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The Irish plays of James Shirley, 1636-1640

by

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Declaration

All of the material in this thesis is my own work. However, some of the factual information and discussion was submitted as the dissertation for my Master of the Arts degree (awarded by The University of Warwick, 2006), entitled “James Shirley’s *The Royal Master*”. Specifically, the work reproduced includes the discussion of Shirley’s move to Ireland and the construction of the Werburgh Street Theatre (Chapter One), the basis of the critical discussion of *The Royal Master* (Chapter Three), as well as some brief, preliminary work on the printing of *The Royal Master* (Chapter Two).

Neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted to another university for another degree.

Abstract

Although he was a prominent and influential playwright during his theatrical career, the work of James Shirley (1596-1666) has been neglected since Dryden's description of him in 'MacFlecknoe' as a mere 'type...of tautology'. Shirley holds a unique place amongst Caroline dramatists as, at the height of his career, he left London to become resident playwright of the first purpose-built theatre in Ireland, the Werburgh Street Theatre. This seminal event has received fairly little attention from scholars, and the plays of this Irish period (*The Royal Master*, *The Doubtful Heir*, *The Gentleman of Venice*, *The Politician* and *St. Patrick for Ireland*) have not previously been examined as a whole.

This thesis examines Shirley's Irish period in its entirety, from the circumstances surrounding his move to Dublin in 1636, through an exploration of his relationship with the Werburgh Street Theatre and what influenced his Irish plays, to the factors which resulted in his return to England in 1640. The thesis historicises the production of these plays in their socio-political context. The chapters (chronologically arranged by play) provide close textual studies and contextual material relating the texts to their patrons, performance spaces, audiences, print history and Irish politics. This research reveals that during this four year period, Shirley gradually adapted his writing style in a targeted attempt to appeal to the tastes of the Dublin audience. Shirley managed the theatre with John Ogilby, who was appointed Master of the Revels in Ireland by Lord Deputy Wentworth. An analysis of the relationship between these three key figures has contributed to a comprehensive picture of the socio-political conditions of Shirley's writing. Through the investigation of Shirley's work and professional position during this time, this thesis builds on recent critical recovery work (including that by Hadfield/Maley, Rankin, Dutton) on the literary-political circumstances of Stuart Ireland.

List of abbreviations

BL	British Library
CSPD	Calendar of State Papers, Domestic
CSPI	Calendar of State Papers relating to Ireland
JCS	Gerald Eades Bentley, <i>The Jacobean and Caroline Stage</i>
MS	Manuscript
NLI	National Library of Ireland
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
PRO	Public Records Office, Kew
PRONI	Public Records Office of Northern Ireland
STC	Short Title Catalogue
StrP	Strafford Papers, Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments, Sheffield Library
TCM	James Shirley, <i>The Constant Maid</i>
TDH	James Shirley, <i>The Doubtful Heir</i>
TGV	James Shirley, <i>The Gentleman of Venice</i>
TRM	James Shirley, <i>The Royal Master</i>

All dates are given in the Old Style, with the year taken to begin on 1st January.

Introduction

James Shirley (1596-1666), was a seventeenth-century playwright and poet, who enjoyed success both at court and in the London theatres. Though his contemporaries spoke highly of him, his work has been neglected since the Restoration, for a number of reasons. Shirley's drama is less interested in character development than in plot. During the Restoration, as well as staging his plays, dramatists appropriated elements of his plotlines into their own plays, which is one of the reasons why Shirley's work has been viewed as the forerunner of the Restoration Comedy genre.¹ Also, his reputation seems never to have recovered from John Dryden's verdict in *Mac Flecknoe* that, 'Heywood and Shirley were but Types of Thee [Shadwell], | Thou last great, Prophet of Tautology'.² More importantly, Shirley's drama responded pointedly to contemporary life, and thus does not transfer well to later periods, when details of the socio-political situation have been forgotten, or are unknown.

Existing scholarship

Martin Butler's seminal book, *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642*, argues that the drama of this period should be examined in its historical-political context, an approach which has prompted a renewed interest in Caroline drama since the 1980s. Butler recognised the importance of Shirley's contribution to Caroline drama, suggesting that, 'as a

¹ Alfred Harbage, *Cavalier Drama: An Historical and Critical Supplement to the Study of the Elizabethan and Restoration Stage* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 77.

² John Dryden, *Mac Flecknoe, or, A satyr upon the trew-blew-Protestant Poet, T. S.* (London: Printed for D. Green, 1682), Wing / D2303, p. 4. Dryden continues:

From Dusty Shops neglected Authors come,
Martyrs of Pies, and Reliques of the Bum,
Much Heywood, Shirly, Ogilby there lay, p. 8.

political playwright...Shirley, whose fashionable manner has been mistaken for mere courtliness, deserves fuller recognition as an independent and intelligent critic of his society'.³ While recent years have seen an upsurge of interest in his contemporaries, Richard Brome and John Ford, Shirley's work and influence have not yet been afforded a similar reassessment.

Shirley has received relatively little critical attention. In 1914, Robert Stanley Forsythe wrote *The Relations of Shirley's Plays to the Elizabethan Drama*, and the following year saw the publication of Arthur Huntingdon Nason's *James Shirley Dramatist: A Biographical and Critical Study*.⁴ Forsythe's work focuses on identifying the sources for Shirley's plays, while Nason concentrates on a biographical study of the dramatist's life. Ben Luow's approach to analysing Shirley's plays, as presented in his 1981 monograph, was soon outdated by Butler's work, and Sandra A. Burner offers an examination of the patronage which Shirley enjoyed.⁵ Most recently, research by Ira Clark and Julie Sanders, has helped to raise Shirley's profile, by contextualising his work amongst other Caroline dramatists.⁶ Clearly, there is much more work to be done on Shirley. The last publication of Shirley's plays and poems was the Gifford/Dyce edition of 1833, and there has not yet been a collected works.

³ Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 281.

⁴ Robert Stanley Forsythe, *The Relations of Shirley's Plays to the Elizabethan Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1914; repr. 1965); Arthur Huntingdon Nason, *James Shirley Dramatist: A Biographical and Critical Study* (New York: University Heights, 1915).

⁵ Ben Luow, *James Shirley* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981); Sandra A. Burner, *James Shirley: A Study of Literary Coteries and Patronage in Seventeenth-Century England* (Landham and London: University Press of America, 1988; repr. 1989).

⁶ Ira Clark, *Professional Playwrights: Massinger, Ford, Shirley and Brome* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992); Julie Sanders, *Caroline Drama: The Plays of Massinger, Ford, Shirley and Brome* (Plymouth: Northcote House, in association with the British Council, 1999); Sanders, 'Beggars' Commonwealths and the Pre-Civil War Stage: Suckling's 'The Goblins', Brome's 'A Jovial Crew' and Shirley's 'The Sisters', *Modern Language Review*, vol. 97, no. 1 (Jan., 2002), pp. 1-14.

The forthcoming ten volume edition of *The Complete Works of James Shirley*, published by Oxford University Press, indicates that interest in Shirley's work is increasing.⁷

This thesis centres upon a four year period of Shirley's career (1636-40), when the dramatist moved from London to live in Ireland, and wrote for the newly-constructed Werburgh Street Theatre. Therefore, as well as contributing to Shirley scholarship, this thesis also engages with recent interest in seventeenth-century Irish literature, and with Ireland's theatrical history. Alan J. Fletcher's 2000-1 publications focus on drama up to the mid-seventeenth century, and provide the most detailed recent work on this subject, which has subsequently encouraged further work in this field, by Christopher Morash, Deana Rankin and Richard Dutton.⁸ Morash locates 1630s drama in Ireland as the establishment of Irish theatre; Rankin places this drama in the broader context of seventeenth-century literature in Ireland, and Dutton conducts an investigation into the Werburgh Street Theatre.

In relation to Shirley, previous scholarship has been predominantly directed at the first and last plays which he wrote for the Dublin theatre, *The Royal Master* and *St. Patrick for Ireland*. No previous attempt has been made to examine Shirley's

⁷ William Gifford and Alexander Dyce (eds), *The Dramatic Works of James Shirley*, 6 vols (London: John Murray, 1833).

⁸ Alan J. Fletcher, *Drama, Performance, and Polity in Pre-Cromwellian Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000); Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts in Pre-Cromwellian Ireland: A repertory of sources and documents from the earliest times until c. 1642* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001); Christopher Morash, *A History of the Irish Theatre 1601-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Deana Rankin, *Between Spenser and Swift: English Writing in Seventeenth-century Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Richard Dutton, 'The St. Werburgh Street Theater, Dublin', in *Localizing Caroline Drama: Politics and Economics of the Early Modern English Stage, 1625-1642*, eds Adam Zucker and Alan B. Farmer (New York: Palgrave, 2006), pp. 129-155.

residence in Ireland, and the work he produced there, as a distinct period in his dramatic career. Neither has sufficient attention been given to a consideration of Shirley's reasons for moving to Ireland, to establishing who comprised the audience of the Werburgh Street Theatre, to determining the repertoire of plays staged at this theatre, to ascertaining how successful the theatre was as a financial venture, or to exploring how Shirley responded to audience attendance.

This thesis enhances Shirley scholarship by examining his Irish years as a finite period, from his arrival in 1636 to his departure in 1640, and by analysing the plays which he wrote for the Werburgh Street Theatre. The thesis elucidates Shirley's motivations for going to, and staying in Ireland, and considers the plays he wrote there in their contemporary Irish context, to increase our understanding of Shirley's contribution to Ireland's first purpose-built playhouse. This study is necessary for furthering knowledge of Shirley as a dramatist, as well as enabling a deeper consideration of Ireland's first purpose-built theatre, and of the literary coteries which existed in Caroline Dublin.

Methodology

Shirley's affiliation to the Werburgh Street Theatre provides a unique opportunity to examine the relationship between a playwright and his audience. This relationship is very difficult to establish when considering Caroline London, as the numerous theatres, dramatists, companies and audiences, present an ever-changing picture. In London, determining the audience of a particular theatre is problematic, as individuals could patronise several establishments, and some attended both private and public

theatres. Combined with the practice of dramatists sometimes writing collaboratively, any attempt to explore the relationship between a single playwright and his audience would be extremely complex. In Dublin, as Shirley was the only professional dramatist working at the only theatre in Ireland, a unique opportunity is provided, which can be used to explore the theory that a dramatist wrote for a specific audience, as well as for specific actors in a company. To date, scholarship has used different approaches to research early modern drama: studies have considered the source material of plays, themes, issues of publication, choice of genre, audience, specific companies, individual playwrights or theatres, stage properties, patronage, censorship, para-text, and political context. My research narrows the field to one theatre, one dramatist, a comparatively small audience and a four year period, which makes it possible to examine Shirley's 'Irish' plays using these various approaches to drama. I have adopted many of the approaches listed above to look at Shirley's Irish years, which builds upon Dutton's work, to consider this period alongside English drama and theatrical practices, but also to recognise that Shirley's decision to remain in Dublin requires a consideration of his position as Ireland's first professional playwright. Dutton has conducted the most recent study of the Werburgh Street Theatre. He moves away from the practice of looking at the Dublin theatre as a colonial project, as he wishes to reintegrate discussions of this theatre with *English* Caroline drama because, as he argues, the majority of work which has been compiled on this theatre has come from scholars of *Irish* theatrical history (such as Fletcher, Morash and Rankin). He argues that Shirley constantly had an eye on London when writing his Irish plays, but although Shirley's publications from this period provide evidence to

support this assertion (discussed in this thesis) ultimately Dutton does not prove his case.⁹ If Shirley's motivation for going to, and staying in, Dublin is unknown, any commentary upon the work he produced while he was there is inadequate. If he went simply to find employment for a few months, following the closure of the London theatres because of plague, then he must constantly have been thinking of returning to London. However, if his motivations for leaving were different, then such knowledge must impact upon our understanding of his Irish plays. His rationale for being in Ireland must have affected what he wrote, how he wrote it, and for whom it was written. This thesis explores the development of Shirley as a working playwright, and examines how his drama was intimately related to a specific audience. It demonstrates that Shirley adapted his drama in direct response to the Dublin audience. By establishing how Shirley's work altered throughout his residence in Ireland, this thesis seeks to uncover what factors prompted this development.

Shirley's Irish years

By the mid-1630s, James Shirley's career as a professional dramatist was well established. He had received acclaim at the English court, and been affiliated, since 1625, with Christopher Beeston and the company which became the prestigious Queen Henrietta-Maria's men at the Cockpit, or Phoenix, in Drury Lane.¹⁰ Following Beeston's disbanding of the company, Shirley moved to Dublin sometime between 1635 and 1637, to become the first resident playwright of Ireland's first purpose-built

⁹ Sandra A. Burner, argues that Shirley's patrons and choice of friends, while in Ireland, suggest his preference for England and the London stage, *James Shirley: A study of literary coteries and patronage in seventeenth-century England* (New York and London: University Press of America, 1988), p. 130.

¹⁰ Ira Clark, 'Shirley, James (bap. 1596, d. 1666)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25427> [accessed 24th July 2006].

playhouse, the Werburgh Street Theatre.¹¹ This Irish period is generally accepted to have been between 1636 and 1640. Scholars have unquestioningly accepted that the motivation behind Shirley's decision to move to Dublin was the closure of the London theatres in 1636 because of plague, but during the previous years of his career, theatre closure had occurred on a number of occasions (1625, 1630 and 1635), which indicates that this cannot have been the sole factor influencing his decision. No satisfactory conclusion has previously been reached as to the reasons for Shirley's four-year stay in Ireland, nor for the circumstances surrounding his return to England in 1640.

My thesis demonstrates that far from there being a single reason, various factors caused Shirley to relocate to Dublin. As this decision was intrinsically linked to the Werburgh Street Theatre, a discussion of the construction of this theatre is necessary, and consideration has also been given to identifying the actors and musicians who were employed. An examination of Shirley's years in Ireland is inextricably linked also to a consideration of his relationships with John Ogilby and Sir Thomas Wentworth.¹² Wentworth was appointed by Charles I as Lord Deputy of Ireland in 1632, and it was his vision of 'civilising' the Irish population which motivated the building of the theatre. John Ogilby first travelled to Ireland in Wentworth's train in 1633. He was unofficially appointed by Wentworth to be Master of the Revels in Ireland, and seems to have been given the task of constructing and managing the Dublin theatre. Ogilby was personally known to Shirley, and has long

¹¹ Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 7 vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1941), I, p. 238.

¹² As Thomas Wentworth was not given the title of the Earl of Strafford until after his departure from Ireland in 1640, he is referred to as Wentworth throughout this discussion.

been assumed to have been a key motivating factor for the dramatist's own relocation to Dublin. Unravelling the previously undetermined intricacies of these affiliations is crucial to understanding the events of Shirley's stay, and builds upon recent critical recovery work (by John Kerrigan, for example) on the literary-political circumstances of Stuart Ireland.¹³

The contentious issue of Shirley's religious convictions and practices is particularly relevant to a discussion of his Irish period. For many years scholars have accepted Shirley's conversion to Catholicism as fact; however, there are documents which show that Shirley was ordained in the Anglican church, and scant evidence is available regarding this conversion. The information currently available cannot be used to infer that Shirley's decision to move to Ireland was induced by religious fervour (discussed in Chapter One), and Wentworth's New English, Protestant Pale was a considerably more hazardous location for a practising Catholic than the London court of Queen Henrietta-Maria.

Outline of thesis

This thesis explores the reasons which contributed to Shirley leaving London, which motivated him to stay in Dublin, and which prompted his departure from Ireland. The production of the plays which Shirley wrote for the Werburgh Street Theatre (*The Royal Master*, *The Doubtful Heir*, *The Gentleman of Venice*, *The Politician* and *St. Patrick for Ireland*) have been historicised in their socio-political contexts, alongside

¹³ John Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English: literature, history and politics, 1603-1707* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

an investigation of how and why Shirley chose to incorporate, and respond to, aspects of the Irish situation in these plays. The chapters are arranged chronologically by play, and provide close textual study, as well as contextual material, relating the texts to their patrons, performance spaces, audiences and to Anglo-Irish politics. Shirley's endorsement, by means of prefaces, for the Irish theatre of select plays by John Fletcher, Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton (*The Alchemist; No Wit, no Help but a Woman's; The Irish Gent; The Toy and The General*), illuminate further his vision for the Irish stage, and these prefaces also help to ascertain who comprised the audience of the Werburgh Street Theatre.

The Royal Master was the first new play to be performed on the Irish stage, and Shirley appears to have given it prominence over all of his 'Irish' plays. It has the most interesting print history of any of the plays in Shirley's canon: two editions were prepared simultaneously in the press for sale in London and Dublin, which marks the first intra-national print franchise in the British Isles, and this thesis explores the significance of this event. The play is also notable for its extensive para-text: in addition to its dedicatory letter and epilogue, the play contains ten commendatory verses. It was unusual for a play in the 1630s to contain so many commendatory verses, and I investigate why they are included in *The Royal Master*.

I undertake a historically contextualised reading of the plays, drawing on Michael Hattaway's argument that specific conditions of performance shape our

interpretation of the ‘meaning’ of a play.¹⁴ For example, *The Royal Master* has received little critical attention as a text, and attempts to contextualise its position as the first new play to be performed at the first theatre in Ireland have been negligible, but these considerations impact upon our understanding of this play.¹⁵ I have also applied Julie Sanders’s argument that an examination of the para-text is a legitimate means of determining audience.¹⁶ T. Gerald Fitzgibbon argues that, over the course of his career, Shirley’s plays show definite changes of both tone and purpose, and this is clearly evident in his ‘Irish’ plays.¹⁷ This thesis seeks to show in much greater detail that, during his years in Ireland, Shirley adapted his writing style to complement better the tastes of the Dublin audience. Building upon Kerrigan’s recent work, *Archipelagic English*, this thesis tackles questions of Anglophone writing, and seeks to place Shirley’s ‘Irish’ plays in their socio-political context, using a historio-graphical approach.¹⁸ Through an examination of why Shirley went to Ireland, when, and his reasons for returning to England, it also illuminates the socio-political climate in which he was writing. The unique circumstances of the first performances of Shirley’s ‘Irish’ plays allow an exclusive examination of the relationship between a Caroline dramatist and his audience.

¹⁴ Michael Hattaway, “Playhouses and the Role of Drama” in Michael Hattaway (ed.), *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2000), pp. 133-147: 135.

¹⁵ C. M. Gayley, *Representative English Comedies, volume III: The Later Contemporaries of Shakespeare* (New York: Macmillan, 1914), pp. 553-562; Nason, pp. 111-115; Lucow, pp. 22-39 and 108-110. These scholars have made some textual analysis, but have focused upon finding sources for, and themes within, the play rather than establishing a contextual history.

¹⁶ Sanders, “Beggars’ Commonwealths and the Pre-Civil War Stage”, pp. 9-10.

¹⁷ T. Gerald Fitzgibbon, “Purpose and Theme in the Drama of James Shirley” (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cork, 1982), p. v.

¹⁸ Kerrigan, pp. vii, 9 and 27.

Chapter One: Shirley's move to Ireland

The first, and arguably most pertinent, question regarding James Shirley's Irish period is why did he decide to go, and stay, there? Generally, this question has been overlooked by scholars of both Shirley and Caroline drama. That is not to say that no reputable critical work has been published on Shirley's Irish years and the Werburgh Street Theatre, but that not enough attention has been paid to this significant period: Allan H. Stevenson produced a succession of articles which established the factual circumstances, and most recently, Richard Dutton conducted an investigation into the life of the Werburgh Street Theatre.¹⁹ However, there has been no previous serious attempt to examine the theatre from the perspective of Shirley: his motivation for becoming involved in its establishment, the work which he produced while he was there, the players for whom he was writing, or the audiences they were trying to entertain. Successfully answering the question of *why* he went to Dublin is of interest to a chronological study of Shirley's career, and will be illuminating with regard to the plays which Shirley wrote during this period. Discerning why Shirley left England, who was to be his patron in Ireland, and whom he expected his audience to be in Dublin, must contribute to our understanding of these 'Irish' plays, and of how Caroline drama functioned outside London.

¹⁹ Allan H. Stevenson, 'James Shirley and the Actors at the First Irish Theater', *Modern Philology*, vol. 40, no. 2 (November, 1942), pp. 147-160; Stevenson, 'Shirley's Years in Ireland', *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 20, no. 77 (January, 1944), 19-28; Stevenson, 'Shirley's Publisher's: The Partnership of Crooke and Cooke', *The Library*, 4th Series, 25 (1944-5), pp. 140-61. Dutton, 'St. Werburgh Street Theater', pp.129-155.

The established, and generally unchallenged, supposition is that Shirley moved to Ireland following the closure of the theatres due to plague, and at the request of his university friend, John Ogilby.²⁰ Yet it seems implausible that, for even the closest of friends, one would unhesitatingly abandon the familiarity of long term employment for the uncertainties of an untapped market. It is, therefore, evident that what drove Shirley to Ireland must be reassessed, and that rather than there being a single motivation, it was a combination of circumstances and enticements which prompted his decision.

Patronage

The relationship between Ogilby and Shirley is thereby only *one* of the possible reasons which prompted the latter's move to Ireland. Ogilby was a key figure in Irish theatrical history during the 1630s, and his connection to Sir Thomas Wentworth, the Lord Deputy of Ireland (1632-1640), is significant, as he would not have been able to offer Shirley independent employment, but rather a position under the patronage of the Lord Deputy, patronage which Ogilby already enjoyed.

Graham Parry emphasises the importance of literary patronage in the 1630s and 1640s, and draws attention to the enormous investment of time and effort which was involved in securing stable patronage. He uses Shirley as a case study to illustrate

²⁰ See Micháel óHaodha, *Theatre in Ireland* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), p. 1; Rankin, p. 98. For information on their relationship at the Cockpit see Lucow, p. 99; Albert Wertheim, 'The Presentation of James Shirley's *St. Patrick for Ireland* at the first Irish playhouse', *Notes and Queries*, (June, 1967), pp. 212-215; Stephen J. Radtke, 'James Shirley: His Catholic Philosophy of Life' (unpublished doctoral thesis: The Catholic University of America, 1929), p. 40.

these difficulties, focusing upon the playwright's move between patrons (from Queen Henrietta-Maria, to Wentworth, to the Earl of Newcastle), and observes that nearly all of Shirley's numerous publications were dedicated to a different person: he suggests that this lack of stable patronage was due to Shirley having a disagreeable personality.²¹ While Parry is accurate regarding the factual details of Shirley's life, his assessment of the dramatist's personality is highly questionable. The transfer of patron from Wentworth to Newcastle can be disregarded – the indictment and execution of one patron somewhat necessitates the acquisition of a new one – which leaves the question of Shirley's transfer of patronage from Queen Henrietta-Maria to Wentworth. Shirley was associated with Christopher Beeston, and the company which became known as Queen Henrietta-Maria's Men, between 1625 and 1636. During this period, the Queen's Men were ranked second only to the King's Men, which ensured Shirley an exalted position amongst dramatists at this time: Bentley argues that the troupe was the wealthiest and most prestigious in London since its formation, c. 1625.²² The following discussion examines why Wentworth was an attractive candidate for a patron. It should also be considered that, when it first opened, the success of the Irish theatre was by no means certain, and Shirley was potentially surrendering a great deal in leaving the patronage of the Queen. Henrietta-Maria had many more demands for her patronage than Wentworth did, and Shirley could, therefore, expect to benefit from

²¹ Parry argues that Shirley's change of patrons was the result of a 'restless temperament and a prickly personality... [and his] instability', although he provides no evidence to support this assessment, see 'Literary Patronage' in David Loewenstein and Janel Mueller (eds), *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 117-140: 137. See also 'The Court Coteries and Court Patronage' in Burner, pp. 85-112. For another discussion of Shirley's patrons see David M. Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama, 1570-1640* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 201-204.

²² G. E. Bentley, *The Profession of Player in Shakespeare's Time 1590-1642* (Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 269.

a more exclusive position within the Lord Deputy's household. Yet securing Wentworth as a patron cannot have been Shirley's primary consideration for leaving London. Indeed, given Shirley's status in London, and the unique circumstances of the Werburgh Street Theatre which made the permanent employment of a dramatist largely unnecessary, obtaining the services of Shirley was a coup, and it is thus fair to suppose that the liaison between the two men was not as one-sided as might be expected from a patron/dependant relationship.²³

Ogilby had been engaged by Wentworth in the early 1630s as a 'gentleman of the household'. While the exact nature of this position is unclear, he was certainly a tutor to Wentworth's offspring, and it is possible that his duties were restricted solely to that of a dancing-master – this was a position which Ogilby had held in Somerset where he taught dance to Ralph Hopton's sisters (c. 1632-3).²⁴ Prior to this, Ogilby had been a professional dancer, but an injury (possibly sustained during a performance of Ben Jonson's *The Gypsies Metamorphosed* in 1621) had put an end to this career, and his occupations subsequent to his employment by Wentworth became increasingly

²³ Ogilby's position as Master of the Revels (discussed below) resulted in ambiguity about the application of London licensing laws on the performance of plays in Ireland. Wentworth's support makes it likely that Ogilby was able to stage any play he was able to obtain a copy of, which essentially gave him an unlimited repertoire of plays which were 'new' to the Dublin audience, rendering the presence of a permanent playwright obsolete. See Dutton, 'St. Werburgh Street Theatre', p. 134.

²⁴ Charles W. J. Withers, 'Ogilby, John (1600–1676)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2007 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20583>, accessed 3rd August 2006]. Fitz-Simon argues that it is unlikely that Ogilby was employed specifically to organise courtly entertainments, but that the title under which he was employed was vague enough to encompass this, p. 11.

diverse.²⁵ He first went to Ireland as a member of Wentworth's entourage in early August 1633, although the precise nature of his duties there is also difficult to define: Rankin suggests that Ogilby was a fencing as well as a dancing master to the Wentworth children, and records that in 1635 Ogilby was officially appointed as 'Historiographer to His Majesty', while Sir James Ware believed him also to have been a transcriber in Wentworth's household.²⁶ Yet Ware's account of the nature of Ogilby's duties in Ireland is not necessarily to be trusted. Ware states that Ogilby:

was encouraged to go into *Ireland* by the Earl of *Strafford*, and, writing a good Hand, was employed in transcribing Matters for him. It was in this Service he gave Proofs of his Inclinations for Poetry by translating *some* of Aesop's *Fables into Verse*, which were afterwards published. Being at that Time one of the Troop of Guards, he writ in Verse, a witty Piece called, *The Character of a Trooper*.²⁷

Ogilby did indeed publish his own translations of Aesop's fables (1651), and it is possible that he was also employed by Wentworth as a transcriber; however, although Ware was once himself employed in Wentworth's household, and might therefore be presumed to be a reliable source, there is no supporting evidence that Ogilby was ever

²⁵ Fitz-Simon, p. 11. Robert Hitchcock records Ogilby as being 'historiographer to his majesty' when he arrived in Dublin, *An Historical view of the Irish Stage; From the Earliest Period down to the close of the season 1788. Interspersed with Theatrical Anecdotes, and an occasional review of the Irish Dramatic Authors and Actors in two volumes* (Dublin: R. Marchbanck, No. 11 Dame-Street, 1788), p. 11. In 1671 Ogilby gained the title of His Majesty's cosmographer, Withers, *ODNB*.

²⁶ Rankin, p. 97; Walter Harris, (ed.), *The Whole Works of Sir James Ware concerning Ireland*, 2 vols (Dublin: printed for Robert Bell in Stephen-Street and John Fleming in Sycamore-Alley, 1764), I, p. 352.

²⁷ Harris, p. 352.

a member of the Troop of Guards.²⁸ Although Fletcher is happy to accept Ogilby's position in the troop, it is more likely that confusion as to Ogilby's duties arose because of the appointment of the impoverished Sir John Ogle as a captain of the Dublin guard in 1633. The extant information about Sir John Ogle from this period is valuable as it grants an insight into Wentworth's authority both in London and Dublin during this year. His power and influence during the mid-1630s must have contributed positively to Shirley's resolve to relocate to Ireland. On the 28th August 1633, Wentworth wrote the following to 'Mr. Secretary Cooke':

Here is a general Direction from his Majesty, and a very necessary one, that all Captains should be present upon their Charges, I desire to know whether it may not stand with his Majesty's Pleasure to exempt Sir *John Ogle* out of that general Rule, considering his Friends here alledge, it was given him with a Purpose rather to mend his Fortunes, than to require his Attendance upon this Place and Service.²⁹

This request was granted on 20th September 1633, 'for Sir *John Ogle*, his Majesty has declared his Pleasure by the Lord Treasurer, so as there needs no other Account'.³⁰

This incident shows that Wentworth was not only willing to bend the rules for those in his favour, but more significantly that the authorities in London allowed him to do so.

²⁸ See Graham Parry, 'Ware, Sir James (1594–1666)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28729>, accessed 7th April 2008], and Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, p. 104.

²⁹ Sir John Coke or Cooke (1563–1644), was an active member of the Privy Council during Charles's years of Personal Rule. See Michael B. Young, 'Coke, Sir John (1563–1644)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5828>, accessed 28th March 2008]. William Knowler (ed.), *The Earl of Strafforde's letters and dispatches with an essay towards his life by Sir George Radcliffe. From the originals in the Possession of his Great Grandson the Right Honourable Thomas Earl of Malton, knight of the Bath*, 2 vols (London: William Bowyer, 1739), I, p. 107. I have been unable to locate any information about what 'charges' the captains were expected to fulfil.

³⁰ Knowler, I, p. 116.

There can be no doubt that these were attractive attributes in a prospective patron.

That the King's decree that captains needed to be physically present is deemed 'a very necessary one' gives an indication of the civil unrest which continued to grip Ireland.

Although he was not a military man, Ogilby's position in Wentworth's household led to him being, belatedly, officially appointed by the Lord Deputy as the Master of the Revels in Ireland on 28th February 1637/8.³¹ Presumably because of his earlier theatrical connections, Wentworth chose Ogilby for the task of creating the first purpose-built theatre outside of London.³² The events surrounding the construction of this theatre are discussed later, but in his role as theatre manager it is unsurprising that Ogilby should have offered the position of resident dramatist to his university friend, the highly successful playwright, James Shirley.

³¹ Morash, p. xi. Ogilby had held this role unofficially since 1635, Rankin, pp. 97-8. Royal Decree confirmed the title in 1661 after an amusing altercation with Sir William Davenant, see Clark, pp. 179-193.

³² Clark suggests that it was Ogilby's idea to create a theatre in Dublin. It will probably never be known whose initial inspiration it was, yet it is clear that both of these men fully backed the project. See *The Early Irish Stage*, p. 27. It also seems safe to assume that Wentworth handed over management of this project to Ogilby as there is a distinct lack of evidence in Wentworth's correspondence regarding the building of the theatre, which would have been expected from the man whose close interest in building work is revealed by the following extracts: Wentworth to the Bishop of Derry, Dublin, 6th April 1637, 'The steward hath sent down the bearer to give help in the getting of the marble. I pray you have an eye upon him and give him a great charge that he take his stone forth of the best beds, which are commonly at the bottom and so are by workmen willingly left behind by reason they require more getting', Public Records Office of Northern Ireland T415/8 (hereafter cited as PRONI); Wentworth to the same, Naas, 12th September 1637, 'You are beholden to me for writing so many letters with my own hand being here the busiest 'pettish' creature about my building you ever saw or read of in all your books', PRONI T415/10.

Sir Thomas Wentworth had theatrical interests which can be traced back to his Grand Tour (1611-1613), when he bought a number of printed plays.³³ His position as the Lord Deputy would have implied that the new Irish theatrical venture had firm support from the local authorities (who were also potential play-goers), and as a patron Wentworth offered secure financial footing for a playwright – an essential consideration for Shirley, whose primary concern must have been reliable patronage for himself and the acting companies with whom he was associated.³⁴ Wentworth busied himself with establishing a vice-regal court, and his interest in theatre was one of the ways in which he sought to establish Dublin as a mirror of London society. He arrived in Ireland with the ambition of making the country profitable to the English crown, and to make Dublin fashionable, as befitted the residence of the King's representative: his success in presenting himself in a regal fashion was derisively commented upon by John Holles, Earl of Clare, in a letter to his son Lord Haughton, dated 1st February 1636/7, 'so Prince like in every particular he styles himself in the plural number, viz. we did thus, and our toe was hurt.'³⁵ After being resident in Ireland for a few years, Wentworth started to put down roots in the country by buying land and richly refurbishing his property.³⁶ C. V. Wedgwood suggests that this illustrates Wentworth's growing confidence in the stability of Ireland, as his thoughts

³³ C. V. Wedgwood, *Thomas Wentworth, First Earl of Strafford 1593-1641; A Revaluation* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962; repr. 1971), p. 25; Ann Jennalie Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 107.

³⁴ Lucow, p. 9.

³⁵ For a discussion of Wentworth's vice-regal tendencies see Clark, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 26; P. R. Seddon (ed.), *Letters of John Holles 1587-1637*, 3 vols, Thoroton Society Record Series, vol. XXXVI (Nottingham: Derry and Sons Ltd., 1975), III, p. 477.

³⁶ Wentworth was appointed to the position of Lord Deputy of Ireland in 1632 but did not actually arrive until late in 1633, see Richard Bagwell, *Ireland under the Stuarts and during the Interregnum*, 3 vols (London, New York, Bombay and Calcutta: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909), I, p. 198.

could now turn to beauty and prestige. Wentworth wanted the Dublin elite to have access to similar pursuits to those available in London, and a theatre provided what he considered to be suitable civilised entertainment, leading to his promotion of this art form.³⁷ Wentworth's vision of providing culture to the citizens of Dublin had two key requirements - a suitable manager and a thriving playwright. Shirley's professional success was certainly a prime consideration for Wentworth, but there may also have been a more personal connection. Shirley's biographer, Anthony Wood, records that Shirley was educated at St John's College, Oxford which was then being presided over by William Laud, future Archbishop of Canterbury.³⁸ Wood's assertion has not been substantiated, and indeed it is well-known that Shirley matriculated at St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, but if Shirley was acquainted with Laud then this relationship could have worked in his favour, as Wentworth's friendship with Laud is well documented in their frequent correspondence, and a recommendation by Laud for the position of playwright would not have been overlooked by Wentworth.³⁹ When considering Shirley's reasons for moving to Dublin, the fact that in Ireland the patronage of Wentworth was equivalent to the patronage of Charles I in London should not be overlooked. It should also be taken into account that Wentworth would have had a vested interest in deciding to whom he should offer his patronage, just as Shirley must have seen an opportunity to increase his status from playwright of the Queen's Men - thus being second to Massinger, playwright to the King's Men - to a

³⁷ C. V. Wedgwood, *Thomas Wentworth, First Earl of Strafford* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 226; see also Fletcher, *Drama, Performance, and Polity*, p. 261.

³⁸ Clark, Ira, 'Shirley, James (bap. 1596, d. 1666)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25427> [accessed 24th July 2006].

³⁹ Clark, *ODNB*.

more prestigious level, that of being the sole professional playwright in Ireland.⁴⁰ Yet, potentially, Wentworth might have had his pick of the London dramatists, who were unemployed following the closure of the theatres because of plague, and while Shirley possessed an excellent reputation as a highly accomplished playwright, his work contained another trait which was attractive to Wentworth. Shirley's drama was often concerned with inculcating civility, and demonstrates an extreme preoccupation with manners and social conduct: both *The Gentleman of Venice* and *The Politician* contain sections which discuss courtly decorum. Wentworth had a known interest in etiquette, as is demonstrated by Richard Braithwait dedicating *The English Gentleman: containing sundry excellent rules or exquisite observations tending to Direction of every Gentleman of selecter ranke and qualitie* to him in 1630.⁴¹ By 1636, Wentworth was particularly concerned with emulating London life by refining Dublin society, and this trait of the dramatist would have been most welcome.

While Wentworth undoubtedly wished to establish Dublin as a vice-regal capital, his interest in patronising Shirley could also have been influenced by the

⁴⁰ 'So long as the [King's] warrant remained in force, the superiority of the troupe at Blackfriars could not be challenged', *JCS*, I, p. 35. This superiority in the 1630s is also illustrated by the permanent employment of the troupe's players between 1608 and 1642, as discussed by Keith Sturgess, *Jacobean Private Theatre* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), p. 59, and by David Stevens in 'The stagecraft of James Shirley', *Educational Theatre Journal*, vol. 29, no. 4 (Dec. 1977), pp. 493-516: 493. For a discussion of the restructuring of the other London troupes see Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Playing Companies* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 418.

⁴¹ Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, pp. 118 and 122; Harbage, *Cavalier Drama*, p. 163 identifies the period 1632-1635 as Shirley's most prolific output of comedies of manners. Richard Braithwait, *The English Gentleman: containing sundry excellent rules or exquisite observations tending to Direction of every Gentleman of selecter ranke and qualitie* (London: printed by John Haviland and are to be sold by Robert Bostock at his shop at the signe of the Kings head in Pauls court-yard, 1630), STC (2nd ed.) / 3563, the epistle dedicatory is addressed to 'his nobly accomplished, honoured and loved Thomas Viscount Wentworth, Lord President of Yorke', and stipulates a support of 'moderate' attendance at plays, p. 195.

previously overlooked consideration of the power which bards traditionally held in Irish culture. Pre-500AD bards, or rather ollavs, have been described as the ‘shadow’ of prominent druids or pagan priests, who added significantly to the consequence of their patron, and the Irish poets of the sixteenth century, and very early seventeenth century, were conscious of this past.⁴² The main function of these poets was to promulgate ideas about kingship. Irish rulers were married to their land and if they behaved as a good king should, then their land prospered and they received poetic praise from their ollav. Ollavs presided at inaugurations, and poetic satire was considered to be injurious to the honour of a king, and was a means of wielding political power. Members of the nobility and ruling classes patronised their own *literati*, as they became known, who wrote poems specifically for their patrons, and the position was usually hereditary.⁴³ Bards may have been in a position to offer counsel to their patrons, and some even assumed emissary roles.⁴⁴ The power of the bards is demonstrated by the treaty signed in 1547, Sligo, where it was agreed that poetic satire and excommunication by the church were corresponding sanctions.⁴⁵ While Roman Catholicism rapidly gained in popularity, becoming by the end of James I’s reign the ‘lynch-pin of Irish national identity’, the bards were still part of Irish culture, and

⁴² James Carney, *The Irish Bardic Poet: A Study in the Relationship of Poet and Patron as exemplified in the persons of the poet Eochaidh Ó hEoghusa* (Dublin: Mount Salus Press Ltd., 1967; repr. 1985), p. 7.

⁴³ Caoimhín Breatnach, *Patronage, Politics and Prose* (Maynooth: An sagart, 1996), p. 4. See also Bernadette Cunningham ‘Native Culture and Political Change in Ireland, 1580-1640’ in Ciaran Brady and Raymond Gillespie (eds), *Natives and Newcomers: Essays on the making of Irish Colonial Society, 1534-1641* (Blackrock, County Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1986), pp. 148-246: 149 and 151.

⁴⁴ Marc Caball, *Poets and Politics: Reaction and Continuity in Irish Poetry, 1558-1625* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), p. 3.

⁴⁵ Carney, pp. 11-12. Also see Kerrigan, pp. 45-6.

Wentworth may have thought to increase his own consequence in the eyes of the native Irish lords by emulating this Irish custom.⁴⁶

Occasionally, some confusion has arisen about the identity of Shirley's patron in Ireland. In *The History of Merchant Taylor's School*, the Reverend H. B. Wilson claims that Shirley spent 'about twelve month in Ireland under the patronage of the Earl of Kildare', but this assertion is probably due to a misinterpretation of the dedication of *The Royal Master*, Shirley's first Irish play: the dedication of the printed editions of this play were indeed addressed to Kildare, but the epilogue of the play pays tribute to Wentworth, who was undoubtedly Shirley's primary patron.⁴⁷ Indeed, while no record of any other work being addressed to Kildare exists, it was Wentworth whom Shirley celebrated for recovering from gout and dysentery in 1640, and it was Wentworth's son to whom Shirley dedicated *The Court Secret* (printed 1653).⁴⁸

Competition from other dramatists

Fletcher suggests that the influx of a new and younger generation of playwrights, such as William Davenant and Thomas Carew, influenced Shirley's relocation to Ireland, as his own style of playwriting was increasingly becoming usurped by the popularity of

⁴⁶ Caball, p. 147.

⁴⁷ Reverend H. B. Wilson, *The History of Merchant Taylor's School*, 2 vols (London: Marchant and Galabin, 1814), II, pp. 693-4. This assumption is reiterated by Rankin, p. 96. The para-text of *The Royal Master* is discussed fully in the subsequent chapter.

⁴⁸ Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, p. 115.

gilded pastorals.⁴⁹ This broadly echoes Alfred Harbage's argument on the subject, which simplistically concludes that Shirley became increasingly dependent upon the popular stage for his income, and that when this source of employment ended with the closure of the theatres, because of plague, he was forced to move to Ireland if he wished to continue his career as a playwright.⁵⁰ That Henrietta-Maria was the driving force behind this new fashion for pastoral romances cannot have relieved any anxieties Shirley may have had that his own approach to playwriting was becoming increasingly marginalised.⁵¹ Ireland might then have seemed a haven from the constant competition for court favour and public popularity and, with his appointment as the only resident playwright, the Irish stage would be his sole domain. By 1636, Shirley had been a dramatist for eleven years and it is, perhaps, natural that younger men using a new style of writing would have replaced the older playwright in court tastes. It is equally possible that Shirley craved a new challenge, as his only opportunity for advancing his career in London was the unlikely circumstance of replacing Philip Massinger as playwright to the King's Men – a position he only acquired after Massinger's death in April 1640.

⁴⁹ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance, and Polity*, p. 269. Shirley did write a pastoral, and it is significant that this appeared in print the year of his return from Ireland, *A pastorall called the Arcadia* (London: printed by J[ohn] D[awson] for John Williams, 1640), STC (2nd ed.) / 22453.

⁵⁰ Alfred Harbage, *Annals of English Drama 975-1700: An analytical record of all plays, extant or lost, chronologically arranged and indexed by authors, titles, dramatic companies &c; revised by S. Schoenbaum*, revised by Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim, 3rd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 164.

⁵¹ Sharpe, p. 170. The years immediately preceding Shirley's departure for Ireland, 1635-1636, saw an increase in the number of plays which can be identified as 'pastoral': Ford's *The Fancies Chaste and Noble* (c.1635), Killigrew's *Claricilla* (1636), and Davenant's *The Platonick Lovers* (1636) – Davenant rapidly became a favourite of the Queen, and Killigrew's wife was one of Henrietta-Maria's maids of honour. In contrast, Shirley's plays from this period did not attempt to incorporate elements of the pastoral: *The Coronation* (1635) and *The Duke's Mistress* (1636) are tragicomedies, *The Lady of Pleasure* (1635) is a comedy of manners, and *The Bird in a Cage* (1636) is a comedy.

Censorship

However, Fletcher's more compelling argument is that, having come under critical censure from Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels in England, for *The Ball* (which depicted recognisable and prominent courtiers), Shirley saw Ireland as an escape from the strict censorship of London.⁵² Although Shirley did not usually push the boundaries of the acceptable, he had once incurred Herbert's severe displeasure, as documented by the Master of the Revels' judgement of *The Ball*, on 18th November 1632:

there were divers personated so naturally, both of lords and others of the court, that I took it ill, and would have forbidden the play, but that Biston promiste many things which I found faulte withall should be left out, and that he would not suffer it to be done by the poet anymore, who deserves to be punisht; and the first that offends in this kind, of poets or players, shall be sure of publique punishment.⁵³

⁵² For a discussion of *The Ball* see Reid Barbour, *Literature and Religious Culture in seventeenth-century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 161. London play censorship had a long history: Ben Jonson, George Chapman and John Marston's *Eastward Ho* (1605) earned them imprisonment for criticising the new Scottish peers; Robert Taylor got into trouble with *The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl* (1613) for an unflattering satire of a living person; John Taylor's *Laugh and Be Fat* (1613) also ridiculed a living person, and failed to obtain a proper licence; Anne Elsdon complained about the portrayal of herself in Dekker, Rowley, Ford and Webster's *The Late Murder at the White Chapel, or keepe the Widow Waking* (1624); Thomas Middleton's *A Game of Chess* (1624) impersonated living monarchs and satirized the Spanish ambassador; William Mountfort's *The Launching of the Mary* (1633) came under attack for calling to attention the politically sensitive topic of privileges which had been granted to the East India Company, and the English government's failure to punish the Dutch for the massacre of English sailors at Amboyna. See Dorothy Aucter, *Dictionary of Literary and Dramatic Censorship in Tudor and Stuart England* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 2001), pp. 96-8, 127-30, 158-161, 188-191 and 192-195 and Richard Dutton, *Licensing, Censorship and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), p. 193. For a discussion of Sir Henry's appointment as Master of the Revels and how this influenced his decisions see Dutton, *Licensing, Censorship and Authorship*, pp. 11-12. Fitz-Simon argues that the growing influence of the Puritans upon drama would have influenced Shirley's decision to leave for Ireland, p. 11.

⁵³ N. W. Bawcutt (ed.), *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, 1623-73* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 52.

William Prynne's 'publique punishment' of the previous year resulted in a sentence of life imprisonment, a fine of £5,000 and having his ears cut off, and while this extreme punishment would not have been Shirley's fate, Beeston, the company's manager, took Herbert's warning seriously and intervened on Shirley's behalf.⁵⁴ Interestingly, Herbert colluded with Beeston, in putting the blame on the dramatist, Shirley, in such a way as to absolve the management, the players and himself as Master of the Revels. Possibly, as Dutton argues, Shirley was one of those dramatists who coached the players in a quasi directional role, and so was expected to carry primary responsibility for such infringements.⁵⁵ Although Shirley published as many as four plays in the year between the licensing of *The Ball* (1632) and *The Young Admiral* (1633), he had clearly heeded Herbert's warning, and he even earned Herbert's praise for the latter play: the Master of the Revels demonstrated that he had good memory in an entry dated 3rd July 1633:

The Comedy called the Yonge Admirall, being free from oaths, prophaness, or obscenenes, hath given mee much delight and satisfaction in the readinge, and may serve for a patterne to other poetts, not only for the bettring of maners and language, but for the improvement of the quality, which hath received some brushings of late.

When Mr. Sherley hath read this approbation, I know it will encourage him to pursue this beneficial and cleanly way of poetry.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ William Lamont, 'Prynne, William (1600–1669)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22854>, accessed 1st April 2008].

⁵⁵ Dutton, *Licensing, Censorship and Authorship*, p. 45.

⁵⁶ The plays were *Changes, Or Love in a Maze* (1632); *Hyde Park* (1632); *The Bird in a Cage (The Beauties)* (1633); *The Gamester* (1633). Bawcutt, p. 180.

However, censorship was not as rigid in Ireland as in London and, with Ogilby's official appointment to Master of the Revels in Ireland, Shirley's freedom of artistic expression was assured.⁵⁷ While Shirley seems to have recovered Herbert's favour, as can be seen from the praise for *The Young Admiral*, gaining liberty from his tyrannical judgement might have been an added inducement to someone whose creativity had previously been thwarted.

It is equally possible that Shirley was disappointed with the reaction of the London audiences to his work. Caroline theatre was increasingly becoming a world of spectacle, and Shirley's more cerebral contribution to drama was being increasingly overlooked by an audience who craved visual splendour and special effects.⁵⁸ Shirley must have felt the strain of this form of economic censorship, which could have been another inducement for his removal to Ireland. He might have thought that the untapped market of Dublin would provide him with the opportunity to educate this audience in the dramatic tastes which he himself preferred; instead of being constrained by the demands of London society, in Ireland he would have the liberty of imposing his unadulterated work upon the hitherto theatrically-unedicated populace. Ira Clark argues that Shirley adopted a 'didactic' approach towards the Dublin audience, as he tried to fulfil Wentworth's vision of a courtly theatre.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 269.

⁵⁸ Lucow, p. 32.

⁵⁹ Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, p. 16.

Furthermore, the London stage at this time was the centre of hard-fought controversy over the religious and moral rectitude of playing. The Puritan element – famously headed by William Prynne - was becoming increasingly vocal which, while not yet a significant threat to a playwright’s livelihood, may have raised concerns about their having a secure future.⁶⁰ In fact, when Shirley made a brief visit back to London in 1638, ‘he found Prynne’s anti-theatrical principles continuing to gain...fast upon the publick mind’, which indicates that the threat which the Puritan opposition posed to the popularity of dramatic entertainment was increasing.⁶¹

Shirley’s Catholicism

Stephen J. Radtke makes the further suggestion that Shirley was drawn to Ireland as it was still predominantly Catholic: yet this assertion presents a more complex set of issues than Radtke explores.⁶² It is true that the majority of the lower social classes practised the Catholic faith, but Radtke ignores the fact that most of Charles's government in Ireland were powerful Protestant figures. There is also the contentious issue of Shirley’s own faith to consider. Since Anthony Wood’s assertion that when Shirley travelled from St. Albans to London he also ‘changed His Religion for that of Rome’, scholars have generally accepted, with a few notable exceptions, that Shirley practiced the Roman Catholic faith throughout the period of his playwrighting career.⁶³

⁶⁰ See William Prynne, ‘Histriomastix; with a preface for the Garland edition by Arthur Freeman’, *The English stage: attack and defense 1577-1730* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc, 1974), p. 159. Fitz-Simon, p. 12.

⁶¹ Wilson, II, pp. 693-4.

⁶² Radtke, p. 40.

⁶³ Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, 4 vols (Oxford: 1817), III, p. 737. Most recently, Rebecca A. Bailey summarises previous scholarship which has assumed Shirley’s Catholic conviction in *Staging the old faith: Queen Henrietta Maria and the theatre of Caroline England, 1625-1642* (Manchester:

There is evidence that Shirley was ordained and given a curacy in 1618, and that he was still connected to the Anglican Church in 1623 and 1624.⁶⁴ Tenuous arguments for a Catholic conversion are given by A. M. Taylor and Marvin Morillo: Taylor suggests that the bequeathing of twenty pounds to Mr Vincent Cane in Shirley's will (1666) is indicative that Cane was Shirley's Catholic confessor, while Morillo argues that Captain Thomas Audley's description of Shirley in the news-sheet *Mercurius Britanicus* (1643) as 'Frier Sherley' implies that his Catholicism was widely enough known to be the object of satire.⁶⁵ Burner provides more compelling evidence for a Catholic conversion, as she identifies a record in a Recusant Roll for the City of Westminster, dated 15th July 1646, for 'Jacobus Shirley, gent'.⁶⁶ Unless further evidence comes to light, the crucial question of *when* Shirley converted to Catholicism will remain the subject of conjecture, as this event currently cannot be more accurately dated than at some point between 1624 and, at the very earliest, 1643.⁶⁷ It is, therefore, entirely possible that Shirley did not convert to Catholicism until after his return to London in 1640. It is equally possible that his conversion occurred as the result of time spent with Catholics who were connected with William Cavendish, Earl

Manchester University Press, 2009), see especially the chapter entitled 'James Shirley: the early texts, 1625-1629', pp. 49-88.

⁶⁴ A discussion of this evidence can be found in Albert C. Baugh, 'Some New Facts about Shirley', *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 17 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), pp. 228-235; Albert C. Baugh, 'Further Facts about James Shirley', *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 7 (London: Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd., 1931), pp. 62-66; Georges Bas, 'Two Misrepresented Biographical Documents concerning James Shirley', *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 27, no. 107 (1976), pp. 303-310.

⁶⁵ A. M. Taylor, 'James Shirley and 'Mr Vincent Cane', the Franciscan', *Notes and Queries*, 7 (Jan., 1960), pp. 32-3; Marvin Morillo, "'Frier Sherley': James Shirley and the 'Mercurius Britanicus'", *Notes and Queries*, 7 (Sep., 1960), pp. 338-9.

⁶⁶ PRO MS E377/49, this reference is quoted by Burner, p. 101.

⁶⁷ Eva Griffith's article, 'Till the state fangs catch you. James Shirley the Catholic: Why it does not matter (and why it really does)', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 2nd April 2010 summarises the most recent scholarship about Shirley's Catholicism.

of Newcastle, Shirley's patron from 1641, an argument which is supported by the date of the record on the Recusant Roll.⁶⁸ Burner convincingly argues that Shirley's association with Catholics at the court of Queen Henrietta-Maria does not allow the conclusion to be drawn that he was himself a Catholic at this time, as his main concern was to attain and maintain the patronage of influential members of the court, regardless of their faith.⁶⁹ Even if Shirley had converted by 1636, Ireland at this time would not have been an alluring prospect for a Catholic planning to reside in Dublin. Even though it can be argued that Roman Catholicism was fundamental to the national identity of Ireland from the 1590s, as mentioned above, this applied to the Ireland beyond the Pale.⁷⁰ Although most of the land and commercial wealth in Ireland was held by Old English Catholics, from the second half of the sixteenth century onwards it was unusual for a Catholic of any descent to hold an administrative position in Ireland.⁷¹ An additional dimension to the religious situation came from the turbulence, during the mid-1630s, of the Protestant church in Ireland. Archbishop Laud, with the full support of Wentworth, made clerical appointments - for example, on 24th August 1634 the liberal provost of Trinity College, Robert Ussher, was replaced by William Chappell.⁷² Chappell was Laud's man, but the political climate was such that when Chappell was accused of being an Arminian in September 1636, Laud decreed that 'if

⁶⁸ Lynn Hulse, 'Cavendish, William, first duke of Newcastle upon Tyne (*bap.* 1593, *d.* 1676)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2006 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4946> [accessed 20th November 2009].

⁶⁹ Burner, p. 101.

⁷⁰ Caball, p. 147.

⁷¹ Hugh F. Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland 1633-41: A Study in Absolutism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), pp. 3 and 17.

⁷² Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, fn. 8, p. 440. For a full account of Laud's connection to the university see Alan Ford, 'That Bugbear Arminianism': Archbishop Laud and Trinity College, Dublin', in Ciaran Brady and Jane Ohlmeyer (eds), *British Interventions in Early Modern Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 135-160.

this be true, let him be punished'.⁷³ Furthermore, when a dispute arose between Chappell and James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland, Laud wrote:

it is in my Judgement a great Business in itself, that [the Provost and the Primate] should be at such an eager Difference in the open Face of that State, and in View of so many Romanists, as swarm there, and cannot but look upon it with Joy.⁷⁴

With so much powerful opposition, not just to Catholicism but to the mere suggestion of Arminianism, Ireland clearly could not be viewed at this time as a haven for an English Catholic dissenter. Indeed under these circumstances, solely for the consideration of practising Catholicism, London would have appeared to be the better option, as there Shirley would have received the support of the Queen. Shirley cannot have had any expectation of moving much beyond the colonial stronghold of Dublin, which represented, at this time, a small pocket of Protestant England which happened to be situated in Catholic Ireland. Therefore, regardless of Shirley's religious convictions in 1636, his presence in Ireland was not confessional, but rather a political move to benefit his career.

⁷³ CSPI, 1633-47, Laud to Wentworth, 8th September 1636, p. 140.

⁷⁴ Knowler, II, p. 36. Letter from Archbishop of Canterbury to the Lord Deputy, 18th October 1636, Croydon. Ussher had strong ties to the university having been a fellow there in 1593, gained a Masters Degree in 1600 and appointed as Vice-Chancellor 18th August 1614, *A Catalogue of Graduates who have proceeded to degrees in the university of Dublin*, 2 vols (Dublin: Hodges, Smith and Foster, 1869), II, p. 577.

Plague

Forsythe suggests that Shirley left London after plague closed the theatres on 12th May 1636.⁷⁵ However, the theatres had been closed for this reason on three previous occasions since Shirley first began playwriting, at the age of twenty-nine, in 1625.⁷⁶ G. E. Bentley records that the plague of 1625 was devastating and closed the public playhouses from the 27th March until the end of November, a total of eight months, and an inauspicious beginning for a new playwright. They were closed again for seven months in 1630 and yet again, for a brief time, in 1635.⁷⁷ While no one in May 1636 could have predicted that the theatres would be closed until 2nd October 1637, the evidence above attests that there had been long experience of bleak theatrical conditions.⁷⁸ From this evidence it might be possible to conclude that the plague of 1636-7 was the last straw for Shirley in a long run of theatre closures. But previous experience of the plague would have led to conjecture that the theatre closure would only last for around eight months, and while the 1636-7 theatre closure of seventeen months was unprecedented, it is unlikely that the closure of the theatres was the predominant motivation for Shirley's move to Dublin. Indeed the timing of Shirley's departure (which will be discussed in detail later), refutes the claim that this longer closure of the theatres was his motivation for leaving.

⁷⁵ Forsythe, p. 27. During his discussion of which actors left to join Ogilby's troupe, Clark implies that this was also when Shirley left for Ireland, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 27.

⁷⁶ Lucow, p. 13.

⁷⁷ Bentley, *JCS*, II, p. 654-657.

⁷⁸ It is not until a letter to Wentworth dated 9th November 1637, that his London correspondent, George Garrard, writes, 'God be thanked the Plague is much abated in London', *Knowler*, II, p. 130.

J. T. Gilbert advocates that an inducement for Shirley was the presence of some relations in Dublin, but Gilbert's theory of family connections is very dubiously based on corresponding surnames – Sir George Shirley, Chief Justice of the King's bench in Ireland from 1620 to 1649, and the Viscount of Rathcool, Sir John Tracy, connected by marriage to the Shirleys of Sussex 'whence the poet is supposed to have sprung'.⁷⁹ If Gilbert's supposition were accepted, then the presence of a rich relative in Ireland would have been an excellent inducement for Shirley's removal to Ireland, though probably not a central factor in his decision making. However, unless further evidence comes to light, this line of argument remains speculative.

The French Troupe

By far the most convincing single reason for Shirley's transfer to Dublin society is the hitherto overlooked presence of a French acting troupe, who first began operating in London in February 1634/5.⁸⁰ The first mention of this troupe can be found in Sir Henry Herbert's office-book:

On tuesday night the 17 of February, 1634 [1634/5] a Frenche company of players, being approved of by the queene at her house too nights before, and commended by her majesty to the kinge, were admitted to the Cockpitt in Whitehall, and there presented the king and queene with a Frenche comedy called *Melise*, with good approbation: for which the king gives them ten pounds.

⁷⁹ J. T. Gilbert, *A History of the City of Dublin*, 3 vols (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1854; repr. 1972), I, p. 39.

⁸⁰ For a discussion of the political significance of this troupe in London see Karen Britland, 'Queen Henrietta Maria's Theatrical Patronage', in Erin Griffey (ed.), *Henrietta Maria: Piety, Politics and Patronage* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2008), pp. 57-72:66-72. This chapter also includes information about a Spanish troupe which was operating in London at the same time.

This day being Friday, and the 20 of the same monthe, the kinge tould mee his pleasure, and commanded mee to give order that this Frenche company should playe the too sermon daies of the weeke, during their time of playinge in Lent, and in the house of Drury-lane, where the queenes players usually playe.

The kings pleasure I signified to Mr. Beeston the same day, who obeyd readily.

The house-keepers are to give them by promise the benefit of their interest for the two days of the first weeke.

They had the benefitt of playinge on the sermon daies, and gott two hundred pounds at least; besides many rich clothes were given them.

They had freely to themselves the whole weeke before the weeke before Easter, which I obtaynd of the king for them.

(in margin) The Frenche offered mee a present of 10*l*; but I refused itt, and did them many other curtesys, *gratis*, to render the queene my mistris an acceptable service.⁸¹

While Lent was a time when London companies were officially limited as to their acting days, Bentley records that he found no example of this being strictly enforced after 1615.⁸² Regardless of whether or not the French troupe was given special acting privileges during this time, it is easy to see why their presence in London was bitterly resented by playwrights and players alike. Henrietta-Maria's prominence in the English court meant that a strong French influence had permeated, and her endorsement of this visiting troupe was the expected reaction of a woman whose French roots ran deep. Her support of them must inevitably have had an impact upon her patronage of her English players at the Cockpit, Shirley's company. It is only too easy to imagine the bitterness of this English troupe against their French rivals who

⁸¹ Bawcutt, pp. 191-2.

⁸² Bentley, *JCS*, I, p. 234; *JCS*, VII, p. 1.

were given preference of royal favour, acting days, clothing and, perhaps the greatest insult, the use of their theatre. Furthermore, there is a possibility that the French troupe included women, as had occurred on a previous trip to London, which had caused Prynne to complain, ‘they have now their female-players in Italy, and other foreign parts – and in Michaelmas 1629 they had French women-actors in a play personated at Blackfriars’.⁸³ Herbert’s entry for this performance at Blackfriars is dated 4th November 1629, ‘For the allowinge of a French company to play a farse at Blackfryers, this 4 of November, 1629, - 2l. 0s. 0d.’, and as this omits any reference to female players, he cannot be expected to have mentioned their presence in 1635.⁸⁴ However, these women did not receive a warm reception in 1629, as is recorded by Thomas Brand, ‘glad am I to say they were hissed, and pippin-pelted from the stage, so that I do not think they will soon be ready to try the same again’.⁸⁵ There is no evidence to support or disprove that French female actors were ready to return to the English stage after an absence of more than five years: yet it is certain that women were not employed by the usual Cockpit players in 1635, and hence did not comprise the company which Ogilby assembled for the Dublin theatre.

Although Bentley estimates that the takeover of the Cockpit lasted for only about fourteen days, it is unlikely that this brevity significantly lessened the rancour of the Queen’s Men, particularly when a special stage subsequently was erected for the French troupe in Drury Lane in the riding school of M. le Februre, a warrant for which

⁸³ Sandra Richards, *The Rise of the English Actress* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1993), p. 1.

⁸⁴ Bawcutt, p. 169.

⁸⁵ Richards, p. 1.

was issued 18th April 1635. In total, the French troupe stayed in London for approximately ten months, as indicated by a warrant which was issued 8th January 1635/6 to Josias Floridor for payment for a play acted at court that month.⁸⁶ Ten months is a long time for stiff competition to have been haunting the London companies, and it must not be forgotten that no one at the time would have known for how long the intruders would be staying, so the duration of their visit must have seemed interminable. Furthermore, having left London because of the plague, in 1635 the King's Players expanded their usual tour route to include a performance in Youghal, Ireland, and while there is scant evidence of their receiving a warm welcome from the local authorities, they gained enough support from residents of the castles and great houses that the success of this venture, of an English company on Irish soil, must have been a strong inducement for Shirley's own move.⁸⁷

It is impossible to determine which factor tipped the balance in favour of Shirley making the monumental decision to leave his position in London and to move to Dublin, but it is evident that there were several incentives both to leave England and to move to Ireland. Shirley might have been tempted to go because of his friendship

⁸⁶ Bentley, *JCS*, I, p. 235.

⁸⁷ Fitz-Simon, p. 11. However, shortly after this trip the Youghal Council Book records for 5th October 1635, 'from hence forward no Maio<r> or Bayliffes, of this towne shall giue Licence to stages player<s> or to any other of that kind to make vse of the Towne hale of this towne', see Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, p. 404. The custom of English acting companies playing in Ireland can be traced back to 1588-9, when Dublin was visited by two touring troupes from England, the Queen's players and the Earl of Essex's players, the Irish authorities paid them for showing their sport in the streets: there is also documentation recording the sum of 5 shillings being paid to the King's Players in Youghal between September 1625 and September 1626, see Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, fn. 18, p. 20. Bentley discusses this Youghal expedition in *The Profession of Player*, p. 205. Cook argues that English troupes also performed on the Continent, see *The Privileged Playgoers*, p. 108.

with Ogilby, for the opportunity of becoming the premier playwright in Ireland, and because of Wentworth's patronage of the arts. Conversely, the factors prompting Shirley's removal from London provide a more convincing explanation for his departure: closure of the theatres because of plague, the rise in Puritan objections to dramatic entertainment, the censorship of plays by Herbert, the competition of increasingly popular works by Carew and Davenant, and the unwelcome presence of the French troupe.

When did Shirley leave for Ireland?

Since a number of plausible theories as to what might have influenced Shirley's relocation to Ireland have been explored, an examination of when he undertook his initial journey there might also help to clarify his motivation. Establishing exactly when Shirley left England will also inform an understanding of how such a remarkable undertaking – the construction of the first purpose-built theatre in Ireland – was accomplished: did Shirley arrive to assist with the planning of the structure, or was the building work complete? Was his first 'Irish' play written purposely for the opening of the new theatre, or had he been working on it in expectation of the London theatres reopening after the plague? Was there a specific event, or set of circumstances which prompted Shirley's move? Understanding when this move took place enables a greater comprehension of what processes were involved in this innovative venture.

The most likely date for Shirley's journey is that offered by Allan H. Stevenson, who suggests that the dramatist's arrival in Dublin coincided with Wentworth's return there, from a sojourn in England, on 23rd November 1636.⁸⁸ This voyage was taken aboard the King's ship the *Ninth Whelp*, which was one of two guard ships then being employed to defend the Irish Sea, and which carried distinguished passengers between Chester and Dublin.⁸⁹ Stevenson's argument for Shirley's presence on the *Ninth Whelp's* voyage to Dublin in November 1636 gains credibility from a discussion of the logistics involved in sea-travel at this time. For a number of years the Irish Sea had been ravaged by pirates, and it was generally considered that the only safe way of travelling to Ireland was aboard one of the King's patrolling armed vessels.⁹⁰ Wentworth himself had been a victim of piracy even before he arrived in Dublin: in May 1633 (more than six months after his appointment as Lord Deputy of Ireland) Wentworth's concern that he would be thought by the Irish to be lingering profitably in England persuaded him to send over most of his household goods ahead of his own appearance, although his plate escaped, the *Pickpocket* took his linen which was said to be worth £500.⁹¹ Numerous tales of passengers being press-ganged were also rife, and in a letter dated as late as 16th December 1637, Reverend George Garrard (a frequent correspondent who provided

⁸⁸ Stevenson, 'Shirley's Years in Ireland', pp. 19-28. Wentworth had left for England on 2nd June 1636, see Lismore Papers, vol. 3. p. 192. There is evidence in his correspondence that Wentworth was in a rush to return to Ireland: Wentworth to John Bramhall, Bishop of Derry, 2nd September 1636, 'I am over head and ears in a troublesome account and extreme desirous to be in Ireland and my family', PRONI T415/6; same to the same, 27th September 1636, 'Yet I will acquaint His Majesty withal and so be enabled how to direct that business upon my coming over which will by the Grace of God be now very speedily', PRONI T415/7. N.b. these extracts come from a transcription of the Berwick Letters 1635-1815 which was granted to PRONI by Miss E. Berwick, Dunardagh, Belfast in 1927.

⁸⁹ CSPD, 1631-33, p. 371; 1633-34, pp. 45 and 70; 1634-5, p. 386.

⁹⁰ In a letter dated 30th July 1631 Bishop Laud raises his concerns to Wentworth about the dangers of a sea crossing to Ireland, see Knowler, I, p. 58.

⁹¹ Bagwell, I, p. 198.

the Lord Deputy with the gossip of London and was the Master of the Charter House) wrote to Wentworth, ‘wee hear of eight merchants ships homeward bound taken by the Argiers Pirates’.⁹² If one could obtain passage on it, safety onboard the King’s guard ship the *Ninth Whelp* was greater than travelling on any other vessel, and it seems likely that Shirley would prefer to accept this means of transportation rather than having to make his own, more hazardous, arrangements, and that he arrived at Dublin in November 1636.⁹³

Construction of the Werburgh Street Theatre

An examination of Shirley’s removal to Ireland must be linked to a discussion of the date when the theatre was built in St. Werburgh’s Street.⁹⁴ It is therefore highly significant that upon his return to Dublin in 1636, Wentworth discovered that during his absence the theatre had been closed by the Primate, and this provides irrefutable evidence that the theatre was built, and was in some capacity operational, before February 1636/7. Fletcher draws attention to the importance that an opened theatre would have had to Shirley, which was doubtless more appealing than a mere projection of employment, so it can be assumed that the theatre was operational for some time before November 1636.⁹⁵ The previously unpublished letter which Fletcher provides was written by Wentworth to Archbishop Laud on 10th July 1637 and states:

⁹² For information on the relationship of Wentworth and Garrard see Lady Burghclere, *Strafford*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan & Co., 1931), II, p. 21.

⁹³ Stevenson, ‘Years in Ireland’, pp. 20-22.

⁹⁴ See Appendix One.

⁹⁵ In letters to his son, the Earl of Clare states that Wentworth was expected to make a trip over to London (4th January 1636/7), and he later records Wentworth’s presence in England (1st February 1636/7), see Seddon, III, pp. 474 and 477. Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, fn. 37, p. 442.

what long of a Playhouse lately sett vp and allowed by me (w^{ch} out of Purity of Zeale ye Primate dureing my being in England had prohibited, least it might, forsooth, haue brought a punishment of ye Plague vpon vs) his Grace is very angry wth me, and saith yat I neither Care for Church nor Church men where my owne Ends come in question.⁹⁶

The identification of the Primate at this time has been confused in recent scholarship by both Fletcher and Dutton claiming that the Primate was Archbishop Bulkeley, when he was in fact Archbishop Ussher.⁹⁷ This confusion of identity probably arose because in 1623 Lancelot Bulkeley, Archbishop of Dublin, revived the controversy over whether the primacy of the Irish Church belonged to the diocese of Dublin or the diocese of Armagh. James Ussher was appointed Archbishop of Armagh in 1625 following the death of Archbishop Hampton, and so was Bulkeley's contender in this debate.⁹⁸ The issue was finally settled by Wentworth in 1634 who decided in favour of the archbishops of Armagh.⁹⁹ Archbishop Ussher was fairly Puritan in his Protestant outlook. A tantalising glimpse of the vehemence of Ussher's theatrical objections can be found in the biography of Mary Rich, née Boyle (youngest daughter of the Earl of Cork) who wrote:

⁹⁶ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 263.

⁹⁷ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 263; Dutton, 'The Werburgh Street Theater, Dublin', p. 131. In earlier scholarship, Wedgwood correctly identified Archbishop James Ussher, *First Earl of Strafford*, p. 226.

⁹⁸ R. Buick Knox, *James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967), pp. 33-4.

⁹⁹ Further evidence that the Primate at this time was Ussher can be found in CSPI 1633-47, 20th July 1636, which provides a list of visitors, 'Lord Mayor followed by the Primate, the Archbishop of Dublin and the Bishop of Meath', which clearly states that the primate and the Archbishop of Dublin are separate identities, p. 149. Also the description 'the primate of Ireland, the great James Ussher' is given in F. E. Ball, 'Some Notes on the Households of the Dukes of Ormonde', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxxviii (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1928-9), pp. 1-20: 5.

for God was pleased, at my first turning to Him, to let me find inexpressible comfort in His ordinances whenever I approached to Him, which did make me to hate and to disrelish all my former vain and idle pleasures, and I then studied the God-breathed oracles, and spent much time in reading in the Word, laying by my idle books, and by my Lord Primate of Ireland's¹⁰⁰ preaching against plays, I was many years before resolved to leave seeing them, for, as I remember, I saw not above two after my being married.¹⁰¹

Ussher's objections must have been strong and considerable to have thus resonated through the years, and he was far from being alone in his opinion: in 1630 Richard Braithwait wrote:

as I approve of the *moderate* use and recourse which our *Gentlemen* make to *Playes*; so I wholly condemne the daily frequenting of them: as some there be (especially in this Citie [London]) who, for want of better employment, make it their Vocation [to see a play daily]...These can finde time enough for *Recreation* but not a minutes space for *Devotion*. So as I much feare mee, when they shall be struck with sicknesse, and lie on their death-bed.¹⁰²

There is considerable disagreement amongst scholars regarding the opening date of this theatre, and it appears that the evidence of the Primate's objection to its existence

¹⁰⁰ This transcription comes from T. Crofton Croker's 1848 edition which here provides the name Archbishop Ussher as a footnote. The original manuscript is held by the British Library and the name Archbishop Ussher is inserted into the manuscript in a different hand to the original work, see Add. MS. 27357, 23^r.

¹⁰¹ T. Crofton Croker (ed.), *Autobiography of Mary Countess of Warwick* (London: Printed for the Percy Society, 1848), p. 22. Mary Rich's account must be treated with caution given that she states that she was born 8th November 1635 (see p. 1), but the ODNB records her date of birth as 11th November 1624, based upon evidence from Cork's records, Sara H. Mendelson, 'Rich, Mary, countess of Warwick (1624–1678)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23487> [accessed 19th March 2009].

¹⁰² Braithwait, p. 195.

has been disregarded, as this throws considerable light onto the debate. The earliest sources for information about the Werburgh Street Theatre are W. R. Chetwood and Thomas Wilks: Chetwood states, 'I cannot find any establish'd Theatre in *Dublin* till the Year 1635' while Wilks asserts, 'the first Theatre that was built in Dublin was in St. Werburgh's Street, about the year 1634'.¹⁰³ Both of these accounts were written over a hundred years after the closure of the theatre - which occurred after the uprising in 1641 - and the discrepancy between them can be explained by Robert Hitchcock's clarification in 1788 that 'we find little relative to the stage, till the year 1635, the tenth of King Charles I. when the first theatre in Dublin was raised' - James I having died on 27th March 1625, the majority of Charles' tenth year of rule occurred during 1634.¹⁰⁴ Subsequent scholastic endeavours to date the opening of the theatre are confusing: in her otherwise commendable book, *Dublin Theatres and Theatre Customs*, La Tourette Stockwell states in a timeline that the Werburgh Street Theatre opened 'c. 1637', yet in a later discussion of a 1628 production of *Othello* she talks of 'the choice of one of Shakespeare's plays for upholding the traditional hospitality of the English Pale, just *seven years* before the erection of the first theatre in Ireland' (my emphasis), which places the opening date of the theatre at 1635.¹⁰⁵ A disparity of two years is highly significant for drawing a viable conclusion for the reason for Shirley's own arrival in Dublin. Fletcher provides evidence from a diary entry of John Clavell for an earlier

¹⁰³ W. R. Chetwood, *A General History of the Stage* (Printed by E. Rider in George's Lane for the Author and fold by Messieurs Ewing, Wilson, Esdau and James Bookseller in Dublin and Mr. Sullivan in Cork, 1749), p. 51. Thomas Wilks, *A General View of the Stage* (London: printed for J. Cooke in Pater-noster Row; for W. Whetstone in Skinner Row, Dublin, 1759), p. 306.

¹⁰⁴ óHaodha, p. 1; Hitchcock, p. 9. See also Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, fn. 10, p. 601.

¹⁰⁵ La Tourette Stockwell, *Dublin Theatres and Theatre Customs: 1637-1820* (London: Benjamin Blom, 1968), pp. xiii and xvii. See Morash, p. xi for a chronology of events relating to the Werburgh Street Theatre.

dating of the opening of the theatre. Sometime between c. January 1635 and June 1637, Clavell copied a prologue and epilogue into his commonplace book of a play which had been staged at the 'New house' in Ireland, which must have referred to the theatre in St Werburgh's Street.¹⁰⁶ As Clavell left Ireland 17th June 1637, the theatre must have been open before this time. Shirley's first 'Irish' play, *The Royal Master*, was entered into the Stationers' Register on 13th March, 1637/8, licensed to the Queen's Men for performance on 23rd April 1638 and the date of the printed editions of *The Royal Master* is 1638.¹⁰⁷ This provides evidence that his first Irish play was staged at Werburgh Street Theatre in 1637, as the title page of the play states that it had already been 'acted in the nev v theater in *Dublin*', which must have occurred before March 1637/8.¹⁰⁸ Ogilby tells us of his 'great preparacōns and disbursements in building a new Theatre...by the Damage of Two Thousand pounds att least'.¹⁰⁹ If we accept Stevenson's theory that Shirley did not arrive until November 1636, Ogilby would have been left with an empty theatre for a number of months, and would therefore not be recouping his vast expenditure.

¹⁰⁶ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, pp. 262-3. Clavell's prologue and epilogue can be found in Fletcher's Appendix, pp. 440-1.

¹⁰⁷ Nason, p. 93. Harbage, *Annals of English Drama*, p. 138.

¹⁰⁸ Stevenson, 'Shirley's Publisher's', p. 154. 1637 is the date which Harbage records as being when Ogilby constructed the theatre, p. 356. James Shirley, *The Royal Master* (1638), STC (2nd ed.) /22454, A1^r; William Gifford and Alexander Dyce (eds), *The Dramatic Works of James Shirley*, 6 vols (London: John Murray, 1833), IV p. 102. All quotations from *The Royal Master* are taken from the 1638 London edition unless otherwise stated, and the Gifford reference has also been given, as this is the most recent edition.

¹⁰⁹ CSPI 63, vol. 345, no. 50, Public Record Office, London, quoted in Clark's, *The Early Irish Stage*, p. 180. I have been unable to discover how Ogilby raised such a sum.

It would have been in Ogilby's interest to open the theatre as early as possible to defray the enormous cost of building it, and to start making a profit. Yet if the theatre was not ready until 1637, then Shirley would have been present in Dublin for a number of months before the building work was even completed. Shirley's nineteenth-century editor, William Gifford, states of the theatre that 'its exhibitions commenced in 1635. About two years after it had opened, we find Shirley resident in the Irish capital', yet he offers no explanation as to what entertainment was being offered during this two year gap.¹¹⁰ Perhaps a clue lies in S. C. Hughes's assertion that 'the impression left by Shirley's prologues is that bear-baiting and cudgel-playing were more to the taste of our ancestors than plays'.¹¹¹ Before the construction of the theatre in St. Werburgh Street there was no designated public area for entertainment in the city of Dublin, and theatrical entertainment had been largely restricted to miracle and morality plays.¹¹² Although Shirley had arrived in 1636, there is evidence to suggest (as will be shown later) that an acting troupe had not been formed until 1637. It has not previously been considered that, in a desperate bid to recover some money in the 'dead' period between the theatre's construction (June 1636) and the first theatrical performance, Ogilby allowed bear-baiting and cudgel-playing to be staged in his theatre. The precedent for a dual-purpose playhouse had been set in August 1613

¹¹⁰ Gifford, I, p. xxxiii.

¹¹¹ During his time in Ireland Shirley wrote prologues for Thomas Middleton's *The Alchemist*; *No Wit, no Help but a Woman's*; *The Irish Gent* attributed to Burnell; *The Toy* and *The General*, see S. C. Hughes, *The Pre-Victorian Drama in Dublin* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1904; repr. 1970), p. 2; Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, fn. 20, p. 21; Hughes, p. 2. The paucity of attendance is mentioned twice by Shirley in prologues to *No Wit to a Woman's* and in 'Prologue to Another of Master Fletcher's plays there' which reads, 'Are there no more? and can this Muses' sphere | At such a time as this, so thin appear?... | Were there a pageant now on foot, or some | Strange monster from Peru or Afric come | Men would throng to it; any drum will bring | (That beats a bloodless prize or cudgelling) | Spectators hither; nay the bears invite audience', Gifford, VI, p. 493. These prologues are discussed later.

¹¹² Wertheim, p. 212.

when Jacob Meade and Philip Henslowe undertook the cost of transforming the Bear Garden into the Hope Theatre, ‘for player to play in, and for the game of bears and bulls to be baited in’.¹¹³ A letter written in 1639 by ‘Honest William’ (so-called by the letter’s recipient, Francis Lord Cottington) tells us of the popularity of bear-baiting in the Paris Garden London:

There you may hear the shouting of men, the barking of dogs, the growling of the bears, and the bellowing of the bulls, mixed in a wild but natural harmony, This appears to the writer a picture of the world, for “All the world is but a bear-baiting”. There are some men who do not endure to see the bears, but they are generally rustics, and of little judgement, who do not know how to regard this business, nor do they approve of recreation.¹¹⁴

If this form of entertainment was as popular with the Dublin audience, and moreover had previously been permitted in the theatre, then their indignation at the forthcoming plays and players, as indicated in Shirley’s prologues, is understandable. Evidence from the prologues which supports this theory is scant, and comes from ‘To a play there [Dublin], called The General’ which states, ‘This is a curse | For their not seeing plays, or something worse’. It is at least possible that the ‘something worse’ refers to blood sports.

¹¹³ Bentley, *Profession*, p. 47. The quotation regarding the bear garden is given by Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* (New York: Russell & Russell Inc., 1962), p. 60 from its initial publication in the *Henslowe Papers*. However, Hotson records that this venture was unsuccessful and that after 1617 the building was used exclusively for entertainment involving animals. Sir Henry Herbert allowed the London theatres permission for performances during Lent in exchange for a fee: however, some of the managers choose to stage other entertainments than plays during this time, the Red Bull and the Fortune, in particular, staged masques, prize-fighters, tumblers and rope-dancers, see Bawcutt, p. 214; Malone, iii, p. 66. After 1620 Herbert’s office-book records that the Swan and Rose theatres were occasionally used for the exhibition of prize-fighters, see Bawcutt, p. 215, Malone, iii, p. 56.

¹¹⁴ Quoted by Hotson, p. 59.

While there is no hard evidence to confirm that such activities occurred in the Werburgh Street Theatre, there is evidence that such entertainment was popular in Dublin, as the Assembly Rolls for 1620 record the following:

the Commons Complained to this Assemblie against diuers new vaine Customes lately growing in this Cittie and vsed by forriners and strandgers As Bull baytinges Beare baytinges and other vnciuell and vnlawful games and excercises allureing vnto them from all partes of the Cittie other mens prentizes and seruantes who therby fall into much vice and idlenes to ye decaie and Impouerishing of theire Masters and other the Citizens,It is enacted and ordained by the said Auctoritie that ye Maior for the time being shall from time to time restraine the Common passadge of Beares and Bulles through the Cittie or any parte thereof.¹¹⁵

This passage ascertains that bear-baiting was considered to be a 'new' pastime in Ireland in 1620, and that there was concern from the city authorities that allowing such entertainments to be conducted was a distraction for apprentices, and therefore detrimental to the Economy. However, it is not implausible to suggest that by 1635 the authorities were resigned to having to regulate such practices officially, rather than banning them altogether, and by permitting Ogilby to host the entertainment they ensured that the event was contained, and conducted at times which would cause least disruption to the working week. Perhaps the best indication of what happened in Ireland comes from the practices of the Master of the Revels in London. After Sir Henry Herbert's accession to this position, fees were paid by each London theatre for permission to perform during Lent; however, some theatres (particularly the Red Bull

¹¹⁵ Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, p. 320.

and the Fortune) were sub-let to prize-fighters, tumblers and rope-dancers.¹¹⁶ The practice of bear-baiting and cudgel-playing could also have influenced the Primate's objections to the theatre.

Wentworth took a long trip to England between June and November 1636, and as Wentworth's letter to Archbishop Laud exclaiming about the closure of the theatre was written after this, on 10th July 1637, it is clear that the Werburgh Street Theatre was in certainly in existence before June 1636.¹¹⁷ That the Primate closed the theatre specifically during the Lord Deputy's absence indicates the latter's involvement in, and support of, the project: Ussher's reasons for closing the theatre are less tangible. Wedgwood first explained the reasons motivating the Primate's impertinent behaviour as 'his disapproval of the theatre in general and a belief that plague might fall on Ireland if such wickedness were permitted', and this statement is validated by the letter which Fletcher printed.¹¹⁸ Given the devastation that the plague was wreaking in England, this fear of disease was not unfounded, but Ussher's reservations could be interpreted to include not just a Prynne-like distaste for theatre, but also an aversion to the baser forms of entertainment which Ogilby may have been permitting. Indeed, as early as 1583 play-going had been classed by Puritans with these forms of entertainment: 'theatres, Curtines, Heaving houses, Rifling booths, Bowling alleys, and such places, where the time is so shamefully misspent...there is no Dicing house,

¹¹⁶ Bawcutt, p. 214

¹¹⁷ For a discussion of the opening of the theatre see Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 263.

¹¹⁸ Wedgwood, *First Earl of Strafford*, p. 226.

Bowling alley, Cock pit, or Theater that can be found empty'.¹¹⁹ As Shirley travelled to Ireland with Wentworth in November 1636, he would have been unaware of the archbishop's hostility towards the theatrical venture until his arrival, so the incident could not have factored in his decision to move. Yet there may have been another factor which prompted the Primate's decision. The policies which Wentworth had implemented in Ireland were unpopular on both sides of the Irish Sea, and the Lord Deputy clearly felt that written communications lacked the impact which his own presence in London would ensure to justify his decisions. Rumours first circulated in March 1635/6 that he would return to England, but this did not happen until June 1636.¹²⁰ The Lord Deputy's return to Ireland was by no means viewed as a certainty in the eyes of the Dublin nobility, with the Earl of Cork recording in his diary:

Sir ffrederick Hamylton gaue me a xx^s peec, for which I am to give him 20 if our L. deputie return not to his government, before any other deputy is chosen.¹²¹

If residents of Ireland were, literally, betting on the fact that Wentworth would be dismissed from his position as Lord Deputy of Ireland, then perhaps Ussher felt that

¹¹⁹ John Feilde, *A Godly Exhortation, by Occasion of the Late Iudgement of God, Shewed at Parris-Garden, the Thirteenth Day of Januarie* (London, 1583), B4, quoted by Cook, p. 98.

¹²⁰ Kearney observes that Wentworth wrote letters from Dublin on 7th June and from London on 30th June and concludes that he must have travelled between these days, p. 95. This time frame can be narrowed very slightly further as evidenced by a letter which Wentworth wrote from London to his wife which is dated 29th June 1636, where he scathingly writes that he 'shall seake with Will Raylson concerning the motto you mention, and as for your poetrye it will cum to noe grete effectte, your witts lie a graver way than forts wth mating of verses', *Private Letters from the Earl of Strafford to his Third Wife*, reproduced by the *Philobiblon Society. Bibliographical and historical miscellanies*, 3 vols (London: printed by Charles Whittingham, 1854), I, pp. 11-17.

¹²¹ June 1636, A. Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore Papers*, 5 vols (London: Chiswick Press, 1886), vol. 3, p. 194. For a discussion of Irish hopes of Wentworth's dismissal see Kearney, p. 96.

his decision to close the theatre would be unchallenged and, most likely, that the issue of the theatre would be of little interest to Wentworth's successor.

Illuminating as the letter is regarding the reaction of high ranking church officials to the theatre, perhaps the most interesting phrase in it is that the theatre formed part of Wentworth's plan as he strove to achieve 'my owne Ends'. This demonstrates how the construction of the Werburgh Street Theatre was part of Wentworth's larger vision of making Dublin into a vice-regal capital – a vision which he clearly felt was nearly achieved, as shown in a letter dated 25th July 1636 when he wrote to Christopher Wandesford, Master of the Rolls and one of the Lord Justices of Ireland, 'Now by the lawes inacted this last parliament, I might truly say that Irlande was totally become English'.¹²² Wentworth carried out numerous architectural projects in his efforts to bring English culture to Ireland: notably, Dublin Castle was renovated, and he commissioned his own country house to be erected. Jiggenstown was the first building in the country to use brick on a large scale, and its technical perfection required the employment of immigrant craftsmen.¹²³ Wentworth was clearly sparing no expense when creating his own image of grandeur and opulence, and a considerable amount of effort must have been employed in the planning of the new theatre.

¹²² 25th July 1636 Wentworth to Christopher Wandesford, Master of the Rolls and one of the lord justices of Ireland, in *Life of Ormond*, V, p. 205.

¹²³ Maurice Craig, *The Architecture of Ireland from the earliest times to 1880* (London and Dublin: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1982; repr. 1989), p. 138; David Howarth, *Images of Rule: Art and Politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649*(Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997), pp. 192-203.

In design the Werburgh Street Theatre itself was probably very similar to Blackfriars: it was built along the lines of a private theatre and could seat around three hundred people, with another one hundred being seated on a balcony, the pit was 30 feet deep and 23 feet wide.¹²⁴ Stage directions from plays performed at this theatre also provide strong evidence to suggest that there was a discovery space.¹²⁵

Although it can now be convincingly argued that Shirley arrived in Ireland in 1636, it is equally clear that a theatre had been constructed before this date, and that it is probably the disparity between the projected building plans and the opening date of a play which has led to such confusion over the dating of the Dublin theatre. If construction was completed by June 1636 plans must have been underway since at least 1635. The Irish parliament of 26th January to 21st March (prolonged to 24th March) 1634/5 legislated against unlicensed popular players. This indicates that the state was protecting the interests of Wentworth's project, and suggests that the theatre was built before January 1634/5.¹²⁶ Yet Shirley's arrival did not mean that plays could be instantly performed, and it is probable that it took some time to acquire a troupe of actors, take them to Ireland and allow them some rehearsal time before staging the first play at the new theatre. Perhaps it took until 1637.

¹²⁴ Morash, p. 5.

¹²⁵ Morash, p. 6; Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 267.

¹²⁶ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, fn. 14, p. 440.

Actors

So who were the actors of the Dublin playhouse, described on the 1640 title-page of *St. Patrick for Ireland* as ‘His Majesty’s Company of Comedians’?¹²⁷ It is known that during the Restoration no London player was allowed to transfer from one company to another without the express permission of the Lord Chamberlain, but in the 1630s rules seem to have been more relaxed: Gurr notes that in the shifting grouping of the London companies, the King’s Men were exceptional for their stability.¹²⁸ As no record of authorization exists to reveal that formal proceedings were followed when a player transferred from one company to another in the 1630s, tracing the history of troupes is complex.

Bentley suggests that Ogilby formed his company from a variety of London-based troupes, and this assertion has been repeated by other scholars: from the Fortune he obtained Edward Armiger, William Perry and Richard Weekes, from the Red Bull, William Cooke.¹²⁹ We can confirm that at least three of these actors were present in Ireland as of 20th April 1638. The vestry of St John the Evangelist refers to ‘William Cooke ye player’; the St Werburgh’s Poor Relief Levies dated 25th April 1640 to 10 April 1642 record a payment of five shillings from ‘Mr Perry at the play house’, but

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

¹²⁸ John Harold Wilson, *A Preface to Restoration Drama* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 19. Gurr, p. 137. On 13th December 1636 there is a record that the King’s Men were granted an allowance of 20*l.* per week, *CSPD* 1636-37, X, p. 228.

¹²⁹ Bentley, I, p. 282; Fitz-Simon states that Ogilby’s entire company was recruited from London, p. 11. Bentley provides evidence that a son of Armiger was buried in London 6th May 1637, but there is no evidence that Armiger himself was present for this burial rather than his wife. For information on the extant printed scholarship about these actors see David J. Kathman’s Biographical Index of English Drama Before 1660: <http://shakespeareauthorship.com/bd/> [accessed 20th January 2010].

the most significant evidence comes from the Register of St Werburgh's Church which records on 29th October 1637 'Some Players about this time buried viz. Armiger – Rookes' – which proves that the actors were present in Dublin before the end of October 1637.¹³⁰ All of the actors mentioned by Bentley were experienced and, as such, were extremely valuable to Ogilby, as raw recruits could have taken months to train, and there would have been no guarantee that they would achieve theatrical competence.¹³¹ Yet a company could not be formed with only four, even such skilled, actors. Nason records that the Cockpit players, the company with whom Shirley had been connected, were disbanded by Christopher and William Beeston during the plague of 1636-7. They then created a company of boy actors which formed the troupe, also called Queen Henrietta-Maria's Men, who reopened the Cockpit on 2nd October 1637.¹³² The cast list of Thomas Nabbe's *Hannibal and Scipio*, performed in 1635, provides us with the names of the Cockpit company: William Sherlock, John Sumner, William Allen, Hugh Clark, Anthony Turner, Michael Bowyer and Richard Perkins were all company sharers, George Stutville, Robert Axen, John Page and Theophilus Bird were hired men, while Ezekiel Fenn was an apprentice.¹³³ Stevenson

¹³⁰ Fletcher provides evidence of Cooke's presence in Ireland, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, p. 333. Fletcher, p. 337 and Clark, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 28 reproduce the record from the account books for the Poor Cess, 1641-2, for St Werburgh's Church. The record of Armiger is given by Fletcher, p. 331; Clark suggests that 'Rookes' was a badly written 'Weekes', and that the actor referred to is Richard Weekes, p. 31. I have been unable to discover the existence of an actor named Rookes.

¹³¹ Clark, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 27.

¹³² Nason, p. 127. In his will, Christopher Beeston left shares of the company to the boy actors to encourage their future careers: 'And whereas I stand possessed of four of the six shares in the Company for the King and Queen's service at the Cockpit in Drury lane, I declare that two of my said four shares shall be delivered up for the advancement of the said Company', Hotson, p. 93. If such generosity was intimated before the division of the company we can imagine the anger of the original Queen's Men.

¹³³ For general information on these men see Bentley, *Profession*, p. 278. William Sherlock: for details of Sherlock's family during in Ireland during the Restoration see Herbert Wood (ed.), *The Registers of St Catherine, Dublin*, V (London and Exeter: William Pollard & Co. Ltd., 1908), pp. 74, 90 and 99. William Allen: a man of this name was buried in Dublin 10th March 1682, see Wood, *Registers*, V, p.

argues that, of this group, probably Allen, Bowyer and Clark moved to Ireland along with William Robins, whom there is reason to believe was a member of the Cockpit troupe (though Clark disputes this claim on the basis of insubstantial evidence).¹³⁴ Stevenson's assertion that a proportion of the Cockpit troupe accompanied Shirley to Ireland and formed a core body of experienced actors along with those from the Red Bull and Fortune is convincing: Edward Armiger, William Perry, Richard Weekes from the Fortune, William Cooke from the Red Bull, and Thomas Jordan from Salisbury Court.¹³⁵ Fletcher also identifies a 'Mr Errington' who lived on Castle Street, near the premises of Shirley's Dublin publishers: this rare name is shared by Richard Errington, a leader of touring acting companies, who had worked with the Queen's Men and thus may have known Shirley personally.¹³⁶ The cast list of *Hannibal and Scipio* names twelve individuals, so even with the addition of the actors from the Cockpit, Ogilby's company would have comprised ten players and, allowing for doubling, about twelve players were required to stage *The Royal Master*, so the rest of the cast may have been formed by Irish locals.¹³⁷ It would also have been highly logical for Ogilby, and/or Shirley, to approach these Cockpit actors as Beeston broke

43. Michael Bowyer: a Dublin record of 1678-79 records 'ffunerall fees. Ground ffees for Mr Bowyer 3.0.0. see Raymond Refaüssé with Colm Lennon (eds), *The Registers of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), p. 94 – Christ Church Cathedral is within sight of Werburgh Street.

¹³⁴ Stevenson, 'Actors', p. 150. Clark, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 28.

¹³⁵ See also Wertheim, p. 212; Clark, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 27; Morash, p. 4. On 28th December 1637 the registers of St John the Evangelist, Dublin record 'Chrisned Thomas Jordan son to Thomas Jorda', see *The Registers, 1619-1699*, ed. James Mills (Dublin: Parish Society of Dublin, 1906), p. 29.

¹³⁶ RCB, P. 326/27/3/28, fol. [6]. The cess notes a 'Mr Croke & Mr Serger staconers' resident on the south side of Castle street fol. [4^v]. For more information on Richard Errington see Bentley, *JCS*, II, 431-2; *SPC*, pp. 391, 433, 436 and 448. Errington's last known recorded appearance was at Coventry on 22nd April 1636, so he could have accompanied Shirley to Ireland in November of that year. See also *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 271.

¹³⁷ Fletcher comments that if local actors were used then Ogilby never acknowledged their participation, see *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 270.

up the company before, or not long after, Michaelmas, 1636 – this specific time can be suggested as the company had not received their livery allowance for that year which was paid around this time.¹³⁸ This means that the Cockpit troupe was looking for work.¹³⁹ Sir Henry Herbert, Richard Heton and the Earl of Dorset formed a new troupe at Salisbury Court which included around half of the members of the old Cockpit company, but the rest had previously found other employment.¹⁴⁰ The loyalty of a sharer was to his company, rather than to the theatre or its owner, which reinforces the argument for the removal of Allen, Bowyer, Clark and Robins to Ireland:¹⁴¹ the Cockpit players must have been extremely displeased with the dismantling of their prestigious company and would wish to band together, where possible, because of friendship and loyalty ties.¹⁴² Shirley's commitment to the Dublin theatre must have been the strongest inducement for these men to follow him there, as they had previously worked with the playwright and consequently understood his style, as he would have understood their acting strengths.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Bentley, *JCS*, I, p. 238. As one of only two companies to receive a livery allowance (the King's Men being the other) the absence of this payment is significant.

¹³⁹ On the 24th September 1637 the following notice appeared in the Privy Council Registers: 'Whereas her Ma^{ty}s Players did by their humble Petition shew, that by reason of the Infeccon of the Plague in and neare about London they have for a long time, almost to their vtter vndoing (having noe other Employment nor meanes to maintaine themselves and their families) been restrayned from vsing their quality. And therefore humbly besought their Lo^{ppes} to bee restored to their former Liberty', Bentley, *JCS*, I, p. 240.

¹⁴⁰ Bentley, *JCS*, I, p. 239.

¹⁴¹ Bentley, *Profession*, p. 50.

¹⁴² 'The large bequest [in Bowyer's will] to Richard Perkins suggests that there may have been friendships among the Queen's men of as long standing as those among the King's men', Bentley, *JCS*, II, p. 386. In *The Profession of Player*, Bentley argues that the ranking players of a company were sharers who were paid by a share of the profits for each performance, as differentiated by the weekly wage which was paid to hired men, see pp. 25 and 50.

¹⁴³ Bentley identifies that sharers of London companies often assembled to pass judgment on the first reading of a new composition, *Profession of Player*, p. 39.

If, as is likely, the Cockpit troupe was dissolved around Michaelmas 1636, it can be concluded that they were quickly shipped to Dublin in preparation for the Christmas entertainments and New Year celebrations. Tiffany Sterne argues that three weeks was usually the required amount of time for a company to prepare a new play, and as the epistle of *The Royal Master* states that the play was acted in the Castle before the Lord Deputy on New Year's Day, the actors must have been resident in Ireland in early December at the latest.¹⁴⁴ We can guess that it would take at least a few weeks for the players to settle their affairs in London, find their feet in Dublin and rehearse the play, as well as accounting for the time it would have taken to recruit these players initially, yet it is possible that three months was sufficient for all these preparations and that the players were ready to perform during the Christmas festivities of 1636 - Ogilby's financial pressures would no doubt have hastened proceedings. If the listed locations on the title page of *The Royal Master* can be taken as an indication of the order of the performances, then the play was staged at the new theatre before Dublin Castle. Therefore, having contributed to the December revels, the troupe could have staged *The Royal Master* at the Werburgh Street Theatre, almost as a practice run, before delivering a performance of the first original play staged for an Irish audience before the Dublin court at the Castle on New Year's Day 1637.¹⁴⁵ The performance at Dublin Castle could have been initiated by Wentworth who may have wished to showcase his new acquisitions (Shirley and the London actors), as a

¹⁴⁴ Tiffany Sterne, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 121. Michael Hattaway adds that a new play was added to the repertory on average every three weeks, and that the comparatively small number of company sharers meant that doubling was commonplace, see 'Playhouses and the Role of Drama' in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* (ed.) Michael Hattaway (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2000), pp. 133-147: 144.

¹⁴⁵ Nason agrees that the Castle performance was probably on New Year's Day 1637, see p. 111.

demonstration of his vice-regal power, and of the cultural opportunities he was bringing to Ireland. It is worth noting that the usual London licensing laws were bypassed for *The Royal Master* as both of these performances occurred a year before the play was entered in the Stationer's Register in London, on March 13th 1637/8, and it was not until a few weeks later, on 23rd April 1638, that the play was licensed for performance to the Queen's Men.¹⁴⁶

Musicians

Ogilby's petition of 1661 states that he brought to Ireland 'a Company of Actors and Musicians'.¹⁴⁷ That music was an important component of Dublin entertainment can be seen from an entry in the Calendar of State Papers for Ireland dated 16th September 1635 where Lord Cromwell requested that Lord Conway and Lord Killultagh arrange 'new songs for the winter'.¹⁴⁸ Bentley reports on the activities of London-based groups of musicians, who enjoyed an independent existence in the world of hired men. The musical requirements of *Hannibal and Scipio* at the Cockpit (1635) led Bentley to comment that 'apparently Queen Henrietta's men could rely on their musicians in 1635', and he records Bulstrode Whitelocke's account of the 1633/4 court presentation of Shirley's *The Triumph of Peace*, 'the first chariot carried the Phoenix musicians, Jeffrey Collins, Thomas Hunter, John Levasher, Nicholas Underhill, Edward Wright,

¹⁴⁶ Nason, p. 93; Stevenson, 'Shirley's Publisher's', p. 153; Harbage, p. 138. The Queen's Men were now, effectively, Beeston's Boys.

¹⁴⁷ CSPI 63, vol. 345, no. 50, Public Record Office, London, quoted in Clark's, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 180.

¹⁴⁸ Robert Pentland Mahaffy (ed.), *Calendar of the State Papers relating to Ireland, of the reign of Charles I. 1633-1647* (London: printed for his Majesty's Stationary Office by the Norfolk Chronicle 1901), p. 110.

John Strange, and two boys'.¹⁴⁹ While it is unknown whether all of these men were still employed by the Cockpit when that company was dispersed in 1636, it can be assumed that the majority of them had remained in the same orchestra, and these individuals might well have been the 'Musitians' whom Ogilby employed.

Not only were musicians an important component of the London theatrical experience, but in the 1630s they could be described as an established part of Irish civic life.¹⁵⁰ The Dublin waits (musicians) can be first found on record in 1465 when their primary function was to perform in civic ceremonies and to accompany ceremonial officials: the seventeenth-century practice of playing at night and early morning three times a week maintained a tacit link with their medieval forbearers' duties of watching.¹⁵¹ The duties of the waits altered over time, and in 1561 they accompanied the Lord Deputy, Sir Thomas Radcliffe, to his lodging after a dinner and pageant which had been organised for him by the mayor.¹⁵² By 1636 a company of musicians was so well-established within Dublin that they received a yearly stipend, recorded in the Dublin Assembly Rolls, which was to be augmented from 'Tenn poundes Irish...to Tenn pounds sterling English money yearelie for their liuerie with

¹⁴⁹ Bentley, *Profession*, pp. 74 and 279.

¹⁵⁰ For an account of the city waits, see B. Boydell, 'Dublin city musicians in the late middle ages and Renaissance to 1660', *Dublin Historical Record*, vol. xxxiv (1981), pp. 42-53.

¹⁵¹ Colm Lennon, *The Lords of Dublin in the Age of Reformation* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1989), p. 62. The *OED* defines 'waits' as 'a small body of wind instrumentalists maintained by a city or town at the public charge...They played for the daily diversion of councillors, on ceremonial and festive occasions, and as a town or city band they entertained the citizens, perambulating the streets: http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50279963?query_type=word&queryword=wait&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=S0Oq-QLQdg5-6990&hilite=50279963 [accessed 7th April 2008].

¹⁵² Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, pp. 19-20.

Condicion that they keepe theire Constant waytes three times a weeke from Michaemas vntill Shrouetide yeaerlie, and to keepe always a good singinge boy from time to time'.¹⁵³ Surely it would have been easy for Ogilby to employ these professional men, but it is possible that instead he decided to supersede any claims they had to dramatic employment in Dublin by importing his own musicians. Perhaps he felt a tie of loyalty to the now jobless musicians of the Cockpit, or he might have wanted to employ men whose work he trusted and who had direct experience of working in a theatre to help ensure the success of his enterprise. But the most compelling reason for Ogilby's import of his own musicians was the dubious reputation which Irish musicians held amongst the members of the Pale. Throughout the sixteenth century Irish musicians were regarded with deep suspicion by the Old English authorities who feared that their presence would lead to disorder amongst 'thEnglyshe men', or the even worse scenario that they would 'provokeith the people to an Iryshe order'.¹⁵⁴

Decrees passed against minstrels and bards can be found from 1534, and in 1596 the Bishop of Cork articulated their greatest threat in a letter to the Lord Chamberlain:

bards, & harpers which runne about the countrey not onely eating the laboures of the poore, but bring newes & intelligenses to the rebels against her

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 330.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 170.

Maiestie, and brute false tales amongst her subjectes
which breedeth great mischief.¹⁵⁵

In addition to the experience which the men from the Cockpit had for participating in theatrical performances, the fear that Irish musicians and bards could also be transporters of intelligence must have been reason enough for Ogilby to seek his musicians from elsewhere.

Audience

A central consideration for the success of the Werburgh Street Theatre was the matter of audience, a further discussion of which occurs in Chapter Four of this thesis. The population of Dublin was much less than that of London, but as Werburgh Street would be the only theatre operating in the city, the question of numbers should not have posed too much of a concern. As the building had been constructed along the lines of a private theatre, it is logical to assume that Ogilby also intended that it should be managed in this way, thereby facilitating Shirley's task as the playwright had little experience of catering to the tastes of the audiences who filled the public theatres of London. In London, the private theatres staged a new play each week to a fairly exclusive audience which included the nobility, professionals (such as lawyers) and even some high-class prostitutes.¹⁵⁶ Although the citizens of Dublin were unaccustomed to the social convention of regularly attending the theatre, a custom now well-established in London, they were familiar with having access to regular, if sporadic, dramatic entertainment. From the early sixteenth century fixed stages had

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 169-70 and 181.

¹⁵⁶ Lucow, p. 31.

been erected on Hoggen Green - the public recreational area to the east of the city walls - for the performance of dramas, and from the same period musicians and performers were frequently employed by households of the ruling elite: the Lord Deputies Radcliffe and Sidney had supported performers, and Lord Deputy Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy had patronised theatricals at Dublin Castle.¹⁵⁷ Fletcher suggests that while such activities meant that dramatic pastimes were entrenched in Ireland, the Werburgh Street Theatre allowed Dublin society a taste of English aristocratic life and its values.¹⁵⁸

The Werburgh Street Theatre also attracted a section of its audience from an institution which disapproved of its members attending. Students from Trinity College were fascinated by the entertainment being offered, and their presence caused friction between those involved with the theatre and the university authorities. Andrew Carpenter identifies that many young men from Gaelic or Old English families went abroad for their education, so the majority of students at Trinity College Dublin would have come from Protestant New English backgrounds.¹⁵⁹ Academic student attendance at the theatre is suggested by a conciliar act of state, which was proposed by Wentworth and effected on 9th February 1636, proclaiming that students, fellows,

¹⁵⁷ Hoggen Green was in the region of Trinity College's present College Green, Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, pp. 19 and 21.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁵⁹ Andrew Carpenter, 'Literature in Print 1550-1800', in Raymond Gillespie and Andrew Hadfield (eds), *The Irish Book in English 1550-1800*, The Oxford History of the Irish Book, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), III, pp. 301-318: 305; see also Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 406. The university had a tradition of Puritan influence, which Laud and Wentworth were keen to adjust, see Knowler, II, p. 36; Kearney, pp. 106 and 114; Ford, pp. 137-141.

and scholars of Trinity College were prohibited from entering taverns, alehouses or inns, and gave the university the authority to search such premises, and to remove offenders: the purpose of this decree was to ensure the moral rectitude of the university, so it is likely, given the evidence above concerning how citizens spent their leisure time, that the university considered attendance at the theatre along similar lines to visiting public houses.¹⁶⁰ Opposition from the university is surprising given their own propensity towards the performing arts: in December 1629 the Trinity College General Register records, ‘the senior sophisters exercise dominion over the junior sort this Christmas. A comedy acted by them and a play by ye Batchellours’, and again in December in 1630 the Register announces ‘it is condescended and agreed that the Batchellours should act their play but not in the Colledge’.¹⁶¹ These theatricals were only grudgingly permitted by the provost, Dr Robert Ussher, who was only persuaded to allow the performance of comedies by his students thanks to the pressure brought to bear upon him by Sir Adam Loftus and Sir Richard Boyle, the Earl of Cork – the two Lord Justices.¹⁶² Robert Ussher had been very unpopular and gave up the Provostship in August 1634, to be replaced by the Arminian William Chappell, who received strong support from both Archbishop Laud and Wentworth - Chappell held this position until June 1640.¹⁶³ The opposition of Trinity College to the theatre is a little odd given that Chappell owed his position to Wentworth, but his feeling that the

¹⁶⁰ Crawford, pp. 383-4. G. B. O’Connor, misinterprets the evidence, and concludes that the university authorities had the power to forcibly remove their students from the theatre, as well as from taverns, *Stuart Ireland: Catholic and Puritan* (Dublin: Hanna & Neale, 1910), pp. 163-4.

¹⁶¹ Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, pp. 324 and 326.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 326, and fn. 460, p. 551.

¹⁶³ Alan Ford, ‘Ussher, Robert (c.1592–1642)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28035>, [accessed 11th April 2008]. Alan Ford, ‘Chappell, William (1582–1649)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5129>, [accessed 11th April 2008].

theatre provided an unwelcome distraction for his students was clearly great enough to overcome this concern.¹⁶⁴

While the citizens of the Pale, soldiers, lawyers and students made welcome additions, the primary target for the audience of the Werburgh Street Theatre was the nobility.¹⁶⁵ The ruling class of Dublin might be supposed to have been better versed in the attractions of theatre than their lesser born counterparts, as not only were a proportion of them relatively recent arrivals from England, but they had the resources to fund dramatic entertainment themselves. The documents of Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork are particularly revealing about private theatrical practices. On 29th January 1631/2 his accounts record a payment of 40^s ‘to the actors of the pley at the Castle’: the location at which this play was performed means that it must have been commissioned by Cork, and possibly also Sir Adam Loftus, as a Lord Deputy had yet to be appointed at this time.¹⁶⁶ Wentworth’s interest in drama is exposed by Cork’s diary which notes that on 6th January 1634/5 that he was invited by the Lord Deputy, Wentworth, to dine and sup where he ‘saw a play acted by his lordships gentle<men>’, and other entry dated January 1635/6 records:

¹⁶⁴ There is evidence to suggest that the nature of dramatic performances conducted by universities greatly differed to that which was provided as public entertainment: on 4th September 1636 Garrard records that the performance he witnessed at Christchurch was ‘fitter for scholars than a court’, *CSPD*, 1636-37, X, p. 113.

¹⁶⁵ See Christopher Morash, ‘Theatre and Print, 1150-1800’ in *The Irish Book in English*, III, pp. 319-344: 323.

¹⁶⁶ The financial record can be found in Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, p. 418. For further evidence of Cork’s interest in drama see Charlotte Fell Smith, *Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick (1625-1678): Her Family and Friends* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1901), p. 20.

the L. deputy invited me and my ffamuly to dynner,
where my self, Dongarvan, & the L. digby onely cam,
and dyned...we saw a tragedie in the parliament hous,
& which was tragicall, for we had no suppers.¹⁶⁷

Evidently, the ruling class of the Pale had been primed by Wentworth to support his forthcoming theatrical enterprise, and these educated individuals were exactly the clientele whom Shirley was used to entertaining. Ira Clark categorizes the English Caroline audience of the private theatres as comprising individuals who were either themselves skilled in the art of rhetoric, or who were able to appreciate the expert application of rhetoric, and Clark states that many of them had personal experience of theatre.¹⁶⁸ As most of the nobility of the Pale had received a similar education to their English equivalents, we can conclude that they were intellectually equipped to appreciate Shirley's work, and that they were considered to form the basis of the Werburgh Street Theatre's audience.

Yet despite the hope that the Werburgh Street Theatre would be a financial and cultural success, Hitchcock's assertion that 'almost all that can be ascertained is, that they played with good success, and were much followed' is questionable given the evidence provided by the prologues which Shirley composed during his residency.¹⁶⁹ Through his Irish plays from *The Royal Master* to *St. Patrick for Ireland* can be seen Shirley's increasingly desperate attempts to lure an audience to the theatre: the stage effects become more spectacular but even the two plays designed specifically to attract

¹⁶⁷ Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, p. 412. Lismore papers, III, p. 146-7.

¹⁶⁸ Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, p. 10.

¹⁶⁹ Hitchcock, I, p. 12.

an Irish audience (*The Doubtful Heir* which contains an ‘Irish’ subplot, and *St. Patrick for Ireland*) were not enough to draw the crowds, and the audience was mainly drawn from the small English population of Dublin.¹⁷⁰ Shirley’s frustration at the size of the audiences at the Werburgh Street Theatre is evident in the prologues which he writes to other plays being performed. His introduction to Middleton’s *No Wit to a Woman*’s reads:

We are sorry, gentlemen, that with all pains
To invite you hither, the wide house contains
No more...
When he [Shirley] did live in England, he heard say,
That here were men lov’d wit, and a good play...
This he believ’d, and though they are not found
Above, who knows what may be underground?
But they do not appear.¹⁷¹

Modern scholars are left to wonder what were the exact nature of the ‘pains’ that were undertaken to induce attendance, but what is obvious is Shirley’s disappointment that such efforts were unsuccessful. His suggestion that the men who would appreciate his work are now dead is indicative of his regret that the theatre is not flourishing as much as he could wish, but the ‘Prologue to Another of Master Fletcher’s plays there’ demonstrates an almost vindictive bitterness:

Are there no more? and can this Muses’ sphere
At such a time as this, so thin appear?...

¹⁷⁰ Albert Wertheim, ‘The presentation of James Shirley’s *St. Patrick for Ireland* at the First Irish Playhouse’ *N&Q* 14 (1967): 213; Wedgwood, *First Earl of Strafford*, p. 227. Lucow states that Shirley lets it be known that he has adapted his writing to suit the debased tastes of his audience, p. 99.

¹⁷¹ Gifford, VI, pp. 491-492. Clark argues that as the 1657 printed text of this play makes an explicit reference to the year 1638 (III.1.288-9) that this is the year which Shirley adapted the play for the Irish stage, as Middleton had died in 1627, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 33.

Were there a pageant now on foot, or some
Strange monster from Peru or Afric come
Men would throng to it; any drum will bring
(That beats a bloodless prize or cudgelling)
Spectators hither; nay the bears invite audience.¹⁷²

It seems extraordinary that Shirley would write in a tone that could potentially alienate the audience who had attended the performance, but a skilful delivery of this speech could have ensured that those present were made to feel part of an elite group who turned away from the coarser entertainments of bear-baiting and cudgel-playing to enjoy the elevated refinement of a play. What is clear from these examples is that Shirley was disillusioned by the reception his work received in Dublin, and that he was not hesitant about showing his discontent.

Setting up the theatre in Werburgh Street was a complex procedure. After overcoming any difficulties encountered during the process of construction, the formidable problem of recouping the enormous expenditure loomed large.¹⁷³ The theatre had to be staffed with a playwright, experienced actors and musicians and the logistics of recruiting these, as well as allowing time for rehearsal before the inaugural performance, had to be negotiated. Then there was the question of establishing a regular audience from a population unused to such entertainment, and the theatre also

¹⁷² Gifford, VI, p. 493; James Shirley, *Poems &c.* (London: printed for Humphrey Moseley, and are to be sold at his shop at the signe of the *Princes Armes* in *St. Pauls Church-yard*, 1646), Wing (2nd ed.) S3481, pp. 42-3.

¹⁷³ Although managing the profits would have become easier after 6th April 1637 when the Irish authorities released 'A Proclamation concerning the abolishing of the Title or name of Irish Money, or Harpes, and reducing all Accompts, Receipts, and Payments to be made Sterling and English Money', Robert Steele, *Bibliotheca Lindesina: A Bibliography of Royal Proclamations of the Tudor and Stuart Sovereigns*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), II, p. 36.

had to overcome the disapproval of both the church and university authorities. With the benefit of hindsight it seems that the odds were always stacked against turning the Werburgh Street Theatre into a profitable enterprise. Yet with the arrival of Shirley, the actors and musicians, the future of the theatre looked positive in 1636, and those involved with the Werburgh Street Theatre must have eagerly anticipated the first performance of the first play to be written for the Irish stage – James Shirley’s *The Royal Master*.

Chapter Two: The para-text and printing of *The Royal Master*

The composition of the two simultaneously printed editions of *The Royal Master* is intriguing. They are adorned with a ‘gorgeous gallery of commendatory verses’, and the obvious care with which these quartos were compiled makes the para-text of *The Royal Master* worthy of analysis.¹⁷⁴ The dedication and the epilogue provide a unique insight into the under-explored area of the web of patronage in early modern Ireland, which is revealed to be highly complex when compared to the established practices of London. Circumstances surrounding the publication of the text fundamentally challenge current knowledge of the relationship between playwright and printer/s. Yet it is the sheer number of commendatory verses - ten in all - which make these two editions fascinating. As a detailed study of these verses, their authors, and the purpose behind their composition has not previously been undertaken, these considerations form the basis of the following discussion.

When the play was printed

The previous chapter concluded that the play was first performed at Dublin Castle on New Year's Day in January 1636/7: it was then performed at the Werburgh Street Theatre in early 1636/7.¹⁷⁵ However, the play was not entered into the London

¹⁷⁴ Stevenson, ‘Shirley’s Publishers’, p. 160.

¹⁷⁵ This argument is supported by Harbage who dates *The Royal Master* to 1637, see *Annals of English Drama*, p. 138. Wentworth was in Dublin for the winter festivities for these consecutive years, which does not allow either year to be ruled out when dating these performances. For evidence of Wentworth’s presence in Dublin for these times see Knowler, II, pp. 41-4, 55-60, 139-40, 143-4.

Stationers' Register until 13th March 1637/8, and not licensed for performance in London until 23rd April 1638: Bentley states that this unknown London staging of *The Royal Master* followed the Irish performance, as the publishers had entered the manuscript in the Stationers' Register before Sir Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels, licensed its performance.¹⁷⁶ The two printed editions of *The Royal Master* appeared in 1638, presumably sometime after March, with differing imprints, showing different publishers and selling locations.

Printing in Ireland

According to Vincent Kinane, there was only one Irish press in operation at any given time until the 1640s, and in the 1630s this press was controlled by the London Stationers' Company.¹⁷⁷ While there is evidence that there were at least two printing presses in operation in Ireland as early as the sixteenth century, factors such as the importation of paper were decisive with regards to the quantity of printed texts which were produced.¹⁷⁸ P. J. Lennox notes that an Irish translation of the Book of Common

¹⁷⁶ Bentley, *JCS*, V, p. 1140; Harbage, *Annals of English Drama*, p. 138.

¹⁷⁷ Vincent Kinane, *A Brief History of Printing and Publishing in Ireland* (Dublin: National Print Museum, 2002), p. 7. Evidence for a 'King's Printed' in Ireland can be traced back to 1550 when the Privy Council paid Humphrey Powell £20 to set up a printing press in Dublin for the purpose of publishing the Common Book of Prayer. Powell's Dublin address is given as 'in the great toure by the Crane', see John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie (eds), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, IV (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 703.

¹⁷⁸ William K. Sessions's research reveals that the first extant Irish printer's imprint outside of Dublin reads 'Emprinted at VVaterford the 7 daye of Nouembre 1555', the title of this work being *The acquital or purgation of the mooste catholycke Christen Prince Edward the VI*, for further information see *The First Printers of Waterford: Cork and Kilkenny Pre-1700* (York: Ebor Press, 1990), p. 1. Another printing press is identified by P. J. Lennox who claims that it was generally accepted that the first Irish press was established in Dublin in 1550, see 'Early Printing in Ireland', *Bibliographical Tracts 1908-10*, vol. XV (Washington D. C.: reprinted from the *Catholic University Bulletin*, 1909), p. 234. The earliest record of paper-making in Ireland dates from 1690 when Nicolas Duplin obtained a warrant for a patent from the Privy Council 'for the sole making of all sorts of white writing and printing paper in Ireland by his process for a period of 14 years', so it can be safely assumed that paper had to be imported until this

Prayer was published in 1608, with reprints of it in English, produced in Dublin, in 1621 and 1637.¹⁷⁹ If the Dublin press were small, and already engaged in printing the Book of Common Prayer, then London really was Shirley's only viable option for printing his work at this time.¹⁸⁰

Printing *The Royal Master*

Two editions of *The Royal Master* were produced by Shirley's publishers in 1638, and their title pages read as follows:

date, see Desmond J. Clarke, *Paper Making in Ireland* (Dublin: The Library Association of Ireland, 1954), p. 3.

¹⁷⁹ Lennox, 'Early Printing in Ireland', p. 235.

¹⁸⁰ James Kelly argues that the most striking feature of Wentworth's time in Ireland was the limited extent to which he used print to promote his policies, see 'Political Publishing, 1550-1700', in Raymond Gillespie and Andrew Hadfield (eds), *The Irish Book in English 1550-1800*, The Oxford History of the Irish Book, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), III, pp. 194-214: 197-8. For a concise summary of print culture in Ireland throughout the seventeenth century see Kerrigan, pp. 75-77.

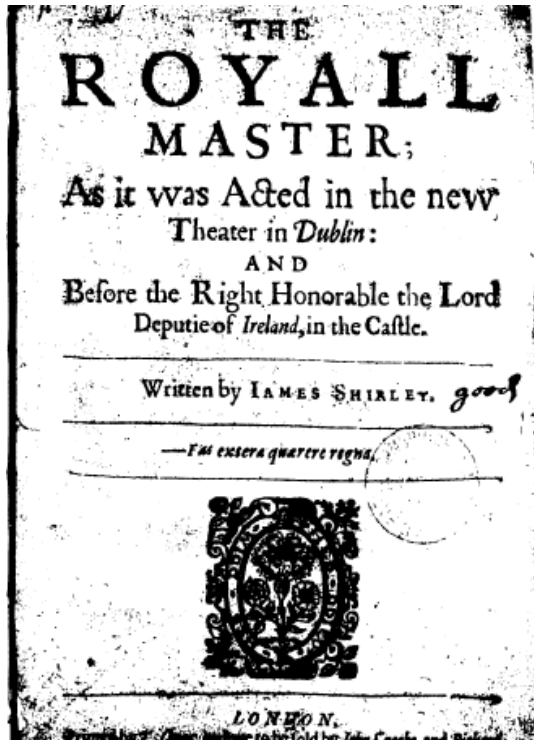


Figure 1¹⁸¹

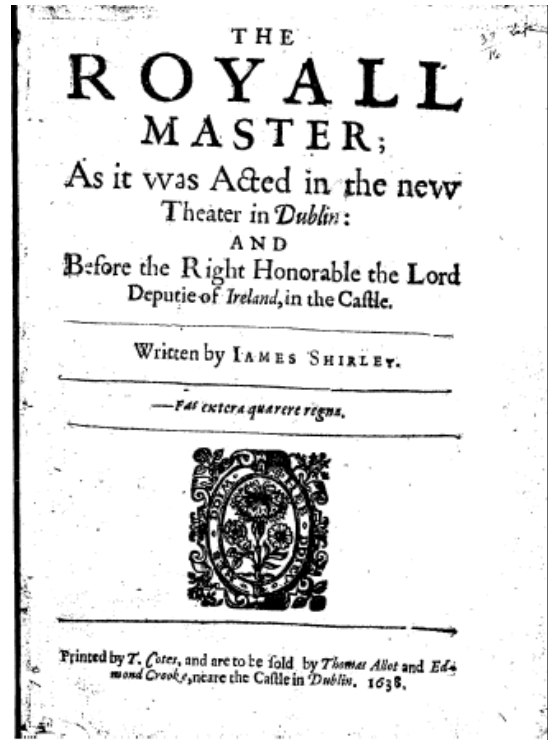


Figure 2¹⁸²

The locations of the distribution of these editions, and the names given on the title pages, offer a fascinating insight into a new phenomenon of printing which began with James Shirley and his publishers. With them the era of British intra-national branches of book-selling shops began.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ *The Royal Master*, sig. A1^r. The last line of the image reads: ‘Printed by T. Cotes, and are to be sold by Iohn Crooke, and Richard Serger, at the Grayhound in Pauls Church-yard, 1638’, STC (2nd ed.) / 22454. All quotations from *The Royal Master* are taken from the 1638 London edition unless otherwise stated: hereafter to be cited as *TRM*.

¹⁸² James Shirley, *The Royal Master* (London: Printed by T. Cotes, 1638), sig. A1^r, STC (2nd ed.) / 22454a.

¹⁸³ Stevenson, ‘Publishers’, p. 154.

Stevenson provides a comprehensive examination of the men who published Shirley's work, their relationships with each other, and with Shirley. Throughout his career, Shirley had sold his work to a number of stationers: John Grove at Furnival's Inn Gate, Holborn; Francis Constable of Paul's Churchyard, and William Cooke.¹⁸⁴ In 1637 Andrew Croke's name appears alongside that of William Cooke, and this is the first time that Croke published anything by Shirley. The collaboration between Cooke and Croke lasted until 1640, and produced ten Shirley plays by joint venture, one by Chapman and two by Fletcher, both of which may have been published with corrections by Shirley.¹⁸⁵ During this time, Cooke alone published two plays by Shirley (*The Maid's Revenge* and *The Humorous Courtier*) while, in association with John Croke and Richard Sergier, Andrew Croke produced the two editions of *The Royal Master*.¹⁸⁶ Stevenson argues that the brief duration of this partnership suggests that an agreement had been made solely to cover the publication of Shirley's plays during the time he was in Ireland.¹⁸⁷

There may have been an additional reason which prompted Shirley to publish plays rapidly in London during his Irish years: on 10th June 1637 the Lord

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 140-42. John Grove took up his freedom in the Company of Stationers 17th January 1619/20: he dealt in law-books, plays and sermons. On 25th September 1637 he transferred his rights to Shakerly Marmion's *Holland's Leaguer*, James Shirley's *The Wedding* and *The Grateful Servant*, and *The Tragedy of Hoffman* to William Leake, see R. B. McKerrow (ed.), *A Dictionary of printers and booksellers in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of foreign printers of English books 1557-1640* (London: Blades, East & Blades, 1910), p. 118.

¹⁸⁵ In 1637 *Hide Park*, *The Lady of Pleasure*, *The Young Admiral*, *The Example*, *The Gamester*; in 1638 *Dukes Mistress*; in 1639 *The Ball*, Chapman's *Chabot*, Fletcher's *Wit without Money*; in 1640 *Loves Crueltie*, *The Coronation*, *The Opportunitie*, Fletcher's *Night-Walker*, Stevenson, 'Publishers', p. 144.

¹⁸⁶ In 1639 *The Maid's Revenge* and in 1640 *The Humorous Courtier*, *ibid.*, p. 144.

¹⁸⁷ Stevenson, 'Publishers', pp. 142-43.

Chamberlain ordered that the Stationers' Company was forbidden to print any play which lacked 'some certificate in writing under the hands of...Christopher Beeston for the King's and Queen's Young Company', as some London printers had been publishing plays which had been stolen.¹⁸⁸ If knowledge of this order was circulating before the decree came to pass, then it is possible that anyone in possession of a play would hasten its publication through the press.

The Crooke family comprised three brothers; Andrew, John and Edmond. Although Andrew Crooke's name does not appear on either imprint, *The Royal Master* was entered into the Stationers' Register on 13th March 1637/8 to Andrew Crooke, John Crooke and Richard Sergier, and it seems that Andrew, as the eldest, was senior in *The Royal Master* operation.¹⁸⁹ He was an ambitious man, and as early as 1634 had made a connection with a bookshop in Dublin, an association which can be deduced from the title-page of *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical, treated upon by the Archbishops and Bishops, And the rest of the Clergy of Ireland; and Agreed upon by the KING'S Majesties Licence In their Synod Begun and Holden at Dublin, Anno Domini 1634*, this was printed by Andrew Crooke and Samuel Helsham, and copies were to be sold by Helsham at the Colledge-Arms in Castle Street, Dublin.¹⁹⁰ Andrew Crooke's Irish connections outlasted William Cooke's, as evidenced by the 1640 imprint of *The Opportunitie*:

¹⁸⁸ Bentley, *Profession of Player*, p. 163.

¹⁸⁹ Stevenson, 'Publishers', p. 144.

¹⁹⁰ Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, p. 134, STC (2nd ed.) / 14265.

Printed for *Andrew Crooke*, and are to be sold at the
Castle Gate in *Dublin*. 1640.¹⁹¹

It could have been the potential profits of the Irish market which led to Andrew Crooke deciding to undertake the publication of *The Royal Master* without Cooke, but, in order to do so, Crooke needed to collaborate with a printer. Thomas Cotes was a London printer located at the Barbican, Aldersgate Street between 1620 and 1641.¹⁹² W. W. Greg notes that he was responsible for printing most of the works in the Crooke/Cooke collaboration, and he also printed both editions of *The Royal Master*.¹⁹³ The slightly lowered ‘S’ in the word ‘MASTER’ on the title-page and the slightly miss-set ‘Y’ of ‘JAMES SHIRLEY’ on the same page, as well as the misspelling of ‘THE FISRT ACT’ in both editions, and identical errors throughout the text, such as the spelling of ‘pretty’, indicates that they were most likely printed from the same formes, with only the minor adjustment of the imprint on the title-pages being made.¹⁹⁴ Financially, it would have been a much less risky venture for Andrew Crooke to send quartos from London to Ireland for sale there, rather than setting up a press in Dublin. Greg’s scrutiny of the texts led to his deduction that the London variant was printed first: there is a thick lead below the lowest rule of the Dublin variant where ‘London’ was removed, also, the latter half of the first line was reset in

¹⁹¹ Stevenson, ‘Publishers’, p. 146.

¹⁹² Henry R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the booksellers and printers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1641 to 1667* (London: Blades, East & Blades, 1907), p. 53.

¹⁹³ W. W. Greg, *A List of Masques, Pageants, &c. supplementary to A List of English Plays* (London: Blades, East & Blades, 1902), p. xxxvii.

¹⁹⁴ *TRM*, sig. D3^v; Gifford corrects these mistakes, IV, p. 125.

the Dublin variant, and is therefore more widely and irregularly spaced than the first half of the line, which was left standing.¹⁹⁵

Andrew deputised his brother, John, and their associate, Richard Sergier, to be in charge of selling the London edition, while his youngest brother, Edmond, and Thomas Allot were to control the Dublin sales.¹⁹⁶ Richard Sergier took up his freedom in the Company of Stationers on 1st March 1636/7, and was a bookseller in London by 1638. He published several plays and occasionally worked in partnership with two of the brothers, Andrew and John Crooke.¹⁹⁷ M. Pollard adds that in 1630 he was bound to Edmund Weaver, who had ‘connections with London’s Irish trade’, and it is possible that Sergier later made use of his old master’s contacts.¹⁹⁸ Thomas Allot ‘evidently had Irish connections as his “next of kin” lived in Dublin’.¹⁹⁹ He took up his freedom on 4th April 1636, and was a bookseller based at The Greyhound in St. Paul’s Churchyard, before creating a partnership with John Crooke, Richard Sergier and Edmond Crooke.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ W. W. Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), II, pp. 676-7.

¹⁹⁶ The only other joint publication by Andrew Crooke and Thomas Allot which I have located is, John Smith, *Essex dove presenting the world with a few of her olive branches, or, A taste of the workes of that reverend, faithfull, iudicious, learned, and holy minister of the Word, Mr. John Smith, later preacher of the Word at Clavering in Essex, and sometime fellow of S. Iohns Colledge in Oxford delivered in three severall treatises, viz., 1. His grounds of religion, 2. An exposition on the Lords prayer, 3. A treatise of repentance* (Printed by George Miller and are to be sould by Andrew Crooke, Thomas Allot, 1629; repr. 1633 and 1637), STC (2nd ed.) / 22798.

¹⁹⁷ McKerrow, p. 240.

¹⁹⁸ M. Pollard, *A Dictionary of members of the Dublin Book Trade 1550-1800: based on the records of the Guild of St Luke the Evangelist, Dublin* (London: Bibliographical Society, 2000), p. 513.

¹⁹⁹ Pollard, p. 7.

²⁰⁰ McKerrow, p. 8.

The Irish connections of both Sergier and Allot would have proved invaluable in promoting the printed edition of the first play performed on the new Irish stage. From the years in which they gained their freedom, it can be deduced that Sergier and Allot were very junior to Andrew Crooke, who had gained his own freedom 26th March 1629.²⁰¹ Edmond died in 1638, but the partnership of John Crooke, Richard Sergier and Thomas Allott survived in Dublin, though their publications, primarily Shirley's plays, continued to be printed in London.²⁰² The partnership was formed in 1637 and it is probable that Edmond Crooke and Thomas Allot ran the shop, with John Crooke and Richard Sergier making only business trips before settling in Dublin around 1639.²⁰³ If seniority can be deduced from whose name first appears on an imprint, then it was John Crooke who was the major partner, and the success of the Dublin shop eventually resulted in him petitioning for, and being granted, the office of printer-general in Ireland in July 1660.²⁰⁴ The significance of these alliances is that *The Royal Master* was probably the first printed edition to have been prepared for simultaneous sale in London and Dublin, with appropriate imprints.²⁰⁵

Shirley's return visits to London

Theatre-going, according to Andrew Gurr, became a respectable pastime under Charles's rule, and it was during this period that plays became valued as literary

²⁰¹ Mark Goldie, 'Crooke, Andrew (c.1605–1674)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/67206> [accessed 28th July 2006].

²⁰² Pollard, p. 132.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 132. See Stevenson, 'Publishers', for a discussion of why the Dublin shop was continued, and its eventual decline in 1641, p. 158.

²⁰⁴ See Goldie; McKerrow, p. 82; Plomer, p. 57.

²⁰⁵ Stevenson, 'Publishers', p. 154.

commodities, with over half the male population being literate.²⁰⁶ The potential profit which was available from this increased interest in reading plays explains why Shirley made special journeys to London to ensure the publication of his work. It is likely that Shirley made two trips to London during his stay in Ireland, the first in the spring of 1637 and the second at the same time the following year, coinciding with the Lenten closure of theatres, which the Werburgh Street Theatre might also have observed: presumably Shirley's official appointment made it easier for him to obtain safe passage to England.²⁰⁷ Having arrived in Dublin only in November 1636, his first London trip in the spring of 1637 was probably required to sort out his affairs for residence in Dublin after he had visited the theatre and decided to make a longer stay. It will probably never be known if Shirley intended to move permanently to Ireland, or if he took his wife and children with him, but it would be injudicious to assume that in 1637 he intended to return permanently to England, as he eventually did in 1640.²⁰⁸ Shirley's second trip to England, in the spring of 1638, to oversee the printing of his plays (discussed in more detail below), explains why *The Royal Master* was printed at this time.

²⁰⁶ Gurr, *Shakespearean Playing Companies*, p. 138. David Wootton (ed.), *Divine Right and Democracy: An Anthology of Political Writing in Stuart England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1986) states that over two thirds of adult men were illiterate in 1642, p. 27. Lawrence Stone, 'The Educational Revolution in England, 1560-1640', *Past and Present*, 28 (July, 1964), p. 68, quoted by Ann Jennalie Cook, p. 73.

²⁰⁷ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 271.

²⁰⁸ Shirley had married Elizabeth Gilmet on 1st June 1618. They had a daughter baptized on 27th December 1619, Mathias's birth is recorded as 26th February 1625, and James was born between 1628 and 1633. It can, therefore, be assumed that in 1636 Shirley had three surviving children (the deaths of two daughters and one son are also recorded), see Ira Clark, 'Shirley, James (*bap.* 1596, *d.* 1666)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25427> [accessed 25th July 2006].

The chronology of *The Royal Master*

The composition of the printed edition of *The Royal Master* is then important for an understanding of Shirley's movements between Dublin and London. After the text of the play appears:

THE EPILOGUE.
As it vvas spoken to the Lord Deputie
on Newyeares-day at night, by way
of vote, congratulating the
New yeare.²⁰⁹

This clearly refers to the performance given at Dublin Castle 1636/7, and supports the play's projected chronology. However, at the beginning of the quarto is a dedication,

To the Right Honorable,
GEORGE Earle of *Kildare*, Baron
of *Opbalie*, and Premier Earle
of the Kingdome of *Ireland*.²¹⁰

This raises questions about the date of the dedication's composition. If Shirley's second trip to London, in 1638, was for the purpose of printing his plays, then the line in the dedicatory letter, 'my Affaires in *England* hasten my departure, and prevent my personall attendance' refers to this journey.²¹¹ It could then be concluded that Shirley wrote the dedication to Kildare so that it could be included in the printed edition.

However, this dedication also includes the phrase:

²⁰⁹ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. L3^r; Gifford, IV, p. 187.

²¹⁰ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. A2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 103.

²¹¹ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. A2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 103.

his Poeme;
tis new, and never yet personated, but expected with the first, when the English Stage shall bee recovered from her long silence and her now languishing scene changed into a welcome returne of wits and men.²¹²

That Shirley states the play to have been ‘never yet personated’ indicates that this dedication was actually written in 1636/7, *before* the play was staged at either Werburgh Street Theatre or Dublin Castle. The London plague of 1636-7 allowed the theatres to reopen in October 1637, so why would Shirley be referring to their silence in the spring of 1638? There are two possible answers. First that Shirley wrote the dedication and sent it, with a manuscript copy of the play, to Kildare as he was unable to deliver it in person. Secondly, that Shirley had originally intended to publish this play in 1637, but due to unforeseen circumstances this had to be delayed until his second visit to London in 1638. By 1638 the bookshop in Dublin had been established, and could transmit manuscripts to London on Shirley’s behalf, via the connection between the Crooke brothers and their associates, rendering superfluous further London trips for the same purpose.²¹³ As the title-page of Henry Burnell’s *Landgartha* (1641) states that it was ‘presented at the new theater in Dublin’, the Werburgh Street Theatre could certainly have been termed ‘nevv’ when it was a year old, as described on the title-page of *The Royal Master*.²¹⁴

²¹² Shirley, *TRM*, sig. A2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 103.

²¹³ Stevenson, ‘Publishers’, p. 146.

²¹⁴ Henry Burnell, *Landgartha, a tragie-comedy as it was presented in the new theatre in Dublin with good applause, being an ancient story* (Dublin, 1641), Wing / B5751. *TRM*, A1^r; Gifford, IV, p. 102.

To maximise the sale of published plays it was important to advertise, and Evelyn May Albright describes the customary habit of promoting a printed text by referring to its recent performances, as people who had attended the plays were also relied upon to be readers of the text.²¹⁵ *The Royal Master* does indeed draw the readers' attention to its performance history, but would the people who saw the play in Dublin be enthusiastic about purchasing a play which they had seen over a year earlier? Perhaps, then, this sales device was largely aimed at the reliable London audiences, who attended the Queen's Men's performance of the play after it was licensed in 1638.²¹⁶

The compilation of *The Royal Master*

The arrangement of material in *The Royal Master's* quartos is interesting, and as follows:

Dedication to Kildare
Commendatory poems by: James Mervyn
Fra. Butler
Drv. Cooper
Ric. Belling
T. I.
W. Markham
W. Smith
John Ogleby
John Iacson
James Mervyn

The play
The Epilogue spoken to the Lord Deputy

²¹⁵ Evelyn May Albright, *Dramatic Publication in England, 1580-1640: A study of conditions affecting content and form of drama* (New York: Gordian Press, 1971), p. 285.

²¹⁶ Details of this London performance are unknown, but it must have occurred after the Dublin performance, as Sir Henry's licence for the play was granted after the publishers had entered the manuscript in the Stationers' Register, see Bentley, *JCS*, V, p. 1140.

Within the components of the para-text there are clues as to when each part was written. However, as with establishing a chronology of the performance history of this play, determining a timeline of the composition of the para-text is extremely difficult. It cannot even be assumed that all of the verses were written at a similar time: it is possible that some were composed immediately after the Dublin performances in 1636/7, while it is certain that others were written later.

Despite Wilson's assertion that Shirley was under the Earl of Kildare's patronage during his time in Ireland, it is most likely that Wentworth was the primary patron of all the men who comprised Ogilby's acting company, as he had been integral in founding the Werburgh Street Theatre.²¹⁷ It should then be questioned why Shirley chose to dedicate his first Irish play to George Fitzgerald, sixteenth Earl of Kildare. Jane Ohlmeyer suggests (without providing any supporting evidence) that, despite enmity between himself and Wentworth, the 'Fairy Earl' 'befriended' Shirley, and that this was the reason for *The Royal Master's* dedication: Schipper argues that Shirley may have first become acquainted with Kildare at St. Albans, where Shirley had been a schoolmaster.²¹⁸ All claims of friendship aside, an appeal to Kildare for patronage was a canny choice for the dedication as he was from one of the oldest and most

²¹⁷ Wilson, II, pp. 693-94.

²¹⁸ Jane Ohlmeyer, 'Fitzgerald, George, sixteenth earl of Kildare (*bap.* 1612, *d.* 1660)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9550> [accessed 3rd Aug. 2006]; Forsythe, p. 27; Jakob Schipper, *sein Leben und seine Werke: nebst einer Unbersetzung seines Dramas 'The Royal Master'* (W. Braumüller: Wien und Leipzig, 1911), p. 189, as quoted by John P. Turner, *A Critical Edition of James Shirley's St. Patrick for Ireland* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1979), p. 34, f. n., 40.

distinguished Irish families, and was regarded as being the first peer of Ireland, so an appeal to him for patronage was also a bid to gain the support of the established Old English nobility.²¹⁹

Elite Irish society in the early seventeenth century was composed of three main groups which are described in a letter from the Nuncio of Flanders dated 21st February 1626. It is worth quoting in full:

In the Kingdom of Ireland there are two or three kinds of Irishmen, of whom some are commonly called Old and mere Irish, others Mixed, others, lastly, are justly called Anglo-Irish. The Old are those who are sprung from the Spaniards who settled in the island of Ireland 3,000 years ago; Mixed are those who are descended from the English who invaded the said Kingdom 500 years ago and the Old Irish that intermarried with them, from whom are sprung very many of the noble houses of Ireland, as those of the Geraldines, Burghs, Butlers, Barrys and several others. Those, lastly, are called Anglo-Irish who at the said time, and continuously thereafter to the present, came into the Kingdom by order or command of the Kings of England, and separated themselves from the Old Irish that they desired neither treaty of firm friendship, nor matrimony with them, and disdained to share with them in laws or customs or language, but in all the matters aforesaid preferred still to be alien from them and accordant with the English in manner of living, laws and language.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Thomas Carte (ed.), *The Life of James Duke of Ormond; containing an account of the most remarkable affairs of his time, and particularly of Ireland under his government*, 6 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1851), I, p. 132. Kearney notes that in 1530 the administration of Dublin was largely dependent upon the support of the Earl of Kildare, pp. 2 and 52.

²²⁰ 'Report on Franciscan Manuscripts preserved at The Convent, Merchants' Quay, Dublin', *Historical Manuscripts Commission* (Dublin: His Majesty's Stationary Office by John Falconer, 1906), pp. 87-8. See also Edmund Curtis, *A History of Ireland* (London: Routledge, 1936; repr. 1992), pp. 114 and 222.

The Nuncio's identification of the 'Old Irish', 'Mixed', and 'Anglo-Irish' groups comprising élite Irish society in the early seventeenth century, have been labelled by modern scholarship as the Old English (Catholics descended from Norman settlers), the New English (Protestant settlers who had arrived after the Battle of Kinsale) and the Old Irish nobility (native Gaelic lords).²²¹ During the 1630s, administrative control of Ireland was predominantly held by New English individuals, but most of the wealth and land ownership of the country was held by the Old English. In comparison to London, the population of Dublin was small, so a successful theatrical venture would have required the support of all factions. While English was the language used administratively, the Irish language was widely spoken by the indigenous population, and amongst some of the Old English settlers, thus language may have been a barrier to theatre attendance. By dedicating his first play, which is the only surviving play to have been dedicated to a member of the Irish court, to Kildare, Shirley was reaching beyond the confines of the New English Dublin elite, and was thus also appealing to the Old English members of Irish society for an audience.²²² However, there is another reason why this play may have been dedicated to Kildare. When Wentworth first arrived in Ireland he did not treat Kildare with the respect which that young man thought was due to him as the first peer in Ireland, and in protest Kildare refused to attend the parliament which Wentworth called: instead he then went to London to complain to Charles, who was forced to uphold Wentworth's position.²²³ It is, then,

²²¹ Curtis, pp. 114 and 222. Kearney describes the three main groups of political power in Ireland as the committee for Irish affairs in the English Privy Council, the New English administration in Ireland and the Old English residents of Ireland, p. 7.

²²² Stevenson, 'Publishers', p. 160.

²²³ For the details of this incident see Carte, I, p. 132. It is probable that this episode contributed to the proclamation which was released on 21st July 1635 'to restrain the Kings Subjects from departing out of

possible that Wentworth asked Shirley to dedicate *The Royal Master* to Kildare as a rare gesture of appeasement. It is also possible that it was Wentworth's insistence upon a strict observance of Court etiquette which influenced Shirley's decision: simply because Kildare was from one of the oldest and most distinguished Irish families he was worthy of reverence before any other Old English, or Old Irish, peer.²²⁴ In addition, in 1634 Kildare had a son whom he named Wentworth which, whilst being a clear attempt to flatter the Lord Deputy, can also be seen as a mark of trying to promote good relations between the two men.²²⁵ Unfortunately, the armistice was to be short-lived, as in 1638 Wentworth made plans to establish a new plantation in Connaught which required an examination of the title of every estate in the area. Kildare refused to allow his property to be thus examined by the Privy Council and was consequently imprisoned.²²⁶

Rather than interpreting the phrase that the play 'tis new, and never yet personated' as being suggestive that Kildare was uninformed about the construction of the new theatre in Dublin, and what was being performed there, it is more likely that

the Realme without licence', see Robert Steele, *Bibliotheca Lindesina: A bibliography of Royal Proclamations of the Tudor and Stuart Sovereigns*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), I, p. 203. See also Charles William Fitzgerald Leinster, *The Earls of Kildare and their Ancestors: from 1057-1773* (Dublin: Hodges, Smith and Co., 1858), p. 247.

²²⁴ For information on Wentworth's insistence on upholding Court etiquette see A. W. Ward, G. W. Prothero, Stanley Leathes (eds), *The Cambridge Modern History, IV The Thirty Years War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), p. 518. For information regarding Kildare's social position see Carte, I, p. 132 and Kearney, p. 52.

²²⁵ This son's death is recorded in a list of funeral entries of gentry and city families, Dublin 1587-1729, 'Wentworth Fitzgerald Earle of Kildare Departed this mortall life this 5th day March 1663 intoured the 6th day of the same month in Christ Church Dublin', Genealogical Office MSS 64-79, Reel 8289, 92^v.

²²⁶ See Ohlmeyer, *ODNB*; Leinster, p. 247. Kildare's imprisonment for plantation issues was far from a unique occurrence – in May 1633, Sir William Cole and other planters in Fermanagh were imprisoned for failure to comply with Wentworth's dictates, as described in a letter from Cole to Sir Arthur Ingram quoted by Kearney, p. 40.

the phrase was intended as an assurance that the play to be staged at the Werburgh Street Theatre was not merely an old play of Shirley's, but one that was written specifically for this historic opening.²²⁷ It can then be concluded that Kildare was presented with a manuscript copy of the play, containing a covering dedicatory letter, but it is unlikely that he received either the epilogue or commendatory verses. That Kildare was not given a copy of the epilogue is suggested by its recording the day on which the play was performed in front of Wentworth, 'Newyeare's day', which strongly indicates that it was written after the dedicatory letter which states that the play had been 'never yet personated'.²²⁸ It can also be assumed that Kildare did not receive the commendatory verses from clues within some of these verses, which allows their composition to be dated after August 1637 (a full discussion of which is given later), and from the reasoning that the verses were compiled in praise of the play and playwright, whereas the intention of the dedicatory letter was to honour Kildare, so the distraction of commendations of the author would have been an unwise strategy in the bid to secure the earl as a patron.

There is a further reason which may have influenced the dedication to Kildare. Similar to practices in England, Irish culture had a well-established tradition of the nobility (both Old Irish and Old English) patronising bardic poetry. In return, and in slight contrast to English practices, the *literati* composed poems for *individual* patrons – a *literatorus* was traditionally bound to his patron for life, and did not address his work

²²⁷ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. A2^r; Gifford, p. 103.

²²⁸ Greg's investigations conclude that the dedication was presumably written before the epilogue was added, *A Bibliography of English Printed Drama*, II, p. 676.

to others, although only a few poets benefitted from the continual support of a single patron by the late sixteenth century.²²⁹ Lord Deputy Sir John Perrot (1571-1573) had employed an Irish harper, Edmund Barrett, but subsequent Lord Deputies had not demonstrably embraced any aspect of Irish culture.²³⁰ Shirley could then have been attempting to tap into this convention so that he could further secure his position in Irish society: that Shirley incorporated his own twist into this time-honoured tradition is indicated by his own composition of two poems of acclamation for two individuals of Irish society (discussed fully in Chapter Four).

The title of the epilogue is somewhat misleading:

As it vvas spoken to the Lord Deputie
on Newyeares-day at night, by way
of vote, congratulating the
New yeare.²³¹

In fact, far less attention is paid to welcoming the New Year than is given to paying tribute to Wentworth:

Our Poet doth forget his Play;
There is something he would pay
Due to your greatneses, and the day...

All Honour with your fame increase,

²²⁹ Caoimhín Breatnach, *Patronage, Politics and Prose* (Maynooth: An sagart, 1996), p. 4. See also Cunningham, pp. 151 and 154. Burner identifies that just as English poets sought patronage from numerous sources, patrons often supported several authors simultaneously, p. 86.

²³⁰ Cunningham, p. 155.

²³¹ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. L3^r; Gifford, IV, p. 187.

In your bosome dwell soft peace,
And Justice, the true roote of these;
Wealth by the worst, and outside of your fate;
And may not heaven your life translate,
Till for your Royall Master, and this Ile,
Your deeds have fild a Chronicle;
In all thats great, and good, be bold,
And every yeare be coppie of the old [*sic.*].²³²

The epilogue refers to several personal aspects of Wentworth's life, and thus allows an insight into his public image at this time. Shirley's first wish for his patron is, 'may health, the bosomes friend, streame through your blood'.²³³ While cursory consideration of this phrase might lead to a supposition that this was a standard declaration, it is now well-known that Wentworth was prone to illness and it was, of course, crucial to Shirley that he remain in good health, as recreational culture would be overshadowed by matters of state if Wentworth's strength was taxed. Shirley also focuses upon Wentworth's wife, Elizabeth Rodes.²³⁴ Elizabeth and Wentworth had married in October 1632 when she was about eighteen years of age, and perhaps it was the recognition that she was his third wife which prompted Shirley to comment, cheekily, that *her* heart 'by onely yours [Wentworth's] embrac'd'.²³⁵ Given that of Wentworth's three surviving children from his second marriage only one was male,

²³² Shirley, *TRM*, sig. L3^r and L3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 187.

²³³ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. L3^r; Gifford, IV, p. 187.

²³⁴ Wentworth had sent Elizabeth to Ireland ahead of his own departure from England. She was accompanied by George Radcliffe and her identity was kept secret until her husband's arrival which caused speculation amongst the Dublin residents about the mysterious woman who was occasionally seen at the Castle, see Bagwell, I, p. 198. It is possible that Wentworth kept her identity secret to minimise the scandal of his marrying her a mere month after the death of his second wife. Wentworth had three wives: the first was Margaret, daughter of Francis, Earl of Cumberland and they had no children. The second was Arabella, daughter of John, Earl of Clare, by whom he had a son, William, and two daughters: Ann married Edward Lord Rockingham, and Arabella married Justin Macarti, son of Donagh, Earl of Clancarti. His third wife was Elizabeth daughter of Sir Godfrey Rhodes of Greath-Houghton, Yorkshire, with whom he had a daughter, Margaret, see Seddon, *Letters of John Holles*, III, p. 444.

²³⁵ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. L3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 187.

and that his union with Elizabeth resulted in a single surviving daughter, Shirley's wish that Elizabeth 'prove | Fruitfull in Children, as in love' (*TRM*, L3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 188) can be interpreted as less of a customary blessing upon a newly married couple, and more of an increasingly desperate wish for the pair as they approached their fifth year of married life.²³⁶ Shirley's use of the compound noun 'top-branch' in the epilogue is noteworthy, as he had previously used it to describe Kildare in the dedication (*TRM*, A2^f; Gifford, IV, 103). In the epilogue, as Burner suggests, the term is being applied to Wentworth's son, William:

...may this faire Top-branch, whose early bloome
Doth promise all the fruit can come
To virtue, and your name be blest,
And live a story to the rest.²³⁷

The subtle linking of William Wentworth to Kildare in this way implicitly suggests that these individuals shared the highest social status in Ireland – Kildare was the most prestigious of the Old English and, honour is being paid to the Lord Deputy as his heir, William Wentworth, is being represented as the most esteemed member of the New

²³⁶ Elizabeth's daughter, Margaret, died in 1681, but I have been unable to determine the year of her birth, see Ronald G. Asch, 'Wentworth, Thomas, first earl of Strafford (1593–1641)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29056> [accessed 3rd March 2006]. Elizabeth had given birth to a son in September 1634 as recorded by Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork, 'the good Ladie Wentworth, wife to the L. wentworth, Lo. Deputie generall of Ireland, was (god be praized) safely delivered in the Castle of Dublin of her firste childe, being a son; whom I beseech god to bless and make a good man. The sign in Sagittarius' - I have been unable to account for Cork's assertion that his star sign was Sagittarius. This child died on 3rd April 1636 in Dublin Castle and Cork records that he 'with many other, Lords, attended his ffvnerall', A. Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore Papers*, 5 vols (London: Chiswick Press, 1886), III, pp. 46 and 173.

²³⁷ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. L3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 188. William Wentworth was born in 1626 and on 1st December 1641 Charles I conferred upon him all the honours which his father's attainder had forfeited. In 1653 Shirley dedicated his romantic comedy *The Court Secret* to William Wentworth, 2nd Earl of Strafford, see A. W. Ward, 'Critical Essay and Edition of *The Royal Master*' in Charles Mills Gayley (ed.), *Representative English Comedies*, 4 vols (New York: Macmillan Company, 1914), III, pp. 545-652: 652; Burner, p. 115.

English faction. Referring to William, rather than the Lord Deputy himself, suggests that Wentworth's prestige will be transferred to his next generation, and also serves as a tacit insult to Kildare, whose social standing is being compared to that of an eleven year old boy. This insult supports the theory that Shirley dedicated the play to Kildare at Wentworth's request, and that Kildare did not receive a copy of the epilogue with his manuscript of the play.

The commendatory verses and their contributors

In *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, Bentley states that the commendatory verses were 'apparently written by residents of Dublin'.²³⁸ However, the evidence below proves this statement to be incorrect, as the contributors of the prefatory material to *The Royal Master* came from a variety of locations and social backgrounds. There is great scope for research to be carried out into the complexities and significance of commendatory verses, as while modern scholars have become increasingly interested in the function of para-text, the consideration of commendatory verses has been largely overlooked.²³⁹ Some of the best evidence from this period, for how a contributor hoped his verse would impact upon the public's reception of a play, comes from a commendatory verse by Joseph Taylor to Massinger's *The Roman Actor* (1629):

²³⁸ Bentley, *JCS*, V, p. 1140.

²³⁹ James Biester has conducted one of very few investigations into this field, but his focus is solely upon gender, 'Gender and Style in Seventeenth-Century Verse', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 33, no. 3 (Summer, 1993), pp. 507-522. Bergeron notes that modern editions of dramatic texts often omit paratext, p. 5. Gérard Genette's incredibly detailed *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, translated by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), does not discuss commendatory verses. Most recently, Sonia Massai argues for the importance which paratext holds for understanding text, but her discussion omits a consideration of commendatory verses, 'Shakespeare, Text and Paratext', *Shakespeare Survery*, 62 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 1-11.

IF that my Lines being plac'd before thy Book
 Could make it sell, or alter but a looke
 Of some sowre Censurer, who's apt to say
 No one in these Times can produce a Play
 Worthy his reading, since of late, 'tis true
 The old accepted are more then the new.
 Or could I on some Spot o'the Court worke so
 To make him speake no more then He doth know;
 Not borrowing from His flattering flatter'd friend
 What to dispraise, or wherefore to commend.
 Then (gentle Friend) I should not blush to bee
 Rank'd 'mongst those worthy ones, which heere I see
 Vshering this Worke, but why I write to Thee
 Is to professe our loues Antiquitie,
 Which to this *Tragaedie* must giue my test,
 Thou hast made many good, but this thy best.²⁴⁰

James Mervyn

James Mervyn holds a significant place in the list of contributors as he is the only individual to have had two verses published. The position of these verses within the prefatory material, as the first and last in the collection, could have been an attempt by the publishers to mislead the reader into thinking that there were ten, rather than nine, contributors.²⁴¹ The eldest son of Admiral Henry Mervyn, James followed his father into the navy.²⁴² In 1631, Charles granted the district of Addergoole, Galway, and the greater part of Fintona or Ballynahatty to James Mervyn, which suggests that by 1636

²⁴⁰ Philip Massinger, *The Roman Actor, A Tragedie* (London: printed for Robert Allot, 1629), STC (2nd ed.) / 17642, sig. A4^v.

²⁴¹ The significance of having ten commendatory verses is discussed below in relation to *The Grateful Servant*.

²⁴² Roy McCaughey, 'Mervyn, Sir Henry (bap. 1583, d. 1646)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/54716> [accessed 25th June 2006].

he was a recognisable figure in Irish society.²⁴³ Admiral Henry Mervyn had been born in Hampshire, so the Mervyns were counted amongst the protestant New English of Ireland, although they were linked by both blood and marriage to Catholic families in Ireland – such as the Touchetts and Maguires.²⁴⁴ As very little is now known about Mervyn, assumptions about his relationship with Shirley can only be speculative, but perhaps they became acquainted aboard ship during the latter's trips to and from London.²⁴⁵ If Mervyn composed his verses just before *The Royal Master's* publication in 1638, then they may have made up to four sea crossings together, which might explain Mervyn's two contributions to the play of his 'friend'.²⁴⁶

Mervyn was not a skilled poet. His verse contains an inept attempt at an extended metaphor of the play being like gems reflecting sunlight, imagery which is referred to throughout, and the word 'beam' is used three times in a mere 18 lines (1 l.4, 1 l.5 and 1 l.15). Yet the verses are useful for providing an insight into the construction of the

²⁴³ Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, comprising the several counties, cities, boroughs, corporate, market and post towns, parishes and villages, with historical and statistical descriptions*, 2 vols (London: S. Lewis & Co., 1837), Omagh entry: <http://www.libraryireland.com/topog/o.php> [accessed 2nd August 2006]. For further information on the Mervyns' claim to Irish lands see George Hill, *The Plantation in Ulster at the commencement of the Seventeenth Century, 1608-1620* (Belfast: Macaw, Stevenson and Orr, 1877), pp. 536-537 and 543.

²⁴⁴ McCaughey, 'Henry Mervyn', *ODNB*; R. M. Armstrong, 'Mervyn, Sir Audley (1603?-1675)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2006: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18613>, [accessed 2nd August 2006]. James's younger brother, Audley, was a member of the committee formed in June 1641 which opposed Wentworth's administration and tried to impeach him, see Kearney, p. 194.

²⁴⁵ When James Mervyn died, his brother Audley inherited their father's estate, see McCaughey, 'Mervyn', *ODNB*. One of the few pieces of information which survives regarding James Mervyn of Tyrone, Castletuchett is that between 21st August 1637 and 11th February 1641 he was recorded as being between £120 and £800 in debt, see Jane Ohlmeyer and Éamon Ó Ciardha (eds), *The Irish Statute Staple Books, 1596-1687* (Dublin: Dublin Corporation in the Republic of Ireland, 1998), p. 259. A previously unpublished manuscript in the National Library of Ireland recording burials in the grounds of St. Werburgh's church contains, '1640 May 16 Eliz: wife of Jam: Mervin Esq...1641 June 12 Capt. Jam: Mervyn', MS104, f. 11. The date of Mervyn's death has not previously been known.

²⁴⁶ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. A3^r; Gifford, I, p. lxxxii.

printed editions. Mervyn reflects, ‘when thou began’st to give thy Master life | Me thought I saw....’ (2 ll. 9-10), which suggests that he had had a conversation with Shirley during the play’s composition, perhaps during the latter’s first crossing to Ireland. Mervyn’s lines also hint that Shirley may have been unwilling to publish *The Royal Master*, ‘Thou Print thy Poem Shirley, ‘twere a fault | To dungion this instructive peece of thine’ (1 ll.13-14), which also provides evidence that Shirley had a definite intention to influence his audience through the medium of the play. It is possible that any reluctance Shirley felt about printing the play was due to its overtly instructive message, and Mervyn warns that Shirley will ‘die traitour to succeeding times’ (1 l.17) if the play is not printed. Mervyn demonstrates his knowledge of theatrical culture by recognizing that some of the audience, rather than reading the text, ‘soly made the study of the Stage’ (1 l.10), but he believes this to be an inferior means of enjoying the work, ‘They might like water in the Sunshine set | Retaine his image, not impart his heate’ (1 ll.11-12). He is also clearly aware that the opinion of the audience would make or break Shirley’s career in Ireland, but reassures his friend that, ‘tongue of Critricks must both write and say | They never yet beheld a smoother Play’.²⁴⁷ It can be deduced that Mervyn wrote his verses before mid-August 1637, as in his second verse he mentions Beaumont, Fletcher and Shakespeare twice in reference to ‘Limbus Patrum’ (2 l.2), and given that Ben Jonson died in August 1637, it is extremely unlikely that he would have been omitted from this short list of

²⁴⁷ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. B2^r; Gifford, I, p. lxxxix.

playwrights, especially as this event is mentioned by two other contributors of the commendatory verses.²⁴⁸

Fra. Butler

Kearney records that the Londonderry, Ulster, representative for the Irish Parliament of 1640 was Francis Butler, and it is highly probable that this man was the Fra. Butler who wrote ‘On Mr. James Shirley’s Royall Master’.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, it is likely that this man was related to James Butler, Earl (later Duke) of Ormond, who was favourably looked upon by Wentworth, and was, therefore, an excellent choice of contributor to Shirley’s work.²⁵⁰ That Wentworth also looked kindly upon Francis Butler is evident from a letter where Wentworth wrote, ‘the businesse betwixt Fran. Butler and Dopping must rest till my coming ouer; tell him I will then settle it for him’.²⁵¹ Shirley himself had, or tried to have, direct contact with the Butlers/Ormonds as he wrote a poem in praise of the Duchess of Ormond (discussed more fully in Chapter Four). Francis Butler provides an illuminatingly explicit account of the function of commendatory verses when used to preface a play, or to use Butler’s own

²⁴⁸ Shirley’s prologue to *The Alchemist* reads, ‘To kneel, not tread, upon his [Jonson’s] honour’d grave’, which indicates that the performance of this play at the Werburgh Street Theatre occurred after August 1637, *Poems &c.*, pp. 36-7; Gifford, VI, pp. 490-1.

²⁴⁹ Kearney, p. 263; *TRM*, A3^f; Gifford, I, p. lxxxiii. A Sir Francis Butler was created Sergeant-Major, as shown by the dispatch from the King to the Lord Lieutenant of the Irish Army, 11th May 1642, CSPI 1633-47, p. 360.

²⁵⁰ Toby Barnard, ‘Butler, James, first duke of Ormond (1610–1688)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2006: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4191>, [accessed 5th May 2007].

²⁵¹ Letter from Wentworth to Christopher Wandesford, Master of the Rolls and a Lord Justice of Ireland, 25th July 1635 as quoted in Carte, V, p. 205.

terminology a 'Poeme' or 'poesie'.²⁵² He begins by praising the audience's 'curious eyes' (l.1) for taking the trouble of reading the play, rather than relying solely upon a theatrical performance: this distinction is somewhat implicit, as while an audience looks *at* a performance, they look 'in' (l.1) a text, which suggests that Butler is placing greater emphasis upon the importance of actively engaging with the written, rather than the spoken, word. This argument is also explored by Morash, who suggests that there was an established culture where people read the play rather than saw the performance.²⁵³ The readers are informed that this play is to be found in 'the printed booke' (l.2) which tacitly indicates that it had been produced for commercial purposes, as printed work allowed for far wider circulation than manuscript copies. Butler claims that 'for the most part' (l.2) plays are published 'with verses frontispic'd' (l.3) to praise the author of the play. However, between 1635 and 1637 twenty-one plays (by John Jones, Heywood, Beaumont, Fletcher, Shirley, Shakespeare, Dekker and Davenant) appeared in print without prefatory material, compared with ten plays (by Jonson, Shirley and Davenant) which did contain commendatory verses.²⁵⁴ From this it can be seen that the presence of such verses was less common than Butler would

²⁵² Fra. Butler, 'To my deserving Friend Mr. *James Shirley* on his *Royall Master*' in *TRM*, sig. A3^r and A3^v. Gifford mistakenly attributes this title to the poem by T. I., giving Butler's contribution the title 'On Mr. James Shirley's Royal Master', I, pp. lxxxiii and lxxxv.

²⁵³ Morash, p. 323.

²⁵⁴ The twenty-one plays without prefatory material were: John Jones, *Adrasta, or the Womans Spleene* (1635); Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Cupids Revenge* (1635); Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Scornful Lady* (1635); Thomas Dekker, *The Honest Whore* (1635); Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1635); William Shakespeare, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (1635); Thomas Heywood, *Loves Maistrasse, or The Queens Masque* (1636); Dekker, *The Wonder of a Kingdome* (1636); Thomas Heywood, *A Challenge for Beautie* (1636); William Davenant, *The Platonick Lovers* (1636); Fletcher, *The Elder Brother* (1637); Shirley, *The Example* (1637); Shirley, *The Gamester* (1637); Shirley, *Hyde Park* (1637); Shirley, *The Lady of Pleasure* (1637); Shirley, *The Young Admirall* (1637); Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* (1637); Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (1637); Shirley, *The Schoole of Complement* (1637); Heywood, *The Royall King, and the Loyall Subject* (1637); Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (1637). See Appendix Two.

lead his readers to believe. Unsurprisingly, Butler's verse states that while inferior dramatic works require such commendations to endorse them, Shirley's play is of such elevated quality that the verses serve instead to highlight the deficiencies of those who praise the play in poetic form. It is interesting that Butler refers to Shirley in the title of his verse as 'my deserving Friend', which suggests that he was personally acquainted with the playwright, and it is possible that it was Shirley who engaged Butler to add to the prefatory material of the play. If Butler was not selected for his literary ability, then perhaps he was approached to write the verse because of his family connections.

Drv. Cooper

Given Shirley's connection to Captain James Mervyn, it is possible that Drv. Cooper was related to Captain Dawtry Cooper, who appears frequently in the Calendar of State Papers during this period, and who had commissions aboard the guard ships the *Seventh* and *Ninth Whelps*.²⁵⁵ Burner argues that Drury Cooper was an Englishman from Nottinghamshire who fought for the King in the Civil Wars and was a Roman Catholic: he matriculated from Trinity College in 1619, obtained a Bachelor's degree in 1621, and a Master's degree in 1624, Burner suggests that Cooper may have met Shirley at Cambridge, as the dramatist was connected to St. Catharine's College 1619-21.²⁵⁶ However, as Andrew Carpenter observes, Drv. Cooper most likely refers to Andrew (or Anthony) Cooper who was an English royalist news reporter and poet.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ *CSPD*, 1631-33, p. 371; 1633-34, pp. 45 and 70; 1634-5, p. 386.

²⁵⁶ Burner, p. 126.

²⁵⁷ Andrew Carpenter (ed.), *Verses in English from Tudor and Stuart Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2003), p. 216; see also Elizabeth Haresnape, 'Cooper, Andrew (fl. 1660)', *Oxford Dictionary of*

Although nothing is known of Cooper's life, there is evidence within his verse that he spent at least part of the 1630s in Ireland. Cooper's verse is distinctly more sophisticated than Butler's and Mervyn's, both in structure and content. He writes in almost flawless iambic pentameter, and punctuates his work with classical references: 'Phoebus', 'Albion', 'Parnassus', 'Castalian', 'Thalia': he also refers to more recent literary figures, 'Spencer' (l.1) and 'Ben' (Jonson, l.18).²⁵⁸ From this, it can be assumed that Cooper was a well-educated man whose literary tastes encompassed the contemporary. He states that 'Ben is dead and gone' (l.18), which means that he must have composed his verse after mid-August 1637, and his reference to Spenser could be a parallel to his own experience of being an English poet residing in Ireland.²⁵⁹ The clues within the verse which suggest that Cooper was resident in Ireland are implicit: Shirley arrives 'from' England (l.7), he 'comes laden with the Muses' (my emphasis, l.8), 'shall we not welcome him' (l.11). It is clear that the essential message of his verse is praise for Shirley, as he urges the playwright to 'put thy Lawrell on' (l.17), and pledges his support in the competition for Shirley to become Jonson's successor by stating 'you rise the Pheonix of his [Jonson's] dust' (l.20). Carpenter also identifies that Cooper's poem acknowledges the existence of a national poetic tradition in Ireland.²⁶⁰ Similarly to Shirley, Cooper was a visitor to the country, and perhaps it

National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6207> [accessed 8th July 2008].

²⁵⁸ Drv. Cooper, 'Vpon Mr. *James Shirley* his Comedy, cal'd *The Royall Master*' in *TRM*, ll. 5, 7, 9-10, 12 and 18, sig. A3^v; Gifford, I, p. lxxxiv.

²⁵⁹ Ian Donaldson, 'Jonson, Benjamin (1572-1637)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2006: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15116> [accessed 25th April 2007].

²⁶⁰ Carpenter, p. 216.

was this fact which impressed upon him a difference in Irish patronage to the practices which were common in England.

Ric. Belling

Sir Richard Belling (1613-1677), born in Belinstown, County of Dublin, of Old English descent, was educated in Ireland before entering Lincoln's Inn, London, although there is no evidence that he ever practised law professionally.²⁶¹ His interest in writing began in 1624 when he wrote a sixth book to Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, dedicating it to Viscountess Falkland: Burner suggests that Shirley and Belling may have become acquainted at this time, due to Belling's presence at Lincoln's Inn.²⁶² A devout Catholic, Belling became a prominent member of the Supreme Council of the Confederated Catholics at Kilkenny (established after the Irish Rebellion of 1641), and was an emissary to Pope Innocent X, as well as being an ambassador to several European princes.²⁶³ After Cromwell's Irish campaign, Belling retired to France where he wrote *Vindiciae Catholicorum Hibernice*, amongst other works, and after the Restoration, when *The Eighth Day* was published, he returned to Ireland.²⁶⁴ Morash

²⁶¹ <http://www.booksulster.com/library/biography/biographyB.php> [accessed 24th November 2006]; Richard Ryan, *Biographia Hibernica: A biographical dictionary of the worthies of Ireland from the earliest to the present time*, 2 vols (Dublin: M. N. Mahon and R. Milliken, 1819), I, p. 76.

²⁶² R. B., *A sixth booke to the Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* (Dublin: Society of Stationers, 1624), STC (2nd ed.) / 1805. Elizabeth Cary, Viscountess Falkland, was a writer and translator: in 1597 Michael Drayton dedicated two of his *Englands Heroicall Epistles* to her, and in 1612 John Davies jointly dedicated *The Muses Sacrifice* to her. In 1622 she went to Ireland following her husband's appointment there as Lord Deputy, see Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, 'Cary, Elizabeth, Viscountess Falkland (1585–1639)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4835> [accessed 7th May 2007]; Burner, p. 124.

²⁶³ <http://www.booksulster.com/library/biography/biographyB.php> [accessed 24th November 2006]; Morash, pp. 6-7.

²⁶⁴ *Vindicarum Catholicorum in Hibernia, Rerum in Hibernia gestarum ab Anno 1641 ad Anno 1649*, (Paris: published under Philopater Irenaeus, 1650); *Innocentiae suae impetitae per Reverendissimum Fernensem*, (1652) contains an account of the Irish rebellion. William Thomas Lowndes, *The*

argues that the inclusion of Belling's verse in *The Royal Master* is evidence that Shirley was content to allow rumours of his conversion to Catholicism flourish: such rumours were inevitable given his association with Queen Henrietta-Maria and her courtiers, and had doubtless reached Ireland through Wentworth's correspondence with George Garrard, who kept him informed of court intrigues and London theatre gossip.²⁶⁵ Kerrigan uses Belling to demonstrate the complexity of an individual's religious conviction during the Caroline era: Belling's Catholicism is evident from his position on the Council of the Confederated Catholics, but his conclusion to Sidney's unfinished *Arcadia* is problematic for determining his religion beliefs, as this was a tale of Protestant chivalry.²⁶⁶ Belling contributed the most cryptic of the commendatory verses, and it is possible that his poem contains personal references, the significance of which are now lost. He demonstrates his classical knowledge by referring to a 'Muse' (l.8) and 'Etna' (l.10), but the only indication that this verse is written to celebrate Shirley's play occurs in the title, 'On the Royall Master, to his Friend the Author'. Curiously, Belling's descriptions frequently appeal to the reader's sense of smell; 'perfume' (l.5), 'incense' (l.7), 'Narde' (l.8).²⁶⁷ Even an obscure reference to Jonson 'the dead would sweeten, and enbalme the Stage' (l.6) refers again to scent: perhaps Belling is referring to the multi-sensory experience of the theatre in

Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature, new edition by Henry G. Bohn, 6 vols (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1864), I, p. 148; Richard Bellings, *The Eighth Day* (London: John Redmayne, 1661), Wing / B1790.

²⁶⁵ Morash, pp. 6-7.

²⁶⁶ Kerrigan, p. 45.

²⁶⁷ Narde is an ointment, or perfume, prepared from the plant of the same name which was highly valued by the Ancients, see

http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00321171/00321171spg1?query_type=misspelling&queryword=narde&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=tNGw-Tm1Rv6-14739&hilite=00321171spg1 [accessed 26th April 2006].

comparison to the less stimulating experience of simply reading a play. Yet the most interesting lines of his verse contain a veiled criticism of Shirley's talent, 'onely thus to blame, | Too lavish is your sacrifice to fame' (ll. 4-5). This can be interpreted as meaning that Belling believed Shirley to have overestimated his audience, and made the play too complex for their unenlightened intellects – the Dublin audience had not previously had the opportunity to develop the more sophisticated theatrical tastes of London. This interpretation is supported by a prologue, quoted in Chapter One, which Shirley later wrote to one of Fletcher's plays which was staged at the Werburgh Street Theatre:

Are there no more? and can this Muses' sphere
At such a time as this, so thin appear?...
Were there a pageant now on foot, or some
Strange monster from Peru or Afric come
Men would throng to it; any drum will bring
(That beats a bloodless prize or cudgelling)
Spectators hither; nay the bears invite audience.²⁶⁸

This exemplifies Shirley's frustration that his audience would rather attend the baser entertainments than watch a play, and it would then appear that Belling had a greater understanding of the Dublin audience than the newly arrived dramatist.²⁶⁹ Perhaps Belling was warning Shirley that the play-going population of Dublin had less developed theatrical tastes than the London audiences, but it would seem that it took Shirley some time to learn this lesson.

²⁶⁸ Shirley, *Poems*, pp. 42-3; Gifford, VI, p. 493.

²⁶⁹ For a discussion of the alternative attractions in Dublin see Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 274.

T. I.

There are two main candidates for the identification of the next contributor, T. I: the playwright, Thomas Jordan, and Sir Thomas Ingram.²⁷⁰ Thomas Ingram was the younger son of Sir Arthur Ingram, who had been closely associated with Wentworth since 1619, when the future Lord Deputy of Ireland had tried to secure preferment at court. Sir Arthur had numerous Irish connections, and from 1629, helped Wentworth to acquire the Irish customs farm, Northern recusancy fines, and the alum industry. The relationship between the two men endured until 1633 when a quarrel resulted in their estrangement.²⁷¹ It is possible that Sir Thomas Ingram contributed a verse to *The*

²⁷⁰ Another person whose initials fit the author's is Thomas Jones, a London bookseller between 1600-37. While his primary trade was in theological literature, Jones also issued a limited selection of plays. Although his involvement with the industry diminished greatly from 24th August 1633, when he passed on his copyrights to Augustine Mathews, his name is found in books dated 1637. However, given that Shirley needed the contributors and their reputations to endorse his work to the play-reading public, it is unlikely that a fairly unknown bookseller, whose involvement in the trade moreover was dwindling, would have been a favoured choice. See, McKerrow, p. 160.

²⁷¹ Sir Thomas Ingram was Sir Arthur's son by his second wife, Anne Ferrers. Wentworth's efforts to secure preferment at court led to his making a concerted effort to further his acquaintance with his two main court contacts, Sir George Calvert and Sir Arthur, who were also fellow Yorkshiremen. Sir Arthur's own political rise led to his purchasing the estate of Temple Newsam for £12,000 in 1622 from the Duke of Lennox, kinsman to King James. James had attended the christening of Sir Thomas Ingram, who remained a committed royalist throughout his life. Relations between Wentworth and Sir Arthur were strengthened following an incident in 1624 when Wentworth had confined Thomas to his room after the young man had tried to seduce a gentlewoman in Dublin. Wentworth wrote to Sir Arthur:

Your son desired only to see her before his departure but I commanded him to his chamber and would not suffer it, for I foresaw a quarter of an hour would serve to make them fast as well as a twelvemonth, and in a business of this nature, sure and unsure is not all alike.

Sir Arthur replied:

I Must ever acknowledge myself bound to your honour for the exceeding great care that you have taken in that most foolish course he was in.

Having been knighted in 1636, Sir Thomas was found a more suitable bride in the person of France Bellasyse, daughter of Viscount Fauconberg of Newbury Priory in 1637, and his desire to follow his father into politics was fulfilled when he became a Member of Parliament for Thirsk, 1640-45. The Ingrams were also connected to the Earl of Cork, who recorded in September 1634 that Sir Arthur, 'lent my son so much money in England'. Sir Arthur had inherited his own father's money lending business, and by 1603 had become comptroller of the London custom house, where he lent customs receipts to courtiers. The Ingrams thus had connections to both Ireland and England. See

Royal Master in an attempt to heal this breach, but it is more likely that the identity of ‘T. I.’ was Thomas Jordan. Clark and Burner suggest that Thomas Jordan was the contributor as he was an actor at Salisbury Court Theatre, and, therefore, would have known Shirley.²⁷² More significantly, on 28th December 1637, ‘Thomas Jordan son to Thomas Jordan’ was christened at St. John’s church, Dublin.²⁷³ Burner argues further that Thomas Jordan was known to sign his name ‘T. I.’, and that he wrote commendatory verses for other playwrights, such as Brome, while Walter Hamilton identifies him as a playwright holding the title of City Poet for London, which required him to produce city pageants and odes upon the appointment of the Lord Mayor.²⁷⁴ The most recent scholarship on Thomas Jordan comes from Lynn Hulse, who is tentative about definitively concluding that he was connected to the Werburgh Street

<http://www.leeds.gov.uk/templenewsam/house/docs/temptree.pdf> [accessed 2nd December 2006]; Richard Cust, ‘Wentworth’s ‘change of sides’ in the 1620s’ in J. F. Merritt (ed.), *The Political World of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, 1621-1641* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 69; John D. Krugler, ‘Calvert, George, first Baron Baltimore (1579/80–1632)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2006 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4420> [accessed 4th Dec 2006]; Simon Healy, ‘Ingram, Sir Arthur (b. before 1571, d. 1642)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Oct 2006 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14414> [accessed 4th Dec 2006]; PRONI D3078/3/1/5; Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Various VIII*, p. 42; Pawson MSS, Letters, warrants and papers 1627-42, 29-12-33, quoted by Anthony F. Upton, *Sir Arthur Ingram* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 225; Wentworth Papers, StrP 217/13^c, quoted in Upton, p. 225; Christine M. Newman, ‘Bellasis family (per. c.1500–1653)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/71863> [accessed 7th May 2007]; *Lismore Papers*, III, p. 48.

²⁷² Clark, p. 28; Burner, p. 125.

²⁷³ James Mills (ed.), *The Registers of St. John the Evangelist: 1609-1699* (Dublin: Parish Register Society of Dublin, 1906), p. 29.

²⁷⁴ In 1637 *Poetical Varieties* was dedicated by Jordan to ‘Mr Ford of Gray’s Inn’, although this was not the playwright John Ford. Jordan also wrote verses to Shirley’s later patron, Thomas Stanley, upon his marriage to Dorothy Enyon, see Burner, p. 125. Walter Hamilton, *The Poet Laureates of England* (London: Elliot Stock, 1879), pp. 5-6. Hamilton states that John Ogilby also held this post.

Theatre, despite the fact that his 1640 miscellany *Sacred Poems* was dedicated to Archbishop Ussher.²⁷⁵

T. I.'s familiarity with Shirley's previous work can shed light upon his comment that *The Royal Master* 'here hath grac'd the publicke view' (l.12): as chief playwright to the Queen's Men, Shirley was used to writing for an exclusive audience at court, in London, and the Salisbury Court Theatre; while Wentworth tried to run Ireland along similar lines (hence the play's performance at Dublin Castle and the Werburgh Street Theatre), Dublin's smaller population might have meant that the theatre's management were forced to be less discerning about their clientele in order to cover costs and make a profit. Alternatively, these lines could be interpreted as referring to an unknown London performance of *The Royal Master*, which would justify the play being sold in both Dublin and London. In his opening metaphor, T. I. describes himself as 'some petty Brooke scarce worth a name', which Hulse suggests is indicative that the author was Jordan, as it plays on his name.²⁷⁶ The phrase, 'Thy Muse I honor'd, e're I knew by sight | Thy person' suggests that Jordan and Shirley were personally acquainted, and the lines, 'oft I've seene with much delight | Thy sweete composures' indicates that he was familiar with Shirley's plays, which he must

²⁷⁵ Lynn Hulse, 'Jordan, Thomas (c. 1614–1685)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept. 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15122> [accessed 23rd November 2007].

²⁷⁶ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. A4^r; Gifford, I, p. lxxxv; Hulse, *ODNB*.

have seen in London.²⁷⁷ This supports the argument that the contributors of the commendatory verses were not exclusively residents of Dublin.

W. Markham

Although Carpenter amalgamates W. Markham into the category of verse contributors who were certainly royalist and probably Catholic, he offers no further clue as to Markham's identity, which remains elusive.²⁷⁸ Burner identifies a Wm. Markham who owed money to Wentworth, as shown by a register of petitions dated 1638, but she seems more inclined to believe him to have been associated with the Markham family of Ollerton, Nottinghamshire, even though no W. Markham is known to have been in this family.²⁷⁹ However, there are clues within the text which suggest that he was, after all, an Englishman living in England, rather than a permanent inhabitant of Ireland.²⁸⁰ Markham has a sound understanding of the business of theatre: he identifies the audience as having 'the leading voice in censuring' (l.2) a play, and acknowledges that they hold the power to 'kill or save' (l.4) a play's reputation, claiming that their opinion is as significant as 'Grand-jurors' (l.3). This intimate

²⁷⁷ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. A4^r-A4^v; Gifford, I, p. lxxxvi.

²⁷⁸ Carpenter, p. 216.

²⁷⁹ *Register of Petitions to the Earl of Strafford, 1637-38*, BM MS. Harl. 430, fol. 99^v; Burner, p. 126.

²⁸⁰ Having consulted Bentley and McKerrow it seems highly unlikely that he was a printer, actor or playwright. Also Sir Henry F. MacGeagh and H. A. C. Sturgess, *Register of Admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple: From the fifteenth century to the year 1944*, 3 vols (London, Butterworth and Co. Ltd., 1949); Reginald J. Fletcher (ed.), *The Pension Book of Gray's Inn*, 2 vols (London: Chiswick Press by order of the Masters of the Bench, 1901); Joseph Foster (ed.), *The Register of Admission to Gray's Inn, 1521-1881* (London: privately printed, 1887); *Records of the honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn vol. 1 Admissions from 1420-1799* (Lincoln's Inn, 1896); Richard Ryan, *Biographia Hibernica: A biographical dictionary of the worthies of Ireland from the earliest to the present time*, 2 vols (Dublin: M. N. Mahon and R. Milliken, 1819); Joseph Foster (ed.), *Collectanea Genealogica: Register of Admissions to Gray's Inn: 1521-1881* (1883); F. A. Inderwick (ed.), *A Calendar of the Inner Temple Records*, 3 vols (London: by order of the Masters of the Bench, 1898) have proved unfruitful and it would appear that Markham was neither admitted into the London Inns of Court, nor was he Irish gentry.

knowledge of the theatre supports the theory that he was an Englishman who was familiar with the profession of playwriting, as opposed to an Irishman who had limited scope for experiencing the theatre. However, it is notable that he identifies this audience to be the ‘readers’ (l.1) of the play, rather than distinguishing them from those who saw the performance – again, this can be interpreted as an appeal to the reading public of England, rather than the Irish populace who saw the original performance of the play. He also states that Shirley ‘did engage | A nation to thy Muse’ (ll.8-9); if Markham were a resident of Ireland, it would have been a simple matter – and poetically sound – to comment that Shirley engaged ‘our’ nation to his muse. Combined with his intimate knowledge of the business mechanics of play-going, this analysis of the poem further supports the supposition that Markham was English, and it was probably in London that he became acquainted with Shirley, which led to him describing the playwright as his ‘much esteemed Friend’ in the title to his verse, and as ‘my worthy Friend’ (l.7) within it. Similarly to T.I., Markham makes a point of describing the stage as ‘publicke’ (l.7), which again serves to distinguish the change in Shirley’s career from a writer of court entertainment to a provider of more general public amusement. Unlike Belling, who no doubt saw the performance in Dublin and was therefore better placed to comment upon the reception of the play, Markham has clearly heard reports that it was an unqualified success, claiming that it received ‘such faire applause’ (l.8). Markham is also the second contributor to refer to the death of Jonson, ‘darling Ben deceased’ (l.11). It is interesting that the two contributors to mention the death of Jonson are Englishmen – it would appear that the demise of the great literary figure did not generate as much interest across the Irish Sea

as it did in England. Markham also declares his support for Shirley obtaining the title of Poet Laureate, ‘thou should’st be | Declar’d the heire apparant to his [Jonson’s] tree’ (ll.11-12). This public endorsement of Shirley’s claim to become Jonson’s successor further enforces the supposition that Markham was English, as it was in London that the battle for this position was being fought.

W. Smith

Unsurprisingly, W. Smith has also proved remarkably difficult to identify. Bentley ascertained that a play licensed by Sir Henry Herbert in 1623 was ‘Written by Smith’, Warburton records a lost manuscript play as being written by ‘Will. Smith’, and a Wentworth Smith appears several times in Henslowe’s Diary.²⁸¹ Five ‘W. Smythes’ were entered in the Register of Admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple during this period, and a Captain William Smith was appointed to the *Fifth Whelp* then *Tenth Whelp*.²⁸² A William Smith wrote *De Urbis Londini Incendio Elegia; accedit etiam ad eandem Urbem et ad Britanniam Carmen heroicum*, printed in 1667, and a W. Smith was the Tipperary County, Munster, representative in the Irish Parliament of 1640.²⁸³ A Captain Smith can also be found in contemporary correspondence of the Earl of Kildare.²⁸⁴ Burner suggests that he may have been the man who wrote the dramas *Freeman’s Honour* (c. 1603) and *St. George for England*,

²⁸¹ Bentley, *JCS*, V, p. 117.

²⁸² *CSPD* 1634-5 pp. 511 and 604; *CSPD* 1635, pp. 4 and 351.

²⁸³ Lowndes, V, p. 2431; Kearney, p. 260.

²⁸⁴ Dorchester to Kildare, Whitehall, 18th January 1631, ‘I remember well yo^e Lo^{ps} recommendacons on y^e beehalfe of Capt. Smith, but his suite was soe formally opposite to his Mat^{ies} resolute profession’, PRONI 3078/3/1/5, p. 16. Robert Randolph to Kildare, 18th July 1631, ‘couldn’t help him with Captyn Smith’, PRONI 3078/3/1/5, p. 40. I am indebted to Dr Eva Griffiths for sharing her transcription of this document.

and that the same individual wrote verses for Henry Burkhead's *Lirenda's Miserie* (1646), yet this is improbable.²⁸⁵ The publishing dates of *Freeman's Honour* and *Lirenda's Miserie* make it unlikely that they were written by the same man, and John Freehafer argues that *St. George for England* was probably the original title of *The Seven Champions of Christendome* which was published 1638.²⁸⁶ While the dates of *St. George for England* and *Lirenda's Miserie* allow a more cogent argument to be made for same authorship, it seems doubtful that the individual who wrote a positive account of England's patron saint, would then publish an allegory in Kilkenny about the Irish conflicts prior to 1643, demonising the New English regime. More convincingly, Burner suggests that the opening lines of this verse indicate a close relationship between its author and Shirley. Carpenter believes that the printer licensed in Kilkenny and Cork between 1649 and 1667 called William Smith, who was known to the Duke of Ormond, contributed to *The Royal Master*, although this individual could have been a close relation of the Catholic William Smith who settled in Damma, having first arrived in Ireland in 1630 as a secretary to Ormond.²⁸⁷ The close relationship between Ormond and Wentworth makes this individual a viable contender for the contributor to Shirley's play.

²⁸⁵ W. Smith is assigned these dramas in Allibone's *Dictionary*, see Burner, p. 125.

²⁸⁶ John Freehafer, 'Shakespeare's 'Tempest' and 'The Seven Champions'', *Studies in Philology*, vol. 66, no. 1 (Jan, 1969), pp. 87-103: 97.

²⁸⁷ Carpenter, p. 273; Plomer, p. 168; Reverend William Carrigan, *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, 4 vols (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker, 1905), III, p. 444.

John Ogleby²⁸⁸

It was to be expected that John Ogilby would have contributed to the prefatory material of *The Royall Master*. As has been previously discussed, he was the key figure in establishing the Werburgh Street Theatre, and his desire to be associated with the first play written for this theatre is understandable. Ogilby could also make a claim to literary aspiration as ‘he writ in Verse, a witty Piece called, *The Character of a Trooper*’.²⁸⁹ He also later wrote about the coronation of Charles II, he translated Aesop’s fables, Homer and Virgil (printed by Andrew Crooke 1665), as well as producing numerous maps, an edition of the Bible, and a treatise against prostitutes. Ogilby addresses his verse to his ‘worthy Friend’, and the tone he adopts throughout is conversational. He clearly has a good idea of how the compilation of the printed text is progressing when he states, ‘all these thy friends, subscribing to thy praise’ (l.1), which indicates both that all of the contributors were known to Shirley personally, and that Ogilby was informed about who had submitted verses before the editions were printed. There are times when the reader almost feels as though they are intruding upon a personal communication between Ogilby and Shirley, ‘twill raise | Opinion in the readers, and engage | Them to peruse, what wee saw on the Stage’ (ll.2-4), which differs greatly from the style adopted by Cooper and Markham who address the reader directly. Ogilby then subtly draws in the reader by implicit flattery, ‘If knowing ones, their judgement thus will be | The Commendation’s short’ (ll.5-6). Ogilby also gives an elusive clue that the play was written expressly for the Irish stage, rather than

²⁸⁸ Although the publishers used ‘Ogleby’, there is no doubt that this is a variant spelling of Ogilby. As Ogilby is better known by this spelling, I have used it throughout the discussion.

²⁸⁹ Harris Walker (ed.), *The Whole Works of Sir James Ware concerning Ireland*, 2 vols (Dublin: printed for Robert Bell in Stephen-Street and John Fleming in Sycamore-Alley, 1764), I, p. 352.

having been a work in progress before Shirley's arrival in Dublin, claiming that the play 'hath in't | Expressions of so new, and rich a Mint' (ll.10-11). Ogilby does not claim, as Jordan does ('ranke this with thy best,' l.14), that *The Royal Master* is Shirley's best play, but that it is written in a 'new' style, quite literally coined from a different Mint to Shirley's previous work, as befitted his new employment at the Werburgh Street Theatre.

John Jacson

Although there was more than one John Jackson who was a bookseller at this time, it is unlikely that these men were considered to be of a sufficiently elevated status to contribute to the prefatory material, and such reasoning also excludes the man whom Cork refers to in October 1636 'I sent John Jackson and Andrew Tucker to tak a module of L. presidents howse, I gave Jo. Jackson 20^s...for materials'.²⁹⁰ It is then most likely that the 'John Jacson' whose work is printed in *The Royal Master* was the member of the 1634 parliament, representing Carrick-on-Shannon with Thomas Cave, and that he was also a member of the 1640 parliament.²⁹¹ His work is dedicated to the 'much honoured James Shirley', which suggests that their acquaintance was slight when compared to the effusive claims of friendship made by Mervyn, Belling, Jordan, Markham and Ogilby. This further suggests that either Shirley's reputation had

²⁹⁰ John Jackson obtained his freedom on 20th December 1633 and worked in Temple Bar between 1634 and 1640, where he associated with G. Green, T. Homer and F. Smith, see Plomer, p. 106. John Jackman obtained his freedom on 1st September 1628. Jackman had a history of being associated with the publication of plays: on 16th May 1631 he entered Dekker's *The Wonder of a Kingdome*, a comedy and *The Noble Spanish Soldier* a tragedy attributed to Dekker but believed to be by S. Rowley, McKerrow, p. 149. Cork is probably referring to the construction of Wentworth's house, Jiggenstown, which is mentioned in Chapter One, *Lismore Papers*, III, p. 210.

²⁹¹ Kearney, pp. 247 and 262.

preceded him, or that his arrival in Dublin was considered momentous enough to merit his being generally known to the Irish gentry. Even without the evidence that Jackson was a member of the Irish parliament, it would be possible to guess that he was a resident of Ireland from his comment, ‘the world may say, | What is this *Jackson* that commends the play?’ (l.4); from this it can be surmised that Jackson was aware that the play was to be printed in England, and that it was hardly likely that the London populace would have heard of him. He is evidently anxious to establish himself as a learned man, ‘I have read | The Lawes of *Flaccus* with a serious head’ (ll.7-8), and also indicates that he is kept informed of recent developments, ‘I hereafter cease to mourne | For those great wits, commended to the Vrne’ (ll.19-20), which could be a reference to Jonson. It is also noteworthy that the compositors of the text attribute the verse to ‘Jacson’, although the poet refers to himself as ‘Jackson’, whether this was due to an Anglicising of the name, or merely a typographical error is impossible to determine. Jackson refers to the honour accorded to his being asked to write a commendatory verse, and is the only contributor to do so explicitly, others refer to experiencing ‘joy’ (Smith, l.1), or state ‘’tis a grace, to stand as Courtiers use | To usher in the reader to thy Muse’ (ll.5-6). This can be interpreted as providing further evidence that Jackson was Irish, as he may well have felt privileged to contribute to such a landmark publication which was being printed and sold in London. It was Cooper who first indicated that there was an Irish contingent who were somewhat unimpressed that an Englishman should be employed to write for the Irish stage, and there is a brief allusion to this in Jackson’s verse also, ‘nor dost thou gall the Theatre’

(l.15).²⁹² From this it can be interpreted that there was some fear that Shirley's work would insult the Irish and Old English audience, and that Jackson is relieved this did not occur. There is also that within the verse which indicates Jackson's wonder of the power of theatre, Shirley has written 'proper to each veine | Of Time, Place, Person' (ll.12-13), and Jackson is clearly impressed that 'we may | Be acted every man, yet see thy Play | Invisible, so curious is thy Pen' (ll.15-17). Such expressions were perhaps to be expected from an audience who had little or no previous experience of theatre.

Burner argues that the contributors are young men associated directly with England and/or Wentworth, rather than with Ireland and the Old English/Native Irish population, with the exception of Belling.²⁹³ Yet it is apparent that they are united neither by rank, religion nor nationality: they number Irishmen, Englishmen and a Scot; Protestants and Catholics; dramatists, theatre managers, sailors and politicians. So what was the purpose of garnering support from such a diverse group of contributors? Again, it should be remembered that the overwhelming consideration of a playwright was employment: Shirley had appealed for support to both Wentworth and Kildare, but what influence would they have with the Old Irish contingent of Dublin or, more significantly, with the citizens of London? It has been suggested that the London-based printers collected the verses, but given the diversity of the contributors, their geographic spread and their social status, this explanation is highly

²⁹² 'Gall' – the spirit to resent insult:

http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50091848?query_type=word&queryword=gall&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&search_id=kBFP-14B77q-7965&result_place=4 [accessed 1st May 2007].

²⁹³ Burner, p. 127.

unlikely.²⁹⁴ Yet the verses were collected specifically for the printed editions, so there must have been close collaboration between the printers and those in charge of assembling the verses. It is known that at least two of the commendatory verses were written months after the first performance of the play, as they mention the death of Jonson, which indicates that these verses were appealing to the London audience, and reaffirms the supposition that the play was always intended primarily for the London stage; but for the same edition to sell in both London and Dublin, it was sensible to include the work of men from as diverse backgrounds as possible. Examining the commendatory verses which preface *The Royal Master* is useful because establishing who was writing what and for whom, allows an informed answer to the more pertinent question *why*. Shirley had previously collected numerous commendatory verses for the publication of *The Grateful Servant* (discussed in detail below), and may not have wished to have the same individuals contributing to *The Royal Master* also. The diversity of the men who wrote poems for *The Royal Master* reflects Shirley's comparative isolation from London patronage, in that he needed to look to Ireland to increase the number of commendatory verse contributors. Including poems from men based in, or connected to Ireland, dedicating the play to Kildare, and praising the Lord Deputy also reveals the coterie which was developing around the Werburgh Street Theatre.

²⁹⁴ Stevenson, 'Publishers', p. 160.

Shirley, Davenant and the battle for the Poet Laureateship

Cook argues that flattery evinced in the para-text of plays merely formed part of the contemporary system of patronage.²⁹⁵ However, this argument does not account for the quantity of verses which appear in *The Royal Master*, and equally does not explain why none of Shirley's other 'Irish' plays contained commendatory verses. Further investigation into the function of commendatory verses in the Caroline period is needed. Of the forty-six plays printed between 1625 and 1638 which contained commendatory verses, the average number of verses per play is three.²⁹⁶ The names of twenty-one dramatists appear on this list, and two are conspicuous for consistently printing texts with numerous commendatory verses: James Shirley and Thomas Randolph. Randolph only published two extant volumes himself, *The Jealous Lovers* (1632, with ten commendatory verses) and *Poems with the Muses' Looking Glass* (1638, with eleven commendatory verses), and it could be the small number of his publications which stirred him consistently to collect so many commendatory verses for his work. Shirley's motivation is more problematic as, throughout his career, not only does the quantity of commendatory verses prefixing his plays change, but many have none at all.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ Cook, p. 117.

²⁹⁶ See Appendix Two.

²⁹⁷ *The Wedding* (1629) contains six commendatory verses; *The Grateful Servant* (1630; rep. 1637), ten verses; *The Traitor* (1635), one verse; *The Royal Master* (1638), ten verses; *Poems &c.* (1646), seven verses; *The Cardinal* (1652), one verse.

It has been suggested that the so-called ‘gorgeous gallery of commendatory verses’ in *The Royal Master* was compiled in tribute to the publication of this first ‘momentous play,’ but a broader look at Shirley’s printed work during this period reveals that it was not his only play to receive such lavish treatment.²⁹⁸ In 1637 *The Grateful Servant* was re-printed for Shirley by ‘I. Okes for William Leake’, neither of whom were connected to the Cooke/Crooke partnership which produced *The Royal Master*.²⁹⁹ *The Grateful Servant* was first printed in 1630 (having been licensed 3rd November 1629), and was dedicated to the privy councillor, and great grandson of Sir Philip Sidney, Francis Manners, Earl of Rutland: Rutland died in 1632, but the 1637 edition included the original dedicatory letter which had been addressed to him.³⁰⁰ These editions also contain ten commendatory verses – the same number as found in *The Royal Master* – written by:

John Foxe
 Jo. Hall
 Ja. Sherlio (presumably the Latin form of James Shirley)
 Cha. Aleyn
 Tho. Randolph (verse in Latin)
 Tho. Randolph (verse in English)
 R. Stapylton
 Philip Massenger
 Tho. Craford
 William Habington.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ Stevenson, ‘Publishers’, p. 160.

²⁹⁹ James Shirley, *The Grateful Servant* (London: printed by I. Okes for William Leake, 1637), STC (2nd ed.) / 22445.

³⁰⁰ Harbage, *Annals of English Drama*, p. 128; Walter Wilson Greg, *A List of English Plays written before 1643 and printed before 1700* (London: Blades, East and Blades, 1900), pp. 106-7. A. J. Loomie, ‘Manners, Francis, sixth earl of Rutland (1578–1632)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17953> [accessed 9th May 2007]. See also Clark, p. 113. *The Grateful Servant* (1630), STC (2nd ed.) / 22444; *The Grateful Servant* (1637).

³⁰¹ Gifford, II, pp. 3-5. While Gifford includes the dedication to Francis, Earl of Rutland, and Shirley’s letter to the reader he only says that ‘it was ushered in to the public by eleven commendatory pieces of

It is of crucial significance that the 1637 edition of *The Grateful Servant* appeared just before *The Royal Master*, and that both plays contain such extensive collections of commendatory verses, which immediately suggests a similarity between the plays: perhaps it was the success of *The Grateful Servant* which prompted the collection of commendatory verses for *The Royal Master*. That two plays contained so much prefatory material forces a revision of the assumption that the verses collected for *The Royal Master* indicate that this play was regarded as special because it was the first written for the Irish stage. With the evidence of two separate plays, and only two in Shirley's canon, containing such extensive prefatory material, it must be assumed that an external force to the life of the plays themselves was at work, perhaps it was the contest for becoming Poet Laureate. While scholars have known for years that Shirley was considered for this position, no work has previously been done on how actively he competed for it.³⁰²

Following the death of Ben Jonson, there was a fiercely fought battle for the successor of the Poet Laureate. There were several contenders for the position, and Davenant and Shirley both made concerted efforts to obtain the title. Davenant was in a better geographical position to fight this London-based battle, and it is apparent that

poetry, by Randolph, Massinger, Stapylton, and others; these have been already given'. In volume IV, Gifford does not even mention the commendatory verses, p. 102. William Habington also wrote a commendatory verse for Shirley's *The Wedding* (1629; repr. 1633) STC (2nd ed.) / 22460 and 22461. In 1636 Habington was considered for the post of the Queen's agent in Rome, however, the position went to another candidate who was supported by patrons of William Davenant - Henry Jermyn and Tobie Mathew, see Burner, p. 98; Gifford, I, pp. lxix-lxxii.

³⁰² Luow mentions that Shirley was considered for the position of Poet Laureate, p. 99. Neither Nason nor Burner comment upon this circumstance.

Shirley's residence in Ireland placed him at a distinct disadvantage for obtaining the support of influential members of the English court. There has been some critical debate about the establishment of the position of Poet Laureate, and interest has been shown in ascertaining whether or not Davenant obtained this position.³⁰³ The crux of the debate is that the first Poet Laureate to have his title conferred by letters patent was Dryden; in these letters Davenant was recognised as his predecessor, although there is no record that Davenant himself received such letters.³⁰⁴ The records of Davenant's position state that on the 13th December 1638 – sixteen months after Jonson's death – he was to be granted an annuity of one hundred pounds (Ben Jonson had originally been granted one hundred marks per annum, but this was increased to one hundred pounds in 1630), yet there is no direct indication that Davenant's allowance was connected to the office of laureate.³⁰⁵ However, W. Forbes Gray argues that the existence of Jonson's pension means that he had held the position of Poet Laureate, even though no official documentation was produced to confirm this. By granting Davenant the same rights as those afforded to Jonson, and expecting the same duties to be performed, Davenant thus also enjoyed the position of Poet Laureate, without official documentation.³⁰⁶ Therefore, although the recognised title of 'Poet Laureate'

³⁰³ A history of the laureateship can be found in Wiltshire Stanton Austin and John Ralph, *The lives of the poets-laureate: with an introductory essay on the title and office* (London: R. Bentley, 1853); Edmund Kemper Broadus, *The Laureateship: a study of the office of poet laureate in Britain, with some account of the poets* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1921). For a discussion about how little can be deduced from frontispiece portraits see Richard Helgerson, *Self-crowned laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the literary system* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 255-6. For a discussion on Davenant's claim to the laureateship, see Edmond, pp. 73-4.

³⁰⁴ 27th January, 1640-1, *Calendar of Treasury Books*, 1669-72.

³⁰⁵ Edmond, p. 73; Austin, p. 72; Maidment and Logan, p. xxxiv. Davenant's annuity was back-dated to 25th March 1638, *CSPD*, 1638-9, p. 161.

³⁰⁶ W. Forbes Gray, *The Poet Laureates of England: their history and their odes* (London: Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1912), pp. 20 and 38. Gray argues further that Davenant's main rival for this position was Thomas May, and that the circumstances of the burial of these two men provides further evidence that

was not made official until Dryden's appointment, both Jonson and Davenant were, essentially, Poet Laureates in all but name, as they fulfilled the function of this position, and were paid for doing so.³⁰⁷ What is most significant for the purposes of this discussion is the time lapse between Jonson's death and the appointment of the new laureate. It has been suggested that Henrietta-Maria personally involved herself in the issue, and that it was her support of Davenant which eventually secured the position for him.³⁰⁸

The numerous verses collated for *The Royal Master*, combined with the judicious reprint of *The Grateful Servant*, strongly suggest that Shirley made a concerted effort to raise his profile, and showcase his supporters, in a conscious attempt to win the coveted position. The verses in *The Grateful Servant* praise Shirley's writing abilities, whereas the main theme which pervades the verses of *The Royal Master* is that 'vote' (prayer or petition), and justice, will prevail in honour of Shirley. These two plays formed the central part of a spectacular campaign to show the support which Shirley already enjoyed, and to encourage further assistance with his bid to become Laureate. Yet Shirley's efforts were unsuccessful, and the position was ultimately awarded to William Davenant in 1638. Perhaps it was this failure to gain the laureateship which inspired the, now often quoted, lines at the beginning of *The*

Davenant held the position of Poet Laureate: May fulfilled some of the duties of the Laureate for Parliament during the Interregnum, when Davenant was a fugitive, and he was buried in Westminster in 1650, but during the Restoration his body was removed and the grave was replaced with Davenant's remains, see p. 39.

³⁰⁷ Dutton argues that Jonson held the post of Poet Laureate in effect, if not in name, "Patronage, Licensing, and Censorship", in Donna B. Hamilton (ed.), *A Concise Companion to English Renaissance Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006), pp. 75-93: 80.

³⁰⁸ Austin, p. 118.

Maids Revenge, 'I never affected the ways of flattery: some say I have lost my preferment, by not practising that Court sinne'.³⁰⁹ Burner argues that it was Shirley's inclination to 'preach' to his audience which led to his failure to gain the Poet Laureateship, but this is a flagrant over-simplification of the situation, and it is much more likely that Shirley did not gain this position because he had not published enough *poems*.³¹⁰ Another contributing reason for this lack of success could have been his residence in Ireland, and Shirley may well have decided to remain in Dublin only after losing the position to Davenant.

It is, then, important to examine who contributed to *The Grateful Servant*, which is a much easier task than identifying those who wrote prefatory verses for *The Royal Master*; as many of them were, and are, well-known names and there has been greater scholastic interest in the compilation of the earlier play. That so much more attention has been paid to the contributors of the para-text of *The Grateful Servant* is presumably because of the circumstances surrounding the publication of this text, as part of the war-of-words between rival factions of the literary community in the 1630s, whereas the unusual quantity of verses prefacing *The Royal Master* has generally been written-off by scholars as merely celebrating the first play to have been written for the Irish stage. Understanding who contributed to *The Grateful Servant* allows a fuller picture of Shirley's campaign to become Poet Laureate.

³⁰⁹ Shirley, *The Maid's Revenge*, sig. A3^r.

³¹⁰ Burner, p. 103.

Jerome de Groot lists William Habington, Thomas Randolph and Robert Stapleton as belonging to the ‘Shirley circle’, and emphasises their Catholic connections/inclinations.³¹¹ Randolph was a friend of Ben Jonson, while Stapleton and Massinger were fellow playwrights, and Charles Ayleyn was a poet, so understanding the motives behind their contributions is unproblematic.³¹² Habington presents a more interesting case; in 1629 he wrote commendatory verses for both Shirley’s *The Wedding* and for Davenant’s *The Tragedy of Albovine*.³¹³ Davenant and Shirley were on opposite sides of the literary debate, and the battle lines had been drawn. It would appear that Habington eventually chose to side with Davenant and the court dramatists, as in 1638 he contributed a commendatory verse to Davenant’s first collection of poems *Madagascar*: it is significant that Davenant focused on producing a collection of poems, while Shirley published only drama at this time.³¹⁴ Ira Clark provides a fascinating exploration of the relationship between four playwrights, Massinger, Carew, Brome and Shirley. Clark’s research shows that these men espoused each

³¹¹ Jerome de Groot, ‘Coteries, complications and the question of female agency’ in Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders (eds), *The 1630s: Interdisciplinary essays on culture and politics in the Caroline era* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 189-209: 198.

³¹² W. H. Kelliher, ‘Randolph, Thomas (bap. 1605, d. 1635)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23123> [accessed 17th July 2008]; L. G. Kelly, ‘Stapleton, Sir Robert (1607x9?–1669)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26305> [accessed 17th July 2008]; Martin Garrett, ‘Massinger, Philip (1583–1640)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2007 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18306> [accessed 17th July 2008]; Eleri Larkum, ‘Ayleyn, Charles (d. 1640)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/339> [accessed 17th July 2008]. See also Clark, p. 113. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is a link between other members of the coterie and Shirley’s publisher: in 1634 William Cooke published Stapleton’s translation of the fourth book of the *Aeneid* (see de Groot, p. 198), and in 1640 Cooke published *Observacōns upon history & c.* by Habington, see Edward Arber, *A Transcript of the Registers of the worshipful Company of Stationers*, 3 vols (London: privately printed, 1913), I, p. 2.

³¹³ Robert Wilcher, ‘Habington, William (1605–1654)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11833> [accessed 17th July 2008].

³¹⁴ Shirley’s collection *Poems &c.* was published in 1646.

other's cause professionally, often writing a commendatory verse for the work of their colleagues. He refers to the divide between the professional and the courtier playwrights: Massinger and Carew heatedly argued about drama through the medium of a poetic exchange, Brome satirized the courtiers, and Shirley 'lost the laureateship to Davenant'.³¹⁵ The support which playwrights gave each other is referred to in the poem which Francis Butler wrote for *The Royal Master*, where he claims that 'for the most part' (l.2) plays are published 'with verses frontispic'd' (l.3) to praise the author of the play.

There is evidence which indicates that the appointment of the new Poet Laureate in 1637 was far from being a foregone conclusion. Although the title was eventually awarded to Davenant, Aurelian Townsend, Thomas May, Thomas Carew and Shirley were all strong contenders for the eminent position: it is claimed that May was so incensed that he was overlooked for the position that he metamorphosed from a strong supporter of the king into one of his enemies.³¹⁶ Davenant's publications at this time indicate that he, too, was involved in an active campaign to win the title. Ira Clark argues that while Shirley would have been a likely successor to Jonson, it was

³¹⁵ Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, p. 4.

³¹⁶ Arthur H. Nethercot, *Sir William D'Avenant: Poet laureate and playwright-manager* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), p. 118. Sir John Suckling's poem *A Sessions of the Poets* (written 1637, see Edmond, pp. 73-4) jestingly includes Sir Kenelm Digby, Endymion Porter and Walter Montague on the list of contenders, see John Suckling, *Fragmenta aurea. A collection of all the incomparable peeces, written by Sir John Suckling. And published by a friend to perpetuate his memory. Printed by his owne copies.* (London: printed [by Ruth Raworth and Tho. Walkley] for Humphrey Moseley, and are to be sold at his shop, at the signe of the Princes Armes in St Pauls Churchyard, 1646), Wing / S6126. Jonson's death resulted in Shirley obtaining the patronage of the Earl of Newcastle, and while this may have been financially more rewarding, it lacked the prestige of the laureateship, see Harbage, p. 75; James Maidment and W. H. Logan, *The Dramatic Works of Sir William D'Avenant*, 5 vols (New York: Russell and Russell Inc., 1872; repr. 1964), I, p. xxxiii; Gray, p. 38.

Davenant's vigorous quest for support, and the approval of the court, which secured his appointment.³¹⁷ In the year 1638 Davenant's publications comprised two plays, *The Unfortunate Lovers* and *The Fair Favourite*, the publication of his first collection of poems, and the production of two court masques, *Britannia Triumphans* and *Luminalia*.³¹⁸ This is an impressive output for a single year (which also included three performances of *The Unfortunate Lovers*, which was licensed on 16th April 1638), and the publication of the volume of poems, in particular, suggests that this multi-publication of his work was carefully timed to support his, ultimately successful, bid for the Poet Laureateship: Burner argues that his cause was strengthened by the presentation of *Britannia Triumphans* during the Ship Money trial, as the drama upholds the naval policy of the crown.³¹⁹ The volume in question, *Madagascar; with other poems*, is notable for the fact that it contains dual dedications to Endymion Porter and Henry Jermyn, who were powerful patrons. Although he never wielded any serious political influence, Porter was well known as the most prominent of Charles's grooms of the bedchamber, and he played a significant part in matters of cultural patronage, regularly receiving numerous letters from suitors seeking the king's favour: his family was also closely associated with Davenant.³²⁰ Jermyn (or Germain) had entered Henrietta-Maria's household as a gentleman usher in 1627, eventually rising to the position of Master of the Queen's Horse in 1639. Jermyn was well known in the

³¹⁷ Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, p. 112.

³¹⁸ Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, The Revels Plays Companion Library (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), p. 63.

³¹⁹ The play was performed before the Queen and Court on 23rd April at Blackfriars, at Whitehall in May and Hampton Court in September, see Edmond, p. 67; Burner, p. 91.

³²⁰ Ronald G. Asch, 'Porter, Endymion (1587–1649)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22562> [accessed 21st July 2008].

court for his close relationship with the queen, and for his influence over her.³²¹ Thus, through these dedications, Davenant was currying the favour of those who surrounded both Charles and Henrietta-Maria. The volume contains five commendatory poems contributed by Endymion Porter, Thomas Carew and Habington, with two by Sir John Suckling, and Mary Edmond notes that within the collection seven poems are addressed to Porter, one famous piece to his wife, and five to the queen.³²² Edmond also explains that the title, *Madagascar*, was chosen in honour of Prince Rupert: in 1636 the prince arrived in England to visit his brother, Prince Charles, and there was a suggestion that he should lead an expedition to Madagascar to conquer the island and establish an English colony.³²³ Given that it would have taken Davenant some time to compile a complete volume of poetry, the sheer number of verses which are addressed to the queen and Porter are indicative that the timing of its publication was not circumstantial. Yet it is the last poem in the collection which is most indicative of Davenant's true motivation for publishing his work at this time. This poem is entitled 'To Doctor Duppa, Deane of Christ Church and Tutor to the Prince [of Wales]. An acknowledgement for his collection, in Honour of Ben. Johnson's memory'. Brian Duppa had collected together a volume of poems in memory of Jonson which was printed in 1638.³²⁴ Davenant did not contribute a poem to Duppa's collection, and Edmond believes that this may have been because he did not wish to appear

³²¹ Anthony R. J. S. Adolph, 'Jermyn, Henry, earl of St Albans (*bap.* 1605, *d.* 1684)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14780> [accessed 21st July 2008].

³²² Edmond, p. 69.

³²³ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

³²⁴ Brian Duppa, *Ionsonus virbius: or, The memorie of Ben: Iohnson revived by the friends of the Muses* (London: Printed by E. P[urslowe] for Henry Seile, and are to be sold at his shop, at the Tygers Head in Fleet Street, over-against Saint Dunstons Church, 1638), STC (2nd ed.) / 14784. Given his propensity to contributing verses, finding a verse composed by W. [H]abington in the collection is almost predictable.

sycophantic before he was assured that he would succeed Jonson as laureate, she uses lines from Davenant's poem to Duppa to support this theory, 'I now mayerne by Bayes | without the taint of flatterie in prayse' (ll. 39-40).³²⁵ By placing the poem addressed to Duppa at the very end of his collection, Davenant is ensuring that the last impression left by his publication is his association with Jonson – along with other Caroline poets, such as Herrick and Carew, Davenant visited Jonson throughout his final illness until his death – an implicit reminder of his suitability for the position of Poet Laureate.³²⁶

The time lapse between Jonson's death and Davenant's appointment can help with untangling the question of the date of *The Grateful Servant's* publication. Earlier in this discussion, Nason's argument that Shirley's second visit to London, in the spring of 1638, was intended solely as a business trip to arrange for the publication of his plays appeared most plausible, yet *The Grateful Servant* was reprinted the year before, in 1637, and so does not fit into this theory. It is probable that in 1637 Shirley grasped the opportunity presented to him by Jonson's death to make a concerted effort to obtain the post of laureate, and he began this campaign by quickly issuing instructions for the reprinting of *The Grateful Servant*: it is most likely that this play was selected because of its commendatory verses, which showed the support which Shirley enjoyed amongst the literary community in London. Given the delay in appointing a new laureate, Shirley's second trip to London to publish his plays can be

³²⁵ Edmond, pp. 73-4.

³²⁶ Ibid., p. 72.

interpreted as his final push to try to win the position. This argument gains weight when Shirley's other publications from the year 1637 are considered, as it is plausible to suppose that at least some of the 1637 publications were part of Shirley's bid for the laureateship. The following table provides details of the print history of Shirley's work which is dated 1637:

Title of play	Date licensed for performance	Date entered in Stationer's Register	Details of first printing	Details of second printing
<i>The School of Compliment (Love Tricks)</i>	11 th February 1624/5	25 th February 1630/1	1631 – Printed by Elizabeth Alde for Francis Constable	1637 – Printed by John Haviland for Francis Constable
<i>The Grateful Servant</i>	3 rd November 1629	26 th February 1630	1630 – Printed by Bernard Alsop and Thomas Fawcet for John Grove	1637 – Printed By I. Okes for William Leake
<i>Hyde Park</i>	20 th April 1632	13 th April 1637	1637 – Printed by Thomas Cotes for Andrew Crooke and William Cooke	
<i>The Young Admiral</i>	3 rd July 1633	13 th April 1637	1637 – Printed by Thomas Cotes for Andrew Crooke and William Cooke	
<i>The Gamester</i>	11 th November 1633	15 th November 1637	1637 – Printed by John Norton for Andrew Crooke and William Cooke	
<i>The Example</i>	24 th June 1634	18 th October 1637	1637 – Printed by John Norton for Andrew Crooke and William Cooke	
<i>The Lady of Pleasure</i>	15 th October 1635	13 th April 1637	1637 - Printed by Thomas Cotes for Andrew Crooke and William Cooke	
<i>The Royal Master</i>	23 rd April 1638	13 th March 1637/8	1638 – Printed by T. Cotes to be sold by John Crooke and Richard Serger in London	1638 – Printed by T. Cotes to be sold by Thomas Allot and Edmond Crooke in Dublin

On 25th September 1637 John Grove transferred his rights to *The Grateful Servant* (along with the rights to several other texts) to William Leake, which means that the play was reprinted after this date.³²⁷ The reasons surrounding the reprinting of *The School of Compliment* are now obscure, and all that is certain is that Francis Constable held the rights over this text from 1631 to 1637. As Stevenson has identified, the partnership between Crooke and Cooke was established at this time, and the table above reveals that they changed printers from Thomas Cotes at the beginning of 1637, to John Norton by the end of the year, yet curiously engaged the services of Cotes for the printing of *The Royal Master*. Perhaps this apparent transfer of printers is coincidental, and Crooke/Cooke consistently engaged both printers to cover a greater volume of work. It is worth noting that while the title-pages of all the other plays in the table state for whom the play has been printed (they provide the name of the publisher), the title-pages of *The Royal Master* omit the name of the publisher/s and instead provide details of who is to *sell* the copies.

A chronology of events could have occurred as follows: in spring 1637 Shirley journeyed from Dublin to London, incorporating during this trip arrangements for the publication of *Hyde Park*, *The Young Admiral* and *The Lady of Pleasure* (all entered into the Stationer's Register on 13th April 1637). Upon hearing the news of Jonson's death in August, Shirley realised that he stood a good chance of winning the laureateship, and decided to raise his profile in London by the fastest means possible –

³²⁷ McKerrow, p. 118.

reprinting one his existing plays. *The Grateful Servant* was chosen because of its prefatory material, and from Ireland Shirley issued instructions to his publisher, John Grove, who had already printed this play. It is possible that by the time the instructions were issued by Shirley (or rather by the time they were received from Ireland) Grove had already transferred his rights over to William Leake. If Shirley was unhappy with this arrangement it could have prompted him to transfer the rest of his publications to the Crooke/Cooke partnership, it is equally possible that although the Crooke/Cooke collaboration had already been established, Grove/Leake held exclusive rights to *The Grateful Servant*, and the reprinting of this play had to be organised through this channel regardless of any publishing arrangements which Shirley later made. Assuming that *The Grateful Servant* was reprinted soon after 25th September, the publication of *The Example* (Stationer's Register 18th October) and *The Gamester* (Stationer's Register 15th November) followed rapidly. The time which elapsed between the April publications and the autumn publications indicates that some event or circumstance triggered another spate of printing in the latter part of the year. It is then clear that *The Grateful Servant*, *The Example* and *The Gamester* were specifically printed as part of Shirley's campaign to become the Poet Laureate. Although in the prefatory material of *The Grateful Servant* many Englishmen can be easily identified, the contributors to *The Royal Master* come from much more diverse backgrounds. The emphasis placed upon gaining Irish contributors indicates that while Shirley's main intention may have been to foster support for his bid to become Poet Laureate, he was also aware of the need to negotiate the troubled waters of Anglo-Irish relations which impacted upon the Werburgh Street Theatre. Indeed,

Shirley could have little anticipated the prophetic quality of his penultimate couplet addressed to Wentworth:

Till for your Royall Master, and this Ile,
Your deeds have fild a Chronicle.³²⁸

The unprecedented circumstance of the simultaneous publication of two editions of *The Royal Master* can be more fully understood in light of the battle for the laureateship. Burner suggests that the commendatory verses indicate Shirley's desire to return to England, as he viewed his residence in Ireland as temporary, yet while Shirley was desperate to raise his profile in London – and had everything to play for until Davenant's position was secured on 13th December 1638 – he was also conscious of his need for a contingency plan if he were forced to remain in Ireland.³²⁹ Selling copies of the play which were specifically targeted at two separate reading audiences ensured that Shirley covered all possible bases.

Conclusion

There are three remarkable aspects of the print history of *The Royal Master*: it was the first play ever to be simultaneously printed and sold, as two distinct editions, in both London and Dublin; it was prefaced with an impressive collection of commendatory verses; it was the first play to be performed expressly on the Irish stage. The sale of the play in both London and Dublin was an unprecedented event, and heralded the beginning of international print franchise. The circumstances surrounding the printing

³²⁸ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. L3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 188.

³²⁹ Burner, p. 127.

of the text have brought to light a fascinating relationship between a playwright and his publishers. Shirley's two return trips to England, in early 1637 and 1638, were almost certainly entirely devoted to business – the first to set up an agreement with Crooke and Cooke to publish some existing plays during his absence in Ireland, the second to press home his suit to become Poet Laureate. The dedication of *The Royal Master* is fascinating: the battle for the laureateship was not concluded by the time the play went to press, yet Shirley chose to dedicate it to Ireland's first peer, the Earl of Kildare. This appeal for Old English patronage was tempered by the Epistle Dedicatory being addressed to the English Lord Deputy for Ireland, Thomas Wentworth. Shirley was thus trying to make his work attractive to both English and Irish audiences, through his dedications as well as through the specifics of the publication of this play. Although the Irish audience was comparatively small (both spectators and readers), Shirley felt that it was worth his while to invest in trying to win over this audience to his work, which could be interpreted as revealing his uncertainty that the laureateship would be awarded to him.

Shirley reacted swiftly to the death of Jonson, by reprinting an old play (*The Grateful Servant*), ordering the first printing of his existing plays (*The Example* and *The Gamester*) and finally publishing a new play, which had the distinction of being the first play to be written for the Irish stage (*The Royal Master*). However, the position required the functions of a poet, and it was probably his failure to publish any of his own poetry which meant that he lost the position to Davenant. While the

commendatory verses showcased the support which Shirley enjoyed, they did not exhibit his own poetic talents. Shirley had time between Jonson's demise and the printing of *The Royal Master* to put together a special publication. He effectively bought the time to do this by printing existing plays to maintain his public profile in London. He was geographically restricted when it came to obtaining contributions for a collection of prefatory verses to his play, which is reflected in the high density of Irish-based authors. Yet while this Irish dominance in the para-text of his play was circumstantial, it served the purpose of targeting the Dublin audience for support of his future work. While Shirley fought for the title of Poet Laureate, he was also very conscious that the result could be negative, and he carefully set up a contingency plan for what he hoped would be his future success in Ireland.

Chapter Three: *The Royal Master*

Although the contributors of the commendatory verses which preface *The Royal Master* indicate that Shirley had already taken into consideration his Irish audience, the play was not written for the Irish stage, but it was the first new play to be performed at the Werburgh Street Theatre. As such, the play's themes, characters, and the topics it discusses, reflected Shirley's engagement with the London audience. Therefore, a textual study of the play in relation to the Irish stage is most valuable as a comparative tool, to demonstrate Shirley's increasingly engagement with his Dublin audience in his later Irish plays.

Andrew Wright, *The Royal Master's* earliest extant critic (c. 1655), described the play as:

an indifferent play both for plot and lines. Montalto for a politician and Domitilla for a chast...spirited lady good parts [*sic*].³³⁰

This analysis incorporates three of four main considerations for the audience of a Caroline play: a good plot, memorable lines or phrases, and 'stock' characters. The date of Wright's comments indicates that he was a reader of the play, which could

³³⁰ British Library Additional Manuscript 22,608, A. W., *Excerpta quaedam*, sig. 114^f. For a discussion of Wright and his manuscript see James G. McManaway, 'Excerpta Quaedam per A. W. Adolescentem' in Thomas P. Harrison, Archibald A. Hill, Ernest C. Mossner and James Sledd (eds), *Studies in Honor of DeWitt T. Starnes* (Austin: The University of Texas, 1967), pp. 117-129.

account for his not mentioning the fourth consideration, visual spectacle.³³¹ Of these four points, ‘stock’ characters is the most complex. If an audience is able to identify readily characters such as the lovers, the Fool or the villain, then the audience are more likely to grasp the plot quickly, which is a distinct advantage for a dramatist. Yet ‘stock’ characters also provided another function in the drama of this period, as indicated by a letter written by Wentworth to his wife on 16th August 1637. At this time, the Lord Deputy was engaged upon a progress of the southern provinces of Ireland, partly with the intention of extending the plantations as far as Clare and Limerick.³³² Wentworth was lavishly entertained by the towns he visited, although these entertainments were not wholly adulatory, as reported in his letter:

here the toune hath entertained us with the force of
Oratory, and the furve of Poetry, and rather taught me
what I should be than told me what I am.³³³

This demonstrates that Irish entertainment during this period also included archetypes of behaviour: Wentworth was not offered a flattering portrayal of himself, but rather an exemplary model of the man he could be. In *The Ball*, Shirley showed his ability for writing recognisable depictions of real people, but Wright’s comments reveal that he was equally capable of creating the ‘stock’ characters expected by an audience. More

³³¹ Wright seems to have an avid reader of plays during the 1650s, and while none of his comments contain references to earlier performances, he consistently demonstrates a preoccupation with the points he raised in the above quotation: ‘Othello, by Shakespeare. A very good play both for lines and plot’, ‘Hamlet, a Tragedie by Shakespeare. But an indifferent play, y^e lines but weake and in nothing like Othello. Hamlet is an indifferent good part for a mad man’, sig. 84^v and 85^v. However, Shirley seems to have been Wright’s favourite dramatist, and he also wrote notes about *The Grateful Servant; Changes, or Love in a Maze; The School of Complement; The Wedding, The Bird in a Cage; Hyde Park; The Young Admiral, and The Lady of Pleasure*.

³³² Burner, p. 114; Wedgwood, *First Earl of Strafford*, p. 227.

³³³ *Private Letters from the Earl of Strafford to his Third Wife*, I, p. 21.

significantly, Wentworth's letter shows how entertainment could also function didactically, surely a quality he appreciated in his resident dramatist, who formed part of the Lord Deputy's plan to 'civilise' the 'wild' Irish.³³⁴ Shirley's successful interweaving of model behaviour in a play whose primary function was to entertain, has caused a modern critic to describe the play as 'inoffensively moralistic'.³³⁵

The Royal Master was the first of Shirley's plays to be performed on the Irish stage, but it does not necessarily follow that the play was written specifically for an Irish audience, nor that it was intended to encompass distinctively Irish concerns. It is unlikely that between the closing of the London theatres (12th May 1636) and Shirley's arrival in Dublin (23rd November 1636) the playwright was idly awaiting the reopening of the theatres. It is much more probable that Shirley was working on a new play during this period, which would be 'expected with the first, when the English Stage shall bee recovered from her long silence'.³³⁶ Indeed, it would have been almost impossible for Shirley to have composed an entirely new play in the month between his arrival in Dublin, and the first performance of *The Royal Master* for the New Year celebrations 1636/7, and there would not have been enough rehearsal time if he had.³³⁷ It is possible that Shirley spent this month adapting his play to suit better the tastes of the Dublin audience, but care must be taken by scholars examining this play not to

³³⁴ Fynes Moryson, *An History of Ireland, from the year 1599 to 1603*, 2 vols (Dublin: printed by S. Powell for George Ewing at the Angel and Bible in Dame-street, 1735; c.1617), II, p. 378. For a discussion about the 'civilisation' of Ireland during the early modern period see Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (eds), *Representing Ireland: Literature and the origins of conflict, 1534-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 8-10.

³³⁵ Lucow, p. 139.

³³⁶ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. A2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 103.

³³⁷ Sterne, p. 121.

read it solely through the paradigm of Irish colonial interests. Fletcher also cautions against assuming that this play was written to commemorate the theatre's opening, and suggests three possible dates for its first performance in Dublin: late 1637, a little before New Year's Day 1638, or very early 1638.³³⁸ He reasons further that the play must have been performed after 9th August 1637, as one of the dedicatory verses refers to the death of Ben Jonson. In fact, two of the commendatory verses refer to this event but, as has previously been argued, there is no evidence that these verses were composed at the time of the first performance, rather than for publication.³³⁹ *The Royal Master* may have the distinction of being the first play 'written for' the Werburgh Street Theatre, but it remains, in essence, a play composed for the English stage.

Political context

The issues raised in *The Royal Master* addressed primarily English concerns, but the play is useful for establishing which topics were of interest to Shirley at the beginning of his residence in Ireland, and to allow a comparison with his later 'Irish' plays, to understand how he later altered components of his drama to try to appeal to the audience of the Werburgh Street Theatre. One of the key features of Charles's reign was his policy of Personal Rule, and it is, therefore, unsurprising that issues surrounding the Royal prerogative became a dramatic focal point during the 1630s.³⁴⁰

³³⁸ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 272.

³³⁹ The verses by Dru. Cooper and W. Markham make direct reference to Jonson's death.

³⁴⁰ Albert H. Tricomi, *Anticourt Drama in England 1603-1642* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), p. 173.

Issues of government and counsel, of marriages and alliances, were of intrinsic importance.

In 1616, the courtier John Holles wrote the following in a letter of advice to his son, ‘courtiers merchandise is matter of state, what factions be up, what down, the reasons thereof’.³⁴¹ Zachary Lesser explains that this advice reveals Holles’s belief that a courtier must be flexible with regard to which faction he supported, and that nothing was of greater value to a courtier than knowledge of the matters of state.³⁴² The fundamental issue which *The Royal Master* discusses is counsel. A king relied upon his counsellors to advise him on decisions regarding state matters, so the integrity of these men, and the advice they gave, was of paramount importance to the governance of a realm. Shirley’s exploration of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ counsel reflected the political situation of the 1630s in England, of which Wentworth formed a part. Charles’s appointment of Wentworth as Lord Deputy of Ireland suggests that he trusted Wentworth’s abilities to reform Ireland. However, Wentworth feared that this placement meant that Charles did not value his counsel, and he was continually troubled by a consideration of who currently had the King’s ear.³⁴³

³⁴¹ P. R. Seddon (ed.), *Letters of John Holles 1587-1637*, 3 vols, *Thoroton Society Record Series*, vol. XXXI (Nottingham: Derry and Sons Ltd., 1975), I, p. 118.

³⁴² Zachary Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication: Readings in the English Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 158.

³⁴³ Sharpe, pp. 139-40.

Plot and sources

Marvin T. Herrick describes *The Royal Master* as being Shirley's best tragicomedy, with the caveat that it is closer to being a tragedy than a comedy, thereby challenging Nason's earlier claim that the play demonstrates 'Shirley's ablest work in romantic comedy'.³⁴⁴ The main plot revolves around the court of Naples.³⁴⁵ The King wishes to marry his sister, Theodosia, to the Duke of Florence; however, a courtier, Montalto, wields great power in Naples, and wishes to marry Theodosia himself. Montalto's plan is foiled by the actions of his rival (the 'banished' courtier Riviero), who returns to Naples in disguise, and is restored to his former position as a high-ranking courtier, by the end of the play. The sub-plot of the play centres on the pastoral romance of a nobly-born maiden, Domitilla. The King woos Domitilla with the objective of wedding her to Montalto, but she misconstrues his intentions, and falls in love with the King. Domitilla and her mother move from the country to the court, where the King (by offering her a position as his mistress) successfully destroys her love for him. The play ends with the exposure of Montalto's schemes, and the forthcoming dual nuptials of the Duke and Theodosia, and of Domitilla and Riviero's son, Octavio.

C. M. Gayley suggests that the main action in *The Royal Master* is drawn heavily from the seventh *novella* of the tenth day of *The Decameron*.³⁴⁶ Forsythe

³⁴⁴ Marvin T. Herrick, *Tragicomedy: Its Origin and Development in Italy, France and England* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955), pp. 300 and 316; Nason, p. 292.

³⁴⁵ For a full synopsis of the plot of *The Royal Master*, see Gayley, pp. 557-8; Lucow, p. 108-110; Nason, pp. 293-299.

³⁴⁶ Gayley, p. 548.

observes that parallels can also be drawn between Shirley's play and the plots of *The Great Duke of Florence* (Massinger, licensed 5th June 1627, published 1636) and *A Maidenhead Well Lost* (Heywood, 1634).³⁴⁷ A. L. Stiefel suggests that the theme of avoiding the king in *The Royal Master* can be linked to a similar theme in a Spanish play, Lope de Vega's *El villano en su rincón*: Luciano García develops this idea by offering a convincing argument that Shirley appropriated aspects of *El villano en su rincón*.³⁴⁸ There are elements of Bombo's behaviour (discussed in detail later in this chapter) which are derived from a Spanish source, which does not overlap either French or Italian plots. Shirley's love of, and familiarity with, Spanish literature was probably formed during his years at Oxford.³⁴⁹

The Royal Master was clearly intended for the London stage both at the time of composition, and after its first Irish performance: Shirley must have been writing in the period following the closure of the London theatres due to plague, and there is evidence within the printed editions which elucidates Shirley's intention for future performances of the play. The London theatres reopened in October 1637, which confirms that the play was first performed in Ireland on New Year's Day 1636/7, rather than 1637/8, because it would be extremely unlikely for Shirley's prologue

³⁴⁷ Forsythe, p. 206.

³⁴⁸ Stiefel's comments can be found in Luciano García, 'The Motif of the Reluctance to see the King in Lope de Vega's *El Villano En Su Rincón* and James Shirley's *The Royal Master*', Review of English Studies, vol. 54, no. 215, (June, 2003), pp. 365-385: 365. Also see García, p. 384.

³⁴⁹ For Shirley's love of Spanish literature see Gayley, p. 558; Burner, p. 120; Forsythe, pp. 10-11. For a discussion of how Shirley used other plays for inspiration, see Forsythe, pp. 48-51 and 116-149.

(printed 1638) to refer to the anticipated end of the English stage's 'long silence' if the performance of plays there had already commenced.³⁵⁰

Shirley blurs the lines of fiction and reality

Before 1636, Shirley had a history of basing some of his characters and plot-lines upon real courtiers and political events. The circumstances surrounding the licensing of *The Ball* (as detailed in Chapter One) exemplify this tendency. Bentley suggests that *The Ball*, *Hyde Park*, *The Gamester*, *The Example* and *The Lady of Pleasure* (all written for the Queen's Men between 1632-5) formed a set of fairly realistic comedies about London's social elite. He observes that all of these plays include satiric characterizations, and that they were all close observations of London life in the early 1630s.³⁵¹ Adolphus William Ward suggests that the intention of *The Ball* was to comment upon the scandalous reports which were circulating about attempts to create the first Subscription Balls.³⁵² Sir Henry Herbert's insistence that *The Ball* be re-written before he licensed it means that the text available today is a blander version than Shirley initially intended. However, even this diluted edition allowed the audience to appreciate local and personal allusions, as is strongly suggested by the evidence that *The Ball* did not appear with *The Example*, *Hyde Park*, and *The Lady of Pleasure* on the protected repertory list of the Cockpit in August 1639, nor is there any

³⁵⁰ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. A2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 103.

³⁵¹ Bentley, *JCS*, V, p. 1079. Harbage specifies that *Hyde Park* and *The Gamester* exploit the foibles of the elite, see *Cavalier Drama*, p. 78; Butler, 'City comedies: courtiers and gentlemen', in *Theatre and Crisis*, pp. 141-180, especially pp. 142 and 173-4.

³⁵² Quoted by Nason, p. 233.

record of later performances, or adaptations.³⁵³ This might indicate that the characters and plot were so highly topical in November 1632 that these particulars did not translate well to later audiences, when memories of specific events had faded. During Shirley's time at the Cockpit, the repertoire was always closely aligned to the court and court affairs. This was because the élite audience which the theatre attracted required that the plays staged there had to be similarly exclusive, rather than having a broader social appeal.³⁵⁴ The set of London comedies listed above shows that Shirley was attuned to his socio-political climate, and the example of *The Ball* shows that he used parodies of identifiable people to create characters within his plays, and to appeal to his audience. Shirley also used political situations as inspiration for his writing, such as *The Triumph of Peace* (1634) which dealt with the soap monopoly.³⁵⁵ These examples show that Shirley had made a habit of referring to real-life figures and events in his work, and this blurring of the lines between fiction and reality in his previous writing encourages a similar reading of *The Royal Master*: although far from being exact representations, aspects of characters within the play can be compared to real-life figures. Alfred Harbage even goes so far as to suggest that Shirley's example, of writing about realistic people and events, was then copied by courtier playwrights, such as William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle in *The Variety* and *The Country Captain* (printed together in 1649 and possibly written with Shirley's help), and Thomas Killigrew's *The Parson's Wedding* (1637).³⁵⁶

³⁵³ Ibid., p. 237; Bentley, *JCS*, V, p. 1079.

³⁵⁴ Gurr, *The Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 421.

³⁵⁵ Tricomi, p. 170.

³⁵⁶ Harbage, *Annals of English Drama*, p. 142.

The King's authority in *The Royal Master*

Lucow's description of the stress which Shirley consistently placed on a monarch's authority over social order is exactly the reading of Caroline drama which Martin Butler cautioned against three years after the publication of Lucow's book.³⁵⁷ Butler argues that drama from this period is strongest when it questions long-held opinions, and engages with the contradictions inherent in living in a time of such uncertainty and change: there is that within *The Royal Master* which allows a questioning of the decision-making process.³⁵⁸ Butler is careful to indicate that the main problem facing Charles in the 1630s was not the matter of his authority, but of his method of governance, and that solutions to this difficulty were repeatedly played out through the dramatic fiction of the period: the question of government is one which underlies the main plot of *The Royal Master*.³⁵⁹ Near the beginning of Act I, the mechanism of bestowing favours upon courtiers is described by Octavio: 'The King himselfe for his [Montalto's] sake gracing me | With title of his bed-chamber'.³⁶⁰ The web of court patronage is thus revealed: Montalto gains the King's favour by suggesting a suitable candidate for a salaried position; Octavio is bound to Montalto for his intercession; the King has shown favour to both Montalto and Octavio. This method of gaining position was used by monarchs as a means of exerting control over courtiers, and ensured that all were constantly striving to attain the king's favour. Political advancement during the Caroline era was certainly a question of whom, rather than what, you knew, and such a system of unelected officials inevitably meant that

³⁵⁷ Lucow, p. 18-19.

³⁵⁸ Butler, *Theatre and Crisis*, p. 4.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 13 and 23.

³⁶⁰ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. C2^f; Gifford, IV, p. 111.

positions were allocated to individuals who were not best qualified for the job. Burner argues that Charles himself practised no consistent method of patronage, and simply hired individuals according to his personal inclinations.³⁶¹ This system of patronage also allowed individuals simultaneously to hold multiple positions, and hence create a monopoly of power. At a basic level, Montalto is the villain of *The Royal Master*, and his influence over the King, and the power which he wields at court, is disapproved of by other characters within the play.³⁶² Shirley uses *The Royal Master* to question Charles's system of government, where the advice of only a few counsellors was given, and one reigns effectively unopposed. One of the clear messages of *The Royal Master* is that the only individual who should hold a monopoly on power is the sovereign. If any subject attempts to rival that power, then disorder will follow. The warning against allowing an individual to rise to such power is explicit in the text. At the end of the play, the King is made to realise his error of judgment in listening almost exclusively to Montalto's counsel, and order is restored to the realm. Thus Shirley reveals that while he believes in the concept of a king's Divine Right, he feels the need to question Charles's policy of Personal Rule.

The King's use of language throughout *The Royal Master* serves to impart his authority to the audience. When discussing matters of state with the Duke, the King personifies their respective states: 'Florence has not | Beene kind to Naples to reward

³⁶¹ Burner, p. 86.

³⁶² Montalto's true nature is revealed by his second speech in the play, which is an aside, 'for though I thus disguise | My face, and tongue, my heart is my owne friend, | and cannot wish my ambition supplanted | By any smooth chin'd Prince alive', Shirley, *TRM*, sig. B4^r; Gifford, IV, p. 107.

us with | Affront for love' (*TRM*, G3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 153); 'Theodosia | is Naples sister' (*TRM*, G4^r; Gifford, IV, pp. 153-4). When conversing privately with Montalto the King refers to himself in the first person singular: 'I will have it so; | If thou dost love me' (*TRM*, I3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 170) yet, a few lines later, when speaking commandingly to members of the court, he uses the first person plural: 'We ease you of the trouble too of waiting' (*TRM*, I3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 171). The King is seen to speak to Montalto in a different manner from the way he addresses the other characters of the play. Their conversation is conducted in a private fashion, which betrays the intimate relationship which Montalto enjoys with his sovereign. It is this intimacy to which Shirley objects, as a king must be even-handed, and not have favourites, a circumstance which necessitates Montalto's downfall. Yet speech is but one of the methods which Shirley employs to ensure that the authority of the ruling monarch is upheld at the end of the play.

Loyalty

A central theme of *The Royal Master* is loyalty, and the play explores the concept of whom you can, and whom you should, trust. At the highest level, this applied to the monarch, and any king written during this period was in some way representative of Charles I. The policy of Personal Rule meant that Charles had to appoint people he could trust to powerful positions, and he required their loyalty in return. Under the assumed name of Philiberto, Riviero tells his son, Octavio, of the reason for his banishment from Naples,

...you were left
By computation, but an Infant when
Your fathers discontents, and faction of
This *Montalto* made him forsake *Naples*,
Which added to your mothers death, the guard
And comforts of your life, were taken from
you.³⁶³

Throughout this banishment, Riviero has remained loyal to his king, and his restoration to a position of trust at the end of the play is a fundamental aspect of a Shirley plot: despite the upheavals which Montalto's interference has caused, the most worthy have remained loyal to the crown, and at the end of the play the sober value of old-world chivalry is reasserted, hence society is restored to hierarchical harmony.³⁶⁴ The importance of the restoration of harmony to the Caroline audience cannot be overestimated, as is succinctly argued by Butler: literature of the 1630s was filled with fictional solutions to the problem of who wielded political power, and how the balance should be restored.³⁶⁵ The example of the King's behaviour was also disseminated through the court to the rest of the population, so order within the court was crucial for maintaining social order throughout the realm.³⁶⁶ Riviero's reinstatement reassures the audience that although the court may experience upheavals, ultimately it will acquire stability. Riviero's devotion to his King throughout his banishment is both an example of the loyalty which was due to Charles, and a reflection of the affection that his subjects had for him.

³⁶³ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. C1^v; Gifford, IV, p. 110.

³⁶⁴ Philip Edwards, Gerald Eades Bentley, Kathleen McLuskie, Lois Potter, *The Revels History of Drama in English*, 8 vols (London and New York: Methuen, 1981), IV, p. 256; Gayley, p. 553.

³⁶⁵ Butler, pp. 13-23.

³⁶⁶ Sharpe, p. 210.

Octavio's loyalty to his mentor, Montalto, is challenged in Act I, and the exchange with one of Theodosia's ladies reveals his initial emotional commitment:

Octav. ... Yet when I am ripe to grapple with a maidenhead,
The Lord *Montalto* the great Court Patron
Will helpe me to a wife.
2 Lady. You are bound to his Lordship.
Octav. And so I am Madam, if you knew all;
I have many obligations to his honour,
But there is one writ here, whose memory
Will keepe my soule awake.³⁶⁷

Octavio's 'obligations' to Montalto refer to 'the great Court Patron's' (*TRM*, B4^r; Gifford, IV, p. 108) sponsorship of him at court, which Riviero comments may be 'argument of penitence' (*TRM*, C2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 112) for leaving Octavio fatherless: though Octavio acknowledges to Andrugio that he, Andrugio, has 'supplied my father in your care of me' (*TRM*, C1^v; Gifford, IV, p. 111). It is likely that the last two lines of this speech ('But there is one writ here, whose memory | Will keepe my soule awake') were delivered as an aside, and although he was 'but an Infant' when his father, Riviero, was forced to leave Naples, this speech suggests that Octavio is aware that Montalto had a hand in this unhappy event. Though his public behaviour shows his loyalty towards Montalto, his true allegiance is written upon his 'soule'. Octavio's loyalty to Montalto is thus duplicitous, and his hotheaded youth is outraged at the merest suggestion that the change in Montalto which 'hath staggard' (*TRM*, C2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 112) Riviero, might indicate that Montalto's corrupt character has become 'honest' (*TRM*, C2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 111); Octavio is unable to forget past

³⁶⁷ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. B4^r – B4^v; Gifford, IV, p. 108.

injustices merely because Montalto may now be considered ‘honest’, and exclaims, ‘my soule cannot be brib’d | So easily to prostrate my owne justice | And leave my fathers ashes unreveng’d’ (*TRM*, C2^f; Gifford, IV, p. 111). This fiery temperament is again revealed when Octavio states that since ‘this *Colossus* | *Montalto* is but mortall sure’ (*TRM*, C1^r; Gifford, IV, p. 110), his wish is ‘to grow to write full man, | To take revenge upon that polititian, | Our Protean favourite’ (*TRM*, C1^v; Gifford, IV, p. 110): ‘protean’ is an extremely pertinent description of Montalto, although the irony of its application to Octavio’s public persona is lost on the speaker. Indeed, Octavio’s behaviour has been such that Andrugio questions his true motivation to befriend his disguised father, ‘we may suspect | This is to catch applause a tricke to winne | Vpon the people who did love *Riviero*’ (*TRM*, C2^f; Gifford, IV, p. 111), but Octavio manages to overcome Andrugio’s doubts and his loyalty to Riviero is never again questioned. Montalto was the cause of Riviero’s banishment, and this circumstance is the root of Octavio’s dislike for him. Without Montalto’s plotting, Octavio would have entered court life with his father’s status and guidance to assist him, rather than being reliant upon Montalto’s influence for gaining favour at court, leaving Octavio in no small measure beholden to him.

Riviero’s loyalty to his sovereign means that he is unwilling to assign any blame to the King for his own banishment. Far from angering him, the King’s continued favour towards Montalto puzzles Riviero, and his fidelity causes him to seek external factors which would explain this behaviour: ‘I begin | To feare there is some spell

upon the King' (*TRM*, K3^r; Gifford, IV, p. 178); 'The King is charm'd' (*TRM*, K4^r; Gifford, IV, p. 181). It is Andrugio who reveals the mechanics behind Montalto's scheming, and the significance of the King receiving bad counsel is such that Andrugio repeats his observations:

Look how they flock, and fawne upon his greatnes;
These are his [Montalto's] creatures, by his power plac'd
So neare about the King, he can heare nothing
Of his great favorite, but what their flattery
And partiall tongues convey into his eare.³⁶⁸

None can approach the kings eare, at which hang
So many flatterers to infect it with
Montaltoaes praise.³⁶⁹

The word 'infect', while primarily revealing Andrugio's low opinion of Montalto, conjures an image of contagion spreading through the court, and suggests the power inherent in having the ear of the king and, therefore, also the opinion of the court. It is unlikely that Shirley would have known, when he was writing the play, that this subject had a particular relevance for his new patron, but throughout his years in Ireland, Wentworth was concerned with who was counselling Charles in London. The imagery of the above quotation is reversed in a letter from Laud to Wentworth on 16th November 1635, in which the Archbishop warns his friend:

that notwithstanding all your great services in Ireland,
which are most graciously accepted by the King, you
want not them which whisper, and perhaps speak
louder where they think they may, against your
proceedings in Ireland as being full of personal

³⁶⁸ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. B4^r; Gifford, IV, p. 107.

³⁶⁹ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. C1^v; Gifford, IV, p. 110.

prosecutions against men of quality...to blast you and your honour if they are able to do it.³⁷⁰

While power and wealth could be accrued in Ireland, Wentworth was effectively banished from the real centre of power, London, by his appointment, and he was plagued by the thought that his enemies used this isolation against him.³⁷¹ The English concept of being 'banished' to Ireland continued throughout this period, as documented in a letter written by Sir George Wentworth 11th June 1640:

there was one Bishop Mannering mightily complained of in the Higher House of Parliament and the noise goes that the displeasure was so great at him here as he is to be removed into Ireland.³⁷²

Sir Thomas Wentworth thus provides an example of a courtier who feared the system of governance adopted by Charles I. Charles promoted favourites, and listened to their advice. Courtiers whose enemies had a strong influence over the monarch, therefore, potentially found themselves in a bad situation.

Despite banishment, Riviero is doggedly loyal to his king, and his steadfastness is rewarded at the end of the play by reinstatement to his previous position, 'Noble

³⁷⁰ Knowler, I, p. 479, as quoted in Samuel R. Gardiner, *History of England from the accession of James I. To the outbreak of the Civil War, 1603-1642*, 10 vols (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1884), VIII, p. 184.

³⁷¹ Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (eds), *Edmund Spenser: A View of the State of Ireland; from the first printed edition (1633)* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1997), p. xiii.

³⁷² PRONI T415/20. The remoteness of Ireland from London is illustrated by a proclamation of 11th February 1637/8 which states that letters carried into or from Ireland will be charged at 9d, whereas letters to France only cost 2d, Steele, I, p. 213.

Riviero'.³⁷³ His quality is shown by his refusal to allow Montalto to be condemned to death for his own supposed murder, instead he says of Montalto, 'Hee will sinke | Apace without that weight upon him, malice | Shall have no share in my revenge'.³⁷⁴ It is this innate morality, as well as his loyalty to his sovereign, which renders him incapable of believing that the King could be so deceived in the character of Montalto. Yet the King shows the loyalty of long-standing affection towards Montalto even when confronted with knowledge of the latter's guilt, firstly in interfering with matters of state (the marriage of the Duke and Theodosia, which would re-connect the alliance between Naples and Florence following the death of the King's wife, who was the Duke's sister), and, secondly, for supposedly murdering Riviero. The King's response to this information, no doubt given as an aside, is very revealing: 'I must not, dare not pardon; it were a sinne | In me of violence to heaven and justice'.³⁷⁵ 'Must not, dare not' indicates that the King is struggling with his conscience over condemning to death an old and previously trusted advisor, and perhaps also indicates that the King realises that to do so could threaten his own authority.³⁷⁶ Even when given evidence of Montalto's treacherous character he is unwilling to distance himself, and remains loyal to the memory of their relationship. Rather than responding with anger to the discovery of Montalto's ultimate betrayal, the King is extremely reluctant to denounce his friend. The reappearance of Riviero is greeted with great relief by the King, who

³⁷³ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. L2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 186 reads '*King. Riviero!*'

³⁷⁴ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. L1^r; Gifford, IV, p. 183.

³⁷⁵ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. K4^v; Gifford, IV, p. 183.

³⁷⁶ Ironically, the reluctance shown by Shirley's king to kill Montalto bears a similarity to the decision later confronted by Charles with the Bill of Attainder against Wentworth. Charles decided that he 'could go against his conscience as a man when his conscience as a King required it' and he eventually consented to the Bill, Wedgwood, *A Revaluation*, pp. 376-377. See also Richard Cust, *Charles I: A Political Life* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2005), pp. 79 and 287-8.

proclaims that Montalto's sentence, 'Now shall bee onely banishment; our hearts | Are full and sprightly', and the tragicomedy takes one step further away from being a tragedy.³⁷⁷ While most of the courtiers in the play show loyalty to their sovereign, ultimately the most profound demonstration of loyalty is given by the King towards an erring subject. Shirley's portrayal of the King's counsellors, therefore, partakes of complex contemporary political dilemmas: it is the duty of the king to indentify who can provide him with good counsel, as failure to do so can be disastrous. Loyalty is commendable, but not at the expense of good counsel. The King's loyalty towards Montalto is combined with mercy. Mercy is also shown to be prevalent among the ruling class by Theodosia's comment upon Montalto's guilt, 'Let him finde your mercy Sir | For his offence to me'.³⁷⁸ The King's relationship with Montalto also demonstrates Shirley's use of a powerful theatrical device, which Emrys Jones describes as 'the human transformation from one polar extreme to the other'.³⁷⁹ The King had placed his absolute trust in Montalto, but by the end of the play he not merely suspects Montalto's betrayal, he knows himself to have been betrayed. The polarity of the King's understanding of Montalto's nature mirrors the changing fortunes of that character's social standing: Montalo begins the play as the most powerful courtier in Naples, by the end of the play he has secured his own banishment. The King's behaviour is extraordinary in his ability to show mercy to Montalto even when his trust has been irredeemably broken.

³⁷⁷ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. L2^v; Gifford, IV, p. 186.

³⁷⁸ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. K4^v; Gifford, IV, p. 183.

³⁷⁹ Emrys Jones, *Scenic Form in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 14.

Shirley offered the King of *The Royal Master* as an example of good leadership. The King demonstrates loyalty towards his friends, and is slow to accept criticism of them, but when their faults are revealed he acts appropriately and decisively. The King's primary concern is maintaining harmony within the court, and with foreign powers, but personal connections sway him and, in this, he demonstrates one of Charles's traits. The stage was used as a means of reinforcing social order, and for conveying ideas. Through the character of the King, Shirley upholds the authority of the monarchy, but the play also criticises the system of governance, and projects possible solutions.

Counsel

Counsel is the overarching subject discussed by *The Royal Master*. Throughout the play examples of both good and bad counsel are given, advice is sought, offered freely, and opinions concealed. Offering criticism and counsel in the court of Charles I was a fundamental process of Personal Rule, and was not regarded as being disloyal to Charles. However, at the very beginning of *The Royal Master*, the audience is warned of the potential dangers of giving counsel. Riviero's first words (lines 10-11), spoken to his trusted friend Andrugio, reveal his concerns about speaking freely, 'we must not be too open, truest friend, | Thy bosome is my Sanctuary' (*TRM*, B3^r; Gifford, IV, p. 105). The hazards attached to offering advice mean that, at the beginning of the play, the King is deprived of the counsel of once trusted courtiers, Riviero and Andrugio. The audience is thus instantly apprised of the fact that something is deeply wrong with the court of Naples: here is a society where free speech is dangerous, and where the

king does not receive a diversity of courtiers' opinions as counsel. Yet Shirley takes pains to assure his audience that the situation concerning counsel in Naples is not the King's fault: 'so sweete a nature as the Kings, abus'd by Parasites' (*TRM*, B4^f; Gifford, IV, p. 107). In an age where the Divine Right of Kings was embedded in social knowledge, it was important to vindicate the king of any hint of wrong-doing: while criticism could be freely offered to Charles, it was in relation to his policies, not his person, which was God's earthly representative.³⁸⁰

Shirley's King actively seeks the opinion of Montalto when he asks, 'how will *Montalto* counsel me' (*TRM*, H2^f; Gifford, IV, p. 159), with regards to deteriorating relations with the Duke. The King is clearly pleased by Montalto's suggestions when he responds, 'Wise *Montalto* | I like thy honest counsell' (*TRM*, H3^f; Gifford, IV, p. 160). This incident is one of two within the play where the King directly asks for advice; the second being when Montalto's treachery has been revealed, 'the Divell has not art | To abuse us so; this will require some counsell' (*TRM*, I1^v; Gifford, IV, p. 166). It would appear that, by the end of the play, the King has finally seen the benefit of asking for a range of opinions. Up to this point, tension about offering counsel has been building within the play, as can be seen from the once cautious Riviero now stating to Guido, 'the king shall know my minde' (*TRM*, H4^f; Gifford, IV, p. 162). Riviero has been withholding counsel as a means of self-preservation in the court, but the situation has intensified, and he has grasped the importance of sharing his

³⁸⁰ For a discussion about how the theory of the divine right of kings permeated society see Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, pp. 181-2.

knowledge of Montalto's true character with the King. It is to the King's credit that by the end of the play he has seen the wisdom of obtaining the counsel of many, rather than relying upon a single counsellor, and it is this range of opinion with which Shirley is most concerned, arguably using the medium of theatre itself to provide counsel.

Another facet of the nature of counsel is raised by Montalto, as he tells the King of the relationship between the Duke and Riviero (still disguised as Philoberto), 'Mistake me not; | *Philoberto* is his secret counsellour' (*TRM*, H3^f; Gifford, IV, p.160). The implication here is that secret counsel bespeaks corruption. It is ironic that Montalto berates the exclusive nature of Riviero's counsel in conversation with the Duke, when that is precisely what he has achieved, and needs to maintain, with the King. Although it is the private aspect of this counsel which Montalto denounces, the real issue is that a private conversation is exclusive, which emphasises that a king must listen to many advisers. Shirley uses the theatrical device of hiding a character during the conversations of other characters three times during *The Royal Master*: in Act III the Duke conceals himself while Riviero converses with Montalto to gain information; in Act V Theodosia hides to overhear the Duke and Domitilla; also in Act V when Theodosia and the Duke are reconciled, the King commands them to conceal themselves from Montalto until his guilt is publically revealed. Seemingly, the deception which has been quietly pervading the court in the earlier acts is infused into the very structure of the play. The increasing rapidity with which these structural deceptions appear hastens the pace of the last two acts, driving events on towards the

climax at the end. This repeated use of hiding a character, or characters, indicates that the stage of the Werburgh Street Theatre had a discovery space, and David Stevens notes that Shirley had made use of the stage hangings in the London theatres when composing his plays.³⁸¹

Personal relationships between a king and his courtiers were a fundamental aspect of court life, but Shirley's message is that these must never interfere with state matters. The personal inclinations of a ruler are thus of intrinsic importance to the management of the realm, and this consideration permeates all of the plays in Shirley's Irish canon.

Social status

Montalto's devious scheming means that he is confident that he is able to control the King:

<i>King.</i>	<i>Andrugio-</i>
<i>Guido.</i>	I doe not like their conference.
<i>Mont.</i>	'Las he has no imployment in the state; He waites like a dull cipher and I have My spies upon him; if I finde him busie, My power with the king shall soone transplant him. ³⁸²

³⁸¹ David Stevens, 'The stagecraft of James Shirley', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 29 (1977), pp. 493-516: 499.

³⁸² Shirley, *TRM*, sig. B4^v; Gifford, IV, p. 108.

It was also important that courtiers always retained a strong sense of their own position in society. Montalto's undoing is that he believes himself to be capable of manipulating the King into letting him wed the Princess Theodosia. Striving to overreach one's social standing is doomed to failure in *The Royal Master*, but attempts to do so underlie both the main and the sub-plots. While Domitilla seeks only to marry the man she loves, Montalto comes very close to murdering the Duke to achieve his goal, as revealed by the stage direction which reads, 'Drawes a dagger at the Dukes backe'.³⁸³ Montalto's motive is to secure his own political position.

Yet it is only isolated individuals who hold the belief that they can advance themselves to the highest echelons, and Shirley makes it clear that the vast majority of society understands its position, as voiced by Simphorosa to her daughter with concern:

I hope you are not dreaming of a Queene;
Such wilde interpretation of the Kings
Favour to us cannot be made without
The forfeits of wits and duties which
Should teach us to containe our thoughts in their
Owne Spheare and not to point them upon objects
Above our Levell.³⁸⁴

Theodosia expresses her contempt with what she perceives to be Domitilla's attempt at social climbing with the phrase, 'you must flatter your proud hopes with one | So much

³⁸³ Gayley argues that Shirley's skill in interweaving the main and sub-plots means that, in essence, *The Royal Master* has only one plot, p. 557. Stage direction in Act 4, Shirley, *TRM*, sig. H4^r; Gifford, IV, p. 163.

³⁸⁴ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. G1^v; Gifford, IV, p. 147.

above thy birth'.³⁸⁵ Lucow suggests that Domitilla is 'ambitious to be queen', but there is nothing in the text to support this claim.³⁸⁶ Achieving social advancement is very much a secondary wish for Domitilla, which comes behind her overwhelming desire to marry the man she has fallen in love with, who just happens to be King. This is exemplified by a conversation which she has with her mother, where she states that she loves the King for his own sake, rather than for his position:

I Betray my selfe,
When I sayd beauty had a power to charme
A King; it might acquit me from suspition
Of any hope to apply them so ambitiously;
Youle grant it just to love the King.³⁸⁷

Confronted with the announcement of the King's imminent arrival at her home, Simphorosa is understandably thrown into a panic about preparations. Guido offers her the following salve for her fractured nerves, 'Princes doe honour when they come upon | Their subjects invitation, but they love | Where they invite themselves' (*TRM*, C3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 115).³⁸⁸ This statement recalls the summer progresses of Elizabeth I, which Charles mirrored in the summer of 1634 when he descended upon Hinchbrooke, Althorp, Belvoir and Castle Ashby.³⁸⁹ However, this was a rare occurrence during Charles's reign, and in an age when one of the greatest favours a monarch could bestow was access to the royal presence, Charles was criticised because

³⁸⁵ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. H1^v; Gifford, IV, p. 158.

³⁸⁶ Lucow, p. 108.

³⁸⁷ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. G1^v; Gifford, IV, p. 148.

³⁸⁸ This phrase is one of the extracts which Andrew Wright transcribed, BL Additional MS 22,608, sig. 114^r.

³⁸⁹ For information on Elizabeth's progresses see Marie Axton, 'Summer's Last Will and Testament: revels end', in John Guy (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the last decade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 258-273: 263. For Charles's progresses see Kishlansky and Morrill, 'Charles I', *ODNB*.

his progresses were generally confined to hunting trips.³⁹⁰ That Shirley includes this incident in his play indicates how important progresses were.

Having prepared a trap to gain knowledge of Montalto's relationship with Theodosia, Riviero gently counsels the Duke: 'I am confident your highnesses will | Stere all your resolutions by honour, | Which in a Prince is sacred' (*TRM*, E4^r; Gifford, IV, p. 135). Here Shirley stresses that a King, or a Duke, must be above reproach in all his dealings, so underhand eavesdropping upon an unsuspecting courtier must be validated by justifying that this action is for the greater good. This makes the King's treatment of Domitilla even more confusing. Having been apprised of her love for him, the King determines to destroy this love by making her 'an immodest offer' (*TRM*, K3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 179), which will also test whether or not she has been 'bred up to vertue' (*TRM*, C4^v; Gifford, IV, p. 117). While deemed to be 'mercifull' (*TRM*, K4^v; Gifford, IV, p. 183) in his dealings with Guido, Aloigio and Alexio, the humiliation he causes Domitilla seems an uncharacteristic action by the King. Such extreme methods are, however, very useful to the plot: social order is maintained by Domitilla staying at her previous level; Domitilla rapidly falls out of love with the King, and therefore does not object to marriage with Octavio; Octavio, who has remained loyal to his love for Domitilla, is rewarded for his filial obedience; the prospects of dual nuptials aids the happy ending of the tragi-comedy.

³⁹⁰ Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, p. 630.

The character of Bombo

Arguably the most bizarre, and ultimately unexplained, recurring theme in the play is that Bombo (described as Domitilla's secretary by Jacamo, *TRM*, H4^v; Gifford, IV, p. 165, but really the Fool of the play) has a strong aversion to being seen by, or to meet with, the King. The audience is initially made aware of this fear through a discussion with Guido during Bombo's first scene:

Sir, as you love me say you saw me not;
I knew I should one time or other be
Found out for state imployments.³⁹¹

This concern is reiterated throughout the play: 'If the King come in person, Ile not be seene'; 'the King shall pardon me; he has | Not seene me yet for all his cunning'; 'I wonnot see | The King'; 'Ile not see the King'; 'you conceale me from the King'; 'I tell you Ile not see the King'; 'He has not seene me yet nor shanot'; 'I will doe any thing but see the King'; 'he has | Not seene me yet nor sha'not'.³⁹² That Bombo articulates his intention of not being seen by the King, no less than eleven times throughout the play, is worthy of some discussion.

One explanation for Bombo's behaviour might be that his character was performed by the same actor who played the King, which would account for why Bombo was so concerned not to be in the King's presence. This must also have considerably added to

³⁹¹ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. C3^r; Gifford, IV, p. 114.

³⁹² Shirley, *TRM*, sig. C3^r, D2^r, D3^v, F4^r, F4^v, G1^r and H4^v; Gifford, IV, pp. 115, 121, 124, 144, 145, 146, 147 and 164.

the comic aspect of his performance, as the audience must have been aware that he had to assume a different costume, and mannerisms, when playing the King. However, the theory of doubling these parts incurs difficulties twice within the text. The first instance occurs in Act III where the King speaks to Theodosia and exits, and the next character to speak is Bombo, who has just entered.³⁹³ If the King's costume was defined by something as quickly donned as a crown, then the brief pause which would have occurred in Act III may have been filled by Ogilby's 'Musitians', whom are known to have been present due to a stage direction in Act V, '*Loud Musicke*'.³⁹⁴ Yet it is more probable that the pause allowed a moment of hilarity, as the audience awaited Bombo's quick-change. This argument is reinforced by Bombo's opening comment, 'You may doe what you will Madam, put me | Into fine clothes, and make an asse of me'.³⁹⁵ Bombo's 'fine clothes' can be interpreted as referring to the actor's costume for the part of the King, while 'asse' clearly relates to Bombo: Shirley was highly unlikely to have included anything which could be interpreted as diminishing the King's authority.³⁹⁶

Secondly, in Act IV the text reads:

Bom. Oh he that leanes to a broken staffe shall
Finde that presently.
Enter King reading a paper, Octavio

³⁹³ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. F3^v; Gifford, IV, pp. 143-4.

³⁹⁴ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. K4^r; Gifford, IV, p. 181.

³⁹⁵ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. F3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 144.

³⁹⁶ For further discussions of Shirley's commitment to upholding the King's authority see Gayley, p. 553; Lucow, p. 18.

Guid. The King.
Bom. King bee your leave; I vanish
*Exit Bombo.*³⁹⁷

The overlap in Act IV could be due to inaccuracies by the printers when incorporating stage directions: an argument which gains credence due to numerous discrepancies in stage directions throughout the text - such as in Act II when Montalto addresses 'Ladies' who have not officially entered the acting space.³⁹⁸ It is more likely that Guido's announcement of the King would pre-empt this character's entrance onto the stage, so this exchange may have been included to allow Bombo to execute another quick costume change.

The historic connections between these two roles allow the consideration that these parts could have been played by one actor, as they are intrinsically linked. The court of both the Tudors and Stuarts understood that the court Fool was the antithesis of the monarch, and that they represented the forces of order and chaos. It was the Fool's role to strain against the limits of what was socially acceptable, and the monarch's role to reassure the court, and country, that despite the outrageous behaviour of the Fool, social order would always prevail.³⁹⁹ Enid Welsford argues that the traditional Fool's bauble was parallel to the monarch's sceptre, which symbolised divine power and order, whereas the bauble represented the opposite pole, anarchy.⁴⁰⁰ The sovereign

³⁹⁷ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. I1^v; Gifford, IV, p. 166.

³⁹⁸ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. D3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 126 reads, 'This way leads to the garden'.

³⁹⁹ John Southworth, *Fools and Jesters at the English Court* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1998), p. 3.

⁴⁰⁰ Enid Welsford, *The Fool: His Social History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1935), p. 216.

and the Fool held unique roles in the court: only the monarch was allowed to command, only the Fool was allowed to disobey. It is this symmetry which corroborates the suggestion that the two parts of the King and Bombo might have been played by the same actor.

The English court would have understood the rules which governed the behaviour of the Fool, and throughout the seventeenth century there was concern that social behaviour should be standardised by formal codification, with the court providing an example of etiquette to the realm.⁴⁰¹ The evidence for this can be found in the hundreds of books concerning correct social deportment, many of which were translated from French. Peter Holland suggests that these patterns became so entrenched in English court culture that they became thought of as natural, with only the young or outsiders needing to be taught them.⁴⁰² The Fool was granted licence to say anything to his ruler, and this freedom of speech allowed the Fool the potential to be the most honest of a king's counsellors. That Bombo never speaks to the King can be seen as Shirley's reflection on the state of England, during this period: something is wrong with the state when the Fool cannot offer advice to the king. Perhaps it is the lack of Bombo's counsel which leads the King into making imperfect decisions, such as continuing to favour the counsel of Montalto above all others.

⁴⁰¹ Sharpe, p. 209.

⁴⁰² Peter Holland, *The ornament of action: text and performance in Restoration comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 57.

A Fool is given licence for erratic behaviour, and this explains why Guido makes the following enquiry after first meeting Bombo:

Guid. Is he mad?
Iaca. A little phantasticke, but very harmlesse,
And makes my Ladies merry.⁴⁰³

In a similar vein Domitilla enquires of Bombo, 'Is this wit naturall?'⁴⁰⁴ In the seventeenth century, 'natural' held a dual meaning when applied to a person: having a low learning ability, and being endowed by nature - as opposed to assuming or acquiring ability.⁴⁰⁵ Bombo's response to Domitilla's question is interesting, 'You were best say | I got it here at Court'.⁴⁰⁶ The implication is that life at court entails acquiring a unique set of social skills; namely deception, manipulation and witty rhetoric. Jacamo informs the audience that Bombo 'can neither write nor reade' (*TRM*, C2^v; Gifford, IV, 113), which argues that he is a simpleton. However, Bombo's reluctance to be involved in court life provides the stronger argument that he is a natural wit, as his unwillingness to become involved in politics reveals a discerning nature.

⁴⁰³ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. C2^v; Gifford, IV, p. 113.

⁴⁰⁴ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. F4^v; Gifford, IV, p. 145.

⁴⁰⁵ 'Natural' - The Oxford English Dictionary Online:

http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00321538?query_type=word&queryword=NATURAL&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=kY3l-qanr2w-2083&hilite=00321538
[accessed 26th August 2006].

⁴⁰⁶ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. F4^v; Gifford, IV, p. 145.

García asserts that Shirley based this aspect of Bombo's character on Lope de Vega's play, which was written between 1611 and 1616.⁴⁰⁷ He argues that Bombo's avoidance of the King is on account of his wish to avoid the office of becoming the court's Fool, an argument which is convincing, given the dubious nature of the 'gift' of the position during the Stuart era.⁴⁰⁸ Bombo's adverse reaction to life at court also serves to balance the enthusiastic response of his young mistress, Domitilla, and parallels the deception of the courtiers.⁴⁰⁹ The deception on Bombo's part is his evasion of the King, thereby denying the King the benefit of his entertaining company, honest counsel, and not embracing the office which Domitilla believes to be readily available to him, 'Ile speake thou maist be the Kings foole'.⁴¹⁰

Stevenson suggests that, of the actors who can be said to have comprised Ogilby's Irish troupe, William Robins was a 'comedian of considerable fame', so it can be assumed that he played the part of Bombo, and hence the King.⁴¹¹ He also states that William Allen was a character actor, who may then have been assigned the part of Montalto; Michael Bowyer had been playing leading men for around a decade, and was known for his romantic roles, so he could have played the Duke; Hugh Clark, having accomplished his apprenticeship, was now considered to be a leading actor in his company, may have been given the part of Octavio; William Perry, a company

⁴⁰⁷ García, p. 383.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 371. For a discussion about the 'gift' of the position of the King's fool see Southworth, pp. 1-3.

⁴⁰⁹ García, p. 382.

⁴¹⁰ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. F4^v; Gifford, IV, p. 146.

⁴¹¹ Stevenson, 'Actors', p. 150.

leader, would fit the role of Riviero, and Richard Weekes, also a company leader, that of Guido; perhaps Edward Armiger played Andrugio, while the ‘minor players’, William Cooke and Thomas Jordan, probably each took on the role of Alexio or Aloigio and also doubled as Jacamo or Pietro.⁴¹²

The strongest argument for the doubling of the parts of Bombo and the King is the interaction of these two characters with that of Domitilla. As Domitilla’s secretary, Bombo converses with her in Acts I and III, while the King and Domitilla speak together in Acts II, IV and V. Sterne argues that during this period actors learnt their parts through private study, although this was often undertaken with a ‘teacher’.⁴¹³ Domitilla would have been played by a boy, whose apprenticeship required him to learn his trade from an established actor: his loyalty was to an individual rather than to the company.⁴¹⁴ Allowing William Robins to prepare his own parts, whilst also instructing his apprentice, would have allowed rehearsal of the play to continue with minimal time clashes with other actors. Domitilla speaks 332 lines in the play, compared with Theodosia’s 121, so Robins’ apprentice would have required more assistance with his part than the boy who played Theodosia.

⁴¹² Ibid., p. 150; Bentley, *JCS*, II, pp. 350, 386, 413, 529 and 615.

⁴¹³ Sterne, pp. 59 and 121.

⁴¹⁴ Bentley, *Profession*, p. 118; Sterne, p. 67.

Archibald Armstrong, the King's Fool

James I's Fool was a dwarf named Archibald Armstrong (Archy), who was retained by Charles when he came to the throne. Archy was a hugely influential figure at court: during James's reign he was frequently approached by petitioners as an intermediary to the king. His stock rose still higher under Charles who gave him one thousand acres of land in Ireland, as is revealed by a petition lodged against him by his brother-in-law, John Grimes.⁴¹⁵ Archy's connection to Ireland was still strong in 1636 as the diary of Sir Richard Boyle records on 2nd June:

Given Armstrong the Kinges Jester v^{li} in gowld, for which god forgive me; and my servant w^m Barber gave Archie 150 and od powndes, that he had entrusted me to keep for him, and he carried it with him into England.⁴¹⁶

The exclamation, 'god forgive me' could be a joke on Cork's part, or it could be a reflection of Archy's unpopularity. This unpopularity is well documented: in 1612 Archy's comments about Prince Henry resulted in the Prince's friends tossing him in a blanket; in 1619, Bishop Corbett referred to him as 'Salt Archy' when recounting his grudge against the Earl of Northampton; Archy's own brother-in-law brought a suit against him in Charles's reign; the Fool was on very bad terms with Archbishop Laud, whose intervention eventually resulted in Archy's banishment from court.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁵ Welsford, pp. 171-176.

⁴¹⁶ Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, p. 414.

⁴¹⁷ Welsford, pp. 172, 176-7; see also *Archy's Dream, Jester to his Majestie; but exiled the Court by Canterburies malice* (1641).

However, the publication in 1630 of *Archie Armstrong's Banquet of Jestes* suggests his popularity at this time.⁴¹⁸ The anonymous *The Ass Race* (1740) describes Archy's popularity before his downfall:

In short the King liked him so well, that he did few Things without *Archy's* Advice, in so much, that he could have scarce had greater Power had he been made Regent of the Kingdom.⁴¹⁹

It evidently became fashionable to employ a Fool, as demonstrated by a document held by the Kilkenny Corporation Records which states that on 18th September 1637, 'to James the Lord Deputy's [Wentworth's] foole 10s', which also provides further evidence of Wentworth's attempts to emulate London court life.⁴²⁰ Having been a prominent figure at court since 1618, by 1636 (when Shirley was writing *The Royal Master*) Archy's status must have been waning, before his eventual dismissal in 1637.⁴²¹ Perhaps during this time Archy's audiences with Charles were limited, and Bombo could then be said to represent how Archy (no doubt much to the delight of his enemies) was gradually disappearing from court into the social wilderness, which is depicted by Bombo's residence in the country. Indeed, following a brief sojourn to court in Act III (*TRM*, F4^r; Gifford, IV, 144), Bombo decides to go 'backe to the

⁴¹⁸ Archie Armstrong, *A Banquet of Jeasts* (London: printed for Richard Royston, 1630), STC (2nd ed.) / 1368.

⁴¹⁹ *The Ass Race: or the secret history of Archy Armstrong fool to King Charles I extracted from a very curious MSS* (London, 1740), p. 4.

⁴²⁰ Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, p. 372. Curiously, the Earl of Kildare employed his own dwarf, as evidenced by a letter written to him by the Earl of Cork 25th March 1633, 'And as for yo^r dwarfe seeinge his present maintenance comes out of yo^r estate, I am very well pleased with yo^r choyce of him to attend you', PRONI D3078/3/1/1-5. I am indebted to Dr Eva Griffith for sharing her transcription of this document.

⁴²¹ Welsford, p. 171.

country house' he inhabited at the beginning of the play.⁴²² With this evidence, the interpretation of Bombo's character can be reviewed – his avoidance of the King could also be a portrayal of the dwindling power of the Fool in the London court.

Conclusion

King Charles said that *The Gamester* (1633) was the best play he had seen for seven years, which gives a clear indication of the genre of play which he enjoyed. The plot of *The Gamester* is similar to Fletcher's comedies, in that it includes tricks, disguises and some wit mixed with the farce. As Burner notes, these elements combine to form a play which sets lust against chastity, and love against loyalty.⁴²³ This description of the play could equally be applied to *The Royal Master*, which suggests that it was originally intended for the London stage, rather than for an Irish audience. It was, of course, important that Shirley's first offering for the Dublin stage was an original drama, rather than one of his earlier plays, to commemorate the historic event of the Werburgh Street Theatre's opening. Although the play was written with London in mind, many of its concerns were equally relevant to Ireland, especially as Wentworth was trying to recreate Dublin as a reflection of London society.

Shirley had a history of writing dramatic parts that had recognisable characteristics of members of the nobility, and this allows comparisons of courtiers to be drawn with characters of *The Royal Master*. Strong connections can be seen

⁴²² Shirley, *TRM*, sig. I4^r; Gifford, IV, p. 172.

⁴²³ Burner, pp. 89-90.

between Charles and Shirley's king, as well as between Bombo and Archy. It is significant that the play's earliest extant critic refers to Montalto not as a villain but as a 'politician', particularly in light of a later play which Shirley wrote for the Werburgh Street Theatre, *The Politician*. None of the characters within the play are directly based upon an individual from Charles's court, but resemblances can be identified, which demonstrates Shirley's engagement with the socio-political situation of his day.

The main themes of the play (counsel, the authority of the king, loyalty, social status) directly engage with the concerns of society in the 1630s, both in England and Ireland. Shirley's King in *The Royal Master* provided an example of social correctness to the Irish population, and his preoccupation with offering exemplary models of behaviour extends through his Irish canon, which must have pleased his new patron, Wentworth. The monarch's right to rule had a particular significance for Ireland, which was a nation struggling to understand its position in the three-kingdom state under Charles's rule, and this theme appears repeatedly in Shirley's Irish plays. It was essential that Shirley engaged with his new audience, and to do so he needed to address concerns of particular interest to them.

Chapter Four: The audience of the Werburgh Street Theatre, and *Rosania*

Contextualising *Rosania, or Love's Victory*

Through the title-pages, dedication, epilogue and commendatory verses, the two 1638 editions of *The Royal Master* reveal that Shirley considered multiple audiences at the beginning of his time in Ireland: the Dublin theatre audience, the Irish reading audience, the English reading audience, and he clearly intended the play to be also performed for a London theatre audience. *Rosania, or Love's Victory* (first printed in 1652 as *The Doubtful Heir*) demonstrates that Shirley was preoccupied with London while writing for the Dublin stage, but that his thoughts were also turning towards writing for his new audience.⁴²⁴ Although there is no evidence that the text of the play existed before its 1652 publication, it is almost certain that the play licensed by Herbert on 1st June 1640 titled *The Doubtful Heir* was the renamed *Rosania*, which had already been performed at the Werburgh Street Theatre: as this thesis is discussing Shirley's 'Irish' plays, the play will be referred to throughout as *Rosania*, to differentiate it from the 1652 publication. This chapter contains a discussion of the audience of the Werburgh Street Theatre, to elucidate for whom Shirley was writing, and examines *Rosania*, to identify which aspects of the play demonstrate Shirley's consideration of this audience.

⁴²⁴ Stockwell argues that the subplot of *The Doubtful Heir* was written specifically to engage the Dublin audience, p. 11.

The para-text of a play can be used both to infer authorial intention, and to identify the audience (as was seen in Chapter Two). *Rosania* was undoubtedly written for the Irish stage, as a prologue entitled ‘To his own Comedy there [Ireland], called Rosania, or Loves Victory’ appears in a section headed ‘Prologves and epilogves; Written to severall Playes Presented in this Kingdom, and else-where’ in Shirley’s *Poems &c.* (1646).⁴²⁵ This confirms that the play was written during Shirley’s residence at the Werburgh Street Theatre, thus *Rosania* be identified as the first play which he wrote specifically for the Irish stage.⁴²⁶

The prologue for this play, as it appears in *Poems*, differs from a later version which was included in the 1652 edition, and the variations in the printed para-texts of this play (which will be discussed in detail later) are of interest for furthering knowledge of Shirley’s Irish years. What is most pertinent to this discussion is how the play reveals the beginning of an alteration in Shirley’s writing style as he responded to his new audience. Herbert had tried to modify Shirley’s plays in 1632 with his criticism of *The Ball*, but although he was successful to a small degree, it was the audience of the Werburgh Street Theatre which had the greatest impact upon

⁴²⁵ James Shirley, *Poems &c.* (London: printed for Humphrey Moseley, and are to be sold at his shop at the signe of the *Princes Armes* in *St. Pauls Church-yard*, 1646), Wing / (2nd ed.) S3481, pp. 148-149. *The Doubtful Heir* appears in the Stationers’ Register 4th September 1646, and also in *Six New Plays* (1653), for further information see Greg, *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama*, II, pp. 838-9.

⁴²⁶ As Shirley most likely had already written *The Royal Master* before his arrival in Dublin, *Rosania* can be identified as the first play written specifically for the Irish stage. There is no definitive evidence available about which of Shirley’s ‘Irish’ plays directly succeeded *The Royal Master*, but subsequent scholarship has generally assigned this place to *Rosania*, presumably because, after *St. Patrick for Ireland*, which was Shirley’s last Werburgh Street Theatre play, *Rosania* was the first ‘Irish’ play to be registered and printed. The exact chronology of *Rosania*, *The Gentleman of Venice* and *The Politician* is of much less importance than the themes and ideas which these plays express and explore.

Shirley's dramatic style, as the alterations which he made to his style of composition, and subject matter, were directly due to the responses and tastes of the Dublin playgoers. Herbert's censures were as nothing to Shirley, compared to the demands of his Irish audience. Dutton argues that Shirley saw 'no essential difference between writing for Dublin and for London'; while this may have been true in regard to *The Royal Master*, there are subtle clues within *Rosania* which indicate that his first offering to the distinctly Irish stage was the beginning of a journey of change in his compositional style.⁴²⁷

It would appear that at least the boy actors of the company were retained from the performance of *The Royal Master*, as both plays contain the same number of female parts – *The Royal Master* has large speaking parts for Domitilla and Theodosia, with a smaller one for Simphorosa, and *Rosania* has large parts for Queen Olivia and Rosania, with a smaller part for Violinda. Shirley seems to have been employing the technique of writing specific parts for members of the troop, which is further indication that he no longer viewed his residence in Ireland as being strictly temporary, as he was investing in Ogilby's company.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁷ Dutton, 'St. Werburgh Street Theater', pp. 137 and 149. Fletcher argues that of Shirley's 'Irish' plays, *The Royal Master* appealed most to aristocratic tastes, which infers that a distinction in tone and style can be made between this and subsequent plays, see *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 272.

⁴²⁸ Bentley argues that as Caroline playwrights were so entrenched within the company for which they were writing, that sharers in that company may have been consulted about particular scenes, characters or staging before the manuscript was completed, *Profession of Player*, p. 40.

Identifying the audience of the Werburgh Street Theatre

The Werburgh Street Theatre's audience had a significant impact upon Shirley's work, so it is necessary to establish, as far as possible, whom it comprised in order to gain a better understanding of the people Shirley was trying to please. The best evidence comes from the dramatist himself in the form of poems, that he addressed to the Irish nobility, and prologues, which he wrote to introduce plays by other playwrights to the Dublin audience, both of which were reproduced in *Poems*. Of Shirley's poems in the 1646 volume, potentially three members of Irish/Irish-affiliated nobility can be identified: Lady Elizabeth, Countess of Ormond; Lady Borlase, and Thomas Wentworth.⁴²⁹

In February 1633, James Butler became the Earl of Ormond, and he was created Marquis in September 1642. Therefore the poem addressed to his wife, 'To the excellent pattern of Beauty and Virtue, L[ady] El[izabeth] Co[untess] of Or[mond]' must have been composed between 1633 and 1642.⁴³⁰ Burner argues that this poem

⁴²⁹ The poem entitled 'To the E[arl] of S[trafford] upon his recovery' is undated, and could feasibly have been written before or after Wentworth's elevation to the peerage, as further evidence from with the *Poems* shows: the epilogue of *The Royal Master* which, in the 1638 editions, 'was spoken to the Lord Deputie' is by 1646 addressed 'To the never enough Honoured E. of St. on New-yeares day at night, after other entertainment'. This demonstrates that Shirley revised his prologues and epilogues, and this example also suggests his respect, or even affection, for Wentworth endured beyond the latter's impeachment and ignominious execution. Ray Livingstone Armstrong in *The Poems of James Shirley* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1941) quotes Gardiner (I, 353, ff. 383) as suggesting that this poem, 'To the E. of S. upon his recovery', was written in May 1640 after Wentworth's return from Ireland when he was dangerously ill with dysentery and gout, p. 61.

⁴³⁰ Lady Elizabeth Preston (1615-1684) was the only surviving child of the Earl of Desmond and married her cousin, James Butler, in 1629, see Edward Solly, *An Index of Hereditary English, Scottish and Irish Titles of Honour* (London: published for the Index society by Longmans, Green & Co., 1880), p. 145; Beckett, pp. 11 and 27; Carte, I, p. 7.

was composed for the New Year celebrations of 1640, but evidence from within the poem disproves this theory, and allows a fairly accurate dating of when it was written:

Be rich in your two darlings of the spring,
Which as it waits, perfumes their blossoming,
The growing pledges of your love, and blood;
And may that unborn blessing timely bud,
The chaste and noble treasure of your womb.⁴³¹

This indicates that, at the time of composition, the Countess of Ormond had two children and was expecting a third. The Earl and Countess had ten children, but only five survived to adulthood, which has led to inaccuracies in former attempts at dating this poem. These childhood deaths make the accurate dating more complex, but it must have been written either between June 1635 and March 1635/6, or between October 1638 and 15th July 1639.⁴³² Given that Shirley did not travel to Ireland until November 1636, the latter date-range for the poem's composition can be accepted.⁴³³

It is only surprising that Shirley waited so long after his arrival to directly address this

⁴³¹ Burner, p. 116. Gifford, VI, pp. 432-433; *Poems &c.*, pp. 36-7.

⁴³² Thomas Carte states, 'The Duke of Ormond had by his Lady eight sons and two daughters. The first son was named Thomas, born in 1632, and died before he was a year old. 2. Thomas Earl of Ossory, born at Kilkenny Castle on July 9th 1634. 3. James born in 1635, but did not live above a year. 4. Another James born on March 24 after the former's death. He died on April 17th 1645 and was buried at Christ-church in Dublin. 5. Richard Earl of Arran was born 15th July 1639. 6. Walter born 6th Sept 1641. He died at Dublin in March 1643 and was also buried at Christ Church. 7. John born in 1643. He was Captain of the troop of horse-guards in Ireland, created Baron of Aghrim, Viscount of Clonmore and Earl of Gowran, and having married Anne daughter of Arthur Earl of Donnegal, died without issue in 1677. 8. James born in 1645 who being an infant, was carried out to take the air in a coach and the horses running away with the coachman down the Phoenix-hill near Dublin, the woman who had the care of him, in her fright threw the child out of the window, who was killed by the fall. The two daughters were Elizabeth born 29th June 1640 and married to Philip Earl of Chesterfield; and Mary born in 1646, married to William Lord Cavendish, afterwards Earl and Duke of Devonshire', II, p. 551. See also Beckett, pp. 77-8.

⁴³³ In his commentary of this poem Armstrong claims that the 'darlings' are Thomas and Richard, and that the 'unborn blessing' refers to John, concluding that the poem must have been written between 1639 and 1642. However, it would appear that Armstrong made this deduction based solely upon the Butler children who reached adulthood, rather than taking into account the children who died in childhood, p. 63.

prominent branch of the Butler family: the Earl had become a member of the Irish privy council in 1635, and has been described as one of Wentworth's most loyal and effective supporters.⁴³⁴ Additionally, when in London Ormond had been known to frequent the theatre, and has even been said to have been on friendly terms with London actors, which enhanced his family's suitability as prospective patrons to Shirley.⁴³⁵ It is possible that the Fra. Butler who contributed a commendatory verse to *The Royal Master* was related to the Earl, thereby providing Shirley with a connection to the family, and it is certain that the Earl was becoming an increasingly powerful figure on the Irish political scene. Perhaps the period October 1638 to July 1639 had already revealed that the theatre in Werburgh Street was struggling, and the poem to the Countess was an attempt by Shirley to gain much needed patronage.⁴³⁶ Another explanation could be that by this time, after two return trips to England, Shirley had definitively decided to stay in Ireland, and was more actively cultivating Irish connections.

The intricacies of specifically dating the poem addressed to the Countess of Ormond pale into insignificance when attempting to date the poem titled 'An elegy upon the honourable, fair, and virtuous Mistress Borlase'. The main difficulty arises because there were two prominent branches of the Borlase family, one based in England and the other in Ireland, and Shirley could have been familiar with either or

⁴³⁴ J. C. Beckett, *The Cavalier Duke: A Life of James Butler, 1st Duke of Ormond* (Belfast: Pretani Press, 1990), p. 16.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9; James Wills (ed.), *Lives of Illustrious and Distinguished Irishmen*, 6 vols (Dublin: Macgregor, Polson and Co., 1840), V, p. 107.

⁴³⁶ Burner argues that the poem indicates past patronage from the Countess, p. 116.

both. Further complications arise as within both branches of the family at this time was a renowned John Borlase, and in his nineteenth-century genealogical discoveries, William Copeland Borlase specifically notes that the English Sir John is endlessly confused with his Irish cousin of the same name.⁴³⁷ The poem contains the lady's name,

... 'tis justice for her sake
To weep yourselves blind, for in vain you keep
Your eye-sight, while Maria's gone to sleep,
That was your path and leader.⁴³⁸

Combined with the evidence of the opening line which reads 'Come hither, virgins that are good, and fair', it is fair to assume that the Maria, or Mary, Borlase whom Shirley is referring to was an unmarried young adult. This would discount 'Mistress Borlase' as being the wife of the John Borlase, who was employed to reform the Irish army, and who became an Irish privy councillor in 1638, before his appointment as a Lord Justice in Ireland in 1641.⁴³⁹ Also discounted by this reasoning is the Mary who married Sir William Borlase of Buckinghamshire, and who died on 18th July 1625.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁷ William Copeland Borlase, *The Descent, Name and Arms of Borlase in the county of Cornwall with a chart pedigree and illustrations* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1888). The English Sir John was created a Baronet on 4th May 1642 and was a staunch Royalist, p. 57.

⁴³⁸ Shirley, *Poems*, p. 60; Gifford, VI, p. 448, ll. 6-9. Shirley, *Poems*, p. 60; Gifford, p. 448, l. 1.

⁴³⁹ P. A. S. Pool, *William Borlase* (Truro: The Royal Institution of Cornwall, 1986), 'descended from Edmund Borlase, a younger son of Walter of Treludderow. His son Sir John Borlase (1575-1647) was a soldier, who held office in Ireland as Master of the Ordnance from 1634 and as Lord Justice (in effect, joint governor) from 1640. The male line of this branch ended with the death in 1682 of Dr Edmund Borlase, a physician of Chester and author of a history of the Civil War in Ireland', p. 11. See also Beckett, p. 23. While the date of her death remains unknown, this Mistress Borlase was alive on 6th November 1641 as she is mentioned in a letter from Rawdon to Lord Conway and Killultagh written from Chester 'this town is full of ladies and women of fashion from Ireland, "with their trunks and stuff", Lady Borlase, Lady Parsons, with her children, Lady Ware, Lady Lowther, Lady Catelin, Lady Osbaston, Lady Wentworth, Lady Meredith, and Mrs Carr', *CSPI* 1633-47, p. 345. See also Terry Clavin, 'Borlase, Sir John (c.1576-1648)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University

It is most probable that the Mary Borlase who was buried at Little Marlow, Buckinghamshire on 27th February 1637 was the subject of this poem.⁴⁴¹ This lady was the unmarried daughter of Sir William. Her brother became the Sir John Borlase, knight, often confused with his cousin of the same name who had Irish connections.⁴⁴² It is of passing interest that Sir William was a friend of Ben Jonson, and the pair addressed verse to each other, with Sir William even painting a portrait of the dramatist.⁴⁴³ That Mary Borlase died in England raises questions about Shirley's Irish years – was this elegy written in an attempt to promote his interests with the Irish Borlases, or was it intended to be part of his efforts to maintain ties in England? Clearly, Shirley held the Borlases closely related to Mary in high regard as evidenced by the following lines:

...for this day,
Hid in a storm of tears, doth wait the name
Of great Borlase, wounded, and led by fame.⁴⁴⁴

While the evidence of these poems does not allow a direct connection to be made between Shirley and the Irish Borlase family, it is reasonable to assume that he was acquainted with the Ormondes, which strengthens the argument that the Fra. Butler who wrote a commendatory verse for *The Royal Master* was related to this family. Although Henrietta-Maria's attendance at private London playhouses had made

Press, Sept 2004; online edn., Oct 2006 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2909> [accessed 28th April 2009].

⁴⁴⁰ Mary Borlase was the daughter of Nicholas Backhouse, Alderman of London. She is said to have died of plague and was buried at Little Marlow. Borlase, p. 44.

⁴⁴¹ This is the individual who is identified by Armstrong, p. 68.

⁴⁴² Charles I created John Borlase III a baronet on 4th May 1642, see David E. Schoonover (ed.), *Ladie Borlase's Receiptes Booke* (Iowa: Iowa Press, 1998), p. 8.

⁴⁴³ Schoonover, p. 1.

⁴⁴⁴ Shirley, *Poems*, p. 60; Gifford, VI, p. 448, ll. 11-13.

theatre-going a respectable pastime, and the connection between Fra. Butler and the Ormondes may lead to the assumption that the Countess of Ormond frequented the Werburgh Street Theatre (as, by extension, did other members of the Irish nobility) evidence from one of the prologues which Shirley wrote during this period strongly suggests her absence.⁴⁴⁵ ‘A Prologue to a play there, called, No Wit to a Womans’ contains the lines,

When he [the playwright] did live in England, he heard say,
That here were men lov'd wit, and a good play;
That here were gentlemen, and lords; a few
Were bold to say, there were some ladies too:
This he believ'd, and though they are not found
Above, who knows what may be underground?
But they do not appear.⁴⁴⁶

This extract is one of the most puzzling of all Shirley's prologues for plays performed at the Werburgh Street Theatre. The distinction which is made between the presence of gentlemen and ladies could be indicative that more gentlemen travelled to Ireland alone than those who took their wives with them. Yet by far the most intriguing lines are ‘though they are not found | Above, who knows what may be underground?’, the meaning of which is unclear. Perhaps ‘above’ could refer to the gallery of the theatre, and ‘underground’ to the pit, which would have been below the level of the stage. The implication would then be that high born ladies were concealing their true identities

⁴⁴⁵ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 261. Lucow, p. 31. Lady Wentworth's interests certainly extended to poetry, but no evidence has yet come to light that she supported theatrical entertainment. In a letter to his wife dated 29th June 1636 Wentworth writes from London, ‘I shall seake with Will Raylson concerning the motto you mention, and as for your poetrye it will cum to noe grete effectte, your witts lie a graver way than forts wth mating of verses’, *Private Letters from the Earl of Strafford to his Third Wife*, reproduced by the *Philobiblon Society. Bibliographical and Historical miscellanies*, 3 vols (London: printed by Charles Whittingham, 1854), I, pp. 11-17.

⁴⁴⁶ Shirley, *Poems*, pp. 40-1; Gifford, VI, pp. 492-4.

and hiding in the pit, but it is far more likely that this was a reference to the presence of prostitutes. This prologue was almost certainly spoken by a female character, which may have lessened the lurid implication.⁴⁴⁷ Shirley's commentary upon ladies in this prologue indicates that, unlike in London, women of high society Dublin did 'not appear' as frequent visitors to the theatre.⁴⁴⁸

Perhaps, then, the separate performances of *The Royal Master*, at Dublin Castle and at the Werburgh Street Theatre, was not merely an isolated incident, but had rather set a precedent that plays staged at the theatre were also to be performed to a select élite at Dublin Castle. This would have reinforced Wentworth's creation of his vice-

⁴⁴⁷ I am grateful to Professor Jonathan Bate for sharing his insights on this prologue in conversation. In London, the practice of an individual prostitute donning different attire and assuming different social classes for subsequent theatre visits is described by Thomas Cranley in his prologue to *Amanada, or the Reformed Whore* (1635), F2^f, as quoted by Gurr, Andrew, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 243-4:

Thether [to the theatre] thou com'st, in severall forms, and shapes,
To make thee still a stranger to the place:

...

Now in the richest colours maybe had,
The next day, all in mourning blacke, and sad.
In a Stuffe Wastcote, and a Peticote
Like to a chamber-mayd, thou com'st to day:
The next day after thou dost change thy note,
Then like a countrey wench, thou com'st in gray,
And sittest like a stranger at the Play.
The morrow after that, thou comest then
In the neate habit of a Citizen.
The next time, rushing in thy Silken weeds,
Embroyder'd, lac't, perfum'd, in glittering shew,
Rich like a Lady, and attended so,
As brave as any Countesse dost thou goe.

⁴⁴⁸ Cook provides evidence of ladies frequenting playhouses, for example, Lady Newport attending a play in Drury Lane 9th November 1637, see *Privileged Playgoers*, p. 140; also Knowler, II, p. 128. Butler provides evidence that the Countess of Arundel and Shirley's Aretina (Shirley, *Lady of Pleasure. A comedie as it was acted by her Majesties Servants, at the private House in Drury Lane* (London: printed by Tho. Cotes for Andrew Crooke and William Cooke, 1637), STC (2nd ed.) / 22448, sig. I1r) visited the theatre, and suggests that Caroline play-going was not only considered to be respectable entertainment, but mentions the prestige accrued to Blackfriars for having the best orchestra in London, *Theatre and Crisis*, pp. 104-5.

regal court, and have separated Dublin's high society from the baser entertainments of Ogilby's dual-purpose theatre. Further evidence located in Shirley's Irish prologues supports this absence of the most prestigious of Irish society from the audience of the theatre. Therefore, the theatre must have been primarily supported by lower ranking members of Dublin society.

Students

Dutton suggests that the first play sold in Dublin during this period, Thomas Randolph's *Aristippus* (c. 1635), could have been staged to suit the tastes of the scholars of Trinity College, Dublin.⁴⁴⁹ In his critical edition of *St. Patrick for Ireland*, Turner argues that this play was written for a 'coterie', rather than a 'public theatre' audience, yet he disregards the fact that the comparatively small theatre-going population of Dublin could itself, by 1640, have become a coterie audience.⁴⁵⁰ The prologue, discussed above, 'A Prologue to a play there, called, No Wit to a Womans', shows that students were among the spectators:

Call you this term? if the courts were
So thin, I think 'twould make your lawyers swear,
And curse men's charity, in whose want they thrive,
Whilst we by it woo to be kept alive.⁴⁵¹

Although the phrase 'call you this term' would have applied solely to law students if the prologue was addressing a London audience, in Dublin the close proximity of

⁴⁴⁹ Dutton, 'Werburgh Street Theatre', p. 131.

⁴⁵⁰ John P. Turner, *A Critical Edition of James Shirley's St. Patrick for Ireland* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1979), p. 39.

⁴⁵¹ Shirley, *Poems*, pp. 40-1; Gifford, VI, pp. 492-3.

Soldiers

This prologue also reveals another group of individuals who formed the audience:

There are some soldiers then, though but a few,
Will see the General before they go;
You're welcome.⁴⁵⁶

That there had been a strong military presence in Dublin for some time is clear from a letter written by Wentworth to Secretary Coke on 28th November 1636 (two days after his return from England) where he cautions that,

the great Work of Reformation, ought not, in my Opinion, to be fallen upon, till all Incidents be fully provided for, the Army rightly furnished, the Forts repaired, Money in the Coffers, and such a Preparation in View, as might deter any malevolent licentious Spirit to stir up ill Humour in Opposition to his Majesty's pious Intendments therein.⁴⁵⁷

It has been claimed that Wentworth 'lavished all-round attention upon the army', and soldiers would have been a common sight on the streets of Dublin throughout the 1630s. It is therefore unsurprising that they would have sought out the entertainments offered by the new theatre.⁴⁵⁸ There was a high turnover of soldiers in Dublin, as Wentworth had arranged that two foot companies, and a troop of horse, were to be resident in the capital in rotation for a month at a time, so that over a period of two years

⁴⁵⁶ Shirley, *Poems*, pp. 147-8; Gifford, VI, pp. 495-6.

⁴⁵⁷ Knowler, II, p. 39.

⁴⁵⁸ Brigadier A. E. C. Bredin, *A History of the Irish Soldier* (Belfast: Century Books, 1987), p. 79.

he could view the entire army: this meant that there was a regular supply of new soldiers to attend performances at the theatre.⁴⁵⁹

Apprentices

It is also probable that apprentices and servants formed a key component of the regular audience. The evidence for this is somewhat more speculative, and is largely based upon the assumption that the Werburgh Street Theatre was a dual-purpose playhouse. The Dublin Assembly Rolls for 1620 was quoted in Chapter One, and repeated here for further analysis:

the Commons Complained to this Assemblie against diuers new vaine Customes lately growing in this Cittie and vsed by forriners and strandgers As Bull baytinges Beare baytinges and other vnciuell and vnlawful games and excercises allureing vnto them from all partes of the Cittie other mens prentizes and seruantes who therby fall into much vice and idlenes to ye decaie and Impouerishing of their Masters and other the Citizens,It is enacted and ordained by the said Auctoritie that ye Maior for the time being shall from time to time restraine the Common passadge of Beares and Bulles through the Cittie or any parte thereof.⁴⁶⁰

Although this concern is raised well before even the earliest speculation of the construction of the theatre (1635), it elucidates a number of relevant elements: the authorities were concerned that individuals from beyond the Pale were introducing uncouth entertainments to its inhabitants; the presence of apprentices and servants at

⁴⁵⁹ Wedgwood, *A Revaluation*, p. 140.

⁴⁶⁰ Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts*, p. 320.

these entertainments had a detrimental effect on both the attendees and their employers; that tighter regulations on such leisure activities were being enforced, and that in 1620 these pursuits were considered to be 'unlawful'. The stricter regulations on the importing of bears and bulls into Dublin for baiting may well have had beneficial repercussions for Ogilby's venture. If Ogilby was able to gain permission for hosting such events in his theatre (which seems likely given Wentworth's support of the enterprise), he would have been obtaining privileged rights to what appears to have been an established, as well as a popular, form of entertainment, which would have been very appealing to his fiscal interests. Although the above cannot be taken as conclusive evidence that apprentices and servants frequented the theatre, it does support the argument that they did. What is certain is that the Werburgh Street Theatre was in direct competition for paying customers with other forms of entertainment. It is this fact which reinforces the theory that ladies of high society (and presumably their male relatives too) did not attend the theatre on anything like a regular basis, even though they would not have experienced the financial constraints of choosing between their public entertainments. Having tapped into the established market for blood sports, it is not too fanciful to imagine that the same clientele also patronized the theatre. Equally, it is then not difficult to conclude that the highest members of Irish society did not wish to frequent an establishment with such vulgar connections, especially as it is possible that the audience contained members of an even lower social order.

Citizens

Fletcher argues that the tone of the prologue and epilogue of *The Royal Master* indicates Shirley was writing for a sophisticated audience: he concludes that while lawyers and members of the military were almost certainly present, tradesmen were not.⁴⁶¹ However, Fletcher mistakes the evidence as there *is* no prologue to *The Royal Master*, and it is most likely that the epistle dedicatory was written solely for the printed edition of the play, rather than for its performance. Also, evidence from *The Royal Master* cannot be taken as conclusive when establishing who comprised the Dublin audience, due to that play's unusual circumstance of being written for the London stage, although it was first performed in Ireland. Ann Jennalie Cook argues that the 'disreputable' poor of London had a strong motive for play-going and that 'whores, pimps, bawds, thieves and the like made playhouses a standard haunt', and there is little reason to suspect that comparative members of Dublin society did not employ the same practices: indeed the presence of the rich would have provided an obvious attraction for whores, pimps and thieves.⁴⁶² In fact, London private theatres relied heavily upon 'ordinary citizens' to support them, especially during the vacation period, as evidenced by a prologue written by Henry Glapthorne in 1639 which (after describing that the elite members of society have left the city) directly addresses these members of the audience,

You are our daily and most constant Guests,
Whom neither Countrey bus'nesse nor the Gestes
Can ravish from the Citie; 'tis your care

⁴⁶¹ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, pp. 262 and 273-4.

⁴⁶² Cook, p. 241.

To keep your Shops, 'lesse when to take the Ayr
You walke abroad, as you have done to day,
To bring your Wives and Daughters to a Play.⁴⁶³

Although Clark argues that the commoners needed to finance the Werburgh Street Theatre did not attend because it had been specifically designed as a fashionable resort, it is probable that counterparts to these London individuals were also encouraged to attend the theatre in Dublin.⁴⁶⁴

Michael Hattaway argues that the geographical location of the London playhouses (outside the jurisdiction of the City) reflected their 'cultural marginality', and that this circumstance might inform modern readings of the texts performed in them.⁴⁶⁵ Such reasoning would surely have to assume also that the close proximity of the Werburgh Street Theatre to Dublin Castle reflected the relative importance of this theatre to Dublin's cultural life. It is also possible that the richer members of the Irish 'court' followed the London practice of bestowing unwanted garments upon their servants who then sold them to players, referred to in the prologue 'To a play there, called The General', 'they [players] mean | To be reveng'd upon't, and change their scene | Awhile to the'country, leave the town to blush, | Not in ten days to see one

⁴⁶³ Henry Glapthorne, *Poems* (London, 1639), p. 27, as quoted by Butler, *Theatre and Crisis*, p. 130. Butler explains that references to the courtiers and gentry indicate that it was intended for a 'private' theatre, and that 'gests' refers to the court's summer progress into the country, or possibly to Charles's 1639 expedition against the Scots.

⁴⁶⁴ Clark, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 34.

⁴⁶⁵ Hattaway, p. 134. Bentley argues that, while at the Cockpit, Beeston made concerted efforts to take full advantage of the propinquity of the court at Whitehall to attract an exclusive audience, *JCS*, I, p. 223.

cloak of plush'.⁴⁶⁶ This would have had a great impact upon the Werburgh Street Theatre audience, as the small size of the Dublin population would have rendered it much easier for the lower social classes to recognise individual items of clothing which had once belonged to wealthier citizens which, as Hattaway argues, could have contributed to a system of political reference.⁴⁶⁷

Fluctuations in the population of Dublin

A proclamation released in Dublin 17th September 1635 stating that 'Noblemen, undertakers, and all other persons of Quality, place, or office within this kingdom shall be resident here' indicates that such people should have been present in Dublin and therefore been potential theatre-goers, yet Shirley had to deal with a severe shortfall in what could have been his regular playgoers fairly soon after his arrival in Dublin. A contemporary letter reveals, 'I am leaving Dublin, which will remain full of people till the Lord Deputy begins his progress on August 9th [1637]'.⁴⁶⁸ This indicates that the population of Dublin was significantly reduced in the summer of 1637, which must have affected the box office sales of the theatre. The productions of the Werburgh Street Theatre faced a new problem upon Wentworth's return to the city, as he and his courtiers had been indulged with impressive visual spectacles during the tour, which were described by Wentworth in a letter to Lord Conway and Killultagh:

⁴⁶⁶ Shirley, *Poems*, pp. 147-8; Gifford, VI, p. 496. The *OED* identifies that in *The Bird in a Cage* (1633), Shirley had used 'plush' to define the livery of a jester or fool.

⁴⁶⁷ Hattaway, p. 142.

⁴⁶⁸ Robert Steele *Bibliotheca Lindesina: A Bibliography of Royal Proclamations of the Tudor and Stuart Sovereigns*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), II, p. 35. *CSPI*, 1633-47, p. 164, Rawdon to Lord Conway and Killultagh, 26th July 1637.

we saw all the seven planets in a very spericall and heavenly motion, and heard each of them utter in harmony several verses in our praise, telling [us] thereby upon my knowledge rather we ought to be than what we were (the common case, you will say, of all painters and orators), and the son, the King of Planets, over and above all the rest did instead of his indulgent heat benignly squirt of his sweet waters upon us forth of a seringe, my hopes being all the whilst the instrument was new, and had not been used before.⁴⁶⁹

The theatre, therefore, had also to compete with such impressive visual displays to attract the élite of Irish society.

Some conclusions about the Werburgh Street Theatre's audience

What emerges is that the picture of Dublin theatre-goers is rather different from that which has previously been suspected, and that while the physical building of the playhouse was along the lines of one of the 'private' theatres of London, the audience more closely resembled that of the 'public' theatres. A reassessment of previous scholarship is, therefore, due. Some of William Smith Clark's deductions about the Werburgh Street Theatre and Shirley's employment there hold true. Shirley's laments about attendance cannot be taken too literally as they are examples of a convention which can be found in prologues throughout the century. In light of the above evidence, however, Clark's deduction that the theatre failed to attract sufficient numbers of 'commoners', due to its design as a resort for the gentry, aristocracy and governmental coterie, needs refining.⁴⁷⁰ While it is true that the original concept

⁴⁶⁹ *CSPI*, 1633-47, p. 169, 21st August 1637 Wentworth (Limerick) to Lord Conway and Killultagh.

⁴⁷⁰ Clark, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 34.

behind the construction of the playhouse was to attract such an élite clientele, for numerous reasons this failed – not least because Dublin Castle provided a much more exclusive venue for theatrical entertainment – and the presence of a pit indicates that commoners were never intended to be excluded. The Werburgh Street Theatre needed to attract local commoners to sustain its existence and, as is evident from Shirley’s prologues and the probable dual nature of the theatre (being used also for bear-baiting and cudgel-playing), they were already present in recognizable groups. The commoners were not, therefore, refusing to attend the theatre due to the intimidating presence of social superiors, and another reason for a lack of numbers must be ascertained. Cook’s description of ‘the privileged’ playgoers aids an understanding of the complexities of the audience; she identifies that this group embraced an incredibly varied set, from yeomens, scholars and prospering landholders, to the nobility.⁴⁷¹ Although the privileged was a comparatively small group of people, it was itself subdivided into a strict hierarchy, and the entertainment offered by the Werburgh Street Theatre may have been more appealing to those of yeoman, rather than aristocratic, descent. Yet the problems faced by the theatre could simply have been numerical: there were just not enough people in Dublin who could afford to pay to attend the theatre on a regular basis. To extrapolate further, perhaps the London habit of returning to the theatre for repeat performances of the same play did not transfer to Ireland. If the audience were only attending on the opening night, then the repertoire of the theatre would be unable to meet such a huge demand for new material.

⁴⁷¹ Cook, pp. 9-12

A reassessment of Ira Clark's suggestion, that in Dublin Shirley's 'didactic' attitude towards the audience was the result of his fulfilling Wentworth's vision of a courtly theatre, is also due:⁴⁷² rather than viewing Shirley's tone negatively as a criticism of high society, it can be deduced that he was instead trying to educate the masses. Michael Hattaway argues that the illiterate members of society were educated by listening to plays as well as sermons, and the Dublin theatre can then be clearly viewed as being part of Wentworth's plan to bring English culture to Irish society.⁴⁷³ Dutton cautions that the very nature of this plan could have alienated Irish residents (particularly the Old English who formed the majority of the gentry) from the theatre, as they already considered themselves to be fully conversant in English culture.⁴⁷⁴

The prologues

Like *The Royal Master*, *Rosania* also has an interesting print history. While the text of the play was first printed in *Six New Plays* (1652) under the title of *The Doubtful Heir*, two versions of the prologue appear in Shirley's *Poems & c.* (1646); one is addressed 'To his own Comedy there [Ireland], called Rosania, or Loves Victory', the other 'A Prologue at the *Globe* to his Comedy call'd *The doubtfull Heire*, which should have been presented at the *Black-Friers*'. *The Doubtful Heir*, as it appears in *Six New Plays*, contains a dedication to the now unknown Sir Edmund Bowier, and explains that the play has already been performed in London, which must have occurred before

⁴⁷² Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, p. 16.

⁴⁷³ Michael Hattaway, 'Playhouses and the Role of Drama' in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2000), pp. 133-147: 134.

⁴⁷⁴ Dutton, 'Werburgh Street Theatre', p. 150.

the closure of the theatres in 1642, ‘sir, it is a piece, which perhaps you have seen in the active representment’.⁴⁷⁵ The Globe prologue is the version which has received most scholarly interest: the most commented-upon reference is to the play’s intended performance at the Blackfriars theatre, and Shirley’s hope that the audience will pardon the ‘vast Stage’ of the Globe.⁴⁷⁶ This version is identical to the prologue which appears as para-text of the 1652 printed edition.⁴⁷⁷ By 1646, the play had been staged both in Dublin and London, with different prologues written accordingly – the prologue for the performance at the Globe being reprinted in the 1652 edition of the play.⁴⁷⁸ Julie Sanders argues that prologues and epilogues in the Caroline period were essential to an audience’s interpretation of the play, which renders the existence of two prologues written for different performance spaces to be worthy of discussion.⁴⁷⁹ Shirley’s preliminary address to the Globe audience is written as an apology, and includes specific examples of the type of entertainments which the play is lacking, ‘no shews, no dance, and what you most delight in, | Grave understanders, here’s no target fighting...no bawdery, nor no Ballets...no clown, no squibs, no Devill in’t’.⁴⁸⁰ This

⁴⁷⁵ Shirley, *TDH*, A2^v; Gifford, IV, p. 277.

⁴⁷⁶ Shirley, *TDH*, A3^f. Gifford, IV, p. 279. Lucow discusses the reception of the play, as indicated by the 1652 prologue, pp. 31-2. Stockwell references the prologue of *Rosania* to demonstrate similarities with London staging practices, p. 9. Curiously, neither Nason nor Forsythe mention the anomaly of the two prologues.

⁴⁷⁷ Shirley, *Poems*, pp. 154-5.

⁴⁷⁸ Hereafter the prologues will be referred to as ‘Dublin’ or ‘London’ accordingly.

⁴⁷⁹ Sanders, ‘Beggars’ Commonwealths and the Pre-Civil War Stage’, pp. 9-10. For a further discussion of the use and function of prologues in early modern drama see Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare’s Theatre: Performance and liminality in early modern drama* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), especially pp. 31-56.

⁴⁸⁰ Shirley, *TDH*, London, A3^f, ll.7-13. Fencing bouts, or ‘target fighting’ was a practice exclusive to the outdoor stages, see Mary McElroy and Kent Cartwright, ‘Public Fencing Contests on the Elizabethan stage’, *Journal of Sport History*, vol. 13, No. 3 (Winter, 1986) and Gurr, *Shakespearean Stage*, p. 14. William R. Bowden concludes that the phrase ‘no bawdry, nor no ballads’, indicates that Shirley was disparaging of ballads in particular, rather than general song, see *The English Dramatic Lyric, 1603-42*, *Yale Studies in English*, vol. 118 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), p. 115.

was clearly the type of entertainment which the audience of the Globe expected, and the absence of such stagecraft provides further evidence that the Werburgh Street Theatre had a smaller stage, more similar to that of Blackfriars, which was where Shirley originally intended the London performance of the play to be held. The apology of the prologue indicates that the Globe performance of *The Doubtful Heir* was unexpected, and thus probably occurred soon after Shirley's return to England, when he had not settled into his new position as Massinger's replacement. The evidence of the Globe prologue, however, means only that Shirley had intended the London performance of the play to occur at Blackfriars, not that he specifically wrote the play for the London stage. The role of prologues and epilogues is important, particularly for Shirley's early 'Irish' work, as they anticipate, and direct, the audience's reception of the drama.

Stern's research on para-text is enlightening to a study of the history of *Rosania*'s printed text. She argues that manuscripts of prologues and epilogues were kept separately from the manuscript of the play they were written for, and this provides an explanation for the presence of the prologue to *Rosania* in Shirley's *Poems*.⁴⁸¹ Even though *The Doubtful Heir* had yet to be printed, the composition of the prologues, as they appear in the *Poems* volume, strongly suggests that Shirley stored the prologues he wrote during his Irish residence together, and simply inserted these

The play was licensed for performance in London 1st June 1640, and must have been performed before the closure of the theatres, which limits the London performance to c.1640-42, see Bawcutt, p. 208.
⁴⁸¹ Stern, p. 178. Presumably this occurred as the play was generally considered to be the property of the playing company. If a new prologue and/or epilogue were required for each new production of a play, then retaining a copy of these would be an insignificant concern.

into the 1646 collection.⁴⁸² Stern argues further that prologues were written specifically for the opening performance of a play, and that prologues aged at a different rate to the play which they prefaced. As there was a significant time lapse between this play's performances in Dublin and London, the existence of two prologues can be explained, and the different audiences would also have necessitated the compilation of the second prologue.⁴⁸³

Of Shirley's other 'Irish' plays only *The Royal Master* also has its prologue appear in *Poems*: even though *St. Patrick for Ireland* was printed in 1640, its prologue is not included in this volume, and neither *The Politician*, *The Gentleman of Venice* nor *The Constant Maid* contain prologues. While altering the title and prologue of *Rosania* had rendered it transferable to the London stage, it is most likely that *St. Patrick for Ireland* was deemed to be too Irish-orientated to make an equal success, and for this reason the play's prologue was excluded from the *Poems* publication, which was focussing on a London-based market. Perhaps it was the special status which *Rosania* enjoyed, as Shirley's first purpose-written play for the Irish stage, which resulted in the preservation of its prologue. Clearly, as the absence of the prologue for *St. Patrick for Ireland* shows, the prologues which are contained in *Poems* are not a complete record of all the plays which were staged at the theatre (nine plays hardly constitute a theatrical repertoire spanning four years), and the prologues which were kept are therefore significant.

⁴⁸² The 'Irish' section of the *Poems* volume begins with 'A prologue to Mr. Fletcher's play in Ireland', and subsequent consecutive prologue titles refer to 'there', meaning Ireland.

⁴⁸³ Stern, pp. 173 and 179.

W. J. Lawrence suggests that Shirley used an innovative stage device during the delivery of the prologue to intrigue the Dublin audience. A frequent practice of the London playhouses was to display the day's play title on a board within view of the audience. W. S. Clark suggests that for the Werburgh Street Theatre production of *Rosania* an actor brought the board on stage while speaking the lines of the prologue.⁴⁸⁴ He could then have interacted with the board and the audience while saying 'Rosania? Mee thinks I hear one say, | What's that? 'Tis a strange title to a Play' then, after explaining this title, turns the board over as he delivers the last line of the phrase, 'that you might know | Something i'th Title, which you need not owe | To anothers understanding, you may see | In honest English there, *Loves Victory*' to reveal the play's sub-title.⁴⁸⁵ Clark notes that this trick was not used in the London production (these lines were not included in the London prologue), which was doubtless because the London audience were already familiar with the play, which would have greatly diminished its impact.⁴⁸⁶ That the staging device was used in the Dublin performance demonstrates that Shirley was thinking of imaginative ways in which to engage his new audience. He might have kept an eye on proceedings in London, but he also endeavoured to captivate spectators in Ireland.

It could be argued that the most significant difference between the variant prologues is that the London version reveals issues of staging, while the Dublin

⁴⁸⁴ Hattaway argues that an actor would wish to engage with the audience from the front of the stage, rather than confining himself to the back with a gaping space in front of him, p. 141.

⁴⁸⁵ Shirley, *Poems*, p. 148-9.

⁴⁸⁶ W. J. Lawrence, *Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies*, 2 vols (Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1912), I, pp. 43-71: 53. Clark reiterates this in *Early Irish Stage*, p. 35.

version is more concerned with problems of audience reception. For the Werburgh Street Theatre audience, Shirley went to considerable lengths to establish that his play was in the mode, favourably comparing his title to Suckling's *Aglaura* (1637/8) and Killigrew's *Claricilla* (c. 1636):⁴⁸⁷ this evidence helps to date *Rosania*'s composition to c. 1638 as Shirley would have wanted his play to be as modern as possible, and he most likely encountered *Aglaura* during his return visit to England in the spring of 1637.⁴⁸⁸

The epilogues

There are also differences between the two versions of the epilogue. Unlike the prologues, the epilogue for the 1652 edition was not completely rewritten, but was rather adapted from what was printed in 1646. The variations between the epilogues are comparatively minor, but they are illuminating on the topic of authorial intention. The actor speaking the lines in Dublin is known simply as the Epilogue, whereas the London version specifies that the Captain gives the epilogue, 'Gentlemen, | I am no Epilogue'.⁴⁸⁹ This specification in the 1652 epilogue gives a different connotation to the final lines of the epilogue, which are identical in both versions,

I mean you o'th Gentry, t'whom he owes
No money, will enter a false action,
And let the rest look to't if there be one

⁴⁸⁷ *Aglaura* was licensed by Sir Henry Herbert on 26th January 1637/8, and printed later that year. *Claricilla* was allowed in 1639, although Bentley and Clark agree that the play was written in Rome in early 1635/6, see Bawcutt, pp. 202 and 204; Bentley, *JCS*, IV, pp. 698-700; Clark, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 34; A. W. Ward, *A History of English Dramatic Literature*, 3 vols (London: Macmillan & Co., 1899), II, p. 116.

⁴⁸⁸ Forsythe, pp. 213-4.

⁴⁸⁹ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 75; Gifford, IV, p. 361.

Among his City Creditors, that dares,
He hath vow'd to presse, and send him to the warres.

This evidently refers to the plotline of the Captain and the Citizens within the play, and could well be interpreted as another tipping of the hat to the soldiers of the Werburgh Street Theatre audience. The reference here to the 'warres' could be to the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) which was ongoing on the continent, or to the Bishops' War in Scotland (1639-40), to both of which Irish, and English, soldiers had been sent. The singling out of the 'Gentry' reveals that members of this social sphere were definitely part of the audience. The epilogue asks the audience, 'Pray tell me your opinion of the Play, | Is the plot currant?' The direct question seems odd, partly because of the numerous definitions of 'currant' at this time.⁴⁹⁰ Perhaps this was intended to prompt the Dublin audience to recall the discussion in the prologue of the plays *Aglaura* and *Claricilla*, and to emphasise the modernity of the production, although this question would have been far more pertinent if posed to the London audience, as it would have been more likely that they had seen the plays *Aglaura* and *Claricilla* than members of the Dublin audience. Perhaps the question is then referring to the Swedish/Dutch wars, and the increasing Scottish threat. Concern over these events prompted Sir Henry Slingsby to write in his diary in 1638,

at such a time we need not go to Theaters to
understand by fabulous representations y^e tragick

⁴⁹⁰ OED online, 'currant' and 'current'.

revolutions of human fortune; ourselves shall be y^e
actors.⁴⁹¹

Shirley may have been asking for an opinion on the fluidity of his writing, but his choice of ‘currant’ could also have referred to the potential financial success of play (its currency). Alternatively, the issue of having a plot relevant to current interests could have been referring to earlier plays which had been staged at the Werburgh Street Theatre. It is certain that *The Royal Master* was performed before *Rosania*, but it is not possible to establish when the other plays to which Shirley wrote prologues were staged. However, Fletcher uncovered a remarkable piece of evidence which sheds further light upon the Werburgh Street Theatre. As mentioned in Chapter One, between January 1635 and 17th June 1637, John Clavell wrote out the prologue and epilogue of a play performed at the ‘New house’ in Dublin: the terminal date of the performance of this play means that it was amongst the first staged at the Werburgh Street Theatre. The epilogue of this unknown play makes it clear that the players were financially supported by the New English faction of Dublin society,

Wee as Industrious planters have fenc’d in
This litle plott vpon your Land, (twere sin
To be ingratefull) as our profets spring
To you, our Lords, w’ele thankfull tribute bring.

Yet it is the opening lines of the prologue which are most interesting to the present argument:

⁴⁹¹ Reverend Daniel Parsons, *The Diary of Sir Henry Slingsby, of Scriven* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green and Longman, 1836), pp. 13-14.

...what wee now present
Hath past our English stage., with high Content,
Then tis not new you'l say, wee grant!⁴⁹²

It is possible that this open acknowledgement that the play has already been performed in London did not find favour with the Dublin audience. Shirley's epilogue to *Rosania* could then be capitalising upon this by indicating that his play was written specifically for the Werburgh Street Theatre, and could then be said to be not only up-to-date, but also engaging with current concerns.

Any argument which could be made about the disparities in the two epilogues as a result of typesetting is dispelled when the differences between them are closely examined. In London the Captain expresses his hope to the audience that, 'when you come abroad, you'l not report | Y'are sorry to have given white money for't'; the Dublin Epilogue states, 'That when 'tis chang'd abroad, you'l not report...'. This demonstrates Shirley's intention of bringing this play to the London stage even though it premiered in Ireland. It is possible that Shirley always intended to alter the play (or perhaps merely the prologue and epilogue) for its London staging, but another line within the epilogue allows a different reading. Shirley is obviously thrilled at the lack of censorship in Dublin, 'may we trust the wit / Without a say-master to authorise it?' and he is revelling in his freedom from the critical eye of Sir Henry Herbert. Shirley is thus alluding to potential alterations which may have had to be made to the text, before

⁴⁹² Quoted by Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 65.

its London performance, in response to the criticisms of the London-based Master of the Revels.

The subtle differences between the two epilogues signifies that these alterations were intentional and, conversely, that what was retained for the 1652 publication was definitely supposed to be there: the mention of ‘King Stephen’ and ‘t’other Prince’ cannot then be dismissed as an error, as Gifford argues.⁴⁹³ In 1832, Genest made the identification that this could be a reference to Stephen Hamerton, the King’s actor, which Fleay reiterated at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁴⁹⁴ However, the possibility seems to have been overlooked that this could be a reference to King Stephen (1135-1154), as his battle for the crown with the Empress Matilda bears a superficial resemblance to the plotline of Ferdinand and Olivia. If this is the case, ‘t’other Prince’ could allude to Leonario, or to Olivia herself in her role as monarch. If this was Shirley’s intention then he was assuming that his audience had a certain degree of historical knowledge.

Sources and plot summary

Fletcher argues that the plot of *Rosania* is similar to *The Coronation* (1635), and traces a Fletcherian influence specifically from *A King and No King* and *Philaster*.⁴⁹⁵

Although Shirley had borrowed much from Tirso de Molina’s *El Castigo del*

⁴⁹³ Gifford, IV, p. 361.

⁴⁹⁴ Armstrong, p. 75; Fleay, II, p. 246.

⁴⁹⁵ Forsythe, p. 214; Burner, pp. 119-20.

Penséque, when writing *The Opportunity* (1634), it has been suggested that he utilised an unused section of this source for *Rosania*.⁴⁹⁶

Ferdinand is presumed dead and the throne of Murcia has passed to his cousin Olivia, who is engaged to marry Prince Leonario of Aragon. Ferdinand leads an assault on Murcia and is defeated in battle. Olivia falls in love with the captured Ferdinand and jilts Leonario to marry him, but Ferdinand is in love with Rosania, who is disguised as his page boy, Tiberio. Ferdinand reassures Rosania that he only married Olivia to provide them with a means of escaping from Murcia, and that he has not consummated the marriage. Tiberio catches the eye of Olivia and she attempts to seduce 'him' at which point Ferdinand bursts in, trying to expose her infidelity. Tiberio is being disguised in another room as a 'woman', but the deception is unveiled as Rosania's true identity is uncovered. Ferdinand is imprisoned again and awaiting execution when nobles arrive and hail him as their rightful king. Ferdinand then marries Rosania, and Olivia's virginity enables her to become engaged to Leonario again. Leonario has his own plan and launches a successful surprise attack on Murcia, once again capturing Ferdinand. The General of the Army exposes his true identity as Rosania's father and Ferdinand's old guardian. The forces which Leonario had expected to reinforce him were in fact sent to rescue Ferdinand, who is triumphantly crowned.

⁴⁹⁶ Nason, pp. 324-5; Forsythe, p. 214.

The sub-plot

While Clark suggests that neither *The Royal Master* nor *Rosania* contains any material which would appeal specifically to an Irish audience, the subplot of *Rosania* could have been written to appeal directly to those of a military background, and in light of the fact that soldiers formed a significant part of the Werburgh Street Theatre's audience, the sub-plot of the play is worthy of close attention.⁴⁹⁷ Lucow argues that Shirley's military characters, throughout his plays, most clearly define his notions of social class. Soldiers fit into a 'middle class' between the nobility and commoners, and the status of soldiers is further defined within the military. The gentlemanly soldier fights for honour, the common soldier fights for wages, while the common citizens try to avoid becoming entangled in military duties.⁴⁹⁸ These character types are recognisable in *Rosania*. Shirley had not previously written a subplot specifically focusing upon soldiers, and it is the subplot to this play which marks the first of the subtle changes in his writing style during his residency in Ireland.⁴⁹⁹ Stockwell, identifies the sub-plot of *Rosania* as dramatising the feud between the tradespeople of Dublin and those closely affiliated to the castle; she emphasises that the scenes are presented from the viewpoint of the Captain, whose military connection associates him with the latter group.⁵⁰⁰ The feud occurred because of general differences in moral values and social viewpoints, but more specifically because the military and

⁴⁹⁷ Clark, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 35.

⁴⁹⁸ Lucow, pp. 38-9.

⁴⁹⁹ Shirley's *The Maids Revenge* (licensed 1626, printed 1639) contains a character who Nason describes as being comic and blunt, and therefore a typical example of the type of military character which Shirley especially enjoyed, but he had not previously written a subplot which revolved around such characters, see Nason, p. 176.

⁵⁰⁰ Stockwell, p. 11.

government officials were often slow in paying their debts to Dublin tradesmen.⁵⁰¹

Lack of pay was an acknowledged root of indiscipline in the army, but enormous difficulties were often incurred in locating funds.⁵⁰² Tensions between the local populace and the army were not limited to Dublin, and in October 1638 a petition was brought to the Irish Star Chamber Court detailing an unprovoked assault on two soldiers by a publican and his friend, who were also bailiffs. The brawl was broken up by a Lieutenant, who was praised by the Star Chamber members for preventing further unrest, as without his intervention the event,

might have bredd a greate mutanie & uproar amongst
the soliders if it had not bene prevented by the Civill
care & disretion of the sd Leiftenant.⁵⁰³

As the case was heard by Wentworth in Dublin, it is possible to suggest that Shirley knew about it, but the main significance of this legal case is that it reveals the tensions which existed between citizens and soldiers. Shirley could have been directly responding to this tension in the sub-plot of *Rosania*.

Fighting and the military

The greatest incongruity in the text is that, while the prologue of the 1652 edition states that the play contains no ‘target fighting’ (a common feature of Caroline drama),

⁵⁰¹ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 273. Another source of conflict between the military and the local population occurred in Ulster, when in 1639 Wentworth stationed soldiers in the county both to prevent Ulster being drawn into the Bishops’ Wars, and to ensure that the requirement that all men over the age of 16 swore the Black Oath was enforced, see Canny, *Making Ireland British*, p. 294.

⁵⁰² Wedgwood, *A Revaluation*, pp. 137 and 140.

⁵⁰³ The case is recorded by Jon G. Crawford, *A Star Chamber Court in Ireland: The Court of Castle Chamber, 1571- 1641* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 587-9.

in the fifth act of the play there is a stage direction stating that the Antient and Lieutenant fight, and the Captain comments, ‘good, good agen, well offer’d – they fight by these Hilts | Furiously’.⁵⁰⁴ The Dublin prologue mentions nothing about a lack of sword fighting, which suggests that when the play was staged at the Werburgh Street Theatre it contained a fight scene, but for unknown reasons this did not translate to the London staging of the play. Indeed the very language used in the Dublin prologue is military, as the play is described as a battle in the war of love,

Fear not the warre, the victorie is yours,
The battell will be ended in two hours.
Wounds will be given and receiv'd, yet need
You fear no sigh or tear, whoever bleed;
You see, but can take in no shot, you are
So far from danger in this amorous warre.⁵⁰⁵

There are phrases and speeches within the text which can be identified as directly appealing to the soldiers of the audience. The Captain gives the two Citizens money to press them into joining the army, ‘Heres twelve pence a peece for you y’ar fit Men | To serve the Queen’, and in the stage directions of the next scene (and throughout the rest of the play) the citizens are referred to as ‘Lieutenant’ and ‘Antient’.⁵⁰⁶ The coercive aspect of this financial exchange is later explained by the Captain when he says, ‘they think I serve ‘em with Press money agen’: the term ‘press money’ had been employed since the beginning of the sixteenth century to describe the money received by a soldier on his enlistment to the army, the acceptance of which was taken as legal proof

⁵⁰⁴ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 65; Gifford, IV, pp. 350-1.

⁵⁰⁵ Shirley, *Poems*, pp. 148-9; Gifford, IV, p. 278.

⁵⁰⁶ Shirley, *TDH*, pp. 12 and 15; Gifford, IV, pp. 292 and 296. Gifford calls them Citizen 1 and Citizen 2 throughout the play.

of his engagement.⁵⁰⁷ As it is likely that many of the soldiers present had joined the army under similarly constrained circumstances, they would be able to relate directly to this exchange.⁵⁰⁸ The Antient reveals that ‘we ha’paid | I take it for our names’, which shows that they paid for their honours which were greater than those afforded to a common soldier.⁵⁰⁹ The Captain’s speech to the Citizens, when they are pressing him to repay his debt, can easily be interpreted as being written to please this contingent of the audience. When questioned if he is going to war the Captain replies,

Yes Mongrels
To fight for your chamlet Faces, while you stay at home
And catch the cramp with telling mony...
Must we Eat Bullets without Butter. Whelps?
Have our Throats cut, or drop like Sheep by’th’hundred,
O’ the rot, to buy your Peace, you boding Screechows?
And ha’ your consciences so course a Nap
To aske money of us?⁵¹⁰

This speech would no doubt provoke feelings of solidarity amongst the soldiers, and unite them against the populace, who did not undertake such dangerous employment.

If the soldiers were owed back-pay then they may also have experienced a similar

⁵⁰⁷ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 66; Gifford, IV, p. 351. See OED:

http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50187981?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=press+money&first=1&max_to_show=10 [accessed 18th May 2009].

⁵⁰⁸ Bredin argues that pay was of great consideration in 1646 following the northern revolt in Ireland. Recruits were encouraged to join the army which Owen Roe O’Neill had raised in Ulster to fight the Scots. Many of these men may have been trained originally in Wentworth’s army, and Bredin argues that they were attracted to O’Neill’s army in part because they were paid 3/6d a week compared to the 2/6 which the Supreme Council of the Confederated Catholics paid Leinster soldiers, see pp. 82-3.

⁵⁰⁹ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 15; Gifford, IV, p. 297.

⁵¹⁰ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 4; Gifford, IV, p. 284. The Captain’s mention of ‘chamlet faces’ is curious: the *OED* states that in the seventeenth century the term ‘chamlet’ referred to a light, costly material made of Angoran goat hair which was often associated with particularly female clothing, see http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50032021/50032021spg1?single=1&query_type=misspelling&queryword=chamlet&first=1&max_to_show=10&hilite=50032021spg1 [accessed 17th May 2009]. The Captain is most likely employing the word in a derogatory manner to imply that the Citizens resemble rich women, while soldiers undertake employment of physical hardship.

situation, where they were unable to meet their obligations because the government had not paid their wages. There was a history of defaults in the payment of wages to soldiers serving in Ireland, as recorded by commissioners in 1622:

want of pay maketh soldiers disable[d] both in their bodies and courages, and drives them to make base shifts to the corruption of discipline; besides long settling in one place makes them think too much of home; and to remove them from one garrison to another is impossible, by reason of their miserable condition for want of pay.⁵¹¹

It is reasonable to assume that paying soldiers had not become a high priority by the late 1630s, as Wentworth's primary concern was to make the country profitable and to send funds back to England. This reading of the text is supported by a later speech of the Captain, 'I come | With a Petition to your honors, for money in arrear', and again in the fifth act of the play with the phrase, 'trust Souldiers, without impertinent | asking for your debts; they'l pay you'.⁵¹²

Another concern for soldiers was the personality or character of their military superiors. The moral integrity of the Captain is in serious doubt following an exchange with Leonario, where the courtier offers an unsolicited payment to the Captain, which is received with little reluctance.⁵¹³ Perhaps it is the Captain's pitiable

⁵¹¹ 'The army estimates of arrears' (NLI, MS 8,013 i); 'A Brief Declaration of the State of His Majesty's Debts in Ireland at Michaelmas 1622' (NLI, MS 8,013 v); report of the commissioners of 1622 (BL, Add. MS 4,756 fos. 33^v, 34); Propositions Concerning the Army', 20 June 1622 (NLI, MS 8,014 (I)), as quoted by Canny, *Making Ireland British*, p. 304.

⁵¹² Shirley, *TDH*, pp. 17 and 66; Gifford, IV, pp. 299 and 351.

⁵¹³ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 9; Gifford, IV, p. 290.

financial condition which prompts his acceptance of the bribe, no doubt exacerbated by arrears in pay. Shirley's message could then be that the loyalty of soldiers could not be assumed if the crown did not fulfil its obligation to them by paying their wages. This concern for the moral character of the commanding officer is supported by the Captain's earlier aside regarding the Citizens, 'would I could tice 'em to | A little treason, theyl ne'r hang for felony' [*sic*].⁵¹⁴ The loyalty of a soldier would be to his captain, and it must have been difficult to follow orders without implicit trust in the individual, although this is, of course, a requirement of army life.

The play also contains more general references to war. It is the Captain who complains that 'this villainous War distracts | All civill mirth'.⁵¹⁵ This reference to 'civill mirth' could be a dig by Shirley at poor attendance, as the minds of the populace would be less likely to turn to theatre in times of warfare. However, given the presence of the soldiers in Dublin this must have been a general, rather than a specific, gripe. The morality of war is also implied by Ferdinand when he states, 'a Kingdom is a Garland, | Worth all Contention'.⁵¹⁶ Some things are worth supreme effort, and one interpretation of this phrase could be that it was trying to justify English rule in Ireland, as both the Tudor and Stuart monarchs had expended considerable effort in dominating the island. The honourable nature of battle is further evidenced by the actions of Leonario, as when the city of Murcia is attacked he expresses his wish to fight Ferdinand in single combat, 'we shall spare | The Blood of many, and conclude

⁵¹⁴ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 3; Gifford, IV, p. 284.

⁵¹⁵ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 3; Gifford, IV, p. 284.

⁵¹⁶ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 21; Gifford, IV, p. 304.

the War | In single opposition'.⁵¹⁷ This heroic speech serves to emphasise the upstanding morals of war when is conducted honourably. A twist on the idea of the glorious nature of war is given by Leonario when he claims, 'Nothing but War can right my cause and honor'.⁵¹⁸ Here war is not justified, but rather it is the means of regaining respect. Shirley's subtle promotion of war-craft throughout the play would have appealed to the soldiers of the audience, and indicates, in his own work, the beginning of his concern to attract these individuals to the theatre.⁵¹⁹ Shirley, of course, did not only target soldiers, and the play contains a brief allusion to the students who also comprised the Werburgh Street Theatre's audience: when speaking to the Antient, the Captain says 'Why now I love you, love you, as well as you do Law'.⁵²⁰ While on their own these examples appear insignificant in and of themselves, when viewed from the paradigm of Shirley's approach to his 'Irish' plays they can be identified as the beginning of change. Given that *Rosania* was Shirley's first play to be specifically written *for* the Irish stage, it can be concluded that he was still unsure of his position and the reaction of his audience. As his residence in Ireland looked set to become semi-permanent, Shirley was forced into greater consideration of the theatrical tastes of the Dublin audience. In this case, he targeted the many soldiers in Ireland in an attempt to ensure that his play was a financial success.

⁵¹⁷ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 8; Gifford, IV, p. 288.

⁵¹⁸ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 27; Gifford, IV, p. 310.

⁵¹⁹ If James Ware's account is to be believed, Ogilby also showed interest in this group, as evidenced by his composition of *The Character of a Trooper* which was written during his own residence in Ireland, see Harris, p. 352 and my earlier discussion in Chapter One.

⁵²⁰ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 66; Gifford, IV, p. 351.

The monarch's right to rule

While Shirley was concerned to appeal to a group which comprised a significant proportion of his Dublin audience, he also wrote about issues which affected the entire population. Charles's policy of Personal Rule had been in effect for a number of years before *Rosania* was written, and there was a general upsurge in vocalising discussions about a monarch's right to rule. This issue was linked to debates about the proper chain of command, which had relevance to both Charles in England, and Wentworth's vice-regal rule in Ireland. The following speech by the Queen is then highly significant:

Whose service is so forward to our State,
That when Our pleasure's known, not to proceed,
They dare be officious in his Sentence? Are
We Queen, or do we move by your Protection?⁵²¹

At this time, Charles was increasingly beset by difficulties arising from his policy of Personal Rule, and Wentworth still faced considerable opposition to his plans of reform in Ireland. Although Lucow suggests that throughout this play Shirley upheld the institution of the monarchy, Butler argues that playwrights of the 1630s discussed current political issues, which included disputes about Charles's policy of Personal Rule.⁵²² This is not to say that Shirley's drama was written with the intention of agitating the populace, but rather that he was engaging with the current socio-political climate. In the speech above, the monarch is asserting her right to make decisions, and to have her will implemented. That the monarch is female (and could therefore be

⁵²¹ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 25; Gifford, IV, p. 308.

⁵²² Lucow, p. 19; Butler, p. 281.

interpreted as being flattering to Queen Henrietta-Maria when the play was expected to be staged in London), is largely irrelevant in this speech, as it is the authority of the monarchy which matters to Shirley. However, Olivia's gender does avoid a direct comparison of her with Charles I. Throughout the play, Olivia has been ferocious in protecting her royal prerogatives, yet when Ferdinand's rightful claim to the throne is revealed in Act V, she does not demur, but promises her obedience, and accepts the King's decisions for her future.⁵²³ Ferdinand's true identity has been indicated since the beginning of the play, when he is described as being, 'so Noble in his Nature, Active bountifull | Discreet, and valiant', therefore order has been restored to the realm at the end of the play.⁵²⁴ However, as Butler suggests, the example of Olivia does question the system of governance. As Queen, Olivia is justified in upholding all the authority of her position, yet she is required to relinquish quietly this status when Ferdinand's superior claim is proven. Ferdinand instantly issues orders which are contrary to the wishes expressed by Olivia when she was Queen (namely whom she is to marry). As Ferdinand is now King, his decision is final, and implicitly suggests that at least some of the decisions which Olivia made were unsatisfactory: this is acceptable in the play as Olivia is no longer the monarch, and her gender helps to gloss over any uncomfortable issues which her enforced abdication from the throne evoke. This line of reasoning has wide ramifications, as while Shirley is expressing his opinion that Charles, and Wentworth, are justified in their positions of absolute authority, he is implicitly conveying the suggestion that, on occasion, their judgement may be flawed.

⁵²³ Shirley, *TDH*, pp. 69 and p. 71; Gifford, IV, pp. 355 and 357.

⁵²⁴ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 1; Gifford, IV, p. 281.

Shirley's portrayal of a female monarch

Although Shirley is famed for his favourable depiction of women, the gender roles in *Rosania* are, at times, extremely odd. The Queen fancies herself in love with Tiberio (who is actually Rosania in disguise), and in her attempted seduction she tells Tiberio, 'Think I am the man' and after kissing 'him' enquires, 'Madam, how like you this?'⁵²⁵ Dramatically, this has the potential to be a highly comic scene, and could then be interpreted as an attempt at appealing to the palates of the Werburgh Street Theatre audience. Shirley had previously used this dramatic device in several of his plays, but it is probable that the Dublin audience was unfamiliar with it.⁵²⁶ Yet perhaps Shirley was trying to say something more subtle and complex about princely power, even though the monarch is female. When deciding the fate of the captured Ferdinand, the nobleman Ernesto reminds Olivia of her engagement to Leonario by stating, 'Madam, the Prince'.⁵²⁷ This statement implies that Olivia must now consider the opinion of her future husband - a check on her authority which she refuses to accept without complaint:

My Lord, you have a Queen.
I not suspect his wisdom Sir, but he
Hath no Commission here to be a Judge,
You were best circumscribe our Regal power,
And by your selves condemn, or pardon all,
And we sign to your will.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁵ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 49; Gifford, IV, p. 334. Gifford records Langbaine's observation that this plotline resembles a story in *English Adventures*, III, between King Henry, Isabella and Horation, IV, p. 276.

⁵²⁶ Forsythe identifies the cross-dressing of a female character in *Love Tricks* (1625), *The Maid's Revenge* (1626), *The Wedding* (1626), *The Grateful Servant* (1629), *The Imposture* (1640), *The Sisters* (1642), pp. 94-5.

⁵²⁷ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 25; Gifford, IV, p. 308.

⁵²⁸ Shirley, *TDH*, pp. 16-17; Gifford, IV, p. 308.

Olivia reminds her courtier that her rank surpasses that of a prince, but this speech also demonstrates that Shirley engages this character with a discussion of regal prerogative which was being debated throughout the Stuart era.⁵²⁹ J. G. A. Pocock argues that supporters of the Stuart kings acknowledged their monarch's right to make autonomous laws, but did not expect them to do so. Instead of viewing the king as being above the law, they believed that the king's prerogative formed part of a fundamental law.⁵³⁰ Olivia's speech indicates that she will accept limitations imposed on her by her courtiers before she will countenance interference from another monarchic state, thus demonstrating her acquiescence that her authority is part of the law of her realm, rather than being above it. This concept is revisited in the play when Olivia challenges the authority of her husband:

Queen Who made you King I pray?
Ferdinand Your power.⁵³¹

Ferdinand has gained the position of king through their marriage, but his power is curtailed as it was conferred solely by the authority of the Queen. It is only when the nobles of Murcia acclaim him as monarch that his power becomes actual, rather than assumed.⁵³² Olivia consistently acknowledges that her authority is part of a greater system of government, as evidenced by the phrase, 'I allow | Your Counsell Lords', which also demonstrates that she is a better monarch than the king of *The Royal*

⁵²⁹ For a full discussion about the issues surrounding the king's prerogative see Christopher Hill, *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), especially, pp. 225-265.

⁵³⁰ J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A study of English historical thought in the seventeenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957; repr. 1987), pp. 54-55.

⁵³¹ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 52; Gifford, IV, p. 337.

⁵³² Shirley, *TDH*, p. 58; Gifford, IV, p. 343.

Master.⁵³³ When she needs to assert her power, Olivia shows her ‘princely’ quality, and there is a sense that she has to assume masculine characteristics in order to rule effectively. As Queen, her decisions are unquestioned, but the play reveals that her judgment as a woman is flawed. This is primarily revealed by her emotional responses, which are shown by her response to Tiberio, and is also exposed by her emotional response to warfare: when Leonario asks to fight Ferdinand in single combat, Olivia tells him,

I’ll pray for you
And not so much for what concerns the State,
As what your merit hath already gain’d
Upon my Heart.⁵³⁴

Fitzgibbon argues that throughout his plays, Shirley exemplifies how individuals are inseparable from the office which they fulfil, and *Rosania* is no exception.⁵³⁵ The position of monarch cannot be separated from the fact that Olivia is a woman with feminine qualities: for example, her much-professed chastity in the first act of the play, ‘her Virgin sweetness’ and ‘chaste affection’ is epitomised by her creation of a law ‘to keep Wifes Pulses temperat, and correct | The insolent Bloud of Women that had Husbands’.⁵³⁶ However, these sentiments are rendered ridiculous by her behaviour towards Tiberio, which serves to undermine her character, with the consequence of further legitimising Ferdinand’s acquisition of monarchical power. Upon his accession to the throne, one of the ways in which Ferdinand demonstrates his favourable

⁵³³ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 8; Gifford, IV, p. 289.

⁵³⁴ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 9; Gifford, IV, p. 289.

⁵³⁵ Fitzgibbon, p. vi.

⁵³⁶ Shirley, *TDH*, pp. 2, 10 and 41; Gifford IV, pp. 282, 290 and 325.

qualities is his generous redemption of Olivia's chastity, 'it is no blemish | To fair *Olivia* still to be a Virgin'.⁵³⁷

Masques

Dutton's claim that Shirley had a conscious eye upon the London stage when writing plays in Ireland provides an interesting lense through which to interpret the play. One example in which it could be argued that Shirley tried to cater to the tastes of the London audience while writing in Dublin is through his use of masques. While the audience of the London theatres would have had knowledge, and perhaps experience, of masques, this was not the case with the Dublin audience, and Shirley was, perhaps, trying to educate his Irish audience. Masques were very popular in the English court and Shirley had found fame with *The Triumph of Peace* (1634) and had already incorporated masques into earlier plays (*The Ball* (1632), *Love Tricks* (1625), and *The Lady of Pleasure* (1635)). In the first act of *Rosania* the Captain mentions the performance of a masque and the reasons for it being performed,

Touching the Masque. Which you two in the name
Of the whole City, offr'd to present
At the Town charges to congratulate
The Queens intended Marriage.⁵³⁸

Using a masque to celebrate a royal marriage was common practice - it had happened in 1613 when Princess Elizabeth married the Elector Palatine, and again in 1625 when

⁵³⁷ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 69; Gifford, IV, p. 355.

⁵³⁸ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 3; Gifford, IV, p. 283.

Charles and Henrietta-Maria wed.⁵³⁹ Although the Captain mentions the reasons for the masque's performance, he does not give any further details about it, and must have assumed a collective knowledge in his audience. Due to trips to London, or residence there, those who held high social status amongst the Werburgh Street Theatre audience may have had knowledge, and experience, of masques. Yet many of the Dublin audience would not have had such understanding of the genre, which indicates that Shirley was still writing, in part, for the London audience. Later, when Ferdinand is imprisoned and awaiting execution he is offended that Leandro, Ernesto and Rodriguez should enter his cell and kneel to him, 'She [the Queen] might allow me death without this scorn, | This jeering Antimasque'.⁵⁴⁰ Ferdinand's exclamation demands a detailed knowledge of masques by the audience. Ferdinand believes that the nobles kneel to him in mockery when in fact they have come to pay him homage as the acknowledged monarch, and it is this reestablishment of social order which would conclude the 'masque'. With these two short allusions Shirley is saying something more profound about the play. The whole plot could be likened, loosely, to a masque – there is disorder in the state while Queen Olivia is in power which is only restored when Ferdinand is acknowledged as King – it is interesting that while Gifford refers to her throughout the play as 'Olivia', in the 1652 edition the title 'Queen' is used for Olivia's speeches throughout rather than her given name, although this was most likely the choice of the compositors, rather than Shirley.

⁵³⁹ Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power* (Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1975), p. 39. Jonson's *The Fortunate Isles and Their Union* was performed for the marriage of Charles and Henrietta-Maria, but other celebrations were cancelled because of the death of James I, Karen Britland, *Drama at the courts of Queen Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 19.

⁵⁴⁰ Shirley, *TDH*, p. 58; Gifford, IV, p. 343.

Conclusions

The question of names is raised most forcibly by the title of the play. The Dublin prologue asserts that naming a play after its heroine is fashionable, but Shirley also provides an alternative title, *Love's Victory*. The sub-title could be an acknowledgement of the plot of *Aglaura*, the ending of which contains multiple deaths, and firmly locates *Rosania* as a tragicomedy, indicating to its contemporary audience that, unlike in *Agalaura*, love will overcome. The change of title to *The Doubtful Heir* reflects the socio-political climate of the 1650s: gone was Henrietta-Maria's court of love, and the focus of England was upon political struggles, following the socio-political upheavals of the Civil Wars. The emphasis of the play is subtly shifted from a consideration of how Rosania's love for Ferdinand will triumph over all obstacles, to the deliberation of how Ferdinand will reclaim his birthright. This would have had special resonance in the 1650s as plans abounded for restoring Charles II to his throne.

As Shirley's first play to be written for the Irish stage, it was to be expected that *Rosania* would demonstrate that he still had the London stage in mind, but elements within the text also show that he was beginning to consider the audience of the Werburgh Street Theatre. At the time of *Rosania's* staging, Shirley still hoped to make the theatre an attractive form of entertainment to the upper echelons of Dublin society, but it is most likely that Wentworth's vice-regal inclinations resulted in practices similar to the London court, where entertainment was provided at Dublin

Castle so that the nobility did not have to rub shoulders with the lower classes.⁵⁴¹

While London tastes and collective audience knowledge influenced the composition of *Rosania*, it also demonstrates that Shirley was beginning to take into account the Dublin audience. The sub-plot of *Rosania* indicates that Shirley had identified a particular group within the Werburgh Street Theatre's audience whose regular attendance he particularly wished to encourage. Shirley's next play, *The Gentleman of Venice*, demonstrates that his interest in writing for the Dublin stage had broadened to encompass a discussion of more general Irish concerns.

⁵⁴¹ This is reflected by the hostility between different social classes within the play, see Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 273.

Chapter Five: *The Gentleman of Venice*

The Gentleman of Venice demonstrates Shirley's increasing engagement with Irish concerns. The play's consideration of the heir focuses upon the suitability of an individual for the role, and incorporates an examination of nature versus nurture. Discussions of this subject were a familiar motif of Renaissance literature, and Shirley's engagement with this debate during his residency in Dublin, prompts the question of what resonance the debate had for the situation in Ireland.

Contextualising *The Gentleman of Venice*

This play was licensed in London on 30th October 1639 for the Queen's Men at Salisbury Court.⁵⁴² It is, therefore, most probable that the play was written in Ireland, and sent over to England as part of the arrangement Shirley had with the Cooke/Crooke partnership, as it unlikely that the London acting troupe held on to an unlicensed copy of the play, choosing this moment to prepare for its performance. Shirley must, therefore, have sent the play over to London, as he had done earlier that year with *The Maid's Revenge*.⁵⁴³ Like *The Royal Master* and *Rosania*, *The Gentleman of Venice* has an interesting print history. The play appears in the Stationers' Register on 9th July 1653, and was first published in 1655, along with *The*

⁵⁴² Frederick Gard Fleay, *A Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama 1559-1642*, 2 vols (London: Reeves and Turner, 1891), II, p. 243; Bawcutt, p. 206. Wilson F. Engel, states that while there is no record of a specific performance of the play, that it was performed at Salisbury Court shortly after it was licensed, *The Gentleman of Venice*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature Under the Direction of Professor Erwin A. Stürzl, Jacobean Drama Studies ed. Dr. James Hogg, 62 (Austria: Insitutut für Englische Sprache und literatur universität Salzburg, 1976), p. x.

⁵⁴³ Although the play was first licensed 9th February 1626, *The Maides Revenge* was entered into the Stationers' Register 12th April 1639, Stevenson, 'Shirley's Dedications and the Date of his Return to England', p. 80.

Politician, in two simultaneous issues, one in quarto and the other octavo, a rare occurrence in the seventeenth century.⁵⁴⁴ W. W. Greg argues that the octavo issues were designed to fit into the 1653 publication of Shirley's *Six New Plays*, and the quarto to fit into collections of the earlier separate editions of Shirley's plays.⁵⁴⁵ Engel argues that the similarity between the ornaments of *The Gentleman of Venice* to those known to have been possessed by the printer William Wilson suggests that he printed these two plays, although no printer is listed on the title-page of the 1655 edition.⁵⁴⁶ Fehrenbach's bibliographical investigations conclude that *The Gentleman of Venice* was printed before *The Politician*.⁵⁴⁷

Engel's evidence that the play was written in Ireland comes from its (and *The Politician*'s) placement in a chronological list of twenty-one plays, between *The Royal Master* (1638) and *Rosania* (c. 1638, first printed 1652).⁵⁴⁸ It has been suggested that *The Gentleman of Venice* was offered to the 'Salisbury Court company' during

⁵⁴⁴ Engel draws attention to the fact that there is no evidence that the manuscript licensed in 1639 was the same as that registered for publication in 1653. However, he argues that the dedication contains no evidence of disapproval of the printer's copy, and that there is no external evidence that the manuscript was altered in a similar fashion to the revision of *The Court Secret* (printed 1653) before its publication, p. xliii. Although Lodowick Carlell's *Passionate Lover* was also printed in simultaneous issues, of different size in the same year, this was an unusual occurrence. For a discussion of the rarity of printing in two sizes during the seventeenth century, see W. W. Greg, 'The Printing of Jasper Mayne's Plays', *Oxford Bibliographical Society Proceedings and Papers*, I, (1922-6), quoted in Edward Huberman, 'Bibliographical note on James Shirley's *The Politician*', *The Library*, 4th series, vol. xviii (1938), pp. 106-108: 107-108. See also Robert J. Fehrenbach, 'The Printing of James Shirley's *The Politician* (1655)', *Studies in Bibliography*, 24, pp. 144-8.

⁵⁴⁵ Greg, *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama*, II, pp. 856-7. Greg provides evidence that *The Gentleman of Venice* and *The Politician* were from the setting of type. See also Engel, p. xl. A comparative discussion of the printed editions is made by Huberman, pp. 104-108.

⁵⁴⁶ Engel, p. vii.

⁵⁴⁷ Fehrenbach, p. 146.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. v.

Brome's absence.⁵⁴⁹ However, the Queen's Men were the troupe for which Shirley had written before he went to Ireland, and the play was licensed under their name.⁵⁵⁰ That the play was written and performed in Ireland avoided the usual difficulties attendant upon transferring plays between one company and another, a problem which was common in London theatrical circles. Engel states that while Fleay and W. A. Neilson agree that there was an Irish performance of the play, Bentley and Schoenbaum have been more cautious in attesting to this.⁵⁵¹ While there is no direct evidence to confirm that the play was performed at the Werburgh Street Theatre, it is doubtful that the resident playwright of this Irish theatre wrote a play which was solely to be performed in London. The argument that this play is a more polished work than either *The Royal Master*, or the subsequent *St. Patrick for Ireland*, is certainly not evidence that *The Gentleman of Venice* was composed in England, but rather explains why Shirley chose this play from his small stock of newly written plays to be sent to London for performance in his absence.⁵⁵²

The 1655 edition of *The Gentleman of Venice* is dedicated to 'The honourable sir Thomas Nightingale, Baronet'. Very little is now known about this man, and the date of the play's publication makes a detailed examination of his significance to

⁵⁴⁹ Brome had been initially contracted to the Salisbury Court company for three years, until July 1638. Although he failed to fulfil the terms of this contract, a new one (lasting for seven years) was agreed upon, beginning in August 1638. However, Brome soon abandoned his responsibilities at Salisbury Court and began writing plays for Christopher Beeston's company: the Salisbury Court company undertook legal action against him on 12th February 1639-40. See Matthew Steggle, *Richard Brome, Place and Politics and the Caroline Stage* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 118-120.

⁵⁵⁰ Engel, p. xii.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. xii-xiii.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

Shirley irrelevant in a discussion of the dramatist's Irish years. Engel suggests that Nightingale was the eldest son born to Robert Nightingale and Theodosia, daughter of Robert Chester, knight, in Newport, Essex 15th October 1629, which makes him 26 years of age at the time which the dedicatory letter was written.⁵⁵³ Fleay argues that the 1655 dedication suggests that the manuscript of the play had been lost and that it was recovered with difficulty, which is an assertion requiring further consideration.⁵⁵⁴

The section of the dedicatory letter which led Fleay to this conclusion reads:

I must acknowledge many years have past, since it did
Vagire in Cunis, and when it had gotten strength, and
legs to walk, traveling without direction, it lost it self,
till it was recovered after much inquisition, and now
upon the first return home, hath made this fortunate
adresse, and application to your Patronage.⁵⁵⁵

For the purposes of this discussion, the most significant phrase is 'the first return home'. The dedication was written for the play's publication, which occurred long after Shirley's return to England. As Shirley had sent the play over for licensing and performance in 1639, he could be forgiven for assuming that a copy was still held by Salisbury Court. If Shirley had left his own copy of the play with the Werburgh Street Theatre company, then hunting down the person who still had the manuscript (Ogilby/the prompter) could have proved difficult.⁵⁵⁶ Given that Shirley is using the

⁵⁵³ Ibid., p. viii.

⁵⁵⁴ The Stationers' Register records on 9th July 1653 that, 'Master Mosely. Entred for his copie a Play called, *The Gentleman of Venice*. Written by James Shirley...vj^d'. The delay in printing has not yet been explained. Fleay, II, p. 243.

⁵⁵⁵ Shirley, *The Gentleman of Venice* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1655), Wing / S3468, A2^r; Gifford, V, p. 3. *Vagire in cunis* – to whimper in the cradle.

⁵⁵⁶ Shirley left Ireland in 1640, and the Irish uprising of October 1641 resulted in the Lords Justice of Ireland ordering the closure of the Werburgh Street Theatre. See Hitchcock, p. 13; Chetwood, p. 52.

metaphor of a baby growing to adulthood, the phrase ‘first return home’ is then referring to the manuscript’s return to his possession. Equally, Shirley may have had problems locating the copy of the play held by Salisbury Court. Shirley had been associated with William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, after his return from Ireland, but Cavendish had been exiled to Paris between 1645 and 1648, when he moved to Antwerp for at least ten years. With the return of his brother, Sir Charles, to England in 1651, Cavendish lost his main point of contact with the scholarly community. Unable to communicate with the exiled Cavendish any longer, perhaps it was this loss of patronage in the early 1650s which led to a small flurry of printed Shirley plays, as the dramatist tried to supplement his income: *The Cardinal*, *The Doubtful Heir*, *The Imposture* and *The Brothers* were printed in 1652, *The Court Secret* and *The Sisters* were printed in 1653.⁵⁵⁷

Although the play was licensed in London, the only evidence of a London performance comes from the title-page of the 1655 edition, which states that it was ‘presented at the Private house in *Salisbury* Court by her Majesties Servants’. Given the parliamentary ordinance for closing the theatres in 1642, which was followed later by even stricter enforcements, this cannot refer to a recent (c.1655) production, but it also does not allow a more specific performance date range to be narrowed between

⁵⁵⁷ Ben Van Beneden and Nora de Poorter (eds), *Royalist Refugees, William and Margaret Cavendish in Rubens House 1648-1660* (Antwerp: Rubenshuis & Rubenianum, 2006), pp. 42-3 and 81.

30th October 1639 and 2nd September 1642. The London production of the play could, therefore, have occurred after Shirley's permanent return to England in April 1640.⁵⁵⁸

Staging the play

It was Engel who first suggested that the parts of Georgio and Thomazo could have been played by the same actor, as the two characters never appear together on the stage.⁵⁵⁹ This theory gains credibility when considered alongside *The Royal Master*, where the characters of Bombo and the King were also probably performed by the same actor. Taking this argument one step further, it is also probable that all four characters were played, in Dublin, by the same actor, as there are several similarities between Georgio and Bombo, who both play the part of the fool in their respective plays, and the actor would be playing one part in the main and one part in the subplot of both plays. Bombo is recognised for his witty wordplay (when informed that the lords are rising from the dining table, he exclaims 'the Lords doe rise and fall'), and Georgio is commended for his use of language ('your wit dances').⁵⁶⁰ While both Bombo and Georgio are rude and disrespectful to their social superiors, Engel's comments about Georgio being vindictive are misplaced, as it is more likely that his lines were delivered in a humorous manner, and that his character is really that of a fool.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁸ Although Brome was the official playwright for Salisbury Court at the time of Shirley's return from Ireland, as mentioned above, he was having difficulties regarding his contract, see Steggle, pp. 118-120.

⁵⁵⁹ Engel, p. xxxv.

⁵⁶⁰ Shirley, *TRM*, sig. D3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 124. Shirley, *TGV*, p. 18; Gifford, V, p. 53.

⁵⁶¹ Engel, p. xxxv. During an exchange with Roberto, Georgio talks of his relationship with Giovanni, 'We are familiar. | You are his Father, and he dares not lie | To you, to me he may talk any thing, | He knows my understanding to an inch.' Shirley, *TGV*, p. 10; Gifford, V, p. 14. This quotation could be

Shirley clearly knew the actors for whom he was writing parts, and there are instances in *The Gentleman of Venice* where he seems to acknowledge Ogilby. In Act III, the stage direction reads ‘Enter Malipiero with Rosabella, dancing, Bernardo, Marcello’, and there is another direction, in parenthesis, stating ‘dance’. More specifically, in reference to Giovanni, Roberto says ‘a little thing | Would make me entertain a dancing master’, which all recalls Ogilby’s initial employment by Wentworth as a dancing instructor.⁵⁶² This all indicates a close-knit theatrical group and a sense of community.

While there is evidence within the play to suggest that not all of the Werburgh Street Theatre audience were highly educated, the presence of numerous references to classical texts does signify that Shirley expected - at least some - of his audience to have a certain degree of knowledge. While these allusions could have been aimed at the students of Trinity College, it can also be assumed that the play was granted a performance at Dublin Castle, in a similar fashion to *The Royal Master*.

The plot

The Duke of Venice is angered by his son, Thomazo’s, lack of enthusiasm to fight in the wars – Thomazo pleads ill-health to avoid combat. Thomazo is a dissolute youth who keeps bad company, especially with Malipiero, who lives on credit due to his

interpreted as Georgio trying to cause trouble between the father and son, but it is more likely that he is disparaging himself.

⁵⁶² Shirley, *TGV*, pp. 9 and 40; Gifford, V, pp. 13 and 47.

expectations of inheriting from his wealthy but childless uncle, Cornari. The Duke's gardener, Roberto, is keen for his son, Giovanni, to have better expectations than he does himself, and he promotes his son's education. Ursula, Giovanni's shrewish mother, strongly disapproves, and seems to reserve all her affection for Thomazo, to whom she was wet-nurse. Giovanni surprises the Duke's niece, Bellaura, with his use of courtly language, but while he is secretly in love with her, Giovanni is adamant that court life is beyond his expectation and ambition.

Venice is in a flutter about the success of the Englishman, Florelli, at the exercises held at the Academy. Thomazo feels that his reputation is being threatened by Florelli, and arranges for his cronies to assault the Englishman. Giovanni grabs a spade to join the fray, and together he and Florelli overcome the attackers. This success, combined with his unrequited love, persuades Giovanni to join the wars. He achieves military recognition for his endeavours, and is made a gentleman by the Duke upon his return. Initially, Giovanni claims that he wishes for no reward for his valour, but when he is pushed says that he wishes to be worthy of Bellaura's hand: she is outraged that she is expected to consider marrying so far beneath her social station.

The licentious lifestyle of Thomazo and Malipiero is curtailed by their imprisonment and threatened execution. Ursula pleads with the Duke for the pardon of her son (which confuses Giovanni who is in high favour), then reveals that she switched Thomazo and Giovanni when they were babies, as she wanted her son to

become a great man. The truth of her revelation is instantly accepted, and the Duke renames Giovanni 'Thomazo'. The new 'Thomazo' is now an acceptable suitor for Bellaura, and the new 'Giovanni' is content to be pardoned and become a gardener.⁵⁶³

There is a subplot which revolves around Cornari and his desire to cut Malipiero out of his inheritance. Cornari is infertile, and kidnaps Florelli to impregnate his wife, Claudiana, secretly. Neither Florelli nor Claudiana can sanction such an act, and instead pray together for Cornari's salvation. Cornari has resolved throughout to kill Florelli, but is chastened when he learns of his and Claudiana's abstinence, so he releases Florelli who flees Venice.

Sources

Engel's work summarises previous scholarship on the sources for this play.⁵⁶⁴

Langbaine suggests that the Florelli-Cornari-Claudiana conflict is based upon a novel from Gayton's *Festivous* notes on *Don Quixote* Book 4, chapters 6-8.⁵⁶⁵ However, Ward notes that Gayton's *Notes* was not published until 1654, and although the first part of *Don Quixote* would have been available to Shirley in translation (1612 quarto and Shelton's *Quixote* of 1620), Ward argues that this remains an unlikely source.⁵⁶⁶

Forsythe suggests that the parts of the play relating to the love of Giovanni and

⁵⁶³ For clarity, throughout this discussion I refer to the characters Thomazo and Giovanni by the names they have at the beginning of the play.

⁵⁶⁴ Engel, p.xii.

⁵⁶⁵ Langbaine, p. 479.

⁵⁶⁶ Ward, *History of the English Dramatic Literature*, III, p. 117.

Bellaura may be related to Lope de Vega's *El Hombre por su Palabra*, but Engel notes that a translation of this play would not have been available to Shirley, although Spanish versions were printed in Madrid in 1625, 1627 and 1629, and in Barcelona in 1630.⁵⁶⁷ Herrick identifies that some aspects of *The Gentleman of Venice* are reminiscent of Cinthio's *Antivalomeni* (The Changeling).⁵⁶⁸

Stage directions

A marked difference between the printed edition of *The Gentleman of Venice* and the two earlier Irish plays is the increase of detailed stage directions,

*The pieces of Armour hung upon severall
trees....Pointing to the Helmet.*⁵⁶⁹

It is unclear if Shirley, as he was in London for the printing, added these himself to the manuscript, or if it was the decision of a prompter, or the printers: Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson assume that most stage directions are authorial, and that they may reflect the dramatist's original conception, rather than what actually occurred when the play was staged.⁵⁷⁰ Given the time lapse between the first performance/s of the play and when it was printed, Shirley might have felt that such detailed directions were needed to explain the action, the details of which would no doubt have been hazy to

⁵⁶⁷ Forsythe, p. 231; Engel, p. xv.

⁵⁶⁸ Herrick, p. 301.

⁵⁶⁹ Shirley, *TGV*, pp. 59 and 60; Gifford reads, 'Giovanni's armour hung upon several trees', V, pp. 68 and 69.

⁵⁷⁰ Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama 1580-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. ix.

even the most avid theatre goer.⁵⁷¹ What is clear, however, is that the manuscript was carefully prepared for the press, and that the stage directions were provided for a readership who may well have never seen the play staged.⁵⁷²

Violence

As in *Rosania*, fighting is fairly prominent, and the main fight scene of the play is also given a very detailed stage direction, without which much of the drama of the situation would be lost,

*Giovanni recovers a sword, having first us'd his spade to side with the Englishman: Bernardo having lost his weapon flies.*⁵⁷³

Without this stage direction, the visually stimulating image of Giovanni first attacking Malipiero and his cronies with a spade, before gaining a dropped sword, would be unimagined, as there is no reference to it in the spoken text. The incident is also thematically important, as it provides a visual clue about Giovanni's true identity – although he first fights using the crude weapon of a spade, this is quickly replaced with a sword, which befits his true rank. It is impossible to determine for how long the fighting would have ensued, but it can be assumed that the visual effect of Giovanni brandishing a spade against swords would have been maximised. Following on from the argument first raised in regard to *Rosania*, this interlude can be seen as appealing

⁵⁷¹ David Stevens explains that stage directions for printed plays could be provided by playwright, prompter or compositor, see 'The Stagecraft of James Shirley', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 29 (1977), pp. 493-516: 494.

⁵⁷² For a more detailed deconstruction on the use of stage directions in *The Gentleman of Venice*, see Engel, p. xlv.

⁵⁷³ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 24; Gifford, V, p. 30.

directly to the coarser tastes of the audience, particularly the soldiers, as while a fight is implicitly indicated by the text, it (especially the spade-wielding aspect) is not necessary to the plot. Any inclination towards interpreting the scene as embodying honourable combat is precluded by the rowdy provocation which is given to Giovanni and Florelli, the implements used in the fight, and the number of participants in the brawl (although Thomazo appears not to have participated, Malipiero, Bernardo and Marcello attack Giovanni and Florelli, which is a far cry from being an honourable duel between two combatants). While the manifest intention of the attackers is to harm Florelli, there is nothing honourable in their conduct, and this diminishes the incident to an unpleasant scrap, which cannot be said to uphold noble values of combat, and indicates further the nature of the audience it was addressing. Giovanni's participation in the fight provides further insight into his true nature: he may have been expected to join in support of Thomazo, the son of the Duke, instead he aids the stranger. The unprovoked attack upon Florelli makes defending him an act of honour on Giovanni's part, and the incident also serves to undermine the honourable quality of Thomazo's character.

Giovanni's utterance about his reasons for joining the war is directed towards his family's servant, Georgio, 'there is no other way to quiet the | Afflictions here, beside 'tis honorable, | And warre a glorious mistris.'⁵⁷⁴ Giovanni provides a subtle variation with his motivation for engaging in warfare as, while he acknowledges the

⁵⁷⁴ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 33; Gifford, V, p. 39.

respect which is due to such an occupation, he is primarily using it as an escape from the romantic troubles which beset him. While in *Rosania* an honourable duel is desired by Leonario, in *The Gentleman of Venice* the engagement of individuals in violent conflict receives a negative portrayal, and it is solely the noble engagement of warfare for political purposes of state which is upheld as righteous conduct: the aforementioned scrap between Thomazo, Malipiero, Bernardo and Marcello against Giovanni and Florelli is portrayed as a brawl, whereas the Duke's interest in warfare is nobly political, as he fears that without military intervention 'the flame will else endanger *Venice* it self'.⁵⁷⁵ While it would have been incredibly difficult to stage a visual depiction of honourable conduct in war, Shirley's preoccupation in this play is not to portray the spectacle of war, but rather to allow the audience to see the effects of dishonourable behaviour in situations of conflict. At the end of the play, Thomazo is (albeit willingly) condemned to lose his high social position to become a gardener; although Malipiero is also granted a pardon, he is mortified by his own conduct towards Florelli:

...Whom I have with such impudence offended,
Command me sir abroad untill by some
Years well employd, a penance for my crimes
I may be thought one worthy to be own'd
Your Kinsman.⁵⁷⁶

Malipiero acknowledges his crimes, and is concerned about the offence which they have caused. He chooses to remove himself from the society which would forgive

⁵⁷⁵ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 12; Gifford, V, p. 17.

⁵⁷⁶ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 78; Gifford, V, p. 88.

him, and seeks to make general, rather than specific, reparation for his actions. While condemning the violent practices of individuals in the play, Shirley upholds the martial decisions of the state as being admirable and just. Of course this concept would have had a special resonance in Ireland: as Lord Deputy, Wentworth needed to maintain social order throughout the country, a task which was exacerbated by the policy of plantations, which displaced the local population, and necessitated the use of military force. Such action constituted state policy and was thus beyond reproach; however, Wentworth also conducted his own ‘battles’ against individual members of the Irish élite (such as his almost relentless persecution of the Earl of Cork), and this behaviour was open to censure. Wentworth’s conduct made him numerous enemies so, far from criticising his patron Shirley was, perhaps, trying to warn him of the dangers of pursuing personal vendettas while holding a position of power. The moral message (of achieving social harmony by obedience to the *diktats* of the state) is implicit in the text, but its presence is unsurprising, as one of the reasons for Shirley’s employment was to educate the population of Dublin in English practices: the subversive quality of this communication arose from self-interest, as his own agenda was to ensure the popularity of the theatre, and not to alienate its patrons by adopting an overtly didactic tone. One of the means by which Shirley sought to ingratiate his subject matter with his audience is discussed by Fitzgibbon, who argues that the unusual name of the English traveller, Florelli, serves to disguise his position as a commentator upon the actions of the Italian protagonists: Fitzgibbon suggests that this serves to focus the response of an ‘English’ audience.⁵⁷⁷ The play’s licensing in England (30th October

⁵⁷⁷ Fitzgibbon, p. 56.

1639) indicates that this play was also performed on the London stage, yet Fitzgibbon's argument also holds significance for the performance in Ireland. The New English amongst the audience were most able to closely identify with Florelli's experiences of the Italians in the play, as they were the 'English' observers of the strange practices/social conduct of the native Irish, and Old English.

There are further, more confusing, instances of violence within the play, such as the strange occurrence when the Duke encourages Thomazo to show his spirit by unprovokedly hitting Florelli, '*Thomazo give that gentleman a box' oth ear*', to which Thomazo evasively responds, 'I would not use a stranger so discourteously'.⁵⁷⁸ Thomazo's refusal to assault a guest is an honourable response, but the Duke's motivation is more problematic. Immediately prior to this exchange, the Duke stated his expectation that Thomazo would ask to participate in the 'Warrs', and when Thomazo excused himself on the grounds of ill health the Duke utters the aside:

This fool is the dishonor of my blood,
He declines all that's noble, and obeys
A base and vulgar appetite, he dwells
Like a disease within my name, but 'tis
Heavens punishment.⁵⁷⁹

The Duke clearly does not suspect the true parentage of Thomazo, but he wishes to provoke his son to become more courageous. His reply to Thomazo's refusal to hit

⁵⁷⁸ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 13; Gifford, V, p. 18.

⁵⁷⁹ Shirley, *TGV*, pp. 12-13; Gifford, V, p. 17.

Florelli is ironic, but also demonstrates his belief that respect must be earned, rather than expected due to the privilege of birth:

Embrace him [Florelli] then, and make your self worthy of
His friendship and converse, you'l gain more honor
Then the empty title of your birth can bring yee.⁵⁸⁰

Emphasis is placed upon the importance of gaining honour personally, and violence is here avoided as Thomazo is now encouraged to behave courteously towards Florelli. However, Thomazo's later attack upon Florelli reveals that he has not learnt to behave honourably, which further indicates his true origins.

The opening scene of the play provides a violent beginning, which involves Malipiero repeatedly kicking his uncle's servant to gain entry to Cornari's house. While this serves to establish immediately that Malipiero is an unsavoury character, the scene could be played in such a way as to elicit humour from the spectators, as – within the conventions of Renaissance drama - a servant is hardly to be afforded the same rights as the ruling class. The two incidents in the play of staged physical violence (Malipiero's kicking of Cornari's servant and the brawl in the garden) are instances of dishonourable conduct, but both could have been staged in a comic fashion. The implication of this is that physical violence is not inevitably a damnable course of action, but that it must be conducted in an honourable manner.

⁵⁸⁰ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 13; Gifford, V, p. 18. This aspect of Shirley's plot has broad similarities to Part II of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, when the protagonist of the play kills his son, Calyphas, for disappointing his expectations of him (IV. i).

Turkish element

In light of the above argument, the reference in Act III about selling Venice to the Turkish Empire becomes more significant,

<i>Malipiero</i>	...Which of you Is best acquainted with the Turk?
<i>Thomazo</i>	What Turk
<i>Mal.</i>	The great and mighty Sultan; the grand Signior. ⁵⁸¹

Although it is unclear whether or not the play is set in contemporary times, the Sultan of this period was Murad IV, who ruled Turkey 1623-1640, and the reference must have called this individual to mind. By the 1630s, the ‘Turkish theme’ was a staple feature on the stage, and news of the Ottoman Empire frequently made its way to Western Europe: Brome’s first play at Salisbury Court was *The English Moor, or the Mock Marriage* (1637), and in *Antipodes* (c.1636) he mentions a Turk.⁵⁸² England’s relationship with the Ottoman Empire is expressed in a letter from Charles I to Murad IV’s successor, Morat Han, dated 11th August 1642. The letter specifically refers to ‘Our Embassadour Resident with You’, and states,

⁵⁸¹ Shirley, *TGV*, pp. 30-1; Gifford, V, p. 36.

⁵⁸² Mark Hutchings, ‘The Stage Historicizes the Turk: Convention and Contradiction in the Turkish History Play’, in Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer (eds), *English Historical Drama, 1500-1660: Forms Outside the Canon* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), pp. 158-178: 158 and 159. For further information on relations between the Ottoman Empire and Europeans see Nabil Matar, *Europe Through Arab Eyes, 1578-1727* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 37. Matar also notes that in his 1670 publication, *Africa: being an accurate Description of the Regions of Aegypr, babary, Lybia and billedulferid*, John Ogilby wrote that Muslims were ‘here and there mingled with Christians, see p. 37. *Antipodes* was licensed in 1640 but probably written in 1636, Ann Haaker suggests that the Turk mentioned is Murad IV (I.iv.32), see *The Antipodes* (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1966; repr. 1967), p. 19. Bentley identifies Brome’s *The English Moor*, and records that Henrietta-Maria’s company repertoire included Lodovick Carlell’s *Osmond, the Great Turk* (1657), *JCS*, I, pp. 241 and 250. Hutchings also provides a list of plays featuring Turks/Turkish interests, pp. 160-1.

that We are desirous that the Amitie which hath of long time been held between our Predecessors, may be renewed, continued and confirmed: And the entercourse of Trade between Our Subjects and Yours be maintained and preserved for the good of both Our Kingdomes and People.⁵⁸³

Kerrigan's argument that Burnell's *Landgartha* (first performed 1640, printed 1641) predicts that Charles I would defeat the Turks on their own ground, supports the view that this topic was also pertinent to the Irish stage.⁵⁸⁴ Murad was notorious for the brutality of his rule, but his brutality was directly linked to his purging of corrupt officials from the State, and he achieved discipline in his army.⁵⁸⁵ It is these aspects of Murad's rule which can be linked to Wentworth's policy of 'thorough', and it is notable that the language which Shirley uses to describe the Sultan is positive, and makes no reference to his methods of obtaining order within his realm. The seemingly slight allusion to the Sultan gains weight when it is considered alongside an earlier reference in the play, where Malipiero says to Thomazo, 'we have built no Seraglio yet'.⁵⁸⁶ During this period, this word could mean a place of confinement, the location within a Muslim house where women lived in a harem, or a Turkish palace, and, as Hutchings notes, the term had a fascination for Western Europe.⁵⁸⁷ 'The Universities' are suggested in lieu of a seraglio, with the comment, 'the Colledge rents would find

⁵⁸³ *King Charles his letter to the Great Turk; the High and Mighty Emperour Sultan Morat Han* (London: printed for H. Blunon, 11th August 1642), Wing (2nd ed.) / C2403, sig. A2^r, A2^v and A3^r. For information on the origins of the relationship between England and the Turkish empire see Park Honan, *Christopher Marlowe, Poet and Spy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 173.

⁵⁸⁴ Kerrigan, p. 178.

⁵⁸⁵ For further information on Murad IV see Lord Eversley, *The Turkish Empire 1288-1924*, abridged by Shajkh Abdur Rashid, 3rd edn (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1958), pp. 77-8.

⁵⁸⁶ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 28; Gifford, V, p. 34.

⁵⁸⁷ http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50220312?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=seraglio&first=1&max_to_show=10 [accessed 18th June 2009]. Hutchings, p. 159.

the wenches petticoates'.⁵⁸⁸ There was an anxiety, in Dublin, about sexual licence amongst students, which led to their being banned from houses of ill-repute, as discussed in Chapter One. Therefore, the exchange in the play further supports the argument that students from the university in Dublin were members of the Werburgh Street Theatre audience, and that Shirley was addressing them here.

Honour

Upholding one's honour when confronted with actual, or potentially, violent situations has been demonstrated as a concern of Shirley's, but he also shows himself to be interested in questions of moral and social honour, and these questions are raised in both of the play's plots. Engel argues that the theme of honour in both plots serves to unify the play, he points out the frequent use of this word throughout the play, and how it is often associated with the title of gentleman.⁵⁸⁹ The discussion of what makes a gentleman is an unsurprising subject for a playwright known for his interest in manners and decorum, but it would have been particularly relevant for the Dublin audience, which was as diverse as Dublin society. Waves of English settlers, most particularly the New English, had resulted in a disordering of the Irish social hierarchy. Members of the *nouveau riche*, such as the Earl of Cork, held great wealth and influence, whereas many of the Old Irish, remained in penury, and had little political power. In times when the ancient Irish nobility was being progressively phased out by English entrepreneurs, the question of what exactly comprised a gentleman was particularly apt. The title of *The Gentleman of Venice* begs the question who is the

⁵⁸⁸ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 28; Gifford, V, p. 34.

⁵⁸⁹ Engel, p. xxx.

gentleman referred to, and it would appear that one potential candidate is present in each of the two plots. Cornari has all the wealth and position which is expected of this title, whereas Giovanni is only awarded this honour as the result of his conduct during the war. The argument which surrounds the conferring of this tribute upon Giovanni is significant when taking the socio-historical context of the play into consideration. The Duke questions,

Why may not
Our power dispence, and though his low condition
By our rule exempt him (for his gallant service
Done) now create him gentleman of *Venice*,
With a noble pension from our treasury
To bear his title up?⁵⁹⁰

Posing this question suggests that the Duke assumes he has the power, but is unable to make such a decision outright. Instead he is forced to question the morality of raising Giovanni's social status to such an extent, and the social implications which would thus ensue. This allusion holds great import for those of the audience whose own status improved while in Ireland. As demonstrated by the case of John Ogilby, social advancement in Ireland did not necessarily translate to English society. The other relevant import of the Duke's speech is his acknowledgement that Giovanni will require funds to support his new position. This proves that honourable conduct alone is not sufficient to uphold the title of 'gentleman', but that material accoutrements are also required. Conversely, whereas Cornari has the financial requirements for his status, his conduct towards Claudiana and Florelli reveal him to be unworthy of his

⁵⁹⁰ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 52; Gifford, V, p. 60.

title. Although Cornari begs for his wife's forgiveness in the final Act, his bribing of Florelli to leave Venice leaves an unsettled feeling that his redemption at the end of the play is incomplete. It is the courtier, Candiano, who responds to the Duke's speech above with a brief but cutting barb,

We give it [the title of gentleman] strangers,
Whose birth we not examine,
He deserves it [sic].⁵⁹¹

This, again, has a particular relevance for Irish society which had been disrupted by the influx of English settlers, and the final line of this speech can then be read as a vicious comment upon the system of preferment in Ireland, whereby individuals who were worthy of receiving social advancement were overlooked by a corrupt system.

Although Giovanni and Cornari provide the most obvious examples for a discussion on the nature of honour and how that relates to being a gentleman, Shirley raises the question in other instances within the play. Given that this play was written during his residency in Dublin, it is perhaps no surprise that the character who consistently upholds all that is meant by the title of gentleman is the Englishman, Florelli. Florelli's behaviour is exemplary, even though his English nationality makes him a clear outsider in the Venetian world which Shirley creates. Florelli is the champion of the Games, he only fights Thomazo and his followers when forced into defending himself, he maintains Claudiana's virtue, and accepts his dismissal from

⁵⁹¹ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 52; Gifford, *V*, p. 60.

Venice without seeking revenge. Florelli's experiences whilst in Venice are doubtless the most extreme of any character within the play, and his own recognition of this is expressed in his penultimate lines:

No inquisitions if you will leave *Venice*:
Let's drink and spoon away with the next vessel.
A hundred leagues hence, I may tell you wonders.⁵⁹²

Florelli's acknowledgement of his bizarre experiences while in a foreign country could be said to reflect the experiences of those English members of the Dublin audience who were relative newcomers to Ireland.

The most problematic example of honourable conduct is expressed in the relationship between the Duke and Thomazo. Although Thomazo is repeatedly referred to by Ursula and Georgio as a 'gentleman', his conduct is far from being worthy of this title.⁵⁹³ This is most forcibly expressed in his speculations about the changes he would implement upon gaining his father's title, 'I would make new laws, and I were Duke of *Venice*'.⁵⁹⁴ This is disrespectful of his father's governance, and also anticipates his father's death. Thomazo's acceptance of his social demotion at the end of the play provides the best example of his honourable conduct, but the magnanimity of this acceptance is tainted by the knowledge that Thomazo has always had inclinations towards the life of a gardener ('I have 'great mind to dig now'), and

⁵⁹² Shirley, *TGV*, p. 71; Gifford, V, p. 81.

⁵⁹³ Shirley, *TGV*, pp. 11 and 23; Gifford, V, pp. 15 and 28.

⁵⁹⁴ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 27; Gifford, V, p. 33.

that he is probably relieved to be excused from the expectations which ensue from being the Duke's son.⁵⁹⁵ While he should be grateful to have escaped further punishment for his crimes (actual and conspired), Thomazo evinces no great surprise at the clemency shown to him, as demonstrated by his flippant reply to the news:

And must I be a Gardiner? I am glad on't.
Pray give me a couple of blessings, and a spade,
And fico [*sic.*]this frippery. I'le thank
My destiny that has yet kept my thread
To a better use than hanging.⁵⁹⁶

The Duke's reaction when he is confronted with the news of the substitution of his natural son with that of the gardener's, who were 'chang'd in their infancie', also raises the issue of honourable conduct.⁵⁹⁷ Throughout the play, clues have been offered which indicate the Duke's affection and respect for Giovanni: on their first meeting he exclaims, 'This Giovanni? | His words tast more of the courtier than the Garden', and he later says,

(though beside this act
Of his abroad) I can give no account
Why I should love this young man, or prefer him,
I know not by what mystery, I have
Had thoughts to wish him more then common fortune.⁵⁹⁸

These intimations prepare the audience/reader for the Duke's unquestioned acceptance of Ursula's account, for his acknowledgement of Giovanni as his rightful son, and his

⁵⁹⁵ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 24; Gifford, V, p. 29.

⁵⁹⁶ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 77; Gifford, V, p. 87.

⁵⁹⁷ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 74; Gifford, V, p. 84.

⁵⁹⁸ Shirley, *TGV*, pp. 54 and 55; Gifford, V, pp. 62 and 63.

rejection of Thomazo. It is a relief to the Duke that the cowardly Thomazo is not his son, yet his benevolence towards the unwitting imposter exemplifies his honourable conduct. Thomazo is instated in his rightful position, which is an occupation he will enjoy. By the Duke's unhesitating acceptance of Giovanni as his son, the right order of things has been reinstated.

The heir

The Gentleman of Venice has been criticised for having two distinct plots which do not cohesively interrelate, but there is a key theme which links these plotlines: the problem of succession.⁵⁹⁹ This is most evident in the Cornari plot, where the attempt to beget an heir is taken to a ridiculous extreme, yet the Duke's dissatisfaction with Thomazo's conduct, and the discussions between Roberto and Ursula about their offspring, show that these characters are also preoccupied with the question of an heir. In all three cases within the play, the problem faced is that the potential heir is not considered to be suitable for the tasks or position which will be required of him. Having a suitable heir would have been a grave consideration for any man in the 1630s, but the questions explored by Shirley would have had special significance for Wentworth. Although Wentworth had an heir to his estate, William (from his second marriage), in 1638 there was no clear successor to his position as Lord Deputy for Ireland. Given that the Irish nobility had been placing bets on whether or not Wentworth would retain his position as recently as 1636 (as discussed in Chapter One), and Wentworth's increasing fear that his absence from London would prove detrimental to his social position, the

⁵⁹⁹ Richard Gerber first noted this concern for an heir, as quoted by Engel, p. xxix.

question of who would succeed to the Lord Deputyship was of interest to the political climate of Ireland in 1638. While Shirley's play suggests that the true heir would always be found, the Irish government could have no such reassurances that their next Lord Deputy would be the best man to deal with the political situation. In the play, problems of succession are directly linked to social standing, which again was pertinent to Wentworth's situation. Wentworth was increasingly concerned that he did not have a title, and he felt that this fact undermined his authority in Ireland: he petitioned Charles I repeatedly for this honour (finally granted in January 1640), and it is likely that his frustration in this matter was commonly known to the vice-regal court in Dublin.⁶⁰⁰

Nature verses nurture

The consideration of an heir is intrinsically linked to material inheritance, and the prominence given to the garden in *The Gentleman of Venice* particularly emphasises the importance of land ownership, which Kerrigan identifies as being a recurring subject matter in Caroline literature from Ireland.⁶⁰¹ During his term of office in Ireland, Wentworth oversaw the plantation of Connacht, and Kearney argues that this, in combination with the commissioning of defective titles, led to a rising fear among the Irish population, as it resulted in extensive alterations in the ownership of Irish land.⁶⁰² These fears would have permeated Dublin society, and Shirley's discussion of land ownership (culminating in his treatment of the garden) indicates that he was

⁶⁰⁰ Wedgwood, *A Reevaluation*, pp. 153 and 272.

⁶⁰¹ Kerrigan, p. 169.

⁶⁰² Kearney, p. 102.

responding to this concern. Rightful ‘ownership’ of the land, or rather the garden, permeates the plot of *The Gentleman of Venice*: as a gardener, Giovanni cannot ‘own’ the land, but Shirley uses the consideration of who should rightfully work the land, to underpin this point. Giovanni is consistently portrayed in a manner which conveys his superiority to the life he leads as a gardener: Georgio describes Giovanni’s creative talents for pruning the hedges into fantastical beasts, exclaiming, ‘I think he means to embroider all the Garden | Shortley, but I do all the course-worke’.⁶⁰³ Georgio’s speech reveals both that Giovanni’s learning and imagination extend far beyond the realm of the garden, and also that his creativity makes him unsuitable, or disinclined, for the hard manual labour required by the job, which is undertaken by the family servant, Georgio. While both the Duke and Bellaura recognise that Giovanni is capable of achieving more than the role he was ‘born’ to, he shows his humility in accepting his position in a conversation with Bellaura, where he declaims that he wishes to attain martial fame in the Academy, as Florelli has:

<i>Giovanni</i>	This Garden Madam, ’tis my Academy, Where gentlemen, and Ladies... Enrich my eare, and observation With harmony of language, which at best I can but coldly imitate.
<i>Bellaura</i>	You were best quit the Garden, & turn Courtier. ⁶⁰⁴

Bellaura’s sentiment is echoed later in the play by the Duke, ‘This Giovanni? | His words tast more of courtier than the Garden’.⁶⁰⁵ That these other characters recognise his worth provides the audience with intimations that Giovanni is destined for greater

⁶⁰³ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 10; Gifford, V, p. 15.

⁶⁰⁴ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 19; Gifford, V, p. 24.

⁶⁰⁵ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 54; Gifford, V, p. 62.

things, and while the reason for his lowly position is ultimately revealed at the end of the play, Shirley again offers an indication of what is to come through Bellaura's curiosity about Giovanni's employment, when she enquires:

Bellaura Why does
 Your master (being rich) suffer his son
 To work i'th garden?
Georgio My master? hee's an honest mortall man Madam,
 It is my mistress, that commands him to't,
 A shrow [*sic.*], and loves him not.⁶⁰⁶

It is incomprehensible to Bellaura that someone with the means to avoid such physical labour would encourage a son to perform it. Ursula is the motivating factor behind this circumstance, and she was also adamant that Giovanni's education be neglected:

...what use had he of learning?
What benefit, but to endanger us.⁶⁰⁷

This proves not only her curious lack of maternal affection for Giovanni, but also reveals her fear that if he were allowed the opportunity to fulfil his potential, his natural ability would expose her deception. While Giovanni's character and inclinations are thus demonstrably incompatible for the life of a gardener, Thomazo is very much suited to it, as shown above by his 'natural' inclination for digging, and by the frequency with which he visits the garden:

Ursula Was not the Dukes Son here?
 I fear he is sick, that I have not seen him
 These two daies in the Garden.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁶ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 18; Gifford, V, p. 23.

⁶⁰⁷ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 8; Gifford, V, p. 12.

⁶⁰⁸ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 10; Gifford, V, p. 15.

The garden thus functions in the play as a demarcation of social status, yet it is also significant as embodying a distinct space. From 1600 onwards, increasing attention was being paid to the grounds surrounding castles and the houses of those holding high status. Enclosed gardens were used as outdoor ‘rooms’, and used to project an image of civilisation, as well as showcasing the wealth of the inhabitant.⁶⁰⁹ The formal style of garden, which was employed throughout the seventeenth century, represented the desire to control and order nature: plants were set out in geometric formations, and well-maintained paths were introduced to encourage walking.⁶¹⁰ This functionality of the garden is articulated by Cornari when he says to Claudiana, ‘Madam *Bellaura* the Dukes charge is entred | The Garden, let’s choose another walk’.⁶¹¹ More significantly, the garden in *The Gentleman of Venice* is designated as ‘another’ space by Georgio, who describes that Giovanni learned of Florelli’s success at the Academy, ‘as he enquired of every Gentleman | Comes in to’th’ Garden, what’s the newes abroad’.⁶¹² Life within the garden is thus isolated from the ‘outside’ world. At the time Shirley was writing, references to gardens in literature fell into two distinct categories. On the one hand, was the association with the Garden of Eden, the Fall of Man and the dangers and temptations which lurked there. Conversely, the enclosed garden could also represent purity and chastity, and had connections to the Virgin Mary.⁶¹³ A garden could thus symbolize either a wild or a tame entity, and the garden of *The Gentleman of Venice* falls into the former category. Despite Giovanni’s

⁶⁰⁹ Audrey Horning, Ruairí Ó Baoill, Colm Donnelly and Paul Logue (eds), *The post-medieval archaeology of Ireland, 1550-1850* (Dublin: Wordwell Ltd., 2007), pp. 277 and 315.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 275-6.

⁶¹¹ Shirley, *TGV*, p. 17; Gifford, *V*, p. 22.

⁶¹² Shirley, *TGV*, p. 9; Gifford, *V*, p. 13. Gifford reads ‘enquires of every gentleman’.

⁶¹³ Paula Henderson, *The Tudor House and Garden: Architecture and Landscape in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 179.

attempts to impose order upon the garden via his artistic pruning, right order has been disrupted, as he should not be a permanent presence, and Ursula's scheming and dominance over her husband causes turmoil to the management of the garden, as well as having repercussions beyond its boundaries.

Regardless of his upbringing, it is in Thomazo's nature to love gardening, and by taking his rightful place he will restore order to the disordered environment presided over by his mother. Equally, Giovanni's fate is to be restored to his true father, and to reassert social order by assuming his rightful place, which is similar to the restoration of Ferdinand in *Rosania*. It is significant that the true identity of the young men is revealed in a location away from the garden: Ursula's power cannot extend beyond its borders into the ordered realm of the Duke's world, and nature is proved to triumph over nurture. It is this reversal of the young men's relationship with the garden which resonates with Irish concerns. Thomazo's reversal of fortune from having overall authority of the management of the garden, to becoming a mere worker within it, is an inversion of Giovanni's experience. The sequestering of, and plantations on, Irish land meant that individuals within Irish society experienced broadly similar reversals of fate. Wealthy, land-holding individuals were impoverished, whereas other individuals prospered with the acquisition of land.⁶¹⁴ The question of nature verses nurture, as explored in *The Gentleman of Venice*, deals with the issue of rightful ownership of the land. The Old Irish, and even the Old English,

⁶¹⁴ Aidan Clarke describes the policy of leasing the lands of minors, effectively transferring the ownership of Irish land into, predominantly, Protestant hands, see *The Old English in Ireland 1625-42* (Worcester and London: MacGibbon and Kee Ltd., 1966), pp. 115-6.

did not count for much in the New English government of the country, yet in reality much of the wealth, and land, of Ireland was held by men from these groups, which gave them considerable influence in political situations.⁶¹⁵ Giovanni's nature transcends the nurture he has received, and he rightfully assumes ownership over the land. On a small scale, individual plantation holdings in Ireland were given to the poor of England and Scotland. English men of higher social status, the New English, were given comparatively vast swathes of land to manage, and to profit from. Thus the implicit message of the play is that the English (and Scottish) settlers are rightfully entitled to Irish land. The native Irish were effectively holding the land in trust, and were required to surrender it to its rightful owners, namely the English administration. Engel criticises *The Gentleman of Venice* for being strongly rooted in the social standards of its time, commenting that 'it is not suited to modern tastes'.⁶¹⁶ Modern scholastic practice would not consider criticising literature for being a product of its time, yet the above observation does expose an acknowledgement that Shirley was engaging with the issues of his age. When he had removed to Dublin, this engagement increasingly began to encompass Irish concerns, demonstrating his transition from a primarily London orientation, to a deliberate consideration of his Irish audience.

The issue of rightful ownership over the land was clearly integral to the situation in Ireland, and was closely bound to the consideration of natural supremacy, and superior claims of birth/nationality. It is, then, interesting that when the play was printed, circa

⁶¹⁵ Merritt, p. 117.

⁶¹⁶ Engel, p. xxviii.

fifteen years after its first Irish performance, Shirley makes reference to similar issues which were affecting England. The dedication to Sir Thomas Nightingale reads:

I know this Nation hath been fruitfull in names of Eminent Honor. But in these times, there be more Lords than Noblemen, and while you are pleas'd to smile upon this piece, I most cheerfully throw my selfe, and it upon your Protection, whose single worth to me, is beyond all the boasted Greatnesse and voluminous titles of our age.⁶¹⁷

Written during the Interregnum, Shirley expresses the sentiment that not all who have achieved titles of honour are worthy of their receipt, that not all who are called noble attain nobility. Shirley's belief in establishing correct social order encompasses English domination of Ireland in the 1630s, but does not extend to the elevation of socially inferior individuals to the heights of English nobility during the 1650s.

In *Rosania*, Shirley's sub-plot can be identified as specifically appealing to the soldiers of the Werburgh Street Theatre. With *The Gentleman of Venice*, he addresses wider Irish concerns, namely issues which have arisen due to plantations, demonstrating that he was beginning to write about subjects which were relevant to his Dublin audience as a whole. *The Politician* goes one step further, moving from a consideration of specifically Irish concerns, to an analogy of the relationship between Ireland and England.

⁶¹⁷ Shirley, *TGV*, sig. A2^r and A2^v; Gifford, V, p. 3.

Chapter Six: *The Politician*

Having addressed a specific section of his audience in the sub-plot of *Rosania*, and discussed some of the issues arising from the plantation of Ireland in *The Gentleman of Venice*, Shirley's next play for the Irish stage, *The Politician*, encompassed the consideration of Ireland's position in the three-kingdom realm of England-Scotland-Ireland. This position was unclear, as Ireland's status as an independent kingdom or as a colony was ambiguous. In *St. Patrick for Ireland*, Shirley approached this issue from a religious perspective. In *The Politician* he limited himself to secular interests. As in his previous Irish plays, Shirley explores questions of succession, counsel, advisors, honour, and he returns to a depiction of the military, this time moving away from a portrayal of individuals to a consideration of the army as a political force. Strong parallels can be seen in the plot with events which occurred at the Danish-Norwegian court, and Shirley uses the Scandinavian situation to analyse the responsibilities of the monarchy. Yet, for all his efforts to address Irish concerns, Shirley still faced the problem of audience attendance.

The evidence from the prologues which Shirley wrote to other dramatists' plays staged at the Werburgh Street Theatre indicates that the theatre was not a huge commercial success. As this was not an acceptable situation, those involved in the management of the theatre realised that new tactics were needed in order to attract a bigger audience. Of the extant plays to which Shirley wrote prologues, *The Alchemist*

is a comedy, *No Wit, No Help Like A Woman's* is a tragicomedy, as are Shirley's *The Royal Master*, *Rosania* and *The Gentleman of Venice*. As one of only five tragedies which Shirley ever wrote (from a total of around thirty-eight plays), *The Politician's* genre is relatively unusual, and was his fourth play for the Irish stage.⁶¹⁸ Although there is evidence that Shirley adapted his previous 'Irish' plays to try to accommodate the tastes of the Dublin audience, this shift in genre could well have resulted from a decision to try to entice an audience, who had not seemed to appreciate comedies or tragicomedies, into the theatre.

Textual history of the play

The print history of *The Politician* is intrinsically linked to that of *The Gentleman of Venice*, which was discussed in the previous chapter. *The Politician* was also printed simultaneously in quarto and octavo impressions by Humphrey Moseley in 1655, after the play had been performed at Salisbury Court by 'her Majesties Servants'.⁶¹⁹ However, the play had been licensed in the Stationers' Register two years previously on 9th September 1653.⁶²⁰ Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim tentatively suggests 1639 as the date of the play's composition, which, combined with the evidence presented in the previous chapter concerning *The Gentleman of Venice*, seems a reasonable assumption.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁸ Robert J. Fehrenbach, *A Critical Edition of The Politician by James Shirley* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1980), p. lxxvii.

⁶¹⁹ Greg, *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama*, p. 856; Greg, *List of English Play*, p. 110.

⁶²⁰ Huberman, p. 104.

⁶²¹ Wagonheim, p. 142. A detailed discussion of the date of the play's composition and print history is given by Fehrenbach, pp. x-xv.

A detailed bibliographic description of *The Politician* is given by W. W. Greg who discusses the erroneous signatures which are found in some copies, and confirms that the same type setting is used as for *The Gentleman of Venice*.⁶²² Previous scholarship has debated whether or not *The Politique Father* licensed by Henry Herbert on 26th May 1641 is the same play as that printed in 1655, but the general consensus now is that they are two separate plays.⁶²³ In 1691 Gerard Langbaine suggested that the plot of *The Politician* was based upon the Countess of Montgomery's *Urania* (1621), specifically Book I.ii, and Fehrenbach suggests similarities with Philip Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1590).⁶²⁴ While there are plot similarities between these works and *The Politician*, Shirley chose to write a tragedy, rather than adopting the pastoral romance genre of this source material.

The significance of Norway for *The Politician*

Shirley's experimentation with the genre of tragedy may not have been wholly successful, as Wentworth's deputy, Sir Henry Slingsby, recorded in his diary that actual events of the time (1638) were more tragic than what could be depicted on the stage:

⁶²² Greg, *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama*, p. 861. See also Fehrenbach, pp. xv-xxv.

⁶²³ *The Politique Father* is now thought to be the original title of *The Brothers* (1652), while the play licensed as *The Brothers* (1626) is now thought to be lost. Alexander Dyce in the introduction to *The Dramatic Works and Poems of James Shirley*, I, p. xxxviii was the first to suggest that *The Politique Father* and *The Politician* were the same play, and Forsythe agreed with this opinion, *The Relations of Shirley's Plays to the Elizabethan Drama*, pp. 173-77. However, Nason destroys this view, pp. 47-68. For further criticism on this debate see F. G. Fleay, 'Annals of the Careers of James and Henry Shirley', *Anglia*, 8 (1885), pp. 410-411 and Bentley, *JCS*, V, p. 1138.

⁶²⁴ Langbaine, p. 48; Fehrenbach, p. xxxi. See also Fleay, pp. 242-3.

at such a time [the Swedish-Danish wars of 1638] we need not go to Theaters to understand by fabulous representations y^e tragic revolutions of human fortune; ourselves shall be y^e actors.⁶²⁵

Slingsby's reference to the Swedish-Danish wars allows the possibility that the wars mentioned throughout *The Politician* referred to this event, as at the beginning of the seventeenth century the relationship between Denmark-Norway-Sweden was not dissimilar to that of England-Scotland-Ireland, and the action of Shirley's play is set in Norway. These three countries had been independent states, but in 1536 Norway lost its status as an independent, though affiliated, kingdom, and became instead a Danish province.⁶²⁶ Norway was to be profitable to Denmark, just as Ireland was later to become profitable to England under Wentworth's governance.⁶²⁷ However, unlike the situation in Ireland, Danish administration in Norway was fairly unobtrusive, though intermarriage between the ruling newcomers and the native population occurred in both countries.⁶²⁸ There was also a direct relationship between Denmark/Norway and Ireland, as a lack of opportunity at home meant that many Gaelic and Old English lords sent their sons abroad for military training: a letter from John Hamilton of Bangor provides evidence that officers from Ulster were serving in the Danish army in 1627.⁶²⁹ Ward plausibly suggests that Shirley was influenced by *Hamlet* when writing

⁶²⁵ Parsons, pp. 13-14.

⁶²⁶ Paul Douglas Lockhart, *Denmark, 1513-1660: The Rise and Decline of a Renaissance Monarchy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 43.

⁶²⁷ Lockhart, *1513-1660*, p. 222.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 222-3. For a discussion about intermarriages in Norway see John Midgaard, *A Brief History of Norway*, 5th edn (Oslo: Johan Grundt Tanum Forlag, 1963; 1971), p. 49.

⁶²⁹ Steve Murdoch, *Britain, Denmark-Norway and the House of Stuart 1603-1660: A Diplomatic and Military Analysis* (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2003), p. 204. For a discussion of the reasons behind Irish men being given military training on the Continent see Jane Ohlmeyer, 'The Baronial Context of

The Politician, an idea which was later reiterated and expanded by Nason, who argued that the play was also reminiscent of *Macbeth*.⁶³⁰ Henry Burnell is the only other individual known to have written plays for the Werburgh Street Theatre, and it is surely significant that his only extant play, *Landgartha* (performed 1640, printed 1641), relates a Scandinavian story, focussing on the Norwegian protagonist, Landgartha.⁶³¹ Kerrigan argues that Burnell used the Scandinavian model to explore the three-way conflicts of the Stuart kingdoms, but Shirley's use of this setting in his earlier play has previously not been recognised.⁶³² Burnell must have known of *The Politician*, and the fact that two dramatists chose this same location for their plays establishes the particular relevance that Norway had for Ireland.

The popularity of Denmark's king, Christian IV, greatly diminished after 1637, but Denmark retained its reputation as a significant political power on the Continent. Its internal instability led to the establishment of a standing army in 1638, a circumstance which would have been known in Ireland.⁶³³ Yet while the similarities between the situation in Norway and that in Ireland are superficial, the parallels between the plot of *The Politician* and the personal circumstances of the King of

the Irish Civil Wars', in John Sonley Anthony Adamson, (ed.), *The English Civil War: Conflict and Contexts, 1640-1649* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 106-24: 111. In 1639, Laud commented 'not a few of our old Commanders, which had been trained up in the Wars of *Holland* and the King of *Sweden*', P. Heylyn, *Cyprianus Anglicus: or the History of the Life and Death of the most Reverend and Renowned Prelate William, by Divine Providence, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury* (London: Printed for A. Seile, MDCLXVIII, 1668), p. 384.

⁶³⁰ Ward, *History of English Dramatic Literature*, p. 98; Nason, p. 311.

⁶³¹ Henry Burnell, *Landgartha: A Tragie-Comedy, as it was presented in the new Theater in Dublin, with good applause, being an Ancient Story* (Printed at Dublin, 1641), Wing / B5751.

⁶³² Kerrigan, pp. 16 and 177.

⁶³³ Lockhart, *1513-1660*, pp. 204 and 212.

Denmark are too analogous for coincidence. Christian IV's first wife, Anna Cathrine of Bradenburg, died in 1612, and he married the Danish noblewoman Kirsten Munk in 1615. There was much gossip following this union, as courtiers believed Munk to hold an unnatural power over the king, and her lack of royal ancestry meant that she was not unanimously recognised as the legitimate queen.⁶³⁴ Additionally, members of the Council were distinctly unimpressed in 1627 when she, a mere noblewoman, was granted the title 'Countess of Slesvig and Holstein', and the order was given to include her in the liturgical prayers for the royal family.⁶³⁵ Munk had an affair with a cavalry officer, Otto Ludwig, Count Palatine, in 1627, but Christian did not know of this until 1632, two years after Munk had left him.⁶³⁶ Significantly for the plot of *The Politician*, Christian claimed that she had tried to poison him on two occasions in 1628.⁶³⁷ Therefore, it can be seen that there are strong resonances between some of the characters in *The Politician* and the intrigues of the Danish court. It should be remembered that Charles I's mother was Anna of Denmark, thus this play has connections which would have appealed to an English, as well as an Irish, audience indicating that Shirley had the intention of also staging this play in London. In *The Politician*, Shirley offers his worst example of a king, and the connection to Denmark would not have been lost on an English audience, which had a long history of mercantile competition with the Danish. By engaging the play with discussions of three-kingdom rule, as Henry Burnell was to do later in *Landgartha*, Shirley ensured

⁶³⁴ Ibid., p. 197; Paul Douglas Lockhart, *Denmark in the Thirty Years' War: King Christian IV and the Decline of the Oldenburg State* (London and Selinsgrove: Associated University Presses, 1996), pp. 69 and 182.

⁶³⁵ Lockhart, *1513-1660*, p. 197, see also Lockhart, *Thirty Years' War*, pp. 181-3.

⁶³⁶ Lockhart, *Thirty Years' War*, p. 209; Lockhart, *1513-1660*, p. 194.

⁶³⁷ Lockhart, *Thirty Years' War*, p. 209.

that his subject matter was of equal relevance to Ireland. Therefore, while *The Politician* demonstrates Shirley's increasing engagement with Irish concerns, he still considered the potential London market for his work.

Plot summary

The King of Norway has remarried a Norwegian noblewoman while his son (Turgesius) and uncle (Duke Olaus) are fighting in, unspecified, wars. Marpisa, the new Queen has a son (Haraldus) from her previous marriage, but there are rumours that his father is actually Gotharus, Marpisa's favourite and the politician of the play's title. Gotharus and Marpisa plot to place Haraldus on the throne.

Upon his return, Duke Olaus voices his displeasure at the King's marriage and is banished from court. Gotharus forges an inflammatory letter from Turgesius which is addressed to the King. Captain Aquinas then sends a message to Turgesius advising him to flee. Turgesius and Olaus arrive at the city to discover the gates are shut against them. Turgesius is killed by Aquinas, and Olaus kills Aquinas in retaliation.

Haraldus overhears the rumours of his parentage and drinks excessively, which results in him contracting a fever. On his deathbed, he discovers from Marpisa that Gotharus is not his father, but that she encouraged Gotharus to think that he was. When Haraldus dies, Marpisa swears to be revenged upon Gotharus. The citizens of

Norway also seek Gotharus's death as they blame him for the death of Turgesius. Unknown to him, Marpisa gives Gotharus poison, and as he flees from his pursuers, he finds 'sanctuary' with Olaus who offers him a hiding place in Turgesius's coffin. It transpires that Turgesius and Aquinas faked their own deaths as part of a plot to rid the court of the Queen and Gotharus. While in the coffin, Gotharus dies from the poison.

The King repents his harsh treatment of his son, and when he realises that Turgesius is alive, he offers his son the crown, which Turgesius respectfully refuses. Marpisa is sentenced to banishment, but she has already taken poison and dies.

Critical discussion of *The Politician*

Fehrenbach makes the untenable argument that *The Politician* is unconcerned with political matters, and suggests that, as emphasis is placed upon external rather than internal conflicts, the play is unsuccessful as a tragedy.⁶³⁸ Fehrenbach has clearly missed the contradiction which his two statements present: Shirley was a skilled enough dramatist that if he wanted to write a tragedy focusing upon inner turmoil then he would have done so. That the action of the plot relies upon exterior factors confirms that these are the issues in which the playwright is most interested, and Ashley H. Thorndike was perceptive enough to realise that the real interest of the play is in the plot.⁶³⁹ Fehrenbach's main difficulty with his examination of this play is that

⁶³⁸ Fehrenbach, pp. xciv and cxi.

⁶³⁹ Ashley H. Thorndike, *Tragedy* (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1908), p. 231.

he focuses too heavily upon comparing details of the plot to its sources, and to the works of Elizabethan dramatists, primarily Shakespeare. While the argument has justifiably been made that during his residence in Dublin Shirley considered how well his 'Irish' plays would be received by London audiences, it is crucial not to overlook the fact that the work he produced at this time also contained topics relevant to specifically Irish concerns, and it is therefore essential to look at Shirley's entire Irish canon when interpreting these plays.

The main themes of *The Politician* reflect many of the politically important issues which dominated *The Gentleman of Venice*, and which were raised in *Rosania* and *The Royal Master*: honour, succession and counsel. Shirley was famed in London for his comedies of manners, but the plays of his Irish period are evidently more concerned with the machinations of state politics.⁶⁴⁰ The four earlier plays are tragicomedies but *The Politician* is darker: defined on its 1655 title-page as 'a tragedy', its more ominous perspective reveals Shirley's recognition of the dire condition of Irish politics, and their close relation to the political situation of England.

Succession

Unlike Shirley's previous Irish plays, *The Politician* has only one plot, and this is consumed by the question of succession, into which are woven secondary themes of

⁶⁴⁰ Shirley's earlier tragedies, *The Maids Revenge* (1626), *The Traitor* (1631) and *Love's Cruelty* (1631) were written for the London stage. Therefore, while Shirley did not favour the genre of tragedy, he had used it before, and it was not simply a new departure for the Irish stage.

honour, counsel, and the consequences of attempting to over-reach one's social situation. Although Gotharus is the driving force behind attempts to alter the royal succession, it is Marpisa who is the real villain of the play. Her character appears relatively seldom, but it is her deceptions and scheming which drive the action of the plot, and this makes her unique amongst Shirley's female inventions for his Irish plays. Where Domitilla dreamed, and Ursula performed a single deed, Marpisa manipulates, exploits and manoeuvres throughout the entire play, and indeed even before the action takes place. She has consistently lied to Gotharus about Haraldus's parentage to further her plan for her son to inherit the kingdom of Norway over the King's rightful heir, Turgesius.⁶⁴¹ Her social climbing from a mere 'concubine' to queen is the subject of the first conversation of the play, where it is noted that she requires,

No less title
Then Queen, to satisfie her ambition.⁶⁴²

It transpires that Marpisa took advantage of Turgesius and Olaus's absence at the wars to facilitate this 'strange and suddaine marriage', although later the validity of the marriage is questioned by the exclamation,

Why she's not married,
He [the King] does but call her so.⁶⁴³

⁶⁴¹ Fehrenbach argues that the name Turgesius was suitable for a play written with an Irish audience in mind as the name has Irish as well as Norwegian connections, p. liii. The name Olaus has Scandinavian connections and, aptly for the play, means forefather. Significantly, Saint Olaf, Latinised to Olaus, perished in a war in which he was assisted by Knut, who was King of Denmark and England, see Charlotte M. Yonge, *History of Christian Names* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1884), pp. 331-2.

⁶⁴² Shirley, *The Politician, A Tragedy* (London: printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1655), Wing / S3482, pp. 1 and 3; Gifford, V, pp. 93 and 95.

⁶⁴³ Shirley, *The Politician*, pp. 1 and 20; Gifford, V, p. 112.

Gotharus is known to be the new Queen's favourite and has been at work to bring about his and his mistress's ambitions, as is revealed by his exclamation upon hearing news of the Prince's victory in battle,

I meant him not this safety, when I wrought
The King to send him forth to warre.⁶⁴⁴

An attempt upon the King's life would be an act of high treason, and indeed would still leave Marpisa and Gotharus with the problem of Turgesius preventing them from obtaining the crown for 'their' son. Even so, the preoccupation of getting rid of the Prince rather than the King demonstrates that the issue being addressed is not that of immediately obtaining power, but of who will eventually succeed to power. Fehrenbach argues that if the play had been truly interested in political matters then the role of the king would have had more prominence, but this line of argument neglects the consideration that of greater concern than the subject of good governance is the issue of succession.⁶⁴⁵ Indeed, with the death of Haraldus their attempts on the life of Turgesius abruptly cease since,

The Prince *Turgesius* death
Is of no use, since 'tis unprofitable
To the great hope we stored up in *Haraldus*.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴⁴ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 2; Gifford, V, p. 94.

⁶⁴⁵ Fehrenbach, p. xciv.

⁶⁴⁶ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 53; Gifford, V, p. 152.

Upholding the monarchy

In his previous Irish plays Shirley unfailingly wrote in support of the monarchy and the King's right to rule: Olivia uncomplainingly steps aside when Ferdinand's true identity is known in *Rosania*, and the king in *The Royal Master*, and Duke in *The Gentleman of Venice*, are honourable throughout. The portrayal of the King in *The Politician* is much more problematic, as his ability to make good decisions is first questioned, and then found to be wanting. One of the reasons for Turgesius's popularity is that not only is the King not fit to rule, but also that his son would do a better job. The issues of kingship which are raised in this play are neatly summarised by Fitzgibbon:

the implicit view of the monarchy is that it does not *automatically* confer personal authority on the holder of the office, it needs the confidence, belief and collective loyalty of a people – especially king's officers – to endorse its power...two aspects of kingship clearly emerge in this play: that kings rule by acknowledged, as much as inherent authority, and that the weakness of the holder is the vulnerability of the office.⁶⁴⁷

The first indication that the King's morals are dubious arises from his romantic relationships: indeed his first speech in the play is directed towards Albina and exhibits no consideration for the fate of his son, who is at war.⁶⁴⁸ The hasty marriage to Marpisa has already been discussed, but it is soon revealed that the King would have

⁶⁴⁷ Fitzgibbon, p. 306.

⁶⁴⁸ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 4; Gifford, V, p. 96.

chosen Albina for a wife if she had ‘consented to returne [his] love’.⁶⁴⁹ That he continues to pursue Albina after his marriage, and after hers to Gotharus, is a far cry from the impeccable moral behaviour expected of a monarch, which is described by Albina as, ‘the examples of chaste love | (Most glorious in a King and Queene)’.⁶⁵⁰ The potentially detrimental effect of the King’s actions is again voiced by Albina who states, ‘the lust of a wild King doth threaten here’.⁶⁵¹ This supports the argument that the king of *The Politician* was based upon Christian IV, rather than on Charles I.

Of greater concern is the King’s poor judgement. In *The Royal Master*, the language of deception and magic was used to explain Montalto’s hold over the King, yet in *The Politician* the descriptions are directly critical of the King’s own discernment, ‘his judgement’s I fear stupified’.⁶⁵² This reveals a subtle shift in Shirley’s critique of the governing power: whereas previously he had been content to lay the blame for bad policies upon the counsel given by advisors, now the acumen of the monarch himself is being disparaged. The criticism which is uttered between courtiers escalates into an attack later in the play, when the Queen hurls the accusation that he is but the ‘shadow of a king’.⁶⁵³

⁶⁴⁹ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 4; Gifford, V, p. 96.

⁶⁵⁰ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 5; Gifford, V, p. 97.

⁶⁵¹ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 6; Gifford, V, p. 98.

⁶⁵² Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 16; Gifford, V, p. 108.

⁶⁵³ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 63; Gifford, V, p. 164.

Amid the difficulties arising from the King's inept rule, hope is provided in the figure of Turgesius. His character is held up as an ideal throughout the play, and when confronted with the perplexing behaviour of his father, his only comment is, 'it puzzles me to think my father guilty'.⁶⁵⁴ Even when provided with evidence that his father has disowned him, Turgesius remains loyal to the crown and to his father. At the culmination of the discussion about the king's fitness for rule, Turgesius demonstrates the quality of his character. The beginning of Act IV contains this remarkable exchange:

Go. You may surrender up your Crown, 'twell shew [*sic.*]
Brave on *Turgesius* Temples, whose ambition
Expects it.
Ki. Nay *Gotharus*.⁶⁵⁵

Here Gotharus is, astonishingly, counselling the King to abdicate in favour of his son, with the inaccurate caveat that Turgesius will be expecting such a move. The brevity of the King's response seems to be his final decision on the matter, but he later reconsiders this advice, first exclaiming,

To whom now must I kneel? Where is the King?
For I am nothing, and deserve to be so,

and later,

Turgesius...
...to whom I give my Crown;

⁶⁵⁴ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 47; Gifford, V, p. 146.

⁶⁵⁵ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 41; Gifford, V, p. 139.

Salute him King by my example.⁶⁵⁶

The deaths which occur in the play are not nearly as shocking as these moments when the King offers up his crown to his son. In the first of these speeches, the King is unaware that Turgesius lives, and this makes his intended renunciation of the throne even more extraordinary, as even Haraldus, the potential successor, has died, so there is no obvious heir. When the King first declares his unworthiness to hold his title any longer, he is unaware of the existence of a successor, and yet he is still willing to renounce his position and responsibilities, potentially casting the kingdom into uproar and disarray. While the ability to recognise his own limitations could potentially be viewed as a positive characteristic, Shirley makes it clear that this action is the most reprehensible in the play. The position of ruler is not one of choice to be discarded at will, but is rather a god-given duty. Although Shirley has, quite radically, discussed the issues surrounding the power of the monarchy, he falls short of advocating abdication. Once again, it is Turgesius who shows his moral fibre and restores order, chastising the courtiers that it is only 'traytors, | [who] Consent your lawful King should be depos'd.'⁶⁵⁷ Turgesius assures his father that he only wishes to obtain the crown upon his sire's natural death, and claims that he requires this time to mature and to be, 'better'd by your example in the practise | Of a Kings power and dutie'.⁶⁵⁸ There is only one sour note in Turgesius's otherwise heroic speech, but even this demonstrates his future abilities as a ruler: he argues that should he replace his father as monarch some dissenters would accuse him of foul play:

⁶⁵⁶ Shirley, *The Politician*, pp, 66 and 73; Gifford, V, pp. 168 and 175.

⁶⁵⁷ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 73; Gifford, V, p. 175.

⁶⁵⁸ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 73; Gifford, V, p. 175.

This change will make 'em think I did conspire,
And force your resignation.⁶⁵⁹

While this is hardly the best motivation for not accepting the crown, Turgesius here reveals an astute awareness of politics, and is able to foresee the repercussions of his actions – a quality which his father demonstrably lacks. It is also significant that the King is not forced to consider abdication by external pressures, but comes to the decision himself. Therefore, although the question of whether you can remove someone from power if they have demonstrated their inability to wield it appropriately is raised, Shirley is careful to ensure that by the end of the play right rule is restored and that the King remains king.

The previous examination of Shirley's Irish plays reveals that he consistently involved his drama with discussions of politics, and the questions of succession and fitness to rule are especially interesting with regard to Wentworth and Charles I. During the 1630s, Charles's policies were becoming increasingly unpopular, particularly the crisis which ensued because of the implementation of Ship Money taxation, and this was blamed to a large extent on his decision to employ Personal Rule governance rather than calling parliament. Criticism of English government became increasingly vocal, although emphasis was placed upon the king receiving bad counsel, rather than upon the King's inability to govern, and this is the situation which Shirley commented upon in his earlier Irish plays – the king of *The Politician* has lost his way, and it is the responsibility of his courtiers to bring him back to the right path. While

⁶⁵⁹ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 73; Gifford, V, p. 175.

Dutton is correct to argue that Shirley kept an eye on the London stage during his residence in Dublin, the subjects raised in *The Politician* reveal that in this play he looked towards Irish politics for inspiration. It is not insignificant that this play was written about three years before the Irish Uprising of 1641, which was a precursor to the English Civil wars (1642-46 and 1648-49). As Fehrenbach noted, Turgesius is firmly opposed to civil war, which he views as an unnatural state:

...At home
Our conquest will be losse, and every wound
We give our Country, is a crimson teare
From our own heart.⁶⁶⁰

Ultimately, the play does not allow the possibility that the head of state be removed, and the ‘resurrection’ of Turgesius ensures that while the play is a tragedy, it ends with a sense of hope for the future.

The politician

As the title of the play establishes, the role of statesman is an important consideration throughout the play. Ostensibly, the politician of the play’s title is Gotharus, indeed it is he who is thus described in the list of characters at the beginning of the 1655 edition. However, the character Montalto in *The Royal Master* is more worthy of having a play named for him than is Gotharus. Montalto is a highly skilled politician who manipulates numerous people around him in an attempt to achieve personal gain. Although it could be argued that Marpisa owes her position to Gotharus’s scheming,

⁶⁶⁰ Fehrenbach, p. xcvi. Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 44; Gifford, V, p. 142

ultimately his power is directly connected to Marpisa's social standing, and he does not achieve political standing in his own right. In the mid-seventeenth century, the word 'politician' was used to describe both a self-interested schemer, and a person interested in professional politics.⁶⁶¹ It is surely significant that both Montalto and Gotharus embody the former of these definitions as both of these characters cause disruptions to the governance of the state. These two characters embody what Shirley seems most to fear, namely the abuse of power for self-interested purposes. Shirley's portrayal of egocentric political characters in *The Politician* suggests a deep concern over the power which individuals can wield in state government. *The Royal Master* was written for the London stage, but the presence of Gotharus in *The Politician* indicates that Shirley's apprehension about the power which could be held by a single counsellor was equally applicable to Wentworth's vice-regal court in Ireland. All of the plays from Shirley's Irish period demonstrate how the actions of individuals can have a profound effect upon the governance of the state, indicating that Shirley wished to highlight the importance of carefully selecting these individuals, before elevating them to positions of great influence.

Gotharus is a competent schemer who has helped to elevate the social status of Marpisa, and his plans to eliminate Turgesius from the succession by sending him into battle contain a degree of subtlety. Marpisa herself is a shrewd manipulator, as

⁶⁶¹ OED, 'politician', http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50182874?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=politician&first=1&max_to_show=10 [accessed 9th September 2009].

demonstrated by her actions towards Gotharus, and her own efforts in achieving her crown.⁶⁶² Conversely, the King is a poor politician, as he is primarily concerned with self-preservation, rather than respecting the established order of authority. While Olaus's motivation is altruistic, his heavy-handed approach to delicate situations reveals his relative incompetence at successful political relations. Therefore, the most successful politician of the play is Turgesius. That Turgesius is not a schemer but more interested in professional politics (as demonstrated by his comment about being suspected of foul play if he were to succeed his father before the latter's death) shows that this is the ideal which Shirley wished to depict. Self-interest should be suppressed when matters of national importance are at stake. Not only is this a criticism of 1630s practices in both English and Irish politics, but Shirley also offers a role model in the character of Turgesius, who has followed all of the rules, and is ultimately rewarded, at the end of the play, with the promise of being the future king who will ascend the throne without controversy.

Consideration of the play in Shirley's Irish canon

The Politician reiterates several themes which were given prominence in Shirley's previous 'Irish' plays. As a dramatist, he is well known for the prominence he gives to female characters, but his Irish plays also demonstrate a preoccupation with violence and military encounters, as well as placing due emphasis upon music and dance.⁶⁶³

⁶⁶² Fehrenbach argues that Marpisa has been manipulating Gotharus for years without his knowledge, p. lxxxix. This circumstance may well have been an allusion to Kirsten Munk.

⁶⁶³ Music is directly mentioned three times in the play: the King refers to 'this musick', 'musicke' is a stage direction in Act III, as is a 'song' and 'dance', Shirley, *The Politician*, pp. 13, 40 and 41; Gifford, V, pp. 105, 134, 135.

Albina is an intriguing character in this play: she slighted the King's affection for love of Gotharus, she is treated harshly by her husband, and soon after becoming a widow attracts the amorous attentions of Turgesius. Her disobliging act of refusing to marry the King is repaid by the harsh treatment she receives at the hands of her husband, and she is described by the courtier Hormenus as 'a Martyr'.⁶⁶⁴ Despite his 'marriage' to Marpisa, the King continues to pursue Albina, putting the argument to her that Gotharus is,

...not the first
Lord that hath purchas'd offices by the free
Surrender of his wife to the Kings use.⁶⁶⁵

Albina's love for Gotharus does not extend to engaging in a relationship with the King to further her husband's career, and she pleads with the King to allow her to remain chaste. Although she married for love, Gotharus clearly married for convenience, and his speeches to his wife are chilling:

Should [you] be sick, and sick to death, I wo'd
Not counsel you to physic.⁶⁶⁶

He later states:

Would thy sufferings
Could ease me of the weight, I would
Empty my heart of all that's ill, to sinke thee,
And bury thee alive, thy sight is hatefull.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶⁴ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 3; Gifford, V, p. 95.

⁶⁶⁵ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 5; Gifford, V, p. 97.

⁶⁶⁶ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 7; Gifford, V, p. 99.

Albina is left distraught that, like Claudiana in *The Gentleman of Venice*, she is condemned by her husband without him first listening to his wife's exonerating explanation. Albina's excellent wifely qualities are demonstrated further by the despair she experiences at being 'an exile from my husband', and this serves to vindicate Turgesius's declaration at the end of the play that she is 'worth | a Prince'.⁶⁶⁸ Claudiana pleaded with her husband for death, and Albina expresses a similar emotion. Although Albina acknowledges the desirability of being released from Gotharus's cruelty by her death, she falls short of actually asking him to commit this act, 'you shall be less Tyrant sir to kill me'.⁶⁶⁹ Perhaps it is the fact that Albina realises that Gotharus would be likely to comply with a request for death that she does not utter it, but her love and loyalty to him are such that upon discovering that he has died she exclaims,

the sad *Albina*
Must sleepe by her dead Lord, I feel death coming.⁶⁷⁰

Claudiana wished for death at the hands of her husband because she was shamed by his treatment of her. While an audience may consider Albina's affections to be misplaced, she only seeks her own death upon the demise of her husband. Indeed, it is Haraldus's sensibilities which are more closely aligned to Claudiana's as he also believes shame to be worse than death,

⁶⁶⁷ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 53; Gifford, V, p. 153.

⁶⁶⁸ Shirley, *The Politician*, pp. 33 and 70; Gifford, V, pp. 126 and 172.

⁶⁶⁹ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 55; Gifford, V, p. 154.

⁶⁷⁰ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 70; Gifford, V, p. 172.

Oh my shame!
What have my ears receiv'd? am I a bastard?
...
I must know the truth
Although it kill me.⁶⁷¹

Albina is more concerned with the lack of her husband's affection than the consequences which result from this – namely, the pressure he brings to bear upon her to appease the King's lust. However, Albina is neither to be tainted by the actions of her husband, nor punished for her decision to marry him rather than the King, indeed Shirley seems to be espousing the opinion that while the King was not worthy of Albina's loyalty as a wife, Turgesius is.⁶⁷²

In stark contrast to Albina's loyalty are Marpisa's duplicitous relations with both her husband and her lover. While Albina's statements can be taken at face value, Marpisa's utterances are rarely straightforward. When discussing what she expects the reaction of Turgesius and Olaus to be, when they learn of her marriage, she says to the King,

Throw me from your bosome
To death, or worse, to shame; oh think upon me,
And if you have one fear that's kin to mine,
Prevent their tyrannie, and give me doom

⁶⁷¹ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 21; Gifford, V, pp. 113-114.

⁶⁷² As well as the commonly known root of the name Albina meaning white, this name had a more personal relevance for Shirley, and a link to Ireland: Albanus was a British martyr connected to St. Albans, where Shirley had previously worked as a schoolmaster, and Saint Albanus was an Irish bishop who was consecrated in Ireland by Saint Patrick, see Yonge, p. 157. Marpisa's name is also fitting, as Marpesia was a celebrated queen of the Amazons, see George Crabb, *Universal Historical Dictionary, or the explanation of the names of persons and places*, 2 vols (London: C. Baldwin, 1825), II, sig. 2S2^f.

Of exile e're their cruelty arrive.⁶⁷³

Her expressed wish for death is quickly tempered to exile but, as Fehrenbach argues, this speech is designed to portray Marpisa favourably as she tries to assert an intention not to have a negative effect upon the relationship of the father and son.⁶⁷⁴ Ironically, although Domitilla, Rosania and Claudiana are prepared for, and ask for, death in their plays, it is only Marpisa, who makes no such declaration, who does die. The female characters of the previous Irish plays are virtuous women who are motivated to consider death due to their integrity and morality. Marpisa is motivated by a lust for power, and she has actively sought to disrupt the established social order. It is for this reason that she must die at the end of *The Politician*. Even though Shirley writes strong female characters, they must still abide by social constraints: Domitilla abandons her desire for social advancement, Olivia relinquishes the crown to her cousin, Ursula's scheming ultimately comes to naught, and Marpisa dies to ensure that patriarchal order is restored at the conclusion of each drama.

The military

Early in the play, a link is made between the intrigues of court and the machinations of warfare,

They shall find stratagems in peace, more fatal
Then all the Engines of the war.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷³ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 18; Gifford, V, p. 111.

⁶⁷⁴ Fehrenbach, p. lxxxvi.

⁶⁷⁵ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 12; Gifford, V, p. 104.

These lines are uttered by Gotharus, and clearly refer to the plots he has formulated against the king and his court, but they are also significant for the comparison they make, and for their prophetic quality. Despite Gotharus's plans, Turgesius remains unharmed by his participation in the war, yet Gotharus and Marpisa both die as a result of intrigues at the court. These lines also set up an opposition between the court and the military which, albeit sometimes surreptitiously, runs throughout the play. The first clash of these two worlds occurs between Marpisa and Olaus, she excusing his treatment of her by exclaiming that he is:

<i>Marpisa</i>	... a Souldier, and not us'd to file His language, blunt and rugged ways of speech Becoming your profession.
<i>Olaus</i>	...we ha'not the device of tongue And soft phrase Madam, which you make an Idol At Court. ⁶⁷⁶

This theme of unsophisticated soldiers being compared to polished courtiers is one which recurs in Shirley's Irish plays, most notably with the Citizens of *Rosania*. However, these Citizens are largely comic characters, whose primary function is to highlight the problems caused by over-reaching one's social status. In *The Politician* those of a military background are loyal and dutiful, having no thought of advancing themselves, and the conflicts between them and members of the court are more visceral than has been seen in the earlier plays. The variations in the use of language which differentiate the highest members of the court, are mirrored by the visual variations of dress which lead to conflict between individuals lower down the social

⁶⁷⁶ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 27; Gifford, V, p. 119.

scale: the courtier Sueno provokes the captain, Reginaldus, and says, 'I have a suit to you', Reginaldus deliberately misunderstands him, using word play to undermine Sueno with the lines,

A Courtier aske a suit of a Souldier?
You'l wear no Buffe nor Iron?⁶⁷⁷

Where Olaus and Marpisa fought using language, the material request of Sueno, that he pluck a hair from Reginaldus's beard, allows the captain to use force against the courtier, the stage directions stating that he '*kicks him*' then '*strikes him*' while he tells Sueno that such treatment 'will make you an upright Courtier'.⁶⁷⁸ This tendency towards violence is repeated only a few lines later when Olaus, believing Aquinas to be in league with Gotharus, '*Strikes him with his Cane*'.⁶⁷⁹ It is obvious that Olaus could not come to blows with Marpisa because of both her gender and her social status, but he is allowed to use violence against his inferior. His use of a cane, rather than a more military instrument, is not explained, but perhaps it was to signify a further mark of disrespect.

The quarrels between individuals rapidly escalate in the play to matters of state. When the King begins to doubt the loyalty of the army, he fears for the safety of his heir, claiming,

⁶⁷⁷ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 29; Gifford, V, p. 121.

⁶⁷⁸ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 29; Gifford, V, p. 122.

⁶⁷⁹ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 30; Gifford, V, p. 122.

I have given my sonne
To the most violent men under the Planets,
These Souldiers.⁶⁸⁰

From this point onwards, the army becomes a political power, as vocalised by the courtier Hormenus in his exclamation to the King,

The Army which you thought scattered and broke,
Is grown into a great and threatning body.⁶⁸¹

The army supports Turgesius and is angered by the treatment he has received at the hands of his father. The mobilization of its forces makes it a political power to be reckoned with: upon learning of Turgesius's supposed death, the army threatens Gotharus with, 'a thousand deaths, | For the good Prince.'⁶⁸² Ultimately, the army is in a position to mount a coup, and hence destroy the court, but this catastrophic situation is averted by the simple, humble words of Turgesius to his father, 'The Armie sir is yours'.⁶⁸³ Friction between civilians and the military were reaching a head in Ireland at this time. The plantations required military presence to subjugate the native population, and tensions were beginning to run high. There was only a brief respite in the relentless policy between September 1639 and March 1640, as during this time Wentworth had been recalled to England to advise Charles I, and plantations were discontinued until the Irish parliament reconvened upon Wentworth's return.⁶⁸⁴ There is a clear shift in Shirley's treatment of the military from *Rosania* to *The Politician*: in

⁶⁸⁰ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 34; Gifford, V, p. 127.

⁶⁸¹ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 62; Gifford, V, p. 163.

⁶⁸² Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 55; Gifford, V, p. 155.

⁶⁸³ Shirley, *The Politician*, p. 67; Gifford, V, p. 169.

⁶⁸⁴ Kearney, p. 102.

the former play, the characters of the citizens-turned-soldiers are designed to allow the soldiers within the audience to identify with them, in the latter play, Shirley's interest broadens out to the national concern of plantations. Addressing this wider topic in the later play supports the argument that Shirley increasingly engaged with issues affecting Ireland during his residency in Dublin.

Conclusion

As Fehrenbach observes, *The Politician* is a play of contrasts. The issue of how to behave as a woman is explored through Marpisa and Albina, what qualities make a good advisor is demonstrated through Gotharus and Olaus, the role of courtier is compared through Hormenus/Cortes and Sueno/Helga and, most importantly, the question of the heir is present in the depiction of Haraldus and Turgesius.⁶⁸⁵ Of the limited scholarship in print concerning *The Politician*, a significant amount has been dedicated to a discussion of its tragic quality, but the argument that it is not a tragedy as only the 'bad' characters die is largely irrelevant when the play is considered in the context of Shirley's Irish canon.⁶⁸⁶ Surely, what is most tragic about the play is that the king offers to surrender his throne? More pertinent is Samuel Schoenbaum's consideration that the play 'wished to be amused rather than moved...above all it craved novelty'.⁶⁸⁷ It is clear that Shirley struggled to attract the large audience he wanted to the Werburgh Street Theatre, and as *The Politician* is his first tragedy for

⁶⁸⁵ Fehrenbach, pp. cvi-cvii.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. cxxi and lxxvi. See also Herrick, p. 299.

⁶⁸⁷ Samuel Schoenbaum, *Middleton's Tragedies: A Critical Study* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 55, quoted by Fehrenbach, p. cxxii. See also Fehrenbach, p. cxxiv for an analysis of which elements of the play capture an audience's attention.

this theatre, and is one of only a very few plays which he wrote in this genre, he appears to have experimented with a genre which was new to the Irish audience. The description of the army as a military force has clear implications for the plantation of Ireland, but depicting the army as a political force also resonated strongly with the situation in Scotland and the Bishops' War (discussed in the following chapter). Basing the character of the king upon Christian IV, rather than Charles I, also suggests that Shirley's motivations were broader than simply attracting an Irish audience, and it is clear that Shirley was dealing with political concerns which spanned the three-kingdoms under Stuart rule. *The Politician* thus demonstrates that, while Shirley was increasingly engaging with Irish concerns, he remained interested in politics across the Irish Sea. However, as a dramatist, his primary motivation for playwriting was financial, and he needed to do more to attract his Irish audience. Shirley needed 'novelty', a more extravagant, dazzling production to capture the imagination of the Irish public. He needed to abandon all thought of writing for the London stage, and to focus solely upon tempting the Irish natives to part with their money at the box office: he wrote *St Patrick for Ireland*.

Chapter Seven: *St. Patrick for Ireland*

St. Patrick for Ireland and *The Constant Maid* were published together, and this circumstance has generally led scholars to assume that *The Constant Maid* formed part of the 'Irish' canon. While *St. Patrick for Ireland* was unquestionably written for the Dublin stage, it is most likely that *The Constant Maid* was written before the dramatist left England. *St. Patrick for Ireland* raises some of the same issues which are found in Shirley's earlier 'Irish' plays (such as the importance of counsel and the institution of the monarchy), but other elements, such as the presence of the Bard and the discussion of religion, demonstrate Shirley's commitment to writing exclusively for the audience of the Werburgh Street Theatre.

The Constant Maid

The Constant Maid and *St. Patrick for Ireland* were first printed by J. Raworth for R. Whitaker in 1640, and this affiliated print history is the reason that *The Constant Maid* was long assumed to have been written during Shirley's Irish period.⁶⁸⁸ In 1966, A. P. Reimer argued that rather than having been composed during the period 1636-40, the play was actually written in the early 1630s.⁶⁸⁹ Yet this conclusion has only been partially accepted by subsequent scholars. Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim tentatively accepts that *The Constant Maid* was written c. 1630, but still suggests that it was

⁶⁸⁸ Greg notes that these plays were included in, what he describes as, 'the nonce edition' of *Two Plays* which was published in 1657, see *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama*, pp. 729 and 731.

⁶⁸⁹ A. P. Reimer, 'Shirley's Revisions and the Date of *The Constant Maid*', *Review of English Studies*, vol. 17, no. 66 (1966), pp. 141-48:148.

performed in Dublin by ‘Ogilby’s Men’.⁶⁹⁰ The date of printing invites a discussion of the play’s connection to Shirley’s Irish years, but as it was not written for the Irish stage, and it is most unlikely that it was performed in Dublin, *The Constant Maid* cannot be included in a list of Shirley’s ‘Irish’ plays.

The 1640 edition of *The Constant Maid* was included, with *St. Patrick for Ireland*, in a collection called *Two Plays*, issued in 1657.⁶⁹¹ It was printed again in 1661, under the title *Love will find out the way*, and this edition was reissued with a new frontispiece in 1667 as *The Constant Maid or Love Will Find Out the Way*. Reimer’s argument that *The Constant Maid* was written between 1632 and 1635 hinges on the, rather tenuous, evidence of variations of speeches within the text of these editions.⁶⁹² While his reasoning is not substantive, Reimer’s conclusions about the date of when the play was written are probably correct. The play was entered into the Stationers’ Register on 28th April 1640, so cannot have been written after Shirley’s return to England earlier that month, and it was not written with an Irish audience in mind (discussed below). Neither can it have been written in Ireland in expectation of Shirley’s return to England, as if this was his intention he would surely have licensed the play for performance immediately upon his return. Therefore, the play must be assigned an earlier date of composition than 1636.

⁶⁹⁰ Harbage, *Annals of English Drama*, p. 140.

⁶⁹¹ Greg, *List of English Plays*, pp. 106 and 109; Greg, *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama*, p. 729.

⁶⁹² Reimer suggests that the 1661 edition was based on an earlier text than that obtained for the 1640 edition. He uses similarities between a speech by Horner, and one by Celestina, in *The Lady of Pleasure* (1635), to suggest that the *The Constant Maid* was written prior to 1635, pp. 142-146.

The most convincing evidence that the play does not fit into Shirley's 'Irish' canon is its setting and subject matter, issues which are largely overlooked by Riemer. The action of the play occurs in London, and contains references to Bedlam, Bridewell, the entrance to St. Paul's Cathedral, and the legend of Dick Whittington.⁶⁹³ Fleay argues that the preoccupation with London life extends to comments upon fashion, and references to popular plays: Fitzgibbon suggests that *The Constant Maid* is most similar in style to Brome's citizen comedies.⁶⁹⁴ However, both these scholars assume that the play was written for the Werburgh Street Theatre: Fleay suggests that the London setting demonstrates sentimentality by Shirley for the landmarks of the city; Fitzgibbon argues that the absence of the play in the records of Sir Henry Herbert strongly suggests a Dublin performance.⁶⁹⁵ Yet it seems far more likely that such detailed references were written with a London audience in mind. While some residents of the Pale would have been familiar with these allusions to London life, many would not have even visited the city, and could not have been expected to have understood such subtleties.⁶⁹⁶ Of Shirley's other 'Irish' plays, *The Royal Master* is set in Naples, *Rosania* in Murcia, Spain, *The Gentleman of Venice* and *St. Patrick for Ireland* provide their locales in their titles, and the action of *The Politician* occurs in Norway. With the exception of *St. Patrick for Ireland*, these plays are set in far off

⁶⁹³ See Fleay p. 105. Shirley, *The Constant Maid, A Comedy* (London: printed by I. Raworth, for R. Whitaker, 1640), STC (2nd ed.) / 22438, sig. A3^v, C4^f, E1^v, F2^f; Gifford, IV, pp. 452, 470, 484, 496.

⁶⁹⁴ '...hospitalitie | Went out of fashion with crop-doublets | and cod-peeces', Shirley *TCM*, sig. A2^f; Gifford, IV, p. 449. Fleay identifies Jonson's *The Case is Altered* and *The Sad Shepherd*; Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*; Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* and Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*, p. 104; Fitzgibbon, p. 92.

⁶⁹⁵ Fleay, p. 104; Fitzgibbon, p. 98.

⁶⁹⁶ For a summary of the plot, and a discussion of the exclusive elements within this play, see Richard Morton, 'Deception and Social Dislocation: An Aspect of James Shirley's Drama', *Renaissance Drama*, IX (1966), pp. 227-245:229. See also Lucow, p. 24. For a discussion of the use of music in *The Constant Maid* see David Stevens, "The Stagecraft of James Shirley", *Educational Theatre Journal*, vol. 29, no. 4 (Dec., 1977), pp. 493-516: 508-9.

lands where few of the audience had travelled, and there is little within the texts which necessitate a precise location – for the purpose of the plots, the settings could be, generally, interchangeable. The legend of St. Patrick, and occasional references within the text (discussed below), demand that *St. Patrick for Ireland* be set in Ireland. Equally, the use of such specific, localised references in *The Constant Maid* strongly suggests that Shirley always intended this play to be performed in London. Fitzgibbon’s argument, about the lack of a London licence for performance indicating an Irish staging of the play, is stronger, but still not conclusive. Shirley’s other ‘Irish’ plays required, and gained, the approval of Herbert before they were staged in London (*The Royal Master* SR 13th March 1637/8, licensed for performance 23rd April 1638; *Rosania* licensed for performance 1st June 1640; *The Gentleman of Venice* licensed for performance 30th October 1639, SR 9th July 1653; *The Politician* SR 9th September 1653; *St. Patrick for Ireland* SR 28th April 1640). The only exception to this is *St. Patrick for Ireland*, for which no extant record of a London performance exists.

It is highly possible that *St. Patrick for Ireland* was never intended for the London stage, as its title and subject matter were targeting too specifically the Werburgh Street Theatre audience. The agreement between Shirley and his London printers provides evidence that the dramatist did not frequently organise for the publication of his plays immediately after their first performance.⁶⁹⁷ The speed with which Shirley began the process of publication following his return to London (c. 20th

⁶⁹⁷ For detailed information about which plays Shirley printed in London during his residence in Ireland, and the time lapse between licensing and printing, see Stevenson, ‘Publishers’, p. 144.

April 1640) explains why neither *The Constant Maid* nor *St. Patrick for Ireland* contains a dedication.⁶⁹⁸ It was unlikely that a play titled *St. Patrick for Ireland* would have an immediate appeal to the reading public of London, which provides a reasonable explanation for the simultaneous issue of these two plays. Presumably Shirley and/or his publisher, Whitaker, thought that it was likely that the plays would sell better as a pair. It is possible that Shirley ‘rediscovered’ *The Constant Maid* upon his return from Ireland, and decided to print it then in an attempt to generate income.

Saint Patrick, for Ireland

St Patrick for Ireland has received the most critical attention of Shirley’s Irish plays, largely because of the significant position it holds as the first performance of such pertinent subject matter at the first purpose-built theatre in Ireland.⁶⁹⁹ While the title page of *The Royal Master*, and the first prologue to *Rosania*, clearly identify these two plays as having been performed in Dublin, there is weight to Dutton’s argument that these plays were written with the London stage in mind, whereas *St Patrick for Ireland* was indisputably written to appeal specifically to the audience of the Werburgh Street Theatre. Burner argues that *St. Patrick for Ireland* demonstrates Shirley ‘neither understood nor cared to appreciate Irish culture’, but this thesis argues that Shirley’s ‘Irish’ plays reveal his increasing engagement with Irish concerns, which culminates in

⁶⁹⁸ Stevenson, ‘Dedications’, p. 83.

⁶⁹⁹ See Fitz-Simon, p. 12; Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 274-5; Armstrong, p. 73; David Howarth, *Images of Rule: Art and Politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997), p. 212.; Stockwell, especially p. 16; Kerrigan, pp. 170-5.

St. Patrick for Ireland.⁷⁰⁰ There has been a considerable amount of scholarly discussion about how to read the religious elements of this play, and to determine from this Shirley's own religious convictions. However, as Fitzgibbon argues, there is no basis for identifying the Saint Patrick of Shirley's play with Catholicism rather than Christianity.⁷⁰¹ Yet, in a discussion of Shirley's Irish years, this play is most significant for demonstrating Shirley's grasp of the complexities of Irish society, and his decision to abandon thought of writing a play which could be transferred to the London stage, for one which encompassed wholly Irish affairs.

Textual history of the play

The play was entered into the Stationers' Register at London on 28th April 1640, which marks the terminal date of Shirley's return to England.⁷⁰² First published in 1640 by J. Raworth for R. Whitaker, *St. Patrick for Ireland* does not fall into the collection of plays which Stevenson identifies as comprising the Cook/Crooke partnership of Shirley's Irish period.⁷⁰³ Whitaker was a successful publisher who has been acclaimed as producing many of the finest printed works of his time.⁷⁰⁴ John P. Turner convincingly argues that the printed edition was compiled from foul papers, rather than a prompt-copy, so it can be deduced that Shirley himself carried a manuscript of the

⁷⁰⁰ Burner, p. 130.

⁷⁰¹ Fitzgibbon, p. 7.

⁷⁰² Stockwell, p. 17.

⁷⁰³ Greg, *List of English Plays*, p. 110.

⁷⁰⁴ Turner, p. 16.

play across the Irish Sea.⁷⁰⁵ Copies of the 1640 edition were included in *Two Plays*, which appeared in 1657, and included *The Constant Maid*.⁷⁰⁶

St. Patrick for Ireland's position in Shirley's Irish canon

At first glance, this play is unlike any other of Shirley's repertoire to date: it has myriad interwoven sub-plots, it relies heavily upon visual effects to create dramatic tension (the moving idols and serpents), as well as containing overt depictions of magic and magical objects. The subject matter of this play is hugely significant, as it demonstrates Shirley's engagement with his locality. Since the beginning of Charles's reign, only four plays about saints had been written.⁷⁰⁷ This makes a play about Saint Patrick highly unusual, and serves to link the play to earlier traditions of miracle, or mystery play cycles. This play would have been extraordinary to a London audience, but Irish traditions of supporting religious plays continued until the 1630s. Kilkenny had paid for plays based on the Temptation, Resurrection and Nine Worthies to be performed on Corpus Christi and Midsummer Day since 1553. Although the prominent members of this town were mainly Protestant and pro-English, in 1637 they paid for a copy of the Corpus Christi plays to be sent to Dublin.⁷⁰⁸ However, *St. Patrick for Ireland* also contains themes which have recurred throughout Shirley's Irish plays: discussions of social manners, the role of a powerful advisor, the authority of the monarchy being upheld, a wife who is at variance with her husband, and the

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁷⁰⁶ Greg, *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama*, II, pp. 729 and 731.

⁷⁰⁷ Shirley's tragedy, *St. Albans* (1625), now lost; Joseph Simons, *S. Damianus* (1626); a Latin play *St. Omers* (1626), John Kirke's heroic romance, *The Seven Champions of Christendom* (1635), Harbage, *Annals of English Drama*, pp. 120, 122 and 132.

⁷⁰⁸ The last record of a Corpus Christi play in Kilkenny is 1639, Clark, *Early Irish Stage*, pp. 22 and 24.

question of the heir. *St. Patrick for Ireland* can then be seen to contain unique elements which differentiate it from Shirley's previous work, earning Marvin T. Herrick's description of the play as a 'tragical-comical-historical-pastoral oleo'.⁷⁰⁹ Fletcher is correct to argue that this play demonstrates a concerted effort to appeal to a wider audience than the Werburgh Street Theatre had previously enjoyed, and that there are discernable elements within it which are deliberately intended to appeal to an Irish audience. However, his assessment that Shirley had previously written only for the upper echelons of Dublin society is inaccurate: *St. Patrick for Ireland* was not written to attract soldiers to the theatre, as they already formed a core component of the audience, and the sensational elements of the play are less a form of 'low entertainment', than a move towards a masque-like production.⁷¹⁰ The elements of spectacle in this play were present, therefore, not to encourage a new stratosphere of society into the theatre, but to encourage greater attendance from the social classes who already formed its clientele.

The para-text of *St. Patrick for Ireland*

Once again, the title of this play is slightly ambiguous: while a cursory interpretation indicates that the character Patrick is working for the benefit of Ireland as a country, the placement of a comma after 'St. Patrick' on the title page of the 1640 edition suggests that the play, *St. Patrick*, has been dedicated by Shirley to Ireland itself.

⁷⁰⁹ Herrick, p. 297. Ward argues that *St. Patrick for Ireland* contains elements of a miracle play, see *History of English Dramatic Literature*, I, p. 100.

⁷¹⁰ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, pp. 274-5. Fitzgibbon identifies that the elaborate staging of this play is reminiscent of masques, p. 60.

Evidence from the prologue implies that this latter interpretation is more accurate: the first lines read, ‘we know not what will take, your pallats are | Various’.⁷¹¹ This reveals that even towards the end of a four year residency, Shirley had not been able to identify decisively what dramatic entertainment would appeal generically to the Dublin audience. More importantly, it identifies that individuals in the audience had varying tastes for drama, and that the dramatist was struggling to find a format which would please the majority. The frustration which Shirley evinced in his prologues to plays staged at the Werburgh Street Theatre by other dramatists, is also apparent in *St. Patrick for Ireland’s* prologue,

We should be very happy, if at last,
We could find out the humour of your taste.

The phrase ‘at last’ refers to numerous earlier attempts, and shows that Shirley was still actively trying to accommodate the various preferences of his audience. While the description that the production will be staged ‘not considering cost, or paines to please’ could be overlooked as a poetic conceit, it is equally possible that the phrase refers to the actual conditions of the production – the construction of the idols in the temple and the staging of the serpents, in particular, could have incurred additional production costs. The prologue also includes a variant on the complaint about low attendance, which seems to have now been standard for Werburgh Street Theatre productions. Through the character of the Prologue, Shirley states his conviction that patrons are now *expecting* to be disappointed with the plays being offered,

⁷¹¹ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland. The first part* (London: Printed by I. Raworth, for R. Whitaker, 1640), STC (2nd ed.) / 22455, sig. A2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 365.

For some have their opinions so displeas'd,
They come not with a purpose to be pleas'd.

This is a subtle but significant shift in Shirley's perception of his audience. Whereas previously he had held the belief that the drama offered was simply not to the taste of the audience, he now appears to be convinced that individuals are attending simply to disparage the entertainment being offered, possibly disrupting the performance by heckling, in a manner described satirically in Thomas Dekker's *The Gulls Hornbook* (1609). Shirley is so preoccupied with this new conviction that he dedicates sixteen lines of the prologue to its consideration.

The prologue ends with the explanation that the scope of the play has been intended to form but the first of two parts of the story of Saint Patrick, and claims that the playwright will require encouragement from the audience to compose the second instalment,

...if ye
First welcome this, you'll grace our Poets art,
And give him Courage for a second part.

The request for positive feedback is repeated in the epilogue, along with a reminder that the play 'is but a part of what our Muse | Intends'.⁷¹² The epilogue is remarkable for the tone of its content, which is far removed from any consideration of reviving the play on the London stage, opening with the lines,

⁷¹² Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. I4^r; Gifford, IV, p. 443.

How e're the Dyce run Gentlemen, I am
The last man borne, still at the Irish game.⁷¹³

A nationalist sentiment is also identifiable in the phrase, made from 'our labour' to 'your Story, native knowne' (my italics) before concluding with a wish to '...let us stile | You Patrons of the Play, him of the Ile'. This suggests that there must have been native Gaelic and/or Old Irish patrons in an audience dominated by New English Dubliners.⁷¹⁴ The emphasis that the play is but the first of two parts extends to the title page of the 1640 edition, which is clearly designated 'the first part'.⁷¹⁵ While the play does stand as a finite piece, aspects of the plot are inconclusive at the end, which could explain why the printers were at such pains to specify the play's intended serial nature.⁷¹⁶ Yet there is an alternative conclusion: the play was printed in 1640, soon after its initial performance, so it is possible that Shirley was still intending to write a second part when the play went to press. Although he returned to England soon after Wentworth's departure, there is no evidence to suggest that this journey was intended to be his final removal from Ireland, and not another business trip, such as those he had undertaken in the spring of 1637 and 1638.⁷¹⁷ That it was the last play which Shirley wrote before leaving Ireland is evident from the lack of a Second Part to the story of Saint Patrick. While it has been generally accepted that Shirley left Ireland after the staging of *St. Patrick for Ireland* because the play was not successful, it is

⁷¹³ Turner explains that the reference in the opening lines is to backgammon, which was often called the 'Irish game', p. 248.

⁷¹⁴ See also Stockwell, p. 17.

⁷¹⁵ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. A1^r; Gifford, IV, p. 364.

⁷¹⁶ Beyond the information given in the paratext of *St. Patrick for Ireland*, nothing is known of the intended second part, see Greg, *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama*, II, p. 731.

⁷¹⁷ Stevenson, 'Shirley's Years in Ireland', p. 24.

equally possible that he had finally identified the tastes of his audience, and that the second instalment was not written solely because the dramatist returned to England with his patron, who had been recalled to England to help resolve the problems in Scotland. When Shirley wrote the First Part of this play, he could not have foreseen that Wentworth would be obliged to return to England, so the decision to not write a second part may not have rested solely upon the opinion of the Dublin audience.

The plot

The magicians are fearful at the expected arrival of Patrick, but their chief (Archimagus) is contemptuous of their fears, and explains that he is confident he can rid Ireland of the threat of Christianity before it has taken hold. It then transpires that this confidence is a bluff, and that Archimagus himself is fearful of an ancient prophecy which states that Patrick will bring Christianity to the island.⁷¹⁸ The King of Ireland has a disturbing dream about serpents, and calls upon Archimagus for an interpretation of its meaning. Archimagus has arranged for Patrick to be killed as soon as he lands on the coast, but this plan goes awry, and Patrick arrives at court where the King accuses him of being disrespectful, and demands his instant removal. Patrick explains that God has sent him to convert the Irish, who are being misled by false gods, which prompts the courtier Dichu to attempt to kill him. Dichu's arm is paralysed by this action, and after Patrick restores its use, Dichu instantly converts to

⁷¹⁸ Stockwell identifies that the names of the characters Saint Patrick, Leogarius, Milcho, Dichu and Emeria are drawn directly from Irish history, p. 15. Fitzgibbon suggests that the crude jokes of Archimagus allow a comparison with Archy Armstrong, Charles I's fool, p. 61. However, it is most likely that this character's name referred to Spenser's character, Archimago, in *The Faerie Queene*: Archimago is an evil sorcerer sent to stop the knights who are in the service of the Faerie Queene. Archimago's greatest hatred is for Redcross, the hero of Book I who carries Saint George's cross, hence Archimago is symbolically the nemesis of England. Also see Kerrigan, pp. 171-2.

Christianity. The King is outraged by this conversion, and demands that Dichu worship the old gods, otherwise his sons will be sacrificed to them. Archimagus formulates a new plan with the King, to invite Patrick to court for the purpose of instructing the royal family about Christianity, where they will then kill him.

Rodamant became Archimagus's servant to learn magic, and has since fallen in love with the Queen. The princesses (Ethne and Fedella) are in love with Dichu's sons (Endarius and Ferochus, respectively) and are horrified that their lovers are to be sacrificed, Ethne stating that she will die alongside them. Archimagus promises to assist the lovers, but says that the men must remove themselves from court for the plan to work. Meanwhile, Emeria (daughter of the officer Milcho) is in love with Prince Conallus. However, the elder Prince, Corybreus, is also in love with her, and Archimagus promises to help Corybreus to win Emeria.

At the pagan temple a spontaneous flame indicates the presence of the gods, and the idol of Jupiter speaks to King Leogarius demanding that his loyalty be proved by killing Patrick. After the King has left, it transpires that Ferochus and Endarius were manipulating the idol, and they are reunited with the princesses.

Patrick is welcomed to court by the royal family, and the King asks to see Patrick's convert, but Dichu is overcome by grief at the loss of his sons, and now lives in the wood in penance. The King feels guilty for ordering the death of Ferochus and Endarius, and Patrick promises to pray for the king, if he truly repents. Conallus,

alone, is unhappy with the deceptive pretext under which Patrick came to court, and when Patrick is about to drink poisoned wine, secretly warns him. Archimagus is astonished that the poisoned wine appears to have no effect on Patrick. Rodamant is then ordered to drink from the same cup and dies. Patrick restores Rodamant to life, by God's grace, which prompts the Queen's conversion, and results in her banishment to Milcho's house. Archimagus gives Corybreus a bracelet which renders him invisible, to aid his wooing of Emeria. He represents himself to her as the King of the Gods, and promises to grant her greatest desire if she gives up her virginity to him. When she calls him an imposter, he rapes her.

Shamed by her defilement, Emeria tells Conallus that he should no longer love her, and she contemplates suicide. Archimagus informs her that the 'god' wishes to revisit her, and suspecting a betrayal she postpones her suicide, instead stabbing Corybreus to death. Rodamant discovers the corpse, and takes the magical bracelet as a gift for the Queen. Milcho is horrified that the murder occurred in his house, and decides to place the blame upon Conallus. Patrick arrives with a letter for Milcho which asks him to kill the bearer. Milcho locks up his house and sets fire to it. Patrick's guardian angel arrives and leads Patrick and the Queen to safety, but Milcho chooses to burn himself as a sacrifice for Corybreus's death. At the altar the 'gods' demand a sacrifice of Christian blood. Rodamant discovers the secret of the bracelet, and uses it to beat Endarius and Ferochus, as they are trying to have sex with Ethne and Fedella. The King returns to the temple to destroy it out of wrath for the death of his son, but Endarius and Ferochus appear as bloodied 'ghosts', and persuade him to

persecute Christians instead. Archimagus promises to summon all poisonous creatures to devour Patrick.

Emeria wanders through the woods and comes across some soldiers who try to rape her – the invisible Rodamant provokes them to fight each other, and she is saved. When a spirit appears to Rodamant, he relinquishes the bracelet. Emeria meets Conallus and tells him she was revenged upon her attacker and reveals that it was Corybreus. Conallus believed his mother was burnt to death, and converts to Christianity when he finds her safe with Patrick, before they all seek out Dichu's hermit cave. At the cave, music presaging the Angel Victor's arrival sends all but Patrick to sleep: Patrick is promised the ability to banish the serpents. The King arrives and is astonished at the presence of his wife and son, but bids them to die when he discovers they are Christians. Archimagus has promised to die if the serpents do not dispatch Patrick, and when Patrick proves that the serpents cannot harm him, and banishes them from Ireland, Archimagus sinks through the ground into hell. The King forgives everyone, and kneels to Patrick, but the saint does not quite trust the King, and the play concludes with the King's conversion to Christianity remaining unclear.

The court and counsel

After his unsuccessful campaign to gain the title and accoutrements of Poet Laureate, the issue of obtaining preferential treatment at court preoccupied Shirley. As previously discussed, this can most clearly be seen in the prologue to *The Maid's Revenge*, and there is an echo of this sentiment in *St. Patrick for Ireland*. When

Patrick first arrives at the Irish court he makes a poor impression upon the princesses, Ethne and Fedella, who share the exchange:

Eth. What does my father meane to doe with this
Dull thing? hee'le never make a courtier.
Fed. His very looks have turn'd my blood already.⁷¹⁹

These observations reiterate those which were raised in Shirley's earlier Irish plays. Olaus's rude speech is portrayed as being detrimental to his position at court, in *The Politician*, and the importance of presenting a good physical appearance recurs throughout *The Gentleman of Venice*. In *St. Patrick for Ireland*, it is Emeria who is objective enough to comprehend 'the wickenesse of court praise', but her observation does nothing to prevent the dreadful events which befall her.⁷²⁰ Yet while the question of how to be a successful courtier captivates Shirley, its discussion is given less attention than the more important consideration of counsellors, and the power which they wield.

Archimagus holds a different position from the dominant counsellors of Shirley's previous Irish plays, which is due to his religious responsibilities. Although the setting of the play pre-dates Christianity's establishment in Ireland, comparisons can be made between Archimagus's position as chief druid and the status of the Archbishop of Canterbury during the 1630s, which had precedence over Ussher's position as the Archbishop of Armagh. The description of Archimagus in the

⁷¹⁹ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. D4^v; Gifford, IV, p. 397.

⁷²⁰ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. C3^f; Gifford, IV, p. 385.

Dramatis Personae is revealing of the reading population's knowledge at this time, or rather, the publisher's perception of this knowledge. Archimagus is described, not as a druid, but as 'The chife Priest, a Magitian', which identifies him with Catholicism, and the 'magic' associated, by Protestants, with the mass and miracles.⁷²¹ His religious credentials are given before his mystical ability, a circumstance which is mirrored in the play, as his role as the authority on religious practices is privileged over his supernatural knowledge. In other words, his political role is more important than his magical skill. A considerable distinction is also made between Archimagus's followers, who are described as 'priests', and Patrick's supporters, who are called 'religious men'.

A discussion of the character Archimagus can thus be split into two distinct, yet intrinsically interrelated, sections: his position as political advisor to the king, and his religious role (the latter will be discussed in detail later). The most important difference between Archimagus and Shirley's other strong political creations, is that while Montalto (*The Royal Master*), and Gotharus and Marpisa (*The Politician*), sought political power to further their own interests, Archimagus's struggle in *St. Patrick for Ireland* is to retain the slice of power which his position as chief Druid already affords him. Archimagus is not, therefore, competing with the King, or with other courtiers, to gain further secular power, rather he is defending the authority he already possesses against an interloper, Patrick. Archimagus is not simply fighting for

⁷²¹ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. A2^v; Gifford, IV, p. 366. Kerrigan, p. 172.

his own survival, he is also motivated by striving to maintain the entrenched religious traditions of his ‘threatened Island’.⁷²² While not a parody of actual events, Archimagus’s struggle to retain his authority in the religious sphere bears a resemblance to the situation which Archbishop Ussher faced. As primate of Ireland, Ussher had a strong political voice, but he struggled to reconcile his political and religious beliefs. He tried to establish the Church of Ireland as a separate entity to the Church of England (later discussed further), and thus consolidate his own position and influence, but in the secular sphere he considered that Ireland should be deferential to England.⁷²³ Shirley was thus engaging with contemporary events, and this play also demonstrates Shirley’s knowledge of Irish culture.

The Bard

The character of the Bard in *St. Patrick for Ireland* is one of the most significant tributes to Irish culture which Shirley makes, and thus this character’s importance is disproportionate to the size of his role. As discussed in Chapter One, the tradition of the bards still held considerable weight in 1630s Ireland. However, Clark is disparaging of Shirley’s creation, arguing that,

the king’s ‘Bard’ behaves just as the typical court jester of the Elizabethan stage, quick at repartee and ready with sentimental or bawdy songs according to the occasion; he exhibits no strain of Gaelic minstrelsy whatsoever.⁷²⁴

⁷²² Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. A3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 368.

⁷²³ Ford, *James Ussher*, p. 180.

⁷²⁴ Clark, *The Early Irish Stage*, p. 36.

While the Bard is undeniably an English dramatic interpretation of this Irish tradition, Shirley's character has similar functions to those undertaken by ollavs; he welcomes Patrick with a commendatory song, which adds to his patron's consequence, and he acts as an emissary to the banished Queen. The Bard's lyrical abilities are established after his first appearance in Act III, with four songs being performed in quick succession, and his witty conversation with Rodamant defines the comparatively high status which he holds in the court. It is the Bard who first welcomes, and introduces, Patrick to the court and royal family, and he has recognised the saint 'by instinct'.⁷²⁵ The first stanza of the Bard's song of welcome is enlightening about the staging of the play:

Patrick welcome to this Ile,
See how every thing doth smile:
To thy staffe and thy miter,
And Lawne that is whiter.⁷²⁶

Most likely, this describes Patrick's costume, and perhaps indicates that the actor changed into a bishop's garb for the character's attendance at court. Although most of his entrances afford him the prefix 'saint', it is not until the final act of the play that he is described as 'good Bishop Patrick', and 'holy Patrick'.⁷²⁷ These reminders of the religious nature of Patrick's presence in Ireland are strategically placed in the text. As the majority of the play is seen from the perspective of members of the ancient Irish

⁷²⁵ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. D3^r; Gifford, IV, p. 394.

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁷ It is only his entrance in Act IV which lacks the prefix 'saint', see Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. G1^r, B1^v, D3^r, H3^v and I1^v. Descriptions of Patrick within the text can be found, sig. H4^r and H4^v. Gifford, IV, pp. 417, 372, 394, 432, 437 and 434. Gifford standardises Patrick's entrances to 'St.' throughout.

court, Patrick is predominantly viewed as a threat to the political establishment. His first arrival at court, dressed as a bishop, emphasises the real reason for his presence, and the repetition of his religious status later in the play sets up the plot for the unwritten Second Part. *St. Patrick for Ireland, The First Part*, is primarily concerned with the political situation of the Irish court, and the effect that Patrick's arrival has upon it. It is only through the visual experience of miracles that members of the court convert to Christianity, and cues within the play indicate that the Second Part would focus more closely upon the religious experience of Christianity, and its spread throughout Ireland.

The Bard is the only individual to recognise instantly Patrick's religious authority, as evidenced by his direct appeal, 'pray father give me your blessing', and he is one of a very few characters to display a consistent lack of hostility towards Patrick.⁷²⁸ His reaction to Christianity is one of the most interesting in the play, largely due to his instant acceptance of the special nature of Patrick's personal faith. Requesting a blessing from an individual whose religion he should view with suspicion is unusual, as is the Bard's comment following Patrick's resurrection of the poisoned Rodamant, 'this Patrick is a rare physition, if he stay with us, | hee'l make us all immortall'.⁷²⁹ This phrase has an explicit meaning, but also implies that Patrick is a healer, and the reference to immortality could allude to the afterlife proclaimed by the Christian church. The Bard is twice described as being 'honest', and his remarks

⁷²⁸ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. D3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 394.

⁷²⁹ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. E1^v; Gifford, IV, p. 400.

thereby possess a credibility which ordinary courtiers lack.⁷³⁰ Despite his acknowledgement of Patrick's religious authority, when faced with his own decision about converting to Christianity, his reasons for refusing are overwhelmingly secular:

Bard. Your companie's faire, but I'll leave you in a wood, I could like your religion well; but those rules of fasting, prayer, and so much penance, will hardly fit my constitution.
Patrick 'Tis nothing to win heaven.
Bard But you doe not consider, that I shall loose my pension, my pension from the King. There's a businesse.⁷³¹

The first of the Bard's speeches is flippant in tone, but the second is more considered, with practical reasoning, which contains yet another reference to obtaining, and retaining, preferment at court. This latter point is further emphasised by Patrick's conclusion of the Bard's response, 'Alas, poore, *Bard*, the flatteries of this world | Hath chain'd his sense'.⁷³² The example of the Bard strongly indicates that objections to Patrick's presence in Ireland are not doctrinal, but have a political motivation, or are concerned with the practical considerations about how Christianity would be implemented throughout the country.

Religion

Shirley's Irish plays predominantly address considerations of court politics, and *St Patrick for Ireland* is no exception. The main plot of the play alludes to the spread of Anglicanism in Ireland, which, of course, could only be achieved via political

⁷³⁰ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. D3^v and F1^v; Gifford, IV, pp. 392 and 395.

⁷³¹ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. H3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 432.

⁷³² Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. H4^f; Gifford, IV, p. 434.

manoeuvrings. It was inevitable that Archbishop Laud's reforms of the English Church would eventually make themselves felt across the Irish Sea. Laud's relationship with Lord Deputy Wentworth meant that he had support for his plans for Ireland, and his position as Chancellor at the university in Dublin must have facilitated these plans, as well as giving him a vested interest in the country.⁷³³ Archbishop Ussher was opposed to these Laudian reforms, as he wished to establish the Church of Ireland as being a separate entity to the Church of England. The relationship between the Church of England and the Church of Ireland was highly complex, and defining the connection between them depended on establishing whether Ireland was a colony or a kingdom.⁷³⁴ The argument for independence from the Church of England was being made by Irish clergy from the pulpit, and disseminated through published sermons, but most influentially by Ussher himself, whose investigations into the early church in Ireland led to him publishing *Discourse of the Religion Anciently Professed by the Irish and British* (first published 1623, reprinted 1631), in which he argued that the Church of Ireland was directly derived from the church established by Saint Patrick.⁷³⁵ Ussher's argument was strongly objected to by Counter-Reformation controversialists, such as William Malone. Although Malone was forced to publish his objections on the Continent, Ussher, amongst others, had no difficulty obtaining the text, and the printed debate raged.⁷³⁶ In 1639, Ussher published *Britannicarum ecclesiarum antiquitates*,

⁷³³ Laud had been elected as Chancellor for the Dublin university on 14th September 1633. Heylyn, p. 268.

⁷³⁴ Ford, *James Ussher*, pp. 175-197.

⁷³⁵ Ussher's supposition was supported by James Ware's 1628 publication, *De Praesulibus Lageniae, Sive Provinciae Dublinensis*. James Kelly, 'Political Publishing, 1550-1700' in Raymond Gillespie and Andrew Hadfield (eds), *The Irish Book in English 1550-1800*, The Oxford History of the Irish Book, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), III, pp. 194-214: 198; Knox, p. 103.

⁷³⁶ Kelly, p. 198.

which again presented his research into the Churches of England and Ireland.⁷³⁷ It was amidst this continuing religious turmoil that Shirley wrote his play.

The King of *St. Patrick for Ireland*, states that he will start ‘grubbing up these Christians, that begin | To infect us, and our kingdome’, which could be a reference to the Reformation of the Church of Ireland, which continued until the mid-seventeenth century.⁷³⁸ The King clearly views the influx of Christians into his pagan kingdom as an unwelcome contamination, whereas Patrick, unsurprisingly, draws a different conclusion about the same event. Patrick explains his point of view thus to the Queen:

Oh Madam, if you knew
The difference betwixt my faith, and your
Religion, the grounds and progress of
What we professe.⁷³⁹

As with the differentiation made in the descriptions of Archimagus’s and Patrick’s followers in the *Dramatis Personae*, a distinction is being made here between the spirituality of ‘faith’ and the ritual ceremonies of ‘religion’. Emphasis is also placed upon the ‘progress’ that Christianity would bring to Ireland. While church rituals were the crux of Laud’s reforms of the Anglican Church, ‘progress’ had a specific significance for how the English viewed Irish culture.

⁷³⁷ Ford, *James Ussher*, p. 193.

⁷³⁸ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. H1r; Gifford, IV, p. 426.

⁷³⁹ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. G2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 419.

Laud's reforms were not limited to Ireland, and were the trigger which provoked the Bishops' War in Scotland (1639-40). Laud's correspondence with Wentworth meant that news of the developments which led up to this crisis reached Ireland.⁷⁴⁰ Wentworth also received updates from his London correspondent, Garrard, who on the 20th May 1639 wrote:

I say nothing of the *Scottish* Businesses: Your Lordship hears quicker and more true Relations of the Passages there from other Pens than I can write. 'Tis our whole Discourse here, nothing else is spoken of. Home Businesses we have none. The Courts at *Westminster* all this Term, especially the Law-Courts rise by eleven of the Clock, there is nothing to do. Little Trade among our Merchants; no buying of Land, all Things are at a stand, Men's Eyes being fixed only on the Issue of this *Scottish* Business.⁷⁴¹

In 1638/9 the Earl of Antrim was authorised by King Charles to raise an army of 5,000 from amongst his Catholic family, and residents of Ulster, to suppress the Bishops' War, although Wentworth's objections meant that this army was never formed.⁷⁴² However, Wentworth's 'New Army' of 1640 was predominantly formed of Catholics and comprised 8,000 foot soldiers and 1,000 cavalry.⁷⁴³ Ireland was thus directly involved in the Scottish conflict, and the situation is referred to by Shirley in his play:

Ethne What wouldst thou do with the Devill?

⁷⁴⁰ For Wentworth's involvement in the Scottish crisis see Peter Donald, *An Uncounselled King: Charles I and the Scottish troubles, 1637-1641* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 94-7.

⁷⁴¹ Knowler, II, p. 351.

⁷⁴² Jane H. Ohlmeyer, 'The wars of religion 1603-1660', in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffrey (eds), *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 160-187: 161-3.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

Rodamant Only exercise my body, take the aire now and then over steeples, and saile once a month to Scotland in a sieve, to see my Freinds.⁷⁴⁴

Rodamant's intended use of a sieve is particularly apt, as this was believed to be a mode of transport used by witches, and the word 'Freinds' most likely refers to Wentworth's 'Black oath'.⁷⁴⁵ Fletcher argues that *St. Patrick for Ireland* exploited prevalent contemporary interest in witchcraft, which was alluded to by Laud in a letter to the Bishop of Derry, dated 17th February 1637/8,

I did not think I should have received any news from Ireland concerning witches but if my Lord fall to conjuring of them I make no doubt but I shall quickly hear more.⁷⁴⁶

The common English conviction that Irish beliefs and traditions were inferior, persisted beyond Shirley's residence, with a 1645 London pamphlet claiming that the Irish 'are much given to sorcery, witch-craft and superstition'.⁷⁴⁷ Shirley was,

⁷⁴⁴ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. C1^r; Gifford, IV, p. 380.

⁷⁴⁵ OED 'sieve' – used by witches for sailing in.

http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50224475?query_type=word&queryword=sieve&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=aPSi-INAKAC-1108&hilite=50224475 [accessed 5th November 2009]. In light of Shirley's knowledge of Denmark/Norway as discussed in the previous chapter, it is interesting that rumours of Christian IV abounded in the English court. Some believed that Christian would support the Covenanters so that they would not disrupt Danish-Norwegian trade, however these rumours were dispelled when Christian offered to mediate between his nephew, Charles I, and the Scots. A letter dated January 1639 states that a Danish ambassador had been dispatched to Scotland, and was due to arrive in London in March. On 17th April 1639 Laud writes that Charles refused Christian's offer of mediation. See Steve Murdoch, *Britain, Denmark-Norway and the House of Stuart 1603-1660: A Diplomatic and Military Analysis* (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2003), pp. 93-4.

⁷⁴⁶ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 274. PRONI, T415/12.

⁷⁴⁷ *Mercurius Hibernicus, or Irish Mercurie: Briefely and truly relating the Conditions, Manners, and Customes of the Natives, with their most barbarous, inhumane, cruell, and bloudie Stratagems* (London: printed by John Hammond, 1645), Thomason Tracts, E. 269 facsimile reprint, p. 4. Stockwell discusses the English preconception of superiority over the Irish, see p. 12.

therefore, responding to contemporary political concerns about the religious unrest in the three-kingdoms under Stuart rule.

Issues of religion had a wide resonance. In 1639, the priest Teabóid Gallduf (anglicized to Theobald Stapleton), published the catechism in Irish, and urged that the vernacular be used henceforth in Ireland as the language of devotional instruction.⁷⁴⁸ Ireland and its inhabitants were engaging in a discussion of what direction its religious life should move in. Gallduf clearly believed that the native Irish should have a greater understanding of, and participation in, religion, whereas the followers of Laud wished to impose his 'English' reforms dogmatically. Confusion and trepidation about these discussions of religious practices are reflected in Shirley's play, primarily through conversion. Dichu is the first convert to Christianity, subsequent to Patrick's restoration of the use of his arm.⁷⁴⁹ Later, while the King's reaction to the greater miracle of bringing Rodamant back to life is to exclaim to Patrick, 'let me honour thee', the Queen is so astounded by the event that she converts:

Receive me *Patrick*,
A weake disciple to thee: my soule bids me
Embrace thy faith: Make me a Christian.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁸ Caball, p. 148; Tony Crowley, *The Politics of Language in Ireland 1366-1922* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p.71-2.

⁷⁴⁹ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. B3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 376.

⁷⁵⁰ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. E1^v and E2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 400.

It is the resurrection of Rodamant which precipitates a crisis amongst the Irish priests. The King's grief at the death of his son, Corybreus, results in a priest relating that the monarch,

Will be reveng'd upon the gods,
...that would not save his dearest son:
I feare he will turne Christian.⁷⁵¹

Patrick's ability to raise men from the dead has made a distinct impression upon the Irish court. Yet it is significant that the threat of the King's conversion is born from his grief, and a wish for retribution against his own gods, rather than a religious conviction. This lack of religious conviction is reiterated at the end of the play when, horrified by the fate of Archimagus, the King says, 'How I shake, | And court this Christian out of feare, not love.'⁷⁵² The King is struggling with the Machiavellian concept of whether it is better to obey a leader out of fear or love, a consideration which allows a reinterpretation of Patrick's character. The miracles which he has performed have inspired both fear and respect. Therefore, the Christian conversion of pagan Ireland, or rather the Laudian reforms being imposed upon the Church of Ireland, is neither doctrinal, or because of the people's unconditional love of the 'new' religion. Instead there is an element of fear that not conforming will bring devastating repercussions. It was, after all, Patrick's fault that Dichu's arm turned to ice in the first place. The King's wish for conversion is highly dubious, and the matter is unresolved by the end of the play, and was probably destined to form the crux of the plot of the

⁷⁵¹ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. G4^f; Gifford, IV, p. 424.

⁷⁵² Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. I3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 442.

unwritten Second Part. Individuals are driven to extreme behaviour when confronted with the issue of conversion. While the Queen's conversion is instantaneous after witnessing a miracle, Milcho chooses death rather than entertaining the consideration of converting:

I choose to leap into these fires,
Rather than heare thee preach thy cursed faith.⁷⁵³

Yet the King is not without resources. At the beginning of Act V, a soldier explains,

...we may get more by every Christian we have the grace
to catch, than by three moneths pay against our naturall
enemies.⁷⁵⁴

This is a reflection of the actual situation in Ireland, where military force was used to suppress insurgents and dissenters.

Throughout the play, Patrick is portrayed as a Christ-like figure. He hardly speaks and, therefore, makes a poor dramatic creation. His role is functionary in the plot, and rather than being an interesting character in his own right, it is what he represents which is important. Angel Victor's prophecy emphasizes this point:

...thou art
Reserv'd to make this Nation glorious,
By their conversion to the Christian faith,
Which shall by bloud of many Martyrs grow,

⁷⁵³ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. G2^v; Gifford, IV, p. 420.

⁷⁵⁴ Shirley, *St. Patrick fore Ireland*, sig. H1^r; Gifford, IV, p. 427.

Till it be call'd the Iland of the Saints.⁷⁵⁵

Although the audience may have been in sympathy with Archimagus during the course of the play, ultimately it is revealed that such loyalty has been misplaced.

Archimagus's high social position was established at the beginning of the play, when the King states that he is,

Next our gods
The hope of this great Iland.⁷⁵⁶

Archimagus's position is thus aligned to that of the King, due to his relationship to the gods. In direct contrast to the Christ-like portrayal of Patrick, with its association of ascension, when Archimagus's end comes he '*Sinks*' through the earth.⁷⁵⁷ The audience is left in no doubt about what they are supposed to think of this, because of the striking visual image which his demise creates. It is surely significant that while the prophecy about Patrick states that he will save Ireland, Archimagus's final act is to curse the country which he has been striving to protect:

There is a power above
Our gods, I see too late. I fall, I fall,
And in my last despair, I curse you all.⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵⁵ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. G2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 419.

⁷⁵⁶ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. B1^r; Gifford, IV, p. 372.

⁷⁵⁷ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. I3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 442.

⁷⁵⁸ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. I3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 442.

It is crucial that Archimagus realises that there is a higher authority than the gods he has served. This implies not that these gods do not exist, but that the Christian god is more powerful.

In light of Ussher's attempts to establish the independence of the Church of Ireland and the debate which ensued, it is more likely that, instead of Shirley's character of Saint Patrick being a Roman Catholic, he is a Protestant figure converting Ireland from paganism to Christianity. This is supported by hints within the text of the play, Patrick twice being described as a 'pale man', with the obvious pun on the Pale with its New English, Protestant inhabitants.⁷⁵⁹ There has also been confusion over the presence of Patrick's 'miter' as mentioned by the Bard upon his arrival at court. Rather than being a symbol of Roman Catholicism, the mitre is here used as a symbol of Laudian reform. As Kerrigan argues, Shirley produced a 'multi-purposive' play, which cannot be simplistically interpreted as English Protestant against Irish Catholic, or even to view Patrick as a Laudian coming to reform Protestant Ireland.⁷⁶⁰ Instead it is more likely, if only for commercial reasons, that Shirley sought to write a unifying narrative, combining elements of Gaelic paganism, Catholicism and Protestantism with Laudian reforms.

⁷⁵⁹ Kerrigan, p. 174; Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. D3r; Gifford, IV, p. 371.

⁷⁶⁰ Kerrigan, p. 173.

The institution of the monarchy

For all the religious turmoil within the play, the institution of the monarchy is upheld throughout. Shirley is even careful to emphasise Patrick's respect for the monarch. After being told that he is addressing the king, Patrick's first words to the sovereign are:

Unto that title
Thus we all bow: it speakes you are alli'd
To Heaven.⁷⁶¹

Patrick thus shows reverence towards the King's relationship with God, but makes it clear that he defers to the position held, rather than to the man, Leogarius. This differentiation, between the individual and their rank, gains in significance at the end of the play. Immediately after the death of Archimagus comes the following exchange:

King *Patrick*, the King will kneele to thee.
Patrick Oh rise,
 And pay to Heaven that dutie.⁷⁶²

The King has referred to himself using his title, rather than his name, and Patrick's response implies that a king should only pay homage to God, and not to a mortal man, thereby reinforcing the King's social status. However, just a few lines later, Patrick comments, 'I suspect him stil', indicating that the motivations of the man, Leogarius, are to be questioned.⁷⁶³ Whereas the King and Archimagus had worked together

⁷⁶¹ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. B2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 373.

⁷⁶² Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. I3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 442.

⁷⁶³ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. I4^r; Gifford, IV, p. 442.

effectively, each in charge of his own domain, such a relationship cannot be replicated with Patrick. The King and Patrick are engaged in a covert struggle for power between secular and religious authority. This is not to say that Patrick wishes to overthrow the King, but that he is challenging the extent of the monarch's power. Leogarius is wary of the threat which Patrick poses, as demonstrated by his nightmares:

He [the King] talks of strange things in his dreame, and frights
Our eares with an invasion, that his Crowne
Sits trembling on his head...
...we are undone.⁷⁶⁴

The unease of the court at the King's disturbance is evident in the last phrase of this quotation. Their concern is for what could happen next, which is similar to the issue of succession raised in *The Politician*. However, whereas *The Politician* was limited to questions of the royal heir, *St. Patrick for Ireland* also probes the subject of what will happen next in Ireland in terms of religion. Can Patrick be Archimagus's successor, and what impact would that have? Frustratingly, this latter issue is raised, rather than explored, and would probably have formed the basis of the subject matter of the unwritten Second Part, yet the discussion of royal succession, and the right to rule, in *St. Patrick for Ireland* is highly significant, as it was a variation of what had already been presented in *Rosania*, *The Gentleman of Venice* and *The Politician*.

⁷⁶⁴ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. A4^v; Gifford, IV, p. 370.

The King's two sons, Corybreus and Conallus, are quickly established as being 'bad' and 'good', respectively. In a soliloquy, Emeria discusses the characters of the brothers, which reflects badly upon Corybreus, the heir,

He has a rugged and revengefull nature;
Not the sweet temper that his brother [has].⁷⁶⁵

In contrast, Conallus's integrity is revealed by his own reflection,

He is my father,
I should else tell him; 'Tis not like a King,
Thus to conspire a poore mans death.⁷⁶⁶

This juxtaposition of the unworthy nature of the heir with the impeccable character of another young man bears a strong resemblance to the situation which was presented between Thomazo and Giovanni in *The Gentleman of Venice*. As in *The Politician*, the question of succession, in *St. Patrick for Ireland*, is resolved through a death, Corybreus's. Although the King still lives, Patrick makes a prediction about the success of Conallus's future reign, and the language which Shirley uses is important, and thus worth quoting at length:

You are, Sir, reserv'd
To blesse this Kingdome with your pious government,
Your Crowne shall flourish, and your bloud possesse
The Throne you shall leave glorious: This Nation
Shall in a faire succession thrive, and grow
Up the worlds Academic, and disperse,
As the rich spring of humane and divine

⁷⁶⁵ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. E2^r; Gifford, IV, p. 401.

⁷⁶⁶ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. D4^r; Gifford, IV, p. 396.

Knowledge, cleare streames to water forraine Kingdomes,
Which shall be proud to owe what they possesse
In learning, to this great all-nursing Iland.⁷⁶⁷

Patrick's use of the word 'reserv'd' indicates that it was predestined that Conallus would outlive his brother to become the royal heir. Also, it is surely significant that Patrick only speaks in terms of Conallus's future success, and how this will continue through the ages, rather than making any reference to Leogarius and Conallus's heritage. References to academic learning in this speech can be said to be appealing to the students of the Dublin university who were in the audience, and it is certain that holding up Ireland as an example of good governance to other nations was flattering to Shirley's patron, Wentworth. As he did in *The Politician*, Shirley answers the question of succession, and what happens next, with an expression of hope for a better future.

Spectacle

While comparisons can be drawn between the subject matter of this and Shirley's previous Irish plays, the most significant difference occurs with Shirley's use of stage effects. David Stevens argues that, over his whole career, Shirley meticulously planned music, properties and costumes in terms of audience reaction, and although Howarth notes that the movable devices used in *St. Patrick for Ireland* had been familiar on the London stage for the previous twenty years, they had yet to be spectacularly employed in Dublin.⁷⁶⁸ Therefore, the use of such dramatic stagecraft

⁷⁶⁷ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. I1^v and I2^f; Gifford, IV, p. 438.

⁷⁶⁸ Stevens, p. 513. Howarth, p. 212.

was a deliberate ploy on Shirley's part to encourage attendance at the Werburgh Street Theatre. The 'movable' devices are used twice in the play, at the pagan temple. At their first appearance, the audience is not privy to the knowledge that the idols are being manipulated by Ferochus and Endarius, which would have created an even more impressive visual experience.⁷⁶⁹ It is, of course, significant that the idols are in the temple, as this alluded to a Catholic form of worship. The staging of this scene in London would have been highly contentious, as shown by a letter written by Edmond Rossingham to Viscount Conway on 8th May 1639:

Thursday last the players of the Fortune were fined 1,000£ for setting up an altar, a baston, and two candlesticks, and bowing down before it upon the stage, and although they allege it was an old play revived, and an altar to the heathen gods, yet it was apparent that this play was revived on purpose in contempt of the ceremonies of the church.⁷⁷⁰

It is, perhaps, unlikely that Shirley would have known of this fine, but the extract reveals that discord about dramatic representations of religious ceremonies was prevalent at the time of composition.

St. Patrick for Ireland includes two other visual effects which would have been even more astonishing to the Dublin audience: the use of fire on the stage, and the visual representation of the serpents. Fire is twice used in the play, first as the flames behind the altar of the idols, which is made explicit by the stage direction '*A flame*

⁷⁶⁹ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. D1^r and G2^v; Gifford, IV, pp. 389 and 420.

⁷⁷⁰ Gurr, p. 247.

behinde the Altar’, and secondly when Milcho’s house is burnt, although this event could have occurred off stage.⁷⁷¹ While the theatre would have been lit by candles, if naked flame was used for either of these effects, it must have been startling for the audience to have witnessed fire being thus used inside a wooden structure. Dutton identifies that a scene from Middleton’s *No Wit, No Help Like a Woman’s* also requires elaborate staging and pyrotechnics.⁷⁷² This play is known to have been staged at the Werburgh Street Theatre, and it is possible that Shirley was inspired by a positive reaction from the audience to include the use of fire in his own play. Little can be gleaned about the actual representation of the snakes from the elusive stage direction, ‘*Enter Serpents, &c. creeping*’, but what is certain is that the production of the play would have required them to be as impressive as possible, due to their integral presence in the legend of the saint.⁷⁷³ Equally, Archimagus’s death scene with his descent into hell would have been an impressive visual display, as he gradually disappeared through a trapdoor.⁷⁷⁴

Escalation of what had formerly occurred on the Irish stage is also evident in the character of Emeria. As previously discussed, Shirley was interested in how violence was employed by and towards women: in *The Royal Master*, Domitilla and Theodosia discuss suicide; Rosania is prepared to die for her lover, Ferdinand; in *The*

⁷⁷¹ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. C4^v and G2^f; Gifford, IV, pp. 388, 419 and 421.

⁷⁷² Dutton, ‘St. Werburgh Street Theatre’, p. 135.

⁷⁷³ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. I3^f; Gifford, IV, p. 440. Turner suggests that a technique derived from London masques was employed with actors dressed as serpents, p. 43; See also Fitz-Simon, p. 13.

⁷⁷⁴ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. I3^v; Gifford, IV, p. 442. Also see Wertheim, p. 213, as quoted by Turner, p. 43.

Gentleman of Venice, Claudiana's husband tries to force her to become pregnant by another man; and Albina, in *The Politician*, experiences great cruelty at the hands of her husband. Emeria's situation in *St. Patrick for Ireland* is more extreme than those of her predecessors. When confronted with the lustful Corybreus, who is disguised as a god, she is offered such pleasures as to result in her asking the god to 'bless [her] with a rape'.⁷⁷⁵ She refuses to comply, leading to Corybreus justifying his subsequent rape of her,

What should have beene with thy consent a blessing, shall
now only serve my pleasure, and I will take the forfeit of
thy coldnesse.⁷⁷⁶

Emeria experiences the degradation of rape, and it is notable that the '*Spirits*' who entered with Corybreus, are described as '*The Devils rejoicing in a dance*' at the end of the scene.⁷⁷⁷ Yet Emeria's trials are not yet over: her despoilment impedes her burgeoning relationship with Conallus, and she is motivated to stab Corybreus to death.⁷⁷⁸ These two events place her in an extreme position, beyond any female character Shirley had written before for the Irish stage.

St. Patrick for Ireland provides the clearest example of Shirley adapting his drama to the tastes of his audience. It is unlikely that his intention was to encourage a new social class to attend the theatre, rather the evidence of the para-text suggests his

⁷⁷⁵ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. E4^f; Gifford, IV, p. 406.

⁷⁷⁶ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. E4^f; Gifford, IV, p. 406.

⁷⁷⁷ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. E2^v and E4^v; Gifford, IV, pp. 402 and 406. Gifford changes the text to 'Spirits are seen rejoicing in a dance'.

⁷⁷⁸ Shirley, *St. Patrick for Ireland*, sig. F4^f; Gifford, IV, p. 414.

concern was to persuade greater attendance from the current clientele. Attempts at increasing the audience primarily focussed upon visual spectacle; the moving idols, serpents, and resurrection. The discussion of religion demonstrates that Shirley was interested in contemporary events, such as the Laudian reforms which were gradually being implemented in Ireland. Shirley was thus functioning as a social commentator, and this play provides evidence of some prevalent concerns of Caroline Ireland.

Shirley's return to England

Shirley permanently left Dublin around the 16th April 1640.⁷⁷⁹ Wentworth had been recalled to England by October 1639, but he briefly returned to Ireland in March 1640, before sailing back to England and it is most likely that this occurrence prompted Shirley's own return to London.⁷⁸⁰ The troubles in Ireland were escalating, as shown by a proclamation dated 18th November 1640 which stated:

proclamation for freedom of passage out of
Ireland into England...officers are to allow all
subjects to pass without hindrance...published in
both kingdoms.⁷⁸¹

This counteracted the proclamation of 1635, which forbade anyone leaving Ireland without the express permission of the Lord Deputy. Therefore, the assumption that Shirley left Ireland solely because of poor theatre attendance, which culminated in the

⁷⁷⁹ Stevenson, 'Shirley's Dedications', p. 83.

⁷⁸⁰ Kearney, pp. 188-9.

⁷⁸¹ Quoted by Steele, I, p. 224. Knowler, I, p. 362, see also Kearny, p. 84.

disappointing reaction to *St. Patrick for Ireland*, must be reassessed.⁷⁸² It is probable that the motivating factor which prompted his decision to return to England was the departure of his patron, as well as the increasingly dangerous situation in Ireland. There is evidence that Shirley was pleased to leave Ireland behind, as years later one of his former students, Thomas Dingley, records:

This saying often us'd by my worthy and learn'd
schoolmaster, James Shirley, Poet-laureat, PATRIAE
FUMUS ALIENO IGNE LUCULENTIOR EST.
“The smoke of one's native land is brighter than the
fire of a foreign country”.⁷⁸³

However, this does not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that he was desperate to leave Ireland; it only indicates that he was glad to return home.

Shirley appears to have been eager to raise his profile in London by publishing rapidly. *The Constant Maid* and *St. Patrick for Ireland* were quickly printed upon his return, as was *The Opportunity*, which had first been licensed in November 1634.⁷⁸⁴ *The Opportunity* was dedicated to an Irish connection, Captain Richard Owen, who commanded the ship on which Shirley had crossed the Irish Sea for the last time, ‘at

⁷⁸² Turner argues that Shirley's return to England was directly connected to *St. Patrick for Ireland's* lack of success, p. 44

⁷⁸³ Quoted by Luow, p. 16. After the Civil Wars, Shirley returned to his profession as a school master. Thomas Dingley was registered at Gray's Inn in August 1670 soon after attending Shirley's school, C. J. Robinson, ‘Dineley, Thomas (*d.* 1695)’, rev. Nicholas Doggett, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7678>, accessed 11th Nov 2009].

⁷⁸⁴ Gifford, III, p. 368.

my return with you, from another kingdom'.⁷⁸⁵ The crisis in Scotland is also mentioned in this prologue, as the 'rebellious enemy' which Owen must soon face.⁷⁸⁶ In the midst of all this publication, there is no evidence that *St. Patrick for Ireland* was licensed for production upon the London stage, probably because its subject matter was deemed too colonial for the interest of the London audiences. Both Stockwell and Turner identify that *St. Patrick for Ireland* demonstrates an adjustment in Shirley's writing style, towards a fuller engagement with the tastes of the Dublin audience, but Stockwell's progression of this idea to argue that the play was 'one last exasperated effort to catch the wayward spectators' lacks foundation.⁷⁸⁷ The lack of a Second Part of Saint Patrick's story, and Shirley's return to England, do not allow a definitive assumption that Shirley had given up trying to please the playgoers of Ireland. Perhaps it was mere circumstance which conspired to ensure his removal from Dublin, and that with *St. Patrick for Ireland* he had finally been able to please the audience of the Werburgh Street Theatre.

⁷⁸⁵ Shirley, *The Opportuntie, a comedy, as it was presented by her Majesties Servants, at the private house in Drury Lane* (London: Printed by Thomas Cotes for Andrew Croke and William Cooke, 1640), STC (2nd ed.) / 222451, sig. A2^r; Gifford, III, p. 368.

⁷⁸⁶ Stevenson, 'Shirley's Dedications', p. 83.

⁷⁸⁷ Stockwell, p. 12; Turner, pp. 42-3.

Conclusion

The closure of the Werburgh Street Theatre

Stevenson makes a convincing argument that Shirley permanently returned to London in April 1640.⁷⁸⁸ This marks the end of Shirley's Irish years, but not the end of the Werburgh Street Theatre, which remained open until October 1641. That the theatre was open for a further eighteen months after the dramatist's departure demands a reassessment of 'Shirley's lack of success in Dublin'.⁷⁸⁹ In fact, the theatre was not closed explicitly because it was a financial failure, but by an act passed by the Lords Justice, William Parsons and John Borlase, on 22nd October 1641, because of the uprising in Ireland: the eventual fate of the theatre was that 'a Cowehouse [was] made of ye Stage'.⁷⁹⁰ Evidence of the Werburgh Street Theatre's success comes from a petition of Ogilby's in the Restoration, where he describes that the building of this theatre was the result of 'great preparations and disbursements'.⁷⁹¹ Surely, as Fitzgibbon suggests, Ogilby would not have attempted a second theatrical venture in Ireland if his first attempt had been disastrous.⁷⁹²

Fitzgibbon also argues that Shirley's determined efforts to engage with his socio-political context through his drama demands a similar assessment of his

⁷⁸⁸ Stevenson, 'Dedications', p. 83.

⁷⁸⁹ This phrase is used by Dutton as a sub-heading, 'Werburgh Street Theatre', p. 142.

⁷⁹⁰ Aubrey, p. 221; Quoted by Fletcher in *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 264, see also Clark, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 29.

⁷⁹¹ *CSPI* 63, vol. 345, no. 50, Public Record Office, London, quoted in Clark's, *Early Irish Stage*, p. 180.

⁷⁹² Fitzgibbon, p. 16.

contemporaries.⁷⁹³ Shirley's contemporary at the Werburgh Street Theatre was Henry Burnell, and, of the two plays which Burnell wrote for this theatre, only *Landgartha* now survives.⁷⁹⁴ It was first staged on Saint Patrick's Day, 1640, when the Irish Parliament convened. Fletcher suggests that the central theme of this play engages with a bill which was being transmitted by Parliament, about Repealing the Statute of Bigamy.⁷⁹⁵ Burnell's moral and political position was thus in direct agreement with Wentworth's, yet his play addressed the concerns of the Old English. The Danish aspect of this play recalled the birthplace of Charles I's mother, Anne, and the Swedish/Danish relationship has been identified as being similar to the Scottish/Irish relationship of the 1630s.⁷⁹⁶ It is also significant that this play was staged after *The Politician*, which had previously made use of the three-kingdom conflicts between Denmark-Norway-Sweden to reflect the relationship between England-Scotland-Ireland. Kerrigan suggests that Burnell drew upon sources close to those of Hamlet to explore the three-way conflicts between the Stuart kingdoms when he wrote *Landgartha* (1640) for the Irish stage. Yet, as *The Politician* had explored this concept first, Burnell's use of the Scandinavian setting must have been a response to Shirley's play, and serves to underline the significance which the earlier play had to Irish interests.⁷⁹⁷

⁷⁹³ Ibid., p. 351.

⁷⁹⁴ Clark, *Early Irish Stage*; p. 38; Chetwood, p. 52.

⁷⁹⁵ Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, pp 275-7. See also Kerrigan, pp. 176-7.

⁷⁹⁶ Dutton, "St. Werburgh Street Theatre", pp. 146-8.

⁷⁹⁷ Kerrigan, p. 16.

The uprising of 1641 had its roots in the issues which Shirley raised in *The Gentleman of Venice*: plantations. The plantations had left many of the native Irish population dispossessed, and some had become outlaws, collecting groups of fighting men around them. Further deep-seated unhappiness was caused in 1639, when Wentworth imposed the 'black oath' to ensure Ulster's loyalty through the crisis caused by the Covenanters of Scotland threatening war. Insurrectionists planned to seize Dublin Castle on 23rd October 1641, but the plan was betrayed, and the Castle saved. However, throughout Ulster the native population took arms against the colonialists, slaughtering thousands of them, and capturing strongholds.⁷⁹⁸

The evidence provided by the order to close the theatre in October 1641, and the fact that Burnell staged his own plays there following Shirley's departure, proves that Shirley did not leave Ireland because the Werburgh Street Theatre was a complete financial failure, although the evidence of the prologues he wrote during his time in Ireland makes it fair to assume that it was not as successful as was initially hoped in 1635/6. Ogilby's opening of the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin during the Restoration also strongly indicates that the Werburgh Street Theatre was not a total disaster. The para-text of *St. Patrick for Ireland* clearly states the author's intention of writing a Second Part, if the play was well received by the audience, but the lack of a Second Part does not exclude the possibility that Shirley did not write it as a result of other circumstances. Wentworth had been summoned to London in the autumn of

⁷⁹⁸ For a discussion of the insurrection see Bredin p. 80.

1639 (he arrived there by October) to assist with resolving the threat posed by Scotland, and he returned briefly to Ireland in March 1640.⁷⁹⁹ Shirley's own return to England, in April 1640, strongly implies that his decision to do so was a direct result of Wentworth's movements, and not because of the success, or lack thereof, of the Dublin theatre.

This thesis has examined the Werburgh Street Theatre from the perspective of James Shirley's career as a dramatist. It has made an attempt to identify the coterie of support which Shirley, and the theatre, enjoyed, as well as investigating how an individual dramatist related to his audience, and how he adapted his work for this audience. As Shirley cannot be described as being Irish, this thesis does not attempt to place him in the position of being the first *Irish* dramatist, rather as the first professional playwright to work in Ireland. While Shirley engaged with the concerns of his audience, they were not his personal concerns, and his perception of such issues was heavily influenced by the English administration in Ireland. The thesis engages with recent critical work (by Rankin and Kerrigan, for example) through a consideration of the life of these plays beyond Ireland: that these plays were printed and sold in London is an indication of the archipelagic nature of Shirley's work. While there is clearly a cross-dialogue between England and Ireland in Shirley's drama from this period, it should be noted that his primary concerns were commercial, and not to raise Irish political concerns in London, or to unite the nations. This thesis

⁷⁹⁹ Kearney, pp. 188-9. Wentworth's trial began on 22nd March 1641, see p. 205.

provides a foundation for future research into numerous related areas, such as comparing Shirley's drama from this period with contemporary dramatists (specifically, considering Burnell's play, *Landgartha*, as a response to *The Politician*). Further work could also be done on identifying the audience of the Werburgh Street Theatre and its repertoire (perhaps investigating the previous repertoires of the actors brought over from England), and this unique circumstance, of being able to isolate and trace a single dramatist's relationship with an audience, could potentially be used to further our knowledge of the complex dynamics of play-writing and theatre-going in Caroline London.

This thesis has argued that patronage was a contributing factor in Shirley's decision to move to Ireland. In London, Shirley would have had to share Queen Henrietta-Maria's patronage with other playwrights. In Dublin, not only was he the sole dramatist to receive support from the Lord Deputy, but he also had a monopoly on attempts to gain patronage from prominent members of Irish society – he endeavoured to do this by dedicating *The Royal Master* to the Earl of Kildare, and by a poem which he addressed to the Countess of Ormonde. Patronage is also a feature in several of his 'Irish' plays: Montalto supports Octavio's position at court in *The Royal Master*, and the Duke of *The Gentleman of Venice* promotes Giovanni's interest, even before his true parentage is known. The Poet Laureateship was also a position dependent on patronage, and Shirley failed to win this position partly because he did not publish enough poems to support his cause, but also because his presence in Ireland meant he

was removed from the circles of patronage in London. Patronage was, then, of intrinsic importance to Shirley, and the permanent departure of his patron from Ireland was the most likely reason for his own return to England. As Wentworth's position in Ireland became more difficult, it is reasonable to assume that Shirley's position was equally affected by the fortunes of his primary patron, and that he was forced to look elsewhere for support as Wentworth concentrated increasingly upon his own affairs.

Shirley first arrived in Dublin in November 1636, and he took up employment at a theatre which had been open, at least, since June 1636. Numerous factors had influenced his decision to undertake this momentous relocation: his friendship with John Ogilby, the promise of exclusive patronage in Ireland, the freedom from direct competition with other dramatists, the presence of a French acting troupe at his London theatre, the promise of increased freedom from artistic censorship, and the closure of the London theatres because of plague. It is possible that before his arrival, the Werburgh Street Theatre had been functioning as a dual-purpose theatre, offering its audience the spectacle of bear-baiting and cudgel-fighting, in an attempt to defray the expense of its construction before a resident dramatist could be ensconced. While the theatre seems to have enjoyed the support of soldiers, apprentices and students, the success with which it attracted its target audience, the higher members of Dublin society, is questionable. It is possible that people of higher social status were deterred from attending the theatre because of the objections of Archbishop Ussher, who closed the theatre during one of Wentworth's absences from Dublin, or perhaps because (as

the example of the performance history of *The Royal Master* suggests) a precedent had been set whereby exclusive performances were held at Dublin Castle, rendering attendance at the Werburgh Street Theatre unnecessary for the privileged few. During his residency in Dublin, Shirley made two return trips to England, in the spring of 1636/7 and at the same time the following year, 1637/8. Nason agrees with Wilson's assertion that Shirley's first trip to England, in early 1636/7, was prompted by a report which reached him on 23rd February of the reopening of the London theatres, and not, as has been frequently supposed, to arrange his affairs for an elongated stay in Ireland.⁸⁰⁰ Yet this reasoning seems unlikely given that the closure of the London theatres was not Shirley's sole motivation for moving to Dublin. Nason argues further that Shirley's second visit to London, in spring 1637/8, was solely intended as a business trip to oversee, and arrange for, the publication of his plays. This is a likely explanation, and this visit could explain why *The Royal Master* was printed in 1638, rather than after Shirley's first London trip, in 1636/7. It is, then, probable that this 1637/8 return trip was prompted by Shirley's intention of making a concerted effort to win the title of Poet Laureate, and that his concern to oversee the publishing of his plays personally was a direct response to this battle. The contextualisation of these 'Irish' plays reveals how Shirley increasingly addressed specifically Irish concerns in his drama, which indicates his gradual disconnection from a focussed consideration of the London stage, and his steadily developing intention to remain in Dublin. His failure to obtain the laureateship doubtless contributed to Shirley's decision to remain

⁸⁰⁰ Nason, p. 111; Wilson, II, pp. 693-4.

in Ireland, until the departure of his patron, Wentworth, prompted his own return to England.

Recurring themes in Shirley's 'Irish' canon

Shirley's 'Irish' plays reiterate a number of the same themes, many of which responded to the socio-political situation in 1630s England, but some directly engaged with specifically Irish concerns. Charles I's policy of Personal Rule had a huge impact upon drama, and Shirley's work was no exception. The relevance of discussions of good government and counsel to English politics is apparent, but, with his vice-regal court in Ireland, they also had import for Wentworth. One of the major implications of the policy of Personal Rule was that the King was dependent upon the advice of his courtiers, thus his choice of counsellors could have a great influence upon the fate of both the nation and individuals. While Wentworth was obliged to summon the Irish Parliament, he did so with the full intention of manipulating it into acceding to his wishes, and his lack of inclination to listen to any advice other than Charles's contributed to his inability to merge successfully the disparate political factions of Ireland into a cohesive, functioning body, a task which, at the time, would have been extremely difficult under any circumstances.

That Shirley discusses the implications of having a single, dominant counsellor in *The Royal Master*, and returns to this subject in *The Politician*, accentuates the relevance which this issue had for governance. To a lesser extent, this situation is

revisited again in *St. Patrick for Ireland*, where Archimagus is the sole advisor of the King, to the detriment of the court. Shirley also explored more complex issues surrounding the monarch's right to rule, which engaged with political debates of the 1630s, and by interrogating issues of inheritance, Shirley demonstrates that his interest in rightful rule extends beyond the current monarch to a consideration of what, or rather who, comes next.

Discussions of kingship, counsel and succession reveal Shirley's interests, and demonstrate his engagement with contemporary issues. Yet what is most pertinent to a discussion of his 'Irish' plays is an examination of the way in which the dramatist altered the content of his work to suit better the tastes of his audience. This alteration is immediately evident in the first subplot to the first play which he wrote specifically for the Irish stage, *Rosania*, where his concern seems to have been to engage the individual soldiers in the audience by creating characters with whom they could identify themselves. *The Politician* was written later, and addresses a wider concern about the army: there was increasing unrest in Ireland throughout Shirley's residency, and Wentworth's authority was only maintained by use of military force. The shift in emphasis reflects Shirley's developing understanding of the socio-political situation in Ireland, highlighting the political importance of the army in Ireland, rather than exploring the concerns of individual soldiers.

Although the sub-plot of *Rosania* demonstrates the beginning of an alteration in Shirley's writing style to accommodate the preferences of the Irish audience, the main plot interrogates the issue of a monarch's right to rule, which was a concern relevant to both Ireland and England. That Shirley wrote a play which addressed matters of interest to a London audience indicates his intention to stage the play there also, and suggests that although he had an increasing interest in engaging his Irish audience, when *Rosania* was written, he still planned a permanent return to England. That Shirley broadens his interest from writing for the London stage to addressing the Dublin audience, and from a consideration of the immediate concerns of the residents of the Pale, to an engagement with issues affecting Ireland as a whole, is progressively apparent in his 'Irish' canon. Shirley's view of the plantations was, naturally enough, that the New English planters were the rightful owners of the land, and that the native Irish had, in effect, been holding the land in trust. Shirley's expansion into exploring issues which affected Ireland as a country is also evident in *The Politician*. His decision to locate the action of this play in Norway had an exceptional relevance for Ireland, as the relationship between England-Scotland-Ireland in the 1630s was similar to that of Denmark-Sweden-Norway. By drawing this parallel between Ireland and Norway, Shirley engages this play with wider issues about Ireland's relationship with England; is it a country in its own right and should it thus be allowed an independent parliament, or is it merely an English colony? Thus he dramatised the conflicts and tensions which were at work in his society.

Shirley's reformed dramaturgy

The prologues which Shirley wrote to introduce plays by other dramatists to the Werburgh Street Theatre's audience have frequently been used as evidence that the audience was small, and that Shirley was dissatisfied both with the poor turnout and with the reaction of this audience to the drama on offer.⁸⁰¹ What has not previously been considered is that Shirley did not passively accept the audience's reaction, but that he actively employed measures to engage his audience and to improve attendance. As can be traced chronologically through his 'Irish' plays, he did this by increasingly writing about topics and situations which were of relevance to the Dublin audience, which culminated in *St. Patrick for Ireland*. Most obviously, the subject of this play was a clear attempt to encourage the residents of Dublin to attend the performance, but there are other elements within this play which illustrate Shirley's developing awareness of Irish culture. This is most evident in the character of the Bard, whose very existence in the play suggests that Shirley's knowledge of Irish customs had grown, and that he was using this knowledge to attract a greater audience. For the purposes of this discussion, what is most significant about *St. Patrick for Ireland* is that it was not licensed for performance in England, which reveals that it might not have been considered suitable material for the London audience, but, more importantly, that it was specifically and solely written for the Dublin stage. It can be argued that Shirley considered the London audience while he was writing plays for the Werburgh Street Theatre, but there is no doubt that *St. Patrick for Ireland* was written for this theatre, and for its audience, without any thought about staging it in London.

⁸⁰¹ See Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, p. 272.

Rather than assuming that *St. Patrick for Ireland* was written as a final, desperate attempt to engage the residents of Dublin, such a complete commitment to writing drama for this audience strongly suggests that Shirley viewed his residency in Ireland as, at least, long term. The lack of a Second Part to this play might then not be a representation of the play's failure to attract a larger audience, as Kerrigan suggests, but circumstantial in that the removal to England of Shirley's patron compelled the dramatist to return there also.⁸⁰²

Shirley has been criticised for not demonstrating any significant alteration in his writing style throughout his career, but his 'Irish' plays alone show an adjustment over just a four year period, and nothing else in the entire Shirley canon is comparable to the style of *St. Patrick for Ireland*.⁸⁰³ This alteration is evident not only in the content of Shirley's work, but also by the treatment the plays received after their first performances: *St. Patrick for Ireland* was not licensed for performance in England, indicating that its subject matter was too specialised for the London audience. Fleay argues that as *Rosania* was offered to the King's Men for performance in London, rather than the Queen's Men, that it was the last of Shirley's 'Irish' plays to be performed at the Werburgh Street Theatre, but it is much more likely that it was the *first* play to be written specifically for this theatre, and that it was this reason which led to its being offered to the King's Men: just as Shirley had originally written *The Royal Master* for the London stage, he was in a similar position upon his return to England in

⁸⁰² Kerrigan, p. 175.

⁸⁰³ This opinion is expressed by Lucow, Baugh and Bas, see Lucow, p. 9.

that he needed a ‘new’ play for performance.⁸⁰⁴ As the first play written in Ireland, *Rosania* was the least of the ‘Irish’ plays to have been influenced by specifically Irish concerns, therefore it was the most likely to appeal to the London audience.⁸⁰⁵

Shirley’s years in Ireland offer a unique opportunity to examine the relationship between a dramatist and his audience. His skill lay in the fact that he was not only a commentator upon his society, but he was also able to adapt his drama to respond to different conditions. His ‘Irish’ plays demonstrate this response, as they progressively incorporate elements of specific interest to a Dublin audience. Shirley saw the need to engage his audience with situations of particular relevance to them, and he was able to respond to the challenges which writing in a different country engendered. He was involved with the first intra-national bookshop franchise, and through his dedications and poetry, tried to appeal to various members of a disparate society. Shirley’s Irish years have long been viewed as an unsuccessful phase in his dramatic career, but this conclusion needs to be reassessed. The Werburgh Street Theatre was a successful enterprise, as shown by the plays written for its stage by Burnell after Shirley’s departure, and by the fact that Ogilby returned to Ireland during the Restoration to build another theatre. Shirley’s ‘Irish’ plays, from *The Royal Master* to *St. Patrick for Ireland*, demonstrate his move away from writing plays which easily transferred to the

⁸⁰⁴ Fleay, II, p. 245.

⁸⁰⁵ Further work needs to be done on identifying how Shirley’s years in Ireland affected his drama after his return to England, although as the London theatres were closed in 1642, there is not a large body of evidence to examine. Shirley wrote three plays after his return to London and before the closure of the theatres, *The Imposture* (licensed 10th November 1640, printed 1652), *The Cardinal* (licensed 25th May 1641, printed 1652), and *The Sisters* (licensed 26th April 1642, printed 1653).

London stage, towards an increasing involvement with Irish concerns, and, in this sense, he truly was Ireland's first professional dramatist.

Appendix One

Time line of events:

1632	Wentworth is appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland
1633	Wentworth and Ogilby first arrive in Dublin
1635	Ogilby is given instructions to build a theatre
8 th Jan 1635/6	French Troupe paid for performing at court in London
Jan. 1635/6	Cork attends a play hosted by Wentworth at the ‘parliament hous’
12 th May 1636	London theatres closed due to plague
Jun. 1636	Werburgh Street Theatre is constructed
Michaelmas 1636	Beeston dissolves the Cockpit company
23 rd Nov. 1636	Shirley arrives in Dublin
Nov. – Dec. 1636	Actors arrive in Dublin
1 st Jan. 1636/7	<i>The Royal Master</i> performed at Dublin Castle
c. Dec. – Feb. 1636/7	<i>The Royal Master</i> performed at the Werburgh Street theatre
Spring 1636/7	Shirley makes a return visit to England
9 th Aug. 1637	Wentworth goes on progress around Ireland
Aug. 1637	Ben Jonson dies
2 nd Oct. 1637	London theatres reopen
23 rd Feb. 1637/8	Wentworth appoints Ogilby as Master of the Revels in Ireland
Spring 1637/8	Shirley makes a return visit to England
13 th Mar. 1637/8	<i>The Royal Master</i> entered into the Stationers’ Register, London

23 rd Apr. 1638	<i>The Royal Master</i> licensed for performance, London
1638	Printed editions of <i>The Royal Master</i>
30 th Oct. 1639	<i>The Gentleman of Venice</i> licensed in London
March 1640	Wentworth permanently returns to England
April 1640	Massinger dies
28 th April 1640	<i>St. Patrick for Ireland</i> entered into the Stationers' Register
1 st June 1640	<i>Rosania</i> licensed for performance in London as <i>The Doubtful Heir</i>
1640	<i>St. Patrick for Ireland</i> and <i>The Constant Maid</i> printed
22 nd Oct. 1641	Werburgh Street Theatre closes
1646	Shirley's <i>Poems &c.</i> published
1652	<i>Rosania</i> printed as <i>The Doubtful Heir</i>
9 th July 1653	<i>The Gentleman of Venice</i> entered into the Stationers' Register
9 th Sep. 1653	<i>The Politician</i> licensed for performance in London
1655	<i>The Gentleman of Venice</i> and <i>The Politician</i> first published

Appendix Two

Plays containing commendatory verses, printed 1625-1638

Year play was printed	Playwright	Play title	Number of commendatory verses
1628?	Cooke, Joshua	<i>Green's Tu Quoque or The City Gallant</i>	1
1629	Fletcher, John	<i>The Faithful Shepherdess</i>	4
1629	Ford, John	<i>The Lover's Melancholy</i>	4
1629	Davenant, William	<i>Albaine, King of the Lombards</i>	8
1629	Massinger, Philip	<i>The Roman Actor</i>	6
1629	Shirley, James	<i>The Wedding</i>	6
1630	Davenant, William	<i>The Just Italian</i>	2
1630	Shirley, James	<i>The Grateful Servant</i>	10
1630	Massinger, Philip	<i>The Renegado, or The Gentleman of Venice</i>	2
1630	Massinger, Philip	<i>The Picture</i>	1
1630	Ruggle, George	<i>Ignoramus</i>	1
1631	Knevet, Ralph	<i>Rhodon and Iris</i>	4
1632	Goffe, Thomas	<i>The Courageous Turk</i>	1
1632	Massinger, Philip	<i>The Emperor of the East</i>	3
1632	Brome, Richard	<i>The Northern Lass</i>	6
1632	Hausted, Peter	<i>The Rival Friends</i>	3
1632	Randolph, Thomas	<i>The Jealous Lovers</i>	10
1632	Massinger, Philip	<i>The Maid of Honour</i>	1
1632	Alabaster, William	<i>Roxana</i>	2
1632	Shakespeare, William	<i>Mr William Shakespeare's comedies, histories and tragedies</i>	7
1633	May, Thomas	<i>The Heir</i>	1

1633	Massinger, Philip	<i>A New Way to Pay Old Debts</i>	2
1633	Ford, John	<i>Love's Sacrifice</i>	1
1633	Ford, John	<i>'Tis Pity She's a Whore</i>	1
1633	Hausted, Peter	<i>Senile Odium</i>	3
1634	Fletcher, John	<i>The Faithful Shepherdess</i>	5
1634	Randolph, Thomas	<i>The Jealous Lovers</i>	10
1634	Ford, John	<i>Perkin Warbeck</i>	5
1635	Jonson, Ben	<i>Caitline His Conspiracy</i>	3
1635	Shirley, James	<i>The Traitor</i>	1
1635	Rutter, Joseph	<i>The Shepherd's Holiday</i>	2
1635	Hutton, Leonard	<i>Bellum Grammaticale</i>	3
1636	Massinger, Philip	<i>The Great Duke of Florence</i>	2
1636	Davenant, William	<i>The Witts</i>	1
1637	Shirley, James	<i>The Grateful Servant</i>	10
1637	Nabbes, Thomas	<i>Microcosmus</i>	2
1637	Alexander, William	<i>Recreations with the Muses</i>	2
1637	Heywood, Thomas	<i>Pleasant Dialogues and Dramas</i>	3
1638	Massinger, Philip	<i>The Duke of Milan</i>	1
1638	Massinger, Philip	<i>The Bondman</i>	1
1638	Ford, John	<i>The Fancies Chase and Noble</i>	1
1638	Heywood, Thomas	<i>The Wise Woman of Hogsdon</i>	1
1638	Shirley, James	<i>The Royal Master</i>	10
1638	Nabbes, Thomas	<i>The Spring's Glory</i>	2
1638	Randolph, Thomas	<i>Poems with the Muses</i>	11

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