

Royalist Reclamation of Psalmic Song in 1650s England

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This article brings into focus the royalist experience of political defeat and cultural recovery in mid-seventeenth-century England. It shows how royalist writers developed a polemically charged psalmic poetics that allowed them to appropriate the discursive authority of their Puritan enemies, reestablish their own cultural standing, and prepare the way for religious and political return. Several writers who found common cause in 1650s royalist poetics appear in these pages, including Izaak Walton, Thomas Stanley, Jeremy Taylor, Henry King, and the author(s) of the 1649 Eikon Basilike. Royalist writers with more divided responses to psalmic polemics appear here as well, including the episcopal divine, Henry Hammond, and the Davidic poet, Abraham Cowley. The poet, psalmist, and polemicist John Milton is an important presence throughout: his Eikonoklastes seems aware of his opponents' polemical project, as do his 1653 psalms, and Paradise Lost itself may respond to what he once derided as royalist "Psalmistry."

1. INTRODUCTION

Well into the 1653 first edition of Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler*, the "Master" angler Piscator retires to perfect a song about "the brave Fishers life."¹ The song ends by noting that anglers often pass an idle hour "Under a green willow" when it rains.² "[I]t is many yeers since I learn'd it," Piscator admits after he returns and performs his song before a group of anglers, "and having forgotten part of it, I was forced to patch it up by the help of my own invention, who am not excellent at Poetry, as part of the Song may testifie."³ The episode prompts Piscator's "Scholer" Viator to account for what he did while his master was off re-creating his song: "I sate down under a Willow tree by the water side, and considered what you had told me of the owner of that pleasant Meadow . . . that he himselfe had not leisure to take the sweet content that I, who pretended no title, took in his fields."⁴ Having established the difference between the busy landowner and his recreating self, Viator "made a conversion of a piece of an old Ketch, and added more to it, fitting . . . [his "thoughts"] to be sung by us Anglers,"

¹Walton, 1983, 148–49.

²Ibid., 149.

³Ibid., 149–50.

⁴Ibid., 150.

and he now asks his master to join him in singing his recovered, retooled lyric: “Come, Master, you can sing well, you must sing a part of it as it is in this paper.”⁵ What follows is a page of sheet music for a duet set by Henry Lawes that ends, “We’l banish all sorrow, and sing till to morrow, / And Angle, and Angle again” (fig. 1).⁶ After Viator and Piscator (and the reader) have sung, one of the company, noting that “this is Musick indeed” that “has cheered my heart,” recalls yet another set of verses, this time in praise of “Musick, miraculous Rhetorick, that speak’st sense / Without a tongue, excelling eloquence.”⁷ Piscator praises him for his “Well remembered” verses and invites the group to repeat Viator’s song: “we will all joine together, mine Hoste and all, and sing my Scholers Ketch over again.”⁸

The Compleat Angler is a genial and appealing volume: half piscatory guide that addresses everything from bream to otter, and half cultural miscellany that collects an array of literary, musical, and philosophical material. But readers then and now have recognized that it is also an unmistakably polemical text. As Derek Hirst has noted, the *Angler* not only entertained royalist readers living in internal exile during the Cromwellian 1650s, but also conveyed to those readers what it understood to be England’s religious and cultural traditions.⁹

Setting Walton’s willow scene next to a line from Henry Hammond’s contemporaneous paraphrase of Psalm 137 sharpens Hirst’s point considerably. Hammond translates, “How shall we sing the Lords song in a strange land?”; he then comments, “But our Levites gave answer presently, that it was not fit for them to sing those festival hymns that belonged to the praises of the God of Israel at a time of publick mourning, and withall in a land and among a people that acknowledged him not for God, or indeed any where but in the Temple, the place of his solemn festival worship.”¹⁰ As the juxtaposition of

⁵Ibid., 151.

⁶Ibid., 337. See also Walton, 1653, 216–17.

⁷Walton, 1983, 151.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Hirst, 1990, 133–50, suggests a general royalist appropriation of high culture in which Walton has a prominent place. Hirst, 2002, 656, argues that, after defeat, royalists constructed “a nostalgic and idealised Englishness” out of *The Compleat Angler*, Raleigh and Marlowe, Beaumont and Fletcher, Donne, *Cooper’s Hill*, and William Cartwright. Zwicker, 60–89, examines Walton’s volume and Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House” as competing polemical compositions. Others discuss the *Angler’s* commitment to the disestablished Church of England: Hirst, 2002, 649; Scodel, 768; Bevan, 96. A. Milton, 61; and Wilcher, 2001, 308–48, note the interdependence of royalism, episcopal religion, and literature during the 1650s.

¹⁰Hammond, 666.

FIGURE 1. Pages 216–17 of Izaak Walton, *The compleat angler or, The contemplative man's recreation*, 1653. © The British Library Board. Wing W661, Profzheimer 1048, Thomason E.1488[1]. The inverted text enables two singers to harmonize using a single book, the treble voice singing *cantus* (216) across from the bass voice singing *bassus* (217).

Walton's willow scene and Hammond's psalmic gloss makes clear, a book that features an angler who “s[its] down under a Willow tree by the water side,” contrasts his “leisure” with his landowner’s business, and recalls and recreates “forgotten” songs in a book that has appropriated the familiar and powerful narrative of Psalm 137 both to make sense of the royalist experience of political and cultural defeat and to justify a righteous expectation of recovery and return. (That the songs the anglers recover are English, poetical, and courtly suggests a royalist reclamation, through psalmic narrative, of secular traditions that were discredited during the time of republican ascendancy in the 1640s.)

What makes the psalmic underpinnings of Walton’s scene particularly startling is the hint they offer of royalist claims to what by 1645 was widely understood to be the securely Puritan territory of metrical psalming. Moreover, by grounding the willow scene and the *Angler* in the relationship

of “Master” and “Scholar,” and by extending the teacher-student model so that the student instructs not only characters but also readers, Walton follows through on his prefatory promise, which is “to make a man that was none, an Angler by a book.”¹¹ In the loaded religious and political context supplied by *The Compleat Angler*, to “Angle, and Angle again” is to use whatever baits work — whether fishing lore or pretty poems that need never breathe a political word to be polemically resonant in a psalmic setting where “Musick” is “miraculous Rhetorick” — to hook and reel readers into what Piscator calls the “Brother[hood] of the *Angle*” and what we might call the disestablished *Ecclesia Anglicana*, or Church of England.¹²

The Compleat Angler is a brilliantly strategic book, but it is by no means alone in its stratagems. Indeed, Walton’s volume is only a particularly accomplished instance of what can be identified as a larger phenomenon of 1650s royalist psalmic poetics. If Walton traces the loss and recovery of poetical song by his rusticated anglers, this essay traces the loss and recovery of ideological and cultural voice by 1650s royalist writers. Specifically, it argues that the *Eikon Basilike* of Charles Stuart and John Gauden, scornfully denounced by John Milton as a royalist “Psalter,”¹³ in conjunction with the apparently unrelated phenomenon of Puritan metrical psalming provided a potent model and means for disenfranchised royalist writers to reestablish discursive authority. More broadly, these pages argue for the emergence of a polemical poetics, royalist in general and psalmic in particular, that manifests the kind of aggressive, dynamic, and even radical characteristics that John Adamson has recently claimed for the still-undiscovered country of royalist writing, writing that needs closer and fuller study than it has received to date.¹⁴ Most generally, this essay places 1650s royalist poetics in the context of a civil struggle for the common ground of English Protestant

¹¹Walton, 1983, 60.

¹²*Ibid.*, 64. On the use of *Anglican* prior to 1660, see Maltby, 142; Stanwood, 67. A. Milton, 252n2, identifies 1650s Anglicans as the royalist divines who objected to the Westminster Assembly’s dismantling of the Elizabethan settlement, as opposed to royalist Presbyterians or Independents.

¹³J. Milton, 1962, 360.

¹⁴Adamson, 24–26, makes a compelling case for “Civil-War Anglicanism” and royalist radicalism and dynamism; as does A. Milton, 63, 75, 81. Adamson; A. Milton; and Scott, 36, all note the still-current neglect of royalist culture, despite revisionist and even post-revisionist progress. A. Milton, 75–76, attributes this neglect to the persistent “chimeras” of “constitutional Royalism” and of “low-key, rational, quietist, and moderate Anglicanism.”

and literary culture.¹⁵ This was an extended struggle between “ceremonialists” and “puritans,” as Achsah Guibbory describes them, that followed a course and chronology of its own, related to, but separate from, those of political wars or regimes or parties.¹⁶ It was also a struggle that more than once discovered cultural rebirth in the ashes of political defeat, as recent studies of republican culture have made clear.¹⁷

In making a case for the political defeat and cultural reinvention of royalist culture from 1649 into the 1660s, this essay features authors who found common cause in the psalmic poetics described here: not only Izaak Walton (1593–1683), but the infamous authors of the *Eikon Basilike*, Charles Stuart (1600–49) and John Gauden (1605–62), as well as Jeremy Taylor (1613–67), Thomas Stanley (1625–78), and Henry King (1592–1669). It also considers Henry Hammond (1605–60), episcopal divine and scriptural purist, and Abraham Cowley (1618–67), intimate of royals and inspiration to the republican Milton. Milton himself is an important presence in these pages: his deconstruction of the *Eikon Basilike* in *Eikonoklastes* demonstrates an awareness of his opponents’ polemical project, as do his 1653 psalms, and it may be that the song and story of *Paradise Lost* owe something to his Restoration desire to reclaim psalmic poetics from royalist writers of the 1650s.

2. POLITICAL CATASTROPHE: “MY HARP UNSTRUNG”

In 1649, and in most of accounts of the “King’s Book”¹⁸ thereafter, the *Eikon Basilike* was understood to represent the definitive end both of the

¹⁵Both sides of the civil conflict drew on common biblical texts and strategies. A. Milton, 78; and Hirst, 2002, 647, note shared typological references to England as Israel. A. Milton, 79–81, points to other shared phenomena, including fast sermons, apocalyptic writing, providentialism, war-mongering, and theological radicalism. Hamlin, 251, identifies Psalm 137 as hyper-common property to the point of contemporary exasperation. Achinstein, 1994, 85, 100; and De Groot, 86, note that both sides used Babel to characterize their enemies; Hill, 112–13, notes the same of Babylon. In their volume on British radicalism, Morton and Smith, 2, touch on the ongoing nature of the Protestant cultural struggle described here when they point to “a persistent debate about the most appropriate form of Protestant worship” from 1650 to 1830.

¹⁶Guibbory, 1–10.

¹⁷Keeble, 2002, builds on Keeble, 1987, as well as on studies of republican literary culture from the 1640s to the 1660s by Smith; Achinstein, 1994; Norbrook; Loewenstein, 2001. Keeble, 2002, 132–34, describes Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* as responses to the Restoration settlement, identifies continuities between 1650s Puritan and republican polemics and 1660s dissenting texts, and claims that Restoration dissenters countered royalist providential history with biblical narratives of suffering and redemption.

¹⁸Stuart and Gauden, 1966, xxi.

royal cause and of the belligerent royalist writing that had emerged during the 1640s in defense of that cause. This article begins its account of later royalist writing with this initial sense of the *Eikon*-as-political-epitaph in order to identify and set aside a reading of the *Eikon Basilike* that has obscured the book's role as the originary document of 1650s royalist cultural poetics.

The *Eikon Basilike* functioned as the king's epitaph, appearing as it did on the day of Charles Stuart's execution, 30 January 1649. As has been well-documented, the book was a publishing phenomenon. Twenty English editions appeared in the first six weeks, with fifteen additional and expanded editions — including four prayers attributed to the king, a letter from the Prince of Wales to his father, several relations of the king's last words to Princess Elizabeth and Prince Henry, an actual epitaph on the king's death, and a collection of apothegms gleaned from the *Eikon*'s text — following in short order before the end of 1649.¹⁹ Several parts of the book — chapter 27's advice to the Prince of Wales, the various addenda, the *Apophthegmata* — were excerpted and sold separately. Versified editions with and without musical settings also appeared in 1649, the most accomplished of these being Thomas Stanley's manuscript *Psalterium Carolinum* and Edwards Reynold's *The Divine Penitential Meditations and Vowes of His Late Sacred Majestie*. English-language editions were published early on in Ireland, Holland, and Paris, and foreign-language editions appeared in Latin, Dutch, French, German, and Danish. The supply of related tragic, elegiac, and hagiographical works was immediate and seemingly unending, whether the genre was sermon, drama, lyrical lament, or martyrology.²⁰

Despite its eloquence, this first outpouring of empathic responses to the *Eikon*'s portrayal of political collapse often conveyed a sense of cultural collapse as well, as texts identified themselves not as literature or poetry or even writing, but rather, in Henry King's word, inarticulate "groane[s]."²¹ This specifically discursive despair plays an important role in the 1649 *Lachrymae Musarum; The Tears of the Muses*, an elegiac collection by poets mourning the death of nineteen-year-old Henry Lord Hastings (1630–49). Because of his age, aristocratic standing, and blood ties to the royal family,

¹⁹Ibid., xiv–xix; J. Milton, 1962, 150–61. See also Wilcher, 2001, 287–307; Loewenstein, 1990, 52–55; Potter, 170–79; Knoppers, 13–25; Maguire.

²⁰For exemplary portrayals of Charles as tragic hero, holy penitent, or saint, see, respectively, Sheppard; Stanley; Reynolds; Leslie.

²¹Hillyer, 145–47, discusses Henry King's *A Deep Groane*, noting that poetic lament was uncommon in 1649.

Hastings is portrayed in *Lachrymae* as, when living, an iconic stand-in for the slain king and the institutions he represents,²² and, when dead, an appropriate object of royalist lament whom elegists mourn as an image of Charles himself.²³ Tellingly, several of the volume's poems portray Hastings as having had a "Golden tongue" whose loss has epochal implications.²⁴ In "Upon the death of the Lord Hastings," John Dryden (1631–1700) draws attention to the military, diplomatic, and theological power of Hastings's now-vanished verbal skills:

Rare Linguist! . . .
 Then Whom, Great *Alexander* may seem Less;
 Who conquer'd Men, but not their Languages.
 In his mouth Nations speak; his Tongue might be
 Interpreter to *Greece, France, Italy*
 A young Apostle; and (with rev'rence may
 I speak't) inspir'd with gift of Tongues, as They.²⁵

William Pestel spells out the tragic implications of Dryden's final analogy by portraying Hastings as an apostle whose "gift of Tongues," granted to enable the spread of Christ's Word after the crucifixion, has been silenced, with calamitous consequences for the Christian cause. Though Hastings had "A tongue so rarely furnisht, as might boast / It self of kin to those at *Pentecost*; / And in their proper Languages begun / To court the Rising and the Setting Sun," his death has meant "*Grief* to his Friends; and to the World, *Despair*."²⁶

Other narratives of verbal desolation abound. In his tribute to the 1649 *Lucasta* of Richard Lovelace (1617–58), John Pinchbacke compares the "charm[ing]" effect of Lovelace's "heavenly rime" on royalists' desponding spirits to that of Orpheus's song on the damned during his quest for Eurydice — only to stop short of the parallel between the unhappy fate of

²²*Lachrymae*, 28–29: "[T]ill His fall, / We could not justly say we had lost All. / We could not say, while he was yet alive, / Truth and Religion did not still survive: / There was a Church and Academy still: / All Vertue, whilst he liv'd, they could not kill . . . / But he is gone; and now this carcase, World, / Is into her first, rude, dark Chaos, hurl'd."

²³*Ibid.*, 26–27: "Forbear, forbear, *Great house of Huntingdon*, / T'engross this Grief, as if 'twere all your own: / The *Kingdom* has a share; and every *Eye* / Claims priviledge to weep his *Elegie* . . . / What though our loss be great; so *great*, that none / In our *Age* has exceeded it, but *One*?"

²⁴*Ibid.*, 82.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 88–89.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 82, 85.

both royalist and Orphic singers.²⁷ Drawing on biblical as opposed to classical tradition to make much the same point, Robert Herrick (1591–1674) in “To his Friend, on the untuneable Times” invokes Psalm 137 to portray the devastating effect of royalist political collapse on poetic song:

Play I co’d once; but (gentle friend) you see
 My Harp hung up, here on the Willow tree.
 Sing I co’d once; and bravely too enspire
 (With luscious Numbers) my melodious Lyre
 Griefe, (my deare friend) has first my Harp unstrung;
 Wither’d my hand, and palsie-struck my tongue.²⁸

As both Pinchbacke’s and Herrick’s pre-*Eikon* poems suggest, laments about the simultaneous deaths of royalism and poetry were not new in 1649. Innumerable earlier texts, including those from the war-torn 1640s, had spelled out the ancient connection between civil strife and poetic instability. In the 1643 *Musarum Oxoniensium Epibathpia Serenissima Reginarum Mariæ*, a versified tribute to Henrietta Maria (1609–69) on her return from the Continent with arms and funds, Thomas Lamplugh exclaims, “Our Muses are return’d (Great *Queen*) with You”;²⁹ I. Goad presents pastoral shepherds who vow to “take up Pipe again” now that the queen is back.³⁰ Pinchbacke provides the dark corollary to these early hopes in a later poem to Lovelace: “Now when the wars augment our woes and fears / And the shrill noise of drums oppresse our ears . . . / Now all the graces from the Land are sent, / And the nine Muses suffer banishment.”³¹ As these lines make clear, royalist despair about poetry was entirely — perhaps terminally — traditional by the time Charles Stuart died.

Despite the preceding evidence to the contrary, what was alive and new in royalist literary responses to the 1649 *Eikon Basilike* was a clear recognition on the part of many royalists and a few republicans that, on its own and overnight, the *Eikon* had so revived the drooping state of royalist song that it was able to emerge from the political trauma of 1649 radically rejuvenated, ready to spread the royalist cultural word in ways and on a scale unimaginable a year earlier, as Herrick’s verse to “the untuneable Times”

²⁷Pinchbacke’s last lines read: “unlesse that *Orpheus* be / A sharer in thy glory: for when he / Descended downe for his *Euridice*, / He stroke his Lute with like-admired Art, / And made the damned to forget their smart”: Lovelace, 5.

²⁸Herrick, 84. Cited in Guibbory, 101.

²⁹*Musarum*, Aa2^r.

³⁰*Ibid.*, B3^r.

³¹Lovelace, 5.

bears witness.³² The rest of this essay explores how the *Eikon* taught surviving royalist writers to do what Herrick in 1648 had thought impossible: take down and string their harps, strengthen their hands, repair their tongues, and sing the Lord's and their own song in an England that had become for them a strange land of exile.

3. THE 1649 BATTLE FOR GODLY SONG: "IT WAS AN ARMY, AND DID VANQUISH MORE THAN ANY SWORD COULD"

Readers and writers close to the *Eikon Basilike* recognized that the book functioned not as Caroline epitaph, but as an invaluable weapon in the hands of surviving royalists. As John Gauden reported after the 1660 Restoration to Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (1609–74), "When [the *Eikon*] came out, just upon the King's death; Good God! what shame, rage and despite filled hys Murtherers! What comfort hys friends! How many enemyes did it convert! How many hearts did it mollify, and melt! . . . What preparations it made in all men's minds for this happy restauration. . . . In a word, it was an army, and did vanquish more than any sword could."³³ Gauden's sense of the book's polemical potency — able to "convert, mollify, melt, vanquish," and indeed to "make" the very "restauration" that the king's army had failed to produce — is not simply the gleeful crowing of partisan hindsight. In his 1649 *Eikonoklastes*, Milton accuses Charles of trying "to bring about that interest by faire and plausible words, which the force of Armes had deny'd him," and he understands that the *Eikon* is less a defense of King Charles and more a model for future offensive "narrations" by 1650s royalists.³⁴ What appears to be a book by and for the king, he charges, is "manifestly the cunning drift of a factious and defeated [royalist] Party, [whose goal is] to make the same advantage of his Book, which they did before of his Regal Name and Authority, and intend it not so much the defence of his former actions, as the promoting of thir own future designs, making therby the Book thir own rather then the Kings, as the benefit now

³²De Groot, 7, accurately notes a "loss of language" and "[l]inguistic confusion" in royalist writing. But because he conflates 1640s wartime royalist polemic with 1650s royalist culture, and insists that royalism and royalist rhetoric became increasingly controlling, rigid, and passive, he misses the subsequent resurgence of a dynamic royalist poetics. After 1649, he avers, "Royalism becomes Royalisms, a fractured, diffuse set of codes and paradigms with no binding narratives": *ibid.*, 144.

³³Stuart and Gauden, 1966, xxxii. Cited in Knoppers, 18.

³⁴J. Milton, 1962, 343.

must be thir own more then his, now the third time to corrupt and disorder the mindes of weaker men, by new suggestions and narrations.”³⁵

As Milton was aware, however, the difference in genre to which he draws attention here — the false genre of royal defense versus the true one of royalist polemic — corresponds to a difference in the biblical narratives that underlies the two ways of reading the *Eikon*. (That biblical narrative underlies all readings of the *Eikon*, Milton knew, was “the shrewdest & the cunningest obloquy that can be thrown upon” it: “For if [Charles] can perswade men that the Parlament and thir cause is pursu’d with Divine vengeance, he hath attain’d his end.”)³⁶ As argued below, while royalist polemicists during the 1640s and in the immediate aftermath of the execution emphasized the parallel between Charles’s martyrdom and that of Christ at the Passion,³⁷ the *Eikon* and a rising number of writers in the 1650s emphasized the parallel between Charles and the King’s Book and David and the Book of Psalms.³⁸

Now “wee come to the devout of it, model’d into the form of a privat Psaltar,” Milton observes caustically of the prayer that follows the *Eikon*’s first chapter, “[w]hich they who so much admire, either for the matter or the manner, may as well admire the Arch-Bishops late Breviary [i.e., the executed Archbishop William Laud’s proscribed Book of Common Prayer], and many other as good *Manuals, and Handmaids of Devotion*, the lip-work of every Prelatical Liturgist, clapt together, and quilted out of Scripture phrase, with as much ease, and as little need of Christian diligence, or judgement, as belongs to the compiling of any ord’nary and salable peece of English Divinity, that the Shops value. But he who from such a kind of Psalmistry, or any other verbal Devotion, without the pledge and earnest of sutable deeds, can be perswaded of a zeale, and true righteousness in the person, hath much yet to learn.”³⁹ Contrary to expectation, Milton’s chief objection to the *Eikon*’s “Psalmistry” here is not Charles’s hypocrisy and political duplicity, which he assumes. It is a given that Charles “use[d]

³⁵*Ibid.*, 338. Charles himself admits that it is “infinitely more glorious to convert souls to God’s church by the Word than to conquer men to a subjection by the sword”: Stuart and Gauden, 1966, 144.

³⁶J. Milton, 1962, 567.

³⁷For discussion of the Christ-like narratives scripting Charles’s fate and final actions, see Hughes in J. Milton, 1962, 160–61; Sandler, 172, 175, 180–81; Wilcher, 1991, 221; Loxley, 169–82; Corns, 5.

³⁸Corns, 5. Potter, 161, notes that the identification of Charles and the psalmic David was not new in 1649. For valuable commentary on the psalmic *Eikon*, see also Sandler, 172, 174; Hamlin, 192–95.

³⁹J. Milton, 1962, 360.

presumptuously the words and protestations of *David*, without the spirit and conscience of *David*,” and that he did so cynically, for political effect.⁴⁰ “[T]his had bin a suttile Prayer indeed, and well pray’d, though as duely as a *Pater-noster*, if it could have charm’d us to sit still, and have Religion and our Liberties one by one snatch’d from us,” Milton notes, adding, “Such Prayers as these may happily catch the People, as was intended: but how they please God, is to be much doubted.”⁴¹

Milton’s real objection to the psalmic *Eikon Basilike* is what he sees as Charles’s idolatrous treatment of biblical and psalmic language: what he scathingly terms the king’s “verbal Devotion.” It is not simply that Charles has incorporated psalmic discourse and narrative into his self-justifying book — though he does so in a major way, closing each chapter with a prayer from the psalms in general and the penitential psalms in particular, and grounding the book’s argument for regnal righteousness in the story of David’s fall into and recovery from sin.⁴² Rather, it is Charles’s debasement of scriptural language to a fixed set of memorable rhetorical forms, forms whose appealing simplicity comes at the cost of having reduced complex scripture to a single (royal) meaning, that so incenses Milton. “It is not hard for any man, who hath a Bible in his hands, to borrow good words and holy sayings in abundance,” he rages; “but to make them his own, is a work of grace onely from above” that requires a responsive “Christian diligence, or judgment” and “the pledge and earnest of sutable deeds,” the only indices of “zeale, and true righteousness in the person.”⁴³ Charles, by contrast, is a mere “Liturgist.” He is a writer who treats scriptural words, not as signifiers pointing beyond themselves to complex and godly meaning that a reader must work to understand, but rather as blank counters cut loose from their original, divinely signifying context, and thereby made vulnerable to whatever circumscribed and interested meaning is imposed upon them locally, a meaning that is then silently imposed upon the supposedly scriptural text’s unsuspecting readers. Milton charges Charles with reducing the Bible to a rhetorical “Manual,”

⁴⁰Ibid., 381–82.

⁴¹Ibid., 422, 601.

⁴²The story of David’s affair with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah, and of his subsequent remorse and piety, structures the first three chapters of the *Eikon* and underlies the book’s overall narrative. The story enables Charles to set his admitted political sin, the Earl of Stafford’s execution in 1641, within the redemptive context of his twenty-four-year reign. It also provides a model for later royalists seeking both to take responsibility for political disaster and to assert ultimate political legitimacy.

⁴³J. Milton, 1962, 553, 360. For valuable discussion of Milton’s attempt to expose Charles in the *Eikon* as a hypocrite and plagiarist who pretends to Puritan conscience in order to forward his own set prayers, see Achinstein, 1994, 166.

a copious handbook out of which he lifts isolated figures and “Scripture Phrase[s],” glibly “clap[ping]” and “quilt[ing]” them together into arbitrary and appealing combinations, which he then does the “lip-work” of mouthing before a national audience, without righteous zeal and for political profit.

Milton’s protest against what he sees as Charles’s blasphemous reduction of scriptural text is a theological one, rooted in radical Protestant renunciation of episcopal fidelity to liturgical prayer.⁴⁴ But long before 1649, the theology of the debate over “set formes of prayer” as opposed to “voluntary prayers” or spontaneous utterance had become inseparable from that debate’s politics.⁴⁵ In this context, when Milton attacks Charles’s royal “Psalmistry,” he does so not simply as a radical Protestant objecting to the ecclesiastical imposition of formulaic prayer on free conscience and divine grace, but also as the rhetorical watchdog for the new parliamentary government,⁴⁶ protesting the *Eikon*’s attempt to standardize the one genre, psalms, that the Puritans in power rightly believed they had made impervious to liturgical reduction. The following pages explore some final moments in the 1630s and ’40s contest over “set formes” and prayers in order to show how the *Eikon* reversed an apparently incontrovertible Puritan decision, and how it appropriated the one feature of Puritan discourse that royalist rhetoric in 1649 most required: psalmic song.⁴⁷ The next section also sets the battle between the *Eikon Basilike* and *Eikonoklastes* in the context of the ongoing war between ceremonialist and Puritan Protestants that began before 1649 and continued after 1660.

4. 1640S BATTLES OVER GODLY SONG AND SET FORMS: “ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE SING OR SAY DAVIDS PSALMES, AND . . . ACCEPT SET FORMES OF PRAYER”

Bitter debate between liturgical and Puritan forms of Protestantism came to a head in England and Scotland in the 1630s and ’40s. Merritt Hughes notes that “Puritan opposition to the use of liturgy of any kind” resulted in

⁴⁴Chapter 14 of *Eikonoklastes* discusses the authority of scripture and its superiority to tradition or the primitive Church; chapters 1 and 16 discuss the spiritual poverty implied by Charles’s use of the psalms as liturgically “set formes of prayer” and on the “tyranny” of imposing such reductively ritualized expressions on free conscience and divine grace: J. Milton, 1962, 505.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 505–06.

⁴⁶Loewenstein, 1990, 51.

⁴⁷Hamlin, 28–29, 50, rightly notes that all parties laid claim to English metrical psalming. But in the 1640s, royalist loss of political and cultural authority, combined with Westminster’s pursuit of a national psalter, created a brief impression of specifically Puritan psalming that later royalists were able to turn to their advantage.

a September 1644 Parliamentary ordinance that substituted the *Directory for Public Worship* for the *Book of Common Prayer*, and an August 1645 ordinance that “forbade the use of any form of worship (except, optionally, the highly simplified form of the *Directory*) under penalty of a year’s imprisonment for a third offense.”⁴⁸

The *Directory* may not have been the only exception to Puritan prohibitions against formal prayer, however, at least in the eyes of the royalist enemy. The same ordinance that proscribed as set forms the liturgy of the Church of England also prescribed what would become a loaded weapon in the hands of 1650s royalist psalmists — psalmic song. “It is the duty of Christians,” the 1645 ordinance proclaims, “to praise God publicly by singing of Psalmes together in the congregation, and also privately in the Family.”⁴⁹ The injunction to psalmic song here is specific, referring to common-meter verses of alternating eight- and six-syllable lines simple enough to be set and sung to old or common tunes, and reflecting the theological imperative of approximating the melodic nature of the Hebrew psalms.⁵⁰ (This imperative informs the 1645 ordinance’s rulings on prayer books and psalms: the call to psalmic song was a call to return to a scriptural genre obscured by Church liturgy.)

As Hannibal Hamlin has demonstrated, the emphasis on a metrical translation that lends itself to popular church music is almost as old as reformed English Protestantism itself.⁵¹ The earliest and most popular of English psalters, that of Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins, appeared in partial form in 1547–49 and was complete by 1562. By 1586 it had the fulsome and revealing title that it would retain throughout the seventeenth century: *The vvhole booke of Psalmes / collected into English meetre by Thomas Sternhold, Iohn Hopkins, and others, conferred vvith the Hebrue, vvith apt notes to sing them vvithall; set foorth and allowed to be song in all churches, of all the people together before and after morning and euening prayer, as also before and after sermons and moreouer in priuate houses, for their godly solace and comfort, laying apart all ungodly songes, and balades, vvich tend onely to the nourishing of vice, and corrupting of youth.* By the time of the 1645 ordinance, “churches” had become congregations and (in Puritan eyes) whatever

⁴⁸J. Milton, 1962, 503n1. For a recent summary of the issues here, as well as for insight on the persistence of conservative religion in the face of Westminster bans on the prayer book, sacraments, and services, see Loewenstein and Morrill, 667–69.

⁴⁹In Firth and Rait, 607.

⁵⁰Woodhouse and Bush, 1083.

⁵¹Hamlin, 22–24, describes Luther’s and Calvin’s early, deep, and reformist affinity for metrical psalms.

“corrupting” was going on was by definition ecclesiastical. But the original impulse to sing metrical psalms, an impulse originating in and justified by the Hebraic originals, persisted. All of the major English Puritan psalmists of the seventeenth century — Henry Ainsworth (1569–1622), Henry Dod (1583[?]-1620), the *Bay Psalm Book* compilers (in 1640), George Wither (1588–1667), William Barton (1598–1678), Francis Rous (1581–1659), and John Milton (in 1648) — conformed to the Sternhold-Hopkins model of common-meter translation suitable to be sung to old tunes.⁵²

Within the particular genre of Puritan metrical psalming, however, there was ample room during the 1640s for internal negotiations over what might constitute a properly revised and official state psalter, one appropriate to the momentous achievement of reformed and godly religion and government in Britain. The Westminster Assembly, the House of Lords, the House of Commons, and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland debated the virtues and vices of existing Puritan psalters. They also argued over the ideal form that a properly revised psalter might take, with versions by Francis Rous and William Barton accepted by some and rejected by others, and with the Scots resorting to a series of revision committees in the late 1640s before arriving at a definitive psalter in 1650: *The Psalmes of David in meeter / newly translated, and diligently compared with the originall text, and former translationes, more plaine, smoothe, and agreeable to the text, then any heretofore; allowed by the authority of the Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, and appointed to be sung in congregations and families.*⁵³

The 1650 Scottish psalter, appearing as it did after the abolition first of the Church of England’s prayer book and liturgy and then of the Church itself, should have represented the final victory of the anticereemonialists in their righteous war against formal prayer. But crucially it did not, and the vexed history behind Westminster’s endorsement of the Scottish psalter suggests that it could never have done so, at least not in the 1640s and ’50s, when contention for the common ground of Protestantism was particularly fierce. For the concept of an official Puritan psalter, “smooth” in “meeter”

⁵²Hunter. Buhler, 33–34, explores the politics of common-meter psalm translations and of Milton’s 1648 translations of Psalms 80–88, which he sees as responses to Lawes’s *Choice Psalmes*.

⁵³The Westminster Assembly accepted Rous’s 1638/1641 *The Psalmes of David in English meeter* in 1645, but the Lords preferred Barton’s 1644 *The Book of Psalmes in metre*. When the Commons imposed Rous on the churches in 1646, few liked it and the Scots outright refused to use it. The Scots appointed four men to revise existing psalters in 1648; they submitted their work in April 1648, but it was deemed unsatisfactory. More revision committees were set up in 1648 and again in 1649; all committees were required to use the common meter.

and “plaine” in tunes, “appointed” to be universally “sung” in such popular and homely settings as “congregations and families,” is remarkably close to the set-form spirit of the prayer book that the 1645 ordinance had expressly forbidden. Moreover, given that the same ordinance that prohibited the prayer book also required the “singing of Psalmes,” there seems to be a peculiar blindness at work here, since the Church’s prayer book had always (since the Bishops’ Bible) been identified, not simply with the psalms, but with metrical translations suitable for singing. *The Book of Common Prayer, and administration of the Sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the Church of England: with the Psalter or Psalmes of David*, its title page announces, with the psalms labeled internally as *The Psalter or psalmes of Dauid, after the translation of the great Bible, poynted as it shall be songue and sayd in Churches*.⁵⁴ Puritan psalmists clearly reformed the psalmic prayer book by replacing the Vulgate Latin of the Great Bible with the “originall” Hebrew, and by excluding any nonscriptural liturgical material. But their ongoing dependence on the familiar English psalter, their continued reliance on metrical translations that conformed to Church melodies, and their seven-year search for a single, popular, national text brought them perilously close to the English prayer book and its detested reliance on set forms that use ostensibly “plaine, smoothe, and agreeable” scripture to promote liturgical uniformity. The Scottish psalter succeeded in replacing the “ungodly songes and balades” of the prayer book with the common-meter scriptural songs favored by the Puritans. But when it established an official metrical psalter, Westminster compromised its principled rejection of scriptural formalism⁵⁵ and opened a door to the royalist enemy, who rightly perceived in the Puritan psalter the rising phoenix of its own extinguished prayer book. To the extent that the Scottish psalter reflected the moral and civil authority of the new government, it was precisely that authority that threatened to pass into enemy hands.

⁵⁴Hamlin, 33, notes that the *Book of Common Prayer* uses Miles Coverdale’s translation from the 1539 Great Bible, but that the Sternhold-Hopkins psalter was both substituted for Coverdale’s in services and often bound with the prayer book.

⁵⁵That the final psalter was Scots Presbyterian may explain the Puritans’ predicament: more radical elements of the anti-ecclesiastical party apparently perceived the contradictions inherent in the idea of a national psalter. For example, one of the commendatory poems before Barton’s 1645 *The Book of Psalms in Metre* defends the work against criticism: “And now none more, I hope, will scruple make / Of singing Psalms in Gospel-times, nor take / Offense at others” (A4^v). That said, even the anti-Presbyterian Milton closed ranks with Puritan translators when he produced metrical translations in 1648. See Hale, 57, 61; Collette, 247–54; Boddy, 3; Hamlin, 74–75.

Pivotal as it was, the Scots psalter and its claim to Puritan ownership of psalmic song was only one element in a number of phenomena enabling royalist recovery of godly song in 1650s England. Another key element, a generic understanding of psalms as set forms, had also been established by royalist writers well before 1649. In his wartime *Psalter of David*, printed in 1644 at royalist headquarters in Oxford, the royalist divine Jeremy Taylor is quietly exultant as he pinpoints the loophole that the psalms represent in Puritan rejection of set forms: “*B. Hippolytus*, in his oration of the end of the world, saith, that in the dayes of Antichrist, *Psalmorum decantatio cessabit*, they shall then no more use the singing or saying of the Psalmes; which when I had observed, without any further deliberation I fix’d upon the Psalter, as the best weapon against him, whose comming we have great reason to believe is not farr off, so great preparation is being made for him.”⁵⁶ The shot could scarcely have been better aimed. Turning Puritan devotion to sung psalms, the Second Coming, and the rhetoric of chiliastic righteousness against his radical Protestant enemies, Taylor identifies his own psalter as a “best weapon” against a suspiciously Puritan and parliamentary “Antichrist” slouching its way toward Oxford even as he writes. Simultaneously, he compels Puritans and parliamentarians to stand by — and to permit to others — their own choice of psalmic song, which he makes their sole defense against the label of Antichrist.

Taylor’s actual psalmic translations and meditative prayers are traditional: the prayer for Psalm 137, for example, follows convention in reading the Babylonian exile as an allegorical representation of the soul’s alienation from heaven during life. But Taylor is relentless in his editorial attempts to redefine the psalms in general and Puritan psalm-singing in particular as royalist liturgical prayer. In page after controversial page, he royalizes the psalter by spelling out parallels between David and Charles.⁵⁷ And he anglicanizes it by including his nonscriptural commentary in the

⁵⁶Taylor, 1644, *6^v. Taylor’s psalter went through ten editions from 1644 to 1683. Loewenstein and Morill, 677, discuss Taylor and Hammond as part of the new generation of chaplains and pious laymen who kept “the case for the Elizabethan Church alive” during the 1650s. Ibid. also argues that the combination of the *Eikon* and the early 1640s correspondence on church government between Charles I and Presbyterian divine Alexander Henderson (often printed with the *Eikon*) “provided the manifesto for the Church-and-Crown alliance” for the second half of the seventeenth century.

⁵⁷Taylor, 1644, *3^v: “I reckon’d King *David* one of the biggest [biblical examples of innocent royal suffering], and of greatest consideration. For considering that he was a King, vexed with a *Civill-Ware*, his case had so much of ours in it, that it was likely the devotions he used might fit our turne, and his comforts sustain us. . . . [A] third part of the Psalmes relate particularly to the present occasion.”

form of a meditative “prayer” at the end of every psalm,⁵⁸ and by providing a full-scale theological defense for understanding the psalms as “set formes of prayer,”⁵⁹ the mere “saying or singing” of which “opens a way so wide for god to enter the heart, that a devout soule does usually from such an employment receive . . . grace.”⁶⁰

Taylor’s most powerful move is his early claim that he has checkmated Puritans at their own psalmic game. The Puritans have embraced the psalter as their particular book, he points out. In so doing, they have unwittingly conceded ground to liturgical principles they allegedly oppose: “I thought that I might not imprudently intend this Booke as an instrument of publicke charity to Christians of different confessions. For I see that all sorts of people sing or say Davids Psalmes, and by that use, if they understand the consequences of their owne Religion, accept set formes of prayer for their Liturgy, and this form [of psalmes] in speciall is one of their owne choices for devotion.”⁶¹ If the Puritan impulse to “sing or say” the psalms is an essentially “devotional” one that turns excerpted sections of scriptural text into “set formes of prayer,” Taylor continues slyly, then there is little difference between the Puritan psalter and the Church’s prayer book. “I am much scandalized,” he protests, “when I see a man refuse to communicate with me in my prayers even such as are in his owne breviary or Manuall.”⁶² It may be no coincidence that Taylor’s characterization of the Puritan psalter as a “breviary or Manuall” anticipates Milton’s reference to the Laudian prayer book in *Eikonoklastes*. Taylor is presciently aware that a standardized psalter designed to replace an existing liturgy through metrical appeal to tradition can be (mis)represented as a prayer book. He is equally aware that a godly assembly authorizing a nationalist psalter can be (mis)represented as institutionally identical to the “universal Communion”⁶³ of “the Church of God in all ages,”⁶⁴ a church that he therefore wickedly figures as a

⁵⁸At *ibid.*, *7^r, Taylor protests disingenuously: “The Prayers which I have collected out of the Psalmes [and which follow each translation] are nothing else, but the matter of the Psalmes put into another mood.” Throughout the psalter, Taylor pretends neutrality while he attacks the Puritan enemy, for example at *ibid.*, *8^r: “So long as nothing of controversie is brought into our prayers . . . and devotion is not made a party, he that refuses to joyne with me in what himselfe confesses true and holy upon pretence I am a hereticke, will certainly prove himselfe a Schismaticke.”

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, *8^v.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, *4^v–*5^r.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, *8^v.

⁶²*Ibid.*, *7^v.

⁶³*Ibid.*, **^r.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, *5^r.

once-and-future Church of England that has absorbed its Puritan opposition and returned to its Catholic origins.⁶⁵

Taylor goes remarkably far in appropriating Puritan psalming for royalist purposes, but he himself produces a psalter that is neither metrical nor musical. He develops the theoretical justification for royalist appropriation of Puritan psalm-singing, and provides Anglican set-form prayers that interpret and simplify his own psalmic translations, that is, but he stops short of writing actual metrical or poetical psalms. The technically prosaic nature of Taylor's translations might seem anomalous, given his strenuous efforts to lay royalist claim to the Puritans' "owne choice for devotion." But it makes sense if we examine one last feature of the 1640s contest for ownership of the psalms.

As he sought to appropriate the Puritans' metrical psalter, Taylor may have needed to dissociate his own volume from the existing and partisan model of royalist psalmic song represented by the 1636 *A Paraphrase upon the Divine Poems* of George Sandys (1578–1644).⁶⁶ Sandys's volume was a self-consciously literary translation set to music and reprinted with additions in 1638 by Henry Lawes (1596–1662), with a section entitled *A Paraphrase Vpon the Psalmes of David. By G. S. Set to new Tunes for private Devotion: And a thorough Base, for Voice, or Instrument. By Henry Lawes, Gentleman of His Majesties Chappell Royall*. The Sandys-Lawes psalter was everything the Puritan ones were not. It was courtly rather than congregational or familial, "well-tun'd" and "harmonious"⁶⁷ rather than "affect[ing] . . . a Rustick Plainenesse,"⁶⁸ and musically "new" and polyphonic⁶⁹ rather than set to old tunes for communal singing.⁷⁰ Poetically and musically exquisite as it was, however, the Sandys-Lawes psalter may have seemed to Taylor a political dead-end, too tied to the discredited royal court to compete for the nation's hearts and minds with the traditional and popular psalters of the ascendant party. The consequent royalist veering away from its own natural

⁶⁵Ibid., **^r.

⁶⁶Buhler, 30, discusses Sandys's psalter; *ibid.*, 36, notes that *Eikonoklastes* attacks Charles for courtly psalming.

⁶⁷Sandys, 1638, (**)^v.

⁶⁸Ibid., (g5)^v.

⁶⁹Ibid., (g)^r.

⁷⁰Lawes's editions of Sandys's psalms in 1648 and 1655 stress the volumes' select and innovative musicality. Hamlin, 64–73, suggests that the divide between psalmic translations by George Wither and Sandys-Lawes paralleled the widening social and political gap in 1630s and '40s England. Buhler, 25, 33–37, details how Milton's 1648 translations of Psalms 80–88 oppose royalist habits of psalm translation. Evans, 168–86, explains the anomalous appearance of Milton's commendatory poem to Lawes in *Choice Psalmes*.

psalter toward the psalmic “breviary” of its theological opponents mystified John Dryden when he reviewed this history in the mid-1660s.⁷¹ But it made keen political sense to Taylor when he strove to make the Puritan psalter his Church’s own in the mid-1640s.

The trajectory that Taylor’s psalter traces — of a royalist redefinition of Puritan psalming as set-form prayer that nevertheless refrains from arriving at the desideratum of psalmic song itself — becomes clear if we compare the frontispiece of Taylor’s *Psalter of David* with the engraving of a psalmic David that appears in George Wither’s 1635 *A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne*. Wither’s engraving, which depicts “Musicke” as “the Handmaid of the Lord,” is representative of how prewar psalters portrayed the psalmist (fig. 2).⁷² A crowned David kneels on open ground with his arms extended before him, harping and psalming toward a sun whose Hebrew inscription identifies it with God. The frontispiece to Taylor’s wartime psalter shows a very different scene (fig. 3).⁷³ David is still crowned and kneeling, but he kneels inside a House of Prayer that provides no view of either sun or heavens, and his arms, which are folded prayerfully across his weary breast, are harpless. His harp, lute, and other instruments hang mutely from a pair of willows that frames the engraving’s foreground. Eloquent representation of a besieged Davidic king laying royal claim to a contested psalter (even as he himself finds it impossible to sing), Taylor’s frontispiece testifies to how deeply perceptions of what Herrick called the “untuneable Times” impinged on even the most zealous efforts to recover royalist song in 1640s England.

5. WINNING THE 1649–51 BATTLE FOR GODLY SONG AND STORY: “SING ME ONE OF THE SONGS OF ZION”

Despite his ambition to appropriate Puritan psalming, then, Taylor in 1644 may have felt compelled by the negative example of courtly psalming to err

⁷¹Dryden, 97–98, writes in his 1665–67 *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*. “[I]t would be no wonder that betwixt the shaking off of an old habit and the introducing of a new there should be difficulty. Do we not see [the people] stick to Hopkins and Sternhold’s Psalms and forsake those of David, I mean Sandys his translation of them?” *Ibid.*, 98, continues, “But if you mean the mix’d audience of the populace and the noblesse, I dare confidently affirm that a great part of the latter sort are already favourable to [Sandys’s kind of] verse.”

⁷²Wither, 1635, 65. Hollander, between 242 and 243, includes the Wither engraving for its representative quality. In email correspondence, Hamlin kindly noted the appearance of Wither’s model of David in such disparate sources as the 1635 Scottish psalter, the Coverdale Bible, and Wither’s own 1619 *Preparation to the Psalter*.

⁷³Taylor, 1644, before *1.

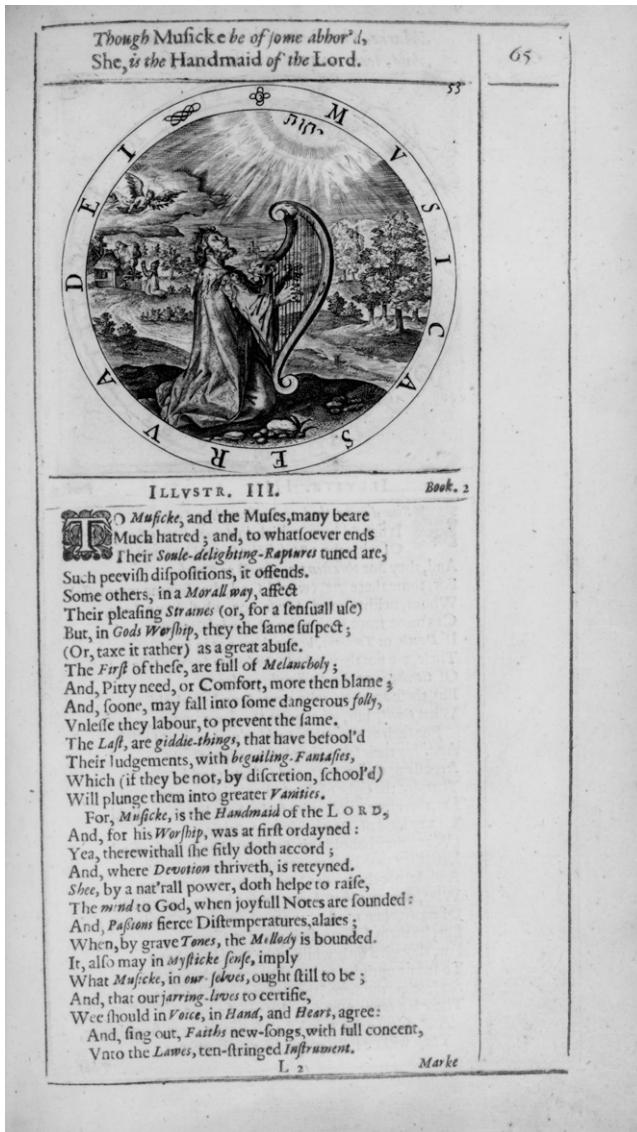


FIGURE 2. Page 65 of George Wither, *A collection of emblemes, ancient and moderne*, 1635. © The British Library Board. STC (2nd ed.) 25900b.

on the side of caution when he produced his own non-metrical translations. With the powerful precedent of Taylor's 1640s psalters to inspire and explain it, however, the 1649 *Eikon Basilike* of Charles I and John Gauden, to which we now return, lay claim to the prosodic authority of the Puritan

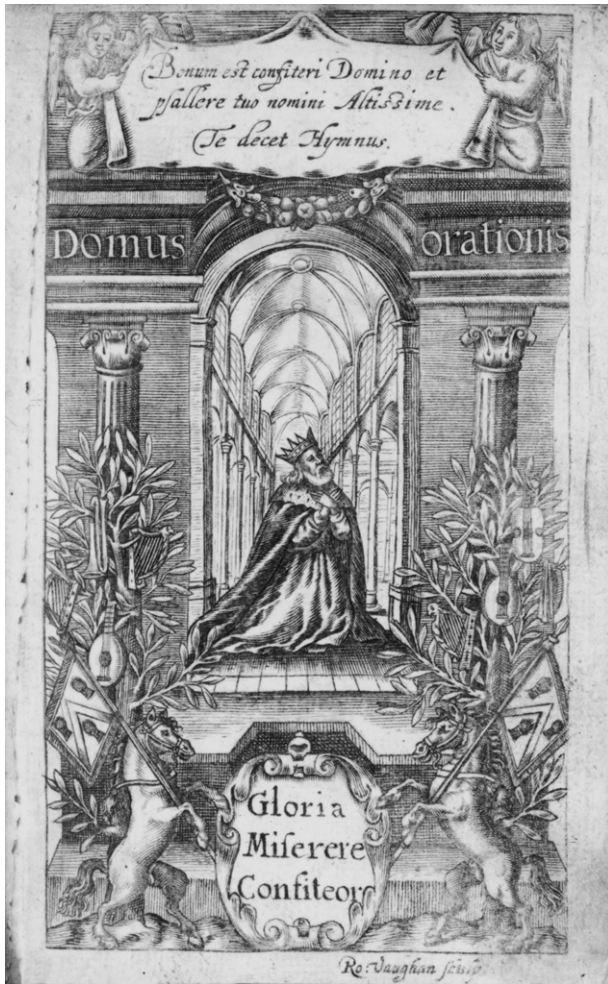


FIGURE 3. Frontispiece of Jeremy Taylor, *The Psalter of David: With Titles and Collects According to the Matter of Each Psalm*, 1644. © The British Library Board. Wing (1996) B2402, Madan II 1626.

psalter.⁷⁴ Crucially, however, the *Eikon* does not resort either to courtly psalmody or to common-meter versifying. Rather, it develops a polemical poetics in which the form and content of the metrical psalter are transformed

⁷⁴The *Devotions* that Taylor attaches to his psalters contains an entire liturgy of prayers, almost all of which the *Eikon* draws upon. But it is the *Devotions'* Calvinist confessions of sin that provide the precise diction, syntax, imagery, and structure that the *Eikon* uses to organize its overall narrative and its sequence of psalmic prayers.

into simple, traditional, euphonic statements of manifest royalist content. As we have seen, it is a poetics that Milton later denounces as the “verbal devotion” of reducing scripture to a blasphemous rhetoric of “set formes,” but that Taylor earlier defends on the grounds that “all sorts of people sing or say Davids Psalmes, and . . . accept set formes of prayer for thir Liturgy.” In sum, though the *Eikon* is neither actually prosodic nor officially psalmic, it uses traditional psalmic sound and form to claim ownership of the contested space of the English psalter, however much that space was reserved for the Scottish Kirk and despite widespread Presbyterian and Puritan disapproval of set-form psalming. “I come far short of David’s piety,” Charles asserts in one of the many sentences whose simple and successive cadences go a long way toward matching the aural and emotional imperatives of common-meter psalming, “yet since I may equal David’s afflictions, give me also the comforts and the sure mercies of David.”⁷⁵

One way to measure the substantial, but still incomplete, advance that the *Eikon* represents, in terms of the royalist takeover of the Puritan metrical psalter and its attendant cultural authority, is to set the famous frontispiece to the *Eikon Basilike* (fig. 4) next to the engravings of the psalmic David that appear in Wither and Taylor.⁷⁶ The figure of Charles in the engraving by William Marshall (fl. 1617–49) recalls both David the psalmist and Christ the martyr, but it also serves as a representation of the *Eikon*’s liminal position between royalist set-form psalmic prayer and Puritan metrical psalming. Charles appears in the *Eikon* very much like the Davidic figure in Wither’s emblem-book, kneeling in harping-and-psalming position while looking up to a godly sun. At the same time, though, Marshall’s Davidic Charles is dramatically harpless: to the extent that he plays any instrument at all, it is the crown of thorns he holds in his extended right hand. In the *Eikon*, as in Taylor’s psalter, there is no harp, no music, no song. As early as late 1649, however, Milton seems uneasily aware of the potential for post-*Eikon* royalist writers to reassert their claim on psalmic song.

Milton’s emerging awareness of the *Eikon*’s claims to godly song and psalmic authority may be what prompts him to trivialize Charles’s book as a mere “peece of Poetrie.”⁷⁷ “The Simily wherwith [Charles] begins [his sixth chapter] I was about to have found fault with, as in a garb somewhat more Poetical then for a Statist,” he notes in *Eikonoklastes*: “but meeting with many straines of like dress in other of his Essaies, and hearing him

⁷⁵Stuart and Gauden, 1966, 149; cited in Potter, 161. In detailing the presence of Psalm 51 in this passage, Hamlin, 192–93, notes the debt of the *Eikon* to the psalms.

⁷⁶Stuart and Gauden, 1649, A5^v–A6^r.

⁷⁷J. Milton, 1962, 406.



FIGURE 4. Frontispiece of *Eikon Basilike: The Pourtraicture of His Sacred Maiestie in his Solitudes and Sufferings*, 1649. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

reported a more diligent reader of Poets, then of Politicians, I begun to think that the whole Book might perhaps be intended a peece of Poetrie. The words are good, the fiction smooth and cleanly; there wanted onely Rime, and that, they say, is bestow'd upon it lately."⁷⁸ Milton's closing reference to a recent psalter in "Rime," possibly to Stanley's *Psalterium Carolinum*, is telling, perhaps more so than he intends it to be.⁷⁹ A poetic rendition of the *Eikon's* psalmic prayers, with musical settings by John Wilson and a commendatory poem by Lawes, the *Psalterium* completes the *Eikon* by recovering for Charles's prayers the full range of psalmic content, meter, and music. Indeed, in its skillful transformation of metrical psalms into actual poetic song, the *Psalterium* lays claim both to the popular psalming claimed by the Puritans and to the courtly psalmody associated with the bypassed Sandys-Lawes psalter. Stanley seems to appreciate that if he can show a Caroline prayer to be neither more, nor less, than a Puritan metrical psalm, and if he can then rewrite this psalm so that it functions as both a set-form

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Crump argues in Stanley, liv, that "although the *Psalterium* was not published until 1657, Stanley may have finished a draft of his translation of the *Eikon Basilike* in the summer of 1649." Hamlin, 195, believes that Stanley responded to the *Eikon's* psalmic hints by providing it with an actual psalter.

prayer and a piece of divine poetry, then he has achieved a polemical victory without having breathed a political word.

In “Ode XIII,” for example, Stanley guts the *Eikon*’s thirteenth prayer of its political content, but leaves the original title, “Upon the calling in of the Scots.” The ode itself sounds like an Herbertian attempt to render poignantly poetical what is also (and always) a simple metrical psalm:

My troubles, Lord, are multipli’d,
O succour the distrest!
In simplest truth thy Servant guide,
The wisest interest.⁸⁰

The appealing piety and apparent purity of the implied metrical psalm wins the reader’s confidence and assent, a trust that the nimble royalist poet then silently expands into unchallenged support for the version of political events represented by the prayer’s intact title.⁸¹ Stanley’s *Psalterium* may be a mere “peece of Poetrie,” but it is poetry that advances the polemical project that began with Taylor’s *Psalter of David* and developed with the *Eikon Basilike*, a project in which Puritan metrical psalms were claimed as royalist property by means of set-form prayers (in Taylor and the *Eikon*) whose implicit prosody (in the *Eikon*) justified their partisan re-presentation as psalmic poetry and song (in Stanley).

Stanley’s *Psalterium* crosses the line from polemical psalming to actual religious and political poetry and song. Other royalist psalters go even farther by proclaiming their reclamation of psalmic song. “Sing Unto the Lord a New Song,” crowns the frontispiece of Henry King’s 1651 *The Psalmes of David*, citing Psalm 96, and this is what every detail of the page does (fig. 5).⁸² Hippolytus’s apocalyptic command never to stop psalm-singing, “Temporibus Antichristi Psalmorum decantatio cessabit,” which was first seen in Taylor, appears on King’s title page as an epigraph.⁸³ The volume’s title — *The Psalmes of David, from the New Translation of the Bible Turned into Meter, To be sung after the Old Tunes used in the Churches*, expanded in 1654 to include *unto which are newly added the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, the*

⁸⁰Stanley, 289.

⁸¹In “Ode VIII,” *ibid.* uses the Herbertian image of an angry God breaking a stony heart to renew it — but does so in poetry that recalls Milton’s own “Nativity Ode”: God’s “Truth and Mercy” come floating down, “meet[ing]” and “greet[ing]” Peace and Justice with “mutuall Kisses.” What the ode commemorates, however, is neither the Nativity nor the Second Coming, but a restored monarchy: God “prop my never fading Crown”: *ibid.*, 281.

⁸²King, 1651, before A^r.

⁸³*Ibid.*, A^r.

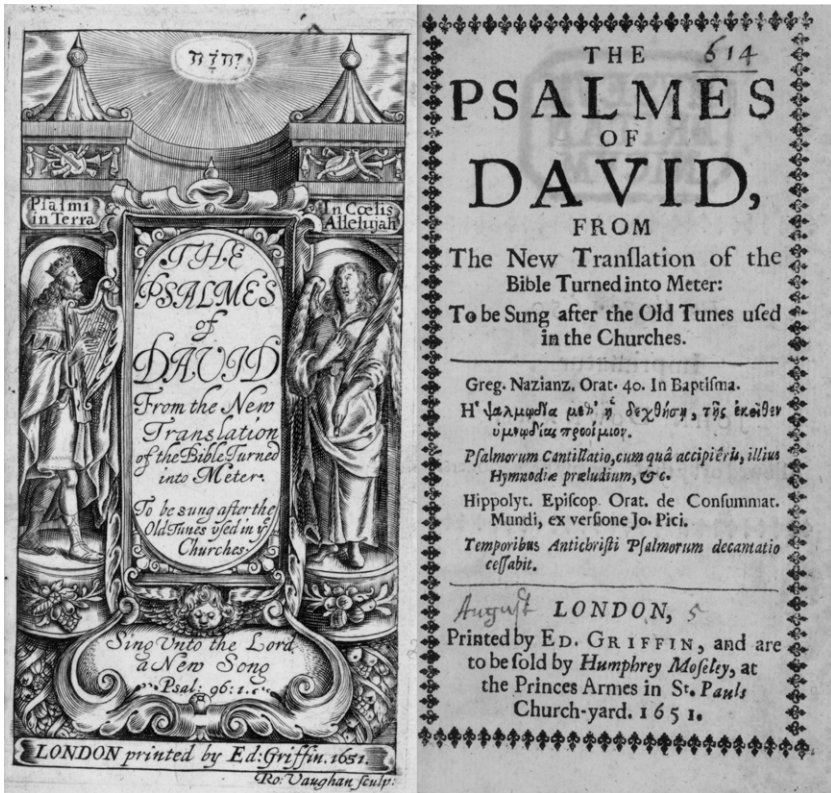


FIGURE 5. Frontispiece and title page of Henry King, *The Psalmes of David*, 1651. © The British Library Board. Wing (1994) B2446, Thomason E.1280[1].

*Ten Commandments, With Some Other Ancient Hymns*⁸⁴ — appears twice in one opening, on both the frontispiece and the title page, doubling the references to “meter,” “tunes,” and “hymns.” The figure of the harping and psalming David, itself a recovery of Wither’s serene prewar image, is doubled into an earthly psalmist harping below the motto *Psalmi in Terra*, and a heavenly singer looking out from below the motto, *In Coelis Alleluia*. In addition, the earthly David no longer kneels but stands, perhaps because he (like Charles?) is already in heaven, and the divine sun that shone from afar on Wither’s David and that drew near the *Eikon*’s Davidic Charles here shines down fully on both of King’s Davids, ensconced as they are in

⁸⁴King, 1654, A^r.

a heavenly palace open to the proximate sun. King supports Psalm 47's injunction to "sing with understanding" by providing both "plainest" translations that are suitable to the "old Meter and old Tunes" of Church Bibles and prayer books, and a number of musical settings each of which accommodates several psalms (fig. 6).⁸⁵ In so doing, he points to the polemic underpinnings of his volume's lyric victory: even as the traditional psalter was being identified as the godly property of the new government, it was serving as the platform upon which episcopal clerics were recovering the soul of their own proscribed prayer book.

In light of the high-stakes contest over psalms being waged and won almost entirely at the level of poetic form and sound, Milton's attempt to discredit the *Eikon* by claiming that the book's formalist preoccupation with "good . . . words" and "smooth and cleanly . . . fictions" comes at the cost of any "Statist" or "Politic[al]" content rings strangely hollow. In characterizing the psalmic *Eikon* as a "peece of Poetry" that tends toward a "Rime" that itself tends toward musical "straines," and in countering Hippolytus's (and Taylor's) call for psalmic song with Amos's (and Milton's) blast against false psalmic singers,⁸⁶ Milton seems alert to the possibility that Charles and his literary heirs have succeeded in using Puritan psalming to reclaim godly song for the royalist side. In this context, his repeated attempts to expose the *Eikon* as "Poetical" suggest an awareness bordering on alarm that the *Eikon* has enabled royalist writers to recover the voices, harps, and melodies that had seemed utterly lost to them as recently as Herrick's 1648 verse "on the untuneable Times."⁸⁷

Within a year of the *Eikon Basilike*, then, royalist writers had increasingly firm hold on godly song. What these writers did not have at first, however, was a corresponding godly story, a story into which they might insert themselves as psalmic singers and out of which they might narrate their own religious, cultural, and even political redemption. They soon had the story they needed, however, and they made dramatic use of it to consolidate their claims to psalmic song. Intriguingly, just as we saw Milton condemn royal psalming as "Poetical" at the same moment that royalist writers were recovering their poetical and psalmic voices, so we see him condemn Charles for plagiarizing a captivity prayer at the same

⁸⁵King, 1651, n^v (after 287).

⁸⁶J. Milton, 1962, 554n1: "[Woe to them] That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David."

⁸⁷Ibid. frequently denounces the *Eikon's* duplicitous dependence on things "Poetical": "Masking" (342); "Emblems" and "Pageantry" (343); the "Stage" (355); "fiction" (362); "Pastorals" (365); "Sonnetting" (421); "bad Poets" (502); "Stage-work" (530); and "the language of a Courtier" (539).

This Tune which is proper to Psalme 119.
 serves for the 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 39. 137.
 With any other of that Meter, containing
 Eight Lines in a Staffe.

This is for Psal. 8. 15. 19. 20. 21. 23. 24. 26.
 28. 29. 32. 41. 42. 45. 47. 48. 52. 69. With
 any others of that Meter, containing only
 Fowre lines in a Staffe. But if the Former
 seemes more difficult, or be lesse used in di-
 verse

FIGURE 6. Page *n* (following page 287) of Henry King, *The Psalmes of David*, 1651. © The British Library Board. Wing (1994) B2446, Thomason E.1280[1].

moment that royalist writers were redefining themselves as psalmic captives.

Milton is vehement when he attacks Charles for passing off Pamela's "Heathen" prayer (from Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*) as his own "Prayer in

Time of Captivity,”⁸⁸ the first of the *Eikon*’s several appendices, added in March of 1649. “[Charles’s] Prayer [is] stol’n word for word from the mouth of a Heathen fiction praying to a heathen God,” he writes, “& that in no serious Book, but in the vain amatorious Poem of *S^r Philip Sidney’s Arcadia*; a book in that kind full of worth and witt, but among religious thoughts, and duties not worthy to be nam’d; nor to be read at any time without good caution.”⁸⁹ Milton objects principally to Charles’s manifest impiety and plagiarism here, but he may also be troubled by what the king’s theft reveals about the acquisitive potential of the *Eikon*’s psalmic poetics. Bad enough that royalist writers have retooled Puritan psalming into a kind of set-form prayer that they then use to establish godly authority and song. But it adds cultural insult to theological injury to glimpse the *Eikon*’s potential to expand its poetics to other discursive realms, including the “vain” and “amatorious” yet also “worth[y]” and “witt[y]” genre of native English romance. No wonder he is at pains to expose and end what might be the first step in a royalist recovery, via psalmic discourse, of English letters.

Milton’s protest against the Pamela prayer brings into sharp focus a detail that the *Eikon* got mainly wrong, but that most 1650s royalist writers got entirely right. The proper prayer for a time of “Captivity” — as Herrick had understood in 1648 and as Taylor and other writers vividly recalled after 1649 — was that most famous of all songs of exilic bondage, Psalm 137:

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we
remembered Zion.
We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof
How shall we sing the LORD’S song in a strange land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.
If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;
if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.⁹⁰

The *Eikon* itself is largely deaf to Psalm 137, primarily because it is informed by several competing biblical narratives, including the dominant story of Davidic kingship and the Puritans’ own favorite story of the Exodus from Egypt.⁹¹ As a result, the book foregrounds the concept of captivity and still

⁸⁸Ibid., 363; Stuart and Gauden, 1966, 183.

⁸⁹J. Milton, 1962, 362.

⁹⁰King James Version, Psalm 137: 1–2, 4–6.

⁹¹Stuart and Gauden, 1966, 68: “[T]his Red Sea of our . . . [royal] blood” will serve as a bitter trial that will bring the country to the Canaan of royalist “piety, peace, and plenty.”

thinks only of Sidney.⁹² By the 1650s, however, *captivity* almost always meant Psalm 137 in royalist writings. Indeed, the psalm's story of Israelite defeat at the hands of the Babylonians became the narrative of choice for writers seeking to make sense of — and polemical hay from — political and cultural catastrophe.⁹³ The story enabled writers to construct the Interregnum as an interregnum — as a period of humiliation, chastisement, disenfranchisement, patience, and silence that might extend for decades, even beyond the lives of the original exiles, but that would come to an end when God's anger at the confessed sins of God's chosen people subsided. (The overlay of this biblical story of meaningful and limited bondage on more traditional figurations of enforced retirement may explain why it is only in the 1650s that English writers seem able to grant the classical notion of *otium* genuinely positive value.)⁹⁴

Psalm 137 not only provided royalist writers with the godly story they needed to explain their political misfortunes, but its particular focus on the onetime presence, wartime loss, and anticipated recovery of the “songs of Sion” spoke to many writers of their emerging experience of cultural survival.⁹⁵ By linking the idea of psalmic song in exile to the particular kind of psalmic poetics that had been developed by Taylor's *Psalter*, the *Eikon*

⁹²Ibid., 155, does refer to the impending captivity when it imagines Charles as Christ, surveying Jerusalem as the “object . . . of my prayers and tears, with compassionate grief, foreseeing those severer scatterings which will certainly befall” it. But this is a rare and fleeting reference, as the Pamela prayer makes clear.

⁹³The specific story of Babylonian victory, the fall of Jerusalem and the temple, and the seventy years of exile are recorded in 2 Kings 24 and 2 Chronicles 36, but the entire latter part of the Hebrew Bible revolves around this narrative. Several studies have explored how various midcentury groups appropriated the biblical story of exile: see Adamson, 35; A. Milton, 75; Hamlin, 218; Hirst, 2002, 647. Shell, 186, suggests, but does not develop, a fascinating link between the Jacobean and Caroline Catholic trope of “weeping England” and later Anglican-royalist use of it: “Were [Civil-War] Anglicans inspired by the use that Catholics had previously made of the trope, or did they derive it independently from the same biblical and literary sources?”

⁹⁴For discussion of negative attitudes toward *otium*, from classical times through Marvell's 1650s poetry, see Vickers, 146–53. Focusing on Psalm 137, Spenser, and the Elizabethan court, Parker, 59, notes traditional associations of *otium* with idleness, impotency, and silence, and argues that the only way a writer could redeem the stalled moment represented by *otium* was to see it retrospectively as part of a larger narrative progression. This vision is precisely the genius of 1650s Anglican-royalist deployment of the captivity narrative. A chart in Taylor, 1655a, B2^v–B4^f, projects feast days from 1654 to 1713, implying a long but limited captivity of near-Babylonian duration: “An Almanack for sixty years.”

⁹⁵Hamlin, 245–47, notes the presence of Psalm 137's song in the royalist writings of Edmund Waller, Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, and Edward Pelling.

Basilike, the *Psalterium Carolinum*, and Henry King's *Psalmes*, these writers were able both to embrace the idea of exilic song and to imagine that song as an agent of redemption and return.

That said, Psalm 137 proved a mixed blessing for royalist writers in 1650s England. As powerfully as the psalm spoke to these writers' experience of internal exile, its interrogation of godly song returned certain writers to their roots in one or the other side of the great divide between ceremonialist and Puritan English Protestants. Thus it was that a handful of episcopal and radical Protestant writers found unlikely common cause against the ongoing project of royalist psalmic poetics: much as certain royalists longed for a restoration of church and king, their commitment to a reformist hermeneutics based on the irreducible Word compelled them to understand Psalm 137 as a directive against their own political project. The pages that follow explore Psalm 137's fortunes in the hands of a few key writers from the 1650s and then come to a close with a meditation on Walton and Milton in the Restoration.

6. LITURGICAL AND SCRIPTURAL SKIRMISHES IN THE 1650S: "NEW AND PERMITTED INSTRUMENTS"

We should not be surprised that it is Jeremy Taylor, writing after the triumph of the psalmic *Eikon*, who most fully appreciates what the captivity narrative has to offer royalists. In 1655, Taylor published what was essentially a Church breviary, a liturgical "manuall" that he clearly intended as a de facto replacement for the outlawed prayer book: *The Golden Grove, or, A Manuall of Daily Prayers & Letanies, Fitted to the dayes of the Week. Containing a Short Summary of What is to be Believed, Practised, Desired. Also Festival Hymns, According to the manner of The Ancient Church. Composed for the use of the Devout, esp. of Younger Persons*. Taylor justifies his volume on the grounds of Psalm 137's narrative of extended captivity and anticipated return: "they who have seen *Jerusalem* in prosperity, and have forgotten the order of the Morning and Evening Sacrifice, and the beauty of the Temple, will be tempted to neglect so excellent a ministration . . . we must now take care that the young men who were born in the Captivity, may be taught how to worship the God of *Israel* after the manner of their forefathers, till it shall please God that Religion return into the Land, and dwell safely and grow prosperously."⁹⁶ He uses the captivity narrative to structure every important aspect of Interregnum life: the temptation of survivors to

⁹⁶Taylor, 1655b, A2^v–A3. Wilcher, 2001, 327–28, notes the role of Taylor's *Golden Grove* in Anglican survivalism.

“forget” the liturgical “order” of the “Temple,” or Church of England; the fact of a rising generation “born in the Captivity” that must be “taught” the royalist way; and the suprarational expectation of a providential “return” of the national “Religion . . . into the Land.”

Once he has secured the captivity narrative, Taylor uses it to justify his own textual project. “We shall prevail,” he promises the reader, but “in the mean time we must by all means secure the foundation and take care that Religion may be convey’d in all its material parts, the same as it was, but by new and permitted instruments.”⁹⁷ By “new and permitted instruments,” Taylor may well mean his own *Golden Grove*, a “manuall” that “secure[s]” the liturgical “foundation” by including everything from “Daily Prayers” to an Anglican *credenda* to “Church . . . Hymns.”⁹⁸ If so, *The Golden Grove* arguably represents a replacement not just for the prayer book, but for the Church of England itself. His is “a Book which [the people] might always have with them,” he confides to Lord Vaughan in his 1650 *The Rule and Exercise of Holy Living*, to supply the “want of personall and attending Guides” and the “want [of] the blessings of external communion.”⁹⁹ The royalist captivity, Taylor implies, has forced the English Church to transform itself from an ecclesiastical institution to a book.¹⁰⁰

And not just any book. “[B]ecause we now want the blessings of external communion in many degrees,” Taylor observes, “we are to take estimate of our selves with single judgements, and every Man is to give sentence concerning the state of his own soul.”¹⁰¹ Absent the guidance of an external Church, the faithful find themselves compelled to do as their radical Protestant brethren require, “to take estimate of our selves with single judgements” before God. With brilliant strategy, the 1655 *Golden Grove* advocates Puritan independence of conscience, but does so via a textual “instrument” whose simplicity and availability promote theological uniformity. His is a “plain Catechism” of “plain Rules,” Taylor notes, whose primitive “simplicity” and “easie Formes of Prayer” are suitable “to the Soul of a Childe or an ignorant Woman,” or any other reader who “need[s] milk, and not strong meat.”¹⁰² And as it is suitable for all, so it is,

⁹⁷Taylor, 1655b, A6–A6^v.

⁹⁸Taylor’s 1655 *Psalter* similarly includes psalms, devotions, and prayers, plus an ecclesiastical “Calendar” by which “every person in Holy Orders” might calculate church holidays to 1769 or “for ever”: A7^v–A9^f, B10^r.

⁹⁹Taylor, 1650, ¶5^{r–v}.

¹⁰⁰Hirst, 2002, 648, points out that royalists saw “the church as embodiment of the nation,” even if that church was “confined . . . to pages of learned tomes.”

¹⁰¹Taylor, 1650, ¶5^r.

¹⁰²Taylor, 1655b, A7^r–A8^f.

through publication, available to all.¹⁰³ In reducing the Church of England to “easie Formes of Prayer” that readers can master on their own, *The Golden Grove* sets the scene for an ecclesiastical direction of conscience that puts William Laud’s earlier machinations to shame.

The Golden Grove (along with Taylor’s other 1650s works) might further be understood as a parody of radical Protestant fundamentals, imagining as it does a textual religion organized around a central book — not the Bible or even the psalter, but the *Golden Grove* itself — so simultaneously accessible and directive that individual readers can be left to their own devices without external interference or fear of dissent. This parodic possibility only clarifies how Taylor has deployed Psalm 137’s captivity narrative to devastating effect, greatly broadening the power, flexibility, and scope of royalist psalmic poetics. Earlier, royalist writers had used the psalter to recover poetical song by absorbing Puritan psalm-singing and by transforming psalmic song into Church-sanctioned prayer, poetry, and music. Now *The Golden Grove* uses the captivity narrative to absorb the essential features of radical Protestantism — textuality, accessibility, and freedom of conscience — and to retool these to serve the diametrically opposed agenda of an exilic clergy bent on reinstating an actual Church of England with a universal — and universally assenting — national membership. That the Restoration Church would make this precise claim for itself in 1662 should give us pause. The date of *The Golden Grove* is 1655, a point at which royalist politics on the ground are in a shambles.

Psalm 137 enables Taylor to complete the construction of royalist psalmic poetics. Having identified the psalms as set-form prayers, and having inspired others to use those prayers to appropriate Puritan psalmic song and its attendant cultural authority, Taylor sets both prayer and song within a psalmic narrative that allows “every man to give sentence” on his own, even as it ensures that every man’s sentence is rooted in the deep grammar of a single, uniform, national discourse. We can appreciate the elegance and power of Taylor’s achievement by recalling the willow scene from Walton’s *Compleat Angler* with which this essay opened. When Viator sits down under a willow by the water, recalls old songs, sings them with his peers, and then finally fishes, he participates, whether he and his fellows (in or out of the book) know it or not, in the underground communion of the

¹⁰³Green, 566–70, charts the clergy’s mounting interest in print. *Ibid.*, 662–63, also shows that by the time he published *The Golden Grove*, Taylor was a master of the medium: while there were fifteen editions of his *Psalter*, there were more than twenty-six separate editions of *The Golden Grove*, making it the most published of any of Taylor’s works, including *Holy Living*.

disestablished Church of England: “We’l banish all sorrow, and sing till to morrow, / And Angle, and Angle again.” At the same time, Viator identifies Walton as a key propagandist in the fully developed project of royalist psalmic poetics.

However, other royalist writers found in Psalm 137 ample reason to resist the polemical pressure of their peer’s poetics. The possibilities and problems posed by Psalm 137 are nowhere so manifest as in the 1659 *A Paraphrase and Annotations Upon the Book of the Psalms* of the episcopal theologian Henry Hammond. Hammond follows Taylor’s lead in defending set-form psalmic prayer,¹⁰⁴ in arguing for a theologically complete psalter that is nonetheless aimed at “every mans understanding,”¹⁰⁵ and in finding in Psalm 137 a potent parallel to Interregnum exile at home. “[I]n thy good time returne the captivity of our Church and nation,” he prays, adding in Tayloresque fashion, “if this fall not out in our dayes, yet our children and their posterity shall receive the benefit and comfort of it.”¹⁰⁶ Indeed, Hammond goes farther than anyone in providing a Church-centered gloss to Psalm 137:

How shall we sing the Lords song in a strange land?

But our Levites gave answer presently, that it was not fit for them to sing those festival hymns that belonged to the praises of the God of Israel at a time of publick mourning, and withall in a land and among a people that acknowledged him not for God, or indeed any where but in the Temple, the place of his solemn festival worship.

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

It is not possible for us so to put off the memory of our sufferings, so to divest our selves of our great concerns and interests in the welfare of Jerusalem, which now is despoiled of her inhabitants, or to put off the sorrow conceived for the loss of those joyfull advantages of Gods publick worship which there we enjoyed: should we convert such dayes of mourning as these into seasons of joy, ‘twere not fit we should ever more use those sacred instruments, set apart for the praising and glorifying of God;

If I doe not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Not fit we should ever be permitted to sing any joyfull hymn again, if we can think fit to apply it to such purposes as these, of pleasing or gratifying our oppressors, or indeed ever sing again, till we can celebrate our returne to our cuntry and temple by our singing.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴Hammond, A4^v.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., (b)3^f.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 500–01.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 666–67.

Hammond's conformity to the tenets of royalist psalming might lead us to expect him to share the polemical zeal of Stanley, King, Taylor, and even Walton, and so to interpret Psalm 137 as authority for exilic song. In fact, however, Hammond brings the captivity narrative to bear so heavily on his reading of Psalm 137 that he paraphrases the "songs of Sion" narrowly as "festival hymns" that should be accompanied by "sacred instruments" and "injoyed" only in the context of "Gods publick worship" at the "Temple" in "Jerusalem" — and that therefore must be "set apart" until "our returne to our cuntry and temple," whenever that may be.

Despite the clarity with which he uses the captivity narrative to articulate his yearning for political and ecclesiastical restoration, Hammond's reformist commitment to accurate scriptural translation keeps him from simplifying Psalm 137's complex treatment of harping, songs, hymns, and silence. Indeed, his psalm is richly — and accurately — ambiguous.¹⁰⁸ For example, in the final verse cited above, if it is "not fit" that the captives sing "any joyfull hymn," is it "fit" that they sing mournful hymns, or perhaps some non-hymnal songs? And if it is not fit "indeed" that they "ever sing again" until their "returne," does this rule out the possibility of exilic song of any kind? (And if so, to what genre does this psalm, this sweep of the string, belong?) Further, when the captives "celebrate [their] returne to [their] cuntry and temple by [their] singing," is it that they refrain from singing until they celebrate their return, or that they celebrate a return that came about by means of their exilic song? Rather than reduce the issue of song to a single meaning that would allow Psalm 137 to justify royalist claims to the psalter, Hammond re-presents in English the textual knottiness of the original Hebraic song.

Hammond defends his practice in his preface. While he identifies the Hebrew psalms as a "Divine Poesy" full of "*Measures and Musick*" and recommends metrical psalms as a first step to psalmic study, he points out that he himself has eschewed both rhyme and meter, presumably because the reformist requirement of individual engagement with scripture dictates a more sophisticated response from a divine, and possibly because of the potential overlap between metrical psalms and set-form prayer. Indeed, Hammond at times sounds frankly Miltonic. He warns that repeating the

¹⁰⁸In his exploration of early midrashic commentary upon Psalm 137, Kugel, 188, notes that the single phrase, *How shall we sing?* can be read variously as: How will we sing? How are we singing now? We will not sing; We will sing, but not Temple songs; and We don't want to sing (but we will do so if forced). He notes that to "hang up harps" could mean to cease playing music, to self-mutilate, to make a penitent gesture, and to tune harps (in preparation for compelled singing). *Ibid.* also points to the psalm's possible suggestion that the singing of holy songs in exile may not be a desecration, but rather "the opposite, indeed one of the few remaining acts of communal piety and national cohesion."

psalms might “degenerate into *lip-labour*” and that “reciting the *Hallelujahs* will be a most ridiculous piece of pageantry.”¹⁰⁹ And he envisions a good man inspired by psalmic song “drawing to himself the most proper juice out of every line, and then enlarging his thoughts, and inflaming his zeal on each occasion that the periods of the Psalm shall severally suggest, and the good Spirit of God excite in him.”¹¹⁰ The Miltonic resonances here are revealing. In attending to the textual complexity that Psalm 137 takes as its topic, and in insisting on the individual effort of the zealous reader who “draw[s],” “inlarg[es],” and “inflam[es],” Hammond effectively advocates a Puritan poetics, one that strenuously resists the reduction of psalms to set-form prayer and song that we find in such polemically motivated texts as the *Eikon Basilike*, Stanley’s *Psalterium*, King’s *Psalmes*, and Walton’s *Angler*.

Milton’s own 1653 translations of Psalms 1–8 make the Puritan dimension of Hammond’s scriptural poetics especially clear. They also register Milton’s outrage at the impious presumption of men who he clearly believes are misusing God’s psalmic Word for their own criminal ends. Unlike the common-meter versions he produced in 1648, Milton’s 1653 psalmic translations insist — both in their stated meaning and in their prosodic irregularity, ruptured cadences, and buried rhymes — on the non-metrical fruits of zealous engagement with the scriptural psalter.¹¹¹ God hates all “workers of iniquity,” Milton’s fifth psalm fulminates, especially the “bloodi’ and guileful man . . . that speak[s] a lie”:

For in his falt’ring mouth unstable
 No word is firm or sooth:
 Their inside, troubles miserable;
 An open grave their throat, their tongue they smooth.
 God find them guilty, let them fall
 By their own counsels quell’d.¹¹²

In light of the ongoing royalist appropriation of Puritan psalming, an appropriation designed to simplify scripture and to impose unitary meaning on a sacred text whose inherent ambiguity requires the interpretive response of the individual godly reader, Milton’s fierce refusal to “smooth” his

¹⁰⁹Hammond, (c)^v–(c2)^f.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, (c)^f.

¹¹¹Woodhouse, 1000, 1084. Hamlin, 140–44, argues for the Sidneyan or literary nature of Milton’s translations of Psalms 1–8. Prineas, 63–77, makes a case for their underlying “plain style.” For other discussion of the 1653 psalms and Milton’s psalmic poetics, see Schindler, 67–69; Miller, 41–46; Jacobus, 122; Radzinowitz, 85–110; R. Schwartz, 84–88; Buhler, 34; M. Schwartz, 84.

¹¹²J. Milton, 1959, 164–65.

“tongue” into set-form psalming and so make of his “throat . . . [a]n open grave” seems richly resonant. His refusal may in fact register his awareness of the polemical implications of psalmic discourse in 1650s England, and of royalist control over what had been, as recently as his own 1648 translations, the Puritan territory of traditional psalmic song.

The polemically embattled nature of psalmic song and story becomes even clearer when we consider a writer who stumbled unwittingly into the cultural minefield of 1650s England. A committed royalist throughout the 1640s and early '50s, Abraham Cowley returned to England from political service in France ignorant about what he quickly decided was debased royalist song — song whose cultural significance he utterly missed. The wars over, “we must lay down our *Pens* as well as *Arms*,”¹¹³ he famously insists in the preface to his 1656 *Poems*, and “to make my self absolutely dead in a *Poetical* capacity, my resolution at present is never to exercise any more that faculty.”¹¹⁴ Deaf to how the wars are not over but ongoing, at least at the level of discourse and culture, Cowley misses the entire phenomenon of royalist psalmic poetics as he loudly hangs up his “Poetical” harp. Likewise, when he argues that English poetry be purged of its secular content and taught to refocus its attention on scripture — “It is time to recover . . . *Poesie* . . . out of the *Tyrants* hands, and to restore it to the *Kingdom of God*, who is the *Father* of it”¹¹⁵ — he misses the intensely psalmic nature of midcentury royalist “poesie,” as well as royalist writers’ ambition to expand outward from psalmic song to secular literature (not vice versa).

Most strikingly, Cowley takes up Hammond’s and Milton’s anti-numerous arguments without any sense of their contemporary polemical stakes. He condemns rhyme in divine poetry, not because of royalist psalmic poetics, but because rhyme trivializes sacred story: “For if any man design to compose a *Sacred Poem* by onely turning a story of the *Scripture* . . . into *Rhyme*, He is so far from elevating of *Poesie* that he onely *abases Divinity*.”¹¹⁶ With equal equanimity, he notes that his secular *Pindarique Odes* are, like the Hebraic psalms, textually challenging. The “Psalms of David” are “the great example of what I have said,” he notes:¹¹⁷ “I am [therefore] in great doubt whether they will be understood by most *Readers*; nay, even by the very many who are well enough acquainted with the common Roads and ordinary Tracks of *Poesie* The digressions are many and sudden, and

¹¹³Cowley, 1908, 84.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, 79–80.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, 88.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 90.

¹¹⁷Cowley, 1905, 156.

sometimes long. . . . The *Figures* are unusual and *bold*, even to a *Temeritie*. . . . The *Numbers* are various and irregular, and sometimes (especially some of the long ones) seem harsh and uncouth.”¹¹⁸ Cowley’s deafness to contemporary debate is impressive. Though his description of his odes could be mistaken for Puritan dissent from contemporary psalmic poetics (Hammond) or protest to it (Milton), in fact it is neither. Improbably, it is a naive apology for psalm-like, prosodically irregular, and elevated English poetry at a time when psalms, metrics, and, indeed, poetry were not beyond or above contention, but were indeed the ground zero of an ongoing war of religion, culture, and nation.

7. GODLY RECLAMATIONS OF POETIC TRADITION IN THE ENGLISH RESTORATION: “I MADE A CONVERSION OF . . . AN OLD KETCH”

Unaware of the phenomenon of 1650s royalist poetics, Cowley hung up his poetical harp in 1656. But his fellow writers did not, and neither did Milton or his peers: the contest between ceremonialist and Puritan writers for psalmic song and cultural authority carried forward into both the Restoration era and the secular realm of English literature. We can catch a glimpse of what that contest was like if we briefly imagine a simple but illuminating standoff between Walton’s *Compleat Angler*, which uses royalist psalmic poetics to lay easy claim on English literary tradition, and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, whose reformist poetics might stipulatively be considered as reappropriative, recovering the godly song, stories, and authority that had been purloined by the enemy during the years of republican dominance. Walton expanded the reach of the royalist polemical project, that is, simplifying, singing, and popularizing English poetry much as writers from Taylor to Henry King had simplified, sung, and popularized the psalms. In so doing, he helped establish a Restoration culture in which literary participation doubled as ideological consent. However, while royalist writers may have won the battle in 1660, opening the door to the court culture of the 1660s and ’70s, they did not win the war. As N. H. Keeble notes, it was out of the ashes of political defeat that Milton and John Bunyan produced the dissenting works that would come to define Restoration literature.¹¹⁹ A final and necessarily speculative interest here, then, lies in the possibility that *Paradise Lost* joined sides in a battle that few realize existed. Milton’s poem may respond, at least in part, to the royalist challenge of the 1650s and ’60s, reclaiming psalmic song from metrical or set-form psalming, regaining traditional and popular

¹¹⁸Cowley, 1908, 86.

¹¹⁹Keeble, 2002, 132–34.

authority through biblical counternarratives, and reappropriating English cultural authority for republican writers.

Early on in *The Compleat Angler*, long before the willow scene described above, Walton uses Psalm 137 to describe the situation of royalists during the 1650s: “That the very sitting by the Rivers side, is not only the fittest place for, but will invite the Anglers to Contemplation . . . seems to be witnessed by the children of *Israel* [“Psal.137”], who having banish’d all mirth and Musick from their pensive hearts, and having hung up their then mute Instruments upon the Willow trees, growing by the Rivers of *Babylon*, sate down upon those banks bemoaning the *ruines* of *Sion*, and contemplating their own sad condition.”¹²⁰ The explicit identification of anglers with captives enables the ensuing narrative to identify as royalist any character who sits by a river yearning for the songs of yesteryear.

The identification is put to pointed use in chapter 4’s milkmaid episode. There Piscator tells of a recent excursion during which he rose from “the silver-streams” that “glide[d] silently” by and chanced to meet a milkmaid and her mother. The pair complied with his wistful request for “old fashioned Poetry” by singing “Come live with me, and be my Love” (“The Milk-maids Song”) and “If all the world and Love were young” (“The Milk-maids Mothers Answer”).¹²¹ The link Walton established earlier between Psalm 137 and riverbank musical nostalgia informs the episode, transforming its innocent portrayal of strangers recalling and rehearsing old English poems into a powerful instance of cultural appropriation in which English literary tradition is identified with — and claimed as — royalist psalmic song.

Walton goes out of his way to emphasize the sung nature of English poetry in the milkmaid episode. Poems are presented as songs for the first time in a volume that until then has featured only poetic recitation.¹²² Piscator admires how the Milkmaid “sung like a *Nightengale*; her voice was good, and the Ditty fitted for it; ‘twas that smooth Song” of Marlowe, which he later describes as “a choice Song, and sweetly sung by honest *Maudlin*.”¹²³ When the mother performs Raleigh’s verses, Piscator praises her for a song “wel sung.”¹²⁴ Walton himself has no need to include here the sheet music that he provides in the later willow scene, because, as Jonquil

¹²⁰Walton, 1983, 70. This passage appears in all five editions. In Walton, 1655, 193, he amended the passage to define exilic sitting and weeping as the precondition for prophet inspiration; he also refers to their “Instruments” as “Harps.”

¹²¹Walton, 1983, 231–35. Hirst, 2002, 648, sees the milkmaid scene as a secular version of the larger royalist “[p]roject of retrieval and reassertion.”

¹²²Walton, 1983, 391.

¹²³*Ibid.*, 89–90.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, 91.

Bevan points out, Marlowe's and Raleigh's familiar poems are "sung plainly to the same tune, a very popular one to which there are numerous contemporary references."¹²⁵ Singing Raleigh's poem in tune to Walton's royalist agenda is as easy and familiar as singing the Sternhold-Hopkins version of Psalm 137.

Walton's psalmic singers do not stop with Marlowe and Raleigh, but make a proprietary gesture toward the larger literary tradition that includes Ben Jonson and the cavalier poets who were given to protestations of love and reminders of time's passage. Piscator recalls Jonson's complaints against Donnean "strong lines" when he deems the "old fashioned Poetry" that he requests of the milkwomen "much better than the strong lines that are now in fashion in this critical age."¹²⁶ Similarly, in the episode that follows the milkmaid scene, Coridon's Horatian praise of country life earns Piscator's Father Ben-like approval: "I would you were a brother of the Angle, for a companion that is chearful, and free from swearing and scurrilous discourse, is worth gold."¹²⁷ "I love such mirth," he adds, echoing "Inviting a Friend to Supper" and "To Penshurst," "as does not make friends ashamed to look upon one another next morning."¹²⁸ Walton's efforts to include the Sons of Ben within the psalmic net he casts may explain why his 1655 edition separates out the willow scene into its own chapter and gives it the distinctly Cavalier title of "Merriment, Song, and Musick."¹²⁹ In the 1661 edition, Walton renames this chapter a second time, perhaps as a nod to how small this earlier victory seems in comparison with the present moment of royalist hegemony: "Is of nothing; or, that which is nothing worth."¹³⁰

If Walton's psalmic recovery of English literary tradition was substantial, consisting as it did of poems and poets, it was also transformational. Walton's singers alter — by simplification, omission, addition, and what Viator calls the "fitting" of old forms to new uses — the poetical "songs" that they "remember." For example, in the milkmaid scene, Marlowe's and Raleigh's poems appear smoothed in form and steadied in content: Walton adds a moralizing penultimate stanza to each and puts both in the mouths of good women. In the willow scene, Piscator admits that he "was forced to patch [his song] up by the help of [his] own invention," and Viator notes that he "made

¹²⁵Ibid., 391. Ibid. notes that the tune "is printed in William Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time* [1859] . . . : This tune, which was discovered by Sir John Hawkins . . . and printed in Stevens' edition of Shakespeare, is also contained in the Second Booke of Ayres, to be sung to the Lute and Base-Violl, &c., by W. Corkine, fol.1612."

¹²⁶Ibid., 232.

¹²⁷Ibid., 241.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Walton, 1655, 287. "The Anglers Song" appears in this chapter, at *ibid.*, 298–99.

¹³⁰Walton, 1983, 330.

a conversion” of an old catch by “add[ing] more to it, fitting” his thoughts to the old song so that it might appropriately be “sung by us Anglers.”

However, the smooth, regular, rhyming, clean, and often feminized verses produced by singers fitting old poetry to new song should give us pause. One of the many things that gets polemicized when Walton expands royalist psalmic poetics into English letters is poetic form, or style itself. Though this is hardly a surprising outcome, given royalist poetics’ claims on the form and sound of Puritan psalming, it is still remarkable. What writers had in their hands in the 1660s was a pure, smooth, easy, accessible, and adaptable poetic style of considerable poetical, cultural, and even political potency: “Musick, miraculous Rhetorick, that speak’st sense / Without a tongue, excelling eloquence.”

An important but unrecognized source for the rhymed couplet that emerged during the 1650s and ’60s as the stylistic norm for English courtly verse was royalist psalmic poetics. In this context, we might cast a brief, final, and speculative eye on “The Verse” that prefaces the 1668 reissue of Milton’s 1667 *Paradise Lost* (begun in the mid-1650s).¹³¹ Milton defends “*English Heroic Verse without Rime*” as “an example set, the first in *English*, of ancient liberty recover’d to Heroic Poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of Riming.”¹³² As David Norbrook, Sharon Achinstein, and John Creaser have noted, this is a powerful statement of what Norbrook identifies as “Milton’s republican sublimity.”¹³³ But a student of the 1650s royalist reclamation of psalmic poetics cannot help but wonder if there are other possibilities as well. It may be that Milton’s defense is also a statement of polemical poetics by a Puritan author whose epic means to signal the freedom of English literary culture from the “bondage” of set poetic forms, particularly when those forms have royalist and liturgical roots. It may be that Milton combines the “ancient liberty” of inspired psalmic and scriptural song with traditional and popular biblical story, and in so doing wrests English literary culture back to his side of the ceremonialist-Puritan divide. It may be, finally, that Milton’s “Verse” functions in part as a declaration of war against an enemy, “Rime,” associated with a polemical psalmic poetics that had laid powerful claim to his religious, national, and poetical patrimony, seeking to compel cultural uniformity and dispel poetic dissent. The answers to these speculations belong to another day. But the

¹³¹Norbrook, 434.

¹³²J. Milton, 1959, 210.

¹³³Norbrook, 135, 225. Creaser, 44, builds on Norbrook when he equates blank verse with political freedom, and rhyme with political conservatism. Achinstein, 1990, 6, 11, discusses Milton’s blank verse, and notes that for him “literary style was thus an allegorical equivalent of a political opinion.”

poet who had his finger on the pulse of royalist “Psalmistry” at its inception may have learned about the redemptive power of psalmic song and story from 1650s royalists, and brought this knowledge to bear on his own response to the “untuneable Times” of the Stuart Restoration.

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