

## **Cooks, Cooking, and Food on the Early Modern Stage**

Submitted by Sally Jane Templeman to the University of Exeter

as a thesis for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in English

in February 2013

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## Abstract

This project aims to take the investigation of food in early modern drama, in itself a relatively new field, in a new direction. It does this by shifting the critical focus from food-based metaphors to food-based properties and food-producing cook characters. This shift reveals exciting, unexpected, and hitherto unnoticed contexts. In *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Titus Andronicus*, which were written during William Shakespeare's inn-yard playhouse period, the playwright exploits these exceptionally aromatic venues in order to trigger site-specific responses to food-based scenes in these plays. Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* brings fair-appropriate gingerbread properties onstage. When we look beneath the surface of this food effect to its bread and wine ingredients, however, it reveals a subtext that satirizes the theory of transubstantiation. Jonson expands on this theme by using Ursula's cooking fire (a property staged in Jonson's representation of Smithfield's Bartholomew Fair) to engage with the prison narrative of Anne Askew, who was burned to death in front of Bartholomew Priory on the historic Smithfield for denying the doctrine of transubstantiation. This thesis also investigates water, which, for early moderns, was a complex and quasi-mystical liquid: it was a primary element, it washed sin from the world during the Great Flood, it was a marker of status, it was a medicine, and it was a cookery ingredient. Christopher Marlowe not only uses dirty water to humiliate his doomed monarch in *Edward II*, but he also uses it to apportion blame to the king for his own downfall. In *Timon of Athens*, Shakespeare draws on the theory of the elements to cast Timon as a man of water, who, Jesus-like, breaks up and divides (or splashes around) his body at his "last" supper. Fully-fledged cook characters were a relative rarity on the early

modern stage. This project looks at two exceptions: Furnace in Philip Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* and the unnamed master cook in John Fletcher's *The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy*. Both playwrights use their respective gastronomic geniuses to demonstrate the danger that lower-order expertise poses to the upper classes when society is in flux. Finally, this project demonstrates that a link existed between ornate domestic food effects and alchemy. It shows how Philip Massinger's *The Great Duke of Florence* and Thomas Middleton's *Women, Beware Women* use food properties associated with alchemy to satirize notions of perfection in their play-worlds.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the University of Exeter for supporting my application for AHRC funding and the AHRC for awarding it. Without this financial support, this thesis could not have been written. I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, Pascale Aebischer, for suggesting the topic of food in the first place and for her support, encouragement, and enthusiasm throughout the last three years. My thanks also go to Elliot Kendall for his advice and suggestions. For their help with proofreading and feedback, my thanks go to Lesley Crawford-Turner, Audrey Flynn, Alanna Skuse, and Pamela Whitehead. For his continuing belief in my ability to complete this project, I send a big hug and a huge thank you to my son, Oliver. Finally, my thanks go to my mother for stepping in with financial support when my funding ended. This thesis is dedicated, with love, to Oliver and my mother.

## Contents

Title page	1
Abstract	2
Acknowledgments	4
Table of contents	5
List of Illustrations	7
INTRODUCTION	9
Hippocratic doctrine	13
Galen of Pergamum	17
Cookery books of antiquity	20
Greek medical doctrine in the Arab world	22
Medieval Arab cookery books	23
Greek science filters into the Christian West	24
Early modern English dietaries	27
The medico-culinary cookery book template	32
Early modern English cookery books	33
Chapter summaries	39
CHAPTERS	
1. <b>What's this? Mutton?": Food, Bodies, and Inn-Yard Performance Spaces         in Early Shakespearean Drama</b>	45
Selling food and selling drama	56
The inn-yard effect	58
Cooking up empathy in <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	60
Slipping between onstage and offstage drinking	62
Cooking corpses in <i>Titus Andronicus</i>	64
2. <b>Cooking Fires, Martyr Fires, and Transubstantiating Gingerbread in         Ben Jonson's <i>Bartholomew Fair</i></b>	76
Staging pyro-properties	79

Immoral inn-keeping cooks and hell's fire	84
Transubstantiating gingerbread	89
Ursula the martyr parody	102
<b>3. Water and Bodies in Christopher Marlowe's <i>Edward II</i> and William Shakespeare's <i>Timon of Athens</i></b>	111
Edward II's conduit water	124
Timon of Athens as a "fleumatike" man of water	131
<b>4. Transgressing Cooks in Philip Massinger's <i>A New Way to Pay Old Debts</i> and John Fletcher's <i>The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy</i></b>	150
Furnace's transgressions across social and spatial boundaries in Philip Massinger's <i>A New Way to Pay Old Debts</i>	158
Cooking and campaigning	167
Corrupting and enforcing appetites	172
Misdirecting gastronomic and astronomic wonders in <i>The Tragedy Of Rollo, Duke of Normandy</i>	175
<b>5. Alchemy and Early Modern Food Effects in Philip Massinger's <i>The Great Duke of Florence</i> and Thomas Middleton's <i>Women, Beware Women</i></b>	197
The colours of alchemy and the colours of food	199
Marchpane stage properties	212
Satirizing alchemy's search for tripartite perfection in Philip Massinger's <i>The Great Duke of Florence</i>	217
Consuming gold	224
Gilt marchpane animals in Thomas Middleton's <i>Women, Beware Women</i> .	226
<b>Conclusion</b>	232
<b>Bibliography</b>	238

## List of Illustrations

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. The George Inn, Southwark. London's last remaining three storey galleried inn from the early modern period photographed in 2009.   | 49  |
| 2. Woodcut showing spectator galleries, possibly at the Bell Savage Inn (Dando and Runt t.pag)  | 49  |
| 3 Herbert Berry's floor plan of the Boar's Head and its yard. The stage was erected in front of the "Ostery" and "Certayne Romes" (The Playhouse 50).   | 54  |
| 4. Modern replicas of early modern gingerbread (Day 64).  | 89  |
| 5. Woodcut of Anne Askew being burnt to death in front of the Priory of Saint Bartholomew. (Foxe 1240).   | 97  |
| 6. Title page of <i>The Lattre Examinary on of Anne Askewe</i> (1547) depicting Askew shining as a martyr.  | 106 |
| 7. Frontispiece from John Taylor's <i>The Scvller Rowing from Tiber to Thames</i> (1612).   | 113 |
| 8. An anonymous painting of London viewed from Southwark c.1630, from the collection of the Museum of London.   | 114 |
| 9. Detail from John Norden's map of 1600, showing the Rose (labelled as "The Stare") and the Globe (bottom centre) and drainage ditches running down both sides of Maiden Lane(Bowsher and Miller 54).  | 127 |
| 10. Detail from Braun and Hogenburg's map of 1572 showing a row of privies along the water's edge at Bankside (Bowsher and Miller 16).  | 129 |
| 11. Recipe for "Furmete with porpeys" from <i>The Forme of Cury</i>   | 154 |
| 12. "Entertainment at a Feast." <i>Les Chroniques de France</i> (c. 1379). Ms. Fr. 2813 fol. 473v. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. This illuminated manuscript shows life-sized, or near life-sized, figures mounting a battlement in to the right of the diners (Fletcher 18; Hensch frontispiece). | 181 |
| 13. Portrait of the Cobham family painted in 1567.  | 207 |
| 14. Detail of a late Baroque dessert (c.1749) recreated at Fairfax House, York, for the exhibition <i>Pleasures of the Table</i> (1997)" (Day 59).  | 209 |

15. An alchemical still (Holmyard 51). 217
16. A sublimatory, which were used by alchemists to purify substances by heating them until they vaporised and then condensing the vapour directly back to a solid state by rapid cooling (Holmyard 56-7). 217
17. A water bath used by alchemists (Holmyard 55). 217

### **Introduction: setting the scene**

“Many of the finest physicians have written about the properties of foods, taking the subject very seriously since it is about the most valuable of any in medicine. For while we do not invariably make use of other resources, life without food is impossible, be we well or ill” (Galen).<sup>1</sup>

This project aims to take the study of food in early modern drama, which in itself is a relatively new field, in a new direction. Its focus is on the material presence of food, food properties, and food-producing cooks in the performance space. It will show that when food properties are examined in terms of real edible food, rather than as literary metaphors, they bring to the stage an array of fascinating contextual allusions. In the hands of William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, individual ingredients are used to create dark subtexts in which the former castigates domesticated cannibalism and the latter satirizes the doctrine

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<sup>1</sup> *On the Properties of Foodstuffs* 29.

of transubstantiation. Food aromas in the performance space are used by Shakespeare to create unique and counter-cultural responses to his early drama. Food's colour, gilding, and shaping, which were influenced, I suggest, by alchemical philosophy and practices, are used by playwrights such as Philip Massinger and Thomas Middleton as a measuring stick against which to measure and find wanting the less than perfect behaviour of their dramatic characters. Water, which was treated as a food in early modern cookery books, is used by Christopher Marlowe to humiliate and judge a king and by Shakespeare to invert key Christian rituals. Staged cooking fires are used by Jonson to probe and parody the horrors of martyr burnings and cook characters who are portrayed as gastronomic geniuses, bring rebellion and transgression to the stage. Early modern playwrights, then, used the material presence of food, fires, and cooks to be experimental, satirical, contentious, and judgemental.

The decision to focus on material over metaphorical food has necessarily committed this project to a relatively narrow field of enquiry within the canon of early modern drama. As Peter Holland explains, "looking for food in Shakespeare as opposed to listening for food in the plays can be distinctly difficult. Packed as they are with references to food by the thousand, the plays largely resist showing us food, restricting the visibility of eating, the sight of the materials of consumption" (11). "[L]ooking for food" in the plays of Shakespeare's contemporaries is equally "difficult." More accurately, though, it is the scarcity of specific evidence in stage directions and dialogue relating to specific staged food properties that causes the difficulty. There can be little doubt that individual and probably striking food effects were used on early modern stages, but proving it is where the difficulty lies. Chris Meads has calculated, for example, that there are one hundred and fourteen

banquet scenes in extant plays written between 1585 and 1642 (1). Unfortunately, insofar as this project is concerned, these banquets are almost invariably brought onstage with notoriously non-specific directions, such as “*servingsmen ... bringing in a banquet,*” or are already “*prepared*” onstage when scenes open (*Shr.* 5.2.0; *Mac.* 3.4.0).<sup>2</sup> Other food-related stage directions and/or dialogic allusions to the material presence of specific foods are also relatively rare.

The scarcity of evidence probably explains why few modern critics have yet ventured down this path. In fact, in “*Shakespeare and Food: A Review Essay*” (2008), David Goldstein not only draws attention to this gap in research, but also specifically calls for work to examine how “*food signifies and functions, and what practices and ideas it encodes, within and across [Shakespeare’s] plays*” and to investigate how “*food function[s] in theatrical and performance practice*”(171).<sup>3</sup> Because Holland and Goldstein restrict their observations about food-based properties to Shakespeare and because Goldstein restricts his call for research to the already enormous field of Shakespeare criticism, they effectively illustrate that beyond Shakespeare these gaps are wider and deeper.

It is the work of this project to begin the process of filling these gaps and addressing these absences. In order to do so, it examines Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Timon of Athens*; Ben Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair*; Christopher Marlowe’s *Edward II*; Philip Massinger’s *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* and *The Great Duke of Florence*; John Fletcher’s *The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy*; and Thomas Middleton’s *Women, Beware Women*.

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<sup>2</sup> See Alan C Dessen’s and Leslie Thomson’s *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642* for more evidence. Dessen and Tomson 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> I am very grateful to David Goldstein’s article for providing one of the triggers that helped me to define my PhD project.

The research in this thesis has primarily focused on printed, rather than autographical, cookery books and medical texts because, I reasoned, this (together with personal experience and oral discussions) is where most playwrights and playgoers would have gleaned information about humoral and culinary matters.<sup>4</sup> Thus, *Early English Books Online* has been my archive. E. K. Chamber's *The Elizabethan Stage* and Glynne Wickham's *English Professional Theatre, 1530-1660* have been invaluable; as has F. David Hoeniger's *Medicine and Shakespeare in the English Renaissance*, which provided a wealth of background medical information.<sup>5</sup> The chapter on inn-yard performance spaces is deeply indebted to Herbert Berry's research into these playhouses, and Chris Meads' research in *Banquets Set Forth* has often guided and informed my thinking on this topic. Wendy Wall's *Staging Domesticity*, Bridget Ann Henisch's *Fast and Feast*, and C. Anne Wilson's "Banqueting Stuffe" were valuable companions at the beginning of this project, and Holly Dugan's *The Ephemeral History of Perfume* is a fascinating book that helped me to close it.

Before we begin, however, in order to understand how food was influenced and understood during the early modern period, it is in ancient Greece that we must "lay our scene" (*Rom. Prologue 2*).

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Most dishes served on English medieval and early modern tables were the products of borrowings and exchanges between scholars and physicians of different nations, of a day-to-day mingling between cultures in places such as Sicily, of booty captured and brought home from crusades and conquests, and of an embedded engagement with humoral

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<sup>4</sup> On the medical front, Shakespeare is, perhaps, the exception among his fellow playwrights because in June 1607 his daughter, Susanna, married the physician John Hall.

<sup>5</sup> Hereafter, Chamber's *Elizabethan Stage* is shortened to *ES*.

doctrine. The process extended back some two thousand years and incorporated the medico-culinary traditions of ancient Greece, the translations and enhancements of these traditions by Arab scholars and physicians working between the sixth and tenth centuries, the inheritance of these enhanced doctrines by Latin scholars working in Spain during the eleventh century, and, finally, the rediscovery and translation of classical medical manuscripts by Renaissance humanists working in Italy from around 1450.

### **Hippocratic Doctrine**

The Hippocratic corpus consists of about sixty anonymous treatises, which were mostly written between 430 BC and 330 BC. They represent “the beginning of systematic medical inquiry in Greece” (Lloyd 12). In order to diagnose and treat malfunctioning bodies, Hippocratic writers had first to explain how healthy bodies functioned and of what they were constituted. There was little consensus. The author of “Regimen I” proposed that human beings were comprised of fire and water; the writer of “Tradition in Medicine,” by comparison, argued that “[t]here exists in man saltiness, bitterness, sweetness, sharpness, astringency, flabbiness and countless other qualities having every kind of influence, number and strength” (Regimen I, 208; Tradition 78). The “first clear statement” on the components of physical matter was put forward by the philosopher Empedocles (c. 492-432 BC), who claimed that “all things consist of earth, water, air, and fire” (Lloyd 24; Roberts 254). This was to become “one of the most important and influential physical theories in antiquity” (Lloyd 24). However, “a great variety of physical theories based on one or more of the Empedoclean elements, or on one or more of the four primary opposites, hot, cold, dry, and wet, were current among medical writers in the late fifth and early fourth centuries” BC (Lloyd 24).

Connected with theories on elements and qualities were doctrines based on humours. Hippocratic writers viewed bile and phlegm as the most important humours, but they disagreed on the number of primary humours and on the role that they performed. The author of “On Affections” proposed that the “beginning and source of all diseases are bile and pituita [or phlegm]” (274). Alternatively, “The Nature of Man” proposed that the “human body contains blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile,” and that these

are the things that ... cause its pains and health. Health is primarily that state in which these constituent substances are in the correct proportion to each other, both in strength and quantity, and are well mixed. Pain occurs when one of the substances presents either a deficiency or an excess, or is separated in the body and not mixed with the others. (262)

As with the elements, each humour was believed to be characterized by two primary but opposite qualities: blood was hot and moist, phlegm was cold and moist, yellow bile (or cholera) was hot and dry, and black bile (or melancholy) was cold and dry.

Humoral theorists believed that a person’s natural complexion or temperament was determined by the humour that dominated their physiology. Thus, a person’s complexion was choleric if heat and dryness prevailed, sanguine if heat and moisture prevailed, phlegmatic if cold and moisture prevailed, or melancholic if cold and dryness prevailed (Elyot B2r–B3r). Nevertheless, complexions were mutable; variables such as age, country of residence, season, constitution, and regimen (diet and exercise together) all had the potential to alter an individual’s predominant humour.

Some Hippocratic writers divided the causes of disease into internal and external factors. External factors included the air, the seasons, and the winds. The author of “Airs,

Waters, Places” took the position that the “chief controlling factors” of “physique, temperament and disposition” “are the variability of the weather, the type of country and the sort of water which is drunk” (168).

Dietetics was a fundamental concept of ancient Greek medicine. The author of “Regimen in Acute Diseases” wrote that, for the sick, regimen “is a powerful aid to recovery, to the healthy a means of preserving health, to athletes a means of reaching their best form and, in short, the means by which every man may realize his desire” (188). In fact, the author of “Tradition in Medicine” argued that diet was so integral to the health of human beings that it was the reason that the “art of medicine” evolved in the first place:

the science of medicine would never have been discovered nor, indeed, sought for, were there no need for it. If sick men fared just as well eating and drinking and living exactly as healthy men do, and no better on some different regimen, there would be little need for the science. But the reason why the art of medicine became necessary was because sick men did not get well on the same regimen as the healthy, any more than they do now. (71)

Wrongful eating (normally in the form of gluttony or excessive abstinence) was condemned because it disturbed the balance of the natural constituents of the body. “Aphorisms,” for example, advised, “[n]either a surfeit of food nor of fasting is good, nor anything else which exceeds the measure of nature” (209).

Disease was generally understood in terms of an imbalance in, or disturbance of the natural state of the body. Food was used to correct imbalances and to maintain balances, but a lack of consensus among physicians regarding which diet to prescribe for which illness created suspicion and doubt in the minds of patients and potential patients. The author of

“Regimen in Acute Diseases” complained that the “science of medicine has fallen so low in popular estimation as not to seem the science of healing at all....in the acute diseases at least, practitioners differ so widely that the diet prescribed by one is regarded as bad by another, the science could almost be compared to divination”(188).

The role that food played in classical dietetics was complex. It was a nutrient necessary for life, growth, and reproduction and a pharmacological agent, which could have a positive or negative effect upon the physiological processes of the body. In addition, the qualities that food contained were understood to behave in complex ways. Food could nourish and heal, but, if wrongly prescribed, eating even the most commonly used foods could be fatal. The writer of “Regimen in Acute Diseases,” for example, advocated using barley-gruel as “the most suitable cereal” to give when dealing with acute diseases because “[i]ts gluten is smooth, consistent and soothing; and is slippery and fairly soft; it is thirst-quenching and easily got rid of in case this be necessary. It contains nothing to produce constipation or serious rumbling, nor does it swell up in the stomach for during cooking it swells up to its maximum bulk” (188). However, the same treatise also warned that a course of dieting on this “most suitable cereal” could be “very harmful”; that if gruel was given to patients with a persistent pain in the side they could “very quickly die”; that in some circumstances those who took thick gruel died “within a week”; and that these deaths were occasionally preceded by madness, choking, or stertorous breathing” (Regimen in Acute 188, 190).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> During the Middle Ages, it was known that ergot fungus in barley meal caused a skin disorder called St Anthony’s fire, or ergotism. “Ergot contained a chemical that made sufferers go berserk, largely because it caused gangrene and eventual loss of hands, feet, and fingers. If not treated, and it rarely was in the Middle Ages, the poisoning led to the sensation of being burned at the stake.” Wakely n.pag.

Most commonly, Hippocratic writers advocated curing sickness or disease by opposites. The author of “The Nature of Man” explained that

Diseases caused by over-eating are cured by fasting; those caused by starvation are cured by feeding up. Diseases cured by exertion are cured by rest; those caused by indolence are cured by exertion. To put it briefly: the physician should treat disease by the principle of opposition to the cause of the disease according to its form, its seasonal and age incidence....This will bring the patient most relief and seems to me to be the principle of healing.

(266)

Treatment generally took the form of adding particular foods, drinks, or drugs with qualities that functioned in an opposite way to the overheated or excessive humour, or with qualities that encouraged the body to purge or rebalance overheated or excessive humours.

Methods of purging or withdrawal included enforced abstinence of food and drink; purgative drugs, clysters or enemas which induced vomiting, sweating, or evacuation of the bowels; bloodletting; cautery; and surgery. The more drastic methods (drugs and surgery) were normally only employed when diet therapy was, or was likely to be, ineffective.

#### **Galen of Pergamum AD 129-c. 210**

After the second century AD, Galen of Pergamum “rapidly became the chief authority on questions of anatomy, physiology and pathology” (Lloyd 55). The body of Galen’s writings “directly or indirectly related to Hippocrates ... [make] up more than a quarter of all the work of his that has survived in Greek—and this takes no account of the frequent occasions on which he refers to Hippocrates in other works”(Lloyd 53).

Moreover—as Powell, Singer, and other critics point out—Galen is often our only surviving

source for the work of medical writers of antiquity whose work is now lost (Powell 2, Singer 399-400 nt. 13). Galen's influence on the way in which Greek medicine was transmitted down through the centuries to the early moderns cannot be overstated. Singer claims that "with the exception of Aristotle, and the possible exception of Plato, there can be no more historically influential ancient author in matters scientific" (vii).

Through a process of selection and by concentrating on those treatises that he believed were written by Hippocrates, Galen brought a form of consensus to humoral doctrine. For Galen, Hippocrates was the originator of the theory based on the four primary opposites (hot, cold, dry and wet) and the four primary elements (earth, water, air and fire) and this "was the theory that—with modifications and additions—Galen himself adopted as the foundation of his own account of the ultimate constituents of the body" (Lloyd 54; Singer ix-x). Thus, as Singer points out, it was Galen's version of Hippocratic doctrine which became so influential (x). It is for this reason and because early modern dietary writers relied heavily on Galen's treatises, that this thesis focuses on Galen and his interpretation of humoralism.

Galen valued diet therapy very highly. In *On the Properties of Foodstuffs, Book I*, he recorded that "[m]any of the finest physicians have written about the properties of foods, taking the subject very seriously since it is about the most valuable of any in medicine ... life without food is impossible, be we well or ill. So it is understandable that most of the best physicians have been concerned to examine its properties in some detail" (29). Although he drew much of his understanding of pharmacology and dietetics from earlier writings, Galen, like the Hippocratic writers before him, stressed the value of combining theoretical and empirical research. Therefore, he travelled widely and observed many different classes of

people (from gladiators to ditchers) and noted the foods and remedies that they used in order to investigate and expand on ideas he found in his sources (Wilkins ix-xxi). He, for example, took the distinction between food as nutrition (where the body acts on food in order to assimilate it into its blood and tissues) and food as a drug (where the food acts upon the body) further than the Hippocratic writers. He concluded that most foods, with the exception of poisons, lay somewhere between the extremes of drug and nutriment and “their role at any one time depending upon the circumstances at that time” (Powell 3). However, like the Hippocratic author of “Regimen in Acute Diseases” before him, Galen was concerned that a lack of consensus on dietetics among his fellow doctors created mistrust among the populace: “for they cannot all be speaking the truth!” he pointed out (*Properties of Foodstuffs* 29).

Because “[m]ost patients—and all bed-ridden cases—were treated in their own homes, [and] cared for by their relatives,” the skill, or lack thereof, of household cooks clearly played a pivotal role in maintaining health and treating sicknesses within Greco-Roman households (Lloyd 36).<sup>7</sup> Galen recognised that the art of healing often depended for its success on the art of cooking: “I do not consider it right for a doctor to be completely ignorant of the art of cooking, because whatever tastes good is easier to digest than other dishes which may be equally as healthy” (On the Powers 131). Like the author of “Regimen in Acute Diseases” before him and for exactly the same reasons, Galen recommended correctly made barley soup to the sick and healthy (Regimen 188; Galen, On the Powers 86-7). However, Galen also launched into a diatribe about bad cooks who, apparently,

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<sup>7</sup> Lloyd points out that “in later antiquity we can find precursors to the modern hospital both in the Roman military ... sick-bays and in civilian institutions of the early Byzantine period, such as that founded by St. Basil at Caesarea in the mid fourth century A.D., nothing of the kind existed in the time of the Hippocratic writers.” Lloyd 36.

“universally made” barley soup “in the worst possible way” by pounding the barley “in a mortar when still raw” and not breaking “it up by boiling it over the fire” (On the Powers 87). Some, he continued, “even add some starch to make it appear as if it has been made into a decoction through sufficient boiling. Not surprisingly, this recipe is very flatulent and rather difficult to digest” (Galen, On the Powers 87). It seems likely, however, that even Greco-Roman cooks who concocted perfectly made barley soup ran the risk of being scapegoated by inept doctors whose remedies had failed to enact the hoped for cure.

### Cookery Books of Antiquity

Cookery books seem to have been numerous in the ancient Mediterranean world. Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophists* (*Doctors at Dinner*), which was “probably completed” c. AD 192, referred to many recipe books “of which we only know the title, named author and an occasional fragment” (Roberts 89; Grocock and Grainger 39).<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately (but also remarkably), “only two recipe books have survived from the ancient world”: the *Apicius* and the *Apici excerpta a Vinidario uiro inlustiri* (or *The Extracts of Apicius by Vinidarius, uir Incustris*)—generally referred to as the *Excerpta Vinidarii* (Grocock and Grainger 39, 32-34).

As with the Hippocratic corpus, the *Apicius* collection was haphazardly collated over many centuries (Grocock and Grainger 13). “Any personal reference to the man has been completely lost and is irrelevant....in general the name was used as a generic term to refer to luxury or excessive eating” (Grocock and Grainger 38). Culinary historians date some of the *Apicius*’ recipes as early as the first century AD, if not before, chiefly because they

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<sup>8</sup> Athenaeus’ text “belongs to the learned variety of the symposium form....At the dinner, which extends over several days, philosophy, literature, law, medicine, and other interests are represented by a large number of guests, who in some cases bear historical names (most notably Galen)...the collections of excerpts which are introduced into [the symposium framework] ... relate to all the material and accompaniments of convivial occasions; they are drawn from a vast number of authors, esp. of the Middle and New Comedy, whose works are now lost....Athenaeus cites some 1,250 authors, gives the titles of more than 1,000 plays, and quotes more than 10,000 lines of verse.” Roberts 89.

include the spice “Cyrenaican *laser* [or *silphium*] which, according to Pliny the Elder, was extinct by c. AD 50” (Grocock and Grainger 15; Dalby 303). By comparison, Grocock and Grainger offer a tentative date for the *Excerpta Vinidarii* as between 460 AD and the early sixth century (32-3).

When we bear in mind how influential Greek dietetics was from antiquity to the early modern period (and beyond), it should not surprise us that ancient Greek cuisine was similarly important in antiquity.<sup>9</sup> A great many of the recipes in the *Apicius*

and their culinary concepts are ... of Greek origin....the fact that Greek culinary tradition was predominant in the early [Roman] empire makes it likely that many of the original recipes which formed the basis of the *Apicius* text were originally written in Greek. At that time there was no independent, truly Roman, culinary tradition in high-status Roman society....*Apicius* may be a Roman recipe book written (mainly) in Latin, but it was probably a Hellenistic collection of recipes at its inception, and continued to be one.

(Grocock and Granger 17)

The Hellenizing of Roman eating habits was encouraged by the arrival of “Greek slave-cooks and their cookery books” who brought with them ideas about “new foods and dining habits,” which began to infiltrate Roman culture over the late third and early second centuries BC (Grocock and Granger 46). As we will see, Greek cookery, like Greek medicine, extended its influence down through the centuries to the early modern period.

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<sup>9</sup> The longevity of Galen’s medical doctrine is astonishing. In 1997, Singer wrote that in “the translations and interpretations of the great Arab and Syrian scholars his medicine became the foundation of a tradition which survives in the Muslim world to this day (the so-called ‘Unani’ medicine, for example, which is taught in Islamic schools in India).” Singer vii.

### Greek medical doctrine transfers to the Arab world

Following the collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, Greek medicine was “kept alive in the Byzantine Empire. Then, from the sixth century on, some of its texts were translated at Damascus into Syriac. Thence Greek Medicine was inherited by the Arabs and Arab-speaking Jews and Christians, who further developed it during their great period of civilization that stretched as far as India in the east and to Sicily and Spain in the west” (Hoeniger 72). The work of translating from Greek and Syriac into Arabic was begun in the eighth century. Translations of Hippocrates and Galen and other scientific and philosophical texts were undertaken by Arab scholars such as Honain ben Issac of Baghdad (known in the Christian world as Joannitius) (809-873), Haly Abbas (died 982-994), and Ibn Sīnā (known in the West as Avicenna) (c. 980-1037) (Zaouali 5). Avicenna was a “physician and philosopher from Bukhara whose treatises on food were known to every serious cook [in the Arab world] in the Middle Ages” (Zaouail 5). Galen’s *On the Properties of Food* was “translated into Arabic with the title *Kitāb al-aghdhīya* (‘Book on Foods’)” and was “cited in all the works of the physicians of the period – Muslim, Hebrew, and Christian—who were practicing under the reign of the Muslim caliphs” (Zaouali 9). “Most of these Arab writers knew their Hippocrates as well as their Galen and saw themselves as upholding the best traditions of Greek medicine” (Lloyd 57).

Besides “reorganizing and reformulating Greek knowledge [Arab physician-scholars] made significant contributions towards the differentiation of certain diseases, and in other branches of medicine, including surgery” (Hoeniger 72-3). Inter-cultural cooperation also influenced Greek dietetics. The caliphs, for example, “employed Christian physicians who were learned in the Greek school of medicine, and they introduced the idea of serving vegetarian dishes to invalids” (Perry, *Medieval Cuisine* x-xi).

### Medieval Arab cookery books

The oldest surviving cookbook in the Arabic language is the *Kitāb al-Tabīkh* (or *The Book of Dishes*), which was “compiled in the tenth century by a scribe named Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq from the recipe collections of eighth- and ninth-century caliphs and members of their courts” (Perry, *Medieval Cuisine* ix; Waines 574).<sup>10</sup> Possibly because of the “glamorous association ... with the caliphs of Bagdad’s golden age,” Ibn Sayyār’s recipes recur in “a number of later cookbooks” (Perry, *Medieval Cuisine* x). This apparent popularity taken together “with the fact that [the caliphs’] private physicians had testified to the healthful quality of many of these dishes” seems to have “accustomed the Arab world to the idea of writing cookbooks” (Perry, *Medieval Cuisine* x). And write they did. Perry contends that “there are more cookbooks in Arabic from before 1400 than in the rest of the world’s languages put together” (*Medieval Cuisine* ix). Arab cookery, as we will see below, mingled Greco-Roman culinary traditions with other influences and this cosmopolitan gastronomy was passed on to the early modern English.

Arab culinary traditions were also influenced by ancient Persia. Significantly, the custom of writing down cookery recipes, rather than passing them on orally, “seems to have been a legacy of ancient Persia” acquired when “Arabian armies conquered Iran in the seventh century” (Perry, *Medieval Cuisine* ix). The names of some of the condiments included in the *Kitāb al-Tabīkh* suggest that they were “exposed to both Persian and Greek

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<sup>10</sup> I have used Charles Perry’s translation of the *Kitāb al-Tabīkh*, which was published in 2005. On the title page Perry identifies the author or compiler of this cookery book as ‘Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Muhammad b. al-Karīm, the scribe of Baghdad and gives the date of composition as the thirteenth century. Two years later, in the foreword to *Medieval Cuisine of the Islamic World*, Perry’s opinion on date and author has changed. He now acknowledges, in line with other critics, that *Kitāb al-Tabīkh* “was compiled in the tenth century by a scribe named Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq” (xi). Perry, *A Baghdad Cookery Book* 13; Perry, *Medieval Cuisine* ix-xix.

influence” and the book included “a number of aristocratic stews with Persian names” (Perry, *Medieval Cuisine* x-xi).

### **Greek science filters into the Christian West**

During the eleventh century, Greek knowledge, preserved and enhanced by Arab physician-scholars, began to filter into the Christian West. Palermo in Sicily and Toledo in central Spain were important cultural centres where Latin scholars encountered ancient Greek knowledge. Sicily was under Saracen rule between 827 and 1071 and during this period the island’s “rich and complex” culture encouraged Latin, Greek, and Arab to “live side by side in peace and toleration” (Metlitzki 8). When the Normans took Sicily, at the end of the eleventh century, this “splendid” multicultural tradition continued and even expanded: “[r]oyal policy encouraged the presence of Englishmen at the Sicilian court and there was continuous interchange in administrators, clerks, and scholars” (Metlitzki 8). Within the tripartite culture of Sicily, scholars translated texts “from the original Greek side by side with versions from the Arabic” (Metlitzki 9). Owsei Temkin describes this process as an “internationalization of the philosophical outlook” (99). As we will see, this mingling of cultures also brought about an “internationalization” of the culinary outlook.

Toledo was of equal importance to this process. When, in 1085, the city was conquered by Alfonso VI, at “one stroke the Christian world took possession of a civilization next to which the Latin West ... seemed ... provincial and barbaric” (Metlitzki 11). “There are a great number of manuscripts which show that ... from about 1150 to 1250, Toledo was the centre of an extraordinary movement of translation from Arabic into Latin” (Metlitzki 11-12). Scholars from England were not only drawn to Toledo to study ancient Greek texts, but some, such as Daniel of Morley, also returned to England with “a multitude of [these]

precious books” (Metlitzki 37). Despite the wealth of ancient knowledge that the Christian West was acquiring, only part of Galen’s work was restored during the Middle Ages. Temkin points out that “[r]elatively few of his scientific books were known before the fourteenth century” and “his philosophically oriented work ‘On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato’ were not translated [into Latin] before the Renaissance” (100).

Around 1450, several Italian Renaissance humanists were inspired to rediscover early classical medical manuscripts. Once found, these scholars “edited [the texts] in Greek and translated them into ‘pure,’ or classical, Latin” because they believed that “the works of the ancient Greeks were superior to anything that had been written in the Middle Ages by either Arabs or Christians” (Hoeniger 75). In a wave of enthusiasm, “[m]edieval Galen was replaced by correct and elegant Galen” (Hoeniger 75). However, this led to a very un-Galenic rigidity because physicians were taught to “follow Galen and Hippocrates to the letter” and, therefore, few adopted Galen’s philosophy of putting theoretical evidence to the test (Hoeniger 75; Powell 29).

Early English translators of Galen include Thomas Linacre (1460-1524), who was part of the humanist movement in Italy (Hoeniger 75). He was “the most highly respected physician of the day” and translated into Latin several works by Galen (Hoeniger 26, 45). Thomas Gale (1507-87) was the “first important translator of Galenic treatises into English” (Hoeniger 40). Gale was one of the leading surgeons of his day and served under “the myghtye” “Prynce Henrye the eyghte about the yeare ... 1544” and under “Philip kyng of Spaine” “about the yeare ... 1557” (Excellent Treatise, 16). Unlike the scholars who were attempting to strip Western medieval medicine of its Arabic influence, Gale clearly valued the contribution made by Eastern physicians. In “An Institution of Chirurgie” (which is set

out as a dialogue between Gale and his student, John Yates), Gale tells Yates that “Hippocrates, Galene, Auicenne [Avicenna]” and “Haliabbas [or Haly Abbas]” were physicians from “whom [he would] learne sounde doctrine” (Institution 2). Despite this, Gale’s chief sources for his *Workes* remained “the princes of phisicke Hippocrates and Galene” (Institution 4). In “An Institution of Chirurgerie,” Gale offered the same synthesis of theories (the four elements, the four qualities, and the four humours) that had been put forward in “The Nature of Man” and advocated by Galen; he listed the six non-naturals (air, meat and drink, sleep and watch, moving and rest, emptiness and repletion, and affects of the mind) and explained how abuse of them caused “the decay of helth”; and he advocated curing by contraries (Institution G3r–F1r). Thus, it was Hippocratic doctrine according to Galen that Gale distributed to his readers in 1564.

Just as the ancient Greeks had done before them, early modern doctors prescribed healing diets and used food in remedies and in balms. The Hippocratic treatise “Fractures,” for example, instructed that “in cases where separation of a rather large bone is probable” apply bandages soaked “in dark astringent wine” to the wound (302). Gale similarly prescribed food-based balms and compounds to treat wounds, which contained ingredients such as egg whites, honey, wine, oil of roses, vinegar, bread, liquorice, figs, and raisins. He also advocated using “a bathe in whiche is boyled the head & feete of a shepe, goate, calf, or lambe” to treat “woundes” (Enchiridion 37). To these everyday ingredients he added ingredients such as “a little opium” and “mercurye” (Enchiridion 34, 37).

Even the aroma of food was used to treat patients. In a chapter entitled “Of syncope or swoounding through cause of the wounde,” Gale advised that “after you haue tasted of the bread, geue hym of the Wine to drinke, & comforte him with sweete smelles, & chafe his

temples with Rose water” (Enchiridion 40-1). By comparison, Andrew Boorde (Gale’s near contemporary) recommended a more pungent aroma in a remedy for a nose bleed: if male, the patient would be encouraged to smell “an hogges torde, and laye the stones and coddess in vinegar. If it be a woman lette her laye her brestes in Vineger” (*Brevarie* 1: 96-7).<sup>11</sup> The topic of food aromas is discussed in more depth in Chapter 1.

### **Early modern dietaries**

In line with the advice offered in antiquity, which directed people to take responsibility for maintaining their own health (a “wise man ought to realize that health is his most valuable possession and learn how to treat his illness by his own judgement”), early modern English writers turned to the print medium to dispense accessible advice in English on Galenic medical doctrine and dietetics (*Regimen for Health* 276). These texts are known as dietaries. Sir Thomas Elyot’s *The Castel of Helthe* (1539), Andrew Boorde’s *A Compendyous Regyment or A Dyetary of Helth* (1542), William Bulleyn’s *The Gouvernement of Helthe* (1558), and Thomas Coghans’s *The Haven of Health* (1584) are four of the best known dietaries.<sup>12</sup> Other examples of this genre include De Burgundia Joannes’ (14<sup>th</sup> Century) *Gouernayle of Helthe* (1490), Thomas Moulton’s *The Myroure or Glasse of Helth* (1531); Philip Moore’s *The Hope of Health* (1564); and Thomas Muffett’s *Healths Improvement* (1655).

Elyot was trained in Greek and Latin and was a humanist and diplomat under Henry VIII. Although he was not a formally trained physician, he claimed that he “well vnderstood” and had “truly experienced” the “science of Phisicke” (A3r). Boorde, Bulleyn, Coghans, and

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<sup>11</sup> Vinegar was considered to be cold and constricting and to narrow the body’s passages. Albala 101-2.

<sup>12</sup> Henceforth, Boorde’s *A Compendyous Regyment or A Dyetary of Helth* will be referred to by its more commonly used title: *A Dyetary of Helth*.

Muffett were physicians; Moulton was a “doctour of diuinitie” (A7r). Moore was not a physician, but had studied “the knowledge of soche thynges, as concerne health”; he particularly recommended “the use and commodities of a good Gardaine,” which, he told his readers, should contain the “diuers herbes” necessary for “meates and medicines” (Epistle \*5v-\*6r).

Elyot’s dietary provided, what he described as, a sufficient level of humoral theory. To provide more, Elyot advised his readers, would be “hard and tedious to bee understoode” for those without “some knowledge in philosophy natural” (C3r). Like Gale, Elyot was familiar with the work of Joannitus because he refers to this Arab scholar’s work in this text; however, his dietary, like Gale’s medical treatises, focused on the writings of “the princes of phisicke” (Elyot C3r; Gale, Institution 4). Elyot provided the basic tenets of Galenic theory in a clear accessible format that stripped the mystique and language barrier (many medical texts were either written in Latin, or used Latin to name ingredients) from many medical and dietary secrets. This accessibility clearly disturbed the “Colledge of approued Phisitions” because Elyot admitted they were “angry” with him for his transgression (A5r).

Elyot believed that adhering to the correct diet would, under normal circumstances, negate the need for medical intervention. Reassuringly, he claimed that “[h]e that liueth in a good order of dyet, needeth neither purgation nor vomit” (Elyot I2r). However, the advice that Elyot offered on food was not always followed in cookery books of the period; this may be because he permitted his personal opinion to mingle with his theoretical knowledge. Onions, for example, were a food that, according to Elyot, made “il iyyce,” engendered “choler,” and were “hurtfull to the eyes”; they also, Elyot somewhat grudgingly admitted, “cause one to sleepe soundly” (C4v-C6r, Cv). Despite the former and perhaps because of the

latter, onions were used in abundance in medieval and early modern recipes. Elyot also advised against “hony” and “Sweete meates” because, he claimed, they engendered “choller”; he was against “Sweete meates and drinckes” because, he claimed, they “doe hurt the teeth”; and he was against “Sweete wyne” because, he claimed, they were “hurtfull to the eyes” (C5r–C6r). Despite this, honey, sweetmeats, and sweet wines were key components in the increasingly popular banquet course being served in the homes of the wealthy during this period.

From the fifteenth century, the French practice of serving a separate dessert course at feasts began to be adopted in England together with the custom of standing or “withdrawing to another room for the final episode of the meal” (Wilson 13).<sup>13</sup> Both innovations evolved out of the ceremony of the *voidée*, which involved clearing the remaining food from the tables at the end of feasts and then serving a final course of hippocras and wafers.<sup>14</sup> The void gradually expanded into a separate banquet course, which consisted of fruit preserved in sugar and honey; dried fruit such as raisins, currants and dates; thick marmalade cut into slices; comfits (sugar coated seeds, spices, and fruits); and marchpane and sugar plate creations. We will return to the subject of marchpanes in Chapter 5 and to sugar plate in Chapter 4. Once the void had become mobile, it became customary (at all but the grandest of occasions) to serve the banquet course in a totally removed place—often a banqueting house (Stead 115-119).

As in antiquity, gluttony was condemned by many in early modern England. It was clearly a behaviour that exasperated Elyot because he waxed hyperbolically on the subject:

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<sup>13</sup> The forerunner of the early modern banqueting course can, perhaps, be traced back to ancient Rome. Elaborate Roman dinners consisted of three courses: the hors d’oeuvre or entrée, the main course, and the desert course—at which fruit and sweets were served. Flower and Rosenbaum 20.

<sup>14</sup> Hippocras was a sweetened spiced wine much like modern mulled wine.

what abuse is here in this realm in the continuall gourmandise & daily feeding on sundry meates at one meale, the spirit of gluttony triumphing amōng us, in his glorious chariot called welfare, driuyng us from him, as his prysoners into his dungeon of surfet, where we are tormented fō catars, feuers, goutes, pleuresses, fretting of the guttes, & many other sicknesses, and finally put to death by them, often times in youth, or in the most pleasaunt time of our life .... (G4r)

Rather than permitting the “spirit of gluttony” to triumph, Elyot advocated eating meals at regular intervals—their number and the amount of time between them depended upon “the temperature of the countrye and person” (Gv). For Elyot, breakfast was such an important meal that he suggested the consequences of missing it could be fatal: “I think breakfastes necessary in this realme” partially because “choler beyng feruent in the stomacke, sendeth up fumosties into the brayne, & causeth headach, & sometime becōmeth adult, & smauldreth in the stomacke, whereby hapneth perrilous sicknes, and sometime sodayne death, if the heat inclosed in the stomack haue not other cōuentēr matter to work on” (G2r).

As Elyot intimates, Galenists understood the stomach to function very much as a cooking vessel in fire. In *The Breviarie of Health* (1575), a more medically-focused text than his dietary, Andrew Boorde wrote that the stomach “is lyke a pot in the which meat and lycour is put in, and as the fyre doth decoct the meates and the broth in the pot, so doth the lyuer under the stomake decote the meate in mans body” (1:109). If the vessel was filled incorrectly, food would burn or be left uncooked. In order to facilitate decoction, Elyot

advocated simple meals and particularly condemned the habit of combining different meats at one sitting:

Now let this be a generall rule, that sondry meates, beyny diuers in substance and quality, eaten all at one meale, is the greatest enemye to health that may be, and that ingendreth most sicknesses, for some meates being grosse & harde to digest, some fyne and easy to digest, do require diuers operations of nature, and diuerse temperatures of the stomacke, that is to say, much heate and temperate heate, which may not be together at one time.

Therefore when the fine meat is sufficiently boyled in the stomacke, the grosse meate is raw .... (G3r)

Boorde's dietary was dedicated to "Thomas Duke of Northfolke," but he directed it to "all men lyuyng" who would know "howe a man shuld order him selfe in all maner of causes partenynge to the health of his body" (+1v-2v). Boorde particularly favoured the use of butter and oils both as food and in remedies. He wrote, "Butter made of crayme is moiste of operacion....it is good for the breste and lunges, and also it doth relaxe and doth mollifie the bely, Dutche men dothe eate it at all tymes in the day" (Boorde, *Dyetary* E2v). Joan Thirsk suggests that butter eating "grew markedly in England" following Boorde's comments and that this eventually transformed dairying "into a substantial branch of commercial business" (*Food in Early*, 16). In *The Breviarie of Health*, Boorde also recommended balms (with which to anoint the body in order to draw out excessive or overheated humors) and remedies that included butter and/or oils. He, for example, advised treating "aches and peine in the armes" by anointing the "place or places" with "the oyle of Turpentyne and ...aquauitie" (Boorde, *Breviarie* 1:23). Gervase Markham, writing

forty years later, also advocated oil-based remedies: he recommended “oyle” of “new layd eggs” to treat burns; “oyle of Lyllyes” in a remedy to cure a “payne” in the head; “fresh butter or ... oyle” in an “oyntment for burning”; and “oyle of Roses” in a remedy for “the swimming or dizzing in the head” (44, 17, 47, 12). We will return to the topic of fat and oil in Chapter 2.

Just like the author of “Regimen in Acute Diseases” and Galen before him, Boorde believed that cooks and cooking played a vital role in maintaining good health and curing the sick. He claimed that

a good coke is halfe a phisicion. For the chefe phisicke (the counceil of a phisicion except) dothe come from the kytchyn, wherefore the phisicion and the coke for sicke men must consult togyther for the preparacion of meate for sicke men. For yf the phisicion withoute the cooke prepare any meate excepte he be very expert, he wyll make a merysshe [?] dysse of meate, the whiche the sycke can nat take (Boorde, *Dyetary* G1v).

In some cases, Boorde even proposed that patients should be handed over to the care of the cook entirely. For the treatment of “a consumption in olde men,” for example, he advised that the “chefest remedy for this matter, is good cherishing, wherefore the medicines must come out of the kitchin” (Boorde, *Breviary* 2:13). The topic of humoral doctrine was not the sole preserve of medical writers and authors of dietaries, however, because cookery book writers had been offering medical advice since antiquity.

### **The medico-culinary cookery-book template**

As we have seen, the interrelationship between cooking and curing had been established in the classical period. Not only did ancient medical treatises discuss diet, but

ancient cookery books also discussed medicine. The *Apicius*, in fact, established a template for cookery books, which mingled recipes, remedies, and the occasional morsel of information relating to the qualities of the ingredients used and this template was replicated in cookery books before and during the early modern period. In between a recipe to “keep unripe peaches for a long time” and one “to preserve green olives so that you may make oil whenever you like,” for example, the *Apicius* provided a recipe for “Multi-purpose salt preparations” that offered “preparations for the digestion, to ease the stomach [and to] ... prevent all diseases and plague and all chills from developing” (141). The *Kitāb al-Tabīkh* also followed this format. Its chapter “On Pickles, Relishes and Condiments” advised that “[t]here are many kinds [of these foods] which are served among dishes, to cleanse their greasiness from the mouth, to improve the appetite, to aid the digestion of food and to make food palatable”(al-Warrāq 86). Some thirteen to sixteen hundred years after the *Apicius* was written, John Partridge’s *The Widowes Treasure* would slot “A medicine for the Plague” in between a recipe for “A Borage Tart or[of?] Spinage” and one for “fine Cakes” (C7r-Dr). Likewise, *The Booke of Keruynges* advised that “harde chese hath these operacyon/it wyll kepe the stomacke open/butter is holsome fyrst & last for it wyll do awaye all poysons” (A2r).

### **Early modern cookery books**

As with the *Apicius* (whose title, Grocock and Grainger speculate, “simply meant ‘luxury food’”) and the *Kitāb al-Tabīkh* (a cookery book associated with “the caliphs of Baghdad’s golden age”), the earliest extant English manuscript cookery book, *The Forme of Cury* (thus named by Samuel Pegge in his 1791 edition), was directed at a readership who dwelt in the upper echelons of society (Grocock and Grainger 35; Perry, *Medieval Cuisine* x).

*The Forme of Cury* proclaimed that it had been written by the “chef Maister Cokes of kyng Richard the Secunde” (37). Targeting manuscript cookery books at elite households was a practice that continued into the first printed English cookery books. The earliest extant example of this genre is the anonymous *The Boke of Cokery* (1500). Its opening lines proclaimed, “[h]ere begynneth a noble boke of festes ryalle and cokery a boke for a pryncis housholde or any other estates.” The fact that some of its recipes concluded with instructions that dishes be served forth “to your Souerayne” or were seasoned “after the pleasure of your Souerayne” emphasised the social exclusivity of its recipes (A5r, B2r).<sup>15</sup> Paradoxically, the act of translating the gastronomic delights consumed by kings and their courts into print provided a means for those not sufficiently elite to dine *with* monarchs to at least dine *like* them.

Another early English culinary text, *The Boke of Keruyng* (1508), targeted a similar market, but focused on the extremely elaborate protocol of carving and serving meat and fish to noble diners. In a chapter dealing with “the keruyng of flesshe,” it instructed that “your knyfe must be fayre and your handes muste be clene & pases not two fynghers & a thombe upon your knife (A4v–A5r). In the chapter on “Seruyce,” readers were advised to “[t]ake your knyfe in your honed and cut brawne in the dysse as it lyeth & laye it on your soueraynes trenchour....touche not the venyson with your honed but with your knyfe ... pare the befe cut the motton & laye it to your souerayne” (*Boke of Keruyng* A5r–A5v.). In an age when the security of a monarch could not be taken for granted, it is astonishing that members of the household were encouraged to wield sharp carving knives under the noses of their sovereigns and princes in this way.

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<sup>15</sup> Only one full copy of this cookery book survives. Some of its pages have been over inked and this now makes sections of the book very difficult to read.

*The Boke of Keruyng*e not only offered advice on how best to obsequiously serve ones “souerayne,” but, during its print life, it came to embody the religious revolutions triggered by these selfsame “soueraynes.” When this recipe book was first printed, in 1508, England was still a Catholic country and, therefore, its feasts were embedded in the ecclesiastical cycle and its Saints’ days. Appropriately, then, many of this cookery book’s chapters were organised around these holy days: “feestes and seruyce from Eester unto Whytsondaye,” the “feest from Pentecost unto mydsomer,” and “the feest of saynt John the baptyst unto Myghelmasse,” for example. This culinary manual concluded with a section written for the benefit of the “Marshall and the ussher,” who needed to “knowe all the estates of the churche and the hyghe estate of a kynge with the blode royall” (B5v-B6v.). The hierarchy is headed with “[t]he estate of a Pope,” which, the reader is told, “hath no pere” (B5v). At a later date, however, in the copy now held at Cambridge University, a, presumably non-Catholic, hand crossed out the Pope’s entry and left the hierarchy topped with “[t]he estate of an Emperour” followed by that of “a kynge,” “a cardynall,” “a kynges sone a prynce,” “an archebyssshop,” “a duke,” “a bysshop,” and so on down the scale (B5v). In 1597, Thomas Dawson reprinted a copy of *The Boke of Keruyng*e, now entitled “The Booke of Caruing and Sewing,” at the end of *The Second Part of the Good Hus-wiues Iewell*. Tellingly, because the country was now Protestant, the hierarchy was now topped with “[t]he estate of a King” (Dawson, *Second Part* 25). Moreover, the “estate of a Bishop” was now considered to be inferior to that of “a King,” “a Kings sonne,” “a Duke,” “a Marques,” and “an Earle” (Dawson, *Second Part* 25). Even a small culinary manual (only twenty four printed pages) could not, it would seem, remain aloof from England’s socio-political-religious changes when they trespassed into the realms of dining etiquette.

Although *The Boke of Keruyng* and *The Boke of Cokery* were directed at monarchical and aristocratic households, the majority of the printed cookery books that followed in their wake were aimed at a readership lower down the social scale: Dawson's *The Good Huswifes Iewell* and *The Second Part of the Good Hus-wiues Iewell* and the anonymous *A Booke of Cookerie, otherwise called the Good Huswiues Handmaid* are just a few examples. The evolution of the middling sort brought with it a ready market for recipe manuals offering guidance to those unfamiliar with conspicuously consuming on the culinary front.

Given the enormous influence that Greek humoralism exerted on early modern medicine, it should not surprise us that Greco-Roman cookery held a similar sway with early modern cooks. Knowledge of Roman cookery arrived in England from at least two sources. Firstly, from the translations of the *Apicius* that were produced in fifteenth-century Italy and, thereafter, circulated around Europe. Secondly, from the influx of Arabic culinary traditions and ideas, which began to occur from the eleventh century, which were themselves often embedded in Greco-Roman customs. It is no coincidence, therefore, that some of the ingredients and food combinations found in early modern English cookery books were strikingly similar to those found in the *Apicius*, the "Excerpta Vinidarii," and the *Kitāb al-Tabīkh*.

Cooking with dried fruit is one example of this culinary cross-fertilisation. Early modern cookery books overflowed with recipes using prunes, dates, raisins, and currants. Thomas Dawson's *The Good Huswifes Iewell*, for example, baked prunes, dates, and currants with "Calues feete" and boiled currants and dates with capons (15, 5). Similar combinations were used in the *Apicius* and in the *Kitāb al-Tabīkh* (*Apicius* 153, 247, 283; *al-Warrāq* 33, 39, 65),

The English fondness for cooking with eggs, or “ayren” in *The Forme of Cury*, also finds an echo in Arab and Greco-Roman cookery (*Apicius* 153, 155, 171; al-Warrāq 51, 56, 80; *Forme of Cury* 75, 83, 94). All three cultures used eggs as a colourful garnish. Hardboiled yolks were used to decorate food, or whole eggs were cracked onto the top of hot dishes to finish them off prior to serving (*Apicius* 213,193; al-Warrāq 51, 68, 70; *Forme of Cury* 53,126; *The Boke of Cokery* D1v). In England, hardboiled eggs (normally just the yolk) were treated like meat (especially during Lent and on fasting days) and cut up or minced and added to sauces, stuffing, and stews. Despite the fact that eggs were an integral component of early modern English cookery, the English were clearly familiar with Galen’s warning that “[h]ard boiled eggs are difficult to digest, slow to pass and furnish the body with a heavy food,” (Galen, *On the Powers* 173). In a glorious moment from John Fletcher’s *The Woman’s Prize; or The Tamer Tamed*, Petruchio threatens to feed Maria with “hard eggs, till they brace her like a drum” (38). After which, he crows, “[s]he shall not know a stool in ten months” (38).

A tradition of colouring food also connected ancient and early modern cookery. The *Apicius* advised its readers to boil “all kinds of leaf vegetables” in soda to make them “emerald green” and offered recipes for white and green sauces (159, 229). Pine nuts and almonds were “washed in some ‘silver’ chalk so that they [were] all equally white;” green oil was drizzled over food just before it was served; and defrutum (a sauce made from wine reduced to one third of its volume) added colour to dishes and sauces (153). In a narrative aside, the *Apicius* told its readers that defrutum made from dried figs was called “colouring” by the Romans (151). This, Grocock and Grainger argue, indicates “that the original was in Greek, though written down in the Roman era” (27). This, then, suggests that the fashion for colouring food was current in ancient Greece. Following the *Apicius*’ lead, the *Kitāb al-*

*Tabīkh* tinted a significant number of its dishes yellow, green, and red (62, 88, 90, 91, 98). In early modern England, the appreciation of coloured food developed into a positive fetish. The topic of coloured food is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Even traditional English favourites, such as meat pies, find a source in the *Apicius*. Its recipe entitled “Sauce for any kind of well-hung bird” advised that “[y]ou will make the bird richer and more flavoursome and you will retain its juices if you put it in the oven covered in a paste made of flour and oil” (*Apicius* 229). Although the word *tracta* (meaning dry pasty sheet) “is an original Latin word ... similar kinds of pastry do seem [to have been] part of [ancient] Greek baking techniques” (Grocock and Grainger 30).

Medieval Arab cuisine “was far more developed than European cuisine of the time” (Perry, *Medieval Cuisine* xiii). Thus, where Muslims and Christians were in contact, such as Moorish Spain or Sicily and “the Crusader kingdoms of the Holy Land, it was the Europeans who borrowed dishes” and ingredients from the Arabs (Perry, *Medieval Cuisine* xiv). Sugar work is an interesting case in point.

Although the date at which sugarcane was introduced to Europe is uncertain, it was “being cultivated in Spain after the arrival of the Moors in the eighth century” (Brothwell & Brothwell 83). In antiquity, sugar was treated as a medicine rather than culinary ingredient: “[i]t was said to be laxative, beneficial in bladder disorders and good for the kidneys” (Dalby 314). Perry contends that sugar recipes for candies and sweetmeats “had once been jealously guarded professional secrets of Middle Eastern confectioners” (*Medieval Cuisine* xvi).<sup>16</sup> By the tenth century, however, the Arabs were also familiar with its culinary potential

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<sup>16</sup> Some recipes in “tenth- and thirteenth-century [Arab cookery] books were really specialist dishes, particularly the candies and sweetmeats that were based on boiling sugar to high concentrations of syrup, such as the soft-ball or hard-crack stage.” Perry, *Medieval Cuisine* xvi.

because the *Kitāb al-Tabīkh* used the sweetening properties of sugar (and honey) to flavour a considerable number of its dishes. Arabic sugar secrets travelled to the West where they found expression in the comfits so beloved by the English. The English love affair with sugar lasted until almost the end of the seventeenth century. In 1699, John Evelyn's *Acetaria* recorded its demise: "now *sugar* is almost wholly banish'd from all, except the more effeminate Palates, as too much palling" (34). We will return to the subject of sugar in Chapter 4.

However, the early modern English did not absorb all the culinary ideas that they found in Arab cookery. The *Kitāb-al-Tabīkh* used more fresh fruit in its savoury dishes than early modern English recipes tended to do: particularly oranges, lemons, and quinces. It also used a wider range of vegetables than were commonly used in English recipes: particularly cabbages, cauliflowers, chickpeas, spinach, celery leaves, leeks, eggplants, lentils, broad beans, turnips, and carrots. Despite this, there is little doubt that many of the culinary traditions practiced by early modern English cooks had arrived from the East and had been travelling from that direction since the Greco-Roman period.

### **Chapter summaries**

Chapter 1 of this thesis focuses on two of Shakespeare's Elizabethan plays, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Titus Andronicus*.<sup>17</sup> These plays were written during a period when Shakespeare and his company were performing in inn-yard venues situated at the heart of catering establishments. I am not aware of any work that has yet considered the impact that a performance venue saturated with a pervasive smell of cooking aromas may have had on the drama performed there. When we consider that both of these plays have strong food-

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<sup>17</sup> All quotations from Shakespeare's plays, unless otherwise specified, are taken from the *Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Shakespeare*, Eds. Stephen Greenblatt *et al.* New York: Norton, 1997.

based themes (food as a shrew-taming device and food as a vehicle of revenge), that both bring inn-appropriate food onstage (roast mutton and a meat pie), and that both bring these properties onstage very close to offstage suppertime (when inn-based cooking aromas would have been at their strongest), it seems likely that Shakespeare was not only aware of the dramatic capital that could be earned from these aromatic performance spaces, but had also recognised how best to exploit it. Thinking about inn-yard venues in this way raises exciting questions about the reception of early Shakespearean drama and opens a window to a completely different kind of early modern theatre.

Chapter 2 discusses Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*.<sup>18</sup> It argues that the playwright uses Ursula's cooking fire and her burning and Joan Trash's gingerbread with its bread and wine ingredients to satirise martyr burnings and the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Ursula's fire, which, I suggest, may have been materially present in the playhouse, would have created a powerfully symbolic link between Jonson's play-world representation of Smithfield and the historic Smithfield, which had been a site of martyr burnings for over two hundred years. Anne Askew was one such Smithfield martyr, who was burnt to death in 1546 for refusing to accept the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Despite the fact that Henry VIII had separated the English Church from Rome in 1534, England's national religion remained enmeshed in Catholic doctrine. Jonson, who attended a debate on transubstantiation in the period before he wrote *Bartholomew Fair*, engages with Askew's narrative (which she wrote while in prison) and the debate that he witnessed in order to create a dark food-based subtext to his superficially festive play.

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<sup>18</sup> All quotations *Bartholomew Fair*, unless otherwise specified, are taken from Ben Jonson. *Volpone, or the Fox; Epicene, or The Silent Woman; The Alchemist; Bartholomew Fair*. Ed .Gordon Campbell. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. 328-433.

Chapter 3 investigates the complex and quasi-mythical substance of water. Because Galenists believed that water was one of the four primary elements from which all matter was constructed, early moderns used water as a medicine in its own right and as a component in other medicines. It was also treated as a cookery ingredient. In addition, medieval and early modern Christians believed that water had literally washed away humankind's sins during the Great Flood and, therefore, religious (baptism) and domestic (hand-washing) ceremonies were constructed around its capacity to purify. Water's purity could not, however, be taken for granted during this period and, therefore, medical texts, dietaries, and cookery books sought to categorise it according to a scale that ran from the purest (usually considered to be water drawn from fast running clean sources or clean rain) to the foulest (water stagnating in pools or in muddy puddles). The cleanliness, or otherwise, of water often signalled its user's status. In London, of course, water also functioned as a vital commercial and social highway. However, this liquid highway often seeped into the areas along its banks. This was especially true of London's Bankside, which was the marshy home of the Globe, the Rose, the Hope, and the Swan.

The astonishingly complex nature of water meant that, as a matter of course, its presence on any early modern stage would have brought with it multi-textured extra-dramatic contexts. When it appeared onstage in Bankside's marsh-dwelling theatres, however, this quasi-mythical liquid must have resonated particularly strongly with playgoers. This chapter discusses the way that Christopher Marlowe uses water both to humiliate and to judge his doomed monarch in *Edward II*.<sup>19</sup> It also shows how William

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<sup>19</sup> All quotations from Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* are taken from Christopher Marlowe. *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays: Oxford World Classics*. Eds. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995. 323-402.

Shakespeare transforms his equally doomed protagonist in *Timon of Athens* into a man of water who, Jesus-like, breaks and distributes (or splashes around) his body at his “last” supper in an act that appears to doom the entire play-world (and possibly, by implication, the audience’s world) by overturning key Christian narratives premised on the hope of redemption and everlasting life in heaven (*Tim.* 3.7.82).

Chapter 4 discusses cooks. Cookery books were one of the first literary genres to be translated into print. However, between 1500 and c. 1650, the authors of these recipes were generally reduced to non-persons in printed cookery books and, as such, they were only permitted the occasional imperative utterance (take this or “boile” that). This anonymity was mirrored on the stage, where dramatists normally banished cooks from their play-worlds and reduced them to imaginary offstage appendages to the action. In the printed medium, very few cooks gained editorial control over their recipe collections before the middle of the seventeenth century. In the dramatic medium, playwrights very occasionally released dramatic cooks from their unseen, offstage kitchens. This chapter discusses two such parolees: Furnace in Philip Massinger’s *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*<sup>20</sup> and the unnamed master cook in John Fletcher’s *The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy*.<sup>21</sup>

Both Massinger and Fletcher take pains to celebrate the culinary expertise of their respective gastronomic geniuses. Fletcher, however, goes further than Massinger by counterbalancing culinary worship with the quasi-worship of scientific (mathematical and astrological) endeavour. Both play-world societies are in a state of flux and this uncertainty

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<sup>20</sup> All quotations from this play, unless otherwise specified, are taken from Philip Massinger. “A New Way to Pay Old Debts.” *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*. Vol. II. Eds. Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1976. 273-377.

<sup>21</sup> All quotations taken from this play, unless otherwise specified, are taken from John Fletcher. “The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy.” Ed. George Walton Williams. *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*. Vol. X. Gen. Ed. Fredson Bowers. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. 145-291.

opens a space for cooks—and, indeed, astrologers—to misuse their arsenal of expertise in order to misdirect matters that should lie considerably beyond their sphere of influence. Both playwrights, then, use cook characters to demonstrate the threat that lower-order expertise poses to societies that have lost the ability to contain the influence of such potentially transgressive characters. Given the fact that both of these cooks are complex and influential figures in their respective play-worlds and given the fact that dramatic cook characters, genius or otherwise, were a rarity on the early modern stage, it is curious that, unlike Jonson's Ursula, both of these cooks have largely slipped beneath the critical radar.

Chapter 5 discusses the ornate nature of early modern domestic food effects. These included coloured food, gilded food, and marchpane and sugar plate castles and towers. Although some historians have drawn attention to the decorative nature of early modern food—Bridget Henisch and Christopher Woolgar, for example—very few have attempted to explain how, why, or when these traditions originated. In fact, the early modern tradition of colouring food can be traced back through medieval Arab cookery to Greco-Roman cookery. Significantly, over this extended period of time and throughout these diverse cultures, food was tinted in a similar spectrum of colours: black, white, red, yellow, green, and peacock blue. This chapter argues that these colours, which were the same colours that metals changed into when they were heated during alchemical experiments, were selected in order to symbolically mesh food with alchemical practices. The same meshing occurred when diners consumed marchpane and sugar plate castles and forts, which uncannily resembled alchemical apparatuses, and when they consumed food decorated with gold and silver leaf, which were the two purest metals in alchemy and contained, alchemists believed, life-preserving and life-extending attributes. The material presence of alchemically-inspired

food effects on domestic tables exemplified the avarice of diners by symbolically including them in a chemical get-rich-quick-process that sought to produce gold from base metals. However, these same food properties also brought with them a reminder of the quest for physiological and spiritual purity because for some alchemists alchemy and religion were inseparable.

This chapter shows how the marchpane castle staged during Philip Massinger's *The Great Duke of Florence*<sup>22</sup> engages with the theme of transformation, or transmutation, which runs through the play and satirizes the notion of perfection during the play's drunken banquet. Similarly, the gilt marchpane animals staged in Thomas Middleton's *Woman Beware Women* satirizes the alchemically-based association between gold and purity.<sup>23</sup>

This thesis, then, proposes that when food was staged in the theatre of a culture immersed in Galenic thinking and engaged with alchemical theories, it operated within, what Natasha Korda and Jonathan Gil Harris describe as, "networks of material relations that are the stuff of drama and society alike" (1). When discussed in these terms, early modern food properties complicate the way in which the plays under discussion here are habitually read today.

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<sup>22</sup> All quotations taken from this play, unless otherwise specified, are taken from Philip Massinger. "The Great Duke of Florence." *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*. 5 vols. Eds. Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1976. 3: 95-180.

<sup>23</sup> All quotations taken from this play, unless otherwise specified, are taken from Thomas Middleton. "Women, Beware Women." *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*. Gen. eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino. Oxford: Clarendon P, 2010. 1488-1541.

## Chapter 1

### **“What’s this? Mutton?”: Food, Bodies, and Inn-Yard Performance Spaces in early Shakespearean Drama**

During his early career, Shakespeare performed in and probably wrote for inn-yard playhouses. Recent research by theatre historians such as Herbert Berry, David Kathman, William Ingram, and others has uncovered fascinating information about these unique performance spaces. To date, critics have overlooked the potential impact that playing venues constructed at the heart of catering establishments, and, therefore, characterized by a pervasive smell of cooking, may have had on the drama performed within their walls. This question is important because it opens a window to a completely different kind of early modern theatre; one in which visceral and intellectual responses jostled in playgoers’ bodies and minds. Evidence from two of Shakespeare’s early plays, written during his inn-yard period, suggests that the playwright recognised and wrote for this different form of theatre. Important food-based scenes in *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Titus Andronicus* are shaped to interact spatially, temporally, and culinarily with the intrinsically aromatic smells of inn-yard playhouses. Thinking about inn-yard venues in this way raises exciting questions

about the reception of early Shakespearean drama. Answering these questions necessarily relies on a mixture of evidence and informed speculation. As supertime approached, for example, how did hungry playgoers bathed in cooking aromas respond as they watched Petruccio deprive Katherine of food? How would they have felt when cannibalism was portrayed onstage? Would this have spoiled or sharpened their desire for a post-performance supertime pie? This chapter will discuss Shakespeare's early foray into interactive appetitive theatre.

During the 1570s, four playhouses were constructed in the yards of inner-City London inns (at the Bell Savage, the Bull, the Bell, and the Cross Keys). During the twenty-five years or so that these playhouses operated, their inn businesses were run concurrently with their theatrical enterprises. These inn-based playhouses were not just an inner-City phenomenon, however, because in 1598 a playhouse was also constructed at the Boar's Head Inn just outside Aldgate. This inn also kept trading as an inn for a period of two years, and possibly longer, after its playhouse was built (Berry, *Boar's Head* 32-7, 107; Berry, *Playhouse in the Boar's Head* 53; Berry, *Boar's Head Again* 55).<sup>24</sup> In fact, the owners of this playhouse devised an inn-specific entry system for this venue. One of the partners had the right "to shut the gates of the inn at eleven o'clock on playing days to discourage those who might be willing to wait [in the inn] a little while to save a penny or two" on the cost of admission to the playhouse (Berry, *The Playhouse* 53).

In addition to these formal inn-based playhouses, inns, of course, had hosted plays in London and around the country since the origins of professional playing. The earliest extant

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<sup>24</sup> In *English Professional Theatre, 1530-1660*, Berry writes that when "the Boar's Head became a playhouse, it ceased to be an inn." However, this statement contradicts what he has written elsewhere about this playhouse – as the references I have given demonstrate. Berry, *Playhouses* 452.

evidence of inns being used as playing venues in London dates from April 1543, when the Court of Common Council banned William Blytheman, Geroge Tadlowe (or Gadlowe), and Thomas Hancokkes from permitting plays to be performed in their “dwelling houses” (Lancashire 268 n. 82). David Kathman has identified these “dwelling houses” as the White Horse tavern and the Bishop’s Head tavern—two inns that stood in Lombard Street, London (Inn-yard Playhouses 154 n. 4). In 1557, the Privy Council issued a succession of proclamations concerning plays and players; despite this, Berry contends that “early in September 1557, if not before ... players... [were] allowed to use the Boar’s Head as a playhouse” (*Boar’s Head* 16). In fact, while he admits there is no evidence to support such a hypothesis, Berry suggests occasional and unofficial playing may have continued at this inn between 1557 and the appearance of its playhouse (*Boars Head* 29). Diaries and itineraries also offer occasional glimpses of London’s busy inn-based theatrical industry. In 1599, for example, Thomas Platter recorded that his London hostelry, probably the French Lily in Mark Lane, “was visited by players almost daily” (10, 31-2). Informal inn-based performances venues were apparently successful enough to inspire the construction of permanent playhouses in four City inns during the 1570s.

Where, then, was drama performed in London’s inner-City inns? The Bull and the Bell Savage each had multiple yards, whereas the Bell and the Cross Keys each had a single yard (Kathman, *London Inns* 72-3). This has prompted Andrew Gurr to assume that the Cross Keys venue was indoors and David Kathman to posit that playing at this inn and the Bell “*may have been indoors*” (italics mine) (Gurr 54-8; Kathman, *London Inns* 72-3). Alternatively, Herbert Berry assumes that the stages of all four inner-City inn-yard playhouses were “in their yards” and that, therefore, performances took place “in the open

air” (Playhouses 295). Lawrence Manley concurs with Berry, as does one of the earliest stage historians, Richard Flecknoe (Manley 190). In 1664, Flecknoe recorded that “about the beginning of Queen *Elizabeths* Reign, [players] began...to assemble into Companies, and set up Theatres, first in the City, (as in the Innyards of the *Cross-Keyes*, and *Bull* in *Grace* and *Bishops-Gate Street* at this day is to be seen)” (G4v). In the absence of critical consensus, the discussion in this article will follow Berry, Manley, and Flecknoe and proceed on the basis that playing at all four inner-City inn-yard playhouses was, almost certainly, outside.

Traditionally, early modern city inns were constructed around a yard, or several yards, which were overlooked by galleries on one or more of their sides—as the photograph of the George Inn, London’s last remaining three storey galleried inn from the early modern period, demonstrates (Figure 1).<sup>25</sup> Their street frontage normally consisted of shops, with a great gate leading to the inn proper (Kathman, *London Inns* 68). This design offered contained and ready-made auditoriums for those plays performed in them. Some inns must have used the galleries that they had to accommodate spectators during performances, but others built additional galleries in order to increase the capacity of their playhouses. Figure 2 is a woodcut from the pamphlet entitled *Maroccus Extaticus Or, Bankes Bay Horse in a Trance* (1595) showing the duo performing at a venue, which may be the Bell Savage Inn (they also performed at the Cross Keyes, but the pamphlet is dedicated to the “mine Host of the Belsauage and all his honest Guests”)(t.pag.).<sup>26</sup> Spectators watch the show from a gallery that does not appear to be a structural component of the inn. More substantial

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<sup>25</sup> Although the original inn burnt down during the Great Fire of London, it was rebuilt in 1667 and Thomas Burke suggests it was originally founded in 1554. Burke 10.

<sup>26</sup> One of *Tarltons Jests*, “*Tarltons greeting with Banks his Horse*,” recounts that when Tarlton was playing at the Bell, he came to “the Crosse-Keyes in Gracious-streete” to see Banks and his performing horse there. Tarlton C2r-C2v.

galleries were constructed at the Boar's Head playhouse when it was extended in 1599, by which time Berry calculates the yard and auditorium could "easily have held 1,000, more if the ... extremities of the yard were used" (*Boar's Head* 122).

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Figure 1. The George Inn, Southwark in 2009.

Figure 2. Woodcut showing additional galleries built for spectators, possibly at the Bell Savage Inn (Dando and Runt t.pag)

Can we place Shakespeare at these inn-yard venues? Chambers claims that Shakespeare "contributed to the repertory of Strange's [Men] in 1592 and perhaps also in 1593" although, as Chambers admits, his name is not included on plots or the company's licence of 1593 (*ES* 2:126).<sup>27</sup> He may, therefore, also have been with them on 6 November 1589 when the Lord Mayor complained to the Privy Council that, during a period when "all plays within the City" had been stayed, "Lord Strange's [Men]" had "in very contemptuous manner" played on at the Cross Keys (Berry, *Playhouses* 302). In 1594, like many other former members of Strange's company, Shakespeare joined the company that formed under the patronage of Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon the Lord Chamberlain. In October of

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<sup>27</sup> Chamber's *The Elizabethan Stage* has been abbreviated in all references to *ES*.

that year, Hunsdon applied to the Lord Mayor to obtain toleration for his “nowe companie of players” that, Hunsdon assured the Mayor, “haue byn accustomed for the better exercise of their qualitie, & for the seruice of her Maiestie if need soe requirer, to plaie this winter time within the Citye at the Crosse kayes in Gracious street” (Chambers *ES* 4:316). The Lord Mayor’s response has not survived and so we do not know whether permission was granted.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the wording of Hunsdon’s request does tell us that before the winter of 1594-5, the men now in his company had “byn accustomed’ to play winter seasons at the “Crosse Kayes” Inn. Potentially, then, this was the inn-yard playhouse that Shakespeare was most familiar with. Frustratingly, although Kathman has uncovered a wealth of information about the owners and tenants of this inn during the time that it was hosting plays, we know virtually nothing about this playhouse or its operation (Kathman, Alice Layston, 148-9).

Can we place *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Titus Andronicus* at inn-yard playhouses? Recent scholarship favours the notion that both plays were composed by 1592 (Hodgdon 28; Howard 133; Callaghan viii; Bate and Rasmussen 1619; Maus 371; Evans 1066). The title page of the 1594 quarto edition of *Titus Andronicus* tells us that three companies had serially owned this play: the Earl of Darby’s Men, the Earl of Pembroke’s Men, and the Earl of Sussex’s Men.<sup>29</sup> Given the early composition dates of these plays and *Titus Andronicus*

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<sup>28</sup> Andrew Gurr contends that Sir Richard Martin, the Lord Mayor in question, “did not consent to Carey’s request” because the following winter James Burbage “set about building a new indoor playhouse in the liberty of Blackfriars—inside the city but safe from the Lord Mayor.” It is also possible, of course, that Burbage was motivated to build his own indoor playhouse because playing at the Cross Keys had been so successful. Gurr 64.

<sup>29</sup> Henslowe recorded “ne” next to the entry of “titus & ondronicus” dated “the 23 of Jenewary” 1593 (1594?). However, as Roslyn Knutson points out, the serial ownership of the play would seem to preclude the possibility that the play was new at this point in time. Instead, Henslowe’s designation probably meant that the play was “new to Sussex’s Men (or newly licensed).” Henslowe 21; Knutson 59.

travels between companies, it is extremely likely that they were performed by Strange's Men or the Lord Chamberlain's Men at the Cross Keys or, indeed, at another of London's inn-yard playhouses. Berry contends that "[w]ell-known companies of actors played at one time or another in" all of these venues and Andrew Gurr suggests that up until 1594 "the professional companies used the city inns for playing as frequently as, and perhaps more frequently than, the purposes-built playhouses" (Berry, *Playhouses* 295; Gurr 71).

Shakespeare's inn-yard playhouse period was short-lived, however, because by 1596 the Chamberlain's Men, Chambers contends, were in occupation at the Theatre, from whence they went to the Curtain, and, of course, by spring of 1599 they had moved to the Globe (Chambers *ES* 2:192-209; Knutson 62-3). Moreover, with the exception of the Boar's Head, which continued as a performance venue until c. 1609 and possibly later, most of London's inn-yard playhouses had closed by the end of the sixteenth century (Berry, *Boar's Head* 124).

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The key difference between purpose-built playhouses and inn-yard playhouses, insofar as this chapter is concerned, is the food that they sold. The former offered playgoers fruit and nuts "according to the season" (Hertzner 57). Archaeological excavations in the yards of the Globe and the Rose have uncovered remains of a surprisingly wide range of fruits: "grape, fig, apple, pear, blackberry/raspberry, elder, plum/bullace, sloe/blackthorn, cherry ... [and] peach" (Bowsher and Miller 149). Nut-cracking and apple-munching playgoers created an aural disturbance in these performance spaces as complaints in dramatic dialogue and prologues show (see Dekker's *Satiro--Mastix*, for example), but these foods created little or no aromas (H2r). By comparison, inns sold a strikingly aromatic range

of foods.<sup>30</sup> They commonly sold buns, cakes, and bread (which were often served toasted and steeped in ale), bacon, all sorts of salt meat, pottage, and roast meat (Clark 132-3). In addition, baking was also “an obvious sideline for any brewer ... who had sufficient supplies of grain and fuel,” so inns often also sold apple pies and mutton pies (Clark 132-3). Fynes Moryson recorded that even in “very poore [English] Villages” you could “smell the variety of meates” on offer at taverns before you walked through the door. The aroma alone was apparently sufficient to cheer away a “starueling looke” (Moryson Rrr3r). In the City, some London inns catered on a very large scale. In 1587, William Harrison recorded that “such is the capacity of some [inns] ... that they are able to lodge two hundred or three hundred persons and their horses at ease, and thereto with a very short warning make such provision for their diet as to him that is unacquainted withal may seem to be incredible” (399). Catering on such a large scale from such an aromatic menu would necessarily have created an abundance of cooking aromas with which to tantalize customers.

The phenomenon of cooking aromas in the performance space was one that was absent in most other playing venues. Public playhouses were built without kitchens and in elite private residences, where plays might well be performed after supper, fashion began to divide the performance space from the eating *and* the cooking space. From the fifteenth century, the English began to adopt the French practice of concluding feasts with a dessert course, or banquet, which consisted of fruit, nuts, sugar, spices, and wine. It soon became

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<sup>30</sup> Peter Clark describes inns as the “upper-class cousins” of alehouses. Inns were normally more respectable and spacious, while alehouses were generally (but not always) smaller. Alehouses normally only sold ale and beer, while inns were additionally permitted to sell wine and sack. Despite Clark’s distinctions, research by Jennifer Roberts-Smith suggests that the terms “Inn” and “Common Ale-House” were sometimes used interchangeably: the Red Lion in Norwich, for example, was licensed using both definitions in different years. Clark 96, 98, 102, 159; Roberts-Smith 114-15.

customary to serve the banquet in a separate location: either in a different room within the house, in the garden, in a banqueting house in the garden, or, sometimes, in a banqueting room on the roof (Wilson 13; Stead 115-134).

Medical doctrine also sought to eliminate cooking aromas from the main house. Because the early modern humoral body was considered to be a porous entity, the demarcation line between it and its environment was blurred. For this reason, Boorde stressed the importance of clean air: “Good ayre,” he told his readers, “dothe conserue the lyfe of man, it dothe comfort the brayne...ingendrynge and makynge good blood,” whereas “euyil and corrupte ayres dothe infectc the bloude, & dothe ingedre many corrupte humours, and doth putryfye the brayne, & doth corrupte the herte” (*Dyetary* A2v). In order to prevent “putryfye[d] ... brayne[s],” Boorde advised that “bake house[s] and brewe house[s] shulde be [built] a distaunce from the [main house] and from other buyldynge[s]” (*Dyetary* A4v). The risk of fire also prompted the nobility and gentry to build their kitchens “a distaunce” from their main houses, or at least from their great halls: “[s]ometimes [they were] completely detached, a building standing on its own; sometimes [they were] built on the end of the house and entered from a courtyard where goods could be delivered” (Henisch 97; Brears 173-201).<sup>31</sup>

By comparison, Berry’s floor plan of the Boar’s Heads shows that its kitchen was both an integral part of the inn *and* extremely close to the performance space (see Figure 3) (*The Playhouse* 50). Many city or town inns of this period are likely to have followed a

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<sup>31</sup> Henisch writes that, at first, during the medieval period, chimneys “were built with reckless bravado out of wood, but in the end caution prevailed. An early fourteenth-century ordinance of the city of London stipulated that all chimneys must be made of stone tile, or plaster....Kitchens continued to be built of wood throughout the [medieval] period, but householders who could afford it chose stone or brick as the safer materials.” Henisch 97.

similar pattern to facilitate the transfer of supplies from yard to kitchen and waste from kitchen to yard and beyond. Given the likely proximity of kitchens to yards, then, it would have been extremely difficult to prevent cooking aromas from seeping from one to the other. For those inns with playhouses in their yards, this transference must have created uniquely aromatic performance venues.

Picture removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 3. Herbert Berry's floor plan of the Boar's Head and its yard. The stage was erected in front of the "Ostery" and "Certayne Romes" (The Playhouse 50)

Not only were these inn kitchens close to their yards, but their catering operation would have been in full swing during performance times. During the second half of the sixteenth century, the Privy Council began to regulate the times of public performances. In 1569, "a series of orders" were issued, which required "that playing [in the City] should cease by 5 p.m., giving a two-hour window within which performances could take place" (Archer 403-4). The Privy Council reiterated this instruction in November 1584, insisting that "no playeing be in the dark, nor continue any such time but as any of the auditorie may

returne to their dwellings in London before sonne set, or at least before it be dark” (Chambers *ES* 4:302). When Lord Hunsdon sought permission from the Lord Mayor for his “nowe companie of players” to play at the Cross Keys during the winter of 1594-5, he attempted to placate the Mayor by assuring him that his players would “begin at two, & have don betweene fower and fiue” (Chambers *ES* 4:316). Performances in private dwellings, by comparison, were not regulated and could take place at any time of the day or night and in any part of the house that the host so desired. G.B. Harrison recorded in his journal that, on 15 February 1598, “Sir Gelly Merrick made a very great supper at Essex House....They had two plays which kept them up till one o’clock after midnight” (258).

From the point of view of performances in inn-yard playhouses, an important side effect of this performance curfew was to create an overlap between the time that public performances concluded and the time that Elizabethans took supper. Because early modern body rhythms were trained around a fairly rigid framework of consumption, most Elizabethans took supper between five and six o’clock in the evening (Henisch 21; Bulleyn Fol. xxxvii). Boorde instructed, for example, that a “naturall appetyde [was] to eate in due order and due tyme, after a digestion. An unnatural appetyde [was] to eate and drinke at all tymes without dewe order” (*Breviarie* 1:17). Civic control and corporeal control, then, not only brought performance time into line with supper-cooking time, but they also, when the performance occurred in an inn yard, caused drama and cooking to mingle in the same location. In fact, cooking aromas must have become a characteristic feature of inn-yard playing spaces.

The pamphlet *Maroccus Extaticus* alludes to this mingling. Despite the pamphlet’s tongue-in-cheek “promise” that it records a private conversation between Bankes and his

horse (Marocco), the performative nature of the conversation suggests that it is likely to be a record of the duo's act (or part thereof). Bankes warns Marocco not to speak "so loude" when he criticizes the behaviour of some landlords (property rather than inn) and he describes the conversation as a "lecture" (C2r, Dr). Clearly, the duo expected an audience of some sort and this is born out by the fact that the pamphlet is dedicated to "mine Host of the Belsauage, and all his honest Guests" (t.pag.). The conversation-performance concludes when Bankes says, "Tis almost supper time Marocco, I heare mine host call" (Dr). The pamphlet's narrators, John Dando and Harrie Runt, report that "O Marocco dyd lye him downe, and *Laurence Holden* [the inn's host] cald in his guest vnto a shoulder of mutton of the best in the market, piping hot from the spit" (Dv). Thus, the host and any "honest Guests" or "eaues-dropping knaues" watching the duo perform would have been assailed by the aroma of spit-roasting mutton throughout the performance and, even without Laurence Holden's call, they would have been subliminally prompted to partake of a post-performance supper at the inn.

### **Selling food and selling drama**

This brings us to the possibility that a mutual commercial backscratching arrangement may have existed between those who sold drama and those who sold food and drink at inn-yard venues. S.P. Cerasano and William Ingram (and others) emphasise the commercial motivation behind professional drama performed for the general public during this period, arguing that those involved in the entertainment industry primarily viewed it as a means of producing wealth (Ingram 16-40; Cerasano 380-395). The theatrical business and the hospitality trade were, and are, natural bedfellows and the potential for collaboration must have been particularly strong when inns were theatrical venues. In fact, some iconic

early modern actors had fingers in both industries: Edward Alleyn was the son of a London innkeeper (the family owned an inn in Bishopsgate) and Richard Tarlton was both famous comic and tavern keeper (Cerasano 394; Streitberger 353; Kathman, *Players* 418-9).

The financial advantage of combining the sale of food and drink with the sale of drama was evident to some theatrical entrepreneurs of the period. On the 10 January 1587, John Cholmley entered into a partnership agreement with Philip Henslowe to build and run the Rose playhouse. Cholmley undertook to bear his share of the maintenance costs and to pay Henslowe the huge sum of £816 divided into quarterly instalments. In return for this not inconsiderable investment, Cholmley would take half the profits earned from the land and the playhouse and would have the sole-selling rights for food and drink on the premises and at a “small house already in his tenure on the south of the plot” (Chambers *ES* 2: 406). Cholmley’s determination to establish a catering monopoly at the Rose demonstrates the potential profit offered by this side of the theatrical business. As Cook points out, the food and drink sold in early modern theatres “could easily cost more than the price of admission” (318).

The financial advantage of combining the two industries was also apparent to some innkeepers because it was evidently vital to the success of some inns. In an article on Norwich inns used by patronized players between 1583 and 1624, Jennifer Roberts-Smith has identified a correlation between an increase in restrictions on players performing in inns and a sharp decrease in business at some of these venues (136). This correlation between loss of players and loss of business cannot have been unique to Norwich inns.

A desire to establish (or maintain) a commercial relationship between his playing company and the keepers of key performance spaces, for the mutual profit of both parties,

may have encouraged Shakespeare not only to bring food onstage in the first place, but also to bring food onstage when he does in *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Titus Andronicus*.

Onstage eating in Shakespeare regardless of where it occurs in a play is actually quite rare.

As Peter Holland points out, “looking for food in Shakespeare as opposed to listening to food in the plays can be distinctly difficult. Packed as they are with references to food by the thousand, the plays largely resist showing us food, restricting the visibility of eating, the sight of the materials of consumption” (11). Yet, in both *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Titus Andronicus*, written during Shakespeare’s inn-yard playhouse period, food is conspicuous by its presence.

### **The inn-yard effect**

When playgoers who were anticipating their supper were tantalized by food properties onstage in a theatrical venue emitting an omnipresent and gradually increasing aroma of food cooking, there can be very little doubt that the physiological demands of their bodies would have been making themselves felt and heard: stomachs would have rumbled and saliva would have run. Humoral medicine understood saliva, or spittle, in terms of a “flumatike humour, bread in the kindly vaines of the tongue”; in cases of excess, however, it could be a sign of a “flumatik complexion” (Anglicus I4v). Saliva was also associated with the desire to eat. Descartes, for example, “observ’d that when we eat, or have a desire thereunto ... [saliva] comes to the mouth in ... abundance” (77-9). Despite the fact that Boorde equated bake-house aromas with slaughterhouse smells, other early moderns recognized that delicious smells triggered salivating desire. In *Mikrokosmographia*, Helkiah Crooke, for example, noted that some “odours” can “mooue pleasure” such as “the steame [that arises] from meate, which are pleasant to those that are hungry” (710). The

authors of *Maroccus Extaticus* take this idea a step further by satirising the notion, found in classical “fables” that human beings could live on food aromas alone. “If we should have gone into a Cooks shop in Fleet lane,” they say, “the smell of roast meat [would have] filled our bellies” without “emptying our purses” (Dando and Runt 3). Crooke’s contemporaries believed that the air was “the *Medium* of Smelling,” but that the “chiefe Organ” of smelling was in the brain (Crooke 711-13). Smells, then, were powerful things.

Although theories of salivation and olfaction appear to distance the responses of early modern playgoers from their modern counterparts, when we move from the theoretical to the physiological this distancing disappears.<sup>32</sup> As Michael Schoenfeldt points out, “[b]odies have changed little through history, even though the theories of their operations vary enormously across time and culture. We are all born, we eat, we defecate, we desire, we die” (6).

Smell, as Holly Dugan has recently pointed out, “is culturally and biologically central to human life, yet it often seems enigmatic ... [and] its role in the past remains a mystery, virtually ignored by historical scholarship” (2). Dugan argues that certain scents had the capacity to transform early modern spaces and figures: incense transformed churches into “spaces inhabited by the divine,” for example, and “the scent of the damask rose was an essential component of both Henry VIII’s and Elizabeth I’s performances of royal power” (17). Shakespeare seems to have recognised that the unique smellscape of inn-yard playhouses had the capacity to transform the reception of plays performed in these venues because he toys with the inn-yard effect in these two plays. Not only did he torment

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<sup>32</sup> For a useful summary of classical and early modern theories of olfaction see Dugan. Dugan 11-17.

playgoers by serving food onstage at suppertime, but he also linked the onstage and offstage focus of desire by staging inn-appropriate food properties: roast meat in *The Taming of the Shrew* and a meat pie in *Titus Andronicus*.<sup>33</sup> In both plays, Shakespeare interrogates ethical concerns (the ethics of shrew-taming and the ethics of cannibalism) within an interactive network of desire: a hungry shrew is taunted with roast mutton, an unrepentant murderer is taunted with a son pie, and hungry inn-yard playgoers were taunted with both.

### **Cooking up empathy in *The Taming of the Shrew***

In the first place, Shakespeare adapted aspects of his source, the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew*, to create an overlap between onstage and offstage food in *The Taming of the Shrew*.<sup>34</sup> In both plays, a servant torments Kate with “the very name of meat” (*Shr.* 4.3.32; *A Shrew* lines 937-66). In *A Shrew* the meat in question is “a peese of beeffe and mustard,” “a sheepes head and garlick,” and “a fat Capon” (938-61). Sander (Grumio’s counterpart) denies Kate the first because it is “too collerick” for a shrew; he denies her the second because it is too aromatic to be eaten discreetly; and he denies her the third

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<sup>33</sup>In a discussion about modern performances of *Macbeth* and *As You Like It*, Michael Dobson argues that “[c]ertain characteristic moods and effects in Shakespeare ... are achieved by deliberately bringing a play’s characters into the same mealtime as their spectators.” Dobson contends that light banquets work best in comedies and heavy feasts in tragedies. This is because modern playgoers’ come to the theatre *after* eating and, therefore, are likely to be “distractingly sickened [and become anxious and distressed] by the spectacle of [actors] eating ... heavy onstage meals.” Dobson 62-5

<sup>34</sup>The relationship between the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew* and Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew* is still subject to debate among critics, editors, and academics. As Barbara Hodgdon, *The Taming of the Shrew*’s most recent editor, points out, “[a]lthough the plays seem to know one another...the chain of that knowing remains intractable and cannot be precisely recovered” (8). Opinion has generally fallen into three main camps: *A Shrew* is the source for *The Shrew*, *The Shrew* is the source play and *A Shrew* a bad quarto copy, *A Shrew* is a memorial reconstruction of a performance of *The Shrew*. In 1987, Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor also put forward a revisionist theory. See Barbara Hodgdon’s introduction for a summary of the current position. The position taken in this chapter is that *The Taming of a Shrew* is the source for Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*. Hodgdon 1-131, esp. 7-38.

because it is “meate for a King” and, therefore, “too deere for them” (*A Shrew* 946-59). In his *Shrew* play, Shakespeare streamlines Sander’s menu to include only choler-inducing dishes: “a neat’s foot,” “a fat tripe finely broiled,” and “a piece of beef, and mustard” (4.3.17-23). This dramatic streamlining also works to overlap play-world food and inn-yard performance-venue food by removing “meate” specifically identified as being fit for a king from the menu. In addition, as Martha Carlin points out, by offering Kate a selection of “cheap dinner dishes,” Grumio is “parodying the behaviour of the host of an inn or a tavern describing the menu to a guest” (199).

Shakespeare also removes all mention of the “venson pastie” and “marchpaines” that Sander cannot fit in his “bellie” during an earlier scene (*A Shrew* 716-20). As we have seen in the introduction, marchpanes, or “marchpaines,” were key components of early modern banquets and Boorde describes venison as “a lordes dyshe” and “meat for greate men” and, as such, both foods would have been out of place on most inn menus (*Dyetary* F4r). When *The Taming of the Shrew* was performed in an inn-yard venue, these changes could only have enhanced the connection between onstage and offstage appetites.

Almost from the opening moments of *The Taming of the Shrew*, characters tease playgoers with allusions to meals and eating. The Lord’s joke to convince Sly that he is a Lord involves relocating him, redressing him, and tempting him with a “most delicious [offstage] banquet” (*Shr.* Ind. 1: 33-5). In addition, the Lord offers a meal to the players (which they take offstage in the buttery), and, in the inner-play, Bianca’s suitors agree to meet to “eat and drink [offstage] as friends” (*Shr.* Ind.1, 98-9; 1.2.275). While these frequent references to meals effortlessly catch the rhythms of what Joseph Candido describes as “a world already there,” they also constantly draw playgoers’ attention to food and eating (222).

Despite this culinary teasing, food does not actually arrive onstage until about two thirds of the way through the play. Petruccio draws attention to roast meat's arrival onstage with his well-known complaint, "What's this-Mutton?" (4.1.141). Bearing in mind the performance window permitted by the authorities, Petruccio's mutton arrived onstage at around four o'clock in the afternoon. At this time of day, in an inn-yard playhouse, preparations for supper were well under way. By the time that Petruccio prevents Kate from eating mutton, claiming that "Tis burnt, and so is all the meat," playgoers are well aware that his behaviour is part of his curing strategy (*Shr.* 4.1.142). Under normal circumstances, we would expect many an early modern playgoer to have supported Petruccio's shrew-curing burnt meat ploy. However, this support may have waned when playgoers were themselves hungry and, like Kate, were being taunted by the aroma of cooked food. Seduced by the inn's smellscape, an onstage-offstage desire for food may have nudged playgoers' sympathy away from Petruccio the shrew tamer and towards the hungry shrew. Empathy for Kate's hunger (although not necessarily her shrewish disposition) may have been urged upon the audience by their own "starueling" bodies (Moryson Rrr3r). In addition, a mutual hunger potentially aligned inn-yard playgoers of both sexes with Kate because, like her, Petruccio's antics were keeping them hungry and would continue to do so until the play concluded and they could consume their post-performance supper.

### **Slipping between onstage and offstage drinking**

Shakespeare not only initiated a culinary conversation between *The Taming of the Shrew* and inn-yard performance spaces, but he also created links between play and playing space through drinking and drunkenness. Clearly, both men and women watched plays in inn-yard playhouses-just as they did in the purpose-built theatres. However, respectable

women were not normally counted among the paying customers of common inns and alehouses. We should remember that the “great swarms” of prostitutes that Platter described haunting “taverns and playhouses” were swarming there to work and not for recreational purposes, as were alewives and any female cooks or serving staff that worked in these establishments (Platter 37). Clark argues that inns were, in fact, male-dominated social spaces, which functioned as “an alternative to, rather than an extension of, established family life” (Clark 132). Inn-yard playhouses were constructed, therefore, not only at the centre of catering establishments, but also at the centre of male social spaces.<sup>35</sup>

The proliferation of moralist treatises complaining about drunkenness demonstrates that excessive drinking was a significant social problem during this period. Some writers complained, unsurprisingly, that the problem was exacerbated by taverns and alehouses. In Phillip Stubbes’ *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583), for example, the character of Philo complains:

I say, ye ... [drunkenness] is a horrible vice & too too much vsed in Ali. Euery cūtre, citie, towne, villaged & other, hath abundāce of alehouses, tauerns & Innes, which are so fraughted with mault-wormes night & day, that you would wunder to se them. You shall haue them there sitting at y wine, and goodale all the day long, yea all the night too, peradventure a whole week

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<sup>35</sup> Despite this masculine centrality, one “striking fact” that has recently emerged is that three of the four City inns with playhouses in their yards were, as Kathman points out, “owned or leased by women during their time as playhouses. Margaret Craythorne owned the Bell Savage from 1568 until her death in 1591, Alice Layston owned the Cross Keys from 1571 until her death in 1590, and Joan [or Joanna] Harrison was the proprietor of the Bull from the death of her husband ... in 1584 to her own death in 1589.” In addition, Susan Browne Green Baskerville (the widow of players Robert Browne and Thomas Green) “was a shareholder” in the Boar’s Head and the Red Bull when they were converted to playhouses and Thomas Smythe, who “owned the Bell during its years as a playhouse,” had “gained control” of this inn “through his wife Alice, the daughter of [its] earlier owner.” Kathman, “Alice Layston” 144; Kathman, “London Inns” 67, 70.

together, so long as any money is left, swilling, gulling & carousing from one to an other, til neuer a one can speak a redy word ... how they stut and stāmer, stagger & reele too & fro, like madmen. (I3v)

In fact, Jack Jorgens, writing in 1977, seems both to acknowledge the inn-yard heritage of *The Taming of the Shrew* and to suggest that its reception is *still* aided by inebriation: he describes the play as one “not for a sober Monday morning, but for a drunken Saturday night” (67-78).

The association between inn-dwelling and excessive drinking opens up a dialogue between Shakespeare’s shrew-taming narrative and other shrew narratives of the period that were offered up as a defence for masculine drunkenness. Richard Younge, for example, claimed that those “that have curst and shrewish wives at homes, love to stray” to the “Taverne and Brothel-house” in order to cure their “sadnesse” (261). When performed at an inn-yard playhouse, *The Taming of the Shrew* opened a venue-specific conversation: a masculinist play spoke within a masculinist enclave and offered a dramatic representation of the very behaviour (female shrewishness) that many of the male playgoers may have used as a defence for their *own* anti-social behaviour (inn haunting and drunkenness).

#### **Cooking corpses in *Titus Andronicus***

Michael Dobson points out that “most writing to date about eating in Shakespeare seems to have overlooked” the “double nature of food in performance—as both a sign and as its real edible self, in both capacities functioning in a specially intimate relationship to the appetites of actors and of auditors” (63). When *Titus Andronicus* was performed in inn-yard venues, food’s capacity to create an appetitive bond between playgoers and the players they watched works on a far more complex level in this play than it does in *The Taming of*

*the Shrew*. Rather than creating temporary empathy for a shrew through a shared onstage-offstage hunger, Titus' pie had the potential to engage with the period's predilection for corpse therapy (Louise Noble connected the play with pharmacological cannibalism in 2003) in order to complicate desire with distaste.

Writing with a playhouse located at the heart of a catering establishment in mind, revenge in *Titus Andronicus* comes baked. Curiously, Shakespeare took great care to create a remarkably authentic pie to serve up as Titus' revenge vehicle. Pies were an ultra-familiar food and the epitome of Elizabethan domestic life: cookery books overflowed with recipes for them and, as we have seen, inns traditionally sold them. In a particularly unsettling way, Shakespeare juxtaposes realistic domestic cookery with gruesome cannibalism.

Firstly, Titus recites his recipe using an appropriate linguistic register:

Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust,

And with your blood and it I'll make a paste,

And of the paste a coffin I will rear,

.....

And in that paste let their vile heads be baked. (5.2.179-199)

Titus' repetitions of *and* accurately reflect the way that many of the period's recipes were composed. Thomas Dawson's recipe entitled "To bake chickens in a Cawdle," for example, instructed readers to "season [the chickens] with salt and pepper, *and* put in butter, *and* so let them bake, *and* when they be baked, boile a few barberries and proines, and currents, *and* take in a little white wine or vergious, *and* let it boil, *and* ..." so on [Italics mine] (*Good Husvifes levvel* 19).

Titus' pastry (or "paste") recipe is similarly quasi-authentic. *A Booke of Cookerie's* recipe was very similar: "Take fine flower, and lay it on a boord, & take a certaine of yolkes of Egges as your quantitie of flower is, then take a certaine of Butter and water, and boil thē together ... and this paste is good to raise all maner of Coffins"(17).<sup>36</sup> Titus, appropriately, substitutes ground bone for "fine flower." Late medieval milling "produced a coarse, less absorbent flour than today" and this coarse flour may well have resembled home-ground bone in appearance—the colour, at least, would have been similar (Stone 14). Titus' substitution of blood for "yolkes of Egges" is also logical. As Thomas Muffett demonstrated, foods were divided into five groups: meats, fish, fruits, field crops and bread, and dairy products; dairy products were subdivided into three smaller groups: milk; cream, curds, cheese, and whey; and eggs and blood (Muffett 8-9). To contemporary audiences, therefore, Titus' substitution of blood for eggs would have seemed entirely appropriate because they both belonged to the same small food group.

Even Titus' plan to "make two pasties of [Chiron's and Demetrius'] shameful heads" is grounded in everyday cookery (*Tit.* 5.2.188). John Murrell's recipe for "Vmble pye" (umbles were guts, particularly deer guts), suggested that "for want of Vmbles" the cook should use "a Lambes heade and Purtenance" (the head, heart, lights, liver, and windpipe of a sheep, all hanging together) (22). Head pie, albeit "Lambes heade" pie, would not, then, have been out of place on Elizabethan tables, or in Elizabethan inns. In addition, the *OED* gives the root of humble from the Latin *humilis* low and *humus* the ground. Shakespeare, thus, manipulates a link between Titus' head pie and "Vmble pye" in order to emphasize the

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<sup>36</sup> Until the end of the sixteenth century, meat and fruit were cooked in pastry crusts called coffins; the pastry functioned as a sealant and was not eaten. From the beginning of the seventeenth century, edible short crust pastry and puff pastry began to replace their inedible predecessor.

scale of Chiron's and Demetrius' reduction. Titus not only humbles Tamora's sons by baking them in a lowly pie, but he also grinds their bones "to dust" and to "powder small" and so reduces them to *humus* or dust of the earth.

Finally, when Tamora eats the son pie, Titus brags that she eats it "daintily" (5.3.60). The *OED* describes *dainty* as "delicately small and pretty ... fastidious, typically concerning food." Although Shakespeare is certainly being ironic, the use of *dainty* also implies that Tamora eats fastidiously and a fastidious eater is unlikely to eat daintily from a messy or grotesque pie. This suggests that Titus' pie, on Shakespeare's stage at least, also looked authentic. Admittedly, wooded pies were sometimes used as stage properties. However, the dramatic crescendo in this scene requires that playgoers see Tamora actually consume part of the son pie, rather than watch her pretend to eat from an artificial one. Titus does, after all, draw attention to the act of consumption: "Why, there they are, both bakéd in this pie,/Whereof their mother daintily hath fed/Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred" (5.3.59-61). In fact, in inn-yard venues, it is quite possible that Tamora's pie had been baked in the inn's own kitchen and it would, therefore, have been identical to the suppertime pies that playgoers were salivating for. On the one hand, then, Shakespeare offers a large dose of culinary realism; on the other, he offers a large measure of explicit cannibalism.

Titus Andronicus first appears onstage as part of a formal procession, which is made up of his surviving sons, his prisoners, "*and others as many as can be*" (*Tit.* 1.1.69). Included in the procession is the body of one of his dead sons carried in a coffin "*covered with black*" (*Tit.* 1.1.69). This impressive entry clearly counterbalances the later impressive coffin-based (or piecrust-based) moment of the play: Titus's feast. At the beginning of the play, the substantial personal losses that Titus has stoically sustained in battles fought for Rome are signified by a single coffin draped in black. By the climax of the play, Titus' less than stoic

desire for revenge against the substantial losses inflicted upon him and his family by Rome's new Emperor and Empress are also signified by a single coffin—although this time it is of the pastry variety. Just as Titus' tomb is the "sacred receptacle of [his] joys," so his pie becomes the "sacred receptacle" of Tamara's joys; while Titus' tomb is the "Sweet cell of virtue and nobility," however, his pie becomes the "Sweet cell" of "Rapine and Murder" (*Tit.* 1.1.92-3, 5.2.83).

Shakespeare signals the play's involvement with dismemberment from its opening moments; he begins with the synecdochical variety and moves to the physical: a headless Rome, for example, is later balanced against two pairs of headless sons (1.1.186, 3.1.325, 5.2.188). Elizabethans would not necessarily have been disturbed by this; they were used to butchered bodies decorating their buildings, streets, and stages. Thomas Platter recorded that he saw the skulls of over thirty people "stuck on tall stakes" on the top of one tower in 1599, and, on the stage, Thomas Kyd's spectacular bloodbath *The Spanish Tragedy* long remained one of the period's most popular plays (it was still being performed in 1597) (Platter 13; Harrison, *Second Elizabethan Journal* 213). Perhaps because many Elizabethans had become desensitized to day-to-day butchery, Shakespeare seems to have felt the need to out-Kyd Kyd for horror and gore. Although both plays climax in shocking multiple murders, the two playwrights approach the moment differently: Kyd deposits his horror all over the stage; Shakespeare, more subtly, bakes his in a pie.

However, the pie that Titus bakes to cure his cholera and revenge lust also harvests ingredients from beyond the bodies of Tamora's sons. Before Titus prepares and cooks Chiron and Demetrius, he lists a catalogue of their crimes:

You killed [Lavinia's] husband, and for that vile fault

Two of her brothers were condemned to death.

My hand cut off and made a merry jest,

Both her sweet hands, her tongue, and that more dear

Than hands or tongue, her spotless chastity. (5.2.171-5)

Titus begins his recipe for son pie just two lines later. Butchered body parts, thus, slip between charge sheet and recipe. The bones that Titus “grind[s] to dust” to make a paste for his pie hark back to Alarbus’ limbs that Lucius lopped off and burned “on the sacrificing fire” (5.2.185, 1.1.143-5). The blood that Titus mixes with ground bone to make his paste reminds playgoers of the “crimson river of warm blood” that rose and fell between Lavinia’s “rosèd lips” following her rape and mutilation by Chiron and Demetrius (5.2.186, 2.4.22-4). The two “shameful heads” that Titus bakes in his pie clearly counterbalance the heads of Martius and Quintus that the Emperor cut off to make “sport” of Titus’ grief (5.2.188, 3.1.233-9). Titus’ pie, therefore, becomes a receptacle for past and present atrocities as justice moves out of the Senate and into the kitchen—a place where cannibalism was actually quite at home in Shakespeare’s day.

At the time that Shakespeare was writing, cooking and curing overlapped because, as we have seen in the introduction, humoral medicine understood food to function both as itself and as medicine. It should not surprise us, therefore, that kitchens were multi-purpose spaces in which cook-*cum*-physicians both catered for their households and cured their ills.<sup>37</sup> Boorde described “a good coke” as “halfe a phisicion” because “the chefe phisicke (the counceil of a phisicion except) dothe come from the kytchyn, wherefore the phisicion and

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<sup>37</sup> Wendy Wall has written brilliantly on this slippage. Wall ch.6.

the coke ... must consult togyther for the preparacion of meate for sicke men" (*Dyetary* G1v).

Kitchen-based cures "for sicke men" sometimes assumed a macabre quality. Taking their lead from Galen, who regarded some parts of the human body as medicine, early moderns practiced pharmacological cannibalism. Galen admitted "that human bones [taken, unbeknown to the patient, in a drink] may have a curative effect" on epilepsy and arthritis, so early moderns commonly prescribed cranium powder to treat epilepsy (Temkin 23). In 1580, Timothy Bright offered examples of "home-grown" remedies that included a cure for the "falling sickness" (or epilepsy) with ingredients such as "Peonie roote," "fine leaved grasse," and the "scalpe of a Man" (37). In 1583, Philip Barrough's remedy included "the pouder of the skull of a man burned" (32). In 1600, Charles Estinne's remedy called for "the skull of man, and more specially of that part of the skull which is nearest vnto the seame of the crowne" (42). And in 1632, Gualtherus Bruele went as far as gendering his ingredients: he recommended "the skull of a man" to treat a woman, and the skull of a woman to treat a man (62). Cranium powder was not the sole ingredient harvested from the human corpse, though, remedies also called for fat and mummy (and from live bodies, early moderns used blood and urine in their remedies). As Louise Noble points out, the "fact that early modern Europeans ate each other for therapeutic purposes is inarguable....English pharmacopoeia ... are saturated with prescriptions and recipes incorporating a wide range of human body parts and excretions" (681). Humoralists established a therapeutic model that subscribed "to the pharmacological superiority of the human body, both living and dead, and valorize[d] medicinal cannibalism—the ingestion of medically-prepared human flesh, as well as blood, fat, bone, and bodily excretions for therapeutic purposes" (Noble 677).

The astonishing absence of respect for or sentiment over the human corpse is apparent in the way that remedies made no taxonomic distinction between human and non-human ingredients and in the way that writers, such as Bright, included human body parts in “home-grown” remedies. Not only did human, animal, and vegetable ingredients mingle in recipes, but they also mingled together in the cook’s kitchen routine. W. Lovell (1661) gave a recipe to treat “the plague in the guts of man” that included instructions on how to produce cranium powder: “Take the Skul of a man or woman, wash it clean, then dry it in the Oven, after your bread is drawn, beat it to powder, and boill it in posset-drink” (3). Over twenty years later, in 1683, Hannah Woolley reproduced this recipe in *The Complete Servant-Maid* (151). Both Lovell and Woolley pass briskly over the instruction to wash their human skulls, but one wonders what exactly it was that cooks were being advised to wash off. Were they removing soil from a recently dug up but decomposed skull, or skin and brain matter from a rather less decomposed head? Drying washed human skulls in bread ovens not only situates cannibalism at the heart of English households, but it also dresses it in a guise of domestic normality—bread was, after all, the staple food of all households at this time. As Wendy Wall points out, the “very fact that recipes calling for human skulls and mummia could be printed alongside conventional salves suggests how customary it was to think of body parts in the kitchen” (197).

For playwrights such as Jonson, the propensity of his fellow human beings to consume, utterly without sentiment, parts of other human beings in therapeutic cures was a topic ripe for satire. In *Volpone*, the titular character (disguised as a mountebank) touts an oil that he claims contains “the powder that made Venus a goddess ... kept her perpetually young, cleared her wrinkles, firmed her gums, filled her skin, [and] coloured her hair”

(2.2.223-5). Volpone's "most sovereign and approved remedy," which also cures "cramps, convulsions, paralyses, epilepsies, *tremor cordial*, retired nerves, ill vapors of the spleen, stopping of the liver, the stone, the strangury ... easeth the torsion of the small guts; and cures *melancholia hypocondriaca*," contains "some quantity of human fat, for the conglutination, which [he] buy[s] of the anatomist" (2.2.99-104, 144-7). Shakespeare's response to the sovereign cure (or corpse therapy) moves considerably beyond satire.

Titus' pie engages with and reacts against the casual (mis)use of the human body in contemporary "home-grown" remedies (Bright 37). Titus' ingredients, which he laboriously emphasises through repetition, categorically draw attention to the human being behind the cranium that was baked and powdered and the blood that was drawn—a relationship that was erased from cookery books and medical texts. In the first instance, Titus' two "Hark[s]" demand the attention of ingredients and playgoers alike. The cook then lingers over the way that he means to prepare and cook his human pie: twice, he tells his ingredients that he will "grind their bones to dust"; twice, he tells them he will make a paste from their blood and powdered bones; twice, he warns them he will cut their throats (5.2.179-199). Then, as if Shakespeare is determined to prove that Titus is not bluffing, the general-*cum*-cook cuts the throats of his prisoners-*cum*-ingredients onstage. There is no doubt that Titus' repetitions extend the torture for Chiron and Demetrius, but they also impact upon the audience. As Titus lingered over his recipe, inn kitchens would have been preparing supper for playgoers. How much more gruesome would Titus' pie seem if the audience could smell the aroma of meat roasting and pastry baking as he recited his recipe? Even playgoers who were blasé about consuming mummy might have reconsidered the implications of consuming human body parts at such a moment. An inn-yard venue would have offered a unique location for a

playwright to attempt to re-sensitise desensitised playgoers to the abhorrent nature of corpse therapy.

Not content with this level of sensory bombardment, however, Shakespeare continues to manipulate the minds and bodies of his playgoers during the short scene (involving Aaron, Lucius, Marcus, and the Goths) that plays while Titus is offstage baking his pie (*Tit.* 5.3.1-15). The playwright uses the present-while-absent, or unseen but smelt, nature of Titus' cooking to tease the audience with references to eating and body parts during this short scene. Lucius describes the captured Aaron as a "ravenous tiger" and instructs that he "receive no sust'nance" (*Tit.* 5.3.5-6). In addition, Aaron reduces himself to body parts (much like the body parts cooking in Titus' pie); he says, "Some devil whisper curses in my *ear* / And prompt me, that my *tongue* may utter forth,/The venomous malice of my swelling *heart* [italics mine]" (*Tit.* 5.3.11-13). All the while, cooking aromas would have been tormenting the audience. When faced with this level of sensory and linguistic stimulation, how would inn-yard playgoers have felt when Tamora and the Emperor arrive onstage, just moments later, to feast on the body part pie?

As the director Samuel West points out, "there [is] something inescapably real about the business of eating [onstage], something that involves an actor's whole body....It can be insolently over-intimate to eat in public ... the imagined flavour and texture that comes with it, is an immediate sensual event that happens not just in the play but in the present time of the audience" (72). It is quite possible that Shakespeare recognised that serving food onstage in any venue created a bond between the appetites of players and playgoers, but in venues suffused in cooking aromas this sensual bond was amplified.

Shakespeare locates his cook at the centre of kitchen-based practices that meshed cookery, medicine, and cannibalism. When the play was performed in an inn-yard venue, Titus would have prepared, baked, and served his pie in an arena drenched in cooking aromas seeping out from the inn's own kitchen. In any performance venue, Titus' line "I'll play the cook" would have entered into a dialogue with the period's intermingling views on cooking and curing; however, these allusions must have resonated particularly strongly in venues that opened directly onto kitchen spaces (5.2.203).

Titus creates his pie wearing his cook's hat, "I'll play the cook," as a dish to serve to the Emperor and Empress at his banquet, "Will't please you eat?" But he serves it as a "cooke" who is "halfe a phisicion" who has prepared a remedy, which includes "the flesh that [Tamora] herself hath bred," in order to cure both her evil ways and *his* revenge lust (Boorde, *Dyetary* G1v; *Tit.* 5.3.61). Curiously, though, Titus is not the only character to "play the cook" in the play (5.2.203). When Aaron brags to Lucius that Lavinia "was washed and cut and trimmed" by Chiron and Demetrius, he (like Titus) reduces an opponent's child to the status of a cookery ingredient, and (like Titus) he lapses into the linguistic register of a cook with his repetitions of "and" (5.1.95). Viewed in this light, Titus' revenge equates to a macabre form of talion justice: not only does he take a life for a life, but he also takes an ingredient for an ingredient.

Because medical practitioners and writers of the period were urging the casual use of human body parts, it is quite possible, even quite likely, that early modern playgoers were less horrified by Titus' pie than modern playgoers normally are. However, as supertime approached, innate desire for food would have motivated playgoers' bodies to salivate for Titus' pie, while regulating principles of morality may have complicated this

response with feeling of abhorrence. Watching Tamora eat the son pie, playgoers could have physically experienced their society's cannibalism paradox: salivating for and desiring the pie to cure their hunger while simultaneously repulsed by its all-too-human contents. Moreover, for those playgoers who stayed to eat a post-performance supper at the inn, the paradox may have lingered long after the play had finished.

The Smellscapes of inn-yard playhouses offered dramatists performance venues that lent themselves to a multisensory form of theatre. In the two plays discussed here, Shakespeare established a synergy between culinary triggers and dramatic action with a view, I suggest, to evoking surprising and site-specific responses in his audiences.

## Chapter 2

### Cooking Fires, Martyr Fires, and Transubstantiating Gingerbread in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*

Ben Jonson's cook-cum-innkeeper, Ursula, in *Bartholomew Fair* (the sweating and, in her own words, "plain plump soft wench o' the suburbs") has been the focus of a significant amount of critical attention (2.5.75-6). There is, predictably, very little consensus among critics on how we should read this inn-keeping, fair-dwelling cook. To Leah S. Marcus, Ursula is bear-like: she describes her as a "gargantuan brawling 'enormity' at the heart of [the fair]" with a name that signifies "*little bear* [and who] ... is forever being baited by the other characters" (202). To Jackson Cope, Ursula represents *Ate* the Pagan goddess of discord, mischief, and folly because she is, he contends, "the very champion of discord, of the lust, theft, fighting, and litigations which dominate a legalistic world gone berserk" (143). With his focus on the burning scene, at the beginning of which Ursula emerges from her booth "*with a firebrand*," Cope identifies parallels with contemporary woodcuts of the goddess *Ate* that depict her "carrying a firebrand in one hand, legal papers in the other, and with her feet encircled by clouds" (2.5.54; Cope 144). This interesting idea is, however, challenged by Leo

Salingar, who points out that “the first concern [Ursula] voices is not fighting but custom, and it is clearly the gentlemen who begin the verbal aggression” (147). Joel H. Kaplan, while not necessarily dismissing Cope’s idea of Ursula as a Pagan goddess, identifies her also with devilry. Drawing on the traditional association between cooks’ fires and hell’s fires, which we will return to later in this chapter, Kaplan contends that the pig woman who sweats out her existence “in a booth to which ‘Hell’s a kind of cold cellar’ has something of the infernal about her” (144). James E. Robinson, on the other hand, reads the play through “the symbolism of vapors that pervades the play’s imagery, characterization, and action” and describes Ursula as “all bilious humors and vapors, conjured in the one dimension of the lower level of human nature—a pitiful, loveable creature” (66, 71).

Many critics interpret the play in general and Ursula in particular through Bakhtin’s theory of the carnivalesque and the grotesque body. Kathleen Rowe contends that Ursula stands “for the abundance of the fair, and the world itself, [she] embodies the energy and vitality that can be attached to the ‘gross’ unruly woman” (40). This idea is epitomised in Peter Stallybrass and Allon White’s description of the pig woman as “the celebrant of the open orifice: her pores are open as is her mouth when she roars out for a ‘bottle of ale to quench me’ or for her pipe to suck or when she spits forth a mouth-filled oath” (64). On the other hand, Jonathan Haynes suggests that *Bartholomew Fair* contains both carnivalesque and anti-carnivalesque elements. He points out that hierarchy of rank is solidified in the play, rather than suspended as one would expect in Bakhtin’s festive marketplace: “More or less from the moment we meet [Quarlous, Winwife, and Grace Wellborn] ... we assume that the business of the comedy will be to confirm and secure them in their social position” (Haynes, *Festivity* 652).

Rachel Leah Greenberg contends that Jonson uses inflated “stereotypes of the female body to the point of caricature” and employs “carnavalesque imagery” to “mask women’s labour by grossly naturalizing their bodies’ activities and functions” and by “recoding the surplus ... that women generate as biological and sexual excess” (v-vi). Natasha Korda also focuses on female labour in the play, but interprets Ursula’s booth as “a site of ... sexual and commercial adulteration” (196). Korda also contends that the “insubstantial wares of [the] market women are exemplified by the froth and smoke of the ale and tobacco on sale at Ursula’s booth” (Korda 196). To Gail Kern Paster, on the other hand, Ursula’s goods are far from “insubstantial,” so much so that she views Ursula’s booth as “the central locus of desire in the fair” (37).

In addition, as some critics have pointed out, the play engages with the period’s oft-used trope identifying women as consumers of men. Don K. Hedrick discusses this in terms of cannibalism and identifies “a number of [cannibalistic] puns and offhand remarks, such as ... Ursula’s threat to roast Mooncalf like one of her pigs at the Fair” (233). Huey-Ling Lee suggests that cannibalistic imagery in the play works both ways and contends that in “the wildest fantasy of these middle-class men, the ‘juicy and wholesome’ (2.5.78) Ursula is metamorphosed into a cannibalistic ogress who, while inviting others to feed on her, threatens to cook up her customers” (267).

Rather than discussing Ursula as a bear, a goddess, an open orifice, a cannibalistic ogress, or a female caricature, this chapter will show that Jonson uses Ursula’s cooking fire, her burning, and Joan Trash’s gingerbread to interrogate martyr burnings and the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Ursula’s fire, which I suggest may have been materially present onstage, had the potential to open a symbolic window between Jonson’s Smithfield

and the historic Smithfield where martyrs had been burned to death for over two-hundred years. Anne Askew suffered this fate in 1546 for refusing to accept the doctrine of transubstantiation and Jonson engages with her narrative—which she wrote in prison and which Johan Bale acquired, edited, and printed—and with her theological position in order to create a dark underbelly to his superficially festive play.

### **Staging pyro-properties**

The tradition of staging fire dates back, at least, to medieval Corpus Christi plays. The account books for the Coventry cycle plays contain entries such as “Hell-mouth-a fire kept at it,” “payd for keypyng of fyer at hell-mothe iiii d,” “a link to set the world on fire,” and “payd for setting the world of fyer v d, payd for keypyng fyre” (Craig 99, 101, 102). Thus, David Mills speculates that the hell of Chester Cooks’ *The Harrowing of Hell* would have included “a dungeon of smoke, stench, and darkness” (302). Fireworks were also used as stage properties. In *The Smell of Macbeth*, Jonathan Gil Harris writes that as “gunpowder manufacturing technologies became widespread in England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, theatrical performances increasingly resorted to cheap fireworks as a foul-scented stage effect in order to conjure up the illusion of the satanic” (476).

We also have abundant evidence that fire continued to function as a property on the early modern professional stage. Dessen and Thomson’s *Dictionary of Stage Directions* lists a significant number of plays printed between 1580 and 1642 with stage directions that call for “fire,” “flame,” “burn,” “burning,” “smoke,” “brand” (firebrand), “torch,” or “torches” (93, 39, 204). Nevertheless, because Dessen and Thompson’s research parameters do not include directions embedded in dialogue, their substantial list is not exhaustive. For

example, they do not include Bartholomew Cokes' "by that fire, I have lost all i' the Fair" (5.3.26-7).

Some of the effects created by early modern pyro-properties must have been elaborate and impressive. Robert Greene seems to have had a particular predilection for this type of property. In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, stage directions call for a tree to appear "with [a] dragon shooting fire" (sc. 9.83). In *The Comicall Historie of Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, stage directions call for a "brazen Head [to be] set in the middle of the place behind the Stage, out of the which, cast flames of fire" and, just four lines later, "flames of fire" are once again cast forth from "the brazen Head" (F2r). Greene was certainly not the only playwright interested in fire, however. In Thomas Middleton's *No Wit/Help like a Woman's*, a masque is staged that requires "A thing like a globe" to open and flash "out fire" (Sc. 9. 62). Even the sceptical Philip Sidney offers backhanded evidence that monsters breathed fire on early modern public stages. Sidney condemned dramatists of his period for disregarding the classical unities and for unrealistic sets. He complained:

Now ye shal haue three Ladies, walke to gather flowers, & then wee must beleeue the stage to be a Garden. By & by, we heare newes of shipwracke in the same place, and then wee are to blame, if we accept it not for a Rock.

Vpon the backe of that, comes out a hidious Monster, with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders, are bounde to take it for a Caue. VVhile in the meane-time, two Armies flye in, represented with foure swords and bucklers, & then what harde heart will not receiue it for a pitched fielde?

(Kr)

While a mime of flower gathering had to be "beleue[d]," imaginary shipwrecks had to be "accept[ed]," and token soldiers had to be "receiue[d]" as "two Armies," "hidious" monsters "with fire and smoke" actually appeared onstage—even if these "Monsters" did have to double as "a Caue" later on, presumably after their "fire and smoke" had been extinguished.

Quite how the theatrical community created these effects, however, is not clear. As Dessen and Thomson admit, directions calling for flaming properties "are often very descriptive but do not indicate exactly what is meant or how the effects were achieved"(92). Despite the absence of technical information, Dessen contends that playwrights and players of this period were "prepared to ... take on what (given the available resources) would appear to be daunting scenes or effects, including moments involving fire and water" (Dessen, Thomas Heywood 50-1).<sup>38</sup>

When this weight of evidence for flaming properties is considered alongside the number of times that fire or smoke are mentioned in *Bartholomew Fair* (admittedly, some references to smoke refer to tobacco smoke), it seems quite likely that Ursula's cooking fire was materially present on the Hope's stage during early performances of the play. When compared to shooting, casting, or flashing flames, staging Ursula's cooking fire would have been a relatively straightforward affair—a simple brazier would have sufficed—and, after all, Jonson does bring fire onstage in another of Ursula's scenes: when she emerges from her

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<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, the risks of staging pyro-properties in wooden playhouses must have been particularly apparent to the theatrical community in 1613. On 29 June of that year, the first Globe burnt down when a small cannon fired a salute during a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* (Wickham 494-5). In fact, the second Globe, which stood just one hundred and fifty yards away from the Hope, had been completed just months before Lady Elizabeth's Men performed *Bartholomew Fair* at the Hope (Berry, *Playhouses* 607). It is possible, perhaps even likely, that the Globe's destruction reduced the attraction of pyro-properties for early modern playwrights. Evidence from Dessen and Thomson suggests that although fire continued to be staged until, at least, the closure of the theatres in 1642, the frequency of its use reduced after 1614. Dessen and Thomson 92-3, 204, 233-4, 268-284.

booth “with a firebrand”(2.5.54). Fire would certainly have enhanced the realism that Jonson was aiming to achieve in this play-world; not only does he bring onstage a rich selection of fairground characters, but he also calls for a significant number of properties: “probably ... more ... than any other contemporary play,” suggests Keith Sturgess (180). As Ursula’s fire crackled, spat, and smoked in Jonson’s replica of Smithfield, it would have offered a powerful and symbolic link to the historic fair’s cooking fires and to Smithfield’s martyr fires—which had burnt there until 1611.

The presence of fire onstage in this play is something that Eugene M. Waith takes for granted in a discussion about the staging of *Bartholomew Fair*. Waith points out that as a stage property “Ursula’s booth ... must obviously have [had] both a front and a back part, separated in some way—presumably by a curtain. From the back part she emerges, sweating profusely, when we first see her (II.ii. 42). There she [would have] had her fire for roasting pigs” (186). If this booth had been constructed as a “free-standing structure” and positioned “a few feet downstage from the central entrance” to the tiring house, posits Waith, then “this arrangement would have [had] the advantage of bringing the action in the front of the booth closer to most of the audience, and of allowing occasional glimpses of the smoke from Ursula’s fire, to which there are several allusions” in the play (Waith 187-8).

One of the “several allusions” to Ursula’s fire and smoke is made by Bartholomew Cokes. He arrives at the puppet booth having been relieved of his gingerbread, his hobby horses, his two purses, his sword, his hat, his cloak, and “Mistress Grace’s handkercher” (3.6.122-26, 2.6.53-141, 3.5.140-80, 4.2.31-47). It is an ironic condemnation of his appalling judgment that, while describing his misfortunes to Littlewit, he swears on Ursula’s fire as if he regards it as an icon of truth and justice: he says, “as I am an honest man, and by that

fire; I have lost all i' the Fair, and all my acquaintance too" (5.3.26-7). His "that" clearly suggests that Ursula's fire was visible onstage.

The smoke from Ursula's fire also draws comments from fair goers. Busy draws attention to the aroma from Ursula's cooking fire when he sniffs out the scent of roast pig "*like a hound*" and, while condemning the perils of tobacco smoking, Justice Overdo points out the effects of, possibly the presence of, the smoke seeping from Ursula's tent: "the lungs of the tobacconist are rotted, the liver spotted, the brain smoked like the backside of the pig-woman's booth here," he complains (3.2.73; 2.6.39-41). In fact, Overdo's description of the black smoke seeping from the "backside" of Ursula's booth, which turns both booth and cook as "black as her pan," creates a slippage between booth, fire, and cook that transforms Ursula's cooking smoke into a semi-corporeal excretion (2.6.39-42).

At the heart of Jonson's version of Bartholomew Fair, then, stood not only the fair's "corpulent, tobacco-smoking, sweating, swindling seller of ale and roast pig" in her den of iniquity-*cum*-tavern, but also a flaming property wafting smoke and fumes across the play-world (and, potentially, across the audience's world) and opening a window between Jonson's Smithfield and its historic ash-strewn counterpart (Greenberg v).

Fire in Jonson's play-world also draws on the tradition that associated cooks and their fires with hell and its fires. Busy, for example, warns Knockem that "the fleshly woman which you call Ursula is above all to be avoided, having the marks upon her of the three enemies of man the world, as being in the Fair; the devil, as being in the fire; and the flesh, as being herself" (3.6.31-5). Desire for her roast pig, which is a product of Ursula's fire, is equated, therefore, with a devilish temptation. Thus, the hypocrite Dame Purecraft warns Win against her proclaimed desire for roast pig: "O! Resist it, Win-the-Fight, it is the

Tempter, the wicked Tempter; you may know it by the fleshy motion of pig. Be strong against it, and its foul temptations ... and pray against its carnal provocations, good child, sweet child, pray" (1.6.13-17).

### **Immoral inn-keeping cooks**

When Jonson paints Ursula as an immoral inn-keeping cook, he is drawing on a tradition found in medieval Corpus Christi drama.<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, "very few" of the play-texts from these cycle plays have survived because once the country shifted away from Catholicism, in which this drama was embedded, Corpus Christi drama was first opposed and then banned (Mills xiii). Early copies of the Chester Corpus Christi plays are extant, however, and they include "The Harrowing of Hell" play, which Chester's Cooks and Innkeepers produced and performed (Mills 302-3). The central scene of this play is, as David Mills points out, set in "hell itself with its great gates, a dungeon of smoke, stench and darkness over which Satan presides, sitting on his throne" (302). In a manuscript that "seems to belong to a period in 1533 when Chester's mayor, Henry Gee, re-enforced the laws controlling the quality and sale of alcohol in the city," the play concluded with a "comic coda" that changed its tone (Mills 303). In this coda, an alewife enters the play's dark and smoky hell to be punished for defrauding her customers. The alewife admits that

Sometime I was a taverner,  
a gentle gossip and a tapster,  
of wine and ale a trusty brewer,

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<sup>39</sup> Corpus Christi cycles surveyed the spiritual history of mankind, from its creation to its doom. Rather than referring to these plays as mystery cycles, the "Middle Ages most frequently referred to this kind of drama as a 'Corpus Christi Play.'" They were normally performed on the Feast of Corpus Christi, which fell on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday—"which, since it relates to the moveable feast of Easter, fell within a range of dates from 23 May to 24 June." Mills xi.

which woe hath me wrought.  
 Of cans I kept no true measure.  
 My cups I sold at my pleasure,  
 deceiving many a creature.  
 Tho my ale were nought

And when I was a brewer long,  
 with hops I made my ale strong;  
 ashes and herbs I blend among  
 and marred so good malt.

.....

Taverners, tapsters of this city  
 shall be promoted here with me  
 for breaking statutes of this country,  
 hurting the common weal,  
 with all tippers-tappers that are cunning,  
 mis-spending much malt, brewing so thin,  
 selling small cups money to win,  
 against all truth to deal. (Mills 313-4)

This comic coda seems to have survived beyond the demise of Corpus Christi plays. Even in 1575, by which time Protestant opposition to these plays had made itself felt, “popular” episodes and figures from Chester’s Corpus Christi plays—which included “the shepherds on

stilts,” “the devil in his feathers,” and “the ale-wife” from “The Harrowing of Hell”—were incorporated into Chester’s “civic secular carnival” held at midsummer (Mills xvi).<sup>40</sup>

Clearly, Jonson’s inn-keeping cook has much in common with Chester’s damned alewife and sometime “[t]averner.”<sup>41</sup> The alewife mixes in “ashes and herbs” to her malt; Ursula dilutes her tobacco with “coltsfoot” (2.2.86-8). The alewife “kept no true measure” of her “cans”; Ursula serves cans of beer frothed “well i’ the filling” and bottles of ale well jogged “o’ the buttock”(2.2.92-3). Ursula also instructs Mooncalf to drink enough so that he will “misreckon the [bill] better, and be less ashamed on’t” and to pretend to be “ever busy” so that he can, by “mis-take” remove “bottles and cans in haste before they be half drunk off” (2.2.94-7). If this ruse is spotted, he must “never hear anybody call ... till [he] ha’ brought fresh, and [is therefore] able to foreswear ‘em” (2.2.98-9). The alewife sells her “cups” “at [her] pleasure” (or prices them as she chooses); Ursula’s prices are similarly customer-specific and subject to sudden spurts of inflation: “Five shillings a pig is my price, at least,” she says, “if it be a sow-pig, sixpence more; if [the customer is] a great-bellied wife, and long for’t, sixpence more for that” (2.2.103-5). The Chester play concludes with the third devil welcoming the alewife to hell:

Welcome, dear darling, to endless bale!

Using cards, dice and cups small,

with many false oaths, to sell thy ale-

now thou shall have a feast! (Mills 315)

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<sup>40</sup> The fact that the “ale-wife” from “The Harrowing of Hell” had become a “popular” episode by 1575 suggests that the 1533 comic coda was repeated in subsequent versions of the play.

<sup>41</sup> Jonathan Haynes cites the influence that medieval morality plays (allegories in which personified virtues and vices struggle for the soul of Man) had on Jonson’s writing. He argues that “the kernel from which Jonson’s realism grew, or the node around which its elements began to crystallize, is the alehouse or tavern scene, whose roots go back to the late medieval morality play.” Haynes, *Origins* 13

Overdo's mission to stamp out the "yearly enormities" of the fair in general and of Ursula's tent in particular, demonstrates that statute-breaking innkeepers and alewives remained a problem for the authorities some eighty years later (2.1.1-36). It is clear that the "cunning" practiced by Ursula in her tavern-booth will earn her, like Chester's alewife, "endless bale" in the next life.

The connection between Ursula's cooking fire, her profession, and the smoky hell of Corpus Christi plays may have been emphasised by the staging of *Bartholomew Fair*. R. B. Parker envisions the Hope stage set out with two booths, one on either side of the stage, with the stocks in between. He situates the puppet booth on the right, which could, he suggests, have doubled as Littlewit's house to avoid it becoming a "dead" space until Act 5 (294-6). Unlike Wraith, who as we have seen placed it centre stage, Parker places Ursula's booth on stage-left because the booth "is pretty clearly associated with hell" and this was the traditional "'sinister' location of hell-mouth" (294).<sup>42</sup> As we have seen, in Coventry at least, a fire was kept burning in the hell-mouth property during the city's Corpus Christi plays (Craig 99, 101).

By drawing on Corpus Christi traditions, Jonson initiates an engagement with the doctrine of transubstantiation that runs throughout *Bartholomew Fair*. Corpus Christi means "body of Christ." The feast of Corpus Christi "was instituted to honour the Blessed Sacrament in the form of consecrated bread or Host, which, since the Lateran Council of 1215, had been officially decreed to be essentially changed into the body and [the wine into

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<sup>42</sup> Parker argues that Jonson, who was "writing allegorical masques" at the time that he wrote *Bartholomew Fair*, may have set out his stage according to medieval stage symbolism. According to this tradition, stage-right was associated with heaven or paradise and stage-left was associated with hell. In addition, stocks "seem to have been used as an emblem of the trials that this world imposes on the virtuous, a type, that is, of the crucifixion. A 1524 tapestry by Albrecht Durer ... shows Justice, Truth, and Reason in the stocks, a combination which the stocking of Overdo, Busy, and Wasp may well be intended to parody." Parker 294-5.

the] blood of Christ when consecrated by an ordained priest” (Mills xi-ii). Corpus Christi plays, then, were specifically associated with the Roman Catholic Church’s doctrine of transubstantiation. In addition to drawing on “popular” character types from this doctrine-specific dramatic genre, Jonson uses two stage properties, Joan Trash’s gingerbread and Ursula’s cooking fire, to satirise the notion of transubstantiation and to mock religious martyrs.

Roman Catholics contended that, when consecrated at the sacrament of Holy Communion, the bread and wine miraculously transformed (or transubstantiated) into the actual body and blood of Christ. By comparison, Anne Askew and other Protestants took the position that the bread and wine were merely symbolic representations of Christ’s flesh and blood or, in Askew’s words, “a remembraunce of hys death” (*First* 16v). This pivotal distinction between Catholics and Protestants (which still holds true today, of course) became both a hotly debated topic and an excuse for inflicting appalling retribution on dissenters of both faiths—depending on whether sixteenth-century England had a Catholic or Protestant monarch. During the reign of Henry VIII, however, matters were more complex than a simple switch from Catholicism to Anglicanism. Despite the fact that Henry VIII had passed the Act of Supremacy in 1534, the Church of England remained embedded in Catholic theology during much of his reign. Thus, in 1546, the paradoxical situation occurred whereby the Protestant Askew was burnt at the stake for refusing to accept the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation in a country whose national religion was no longer Catholic.

### **Transubstantiating gingerbread**

Jonson draws the debate over Communion into his play-world using gingerbread. On the one hand, gingerbread was a traditional early modern fair treat and, therefore, a suitably authentic property for one of Jonson's semi-authentic marketeers to sell. Jonson emphasises the realistic nature of this property by giving Joan Trash the lines, "Buy any gingerbread, gilt gingerbread!" (2.2.32). As Chapman points out, "the gingerbread sold at medieval and early modern fairs was typically gilded, studded with cloves, then stamped with the symbols of the fair's patron saint" (528). As Figure 4 shows, early modern gingerbread could be very elaborate. As a seller of gilded gingerbread probably stamped with the image of Saint Bartholomew, Joan slips between vendor of food and vendor of Catholic icons. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the Puritan Busy denounces her wares as a "basket of popery" (3.6.67-8). Her name, Trash, clearly offers an implicit criticism of Catholic icons and those who traded in them.

Picture removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 4. As these modern replicas show, early modern gingerbread could be stamped in very elaborate moulds (Day 64).

Joan's realistic gingerbread also engages with the doctrine of transubstantiation because, as Hannah Woolley's recipe for "fine Gingerbread" demonstrates, its ingredients included bread and wine:

TAke three stale Manchets, grate them, dry them, and beat them; then sift them thorow a fine sieve; then put to them one ounce of Ginger beaten and searced fine, as much Cinnamon, half an ounce of Aniseeds, and half an ounce of Liquorice, half a pound of sugar, boyll all these together with a quart of Claret Wine till it come to a stiffe paste; then mould it on a Table with a little Flower, and roul it very thin, and print it in moulds; dust your moulds with some of your powdered spices. (*Cook's Guide*, 95-6)

In the first place, then, Joan's gingerbread satirizes the ceremony of Communion by bringing its key components (bread and wine) onto the common stage in the basket of a poor and slightly "crooked" marketeer (2.2.23).

In the second place, Jonson uses Leatherhead's criticism of Joan's Eucharistic gingerbread to reiterate Protestant arguments against the doctrine of transubstantiation. Leatherhead accuses Joan of making her product from substandard ingredients: "stale bread, rotten eggs, musty ginger and dead honey" (2.2.8-9). When this accusation is taken together with Joan's double-dealing with Cokes (she sells her basket of gingerbread to him for five shillings and then "*plot[s] to be gone*" before he can take possession of his goods), it has led some critics to suggest that Joan's "crooked ... body" is analogous to her crooked practices (3.4.137-8, 3.6.18, 2.2.23). Korda, for example, suggests that as far as the play's female vendors are concerned, "market abuses are literally made flesh: Joan Trash's body is as 'crooked'... as her commercial practices, while Ursula's 'enormities'—Justice Overdo's

term for market infractions—are materialized in her corpulence” (197). However, Joan’s gingerbread is actually a far more complex stage property than readings like this suggest.

It is important to bear in mind that Leatherhead makes his accusation in an attempt to force Joan to move over and stop “hinder[ing]” the “prospect of [his] shop” (2.2.4). This suggests that commercial, rather than culinary, concerns trigger his outburst. Significantly, he is the only character to complain about the quality of her product. In fact, the impulsive Cokes has no hesitation in buying up her entire stock for his “banquet” (3.4.139). Moreover, Joan stoutly defends herself against the “too-proud pedlar[‘s]” accusation and declares that her wares are made from “[n]othing but what’s wholesome” (2.2.12, 7). Joan insists that “though [she] be a little crooked o’ [her] body, [she will] be found as upright in [her] dealings as any woman in Smithfield” (2.2.23-4). To be fair, this is not much of a measuring stick because Ursula is very soon onstage describing her unethical commercial practices (frothing up ale, misreckoning bills, and whisking away half drunk bottles and cans, for example) (2.2.86-100). However, there is never any suggestion that, trading practices aside, Ursula’s roast pig is anything other than excellent. Likewise, Joan’s gingerbread could be imagined to be equally “wholesome.”

Insofar as Leatherhead’s “stale bread” accusation is concerned, evidence from contemporary cookery books seems to support Joan’s defence of her gingerbread’s wholesomeness. Although Markham’s recipe for “course Ginger bread” and Woolley’s recipe for “Gingerbread” both required “three penny Manchets finely grated,” it is curious that that Woolley’s recipe for “*fine* Gingerbread,” as we have seen, specifically called for “three *stale* Manchets [italics mine]” (Markham 127; Woolley, *Accomplish’d* 55; Woolley,

*Cook's Guide* 95). Thus, Leatherhead's accusation suggests that Joan's produce may be of the finest, rather than the poorest, quality.

The hobby-horse seller's accusation that Joan has used "dead honey" may actually be a moot point because, as Woolley's recipe demonstrates, sugar replaced honey in some gingerbread recipes. "[D]ead honey" is a term that rarely occurs in extant early modern texts. In a political treatise, Francis Osborne used the term metaphorically. He described "dead Honey" as "stale, course, and lesse usefull, none being pure and Virginall, but what is sucked from every flower, that may be found in the wilde fieldes" (112). It is not dead then, but "lesse usefull" and gathered from wild flowers. The latter is surely true of all honey. Once again, then, Leatherhead's accusation appears to lack substance.

On the other hand, the allegation that Joan's ginger is "musty" may contain an element of truth. One imagines that keeping spices, or anything else, dry in damp dwellings must have been very difficult. Musty spices, therefore, must have been a problem for many householders, and not just for market traders who were "a little crooked 'o [the] body" (2.2.23). Of course, the wealthy kept their expensive spices locked in chests or boxes and these may have kept them secure *and* helped to insulate them from dampness. *The Good Wife's Guide*, for example, instructed that "unused spices" must be collected and put "in baskets in a locked coffer for safekeeping" (268).

When examined more closely, then, Leatherhead's apparently scathing adjectives actually contain contradictions and generalisations. I suggest that these occur because Jonson had an ulterior motive for including them. Leatherhead's adjectives, "stale," "rotten," "musty," and "dead," echo those used by Protestants to deride the notion of transubstantiation (2.2.8-9).

The debate on holy Communion must have resonated particularly strongly for Jonson, who had been converted to Catholicism in 1598, when he was imprisoned and awaiting trial for the murder of Gabriel Spencer (a fellow actor) (Herford and Simpson 19). Later, Jonson ruefully noted that “[a]ffliction teacheth a wicked person some time to pray: Prosperity never” (*Works* 3: 392). Jonson took his new faith sufficiently seriously that, in 1606, he and his wife were cited and fined for recusancy and for “not taking the [Protestant version of the] sacrament at Easter” (Herford and Simpson 223 nt.1). By 1610, however, Jonson had reconverted to the Church of England (Chapman 514; Herford and Simpson 19 nt.2). When he was writing *Bartholomew Fair*, it is possible that this brush with the authorities over matters of faith still rankled with Jonson. More probably, Jonson’s engagement with the Eucharist debate was reignited when he attended a theological debate on this topic in Paris on September 4, 1612.

Daniel Featly published a transcript of the debate (entitled *The Svmme and Svbsstance of a Dispvttation betweene M.Dan. Featly, Opponent, and D.Smith the younger, Respondent ... at Paris. Sept. 4. 1612.*) in *The Grand Sacrilege of the Church of Rome* (1630), which ended with a declaration of its authenticity by two witnesses identified as “I.P.” and “B.I.” (306). John Lechmere printed a translation from Latin of S.E.’s transcript of the conference (entitled *The Svmme of a Conference Betvixt M.D. Smith now B. of Chalcedon, and M. Dan. Featly Minister. Abovt the Reall Presence, With the Notes of S.E.*). Lechmere’s text included the names of those who had witnessed the debate; the list included “M. Iohn Porie” and “M. Ben: Iohnson” (5).<sup>43</sup> It seems safe to assume, then, that I.P. was John Porie

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<sup>43</sup> Lechmere’s translation of the text was reprinted in John Lechmere’s *The Relection of a Conference Touching the Reall Presence. Or, A Bachelovrs Censvre of a Masters Apologie for Doctor Featle*. Donway, 1635. 1-127.

and B.I. was Ben Jonson because, as William Dinsmore Briggs points out, they “are the only two persons in S.E.’s list that have the right initials” (3). In Featly’s transcript, then, Jonson affirmed, “I professe, that all things in this Narration deliuered and quoted out of *D.Smiths Autographie* [the original record of the debate], are true out of my examination. And of the rest I remember the most, or all: neither can I suspect any part” (306). Jonson did not just attend this dispute, then, he was sufficiently involved with it and its proceedings to function as a witness to the accuracy of its written record.

The question that Jonson heard debated was “*Whether the body of Christ were truly and substantially in the Sacrament, vnder the formes of bread and wine?*” (Featly 288).

Exchanges between Featly (Protestant) and Smith (Catholic) included the following:

FEATLY. I argue thus from the Text: Christ tooke bread, and brake it, and gaue it, and said, *This, &c.* [‘This is my body’ (Luke 22.19).] Therefore by this word, *This*, he meant *this bread*, as the Fathers generally accord in their interpretations of it....*How shall it appeare vnto them, that the bread which was blessed, was our Lords body?*

.....

[E]ither you must accept of a figure in Christs words, or put backe, and reiect all these reuerend Fathers, and your own Doctors also at once.

SMITH. [T]he Fathers by *panis*, meant, *panis Eucharistatus*

.....

FEATLY.           Therefore...by *panis* they meant that which is not now *panis*.  
 For *panis Transubstantiatus* is no more *panis*, then *homo mortuus* is *homo* .... Is this, thinke you, their meaning? Bread is Christs body, that is, Bread not being bread is Christs body.  
 Might I not say with as good reason: It is my body, that is, it is not my body?

SMITH.           I say... *bread (not remaining bread) is the body of Christ.* (Featly 296-297)

It would seem that this debate had a significant impact upon the reconverted Protestant playwright because he used his next dramatic project, *Bartholomew Fair*, to engage with the positions taken by its participants.

When we view Joan's gingerbread as a satirical device, the motive behind Leatherhead's adjectives (which, as we have seen, are not entirely appropriate for her gingerbread) assume a different perspective. They create a slippage between the bread in Joan's gingerbread and the bread of the Eucharist. Bale, who edited and published Askew's prison narrative, for example, complained that "Christe is the liuyng breade which came from heauē .... But that is not sufficyēt (saye the prestes) on lesse ye beleue also, that he is that deade breade which came frō ye waffer bakers" (Askew, Lattre 17v) Similarly, Askew's position was that the

sonne of God, that was borne of the vyrgyne Marie is now gloriouse in heauen [and, therefore, cannot be in the bread of the sacrament] and wyll come agayne from thens at the lattre daye lyke as he wente vp .... And as for that ye call your God, is but a pece of breade. For a more profe therof (marke

it whan ye lyste) let it lye in the boxe but iii. monethes, and it wyll be moulede,  
and so turne to nothyng that is good. Wherupon I am persuaded, that it can  
not be God. (Lattre K6v)

As these quotations show, Jonson selected Leatherhead's adjectives with care. Words such as "stale," "rotten," "musty," and "dead" engage Jonson's play with Askew's narrative and with Protestant polemical denials of transubstantiation. The bread in Joan's gingerbread and the sacramental wafers (or bread substitute) both come from a baker.<sup>44</sup> The accusation that Joan's honey is dead echoes Bale's assertion that the sacramental bread is "deade." The accusation that Joan's quasi-iconic gilt gingerbread is "musty" engaged with the Protestant view that Eucharistic bread could not become the body of Christ because, in Askew's words, it went "moulede" and, in Featly's words, it went "*mouldie*" and bred "*vermine*" (Askew, Lattre K6v; Featly, *Transubstantiation Exploded* 119).<sup>45</sup> Thus, the Protestant Askew saw "nothyng that is good" in the bread and wine of the Eucharist (Lattre K6v). Alternatively, Jonson's peddler of Catholic icons sees "[n]othing but what's wholesome" in her iconic (ginger)bread (2.2.7). The linguistic echo is unlikely to have been accidental.

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<sup>44</sup> As Ken Albala points out, some urban dwellers lacked cooking facilities entirely and depended on cookshops and bakeries where they could take their pies or bread dough to be baked. "Presumably marking your loaf meant that you could identify it when you came back to claim it." Not only was early modern gingerbread, which was not cooked (as Woolley's recipe shows), an ideal product for poor women to make and sell, but also the bread it contained was probably bought from, or baked in, a baker. Albala 112.

<sup>45</sup> In *Transubstantiation Exploded*, Featly wrote that "[w]hosoever holdeth the doctrine of Transubstantiation beleeveth that accidents may subsist without their subjects. For Transubstantiation as ... [the Catholic Church] defineth, is a *mutation or turning of the whole substance of bread into the whole substance of Christs body, and the whole substance of the wine into the substance of Christs blood, the accidents of bread and wine still remaining*" (116). He continued, "[I]t goeth beyond all the fictions in *Ovid his Metamorphosis*, to turne accidents into substance, and substance into accidents: to talke of meere accidents *broken, eaten, digested and voided*: to tell us of *accidents putrified*, and growing... *mouldie* and *breeding vermine*: of *accidents frozen and congealed*: nay of accidents not onely subsisting by themselves, but also supporting substance, as when dirt stickes to the Sacrament through negligence, it having fallen to the ground; or when poyson hath beene put into it ... wherewith ... *Henry the fourth of Luxemburg* tooke [his] baine." Featly 116,119.

Ursula's cooking fire extends the play's involvement with transubstantiation by establishing links between it and the martyr fires that had burned on the historic Smithfield for over two centuries. One of the first martyrs to suffer this fate was John Bedby who was burnt in 1410; the last, strangely, was Bartholomew Leggatt who was burnt in 1611 (Morley 62-3, 113). Few of Jonson's playgoers are likely to have missed the irony of a character named Bartholomew drawing attention to a fire burning in Jonson's version of Smithfield—particularly if they had been among the crowd that watched him burn to death on the real Smithfield just three years before (5.3.26-7). Ursula's fire would have opened a window between the authentic and the dramatic Smithfields and between authentic and parodied martyrs.

Picture removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 5. Anne Askew was burnt to death in front of the Priory of Saint Bartholomew. In the 1583 edition of Foxe's text, the woodcut is entitled "The order and maner of the burning of Anne Askew, Iohn Lacels, Iohn Adams, Nicholas Belenian, with certayne of the Councell sitting in Smithfield" (Foxe 1240).<sup>46</sup>

Smithfield's martyr fires were usually kindled outside the gates of the Priory of Saint Bartholomew, which was the site of the cloth fair that ran alongside Bartholomew Fair's

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<sup>46</sup> In other editions of Foxe's text, the title alters slightly. In the first edition (1563) the woodcut is headed "The description of Smythfielde with the order and maner of certayne of the Councell, sytting there at the burnying of Anne Askewe and Lacels with others." Foxe 678.

pleasure fair in Jonson's day (Morley 62-3). Askew was burnt to death there on 16 July 1546. Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* included a woodcut depicting her burning, which incorporated, as Morley points out, "a rude sketch of the Priory of St. Bartholomew" in the background (see Figure 5) (Morley 62-3).<sup>47</sup> Of the other woodcuts in Foxe's text that depicted martyr fires in Smithfield, it is significant that only the illustration of Askew's burning included a representation of the Priory and she was the only woman actually named by Foxe (Foxe, *ATLA* n. pag.). Morley rather morbidly suggests that following Askew's burning "the ground must have been still black with [her] ashes" when Londoners walked that way "not very many days later" to go to the fair in Smithfield (63). Jonson takes this chain of significance, which links female martyr to the priory and to the fair, and embeds into his Smithfield-based play-world by transforming Ursula into a cook-*cum*-martyr and, by association, transforming her fire into a martyr fire. He also uses the printed record of Askew's interrogation and martyrdom to link Ursula to other historic female martyrs.

In a fascinating article entitled "Flaying Bartholomew: Jonson's Hagiographic Parody," which focuses on the links between Saint Bartholomew and Jonson's Bartholomew Cokes, Alison Chapman suggests that, following his renouncement of the Catholic faith, Jonson "struggled to reject some of the key features of this religious inheritance, and [*Bartholomew Fair*] invokes important aspects of Catholic religious practice only to repudiate them and to show audiences the folly of such forms of piety" (511). Chapman argues persuasively that

Jonson borrows and redeploys in highly parodic ways the iconography of Saint Bartholomew in order to mock not the actual apostle himself but the

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<sup>47</sup> Anne Askew's name was also written as Askewe, Ashcough, and Kyme. Fuller 155; Fullwood 241.

Catholic traditions and rituals that over the centuries had accreted around the saints. Bartholomew Cokes—the quintessential nitwit who is stripped of his money bags by a knife-wielding cutpurse and of his clothes by other thieves—serves as Jonson’s satirical analogue for Saint Bartholomew, who was stripped of his very skin (flayed alive) by knife-wielding torturers. In Jonson’s inverted Hagiography, the central character’s fleecing reveals not the real saint’s transcendent holiness, but the mock saint’s shallowness. (513)

Because Chapman’s focus is on a flayed martyr, however, she does not consider the connection between Jonson’s female cook who is burnt in Jonson’s Smithfield and female martyrs who were burnt on the real Smithfield. Nor does she consider that Jonson’s satirical gaze may have been set both on and beyond the Catholic Church. In fact, Jonson uses fire and burning in *Bartholomew Fair* to parody martyrdom across faiths. While Saint Bartholomew was a Catholic martyr, Anne Askew was a Protestant who was chiefly condemned for denying the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.

Evidence in *Bartholomew Fair* suggests that Jonson’s mutable religious conviction left him bemused by, and perhaps even contemptuous of, those whose faith remained constant regardless of the consequences. As William Drummond, rather ambiguously, recorded from his conversations with Ben Jonson in 1619, Jonson was “for any religion as being versed in both” (Herford and Simpson 151). For Jonson, it seems that his brush with the authorities over churchgoing and taking the sacrament at Easter was as far as he was prepared to take theological resistance. Askew, by comparison (who was also asked whether she “intended to receyue the Scramente at Easter” and replied that if she did not

she was “no Christen woman”) resolutely refused to recant her faith or to betray other Protestants despite her appalling treatment (*First C6v*).

Jonson may have read about Askew’s imprisonment, interrogation, and torture from her own reports, which she wrote in prison and which were edited and printed by Johan Bale (he interjected a commentary of his own, added a preface addressed “to the Chrysten readers,” and a “Conclusyon”). The playwright may also have read about her in Foxe, who reprinted Askew’s text (without Bale’s editorial) in *Actes and Monuments*. In 1571, the “convocation ordered that a copy should be set up along with the Bible in cathedral churches and that every archbishop, bishop, archdeacon, dean, and resident canon should keep a copy in hall or dining room for servants and visitors. It was also installed in many parish churches” (Jones 211). Jonson may have seen one of these cathedral copies, or, as his father “took orders ... under Elizabeth,” it is not inconveivable that he saw a copy once used by his father (Hereford and Simpson 2).<sup>48</sup>

Bale wrote that Askew was “borne of a verye auntyent and noble stocke. Sir William Askewe a worthy knyght beyng her father” (*First A6r*). Her “wit, beauty, learning, and religion procured her much esteem on the *Queens side of the Court*, and as much hatred from the Popish persecuting Bishops”—Henry VIII had married the Protestant Catherine Parr on 12 July 1543 (Fullwood 242).<sup>49</sup> Because of Askew’s court connections, she was tortured in an attempt to force her to implicate other “Court Ladies,” potentially the queen herself, in her “*heresie*” (Fullwood 242). Over a hundred years later, the story of Askew’s martyrdom

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<sup>48</sup> Jonson did not know his father because he was born shortly after his father’s death. Hereford and Simpson 2.

<sup>49</sup> Later editions of Askew’s texts began to draw attention to her birth on their title pages. The 1560 and 1585 editions, for example, tells us that “Maistres Anne Askew” was the “younger daughter of Sir William Askew knight of Lincolne.”

was still valuable currency in Church of England propaganda. In *The Church History of Britain*, Fullwood complained:

be it remembred, that, whereas *heresie* onely was charged upon her, without the least suspicion of Treason, yet was she rackt to detect some Court Ladies of her opinion, by the Lord *Wriothisly* the then, and Sir *Robert Rich*, the next Lord Chancellour. But, whether it was noble of these Lords, or legall in these Lawyers, or conscientious in these Chancellours, to rack one already condemned to death, belongeth to others to determine. (242)

Henry did order Catherine's arrest in 1546, in fact, but she was able to cajole him into rescinding the order (Starkey 762-4).

Catherine Parr's sister Ann had married into the Herbert family (William Herbert) and, while Catherine remained in favour, the Herberts basked in their brother-in-law's good graces. They received, for example, a series of grants that included the Abbey of Wilton, which the Herberts pulled down to build Wilton House (Wilson 45, 135-6). Ann and William Herbert produced Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke; Henry Herbert married Mary Sidney and they produced two sons: William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke and Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery (Hopkins 182). The third Earl of Pembroke became a great patron of literature (as did the Sidneys, of course). One of the recipients of his patronage was Jonson who received twenty-five pounds every New Year's Day to buy books (Hopkins 14). Had torture been able to induce Askew to implicate the queen and her ladies in the crime of "*heresie*," Catherine may have followed Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard to the scaffold. There can be little doubt that this would have had serious implications for her family. Without Askew's silence, then, the great Herbert/Sidney legacy may never have

flourished.<sup>50</sup> It is possible, therefore, that, Jonson may have learned about Askew through his connection to these families. If he did, he certainly had no compunction about satirising their martyred protector.

### Ursula the martyr parody

Who better to parody Askew, “the last person of quality” to suffer “martyrdome” during the reign of Henry VIII and a woman with “wit, beauty, learning, and religion,” than Jonson’s whale-like, oily pig woman? (Fullwood 241-2; 2.5.116-7). Not only is Jonson’s cook female, but she is also portrayed as a martyr to her god (the god of commerce). Her first words in the play are “Fie upon’t! Who would wear out their youth and prime thus, in roasting of pigs, that had any cooler vocation? Hell’s a kind of cold cellar to’t, a very fine vault, o’ my conscience! ... I am all fire and fat” (2.2.41-4, 49). As the references to Ursula’s fire continue, so Jonson builds on his Askew parody. When Mooncalf attempts to calm Knockem’s boisterous behaviour in her booth, Ursula leaves her cooking fire and emerges “*with a firebrand*” and warns Mooncalf, “Must you be drawing the air of pacification here, while I am tormented, within, i’ the fire, you weasel?” (2.5.57-59). Ursula also describes herself as one “that [has] dealt so long in the fire” (2.2.88-9). Although it may be tempting to identify Ursula with the pigs that she roasts here (as Lee suggests, for example), a roasting pig carcass is considerably beyond torment by flames—unlike cooks and martyrs (Lee 265). Like Askew, Ursula is “tormented” by fire, is “all fire,” and has “dealt so long in the fire.” Like Askew, Ursula bandies words like “conscience.” However, Ursula uses the word simply as an expletive and links it, through her fire, to hell (“Hell’s a kind of cold cellar

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<sup>50</sup> Jonson’s poems dedicated the Sidney family include “To Penhurst,” “To Mistress Philip Sidney,” and “Ode to Sir William Sidney, on his Birthday.” To the Herberts, Jonson dedicated his Epigrams (to the Earl of Pembroke), and individual epigrams are dedicated “To William, Earl of Pembroke,” “To Sir Edward Herbert,” and “Epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke” Jonson, *Works* Vol. III.

to't, ... o' my conscience!"). Askew's conscience was her *raison d'être*, which, she hoped, would take her "to Heaven in a *Chariot of Fire*" (Fuller 155). I suggest that Jonson had Smithfield's martyr burnings on his mind when he wrote these Smithfield-based scenes.

In addition, Overdo draws attention to Ursula's smoky black appearance when he describes her as "black as her pan" (2.6.41). It is not difficult to imagine a connection between the appearance of a smoky black cook who works "in the fire" and a smoky black martyr who died in the fire. However, there is more to Overdo's line than this. On the day of Askew's burning, Foxe recorded that

Before the fire should be set vnto them, one of the Benche hearyng that they had gunnepouder about them, and beyng afrayde least the fagots by strength of the gunnepouder would come flieng about their eares, began to be afraid, but the Erle of Bedford declaring vnto him how ye gunpouder was not laid vnder the fagots, but onely about theyr bodies to rydde them out of their paine .... (1240)

Ursula's blackened appearance, therefore, connects her to Askew who not only smoked in the fire, but who was blackened with "gunnepouder" about her body in order to hasten her death.

Moreover, both Askew and Ursula are burnt in Smithfield. Although Ursula first emerges from her booth "*with a firebrand*" during her burning scene, she goes back in and re-emerges with her "pigpan" (2.5.54, 126). After a fight, Ursula falls with the pan and is burnt. "Curse of hell, that ever I saw these fiends! O! I ha' scalded my leg, my leg, my leg, my leg! I ha' lost a limb in the service!" she says (2.5.146-7). Rather than applying "gunnepouder" to Askew's body to hasten her death, Jonson's fair people apply foodstuffs

to their cook-cum-martyr's body to preserve her life (Foxe 1240). The ingredients that Ursula calls for, "some cream and salad oil, quickly," are those typically found in early modern remedies for burns and scalds (2.5.148). *The Second Part of the Secrets of Maister Alexis of Piemont* (1563), for example, contained "A remedye for anye burnynge or skaldyng, eyther by fyre or by whote water, or anye other casuall chaunce what so euer it be" that instructed its readers to "annoynte" the place with an "oyntment" created from "Lyme," "common oyle," and "oyle of Roses" (69). Gervase Markham's *English Housewife* included a similar oil-based remedy "For any scalding with hot water, oile, or otherwise" (44). It instructed: "take good creame, & set it on the fire, and put into it the greene which growes on a stone wal, take also *yarrow*, the greene of elder barke and fire grasse, and chop them small, then put them into the creame, and stirre it well till it come to a oyle salue, then straine it and annoynt the sore with it" (44-5).

Despite its medical authenticity, even the treatment of Ursula's wound resonates with Askew's narrative. As the "lorde of London" (the Lord Chancellor) attempted to persuade Askew to recant her faith and to "vtter all thynges that burdened [her] conseyence," he likened her conscience to a wound that needed to be uncovered and inspected so that it could be treated (Askew, *First D7r*). Askew recorded the Lord Chancellor's words thus:

[Y]f a man hadde a wounde, no wyse surgeon woulde mynystre helpe vnto it, before he hadde seane it vncovered. In lyke case (saythe he) can I geue yow no good counsell, vnlesse I knowe where wyth youre conseyence is burdened. I answered, that my conseyence was clere in al thynges. And for to lai a pliastre vnto the whole skinne, it mighte apere moch folye (*First D7r*).

When Ursula is burned, she instructs her fellow fair people to uncover her wound so that it, too, can be “seane” and “helpe” “mynystre[d] vnto it” (Askew, *First D7r*). “Rip off my hose,” she tells them (2.5.149). Knockem adds, “take off her shoes” (2.5.162). The “cream and salad oil” that Ursula calls for will serve as a “pliastre [or thick cream] vnto [her]...skinne” (2.5.148; Askew, *First D7r*). When the two texts are read together, medical metaphor and medical remedy combine to mock Askew’s tortured flesh and conscience with Ursula’s burnt flesh and lack of conscience. Ursula’s burnt flesh is exposed and treated in public surrounded by her noisy fellows; Askew’s conscience was exposed and probed in a dungeon in the Tower of London by her oponents. Ursula’s burnt flesh (we assume) will heal; Askew’s prodded conscience and tortured body will burn. The abundant and apparently superfluous domestic details that Jonson gives us in this scene seem designed to link Ursula’s burning and its treatment with Askew’s interrogation and end.

As we have seen, Askew was tortured before she was burnt to death. She wrote that “they dyd put me on the racke, by cause I cōfessed no ladyes nor gētylwomen to be of my opynyon, & theron they kepte me a longe time. And bycause I laye styll and dyd not crye, the Chauncelloure and maystre Kyche, toke paynes to racke me theyr owne handes, tyll I was nygh dead” (Askew M3r). Foxe’s report on Askew added that “she aboade their tyranny, till her bones and ioints almost were pluckt a sunder, in such sort, as she was caried away in a chaire” (1239). Foxe added that on “the daye of her execution ... she was brought into Smithfield in a chayre, because she could not goe on her feete, by meanes of her great torments” (1240).

Picture removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 6. Askew, apparently, shining as a martyr on the Title Page of *The Lattre Examinary on of Anne Askewe* (1547)

The image of a chair is synonymous, therefore, with the sufferings of Askew. Jonson also draws this detail of Askew's narrative into his play. When Jonson's cook-cum-martyr burns her leg, Leatherhead advises, "Best sit up i' your chair, Ursula. Help, gentlemen [*They lift her up*]" (2.5.153). Similarly, Knockem instructs, "thou shalt sit i' thy chair, and give directions, and shine *Ursa major*" (2.5. 172-3). As many critics and editors have pointed out (Bevington *et al*, for example), "shine *Ursa major*" is a reference to the Great Bear, the Big Dipper constellation (Bevington 2.5.187). However, given the martyr imagery prevalent in the play, it is also possible that this line is intended to parody the heavenly aura that religious martyrs and saints were believed to possess. The title pages of early editions of Askew's two texts, for example, show her as a martyr with a shining halo (Figure 6). Once again, then, Jonson lampoons martyr with cook: his burnt but shining cook sits in her chair and mocks the burnt but shining Askew who once sat in hers.

Jonson extends his satire of martyrs beyond Askew by using his cook to establish connections with other historic female martyrs. In the first place, the very name of Jonson's cook satirizes saintliness because it links her to the martyred Saint Ursula. If he did not already know it, Jonson would have found the legend of "Saynt Ursula" nestling in amongst a discussion of the virtues and sufferings of Askew in Bale's contributions to Askew's narrative (Lattre H1v-H2r). Bale compared Askew "and her condemned companye" (Lacels, Adams, and Belenian who were burnt with her) to "Saynt Ursula ... and her she pylgrymes" (those who were martyred with "Saynt Ursula") (Lattre H1v-H2r). Saint Ursula's Memorial Day is October 21<sup>st</sup>, just ten days before Jonson's Ursula first walked onto the public stage and, therefore, her memory would have been fresh in the minds of any Catholics or former Catholics in the audience—many of whom would have used almanacs to remind them of saints' days. *The Roman Martyrology* records that Saints Ursula and her companions "gained the martyrs' crown by being massacred by the Huns for their Christian religion and their constancy in keeping their virginity" (325). The "history of these celebrated virgins of Cologne rests on ten lines, [but] ... these are open to question. This legend, with its countless variants and increasingly fabulous developments, would fill more than a hundred pages," writes Poncelet (St. Ursula n.pag.).

One of the legend's "countless variants" relates to the precise number of Saint Ursula's virginal companions and speculation ranges from "several" to "eleven thousand" (Poncelet n.pag.). The "variants" and "fabulous developments" of this narrative seem to have attracted Jonson's sardonic gaze because he parodies Saint Ursula's virginal companions with his Ursula's less than virginal companion, Punk Alice, and with Ursula's

new companions, Mistress Overdo and Win, whom the less than saintly Ursula plots to transform into less than saintly prostitutes (4.5.12-17).

Not only does Jonson parody Saint Ursula with her less than saintly namesake, but he also uses Askew to link his cook-*cum*-martyr to Blandina—an early Christian female martyr. In Bale’s comparison between Askew and other historical saints and martyrs, he likened Askew to Blandina who was “put to deathe with. iii. myghtye companions ... for her Christē beleue, about the yeare of our Lorde. C. and. lxx. [AD 170] in the primatiue sprynge of their Christyanyte” (Askew, *First* A6v). As Bale pointed out, Askew also had “iii. Fyre fellowes” (Askew, *First* A7r). “Though Blandina were yonge, [continued Bale] yet was she called the mother of martyrs. Manye men haue supposed Anne Askewe, for her Chrysten coustancye [sic] to be no lesse” (Askew, *First* A6v). This image is parodied by Jonson, who describes his cook as “Mother o’ the bawds” and “mother o’ the pigs” (2.5.67-8).

Bale acknowledged that he was quoting Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, c. 260-340. Meredith Hanmer’s 1577 translation of Eusebius twice reported that, among other tortures, Blandina and her companions “patiently suffred the iron chair, vwherein theyr bodies boyled as in a frienge panne” (Eusebius 78, 80). Through Bale and Eusebius, then, the theme of chairs and burning connects all three narratives. In Eusebius, a metal chair inflicted horrendous burns on Blandina; in Foxe, a chair offered temporary relief to Askew before she was burned; and in Jonson, a chair offers relief to his cook-*cum*-martyr after she is burnt.

In addition, the report of Blandina’s body being boiled “as in a frienge panne” may have suggested the method of his Ursula’s burning to Jonson because he rather labours the pan image in this scene (Eusebius 78). In *Bartholomew Fair*, stage directions tell us that Ursula “comes in with the scalding-pan” (2.5.138). Whereupon Edgworth and Nightingale

exclaim, “Ware the pan, the pan, the pan; she comes with the pan, gentlemen” (2.5.139-40). The cry is taken up again at the close of the play, when the naked Trouble-all enters the puppet booth having “stolen Gammer Ursula’s pan” to hide his nakedness (5.6.51). He is pursued by Ursula crying, “O! stay him, stay him. Help to cry, Nightingale; my pan, my pan!” (5.6.48-9).

When Jonson permits his burnt cook-*cum*-martyr to be treated, rather than permitting her to expire, it could be argued that he does so in order to draw an “air of pacification” over the practice of martyr burning (2.5.58). In fact, because of the play’s allusions to both Puritanism and Catholicism, Pinciss reads the play as one that calls for religious tolerance and argues that Jonson “seems to have been signalling for the king and the court the benefits of adopting a more tolerant policy in matters of religion” (351). However, I suggest that Jonson’s message was less tolerant and more cynical than this. The subtext to his play is dark and run through with references to religious schisms and martyrdom. This darkness, which contains a burnt cook-*cum*-martyr and a mock purveyor of Sacramental bread and wine at its epicentre, suggests that Jonson, who switched from Protestant to Catholic and back again with apparent ease, was contemptuous of those individuals (regardless of their religious persuasion) who were prepared to, in Thomas Fuller’s words, ride “to Heaven in a *Chariot of Fire*” (155). Chapman, whose focus is on flaying, quite rightly points out that Jonson stages a “dramatic repudiation of martyrdom” (536). He does this, Chapman contends, in order to provide “justification for [his] decision to forswear the martyr’s crown and [to imply] an oblique criticism of those who opted for it” (536). However, as this chapter has shown, when the spotlight switches from flaying to burnings, Jonson’s focus on religious dissent in *Bartholomew Fair* becomes general and

gendered. Possibly, the playwright felt a particular antipathy for women who demonstrated the strength of faith that he lacked.

### Chapter 3

#### **Water and Bodies in Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* and Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens***

“On September 21<sup>st</sup> [1599] after lunch, about two o'clock, I and my party crossed the water, and there in the house with the thatched roof witnessed an excellent performance of the tragedy of the first Emperor Julius Caesar” (Platter 26-7).

To early moderns, water was a complex, mythical, life-forming substance. Its status as one of the four primary elements, from which Galenists believed all matter was constructed, encouraged early moderns to use it as a medicine in its own right and as an ingredient in other medicines. It was also treated as a cookery ingredient: it was often weighed and measured like other foods and, in some early recipes, it was used as a sauce in its own right. During the reign of Henry VIII, as we will see in Chapter 4, it was even used to execute, or boil to death, poisoners (Hall Fol. C.C.). In addition, medieval and early modern Christians believed that water was powerful enough to have washed humankind's sins from the world during the Great Flood and, therefore, religious (baptism) and domestic (hand-

washing) ceremonies were constructed around its capacity to purify. Water's own purity was categorized according to its source in a scale that ran from pure (that drawn from fast running clean sources or clean rain) to foul (that stagnating in pools or in muddy puddles). Finally, as all early modern Londoners would have been well aware, it formed a vital (but far from clean) commercial and social highway in the river Thames.

Given water's complex nature, its presence on any early modern stage would have brought with it multi-textured extra-dramatic contexts. However, when it appeared onstage in theatres built on Bankside, a marshy and often waterlogged area, water must have resonated particularly strongly with playgoers. As Marvin Carlson quite rightly points out, an "audience not only goes to the theatre; it goes to the particular part of the city where the theatre is located, and the memories and association of that part of the city help to provide a reception context for any performance seen there" (140). This chapter will discuss the way in which water inverts rituals in Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* and in William Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*. In the former, water is used to humiliate and judge a doomed monarch; in the latter, a water-based ritual appears to doom the entire play-world (and possibly, by implication, the audience's world) by overturning key Christian narratives premised on the promise of redemption and life everlasting in heaven.

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For most early modern playgoers who visited the Bankside theatre district—where the Swan, the Rose, the Globe, the Hope, and the Newington Butts stood—the ritual of theatre-going, as Platter makes clear in the epigraph, involved "cross[ing] the water" (26-7). Like Platter, other visitors also classified theatres according to their position relative to water. The compiler of the itinerary of Prince Otto of Hesse-Cassel, who visited London in

1611, recorded that the Globe stood “over the water,” whereas the Theatre was on “the hither side of the water” (trans. and qtd. in Chambers *ES* 2: 369). Edmund Malone speculated, in 1807, that “common” early moderns crossed the river “on foot” across London Bridge (264). In 1614, however, John Taylor the water poet wrote that a “great concourse of people” crossed the river Thames by boat (172). When Bankside’s theatrical trade was at its peak, in fact, Taylor claimed that “euery day in the weeke” some “three or foure thousand people” travelled to Bankside by water, and that the trade between the City and Bankside supported over twenty thousand “Water-men, and those that liue[d] and [were] maintained by them” (172).<sup>51</sup> It should not surprise us, therefore, that Henslowe’s partner in the Hope playhouse-*cum*-bearbaiting arena, which was built in 1614, was a waterman, Jacob Meade (Wickham 595).

Picture removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 7. Frontispiece from John Taylor’s *The Scvller Rowing from Tiber to Thames* (1612).

Crossing the river in a light and narrow rowing boat (or by “Oare and the Scull,” as Taylor described it) would have been a sensuous experience for playgoers (see Figure 7) (172). Travelling in crafts that were low to the water, passengers were cast about on the

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<sup>51</sup> Taylor records that the fare for crossing the river by boat was six pennies, but complains that some travellers haggled to get “two pence for sixe penni, worth of labour.” Taylor 174.

choppy Thames, splashed, and subjected to the pungent aroma of a river into which drained human effluent and the waste from a rapidly expanding city. The watermen's sweat would have compounded this heady aroma. Taylor claimed that a waterman would row "till his heart ake[d]" and he had sweated "till hee hath not a dry thread about him" (174).

Picture removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 8. An anonymous painting of London viewed from Southwark c.1630, from the collection of the Museum of London. The picture shows the "magnificent sight" of boats on the Thames (de Maise 2-3).

In addition, as Figure 8 shows, the Thames was a busy water highway. In 1597, the French ambassador, André Hurault de Maise, wrote that from Greenwich to London "it is a magnificent sight to see the number of ships and boats which lie at anchor, insomuch that for two leagues you see nothing but ships" (2-3). Cutting across a busy waterway in small boats necessarily involved an element of risk and the behaviour of some watermen made the journey even more perilous. The Company of Watermen was formed in 1566 in an attempt to regulate the profession because, as the Act of Parliament forming the Company claimed, ferry passengers risked "many misfortunes and mischances, caused by evil and ignorant persons who robbed and spoiled of their goods, and also drowned them" (Records n.pag.). It would seem, however, that these regulations were not entirely successful because even Taylor admitted that "a rayling knaue" did on occasions "abuse his Fare,

either in words or deeds,” but, he claimed, “no company hath sharper Lawes, or more seuerely executed” than the Company of Watermen (173-4). Danger and dampness, then, were an integral part of the Elizabethan and early Jacobean ceremony of gathering for and travelling to a theatrical experience on Bankside.

Even if playgoers arrived safely on Bankside, they still had to contend with the area’s marshy terrain. A. H. Graham writes that

Documentary records show that river defences had been constructed along the south bank by the 14<sup>th</sup> century; there are records of many law suits dealing with the neglect of quays, and of ditches, and graphically describing the resultant flooding at high tide, and the subsequent lack of adequate drainage back into the river ... It seems clear ... that large areas ... remained waterlogged until the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century. (516)

Potentially already splashed or soaked from the river crossing, playgoers’ journeys from Bankside’s landing stairs to the playhouses also involved a trudge over low-lying and often waterlogged land. The geology of the area (wet, low-lying, and close to the river) explains why fishponds had been a feature of Bankside since, at least, the fourteenth century (Bowsher and Miller 13-4). In fact, evidence discovered during excavations at the Globe site suggests that it contained at least one such pond (Bowsher and Miller 14). Fishponds were known as the Stews, “but the name was transferred at an early stage to ... the row of inns and brothels that [had lined] ... the waterfront on Bankside” since, at least, the beginning of the thirteenth century (Bowsher and Miller 13-4). Bankside’s identity, then, was indelibly linked to water and, through an etymological slippage, this connected it to other characteristic features of the area: brothels and inns.

Once playgoers arrived at their playhouse of choice, more wetness may have been in store for them because the ground in playhouse yards on Bankside could also be soggy. Recent excavations of the debris of the site beneath the galleries at the Rose, which stood just yards from the Globe on the opposite side of Maiden Lane, have discovered botanical remains that “suggest a dank, dark, cramped space” and seed remains from wild plants that suggest “a wet, damp habitat” (Bowsher and Miller 62-3). It would appear that a wet yard was an ongoing problem for Henslowe because excavations have uncovered evidence of attempts to alleviate the damp conditions: a “sloping bank, consisting essentially of clay, was placed against the stage frontage” and this “was perhaps ‘strengthened’ by a dump of wooden debris” (Bowsher and Miller 49).<sup>52</sup> In addition to standing in a waterlogged yard, playgoers in all open-air theatres were, of course, at the mercy of the elements. It should not surprise us, therefore, that evidence of what has been interpreted as a “drip line,” caused by “rainwater coming off the thatched eaves of the galleries,” has been uncovered in the Rose’s yard (Bowsher and Miller 49). If inn-yard playhouses were characterized by the delicious aroma of food cooking, then Bankside’s playhouses must have been characterized by the musty stench of damp playhouses and damp playgoers.

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The liquid that dripped on playgoer’s heads, squelched in the mud beneath their feet, and cast them about in small boats on the Thames was, early moderns believed, a life-creating substance. The period’s Galenists understood water to be one of the four primary elements from which all matter was formed (the others were fire, air, and earth). In Elyot’s words: “water hath preheminance aboue all other licours, not only because it is an element,

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<sup>52</sup> Bowsher and Miller’s plan of the two sites shows that the plots of the Rose and the Globe were some ten metres apart. Bowsher and Miller 17.

that is to say, a pure matter, whereof all other licours haue theyr originall substance, but also for as much as it was the very naturall and first drinke to all maner of creatures” (E8v). John Bate even granted this “pure matter” quasi-animate qualities when he wrote, “Ayre, and Water doe insert themselves into all manner of concavities, or hollownesses, in, or upon the earth ... water is by nature ... a massie, subtile, substance” (A3r-A3v).

Such was water’s complexity that different waters, distilled or natural, were believed to be quite different substances. As the Hippocratic treatise “Air, Waters, Places” explained, “no two sorts of water can be alike but some will be sweet, some salt and some astringent and some from warm springs. When they are all mixed they quarrel with one another and the strongest is always the dominant” (Air, Waters, Places 155). Partridge’s recipe for “Plumbs ... in Syrop” demonstrates that this thinking was still current during the early modern period. He instructed his readers to “Take halfe a pounce of Snger [sugar], halfe a pinte of Rosewater, and a pinte of faire rainewater, or of some other distilled water,[and] seeth the suger, and the two waters upon a soft fyre of coales” (*Treasurie* B1v-B2r).

Because of its elemental potency, water was used as a medicine in its own right in some medical treatises. Gale, for example, included “Waters eyther fountayne or distilled” in his list of “reperussive” medicines (medicines thought to “repell and dryue” back inflammations, ulcers, fevers, dolour, and pain) and “Whote water” in his list of “resolving medicines” (medicines thought to induce sweating) (*Antidotarie* 1:1, 1:3).<sup>53</sup> Dietaries followed suit. Elyot told his readers that “Hyppo[crates] affirmeth ... in sharp and feruent diseases, none other remedy is to bee required then water” (Fv). William Vaughan claimed to “have knowne diuers students which vsed to bathe their eyes onely in well water twice a

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<sup>53</sup> Elyot defined dolour as a “[h]eauines [heaviness] of mind” caused by “sorrowe” (Kr).

day, whereby they preserved their eyesight free from all passions and bloudsheds, and sharpened their memories maruaylously" (72).

Water's importance in early modern medicine was such that many remedies concocted using water (or even wine) simply became known by the generic term *water*. In fact, the terms medicine, remedy, and water were used interchangeably in some medical books. A.T.'s *A Rich Store-house or Treasury for the Diseased* (1596), for instance, included "A very good *water* for to clense the mouth, and to fasten teeth," "A *Medicine* for a Canker in the mouth," and "An excellent *Remedie* for a Canker in the mouth or throate" [italics mine] (Ov, N2v–N4r, N4r–N4v). Although each of these remedies included small amounts of honey, the base liquid in all three was water.

Thomas Middleton satirised the popularity of, the misplaced faith in, and the excessive cost of curing waters in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. In the play, the Kix's are a wealthy childless couple desperate to have children. By comparison, the Touchwoods are facing financial ruin because they are too productive. The potent Touchwood Sr. agrees to sell the Kix's a "water" which has got *him* nine children and which, he assures them, will see the them "Circled with children" "within these few years" (2.1.178–88, 3.3.91–2). The "water" in question is a combination of some "almond milk," which Touchwood Sr. instructs Sir Oliver Kix to drink, and Touchwood's own sperm, which he administers to Lady Kix himself (during the five hours that he has instructed Sir Kix to ride his horse after taking his "water") (3.3.104–52). The almond milk cost Touchwood Sr. a mere "threepence" and he sells his cure to the Kix's for four hundred pounds (3.3.90, 3.3.130–8).

Perhaps, then, it is not surprising that early moderns believed that water interacted with the body's physiology in a different way from other liquids imbibed by the body. This is

especially important because humoralists understood the stomach to function very much as an oven or cooking vessel. If diners incorrectly filled or overfilled their ovens then their food would either burn or remain uncooked. Andrew Boorde wrote that “there be two maner of stomaches, the one is an appetyde to eate & to drink, and the other is a vessell in man the which doth receiue meat and drink into it, and is lyke a pot in the which meat and lycour is put in, and as the fyre doth decoct the meates and the broth in the pot, so doth the lyuer under the stomacke decote the meante in mans body” (*Breviarie* 1:109). Drowning the stomach’s heat with drink impaired concoction (the digestive process began after concoction) and, therefore, dietaries attempted to regulate drinking.<sup>54</sup> Elyot advised that drinking between meals was “not lawdable” except in the case of a “very greate thyrst” because “it interrupt[ed] the office of the stomack in concoction, and cause[d] the meate to passe faster then it should do, and the drinke beeyng colde, it rebuke[d the] naturall heat [of the stomach]” (G2v). Thus, the meat remained raw and digestion was corrupted. For the same reason, when drinking during a meal, Elyot instructed that “the drynke [should] rather be mixt [with] meate by sundry little draughtes, then with one greate draughte at the end of the meale” (G5r).

Despite Elyot’s dire warnings against drowning the stomach’s heat with too much drink; and Bulleyn’s warning that drinking “colde water is euyll, for it wyll stoppe the bodye, and engender melancholye”; and Boorde’s warning that “water is nat holsome sole by it selfe for an Englyshe man ... [it] is colde, slowe, and slake of digestyon,” paradoxically, dietary writers prescribed cold water as a remedy for overeating (Elyot G2v; Bulleyn Fol. ciii; Boorde *Dyetary* C3v). Both Elyot and Coghnan advised that after “a great surfet, specially

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<sup>54</sup> See Ken Albala’s *Eating Right in the Renaissance* for more information on the concoction and digestion processes. Albala ch. 2.

taken with superfluous eating of bāqueting meats,” drinking cold water was “a general remedy” (Elyot Fr; Coghlan 207-8). Alternatively, “if there [was] no feuer,” the unfortunate patient could be encouraged to vomit by drinking “a little warme water” (Elyot G3r). Offering an explanation for this apparent contradiction, Coghlan claimed that if “a cup of colde water” was taken by those who had drunke too much overnight then it would “cleanse the stomacke, ... repress the vapours and fumes, and dispose it to reteine [retain] newe sustenance” (208).

Despite the paradox, the water cure for overeating was evidently in common usage because it found its way onto the stage. In Thomas Nabbs’ *Totenham-Court* (1639), a character named George attempts to seduce another man’s wife. The sound of the husband returning interrupts the seduction, so George hides in an extremely convenient tub. Unfortunately, a serving girl then enters and pours “a paille of conduit water” into the tub and on top of George who cries out, “Hold, hold; I am drown’d” (36). When the resulting commotion dies down, George’s friend teases him with the line “I am sorry *George* you should drinke water after your sweet-meats” (37). The meaning of “sweet-meats” here, clearly, slips between banqueting food and female favours, both of which should, apparently, be taken before water.

As with medical remedies, culinary recipes also used water as an ingredient in its own right. Most frequently, it formed the foundation liquid for a sauce with other ingredients. Sometimes, however, it was used as a sauce in its own right. *The Boke of Cokery*, for example, offered a recipe for “makerell” that was cooked and served in a “sauce of water and salt” (g3r). *The Forme of Cury* also included a recipe for a water-based sauce

called “Aquapatys”: “Pill [peel] garlec and cast it in a pot with water and oile. and seep it, do perto safroun, salt, and powdour fort and dresse [serve] it forth hool” (71).

In addition to thinking about water in terms of an elemental component of the body, a medicine, and a cookery ingredient, early moderns obviously thought of clean water as a valuable commodity. The lease for the dissolved Blackfriars priory (drawn up by the owner Sir William More of Loseley in Surrey in 1576), for example, strictly controlled the ingoing tenant’s (Richard Farrant’s) access to the building’s supply. The lease specified the amount of water that Farrant was permitted to draw from More’s supply (“one quill of conduit water issuing and running from the conduit”); it strictly limited access to the water (it was “for the only use of ... Farrant and his family”); it protected the pipe work (Farrant should “not alter nor cut the pipe of the said conduit or water, nor ... employ any [of] the water aforesaid but only to the use of the said Richard Farrant and his family”); it legislated against waste (“nor shall [Farrant] suffer the same water to run to waste”); and, in the event of Richard Farrant’s death, it granted his “wife or child ... use and commodity of the said quill of water” (Wickham 390-3).<sup>55</sup> Such was the concern about the proper use of this valuable commodity that rules decreed water taken from conduits should be used only for cooking and drinking purposes (Jenner 254).

Water conduits, which brought water into the City from springs and rivers beyond its boundaries, had been a feature of London since the medieval period. John Stow’s *A Survey of London* (1598) recorded that over twenty five conduits had been built in the City since 1285 and wells were far more common. Often conduits were constructed as “monuments” by current mayors, or by past mayors of the city (or by their executors), as

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<sup>55</sup> A quill was a “private pipe attached to the main pipe feeding the conduits.” Jenner 253

long-lasting epitaphs to their wealth and power; thereby, perpetuating an association between wealth, power, and a convenient supply of clean water (Stow 108-9, 144, 153, 161, 172-5, 188, 191, 205, 247-8, 254, 260, 292, 302). In fact, “water was part of the currency of civic favour, and quills were granted as a special favour to valued friends of the City” (Jenner 254). In times of heavy rainfall, the water flow through some conduits could be strong enough to drown anyone unlucky enough to fall in (Stow 205). There can be little doubt that the noise of cascading water would have affected dwellings in the proximity. Thus, water impacted spatially, visually, and aurally upon London’s cityscape. Some of London’s wealthy inhabitants had water piped directly into their houses from the Thames, or had well yards next to their kitchens (Stow 172; Jenner 251). Some country castles had wells within their walls, some had wells in their kitchens, and some (putting many modern homeowners to shame) had structures in place to collect and recycle rainwater (Brears 75-8). For less wealthy Londoners, supplies of clean water had to be heaved up from wells or hauled back from public taps; those who could afford it paid lowly water carriers to do the job. Water was such a valuable commodity, however, that Rosemary Weinstein claims, “anyone carrying a weapon was forbidden to approach” public taps (34).<sup>56</sup>

Early moderns approached the classification of water in a proto-scientific way and evaluated water’s purity according to its source. Elyot claimed that if “rayne water” was

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<sup>56</sup> Mark Jenner has traced the movement from conduit-supplied water to piped water in London. He writes that “sources of water were embedded within clusters of relationships which determined who could use particular sources. These social networks worked at many levels. Property owners might permit thirsty businesses to draw water from their well or Thameside wharf....There were also agreements between households, and between landlords and tenants.” Once water companies—such as the London Bridge Company, the Broken Wharf Company, and the New River Company—began piping water directly into houses it reduced consumers’ “involvement in the hurly-burly of the public water sources, but [initiated] the first network technologies, [and bound] thousands of households into a common system.” Jenner 251, 264.

“pure and cleane,” it was the “most subtill and penetratiue, of any other waters”; spring water that flowed “out of a springe in the east” and “passe[ed] swiftly among great stones or rocks” was the next best; and water from “a cleane riuer, which [ran] on great hard stones or peples” was the third most desirable (Fr). Predictably, however, dietary writers did not necessarily agree on where the best water was located. Bulleyn took the view that

water which is here amongst vs in Riuers, Pondes, springes, floudes, and seas: be no pure waters, for thei be mingled with sundry ayres, corruptions, grosenesse, and saltines ... the claye water is pure, for cley clenseth the water, and is better then water that runeth ouer grauell, or stones, so that it be pure cley, voyde of corruption. Also waters runnyng toward the east, be pure, comyng oute of harde stonye rockes, and a Pinte of that water is lighter then a pynte of the standyng water of welles, or pooles. The lighter the water the better it is. (Fol. cii-iii)

Water’s purity was an important consideration for physicians and cooks alike and their remedies and recipes frequently call for a source-specific type of water. Once again, though, there is disagreement about which type of water was believed to be the purest or best and varieties called for by cooks and physicians included rainwater, fountain water, fair water, sweet water, good water, clean water, conduit water, or “verye faire” water. Coghnan offered three ways to identify the “best sort” of water: “[f]irst by the lightnesse, for the lightest is best. Secondly by little skimme & froth in boyling. Thirdly by drenching of linnen clothes in the water, and laying the same to dry, for that which is soonest dry, sheweth the best water” (209). Plat even offered instructions on “[h]ow to gather and clarifie May-dewe” (H8v). In addition, remedies, recipes, salves, and cosmetics frequently used distilled waters.

Rosewater was the most commonly used. As with medical and culinary texts, dramatic texts referred to specific types of waters. In Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, for example, Brutus claims that Rome's "best water is brought by conduits hither" and, in *Romeo and Juliet*, Paris sprinkles "flowers" and "sweet water" on Juliet's tomb (*Cor.* 2.3.231; *R & J.* 5.3.1).

Just as clean water was a marker of wealth and power, dirty water was a marker of poverty and powerlessness. Thomas Nashe's *Pierce Penniless*, for example, alludes to the "the puddle water of penury" (76). Boorde warned, "let euery man beware of all waters the whiche be standynge, and be putryfyed with froth ... for yf they bake, or brewe, or dresse meate with it, it shall ingendre many infyrmytes" (*Dyetary* D1r). When *King Lear's* Edgar performs the role of "Poor [mad] Tom," he attempts to prove his madness by telling Gloucester that he "drinks the green mantle of the standing pool" (3.4.118-19). Even without Boorde's warning, most playgoers would recognise Edgar-as-Tom's wrongful drinking as a mad behaviour likely to "ingendre many infyrmytes."

#### **Edward II's conduit water**

Christopher Marlowe wrote *Edward II* c.1592. The title pages of the 1594, 1598, and 1612 quartos identify the play with Pembroke's Men (Q1 is actually a "[q]uarto-form octavo" edition) (Bevington *et al* 419). This is despite the fact that the company broke up in 1593, reformed in 1597, and broke up again around 1600. When Pembroke's Men went bankrupt in the summer of 1593, Sussex's Men took over their plays and this company played at the Rose between December 1593 and April 1594 (Chambers *ES* 2:128-134). In addition, Henslowe places the re-formed Pembroke's Men at the Rose in 1597 and 1600 (Henslowe 20-21, 60, 164).

In *Edward II*, water appears onstage, possibly the Rose's stage, as part of a ritual. Its purpose is both to invert the ritual to which it is central and to interrogate the causes for the inversion. When Mortimer Junior has imprisoned Edward II in a foul-smelling dungeon, Marlowe's deposed and disenfranchised king begs his jailors for water: "O water, gentle friends, to cool my thirst/And clear my body from foul excrements!" (5.3.25-6). Matrevis replies, "Here's channel water, as our charge is given./Sit down, for we'll be barbers to Your Grace" (5.3.27-8).

Ordering the livery and lodging of a monarch was normally a prestigious position. John Russell's *The Boke of Nurture* (c. 1440-70) described the correct ritual to adopt when bathing a king:

...looke ye haue sponges .v. or vi. ...

.....

A basyn full in youre hand of herbis hote & fresche,

& with a soft sponge in hand, his body pat ye wasche;

Rynse hym with rose watur warme & feire vpon hym flasche. (66-7)

Ironically, Russell entitles this section "A bathe or stewe so called" (66). Stews, it would seem, could be fishponds, brothels, inns, *and* baths for kings. In *Edward II*, both the washer and the washed are uncomfortable with the inversion of this ritual. Matrevis feels driven to explain that he is only using "channel water" because he has been charged to do so, while Edward is so horrified to be brought face-to-face with dirty water that he views it as an assassination attempt. "Traitors, away! What, will you murder me,/Or choke your sovereign with puddle water?" He demands (5.3.29-30).

During this period, channels and sewers were irrigation ditches or water channels that drained water off the land—rather than sewers in the modern sense. The waterlogged areas of Bankside (or Southwark) were only stabilised at all by “the maintenance of a complex series of local drains and ditches fitted with sluices” (Bowsher and Miller 11). Excavations at the Rose site have discovered evidence of drainage ditches on four sides of this playhouse (Bowsher and Miller 58, 102, 125, 160). The Globe, like the Rose, faced onto Maiden Lane, which had drainage ditches running along both sides. In addition, John Norden’s (1600) map shows a channel running behind this playhouse (see Figure 9) (Bowsher and Miller 54). As we have seen, the wateriness of the area was an integral part of the character of these playhouses. In “Execration upon Vulcan,” for example, Jonson describes the Globe as “the glory of the Bank ... Flanked with a ditch, and forced out of a marish” (*Works* 3:322). Playgoers who travelled from the City to watch plays in these playhouses, then, actually faced double water crossings: both across the Thames and across water channels.

The traditional English history narrative trope of this period that represented England as a blessed plot of land nurtured by its monarch (exemplified in Shakespeare’s line “This b<sup>l</sup>essèd plot, this earth, this realm, this England”) is used by Marlowe in *Edward II* to represent Edward as a poor farmer-monarch who has abandoned his farm-kingdom in favour of his favourite: Gaveston (*R2* 2.1.50). Lancaster complains, “Ah, wicked king! Accursèd Gaveston!/This ground ... is corrupted with their steps”; the Queen complains that Edward’s “looseness hath betrayed [his] land to spoil/And made the channels overflow with blood”; and Mortimer Jr. complains of “the open wrongs and injuries/Edward hath done to us, his queen, and land” (*Edward II* 1.2.4-5; 4.4.11-12; 4.4.21-2).

Picture removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 9. Detail from John Norden's map of 1600, showing the Rose (labelled as "The Stare") and the Globe (bottom centre). The map shows drainage ditches running along both sides of Maiden Lane (where "The globe" is marked) and behind the Globe (Bowsher and Miller 54).

It is ironic, therefore, that Edward's failure to nurture his land reduces him to a situation where water drawn from the land is offered to nurture (or refresh) him and to wash his body. Dirty or not, channel water ran like blood in veins through England's soil and Edward's contempt for this nutriment from the land, "What, will you murder me,/Or choke your sovereign with puddle water?", is emblematic of his broken connection with England's soil (5.3.29-30). Edward's refusal to imagine the "lowly earth" of England drinking his kingly blood complicates the image (5.1.13). Likening himself to an imperial lion, Edward II says,

... when the imperial lion's flesh is gored,  
 He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,  
 And, highly scorning that the lowly earth  
 Should drink his blood, mounts up into the air... (5.1.11-4)

Edward will not permit the soil to drink his blood; nor will he permit himself to drink the soil's blood. This closed circle, which excludes nutriment, exemplifies Edward II's care-less rule.

In addition to serving Edward II channel water to “cool [his] thirst,” Marlowe uses water to physically and to psychologically abuse his monarch. Mortimer Jr. instructs Edward’s jailors to “[s]eek all the means thou canst to make him droop” (5.3.25, 5.2.54). Ironically, given this plant-based metaphor, Edward is forced to “droop” through overwatering rather than through a lack thereof. Edward II is kept in a dungeon into which channel water runs. Matrevis and Gurney discuss the King’s predicament:

MATREVIS. Gurney, I wonder the king dies not,  
 Being in a vault up to the knees in water  
 To which the channels of the castle run,  
 From whence a damp continually ariseth  
 That were enough to poison any man  
 Much more a king brought up so tenderly.

GURNEY. And so do I, Matrevis. Yesternight  
 I opened but the door to throw him meat,  
 And was almost stifled with the savour. (5.5.1-9)

Although channels should have contained only water that had drained off the land, human waste did on occasions find its way into these ditches. Extant records from the Commission of Sewers show that privies were sometimes erected over sewers (Bowsher and Miller 15). Sewage in water would have had particular significance for Bankside’s playgoers. The Surrey and Kent Commission of Sewers were the body in charge of maintaining channels and, in 1587 for example, they ordered landowners along Maiden Lane to remove “posts that obstructed the flow of water in the ditches. Some of the posts supported privies” (Bowsher and Miller 15). In addition, Braun and Hogenburg’s map of

1572 appears to show privies erected on Bankside along the edge of the river Thames (see Figure 10).<sup>57</sup>

Picture removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 10. Detail from Braun and Hogenburg's map of 1572 showing a row of privies along the water's edge at Bankside (Bowsher and Miller 16).

Gurney's complaint about the "savour" emanating from Edward's prison clearly implies that Edward II's standing water contains human waste. Thus, Marlowe uses water of the lowest possible quality to humiliate Edward and to signify the scale of his fall: a king used to "wanton poets," "pleasant wits," "idle triumphs, masques [and] lascivious shows" is now forced to stand "up to the knees in water" containing sewage (1.1.50; 2.2.156). Potentially, Matrevis' description may have triggered an olfactory memory for playgoers who may have been "stifled" with the selfsame "savour" as they passed the privies at Bankside's water's edge and as they crossed and re-crossed the, possibly sewage infested, sewer in front of the Rose. This onstage-offstage water-based slippage may have extended to the channel water brought onstage to wash and shave Edward II because, if the play was

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<sup>57</sup> For more on riverside privies, see Andrew Gurr's *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*. Gurr 37-8.

performed at the Rose, it is entirely possible that the company drew this property from one of the channels or ditches that surrounded the playhouse.

Nevertheless, even while Marlowe is dramatising the pathos of Edward's captivity he is also interrogating its causes and he uses water to evoke sympathy *and* to apportion blame in this play. Edward II complains that

Within a dungeon England's king is kept,  
Where I am starved for want of sustenance;  
My daily diet is heartbreaking sobs  
That almost rends the closet of my heart. (5.3.19-22)

As this and the lines quoted above make clear, Marlowe explicitly, almost sadistically, represents the predicament of his abused monarch. When, a few lines later, channel water is brought onstage by Matrevis and offered to Edward, it is clear that this particular stage property has been selected to set up a cause-and-effect echo. Matrevis' line, "Here's channel water, as our charge is given," is designed to remind playgoers of opening moments in the play when Edward himself wielded channel water as a weapon of humiliation (5.3.27).

*Edward II* opens at the beginning of Edward's reign, just as Gaveston is returning from a period of banishment—a banishment for which Edward and Gaveston blame the Bishop of Coventry. When the two meet the Bishop again, they take their revenge. Edward gleefully tells Gaveston to "Throw off his golden mitre, rend his stole,/ And in the channel christen him anew" (1.1.186-7). Edward, then, strips the bishop of one of his signs of office, "his golden mitre," and metaphorically reduces him to an infant-like state by (re)christening him in channel water. In Act 5, it is Edward's turn to be stripped of his sign of office and reduced to a child-like state using the medium of water. Gurney tells the beleaguered king

that they have been instructed to “wash [his] face and shave away [his] beard”; this, Gurney tells the king, is to prevent him from being “known and rescued” (5.3.31-2). The stage direction “*They wash him with puddle water and shave his beard away*” confirms that they perform a version of this demeaning ceremony onstage (5.3.36).

In England during this period, masculinity was firmly associated with facial hair.<sup>58</sup> In the case of Marlowe’s *Edward II*, his beard is an integral sign of his masculinity and his office. Gurney tells his king that the removal of his beard will prevent Edward from being “rescued” because without it he will not be recognised as the king (5.3.32). Just like re-christening the Bishop, Edward’s beardless face will superficially unman him by reducing him to a prepubescent and pre-monarchical appearance.

Marlowe eloquently presents the pathos of Edward II’s final predicament, but uses the presence of water onstage to draw attention to the King’s culpability: his own misrule has led to his downfall. To emphasise this point, Marlowe counterbalances Edward’s removal of the Bishop of Coventry’s “golden mitre” (or headdress) with the scene in which the Bishop of Winchester persuades Edward to resign his own golden headdress (or crown) (5.1.1-124). Channel water flows between these two scenes making connections and forming moral judgments.

### **Timon of Athens as a “fleumatike” man of water**

In *Edward II*, then, Marlowe places water at the heart of his play’s crisis of monarchy; in *Timon of Athens*, by comparison, Shakespeare places water at the heart of what may have

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<sup>58</sup> Will Fisher’s research has discovered that in English portraits from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries approximately ninety percent of the men are depicted with beards, usually with a moustache. Fisher argues that “these portraits helped to produce an idealized version of the male body, which included facial hair.” Fisher 231-2.

been, evidence in the play suggests, his own crisis of faith. When we use the early modern theory of the elements to discuss Timon in terms of a bipolar mixture of water and earth, the act of serving water at his second feast equates, I suggest, to both a metaphoric and a quasi-embodied parody of the Last Supper and the Eucharist. Shakespeare manipulates water—in the form of metaphors, in the form of a character’s complexion, and in the form of a stage property—to invert key biblical narratives and to eliminate the promise of redemption that they offer. Despite the fact that the play is set in a classical pagan play-world, the play is awash with biblical imagery. However, in Shakespeare’s pagan-cum-Christian play-world, water is associated with Jesus solely to emanate a sense of darkness and despair.

Ever since Chambers, in 1930, declared that *Timon of Athens* as we have it in the First Folio is both unfinished and unperformed, other critics, such as Una Ellis-Fermor, have taken this position (Chambers *William* 480-4; Ellis-Fermor 270-83). Ellis-Fermor saw it as an incomplete experiment with structure; E. A. J. Honigmann (writing twenty years later) viewed it as a “very nearly finished” experiment with genre (as “something other than the regular tragedy”) (Ellis-Fermor 275; Honigmann 20). In 2008, Anthony B. Dawson and Gretchen E. Minton returned to and expanded upon the unfinished play theory. Pointing out that John Heminge and Henry Condell did not “seem to have intended at first to include *Timon of Athens*” in the First Folio (the play was inserted as a replacement for *Troilus and Cressida* when this play was “temporarily withdrawn from the volume” probably because there was “trouble over the copyright”), they argue “that *Timon* is both co-authored [with Thomas Middleton] and unfinished” because only these two things together “can explain all the peculiarities of the play as we have it in the First Folio” (10 nt.1, 10-11). Honigmann

points out, however, that “the state of the Folio text” does not eliminate the possibility that a “cleaner and final fair copy blessed with the author’s approval” once existed (19-20). On the other hand, Lewis Walker reads the play as a (finished) allegory for the operation of the goddess Fortune, which necessitates “a mingling of allegorical and naturalistic elements which is disconcerting for the modern reader” (577). Anne Lancashire also views the play as complete; she argues that many of its problems (“the lack of characterization, the name labels, the ‘irrelevant’ III. v, the episodic nature of the action, the bit parts ... the lack of complex imagery ... and the [play’s] unusual shortness”) cease to be problems if the play is interpreted as a “moral exemplum” or “kind of morality drama” (44).

Most editors of *Timon of Athens* locate its composition date between 1605 and 1608, which places it just before, or on the cusp of, the opening of Blackfriars.<sup>59</sup> Although we have no contemporary evidence that the play was performed during Shakespeare’s lifetime, as Katherine Maus points out, “such firm evidence is often lacking in the scanty surviving documents: the record is similarly silent on such plays as *As You Like It*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *All’s Well That Ends Well*, and *Anthony and Cleopatra*” (Maus 2251). John Jowett contends that the play was written for performance at the Globe, but prefers not to imply “any judgement as to whether that expectation was fulfilled” (11). Alternatively, Honigmann and Muriel Bradbrook speculate that, rather than the Globe, the play may have been intended for an indoor venue: Honigmann tentatively places it at Inns of Court venues (Honigmann 14, 18; Bradbrook 83-103). Despite the detractors, the debate in this chapter assumes that the play as it has come down to us, or one very similar to it, was both written

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<sup>59</sup> *The Norton Shakespeare* suggests a date of composition of between 1605 and 1608; *The Arden Shakespeare*’s edition of the play suggests 1607 or “a little earlier”; *The RSC Shakespeare* cautiously suggests a date between 1604 and 1606; and *The Riverside Shakespeare* conjectures a date between 1605 and 1608. Norton 2247; Arden 12; RSC 1748; Riverside 1490.

for and performed at the Globe, where its prominent water-related rituals and imagery would have resonated with particular force.

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Elyot explained that man's complexion was made up of

a combination of two diuers qualities of the foure elements in one body, as hoat and drye of the fyre, hoat and moiste of the aire, cold and moist of the water, cold & drye of the earth. But although all these complexions be assembled in euery body of man and woman, yet the body taketh his denomination of those qualities which abound in him, more than in the other" (B2r).

During the first section of *Timon of Athens*, Timon is pre-eminently associated with "cold and moist" water and early modern humoralists are likely to have used these clues to identify him as a character with a "fleumatike" complexion (Elyot B2v). During the second section of the play, Timon is pre-eminently associated with the "cold & drye" earth and this in turn would have identified him as "Melancholike," or one "ouer whom the earth has dominion" (Elyot B3r).

During Timon's "fleumatike" period, his vaults weep, visitors "flood" to him and "[r]ain sacrificial whisperings in his ear" (2.2.154, 1.1.42, 82). The Second Lord describes how Timon "pours" out kindness and at the first banquet he calls for the health to "flow this way, my good lord" (1.1.275, 1.2.53). As Timon's finances deteriorate, those around him speak of his extravagance in terms of a rampaging flood. The Senator complains about Timon's "raging waste" and twice predicts that Timon's defences (or estate) "cannot hold" (2.1.4, 12). Even when Timon's fortunes begin to fail and his false friends reject him, the

recklessly generous benefactor remains convinced that his “fortunes ’mong his friends” could never “sink” (2.2.224-5).<sup>60</sup> Timon’s faithful steward, Flavius, describes his master’s extravagance in terms of a flood of water, or “a flow of riot” and reminds his employer that “many times” he warned him about the “ebb of [his] estate/And [his] great flow of debts” (2.2.3, 2.2.127-37). Although, of course, Shakespeare is writing in metaphors here, early moderns, who would have been very familiar with the theory of the elements, were likely to have translated these watery metaphors into signs of a “fleumatike” complexion (Elyot B2v). After all, the signs offered in dietaries and medical texts to identify each complexion were not necessarily concrete concepts. Signs of a “fleumatike” complexion, for example, included “Dreames of things watrie or fishe,” “Slownesse,” “Dulnesse in learning,” and “Spettle white, abundant, and thick” (Elyot B2v). As we will see below, Timon’s water banquet represents a turning point in his complexion because thereafter his complexion transforms from “fleumatike” to “Melancholike” (Elyot B2v-B3r).

Shakespeare stages two banquets in this play; Timon hosts them both. The first is an elaborate affair designed to demonstrate Timon’s pre-eminence within Athens’ gift-giving culture. It begins with “*loud music*” and then a “*great banquet [is] served in*” (1.2.1). Shakespeare’s man of water not only “pours ... out” kindness during the “happy hours” at this banquet, but he also leaks tears (1.1.275, 3.2.5-6). He admits that “joy’s e’en made away ere’t can be born: mine eyes cannot hold out water” (1.2.99). Apemantus attempts to warn Timon that his guests are fair-weather friends, but Timon remains convinced that gift

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<sup>60</sup> Lewis Walker interprets the play as an allegory of Fortune’s operation, which portrays Timon as a study of what it means to be loved and then abandoned by this goddess. Walker argues that Timon’s belief that his ‘fortunes ’mong his friends can [never] sink’ is a reference to ‘sliding backwards down Fortune’s hill (the hill is mentioned in the Poet’s allegory of Fortune in the first scene of the play). I am not convinced by Walker’s argument here, chiefly because one does not sink down a hill. *Tim* 2.2.225; Walker 593-4.

giving and hospitality will always be reciprocated among friends: “the gods themselves have provided that I shall have much help from you. How had you been my friends else?” (1.2.84-6). However, as we discover very early in the play and as his steward has often warned him, Timon’s beneficence has emptied his “coffer[s]” (1.2.188). Timon’s feast-time tears may be genuine, but they only flow because his judgement is flawed and he has been too dull to learn the lessons that his steward and Apemantus have tried to teach him about his “great flow of debts” and his poor choice of friends (2.2.137). Appropriately enough, as we have seen, “[d]ullness in learning” was believed to be a sign of a “fleumatike” complexion (B2v).

Watery Timon not only excretes tears, but, at his water (or second) banquet, he also sprinkles spittle. At this banquet, “*Servants [enter] with covered dishes*” and this level of culinary pomp leads Timon’s guests to imagine that they are soon to be served “Royal cheer” (3.7.44, 46). The now impoverished Timon says grace. He begins in an authentic manner, “You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with thankfulness,” but soon degenerates into abuse: “For these my present friends, as they are to me nothing, so in nothing bless them; and to nothing are they welcome. –Uncover, dogs, and lap” (3.7.65-77). The dishes are uncovered to reveal the water inside and Timon continues railing at his guests:

May you a better Feast never behold,  
 You knot of mouth-friends. Smoke and lukewarm water  
 Is your perfection. This is Timons last,  
 Who, stuck and spangled with your flattery,<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Here the *Norton Facsimile First Folio* has “This is Timons last,/ Who stucke and spangled you with Flatteries.” Hinman 705.

Washes it off, and sprinkles in your faces

Your reeking villany.

*[He throws water in their faces]*<sup>62</sup>

Live loathed and long,

Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,

Courteous destroyers, affable Wolves, meek Bears,

You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time's flies,

Cap-and-knee slaves, vapours, and minute-jacks! (3.7.80-89)

As this shows, Timon's anti-grace contains a proliferation of words beginning or ending with the consonant "s" (slaves, friends, bless, dogs, Timon's); s-sounding alliterations (sprinkle and society, stuck and spangled, smiling and smooth); and groups of words that begin and end, or end and begin, with "s" (mouth-friends and smoke, sprinkles and faces, smiling and parasites, and trencher-friends and time's flies). When spoken loudly, as they would have been on the early modern stage, these tongue-twisting alliterations would have both evoked an image of water ("You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with thankfulness") and materially produced it (in the form of spittle). It would be difficult for any speaker, let alone a supposedly "fleumatike" one with an abundance of thick and white "Spettle," not to sprinkle those around him with spittle as he enunciated these lines. It is possible, of course, that players straining to deliver their lines loudly enough for an audience to hear in noisy early modern playhouses often found themselves expelling spittle.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> None of the stage direction quoted in this scene are in the *Norton Facsimile First Folio*. Hinman 705.

<sup>63</sup> This also happens on the modern stage, of course. In the recent production of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (2012), during act 3 scene 2 (in which Ferdinand confronts his sister about Antonio) there was so much spittle in the air that Eve Best, who played the Duchess, had to wipe her face surreptitiously at various points during the action.

Nevertheless, Shakespeare slips his protagonist into a god-like role by designing language that specifically triggers a physiological enactment of what Timon asks his gods to provide (to “sprinkle [his] society”). When these lines were delivered in daylight on a thrust stage in a compact public playhouse, playgoers were unlikely to have missed the irony of this linguistic effect.

Timon also resorts to other forms of sprinkling during this scene. His lines “This is Timons last,/Who, stuck and spangled with your flattery,/Washes it off, and sprinkles in your faces/Your reeking villainy” and “Soft, take thy physic first,” imply that he dips his hands into the dishes of water on his table and sprinkles his guests from that source as well (3.7.82-85, 3.7.92). Like the gods, Shakespeare appears to say, Timon also sprinkles.

Not only do Timon’s watery seepages physiologically transform him into a god-like figure, but he is also elevated to a god-like status by presuming to lecture his gods as equals: “For your own gifts make yourselves praised; but reserve still to give, lest your deities be despised. Lend to each man enough that one need not lend to another; for were your godheads to borrow of men, men would forsake the gods” (3.7.66-69). Timon’s advice is directed both at the gods and at himself, a doubling that further equates him with his “great benefactors.” Like the gods, Timon believed he was “born to do benefits”; like the gods, Timon has been praised for his gifts; but like him, he warns the gods, men will forsake them in their time of need (1.2.95, 3.7.65-9).

If we transfer Timon’s actions from a pagan to a Christian framework, however, then his association with water during the first half of the play makes it difficult *not* to read his water banquet as a parody of the Eucharist ritual initiated by Jesus at the Last Supper. Of course, I am not the first critic to read this scene in this way; Clifford Davidson, Frank

Kermode, and Anne Lancashire all describe it as “kind of parody” of the Last Supper (Kermode 1491; Lancashire 42; Davidson 190,195-6). However, although these critics spot the parody, they do not expand their discussion much beyond this point. I hope to show that that by associating Timon with water, Shakespeare deepens and darkens his imitation to such a degree that a Christian ritual signifying redemption and the hope for everlasting life is inverted to create a play that eliminates both hope of and desire for redemption in his protagonist.

Lest there be any doubt that Shakespeare intended Timon’s water banquet to function in this way, he uses his protagonist to stress the point. At the feast, the host tells his guests that “[t]his is Timon’s last” (3.7.82). The material presence of water onstage is at the very heart of Shakespeare’s parody. Other commentators disagree with me, however. Steve Mentz, for example, contends that the water in this scene “represents that which cannot be falsified, cannot mean anything other than what it means, and therefore cannot satisfy courtiers” (91). I suggest, given the extremely complex nature of water and the way in which Shakespeare uses this particular element to initiate a sequence of biblical parodies in this play, that Mentz’s reading is too shallow.

Even without the connection between Timon and water, the presence of water onstage at Timon’s “last” supper resonates with the preparations that Jesus and his disciples made for their Passover meal. In the Bible, Jesus instructs Peter and John to prepare the meal in a room in a city house that they would find by meeting and following “a man carrying a jar of water” (Luke 22:10). When they arrive at the house, Peter and John are instructed to ask the householder to direct them to the room in which the “Teacher” is to eat the Passover with his “disciples” (Luke 22:11). Shakespeare takes this image of water as

a sign of fellowship around which a group of trusted disciple could gather safely with their “Teacher” and inverts it in *Timon of Athens*. At Timon’s “last” supper, a group of once trusted, but now despised, followers gather around their former leader and his water dishes. Rather than gathering in fellowship, however, Timon’s guests gather in the mistaken belief that they can bleed their host for more gifts.

Secondly, during the Last Supper, Jesus uses water in a washing ceremony designed to teach equality and reciprocity to his disciples. Jesus pours water into a basin, washes his disciples’ feet, and says, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you” (Luke 22:7-13, John 13: 5-15). At Timon’s first, or “*great*,” banquet, he reiterates these sentiments to his guests: “[w]e are born to do benefits,” he tells them, “O, what a precious comfort ‘tis to have so many like brothers commanding one another’s fortunes!” (1.2.95-8). By the time that Timon serves his “last” supper, however, he has lost his zeal for teaching and for sharing. The water that his servants bring onstage in “*covered dishes*” mocks Jesus’ foot-washing water and the example he set during his Last Supper (3.7.44). Rather than preaching fellowship, Timon’s grace castigates his “like brothers,” or disciples, for being “smiling, smooth, detested parasites” (1.2.98, 3.7.86). Rather than advocating generosity, Timon lectures his gods to be prudent: “For your own gifts make yourselves praised; but reserve still to give, lest your deities be despised” (3.7.66-7).

In addition to using water to invert aspects of the Last Supper, Shakespeare initiates a Eucharistic motif during Timon’s first banquet that spills over into his “last” supper. When Timon invites Apemantus to his first feast, the philosopher declines on the basis that he “eat[s] not lords” (1.1.206). Despite his reluctance to metaphorically consume his host

(surely an allusion to consuming Christ's body during the Eucharist ceremony), Apemantus attends the feast primarily, it would seem, to point out the quasi-cannibalistic and, in a Christian frame, quasi-Eucharistic behaviour of his fellow guests: "O you gods, what a number of men eats Timon, and he sees 'em not! It grieves me to see so many dip their meat in one man's blood; and all the madness is, he cheers them up, too" (1.2.38-41).<sup>64</sup>

The slippage between Timon and Jesus continues into Timon's "last" supper. This time, however, water, rather than "blood," represents the host's body. Because Shakespeare has fashioned Timon into a man of water, the act of serving and distributing water at his "last" supper metaphorically equates to the division and distribution of his body for consumption by his followers during the Eucharist. At Jesus' Last Supper, he blesses bread, breaks it, and tells his disciples, "Take, eat; this is my body" (Matt. 26:26). At Timon's "last" supper, he says grace (blesses the food), splashes the water (or breaks his body), and tells his guests to drink (or eat) him: "Uncover, dogs, and lap" (3.7.77). For modern playgoers, this slippage can only really operate in the realms of metaphor. However, for early moderns, who viewed a "fleumatike" complexion as one in which the element of water literally dominated a person's physiology, the slippage may have operated on a much more complex and corporeal basis.

Coming together to eat with the spectre of betrayal hovering in the air is, of course, another theme that links Jesus' Last and Timon's "last" suppers. There can be little doubt that Apemantus' words at Timon's first feast, "It grieves me to see so many dip their meat in one man's blood," are designed to recall Jesus' prediction at the Last Supper that "[h]e who

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<sup>64</sup> Catholics believed that the bread and the wine of communion literally transformed (or transubstantiated) into the body and blood of Jesus. Protestants, by comparison, understood the ritual to work on a symbolic, rather than literal, basis. Thus, as we have seen in Chapter 2, Protestants accused Roman Catholics of Eucharistic cannibalism.





paralleled in a secular play, since it is concerned with worldly goods as a snare for men's souls" (37).

I suggest, however, that Shakespeare's blatant inversion of key biblical narratives and his heavy-handed repetitions of "denied," which Lancashire does not mention, make it abundantly clear that *Timon of Athens'* play-world is secular only in a very token way and at its heart it remains Christian. Much as Shakespeare's Rome represents and comments upon Shakespeare's London, so Shakespeare's pagan represents and comments upon Shakespeare's Christian. In fact, in addition to offering dark parodies of the Last Supper, the Eucharist, and Peter's denial of Jesus, Shakespeare uses Christian theology at other points in the play to infuse his protagonist with a sense of bleak hopelessness.

At the conclusion of Timon's first banquet, for example, Apemantus warns Timon once more about his extravagance. Timon tells him to go and return "with better music" (1.2.243). Apemantus replies, "So. Thou wilt not hear me now, thou shalt not then. I'll lock thy heaven from thee" (1.2.243-5). Many editors of the play interpret this as meaning that Apemantus will remove his "redemptive guidance" from Timon (*Norton* 1.2.245; *Arden* 1.2.255; *RSC* 1.2.237). More literally, though, the words, like the action of the play, once more emphasise that the possibility of redemption has been removed from Timon's grasp. Pointedly, these Christian concepts, heaven and the notion of redemption, are extolled by a pagan character in a pagan play-world. Yet more Christian still are Flavius' words, which he delivers after Timon has left Athens and his household has been broken up: "My dearest lord, blessed to be most accursed,/Rich only to be wretched, thy great fortunes/Are made thy chief afflictions" (4.2.42-4). Flavius' apparent prayer not only evokes images of Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion ("My dearest lord, blessed to be most accursed"), but it also extends

the slippage between Timon and Jesus because “My dearest lord” could, of course, refer to both. However, Timon’s accursedness, unlike Jesus’, offers redemption to no one, least of all himself.

With the concept of redemption in mind, I would like to return to the conclusion of Timon’s anti-grace: “For these my present friends, as they are to me nothing, so in nothing bless them; and to nothing are they welcome. –Uncover, dogs, and lap” (3.7.75-77). The “nothing” that Timon offers his “present friends” does not equate, as some commentators suggest, to water instead of food. Firstly, because, as we have seen, early moderns treated water as food. Secondly, and more importantly, Timon delivers his anti-grace while operating as a parody of Jesus during a scene that parodies the Last Supper. When viewed in this light, Timon’s “nothing” stretches beyond culinary and financial considerations to embrace theological concerns. In John’s Gospel, Jesus says, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh ... he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (6:51-4). Timon’s “nothing” effectively nullifies the promise in these words. At their “last day,” neither Timon (the living water) nor the quasi-Christian play-world population will achieve redemption or eternal life in heaven. In place of eternity, Timon offers his guests “nothing.” In an extraordinarily bleak scene, Shakespeare removes the hope of, even desire for, salvation from his Jesus-like character and condemns the entire play-world population to nothingness. Shakespeare’s inversions of this fundamental Christian narrative must have delivered a dark and troubling message to his predominantly fundamentalist Christian audience. Water is located at the centre of this dismal abyss.

Timon's "last" supper is structurally as well as theologically important to the play.<sup>67</sup>

It works as point of transition for Timon and as a hinge between the two diametrically opposed halves of the play. After his "last" supper, the bitter, cursing, and naked Timon turns his back on Athens and removes to the woods to become an embittered and melancholy man of the earth. According to the theory of the elements, this makes sense. Bulleyn wrote that of the "foure Elementes," earth was "the heuist [heaviest] matter & grossest, whiche [was] colde and drie, and melancoly" (Fol. x). Water, by comparison, was "more lighter then earth, heuier then fire and ayre" (Bulleyn Fol. cii). It is entirely appropriate, then, that as Timon sinks into melancholy he becomes associated with the melancholy earth. Rather than hunting for plants or fruits growing above the ground, or eating the meddler that Apemantus offers him, Timon lives in the gross earth (in a cave) and for food he calls upon the earth to "yield [him] roots" (4.3.1, 23). Timon's earth-dwelling hell mirrors the apparent change in his complexion, from one "wherein water hath preheminance" ("fleumatike") to one in which earth "hath dominton" ("Melancholike") (Elyot B2v–B3r). Humoralists would also have recognised that Timon's diet was likely to have increased his melancholic condition. Bulleyn warned that "herbes puls, and rootes bee all wyndye, [and] engēderers of melancholly" (Fol. lxxviii). In *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton advised that "if there be an hell vpon earth, it is to be found in a Melancholy mans heart" (273).

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<sup>67</sup> Dawson and Minton divide act 3 scene 7 between Middleton and Shakespeare. They suggest that the "opening sequence with the gathering lords is most likely Shakespeare's .... The central section, the mock banquet, is certainly Shakespeare's ... [and the] last part of the scene, following Timon's exit (105-end), seems to have been added by Middleton, perhaps to provide some time before Timon's re-entry outside the walls of Athens at the beginning of 4.1." Dawson and Minton 406.

The irony is, of course, that while digging for roots, Timon digs up the “root of all evils”: gold. Timon’s harvest clearly satirises the oft (mis)quoted line from the Bible “the love of money is the root of all evils” (I Timothy 6:10). Because he no longer loves it nor has any use for it, Timon regards the earth-dwelling, wood-based gold as passive and impotent and tells the visiting Apemantus that it “sleeps and does no hirèd harm” (4.3.292). Timon comes to realize, however, that gold can purchase revenge and so he uses it to do as much “hirèd harm” as he can muster. He, for example, hires the prostitutes Phrynia and Timandra to spread a plague of syphilis: “Do you damn others, and let this [gold] damn you;/ And ditches grave you all” (4.3.164-5). Timon, then, uses gold dug up *from* the earth to spread a plague *over* the earth in order to put Athenians *into* the earth long before their time.

When we bear in mind the way that the element of water and then the element of earth dominate Timon’s complexion, it is entirely appropriate that he digs his grave on the cusp of the sea where water and earth meet: “where the light foam of the sea may beat/ [his] gravestone daily” (4.3.371-2). Shakespeare sourced Timon’s burial site from Plutarch’s *Lives* (Thomas North translated the text in 1579), in which Timon’s narrative is embedded into the *Life of Marcus Antonius*. Plutarch wrote that Timon “died in the city of Hales, and was buried upon the sea side. Now it chanced so, that, the sea getting in, it compassed his tomb round about, that no man could come to it” (265). In Shakespeare, Timon’s resting place is reported to the Athenians by a soldier who tells them that “Timon is dead,/Entombed upon the very hem o’th sea” (5.5.66-7). William Pool contends that Timon selects this site for his grave because it offers the “least solid place he can think of for his everlasting mansion” (209). I suggest that, by this point in the play, Timon has already eliminated hope for all things everlasting and that, instead, the site of his grave relates to

the makeup of his complexion. Timon, whose complexion has switched from “fleumatike” to “Melancholike,” buries himself (a neat trick that Shakespeare does not explain) at a spot where water and earth will battle eternally. Curiously, his servants seem to predict his final resting place when they describe him in these same bipolar terms at the point of his financial demise. On the one hand, the servants imagine themselves standing on “the dying deck” of a leaking “barque”; on the other hand, they describe Timon’s fortunes as “buried” and him as “thrown into his grave” (4.2 19-20,.9-10).

Timon’s gravesite may have had particular significance for playgoers who watched the play at the marsh-dwelling Globe playhouse. Archaeological excavations at the Globe site have discovered evidence “of mixed deposition of waterlaid material and what appeared to be efforts at reclamation over the site before its use as a playhouse” (Bowsher and Miller 88). In fact, Matthew Steggle describes reclaimed land on the Southbank as “liminal” because “it was land where water ought to be” (75). Perhaps, then, as they heard Timon’s final resting place described onstage, playgoers at the Globe may have cast a rueful glance the yard’s waterlogged ground that also stood at the “very hem o’” water—although, insofar as the Globe was concerned, it was river water rather than seawater (5.5.67). The Globe’s water-based liminality interacts with Timon’s betwixt and between resting place and the theme of water out of place connects playhouse, playgoers, and play.

In both *Edward II* and *Timon of Athens*, water inverts rituals. For both titular protagonists, the material presence of water onstage signifies the absence of hope. For Edward II, though, the hopelessness is earthbound; there is no suggestion that the channel water, which is brought onstage to exemplify and punish his misrule (at least until a greater punishment is levied), is designed to nullify his hope for heaven-based redemption. In *Timon*

*of Athens*, however, Shakespeare's message is much darker and bleaker. Like Edward II, Timon's own actions collapse his affluent rule. Like Edward II, Timon's water signifies the distance he has fallen. Unlike Edward II, however, Timon's water engages with and overturns key Christian narratives and, in doing so, appears to remove all hope for redemption from all the play-world characters, but especially from Shakespeare's parody of Jesus who dies, his gravestone tells us, a "wretched soul bereft" (5.5.73).

## Chapter 4

### **Transgressing Cooks in Philip Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* and John Fletcher's *The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy***

One of the first literary genres to be printed was cookery books. However, the evolution of the printed cookery book brought with it anonymity for many of the cooks whose culinary wonders (and medical remedies) made these books desirable. For a period of about one hundred and fifty years, between 1500 and c. 1650, cooks were pushed to the margins of the print world and only permitted occasional imperative utterances (take this or “boile” that) in their texts. This marginal status was mirrored on the stage, where dramatists normally refused cook characters entry to their play-worlds (except during brief and occasional moments of comic relief) and, instead, banished them to imaginary offstage

kitchens. In the printed medium, very few cooks gained autonomy over their recipe collections before the middle of the seventeenth century. On the early seventeenth-century stage, playwrights began to experiment by occasionally staging significant cook characters.

This chapter will discuss two such cooks: Furnace in Philip Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* and the unnamed master cook in John Fletcher's *The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy*. Having taken the decision to pluck cook characters from obscurity, both Massinger and Fletcher emphasize the culinary expertise of their respective gastronomic geniuses. Fletcher, however, takes this celebration of expertise further than Massinger does by counterbalancing it with quasi-worship of scientific (mathematical and astrological) endeavour. Both play-world societies are in a state of flux and uncertainty and this offers these cooks, and astrologers, an opportunity to misuse their arsenal of expertise in order to misdirect matters that should lie considerably beyond their sphere of influence. Both playwrights, then, individuate cooks in order to demonstrate the threat that lower-order expertise poses to societies that have lost the ability to contain the influence of such potentially transgressive characters. Given the fact that both of these cooks are complex and influential figures in their respective play-worlds and given the fact that dramatic cook characters, genius or otherwise, were a rarity on the early modern stage, it is curious that, unlike Ursula, neither of these cooks have attracted much critical attention.

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Pre-printing era cooks circulated their recipes either aurally or in manuscript form and, thus, were able to maintain the relationship between product and producer. The oldest extant manuscript cookery book written in English (c. 1390) is *The Forme of Cury*.<sup>68</sup> Because

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<sup>68</sup> *Le Viandier de Taillevent* was a French cookery book contemporary to *The Forme of Cury*. It too was written by a cook, Guillaume Tirel or Taillevent. He "was probably born about 1310 and died in 1395. He

the manuscript form of this cookery book makes editorial (although not, necessarily, scribal) intervention unlikely, it may contain the oldest extant words written by an English cook (see Figure 11). The proem proclaims that the *Forme of Cury* “was compiled of the chef Maister Cokes of kyng Richard the Secunde kyng of .nglond [England] aftir the Conquest. the which was acounted pe best and ryallest vyand of alle esten .ynges [Christian kings] and it was compiled by assent and avyement of Maisters and phisik and of philosophie pat dwellid in his court” (37).<sup>69</sup> As the proem makes clear, the dishes in this recipe collection were concocted to grace the table of a king who was considered to be the premier gourmet among Christian Kings. It should not surprise us, therefore, that this cookery book and its French contemporary *Le Viandier de Taillevent* were prestigious items in their own right and circulated at the very top of European society: *Le Viandier de Taillevent* was “probably written for Charles V” (Prescott vii). *The Forme of Cury*’s elite status continued down the centuries; Samuel Pegge claimed that the source manuscript for his 1780 edition of this cookery book was “the identical Roll which was presented to Queen Elizabeth, in the 28<sup>th</sup> year of her reign” (15). Despite the fact that the authors of *The Forme of Cury* remain nameless, their voices and authority are very much present in this early recipe collection.

The evolution of print effectively silenced cooks’ voices and erased their authority. In fact, most English cookery books printed between 1500 and c. 1650 were edited and/or compiled by non-cooks. John Partridge (who published *The Tresurie of Commodious Conceits, and Hidden Secrets* and *The Widowes Treasure*) generally wrote “romantic

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started as a ‘kitchen boy’ under Charles IV, rose to ‘first cook of the king’ under Charles V, and eventually became ‘master of the kitchen stores of the king’ under Charles VI.” *Le Viandier de Taillevent* was probably written for Charles V between 1373 and 1380 .... It rapidly became the authority on culinary matters. When printing was introduced it went through at least 15 editions between about 1490 and 1604. It was not the first cookbook written in French, but it was the earliest successful one.” Prescott vii.

<sup>69</sup> Spaces were left in this manuscript for the initial words, which were “intended to be afterwards written in red ink”: as, for example, “.nglond” and “.ynges.” Pegge 43 nt. 1 and nt. 6 see fig. 1.

'histories' in verse" (Holman 3). Gervase Markham (who published a great many texts including *The English Hovse-vvife*) was the third son from a noble family in decline and spent some nine years working as a husbandman (Best xi-xv). Sir Hugh Plat (whose books include *Delights for Ladies* and *Sundry New and Artificial Remedies against Famine*) was a courtier, inventor, and writer. *A Newv Boke of Cookerie* was "set forth" by I.M. (John Murrell) who described himself as "a Traueller" on the title page. In addition, a great many cookery books were published anonymously. Wynkyn de Worde printed *The Boke of Cokery* (1500) and *The Boke of Keruyng* (1508) and in neither does he acknowledge the cook behind the recipes. This printer, in fact, inserted his own voice where, perhaps, a cook may have found space for a word or two by inserting an in-house formatted introduction. *The Boke of Cokery* opens with "Here begynneth a noble boke of festes ryalle and cokery a boke for a pryncis household"; *The Boke of Keruyng* opens with "Here begynneth the boke of keruyng and sewyng/ and all the feestes in the yere for the seruyce of a prynce or any other estate." In so many cases, then, the act of translating recipes into print pushed cooks beyond the margins of their own creations.<sup>70</sup>

By the middle of the seventeenth century, however, cooks had begun to regain the literary spotlight. Robert May, a cook who trained and cooked in the kitchens of French and English noblemen, printed *The Accomplisht Cook* (1660), which was the first English cookery book printed in folio format. Giles Rose, whose title page told his readers that he was "one of the Master Cooks in His Majesties [Charles II] Kitchen," printed *A Perfect School of Instructions for the Officers of the Mouth* (1682). In addition, during the 1670s and 1680s

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<sup>70</sup> Thomas Dawson (who published *The Good Husvifes Iewell* parts one and two) may be an exception to this norm. He "may have been a steward or a master cook" but he also "may have been a great man's gardener." It is possible, therefore, that he composed the recipes that were printed under his name. (Black ix).

Hannah Woolley published *The Cook's Guide*, *The Ladies Directory*, *The Queen-like Closet*, *The Gentlewomans Companion*, *The Accomplish'd Ladys Delight*, *The Compleat Servant-Maid*, and *The Ladies Delight*. In *A Supplent to The Queen-like Closet*, Woolley emphasised her credentials by assuring her readers that she would only offer them remedies and recipes that she had "had many years Experience of, with good success" (Woolley, To the Reader Av). As if to emphasise the sea change that had taken place around the cook-author, the commercially savvy Woolley included her name or initials some nine times in this particular text and, rather than allowing her essence to be distilled out of her printed product, she used her cookery book to open a door to her material presence and to her site of production. Woolley gave her address so that, should her readers have wished to do so, they could purchase "*several Remedies for several Distempers* [directly from her], *at reasonable Rates*" (Supplement A6r-A6v).

Picture removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 11. Recipe for "Furmete with porpeys" from *The Forme of Cury*  
<http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/inthebigynnyng/manuscript/ms7/>

Although Woolley directed her advice at both male and female cooks (cooks in aristocratic households were still, however, almost exclusively male), the attributes and

skills that she claimed a cook should possess echoed those described by her cook-*cum*-author predecessors from Richard II's kitchens. Woolley told her readers that cooks

ought to be very well skill'd in all manner of things both Fish and Flesh, also good at Pastry business, seasoning of all things, and knowing all kinds of Sauces, and pickling of all manner of Pickles, in making all manner of Meat Jellies; also very frugal of their Lords or of their Masters, Ladies or Mistresses Purse, very saving, cleanly and careful, obliging to all persons, kind to those under them, and willing to inform them, quiet in their Office, not swearing nor cursing, nor wrangling, but silently and ingeniously to do their Business, and neat and quick about it; they ought also to have a very good Fancy: such an one, whether Man or Woman, deserves the title of a fit Cook. (*Queen-like Closet* 332-3)

Woolley expected cooks to be "neat and quick"; Richard II's "Maister Cokes" expected no "taryyng." Woolley expected cooks to "ingeniously ... do their Business"; Richard II's "Maister Cokes" made dishes "craftly" (Woolley, *Queen-like Closet* 333; *Forme of Cury* 37). The role of cooks, then, had changed very little, but, after a gap of nearly three-hundred years, they had finally regained the literary spotlight.

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What, then, do the words of Richard II's cooks tell us about the medieval and early modern cook's domain? Bridget Henisch has examined the representations of medieval cooks in manuscript borders and in carvings and has concluded that "cooks were exceedingly cross and their kitchens in perpetual uproar" (59). Loath as I am to disagree with the wonderful Henisch, *The Forme of Cury* actually created an impression of a kitchen

where efficiency and speed were the order of the day. The cooks told their readers that the recipes were “sette here by noumbre and by ordre. sso pis little table here sewyng [showing or following] wole teche a man with oute taryyng: to fynde what meete pat hym lust for to have” (37). Clearly, if the lusting subject happened to be your monarch, it would be in any cook’s best interests to avoid “taryying.” However, the use of “lust” also implied that the motivation for culinary choices in Richard II’s court oscillated between rational dining (recipes were compiled “by assent and avysement of Maisters and phisik and of philosophie pat dwellid in his court”) and carnal desire (37). This cookery book implied, therefore, that desire required order to speedily satisfy it and that dishes were produced in a kitchen where well-ordered cooks curtailed any “taryying.”

In addition to being well ordered and efficient, Richard’s cooks were also crafty and cunning and proud of it. These cooks told their readers that their cookery book would teach them how to make “commune potages and commune meetis for howshold as pey shold be made craftly and holsomly. Aftirward it techip for to make curious potages & meetes and sotiltees” (37). The epithet “cunning” or “crafty” was attached to the noun “cook” quite frequently during the early modern period. Cunning could imply that the cook was economical. In Nicholas Breton’s *Conceyted Letters*, for example, a son advised his father that “a cunning Cooke” would be able to “make a rich servise of small cost” (*A letter written from an olde man* E4r). It could also reflect the cook’s ability to artfully concoct curious dishes, or to use their art to “counterfeit” nature: *The Forme of Cury’s* “curious ... sotiltees,” for example, or Giles Rose’s “counterfeit Strawberries,” which he advised his readers to

create from “massepain” (*Cury* 37; Rose 257).<sup>71</sup> Sometimes, of course, a cunning cook meant a devious one. A pamphlet entitled *The Lamentable Complaints of Hop the Brewer and Kilcalfe the Butcher* (1641) complained about cooks who sold dressed (or cooked) meat at exorbitant prices on Sundays (a fish day):

I will tell you what I have observed in some of these Cooks [complains Kilcalfe]. You should have a Cooke that upon Sundaies would dresse twice so much meat as upon ... [any] other day, and sell it three times as deare, for Sir his doore shall stand open all the service time, and any body may be suffered to come in (the Church Wardens excepted) ... the thine slices, which hee with much pollicy carveth from the spit ... hee will aske you eighteene pence of that which (on any other day) hee would take eight pence for. (A4r)

In addition, the craftiness and cunning of cooks had evoked trepidation since the classical period about the power that they wielded over human appetites. Muffett’s *Healths Improvement* reported that the “Romans once banished Physitians out of *Rome*, under pretence that physick druggs weakened the peoples stomacks: and Cooks, for corrupting and enforcing appetites with strange sawces and seasonings” (7). Medieval and early modern cooks, then, were a curious concoction of culinary artists, humoral experts, efficient taskmasters, savvy commercial operators, and, as we have seen in Chapter 2, because of their association with fire, devious devils.

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<sup>71</sup> Sotelties were figures and structures moulded from sugar paste, wax, or marchpane. They were set either individually or in pageants and scenes which decorated banqueting tables or were carried around between courses. John Partridge gives a recipe for the “Paste of Suger,” from which “a man may make all manner of fruites, and other fine things with their form, as platters, dishes, glasses, cuppes, and such like things, wherewith you may furnish a table: and when you have done, you may eate them vp. A pleasant thing for them that sit at the Table.” Partridge, *Treasurie* A8r –B1r.

It is curious, then, that these complex real-life characters rarely translated into fully-fledged dramatic characters. Despite the inordinate number (one hundred and fourteen, according to Meads) of banquets and feasts served onstage or imagined occurring just offstage, very few cooks made the transition from imaginary offstage producers to actual onstage characters during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (Meads 1). Shakespeare was, it seems, particularly loath to deal with cooks. Although Titus Andronicus and Timon of Athens are driven by dire circumstances to perform the role of cook and *Macbeth's* witches concoct potions in their cauldron, none of these characters are *bona fide* cooks (*Tit.* 5.2.203; *Tim* 3.5.14; *Mac.* 4.1). Where Shakespeare refused to go, however, other playwrights did occasionally venture. The remainder of this chapter will discuss the way in which Massinger and Fletcher drew on contemporary expectations of, and fears about, real cooks in order to create dynamic dramatic cooks that function as subversive agents in their respective play-worlds. Furnace's gastronomic power and physical presence transgress social boundaries, while the culinary artistry of Fletcher's cook is subverted by another's political agenda.

**Furnace's transgressions across social and spatial boundaries  
in Philip Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*:<sup>72</sup>**

In *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, Massinger creates an astonishingly brutal play-world in which aristocrats and members of the gentry are isolated, downtrodden, or ruthlessly banished from the stage by the machinations of the amoral merchant and usurer Overreach. This social vacuum creates a space onstage for Furnace, Lady Alworth's cook, to step into and, once there, he takes the opportunity to interact with his social superiors on a semi-

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<sup>72</sup> In order to avoid confusion and to fall into line with most modern editors and critics of this play, I have modernised the early modern spelling of character names that the Oxford edition uses: Louell (to Lovell), Overreach (to Overreach), and Ladie Alworth (to Lady Alworth).

equal footing. Massinger's decision to bring a non-deferential cook onstage, and to give him the space and agency to influence and interact with elite characters, represents a level of social overreaching equivalent to that of the playwright's arch-villain, Overreach. In fact, despite the fact that Overreach's *tour de force* ruthlessness has captured the attention of most critics who have written on this play, Overreach and Furnace represent a very similar threat to Massinger's play-world—that of the lower classes taking possession of spaces and prerogatives to which, the play contends, they have no inherited or moral right.

Massinger's viewpoint may have been the product of his upbringing. His father was house-steward to the second and third Earls of Pembroke.<sup>73</sup> It is quite possible, therefore, as Patricia Thomson posits, "that [Massinger] was brought up at Wilton [the Herbert's countryseat] before he was sent (according to the tradition at Pembroke's expense) to Oxford" (Thomson 176). The playwright's association with the Herbert household "gave him an opportunity not afforded to all the London dramatists: that of studying from within the lives of noblemen" (Thomson 176). Massinger, however, lived during a period of enormous social change as the rise of the merchant class during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries coincided with the decay of many old family estates. Thus, Massinger may also have witness from within the effect that this social change had on some old families.

Many critics interpret Overreach as an expression of Massinger's fear and mistrust of the emerging trading class. Michael Neill suggests, for example, that the "chain of debt created by Overreach's lending is one which seeks to override the traditional obligations of society, and to replace the patriarchal hierarchy with a vicious commercial autarchy,

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<sup>73</sup> Most critics agree that Philip Massinger's father held the position of steward in the Herbert household. Ira Clark, however, writes that Massinger's father "had long and faithfully attended the Herberts as a confidential agent, overseer, adviser, and member of parliament, presumably with their sponsorship." Clark 19.

governed by himself, the unfettered master of an anti-family of slaves" (198-9). Alan Gross contends, "[o]ne would be ill-advised ... to make light of Sir Giles Overreach. He is steeped in an evil of a ... serious sort, one which ... directly involves the ruin of others" (336-7).<sup>74</sup>

Although Margot Heinemann quite generously describes Massinger's outlook as "nostalgic" because it admires "essentially aristocratic" virtues, Gross, in a discussion on *The City Madam* and *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, contends that "Massinger is never unclear ... in his condemnation of the social and financial ambitions of the trading class" (Heinemann 214-5; Gross 342).<sup>75</sup> While Overreach overtly personifies Massinger's horror at the changes that were occurring at the top of his society, critics have overlooked the fact that Furnace, just as surely, demonstrates the consequences of social insurrection at the lower end.

Not content with staging a scurrilous merchant as a warning to the land-owning classes, Massinger also represents the extinction threat faced by this societal group by creating a play-world populated by a particularly small cast and from which aristocrats are virtually eliminated.<sup>76</sup> The *dramatis personae* consists of just three members of the lower

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<sup>74</sup> Nancy Leonard contends that the play is not a simple condemnation of the merchant class *per se*, and that the "dramatic conflict between the nobles and Sir Giles Overreach shows both sides to be victims and villains." Leonard 176.

<sup>75</sup> Ira Clark, however, adopts a different stance. Clark argues for "a new sociopolitical position for [Massinger]: one of accommodation based on an adherence to the tradition of the old hierarchy of inherited degree, patriarchy, and patronage, but mediated through a reforming emphasis on gratitude on the part of the patron as well as on the part of the dependent." According to Clark, then, Massinger was amenable to a form of social reform, as long as it was based on Christian values such as testing, forgiveness and reconciliation. I would suggest, however, that the threat posed to the old hierarchy in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* by Overreach's savage, brutal, and sadistic behaviour nullifies the possibility that such an accommodation could possibly be reached within this play-world. Clark.9.

<sup>76</sup> Edwards and Gibson claim that a likely composition date for *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* is mid-summer 1625 (273-5). In that year, as Frank Percy Wilson points out, London was in the grip of one of the worse outbreaks of plague that it had known. If Massinger composed the play with a view to performing it on tour in the provinces, as Edwards and Gibson posit, then it is possible that he wrote the play with a small cast for practical and artistic reasons. Supporting this argument is the fact that "[s]atirical comedies with a provincial setting are rare, and *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* is very markedly set in the Nottinghamshire countryside" (Edwards and Gibson 276). Moreover, "the Lady Elizabeth's men were at Nottingham in 1623-4,

aristocracy (Lord Lovell, Lady Alworth, and her stepson Tom Alworth), a financially embarrassed member of the gentry (Welborne), and three members of the emerging merchant class (Sir Giles Overreach, his daughter Margaret, and Greedy a Justice of the Peace). Apart from a parson, the other characters are members of the lower orders (servants, lowly merchants, an alehouse keeper, and his wife). In addition to this aristocratic wasteland, victims of Overreach's "darke,/And crooked wayes" hover like ghosts at the periphery of the play-world: Lord and Lady Downefalne and a "poore farmer" have all been utterly ruined by Overreach and "master *Frugall*" is Overreach's current target (4.1.136-7, 2.1.7-8, 2.1.26-42). Although these unfortunates are discussed, they are never seen.

The two aristocrats who are flourishing (Lord Lovell and Lady Alworth) are so isolated that they end up marrying each other almost, one feels, through a lack of other options: they are the only characters in the play whose "yeares," "states," and "births" are equal, or at least not "vnequall" (5.1.62). The population of Massinger's play-world offers a stark warning to the members of his elite audiences (the title pages of Massinger's plays show that most of his plays were performed at the Phoenix or at Blackfriars) about the threat posed to them by the excesses of the merchant class.

Overreach envisions a world in which members of the elite serve his purposes, or are destroyed, and he delights in driving those that he has destroyed to "kneele" to him as "bond-slaues":

I will haue [Margaret] well attended [he tells his servant, Marrall], there are  
Ladies

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and it is just possible that their successors were there in 1625" (Edwards and Gibson 276). On the other hand, as Wilson plausibly argues, "[f]ew of the companies travelled in the country during the summer [of 1625], for few towns or villages would have admitted them" (170). Edwards and Gibson 273-292; Wilson, F.P. 129-175.

Of errant Knights decay'd, and brought so low,  
 That for cast clothes, and meate, will gladly serue her.  
 And 'tis my glory, though I come from the Cittie,  
 To haue their issue, whom I haue vndone,  
 To kneele to mine, as bond-slaues. (2.1.78-83)

One of the “bond-slaues” scrabbling for cast-off clothes and “meate” is Lady Downefalne: Margaret’s “new Woman” (3.2.38). Although she is never permitted to step onstage, we hear about her predicament through Overreach. He asks Margaret, who would prefer, but is not permitted, to treat the unfortunate gentlewoman as a companion, “Is she humble *Meg?*/And carefull too; her Ladyship forgotten?” (3.2.40-1). When Margaret admits that she pities Lady Downefalne’s “fortune,” Overreach bursts into a cruel diatribe:

... Pitty her? Trample on her.  
 I tooke her vp in an old tamin gowne,  
 (Euen staru'd for want of two penny chopps) to serue thee:  
 And if I vnderstand, shee but repines  
 To doe thee any duty, though ne'er so seruile,  
 I'le packe her to her Knight, where I haue lodg'd him,  
 Into the Counter, and there let 'em howle together. (3.2.42-48)

If Lady Downefalne is not sufficiently servile, Overreach is quite prepared to reduce her situation still further—to an animal-like existence where she can howl with her already confined husband in a cage. The erasure of Lord and Lady Downefalne from the landed classes is completed by their erasure from the stage.

In comparison to the critical interest that *Overreach* has generated, Furnace the cook has largely slipped beneath the critical radar. Those writers who do mention him normally consider him alongside the other servants in the play. Nancy Leonard, for example, dismissively suggests that “Order, Furnace, and the maidservants provide comic business as they ridicule Welborne’s smell and want to banish him to privy and pig-sty” (183). A closer examination of Furnace’s behaviour, however, reveals that his role in the play far exceeds that of mere “comic business.” His behaviour has important social significance and is just as emblematic of Massinger’s resentment of social change as is that of *Overreach*. As we have seen, cooks were a relatively rare presence on the stage during this period. Thus, Massinger’s decision to bring a cook character onstage, place him front and centre, and permit him to interact on an almost equal footing with members of the landed classes can be interpreted, I would suggest, as a radical piece of social criticism masquerading as comic relief.

Massinger’s strategy of reducing and isolating elite characters in this play effectively opens a space for, and even a need for, a support network of servants. Within this space, Furnace adopts the very un-servant-like role of adviser to his employer and defender of the household. Woolley made it very clear that this was not how cooks of this period should behave. Cooks should be “quiet in their Office,” she instructed, and should “silently and ingeniously ... do their Business” (*Queen-like Closet* 333). Furnace’s escape from his kitchen domain is only possible because those that should occupy this space have been removed by *Overreach*’s new world order. Although *Overreach* is the primary coloniser of this freshly available social territory, Furnace is close behind him.

We have only to look at Welborne's views on servants to appreciate quite how revolutionary Massinger is being by giving autonomy and power to a cook. Welborne, as his name implies, was born into the landed gentry, but his prodigal lifestyle and Overreach's "darke/And crooked wayes" have reduced him to penury (4.1.136-7). When the play opens, Welborne admits to having been "vomited out of an Alehouse" by the Tapster whom he set up in business and whose business his riotous ways have supported; later, Lady Alworth's servants mock Welborne's unkempt appearance and pungent smell as they attempt to eject him from *her* house (1.1.178, 1.3.53-66). A little bitterness towards servants and the lower classes on Welborne's part is, therefore, to be expected. Nevertheless, Welborne's views are likely to have resonated with members of the land-owning and cook-employing classes in Massinger's elite audiences.<sup>77</sup> Servants are, says Welborne,

Created only to make legges, and cringe;  
 To carrie in a dish, and shift a trencher;  
 That haue not soules only to hope a blessing  
 Beyond blacke iackes, or flagons; ... that were borne  
 Only to consume meate, drinke, and batten  
 Vpon reuersions ... (1.3.59-65)<sup>78</sup>

Welborne's words engage with the topsy-turvy nature of this play-world. Furnace, as a servant, should behave as one of Welborne's cringing "slaues," but he has been freed to wander where he will; Lord and Lady Downefalne, by comparison, should be free and

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<sup>77</sup> Once the plague of 1625 had died down and playing had resumed in London, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* was performed at the Phoenix, or the Cockpit, a private playhouse in Drury Lane. T.pag.(1633).

<sup>78</sup> Ira Clark disagrees with me on this point. She takes the view that the "grateful service" of the Alworth household servants (Order, Amble, Furnace, and Watchall) "sustains an idealized hierarchical community .... Though comic in their harmless ruckus, they represent orderly virtues. They especially exemplify the grateful service and duty owed to a patron who provides protection and support." As I hope to show in this chapter, Furnace's role is far more complex than this interpretation implies. Clark 236-7.

powerful, but Overreach's ambition has reduced them to the status of "bond-slaues" (2.1.83). When Welborne makes his peace with Lady Alworth (by reminding her that he supported her dead husband through his period of financial difficulty), it is Furnace, significantly, who first expresses remorse at Welborne's treatment by the Alworth household. "Are not wee base Rogues," he asks, "That could forget this?" (1.3.109-10). Crucially, Furnace's "wee" makes no distinction between servant and mistress; he implies a parity between the two and criticises them both equally. Nor is this the only example of this cook's lack of deference. Later in the play, he calls his mistress and her guests into dinner with "Will you still be babbling,/Till your meate freeze on the table? the old tricke still./My Art ne'er thought on" (2.2.90-2). Once Welbourne and Lady Alworth are reconciled, it is Furnace (and Order the steward) who are invited to accompany Welborne to the cellar where they will "end all quarrells" in drink (1.3.132). Moreover, Furnace has the last line in this reconciliation scene. Although the line may be innocuous, "Still merry master *Welborne*," the significance of having the last word is not (1.3.133). Just as Furnace is the antithesis of a leg-making, cringing servant, Overreach is the antithesis of a socially responsible landowner. Just as Overreach glories in his power over financially embarrassed members of his society, Furnace relishes the opportunity to treat his employer and her guests as his equals.

Furnace's freedom is such that he is neither spatially confined to his kitchen, nor is he generically confined (as most lower-class comedy characters would be) to one or two brief comic episodes in the play. He is onstage during five scenes and is a significant presence in all of them. In fact, Furnace's scenes bracket the action of the play: he arrives onstage in Act 1 scene 2 and is onstage during the last scene of the play. For much of the

play, Furnace is also freed from the contemporary view of cooks as “cholericke.” As Amble points out, this complexion was thought to occur because of their places next to fires (1.2.10). Although Furnace performs this stereotype enthusiastically during his first few lines (“If the steward is “merrie,” says Furnce, “Ile bee angrie.” “At all houres, and all places,” he says, “Ile be angry;/And thus prouok’d, when I am at my prayers,/I will bee angry”), his temper soon dies down and is rarely reignited (1.2.6-7, 1.2.14-16). Instead, he emerges as a cook who is as serious about the art of cookery as were Richard II’s “Maister Cokes.”

As the play opens, Furnace expresses his frustration because, despite his art, he cannot tempt his mistress to eat while she is mourning the loss of her husband:

I was entertain’d by her to please her palat,  
 And till she forswore eating I perform’d it.  
 Now since our master, noble *Alworth* died,  
 Though I cracke my braines to find out tempting sawces,  
 .....  
 Shee keeps her chamber, dines with a panada,  
 Or water-gruell; my sweat neuer thought on. (1.2.21-36)<sup>79</sup>

While this introduction to Furnace offers an innovative way of providing the back-story to Massinger’s drama, it also initiates the social criticism with which Furnace is hereafter associated.

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<sup>79</sup> Craik glosses Panada as a “boiled and flavoured bread pudding.” Hannah Woolley offered a recipe for a “Pannado” (or Panada) that revealed just how unworthy of Furnace’s creative genius such a dish would have been to create: “Take a quart of Running-water, and put it on the Fire in a Skillet, then cut a light Roul of bread in slices, about the bigness of a groat, and as thin as Wafers, lay it on a Dish on a few Coals, then put it into the water, with two handful of Currans pick’d, and wash’d, a little large Mace, when it is enough, season it with Sugar and Rose-water.” Craik 15; Woolley, *Accomplish’d* 299.

### Cooking and campaigning

In Furnace's mission to tempt his mistress' "palat," for example, he initiates a theme connecting cooking and campaigning that runs through the play. He tells the other servants that he creates "fortifications in the pastrie" that are so true to life that they

... might serue for modells in the Low-Countries,

Which if they had beene practis'd at *Breda*,

*Spinola* might haue throwne his cap at it, and ne'er tooke it –

.....

... with six egges, and a strike of rie-meale

I had kep't the Towne, till doomesday, perhaps longer. (1.2.25-31)

Furnace is alluding to the Spanish siege of the fortified Dutch city of Breda (1624-5) in which the Marquis of Spinola led the Spanish forces and prevailed over the Dutch.<sup>80</sup> On one level, Furnace's words are mere hyperbolic banter by a cook in his kitchen-kingdom; on another level, the image engages with the period's social mutability that so horrified Massinger. Not only does Massinger grant a cook a voice in a space, the early modern stage, which was normally off limits to cook characters, but his cook's revolutionary banter implies that the art of a lowly cook could outdo the art of prestigious military strategists. Thus, the image of pastry forts out-forting military forts works as a powerful metaphor for a world, which, this play suggests, was turning upside down.

As if to emphasise his meaning, Massinger returns to the engagement between cooking and campaigning later in the play. In the scene in question, Overreach is attempting

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<sup>80</sup> Furnace's words would have had particular resonance for Massinger. Sir Philip Sidney's sister Mary had married Henry Herbert, the second Earl of Pembroke in 1576. They lived mostly at Wilton during the time that Massinger's father was Steward. Sidney perished while fighting for the Protestant cause against the Spanish in the Netherlands in 1586. Wilson, A. N. 207.

to force a marriage between his daughter Margaret and Lord Lovell. Such an alliance would make his daughter “honourable” (and, thus, enable Overreach to bask in the glow of her elite status) and represent the pinnacle achievement of Overreach’s “darke/And crooked wayes” (3.2.59, 4.1.136-7). Overreach invites Lord Lovell to dinner, and oversees every detail of the preparations with a military precision:

...let no plate be seene, but what’s pure gold,  
Or such whose workemanship exceeds the matter  
That it is made of, let my choicest linnen  
Perfume the roome, and when we wash, the water  
With pretious powders mix’d, so please my Lord,  
That he may with enuie wish to bathe so euer. (3.2.4-9)

In order to ensure that the food is equally impressive, Overreach instructs Greedy, a gluttonous Justice of the Peace, to oversee his kitchen:

... Master *Iustice*, since you loue choice dishes,  
And plenty of ‘em -  
.....  
I doe conferre that prouidence, with my power  
Of absolute command to haue abundance,  
To your best care. (3.2.13-18)

Greedy replies,

I’le punctually discharge it  
And giue the best directions. Now am I  
In mine owne conceite a Monarch, at the least

Arch-president of the boyl'd, the roast, the bak'd,

For which I will eate often, and giue thankes,

When my bellies brac'd vp like a drumme, and that's pure iustice. (3.2.18-23)

The military undercurrents to this scene are very clear, but I would like to draw particular attention to the fact that the kitchen is described as a quasi-sovereign state. Greedy will become "Monarch," or at least "Arch-president of the boyl'd, the roast, the bak'd."

Although Greedy is an extremely poor Justice of the Peace (he accepts belly-bribes in exchange for licences to trade and would rather eat than judge cases), he is a supremely incompetent "Arch-president" of the kitchen (2.1.9-10, 4.2.46-82, 1.3.30-38). In order to avoid his drama from becoming over cooked (by staging two cooks rather than none), Massinger reverts to tradition and keeps Overreach's cook offstage. In the absence of this cook, Greedy becomes the mouthpiece for the chaos that ensues as rebellion breaks out in his recently acquired kitchen-kingdom. Thus, Massinger sets up a second, less subtle, instance of kitchen-based social inversion. This time, rather than metaphorically elevating a cook to a designer of military forts, a Justice of the Peace is reduced to the rank of head cook.

The scene becomes a glorious mix of melodramatic tension and rising chaos. Overreach's desire to control and manipulate his daughter is juxtaposed with Greedy's desire to control and manipulate Overreach's cook and Margaret's growing rebellion is juxtaposed with that of Overreach's offstage cook. Overreach begins by cajoling Margaret to seduce Lord Lovell and then threatens to disinherit her if she will not obey him:

Part with these humble thoughts, and apt thy selfe

To the noble state I labour to aduance thee,

Or by my hopes to see thee honorable,  
 I will adopt a stranger to my heyre,  
 And throw thee from my care, doe not prouoke mee. (3.2.57-61)

At this dramatic moment, Greedy bursts in:

... 'Tis matter of importance.

The cooke Sir is selfe-will'd and will not learne  
 From my experience, there's a fawne brought in Sir,  
 And for my life I cannot make him rost it,  
 With a *Norfolke* dumpling in the belly of it. (3.2.63-7)

Overreach threatens to "scald" his cook in "his owne Caldron" if he will not obey Greedy; Greedy returns to the kitchen and Overreach returns to his grand scheme of marrying his daughter to a lord (3.2.73). He begins to list Lovell's virtues and attributes: he is a "Lord, *Megge*, and commands a regiment/Of Souldiers" (3.2.76-7). Greedy interrupts again:

I'le resigne my office,  
 If I be not better obey'd.  
 ... 'twould make me a franticke, and stark-mad,  
 Were I not a *Iustice of peace* ...  
 Which this rebellious Cooke cares not a straw for. (3.2.82-6)

Soon the insurrection in the kitchen begins to infect Margaret. She tells Lovell that her father's haste to see her "change the barren name of Virgin/Into a hopefull wife" "[h]olds no power o'er [her] will" and that if her duty is "forc'd too much" it "may breake" (3.2.188-91). Watching them talk, Overreach mistakenly believes that seduction is in the air and that his plan is coming to fruition. At this moment, when Overreach can almost taste

success, Greedy bursts in for a third time. This time he sounds the dinner “clapper” to tell the diners that dinner is ready: “The bak’d meates are run out, the rost turn’d powder”—a description that implies that the revolution underway in Overreach’s kitchen has produced nothing but overcooked and spoiled food (3.2.206).<sup>81</sup> Overreach threatens to powder Greedy, but Greedy, emboldened by the prospect of dinner, replies, “Beate me to dust, I care not./In such a cause as this, I’le dye a martyr” (3.2.207-8). When Overreach does beat his newly promoted “Arch-president of the boyl’d, the roast, the bak’d,” Greedy, like Margaret, rebels: “How! strike a *Iustice of peace*? ‘tis pettie treason” (3.2.210).

Thus, kitchen power struggles intrude upon and frustrate the machinations of the powerful in this scene. In each separate domain (the kitchen and the Great Hall) a character (a cook and a merchant’s daughter) resist the unwelcome demands of an unscrupulous new power (a Justice of the Peace who would be a head cook and a money-lending merchant who would be an aristocrat by proxy).

Massinger, however, is not yet finished with kitchen concerns in this scene. In addition to interleaving issues of oppression and rebellion, Massinger uses culinary metaphors to link the realm of the merchant and the domain of the cook. In Overreach’s imaginary offstage kitchen, for example, Greedy is determined that the woodcocks will be “dress’d [according] to [his] minde,” while, onstage, Overreach is equally determined that Margaret will be dressed according to *his* mind:

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<sup>81</sup> Burning was often the only method offered to measure overcooking by late medieval and early modern cookery books and household manuals. *The Good Wife’s Guide*, for example, advised that when cooking millet, the cook should “[w]ash it in 3 changes of water and then put in an iron skillet to dry over the fire, shaking it well, so that it dos not burn.” When roasting pork the cook should “[f]irst scald and then roast on a spit. Put some lard in a pan, and using a stick with some feathers at the end, grease the skin or rind of the pig so that it does not burn and harden: otherwise lard it.” On the other hand, this guide also instructed that for “Lamb roasted in fine salt, verjuice, and vinegar. First put the shoulder on a spit and turn it in front of the fire until all its grease has dripped off. Then lard it with parsley – at that point and not earlier, for if done earlier, the parsley will burn before the shoulder is roasted.” *Good Wife’s Guide* 296-7.

... Ha, this is a neate dressing!

These orient pearles, and diamonds well plac'd too!

The Gowne affects me not, it should haue beene

Embroider'd o're, and o're with flowers of gold,

But these rich lewels, and quaint fashions helpe it. (3.2.89, 3.2.29-33)

In the kitchen, Greedy insists that the cook roasts the fawn “[w]ith a *Norfolke* dumpling in the belly of it” (3.2.67). Onstage, Overreach instructs Margaret to encourage any advances that Lovell may make towards her. “Virgin me no Virgins,” he warns her, “when he kisses you, kisse close” (3.2.112, 118). Then, he tells her, “Giue me but proofe, he has enjoy'd thy person ... [and] I will ... force him/By marrying thee, to cure thy wounded honour” (3.2.146-53). A “dumpling in the belly” is, perhaps, the very proof that Overreach has in mind.

**“[C]orrupting and enforcing appetites”<sup>82</sup>**

After his initial scene, Furnace returns to the stage to dazzle the sycophantic Overreach and Greedy with his art. However, the disgruntled cook complains that, although they “pretend loue to” his mistress, they really come to “feed vpon” and “deuoure” her while she is in mourning (1.2.38-40). Despite his reluctance to feed such guests, Furnace’s culinary skills are such that his artistry effortlessly controls the body and mind of Greedy. His offer of a fresh “pipe/ Of rich Canarie” wine makes Greedy salivate (1.3.8-9).<sup>83</sup> “How his mouth runs or’e!” says Amble (1.3.11). “Ile make it run, and run,” boasts Furnace (1.3.12). His offer of “a chine/ Of beefe well seasoned,” a “pheasant larded,” and a fat “stagge ... bak’d in puffpast” seduces the Justice of the Peace so completely that he threatens to

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<sup>82</sup> Muffett 7.

<sup>83</sup> T.W. Craik glosses “a pipe” as 126 gallons (1.3.nt.8); the *Norton* edition glosses it as a “large cask” (1.3.8). Craik 1.3. nt.8; Bevington *et al* (1.3.8).

abandon the commission on which he is about to sit (1.3.15-21). "Cause me no causes," says Greedy, "I'le proue't, for such a dinner/ We may put off a commission" (1.3.28-29).

Overreach, however, is horrified that Greedy would lose him "a thousand pounds for a dinner" and warns his Justice of the Peace that "We must forget the belly,/When we thinke of profit" (1.3.31-3). Greedy is reluctantly removed, but as he goes he begs Furnace to send him "but a corner of that immortall pastie" (1.3.35).

Massinger is clearly satirising the long-held belief that cooks had the power to corrupt and enforce "appetites with strange sawces and seasonings" (Muffett 7). However, the humour of the scene does not disguise the fact that a character other than Overreach is demonstrably capable of using his art to divert and control the figure representing the law in the play. Furnace is clearly no token comedic diversion; there is, in fact, a dark side to Massinger's cook that connects him to the amoral Overreach. Furnace's boast that he can control Greedy's responses (by making him salivate) is counterbalanced by Overreach's boasts that he only made Greedy a Justice of the Peace because he knows that "[h]e that bribes his bellie,/Is certaine to command his soule" (2.1.9-10). Language of worship, thus, connects these two transgressing characters. Overreach wants Greedy's "deuotion" in order to "command his soule"; Furnace, in turn, concocts "immortall" pies that keep Greedy at his "deuotion." However, while Overreach actively uses belly-bribes to make Greedy manipulate the law on his behalf (to intimidate his neighbours, to pursue false lawsuits against them, and to force them to sell their land to him at "halfe [its] value"), Furnace misdirects the law more passively (2.1.44-48). His culinary power is such that he effortlessly (and unintentionally) seduces the Justice of the Peace away from his duty (2.1.20-1, 2.1.44-

48). Nevertheless, food becomes a weapon wielded by a cook *and* an amoral merchant to divert justice.

Overreach and Furnace, the two choleric and upwardly mobile characters of the play, are also connected by their shared propensity for violence. In amongst a catalogue of other violent outbursts, Overreach threatens to “scald” his cook in “his owne Caldron” for failing to obey Greedy; to “powder” Greedy for interrupting, as he believes, Margaret’s seduction of Lovell; and to “teare [Marrall] ioint after ioint” for betraying him (3.2.72-3, 3.2.207, 5.1.225-6). In fact, Overreach is so completely associated with violence in the play that his character is almost allegorical: he could be seen to represent the sum of all the violence wrecked on feudal society by the merchant class as a whole.<sup>84</sup> Even so, Furnace is also guilty of threatening with menace. When, for example, the cook realizes that Overreach has played an important part in Welborne’s downfall, he says, “Would I had/The roasting of his heart, that cheated him” (2.2.97-8). In addition, during the dénouement scene, and despite the catalogue of violence offered throughout by Overreach, it is Furnace’s threat of violence that closes the episode. Even though Marrall’s betrayal of Overreach has released the beleaguered Welborne from Overreach’s clutches, Marrall remains doubly damned—as a servant who has carried out Overreach’s immoral orders and as a servant who has betrayed his master. Thus, Furnace tells Marrall, “If that I had my cleuer here/I would diuide your Knaues head” (5.1.348-9). Although Marrall is allocated the concluding moral, “[t]his is the hauen/False seruants still arriue at,” it is Furnace, not the householder, who threatens the false servant with physical retribution (5.1.349-50). The fact that both Overreach and

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<sup>84</sup> Clark also makes this point; she writes that the play “goes beyond a single instance of a commoner’s assault on caste. It satirizes a class of ignoble mercenary leeches who feed off such an assault and who live on cash acquisitiveness.” Clark 234.

Furnace both threaten using a culinary register emphasises the relationship between these two still further. There are, however, important differences between Overreach and Furnace: Overreach's violence is antagonistic, proactive, and destructive, while Furnace's violence is defensive, reactive, and occasionally environmental (a side effect of working in a hot kitchen).

The upside-down social wasteland that Massinger constructs permits Overreach to flourish for a while, but it ruthlessly contains him in the end. As Overreach's plans go awry, he descends into madness and is carried off "to some darke roome" in "*Bedlam*" (5.1.375-6). However, the same social wasteland has also created a space for a cook to move up and beyond his kitchen-kingdom and enter the world of his social superiors on a semi-equal footing. Although Overreach's overreaching is punished by containment of the most ruthless kind, Furnace the cook remains free and powerful in his conquered territory.<sup>85</sup>

**Misdirecting gastronomic and astronomic wonders in  
*The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy.***<sup>86</sup>

The following section discusses the unnamed master cook in *The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy* written by John Fletcher and several collaborators.<sup>87</sup> This play was "one

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<sup>85</sup> It is supremely ironic that a transgressing cook seems to have influenced Massinger's own legacy. John Warburton (1682-1759) collected many of Massinger's plays in manuscript form. Tragically, Warburton's chef seems to have cooked some of them. Douglas Howard admits the "horrifying possibility" that Warburton's cook "destroyed" Massinger's lost plays "by using them to line pie bottoms." Howard 3.

<sup>86</sup> The first edition of this play (1639) is entitled *The Bloody Brother. A Tragedy*: the second edition of the play (1640) is entitled *The Tragedy of Rollo Duke of Normandy*. Most modern editors take the second edition as their copy text, and thus its title (although the spelling is normally modernised), because, as George Walton Williams points out, "there is evidence that a non-authorial agent ... intervened between the prompt-book and Q1 and there is no unequivocal or compelling evidence that any such agent ...intervened between the prompt-book and Q2" (Williams 151). My discussion of this play takes its quotations from the Cambridge edition, which uses Q2 as its copy-text. Williams 151.

<sup>87</sup> The play, in fact, represents "an extreme" example of collaboration: besides Fletcher, other probable collaborators include George Chapman, Ben Jonson, Philip Massinger, and Nathan Field (Leech 361; Hensman xxv-xxxi). Even the play's last song appears to have been a collaborative effort. The first stanza, which begins "Take O take those lipps away," was "possibly written (at least in part)" by Shakespeare, while

of the most popular plays of the seventeenth century,” but its popularity had waned by 1778 and its dramatic neglect has continued down the centuries (Jump xxxi -xxxiv).<sup>88</sup> In 1950, Clifford Leech described its condition as “approaching oblivion”; and in 2001, Meads pointed out that “no number of esoterically interesting banquet scenes [the play has two] can redeem the play from the obscurity it has enjoyed for centuries” (Leech 360; Meads 176). The play’s dramatic “oblivion” has led, not surprisingly, to a near critical oblivion that continues into the twenty-first century.<sup>89</sup>

*The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy* depicts the fates of two feuding brothers, Otto and Rollo. Otto is generally good and just; Rollo is evil and amoral. Their father, the Duke of Normandy, has died and divided the state between his two sons. Rollo’s desire to rule alone leads to murder, fratricide, and eventually to his own death. On the way, Latorch, Rollo’s favourite, enlists the kitchen staff in a plot to poison Otto and a group of astrologers to, wrongly, implicate Aubrey (Rollo’s Kinsman, wise council, and Latorch’s rival) in a treason

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editors have traditionally “assigned” the second stanza to Fletcher. For the sake of clarity, I refer to the play as Fletcher’s throughout my discussion here. Leech 361; Hensman xxv-xxx; Foster 58,60.

<sup>88</sup> As Jump points out, this play’s popularity continued through the Civil War period. In 1699, James Wright recorded that “[w]hen the Wars were over, and the Royalist totally Subdued; most of [the players] who were left alive gather’d to *London*, and for a Subsistence endeavour’d to revive their Old Trade, privately. They made up one Company out of all the Scatter’d Members of the Several; and in the Winter before the King’s Murder, 1648, They ventured to Act some Plays with as much caution and privacy as cou’d be, at the *Cockpit*. They continu’d undisturbed for three or four Days; but at last as they were presenting the Tragedy of the *Bloody Brother* ... a Party of Foot Souldiers beset the House, surprized ‘em about the middle of the Play, and carried ‘em away in their habits ... to *Hatton-House*, then a Prison, where having detain’d them sometime, they Plunder’d them of their Cloths and let ‘em loose again.” Jump suggests that “[i]n consequence, perhaps, of such raids as this, the actors took to staging ‘drolls’ – ‘short, racy, comic scenes from the plays most in favour’ at fairs, at taverns, and occasionally at the regular theatres.” The kitchen scene from *The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy*, printed under the title of “The Three Merry Boyes” (in Francis Kirkman’s *The Wits of, Sport upon Sport*) was one such droll. Wright 8-9; Jump xxxii; Kirkman 73-78.

<sup>89</sup> Meads, whose focus is on dramatic banquets, does include a brief discussion on Fletcher’s kitchen scene, which he bases on the Q1 text entitled *The Bloody Brother*. Meads 174.

plot. Like Massinger's play-world, then, Fletcher's play-world is in a state of ever-increasing turmoil.

Like Massinger's cook, Fletcher's master cook is a culinary artist at the peak of his profession. While both playwrights demonstrate and celebrate the culinary artistry of their respective cooks, they also dramatise their concerns about the power that such artistry grants to members of the lower orders. However, Fletcher takes the idea of culinary-based transgression a step further than does Massinger. He not only associates his master cook with the high culinary art of the *sotelty*, but he also connects gastronomic wonders with scientific marvels in order to demonstrate the ease with which both can become weapons when manipulated by politic power-seekers. While Massinger's cook moves into the social space of his superiors through his own volition, Fletcher's master cook, who remains contained within his kitchen-kingdom, is tempted to transgress only when one of his social superiors, the court-dwelling Latorch, moves into his space. Despite these differences, both playwrights draw their cooks as complex, multi-dimensional characters: Furnace is a fascinating mix of gastronomic genius and social rebel; Fletcher's cook is a mixture of culinary artist and "sotle" poisoner.

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Fletcher's cook is a master of the *sotelty*, which were small scenes or pageants constructed from coloured or gilded sugar paste, almond paste, and/or board that depicted small human figures, animals, fantasy figures, buildings, and vessels.<sup>90</sup> These miniature

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<sup>90</sup> The spelling word *sotelty* varies: John Russell, for example, spelt it "Sotelte" and "soteltees" (Russell 49-50). Modern writers often alter this to *soteltie* (Hunter), or *sotelty* & *sotelties* (Henisch). I have followed Henish. Hunter 37-8; Russell 48, 50; Henish 233.

pageants were carried in and displayed between courses at feasts. The introduction of "gum tragacanth, the resin from a shrub of Eastern Mediterranean origin, which helped to bond and strengthen the paste," allowed these miniature wonders to become very complex by the end of the fifteenth century (Wilson, C.A. 20).

For a banquet given by Cardinal Wolsey at Hampton Court in the 1520s, for example, George Cavendish recorded that "cooks wrought both night and day in diverse subtleties and many crafty devices, where lacked neither gold, silver, ne any other costly thing meet for their purpose" (71). The "subtleties, and curious devices" included

castles with images in the same; Paul's Church and steeple in proportion for the quantity as well counterfeited as the painter should have painted it upon a cloth or wall. There were beasts, birds, fowls of diverse kinds, and personages, most lively made ... in dishes; some fighting (as it were) with swords, some with guns and crossbows, some vaulting and leaping, some dancing with ladies, some in complete harness jousting with spears, and many more devices than I am able with my wit to describe. (73-4)

Alternatively, sotelties could follow serious religious or allegorical themes. John Russell's *Boke of Nurture* (c.1460-70) described a sotelty for a "Dynere of Flesche," which included an "angelle goodly" that sung "*with a mery chere,/Vn-to iij. sheperdes vppon an hille*" (49).

Although sotelties were a particular feature of medieval banquets, they remained popular during Fletcher's lifetime (c.1575-9-1625). In fact, Robert May's *The Accomplisht Cook* was still offering instructions on sotelty making in 1660. He advised his readers to

Make the likeness of a Ship in pasteboard, with flags and streamers, the guns belonging to it of kickses [?], binde them about with packthred, and cover

them with course paste proportionable to the fashion of a Cannon with Carriages, lay them in places convenient, as you see them in Ships of War, with such holes and trains of powder that they may all take fire, place your Ship firm in a great Charger ... in another Charger have the proportion of a Stag made of course paste, with a broad arrow in the side of him, and his body filled up with claret wine. In another Charger ... have the proportions of a Castle with Battlements, Percullices, Gates, and Draw-Bridges made of pasteboard ... (A7v-A8r)

Although the military theme lent itself particularly well to dramatic culinary displays (as we can see, May's sotelty included "trains of powder that ... may all take fire"), special effects were not exclusive to military-themed sotelties. Fletcher's master cook, for example, brags that in one such sotlety he will have "a dozen of Larkes/Rise from the dish, and sing all supper time" (2.2.14-5). Although this appears to be hyperbolic bragging, the cook's idea is actually based in authentic culinary tradition. May described cutting open pies that contained live frogs, "which [made] the Ladies to skip and shreek," and others that contained live birds

who by a natural instinct flying at the light, will put out the candles: so that what with the flying Birds and skipping Frogs, the one above, the other beneath, will cause much delight and pleasure to the whole company: at length the candles are lighted, and a Banquet brought in, the musick sounds, and every one with much delight and content rehearses their actions in the former passages. (A8r)

In both May's sotelty and that of Fletcher's master cook, birds released from pies were quite likely to have sung "all supper time."

As sotelties "became more elaborate they grew larger," so large, in fact, that some had to be "wheeled onto the floor of the hall, where life-size actors took the place of small-scale models" (Henisch 234).<sup>91</sup> In Henisch's words, by a "stroke of good fortune, the details of one pageant entertainment [from a feast in 1378 hosted by Charles V of France] are known to us, and a contemporary illustration of the event has been preserved" (234; Fletcher 18). Figure 12 shows life-sized, or near life-sized, figures mounting a battlement in to the right of the diners. Sotelties of this size clearly created a slippage between culinary drama and theatrical drama by linking the culinary pageants that rumbled into Great Halls on wheels with the pageant wagons of medieval Corpus Christi plays that rumbled through medieval streets. Yet, even the small-scale sotelties constituted a form of mid-feast drama. Just like theatrical drama, they required actors (albeit inanimate ones), costumes, properties, makeup (or colouring), and sets; just like theatrical drama, they required the art and skill of a creative mind to bring them to life; and just like theatrical drama, the performance was ephemeral. As we will see in Chapter 5, early modern cookery books emphasised that food's appearance was, as a matter of course, prioritised over its taste during this period. However, sotelty-constructing cooks elevated food to high art and themselves into supreme culinary artists.

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<sup>91</sup> In France, "the term *entremet* covered both the table ornament and its grander cousin, but in England sotelty referred only to the first, and the term *pageant* was used to cover the second." Henisch 234.

Picture removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 12. "Entertainment at a Feast." *Les Chroniques de France* (c. 1379). Ms. Fr. 2813, fol. 473v. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. This illuminated manuscript shows life-sized, or near life-sized, figures mounting a battlement in to the right of the diners. (Fletcher 18; Henisch frontispiece)

Fletcher's master cook, swathed as he is in the art of the sotelty, is a cook of this ilk. He brags to his fellow kitchen workers about the sotelty that he plans to create for the forthcoming feast, which is being arranged to celebrate the, supposed, reconciliation of the brothers Rollo and Otto. The cook tells his fellow kitchen workers:

Ile make yee Pigs speak French at table, and a fat Swan

Come sailing out of *England* with a challenge.

Ile make yee a dish of Calves feet dance the Canaries,

And a consort of cram'd Capons fiddle to em.

A Calves head speak an Oracle, and a dozen of Larkes

Rise from the dish, and sing all supper time;

Tis nothing boyes, I have fram'd a fortification,  
 Out of Rye past, which is impregnable,  
 And against that for two long houres together,  
 Two dozen of maribones shall play continually. (2.2.10-19)

Fletcher's master cook may appear, to modern readers at least, to be representing himself as a practitioner of magical arts, but, actually, his bragging is based in authentic sotelty techniques. Sotelty designers sent their creations to the table "festooned with helpful labels and explanatory mottoes" and these labels explain not only how Russell's angel could "syngynge," but also how Fletcher's master cook could make "Pigs speak French" and a "Calves head speak an Oracle" (Henisch 232; Wilson, C. A. 20; Russell 49; *Otto* 2.2.10-14).

Not only does Fletcher's master cook describe his culinary masterpiece, but the kitchen staff also describe the moment of its entrance: "when the Tables [are] drawne, to draw the wine in" (2.2.40). Just like the theatre, there will be music; in this case, it will take the form of the Butler's drinking song. The words of the song, which are centred in humoral medical philosophy, recommend wine as a medicine that "*works the heart up, wakes up the wit,/ ... helps the head-ach, cough and tissick,/And is for all diseases Physick*" (2.2.51-54).

Thomas Coghnan's dietary confirmed the authenticity of this advice; when taken in moderation, Coghnan advised, wine "is the most pleasaunt liquor of all other, and a special benefite and comfort of mans life: a great encreaser of the vitall spirits, and a restorer of all powers and actions of the bodie: and to chēreth and comforteth the heart" (211).

Nevertheless, by associating his master cook with the art of the sotelty, Fletcher is also hinting at a darker and more treacherous side to his culinary genius because an etymological slippage exists between sotelty creators and those with a "sotyle," or

treacherous, nature. The *OED* gives various Anglo-Norman and Middle English forms of subtlety, which include sotilté, sotelté, sotileté, and sultitie. The meaning of “sotyle” during the medieval and early modern period ranged from the “sotyle” ornamental scenes that we have discussed to “Craftiness, cunning, esp[ecially] of a treacherous or underhand nature; slyness,[and] guile” (*OED* 4b, 3b). Moreover, the meaning of “subtily” morphed craftiness into devilishness (*OED* 1a).

By the time that Fletcher’s cook has been persuaded to drop “a dose” of poison into Otto’s broth, he has begun to resonate with “sotel” villains from medieval Corpus Christi, or mystery plays (2.2.158). The Pilate character from “The Scourging” in *The Wakefield, or Towneley Mystery Cycle*, for example, brags, “I am full of sotelty,/ffalshed, gyll, and trechery” (284, lines 10-11). Fletcher’s master cook is similarly full of sotyle “trick[s]” and “rare trick[s],” one of which, like Pilate’s scene, involves “a sacrifice” (2.2.32-4). Although, rather than the sacrifice made by Jesus (which Pilate’s “sotelty” facilitated), Fletcher’s cook imagines a sacrifice offered by “a plump Vintner,/Kneeling and offering incense” to the god “*Bacchus*” (2.2.34-39).

Traditionally, as we have seen in Chapter 2, cooks were also cast as “sotel” and devilish through their relationship with fire and Fletcher draws on this association in order to emphasize his master cook’s potential for treacherousness. By the time that Latorch has persuaded the cook and his fellows to poison Otto, and despite the fact that the Pantler warns them that poisoning is “a damned sinne,” Fletcher’s sotle and devilish cook is neither afraid of sinning nor of burning in hell for eternity: “The fire’s my playfellow, and now I am resolv’d boyes,” he says (2.2.169-70).

Cooks not only had the power to seduce diners by controlling their appetites “with strange sawces and seasonings” and to stun and amaze them with sotelites, but, whether by accident or design, they also had the power to poison them (Muffett 7). Edward Hall recorded that in the “xxxiiii. Yere” of the reign of “Kyng Henry the viii” (1532)

In the Parliament aforesayde was an Acte made, that whosoeuer dyd poyson any persone, shoulde be boyled in hote water to the death: whiche Acte was made because one Richard Roose, in the Parliament tyme had poysoned dyuerse persons at the Bishop of Rochesters place, which Richard, according to the same Acte, was boyled in Smythfelde the ... wednesday followyng, to the terrible example of all other. (Fol. C.C.)

Medieval and early modern monarchs took the threat of being poisoned very seriously. In 1598, Paul Hentzner witnessed the precautions taken by Elizabeth I against just such an eventuality. While Elizabeth I was at prayers, reported Hentzner, her table was set out:

an unmarried lady of extraordinary beauty [came in]...and along with her a married one, bearing a tasting-knife ... when [the former] had prostrated herself three times [she] ... approached the table and rubbed the plates with bread and salt .... the yeoman of the guard entered, ... bringing in at each turn a course of twenty-four dishes, served in silver most of it gilt; these dishes were received by a gentleman in the same order as they were brought and placed upon the table, while the lady-taster gave to each of the guard a

mouthful to eat of the particular dish he had brought, for fear of any poison.

(106)<sup>92</sup>

Hentzner recorded that Elizabeth I dined and supped alone (107). In most households, however, diners took their food from communal bowls, or messes, which four diners shared. For an early modern murderer, therefore, poison was not a precise *modus operandi*.<sup>93</sup>

Latorch's plot to poison Otto factors this lack of exactitude into his plan because he attacks on several Otto-specific fronts. Addressing the Cook, Butler, Pantler, and the "Yeoman of the Celler," Latorch says, "These [the poisons] must be put then into the severall meats/ Young *Otto* loves, by you into his wine sir,/ Into his bread by you, by you into his linnen" (2.2.127-9). Latorch, then, transforms the kitchen staff into a community of poisoners, which is an unusual dramatic concept for this period. Those that poisoned others on the early modern stage more frequently did so alone. The Ghost of Hamlet's father, for example, tells Hamlet that his brother (Hamlet's uncle) had poisoned him while he was sleeping by pouring a "leperous distilment" into his ear (1.5.61-70). A similarly solitary poisoner is Count Lodovico from Webster's *White Devil*, who "*sprinkles* [the Duke of] Brachiano's beaver [hat] with a poison" (*White Devil* 5.2.77).

Fletcher may have taken the notion of a community of murders from his source, the story of Bassianus and Geta in *The History of Herodian*, in which we are told that the feuding

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<sup>92</sup> It is ironic that, although similar precautions were probably taken by all medieval and early modern English monarchs, carvers were permitted to wield sharp knives under the very noses of their sovereigns because meat was traditionally carved and served at the table. *The Boke of Keruynges*, for example, advised carvers to "take vp your trenchours as nye the poyny [of the knife] as ye may/ than laye foure trenchoures to your souerayne one by another .... Take your knyfe in your honde and cut brawne in the dyshe as it lyeth & laye it on your soueraynes trenchour ... touche not the venyson with your honde but with your knyfe" (A4v – A5r).

<sup>93</sup> See Fredson Thayer Bower's "The Audience and the Poisoners of Elizabethan Tragedy" for a discussion on medieval and early modern poisoners.

brothers “omytted ... no kynde of secrete wyles, and entrappynge, labourynge to entyse eyther others Cookes, Butlars, and Cupbearers, to poyson theyr Master” (Fol. Xlviii).<sup>94</sup>

However, the plural nouns used here suggest that each member of staff were “entyse[d]” separately. Alternatively, Bertha Hensman has identified topical allusions in this play to “The Great Powder Poison Trial of 1615 to 1616 in which the Earl and Countess of Somerset [Robert Carr and Frances Howard] were convicted of inducing a group of accomplices to murder Sir Thomas Overbury by serving him with poisoned food” (Hensman xxxi-xxxii).<sup>95</sup> The prosecution claimed that “the poison plot had been instigated by Carr and the countess of Essex, working with [the Earl of] Northampton’s knowledge and help and using [Sir Gervase] Elwes [the Lord Lieutenant of the Tower of London], ... Richard Weston [Overbury’s keeper],” Anne Turner (the widow of a physician and a friend and confident of Frances, countess of Somerset), and James Franklin (an apothecary) (Bellany 54-56, 184-88).

In *The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy*, Latorch’s strategy of employing the kitchen staff to introduce poison to several different Otto-specific items (“the severall meates/ Young *Otto* loves,” “his wine,” “his bread,” and “his linnen”) also resonates with the Overbury poisoning (2.2.127-9). Bellany reports that during the trials of 1615 and 1616,

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<sup>94</sup> In *Of Dramatick Poesie, an Essay* (1668), as Jump and Hensman point out, Dryden identified the story of Bassianus and Geta as the source for *The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy*. Dryden 30; Jump xx; Hensman xvi.

<sup>95</sup> Hensman makes these observations in order to support her argument that the play was composed c. 1617. She also connects the names of the cheating astrologers in act 4, scene 2, (La Fiske, De Bubie, and Fryer Rusee) with contemporary astrologers and fortune tellers who were in the public gaze between 1616 and 1617 (Nicolas Fiske, Captain Bubb, and Friar Rush). Williams points out that the first record of a performance of “*The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy, or The Bloody Brother ...* occurs in lists of plays given before the royal household; *Rollo* was presented at Court on 7 November 1630, on 21 February 1631, and again on 17 January 1637.” Hensman xxxii-xxxiii; Williams 147.

the prosecution alleged that Overbury had been poisoned, slowly and painfully, over the course of the summer of 1613 ..... Potions and powders, disguised as medicines, had been taken to him; poisoned pies and jellies had been delivered to his table; and, when all else failed, an apothecary's assistant had been bribed to finish him with a poisoned enema. (55-6)

Bowers reports that the poison of choice for Overbury's murders was copper vitriol (502). Crucially, though, whereas Frances Howard's communal poisoning plot succeeded, Latorch's plot goes awry because the Pantler, afraid of sinning, betrays his fellows.

When Latorch first lays out his poisoning plan to Rollo, the moment emphasises the overlap between culinary and political misdeeds in this play. Rollo asks him, "Canst thou doe it neatly?" (2.1.109). Latorch assures Rollo that he can and, once the cook is enrolled in the plan, Latorch's political neatness is replicated by the cook's culinary neatness. The cook demonstrates, for the benefit of the Yeoman, how to poison wine "quick and neatly" (quickness and neatness were, after all, skills that Woolley advised cooks to possess) (2.2.166; Woolley, *Queen-Like* 333). Both cook and courtier, then, are "full of sotelty" and both transgress "neatly" as Latorch's "two-edg'd wit" morphs together culinary cunning and political craftiness (Scourging 284, line 11; *Rollo* 2.1.103).

In fact, once persuaded to participate in Latorch's poisoning plan, the cook approaches the task with as much flair as he approaches the science of sotlety making: creating sotelties is "nothing," poisoning is "easily done," and both are an art (2.2.26, 154). The cook assures his fellows:

Tis easily done,

As easy as a man would roast an egge,

If that be all; for look ye gentlemen,  
 Here stands my broths: my finger slips a litle,  
 Downe drops a dose, I stirre him with my ladle,  
 And there's a dish for a Duke: *Olla podrida*:  
 Here stands a bak't meate, he wants a little seasning,  
 A foolish mistake, my spice-boxe gentlemen,  
 And put in some of this, the matters ended:  
 Dredge ye a dish of Plovers, there's the art on't,  
 Or in a galingale a little does it.<sup>96</sup>

YEOMAN. Or as I fill my wine.

COOK. Tis very true Sir  
 Blessing it with your hand, thus, quick and neatly  
 First, tis past.

YEOMAN. And done once tis as easy  
 For him to thank us for it, and reward us. (2.2.154-68)

The fact that the cook describes the act of poisoning wine in anti-Eucharistic terms, poisoning wine by “blessing” it, highlights the fact that this group have now utterly fallen from grace (2.2.166).

Without stage directions or a contemporary report of a performance to guide us, we cannot know how this kitchen-based poisoning scene was performed on the early modern stage. In the first place, how were properties used to identify the stage as a kitchen? As

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<sup>96</sup> Olla podrida was a type of stew, which settlers in Virginia discovered Native Americans cooking. Thomas Hariot described the recipe: “They or their woemen fill the vessel with water, and then putt they in fruite, flesh, and fish, and lett all boyle together like a galliemaufrye, which the Spaniarde call, olla podrida.” Hariot ch. XV.

Fletcher's scene opens, "*the Master Cook, Butler, Pantler, [and] Yeoman of the Seller*" enter with "a Jack of beere and a dish" (2.2.0). Potentially, there was also a fire of some sort because the Cook tells his fellows, "*this fire's a plaguy fretter [italics mine]*" (2.2.2). The food properties mentioned in the cook's dialogue may also have been staged because, firstly, they would work to establish the kitchen setting and, secondly, they would work to establish the sinister ambience that slips between the kitchen scene and the banquet scene, which follows immediately afterwards. It would be far more sinister to watch the master cook actually drop and sprinkle poison over food properties such as "broths," "bak't meate," and a "dish of Plovers" strategically placed "[h]ere" and "[h]ere," than it would be to watch him mime these actions (2.2.152-163). If food properties were used in this scene, they also had the potential to mix audience participation into the poisoning plot: listening to the plan, watching the food being poisoned in the kitchen, watching it being served during the banquet, and remaining silent effectively casts playgoers as quasi-accomplices to both cook and courtier.

The material presence of food properties would mean, however, that once Latorch has handed over his "*papers,*" "*money,*" and the containers of poison, destined for Otto's "meats," "his wine," "his bread," and "his linen," the four kitchen characters would be left with a abundance of properties to juggle (2.2.114, 115, 127-29). Logically, then, (both for artistic and practical reasons) the scene required a kitchen-appropriate trestle table onto which these characters could deposit some of these items. In which case, the table would serve a dual function. In 2.2, as with the food properties, it would help to identify the stage as a kitchen and, without leaving the stage, in 2.3, it would transform the stage into a Great Hall being set for a feast. In fact, the dialogue that opens the banquet scene draws attention

to this particular property as one servant tells his fellows to “Perfume the roome round: and prepare the table” (2.3.1). As the poisoner’s kitchen table transforms into the intended victim’s feast table, complete with the same food properties, the moment triggers a fascinating continuum between the illicit behaviour of cook and courtier. In addition, and without removing him from his kitchen, the kitchen-*cum*-banquet table situates a sign of this transgressing cook at the heart of courtly power and intrigue.

Nevertheless, in order to persuade Fletcher’s master cook to misuse his culinary skills, Latorch first has to play on the kitchen staff’s fears about the uncertainty in the state that the brother’s feud has caused. The cook complains, “We live between two stools, every hower ready/ To tumble on our Noses” (2.2.90-1). Latorch offers to replace uncertainty with, alleged, certainties. He asks the kitchen staff, “Dare yee but think to make your selves up certainties,/Your places and your credits ten times doubled/The Princes favour, *Rolloes*?” (2.2.97-9). In exchange for administering poison, Latorch offers the kitchen staff the certainty of an improved position, the favour of Prince Rollo, and gold. It is no surprise, however, that there are fewer certainties in Latorch’s promises than there are in an unstable court and their attempt to poison Otto earns the cook and most of his fellows a date with the hangman for “high treason” (3.2.15).

Fletcher, then, demonstrates a fascination with culinary artistry, but he also draws attention to the ease with which his master cook, whose relationship with fire and sotelties has already tainted him with a perceived predilection for transgressive behaviour, agrees to misapply his artistry. Fletcher extends his warning about the danger of lower-order expertise by creating a second artistic-*cum*-scientific, extra-court world: the university, where the cheating Russee, De Bube, La Fiske, Norbret, and Pipeau misapply their

astrological knowledge in order to cheat anyone unfortunate enough to cross their path. As with the realism of his culinary references, Fletcher's astrological scene, according to J. C. Eade, is "astrologically sound" (Astrological, 199). The fact that Fletcher connects these two sites of expertise on numerous levels would not have surprised early moderns because cooking and astrology had been linked since antiquity.

In an extant comic fragment from an ancient Greek play, a cook tells us that the first thing that "a true *mageiros*" (who were an amalgam of butcher, sacrificer, and cook) "must know is about the heavenly bodies and the setting and rising of the stars and when the sun rises for the longest and the shortest day and in what parts of the Zodiac it is. For almost all our cooked dishes and foods take on different delights in different circumstances according to the movement of the whole universe" (Wilkins 398-9). Despite the fact that the influential Galen "had nothing to say on the subject" of astrology, fourteenth-century European cooks were similarly guided by astrological cycles (Hoeniger 109).<sup>97</sup> The author of *The Good Wife's Guide* (c. 1392-4), for example, advised that savory, marjoram, sorrel, basil, parsley, trees, vines, white cabbage heads, and Easter cabbages should be planted or sown during a waning moon, while peas and broad beans should be planted in small batches in October "after each waning of the moon" (209-14). Gervase Markham, writing during the first half of the seventeenth century, also advised his readers that a housewife should "know the time of the yeere, Moneth and Moone, in which all Hearbs are to be sowne; and when they are in their best flourishing, [so that by] gathering all Hearbs in their height of goodness, shee may haue the prime vse of the same" (63).

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<sup>97</sup> For a discussion on the influence of astrology on medical doctrine in Shakespeare's day, see Hoeniger 109-111.

In *The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy* links between gastronomy and astrology abound. In the first place, both are presented as wonders of their age. The butler asks Fletcher's master cook, "What brave new meats" and "what new rare munition" he has created for the household (2.2.5-9). The master cook replies, "Peuh a thousand" and brags that he also has "a rare trick" up his sleeve (2.2.9, 33). These culinary wonders are juxtaposed with the scientific "wonders" that Latorch promises to bring Rollo from the university:

... theres one *Norbret*, (him I never saw)  
 Has made a mirroure, a meere looking-glasse  
 In show you'd think't no other, the forme ovall,  
 .....  
 Which renders you such shapes, and those soe differing  
 And some that will be question'd, and give answers,  
 Then he has set it in a frame that wrought  
 Upon the revolutions of the starres,  
 And so compact by due proportions  
 Unto their harmony doth move alone  
 A true *Automaton*. (4.1.198-212)

As Latorch continues to enthuse about the wonders that science can produce, he connects mathematicians and cooks:

...art and time Sir can produce such things:  
 What doe we read there, of *Hiarbaes* banquet  
 The great Gymnosophist that had his Butlers

And Carvers of pure gold wait at the table:

The images of *Mercury* too, that spoke,

The Wooden Dove that flew, a Snake of Brasse

That hist: and Birds of silver that did sing.

All these were done Sir by Mathematiques:

Without which there's no science nor no truth. (4.1.217-25)

While Fletcher's cook creates a sotelty around the god "*Bacchus*," Latorch's "Mathematiques" created speaking images of the god "*Mercury*" (2.2.36). While Fletcher's cook creates pies from which "a dozen of Larkes/ Rise from the dish, and sing all supper time," Latorch's "Mathematiques" created a "[w]ooden Dove that flew" and "[b]irds of silver that did sing" (2.2.14-5). While Fletcher's cook can make a "Calves head speak an Oracle," Latorch's "Mathematiques" could make "a Snake of Brasse/That hist" (2.2.14). Crucially, all these "wonders" are created to stun and impress diners at banquets. In Latorch's words, "art and time ... [and master cooks and "Mathematitans"] can produce such things" (4.1.217, 181).

Nevertheless, despite the play's fascination with culinary and scientific wonders, it repeatedly warns about the way in which wrongdoers can misuse and misapply such marvels. Latorch exemplifies this contradiction. On the one hand, he is enthralled by the things that "art and time" could produce; on the other hand, he has absolutely no qualms about misdirecting gastronomy and astrology to suit his own political agenda. As with the kitchen staff, Latorch plays on the astrologers' fears about their fluctuating fortunes. As with the kitchen staff, Latorch purchases transgressions with supposed certainties and hard cash. In exchange for administering poison, Latorch offers the kitchen staff the certainty of an

improved position, the favour of Prince Rollo, and gold (2.2.102-117). In exchange for a false horoscope, he offers the astrologers the certainty of life in the form of pardons, the certainty of wealth in the form of gold, and the possibility of the prince's favour in the form of his greeting (4.2. 107-147). Just as Latorch misdirects the master cook's genius, so Latorch reduces Norbret's wonderful astrological reading to a shrewd "guesse" directed by his own pointed and politically motivated anti-Aubrey hint (4.2.229).

LATORCH. Of the Dukes life, what dangers threaten him?

NORBRET. Apparent and those suddaine: when the *Hyleg*,  
 Or *Alchocoden* by direction come  
 To a quartile opposition of the place  
 Where *Mars* is in the geniture (which is now  
 At hand) or else oppose to *Mars* himselfe, expect it.

LATORCH. But they may be prevented.

NORBRET. Wisdome only,  
 That rules the starres may doe it ...

.....

LATORCH. You cannot name the Person brings this danger?

NORBRET. No, that the starres tells not us, they name no man;  
 That is a work Sir of another place.

RUSSEE. Tell him whom you suspect, and hee'l guesse shrewdly.

LATORCH. Sir, we doe feare one *Aubrey*, ift were he  
 I should be glad, for we should soone prevent him.

.....

LATORCH. O it is *Aubrey*: Gentlemen I pray you

Let me receive this under all your hands. (4.2.206-38)<sup>98</sup>

Curiously, however, neither of the corrupted wonders that Latorch employs (poisoned food and doctored horoscopes) serves the purpose that he intends. A forewarned Otto refuses to eat or drink at the poisoned banquet and a distracted Rollo (who is rushing off to seduce Edith at a private banquet) instructs Aubrey to open the letter from Latorch that accuses the opener of treason. Fletcher seems to suggest, then, that the transgressions of master cooks, astrologers, and courtiers can only extend so far, beyond that a greater power concocts policy.

In times of uncertainty, this play warns us, cooks and astrologers (or art and science) can be enticed to misuse their expertise in order to obtain a few certainties. This facilitates, in this play-world at least, their corruption by those like Latorch who barter supposed certainties for a “foolish mistake” here and a shrewd “guesse” there (2.2.161). It should not surprise us, however, that there are fewer certainties in Latorch’s promises than there are in an unstable court: most of the kitchen staff are hanged for their transgressions and the astrologers are whipped “extreamely” for theirs (5.2.220).

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Both *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* and *The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy* break with tradition by giving cook characters a significant presence on the early modern stage. Both Massinger and Fletcher drew their rebellious cooks with nuanced levels of personality and characteristics that must have made them an electrifying presence on the early modern stage. The transgressions of these cooks draw on old food-based fears (fear of

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<sup>98</sup> For a detailed discussion on the astrology in this scene see J.C. Eade’s “Astrological Analysis as an Editorial Tool: The Case of Fletcher’s *The Bloody Brother*” and *The Forgotten Sky*.

the seductive power of food and the fear of poisoning), while, at the same time, they depend upon the artistry and craftiness of their culinary expertise. Although both plays warn about the power that expertise places in the hands of the lower orders, neither playwright can prevent themselves from celebrating the “sotle” genius of their cooks and their craft.

## Chapter 5

### **Alchemy and Early Modern Food Effects in Philip Massinger's *The Great Duke of Florence* and Thomas Middleton's *Women, Beware Women***

As we have seen, early modern food often oscillated between nourishment, medicine, and art. Although the pinnacle of gastronomic artistry was the sotelty, cooks created other food effects to lavish on diners. These included coloured food, food moulded into the form of castles and towers, and gilded food. Most of these food effects were consumable, but some were not and this created a separate category of purely decorative food. In addition, even the highest in the land occasionally resorted to fake-food food effects. Although some historians (Bridget Henisch, Christopher Woolgar, for example) have drawn attention to the decorative nature of this period's food, very few have attempted to explain how, why, or when these traditions originated. With colour, for example, Woolgar contends that it was solely employed to make a decorative point, "rather than one of

deeper meaning” and, thus, he posits that fish dishes may have been served in green sauces in order to reflect their “watery origin” (21-2). In this chapter, I take the opposite position and argue that both the practice of colouring food and the colours selected were, in fact, awash with deeper meanings.

The tradition of colouring food can be traced back from the early modern English, to medieval Arabs, to the Greco-Romans. Significantly, over this extended period of time and throughout these diverse cultures, food was tinted in colours from a similar spectrum: black, white, red, yellow, green, and peacock blue.<sup>99</sup> I suggest that these colours, which mimicked the colours that metals and/or the Philosopher’s Stone changed into when heated during alchemical experiments, were selected to symbolically mesh food with alchemical practices; the knowledge of which travelled along a similar temporal and geographical trajectory as did the practice of colouring food.<sup>100</sup> The same meshing occurred when diners consumed marchpane and sugar plate forts and castles, which uncannily resembled alchemical apparatuses, and when they consumed food decorated with the two purest metals in alchemy, gold and silver, which alchemists believed contained life-preserving and life-extending attributes. On the one hand, alchemically-inspired food effects exemplified the avarice of diners by symbolically embedding them in a chemical wealth-creating process that sought to transform base metals into gold. On the other hand, these same food properties also reminded consumers of the quest for physiological and spiritual purity

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<sup>99</sup> The fact that colouring foods in the same spectrum of colours can be traced back to antiquity negates Woolgar’s additional point that the colour of medieval food matched “almost exactly the tinctures of heraldry.” Woolgar 22.

<sup>100</sup> T. Sarah Peterson also connects aspects of Middle Eastern cooking with alchemy. However, with regard to tinting food, her focus is on gold, or yellow, coloured dishes. Peterson 15-21.

because for some alchemists the tripartite search for material, physiological, and spiritual perfection was integral to their science.

When these alchemically-inspired food effects dressed early modern stages, they introduced fascinating subtexts into the scenes in which they featured. As this chapter will demonstrate, the marchpane castle brought onstage during the banquet in Philip Massinger's *The Great Duke of Florence* engages with the theme of transformation, or transmutation, that runs through this play and mocks notions of perfection during the drunken banquet. In Thomas Middleton's *Women, Beware Women* gilt marchpane animals satirize the alchemically-based association between gold and purity.

#### **The colours of alchemy and the colours of food**

Roger Bacon's *The Mirror of Alchimy* (1597) was printed some three hundred years after his death and included "certaine other worthie [ancient and medieval] treaties of the like Argument" (t. pag.).<sup>101</sup> Bacon explained that the "learned Philosphers blessed stone, whereon *Alchimy* worketh," was used during alchemical experiments that endeavoured "to perfect the imperfect that ... nature hath deliuered vs" (8). To achieve this perfection, "mettals" had to be heated because "[h]eat perfecteth althings" (9). In a chapter entitled "Of the accident all and essentiall colours appearing in the worke," Bacon explained how fire was believed to work on the stone and how it "often changed in decoction into diuerse colours":

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<sup>101</sup> Roger Bacon (1214?-1294) was a "medieval scholar of very wide learning, and one who captured the popular imagination enough to set going a large number of highly picturesque legends: he could 'make women of devils and juggle cats into costermongers.' This vulgar conception of Bacon as a sorcerer and necromancer was satirized by Robert Greene (1560-92) in his play 'The Honorable Historie of Frier Bacon and Frier Bongay.' Performed in 1594." Holmyard 117.

In the first operation of our stone, it is called putrefaction, and our stone is made blacke: whereof one saith, When thou findest it blacke, know that in that blackness whiteness is hidden, and thou must extract the same from his most subtile blacknes. But after putrefaction it waxeth red, not with a true rednesse, of which one saith: It is often red, and often of a citrine colour, it often melteth, and is often coagulated, before true whitenesse. And it dissolueth it selfe, it coagulateth it selfe, it putrifeth it selfe, it coloureth it self, it mortifieth it selfe, it quickneth it selfe, it maketh it selfe blacke, it maketh it selfe white, it maketh it selfe red. It is also greene: whereon another sayth, Concoct it, till it appeare greene vnto thee, and that is the soule. And another, Know, that in that greene his soule beareth dominion.

There appears also before whitenesse the peacocks colour. (12-13)

Although food was occasionally tinted in colours beyond Bacon's spectrum (*The Boke of Cokery* advised its readers that when making "brawne ryall" they should mix powder of "gynger & sanders" to colour it "browne" and Plat advised how to make sugar plate the "colour and taste of any flower," for example), such breaks with the norm were surprisingly rare (*Boke of Cokery* i1r; Plat B7v). In fact, evidence from cookery books written during a period that extends over some sixteen hundred years shows that food was consistently tinted in the colours that Bacon describes as occurring during alchemical experiments.

As E. J. Holmyard points out, the earliest mentions of alchemy occur "in a Chinese edict of 144 B.C." and in "a book on alchemical matters [that] was written in Egypt at a date that cannot be more precisely fixed than as about 200 B.C" (25). Alchemy's "main line of development [continues Holmyard] ... began in Hellenistic Egypt, and particularly in

Alexandria and other towns of the Nile delta” (25). An extant encyclopaedia on alchemy that dates from c. AD 300, but which incorporates earlier texts, shows that alchemy “was being practiced in the centuries immediately before and after the birth of Christ” (Holmyard 27).

As we have seen in the introduction, evidence that cooks tinted food in alchemically-inspired colours survives in the *Apicius*. Parts of this cookery book date from the first century and it contains “a great many ... recipes and their culinary concepts” that are of “Greek origin” (Grocock and Grainger 17). The *Apicius* advised its readers to boil leaf vegetables in soda to make them “emerald green” and offered recipes for a white sauce and a green sauce to serve with birds (159, 229). Pine nuts and almonds were “washed in some ‘silver’ chalk so that they [were] all equally white” and green oil was drizzled over numerous cooked dishes just before they were served (*Apicius* 153). In addition, *defrutum* (a sauce made from wine reduced to one third of its volume) was used as an ingredient to colour many dishes and sauces. In a narrative aside, the *Apicius*’ original editor/compiler told his readers that *defrutum* made from dried figs was called “colouring” by the Romans (151). This, Grocock and Grainger (the book’s modern editors) argue, indicates “that the original was in Greek, though written down in the Roman era” (27). This, in turn, suggests that the fashion for colouring food was current in ancient Greece.

Following the decline of the Roman Empire, Persia invaded the East during the seventh century and this invasion was quickly followed by the Muslim conquests. According to a tenth-century biographer, “the first Muslim to interest himself in alchemy was the Umayyad prince Khalid ibn Yazid, who died about 704.... he ordered some Greek philosophers to be summoned from Egypt and instructed them to translate alchemical books from the Greek and Coptic languages into Arabic” (Holmyard 63-4). Between the

eighth and tenth centuries, alchemy “rose” in the East and cast its “glow” on the West from Arabic Spain from whence European alchemy was “ignited in the twelfth century” (Alfonso-Goldfarb 127).

The earliest extant culinary manual in the Arabic language, the *Kitāb al-Tabīkh*, demonstrates that by the late tenth century the Arab world had adopted the food-colouring tradition. A significant number of the dishes in this cookery book were coloured yellow, green, and red (al Warrāq 57, 62, 90, 91, 98).

Alchemy was introduced into Latin Europe by Robert of Chester, who completed a translation of the Arab alchemical text entitled *Book of the Composition of Alchemy* on 11 February 1144 (Holmyard 105-6). In the preface to his translation, Robert claimed that, until that point in time, alchemy was unknown in Latin Europe (Holmyard 106). During the medieval period, inspired, I suggest, by this newly discovered knowledge of alchemy, the English (and French) adopted the food-colouring tradition and transformed it into a positive fetish.

Medieval and early modern English and French cookery books used saffron to colour dishes yellow and red; spinach, parsley, mint and other herbs to colour dishes green; curds, wheat starch, and blanched almonds to create very white dishes; sanders and turnsole to create bright blue dishes; and spices, fried onions, currants, raisins, prunes, and dates to create black sauces and dishes. *The Good Wife's Guide* (a French household manual written c. 1392-4) offered menus that included dishes such as “black stew of hare,” “green soup of eels,” “yellow soup,” “yellow sauce,” “white sauce,” “silver pasties,” “red cider apples roasted and topped with white comfits,” and compote topped with white and red comfits (260-4). In a chapter entitled “Here begynneth the feestes and seruyce from Easter unto

Whytsondaye," *The Boke of Keruyng* advised that "soden egges with grene sauce" and "capons that ben coloured with saffron" were appropriate dishes to serve during this period (A6v). *The Boke of Cokery* included recipes for several white dishes; dishes coloured "blewe" with turnsole, or half "blewe" and half "whyte"; and tri-coloured dishes that used sanders, saffron, and "herbes" to create a "grene" "parte" (c4r, c5r, h3r). Jellies were also coloured. *A Booke of Cookerie*, for example, offered recipes for "Gellie both white and redde" (f2r-f3r).

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Contrary to popular belief, alchemy was not solely a proto-science that sought to transmute base metals into gold "by means of an ill-defined something called the Philosopher's Stone" (Redgrove 1).<sup>102</sup> In fact, alchemy was "both a philosophy and an experimental science, and the transmutation of the metals was its end only in that this would give the final proof of the alchemistic hypothesis" (Redgrove 1).

Alchemy was the attempt to demonstrate experimentally on the material plane the validity of a certain philosophical view of the Cosmos ... this philosophical view of the Cosmos was Mysticism. Alchemy had its origin in the attempt to apply, in a certain manner, the principles of Mysticism to the things of the physical plane, and was, therefore, of a dual nature, on the one hand spiritual and religious, on the other, physical and material. (Redgrove 7-8)

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<sup>102</sup> Redgrove includes two numbers at the top of each of his pages. The numbers in square brackets relate to the chapters, the non-bracketed numbers relate to the page numbers. The numbers quoted here are page numbers.

On the material level, it was believed that the Philosopher's Stone achieved perfection through the transmutation of base metals into the purest metal, gold, and this, as Redgrove points out, is where the focus of most alchemists was fixed (13). On the physiological level, the Philosopher's Stone was viewed as, or could be transformed into, an Elixir of Life. Paracelsus (who studied, wrote about, and practiced alchemically-based medicine during the first decades of the sixteenth century) claimed that the Philosopher's Stone was capable of penetrating "the whole body" in order to restore and renew it: it "purgeth the bodies, and renders them in such wise, as if they were but newly born; it bannisheth every thing that endeavours to destroy Nature" (69).

For some alchemists, however, or possibly for most alchemists sometimes, the material and physiological were inexorably linked to the spiritual. In the serially translated "The Booke of the Secrets of Alchimie," Galid wrote,

Thankes be giuen to God the Creator of all things, who hath conducted vs, beautified vs, instructed vs, and giuen vs knowledge and vnderstanding.... Know brother, that this our mastery and honourable office of the secret Stone, is a secret of the secrets of God, which hee hath concealed from his people, neither would he reueale it to any, saue to those, who like sonnes haue faythfully deserued it, knowing both his goodnesse and greatnesse: for to him that desireth a secret of God, this secret masterie is more necessary then any other. (28)

Redgrove contends that "all [those] who were worthy of the title 'alchemist' realized at times, more or less dimly, the possibility of the application of the same methods to man and the glorious result of the transmutation of man's soul into spiritual gold" (13).

The search for this tripartite perfection explains, I suggest, why English medieval and early modern diners (and Greco-Romans and medieval Arabs) consumed food that was symbolically embedded in alchemical practices. Unfortunately, however, we look in vain to early modern cookery books for evidence to confirm this. By the time that *The Forme of Cury* was written, some two hundred and fifty years after the knowledge of alchemy had been introduced in England, colouring food had evidently become an established practice and, as such, Richard II's master-cooks made no attempt to historicise or to explain the food-colouring custom that they advocated.

In early modern English kitchens, the engagement with Alchemy's fabulous search for material, physiological, and spiritual perfection would have had to operate within the confines of humoral philosophy. This, as we have seen, considered all food, and therefore all spices and colourings, as a means to achieve a different kind of perfection: that of a perfect humoral balance. For early moderns, therefore, colouring food worked on multiple levels. Let us take the example of green sauce, which was a particular favourite during this period. On the material plane, alchemists associated green with the colour of the soul ("[c]oncoct it, till it appeare greene vnto thee, and that is the soule") (Bacon 13). On a humoral front, as Henry Buttes advised, this sauce could be made from "sweete hearbes, as Betony, Mint, Basill: also Rose vineger, a Clowe or two, and a little Garlicke" (P2v). Its temperature depended on "the temperature of the herbs it [was] made of, now more, now lesse hot" (Buttes P2v). When it was eaten "with flesh (as mustard) [it] excitet[ed] appetite: commende[d] meates to the Palate: helpe[d] concoction: [and broke] ... fleame in the stomack" (Buttes P2v). It was not "for feuers and hotte stomacks, especially eaten largely"

(Buttes P2v). Cooks, then, had to balance many forms of perfection: gastronomic, humoral, alchemical, and aesthetic.

When the ubiquitous green sauce was referred to on the stage, it clearly drew meaning from these cohabiting contexts. In a scene set during Lent in Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, Allwit (whose wife is kept and whose household is maintained by Sir Walter Whorehound) taunts bribe-taking promoters (who informed on those who sold or purchased meat during Lent) by pretending to be a stranger in search of meat. Allwit tells the promoters that he longs for "any flesh;/But ... especially for veal and green-sauce" (2.2.79-80). The allusion to green food operates on multiple levels. On the literal level, green sauce's popularity makes Allwit's pretended desire for it entirely believable. On the material level, both the promoters and Allwit, who is described as a "Green-goose" about to be "sauced" by the Second Promoter, allude to green during their gold-producing schemes: the promoters trade in illicit meat and bribes; Allwit illicitly trades in his wife's flesh and is bribed to continue doing so by Sir Walter Whorehound (2.2.81). On the spiritual level, and the church is, after all, involved in this scene through the Lenten time frame, green's symbolic association with the purity of the soul condemns the immoral alchemy (or gold-creating schemes) of promoters and Allwit alike.

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Comfits were also a colourful and ubiquitous presence on early modern tables. Comfits were made by coating seeds, nuts, spices, or small pieces of fruit peel in layer after layer of hot syrupy sugar (see Figure 13). They could be made in a variety of colours, but Plat's long chapter on "The arte of comfetmaking" specifically told his readers how to colour them in the alchemical colours of "redde," "greene," "yellow," "golde," and "siluer" (C12c –

D6r). These sugary treats could also be made in different styles and sizes: from “crispe and ragged” to “greate, huge, and big” (Plat C12v – D6r).

Picture removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 13. Portrait of the Cobham family painted in 1567. The dish in the bottom right hand corner contains white comfits.

The accounts from the Office of the Revels during Elizabeth I’s reign show that Court property makers used comfits produced in colours from the alchemical spectrum to construct innovative and ingenious food properties. The Revels’ Accounts recorded purchases from “thappoticary” that included “suger plate,” “Musk Kumfettes,” “Clove Cumfettes,” “Synamon kumfettes,” and “Gynger Cumfettes” (Feuillerat 175). These were purchased to serve as “fflakes of yse [ice] & hayle stones” in the “maske of lanvs” (Feuillerat 175). If these spices (cloves, cinnamon, and ginger) were mixed with the sugar during the comfit-making process, as Plat advised his readers to do, then they were likely to have produced black, yellow, and red comfits. The irony was, of course, that these food effects designed to represent coloured ice connected directly to the colours produced in the flames of alchemical experiments.

Because the “maske of lanvs” has not survived, we do not know how these food effects were used (Sibley 195). If they were designed to cascade to the floor, they would have created noise as they came down and as they hit the ground; they would also have emitted an aroma of sugar and spices as they broke up, or were crunched underfoot. In this masque, then, even though these comfits were unlikely to have been designed for consumption, their aromatic nature probably alerted masquers and audience alike to the actor beneath the role—or the food beneath the food effect.

Another colourful food popular with early moderns was coloured cream tarts. Dawson offered a recipe for “tartes of creame,” which could be coloured white and yellow by colouring half with “saffron or yolks of egges” (*Second Part* 17-8). Markham went even further; he described how to combine individually coloured sections in order to create one spectacular multi-coloured dessert:

If the tart be in the proportion of a beast, the body may be of one colour, the eyes of another, the teeth of an other, and the tallents of another: and so of birds, the body of one colour, the eyes of another, the legges of an other, and euery feather in the wings of a seuerall colour according to fancy: and so likewise in armes, the field of one colour, the charge of another, according to the forme of the Coat-armour: as for mantles, trailes and deuices about armes, they may be set out with seuerall colours of preserues, conserues, marmaiads, and goodinyakes [sweetmeats made from quinces], as you shall find occasion or inuention, and so likewise of knots ... (121).<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Well into the seventeenth century recipe books, such as Robert May’s *The Accomplisht Cook* (1660), still contained colourful dishes. May still offered his readers recipes for “a Spinage Tart of three colours, green, yellow, and White” and, for “the several colours of Tarts.” May 231, 233.

Figure 14 shows a modern reproduction of a multi-coloured cream dish (Day 59). Although the recipe dates from c. 1749, it demonstrates the complexity and the artistry of dishes such as Markham described.

Dramatic dialogue occasionally alludes to this form of coloured treat. In *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare suggests that even lowly shepherds were partial to colourful tarts because, in this play, the clown is sent to buy provisions for the sheep-sheering feast with a list that includes "saffron to colour the warden pies" (4.3.42). More realistically, given the cost of spices, in Thomas Heywood's *The Fayre Mayde of the Exchange*, Fiddle tells Mistress Flower that the kitchen staff require "some saffron,/To colour the custards" that are being prepared for dinner (13v.).

Picture removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 14. "Detail of a late Baroque dessert (c.1749) re-created at Fairfax House, York, for the exhibition *Pleasures of the Table* (1997)" (Day 59)

In addition to coloured sauces, comfits, and cream tarts, colourful food effects proliferated during domestic banquet courses. Markham's list of banquet foods included "preserved fruites"; "pasts [pastries]"; "wet suckets [fruit candied or preserved in sugar]";

“dried suckets”; “Marmelades and Goodiniakes [sweetmeats made from quinces]”; “comfets of all kinds”; “peares, apples, wardens back’t, raw or roasted”; “Oranges and Leamons sliced”; and “Wafer-cakes” (36). The naturally bright colours of these fruits would have been enhanced with spices and colourings. Dawson’s list of “THE NAMES OF ALL thinges necessary for a banquet” included saffron, ginger and saunders (*Good Huswifes Iewell* 23).<sup>104</sup> In addition, these orange, red, yellow, and green fruits and fruit dishes could be combined to construct complex food effects. In Jasper Mayne’s *The Amorous Warre*, young courtiers ask Marthesia, a “*Diomed [diamond?] oth’ Cawdles,*” to “lay aside [her] contemplations [of]/How to take towne in *Marchpane*; or expresse/The Siege of Thebes, or travels of Ulisses/*In sweet meats*” and, instead, make one of them the recipient of her favours (53).

Whereas alchemists used heat to cleanse and purify metals, humoralists used the brightly coloured sugary foods, of the type served at banquets, to heat and purify the body. According to Buttes, sugar was “hot and moyst in the first” degree and, as such, it helped to keep “the bodie cleane and neate,” it was “holesome for the reines,” it nourished “more then honny,” and cleansed “the breast” (Spice, n.pag). Because of the heating quality of banquet food, consumers ran the risk that their inflamed passions could ravish their senses. As the Ward in Thomas Middleton’s *Women, Beware Women* complains, “women, when they come to sweet things once/They forget all their friends, they grow so greedy –/Nay, oftentimes [they also forget] their husbands” (3.2.76-8).

Because of the fairly limited range of foods served at banquets, as Michael Dobson points out, it was “a supremely convenient course” for dramatists to stage (65). Unhelpfully

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<sup>104</sup> “[R]ed, yellow, and white varieties of this aromatic wood were known as sanders.” Best 308.

for a project such as this, banquets were normally called onstage with catchall and non-specific stage directions such as “*servingmen ... bringing in a banquet,*” or are already “*prepared*” onstage when scenes open (*Shr.* 5.2.0; *Mac.* 3.4.0).<sup>105</sup> Except in cases where dialogue compensates for the absence of a menu, as is the case with the banquet scene in *The Great Duke of Florence* discussed below, we are left to speculate about which colourful creations were brought in or “*prepared*” during these scenes.

In the domestic realm, marchpanes were iconic banqueting food. As Markham’s “*Ordering of banquets*” instructed, they had “the first place, the middle place, and last place” on banquet tables (136). As this recipe demonstrates, marchpane was similar to modern marzipan:

Take the best Iordan Almonds and blanch them in warme water, then put them into a stone mortar, and with a wooden pestell beate them to a pappe, then take of the finest refined sugar well searst, and with it Damaske Rose-water, beate it to a good stiffe paste, allowing almost euey Iordan Almond three spoonefull of sugar ... lay it vpon a faire table, and ... mould it like leauen, then with a roling pin role it forth, and lay it vpon wafers washt with Rose water; then ... put it into what forme you please ... wash it ouer with Rose-water and sugar mixt together, for that will make the Ice, then adorne it with Comfets, gilding, or whatsoeuer deuices you please, and so set it into a hot stoue, and there bake it crispie. (Markham 130)<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> See Alan C Dessen’s and Leslie Thomson’s *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642* for more evidence. Dessen and Tomson 19-20.

<sup>106</sup> As with sugar, sweet almonds were considered to have heating qualities. Buttes wrote that they were “temperately hot and moist almost in the first” degree and bitter almonds “drie in the second.” They “helpe[d ] the sight: encrease[d] seed, and braine: fetch[ed] vp fleame: purge[d] the breast: cause[d] sleepe: [and] open[ed] obstructions of the liuer” Buttes E2.

Paradoxically, in addition to their position at the heart of fine dining, marchpanes were also associated with fasting because, during Lent and on fasting days, almonds and almond milk were commonly used as substitutes for meat and dairy produce. Aside from the wafers used in marchpane recipes—which were normally made using eggs and cheese, but could be made without either—marchpanes made perfect fasting food (*Good Wife's Guide* 334). In addition, this supremely adaptable food was also considered to be a “comfortable meate [suitable] ... for weake folkes, suche as haue lost the taste of meates by much and long sicknesse” (Partridge, *Treasurie* A6r–A6v). Marchpanes, then, functioned as symbols of status, symbols of religious piety, symbols of humoral imbalances, and as iconic food effects.

A substantial body of evidence, stretching across literary genres (pamphlets, social history narratives, royal account books, and, of course, cookery books), testified to the decorative and colourful statements that these multi-functioning machpanes made at banquets. William Harrison recorded that at Guild feast banquets marchpanes were served “wrought with no small curiosity” (129). The Office of the Revels' Accounts from the reign of Elizabeth I included an entry for “Gowlde leaves to gilde the Marchepane stuf” (Feuillerat 176). As we have seen, Markam's recipe for “the best Marchpane” recommended glazing these creations with sugar ice and adorning them with “Comfets, guilding, or whatsoeuer deuices [his readers] please[d]” (130). Even as late as 1660, Robert May was still advising his readers to garnish their marchpanes “with some pretty conceits made of the same stuff” and to “stick long comfets upright on it” (May 253).

### **Marchpane stage properties**

When we add the significant number of banquet scenes that were staged in early modern plays to the importance of marchpanes to this course, there can be little doubt that

early modern professional playing companies would have owned a selection of banqueting properties and that these selections must have included at least one elaborately decorated and/or coloured marchpane. In fact, marchpanes are included in two extant inventories of stage properties. The first, and perhaps the best known, appears in Henslowe's *Diary* under the heading "*The Invention tacken of all the properties for my Lord Admeralles men, the 10 of Marche 1598*" (319). In amongst properties such as "j rocke, j cage, j tombe, j Hell mought," Henslowe recorded "ij marchepanes" (319). Unfortunately, Henslowe did not record what his marchpanes were made from. They may have been real, or pasteboard, or wood, or they may even have been wax because Elizabeth I's Revels' Accounts recorded a payment for "Wax for A Cake in ffarrantes playe" (Feuillerat 240).

The possibility that Henslowe's marchpanes were real is suggested by Partridge's claim that if these dishes were "through dried, and kept in a drie and warme ayre, a Marchpane [would] ... laste many yeeres" (*Treasurie* A6v). As with flakes of ice made from comfits, Partridge's long-lived marchpane had the potential to slip food effects out of the classification of food altogether because the act of consumption is central to the *OED*'s definition of food: "any nutritious substance that people or animals eat or drink or that plants absorb in order to maintain life and growth." Any cook, or property maker, intending to keep a marchpane for "many yeeres" had clearly ceased to think of it in terms of a consumable product.

The definition of food is also stretched and problematised by Partridge's recommendation, and that of other cookery book writers, that cooks could "furnish a table" with items such as "platters, dishes, glasses, cuppes, and such like things" made from "Paste of Suger," which, when the diners were finished eating off them and drinking from them,

they could “eate ... vp” (*Treasurie* A8r –B1r). Clearly, early moderns were familiar with the slippery nature of food effects as generally consumable, but sometimes not consumable, products. This dynamic could also be reversed because that which masqueraded as a real food effect on private tables was not necessarily always so. Horatio Busino recorded that at a banquet following a court masque in 1618, the “table was covered almost entirely with seasoned pasties and very few sugar confections. There were some large figures, but they were of painted pasteboard for ornament” (143). Even the Court, it would seem, indulged in dramatic, but imitation food effects.

It seems likely that professional playing companies used a mixture of real and imitation food effects onstage. Where fresh food was available, such as in inn-yard venues, it was probably used, but there is no doubt that fake food effects were also brought onstage. One of the few pieces of evidence for the latter is found in the second extant property inventory, which occurs in Richard Brome’s *The Antipodes* (1638) and shows that some marchpane effects were constructed from pasteboard.

In this metadramatic play, a play-within-a-play is performed by Lord Letoy’s servants—who are both servants and players in his household. Letoy brags that his “lads can act the emperors’ lives all over,/And Shakespeare’s chronicled histories, to boot” (1.5.67-8). This domestic company of players perform a play, which is set in a topsy-turvy world called Antipodes (where “women overrule the men,” “get the men with child,” and “Hunt, hawk, and take their pleasure”) (1.6.124, 135, 147). One of the purposes of the inner-play is to cure Peregrine (the son of a country gentleman) of his travel lust because he spends his time reading travel texts and fantasizing about travel, rather than procreating with his wife. In order to enact a cure, Perigrine is drugged by Doctor Hughball and, when he wakes, he is

told that he has been asleep for “[e]ight months, and some odd days” and that during this time he has travelled to the Antipodes (2.4.17). Peregrine believes the ruse and proceeds to explore this new world. During his explorations, Peregrine discovers the players’ “tiring house” (3.6.3). The properties that he finds there are apparently so realistic that he believes himself to be at the heart of Antipodes. Byplay (Letoy’s conceited servant) is so disturbed by this invasion of his players’ inner sanctum that he misses his entrance cue and then abandons his role in the inner-play entirely in order to complain directly to Letoy about “the mad young gentleman” (Peregrine) who has

... got into our tiring house amongst us,

And ta’ne a strict survey of all our properties:

Our statues and our images of gods, our planets and our constellations,

Our giants, monsters, furies, beasts, and bugbears,

Our helmets, shields, and vizors, hairs, and beards,

Our pasteboard marchpanes, and our wooden pies. (3.6.3-8)

Byplay’s complaint implies that these “pasteboard marchpanes” are sufficiently credible and realistic to deceive a slightly mad (or melancholic according to Ann Haaker) “young gentleman” (Haaker xiii-xx). It appears from this list that marchpanes were as essential to playing companies as “hairs, and beards.” It is also worth noting that both Brome’s “survey” and Henslowe’s “[e]nventary” suggest that dramatic banquets were sufficiently realistic to reflect the domestic practice of serving two or more marchpanes at each sitting because in both lists marchpanes were listed plurally.

Meads cites Brome’s scene as “[c]lear evidence of a tradition of the use in the theatre of pasteboard and/or marchpane” stage properties (65). They are also clear

evidence of the use of coloured and decorative food effects on the early modern stage. This is not simply because, as we have seen, a body of evidence proves that marchpanes were designed to be visually impressive culinary creations, but also because common sense tells us that without fancy shaping, colouring, and elaborate decorations to define them, marchpanes (whether real or pasteboard) would have resembled nothing more than indeterminate cream shapes.

Of more interest from the point of view of alchemic food effects, however, is the fact that marchpane was frequently moulded to resemble forts and castles. Thomas Dekker's pamphlet *O per se O. Or A New Cryer of Lanthorne and Candle-Light* described a "March-pane Castle" with "little streamers" "hanging dandling by at the foure corners" and, in *A Strange Horse-race*, Dekker described "The Bankrovt's Banquet" as having "March-panes" with "long Orange-comfits standing up like Pikes" and "in the midst of euery March-pane a goodly sweet Castle, all the bottomes being thickely strewed with Careawaies" (*O per se*, E4r; *Strange* F4r ). This tradition in England can be traced back as far as *The Forme of Cury*, which included a recipe for particularly colourful "CHASTLETES," or castles, which were constructed from "iii Coffyns" that were dried "harde in an Ovene" and then filled with coloured fillings (108).

Where, then, did the inspiration for these oft-produced fort-like food effects come from? On the one hand, it is entirely possible that the fort-motif was suggested by medieval chivalric codes of conduct and the militaristic society in which it operated. On the other hand, it is also possible that, as with coloured food, a secondary and more subtle inspiration for this food effect is traceable to alchemy. As figures 15, 16, and 17 show, the apparatus used in alchemical experiments bears a striking resemblance to castles and towers. Figure

15 is a still; figure 16 is a sublimatory, which were used to purify substances by heating them until they vaporised and then condensing the vapour directly back to a solid state by rapid cooling; figure 17 is a water bath (Holmyard 51, 56-7, 55).

Pictures removed for copyright reasons.

Figures 15, 16, and 17. (Holmyard 51, 57, 55)

These apparatuses were used by alchemists who dealt in the physical plane and sought the transmutation of base metals into gold. Given alchemy's dual nature as both science and religion, however, this equipment could also function as a material sign that its user was also searching for spiritual purity because, as Redgrove points out, alchemy "was the attempt to demonstrate experimentally on the material plane the validity of a certain philosophical view of the Cosmos" (8). When viewed in this light, replicating, or alluding to, these alchemical apparatuses in domestic or dramatic food effects could be viewed in a quasi-religious light.

**Satirizing alchemy's search for tripartite perfection in  
Philip Massinger's *The Great Duke of Florence***

As with coloured food, we must look to dramatic dialogue, rather than to stage directions, for evidence that marchpane castles and towers were used as food effects on the early modern stage. One example occurs in Philip Massinger's *The Great Duke of Florence* (c.

1627).<sup>107</sup> In this play, Giovanni, the Duke of Florence's nephew and heir apparent, has fallen in love with Lidia, a "matchlesse [but socially inferior] virgin," who is the daughter of his country-dwelling tutor, Carolo (2.1.163). When Giovanni is called to court, those travelling with him carry reports of Lidia's beauty to Cozimo, the Duke of Florence. Cozimo's interest is triggered, so he sends his favourite, Lodovico, to investigate. When Lodovico meets Lidia, however, he is himself smitten by her. On his return to court, Lodovico enrolls Giovanni in a plot to persuade Cozimo that reports of Lidia's beauty have been greatly exaggerated. By doing so, Lodovico hopes to dampen Cozimo's interest and, unbeknown to Giovanni, to woo Lidia for himself. Hearing contradictory reports, however, Cozimo suspects a plot and sets out to visit Lidia himself. In a desperate attempt to prevent Cozimo from meeting Lidia and both falling in love with her and discovering that his favourite and his nephew have lied to him, Giovanni writes to Lidia to warn her that Cozimo is on his way. He warns Lidia that the Duke may be planning to seduce her with an "*unlawful love*" and hopes that she can find a way to prevent such a catastrophe occurring (4.1.92).

On arrival at Carolo's house, Cozimo accuses the tutor of treason and banishes him to his chamber because, he claims, Carolo has plotted to match Giovanni with Lidia during Giovanni's residence in his house. Cozimo then goes to meet "the matchlesse virgin" in order to judge her for himself (2.1.163). Lidia, however, has sent her less than dazzling servant, Petronella, to meet the Duke in her stead.<sup>108</sup> Clearly, mistress and servant have plotted a charade designed to appal the Duke. When he meets the alleged "diamond," the Duke is suitably horrified (4.2.333). Petronella performs her part with relish and their

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<sup>107</sup> *The Great Duke of Florence* was written between 1624 and 1627 (Edwards and Gibson 95). James I died in March 1625, which places Massinger's play just before or just after the change of monarch.

<sup>108</sup> Meads points out that this substitution was inspired by a similar situation in the earlier (and anonymous) *A Knack to Know a Knave*. Meads 192.

meeting degenerates into what appears to be a slapstick parody of elegant banqueting behaviour.

When Cozimo meets Petronella-as-Lidia, he offers to “Salute” her (4.2.159). She replies, “Let me wipe my mouth Sir/With my Cambrick handkercher, and then have at you” (4.2.160-1). Petronella, relishing her role as hostess, draws Cozimo’s attention to the banquet:

Will your Dukeship

Sit down and eat some Sugar-plums [a type of comfit]? here’s a Castle

Of March-Pane too, and this Quince Marmalade

Was of my owne making. All summ’d up together

Did cost the setting on, and here is wine too [which she then] *Drinks all off*

As good as e’re was tap’d. (4.2.163-68)

The horrified Duke asks, “Doe you drink thus often Lady?” (4.2.171). Petronella assures her guest that she drinks when she is thirsty and eats when she is hungry, and proceeds to drink yet more wine. She then offers to drink on behalf of Cozimo. Clearly deciding that he wants no part of such a banquet, the Duke nominates Calandrino, Giovanni’s merry and clown-like servant, to partake in his stead. Cozimo tells Calandrino, “[Y]ou shall sit inthroan’d, and eate, and drink/As you were a Duke” (4.2.184-5). Calandrino is delighted and assures the Duke that he will “eate and drink like an Emperour” (4.2.186). Once Calandrino joins Petronella at the table, matters degenerate still further. Calandrino, who has learnt Court manners when he travelled to Court with his master, attempts to instruct Petronella in correct dining etiquette. During her instruction there is yet more drinking:

CALANDRINO. Nay, pray you eate faire,

Or deuide, and I will choose. Cannot you use

Your fork as I doe? Gape and I will feed you. *Feedes her.*

Gape wider yet, this is Court-like.

PETRONELLA. To choke Dawes with,

I like it not.

CALANDRINO. But you like this. *They drink.*

PETRONELLA. Let it come boy. (4.2.189-193).

The pinnacle of this drunken banquet is a “lusty Hornepipe,” which is danced by Calandrino, Petronella, and other servants (4.2.203). After inquiring whether she “foot[ed] it roundly,” Petronella “[f]alls downe” drunk and is then, on Cozimo’s instructions, taken to the cellar to cool off (4.2.211-13).

Although this scene may appear to be satirising correct “Court-like” banqueting behaviour, it actually offers a perilously accurate picture of the type of behaviour that occurred in James I’s court. During the Court Christmas celebrations of 1618, Horatio Busino attended “a series of sumptuous banquets” and “most graceful masques” (136). Busino described the “extravagant masquers” and the equally “extravagant” audience (140). He also described how these elegant Court-dwellers behaved during the banquet: “The repast was served upon glass plates or dishes and at the first assault they upset the table and the crash of glass platters reminded me precisely of a severe hailstorm at mid-summer smashing the window glass. The story ended at half past two in the morning and half disgusted and weary we returned home” (143-4).

Nor was the lack of banqueting decorum witnessed by Busino a one-off fluke. In 1606, Sir John Harington described courtiers behaving in a particularly Petronella-as-Lidia

manner. Harington reported that “English Nobles ... now follow the fashion and wallow in [the] beastly delights” of “good liquor” (126). “The Ladies,” Harington continued, “abandon their sobriety, and are seen to roll about in intoxication” (126-7). This level of intoxication proved a bar to performing masques accurately. Harington described one eventful entertainment, which was performed for the visiting Danish King:

The lady who did play the [Queen of Sheba’s] part did carry most precious gifts to both their Majesties [“wine, cream, jelly, beverage, cakes, spices, and other good matters”]; but, forgetting the steppes arising to the canopy, overset her caskets into his Danish Majesties lap, and fell at his feet.... Much was the hurry and confusion; cloths and napkins were at hand to make all clean. His Majesty then got up and woud [*sic*] dance with the Queen of Sheba; but he fell down and humbled himself before her, and was carried to an inner chamber and laid on a bed of state....The entertainment and show went forward, and most of the presenters went backward, or fell down, wine did so occupy their upper chambers. (127-8)

It is curious that food was used in this masque as “most precious gifts” fit for a king. Moreover, the mess made by these gifts when the Queen of Sheba dropped them tells us that, unlike the “painted pasteboard” ornamental figures that Busino witnessed at a Court banquet in 1618, these culinary properties were real.

The link between the behaviour at Massinger’s banquet and real “Court-like” behaviour is painfully clear. However, whereas a drunken Danish king who attempted to perform in a masque was able to sleep off his stupor “on a bed of state,” the inebriated Petronella, who adopts the mask of her mistress in a domestic playlet, has to recover “in the

Cellar” (Harington 128; *Florence* 4.2.213). Although the comic juxtaposition of elegant banquet food and inelegant diners may have seemed very funny and thoroughly status-affirming to Massinger’s sophisticated audiences (*The Duke of Florence* was performed at the Phoenix in Drury Lane, which “attracted much the same sophisticated clientele as the private playhouse in Blackfriars”), some courtly playgoers may have recognised themselves in the sights of Massinger’s satire (Wickham 623).

Importantly for our purposes, at the heart of Massinger’s drunken banquet stands a “Castle/Of March-Pane,” which, through its association with alchemy, inserts yet another subtext to this scene by counterbalancing social critique with alchemical concerns (4.2.164-5)? According to the alchemistic view, an analogy existed

between the problem of the perfection of the metals, *i.e.*, the transmutation of the ‘base’ metals into gold, and the perfection or transfiguration of spiritual man; and it might also be added, between these problems and that of the perfection of man considered physiologically. To the alchemistic philosopher these three problems were one: the same problem on different planes of being; and the solution was likewise one. (Redgrove 12)

These three “problems” intersect during Massinger’s banquet. The playwright uses Petronella to draw attention to the presence of material wealth and to the absence of spiritual or physiological riches. Massinger highlights the former when Petronella boasts to Cozimo that the banquet when all “summ’d up together/Did cost the setting on” and that the wine is as “good as e’re was tap’d” (4.2.166-8). Petronella’s behaviour at the banquet, which her inebriated state shows is more than playacting on her mistress’ behalf, demonstrates that the problem of her spiritual perfection is yet to be solved; as, too, is the

problem of her physiological perfection because Cozimo describes her “out-side” as rough (4.2.159). However, given the transparent parody of Court behaviour that Massinger offers in this scene, it is clear where he believed the real “problems” in need of solutions resided (Redgrove 12).

In addition, Massinger builds on this play’s sub-textual association with alchemical practices by drawing on the theme of transmutation. In the play, transmutations occur as characters transform between roles. Cozimo, for example, begins as prince and head of state; during the banquet scene, he abdicates this role and encourages Calandrino to perform his part; during the trial scene, he abdicates his role of God-like judge and transforms himself into the prosecutor; he is persuaded to turn back into a God-like judge by Lidia, but is then obliged to transform himself into a figure of blind justice so that he can issue pardons to subjects who he knows are false. In between these transmutations, Cozimo begins the play as resolute widower, is transformed into a lust-smitten suitor to Lidia, and is then transformed back into a resolute widower.

Lodovico is similarly transformed. When we first meet him he is Cozimo’s “industrious Bee,” or pet pirate, who sails the sea to crop “the sweet flowers of [their] enemies,/And every happy evening returnes/Loaded with wax and hony to [the] Hive” (1.2.80-3). Once he meets Lidia, however, Lodovico feels compelled to “put off [his] naturall shape/Of loyall duty” and to “disguise [him]selfe/In the adulterate, and cobweb masque/Of disobedient trecherie” (5.1.9-12). Calandrino, too, transforms himself from a foolish country servant into what he imagines to be a Court knave or a “Signior” by means of a “spruce ruffe,” a “hooded cloake,” a “long stockin,” a “Case of tooth-picks,” and a “silver forke” (3.1.384-6).

Even the relatively pure Lidia undergoes transformations. She begins as Giovanni's companion and fellow student; she then becomes director of the parody banquet; when her doubling plot at the banquet is discovered, she transforms into a petitioner for Giovanni; during the trial, she briefly becomes Giovanni's "gentle" judge until she descends from "*the chaires of State*" in order to urge Cozimo to reassume that role; and, finally, she eagerly awaits her transmutation from base subject to the Philosopher's Stone-type perfection of Giovanni's wife (5.2.112, 5.2.107, 5.2.211-13). Most of the transformations in this play are driven by physical lust and/or desire and none are motivated by a desire for spiritual purity. The alchemically-inspired food effect at the heart of Massinger's drunken, or base, banquet silently condemns those who seek the gratification of their will over the perfection of their soul.

### Consuming gold

In addition to the influence of alchemical colours and apparatuses, alchemy also impacted upon early modern food and medicine through the metals that its practitioners understood to represent material perfection: gold and then silver, which was considered to be "more perfect than the rest" (Redgrove 27). The other metals that alchemists used were "steele," "Leade," "Copper," and "Iron" (Bacon 3). Bacon explained that gold was considered to be "a perfect body ... pure, fixed, cleare, red, and of *Sulphur* cleane, fixed, red, not burning, and it wanteth nothing" (2). Silver was "a body, cleane, pure, and almost perfect ... pure, almost fixed, cleare, and white, & of such a like *Sulpher*: It wanteth nothing, saue a little fixation, colour, and weight" (Bacon 2-3). Alchemists contended that all metals were formed from one seed and that Nature worked "continuously up to gold; so that, in a sense, all other metals [were] gold in the making" (Redgrove 28).

The Philosopher's Stone "was thought to be of a species with gold" and the Elixir of Life "was generally described as a solution of the Stone in spirits of wine, or identified with the Stone itself" (Redgrove 36, 35). Under certain conditions, it was believed that the Stone could restore the subject "to the flower of youth" (Redgrove 35). However, the notion that the "Elixir would endow one with a life of endless duration on the material plane [was] not in strict accord with alchemistic analogy. From this point of view, the effect of the Elixir [was] physiological perfection, which, although ensuring long life, is not equivalent to endless life on the material plane" (Redgrove 35).

It is of no surprise, then, that early moderns used this life-prolonging and body-perfecting metal in their remedies. Elizabeth Grey, Countess of Kent, for example, offered a "Medicine for the falling sicknese" (epilepsy), which included "a penny weight of the powder of Gold" (3). Similarly, Woolley included gold in her recipes for "The Cock water...for restoring out of deep Consumptions," "Rosa Solis," "The Melancholy water," a cordial called "Tincture of Caroways," and a "Custard for Consumption" (Woolley, *Queen-Like* 12-13, 16, 21, 29, 103-4).

Early moderns also took gold and silver with their food. They were symbolically present in dishes that had been coloured red (gold), or white (silver), or, quite commonly, a combination of both. As we have seen, Bacon described gold as "a perfect body ... pure, fixed, cleare, [and] red" and silver as "a body, cleane, pure, and almost perfect ... and white" (2-3). They were also materially present in dishes that had been decorated with gold and silver leaf. Dawson's recipe for Manus Christi, for example, instructed his readers to mix "Rosewater," "Ambergreece," "grains of Pearle," and "Suger" together and then "boyle" the mix "till it doe rise and fall againe three times" (*Good Husvives* 23). This mixture was

shaped into “little Cakes,” which, when they were “halfe colde,” were covered in “golde” leaf (Dawson, *Good Huswifes* 24). Dawson also offered instructions on how to “bray golde”: “[t]ake Golde leaues, fower [four] drops of hony, mix it wel together, and put it in to a glasse, and when you will occupie it, steep and temper it in gumme water and it will be good” (*Second Part* 46). A colourful dish from *The Booke of Cokery* called “byande ryall” was dressed up with “golde” and “sylvuer foyle” and with “losynges” cut out of “suger plate and gynger plate or past ryall” (c6r-c6v). Dawson’s recipe for “a white leach” concluded with the instruction “Lay it faire in dishes, and lay golde upon it” (*Second Part* 19). Plat offered instructions on how to gild items made from sugar paste: “[g]ilde it on the edges with the white of an egge laide round about the brim of the dish with a pensill, and presse the gold downe with some cotton, and when it is dry skew or brush off the golde with the foote of an Hare or Conie” (B5v –B7v).

On the spiritual and physiological level, decorating food with gold transformed that food into a quasi-Elixir of Life with the potential to transmute those that consumed it from the base metal of “sinful and unregenerate man” into spiritual and physical gold by purging bodies and spirits and rendering them “as if they were but newly born” (Redgrove 11; Paracelsus 69).

#### **Gilt marchpane animals in Thomas Middleton’s *Women, Beware Women***

In *The Great Duke of Florence*, Massinger satirises the association between gold and purity in the opening scene and, by doing so, he alerts the audience to the play’s alchemical subtext. Carolo, the tutor, likens the Duke’s favourite, Lodovico, to “pure and tride gold” (1.1.86). When, however, Lodovico is “tride” by the fire of Lidia’s beauty, his golden surface

dissolves to reveal a base interior of “disobedient trecherie” (5.1.12).<sup>109</sup> Metaphorical allusions to alchemy were a popular trope with early modern playwrights. However, there were occasions when metaphors were materialised onstage in the form of gilded food properties. Chapter 2 has already discussed Joan Trash’s gilt gingerbread. The focus here will be on the “gilded bull,” ram, and goat made from marchpane that Thomas Middleton brings onstage in *Women, Beware Women* (3.2.74-5).<sup>110</sup>

In Middleton’s play, a marriage has been arranged between Isabella and a foolish Ward. The couple first meet at a banquet, which is smouldering with sexual tensions (3.2). Middleton’s Duke of Florence (which is a different Duke of Florence from the titular figure in Massinger’s *The Great Duke of Florence*) is there with Bianca, whom he has raped and made his mistress. Bianca’s cuckolded husband, Leantio, is there miserably watching his wife with the Duke. As Leantio watches his wife, however, Livia (a wealthy widow) watches and is smitten by him. Isabella has agreed to marry the Ward to provide camouflage for the incestuous affair that she is conducting with her uncle, Hippolito. Despite the fact that the Ward’s guardian, Guardiano, warns his charge that he “shalt ne’er find [Isabella’s] hand out of her uncle’s,” the Ward, being foolish, is not suspicious (3.2.16-20). As Livia spots Leantio, the Ward spots Isabella:

I see her now, I’m sure. The ape’s so little

I shall scarce feel her. I have seen almost

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<sup>109</sup> Predictably, perhaps, Lodovico tries to convince himself that his base behaviour is a “disguise” and his “natural shape” is actually one of “loyall duty” (4.1.1-40).

<sup>110</sup> The composition date of Middleton’s *Women, Beware Women* is subject to debate. The “usual” dating of the play is “between 1621 and Middleton’s death in 1627,” but Jackson I. Cope argues for a date of between 1613 and 1614 (300). As John Jowett points out, the play “finds no mention in records before the Civil War, so information about early performances is confined to what can be inferred from the first printed edition of 1657” – which is very little because the title page offers no information about the playing company or the performance venue for this play (1488). In a review of the current evidence, Taylor and Lavagnino settle on a composition date of 1621. Cope 300; Jowett 1488; Taylor and Lavagnino 414-416.

As tall as she sold in the fair for tenpence.  
 See how she simpers it, as if marmalade  
 Would not melt in her mouth. She might have the kindness i'faith,  
 To send me a gilded bull from her own trencher,  
 A ram, a goat, or somewhat to be nibbling.  
 These women, when they come to sweet things once  
 They forget all their friends, they grow so greedy—  
 Nay, oftentimes their husbands. (3.2.72-8)

These phallic gilded marchpane animals are clearly emblematic of the illicit sexual tension swirling around in this scene. They also allude to the cuckold horns that Leantio is already wearing and that the Ward will soon put on. However, the coat of gold leaf that adorns these food effects also ironically situates gold (“a perfect body”) at the heart of this furnace of illicit desire (Bacon 3). By placing them on Isabella’s “trencher,” Middleton materially juxtaposes spiritual imperfection with material perfection.

*Women, Beware Women’s* gilt food effects also offer a reminder of the alchemists’ quests for purity. Redgrove writes that

alchemists held that the metals are one in essence, and spring from the same seed in the womb of nature, but are not all equally matured and perfect, gold being the highest product of Nature’s powers. In gold, the alchemist saw a picture of the regenerate man, resplendent with spiritual beauty, overcoming all temptations and proof against evil; whilst he regarded lead – the bases of all the metals – as typical of the sinful and unregenerate man, stamped with the hideousness of sin and easily overcome by temptation and evil; for whilst

gold withstood the action of fire and all known corrosive liquids (save *aqua regia* [acid] alone), lead was more easily acted upon. (11)

It is an ironic condemnation of Isabella's "unregenerate" behaviour that she who tantalised the Ward at the banquet with golden food effects is killed during the masque with "*flaming gold*" thrown by Livia (5.1.154). As Livia, dressed in alchemically-appropriate peacock colours, turns Isabella into a "burning treasure," she specifically links her molten-gold murder weapon to materialistic alchemical doctrine: "Now for a sign of wealth and golden days,/Bright-eyed prosperity which all couples love" (5.1.155, 152-3).

Middleton, however, is not content to rely on contrasting "sinful and unregenerate" characters with materially perfect food effects and, in order to emphasise the morally bankrupt nature of his play-world, he uses dialogue to reiterate a sinning mantra (Redgrove 11). Livia manoeuvres Bianca into a situation where the Duke is able to rape her. When the two women meet afterwards, Livia assures Bianca that although sin tastes "like wormwood-water" at "the first draught," thereafter it tastes like "nectar" (2.2.475-6). Encouraged to do so by the Duke, Hippolito seeks out Leantio, whom he describes as "an apparent sinner," to take revenge for tarnishing his sister's (Livia's) reputation with his "impudent daylight lecher[y]" (4.2.9-10). When Hippolito finds his target, he tells Leantio that he counts it as "no sin to valour/To serve [Leantio's] lust so" and that he must die (4.2. 29-31). Isabella then adds Hippolito's sin of murder to their joint sin of incest and admits in an aside, "O shame and horror!/In that small distance from yon man [Hippolito]to me/Lies sin enough to make a whole world perish" (4.2.134-6). Bianca, meanwhile, describes herself as a poor soul who sins by night (5.1.66). When the Duke attempts to legitimise his relationship with Bianca through marriage, his brother, the Cardinal, accuses him of giving "[r]eligious honours" to

sin and reminds the Duke that [h]oly ceremonies/Were made for sacred uses, not for sinful” (4.3.1-4). The Cardinal, a chance survivor of the multiple murders perpetrated during the masque, closes the play by surveying the piteous “ruins” that the sin of lust has caused in the state:

Sin, what thou art these ruins show too piteously.

Two kings on one throne cannot sit together,

But one must needs down, for his title’s wrong;

So where lust reigns, that prince cannot reign long. (5.1.263-6)

The theme of sinfulness is connected with alchemy through references to base and baseness. Hippolito describes Leantio’s “baseness” as “impudent” and claims that “the very sun” must “blush at him!” (4.2.1-2). Leantio responds by calling Hippolito “to account for a wound lately/Of a base stamp upon me” (4.2.35-7). Hippolito, maintaining the alchemical allusions, tells Leantio that the wound was “most fit/For a base metal” (4.2.37-8). These references to lead satirize the idea that any of these souls will be transmuted into “spiritual gold” (Redgrove 13).

However, just to emphasise the point, Middleton permits his characters to reflect on the consequences of sin on souls. Hippolito assures Leantio that by murdering him he will be using him “fairer” than Leantio has used his “own soul” (4.2.39-40). The Cardinal warns his brother the Duke not to grow “too cunning for [his] soul” (4.3.35). He also warns the Duke that, while he lives, his “guilty soul” may be able to take sanctuary in his body, “[m]an’s only privileged temple upon earth,” but that when he dies there will be no eternal life for such an “offender” (4.3.36-46).

Middleton's final allusion to alchemy occurs during the masque because he dresses his characters in colours associated with this proto-science. Hymen wears yellow, Ganymede is dressed in "*a blue robe powdered with stars,*" and Hebe wears "*a white robe with golden stars*" (5.1.87). Livia, as Juno, makes a later entrance wearing "peacock feathers" (5.1.176). J. R. Mulryne points out that Hymen was often associated with yellow or with "saffron-coloured robe[s]," but that the origin for this is uncertain (156 nt. 50.1). However, given the play's alchemical subtext, it seem likely that these colours (yellow, blue, white, gold and even "the peacocks colour"), which were directly associated with the purification process as alchemists understood it, were selected as a final satirical negation of the hope for purification of any sort in this play-world (Bacon 13).

In Massinger's *The Great Duke of Florence*, as we have seen, the titular duke attends a banquet at which he witnesses, but does not participate in, base behaviour. At the heart of this banquet stands a marchpane castle-*cum*-sign of alchemy that both judges Petronella's "unregenerate" behaviour and offers a reminder about the lofty ambitions of alchemists who were engaged in an ongoing quest to create "regenerate man, resplendent with spiritual beauty" (Redgrove 11). In Middleton's *Women, Beware Women*, a different Duke of Florence is more lead than gold because he is one of many characters who are "stamped with the hideousness of sin" and who have been "easily overcome by temptation and evil" (Redgrove 11). During Middleton's banquet, a superabundance of immoral behaviour is juxtaposed with a food effect decorated with what alchemists viewed as material perfection: gold. In both plays, then, alchemical food effects function as a touchstone of perfection and comment upon the behaviour of less than perfect men and women.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout the course of this thesis, I have aimed to demonstrate the wealth of subtexts that the material presences of food properties and food-producing cooks were capable of bringing to early modern drama. Food was in itself a complex substance during this period, but in the hands of Shakespeare, Jonson, Marlowe, Massinger, Fletcher, and Middleton it and its culinary creators became dramatic devices *par excellence*.

For Shakespeare, food was both a commercial and dramatic tool. Chapter 1 investigated food aromas in the performance space. It suggested that Shakespeare recognised and exploited the dramatic and commercial potential of suppertime food aromas in inn-yard performance spaces. In *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Titus Andronicus*, Shakespeare brought inn-appropriate food onstage at offstage suppertime. It is likely that this overlap triggered a mutual onstage-offstage desire for food, which had the potential to

evoke unique location-specific responses in playgoers: sympathy for a hungry shrew in the former and desire for, rather than abhorrence over, a son pie in the latter. Inn-yard performance spaces, therefore, may have hosted a completely new form of aromatic and appetitive theatre.

The second chapter looked beneath the external appearance of food properties to the ingredients within. It showed how the bread and wine in the gingerbread staged in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* add a sub-textual darkness to this superficially festive play. Having attended a Catholic versus Protestant debate on the doctrine of transubstantiation in the period before he wrote this play, Jonson uses these ingredients to mock the Catholic tendency to iconize sacramental bread by putting his gingerbread in the basket of a marketeer called Joan Trash. To stress the point, characters in the play deride Joan's gingerbread/sacramental bread using the same language that Protestants were wont to use to decry the theory of transubstantiation (that bread could not actually become Christ's body because it went mouldy, for instance). Not content with this, however, Jonson also uses Ursula's cooking fire, staged in his representation of Smithfield's Bartholomew Fair, to engage with the practice of burning martyrs to death on the historic Smithfield in front of Bartholomew Priory. He uses the burning of his cook-*cum*-martyr (Ursula) to connect with the burning and torture of Anne Askew, who had been martyred on Smithfield in 1546 for denying the doctrine of transubstantiation. Further, he uses aspects of Askew's prison narrative to link Ursula's burning to that of other female martyrs. The gender bias of his satire on burnt martyrs suggests that Jonson, whose own religious persuasion was far from tenacious, was especially provoked by women whose faith was resolute enough to sustain them through such horrors.

Chapter 3 turned to water, which was treated very much as a food in cookery books. It was often weighed and measured like food, it was treated as an ingredient in recipes, and, in some early recipes, it was used as a sauce in its own right. Water, though, was a supremely complex liquid to the early moderns: it was a primary element; a medicine; it had literally, so early modern Christians believed, washed away mankind's sins during the Great Flood; and its cleanliness, or otherwise, was an indicator of status and power. It was also intimately connected with the character of the playhouses on Bankside. In *Edward II*, Marlowe uses the material presence of dirty channel water onstage both to humiliate his doomed monarch and to remind playgoers that he is culpable for his own downfall. In *Timon of Athens*, by comparison, Shakespeare associates his doomed protagonist with a watery complexion. This physiological wateriness transforms the water that Timon serves and splashes around at his "last" banquet into a quasi-corporal liquid and, thus, Timon's actions parody those of Jesus when he broke and distributed bread, as his body, at his Last Supper. In an extraordinarily bleak scene, Shakespeare appears to nullify this key Christian narrative premised on the hope of redemption and everlasting life in heaven because, rather than hope, Timon offers only "nothing" at his "last" supper (*Tim.3.7.75-82*).

Chapter 4 discussed cooks, which were rarely brought onstage as fully-fledged characters during the early modern period. This chapter discussed two exceptions: Furnace in Philip Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* and the unnamed master cook in John Fletcher's *The Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy*. Both play-world societies are in a state of flux; both cooks are presented as gastronomic geniuses. These two variables create the space and the means for these cooks to misuse their arsenal of expertise in order to influence matters that should lie considerably beyond their sphere of influence. Both

playwrights, then, use cooks to warn about the threat that lower-order expertise poses to societies that have lost the ability to contain such potentially transgressive characters.

Chapter 5 discussed the ornate nature of early modern domestic food effects, which included coloured food, gilded food, and food moulded in the shape of towers and castles. It argued that the colours used to tint food were selected to mirror those achieved when heating metals during alchemical experiments. Significantly, the practice of colouring food and the practice of alchemy followed a similar geographical and temporal trajectory. When diners consumed coloured food, therefore, they were meshing themselves in alchemical processes that sought material perfection, in the form of gold; physiological perfection, through gold's perceived health-giving and life-extending attributes; and spiritual perfection because for some alchemists their science and their religion were inseparable. This same meshing occurred when diners consumed food shaped as towers, which uncannily resembled alchemical apparatus, and food decorated with gold and silver leaf (or foods coloured red and white to symbolically represent gold and silver). On the stage, alchemy and alchemical practices provided a rich vein of material for dramatists to satirize in their dialogue. Some playwrights, though, materialized their metaphors in order to deepen and extend the parody. Philip Massinger's *The Great Duke of Florence* uses a marchpane castle to satirize notions of perfection (material, physiological, and spiritual) during a drunken banquet and to engage with the theme of transformation, or transubstantiation, that runs through the play. In *Women, Beware Women*, Thomas Middleton uses gilt marchpane animals to satirize the alchemically-based association between gold and purity.

Although this thesis has begun the process of examining the use of food properties in early modern drama, there is much left to consider. How were food properties used in masques, for example? As we have seen in Chapter 5, real food was used to represent itself in some masques. In others, real food was used to create non-food effects. Was this reliance on real food properties the norm? What impact is this likely to have had on the reception of court masques? How, if at all, were food properties used in Corpus Christi drama? How did the sites that sold food along the processional routes impact upon the reception of these plays? In 1426, Brother William Melton of the order of Friars Minor complained that, during the feast of Corpus Christi, citizens and visitors attended “not only to the play ... but also greatly to feasting, drunkenness, clamours, gossipings, and other wantonness” (Johnston and Rogerson 728). Perhaps, then, food competed with, rather than complemented, medieval drama.

Food was also a pervasive presence in the margins of early modern drama. Henslowe’s *Diary* shows that his company met and ate together at taverns. In 1602, for example, he recorded a payment made towards the cost of “supe[r]” when his company met “at the mermayd” (214). For those who worked in the masque-producing industry, an entry in the Revel Accounts suggests that food may have been part of their remuneration. In 1573, “vij<sup>s</sup>” was paid to a group of “woo<sup>r</sup>kmen that wayted on the Mask all nighte [and] who had [had] no tyme to eate theyer supper” (Cunningham 25). What impact, if any, did backstage eating have upon the front stage performances of early modern drama and masques?

Early modern food properties were meshed in a network of cultural, religious, humoral, chemical, corporeal, and culinary dialogues. Playwrights of this period exploited

these multi-dimensional properties to infuse their stage action with subtextual allusions, contexts, and codes. For those early modern playgoers who were party to these codes and allusions, a marchpane fort could never have been just a marchpane fort anymore than a cooking fire could have been just a cooking fire.

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