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BEFORE SHAKESPEARE, DURING THE RENAISSANCE:

JOHN TIPTOFT, EARL OF WORCESTER (D. 1470) AND THE USES OF PADUA

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What follows provides a reminder of the power of forgetting. It acts as a prelude to Shakespeare's Padua by considering what that city had been to Englishmen a century before his birth, and what it was no longer to his contemporaries. It does so by taking as our guide one English lord who was himself half-forgotten by Shakespeare's lifetime. John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester (1427-70), had a political career – made earl and councillor by Henry VI, adroitly out of the country during the Wars of the Roses, called back by Edward IV to be a key advisor and executor of summary justice, only to be captured during the Readeption and himself executed – that had great dramatic potential, but the Elizabethan playwrights ignored it.<sup>1</sup> Even in the plays entitled *Edward IV*, attributed to Thomas Heywood, he was absent from dramatis personae.<sup>2</sup> When he was remembered, as in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, it was as the 'butcher' whose loyalty to the Yorkist king had immersed him in

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<sup>1</sup> The best biography remains Rosamond J. Mitchell, *John Tiptoft (1427-1470)* (London: Longmans, 1938); see also Peter Spring, *Sir John Tiptoft* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Heywood, *The First and Second Parts of King Edward IV*, ed. Richard Rowland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

‘bluddy affayres’.<sup>3</sup> His life was presented as being acted out entirely in England and Ireland; *The Mirror* omitted a biographical fact that earlier writers had considered crucial to his character development – his years in Padua.

If this article were to take a Shakespearean passage as the text on which it expounded it would be the well-known lines of York to dying Gaunt complaining that their nephew, the young king Richard II, was in thrall to:

Reports of fashion in proud Italy,  
Whose manners still our tardy-apish nation  
Limps after in base imitation.<sup>4</sup>

According to York’s complaint, even in this demi-paradise of England lurks temptation, imported from across a silver sea which patently fails in its office of being a wall. Our interest will be in what role Padua played in this tradition of Italophobia and for this our guide will be the experiences of John Tiptoft. They will lead us to a conclusion in which ‘our nation’ will come to appear a little less tardy, a little less limping in its interactions – at least before the age of Shakespeare.

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<sup>3</sup> Lily B. Campbell (ed.), *The Mirror for Magistrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), pp. 196-202. For discussion of this section, see Scott Lucas, “‘Let none such office take, save he that can for right his prince forsake’: *A Mirror for Magistrates*, Resistance Theory and the Elizabethan Monarchical Republic’ in John F. McDiarmid (ed.), *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 91-107, 96-8.

<sup>4</sup> *Richard II*, 2.1.21-3.

## I. Author

At the earl of Worcester's execution on 18 October 1470, 'the axe cut off more learning in England than was left in the heads of all the surviving nobility'.<sup>5</sup> Thomas Fuller ennobled many writers, including William Shakespeare, by providing them with their first biographical sketch in English. His description of John Tiptoft is, in truth, more detailed than his of Shakespeare and that is because he could rely on previous written testimonies – rely and reduce.

Fuller's central contention was one which had fairly wide currency in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth century: this lord was a learned man. Little evidence is adduced in Fuller's *Worthies* to support the claim. It is said, that having been born to the Lord Tiptoft – that is, the first Baron Tiptoft (d. 1443) – the son was 'bred in Baliol College in Oxford where he gained great learning'.<sup>6</sup> It is also mentioned that the earl travelled to Rome and gave before the pope, Pius II, a 'Latin speech ... which converted the Italians into a better opinion than they had formerly had of Englishmen's learning'. Fuller omits, however, any mention of surviving texts attributed to him. He overlooks, therefore, what recent scholars of English drama would consider Tiptoft's most significant literary contribution: he stands as a grandfather to the theatrical tradition of which Shakespeare was an inheritor. In 1481 William Caxton offered to his customers a printed book providing in one volume three translations into English prose of Latin works. Two were classical –

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas Fuller, *The history of the worthies of England* (London, 1662), pp. 155-6.

<sup>6</sup> He appears in the work of Fuller's contemporary, Henry Savage, *Balliofergus* (Oxford, 1668), p. 103, but there is no evidence to support this college association.

Cicero's *De senectute* and *De amicitia* – while the other had been composed earlier in his own century; it was *De nobilitate* by the Pistoian scholar and diplomat, Buonaccorso da Montemagno (d. 1429).<sup>7</sup> This last translation was to become in the following decade the main source of Henry Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucrez*, the earliest English dramatic interlude, which was printed by John Rastell in the 1510s.<sup>8</sup> Caxton attributes the translation of both Buonaccorso's text and Cicero's *De amicitia* to 'the noble famous Erle, The Erle of wurcestre ... which in his tyme flowred in vertue and cunningg to whom I knewe none lyke emonge the lordes of the temporalite in science and moral vertue'.<sup>9</sup> Fuller may have had Caxton's words in mind when he contrasted the rest of the nobility negatively with the earl of Worcester.

The surviving copies of Caxton's printing – more than a score are known – bear evidence of reading in the century after its production, but none pay attention to the translator's identity.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, when Rastell's son, William, printed (c. 1530) Cicero's *De*

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<sup>7</sup> Daniel Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature 1430-1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 168-73.

<sup>8</sup> The play is edited in *The Plays of Henry Medwall: A Critical Edition*, ed. M. E. Moeslein (New York: Garland, 1981). For the year of his death, see Alan H. Nelson, 'The Death of Henry Medwall (1501)', *Notes and Queries*, 43, 2016, pp. 375-6. See Wakelin, *Humanism*, pp. 173-81, and Carla Baricz, 'Performing *Fulgens and Lucrez*: Henry Medwall and the Tudor Great Hall Play', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 31, 2018, pp. 178-203.

<sup>9</sup> N. F. Blake, *Caxton's Own Prose* (London: Deutsch, 1973), p. 123.

<sup>10</sup> The Incunabula Short Title Catalogue, under ic00627000, lists 23 copies in public libraries: <https://data.cerl.org/istc/ic00627000>. There are also copies in private hands, with one sold at

*amicitia* ‘newly translated out of Latyne into Englishe’, he lied a little: it was Tiptoft’s version that he used without naming him.<sup>11</sup> The memory of the earl’s association with these works was kept alive by the mid-sixteenth-century development of the bibliographical tradition.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Fuller’s immediate source was the Latin catalogue of British writers by John Bale (1495-1563).<sup>13</sup> Bale, in turn, was informed by the notebooks of his friend, John Leland (d. 1552), unpublished until the eighteenth century. Leland’s collection of lives includes a notably extended entry for Tiptoft.<sup>14</sup> It helpfully renders into Latin Caxton’s

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Christie’s, London on 14 July 2021, with the catalogue entry listing others:

<https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6326048>. For summary records of annotations in 15 of these copies, see <https://data.cerl.org/mei/02128027> [all URLs accessed 18 August 2022].

<sup>11</sup> *Tullius de amicicia, in Englysh* (London, 1530), colophon (fol. 18). About the same time and from the same press appeared *Iulius Cesars commentaryes* ([London, 1530]), a translation sometimes attributed to Tiptoft but without any evidence adduced; the claim appears to derive from Frognall Dibdin in his edition of Joseph Ames’s *Typographical Antiquities* (London, 1810-19), vol. 3 (1816), pp. 106-7; for refutation, see Mitchell, *Tiptoft*, p. 175.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Sharpe, ‘The English Bibliographical Tradition from Kirkestede to Tanner’ in Charles Burnett and Nicholas Mann (eds), *Britannia Latina: Latin in the Culture of Great Britain from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (London: Warburg Institute, 2005), pp. 86-128.

<sup>13</sup> John Bale, *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytannie ... catalogus* (Basel, 1557-59), vol. 1, pp. 620-1.

<sup>14</sup> John Leland, *De viris illustribus*, ed. James Carley (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2010), pp. 796-806.

sentences praising the earl but it unhelpfully falls into exaggeration when it attributes the English *De senectute* to Tiptoft.<sup>15</sup> Leland's description is also the source for Fuller's statement that the earl impressed Pius II with his eloquence, so much so that the pope shed tears of joy. Leland sprinkles his discussion with long quotations, including one by Tiptoft's secretary, John Free, in which this claim was made. Leland had found the words in a manuscript which Free had sent back to England from Italy; the codex was, in fact, made in Padua.<sup>16</sup> Here lies the striking difference between, on the one hand, Fuller, who, in his ordering of worthies, places Tiptoft in the county of his birth (Cambridgeshire) and gives an Anglo-centric description of his life and, on the other, the bibliographers who emphasise the earl's time in Italy. Leland conjures up an image of his subject thirsting for learning from a young age, and so became determined to seek out Padua and its university '*omni bonarum disciplinarum genere longe instructissima*' (which was by far the most versed in every type of good branch of knowledge).<sup>17</sup> It was not Padua alone that Tiptoft visited; Leland also mentions Ferrara, to which (it is said) Tiptoft was drawn by the fame of the educator Guarino da Verona. In the mid-twentieth century, emphasis was placed on Tiptoft as one of the English 'pupils of Guarino' but this is liable to misrepresent the balance of importance

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<sup>15</sup> For the reasons why we must reject this attribution, see Mitchell, *Tiptoft*, p. 174. There has been some broader scepticism of Tiptoft as an author: Anna Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, 'Richard III's Books, XII: William Worcester's *Boke of Noblesse* and his Collection of Documents on the War in Normandy', *The Ricardian*, 9, 1991, pp. 154-65, 160-1, but see Wakelin, *Humanism*, p. 170, n. 32.

<sup>16</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 80.

<sup>17</sup> Leland, *De viris*, p. 798.

between the two cities.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, what mattered for Leland and for Bale was that the earl had supplemented his learning by moving between these two locales and thus became an eloquent writer in Latin. Bale includes a list of those writings, epistles and orations, including one ‘*ad Patauienses*’ – none of the speeches survives.

What the bibliographers provide, therefore, is a depiction of the earl which in some ways overlaps with that given by Caxton but which refocuses it on the international nature of Tiptoft’s intellectual odyssey. He had become more fully a worthy Englishman by being a Paduan resident.

For all their difference, these memorials of the earl of Worcester, from the late fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, share an assumption that he is a figure of virtue. This, though, was not how he was generally remembered. His depiction in *The Mirror for Magistrates* had wider currency – as a man of blood who (when his foreign travels were remembered) stood as an example of the dangers of an Englishman spending time abroad.

## II. Butcher

The writings discussed so far could all be considered the fruits of John Tiptoft’s *otium*, but there were also texts from his hours of *negotium*. These short works were ignored by the bibliographers but sought after by early modern heralds. Chief among them were the ordinances for ‘jousts of peace’ issued on 29 May 1466 in the name of Edward IV’s

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<sup>18</sup> The phrase is Roberto Weiss’s in his *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century*, first printed in 1941. For discussion, see David Rundle, ‘Beyond the Classroom: International Interest in the *studia humanitatis* in the University Towns of Quattrocento Italy’, *Renaissance Studies*, 27, 2013, pp. 533-48.



Constable, a position Tiptoft held from 7 February 1462 to 24 August 1467.<sup>19</sup> The ordinances were not merely of antiquarian interest: they were re-promulgated early in Elizabeth's reign, in 1562.<sup>20</sup> The topic of the ordinances might suggest the role of Constable was an innocuous one, but this was only an ancillary part of his responsibilities. It was the more significant role as a judge that helped Tiptoft gain a noxious reputation.

The chronicles, from the fifteenth century through to Holinshed, describe how, as Constable and, later, Deputy Lieutenant in Ireland, Tiptoft dealt with rebels against his king by a process of arrest and brief trial followed by brutal punishment. There is one narration of these events which adds an extra element. In describing the fate of the earl of Oxford and his son, the so-called Warkworth Chronicle says that they 'were brought before the earl of Worcester and judged by law Padowe'.<sup>21</sup> We might be inclined to dismiss this as a corrupt or unclear reading were it not for the fact that, remarkably, it is echoed by an important Italian source.

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<sup>19</sup> On these ordinances, see Mitchell, *Tiptoft*, pp. 101-3, and Joachim K. Rühl, 'Regulations for the Joust in Fifteenth-Century Europe: Francesco Sforza Visconti (1465) and John Tiptoft (1466)', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 18, 2001, pp. 193-20. For the dates of his tenure as Constable, see *Calendar of Patent Rolls* [hereafter *CPR*] 1461-67 (London, 1897), p. 74 and *CPR* 1467-76 (London, 1900), p. 19.

<sup>20</sup> John Harington, *Nugae Antiquae*, ed. Henry Harington and Thomas Park (London, 1804), vol. 1, pp. 1-11.

<sup>21</sup> Lister M. Matheson, *Death and Dissent. Two Fifteenth-Century Chronicles* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), p. 97; for discussion of its possible place of production, see J. A. F. Thomson, "'Warkworth's Chronicle' Reconsidered', *English Historical Review*, 116, 2001, pp. 657-64.

The Florentine book-seller, Vespasiano da Bisticci, included a biography of ‘Messer Giovanni duca d’Ulsestri’ in the collection of *vite* he wrote in retirement in the 1480s. He includes in it a notably detailed description of the earl’s execution, opening it by explaining:

tutti gridavano ch’egli morisse, e ... egli innovate certe legge che l’aveva recate d’Italia, ... egli aveva fatto, ... una lege ch’era contra al popolo, che si chiamava la lege da Padova, ... dov’egli era istato a Studio (all called for him to die and said that he had introduced certain laws that he had brought in from Italy ... he had made ... a law which was against the people, which was called the law of Padua, ... where he was at the University).<sup>22</sup>

Both the English chronicler talking generally of ‘lawe Padowe’ and Vespasiano invoking a specific ‘lege di Padova’, ascribe Tiptoft’s perceived cruelty to an import of unEnglish practices learnt while in the Veneto. It was no matter that Tiptoft’s time in Italy was spent in scholarly pursuits other than legal studies; the combination of the known biographical fact of his presence in Padua and the high international reputation the University in the teaching of law was sufficient to cast a slur. The purpose of the accusation was to make appear alien what was, in fact, established practice.<sup>23</sup> The Constable’s Court was, from its fourteenth-

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<sup>22</sup> Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Le Vite*, ed. Aulo Greco (Florence: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 1970), vol. 1, p. 419.

<sup>23</sup> M. H. Keen, ‘Treason Trials under the Law of Arms’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 12, 1962, pp. 85-103. See David Rundle, ‘Was there a Renaissance Style of Politics in Fifteenth-Century England?’ in George W. Bernard and Steven J. Gunn (eds), *Authority*

century origins, one of England's legal institutions which worked by civil law, rather than English common law. Its particular remit was related to war: it, in effect, imposed military law and thus exacted summary justice.<sup>24</sup> What could have been seen as controversial was Edward IV's recourse to such a Court to deal with opponents who were not caught in open battle, though, in truth, even that was not unprecedented.<sup>25</sup> If there were any extensions of the Court's powers on Tiptoft's watch, they were responding to local legal knowledge and present political circumstance, rather than any sudden influx of influence from civilian learning elsewhere.

While Tiptoft was in his ascendancy, his Lancastrian enemies were in exile across the channel. Among their number was Sir John Fortescue, who spent some of his time advising through his writings the would-be king, Henry VI's son, Edward. One central element of his teaching was the superiority of the English legal system over civil law. Fortescue depicted it as a clash between neighbours, with France as the representative of a system supposedly alien to England; no reference is made to Italy's importance in civilian learning. But Fortescue's apparently simple dichotomy is complicated by conscious acts of misdirection. For instance, he complained about the French use of torture, surely not unaware that there were rumours of its use in London in recent years, and that, indeed, it

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*and Consent in Tudor England. Essays presented to C. S. L. Davies* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 15-32, 19-21.

<sup>24</sup> John H. Baker, *Oxford History of the Laws of England. VI: 1483-1558* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 216-19; George D. Squibb, *The High Court of Chivalry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 26-7.

<sup>25</sup> John M. Collins, *Martial Law and English Laws, c. 1500-c.1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 21.

was licensed for use in the naval equivalent of the Constable's Court, the Court of Admiralty.<sup>26</sup> He mentioned both of those courts when praising the English recourse to witnesses, noting their use ought '*iuxta legum Anglie sanctiones*' to be required in the Admiralty and that it had been the custom ('*solitum est*') in the Constable's Court.<sup>27</sup> This misrepresents, by suggesting either of these courts was administered by common law; moreover, by the use of the perfect tense to describe procedure in the Constable's Court, Fortescue implies it is falling away from previous good practice. It may be that rumours of Tiptoft's activities, however distorted, were known not just in England and Florence but also near the banks of the Meuse. If so, they played into what Fortescue saw as a wider conflict between common and civil law.

In the following centuries, it might be said that what Fortescue called 'the laws of England' won, and therefore Tiptoft's world died a second death, but the outcome was not immediate or straightforward. Tiptoft's execution did not decapitate the standing of the Constable's Court but its use did decline in the early sixteenth century, with no permanent Constable appointed after 1504 and its powers being resurrected only at times of unrest.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> John Fortescue, *De laudibus legum Anglie*, ed. S. B. Chrimes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942), pp. 46-52; James Heath, *Torture and English Law* (Westport: Greenwood, 1982), pp. 49-57.

<sup>27</sup> Fortescue, *De laudibus*, p. 74 (Chrimes translates *solitum est* as present tense).

<sup>28</sup> Baker, *Oxford History*, pp. 216-18; Anne F. Sutton, 'The Admiralty and Constableness of England in the Later Fifteenth Century: The Operation and Development of these Offices, 1462-85, under Richard, Duke of Gloucester and King of England' in Anthony Musson and Nigel Ramsay (eds), *Courts of Chivalry and Admiralty in Late Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2018), pp. 195-222.

More widely, of course, it was not the only venue for the use of civil law in England, with institutions like Star Chamber and the Court of Chancery working by civilian principles.<sup>29</sup> What has been called the ‘enemy theory’ – that is, the assumption that common lawyers showed little interest in civil law beyond considering it a threat – is out of fashion, partly because there is evidence for increasing knowledge of it during the sixteenth century.<sup>30</sup> This does not mean, though, that the works of Fortescue were forgotten; they were, indeed, invoked in the early seventeenth century by Sir Edward Coke, when he discussed the use of torture in the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>31</sup> Coke considered the presence of the rack in the Tower of London as evidence that its users ‘intended to have brought in the Civill Laws’ – though he placed responsibility not with Tiptoft but with Henry VI’s councillors, specifically John Holland, duke of Exeter and William de la Pole, duke of Suffolk.<sup>32</sup>

Though the rise and fall of Suffolk, unlike Tiptoft’s, found its way into Shakespeare’s drama, the litany of accusations with which the rebels assail the duke do not

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<sup>29</sup> J. A. Guy, *The Cardinal’s Court: The Impact of Thomas Wolsey in Star Chamber* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1977); William J. Jones, *The Elizabethan Court of Chancery* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

<sup>30</sup> The phrase is David J. Seipp, ‘The Reception of Canon Law and Civil Law in the Common Law Courts before 1600’, *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 13, 1993, pp. 388-420. See also R. H. Helmholz, *The ius commune in England: Four Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>31</sup> On Coke’s engagement with Fortescue more widely, see Glenn Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution* (London: Macmillan, 1992), esp. ch. 2.

<sup>32</sup> Heath, *Torture*, pp. 52-3 citing Edward Coke, *The third part of the institutes* (London, 1644), p. 35 (chapter 2 on petit treason); Fortescue is cited in Coke’s marginal annotation.

include any mention of changing the legal system. A similar lack of interest in its civilian associations is apparent in Shakespeare's references to Padua. When *The Taming of the Shrew*, transferring the action of *A Shrew* from Athens (city of 'Platoes schools and Aristotles walks'), introduces Padua, 'nursery of the arts', the allusions are to its reputation for education generally or arguably specifically solely in the basic degrees and not in the higher faculty of law – unless when Lucentio says that he will 'haply institute / a course of learning', the verb is intended to echo the title of one part of the *Corpus*.<sup>33</sup> For explicit associations between Padua and the law, we have to turn to *The Merchant of Venice*, where into the location of the action is imported legal learning developed in the Venetian Empire's university city. The comparison with Tiptoft's 'law Padoue' is instructive: the advice that Bellario relays to Portia unleashes a denouement which is (for some) happy, since it celebrates the law's possibilities for mercy rather than its threat of severity. However we read the courtroom drama of *The Merchant's* final scenes, it is striking that any sense of danger associated with law taught in Padua is absent.<sup>34</sup> Instead of being the source of a pernicious legal acuity, Padua has become its antidote. Between Tiptoft and Shakespeare, there had been, as it were, a taming of shrewd Padua.

### III. Pilgrim

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<sup>33</sup> *The Shrew*, 1.1.3, 7-8; compare *A Shrew*, 3.2.

<sup>34</sup> Quentin Skinner, 'Why Shylocke Loses His Case: Judicial Rhetoric in *The Merchant of Venice*' in Lorna Hutson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of English Law and Literature, 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 97-117.

If Padua came to seem less dangerous in one aspect, there was another in which it was more so in the later sixteenth century than it had been in Tiptoft's lifetime. In 1595, there was the first printing of what proved to be a popular pair of broadside ballads narrating the adventures of Maudlin, the daughter of a Bristol merchant.<sup>35</sup> She was in love but was not allowed to marry, so her intended (after serenading her like Romeo to Juliet) left their hometown for Padua. Hearing that he was ill, Maudlin determined to find him, reached 'the pleasant banks of Italy' and found him in the city – 'but now alas behold the lucke', he was thrown into prison for heresy:

Condemnd he was to die alas,  
Except he would his faith and his religion turne:  
But rather then he would go to masse,  
In fiery flames he vowed to burne.

At the moment he was to die, Maudlin stepped forward, insisting she would join him in the fire. It seems that the judges had been affected by the same legal instruction as Portia for, when they saw the depth of the lovers' commitment, they showed mercy. The English lovers

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<sup>35</sup> For each ballad the earliest version survives in one copy in the British Library's Huth collection (STC 3795 and 3796), digitised by the English Broadside Ballad Archive (EBBA), numbers 37037-78: <https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/>. The online database gives a broad range for their printing (1583-1625) but there are records in the Stationers' Register of payment for their publication on 24 February and 17 March 1595 by Thomas Creede; see <https://stationersregister.online/> [all websites accessed on 23 August 2022].

could thus return to ‘mery Bristow ... at last’ and tell all about ‘the dangers they had past’.  
Reader, she married him.

The moral of the ballads – that Padua was an unsafe place for any confirmed Protestant – could have been applied to nearly anywhere in Italy or in western Mediterranean Europe. For some, in fact, Padua was a less threatening place than most for those of divergent religious opinions, and so it hosted some exiles from Mary’s England, as it later did Catholics from Elizabeth’s.<sup>36</sup> This Reformation status obfuscates its earlier role, in which Tiptoft can again stand as an example. Though he may have been known as ‘the Butcher’, he was also considered a pious man, epitomising for Vespasiano da Bisticci a trait of ‘questi oltramontani’.<sup>37</sup> Vespasiano explained that, as England descended into civil war, the earl ‘fece come fanno e’ savii’, and left his homeland on pilgrimage.<sup>38</sup> In the pursuit of a spiritual experience, Padua was both a stopping-point and a destination in itself.

As for many English pilgrims, Tiptoft’s primary purpose was to reach the spiritual heart of his religion, even though it fell outside Christian control. We are remarkably well-informed about his journey to Jerusalem and to other sites in the Holy Land, because several others on the trip, both Italian and English, left descriptions of it.<sup>39</sup> His embarkation point

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<sup>36</sup> Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors. English Students in Italy, 1485-1603* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 121-2.

<sup>37</sup> Vespasiano, *Vite*, p. 420.

<sup>38</sup> Vespasiano, *Vite*, p. 417.

<sup>39</sup> There are two *volgare* narratives, by Gabriele Capodilista (printed c.1475) and Roberto da Sanseverino, available in *Felice et divoto ad Terrasancta viaggio facto per Roberto de Sancto Severino (1458-1459)*, ed. Mario Cavaglià and Alda Rossebastiano (Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 1999), and one in English by William Wey, most recently printed in *The*



was Venice. There, in May 1458, Tiptoft met other English pilgrims, including William Wey, fellow and bursar of Eton College. Wey had reached Venice from the south, having already paid his devotions in Rome. He therefore travelled up through Umbria, then via Forlì and Ravenna.<sup>40</sup> In contrast, Tiptoft is more likely to have gone directly to Venice, and so reached it from Padua, presumably travelling as others did ‘*per mare et aquam*’, that is by boat along the Brenta and into the lagoon.<sup>41</sup>

In *The Shrew*, Shakespeare places the urban setting of the action in connexion with other cities, mentioning both Venice and Verona; for all the vagueness of the opening reference to ‘fair Lombardy’, a geographical awareness is on display. That geography, however, is more confined than it had been for Tiptoft and his fellow pilgrims, for whom Padua acted as a stepping stone to or from Venice which itself was a spring-board to venturing further east. This does not mean that Padua was solely a resting place; a pilgrimage was not simply about arriving at the final location. As Wey’s description shows, the places en route were also venues of devotion, his itinerary listing the relics to be seen in Venice and Padua.<sup>42</sup> He mentions four Paduan sites, including the tomb of Anthony, the Portuguese early follower of St Francis; Anthony died just south of Padua’s walls, where the basilica in his honour was then built.

The patterns of devotional travel of which Tiptoft and Wey were two representatives continued apace for at least a half-century after their pilgrimage, and a journey from

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*Itineraries of William Wey*, ed. Francis Davey (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2010). The journey is reconstructed by R. J. Mitchell, *The Spring Voyage* (London: John Murray, 1964).

<sup>40</sup> *The Itineraries of William Wey*, ed. [G. Williams] (London, 1857), pp. xxi-xxiii.

<sup>41</sup> *Informacon for pylgrymes vnto the holy londe* ([Westminster] [c. 1496]), sig. [a iv<sup>v</sup>].

<sup>42</sup> Wey, *Itineraries*, p. 53.

England to the Holy Land was not entirely unheard of in Shakespeare's own lifetime.<sup>43</sup> The best-remembered of those later travellers is Thomas Coryat (d. 1617) who spoke of his time in Padua. We might detect some similarities between his experience of the city's holy sites and that of Tiptoft. Like Coryat, Tiptoft presumably approached the basilica of St Anthony via the Jewish quarter and may have paused to admire the statue of Gattamelata, 'passing exquisitely made, according to the full and lively proportion of a man and horse' – Donatello's sculptural masterpiece, reviving the ancient style of equestrian statue, and completed only a few years before the earl's arrival in the city.<sup>44</sup> Tiptoft may also have had the same impression of the basilica as Coryat: 'a very beautifull building, but not so faire without as within'.<sup>45</sup> The chasm between the two Englishmen is on display in Coryat's reaction to the saint and his cult. Coryat claims a lack of prior knowledge about Anthony and comments: 'It is reported that his Tombe hath the vertue to expell Diuels, which I do hardly beleue. For I saw an experiment of it when I was in the Church which came to no Effect'.<sup>46</sup> Such a performance of scepticism and, with it, the sense of being in an alien land, marks the distance from Tiptoft's world. Padua was no longer part of a single fabric of Christian wonder; the curtain had been rent in twain.

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<sup>43</sup> Beatrice Groves, "'Those sanctified places where our Sauious feete had trode": Jerusalem in Early Modern English Travel Narratives', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 43, 2012, pp. 681-700.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas Coryat, *Coryats crudities* (London, 1611), p. 142; the completion of the statue of Gattamelata (Erasmus da Narni, 1370-1443) is usually dated to 1453.

<sup>45</sup> Coryat, *Crudities*, p. 142.

<sup>46</sup> Coryat, *Crudities*, p. 143.

#### IV. Book-collector

While Padua may have, for some among the visiting English, lost the religious charge it had for John Tiptoft, there was one obvious continuity: its reputation as a centre of learning. The presence of Englishmen at university lectures has been chronicled over the sixteenth century but it is also well-known that they stood in a longer tradition.<sup>47</sup> When Tiptoft based himself in Padua after his return from Jerusalem, he was by no means a lone pallid face haunting the university. But there were ways in which he was atypical among his fellow students.<sup>48</sup> His noble status made him akin to his later sixteenth-century successors; his contemporaries were more often finishing their legal education as part of an ecclesiastical career. His position also came with buying-power. I wish to highlight here one way in which he employed that: as a buyer of books. A university town was not defined solely by its structures of education; Padua had its city government (albeit by this date overseen from Venice), its cathedral and monasteries, and, in addition, was host to commercial activities which could thrive in an educational environment.

The Ferrara-based humanist, Ludovico Carbone, claimed in his funeral oration on Guarino da Verona that Tiptoft despoiled Italy's libraries in order to embellish England with

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<sup>47</sup> Woolfson, *Padua*, supplemented by id., 'Padua and English Students Revisited', *Renaissance Studies*, 27, 2013, pp. 572-87; see also Daniela Marrone, Linda Luxon and Gaetano Thiene (eds), *English Students of Medicine at the University of Padua during the Renaissance* (Padua: Padova University Press, 2016).

<sup>48</sup> R. J. Mitchell, 'English Students at Padua', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 19, 1936, pp. 101-18.

beautiful books.<sup>49</sup> Forty-one books can now be associated with Tiptoft, and of those he saw or came to own thirty-five during his time in Italy.<sup>50</sup> Carbone's location reminds us that the earl had the financial wherewithal to travel and purchase manuscripts in multiple cities, including (as well as Padua and Ferrara) in Venice and Florence: Vespasiano da Bisticci later recalled him because he had been a client in his shop.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, despite Carbone's words, not all of Tiptoft's newly minted library returned to England with him; it is clear that a part stayed in Padua until the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>52</sup> That city, however, did have a special significance for both Tiptoft's book-collecting and, through that, for England's engagement with the Renaissance. A substantial number of his manuscripts were made there for him and included some avant-garde humanist productions. One of those is a copy of Juvenal written by the Paduan scribe, Bartolomeo Sanvito, and others came from the same milieu. Sanvito may be best remembered for his association with Andrea Mantegna as they developed together the arts of the book; his primary palaeographical significance lies in his development of the slanted cursive bookhand which we have come to know as 'italic'.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Eugenio Garin, *Prosatori latini del Quattrocento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1960), pp. 398-400.

<sup>50</sup> David Rundle, *The Renaissance Reform of the Book and Britain: The English Quattrocento* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 174-227. London, British Library, MS Burney 230 may be added to this list, on the basis of the annotations at fols 22, 25.

<sup>51</sup> Susan Connell, 'Books and their Owners in Venice 1345-1480', *JWCI*, 35, 1972, pp. 163-86, 180.

<sup>52</sup> Rundle, *Renaissance Reform*, pp. 203-4.

<sup>53</sup> A. C. de la Mare and Laura Nuvoloni, *Bartolomeo Sanvito* (n.p.: Association Internationale de Bibliophilie, 2009).

Following Tiptoft's death, those books of his which were in his homeland were dispersed, putting into circulation a collection of both classical and humanist texts. Some of these reached Englishmen with humanist interests including John Russell, bishop of Lincoln (d. 1494), and Robert Sherborn, bishop of Chichester (d. 1536), as well as the medical scholar William Grocyn (d. 1519). Among these, Tiptoft's Juvenal was bought in London in 1491 by a Brescian who had settled in England, Pietro Carmeliano, a secretary to Henry VII and responsible for introducing italic script into royal diplomatic correspondence.<sup>54</sup> Carmeliano was no means the first Italian Quattrocento scribe active in England. There had, in fact, been a fairly continuous presence since the 1430s. One early representative was Milo da Carraria, a scion of the Carrara dynasty who had ruled Padua until the Venetian take-over in 1405. One of the texts Milo copied while in England was the foundational humanist educational tract, *De ingenuis moribus* by Pier Paolo Vergerio, which had been dedicated to one of Milo's relatives. In fifteenth-century England, there was some memory of an independent Padua.<sup>55</sup>

It is also the case that Tiptoft did not discover the Renaissance by going to Italy: in the early 1450s, he was presented with a codex, manufactured in Oxford, which was a compilation of humanist treatises to be found in the University Library there.<sup>56</sup> In short,

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<sup>54</sup> Rundle, *Renaissance Reform*, pp. 254-64.

<sup>55</sup> Rundle, *Renaissance Reform*, pp. 78-81; the manuscript is now Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 952, produced in London in 1447.

<sup>56</sup> Dublin, Trinity College, MS 438; for the context of its production, see David Rundle, 'The Playpen: Reform, Experimentation and the Memory of Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester in the Registry of the University of Oxford' in James Willoughby and Jeremy Catto (eds), *Books*

John Tiptoft stands not as the beginning of a tradition of Renaissance contact but as witness to its pre-existing structures. If his experience marks a new stage in that tradition, it is in the increased importance of Padua as a centre of innovation in book production.

In the mid-sixteenth century, John Leland placed Tiptoft in a lineage of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century English scholars who had knowledge of Italy and were thus responsible for the '*instauratio bonarum literarum*', the Renaissance of good letters.<sup>57</sup> Elsewhere, Leland emphasised the importance of Padua in this process.<sup>58</sup> What is worth emphasising is that our engrained assumption of a time-lag in cultural development – a Renaissance in Italy only belatedly reaching England – does not pertain in this perception of the revival of eloquence. In this regard, Quattrocento Englishmen like Tiptoft were not so much 'impish' as implicated in the Renaissance's success, as customers, patrons and distributors of its works.

## V. Ghost

In contrast to Leland, for his contemporaries, the authors of *The Mirror of Magistrates*, Tiptoft was a rueful ghost, reduced to bemoaning his own cruelty. To end, however, I want to suggest there is another ghost on the stage – the city of Padua itself. Roger Ascham's dictum 'Italie now is not that Italie that it was wont to be' could be particularly applied to

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*and Bookmen in Early-Modern England* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2018), pp. 17-39.

<sup>57</sup> David Rundle, 'The Renaissance' in Will Rossiter and Petra Rau (eds), *Europe in British Literature and Culture* (forthcoming).

<sup>58</sup> Leland, *De viris*, p. 812.

Padua.<sup>59</sup> By Shakespeare's lifetime, it had lost the specific sense of legal danger that had been applied to it by some in the fifteenth century. That had been replaced by a vaguer fear of spiritual threat, a function of the end of a shared European geography of pilgrimage, in which Padua had a role. We have also described it as having an importance in book-production in the second half of the fifteenth century. That heyday did not last long, exemplified by the departure of the scribe Sanvito himself to Rome; he was able to find customers throughout his life but the shift to print both created challenges for other manuscript-producers and reduced Padua's significance. When there was an attempt to replicate italic script as a font, it was at the press of Aldus Manutius in Venice. That experiment had a long-term success so that, in combining Roman type with italic, the First Folio was the inheritor to habits which had their origins in Padua during Tiptoft's years.

We cannot, of course, imagine there was any consciousness of the Paduan link among the typesetters of Shakespeare's plays. Rather, there had been a washing away of many of the associations it had held. There were some continuities and some new features but what had been forgotten was arguably most helpful, giving Shakespeare an open stage on which to conjure his own 'Padua'.

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<sup>59</sup> Roger Ascham, *The scholemaster* (London, 1570), fol. 23<sup>v</sup> [sig. hiii<sup>v</sup>].