



Lucy Underwood\*

# Between Jerusalem and Babylon: Catholic Discourses of Israel and National Identity in Elizabethan and Jacobean England (ca. 1560–1625)

<https://doi.org/10.1515/jemc-2024-2007>

**Abstract:** This article examines how English Catholics imagined Jerusalem and Israel in relation to themselves, their nation and their Church. While English Protestant uses of Jerusalem imagery have been well-studied, their inter-confessional context has received less attention, and yet it was crucial to shaping them. Catholic deployments of Old Testament images and typology were no less sophisticated and significant than Protestant ones; English Catholic texts show how multivalent imagery of Jerusalem and its antithesis, Babylon, could be used both to express and to attempt to resolve tensions between the officially Protestant nation and the “true” Church. Exploring Catholic conceptions of Jerusalem, England and the Church is valuable because it offers insight into the culture that formed English Catholic recusants, missionaries, exiles and politicians, but also because it is important to a properly integrated account of the religious politics of England.

**Keywords:** Jerusalem; England; English Catholicism; Israel; Babylon; William Allen

In July 1581, George Elyot, a government agent, infiltrated an illegal Mass celebrated by the Jesuit priest Edmund Campion, an Oxford scholar turned clandestine Catholic missionary. Elyot published an account of his subsequent arrest of Campion, in which he recalled that after Mass:

the saide Campion [...] made a Sermon very nigh an houre long, the effect of his text being, as I remember, *That Christe wept over Jerusalem &c.*, And so applied the same to this our Countrie of England, for that the Pope his authoritie and doctrine did not so floorishe heere as the saide Campion desired.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> George Elyot, *A Very True Report of the Apprehension and Taking of that Arche Papist Edmond Campion [...] (London: Thomas Dawson, 1581)*, B3. STC (2nd ed.) 7629.

---

**\*Corresponding author:** Lucy Underwood, Honorary Research Fellow, History Department, University of Warwick, Warwick, UK, E-mail: l.underwood@warwick.ac.uk

The sermon's text was taken from the designated Gospel reading (9th Sunday after Pentecost), Luke 19:41–47, which opens “and when he drew near the city, he wept over it.” Robert Persons’ account of his fellow missionary corroborates, and reports that the congregation “shedde teares in abundance, especially when they saw [...] by the lively speech of the preacher, the cruell image of their country, glutted [...] with holy mens blood.”<sup>2</sup> Campion compared the rejection of Christ by Jerusalem’s leaders to the rejection of Catholicism by Elizabethan England – and the killing of prophets to the executions of priests.

This essay examines how English Catholics imagined Jerusalem and Israel, and understood them in relation to themselves, their nation and their Church after the Protestant Reformation, during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. While English Protestant uses of Jerusalem and Israelite imagery have been well-studied, their inter-confessional context has received less attention.<sup>3</sup> Protestant England stood opposite not only Catholic Rome, but Catholic England: the rival versions of England’s past and present which Protestant propagandists had to attack, repeatedly, long after Protestantism attained political dominance.<sup>4</sup> Exploring Catholic conceptions of

---

2 Quoted by Gerard Kilroy in “To wyn yow to heaven”: Edmund Campion’s *Winning Words*, in *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange between England and Mainland Europe, c. 1580–1789: The World Is Our House*, ed. James E. Kelly and Hannah Thomas (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2018), 19–42 (19–21 for this sermon, quotation at 20).

3 For example: Achsah Guibbory, *Christian Identity, Jews and Israel in 17th-century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Victoria Brownlee, “Imagining the Enemy: Protestant Readings of the Whore of Babylon in Early Modern England, c.1580–1625,” in *Biblical Women in Early Modern Literary Culture, 1550–1700*, ed. Victoria Brownlee and Laura Gallagher (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 213–33; Achsah Guibbory, “Milton, Prophet of Israel,” in *Religious Diversity and Early Modern English Texts: Catholic Judaism, and Secular Dimensions*, ed. Arthur F. Marotti and Chanita Goodblatt (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 136–52; Patrick Collinson, “Biblical Rhetoric: The English Nation and National Sentiment in the Prophetic Mode,” in *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England*, ed. Claire McEachern and Deborah Shuger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 15–45; idem, “John Foxe and National Consciousness,” repr. in idem, *This England: Essays on the English Nation and Commonwealth in the Sixteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 193–215; Vanita Neelakanta, *Retelling the Siege of Jerusalem in Early Modern England* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2019); Beatrice Groves, *The Destruction of Jerusalem in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Bernard Capp, “Transplanting the Holy Land: Diggers, Fifth Monarchists, and the New Israel,” in *The Holy Land, Holy Lands and Christian History: Papers Read at the 1998 Summer Meeting and the 1999 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Robert N. Swanson, *Studies in Church History* 36 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), 287–98.

4 Christopher Highley, “A Pestilent and Seditious Book”: Nicholas Sander’s *Schismatis Anglicani* and Catholic Histories of the Reformation,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68 (2005), 151–71; Victor Houlston, *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England: Robert Persons’ Jesuit Polemic, 1580–1610* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007), 94–116; Felicity Heal, “Appropriating History: Catholic and Protestant Polemics and the National Past,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68 (2005), 109–32.

Jerusalem, Israel, England, and the Church is valuable because it offers insight into the culture that formed English Catholic recusants, missionaries, exiles, and politicians, but also because it is necessary to a properly integrated account of the religious politics of England. This essay argues that English Catholic constructions of Jerusalem express conflicts within national identity caused by English rejection of Catholicism, but also offer potential resolutions. In its tensions and its creativity, Catholic Jerusalem imagery constructs an England paradigmatically different from that which Protestants imagined, and interdependent with it.

Jerusalem was a powerful image in early modern Christian thought. It had long been a pervasive presence in Christian liturgy, that liturgy being derived from the Hebrew Scriptures as well as from the Christian New Testament, in both of which Jerusalem, citadel of Israel, is a key symbol. More widely, the fundamental understanding of Israel as divinely chosen nation imbued the significance of Israel and Jerusalem with national *and* religious connotations.<sup>5</sup> Christian interpretations of Jerusalem – and its antithesis, Babylon – had become woven into European culture such that Protestant reformers necessarily had to create Protestant Jerusalems: to re-imagine Jerusalem, Israel and Babylon, casting themselves as the people of God and their confessional rivals as the reverse.<sup>6</sup> Equally, Catholics could not accept this recasting of central *topoi* of Christian self-fashioning, and deployed them both to maintain traditional paradigms, and to interpret post-Reformation realities. This study, re-introducing English Catholic uses of Israel and Jerusalem imagery into the picture, aims to recover the contentiousness and inherent instability of these rhetorical frameworks. Competitive, rival uses of shared cultural reference points shaped each other. Paying attention to English Catholic understandings of Jerusalem modifies and enhances our understanding of both Protestant and Catholic ways of imagining Church, nation and Christendom.

After considering the cultural background to early modern Christian perceptions of Jerusalem and Israel, this essay will explore English Catholic appropriations of those symbols. First, Ralph Buckland's approximation of English Catholic to Israelite history and his negotiation of the national and ecclesial connotations of Israel, in *Seven Sparkes of the Enkindled Soule* (ca. 1604), will be explored. The second section analyses the complex applications of Jerusalem Desolate to England, using a Latin elegy for William Cardinal Allen (1532–1594) among other texts, and compares Catholic with Protestant discourses. The third section further explores the ambiguity

---

<sup>5</sup> Anthony D. Smith, “Nation and Covenant: The Contribution of Ancient Israel to Modern Nationalism,” in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 151 (Oxford: British Academy/Oxford University Press, 2007), 213–55.

<sup>6</sup> Brett E. Whalen, *Dominion of God: Christendom and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). Whalen also discusses dissenters and anti-papal writers in the Middle Ages who raised the possibility of Rome as Babylon: *Dominion of God*, esp. 177–203.

of Jerusalem/Israel metaphors to consider the role(s) played by Jerusalem's antithesis, Babylon, whose identity was fiercely contested: Protestants cast papal Rome in that part – while Catholics saw Rome as a second Jerusalem. For English Catholics, their nation's own identity was dangerously poised between Jerusalem and Babylon, as is seen in such texts as Anthony Copley's *A Fig for Fortune*, which is discussed here. The final section of this article argues, however, that this ambivalence did not necessarily mean rejection of England itself by Catholic writers.

The main sources for this article have been selected for having a particularly strong focus on Jerusalem/Israel, and for representing a diversity of audiences and genres. Additional references to other sources indicate that such imagery recurred with some frequency in English Catholic texts, including where it was not the main emphasis; this suggests that these *topoi* were embedded in English Catholic religious culture. While I have attempted a survey of reasonable breadth, this study makes no claim to be comprehensive or to have included all potentially relevant sources. One major area which might reward further research is uses of Jerusalem and Israel symbolism in the literature and spirituality of English expatriate convents. A proper investigation of these sources is beyond the scope of this article, however.

My sources are chosen from the Elizabeth and Jacobean periods, when these discourses were developed and incorporated into English Catholic thinking. As will be seen, changes in their deployment across the period can sometimes be detected, although the main themes seem to me to be fairly constant. How they may have transformed or shifted during the upheavals of the mid-seventeenth century, or the altered *modus vivendi* of the late Stuart age, would also be an interesting avenue for future research.

## 1 Jerusalem, Christian Identity, and National Identity

Christian narratives of salvation history held that as Jesus' New Covenant fulfilled the Old Covenant of God with his people, so the New Israel was the Church, a chosen people no longer defined by ethnic heritage as well as religion, but solely by Christian faith: members of the New Israel might as well be Greek as Jewish.<sup>7</sup> Since the majority of Jews, at the emergence of Christianity, declined to embrace it, this New Israel came to function as rival to the first Israel. The destruction of Jerusalem by (still pagan) imperial Rome in AD 70 was regarded as the consequence of Jewish

---

7 Cf. Gal 3:28.

rejection of the Messiah, signalling the translation of Israel's status to the Christian New Israel.<sup>8</sup>

During the centuries of Catholic dominance, the transition of Israel to Church was expressed as a translation of Jerusalem to Rome. Marie Tanner has explored the impact of Rome-as-Jerusalem on the rebuilding of Saint Peter's and other Renaissance projects: Pope Nicholas V and his immediate successors, trying to recover authority following the Great Schism and the Conciliarist movement, exploited Jerusalem relics and imagery to emphasise the See of Rome's divinely-ordained status.<sup>9</sup> The imperial Roman destruction of Jerusalem was central, since it was Titus, Jerusalem's conqueror, who allegedly brought many Temple treasures to Rome. The pagan emperor was a divine instrument in the transfer of Jerusalem's status to Rome. In the medieval era, a fiction had developed that made Titus and Vespasian Christian converts, whose war was explicit vengeance for Christ's death.<sup>10</sup>

The potential of Jerusalem and Israel for national as well as ecclesial self-fashioning also had a long history. Some late medieval preachers invoked Israel to promote ideas of God's special protection of England. According to the chancellor's address to the 1377 parliament, when Scripture proclaims "Pacem super Israel," "by that Israel is meant the inheritance of God, which is England." In 1483, England's Parliament was validated by comparison to Moses and Aaron speaking to God on behalf of the people, as parliament did to the king. Similar claims for France had been made since the thirteenth century, perhaps prompting English appropriation.<sup>11</sup> As far back as the eleventh century, however, an early *Vita* of Edward the Confessor described a vision of Saint Peter in which the saint declared that "the Kingdom of the English is God's."<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Whalen, *Dominion of God*, 47 and 93; Groves, *Destruction*, esp. 6, 53, 109, and 117; Susan Yeager, "The Siege of Jerusalem" and Biblical Exegesis: Writing about Romans in Fourteenth Century England," *The Chaucer Review* 39 (2004), 70–102; Augustine of Hippo's *City of God* does not emphasise the Roman destruction or the Crucifixion specifically, but assumes that the Jewish failure to recognise Christ led to the loss of their privileged role of embodying the City of God. Augustine of Hippo, *City of God* 17.4, trans. William M. Green et al., Loeb Classical Library 415, 7 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), vol. 5, 229–37.

<sup>9</sup> Marie Tanner, *Jerusalem on the Hill: Rome and the Vision of St Peter's in the Renaissance* (New York: Harvey Miller, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Yeager, "Writing about Romans in Fourteenth Century England," esp. 72.

<sup>11</sup> John W. McKenna, "How God Became an Englishman," in *Tudor Rule and Revolution: Essays for G. R. Elton from His American Friends*, ed. Delloyd J. Guth and John W. McKenna (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 25–43.

<sup>12</sup> *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, vol. 2, 362. "Et issint vous avez ce q' l'Escripture dist, 'Pacem super Israel', paix sur Israel, pur quell Israel est a entendu l'eritage de Dieu, q'est Engl." John G. Nichols, *Grants & c. of the Reign of Edward V* (London: Camden Society, 1854), xxxix–xliv (at xliv–xlvi). *Vita Aedwardi Regis* (c. 1065–1066), in *Lives of Edward the Confessor*, ed. Henry R. Luard (London: Longman & co., 1858),

Applications of biblical events to English history continued to appeal to Tudor Catholics. After Mary I's accession, as Catholic queen determined to undo Edward VI's Protestant project, biblical comparisons celebrated her championship of true religion and offered *exempla* of female rule: Mary was hailed as Deborah and as Judith, as well as compared to her namesake Mary, Mother of God. Mary would be Deborah to England's errant Israel, Judith to its Jerusalem, restoring its true vocation as a beacon of Catholic faith. Unsurprisingly, after 1558 Protestants cast Elizabeth I as Deborah and Judith. Equally inevitably, Catholic writers returned to the earlier casting of Mary as Deborah, while making Elizabeth Jezebel, a biblical villainess.<sup>13</sup>

Protestant Jerusalems maintained a balance, or a tension, between national appropriation and a supranational Church. William Haller's *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* opened the debate on whether English Protestant writers saw England as the New Israel, or merely as part of the ecclesial New Israel. Patrick Collinson argued that England was perceived as *an*, rather than *the*, elect nation.<sup>14</sup> Beatrice Groves concluded that the international, confession-based Church identification was primary, yet some of the sources she quotes explicitly attribute a special Israelite identity to England or London.<sup>15</sup> Alexandra Walsham found that sermons were more likely than theological treatises to cast England as especially like Israel – so that “in practice, as opposed to the theory of academic elites, the balance was constantly being tipped” towards Jerusalem as *topos* for an exceptionalist national identity.<sup>16</sup>

Such (qualified) self-appropriation was not unique to Protestant England. As Anthony Smith has shown, the adoption of Chosen Nation discourse based on Israel and Jerusalem to entwine national and religious identity can be detected across

---

389–435 (at 394): “Regnum”, inquit, ‘Anglorum est Dei; post te providit sibi regem ad placitum suum.’ For the date of *Vita Aedwardi*, commissioned by Edward’s widow: Elizabeth M. Tyler, *England in Europe: English Royal Woman and Literary Patronage c. 1000–c. 1150* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 143–44. McKenna, “How God became an Englishman,” quotes these and other examples from medieval texts.

<sup>13</sup> Paulina Kewes, “Two Queens, One Inventory: The Lives of Mary and Elizabeth Tudor,” in *Writing Lives: Biography and Textuality, Identity and Representation in Early Modern England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Stephen Zwicker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 187–208 (at 193–95); “R.B.P” [Ralph Buckland Priest], *Seven Sparkes of the Enkindled Soul* (n.p., n.d. [1604]), C[6]r–v. Cf. ARCR 2:96; Highley, “A Pestilent and Seditious Book,” 169–70.

<sup>14</sup> William Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963), issued as *The Elect Nation: The Meaning and Relevance of Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); Collinson, “Biblical Rhetoric”; idem, “John Foxe and National Consciousness.”

<sup>15</sup> Groves, *Destruction*, 13–14, 17–18, 50–51.

<sup>16</sup> Alexandra M. Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 287–90 (289–90).

Christendom.<sup>17</sup> Norman Housley argued that during the late Middle Ages, pre-occupation with the physical Holy Land competed with (various) Western *patriae* imagined as Jerusalem; by 1600, the latter was predominant.<sup>18</sup> In France, the psalms were appropriated to compare Louis XIII to King David, leading a new Israel to victory over its enemies, the Huguenots. Sacred architecture could also claim Jerusalem for national identity: the Spanish fashion for replicating exact measurements of Holy Land pilgrimage sites was predicated on Spain being a new Holy Land.<sup>19</sup> In both Protestant England and Catholic Spain, national claims co-existed with supranational, ecclesial interpretations of the New Jerusalem. English Catholics drew on the same multivalent meanings, rendered more complex by their nation's public identification with false religion.

Approximating one's audience to Israel was not undiluted flattery. To invoke Israel was to claim salvation history as the family tree of one's own confession; it was analogous to Protestant and Catholic claims to continuity with the primitive Church. A Catholic ballad on a martyred priest alludes to Old Testament martyrs from "Abell to Zacharie," including the "seven *machabees*" who "would [...] never shrinke from Christ his most sacred lawe," before recalling the Apostles and early Christian martyrs. A direct line of true martyrs is asserted from the second generation of humankind to Robert Middleton at Lancaster in 1601.<sup>20</sup> Yet to be compared with the Jewish people was, in Christian minds, to be associated with sin, rejection, and punishment as well as with election, divine revelation, and salvation. It was a rebuke as well as a claim to authenticity. The point of many sermons on Israel was prophetic *warning*: Israel was punished for its sins, therefore if England continues to sin, she too will be punished.<sup>21</sup>

Using language of Jerusalem and Babylon was also related to apocalyptic thought. The end of the world was a major pre-occupation of early modern

---

17 Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

18 Norman Housley, "Holy Land or Holy Lands? Palestine and the Catholic West in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance," in *The Holy Land, Holy Lands and Christian History*, ed. Swanson, 228–49.

19 Peter Bennett, "Hearing King David in Early Modern France," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 69, no. 1 (2016), 47–109; Adam G. Beaver, "From Jerusalem to Toledo: Replica, Landscape and the Nation in Renaissance Iberia," *Past & Present* 218 (2013), 55–90. Cf. Giuseppe Perta, "The Holy City and Medieval Europe," in *Routledge Handbook on Jerusalem*, ed. Suleiman A. Mourad, Naomi Koltun-Fromm, and Bedross der Matossian (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 324–44, for earlier imitations of Jerusalem's shrines.

20 "A songe of four priests," in *Old English Ballads 1553–1625 Chiefly from Manuscripts*, ed. Hyder E. Rollins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), 70–78 (quotations at 74). BL Add.Ms.15225 f. 31–33.

21 Groves, *Destruction*; Collinson, "Biblical Rhetoric"; Walsham, *Providence*, 281–325; C. I. Cox, "Voices of Prophecy and Prayer in Thomas Nashe's *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*," *Renaissance Papers* 5 (2000), 51–69.

Christians, especially Protestants, and Jerusalem/Babylon imagery is prominent in the Book of Revelation, the major eschatological scriptural text. Identifying Jerusalem and Babylon were part of anticipating the Second Coming and understanding one's own and one's nation's proper part in it. Apocalypticism was less prevalent among Catholics, but they too wondered whether the Gospel had now been proclaimed "to the ends of the earth," and the consummation of this world and vindication of the New Jerusalem might be imminent. English Catholics detected Apocalyptic significance in the tyrannies of Protestant persecutors, especially Elizabeth I.<sup>22</sup>

English Catholics deployed the symbols of Israel and Jerusalem to validate their identity and experiences. They used it to represent the persecution of English Catholics; to invert Protestant imagery; and to express ambivalent and subversive sentiments about their nation, as part of their challenge to the narrative of "Protestant England." The scriptural Chosen Nation, and its Holy City, offered a vehicle to explore the symbiosis of religion and nation, to express sentiments both loyal and subversive, both patriotic and cosmopolitan, and to maintain a claim to territory Protestant rhetoric aimed to possess. Scholarly emphasis on English Protestant uses of Israel and Jerusalem *topoi* elides the context of conflicting Jerusalems, Catholic as well as Protestant, rhetorically fought over even as the physical city has so often been. This key element of a shared cultural heritage was prize territory in the inter-confessional struggle.

## 2 Catholic Psalms for an English Israel

My Lord, O My God: how long wilt thou deferre the delivery of thy people?  
Arise, and free us O Lord: arise (O Lord) and save us.  
Help us thou in our tribulations; for vaine is the aid of man...  
[...] By the hand of thy great seruant James, shake off our yoake:  
that we may find him an honourable comforter.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Adrian Streete, *Apocalypse and Anti-Catholicism in Seventeenth-century English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Paul K. Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017); Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 323–28, 340–45, and 430–34; Coral Stoakes, *English Catholic Eschatology, 1558–1603* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2016).

<sup>23</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, A6r–v; A. F. Allison and D. M. Rogers, *The Contemporary Printed Literature of the English Counter-Reformation between 1558 and 1640*, 2 vols. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1989–1994), vol. 2, (hereafter ARCR 2), no. 96, 24.

The first of these stanzas reads like the translation of a psalm. Although it does not directly translate any one verse, its lexis recalls various psalms. The third line translates the Vulgate's Ps 59:13: "*Da nobis auxilium de tribulacione, quia vana salus hominis.*" But the second stanza, naming James VI/I of Scotland and England, is clearly not scriptural.

These verses are from *Seven Sparkes of the Enkindled Soule*, a series of compositions in psalm form constructed from biblical paraphrases, written ca. 1604 probably by an English priest, Ralph Buckland.<sup>24</sup> Although psalms are as central to Catholic as to Protestant worship, in Catholic liturgy they were said or sung in Latin. Nor was there an English Catholic translation of the Old Testament until the Douay-Rheims version appeared in 1609, although the *Manual of Prayers* (first edition 1583) and the 1599 *Primer of the Blessed Virgin Mary* included psalm translations.<sup>25</sup> In form and metre Buckland's psalms are similar to these, and to the English psalms found in the *Book of Common Prayer*. His translations (when he translates directly) seem to be from the Latin Vulgate. While Buckland's compositions show the kaleidoscope of applications Jerusalem imagery offered, they are pre-occupied with how Israel as nation can be mapped onto England.

Using a biblical form and language asserts authority. Without claiming that his work is the Word of God, a writer may describe it as "drawn out of sacred scriptures," eliding authorship: the words are not Buckland's, he merely demonstrates their applicability. The preface, addressed to "devoutly affected, and enduring Catholikes" reproduces passages from Scripture and patristic writers and is signed "Not the Author: but sacred Authority."<sup>26</sup> Re-wording the scriptural laments of Israel to express their hardships identifies English Catholics with prayers seen as belonging prophetically to Christ, and hence with Christ himself. Likened to Christ's fore-runners, they are provocatively affirmed to be Christ's true followers. Buckland's use of psalms to liken his nation to Israel is interesting to compare with propaganda for French monarchs. In both cases, psalms are deployed to imagine the nation as Israel,

---

24 John Austin, a mid-seventeenth-century Catholic poet, also wrote original psalms; Buckland is an earlier example of this technique. Alison Shell, "Intimate Worship: John Austin's Devotions in the Ancient Way of Offices," in *Private and Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Alec Ryrie and Jessica Martin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 259–80. Susannah B. Monta, "John Austin's *Devotions*: Voicing Lyric, Voicing Prayer," in *Early Modern English Catholicism: Identity, Memory and Counter-Reformation*, ed. James Kelly and Susan Royal (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2019), 226–45.

25 A *Manual of Prayers Newly Gathered out of Many and Divers famous Authors [...]*, ed. (attrib.) George Flinton ([Rouen] 1583), ARCR 2:200, sig.G[4]v-G[7]r, and subsequent editions; *The Primer, or Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary [...]* (Antwerp, 1599), ARCR 2:227 and subsequent editions (psalms form most of the Office throughout).

26 Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, title-page, preface A3v, A5v. Compare this to Austin's title-page quotation, "Mind not who speaks, but what is said." Both seem to minimise the dependence of the book on its writer. Monta, "Austin's *Devotions*," 226–27.

but in France the figure of David was central, conceptualising the king as the key expression of this Chosen Nation identity. English Catholic imagery, necessarily, focused on the people (or the Catholic subset thereof) rather than on a chosen king.<sup>27</sup>

*Seven Sparkes* presents itself as a devotional work, enabling English Catholics to pray for themselves and their country. In the context of confessional struggle, though, such devotion is inevitably polemical: implicitly by writing English Catholics (not Protestants) as the biblical People of God, and explicitly through descriptions of persecution, and of England's religious history, which is likened to Israel's.<sup>28</sup> *Seven Sparkes* tends to assume rather than demonstrate the truth of Catholic claims, its psalms are very much in the voice of a Catholic, and the struggles it directly addresses are those between people of Catholic convictions: over recusancy (refusal to attend Protestant services as required by law) and formal reconciliation to the Church.<sup>29</sup> In these respects, Buckland wrote for an English Catholic audience emerging from the difficult years of Elizabeth I – but, as always, with the possibility that Protestants might also read the work. The Catholic identity Buckland uses biblical Israel to validate is loyalist, recusant and distinctively English.

Buckland exploits a language of election, but his notion of "chosen" England depends on geography more than ethnicity: the land itself is "the jewel: which [God] lovedst so well." He opens by dwelling on the "work that thou wroughtest one thousand yeares past: in converting our Auncestors to the faith": that is, the mission sent to the Angles and Saxons by Gregory the Great. But Buckland looks back further to acknowledge that this conversion meant "this Island [...] recovering her auncient

---

27 Bennett, "Hearing King David."

28 See William J. Sheils' analysis of Thomas Stapleton's *Promptuaria Morales* and *Promptuaria Catholicum* for a discussion of both the distinction and the overlap between pastoral and polemical theological writing. William J. Sheils: "The Gospel, Liturgy and Controversy in the 1590s: Thomas Stapleton's *Promptuaria*," in *Early Modern English Catholicism*, ed. Kelly and Royal, 189–205 (esp. 202–4).

29 Lucy Underwood, "Persuading the Queen's Majesty's Subjects from Their Allegiance: Treason, Reconciliation and Confessional Identity in Elizabethan England," *Historical Research* 89, no. 244 (2016), 246–67 (at 260–61 for *Seven Sparkes* and reconciliation). For the recusancy/conformity debate, see Alexandra M. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1993); eadem, "Yielding to the Extremity of the Time: Conformity, Orthodoxy and the Post-Reformation Catholic Community" and Michael C. Questier, "Conformity, Catholicism and the Law," in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560–1660*, ed. Peter Lake and Michael C. Questier (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), 211–36 and 237–61 respectively; Peter Lake and Michael C. Questier, *The Trials of Margaret Clitherow: Persecution, Martyrdom and the Politics of Sanctity in Elizabethan England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), esp. 49–67. Notably, Buckland also wrote a tract against outward conformity. See ARCR 2:95.5: Ralph Buckland, *An embassage from heaven. Wherin our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ giveth to understand, his iust indignation against al such, as being catholikely minded, dare yielde their presence to the rites [...] of the malignant church* (n.p.d., [1610 or 1611]).

glory.” He retells Britain’s evangelisation through Pope Eleutherius and King Lucius, and “Alban the Prothomartir” who (like dozens of recusant martyrs) “for harbouring a priest lost his life.” Upon the Saxon invasions, “pitying that Infidels should possess” the land, “Thou broughtest to passe by incomprehensible wisdome: that they also were by Gregory converted.”<sup>30</sup> Emphasising that both Saxons and Britons, and later Danes and Normans, shared the doctrines that “all Christendome at that time professed/ Of the faith Catholike, which in this Island: thou (O eternal truth) hadest in this wise planted, watred, and established,” Buckland manages a dual emphasis. The “truth” did not originate in Britain/England, but was received “from the Holy City, from Peter’s seate”; yet the insistence on its planting and watering, and the “fruit” “yealded” by “this Island” implies especial holiness.<sup>31</sup> Nor was Buckland alone in attempting to harmonise a strong English identity with a Catholic Britishness; the historical martyr-frescoes at the English College, Rome (to give one prominent example) celebrated a continuing story from Saint Peter, Saint Alban and Lucius through Gregory the Great to Gregory XIII.<sup>32</sup> Agricultural metaphor reinforces the sense of the physical land as holy, creating continuity between the different peoples inhabiting it, as each embraces the true faith after settling in God’s favourite island.

This is congruent with the mythical history of England then popular, which made Brutus of Troy its founder, smoothing over the rupture of the fifth-century Germanic migrations which ultimately turned (part of) Britain into England. John Foxe subscribed to this version of national origins, which he appropriated by positing the pre-Anglo-Saxon, pre-Augustine Britons as pure, primitive, Protestant Christians, slowly corrupted by papal incursions.<sup>33</sup> The Catholic Richard Verstegan emphasised the Germanic migrations, stressing that *as a nation* the English owed

---

30 Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, B[11]r, B[7]v, B[10]v, B[11]r-v.

31 Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, B[11]v, B[12]r.

32 See the book of engravings based on them: Giovanni Battista Cavallieri, *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome: Bartolomeo Grassi, 1584). For Catholic engagement with British identity, see also Chapter 4 in Lucy Underwood, *England’s Exile: Catholicism and Nationhood after the Protestant Reformation, c. 1558–1660* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, forthcoming); Alison Shell, “Divine Muses, Catholic Poets and Pilgrims to St Winifred’s Well: Literary Communities in Francis Chetwinde’s ‘New Hellicon’ (1642),” in *Writing and Religion in England 1558–1689: Studies in Community-Making and Cultural Memory*, ed. Anthony W. Johnson and Roger D. Sell (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 273–88; Christopher Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 80–117; Jason A. Nice, “Being ‘British’ in Rome: The Welsh at the English College, 1578–1584,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 92 (2006), 1–24. Also Andrea Bacciolo, “Identità e autorità nel ciclo dei martiri del Collegio Inglese di Roma,” in *Identità e Rappresentazione: Le Chiese Nazionali a Roma, 1450–1650*, ed. Alexander Koller, Susanne Kubersky-Pedder, and Tobias Daniels (Rome: Campisano Editore, 2015), 271–95.

33 Benedict Scott Robinson, “John Foxe and the Anglo-Saxon,” in *John Foxe and His World*, ed. Christopher Highley and John N. King (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 54–72.

their Christianity to Pope Gregory and Saint Augustine, even if the Britons had been converted earlier.<sup>34</sup> Buckland combined the two approaches: the English are *both* Augustine's spiritual children and exist in the continuous history of a divinely-blessed land. Other English Catholic texts which combine British and English pre-occupations include John Wilson's *English Martyrology* (1608) which commemorates saints from throughout the British Isles, including pre-Saxon British ones.<sup>35</sup> Of course, in Catholic versions these early peoples were all pure, primitive, Catholic Christians.<sup>36</sup>

While likening one's nation to Israel was an established strategy for asserting God's favour, the Jerusalem/Israel *topos* was also necessarily supranational. Jerusalem could not be simply "England," either to Catholic or Protestant minds, because Jerusalem was the Church; conversely, identification with Israel meant that "the Church," while primarily a theological entity, could acquire connotations of nationhood, helping to give expression to the idea of Christendom or the Christian commonwealth (*respublica Christiana*).<sup>37</sup> The medieval Church claimed the status of New Israel and as part of that claimed Jerusalem for Rome; Protestant writers and preachers identified the true Church as the diffusion of the Elect, in various places and institutional forms, found across many nations. Thus England could never be more than *part of Israel*, a location of the New Jerusalem.<sup>38</sup> Neither Protestants nor Catholics could simply equate their own nation with chosen Israel and stop there.

Buckland addressed in his "fifth psalm" the ecclesial, and supranational, function of Jerusalem. Opening stanzas refers to "his holy congregation," and "his Spouse"; a litany of scriptural ecclesial metaphors follows, which opens "Thou hast erected the Church, *as thy Kingdome upon earth*." The Church is also "Tabernacle," a City on a hill, the "Queene standing at thy right hand," "piller of truth," "thy turtle

---

<sup>34</sup> Heal, "Appropriating History."

<sup>35</sup> John Wilson, *The English Martyrology Conteyning a Summary of the Lives of the Glorious and Renowned Saintes, of the Three Kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland* (n.p., 1608), A1v, B[5]v, G[8]r-v, cf. N[7]r-v. Cf. ARCR 2:806.

<sup>36</sup> As in Robert Persons, *A Treatise of Three Conversions of England from paganism to Christian religion [...]* (n.p. 1603), cf. ARCR 2:638; Richard Broughton's *An ecclesiastical Protestant historie, of the high pastoral and fatherly chardge and care of the popes of Rome, over the church of Britanie [...]* (n.p., 1624), cf. ARCR 2:78. Cf. Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation*, 80–117.

<sup>37</sup> Brian Lockey, *Early Modern Catholics, Royalists, Cosmopolitans: English Transnationalism and the Christian Commonwealth* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), esp. Introduction & Chapter 1; Stefania Tutino, *Empire of Souls: Robert Bellarmine and the Christian Commonwealth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>38</sup> Walsham, *Providence*, 287–90. Guibbory, *Christian Identity* maximises the "national" tendency until its disruption by the Civil Wars: see his comments at pp. 13, 53, and 81, and 215–19 on how, between 1640 and 1660, radical Protestants "detached" Israel from the nation with their focus on individual membership of the true Church, which did not mean a national Church.

[dove]," a rock, a ship, the Ark, and a castle; these appellations represent Catholic interpretations of various scriptural passages. This litany culminates "Rejoyce and be glad, yee inhabitants of Hierusalem: among whome is the great and holy one of Israell," and asserts, "No nation under heaven hath a God so potent, so loving."<sup>39</sup> The national character of the scriptural Israel impinges on the ecclesial application, so that Church becomes Kingdom – but not co-terminous with the kingdom of England (or any other). Rather "all nations, subject to [Peter's] chaire" are "blessed." Buckland's text aims to mitigate the implied competition between Jerusalem and England, and the purposes of this supranational Kingdom are defined spiritually and theologically: the reception of true doctrine, the ministering of valid sacraments. The Church member's gain is to be "daylie prayd for, throughout the world"; the origin of Church authority is God, not itself ("thou art her teacher: that shee may not be ignorant"), and it is "the Keyes of thy *heavenly* Kingdome" which are "in her possession."<sup>40</sup> And, crucially, nations are "blessed," not erased, by being "subject" to Peter's Chair. A similar idea is expressed in Anthony Copley's poem *A Fig for Fortune*, in which the "High Sacrificator" of Sion (the pope) directs the "English-islander" to fight for Sion "under St George's banner."<sup>41</sup> Whether this reconciliation of potentially competing entities succeeds may be largely in the mind of the reader.

But, like Protestants, Catholics appreciated the potency of both national and supranational applications of Jerusalem imagery, and aimed to interlace rather than oppose the two.

### 3 Jerusalem Desolate, England Apostate

The sacred texts Christians know as the Old Testament, however, present not only a Chosen Nation and Holy City, but Jerusalem as a lost city, yearned for from exile; and also a place destroyed through hostile conquest and divine punishment. Israel, therefore, was easily appropriated into exilic discourse, as expatriate English Catholics reached for biblical sources to describe both physical separation from their homeland, and that homeland's fall from grace. Because exile and desolation were caused by Israel's sins, criticism is inherent in this identification.

Jerusalem Desolate was central to English Catholic appropriations of Jerusalem. A Latin elegy for William Cardinal Allen, early leader of the English Counter-

---

<sup>39</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, C[12]v-D2r (71–75). Cf., for examples, Eph 5:23–27; Matt 5:14; Ps 45:9; 1Tim 3:15; Song 6:9; Matt 16:18; Luke 5:1–11; Mark 4:35–41; Exodus 40; Hebr 9:1–4; Genesis 6–9; Isa 33:16; Ps 122:3.

<sup>40</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, D3v, D4r, D2v, D4r (my emphasis).

<sup>41</sup> Anthony Copley, *A Fig for Fortune* (London, 1596), STC (2nd ed.) 5737, K[4]v.

Reformation, borrows Isaiah's metaphor of Israel as vineyard to speak of post-Reformation England: its vines torn down, walls reduced to rubble, flocks massacred. To Catholic readers, the correspondences with England were multiple, the decaying walls of monasteries embodying the violated walls of Isaiah's vineyard.<sup>42</sup> Vineyard metaphors also drew on New Testament parables, themselves reliant on scriptural texts known to Jesus and his early audiences. Invoking England as "vineyard" merged the Church as God's vineyard with Jerusalem punished.

The vineyard imagined in the Allen elegy shifts between several analogues, appealing to a mosaic of biblical books, each noted in the margins.<sup>43</sup> When the vineyard is introduced, England appears as its cultivator: "You O England will that your vineyard once flourishing and happy, now is neither flourishing, nor yours, nor a vineyard [...]." The "vineyard" is the English Church.<sup>44</sup> The marginal notes cite Jeremiah 7, in which the vineyard is the "House of Israel," as well as Matthew 21, Mark 11 (*sic*: an error for Mark 12) and Luke 19 (*sic*: an error for Luke 20). Matthew 21 includes the parable of the man who planted a vineyard, described identically to that in Isaiah 5, and leased it to tenants. The tenants refuse to pay the rent, and kill the owner's messengers and finally his son. The owner then replaces the tenants with new ones. In Luke's Gospel, this parable (in Luke 20) is preceded by Christ's prophecy of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. The Gospel parable was taken to refer to the Temple authorities, and to the Church.

Yet this deployment of that parable is not triumphalist. The vineyard evokes the Church, but the Church cannot have a successor. The New Covenant – the Church – was brought by the Son of God to fulfil the Old Covenant revealed through the prophets; but, logically, there could be no messenger of higher authority than the Divine Son. So, however great its members' sins, God's chastisement of his Church could never include total destruction or its replacement with "new tenants." Thus Jerusalem Desolate as warning does not quite work.

But when the vineyard is not "the Church" in its totality, but "Catholic England," or the "*Ecclesiae Anglicanae*," deployments of Jerusalem's destruction as rebuke and lament become available. The English are the faithless servants, the sinful, punished nation, and Catholic readers are invited to identify with the Jews even while the latter are rebuked.<sup>45</sup> Lament for true religion and for the nation are intertwined, as in the Jewish scriptures.

---

<sup>42</sup> Downside Abbey Rare Books Collection 78395, 6–10, 11–14. Anonymous MS. I have not located a printed version, or other MSS. The text covers 60 pages of a 2"×3" book with leather binding, otherwise blank. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

<sup>43</sup> Downside 78395, *passim*.

<sup>44</sup> Downside 78395, 6.

<sup>45</sup> As Groves outlines for Protestant texts: Groves, *Destruction*, esp. 86–118.

In passages looking back to the vineyard's flourishing era, the elegy introduces "the Bride," invoking the Beloved in the Song of Songs; now the Church is the Bride *in* the vineyard, seeking the Bridegroom (Christ). He has chosen "this your vineyard (O England) [...] for the celebration of his nuptials": England is itself the vineyard, setting for Christ's wedding of His "Bride" the Church, with England's inhabitants as guests.<sup>46</sup> In describing the transition from vineyard to destruction, Promised Land to Jerusalem Desolate, the author shifts to another Old Testament vineyard: that of Naboth. Told in 2Kings, the story has the tyrannical king Ahab covet the vineyard of Naboth, who refuses to sell his inheritance; Ahab's wife Jezebel frames Naboth for a crime, has him executed, and gives the vineyard to Ahab (divine retribution later overtakes them). In the Allen elegy, images of flock, shepherd and threatening wolf which recur in Christ's speeches are used to cement Ahab's characterisation as enemy of the true Church:

Achab saw this vineyard because it was near his den [...] he saw, and he craved the vineyard. He circled it often, he could not invade [...] he ran to the gate, and wove himself the costume of a lamb, indeed within he was a rapacious wolf: there stood Naboth. And he watched his doors and gate. Achab proposed to buy the vineyard [...] Naboth denied since it was the inheritance of their fathers: he denied also since he saw him to be a wolf and not a shepherd.<sup>47</sup>

Ahab is described destroying the vineyard in terms which again allude to Isaiah.<sup>48</sup> In an English Catholic text, Ahab easily suggests Henry VIII; and Jezebel could represent Anne Boleyn or her daughter, Elizabeth.<sup>49</sup> An additional allusion to Revelation makes Jezebel not only tyrant but seductress: "to you Jezebel gave to drink from the golden chalice of impiety [...] And you deceived (O England) ran after that Babylonian whore."<sup>50</sup> The Old Testament villainess Jezebel was typologically linked to the "whore of Babylon" from the New Testament Book of Revelation;<sup>51</sup> Protestants had no monopoly on this characterisation of religious opponents. This opposition between Israelite Bride (the Church) and Babylonian whore (false Church) also incorporates the Babylon/Jerusalem antithesis familiar in early modern Christian *topoi*.<sup>52</sup> Its use here is important to the constructive ambivalence of English Catholic

---

46 Downside 78395, 10–11.

47 Downside 78395, 12.

48 Downside 78395, 14–15.

49 Highley, "Schismatis Anglicani," 169–70, for Elizabeth as Jezebel. An identification with Anne, as the seductress of Henry, would also make sense.

50 Downside 78395, 16–17.

51 See Stoakes, "English Catholic Eschatology," 123–61 (esp. 123 and 138 for Jezebel and the Whore of Babylon invoked together).

52 Compare Una/Duessa in Book 1 of Edmund Spenser's Protestant *Faerie Queene*. See Brownlee, "Imagining the Enemy."

Jerusalem discourse, as the text suggests that England *is* neither of these symbolic women, but can be the home of either.

The direct address, however, signals that England, the location of either the Bride or Jezebel, can also be personified as a woman, here a mother: “You suffered your sheep to be led as victims, your sons to torture, your offspring to the butcher [...]”<sup>53</sup> England imagined as abusive mother or stepmother recurs in Catholic persecution texts.<sup>54</sup> Here, allusions to Jeremiah’s captured Jerusalem imply England as both victim and perpetrator: not only are “the sheep of your pastures dragged to the butcher,” but *you* have sent them there. As in Lamentations 4:3, an unloving mother is imagined:

they fled to you as to a mother, and you [...] did not recognise your sons, you scorned the poor ones, you handed over the harmless, you removed your protection, you denied your shelter: Your little ones asked for bread and you gave the sword; they begged milk and you handed them poison.<sup>55</sup>

Bread refers to the Catholic Eucharist, prohibited in England while its providers were subject to capital penalties; poison is heretical teaching.

Like Allen’s elegist, Ralph Buckland cast sixteenth-century England as a faithless and consequently devastated Israel. Alluding to Jeremiah 2–3, England’s heresy is imagined as adultery: “Thy darling and vowed Virgin:/ hath giuen over her selfe, common to all adulteries/ To Luther and Calvin she hath opened her bosome.”<sup>56</sup> Accusations of idolatry, frequently linked to promiscuity, were commonplace in Protestant representations of Catholicism; Buckland portrays Protestantism as a promiscuous chasing after multiple false teachers. Idolatry is also suggested when Buckland refers to Henry VIII “commaunding his lawes to be obserued for Gods truth,” and to compliant bishops who “themselves yealded Gods honour to man: and augmented the scandall by their example.” In Elizabeth’s reign, “the common sort [...] at the commaunders voice, bowed their knees to Baal.”<sup>57</sup> The Royal Supremacy is imagined as idolatry.

Buckland, like the Allen elegy, equates Jerusalem’s famine to the English prohibition of Mass by combining Lamentations 1:24 with John 6:50–51, to produce “Little ones crave the bread which came from heaven: and there is none to give it them.”<sup>58</sup> Buckland likewise relates faithless Jerusalem to persecuting England by identifying his co-religionists as a faithful remnant, in passages adapted from various psalms of

---

<sup>53</sup> Downside 78395, 16–17.

<sup>54</sup> Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination 1558–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 184–85.

<sup>55</sup> Downside 78395, 17.

<sup>56</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, C[10]v–[11]r, at 11r.

<sup>57</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, C6v–C7r.

<sup>58</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, F6v.

complaint (e.g., Psalms 13, 14, 106, 119, 69). Adaptation, rather than translation, is these passages' functional crux. Ps 25/26:4-5, "I have not sat with the council of vanity: neither will I go in with the doers of unjust things. I have hated the assembly of the malignant; and with the wicked I will not sit"<sup>59</sup> becomes "For thy service we suffer, hating the profane Church: and refusing to sit in the congregation of the wicked./ Ungodly assemblies we have detested." Here, Buckland *adapts* the psalm in order to comment on the Catholic debate on outward conformity; he takes the view that recusancy was the mark of Catholic fidelity. That paraphrase, "profane Church," appeals to Scripture to support recusancy; simultaneously, it identifies English Catholics with ancient Israelites more explicitly than simple translation would have.<sup>60</sup>

Buckland's psalms and the Allen elegy make extended use of "Jerusalem Desolate" imagery to characterise the Protestantisation of England, offering a clue to the cultural imagination from which these texts emerged. William Byrd, the Catholic composer who wrote both for the Chapel Royal and the secret liturgies of Catholics, also used Jerusalem texts with resonances of persecution in his motets. Craig Monson has drawn attention to those deployed in both English Jesuit writings and Byrd's compositions: for example, Ps 78:2, *Posuerunt morticinia servorum tuorum escas volatilibus caeli*; or Isa 64:9-10, *Ne irascaris Domine/ Civitas sancti tui*, with its final, hauntingly set, libretto, "*Jerusalem desolata est*."<sup>61</sup>

Catholic interpretations of England as Jerusalem Desolate prompt comparison with English Protestant ones. Collinson found that the key element in Protestant sermons was the threat that God would reject his Chosen Nation *if* she did not repent: England *might* end up like the Jerusalem of Lamentations, and others have similarly emphasised Protestant minatory prophecy. If England was the new Israel, then like Israel she could be punished for her sins.<sup>62</sup> Beatrice Groves posited that this emphasis encouraged identification, and sympathy, with the Jews, leading to what she sees as a less antisemitic attitude.<sup>63</sup> She argues that this distinguished Protestant from Catholic (pre-Reformation) interpretations of Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70: Catholic triumphalist narratives that wholly alienated the Jews, compared to Protestant warning ones which facilitated empathy through (potential) identification. Yet Groves' thesis risks overstating the absence of empathy for the Jews in

---

59 Douay-Rheims bible [1899 ed.], Ps 25:4-5.

60 Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, A3r, and 140-41 on recusancy.

61 Craig Monson, "Byrd, the Catholics and the Motet: The Hearing Re-opened," in *Hearing the Motet: Essays on the Motet in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Dolores Pesce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 348-74 ("They have laid out the corpses of thy servants before the birds of the air" and "Do not be angry, Lord/Your holy cities").

62 Collinson, "Biblical Rhetoric"; Groves, *Destruction*; Walsham, *Providence*, 281-325; Cox, "Voices of Prophecy."

63 Groves, *Destruction*, esp. 1-10, 13-54; Neelakanta, *Retelling the Siege*, concurs, esp. 8-9.

pre-Reformation texts and understating the condemnation – the basic assumption that the execution of Jesus Christ caused collective, enduring guilt – that remained fundamental to Protestant uses of Jerusalem destroyed.<sup>64</sup> Various scholars have argued that a number of medieval texts dealing with Jews and/or the Roman destruction of Jerusalem convey sympathy for the Jews while still portraying them as justly punished, and entertain the possibility of Christians' sins incurring similar punishment; like post-Reformation texts, they thus invited readers to identify themselves with the Jews at some level.<sup>65</sup> As Campion's reported sermon indicates, early modern English Catholics also invoked Jerusalem's fall as warning, thereby identifying English audiences with both Jerusalem's sin and its punishment.

Another example of Catholic engagement with such identification illustrates the pitfalls of an over-schematised approach. Groves regards Thomas Lodge's translation, *Famous and Memorable Workes of Josephus*, as illustrating the posited Reformation shift, yet seems unaware of the evidence that Lodge was a Catholic. Vanita Neelakanta acknowledges Lodge's Catholicism, but does not discuss its relevance to an alleged Catholic/Protestant divide between triumphalist and minatory interpretations of Jerusalem.<sup>66</sup> It is true, however, that English Catholic texts tend to be more interested in the Old Testament Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem than the Roman one. This made identification with the Jews more straightforward, since the Babylonian destruction had no links with the rejection of Christianity; the Jews' status as Chosen People is uncontested at this stage.

An important feature which does distinguish some Catholic texts from Protestant ones is that Jerusalem destroyed is invoked as rebuke more than warning: the disaster has already happened. The holy places (monasteries and shrines) *have* been ruined, the "holy of holies" (tabernacles in which the reserved Eucharist remained)

---

<sup>64</sup> Not that this was universal. Andrew Crome's work has discussed how at least some preachers and thinkers made the Jews' *continuing* chosen status central, with England's predestined role being to compensate for past antisemitism by helping to re-establish the Jewish kingdom: Andrew Crome, *Christian Zionism and English National Identity, 1600–1850* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

<sup>65</sup> Yeager, "Writing about Romans"; Suzanne Yeager, "Jewish Identity in 'The Siege of Jerusalem' and Homiletic Texts: Models of Penance and Victims of Vengeance for the Urban Apocalypse," *Medium Aevum* 80 (2011), 56–84; Nicholas Vincent, "William of Newburgh, Josephus and the New Titus," in *Christians and Jews in Angevin England: The York Massacre of 1190, Narratives and Contexts*, ed. Sarah Rees Jones and Sethina Watson (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), 57–90; Marco Nievergelt, "The Siege of Melayne and the Siege of Jerusalem: National Identity, Beleaguered Christendom, and Holy War during the Great Papal Schism," *The Chaucer Review* 49 (2015), 402–26. Groves, *Destruction*, 29, dismisses Yeager in a footnote, but does not explain why her interpretations and others cited here are "unconvincing."

<sup>66</sup> Erin Kelly, "Jewish History, Catholic Argument: Thomas Lodge's 'Workes of Josephus' as a Catholic Text," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 34 (2003), 993–1010; Groves, *Destruction*, 16, 34–35, and 87; Neelakanta, *Retelling the Siege*, 76–90.

has been broken. Reprimand and lament are more relevant than exhortations that “this could be you” unless you repent. Catholic Jerusalem comparisons were explanatory rather than exhortatory: a way of understanding the recent past rather than influencing the future. One of these explanatory functions was to exonerate England from its Protestant apostasy. If Protestant dominance is imagined as punishment, as famine and pillage and conquest, it is something external to England, whose authentic state is one of (Catholic) flourishing. Such a paradigm also participates in wider Catholic discourses of Protestant Reformation as scripturally-rehearsed barbaric invasion. These discourses were sometimes inflected with biblical *topoi* of the north as source of evil and disaster, which both Protestants and Catholics deployed to imagine, account for or denigrate popery or heresy (as the case might be). Buckland’s “Fourth Psalme” refers to “a parching wind [...] from the north: which made the boughs thereof to wither, and the flourish thereof to decay.”<sup>67</sup>

But portraying the Protestant Reformation as divine castigation begged the question of what sin could have incurred such punishment, if Catholic England were so virtuous. Buckland suggests that “our forefathers were unmindfull of thy mercies: and kept not the covenant of thy commaundements,” implying perhaps a lukewarm faith, blessings taken for granted. But it does not quite follow from the description of pre-Reformation England where “all things went in order, and the sweet consort of the common wealth: was as the harmony of the wel-tuned instrument.”<sup>68</sup> Similarly, the Allen elegy can only offer, “All these things happened to you (O England) because you were too happy, because you were lifted up exceedingly,” suggesting complacency, pride leading to a fall.<sup>69</sup> This is brief, though, compared to the elaborate evocation of both glory and destruction. Protestant preachers also faced the problem of building up England’s incomparable blessedness in Chosen Nation comparisons, and then pivoting to her appalling, wrath-provoking sins, and they also left this dichotomy under-explained.<sup>70</sup>

When Catholic texts imagine Protestant apostasy primarily as the causative sin, analogous to Israel’s idolatry, the possibility of Jerusalem as warning is raised: the sin has occurred, the scourge may be yet to come. The text from Luke 19 which Campion reportedly applied to England was precisely one in which Jesus prophesied *future* destruction. It is not clear whether Campion – like Buckland – elaborated on the destructive Reformation as punishment for Catholic England’s waywardness, making Luke 19 a prophecy fulfilled, or alternatively suggested that England’s spiritual fall was yet to be followed by physical destruction, perhaps by the Spanish.

---

<sup>67</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, C3r. Peter Marshall, “The Reformation and the Idea of the North,” *Nordlit* 43 (2019), 4–24; Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation*, 76–79.

<sup>68</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, C3v–C4r, C2v.

<sup>69</sup> Downside 78395, 16.

<sup>70</sup> Walsham, *Providence*, 281–325 cites many.

Campion almost certainly did not pursue the latter interpretation, since Elyot, during his evidence at Campion's trial, could say only that the Jesuit's preaching had anticipated "a day of change, comfortable to the Catholiques now shaken and distressed and terrible to the heretickes here florishinge." The defendant responded: "Judas, Judas, noe other day was in my mynd, I protest, then that wherin it should please God to make a restitution of ffayth and religion."<sup>71</sup> Campion was impatient with the regime's own assumption that religious conversion *must* mean forcible regime change, an assumption then attributed to Campion and grafted onto his words. But if Campion did not share it, such an interpretation remained Troublesomely available.

England's status as a Protestant state certainly altered and complicated how Catholics related it to Jerusalem; if England *could be* or *had been* the Promised Land and the Holy City, it could also be its enemy and oppressor. In this, Catholic deployments of such imagery differed from English Protestant ones, and on one reading were weakened. Yet Catholic and Protestant Israel comparisons shared this underlying instability: England's identity as Israel is provisional, and could be forfeited. Its rejection of God could be punished with destruction, like the first Israel's. Meanwhile, for Catholic and Protestant, the ecclesial use of Israel could not be conditional, because the New Covenant is permanent, and the Church (however understood) cannot be divinely rejected. What could be in question, Protestant preachers reminded their audiences, is whether England continues to be the (or *a*) supreme receptacle of the New Covenant, and thus in a special way Israel. The key difference is that in most Catholic versions, the destruction has already happened, and this may explain why Catholic writers emphasise the Babylonian rather than Roman destruction of Jerusalem. Both discourses need to offer hope along with castigation. Protestant texts can use the final, Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple and still offer hope, because the destruction in England's case may yet be avoided. Catholic writers, suggesting Jerusalem is *already* desolate, prefer the Babylonian destruction and exile because the audience knows that that desolation was followed by restoration, and hope can be offered in that guise. Jerusalem Desolate was as important as Chosen Israel to Catholic discourses of England's religious history. As will be seen, so was Jerusalem's enemy and antithesis, Babylon.

## 4 Between Jerusalem and Babylon

English Catholics could locate both Jerusalem and Babylon in different places, shifting the reference-points of Jerusalem, Rome, England and Babylon about in ways which validated their own identity, and challenged the symbolic maps of Protestants.

---

<sup>71</sup> Gerard Kilroy, *Edmund Campion: A Scholarly Life* (London: Routledge, 2015), 316–17.

Edmund Campion resisted the step from imagining England as sinful Jerusalem to endorsing forcible regime change; William Allen, however, had no doubts about such an application of metaphor. When he wrote to the papal secretary of state in August 1583 concerning “the time [...] for judging our Babylon and pitying Sion,” he meant the latest scheme to overthrow Elizabeth Tudor.<sup>72</sup> The England to be “judged” is *Babylon*. As seen in the Allen elegy, in Catholic texts referents are shifting, and “England” can be whore as well as bride: not only sinful Israel, but Israel’s antitheses, Babylon or Egypt. This is a marked difference between Catholic and Protestant texts, allowing writers to explore an ambivalence much deeper than that involved in comparing England’s to Israel’s sin and punishment.

The letters of Robert Southwell, poet and Jesuit missionary in his native England from 1586 to his execution in 1595, are scattered with references to psalms.<sup>73</sup> The Hebrew psalms in Latin translation formed Southwell’s daily prayers, and to express himself in their lexis would scarcely have required thought. But how he deployed them offers clues to Southwell’s perceptions. Writing to his superior (the General of the Society of Jesus) in Rome, of clandestine liturgies and (he reported) remarkably resilient Catholic communities, Southwell said that “We have sung the songs of the Lord in a strange land, and in the desert we have sucked honey from stone and oil from the hard rock.”<sup>74</sup> This refers to Ps 136:4 and the Babylonian exile: “Quomodo cantabimus canticum Domini in terra aliena...?” (“How shall we sing the songs of the Lord in an alien land?”). It also quotes Deut 32:13: that the Lord placed Jacob (Israel) “super excelsam terram [...] ut sugeret mel de petra oleumque de saxo durissimo” (“above the earth, that he might suck honey from stone and oil from the hard rock”). Southwell’s appropriation is assertive, as a rhetorical question of despair (*How shall we sing?*) becomes a statement of consolation achieved (*We have sung*), and a claim to God’s special care. But it also characterises England as an “alien land,” the Babylon of exile.

---

72 *Letters and Memorials of William, Cardinal Allen*, ed. Thomas F. Knox (London: David Nutt, 1882), 201; Eamon Duffy, “Founding Father: William, Cardinal Allen,” in *idem, Reformation Divided: Catholics, Protestants and the Conversion of England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 132–67.

73 Southwell’s letters are edited and translated by Thomas M. McCool in “The Letters of Robert Southwell,” in *idem, And Touching Our Society: Fashioning Jesuit Identity in Elizabethan England* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2013), 143–95, and by John H. Pollen in *Unpublished Documents Relating to the English Martyrs 1584–1602*, Catholic Records Society Records Series 5 [hereinafter CRS:5] (London: Catholic Record Society, 1908), 294–332. Allusions to the Vulgate psalms are frequent in Southwell’s Latin. See also Monson, “Byrd, the Catholics and the Motet,” esp. 353–54. An excellent study of Southwell’s literary work is Anne Sweeney, *Robert Southwell: Snow in Arcadia: Redrawing the English Lyric Landscape, 1586–1595* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

74 Southwell to Claudio Aquaviva, March 8, 1590. CRS:5, 330–32.

Context and audience may influence the shifting allusions we see in different texts. Southwell was in England; his immediate audience was his Jesuit superior in Rome, with – since mission reports were used to compile the Society's printed “Annual Letters” – potential readers in the whole network of Jesuits and their contacts.<sup>75</sup> Allen (in the letter cited above) was also writing to non-English correspondents, about the need for political and military intervention in England. Thomas Hide, addressing exile in his *Consolatorie Epistle*, was writing for Catholics in England or abroad, although (again) English Protestants might see the text.<sup>76</sup>

Yet presenting England as Jerusalem or as Babylon was not simply about different modes for different audiences; these ambivalences run through Catholic thinking about Jerusalem and England. Richard Bristow's anti-Protestant polemic *Motives to the Catholic Faith* (1574), after discussing the need for recusancy and comparing heresy to idolatry, exhorted his readers to repentance:

And thirdly, during this time that God his iustice for our great, innumerable, frequented, universal sins will have us to sitte in Babylon, we must bitterly weepe, sobbe, and sigh, to remember Sion and the Temple of our Mother Jerusalem, day and night [...] praying God [...] once to make an ende of our miserable Captivitie, & to bring us al home againe to the sweete Angelical songes & heavenly service of the same [...].<sup>77</sup>

Bristow wrote for English readers – Catholic or Protestant – and in this passage, especially for those wavering between conformity and recusancy. Yet, as in Southwell's letter aimed at foreign Catholics, here too England is likened to Babylon: not merely a desolate Jerusalem, but the enemy of God and his people.

If England might be Babylon, where was Jerusalem? Southwell's letter from “Babylon” was addressed to Rome. While he does not identify his correspondent's location with Jerusalem, that casting was long familiar to Catholic culture. It was also polemical: when English Catholics imagined Rome as Jerusalem, they resisted Protestant representations of Babylon as Rome. Gregory Martin's 1581 encomium on “Roma Sancta” celebrates “the victorie of Christ over the Diuel, of Peter over Nero, of the See Apostolike over the earthly Empyre, of Rome the spouse of Christ over Rome

---

<sup>75</sup> On Jesuit correspondence networks: Paul Nelles, “Jesuit Letters,” in *Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits*, ed. Ines G. Županov (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 44–72.

<sup>76</sup> Thomas Hide, *Consolatorie Epistle to the Afflicted Catholikes* (Leuven: John Maes for John Lion, 1579), G[8]r, H3v, cf. ARCR 2:430, 431 See Freddy C. Dominguez, *Radicals in Exile: English Catholic Books in the Reign of Philip II* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020), esp. 108–11, on the adaptation of texts for different audiences.

<sup>77</sup> Richard Bristow, *A Briefe Treatise [...] to Finde out the Truthe [...] Conteyning sundry Worthy Motives to the Catholike Faith* (Antwerp: Joannes Foulerus [=England?], 1574), R-[7]v-R[8]r. Cf. ARCR 2:67, 68.

the whore of Babylon.”<sup>78</sup> Catholic commentators cast pagan Rome as the Babylon of Revelation, now superseded by Christian Rome. They did this in continuity with long-standing Catholic tradition, but also in opposition to the anti-papal interpretation Protestants placed on Rome and Babylon, of which they were aware.<sup>79</sup>

The relation of Rome to Jerusalem and to England is important in the sermon preached by an English priest before the pope and cardinals on Saint Stephen’s Day 1586, an annual event.<sup>80</sup> That year’s preacher, William Baldwin, drew attention to Stephen’s martyrdom “in his fatherland by his fellow-citizens,” positing that Stephen wished to be “sacrificed” by “Jews and by this Jerusalem” out of patriotic devotion – as English missionaries were martyred in England. He then linked Stephen to Rome, quoting a tradition that Peter’s mission to Rome was inspired by Stephen’s sacrifice, and also that Stephen’s body was yet another relic which had journeyed from Jerusalem to Rome. Therefore “Since he who converted Paul by his prayers, impelled Peter even by his death, in the same city assigned the monument to his bones, who should hesitate to declare him the parent and patron of the Roman Church?” In the same sermon, the pope is addressed as father and patron of the English missionaries, Saint Stephen’s imitators.<sup>81</sup> England as Jerusalem, the pope as paternal shepherd, and Rome’s succession to Jerusalem are all invoked to show that the Babylonian Antichrist was not the only Rome an Englishman could imagine.

Roman appropriation of Jerusalem is also deployed in Anthony Copley’s narrative poem, *A Fig for Fortune*, constructed as a riposte to Book 1 of Edmund Spenser’s Protestant epic, *The Faerie Queene*. Copley constructs an alternative “imagined England,” in which his hero is exiled from “Elizium” – seemingly an allegory for Elizabeth’s kingdom. He discovers true faith through Catechresius the hermit, and then journeys to the heavenly city of Sion.<sup>82</sup> Copley’s Sion picks up Spenser’s mention of the heavenly Jerusalem, but expands it – where Spenser’s

---

<sup>78</sup> Gregory Martin, *Roma Sancta (1581): Now First Edited from the Manuscript*, ed. and trans. George B. Parks (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1969), 10.

<sup>79</sup> They could hardly have been unaware of so pervasive a *topos*, but specific examples of their engagement include John Williams’ satirical tract, “Balaam’s Asse,” for which see Emily Jennings, “Balaam’s Asse’ Uncovered: New Light on the Politics of Prophetic Exegesis in Mid-Jacobean Britain,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 81 (2018), 1–27, and below; Richard Verstegan’s comments, quoted in Stoakes, “English Catholic Eschatology,” 141–42; John Floyd, *The Overthrow of the Protestants pulpit-babels, convincing their preachers of lying & rayling, to make the Church of Rome seeme mysticall Babell [...] (n.p. [St.Omer], 1612)*, cf. ARCR 2:297.

<sup>80</sup> Archives of the Venerable English College, Rome, Liber 281, 159–62. Lucy Underwood, “Representing England in Rome: Sermons from the Early Modern English College to Popes and Cardinals,” *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 23 (2020), 4–26.

<sup>81</sup> VEC Liber 281, 160–61. My translation from Latin.

<sup>82</sup> Lucy Underwood, “Sion and Elizium: National Identity, Religion, and Allegiance in Anthony Copley’s *A Fig for Fortune*,” *Renaissance and Reformation* 41, no. 2 (2018), 65–96. Susanna B. Monta,

Knight glimpses a distant Jerusalem, Copley's Knight travels to the city and participates in Sion's defence. Sion has connotations of Jerusalem-as-Heaven, but mainly signifies the Church – that is, the Roman Catholic Church, whose seven sacraments, Eucharistic rites, and governance by the pope are alluded to in Copley's description of the Holy City.<sup>83</sup>

Copley's Sion enables a re-imagining of English identity in relation to Rome. His Knight joins the war against the Babylonian Doblessa, ambiguously representing heresy, heretical England, or perhaps the heretical queen, Elizabeth. But he enlists in Sion's ranks as an "English-ilander" under "St George's banner." Copley suggests that, although his Knight finds Sion through exile from "Elizium," he is not exiled from England: he finds a truer English identity within Roman Sion. Playing audaciously with Protestant characterisations of Rome, Jerusalem, and Babylon, *A Fig for Fortune* deploys an opposition between Elizium – the name of the pagan heaven – and Sion. It suggests that when England rejects Sion/Rome, she ceases to be truly "England" and becomes "Elizium" – the pagan paradise, and (necessarily in a Christian worldview) a vain aspiration, which results in her degeneration to "Babylon."<sup>84</sup> The challenge this raises to Protestant Chosen Nation rhetoric is audacious. Copley's poem was written with both Protestant and Catholic readers in mind: although obviously concerned with Catholic issues, he had it published in London with official licence.<sup>85</sup>

In Copley's *A Fig for Fortune*, the Knight's exile from the Babylon which Elizium/England has become turns into a homecoming. English Catholic uses of biblical references to characterise leaving England illustrate the complexities of locating Jerusalem, and indeed England. Buckland wrote that as heresy took over, "Sincere Christians fled from *Babilon*: least they should be plunged in her iniquities,"<sup>86</sup> echoing the sentiment implied in Southwell's allusion to Psalm 136. Buckland followed this with a different allusion: "Thou determinedst in thy wrathfull fury: to cast of England for evermore [...] But a Moyses stood up before thee: entreating for his comfortless country." This characterises England as the Israelites who, rescued from Egypt, fell away from the divine law while crossing the desert; Moses persuaded God not to destroy them, but Israel was condemned to wander forty years in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land. But the students of Allen's overseas seminaries are also those "delivered like *Israelites* out of the fornace of *Aegipt*: and

---

"Introduction," in *A Fig for Fortune by Anthony Copley: A Catholic Response to The Faerie Queene*, ed. Susanna B. Monta (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

<sup>83</sup> Underwood, "Sion and Elizium"; Copley, *A Fig for Fortune*, H[4]v, I4r, I1r, K1v, and D3r. Cf. Susanna B. Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 106–8.

<sup>84</sup> Underwood, "Sion and Elizium."

<sup>85</sup> Underwood, "Sion and Elizium," 95.

<sup>86</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, C[7]r.

called like *Abraham* from house and kindred.” In a series of images, England appears as wavering Israel, persecuting Egypt, and pagan Ur. Thomas Hide’s 1579 *Consolatoria Epistle* also compares English Catholic expatriates to Moses fleeing Egypt – not his second departure leading Israel’s Exodus, but his first, fleeing after killing the Egyptian slave-driver.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, the Allen elegy compares its subject to both Moses and Aaron, with an emphasis on escape from Egypt and the desert journey: Moses “led the people and cared for it for forty years through the desert, that he might lead it into the promised land.”<sup>88</sup> The desert could symbolise persecution and/or exile, Allen’s colleges being expatriate institutions. Moses had *not* led his people to the Promised Land, dying while they still wandered in the desert in consequence of their sins; Allen’s death while Catholicism remained unrestored is attributed to English sinfulness.<sup>89</sup>

Allen, however, was also compared to Noah, and his seminaries to the Ark; and to Joseph, who, “thrown out by the fatherland,” became great in Egypt, “the Kingdom of Pharaoh,” and who “sent back into the fatherland sacks full of grain” and “called forth your sons, your brothers, your parents [...] out of famine to the harvest.”<sup>90</sup> While the Catholic (mainly Habsburg) territories are thus represented as the place of refuge and plenty, this still leaves Philip II as the pagan Pharaoh, and England as the Promised Land, however famine-wasted. These manifold allusions draw out the ambiguities of loyalty and identity that exile could create. Locating the Promised Land by different reference-points was one way of expressing and addressing these ambiguities.<sup>91</sup>

Jerusalem did not have to be pinned down physically; and locating it in the spiritual dimension allowed England to be imagined as *both* Jerusalem and Babylon – or as poised between the two. Bristow’s passage in his *Motives* (see above) posits Babylon as a state of mind: “we” must pray God “to bring us al home againe” to Jerusalem,

in which prayer [...] let us ioyne togeather [...] al that be Catholikes, both such as are *already by Gods goodness delivered out of Babylon* bothe in *soule and body*: and suche also as are *only in soule* out of it, and not in bodie: finally suche also as are *in it stil bothe in soule and bodie*, who doubtlesse have of al most neede so to pray [...].<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Thomas Hide, *Consolatoria Epistle*, G[8]r. cf. Exod 2:11–15.

<sup>88</sup> Downside 78395, 30.

<sup>89</sup> Downside 78395, 31.

<sup>90</sup> Downside 78395, 28–29.

<sup>91</sup> See Frederick E. Smith, “Life after Exile: Former Catholic Emigrés and the Legacy of Flight in Marian England,” *English Historical Review* 133, no. 563 (2018), 806–34, for how Catholic exiles of Henry VIII’s reign attempted to deal with these tensions. Also Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy*, 169–223, for how exile could be experienced as refuge and as opportunity.

<sup>92</sup> Bristow, *Motives* (1574), f. 136r-v.

Babylon is both a spiritual state (conforming to heretical religion) *and* a physical place (Protestant England), since a recusant Catholic is “only in soule out of it,” while expatriate Catholics are “delivered” body and soul. Leaving England thus has to be partially positive; yet this could co-exist with imagining emigration negatively as “exile.” Hide’s *Consolatorie Epistle* has Catholic expatriates fleeing Egypt like Moses, but also dwells on the sufferings of exile as “martyrdom of the minde.”<sup>93</sup> Southwell also wrote of those “who are now in Judea, that is, constant in confession of the faith,” although he continued, quoting Psalm 136 again, “we will sit by the waters of Babylon and weep when we remember Sion.”

Southwell’s “terra aliena” means heretic territory, a definition which then fitted England. Texts which seem to merge England into Babylon could be seen as illustrating a fundamental problem for Catholic applications of Jerusalem imagery. The public identification of England with Protestantism meant that national and ecclesial referents for Jerusalem/Israel were necessarily opposed. And because religious belief meant that the ecclesial identity had to take priority, these discourses could not work the way Protestant ones could. The *topos* of Jerusalem and Babylon could not successfully shape a Catholic English national identity, but delineated its failure. One could argue in favour of prioritising Christendom over island-nation, but one could not argue away their incompatibility.

To some degree, the success or failure of figurative discourses is in the reader’s mind. But English Catholic uses of Jerusalem metaphors could deploy ambivalence to articulate subversive visions of England, to resolve tensions as well as to express them. Buckland and Copley address the conflict in casting England as Babylon by locating *both* Babylon and Jerusalem in England. Copley implies that England’s identity as either Babylon or a member of Sion is a matter of choice: his Knight chooses to be an “English-islander” in Sion, fighting Babylon under Saint George’s banner. Buckland’s laments for Babylonian captivity may suggest Protestant England as a place of exile, but his portrayal of Catholic England as Jerusalem flourishing implies that what English Catholics are exiled *from* is Catholic England. Imagining England’s future reconversion, Buckland promises “The Daughters of Babilon shall be cast downe [...] Proude Heresie shall strike her saile [...]” (cf. Isaiah 47).<sup>94</sup> This applies equally to Bristow: while Catholics sit in the Babylon of Protestant England, the “Mother Jerusalem” they remember is *also* England. Meanwhile, when they wrote – and painted – their community’s history, the exiled English Bridgettine nuns described going into exile as weeping by the rivers of Babylon to remember Sion,

---

<sup>93</sup> Hide, *Consolatorie Epistle*, G[8]r, H3v. Cf. discussions of exile in Liesbeth Corens, *Confessional Mobility and English Catholics in Counter-Reformation Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), esp. 23–53.

<sup>94</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, sig.B4r.

quoting the same Psalm 136[137] to which Bristow and Southwell alluded. Syon was the actual name of their destroyed convent, but it is also Catholic England.<sup>95</sup>

Protestantism is the incursion of Babylon. Jerusalem is the *real* (Catholic) England. The division between Jerusalem and Babylon is spiritual and confessional; which of them is manifest in England is mutable and profoundly significant.

In William Allen's letter referring belligerently to the "pitying of Sion," "Sion" is not simply the Catholic Church, but Catholic England; to overthrow Protestantism in England would be an "immortal benefit" to "all of us and our nation."<sup>96</sup> The same is true of Buckland's Israelite Catholics oppressed by Babylonian heresy. England's Catholics are the remnant: the true Israel, and the true England. When Protestant heresy is cast as Babylonian and Catholicism as Israelite, that alienates England from Catholicism only if one assumes England is *de natura* Protestant and therefore rejected in the rejection of Babylon. But to Buckland and his readers, the point was that England was, in its true nature, Catholic and (part of) Jerusalem. The conjunction of nation and religion in the Jerusalem/Babylon metaphor therefore emphasised that rejecting the true Church also excludes heretics from the true nation.

Confessional circumscription of the nation could apply within texts that maintained loyalism toward a Protestant monarch. Buckland probably wrote his *Seven Sparkes* at a time when the accession of James VI/I created hopes for toleration.<sup>97</sup> Perhaps it even came out before the executions of John Sugar and Robert Grissold at Warwick (July 16, 1604) ended hopes that lethal persecution was over.<sup>98</sup> At any rate, in the spirit of this brief period of optimism, Buckland positions himself as a Jacobean loyalist. He imagines James I as "a second Cyrus," who, like the biblical king of Persia, will allow the scattered "infants of Sion" – English Catholics – to return home, and restore the "Temple." James I compared himself with Cyrus, as portrayed by the

---

<sup>95</sup> Elizabeth Perry, "Petitioning for Patronage: An Illuminated Tale of Exile from Syon Abbey, Lisbon," in *The English Convents in Exile, 1600–1800: Communities, Culture and Identity*, ed. Caroline Bowden and James E. Kelly (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 159–74 (at 167–69); Christopher de Hamel, "The Miniatures," in *Syon Abbey: The Library of the Bridgettine Nuns and Their Peregrinations after the Reformation [...] with the Manuscript at Arundel Castle*, ed. Christopher de Hamel (Otley: The Roxburghe Club, 1991), 37–47 (at 41). The intended audience for this history was King Philip III of Spain, and later his daughter.

<sup>96</sup> Knox, *Letters and Memorials of William, Cardinal Allen*, 201: "immortali beneficio," "omnia in nos gentemque nostrum."

<sup>97</sup> ARCR 2:96; on Catholic strategies at the time of the Jacobean accession, see Michael C. Questier, "The Politics of Religious Conformity and the Accession of James I," *Historical Research* 71, no. 174 (1998), 14–30; idem, *Dynastic Politics and the British Reformations, 1558–1630* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 269–300.

<sup>98</sup> Godfrey Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests: A Dictionary of the Secular Clergy of England and Wales 1558–1850*, 4 vols. (Ware and Ushaw: Saint Edmund's College, 1968–1977), vol. 1, 341–42.

Greek author Xenophon, so this is a compliment – but a calculated one.<sup>99</sup> In the biblical analogue, Cyrus, although the defender of Israel, is still a heathen and a foreigner; it contrasts with the casting of France's Catholic King as David.<sup>100</sup> In Cyrus, heathenness and foreignness are conflated. Imagining Catholics as the faithful remnant and James as Cyrus similarly conflates lacking the true faith with dissociation from the nation. In a complete re-labelling of the Protestant mental map of Jerusalem, England, Babylon and Rome, Catholicism could be asserted as defining not only true religion, but true Englishness. That ambivalent status of Protestant England, between Jerusalem and Babylon, created opportunities as well as tensions for Catholic writers.

## 5 Our Babylonian England

If Buckland offered James I a calibrated loyalism which placed him somewhere between the Holy City and her antithesis, other Catholic texts seem to make England unequivocally Babylon. And these might well be read as challenges to Protestant characterisations of Rome as Babylon which paradoxically validate Protestant conceptions of England as Rome's antithesis. John Ingram, a Catholic priest martyred in 1595, wrote that he hoped his death would "purchase" good for "our Babylonian soil": England, although the object of charity, is the Babylon which sheds martyrs' blood.<sup>101</sup>

A provocative satire on England as Babylon is explored in Emily Jennings' research on the tract *Balaam's Asse*.<sup>102</sup> This manuscript treatise was surreptitiously introduced into James I's court in 1613; fury ensued, with the suspected author (John Cotton) imprisoned until 1618 in the Tower of London before being cleared – by the arrest of the real author, John Williams, who was executed in May 1619. *Balaam's Asse* does not survive, but Jennings reconstructed its content from descriptions and refutations, and from a sequel penned a few months later. The tract refuted James I's "Monitory Preface" to his *Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance* (1609), which identified the pope as Antichrist and insisted that this interpretation of the Book of Revelation was irrefutable: there was no "other method" for interpreting it that would "contradict no part of the Text."<sup>103</sup> *Balaam's Asse* argued that, on the contrary,

<sup>99</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, B[5]v, B[6]v. John Cramsie, *Kingship and Crown Finance under James VI and I, 1603–1625* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), 24–28. Compare the conditional praise of Philip II as Cyrus in Joseph Creswell SJ's account of King Philip's visit to the English College, Valladolid (1592): Dominguez, *Radical Exiles*, 107–8.

<sup>100</sup> Bennett, "Hearing King David."

<sup>101</sup> CRS:5, 283.

<sup>102</sup> Jennings, "Balaam's Asse."

<sup>103</sup> Jennings, "Balaam's Asse," 3, citing James I, *An apologie for the oath of allegiance*.

James I's England was Babylon, and he was Antichrist. This challenge was aimed explicitly at the Protestant king himself, and his court; Williams did not direct his provocative work at a wider audience (Protestant or Catholic) by printing it, although he may have assumed its contents would be reported.

Williams went head-on for what other texts danced towards, away from and around: Protestant England is Babylon, its ruler Antichrist, and this is because of its persecution of the true Church in communion with Rome. He was not the first Catholic to think of this: in 1593, Richard Verstegan wrote that he had toyed with producing a polemical work "against the heretikes that would proove Roome to be Babilon" which would identify Protestant England as Babylon and Elizabeth as the Babylonian whore, starting from the near-anagram of "Albion" and "Babilon."<sup>104</sup>

It is not clear that Verstegan meant this as a serious theological proposition; he never wrote it up, deciding he "would not meddle in the matter aforesaid."<sup>105</sup> But Williams, who did meddle with it, was doing something rather different. As Jennings suggests, Williams' purpose was not to prove that James VI/I was Antichrist, but to demonstrate that scriptural figures *could* be spun either way, and therefore James' version was not, in fact, conclusive evidence against Catholicism. Williams "exposed and exploited the rhetorical manipulability of the verbal formulae, punitive rituals, commemorations and biblical exegeses through which Protestant hegemony was typically asserted in mid-Jacobean Britain."<sup>106</sup>

In that he developed techniques used by Copley and Buckland, Williams was not the first writer to do this, though he seems to be the only one to have died for it. Where the Elizabethan Copley provocatively hinted that Elizabeth I *might* be of Babylon, Williams' satire quite directly put James on Babylon's throne. Perhaps the less dangerous conditions of James' reign made the risk (mistakenly) seem lower; perhaps James' sallies into writing political theology made him a target. Perhaps Copley and Williams were just different people. But – though differently developed – the lines of thought which led both to *A Fig for Fortune* and to *Balaam's Asse* are consistent.

John Williams' satirical intent is further demonstrated by his statement from the scaffold: "that hee hoped they wold not thinke him so fond as to conceave himself to be illuminated with any divine or Propheticall Spirit, but that which hee wrote was *pumice* [polished verses]."<sup>107</sup> The Protestant regime may have chosen to miss the satirical nature of Williams' text, but he mocked the labelling of Rome as Babylon, by

---

<sup>104</sup> Stoakes, "English Catholic Eschatology," 141–42; Richard Verstegan to Robert Persons (Enclosure 2), April 1593, in *Letters and Despatches of Richard Verstegan*, ed. Anthony G. Pettit, Catholic Record Society Records Series 52 [hereinafter CRS:52] (London: Catholic Record Society, 1959), 134–43 (at 142).

<sup>105</sup> CRS:52, 142.

<sup>106</sup> Jennings, "Balaam's Asse," 2.

<sup>107</sup> The National Archives, Kew Gardens, London (TNA), SP14/109/f.17v.

showing that it made no *more* sense than calling England Babylon. Williams destabilised the identification, rather than seriously intending to replace it.

Neither Williams nor Ingram, furthermore, rejected England (any more than Copley had). Williams's words and prayers at his execution emphasised his Catholicism; but he also prayed for the king's "long lyfe and prosperous raigne" and stated, in a three-quarters-apology, that "hee had bin to busy and saucy with his Majesty that hee was heartily sory for that hee had so much offended and distasted the King in wrytyng that booke, which *hee was led to doe out of an inconsiderate love to his Contray.*" As Jennings observed, Williams reversed the charge of treason into one of excessive patriotism – a move profoundly disturbing, because it separated patriotism from deference to the king. Offence to the king and affection to England could coincide. The officials present understood as much, deeming "that confession not answerable to his offence."<sup>108</sup>

Suggesting that England could be Babylon did not preclude affinity with it. Williams framed his exposure of Protestant fallacies as patriotic, and himself as not merely dutifully but emotionally bound to England: an "inconsiderate," i.e. a passionate, love that overwhelmed prudence, led him to forget due respect to the king. John Ingram saw England, Babylonian or not, as not only the scene but the object of his sacrifice. He proposed his death as a patriotic sacrifice which would "purchase" good not only for the Church, but for "*our Babylonian soil.*"<sup>109</sup> Even if England chooses to be Babylon, Williams and Ingram insist, they still identify with it. Williams addressed those who watched (or would hear of) his death, Protestant or Catholic; Ingram wrote to his fellow Catholics, specifically those imprisoned for the same cause. Both statements were made in what can reasonably be regarded as a moment of truth, that of imminent death.

But if England could become Babylon, perhaps it could also return to being Jerusalem. Buckland's hope for a restored Catholic England is presented through images of Jerusalem restored, drawn from Isaiah's prophecies: "Hierusalem shall be built up againe"; "He shal likewise bring the Infants of Sion, from all quarters of their banishment: joyfully shal they returne [...] There shal not be any more grief: misery and tribulation."<sup>110</sup> These had multiple applications for early modern Christian commentators. Historically, they were fulfilled with the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile; they could also refer to the Church, through which divine grace would extend to all nations. The salvific prophecies were also thought to anticipate the New Testament Book of Revelation, which promises a New Jerusalem, the

---

<sup>108</sup> TNA SP14/109/f.17r-v (emphasis mine); Jennings, "Balaam's Asse," 23.

<sup>109</sup> Chapter 1 of Underwood, *England's Exile* (forthcoming).

<sup>110</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, B1r-B[7]r, quotations at B1v, B5v. Cf. Isaiah 44–45, esp. 44:26–28; Isa 35:10; 51:11.

perfected Heaven and Earth. England's reconversion as Jerusalem restored was deployed by Buckland, and also in the Allen elegy: "[pray] that he who brought you a Moses in the desert, a Daniel in captivity [...] send Joshua who will lead [them] into the land of promise. He may give [them] Zerubabel who led them from captivity into Jerusalem, who might raise up to him a temple."<sup>111</sup>

Buckland's use of Jerusalem restored elucidates the attraction of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem. It allows optimism: this particular story ends with the *rebuilding* of Jerusalem, and a restored Jerusalem promising the restoration of Catholic England was preferable to the transference of its value elsewhere. This promise could even be drawn into the present, as when Buckland refers to the missionary priests whose presence "only representeth in some sort: the state of former times," and who "build apace the wales of thy Hierusalem," so that "thy Temples [may be] cleansed of the abhominations: returning to the use whereunto they were builded."<sup>112</sup> It is possible that the circumstances of 1603–1604 (see above) allowed such optimism more scope: Copley's *A Fig for Fortune*, for example, does not really imagine Elizium's conversion, while Buckland devotes a whole "psalm" to England's restoration from heresy.<sup>113</sup> Yet such hope had always been part of the "English Mission" (perhaps a psychologically necessary part): the Elizabethan William Byrd's motet *Circumspice Hierusalem* (which was never printed) celebrated "the joy coming to you from God." "Your sons whom you sent forth dispersed, they are coming [...] rejoicing in God's honour" may refer specifically to the Jesuit mission of 1586 (that is, the arrival of the priests Robert Southwell and Henry Garnet).<sup>114</sup> England could be castigated as having fallen to Babylon, or even having become Babylon, but it could also be exhorted to restoration.

## 6 Conclusion

Catholic uses of Old Testament imagery and typology, and their understandings of English nationhood, were as sophisticated and significant as Protestant ones; yet (to understate the case) scholarship has focused more on the latter than on the former. The fact of their nation having established false religion meant that English Catholic deployments of Jerusalem, Israel, and Babylon imagery contained inescapable

---

<sup>111</sup> Downside 78395, 64.

<sup>112</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, C[11]r-v.

<sup>113</sup> The second, *Seven Sparkes*, B1r-B[7]r.

<sup>114</sup> Monson, "Byrd, the Catholics and the Motet," 349–50. Baruch 4:36–37 (Vulgate), "Circumspice Hierusalem ad orientem et vide iucunditatem a Deo tibi venientem ecce enim veniunt filii tui quos dimisisti dispersos veniunt collecti ab oriente usque ad occidentem in verbo Sancti gaudentes in honorem Dei."

tensions. But they simultaneously carried a fertile versatility, and a subversive potential. Protestant Jerusalem images also required rhetorical balancing acts between different imperatives, although Protestant dominance meant that they did not need the careful, provocative disjunction between the nation and its Protestantised face which Catholic ones deployed – although some radical Protestants regarded the rulers of their English Israel as more Babylonian than Israelite, and this conflict intensified in the Civil Wars era.<sup>115</sup>

The necessary presence of Rome shifted the balance in Catholic visions of Church and nation, including when it came to imagining Jerusalem – although Protestant Israelite imagery was not devoid of tensions between supranational and national, universal Church and English particularity. In Catholic imaginations, perhaps nationhood could not be absolute. Whether that changed the meaning of nationhood so much it was not nationhood at all, leaving English Catholic Jerusalems doomed to fail, may be a matter of perception.

English Catholic texts certainly resisted such a conclusion. The elegy to Allen ultimately imagined those alienated from the current English polity as those who truly loved England. Buckland closed his complaint about persecution “And all that love their Country: let this be their daylie teares.”<sup>116</sup> John Williams allowed that excessive “love to his Country” might have provoked him to insult the king, Jerusalem, Babylon, Rome, and England and how one configured those four points enabled alternative versions of both true religion and true Englishness.

The multiple ways in which one could apply tropes of Jerusalem and Israel underlines how the armoury of images available to Protestants and Catholics was the same. Their deployment was a battleground of competing identities, with neither side having a monopoly on *topoi* of infidelity, punishment and redemption, or of biblically-endorsed national and confessional identities. Catholics had cast Mary I as Deborah before Protestants had given that role to Elizabeth; Catholics saw Old Testament idolatry reappear in the Royal Supremacy where Protestants found it in Catholic image veneration. Appropriating Jerusalem and Israel allowed English Catholics to make sense of persecution; to explain England’s apostasy; to circumscribe monarchical loyalty without rejecting it; and to justify separatism. They imagined England, heresy, English Catholics, and Rome through constructively mobile applications of Jerusalem and Babylon. Crucially, Jerusalem imagery enabled writers to articulate ambivalence – and perhaps to resolve it, through driving apart the (to them) falsely welded notions of England and Protestantism. In

---

<sup>115</sup> Guibbory, *Christian Identity*, esp. 121–85; Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon*, esp. 47–92 and 132–78.

<sup>116</sup> Buckland, *Seven Sparkes*, C[12]r.

this, English Catholics' imagined Jerusalems manifested the common theme of distinctively Catholic versions of England: the interpretation of Protestantism as a destructive incursion, the wrecking-ball rather than the foundation stone of the English nation.

**Acknowledgements:** I am very grateful to Peter Marshall, Alison Shell, Brian Lockey and two anonymous reviewers for reading drafts of this paper.

**Research funding:** The research for this paper was funded through a Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship held at the University of Warwick.