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The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton

Tiffany Jo Werth

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The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton

TIFFANY JO WERTH

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For Bertrand W. Delacourt

Acknowledgments

Much like metamorphic rock that starts out in one form, but then substantially changes as it grows, this book has transformed across what feels like deep time. What I thought to be a book about the ungodly, turned to stone. It emerges thanks to the many humans whose ministrations helped me endure its glacial accretion. Whatever grains of imperfection remain are solely mine to bear.[1]

The spark that started me down this pathway was ignited by one whom I think of as the lithic paterfamilias, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, who forged beyond the humans, the creatures, and the vegetal, to reveal the wonders of a mineral charisma. His encouragement to a fellow lithic enthusiast set me on my own pilgrimage. My first steps found footing thanks to a Shakespeare Association of America seminar on the nonhuman Renaissance co-led by Andreas Höfele and Laurie Shannon. From then, a procession of interlocutors contributed to its sedimentation: chief among them, Vin Nardizzi, who has read more drafts than any one person should and who was always there to add an extra push when the hill became too steep. Next, Fran Dolan, who willingly dug in and wrote many a letter in support of a project despite its lack of oenologists. Her championing of its many iterations is a testament of will. Looming always in the backdrop was Jean E. Howard, who reminded me that one day I had to stop collecting rocks and see them into a monograph.

The book began high atop Burnaby Mountain at Simon Fraser University under the rigorous tutelage of an incredible grant facilitator, Beverly Neufeld, who kept me chiseling away until the project took form. She it was who showed me stone's human form. From there, I benefited from multiple academic communities, libraries, and indefatigable readers. Call outs go to my first Ph.D. student, Nathan Szymanski, for his collaboration on the transcription of a little-known academic drama that later came to be the basis of my first chapter on England's stony genesis. A conference in Dundee, Scotland in honor of the late Professor Victor Skretkowicz first introduced me to the Stone of Scone, then held along with the crown jewels in Edinburgh Castle. London Stone, too, soon caught my eye, and thanks to Will Stockton, editor of *Upstart: A Journal of English Renaissance Studies* and an encouraging anonymous reader, my first stony thoughts became public.

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[1] With one exception: any signature errors to recto and verso in the works of John Calvin are due to the sins of Minister Fig, the Count Palatine, as he lay suffering from COVID FOG.

Invited talks over the years provided fresh challenges and inspiration. In particular, I am grateful for the rich veins of conversations afforded by: the Early Modern Studies Institute (EMSI) with thanks to the cohosts, Heather James and Heidi Brayman; the UC Irvine Early Modern Cultures Group with shout-outs to Rebeca Helfer and Julia Reinhardt Lupton (who chose the perfect poster font); the Erasmus + Programme that took me to University College Dublin, where I was perfectly hosted by Jane Grogan; and, later, with thanks to Julie Sanders, a trip to the North and Newcastle University; the Paris Early Modern Seminar at the Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris; the Group for Early Modern Studies at the CUNY Graduate Center (thanks to András Kiséry and Mario DiGangi). Several digital invitations during COVID, including the Early Modern Temporalities Virtual Talk Series at the University of Texas at Austin (courtesy of J. K. Barret) as well as the Art History Methods seminar at the University of British Columbia (with thanks to Joseph Monteyne), provided sanity and fellowship in the middle of a world pandemic.

Numerous informal readerly eyes also kept me on the path, with a special thanks to the Huntington early modern reading group (Rebecca Lemon, Will Fisher, and J. K. Barret), Joe Campana, Ayesha Ramachandran, Melissa Sanchez, Stephanie Shirilan, Andrew Wadoski, Will West and those whom we might call Hillary Eklund and Julian Yates. It is also always a boon to have a Reformation historian at your back, and I'm grateful to John Craig for many things, but among them, for tracking down the elusive Robert Welstead/Welsteede. Pam Brown generously shared her cornucopia of bezoar resources. In this list of indispensable folk, I also include the long-term fellows with whom I shared Mahogany Row while in residence at the Huntington (2016–17): Jon Mee, Laura Forsberg, Fuson Wang, Nicolas Ridout, Matthew Hunter, J. K. Barret, Margo Todd, Bethel Saler, and the honorary Peter Mancall. There's a footnote in here somewhere just for all of you. Laura and J. K. deserve a special star; I have fond memories of happy hours at the Raymond where we ate tater tots and burned bridges. J. K., you are the best hallmate ever.

I also owe a thanks to my early modern colleagues at Simon Fraser University, Ronda Arab and Paul Budra, and to the ecocritical writing group at UC Davis: Liz Miller, Mike Ziser, and Tobias Menely. I'm also lucky to have an incredible cohort of premodern colleagues at UC Davis who sparked joy and goaded me onward: Gina Bloom, Claire Goldstein, Noah Guynn, John Slater, Daniel Stolzenberg, Matthew Vernon, and Claire Waters, thank you for welcoming me into a flourishing intellectual environment. Big props to my collaborators in Oecologies, and the Earth, Sea, Sky network: namely Vin Nardizzi, Tom White, Todd Borlik, Bronwen Wilson, and Lyle Massey, without whom the long years of this book's crystallization would have been quite dull.

Critical to the labor of this project was the assistance of graduate and early career scholars: Laura Aguilar located images from the Warburg Institute; Sawyer Kemp and Courtney Cahalan corralled images and tracked down permissions for the many images that make such a vital contribution to this book. A constellation of thanks goes out to Kirsten Schuhmacher, who shares the love of Spenser, pocket pies, and impossibly long projects. Without her final eye—and companionship—in tracking Error to her many dens, this book might have been devoured by her numerous progeny. I also benefited from the perfection demanded by Kirk Hamlin Perry, whose eye not only caught Error and her spawn but who also made clever recommendations: "Note how the addition of a comma creates two neat testicular syntactic units." May his mountain pilgrimage find success.

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To my Aunt Jo, who followed with interest every new stone overturned, but who found a new planet with all her feathered and furry friends before this book came into final form, I wish the best of interstellar and galactic travels. You are much missed on Earth. For my parents, who raised me below the rocky shadow of Mount Rushmore and the emerging torso of Crazy Horse, Willard and Lenora Werth, I thank them for their insistence on the importance of education, even when they did not understand my choices of faraway places to pursue that goal: London, New York, Vancouver, the Bay Area.

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6.7. Bernard Palissy's *Oval Plate.* Mid-sixteenth-century, lead-glazed earthenware, 6.2 × 33 25.3 cm, 97.DE.46.
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Pacific Palisades, California. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program. 273

7.1. Portrait of John Donne engraved by Martin Droeshout. In John Donne's *Deaths Duell* [. . .] (London: B. Alsop and T. Fawcet, [1633]), RB 60135.
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7.2. Donne's effigy in St. Paul's Cathedral, London.
Photograph by the author. 296

7.3. Depiction of Merlin's cave. Plate to Book 3 of Sir John Harington's translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* [. . .] ([London]: [Richard Field], [1591], sig. B3^{v}, RB 62722.
Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. 308

8.1. *Scripta manent* from Geffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblemes* [. . .] (Leiden: In the house of Christopher Plantyn, by Francis Raphelengius, [1586]), sig. R2^{r}, RB 79714.
Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. 318

8.2. The emerald tablet from Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphiteatrum sapientiæ æternæ* [. . .] ([Hanau]: Excudebat Guilielmus Antonius, 1609), KB+ 1609.
New York Public Library, Rare Books. For inquiries concerning use outside the scope of the license terms, please contact the rights holder. 324

8.3. The garments of the high priest and the Ephod of Aaron from Exodus 28 in *The Bible and Holy Scriptures* [. . .] (Geneva: [s.n.], 1560), sig. Kii^{r}, RB 55362.
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8.4. "The Pillar of Fame" from Robert Herrick's *Hesperides; or, the Works Both Humane and Divine of Robert Herrick Esq.* (London: Printed for John Williams and Francis Eglesfield, and are to be sold by Tho. Hunt, 1648), sig. Cc7^{v}, RB 105743.
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9.1. Illustration for St. John's vision of the New Jerusalem from Revelation 21, *Biblia* (Strassburg: In Verlegung L. Zetzners seligen Erben, 1630), 268, RB 41130.
Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. 354

9.2. Woodcut from Edmund Spenser, *A theatre wherein be represented as wel the miseries & calamities that follow the voluptuous worldlings* [. . .] (London: Henry Bynneman, 1569), sig. D6^{r}, RB 62764. A partial translation of a work by the Dutch author Jan van der Noot, this volume's woodcuts are copied from the etchings by Marcus Gheeraerts the elder.
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9.3. F. R. Honey, reproduction of Brockett's map of New Haven in 1641.
Public domain at the Yale University Art Gallery. https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/35283. 364

Introduction
Jacob's Ladder

This book begins with a dream. In chapter 28 of Genesis, a young Jacob obeys his father and leaves the promised Canaanite land to search for a wife in his mother's homeland. While making the dangerous crossing back to his land of origin, "because the sonne" had set, Jacob stops to sleep. He gathers "the stones of the place" and places them "vnder his head" for a pillow (28:11).[1] Falling asleep, he dreams of a ladder stretching from earth to heaven. "Angels of God" go "vp and downe by it" while God himself stands above it. In the dream, God promises Jacob that his "sede shal be as the dust of the earth" (28:12, 14). The divine assurance of fruitfulness, "a multitude of people" (28:3), seemingly fulfills the blessing sought by Old Testament patriarchs. But Jacob wakes early, "afraid": "how fearful," he cries, is "the gate of heauen" (28:17). He sets the stone that was his pillow "as a piller," anoints it with oil, and renames the plain of Luz (where he slept), calling it Bethel, "Gods house" (28:18, 22). Jacob then lifts "up his fete" and continues his journey (29:1).

In the following pages, I dwell on the particulars of Jacob's crossing: the stone pillow, the ladder, the divine promise of human fecundity, and the potent affective response the dream generates. From Jacob's dream, I extract a series of arguments about the early modern human's complex relationship to stone. Like the dream itself, my book takes its departure from the stony pillow that cradles Jacob's head, grounding the imaginative ascent and vision. As a foundational step, the stone is no mere cushion or bottom. Rather, as Jacob himself sees it, the "stones of the place" operate as a portal—the "gate of heauen"—between realms. These stones are the in-between matter linking seemingly distant and distinct geographies: the human realm below and the divine above. The second step of my argument follows from the first: as point of origin for the visionary spark, the stone pillow, a rocky threshold, pulses with vitality. Far from being barren, lifeless, and inert matter, the stones herald the multiplication of Jacob's seed and

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[1] All biblical citations are to *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, ed. Lloyd Eason Berry (Madison, Milwaukee, and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton. Tiffany Jo Werth, Oxford University Press. © Tiffany Jo Werth (2024).
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lineage "as the dust of the earth." The futurity of Jacob-become-Israel stands adumbrated in the dream's anointed stone pillar, which remains standing as witness to the dream even after Jacob continues his journey. In its confluence of human, earthly, and heavenly domains, Jacob's dream envisions what cultural geographer Sarah Whatmore calls a "hybrid geography," where partitions between physical or material terrains and those of human anatomies and cultural systems break down or are distributed in such a way as to transgress binary divisions.[2] In the geography of Jacob's dream, the rocky plain of Luz harbors a fertile, interrelational drift among and across kinds: mineral, human, and divine.

For twenty-first-century literary critics, it may be tempting to overlook the lowly stone upon which Jacob rests. It is rendered deceptively uncharismatic—dull, forgettable—by its relative passivity, its seeming in difference to human ascendency or commentary, and its raw, found nature devoid of a gem's sparkle or wealth. Yet surprisingly, Jacob's stony pillow is just one example among many lithic entities that structured the founding myths of English identity and poetic creation. Stones, rocks, and the broader mineral realm paved a durable imaginative path that allowed early modern England to descry its origins; understand its genealogies (of its nation, its humans, its church); fantasize and agonize over its people's sexual, biological regeneration; and conceptualize a human continuum in the geographies of the afterlife—both on earth and in heaven.

Like Jacob's dream, what I call the *lithic imagination* rifts apart a familiar and seemingly stable geography to reveal as coextensive the domains of the mineral and the fleshly across the tumultuous period of England's long Reformation.[3] By returning to the plain of Luz to think not above but along with Jacob, we must, like him, lay our head on the stone and listen. Although we have been trained to think of stone as the fleshly human's antithesis—even as the worst insult that Shakespeare's Venus imagines when she accuses Adonis of being but a "flinty-hearted boy" (ln. 95), a "lifeless picture, cold and senseless stone" (ln. 211)—we might instead see stone and stoniness as infiltrating and animating every stage of a human life cycle.[4]

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[2] Sarah Whatmore, *Hybrid Geographies: Natures Cultures Spaces* (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

[3] I adopt and use the terminology of historians of religion who argue that there was not one decisive English Reformation but rather a series of religious changes, and a period of evangelical activity, from the 1520s up until at least 1800. For seminal debates on this terminology, see Nicholas Tyacke, *England's Long Reformation 1500–1800* (Hoboken, NJ: Taylor and Francis, 1997). For a review of the practical limits that established norms and shaped the course of the Reformation in England, see Lucy Bates, "The Limits of Possibility in England's Long Reformation," *The Historical Journal* 53, no. 4 (2010): 1049–70.

In *The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton*, I trace a messy and promiscuous relationality of the human and the stony. In doing so, I challenge an entrenched scholarly narrative that predicates the Renaissance on human preeminence and exceptionalism.[5] Highlighting how the stony etiologies of the human, of England, and of its church grounded their imaginative force within England's mineral landscape—its lithic cliffs and walls, enigmatic rocky heaps, and ubiquitous stone church altars—I argue that the human does not stand distinguished at the world's godly center as a pinnacle of creation but instead shares a homologous structure with its stony bottom. Key to my argument is the revelation of a vexed bond between stony matter and spiritual belief and election, a bond cemented in Jacob's dream. Such a seemingly non- or in-human materiality persists despite the polemics of England's long Reformation with its wariness of stone and the new philosophies of an emergent Scientific Revolution that sought to distinguish the human as a rational, dominant— and chosen— species. Too often voices such as those of the political philosopher, Thomas Hobbes are taken as paradigmatic. In an effort to distinguish the human, for example, Hobbes critiques medieval scholastic notions that humans and stones might share forms of agency, or share a charismatic force. He scoffs that "if stones and metals had a desire, or could discern the place they would be, as man does," they would enact it.[6] But Hobbes's seeming distinction puts voice to a lingering anxiety that could not quite be put to rest: that some other invisible yet material, corporeal, bond exists between "man," "stones and metals."

Examining the course of a transitional period that culminated in a Copernican, Sun-centered as opposed to Earth-centered conception of the universe, I track an entanglement of the mineral and human in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English culture. This entanglement undercuts an Aristotelian hierarchy of life and forces a recalibration of the universe as revolving around a human-centric Earth. Aristotle influentially develops a “scale of nature” on which the natural world commences with inanimate matter, and progresses through plants to invertebrates, and finally to vertebrates where the human, who also has rationality, occupies the highest position. In addition, in the Ptolemaic worldview, the Earth and its humans were the center of the universal spheres. Such a seemingly stable model gives way, via a reading of Jacob’s ladder, to a more dynamic, early modern sense of a *scala naturae* or scale of nature wherein the human vies for a place among a more-than-human crowd. Stones, I argue, were neither dull, dead, nor indifferent matter across England’s long Reformation.

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[4] All citations from *Venus and Adonis* are to William Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Suzanne Gossett, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Gordon McMullan, 3rd ed. (New York: Norton, 2016).

[5] This sentiment might be most popularly encapsulated by Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1999).

[6] Thomas Hobbes, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, ed. William Molesworth, vol. 3 (London: J. Bohn, 1839–45), 678.

Scala Naturae: The Stone and the Ladder

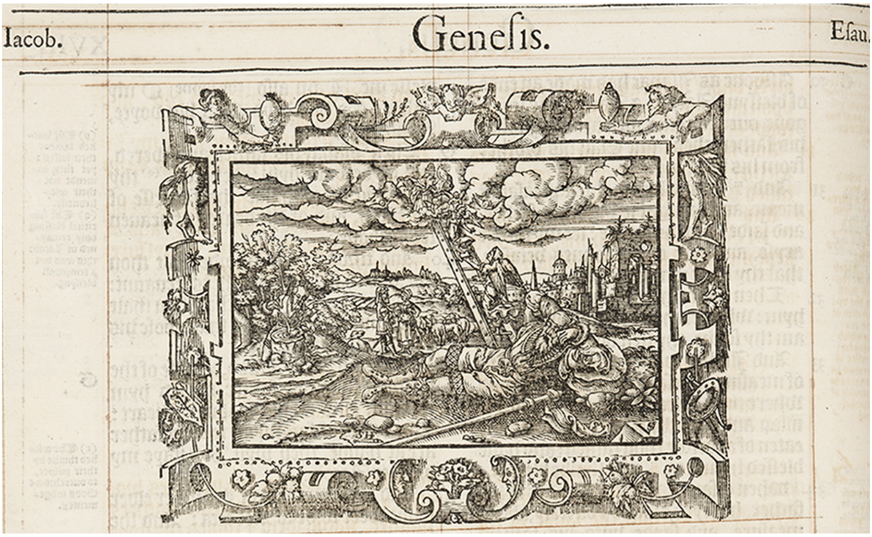

Figure 0.1 Jacob’s ladder from Genesis, *The. holie. Bible. conteynyng the olde Testament and the newe* ([London]: [Richard Iugge], [1568]), RB 99900.
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Frequently illustrated in early English Bibles—as in this woodcut copy from the German illustrator Virgil Solis, from the 1568 Bishops’ Bible—the famous ladder (or stairway) of Jacob’s dream is writ large across the

Renaissance imagination (Figure 0.1).[7] Central to the picture plane, the ladder of Jacob's dream bisects pictorial foreground and background, earthly plain and heavenly domain. At its apex, an anthropomorphic deity watches winged angelic beings move along the ladder. The ladder grounds itself in the slumbering figure of Jacob, whose arm and head rest on a large rock. The image's central diagonal line thus creates a continuum from stone through human to God. On the viewer's left, the balding, bearded patriarch Jacob kneels before and anoints the stone. Jacob's treatment of the stone—setting it upright for a pillar and anointing it with oil—resembles the practice for placing sacred stones in ancient sanctuaries, where they would have been seen as the abodes of the gods. Jacob's posture of reverence and the stone's highly visual placement affirm its centrality to the story's vision, providing a tacit acknowledgment of the stone as witness but also as symbol of germinal potency, designating it as a genealogical instigator in the story still to come.

Jacob's ladder dream was a touchstone for religious commentaries as well as theories of natural philosophy that sought to understand a hierarchy of life.[8] Yet, often, the ladder came under closer scrutiny than did the stony pillow at its base. For instance, John Milton, writing over a century later, at the far end of England's long Reformation, imagines that as Satan journeys toward Eden he beholds a "magnificent" staircase or "Portal" ascending to the "wall of Heaven," "such as whereon *Jacob* saw / Angels ascending and descending" as he lay "Dreaming by night under the open Skie" (*Paradise Lost*, 3.502–15).[9] Milton's omission of the object that Jacob so conspicuously anoints—the stone pillow turned into a pillar, which stands material witness to the dream—follows the familiar path of many English commentators and annotators who turn their focus upward with the ascending angels. My argument is that it is high time we look at this stone.

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[7] This Bishops' version of the Bible includes lavish illustrations that were copied from the German illustrator Virgil Solis. Notably, this image portrays an anthropomorphic deity presiding at the ladder's top. Due to objections to a depiction of the Godhead, later editions often replaced the image of God with the Tetragrammaton. By way of example, see the later 1572 edition of the Bishops' Bible (STC 2107). Another influential visual illustration of Jacob's ladder occurs in Peter Derental, *A true and lyuely historyke purtreatrues of the vvoll Bible* (Lyons: by Iean of Tournes, 1553) with woodcuts by Bernard Salomon, a translation of Claude Paradin's French original.

[8] For the pervasiveness of Jacob's ladder in medieval and Renaissance painting, see Meredith Jane Gill, *Angels and the Order of Heaven in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 134–50; Philip Hardie, *Celestial Aspirations: Classical Impulses in British Poetry and Art* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2022), 17–8, 113–4, 186.

[9] All citations of Milton's works are to John Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1957).

Following Milton's gaze upward to heaven, where there glitters a "Diamond and Gold" gate and a portal with sparkling "orient gems" (3.506–7), many early modern commentators—and later, modern literary critics—gloss over Jacob's stony pillar in favor of the ascending stairway to heaven. Milton's refiguration and displacement of the earthly stone pillar into a constellation of heavenly gems ignores the humble, plain, material basis for the vision. The motivation for such refiguration likely stems from the injunction of Deuteronomy 12:2–3 ordering the Israelites, upon entry into Canaan, to "vtterly destroy" the altars, "breake downe their pillars," and "hewe downe the grauen images of their gods." This biblical text powerfully indicts stones as potentially idolatrous, pagan material. The Mosaic law would, typologically, herald more zealous godly proponents—inspired by the English Reformations—who would (again) embrace the fervor of Deuteronomy and the later Old Testament prophet Josiah in their iconoclasm, frequently making stone an object of destruction and oblivion.[10] Milton hews to this tradition, refiguring the common, found, and raw altar stone into the gems of a heavenly realm.

The tendency to gaze upward, rather than downward, may also draw from pagan, classical sources. An oft-visited passage of the poet Ovid from the first book of *Metamorphoses*, as translated by Arthur Golding in 1567, explains that while "all other beasts behold the ground with groveling eie, / He gave to Man a stately looke . . . / to behold the Heaven wyth countnance cast on hie" (1.97–9).[11] Golding's adjectival choices leave little ambiguity; "ground" alliterates with "groveling eie," which is set opposite by rhyme to the "stately" "countenance cast on hie" that beholds "Heaven." In early modern England, a fundamental continuity between ground or earth, clay, dust, and human fleshly form was commonplace. As Jean E. Feerick demonstrates, this porous kinship of the embodied human and the earthly realm with its minerals was often mobilized to insist on the importance of transformation.[12] To grovel, in Laurie Shannon's seminal argument, only foregrounds the poor and vile nature of humankind, its negative exceptionalism.[13]

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[10] For defining scholarly accounts of the religiously motivated waves of early modern English iconoclasm, see Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). See also Ernest B. Gilman, *Iconoclasm and Poetry in the English Reformation: Down Went Dagon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). For a seminal study on the relationship within Protestantism of idolatry to iconoclasm, see Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[11] *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation, 1567* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2000).

[12] Jean E. Feerick, "Groveling with Earth in Kyd and Shakespeare's Historical Tragedies," in *The Indistinct Human in Renaissance Literature*, eds., Jean E. Feerick and Vin Nardizzi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012), 231–52.

Jacob's dream, then, could be construed as a symbolic ladder or stair that sought to emulate the ascending angels, leaving behind the grosser "ground" of the material world for the immaterial "on hie." An influential generation of twentieth-century literary scholars would adopt and promulgate this reading of a "great chain of being," using Jacob's ladder as a biblical template, an integral symbol behind the *Elizabethan World Picture*.[14] According to their view, the ladder operates as a controlling metaphor that illustrates a vertical, hierarchical existence of being—from inanimate, stony nature upward to the incorporeal angels clustered around God. Peter Sterry, a Cambridge Platonist and contemporary to Milton, is often quoted for his exposition on this chain: "All ranks and degrees of Being, so becomes like the mystical steps in that scale of Divine Harmony and Proportions, *Jacobs Ladder*. Every form of Being to the lowest step, seen and understood according to its order and proportions in descent."[15] In the influential accounts of Arthur O. Lovejoy and E. M. W. Tillyard, the metaphorical ladder was also understood to draw from Aristotelian categories of life as organized in a progressive hierarchy from simpler to more complex forms.[16] In such readings, Jacob's stone pillar merits little attention as it occupies merely the "lowest step" or rung among kinds of being.

The force of this interpretation of a "great chain of being" met with some early critical scrutiny but came under sustained critique by ecocritics who saw in it a controlling metaphor of ecological bias.[17] Scholars like Gabriel Egan, Magdalena Holy-Łuczaj, and Arun Saldanha criticize its privileging of certain kinds of life, as well as its distinction between life and nonlife.[18] They valorize a broadly posthumanist position that seeks to decenter the human. Their critiques highlight what they believe to be a dangerous extension of patriarchal power structures and imperial designs, as well as a Cartesian positivism that favors reason and immateriality, and, perhaps most damningly, an exceptional-human bias. Over the *longue durée*, such a worldview, these scholars argue, contributed to what many now call the Anthropocene or "time of the new man."[19]

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[13] Laurie Shannon, "Poor Things, Vile Things: Shakespeare's Comedy of Kinds," in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespearean Comedy*, ed. Heather Hirschfeld (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 359–73.

[14] Seminal studies are Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936); and E. M. W. Tillyard, (New York: Vintage Books, 1960).

[15] Qtd. in C. A. Patrides, "Renaissance Interpretations of Jacob's Ladder," *Theoligische Zeitschrift* 18 (1962): 417.

[16] The influence of Lovejoy and Tillyard continues to color biological understandings of these early modern metaphors. See, for instance, Andreas Hejnol, "Ladders, Trees, Complexity, and Other Metaphors in Evolutionary Thinking," in *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts of the Anthropocene*, eds. Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Elain Gan, and Nils Bubandt (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 87–102.

[17] Earlier studies questioned the methodology of Lovejoy's work as a history of science text but sidestepped its ecological biases. Two influential critiques of this nature were retrospectives: William F. Bynum, "*The Great Chain of Being* after Forty Years: An Appraisal," *History of Science* 13, no. 1 (1975): 1–28; and Daniel J. Wilson, "Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* after Fifty Years," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48, no. 2 (1987): 187–206.

Yet much of the twenty-first-century ecocritical critique against the "great chain of being" relies on a nineteenth-century formulation of human exceptionalism as understood by mid-twentieth-century critics such as Tillyard and Lovejoy rather than on early modern humanism. As Kenneth Gouwens demonstrates in "What Posthumanism Isn't," influential posthumanist thinkers such as Cary Wolfe fail to peel back the accretive layers of interpretation that have obscured the early modern conception of the human as one groveling among other earthly creatures.[20] That is, ecocritical scholars mistakenly read the "great chain of being" as indicative of a hierarchical, human-centered epistemology that prioritizes rationality and agency. We might better understand the Renaissance readings of the "great chain of being" if we return to Jacob's dream of a ladder and focus our gaze downward to the stones.

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[18] An early influential ecocritical reading is Gabriel Egan, "Gaia and the Great Chain of Being," in *Ecocritical Shakespeare*, eds. Lynn Bruckner and Dan Brayton (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 57–85. For accounts less specific to the early modern, see also Magdalena Hoły-Łuczaj, "Heidegger's Support for Deep Ecology Reexamined Once Again: Ontological Egalitarianism, or Farewell to the Great Chain of Being," *Ethics & the Environment* 20, no. 1 (2015): 45–66. Arun Saldanha, "Geophilosophy, Geocommunism: Is There Life after Man?," in *Posthumous Life: Theorizing Beyond the Posthuman*, eds. Jami Weinstein and Claire Colebrook (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 225–47.

[19] Although it remains a contentious term, particularly in relationship to dating, it is widely used in cultural reference. See Simon L. Lewis and Mark A. Maslin, "Defining the Anthropocene," *Nature* 519 (2015): 171–80. See also Dana Luciano, "The Inhuman Anthropocene," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 2015. For discussion on its possible dating as early as 1610, see Steve Mentz, "Enter Anthropocene, c. 1610," *The Glasgow Review of Books*, September 27, 2015. For its impact on literary reading and history, see Tobias Menely and Jesse Oak Taylor, introduction to *Anthropocene Reading: Literary History in Geologic Times* eds. Menely and Taylor (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017).

[20] For a thorough account of Renaissance humanism versus posthumanism, see Kenneth Gouwens, "What Posthumanism Isn't: On Humanism and Human Exceptionalism in the Renaissance," in *Renaissance Posthumanism*, eds. Joseph Campana and Scott Maisano (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 37-63. As Gouwens argues, application of "the term to the thought and culture of the Renaissance risks creating serious confusion," 37. Scholarship now largely concurs in what Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Lowell Duckert term a "veer ecology" in much premodern thought, see Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Lowell Duckert, eds., *Veer Ecology: A Companion for Environmental Thinking* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

The early Italian humanist Pico della Mirandola's takeaway, for instance, from his reading of the dream of "the patriarch Jacob" concludes that humans are exceptional only in so far as they excel in mutability: "Whatever seeds each man cultivates will grow to maturity and bear in him their own fruit. If they be vegetative, he will be like a plant . . . if intellectual, he will be an angel."[21] Humans did not inhabit the apical point on the hierarchical ladder; rather, they might ascend and descend with alarming mobility. Pico both admires and abhors humankind for its chameleon-like capacity for transformation. Although Pico writes within an Italian and Catholic context, his philosophy found a wide reception, even among English Protestants. John Dee, philosopher, mathematician, polymath, and astrologer at Elizabeth I's court, sought to construct a Jacob's ladder that might lead to the next world via his conversations with angels. To engage in these conversations, Dee began with an obsidian show stone where he allegedly received dictation from heavenly beings.[22] Pico, and later Dee, articulate what will become fairly standard in Renaissance thought: although philosophers and thinkers accept a boundary between kinds, they also explore the theoretical and theological possibilities of matter veering and boundary crossing. Such boundary crossing among kinds and domains, this book argues, was frequently underwritten with, and made possible by, stones.

As I've argued elsewhere, by reconceptualizing the controlling metaphor of being as one of a scale of nature, we can eschew a stable hierarchical chain centered on a dignified human, and we can see a higher-stakes game: one where correspondence, sympathy, and harmony promise greater freedom and movement; but also where metamorphosis, aversion, and dissolution threaten grave danger and loss of identity.[23] For writers working across the long English Reformation, a reduction of human, fleshly identity to one of stoniness was further charged with the taint of idolatrous worship and damnation. Humans had to constantly negotiate their place in a teeming, often violent, world among creatures and entities, a point that Laurie

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[21] Pico della Mirandola, "Oration on the Dignity of Man," in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, eds. Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristellar, and John Herman Randall, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 225.

[22] For more on John Dee's use of the show stone, see Deborah E. Harkness, "Shows in the Showstone: A Theater of Alchemy and Apocalypse in the Angel Conversations of John Dee (1527–1608/9)," *Renaissance Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (1996): 707–37.

[23] Tiffany Jo Werth, "Introduction: Shakespeare and the Human," in "Shakespeare and the Human," special issue, eds. Tom Bishop and Alexa Huang, *The Shakespearean International Yearbook* 15 (2015): 1–20.

Shannon articulates with great force in *The Accommodated Animal*.[24] As Shannon details, the challenge to an Aristotelian hierarchy of kinds was developed through Neoplatonic thinkers such as Charles de Bovelles and Raymond Sebond, and thus ultimately Michel de Montaigne, who also espoused an early sensibility of nonhierarchical links across the scala steps.[25] While the scala moved upward through categories, a point that Andreas Hejnol notes in his history of ordering nature, it was also understood that each substrate contained the forms below it, making the scala relational as well as hierarchical.[26] This pre-Cartesian relational concept of the human is what Garrett Sullivan illuminates in his study of sleep in early modern thought.[27] Such a premodern sensibility of an unstable, metamorphic human partially explains Jacob's reflexive response of fear at beholding the "gate" to divinity, rather than simple joy at his dream's "blessing" (Genesis 28:4).

While the sliding nexus of mineral, human, and divine might be viewed along a hierarchically aspirational axis from stone pillar to the deity, the Renaissance exegetical pathway often dwelt instead on a recursive, and anagogic, similitude between above and below. Religious commentators did not interpret Jacob's ladder as solely a dream of a delimited hierarchy and spiritual ascent. Instead, they read John 1:51 in typological fashion: "Hereafter shal ye se heauen open, & the Angels of God ascending, and descending vpon the Sonne of man." The New Testament phrasing echoes that of Genesis, showing the angel's mobility along Jacob's ladder, but substitutes the "Sonne of man," that is, Christ, for the stony pillow. As C. A. Patrides catalogues, widely respected English theologians across the long Reformation—from the well-known Henry Smith (called "silver-tongued") and Andrew Willet to the lesser-known John Lightfoot—expound this analogy, drawn from older Patristic sources but also from their nearer religious contemporary, John Calvin.[28] The analogy accords with the homiletic wisdom scattered throughout the Old and New Testaments. Moses describes God as "the Rock" (Deuteronomy 31:4), and later Paul will name Christ as the "chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20). Jacob's dream of a ladder, or series of steps, might be interpreted as a bridge—built, perhaps, of stone—that facilitates an analogic imagination beginning, but also, ending in stone.

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[24] Laurie Shannon, *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[25] For more on the Continental context, see "La plante dans la scala naturae," in Dominque Brancher, *Quand l'esprit vient aux plantes: Botanique sensible et subversion libertine (XVIe–XVIIe siècles)* (Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 2015), 30–48. My gratitude to Phillip Usher for this reference.

[26] Hejnol, "Ladders, Trees, Complexity, and Other Metaphors in Evolutionary Thinking," 88.

[27] Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr., *Sleep, Romance and Human Embodiment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). As he writes, our view is an "anachronistic" one conditioned by Cartesian dualism, one that sought to recast "the human in essential rather than relational terms," 7.

Having dwelt on the biblical account of Jacob's dream and its mid-sixteenth-century Geneva glossing and translation, I turn to a mid-seventeenth-century poetic reprisal to illustrate how Jacob's dream might enfold—rather than delimit—stone, human, and God. Rather than occupy rigid positions or be confined to a single rung on the *scala naturae*, ontological categories were seen as potentially circulatory, even between material and spiritual realms. Appearing in the enlarged 1655 volume of Henry Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans*, the poem "Jacob's Pillow, and Pillar" meditates on "the Temple in thy Pillar reared."[29] Since the poem may not be familiar, I include it by stanza in its entirety. Composed of three stanzas of rhyming couplets, the poem opens with its narrator's vision:

> I see the Temple in thy Pillar reared,
> And that dread glory, which thy children feared,
> In mild, clear visions, without a frown,
> Unto thy solitary self is shown.
> 'Tis number makes a schism: throngs are rude,
> And God himself died by the multitude.
> This made him put on clouds, and fire and smoke,
> Hence he in thunder to thy off-spring spoke;
> The small, still voice, at some low cottage knocks,
> But a strong wind must break thy lofty rocks.

In this stanza, the narrator typologically reads the pillar that Jacob reared in Bethel as "the house of God" as the "Temple," which has to be hidden and then revealed to later generations only through a "small, still voice."

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[28] For sermon citations, see Patrides, "Renaissance Interpretations of Jacob's Ladder," 412n.4, 412n.5, and 413n.6. Although Patrides does not quite draw the connection between the stone and Christ, and focuses instead on the ladder, the interpretive suggestion lingers. For Calvin's commentary, see John Calvin, *A Commentarie of John Calvin, Upon the First Booke of Moses Called Genesis* trans. Thomas Tymme (London: John Harison and George Bishop, 1578), sigs. $Pp2^r$–$Pp3^r$.

[29] Henry Vaughan, *Henry Vaughan: The Complete Poems* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976; repr., 1995), 295–6.

While this voice knocks at “some low cottage,” a “strong wind” is required to “break thy lofty rocks.” The stanza’s polytemporalilty layers the patriarch Jacob’s vision with those of his later “off-spring,” including the narrator. But whereas Jacob received his vision via the stony pillar, it is implicit that the speaker imagines that the dwelling place of God, the Pillar-Temple, has been metamorphosed into the interior heart of the penitent; hence the “thy” of the first line, in reference to Jacob, slides into the “thy” of a penitent believer (who is also the reader), and whose rocky heart now must be broken by a strong wind, typically understood to refer to the Holy Spirit.

That the final line of stanza one refers to the heart of a believer can be gleaned from the opening lines of stanza two, in which “true worship” comes from “selected hearts”:

> The first true worship of the world’s great King
> From private and selected hearts did spring,
> But he most willing to save all mankind,
> Enlarged that light, and to the bad was kind.
> Hence Catholic or Universal came
> A most fair notion, but a very name.
> For this rich Pearl, like some more common stone,
> When once made public, is esteemed by none.
> Man slights his Maker, when familiar grown,
> And sets up laws, to pull his honour down.
> This God foresaw: and when slain by the crowd
> (Under that stately and mysterious cloud
> Which his death scattered) he foretold the place,
> And form to serve him in, should be true grace
> And the meek heart, not in a Mount, nor at
> *Jerusalem*, with blood of beasts, and fat.
> A heart is that dread place, that awful cell,
> That secret Ark, where the mild Dove doth dwell
> When the proud waters rage: when heathens rule
> By God’s permission, and man turns a mule.
> This little *Goshen*, in the midst of night,
> And Satan’s seat, in all her coasts hath light,
> Yea *Bethel* shall have tithes (saith *Israel’s* stone)
> And vows and visions, though her foes cry, None.
> Thus is the solemn temple sunk again
> Into a pillar, and concealed from men.

> And glory be to his eternal Name!
> Who is contented, that this holy flame
> Shall lodge in such a narrow pit, till he
> With his strong arm turns our captivity.

This stanza refocuses the reverence given to Jacob's "Pillar" as the dwelling place of God, shifting it away from the "Mount" or temple at Jerusalem and toward the "meek heart"—a "dread place," a hidden and "secret Ark," where the "mild Dove" (or Holy Spirit) might reside. "*Israel's* stone" receives its worship when the penitent's interior stone—that is, his heart—sparks with "holy flame" within the embodied "narrow pit" of his human chest cavity. God's small voice speaks again through stone, only this time from within the human body, where the "solemn temple," changed back into a pillar, has sunk.

The final stanza offers yet one more stony transformation, this time imagining the stone pillow to be a "type" of Christ, as metaphorically represented by "Day-star," "healing Sun," and "Guardian."

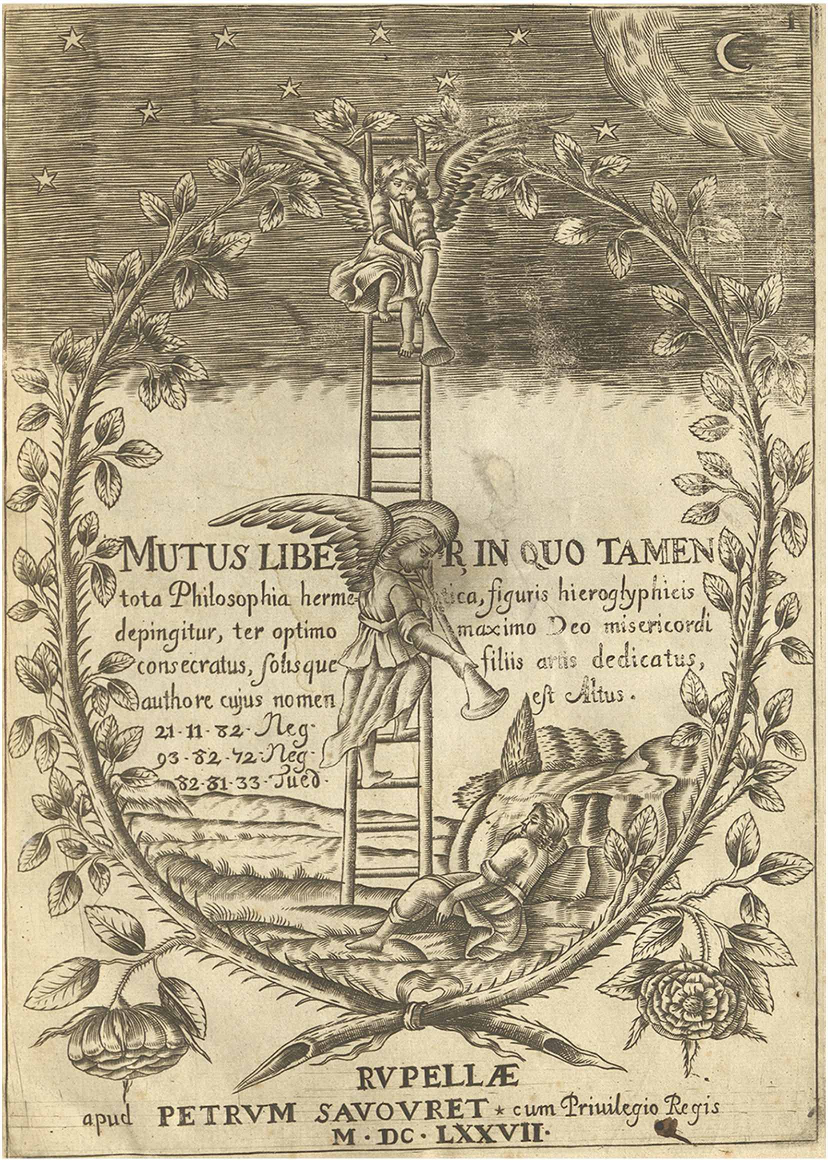
> But blessed *Jacob*, though thy sad distress
> Was just the same with ours, and nothing less;
> For thou a brother, and a blood-thirsty too
> Didst fly, whose children wrought thy children's woe:
> Yet thou in all thy solitude and grief,
> On stones didst sleep and found'st but cold relief;
> Thou from the Day-star a long way didst stand
> And all that distance was Law and command.
> But we a healing Sun by day and night,
> Have our sure Guardian, and our leading light:
> What thou didst hope for and believe we find
> And feel a friend most ready, sure and kind.
> Thy pillow was but type and shade at best,
> But we the substance have, and on him rest.

In the poem's series of metamorphic identities, Jacob's pillar becomes the temple of God, that stony pillar/temple then becomes the human heart, and, finally, it is revealed to be the "type" for the salvific spark of the divinity, Christ, "the substance." The series of steps along Vaughan's imagined salvific ladder have their beginning, middle, and end in a stony substance or matter that might manifest as a pillar, a human heart, or the divine presence itself.

Jacob's dream thus cements history, grounded in a (literal) material geography of place and biblical patristic lineage, with a storied spiritual lesson. The mid-seventeenth-century Neoplatonist Peter Sterry's exposition of the *scala naturae* points toward this reading when he interprets Jacob's ladder less as a vertical hierarchy of ascent than as a series of horizontal harmonies—and transformations—across degrees or rungs. As the imagery of Vaughan's poem reveals, Jacob's dream is one of transformative metamorphosis across kind and form, creating a correspondence between a spiritual journey and the sublimation of matter, where that which is above is likened to that which is below.

Perhaps because of its mineral or lithic underpinning, the dream of Jacob's ladder is a recurring theme that found its way into the period's alchemical imagination. In alchemical writing, Jacob's ladder often appears as a metaphor throughout the sublimation process that is required to achieve the philosopher's stone. Via the emblematic ladder, the stony or lithic imagination encompasses the philosophical as well as artisanal branches of alchemy. The allusions to Jacob's dream in a late early modern alchemical text, *Mutus liber*, offers one illustration of the pervasiveness of Jacob's ladder to the alchemical imagination.

In the engraving from the title page (Figure 0.2), the stone pillow swells to become a stony embankment upon which Jacob, a figure for the alchemical adept, slumbers. For alchemists, the stone pillow upon which he sleeps was a popular symbol for the philosopher's stone, which facilitates the dream and the call to ascend the ladder into the starry heavens above. In the later engraving (Figure 0.3), the ladder appears in a horizontal position—which invites readers to find horizontal harmonies as well as vertical ascent within the imaginary of Jacob's dream. As in Sterry's philosophical explanation, Jacob's dream within alchemy symbolizes an integration of various processes or stages of the "Magnum Opus," also referred to as the "Work," necessary to perfect the philosopher's stone. That is, Jacob's dream emblematizes both a physical journey to transmute base metal into gold and a spiritual transformation. Its imagery works on a double plane of analogy: as a pursuit of nature's chemical processes, an exoteric and scientific aspect; and as an esoteric, mystical, and spiritual aspect. Jacob's dream, then, alerts us to the stony—and more broadly the mineral—realm's central place within early modern discourses on the potential for matter's transformation in both literal and symbolic registers. Stone is both densely material and a foundation for the abstract imaginary.



MUTUS LIBER, IN QUO TAMEN
tota Philosophia hermetica, figuris hieroglyphicis
depingitur, ter optimo maximo Deo misericordi
conſecratus, ſolisque filiis artis dedicatus,
authore cujus nomen eſt Altus.
21·11·82·Neg·
93·82·72·Neg·
82·81·33·Jued·

RVPELLÆ
apud PETRVM SAVOVRET ★ cum Priuilegio Regis
M·DC·LXXVII·

Figure 0.2 Title page to Isaac Baulot (Altus, pseud.), *Mutus liber* [. . .] (La Rochelle: Petrum Savouret, 1677), FGH 6190 (Innes Collection).

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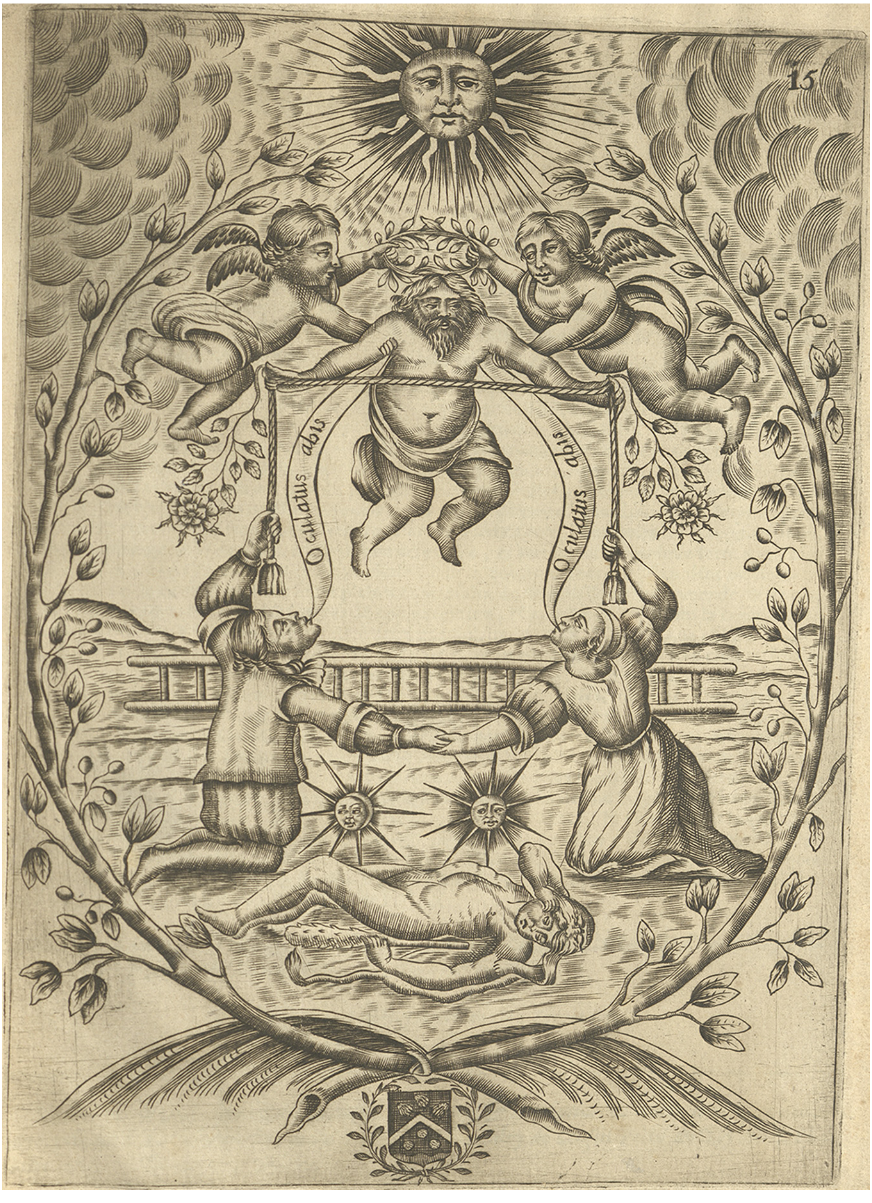

Figure 0.3 Illustration in Isaac Baulot (Altus, pseud.), *Mutus liber* [. . .] (La Rochelle: Petrum Savouret, 1677), FGH 6190 (Innes Collection).

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In its recounting of the lithic imagination across the long English Reformation, my book will also engage, at various moments, the related strands of an alchemical imagination. In *Magiæ Naturalis* (Naples 1558), or as translated into English, *Natural Magick* (London, 1658), John Baptista Porta considers the forces that animate rational, creaturely, and vegetal forms that "like as it were a cord platted together, and stretched along from heaven to earth, in such sort as if either end of this cord be touched, it will wag the whole; therefore we may rightly call this knitting together of things, a chain, or link and rings."[30] If understood, he continues, the natural magician (or alchemist) might perform distillation, change metals, and bring about strange cures. For one need only comprehend the underlying natural sympathy and antipathy in order to "find out the vertues of things." These hidden or "secret properties of things" exist in "all kinds of creatures" where a "certain compassion, as I may call it, which the Greeks call Sympathy and Antipathy" might be wielded as "fit remedy against the harms of the other."[31] This habit of thought will characterize many early modern approaches to the mineral and stony realm, conceiving it as simultaneously sympathetic and antipathetic to human life, to possess what the medieval world thought of as a mineral "charisma" of nature.[32] In his work on early modern alchemy, historian of science Lawrence Principe explains that "for the early modern thinker, such analogies—or metaphors, or harmonies, call them what you will—meant vastly more than they do to moderns. For them, an analogy was something actually existing in the world—a real connection intentionally built into the fabric of what is. Metaphors and analogies constituted a central facet of their multi-layered, multivalent, highly interconnected world."[33] Yet, as another historian of science, William Newman demonstrates, these alchemical analogies were never without fierce debate; alchemical and mineral analogies threaten, even as they potentially elevate, human distinction.[34] The natural world, and especially the mineral realm, revealed the interconnections—with all their related tensions—between kinds and forms of existence.

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[30] John Baptista Porta, *Natural Magick* (London: Printed for Thomas Young and Samuel Speed, 1658), sig. D4v.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Kellie Robertson, *Nature Speaks: Medieval Literature and Aristotelian Philosophy*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 30–1.

[33] Lawrence Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 204–5.

[34] William Newman, *Promethean Ambitions: Alchemy and the Quest to Perfect Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

My book, in thinking through alchemy as critical to the lithic imagination, owes a profound debt to Katherine Eggert's magisterial *Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism in Renaissance England*. Her work lays the foundation for linking the "unlikely matter" of alchemy with English religious debates such as those over transubstantiation and the resultant obsession of many English poets with the problem of human flesh and earthly matter.[35] My study departs from Eggert's only in its conclusions. Rather than reading alchemy as a way to "forget" the problems of earthly matter—as a system of "disknowledge"—this book finds alchemy's mineral technologies to be instrumental to an array of human desires. The surprising plasticity of stone renders it a generative elemental force capable of subtending human life. This book takes its departure from Jacob's dream, with its sliding scales and stony gateways, to present the mineral realm of stone relationally: we not only slumber *on* stone but in, with, and through it.

Methodology: The Lithic Imagination and Its Hybrid Geographies

The Lithic Imagination thinks through analogy not only as a linguistic rubric for ordering the world but also as a natural pattern or feature within the world's structure. My book thus resists distinctions between the literary or semiotic and the "real," and in doing so it recapitulates an older methodology, that of the Renaissance *scala naturae*, as well as a new materialist mode of relational analysis. It focuses on the period of England's long Reformation, bookended by Sir Thomas More in the early sixteenth century and John Milton in the late seventeenth. It is centered mostly on literary history and texts, but accompanied by a substantial consideration of a related stony imaginary in visual culture. My starting point is the pronounced fear of and fascination with the stony in a period of English history that experienced religious upheaval and controversy and in which many of the authors and artists under consideration were deeply religious. Accordingly, the book is historicist in focus but encompasses a heterodox assemblage of approaches that draws at various moments from book history, history of science, queer studies, and eco-materialism. It relies on a mix of close readings of textual passages and visual images as well as an approach of collection and distant reading in order to better illuminate the cultural matrix. The book makes its most significant interventions into two subfields of early modern study, religion and ecocriticism, and offers a prehistory to twenty-first-century theories of new materialisms. It also prompts direction for future studies as it broaches a discussion between eco-studies and premodern critical race studies by calling attention to the elemental substance of embodiment and the category of the "human."

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[35] Katherine Eggert, *Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

My concern is to trace analogic pathways across kinds or forms (stone to human, human to God, God to stone) that in turn inform imaginaries and epistemologies or ways of knowing. To track the lithic veins and their correlations and correspondences entails crossing boundaries of the literary/imaginative and the new philosophical/protoscientific accounts of stoniness.[36] While this book does not claim to be a history of science, it follows Debapriya Sarkar's argument for how the "possible knowledge" of literary forms was integral to accounts of early modern science.[37] Stone makes manifest significant links between the emerging philosophies of science and epistemology and the lingering, entrenched sensibilities of theology, which are intrinsically a part of the cosmic vision of this period's thinkers—whether alchemist, preacher, mother, new philosopher, or poet. The lithic imagination begets correlation and correspondence across seeming difference.

With its stone and its ladder, the dream that opens this book illustrates how imagination is constituent with its material grounding. When Jacob dreams with his head on a stone—in a very human affective state of exhaustion, hope, and fear—the sensory, material, and "natural" plane where he sleeps (the rock-strewn plain of Luz) connects rung by rung to the supernatural plane, the heavenly realm of angels and divinity. Jacob's affective state connects his human emotions or passions to a correlative "mineral emotion," a phrase that Lara Bovilsky uses to reveal a common ground between human and stone in a constitutive act of figuration.[38] As Jeffrey Jerome Cohen writes, "Stone brings story into being." It is "a material metaphor," or perhaps better still, in Lowell Duckert's term, a "matterphor."[39] Thinking of stones as a kind of prime "matterphor" invites us to read their presence as what theorist Donna Haraway calls "material semiotic nodes or knots" that coshape diverse bodies in an ecomaterial–semiotic creation.[40] To put it more directly: stones, stoniness, and minerality undergird the human semiotic imagination. They are "coeval" things that, as Julian Yates explores, deny a subject–object distinction.[41] Cradled together, the stony "lithic" and the human "imagination" form an ecomaterial–semiotic symbiosis. The critical role that stones play in sparking human imagination has been termed by Gaston Bachelard as a "stone midwifery." For Bachelard, stones afford us a vision of the matrix where the material, the ideational, and the narrational conjoin.[42] Bachelard's theoretical sense of a multivalent, interconnected imaginative and material realm, made visible by stone, reprises the imaginary of Jacob's dream and the early modern alchemical interpretations of its conflicted harmonies. The stony natural—with its complex connections and symmetries—sometimes exists in uncomfortable, even frightening, proximity to human embodiment and imagination.

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[36] For a study of how analogy challenges distinctions between literature and science, see Devin Griffiths, *The Age of Analogy: Science and Literature between the Darwins* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016).

[37] I'm grateful to Debapriya Sarkar for advance reading of her book while yet in manuscript. See Debapriya Sarkar, *Possible Knowledge: The Literary Forms of Early Modern Science* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023).

[38] Lara Bovilsky, "Shakespeare's Mineral Emotions," in *Renaissance Posthumanism*, eds. Campana and Maisano, 253–82.

[39] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 4 where Cohen also quotes Duckert.

My book title uses the umbrella term *lithic* as a word "of or pertaining to; consisting of stone" (*OED*, adj.2), a word drawn from Greek and, according to the *OED*, first used by late eighteenth-century publications of the Royal Society. Although not yet in use during the early modern period, the term's evolving definition encapsulates the arc of this book's study. Its first documented appearance was to describe a "stone" or "calculi in the bladder" (*OED*, adj.1). Its bodily connotation would, only later, in the mid-nineteenth century, be adapted to the emerging field of geology. The etymologically embodied origins of *lithic* attest to the entanglement of the human and the stony that I trace across the hybrid geographies of early modern English literature as well as visual culture. This book reads stones and stoniness widely construed: literal and imagined. The mineral veins it follows, like the etymological evolution of *lithic*, merge the organic and inorganic. Taking my cue from Jacob's stony pillow, I focus primarily on unhewn, raw, and sometimes alloyed material rather than on precious stones, gems, or statuary, although these will on occasion find their way into the story.

For the reasons sketched above, the lithic imagination arguably spans what cultural geographers term a "hybrid geography." *Geography*, like the term *landscape*, has often been understood to imply a binary division.

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[40] Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2016).

[41] Julian Yates, *Of Sheep, Oranges, and Yeast: A Multispecies Impression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), esp. 223–69.

[42] See Gaston Bachelard, *Earth and Reveries of the Will*, trans. Kenneth Haltman (Dallas, TX: Dallas Institute Publications, 2002), 143; and Cohen, *Stone*, 266n.12.

It implies an objective natural world whose physical features might be observed, mapped, studied by a distinctly separate, human, observer. As cultural geographer John Wylie demonstrates in his influential study of the term *landscape*, such tidy divisions frequently break down. Affinities, attractions, and attachments muddy seemingly fixed poles that demarcate proximity from distance, observation from inhabitation, eye from land, and perhaps above all, nature from culture.[43] These binaries are not innate but rather culturally conditioned habits of perception: "the accomplice and expression of an epistemological model whose central supposition posits a pre-given external reality which a detached subject observes and represents."[44] By contrast, the perspective of a "hybrid" geography maps "the heterogeneous entanglements" that entail thinking space and world "through the body," thus opening human experience to something ontologically new, to a "field of alterity"—one, my book proposes, even as seemingly non- and in-human as "lifeless" "cold and senseless" stone.[45]

Another cultural geographer, Sarah Whatmore, usefully suggests that to move beyond the binary categories of human and nonhuman, we should explore "alternative cartographies" for thinking with a "more than human world."[46] To do so entails a consideration of how bonds emerge in a "relational becoming" across the morphological particularities—as well as the mutabilities—of the lithic and the fleshly. In the terms of Jacob's dream and its stony pillow-pillar, a hybrid geographical perspective poses some key questions: What changes if we read as literal the figurative "touchstone" as a criterion to test "genuineness or value of anything" (*OED*, n. and adj.2b)? How might the grammatical compounding of a human sensory capacity such as touch to a "fine-grained dark stone used for building and monumental work" (OED, n.1) exemplify a contact zone where the bounded, physical, fleshly human overlaps with the stony? And, by overlapping, thereby become ontologically bonded? As per the *OED*, a "touchstone" functions as a reference point by which genuineness or identity is assayed: whether that be of a nation, a church, or a pure (and, therefore, elect) or impure (and, therefore, damned) human. To recognize the etymologically formed compound of a "touchstone" as a criterion of judgment and of value is to recognize that the mineral is a co-constitutive cognitive extension as well as physical augmentation of the human.

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[43] John Wylie, *Landscape* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[44] Ibid., 3.

[45] Whatmore, *Hybrid Geographies*, 3; Greenblatt et al., *The Norton Shakespeare*.

[46] Whatmore, *Hybrid Geographies*, 159.

The Lithic Imagination thus joins in the conversation, begun with earlier books in this series, over the overlapping and contested "landscape" of early modern literary geographies. Gavin Hollis illuminates the absent geography of America within early modern English theatre repertoire; Laurence Publicover maps the far-flung dramatic geographies of romance on the English stage; and Chris Barrett explores how an emerging cartographic genre triggered worries about an "earth in flux."[47] It also follows more recent series publications like that of Todd Borlik, who calls attention to how the anthropocentric bias of fantasies of human exceptionalism might be undercut if we look at Shakespeare's fascination with topography and human–animal hybrids that counter narratives of human domination and repudiate an Anthropocene species tyranny.[48] As Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan emphasize: Early modern embodiment encompassed geographic dimensions, revealing a transactional web between the human body and the world. Critical to these understandings of the relationship between geography and embodiment is the potential for "motion over stasis," for transformation, and for a perspective that sees the "microcosm-macrocosm relationship as interactive."[49] My book contributes by turning attention to how geography was seldom severed from the bedrock of a material world that the embodied humans dreamed and made so.

Connecting the Turn to Religion with the Turn to Green

Through its focus on the mineral, *The Lithic Imagination* builds on and connects early modern scholarship's turn to religion with the posthumanist, new materialist, and ecocritical turn to green. As Reformation historian Peter Marshall has summarized, postrevisionist scholarship recognizes that England's Reformation was long, recursive, incomplete, and uneven in its progress.[50] Yet despite the long, recursive, and uneven unfolding of religious reform, literary critic Robert N. Watson argues that the epistemological anxieties of the English Reformations fundamentally altered attitudes toward nature. The epistemological anxieties ushered in a growing alienation of humans from the natural world: its creatures as well as its elemental entities.[51] Similarly, in *Shakespeare and the Natural World*, Tom MacFaul demonstrates how Reformation theology decisively influenced theories of Renaissance natural philosophy.[52] In *The Concept of Nature in Early Modern Literature*, Peter Remien argues that the contours of humans' relationship to the natural world were understood to be an interdependent system, not simply one of human or divine ascendance. The divine structure of the universe might be discovered in the macrocosmic system of the human body and the relationship of human to more-than-human creatures.[53] And, in a now seminal account, historian Alexandra Walsham details the extensive reconfiguration brought about on the landscape as a result of religious change.[54] These studies thus recognize that England's crisis of faith fostered ongoing and distinct concerns about how and where the human fit into the natural world of God's creation. But ecocritical studies to date have attended too little to the critical role that religion plays in early modern animacy hierarchies, and this book seeks to redress that gap through a focus on stone's multiple spiritual entanglements.

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[47] Gavin Hollis, *The Absence of America: The London Stage, 1576–1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Laurence Publicover, *Dramatic Geography: Romance, Intertheatricality, and Cultural Encounter in Early Modern Mediterranean Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Chris Barrett, *Early Modern English Literature and the Poetics of Cartographic Anxiety* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[48] Todd Andrew Borlik, *Shakespeare Beyond the Green World: Drama and Ecopolitics in Jacobean Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

[49] Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr., eds., *Geographies of Embodiment in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 1–13 at 1.

[50] Peter Marshall, "(Re)Defining the English Reformation," *Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 3 (2009): 564–86.

Materialisms and the Indistinct Human

The premodern lithic imagination that is the focus of this book offers a longer, deep prehistory to twenty-first-century new materialisms. The early modern human investments with material, mineral, and geological matter affiliate with the more-than-human realms that anticipate Anthropocene-era debates about "vibrant matter" (Jane Bennett), agential capacity, and human entanglement with the nonorganic. The lithic imagination sets a cultural literary backdrop to Jane Bennett's "Life of Metal," Jussi Parikka's geological media, and the carbon imaginary that theorist Elizabeth Povinelli illuminates in order to challenge the modern distinction between Life and Nonlife.[55] It offers a historical prologue to the account of "Lithic Vitality" by Penny Harvey and the query of Hugh Raffles that explores how marble, sandstone, gneiss, magnetite, blubberstone, iron, and muscovite assume a force in human affairs.[56]

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[51] Robert N. Watson, *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

[52] Tom MacFaul, *Shakespeare and the Natural World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[53] Peter Remien, *The Concept of Nature in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[54] Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[55] See Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010); Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, *New Materialisms: Ontology,*

Early modern scholars, drawing from and deepening the historical lens provided by posthumanist and new materialist theorists (such as Giorgio Agamben, Karen Barad, Jane Bennett, Rosi Braidotti, Mel Y. Chen, Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, Bruno Latour, Eugene Thacker, and Cary Wolfe, among others), have called into question "the human" as a privileged, distinct entity.[57] Prominent among such early modern critics of English literature are Bruce Boehrer, Todd Borlik, Joseph Campana, Hillary Eklund, Jean E. Feerick, Erica Fudge, Vin Nardizzi, Laurie Shannon, and Julian Yates.[58] Thanks to the work of these foundational scholars, it is now a critical commonplace to engage with what Jennifer Linhart Wood calls the "dynamic matter" of the Renaissance.[59] But with the exception of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's pathbreaking argument in *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman*, and Phillip John Usher's *Exterranean* that focuses attention

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Agency, and Politics (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010); Eugene Thacker, *After Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Jussi Parikka, *The Anthrobscene* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014); Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2016).

[56] Penny Harvey, "Lithic Vitality: Human Entanglement with Nonorganic Matter," in *Anthropos and the Material* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2019), 143–60; Hugh Raffles, *The Book of Unconformities: Speculations on Lost Time* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2020).

[57] Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matte*; Rosi Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019); Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2012); Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*; N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Latour, "An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto,'" *New Literary History* 41, no. 3 (2010): 471–90; Thacker, *After Life*; Cary Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?*, Posthumanities 8 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

[58] Bruce Boehrer, *Shakespeare among the Animals* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); *Animal Characteristics: Nonhuman Beings in Early Modern Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Todd Andrew Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature: Green Pastures*, Routledge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture (New York: Routledge, 2011); Campana and Maisano, eds., *Renaissance Posthumanism*; Hillary Eklund, ed., *Ground-Work: English Renaissance Literature and Soil Science* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2017); Erica Fudge, Ruth Gilbert, and Susan Wiseman, eds., *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies, and Natural Philosophy in the Early Modern Period* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999); Jean E. Feerick and Vin Nardizzi, eds., *The Indistinct Human in Renaissance Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Laurie Shannon, *The Accommodated Animal*; Julian Yates, *Of Sheep, Oranges, and Yeast.*

[59] Jennifer Linhart Wood, ed., *Dynamic Matter: Transforming Renaissance Objects*, Cultural Inquiries in English Literature, 1400–1700 (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022). For another edited collection that explores a range of lively "organic supplements,"

on earthly extraction, such book-length premodern ecocritical studies have been limited because they have restricted their conception of the nonhuman to vegetal and sensitive creaturely life and objects.[60] Following Cohen, whose "stories of stone" within medieval culture reveal human and stone to be simultaneously kin and stranger, I show nature's stony bottom to be a vital force within post-Reformation authoritative hierarchies. While Cohen studies a stony "ecology of the inhuman" within a more or less Catholic culture, my book grapples with how imaginative literature was affected by a religious rupture that would revitalize the Deuteronomic wariness toward stones, rethink taxonomic divisions, redefine the nature of matter, and map anew human anatomical geographies. This book also travels with medievalist Kellie Robertson's *Nature Speaks: Medieval Literature and Aristotelian Philosophy*, with its interest in the animated conversation between the natural world and humans, but it refutes her unilateral claim that this is "lost in the early modern period."[61] For, despite such radical cultural change, I argue that literary creation did not become doubly alienated from the natural world but grounded itself ever more firmly in a material and natural foundation: stone. My book thus challenges a clear binary division between pre- and post-Reformation culture and speaks in conversation with premodern iterations of critical animal, plant, and multi-species-oriented approaches as well as the posthumanities.

Lithic Hierarchies and Imperial Vortices

Stone's affinity to potential power, durability, and its long temporal reach render it a favored foundational material for fantasies of hierarchy and a patrilineal domination of a chosen seed. As I have noted, the reception of Jacob's dream vision often showcases its aspirational thrust, noting the ascending angels, reaching for divinity above, claiming the genealogical heritage of seed, all the while ignoring the lowly stone. This book focuses on the analogies and moments of crossing between kinds and realms, but in doing so, it also acknowledges the vertical proclivities that Jacob's ladder—and its stone—affords. Jacob's dream is fabricated on a patriarchal and, to use

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see Miriam Jacobson, Julie Park, and Julia Reinhard Lupton, eds., *Organic Supplements: Bodies and Things of the Natural World, 1580–1790* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020).

[60] Cohen, *Stone*; Phillip John Usher, *Exterranean: Extraction in the Humanist Anthropocene* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019). A notable article-length exception is Bovilsky, "Shakespeare's Mineral Emotions."

[61] Robertson, *Nature Speaks*, 9, 323–48.

twenty-first-century terms, a settler colonial vision wherein his genealogical seed multiplies as "dust" across the earth.[62] Stone's affordance can ground empires, nations, people, and faith as well as provide the matter for paternal perseverance in the absence of biological reproduction. It can double as a marker of civilization and thus of aspirational imperialism. It might enlist itself with an elitist and race-making logic and provide a prop for species' tyranny.[63] Its potential collusion in such enterprise offers an avenue to bring together ecocriticism with its attention to social justice and the trending fields of raceb4race and premodern critical race studies. This study begins to bring those fields together through its focus on a taxonomic category of the human as a species, one enmeshed in a larger domain network that is permeable. It explores how the elemental substance of humans renders them vulnerable to, embedded in, and perpetually interconnected with, the substances in their environment in what Karen Barad calls "networks of intra-active material agencies."[64] Key to this study will be an exploration of Stacy Alaimo's "transcorporeality," that is, an orientation that expresses an imbrication of non-, in-, and more-than-human and human natures to show that human bodies are not discrete in time and space.[65] Alaimo's twenty-first-century term unwittingly offers a variant of an early modern coinage by Sir Thomas Browne, who first uses a version of the Latin *transcorporatio* in English as *transcorporating*.[66]

This book argues that vertical aspirations invoked in Jacob's ladder and stone are never as secure as the writers and thinkers might sometimes hope. Instead, stone proves to be tricky matter, capable of betrayal, reversal, and subversion even when it appears stable, durable, and malleable to human desire. It plays equally with preservation and loss. The liminal analogies stone affords, like its overlapping facies, are prone to interlocking metamorphism, but also violent, exhaustive quakes, tremors, and dislocations. Its strata preserve alike traces of existence, flourishing, and extinction.[67]

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[62] For an overview of the relationship between the nascent early modern English colonial imagination and the development of settler colonial logic, see Nancy Shoemaker, "Settler Colonialism: Universal Theory or English Heritage?," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 76 (2019): 369–74. See also Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017).

[63] For a seminal study on the ties between a settler colonial logic, place, and racial identity, see Tracey Banivanua-Mar and Penelope Edmonds, eds., *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[64] Quoted from Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, in Stacy Alaimo, *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in Posthuman Times* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 113.

[65] First developed in Stacy Alaimo, *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self* (Indiana University Press, 2010). For a concise definition, see "Trans-Corporeality," in *Posthuman Glossary*, ed. Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova (London: Bloomsbury Academic 2018), 435–8.

[66] This etymology is noted in Jessica Wolfe, "Gorgonick Spirits: Myth, Figuration, and Mineral Vivency in the Writings of Thomas Browne," in *Organic Supplements*, 124n.17.

Medieval, Catholic, and Early Modern Protestant Reformed

Finally, the analogic, lithic imagination, as followed by this book, engages with scholarship that reassesses periodization. It softens the boundaries of a Catholic and Protestant imaginary, finding that stones and stoniness remained the bedrock for a variety of sacred and earthly geographies. My work challenges the commonplace that within the Protestant imagination stones lost vitality, becoming but dull matter dangerous only for its idolatrous potential. Instead, I trace a recursive and frequently bitter fight across the waves of English reform to claim foundational stones, both imagined and real. The contested centrality of the lithic to Christian belief across the confessional spectrum, as noted throughout this story, makes the lithic a lightning rod at key moments of English reform. For example, the injunction in Deuteronomy 12:3 against altars and stone pillars (such as Jacob's), as well as graven images, excited the fierce contention over stone altars in the English church from the short reign of Edward VI well into the Laudian reforms of the 1630s. The ongoing debate over physical altars would coalesce with Calvinist-inflected anxieties over the stony-hearted reprobate—anxieties that would frequently flare into the late seventeenth century. The lithic imagination would also find expression in the vogue for funerary monuments and lifelike effigies that grew, rather than declined, in English culture. This impulse would even stretch into the imaginary Puritan-inflected geography of the afterlife of earth and its human inhabitants in the New Eden or New Jerusalem.

Morphology: Creations, Conversions, Continuum

This book examines human–stone analogies across sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English texts and visual culture that cluster around three critical thresholds of the human life cycle: 1) "Lithic Creations" describes a petrogenesis below foundational stories of origin (chapters 1 through 3 explore stony etiologies of England, its human inhabitants, and its church); 2) "Lithic Conversions" explores an erotically charged transfiguration of flesh and stone that threatens damnation and petrification but also shimmers with potent animacy and a queering petrosexuality (chapters 4, 5, and 6); and, finally, a "Lithic Continuum" follows a petrologic ontology into the cosmic afterlife (chapters 7, 8, and 9). The book aims to bring cohesion to its topic by stressing the extent to which the lithic enfolds *human figuration* across the fissures of England's long Reformation.

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[67] For a longer anthropological perspective on stone's role in both cultural preservation and loss (especially in regards to indigenous culture), see Raffles, *The Book of Unconformities*. For the literal mineral underpinnings to the "Anthropocene," see Robert M. Hazen et al., "On the Mineralogy of the 'Anthropocene Epoch,'" *American Mineralogist* 102, no. 3 (2017): 595–611.

The book opens with the "perilous rocks" in the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More—a humanist renowned for his insistent Catholic belief. And it closes with the alabaster eastern wall in the Eden of John Milton, and the lithic New Jerusalem of John Bunyan—two writers who epitomize varying degrees of Puritan, Reformed belief. It begins with stories of genesis, passes through bodily conversions and lithic intimacies, and concludes with bodily dissolution and death. This chronological and biological progression in historical time, and its concomitant series of religious supersessions, however, is shot through with circular analogies and permeable scales that thwart a teleological model. The circulating, rhyming geographies of "womb" and "tomb" make apparent how, throughout and across, stone exemplifies what Jonathan Gil Harris calls "untimely matter."[68]

The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton explores how stones, rocks, and the broader mineral realm play a vital role in early modern England's religious and cultural systems, a role that, in turn, informs the period's poetic and visual imagination. The scale of the human lifespan and the gyre-like turns of England's long Reformation provide a conceptual framework for the various stony textual and visual archives this book studies. The texts and images participate in specifically English histories (literary, artistic, political, religious) although Continental influences are frequently in dialogue. The religious orbit encompasses the Christian rivalry with Jewish culture, touches on Christianity's tension with Islam, but most intently centers on the antagonism between Catholic and variants of Protestant and Reformed belief.

The volume features canonical writers such as Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne, Wroth, Herbert, Milton, and Pulter, but puts them in company with lesser-known religious polemicists, alchemists, anatomists, painters, mothers, and stonemasons. Accordingly, the multimedia archive includes drama, lyric, and prose as well as biblical illustrations, tapestries, church furniture, paintings, anatomical drawings, and statues. The lithic too is capaciously construed as a continuum of rocky as well as mineral forms ranging from bodily encrustations like the kidney and bezoar stone, to salt, iron, limestone, marble, flint, and silicon. The assemblage of materials bears witness to aspirational imperial fantasies and looming colonial conquests; it engages in both syncretism and supersession; upholds and subverts gender hierarchies; limns the race-making category of hue with desire; and supports, and sometimes thwarts, elitist ideologies of an elect, chosen people. All come together via the storied pathways of stone as densely material and as a foundation for the abstract imaginary along the *scala naturae*. Across the lithic-human fold, stone promises, fascinates, betrays. As alpha and omega, stone can herald salvation or it can threaten with damnation.

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[68] Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

Creations and Petrogenesis

The first part, comprising three chapters, explores how the lithic imagination is a foundational component to a variety of creation stories. Chapter 1 traces how otherwise unassuming, plain rocks and megaliths become key markers in the emerging cartographic depictions of England. The chapter curates a *lithic chorography* by describing and mapping four critical stony wonders: (1) it begins with the perilous, porous, rocky coastline whose boundary exemplifies England's imperial dreams; (2) it next turns to London Stone, a once-large boulder imagined for centuries as the capital city's stony heart and ambiguous guardian; (3) it then follows the fortunes of the Stone of Scone, upon which English monarchy is crowned; and (4) it concludes with the large heaps of stone at Stonehenge, whose inscrutable designs still fuel imaginative speculation about the worlds of England's past and its future. Throughout, I consider how these lithic entities operate as porous bodies that are characterized by their intimate relation to human desires. Their interface with human bodies creates a "transcorporeality," a relation that Stacy Alaimo describes as a matter–energy flow. The transcorporeal relations—of trust, of treachery—between human and stone provide a critical foundation for English identity from its break with Rome in the first half of the sixteenth century through its crisis of authority during the civil war in the mid-seventeenth century. England's process of identity formation might be thought of as a petrogenesis, with its origin grounded in the formation, description, and imagination of rocks.

Chapter 2 pivots from England's petrogenesis to that of its human inhabitants. From its biblical and classical heritage, the early modern world gained a lithic double helix that informed its understanding of human genesis, evolution, and devolution. The biblical and Ovidian accounts of human creation were syncretized to form the bedrock for a "stonie race." Although humans might wish to distinguish themselves from their base matter, its persistent presence served to curb their hubris. This chapter follows how stone might engender, but also degender, humankind. For a focal case study, the chapter considers Edmund Spenser's iron man, Talus, whose joint nature dramatizes human obduracy. As an allegorical figure of justice whose violence still horrifies readers, Talus, in this chapter's reading, is less inhuman machine and more troubling human.

The final chapter of "Lithic Creations" turns to a key institution that came to distinguish England from its Continental Christian neighbors: the Church of England. Here too, the lithic will play a critical and ever-complex role in identity formation. Through three sections, this chapter traces the transcorporeal stony geography that underlay a succession of spiritual empires—from Judaism in Jerusalem through Catholicism in Rome to, finally, Protestantism in London. The chapter begins with the Jewish Old Testament heritage of the Foundation Stone below the sacred site known as the Dome of the Rock, whose Arabic name is Haram al-Sharif. Through an accretion of biblical stories and legends, it became both a literal and figural key to the spiritual translation of earthly material. Its authority helped to enshrine a consecrated stone as the sacrificial bedrock of Christian religious worship. Appropriating this lithic biblical heritage, the Catholic Church in Rome drew its authority from its claim to the apostolic cornerstone, St. Peter, the rock upon whom Christ founded his church. Petrine authority consequently lay behind the Catholic consecration of stone altars and superaltars upon which Mass was to be performed in all Christian churches. With the onset of religious reform, theologians such as John Calvin and others claimed that the only possible interpretation of the cornerstone is that it is Christ himself, not some temporal foundation stone. In London, and across England, these religious debates over the identity and role of the cornerstone would periodically blaze up in altar controversies involving church furniture and, eventually, the printed frontispieces of foundational devotional texts of the Anglican Church. The chapter concludes with a late twentieth-century altar furor around the installment of a controversially shaped stone altar made by the sculptor Henry Moore and placed in the historic church of St. Stephen Walbrook.

Lithic Conversions: Petrification and Petrosexuality

The second part, "Lithic Conversions," also comprising three chapters, explores how flesh and stone might be convertible forms of matter. The first chapter in this part takes up what is perhaps the most familiar stony trope: the stony heart. It explores how this biblically inflected metaphor becomes the subject of intense scrutiny. The emerging fascination with anatomical dissection and drawing coupled with the medical and biblical injunction of *nosce te ipsum* (know thyself) reveals the heart to be quite unlike a stone; yet, within Calvinist rhetoric, the refrain to beware the stony-hearted reprobate insists on humankind's double nature and stony potential. These two cultural contexts set the backdrop for the turn in mid-seventeenth-century devotional lyrics to the trying of the heart, perhaps most familiarly in the poems of George Herbert, but also in the popular emblem book known as *Schola Cordis* ("School of the heart"), and in Henry Vaughn's alchemical poetry. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how these male-authored discourses of the stony heart frequently find in it a salvational spark. By contrast, female poets such as Hester Pulter find the stone and clay within to herald an undistinguished oblivion. As with the figure of Niobe, whose tears endure in her petrified state, the turn to stone might simply prolong suffering. In sum, the potential transformative nature of matter produces an uneasy relationality between human and stone. The inhuman ecology of stone is never simply presented as an antithesis to the human but is instead brought "in" to the very center of human anatomy and human salvation.

The next chapter explores how a creaturely body might become the quarry for painful but potentially marvelous rare stones. It considers how the growth of bodily calculi—the kidney stone in humans and the bezoar stone in certain animals—expands the boundaries of embodied anatomical geography into the mineral realm, disrupting the binary categories of life forms. These conversions of lithic and fleshly matter enact what Phillip Usher terms an "exterranean" process that visibly enacts a continuum of stone and human. For the body is both the "land/ground/place" where the calculi grows and the "matter itself" (the stone) which both is and yet can never be fully oppositional.[69] In the case of the kidney stone, this relational hinge between human and stone proves painful but also indicates a microcosmic bodily correspondence to the macrocosm. Various theories for performing a lithotomy conjoined occult, medical, and popular homiletic wisdom to *exterranean* extraction, and kidney stones joined other rare curiosities such as unicorn horns and bezoar stones in collections. Bezoar stones, like kidney stones, grow from organic bodies, and both were believed to be a nostrum for a variety of diseases, physical and spiritual. The bezoar stone's alleged transformative powers of conversion made it comparable to a philosopher's stone or even to Christ, who might cure a sick body and save a hard-hearted human. These lithic bodily byproducts testify to a very real possibility of lithic–human conversion. They offer an accessible form of proof that biological life has a mineral capacity.

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[69] Usher, *Exterranean*, 3.

The third and final chapter in "Lithic Conversions" studies how an embodied organ of masculine anatomy, the testes, or stones, plays a role in the animation of imaginative lithic intimacies. It begins by examining how anatomical manuals represented the "testes" as a principal body part responsible for the propagation of humankind. The chapter suggests—through a reading of the mechanicals' play from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—that this literal anatomical baseness provides the material grounding for humor but also for gendered frictions that surround the erotic frisson of mineralized and fleshly forms. The chapter next turns to the Ovidian and Petrarchan *donna petrosa* tropes popular in sonnet sequences and romance narratives that depict figures of what Patricia Phillippy terms "marmorization"—bodies transfigured into stone.[70] It argues that the fantasy of a stony beloved serves to vivify masculine reproductive capacities at the expense of the petrified, marmoreal female figure. Through an analysis of the biblical story of Lot's wife turned into a mineralized plinth of salt, the heroines of Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania* petrified in the Throne of Love, and Hermione, preserved and reanimated as a miraculous statue, the chapter explores the multivalences of the Latin root *dūrāre* of *perdure*, which means both to harden and to endure. The chapter concludes that marmorization preserves human futurity in complex ways. It simultaneously fixes gender norms even as it renders them fluid, permeable and unfixed in ways that trouble normative taxonomies of human desire and sex practice.

Lithic Continuum: Petrologic Ontologies

The final part, "Lithic Continuum," turns to a consideration of how stone paves the way into the afterlife. Its first chapter, "Hewing the Human," considers how the Ovidian figures of Echo and Narcissus offer two templates for how a posthumous life might be imagined via stone. The Narcissus story illuminates a fantasy of self-preservation through the mirroring of the self in the creation of a stony effigy. The chapter's focal case study is of John Donne's effigy in St. Paul's, which I read as heralding Donne's vision of being reunited with the cornerstone, Christ, in the heavenly afterlife. Echo's story offers a less narcissistic and more dialogic and collaborative fantasy. Her self is preserved not through a material reflection but on a "double voice" that collaborates with stone for its echo. To pursue these stories, the chapter studies two iconic reverberatory sepulchers—the sepulcher of Christ and the tomb of Merlin—wherein death is transfigured into life. Through a reading of George Herbert's meditations on Christ's sepulcher (in devotional lyrics) and of Edmund Spenser and Sir John Harington's depiction of Merlin's lively entombment (in their borrowing from and translation of *Orlando Furioso*), the chapter demonstrates how stubbornly syncretic is the desire for a stony afterlife. Yet while these lithic posthumous futures promise a reanimation through the creation of a monumental human, they do so in ways that are both startlingly familiar and unnervingly alien.

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[70] Patricia Phillippy, *Shaping Remembrance from Shakespeare to Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 22.

In contrast to the previous chapter, which explores how the lithic might offer a continuum for the embodied human, "'Not Marble, Nor the Gilded Monuments': Sepúlchred Verse" challenges the classical and rhetorical claim that *scripta manent* (writing lasts) while marble and stone monuments crumble. This chapter explores the material paradox of lyric claims to supersede mineral monuments. Rather than seeing the quarrel between linguistic and lithic monuments as antagonistic and rivalrous, "Sepúlchred Verse" explores how a rich cultural habitus reveals the claims to instead be symbiotic and constitutive. Through a reading of the biblical inheritance of the stony Mosaic tablets of covenant and witness, as well as a reading of the occult traditions behind the seminal text of alchemy, the emerald tablet, the chapter argues that the creation of a bond between stone and engraved character rendered stones as intercessory media capable of binding celestial and terrestrial realms. The chapter concludes with a reading of two oft-recruited lyric examples of linguistic, as opposed to lithic, continua: Shakespeare's sonnet 55 and Milton's "On Shakespeare." It argues that both poems recruit petrification in order to perdure and in so doing imagine a distinctly inhuman posterity.

"The New Jerusalem, Geologic Election, and Lithic Afterlives in Heaven's Marble Vault," the final chapter, moves beyond death to consider stone's place in the imagined geography of the afterlife. The chapter opens with Othello's strange invocation to "yond marble heaven," exploring how the celestial might share in the earthly lithic imagination. To do so, it analyzes the early modern eschatological preoccupation with the New Jerusalem, whose material perdurance emerges in St. John's Revelation and whose vision lays the foundation for the translated saints to reside in a crystalline *corpus coeleste*, a heavenly body whose architecture is of mineralized form. I examine the late sixteenth-century Spenser and Anne Vaughan Locke through the late seventeenth-century Milton and Bunyan to frame the pervasive, ongoing insistence in life and death of a lithic materiality. The book concludes with a brief analogy that reveals a continuum from the Christian eschatological vision of the New Jerusalem to twenty-first-century postearth, posthuman, and transhuman H+ futures as envisioned by elite Silicon Valley techno prophets. Considering the confluence of human desire and stony endurance, I map the transmission of the lithic imagination from Old to New, from this life into the next, noting as I do so its exclusionary potential and its harboring of a particular elect or elite.

PART I.

LITHIC CREATIONS

1

A Lithic Chorography of England

Raphael Hythloday's description of "the Ilande of Vtopia" begins with the crescent-shaped bay, whose quiet waters offer haven from the "large & wyde sea." At the harbor's center sits "a great rocke," which, the narrator assures the reader, is "nothing perillous" because of its visibility. It boasts a strong tower as well as a garrison. Surrounding it, however, is a hidden peril: submerged and scattered throughout the bay lie other rocks that are "very ieoperdous & daungerous."[1] Only a Utopian who possesses the current map of these landmarks can safely sail to shore; strangers risk being dashed to pieces. Depicted as hulking gray masses undergirded by deep-anchoring vertical strokes aligned in a menacing, defensive maze, these "ieoperdous & daungerous" rocks appear on the map accompanying a 1612 Leipzig edition of Sir Thomas More's text (Figure 1.1). Ships, with billowing wind-filled masts, prudently steer clear.

The defensive "ieoperdous" rocks memorably map Utopia's boundary. Guardians as well as boundary markers, these rocks trace the limits of the island's geography—both real and imagined, visible and concealed. Their more-than-human presence forms the foundation for the Utopian fantasy of identity as a country apart. More's depiction exemplifies what Debapriya Sarkar discusses as *islomania* (from Lawrence Durrell): the early modern fascination for island geographies that spark "imagination and instigate action" as worlds and spaces within which to rethink existing social and cultural structures.[2] As such, the submerged rocky Utopian boundary serves as a useful introduction to this chapter, which examines how lithic chorography plays a vital role in England's identity formation—and fragile sense

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[1] All citations of Thomas More's *Utopia* are to the first English translation: Thomas More, *A Fruteful, and Pleasaunt Worke of the Beste State of a Publyque Weale, and of the Newe Yle Called Vtopia*, trans. Raphe Robynson (London: By [S. Mierdman for] Abraham Vele, dwelling in Pauls churcheyarde at the sygne of the Lambe, 1551), sigs. G5^{r}–G6^{r}.

[2] See Debapriya Sarkar, "Islands and Shores: Early Modern Islomania," in *A Cultural History of the Sea in the Renaissance*, ed. Steve Mentz (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 135–56 at 36. For the significance of islands more broadly within Western culture, see John Gillis, *Islands of the Mind: How the Human Imagination Created the Atlantic World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton. Tiffany Jo Werth, Oxford University Press. © Tiffany Jo Werth (2024).
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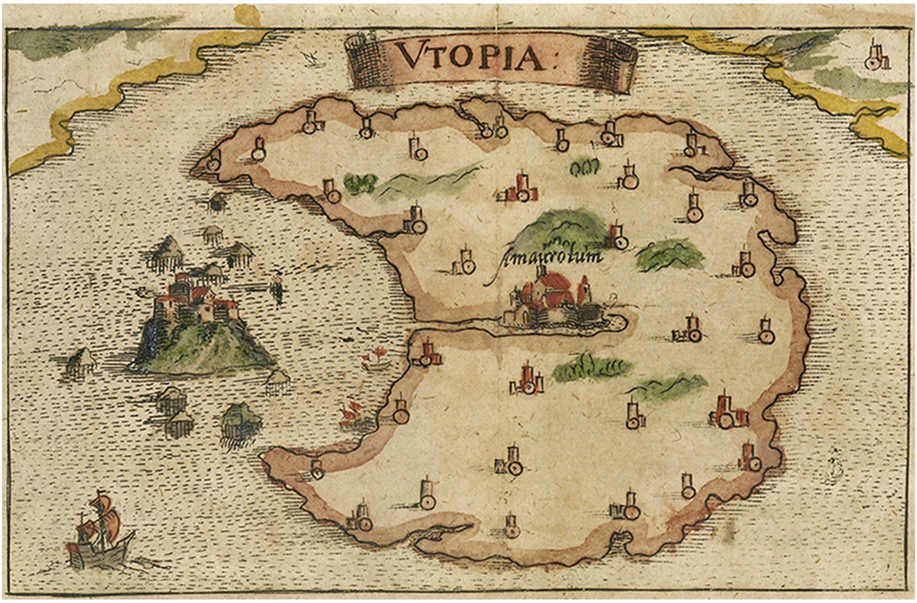

Figure 1.1 Map of Utopia from Thomas More's *De optimo Reipublicæ Statu* [. . .] (Leipzig: Michael Lantzenberger, 1612).

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of sovereignty—in the critical aftermath of Henry VIII's formal break with Rome and Catholicism. The lithic chorography serves as what Andrew Bozio calls a "form of emplacement" that enfolds landscape and its object within social and cultural surroundings.[3] A distinctive yet permeable boundary, Utopia's rocky barriers illuminate the channels that separate Utopia from, but also join it to, elsewhere.

Raphe Robynson's English adjectives, translated from the original Latin, bristle with equal parts defensive strength and vulnerability: "ieopardous," "perillous," "daungerous." The presence of rocky barriers—as both buffer and gateway—simultaneously fortifies the idea of the island body and reveals its vulnerability to foreign invasion. The selective enclosing of the island behind these barriers contributes to the opening dramatic irony of book 2. Although a seemingly straightforward declarative chorography of Utopia,

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[3] See *Thinking Through Place on the Early Modern English Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 24–64.

Hythloday's descriptive geography mirrors More's thematic preoccupation with England's prevailing ills—including, foremost, land enclosure. In Utopia, this problem will produce thieves, vagrants, and the infamous man-eating sheep detailed in book 1.[4] As a foundational template of fictional geography, Utopia is "vehemently defended as real even as its fabrication is highlighted" and its epistemological motifs will find echo in the English imaginary.[5]

Although no hidden perilous rocks lurk below the English Channel waters, England's shoreline boasts the distinctive chalky white cliffs of Dover. In a dedicatory poem to Michael Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* (second edition), George Wither names the "cliffs of Dover" as a synecdoche, via rhyme, for "all *ENGLAND* ouer."[6] Their signature chalky color, moreover, lies behind the Latin name for England, Albion. Sir Thomas More's brother-in-law, early humanist writer and printer John Rastell, writes that "this lande was fyrst called Albyon . . . by reason of ye whyte Cleues & rockes at Douer whiche be sene farre in a bryght day & was so called Albyon of the Latyns as it were the whyte lā de for Albus is latyn for whyte."[7] Like the rocks of Utopia's harbor, Dover's white cliffs distinctly mark another imaginative island's—England's—boundary; like the "ieopardous" rocks, they too might appear simultaneously intimidating and fragile. Their white cliff faces rising from the shore make them unmistakable even at great distance, but the chalky softness of their limestone suggests an erosive vulnerability. The material composition—the lithic substrate—of Dover's white cliffs and Utopia's submerged rocks foreshadow the perilous project of constructing Englishness across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[8]

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[4] On the man-eating sheep in More's *Utopia*, see Julian Yates, "Humanist Habitats: Or, 'Eating Well' with Thomas More's *Utopia*," in *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England*, ed. Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr. (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 187–209.

[5] Sarkar, "Islands and Shores," 140.

[6] Dedicatory poem by George Wither in Michael Drayton, *The Second Part, or a Continuance of Poly-Olbion* (London: Printed by Augustine Mathewes for Iohn Marriott, Iohn Grismand, and Thomas Dewe, 1622), sig. A3^{v}.

[7] From the author's prologue in John Rastell, *The Pastyme of People the Cronycles of Dyuers Realmys and Most Specyally of the Realme of Englond* (London: Printed by John Rastell, 1530), sig. A^{v}.

[8] The continuing legacy of the cliffs of Dover within English identity emerges in Shelley Trower, *Rocks of Nation: The Imagination of Celtic Cornwall* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). Trower studies nineteenth-century English culture and literature and discusses the racial as well as national implications of these chalky cliffs. The cliffs provide the opening and controlling metaphor for a study of nation building. My thanks to Nicolas Ridout for calling this book to my attention. See also Maxwell Uphaus, "'The Chalk Wall Falls to the Foam': Reimagining Littoral Space in the Poetry of the Dover Cliffs," *Comparative Literature* 73, no. 2 (2021):

Cartographically, Utopia (and Albion or England) delimit their territory with a distinctive rocky ring. Etymologically, the literal, material white cliffs gave rise to the metaphorical heritage of "Albion" descending from Roman civilization. Marjorie Rubright compellingly makes a case for how Dover's chalky cliffs undergird the etymological and philological process that will consolidate the "toponym 'Albion' itself," and align biopolitics with geological features to forge a national, as well as racialized, white identity.[9] This process furthers the fantasy of what John of Gaunt in *Richard II* will call "this earth, this realm, this England" as a "sceptered isle" whose identity is as a "precious stone set in the silver of the sea" (2.1.50, 40, 46).[10] The seemingly naturalized etymology effaces a more complicated set of relations wherein a vision of England's "islandness" requires careful construction. That construction relies on an imaginative as well as a material foundation of stone. This chapter lays the groundwork for how the geologic and lithic are enlisted in human and national identity formation, laying the foundation for additional work on its relation to premodern critical race studies.[11] While Gaunt may claim that the boundary of the sea itself may serve "in the office of a wall," there will, in fact, need to be actual walls, such as Hadrian's Wall, to act as spatial referents that will delimit "Englishness" and erase geographical complexities (such as Scotland) from a nationalistic imaginary (2.1.47).[12] The long-enduring perplexities of English national identity rely in part on the interpretation, and material constitution, of iconic stony

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209–24. While these studies explore later correlations of racial and national identity, the correlation between the whiteness of the cliffs of Dover and their visible denotation of Englishness speaks to even earlier examples of race-making metaphors and categories. For an overview of recent scholarship related to whiteness in early modern studies, see Arthur L. Little, Jr., "Is It Possible to Read Shakespeare through Critical Whiteness Studies?," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race*, ed. Ayanna Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 268–80.

[9] I am grateful to Marjorie Rubright for sharing with me her unpublished paper that correlates naturalized geographic borders with political limits and racial constructions of whiteness. Marjorie Rubright, "The Nature of Whiteness in *Henry V's* Theater of the Earth" (lecture, Columbia University "Shakespeare Seminar," New York, 2021).

[10] All citations to Shakespeare are to Greenblatt et al., *The Norton Shakespeare*, unless otherwise noted.

[11] The coalition of geography, embodiment, race-making, and environmental narratives is newly emerging. Its foundations can be located in the pioneering work of Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995). For recent directions, see chapter 2, n6.

[12] For the anxiety surrounding the early modern effacement of Scotland from the fantasmatic vision of England's islandness, see Lorna Hutson, "Forensic History: Henry V and Scotland," in *The Oxford Handbook of English Law and Literature, 1500–1700*, ed. Lorna Hutson, Oxford Handbooks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 687–708; Christopher N. Warren, "Henry V, Anachronism, and the History of International Law," ibid., 709–27. For an

entities. England's imagined cultural origin as well as its literal boundary are thus grounded in its rocky perimeters. But far from being set in stone, such boundaries often belie or bury within them a contradictory sense of naturalized permanence that effaces their complex strata, their transcorporeal identities, that entangles human and more-than-human bodies.

While Dover's distinctive cliff face might be easily spied by any boat crossing the channel, or Hadrian's Wall mark a seemingly visible north–south distinction, Utopia's "perillous" rocks draw our attention below the human eye's visible threshold. Utopia's underwater rocks force readerly attention to go below the surface to illuminate concealed strata that are nevertheless critical to the navigation of England's physical as well as cultural geography. To enter into Utopia, or England, one needs a knowledge of the multiple complexities inherent to its seemingly stable, iconic and founding lithic features. The early modern art and practice of *chorography*, which the *Oxford English Dictionary* describes as "delineating on a map or chart, particular regions, or districts; as distinguished from *geography*, taken as dealing with the earth in general," offers a useful working term for the conjunction of specific physical places and their cultural connotation as expressed in written description (n.1). James Moxon's 1679 definition underscores how this term "chorography" yokes the "Greek *choros*, a place or tract of Ground," with "Grapho, to write, or treat of"—a denotation that cements a "place" to the human art or practice of writing.[13] What this chapter terms *lithic chorography* involves paying attention to the ways that material, rocky formations contribute to the early modern English practice of establishing boundaries and sovereign territories, historical and imaginary.

Chorography acknowledges the conjunction of place and geography with human description. In this respect, the lithic chorography in this chapter draws inspiration from what Guy Debord, in his critique of twentieth-century urban geography, terms *psychogeography*. This theoretical movement's spirit, while anachronistic to the early modern, nonetheless draws from a habit of thought that arguably existed much earlier than the 1950s coinage.[14] Some critics, for instance, go so far as to argue that we might locate

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overview of the contentious and complex monument that is Hadrian's Wall, see Richard Hingley, "'The Most Ancient Boundary between England and Scotland': Genealogies of the Roman Walls," *Classical Receptions Journal* 2, no. 1 (2010): 25–43.

[13] *Lexicons of Early Modern English*, ed. Ian Lancashire (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), http://leme.library.utoronto.ca.

[14] For a translation of Guy Debord's text, originally published in *Les Lèvres Nues* 6 (1955), see "An Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography," trans. Ken Knabb, in *Critical Geographies: A Collection of Readings*, eds. Harald Bauder and Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro (Kelowna,

psychogeography's origins in late seventeenth-century London.[15] Psychogeography, I suggest, operates much like early modern chorography because in both discourses the material places on a map serve to alert us to the stories lurking below their cartographic representation. As Sukhdev Sandhu writes, psychogeography, headlined in the 1990s by writers such as Peter Ackroyd and Iain Sinclair, attunes the present-day city chronicler to "echoes of the past" in order "to divine strange visual and acoustic coincidences" that testify to the "still-potent presence" of "history and texture" within a city that, to some, "lack[s] those qualities."[16] Psychogeography's attention to multiple manifestations—what might in textual terms be called *palimpsests*—also aligns with the multiple strata that compose the lithic entities this chapter studies.

Having reached the utopian isle of Albion-Britannia via the perilous rocks of Dover and of More's *Utopia*, this chapter considers in turn how three homely yet enigmatic and iconic stony entities come to support ideas of English origins and sovereignty across the long Reformation. The three case studies examine raw, mostly unconstructed lithic entities that become, in collaboration with human story, touchstones—albeit often treacherous ones—for English identity and its sovereign (eventually imperial) power. First, I consider one of the earliest examples of an unhewn, largely unremarkable stone entering the English written record (*c.*1135): London Stone, which will come to emblematize a city's relationship to its inhabitants. Second, I turn to another ordinary-looking stone, the Fatal Marble, also known as the Stone of Scone or Jacob's Pillow, which for centuries lay beneath the English monarchy's symbolic, as well as actual, seat of power.[17] Finally, I conclude with a little-known mid-seventeenth-century account of the more famous rocks of Stonehenge. In its starring role in a manuscript from one of the last academic dramas performed in Oxford just before the closing of the theatres, Stonehenge shorthands the ambivalent heritage as well as the imperial identity embedded in the "huge heaps of stones" found "Near

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BC: Praxxis € Press 2008), 23–7, http://hdl.handle.net/10214/1798. See also Sukhdev Sandhu, "Discovering the Secrets of the City," [review of *Psychogeography*, by Merlin Coverley, *New Statesman* 135 (2006): 46–7.

[15] This case was made with Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year* in mind for its chronicling of a city's topography according to the shifting mental landscape inspired by deadly disease. See Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography: The Pocket Essential Guide* (Chichester: Pocket Essentials, 2003).

[16] Sandhu, "Discovering the Secrets of the City," 46–7.

[17] John Stow, *A Survey of London* (London: John Wolfe, 1598), sig. N^{r}. Stow records an account of it from a "fayre written Gospell booke" given to the church in Canterbury by Ethelstane, king of the West Saxons, wherein one parcel of lands or rents belonging to the church are said to be "neare vnto London Stone."

Wilton sweet," which Sir Philip Sidney named first and foremost among England's wonders.[18] The storied accretions surrounding the physical vestiges of these stones rendered them powerful players and flashpoints of controversy.

All three stony witnesses complicate a teleological narrative wherein an increasing scientific objectivity completely alters attitudes toward stone. That narrative of a lithic disenchantment across England's long Reformation stresses the growing importance of measurement, mensuration, and historical accuracy in its account of England's stony heaps.[19] The physically unremarkable, ordinary stones in these three case studies, however, remain stubbornly analogic, imaginative fixed corollaries in the drama of human imagination even as they move through time and place. Composed of sedimentary narratives, they entrench their enigmatic radiance in their located, cartographic positions in London, Scotland, and the plains of Salisbury out of the past and into the present. Throughout, these founding stones can be seen to both bolster and thwart human will and desire, anchoring cultural imagination. The material aspects of these rude but famous rocks form the basis of a lithic imagination as uniquely—and fiercely—English as the Dover cliffs.

London Stone

Beyond the chalky cliff perimeter, England's next recognizable stony guardians might appear to be London's walls. John Stow opens his *Survey of London* by comparing the glory of Rome to that of "this famous citie of London."[20] His simile recalls how, just as the Dover cliffs bequeathed the Latin name of "Albion" to England, so "greater glorie" emerges through this classical urban genealogy that sees Rome in London.[21] In particular, however, Stow equates "civility" as arriving in England when cities walled with "thick and cumbersome woods, plashed" were instead "walled with stone."[22] Stone, in Stow's account, indicates more than just guardianship or protection. It also marks a "civilized" identity in contrast to the "Irishmen our next neighbors," whose towns are defended only with a "thick entangled wood" and "a ditch and a bank."[23] The contemporary writer and psychogeographer Peter Ackroyd, perhaps taking a cue from Stow, begins his "biography" of London with its walls.[24]

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[18] "Certain Sonnets 22," in Philip Sidney, *Sir Philip Sidney* ["Selections from the writings of Sir Philip Sidney"], ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones The Oxford Authors (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 27–8.

[19] The seminal argument of Keith Thomas that finds a "disenchantment" of the natural world across the English Reformations does not address stones specifically, but the thesis is often assumed to apply. See Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983); and Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Scribner, 1971). That the landscape—and specifically its stony heaps—remained a contested site of mystery and religious belief has been forcefully argued by Angus Vine, *In Defiance of Time: Antiquarian Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); and Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape*.

[20] Stow, *A Survey of London*, sig. B^r.

[21] Ibid.

It is tempting to read the stone walls coming into being alongside London as an English corollary to Amphion's raising of the Theban walls. "O that I had the Thracian Poets harpe" writes Edmund Spenser in his *Complaints*, "or that I had Amphions instrument / To quicken with his vitall notes accord, / The stonie joynts of these old walls now rent."[25] The sentiment of Spenser's lines lends itself to a commonplace rendering of human–stone relations. The orphic power of the poet, Jenny C. Mann argues, emerges in this story as the stones respond to the fantasy of human, and especially poetic, authority to enliven seemingly dull matter: stone.[26] Figure 1.2 illustrates this moment in a drawing from the Italian Giovanni Luigi Valesio (1583–1633), now held in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In the image, the stones ascend to form a tower wall while Amphion looks on, playing a stringed instrument. As in Spenser's description, Amphion "quickens" the stones to serve as guardians to the city's inhabitants.

But such anthropocentric accounts might well consider an even more singularly famous London stone. Although Peter Ackroyd begins London's biography with its stone walls, he writes that London's true guardian may be not its walls, but its stony heart: an unimposing limestone boulder known as London Stone.[27] For early modern surveyors, poets, and playwrights, London Stone offers a counterpoint and a more complex story of human–stone relations. London Stone exemplifies how stone might do more than quicken to a "vital" human will. Its storied past reveals a corporate transhistorical body that operates as a crucial symbolic but also a material contract, between stone and the more-than-human city. London Stone, like

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[22] Ibid., sig. B2^r.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography* (New York: Anchor Books Random House, 2000).

[25] Edmund Spenser, *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, ed. William Oram (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 399–400.

[26] Jenny C. Mann, "The Orphic Physics of Early Modern Eloquence," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Literature and Science*, ed. Howard Marchitello and Evelyn Tribble (New York: Palgrave, 2017), 231–56.

[27] Ackroyd, *London: The Biography*, 17–18.

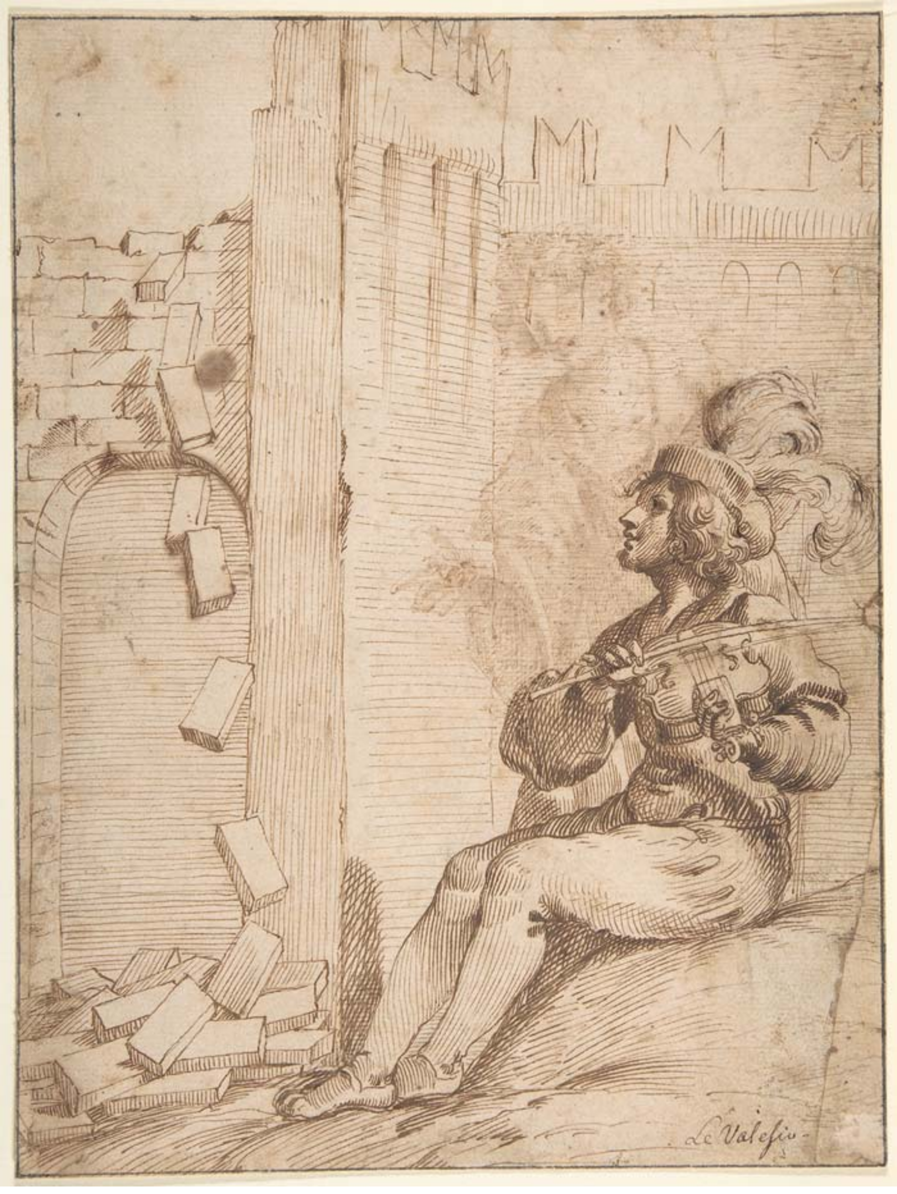

Figure 1.2 Giovanni Luigi Valesio's *Amphion Building the Walls of Thebes*. Late sixteenth to first half of seventeenth century, drawing, 24.2 × 18.2 cm, 2009.31.3, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. Joseph F. McCrindle Collection, Bequest of Joseph F. McCrindle, 2008.

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the "ieopardous" rocks of Utopia, wields an ambivalent power, equal parts strength, vulnerability, and treachery. It might protect, but also betray, its people and their city.

For a seemingly dull slab of limestone, London Stone boasts an impressive vitality. In the past eight hundred years, English writers have supposed it an ancient altar, a Roman mile marker, and even enchanted storage for Arthur's famed sword, Excalibur. Shakespeare imagined it as weighty furniture—his rebellious Jack Cade sits on it to proclaim his (short-lived) victory. Though it made headlines in 2016 when archeologists moved it from Cannon Street to the Museum of London, the average twenty-first-century tourist might be surprised that a small, unassuming hunk of carbonate rock generates so much speculation.[28]

London Stone's remarkable survival (through multiple fires, road construction, and two world wars) points to its enduring strength; yet, like Dover's cliffs, its endurance belies a fragile symbiotic existence. The stone itself is composed of oolitic limestone—a mineral structure that dissolves and recrystallizes easily because it forms layer by layer. It is, in lithic terms, perishable, and intimately connected with plant and animal life. Its layers form from the precipitation of calcium carbonate out of seawater or the accumulation of shells and skeletons of calcareous marine organisms such as corals, worms, crinoids, and certain protozoa. Both plant and animal life contribute to making it a frequently rich source for fossils. The heterogenous and complex network of life adds the human to its many layers, invisible yet as much a part of the stone as its unique and complex natural mineral balance. In its storied matter, it testifies to a constantly renegotiated lithic–human symbiosis. For the early modern chronicler, such as John Stow, or writers like William Shakespeare, London Stone was inexplicably bound up with London itself, both an enduring marker of identity amid change, and also an entity rife with a complex life.

The imposing and powerful nature attributed to the stone may seem especially odd when compared to the unprepossessing size of the small block of stone in existence today. Yet it was once a larger and more imposing stone. Early maps of London, including the copperplate map in Figure 1.3, show what the early modern London chronicler John Stow in 1598 describes to be a "great stone."[29] Appearing as an anomalous instance of raw unhewn

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[28] The flavor of this coverage can be glimpsed in the more measured reporting of Charlotte Higgins, "'Psychogeographers' Landmark London Stone Goes on Show at Last," *The Guardian*, March 11, 2016.

[29] Stow, *A Survey of London*, sig. N^{r}.

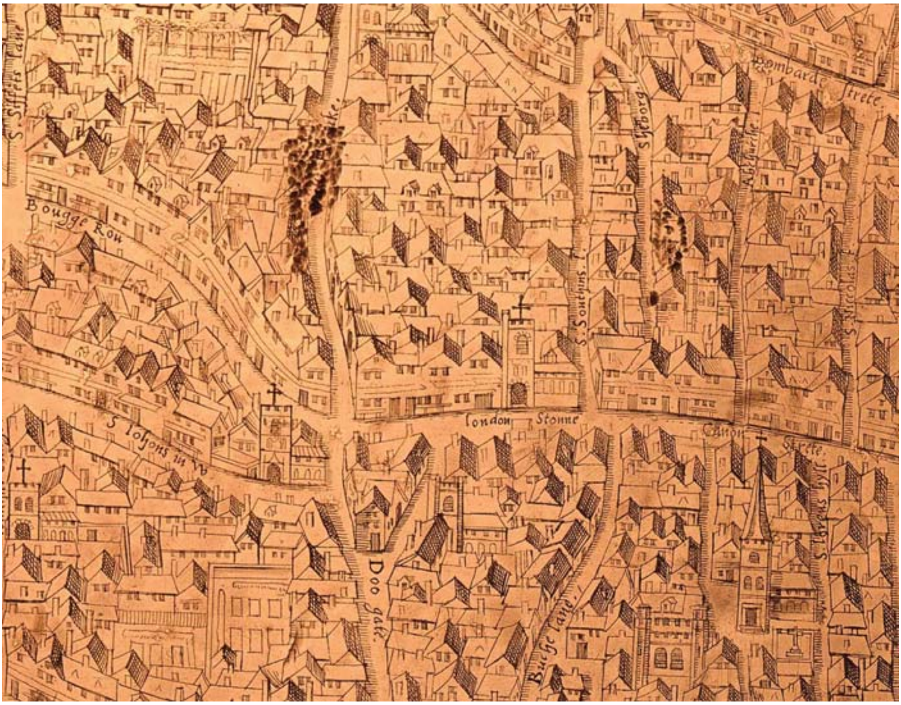

Figure 1.3 Copperplate map of *c.* 1559.

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stone amid London's constructed homes, its square blockish presence right in the middle of Cannon Street testifies to the more imposing presence of Stow's "great stone." The engraving also illuminates the oddness of the stone's ongoing presence amid the bustle of London: Why leave a large rock in the middle of the road to snarl traffic? As Stow recounts, its presence frequently hindered, rather than guarded, London's citizens.

Stow locates London Stone, "pitched upright," on the south side of Candlewick Street (later Cannon Street); "Fixed in the ground very deep" and "so stronglie set," he remarks, "that if cartes do runne against it through negligence, the Wheeles be broken and the stone it selfe unshaken."[30] Although we cannot entirely trust these maps or Stow's description as accurate representations of the stone's location or appearance, both cartographic and textual accounts nonetheless confer legibility, making London Stone one of the few unbuilt or raw, "rude" natural landmarks worthy of map notation. The map's stone houses, cathedrals, and walls would all be hewn and ordered by human labor.

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[30] Ibid., sig. N^{r}.

Stow's brief anecdote is illuminating. London Stone persists "pitched" as a stumbling block, dashing the wheels of any who do not pay attention. The stone, meanwhile, remains "unshaken." Stubbornly persistent, the stone endures as carts, and generations, pitch themselves against it and crumble. As a cartographic feature, "London Stonne" endures as a recognizable landmark amid buildings and streets destroyed or renamed. Stow recounts how a fire in the first year of King Stephen, for instance, began in a house near London Stone and consumed all east to Aldgate.[31] London Stone was, presumably, the sole remaining, recognizable landmark amid the destruction. The Stone's composite or hybrid geography—part natural world, part cityscape, part human story—inscribes a corporeal, but enduring, dimension upon the otherwise architecturally built city of London.

Believed in some accounts to be a type of founding stone, London Stone (like the cliffs of Dover) fostered England's fantasy of being linked to the Roman Empire, as it was also known as "the stone of Brutus." William Camden, early chronicler of Britain, for instance, speculates that London Stone originated as a Roman mile marker, such as was "in the Mercae place of Rome."[32] Samuel Clarke, in 1657, expanded on this to claim: "In the middest of the City was set a mile mark (as the like was in *Rome* also) from whence they measured their stations, which stands till this day, and is commonly known by the name of *London stone*."[33] Elisha Cooles's English dictionary of 1677 corroborated such historical lineage, making it definitive: "*Milliary, l.* mile-mark a stone-pillar (in *Rome*) with a brass-ball, from whence all the Miles were reckoned. Such a one *London stone* is thought to have been."[34] Such denotative descriptions bolstered England's favored mythology that saw the empire of Rome passing through the legendary Brutus to the founding of England's capital, London. As John Clark demonstrates, an early fourteenth-century narrative poem known as the Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle (a version of which was intended for a London readership) credits Brutus with setting up London Stone.[35] London Stone stood proof that the power of Rome's stony (civilized) empire passed to England.

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[31] Ibid.

[32] William Camden, *Britain, or a Chorographicall Description of the Flourishing Kingdomes of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London: Printed by F. K[ingston] R. Y[oung] and I. L[egatt] for George Latham, 1637), sig. Mm6^r.

[33] Samuel Clarke, *A geographicall description of All The countries in The known vvorld as Also of The greatest and famousest cities and fabricks* (London: Printed by R.I. for Thomas Newberry, 1657), sig. M3^v.

[34] Elisha Cooles, *A English Dictionary* (London: Peter Parker, 1677), sig. Aa4^r.

The stone also served as a simile to England's growing colonial reach into the so-called "new" world. As *matterphor* it embodies England's dream of *translatio imperii*. Even as sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century antiquarians and chorographers proclaimed its Roman past, London Stone also became a landmark to orient an Englishman across the Atlantic. Thomas Gage's *English American* (1648), a journal of his journey to America, familiarizes the exotic Mexican palace of the Marquesse del Valle (descendant of Hernán Cortés) by comparing it to London Stone; it contained, he wrote, an "old Idoll an Eagle of stone," which was "twice as big as *London* stone."[36] Despite its being twice as small, and of a rude shape, London Stone continued to be a mile marker, a notable cultural as well as topographical feature, a counterintuitively mobile milestone measuring influence as well as distance. A lithic conduit of cultural heritage, London Stone conveys familiarity, imperial power, identity, and authority.[37] Its stony diachronic matter was a pillar of witness to England's growing shadow around the world.

These stories show London Stone's transhistorical endurance and unlooked-for mobility as it becomes a marker for measurement as far away as the ancient and so-called "new" world. Yet, despite this outsized more-than-human temporal and geographical remit, it also remains in many accounts what contemporary theorist Stacy Alaimo terms "transcorporeal" in nature.[38] Accounts emphasize its multiple corporeal capacities, its physical and material dimensions. It finds a voice in lyric and dramatic expression for, in some stories, it smells, speaks, and even falls in love. A character from

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[35] John Clark, "'Brut Sett Londen Ston': London and London Stone in a 14th-Century English Metrical Chronicle," *Transactions of the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society* 69 (2018): 171–80.

[36] Thomas Gage, *The English-American His Travail by Sea and Land* (London: R. Cotes, 1648), sig. F4^{r}.

[37] Americans recognized its imaginative significance to England. When Nathaniel Hawthorne visited, in the 1850s, he turned out of his "direct course" to view "this famous stone." Perhaps expecting a more imposing stone, Hawthorne was underwhelmed: "judging by what I saw," it was only "a rudely shaped and unhewn post." Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The English Notebooks: Based Upon the Original Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library*, ed. Randall Stewart (New York and London: Modern Languages Association of America, Oxford University Press, 1941), 289.

[38] Alaimo, *Bodily Natures*.

William Haughton's play, *English-men for my money* (1616), remarks: "I haue the scent of *London-stone* as full in my nose" and urges his audience to inhale deeply for "Sirrs feele about, I smell *London-stone*."[39] Recognizable for its scent, unmistakable for its touch that crumbles cart wheels, London Stone exceeds being a mere stumbling block. An embodied entity, it is capable even of love and betrayal.

London Stone itself, in one account, falls in love and gets married. An early sixteenth-century poetic treatise doubtfully ascribed to John Lydgate (1521) tells how London Stone fell in love with "*the bosse of Byllyngesgate*" (a water conduit). The narrator begs his audience "with your charyte" to provide the bride and groom with "weddynge gere," for both are "naked."[40] "[I]t wolde do you good," he promises his human readers, "to se them daunce and playe." Described as "curtes and gente" (courteous and gentle), London Stone bursts into speech. Passionately he defends his bonny lass against the slander that she has already given birth to a child by the well "with two bucketts." That "fayre Bosse," says London Stone, "hooly was in my syght" and "to my nature / she sholde be coequall." The stony bridegroom declares his soon-to-be bride's purity, swearing, "I knowe by the sterres" and "my study." In this delightfully more-than-human lyric, London Stone loves—and by implication makes love—reasons, studies, and swears. His marriage may not be of like or kind, but it is a lively slab of more-than-human love.

This little poem performs something quite striking. It obliterates lively differentiation of stone, water, or human being, inviting all to dance: "Syth the goddess above / hath destyned them so."[41] Arguably, the poem, and its human writer, quickens London Stone just as Amphion calls the stones to dance. But the poem's prosopopoeia unsettles a simple dialectic and anticipates Spenser's Talus, who, too, will exhibit passion, albeit of a more violent nature. Moreover, unlike Amphion, whose song quickens the Theban stones to dance into a wall for human benefit, London Stone's courtship of a water conduit benefits none other than the more-than-human and transcorporeal entities. It invites readers to see London coming to life through a dance held by the hosts, a stone and a water conduit. In this account, the human inhabitants are the guests. The marriage dance emblematizes a symbiosis of more-than-human players as integral to London's life.

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[39] William Haughton, *Englishmen for My Money* (London: W. White, 1616), sig. G^{v}.

[40] John Lydgate, *Here Begynneth a Treatyse of This Galaunt with the Maryage of the Bosse of Byllyngesgate. Vnto London Stone* (London: J. Skot for Wynkyn de Worde, 1521), sig. A5^{v}.

[41] Ibid., sig. A6^{r}.

The marriage dance, however, also highlights the poem's narrative contradictions. How can an immobile stone that even carts can't budge, dance? London Stone, as it turns out, despite its seeming lack of locomotion, possesses a strange power of movement. London Stone, geologists now know, is non-native to London. But how the stone came to London (or perhaps, how London came to it) and its purpose remain enigmatic, as stubbornly silent as Utopia's guardian rocks. Identified by geologists as Clipsham Limestone or oolite, from the Midlands, London Stone is a good-quality stone somehow transported to London.[42] Although how or when it arrived remains recalcitrant, its subsequent identity is sutured to the city of London's own emergence. Today, an official bronze plaque (dating from 1962) documents the stone's appearance as dating from "1188 [when] there was a reference to Henry, son of Eylwin de Lundenstane, subsequently Lord Mayor of London."[43] This seemingly transparent geological genealogy ("son of" London Stone) hides an allusive categorical confusion beneath an apparent statement of fact.

The plaque provides a shorthand to the stone's non-normative relationship to a city and its inhabitants. Who was this Eylwin de Lundenstane whose son Henry became Lord Mayor of London? One might conjecture that Eylwin "de Lundenstane" took his rocky moniker from his proximity to the stone, as in fact later State Papers frequently identify people and businesses, such as printer's shops, as being "of" or "near" London Stone, a geographic locator as familiar as St. Paul's or the Tower. "Some again have imagined, the same to be set up by *Iohn* or *Thomas London-stone* dwelling there against it," explains James Howel in *Londinopolis* (1657), "but more likely it is, that such men have taken name of the Stone, than the Stone of them."[44]

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[42] Ralph Merrifield, *London City of the Romans* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983). What survives is likely an apex from a larger stone. A Roman origin is probable, although Clipsham limestone does not seem to have been regularly used in Roman times. Arguments that favor its Roman origins speculate that it lay at the gateway of the provincial government; see John Morris and Sarah Macready, *Londinium: London in the Roman Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982). A recent re-examination of the existing stone has proposed that it may be Bath Stone, a stone commonly used in early Roman London; see John Clark, "Jack Cade at London Stone," *Transactions of London and Middlesex Archaeological Society* 58 (2007): 169–89 at 177.

[43] For the historical references behind the bronze plaque, see John Clark, "London Stone: Stone of Brutus or Fetish Stone—Making the Myth." *Folklore* 121, no. 1 (2010): 38–60 at 39.

[44] James Howel, *Londinopolis* (London: J. Streater for Henry Twiford, George Sawbridge, Thomas Dring, and John Place, 1657), sig. N3^{v}.

James Howel's explanation that "men have taken name of the Stone" prompts a reorienting of perspective. It is almost as if "Elywin" or "Iohn or Thomas" become "men of stone," for they are "of" "Lundenstane." These early human founders of London are legible, memorable, perhaps even exist, because they are coextensive with the lithic entity known as Lundenstane. London Stone, like Jacob's pillar, stands in as a progenitor of London's citizens. The historical plaque, however unintentionally, introduces present-day Londoners to an entangled lithic–human entity, preserving both through time. Moreover, the syntax suggests London Stone to be the guarantee that Elywin son Henry would ascend as "Lord Mayor of London." In historical record, London Stone holds a metonymic relationship to the city of London. Its substantive physical presence that breaks cartwheels and dances in song confers authority and legitimacy to its proximate humans. Proximity to it or possession of it confers not only identity but also a particular power over, or right to, the city.[45]

London Stone's powerful authority, like Jacob's pillar, however, comes with a double edge. Later in the nineteenth-century, Nathaniel Hawthorne believed, for example, that he could still see the "one or two long cuts" left on London Stone by the sword of the fourteenth-century leader of popular rebellion, Jack Cade.[46] Dramatized and made famous by Shakespeare in *Henry VI Part 2*, the Cade episode loosely draws from early modern chronicle accounts by William Caxton (1480), Robert Fabyan (1533), and Raphael Holinshead (1586). In the play, the rebel Jack Cade leads his victorious troops into London. Upon entering the city, he "strikes / his staff on London Stone" (leaving the marks that Hawthorne claims he sees) and "sitting upon London Stone," he proclaims himself "lord of this city."[47] Just as Arthur allegedly proves his right to the throne by pulling a sword from a stone, so Cade in Shakespeare's drama proves his authority by striking the stone that symbolized—or perhaps was—London itself.[48]

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[45] A nineteenth-century proverb epitomizes this symbolic tendency and further promotes a sympathetic relationship between city and stone: "So long as the Stone of Brutus (i.e. London Stone) is safe, so long shall London flourish." Current consensus locates the proverb's origins in the nineteenth century, being first cited in print by a pseudonymous contributor to *Notes & Queries* (1862), who quoted an allegedly ancient proverb. However, the proverb's author was likely a Welsh clergyman who wished to link London Stone to Brutus of Troy, legendary founder of London. See Richard Williams Morgan, *The British Kymri, or, Britons of Cambria: Outlines of Their History and Institutions from the Earliest to the Present Times* (Ruthin: J. Clarke, 1857). According to Morgan, Brutus placed a sacred stone that came from the Palladium of the mother city of Troy, in the Court of the Temple of Diana, on which the kings of Britain were sworn. It is now known, he writes, as "London Stone" at p. 31. For the myth's achieving the status of "traditional" and unquestioned, see John Clark, "London Stone: Stone of Brutus or Fetish Stone—Making the Myth," *Folklore* 121, no. 1 (2010): 38–60.

[46] Hawthorne, *The English Notebooks*, 289.

[47] William Shakespeare, *2 Henry 6*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, The Riverside Shakespeare (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), stage direction 4.6, 4.6.1. John Clark argues that

An image of this scene, found in a late nineteenth-century edition of Shakespeare's works, shows Cade jauntily seated on the stone's top, right hand topping his sword, gaze defiant.[49] The imagery amplifies the myth that Cade draws authority from the stone. Whereas Moses draws water from the rock in Sinai by striking it at God's command, Cade commands upon striking the stone that henceforth during his first year's reign nothing but "claret wine" should flow from the city conduits.[50] Cade's torso extends down through the stone, making it difficult to tell where man ends and stone begins. The sinuous, flowing cloak furthers such indistinction, as the drapery slips from human form into stone slab merging into what looks like a tenuous tree root forming a third foot. The transcorporeal movement in the image reminds the viewer that both the lithic and the vegetal are construed within the baseline of the human along the scala. In historical accounts, Cade attempts to make an heroic statue out of himself, to elevate his base status, to become a monumental testimony to his victory and his good cheer (all that wine). Like London Stone's boisterous wedding, Cade has enlivened the city through his interaction with this iconic stone. But, as seen in Figure 1.4, the image represents a lithic–human symbiosis, rather than a triumphant human shorn of foundational matter. Stone anchors Cade in place; Cade extends the stone's reach to create a powerful symbol, half-enduring stone, half-conquering man.

This image portrays Jack Cade's grab for political power at its victorious apex jauntily boosted by London Stone. Cade, however, might better have harkened to Jacob's fear. Later writers, William Blake among them, would be

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this episode makes great theatre but is of uncertain historical provenance. Clark claims, moreover, that the symbolism of London Stone as key to the city seems largely to have been lost on early modern audiences. We remember it, he suggests, thanks to Shakespeare's rendering of it, see Clark, "Jack Cade at London Stone," 168–89.

[48] Elsewhere, Shakespeare demonstrates a fascination with the vibrant power of stone to influence his human characters. See Mary Floyd-Wilson, "The Preternatural Ecology of 'a Lover's Complaint,'" *Shakespeare Studies* 39 (2011): 43–53.

[49] Although this visual image emphasizes the materiality and presence of London Stone, its staging on the theatre remains obscure. Given the difficulty of moving heavy stones on and off stage quickly, it may have been evoked in viewer's imaginations. For instance, even in modern productions such as Nick Bagnall's 2013 Globe Theatre production of the trilogy of *Henry VI*, disappointingly, there was no attempt made to bring the material stone on stage. Instead, the actor portraying Jack Cade merely stepped on to the stairs at backstage that had been representing the throne.

[50] Shakespeare, *2 Henry 6*, 4.6.4.

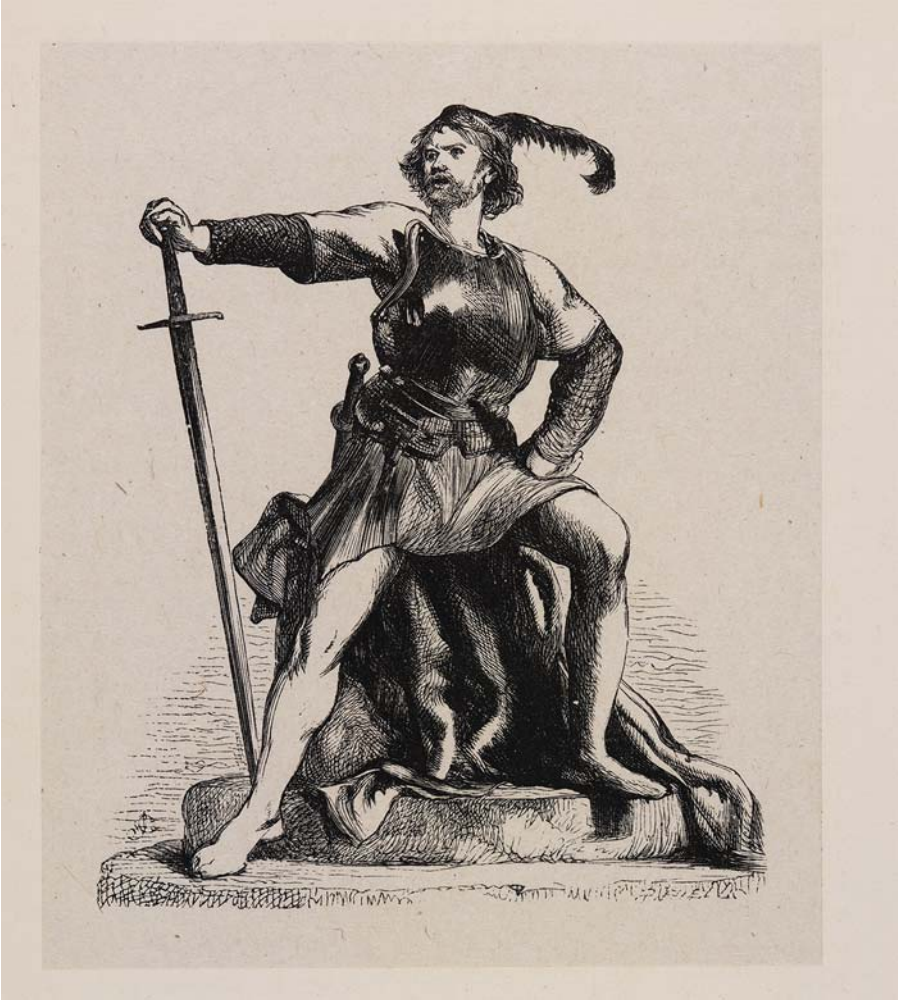

Figure 1.4 Jack Cade as illustrated by Sir John Gilbert. *Henry VI Part 2. The Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. Howard Staunton (London: G. Routledge, 1881), RB 138504.

Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

wary of London Stone's potentially dark mythic power.[51] In his book *London*, Peter Ackroyd speculates that the stone might be "London's guardian spirit."[52] Yet, if the stone guards London's citizens, that power unsettles as well as comforts: its radical alterity supersedes human scale. Many contemporary depictions fear its intentions. In the novel *The House of Doctor Dee* (1993), the sixteenth-century historical figure and occultist John Dee chips away at it for his alchemical experiments. In Charlie Fletcher's trilogy for children *Stoneheart* (2006), it embodies evil, a sinister force better contained behind an iron grille, which protects London's citizens from the stone rather than the stone from them. In China Miéville's *Kraken* (2010), trusting the "big chunk of stone" is a "quaint or dangerous tradition."[53] Jack Cade may have touched his sword to London Stone and gained the authority to speak, but did he wonder, Miéville's narrator asks, "why it had turned on him afterward" when his rebellion was crushed and his head looked down from a pike on the bridge?[54] Whether "forgotten" or "hiding" or "camouflaged or whatever," the Stone remains "the heart" of Miéville's steampunk, alternative London. London Stone is "always, suspiciously, at the heart of things."[55] Its ambiguous power haunts more than fiction; it also spikes blog headlines that speculate "why it could spell doom for the capital."[56] As lithic fantasy, London Stone casts a disproportionately longer shadow than its stony stump.

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[51] In *Jerusalem*, William Blake imagines a darker vision for such human-lithic interaction: "[T]he Druids' golden Knife / Rioted in human gore," and human sacrifices "groan'd aloud on London Stone," William Blake, *Jerusalem* (London: J. Pearson, 1877), plate 27, lines 30–4.

The stone's topographical and geographic significance is but a dot on the map compared to its imaginative reach. Much more than a landmark only, its transcorporeality renders it a stumbling block, a temporary throne of ambition, an amorous force, and bound in mystical and legislative ways to civic authority. To writers such as modern-day city chronicler Iain Sinclair, it always already plays vividly in London's mental and material existence. For Sinclair, writing when London Stone still occupied 111 Cannon Street, the stone and its "mantic cargo" showed London's misalignment. Because it stood "behind bars," a "trophy" for the Overseas Chinese Banking Corporation Limited that until recently occupied 111 Cannon

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[52] Ackroyd, *London: The Biography*, 17–18.

[53] Charles Fletcher, *Stoneheart* (London: Hodder Children's Books, 2006). See also Kate Griffin, *The Midnight Mayor* (New York: Orbit, 2010). Griffin's novel tell how London Stone has been destroyed and along with it, its power to preserve London; similarly in Sarah Silverman, *The Nowhere Chronicles* (London: Indigo, 2010–12), London Stone has been stolen and a dark king reigns; London Stone links the mortal world to the faerie world below in Marie Brennan, *Onyx Court* (London: Tor, 2008–11). It also gets a mention in Nicci French, *Tuesday's Gone* (New York: Pamela Dorman Books/Viking, 2013).

[54] China Miéville, *Kraken* (New York: Del Rey, 2010), 192–3.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Nick Enoch, "Fury as Developers Plan to Move Legendary 900-Year-Old London Stone from Its Historic Site (and Why It Could Spell Doom for the Capital)," *Daily Mail: Mail Online*, January 25, 2012.

Street, London Stone's presence behind bars disrupted "the City's sacred geometry," and, by inference, disintegrated the psychic stability of its inhabitants.[57] Guy Debord describes this psychogeographic worldview as one that recognizes how the "laws" and "effects" of the geographical environment "consciously organized or not" influence "the emotions and behaviors of individuals."[58] Psychogeography, in whose schema London Stone represents a pivotal point, rejects a separation between humans and their surroundings. In popular lore, its fortunes remain entwined with those of the modern city as well as a stubborn reminder of London's past.[59] London Stone is an inscrutable heart whose beats propel geographic, literary, psychic, and historical memory, if one dare to look beyond its seemingly small, nonhuman, and benign, manifestation.

The Stone of Scone, Fatal Marble, or Jacob's Stone

London Stone binds English identity to a variety of mythic as well as Roman-historical pasts, and futures. It invites dreams of a *translatio imperii* fantasy. But if it, like the imaginary of the cliffs of Dover, facilitates John of Gaunt's vision for a "sceptered isle," a "stone" amid the wild sea, another stone, one yet more central to the imperial ambition of England, carries within it a stubborn reminder of England's emplacement amid other peoples and cultures. The Stone of Scone hails from north of Hadrian's Wall, a constant reminder of Scotland's reach into the very heart of the English throne. In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, when Ross and Macduff discuss Macbeth's impending sovereignty, they note that he has "gone to Scone / to be invested" (2.4.99). Although not directly referenced, the two anxious courtiers refer to the Scottish practice of conferring kingship in Scone upon a legendary stone, variously known as the Stone of Scone, *fatal marmor* or the Fatal Marble, and Jacob's stone. A few lines prior, Ross and an Old Man were discussing a series of "unnatural" portents: a lowly mousing owl "hawk'd at and kill'd" a falcon; Duncan's horses, it was said, did "eat each other" (2.4). These "unnatural" portents with their aura of a power at play beyond mere human ken, surround the play's dark allusion to what English chroniclers would call "the Fatall marble."

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[57] Iain Sinclair, *Lights Out for the Territory* (London: Granta, 1997), 102, 16.

[58] Guy-Ernest Debord, *Introduction*, 23. Psychogeography, headlined by writers like Peter Ackroyd and Iain Sinclair, attunes the present-day city chronicler to "echoes of the past" in order "to divine strange visual and acoustic coincidences" that testify to the "still-potent" presence of "history and texture" within a city that to some "lacks those qualities"; see Sandhu, "Discovering the Secrets of the City," 46–7.

[59] For the stone as a nationalist fantasy "newly creepy in an age of nostalgia-fueled populism" and its resonance even in the "sleekly exclusionary corporate urbanism" of London, see Raffles, *The Book of Unconformities*, 48–51.

The stone where presumably Macbeth would sit when crowned acted as much more than theatrical prop. Like London Stone for aspiring leaders such as Jack Cade, its ties to power and its aura of preternatural destiny made it a coveted entity. Simultaneously concrete and mystical, it straddles material and immaterial workings of power: ancient, emotive, and enigmatic. Like London Stone it is plain and lacks ornamentation or decoration. Yet, as A. Marchant writes, the stone's significance has a long affective history in British coronation rituals that stretch back to 1296.[60] In *Reges, Reginae, Nobiles* (1600), William Camden records how the stone journeyed from Scone in Scotland to London, England: when King Edward I returned triumphant from conquering Scotland, he "dedicated to God in Westminster Church the scepter & Crowne of Kings of Scotland, together with the throne in which they used to be installed . . . with Jacobs stone (as they call it) upon it."[61] Equal in power to the Scottish scepter and crown, the crude and unhewn stone materially evidenced Edward's English triumph. Its very presence determined the legitimate bounds of a sovereign power. The Stone of Scone thus highlights the transcorporeality of kingly power as its materiality foregrounds the interconnections of civic authority and human bodies with stony slabs. Moreover, its literal mobility, rather than its cartographic emplacement as a fixed landmark, emphasizes a mobile lithic chorography, one whose motility might be a constant source of human anxiety. Rather than a fixed, durable cliff face, or stone wall, the Stone of Scone was alarmingly portable.

Accounts of the Stone of Scone such as that in *Macbeth* may lead a reader to imagine a beautiful white marble block, as the chronicles refer to it as "marble." But the stone is, in fact, a rather ordinary red sandstone with a distinctly yellowish hue. It lacks the craftsmanship or rare jewels that would seemingly render it valuable. Nor does its color contribute to a discourse of whiteness that might further bolster England's sense of its *terra firma*, the privilege of what Karen Fields and Barbara Fields refer to as a "racecraft" within political structures.[62] Yet the alternate name here given, "Jacobs stone," suggests how this rough stone—besides conferring sovereignty—might nonetheless nurture patriarchal dreams of a chosen people's blessing and futurity, even as it triggers fear for its indifference to human desire. King James, a target audience for *Macbeth*, was himself crowned in London on Edward I's Coronation Chair, preserved in the Royal Chapel at Westminster, where he sat upon the throne that housed a special shelf wherein lodged this storied stone. Its legend saddles a long sweep of English as well as Scottish monarchy, from Edward II's coronation in 1308 to Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953 and that of King Charles III in 2023.[63] The now-empty shelf remains visible to visitors to Westminster today. How it appeared with the stone in place can be seen in the photo of the Coronation Chair in Figure 1.5. As the image shows, the stone's visibility as the foundational power below the throne would have been seen by any approaching the sovereign.

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[60] A. Marchant, "Romancing the Stone: (E)Motion and the Affective History of the Stone of Scone," in *Feeling Things: Objects and Emotions through History*, eds. Stephanie Downes, Sally Holloway, and Sarah Randles Holloway Downes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 192–208.

[61] William Camden, *Reges, Reginae, Nobiles, & Alij in Ecclesia Collegiata B. Petri Westmonasterij Sepulti, Vsque Ad Annum Reparatae Salutis* (London: Excudebat E. Bollifantus, 1600). The Huntington Library copy contains interleaved pages on which an English translation of the text is written in secretary hand. The translation above is taken from these interleaved pages. No folio, page, or signature notations appear in the volume.

Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1577) elaborated the Scottish traditions to an English audience. Other accounts would follow, including that of Camden, and, in 1611, Anthony Munday's *A Brief Chronicle of the Successe of Times*. Munday, perhaps better known for his numerous translations of Continental romances, enlarges earlier accounts. He writes of Scotland's ancient King Gathelus, who lived in peace with his neighbors while he sat "daily on his Marble stone in Brigantia, administring Lawes and Iustice to his people."[64] The stone in these accounts confers sovereignty and holds ties to the dispensation of justice, a capacity exploited in book 5 of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. These capacities suggest why it might be cultivated for human ends and how it might serve for a transcorporeal succession of sovereignty. After all, human kingly bodies come and go, while the Stone of Scone endures below the throne.

Its transcorporeal function may also contribute to the complex story behind the stone's many names, including its designation as "Jacob's stone."

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[62] Karen E. Fields and Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (London: Verso, 2012).

[63] While always present in historical coronations, its theatrical staging can be gestural and imaginative. Some productions, such as that of director Joe Hill-Gibbins's *Christopher Marlowe's Edward II* for the National Theatre (2013), choose to display prominently a stone slab in their portrayal of the English Coronation Chair.

[64] Anthony Munday, *A Briefe Chronicle, of the Successe of Times, from the Creation of the World, to This Instant* (London: Printed by W. Iaggard, printer to the Honourable Citty of London, and are to be sold at his house in Barbican, 1611), sig. Gg6^{v}.

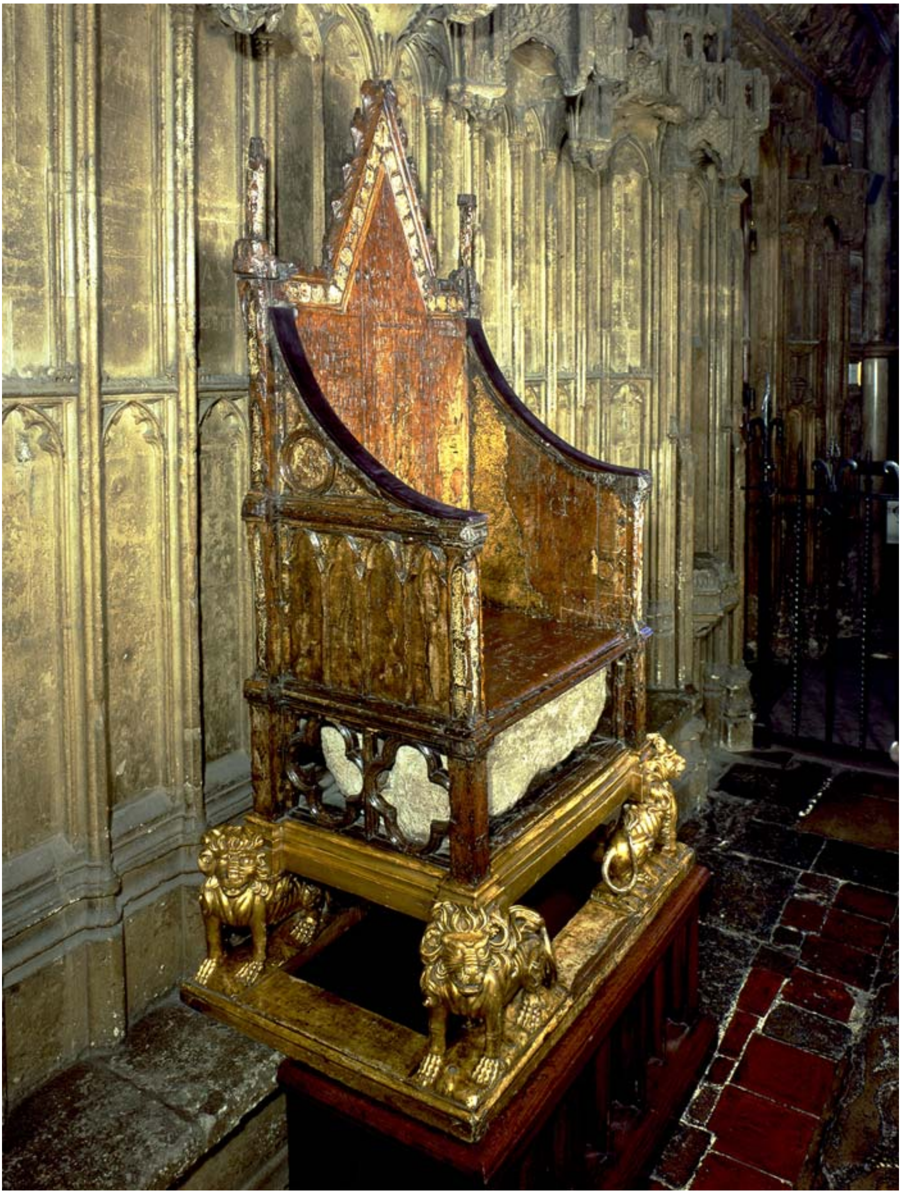

Figure 1.5 Coronation Chair with the Stone of Scone.

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As my introduction details, a critical image within the early modern understanding of the *scala naturae*, Jacob's stony pillow was both the base and portal for his dreams of paternity as well as mobility in the spreading of his seed. But, just as Jacob's dream inspired both desire and fear, so too this desirable capacity was shadowed by the fabled marble's ties to prophecy, destiny, and the preternatural forces at work in the scene from *Macbeth*. Munday observes that, although the "stone was fashioned like a seat or chaire," an object presumably quiescent to human ascendancy, it also had

> such a fate thereto belonging (as is said) that wheresoeuer that stone should be found, there shoulde the Scottishmen raigne and hold dominion. Héereof it ensued, that there first in Spain, afterward in Ireland, and next in Scotland, the Kings ruling ouer the Scottishmen, receiued the Crowne sitting vppon that stone.[65]

An alleged Latin inscription on the stone spelled out this "fate" that the stone bore as it moved across shifting landscapes from Spain, to Ireland, Scotland, and then England: "Ni fallat fatum, Scoti quocunque locatum· / Inuenient lapidem, regnare tenentur ibidem" which Munday somewhat loosely Englishes as "Except olde Sawes doo faile, / and Wizards wits be blinde: / The Scots in place must raigne, / here they this Stone shal finde." Munday's chronicle hints that this "fatal Marble stone" may be more than a trophy of human sovereignty; it might, in fact, determine it.[66] Humans, like faithful seeds, serve its destiny by moving it around the map in a more-than-human version of *translatio imperii.*

In his description of the various monuments in Westminster (1631), John Weever offers a longer accounting, and even deeper history, including yet more of the Scottish legends. Weever's chronicle will trace the stone's origins yet further back, this time beyond the bounds of Europe or a classical Rome or Greece to a daughter of the Egyptian Pharaohs: "Aftur a woman that Scote hyghte, the dawter of Pharaon. / Yat broghte into Scotlond a whyte marble ston, / Yat was ordeyned for hure kyng, whan he coroned wer."[67] Intriguingly, Weever refers to the stone as being of "whyte marble," perhaps a displaced desire for it to be other than its yellowish-hued red sandstone.

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] John Weever, *Ancient Funeral Monuments within the United Monarchie of Great Britaine, Ireland, and the Ilands Adjacent* (London: Thomas Harper, 1631), sigs. Rr^{v}-Rr2^{r}.

Regardless, the origin here named finds it in a non-Christian, nonwhite culture and associated not with a patriarch, but a daughter of Pharaoh. She set its journey in motion. It then allegedly passed through Europe before King Kenneth fetched it out of Argile and to Scone, where it resided until seized and carried by Edward I to London—where it would wait patiently until James's arrival to fulfill its destiny for a Scots to "raigne" in place. As Weever translates the "propheticall Distichon," "If Fates goe right where ere this stone is pight, / The Regall race of Scots shall rule that place."[68] Weever concludes, "Which, by whomsoeuer it was written, we, who now liue, finde it happily accomplished."[69] Here, stone colludes with broader powers, moving between material and theoretical bodies, with seemingly scant regard for human will.

As in the dialogue between the anxious noblemen of *Macbeth*, the history ledgers play on the double edge of *fatal*: as both a signifier (and in fact a signified) of being chosen, and an inevitable marker of preternatural forces. The modifier *fatal* connotes someone or something pricked out by destiny, but with the ringing undertone of "doomed" (OED, adj.2). In the seventeenth song of *Poly-Olbion* (1612), Michael Drayton warns against trusting the Scottish stories of the "*fatal marmor*" but nonetheless credits the engraved distich and the stone's being "inclos'd . . . in a woden Chaire" to the Scotsman King Kenneth, and among the great spoils of Edward Longshanks that continues to shadow the monarchs crowned upon it at Westminster.[70] The marginal gloss notes that this "Fatall marble" has a similar connotation to "our word saddle," to imply an obsolete usage meaning a "type of chair or seat, a bench" (*OED*, n.2).[71] Throne and stone were, in other words, practically indistinguishable. Visually, as in Figure 1.6, the throne itself appears to be a single carved slab of veined marble. The engraving underscores the conflation of stone with throne. The lined veins are suggestive of a lurking vitality that belies its seeming static form.

John Weever describes Edward's desire to "extinguish, if it were possible, the very memory of the Nation" by despoiling Scotland of histories, instruments of states, and antique monuments: "Sending to Westminster the Marble stone, wherein (as the vulgar were persuaded) the Fate of the

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[68] Ibid., sig. Rr2^r.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Michael Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* (London: Printed [by Humphrey Lownes] for M Lownes. I Browne. I Helme. I Busbie, 1612), sig. Aa6^r.

[71] Ibid.

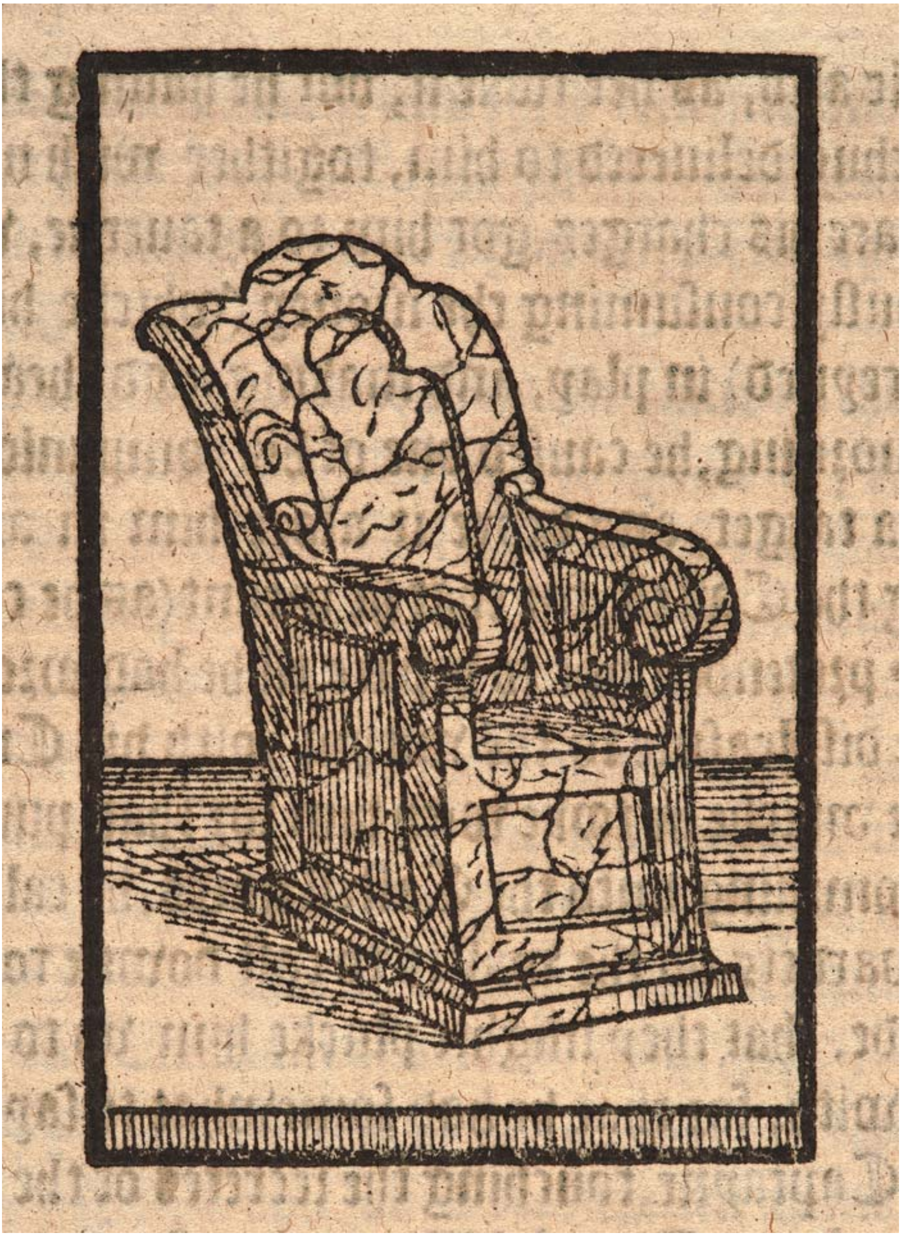

Figure 1.6 Detail of Coronation Chair from Raphael Holinshed, *The firste volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande and Ireland* vol. 2 (London, 1577), 822, RB 61523.

Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

kingdom consisted."[72] In other words, with the stone carried to England, the fantasy of the English island broached in *Utopia* becomes complete, and the effacement of Scotland is melded into the very fabric of the English throne. The fatal irony that Weever reads in this story is that when Edward seized the stone, he precipitated a chain of (predestined?) events that would eventually deliver the English crown to a Scottish king. The stone's movement precipitates England's becoming Britain.

John Weever's parenthetical aside that the "vulgar" believed the prophecy about the fate of the kingdom being tied to the *fatal marmor* indicates, on the one hand, an elite dismissal of the stone's potency; yet, whether for reasons of satisfying the "vulgar" or for other more complicated reasons, the stone was and continues to be a strain on the relationship between England and Scotland. In an episode that would later be popularized in a film, on Christmas Eve of 1950 a group of four Scottish nationalist students seized the stone in a symbolic gesture from its shelf in the Coronation Chair. Four months later, the stone reappeared, draped in Saltire, in Abroath Abbey. Police returned it to Westminster. Although some now claim that the returned stone is a fake, it continues to play a role in Scottish–English politics. In 1996, then prime minister John Major announced it would be returned to Scotland, stipulating, however, that it be made available for all future sovereigns of the United Kingdom at their coronation (which, presumably, would take place in Westminster).[73] Upon returning to Scotland, the stone was housed in Edinburgh Castle alongside the other honors of Scotland (the country's crown jewels). In 2020, enthusiasm erupted over the news that the stone would return to Perth (the original capital of Scotland), to its city hall with a planned opening of 2024. Modern geological tests show that the stone was likely quarried at Scone, just outside of Perth, and locals herald its return home as a "game-changer" that will establish Perth "as the place to be."[74]

Although most official reports note that plans remain in place to ensure the stone can be used at Westminster Abbey for future coronations, not all agree. One of the students involved in the theft, now over ninety years old, gave an interview to the *Telegraph* where he claimed "that it should not be assumed" that the stone "will automatically be made available for the ceremony, which would be in Westminster Abbey."[75] Such a journey would again trigger the anxieties about a mobile lithic chorography that destabilizes boundaries between nations as well as between the powers that inhere in humans and their constructs as opposed to more-than-human entities and forces. Why, we might ask, is the Stone of Scone critical to a coronation?

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[72] Weever, *Ancient Funeral Monuments within the United Monarchie of Great Britaine, Ireland, and the Ilands Adjacent*, sig. Rr^{v}.

[73] Speculation fueled media reports around the world, and *The Guardian* report noted that the coronation liturgy pointedly stated that the red sandstone was "lent . . . with the consent of the Scottish government and people." See Esther Addley, "Coronation Treasures: From the Stone of Destiny to the Sovereign's Orb," *The Guardian*, May 5, 2023.

[74] For a sampling from Scottish and English news coverage, see Jamie Buchan, "Stone of Destiny Is Coming Home to Perthshire after Seven Centuries," *The Courier*, December 23, 2020; Martin Hannan, "Stone of Destiny to Return to Perthshire in Historic Move," *The National*, December 23, 2020; Daniel Sanderson, "Stone of Destiny to Return to 'Spiritual Home' of Perth," *The Telegraph*, December 23, 2020.

The ongoing squabbles over the stone suggest that centuries later, the stone still matters and has a say in the adjudication of sovereignty. *Macbeth* foretells this, for the play concludes with another coronation pending at Scone, this time for the triumphant Malcolm. He proclaims to mark the end of tyranny, that by "the grace of grace, / We will perform in measure, time and place: / So, thanks to all at once and to each one, / Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone" (5.7.102–5). But the Jacobean audience would know that tyranny was not at a final end, nor Malcolm's crowning on the Stone of Scone the end of a lithic drama. Jacob's stone or the Fatal Marble or the stone of destiny (or whatever name it currently abides by) serves as another counterpoint to how stone may seemingly share—even serve—human aims but for its own inscrutable ends. As a transcorporeal agent trafficking between people and power, it begets, carries, and thwarts human desire and dreams. In both London Stone and the Stone of Scone, we can trace how the nature of lithic chorography, with its attendant transcorporeality, underscores the hybrid geographies stratified within English sovereign designs and power.

Stonehenge

Philip Sidney's inclusion of Stonehenge as one of England's wonders aptly captures the lithic's ambiguous appeal on a magnified scale. London Stone might have been on the map for many Londoners, and the Fatal Marble the seat of kings, but Stonehenge would take on a title-page starring role as synecdoche for the emerging cartographic imagination of Albion-Britannia. Like London Stone's complex transcorporeal negotiation of a city and its human inhabitants, Stonehenge's hybrid geography encompassed a frequently contentious landscape of human inhabitants and their senses of Englishness. When, in 1600, William Camden added a magisterial engraved title page to his expanded edition of *Britannia sive Florentissimorum regnorum Angliae, Scotie, Hibernie*, his fascination with megaliths emerges in several striking details. As Angus Vine reads it, that fascination begins in the incorporation of an architectural plinth surrounding three central cartouches, two of which noticeably feature the lithic.[76] Front center the largest oval cartouche shows a map of Britain and a part of Hibernia afloat in an ocean replete with ships at full mast and a sea monster. The perilous rocks that lie in Utopia's harbor have, in this cartographic vision of Albion Britannia, migrated from boundary to center.

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[75] Victoria Ward, "Stone of Scone 'Should Not Automatically Be Loaned to England for Next Coronation,'" *The Telegraph*, December 20, 2015.

Centered between the map and the crowning cartouche visible in Figure 1.7 perches a smaller oblong cartouche featuring the capitalized word "BRITANNIA." A final, third cartouche crowns the title with a personified, reposing, figure of Albion-Britannia. She does not, however, repose on what a reader might be trained to expect—a cloud or other heavenly emblem—but instead on a haphazardly piled heap of rocks. Following the vertical axis downward to the image's base, the viewer finds yet more stones, these nestled between the central plinths, in a configuration that suggests Stonehenge. The distinctive stone circle sits in a rural landscape with baths, buildings, and a hilly backdrop. The 1600 edition, Vine concludes, made Stonehenge "easily identified as the iconic figure of Albion-Britannia."[77] As above, so below, Albion-Britannia's chorography, the image argues, rests on, but also aspires to, a lithic apotheosis.

This chapter's concluding section considers Stonehenge's role in a pivotal moment of English history, just before the closing of the theatres in the onrush of civil war. It does so through a reading of a little-known academic play, performed at St. Johns College, Oxford and possibly written by a scholar of anatomy, Dr. John Speed, son to the famous cartographer of the same name. Now referred to by its two early modern references as *The Converted Robber, or Stonehenge, a Pastoral*, the play is remarkable, in part, for its geography: Stonehenge. Indeed, landscape overshadows character if we take Anthony à Wood's recollection of the play as having its titular personality

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[76] See Vine, *In Defiance of Time*, 109.

[77] Ibid., 115.

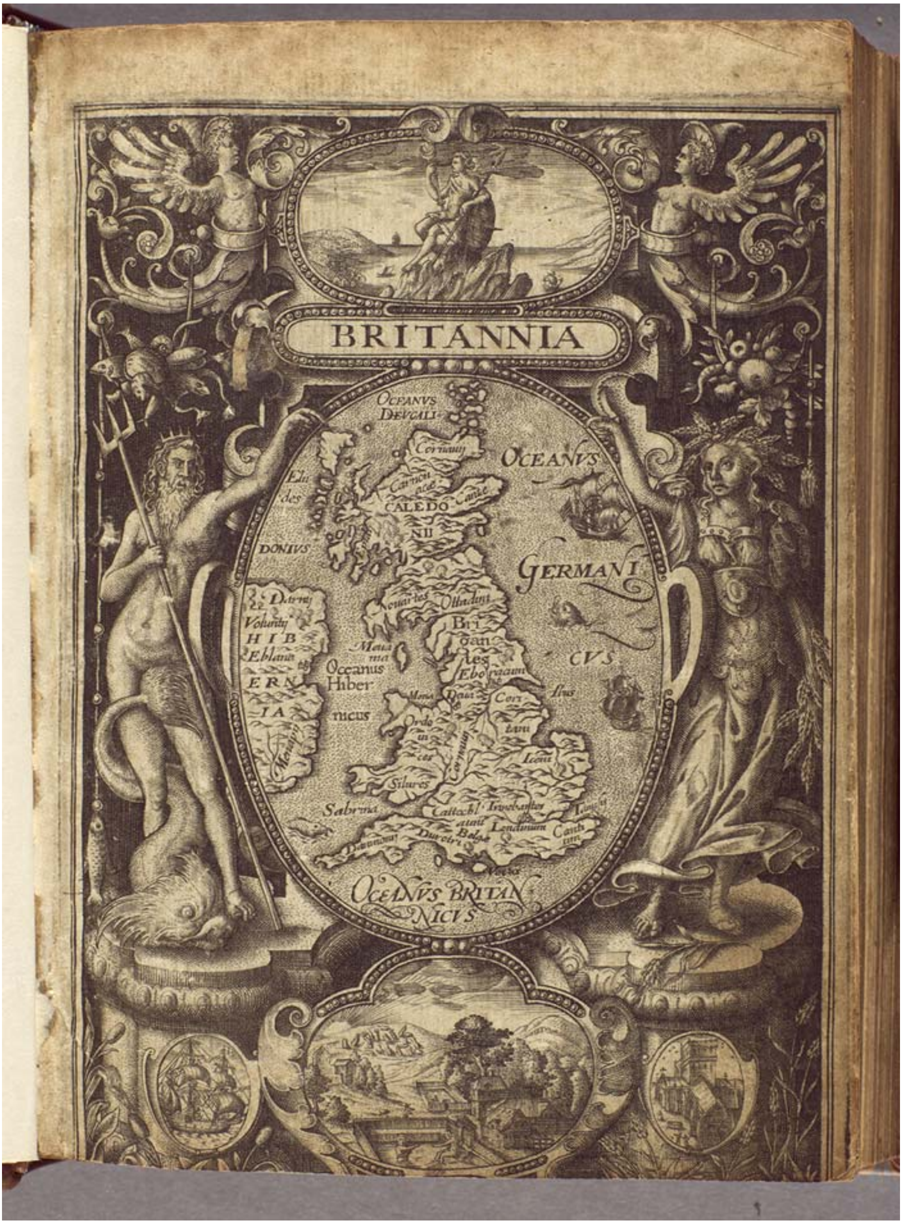
BRITANNIA
OCEANVS DEVCALI
OCEANVS GERMANICVS
CALEDONII
HIBERNIA
Oceanus Hibernicus
Brigantes
Londinum
OCEANVS BRITANNICVS

Figure 1.7 Title page to William Camden's *Britannia* [. . .] (London: Georg. Bishop, 1600), RB 600238.

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to be not the converted robber, but Stonehenge.[78] Here, human character is literally effaced by stones. Although not mobile as was the Stone of Scone, this iconic lithic landscape grounds the play from its opening flourish, proving as integral—but also as mercurial—as the disguised, converted, and transformed characters of the play itself.

Following the lead of Julie Sanders' work on cultural geography, what she terms the processes for the complex interactions between people and places, I offer a brief excursus into the topical energies that Salisbury plain, and "the wonder that is upon" (stage direction, ln. 98) it, Stonehenge, releases.[79] For although "acted by St. Johns College," the play directs audience wonder toward a plain whose cathedral and stone monuments chronicle a unique sense of Englishness in the mid-seventeenth century. Designed to please the president and fellows of an Oxford college, the play highlights local celebrations by showcasing circumstances relevant to the play's performance, thus adding to an otherwise familiar pastoral plot a particular timeliness as well as a particularity of place with a surprising sense of near deep time.

The play's pastoral plot, although largely conventional in its tale of robbers converted by a virtuous shepherdess, harbors a disruptive edge that fractures any single-point perspective. The stage directions specify the scene to be Salisbury plain shown "to be like Stonnage" (stage direction, ln. 98). The materially specific nature of this stage direction prompts a reflection on how Stonehenge might have been represented on stage. While the *Records of English Drama* for St. John's College, Oxford records payments and inventories for some academic drama, none mention a cache of rocks.[80] In an appendix of "Playhouse Inventories Now Lost," to *Henslowe's Diary*, one entry points to the fact that the more commercial theatres in London did on occasion list stones among their properties: "*Item*, j rocke" (along with

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[78] Anthony à Wood, [*Athenæ Oxonienses. An Exact History of All the Writers and Bishops Who Have Had Their Education in the Most Ancient and Famous University of Oxford, From . . . 1500 to the End Of . . . 1690 . . . To Which Are Added, the Fasti or Annals of the Said University for the Same Time.*], ed. Philip Bliss, vol. 2 (London: Printed for F. C. and J. Rivington, 1813), 660–1.

[79] See, in particular, the introduction to Julie Sanders, *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama 1620–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1–17. All play references are to the semi-diplomatic transcription published in *English Literary Renaissance* 48, no. 2 (Spring 2018): 191–255.

[80] See, for example, the recorded accounts for St. John's college in 1635 record payment for "the making of a stage and scaffolds," as well as an "Actors bill," *Records of Early English Drama. Oxford*, ed. John R. Elliott and Alan H. Nelson, vol. 1, Records of Early English Drama (London: British Library, 2004), 517.

"j. tombe, j. Hell mought)."[81] But such an entry is a rarity among the substantive inventories of rich fabric, swords, and other costumes. Being mindful of Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda's demonstration that stage props were also regarded "as *properties*" suggests two possibilities for the paucity of stones accounted for in theatrical accounts and records: one, perhaps as property they had little monetary value, or, two, perhaps given their weight and the difficulty of moving them on and off stage (coupled with their lack of monetary value), the audience was instead invited to *imagine* them on a bare stage.[82] Alternatively, the scene may have been painted on a cloth backdrop. Regardless, either staging of stone would have relied on the audience imagination to populate the stage with its lithic monuments—an exercise, I suggest, that furthers the transcorporeal movement between stone and human imagination.

For throughout the play, this rocky presence looms as history, legend, promise, and threat, a character whose conversions occur with a dizzying rapidity unmatched even by the shepherdess masquerading as a boy or the robbers turned shepherds. The play opens with a would-be robber, Alcinous, posing as a shepherd who has lost his sheep. Through an aside, the audience learns that his companion, Alexis, is, in fact, a disguised shepherdess captured long ago by robbers and saved from rape by him (Alcinous, however, doesn't recognize the boy beside him as the girl he saved, Clarinda). The drama pivots on sexual bawdry and the erotic frisson of gender play, all watched over by the looming backdrop of Stonehenge. When the conniving, smooth-talking Alcinous spies an "aged swayne" (60) coming across the plain, he inquires if the old shepherd has seen any unknown sheep. The "aged swayne" (who is called Iarbus) offers to lead him to where local shepherds are "gatherd in A Ringe" (77). As they walk, Iarbus launches into a perambulating tour of the "gay buildings" of Salisbury (82) and its famous "pile" of stones (100).

Iarbus's long-winded speech rings with a clownish low dialect and literary archaism: He talks of shepherds who "zang" (rather than *sang*) and *that* and *those* become the Spenserian-inflected "thilke." But despite his rusticism,

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[81] Philip Henslowe, *Henslowe's Diary*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 319. This inventory is from the "Lord Admerlales men" from 1598.

[82] Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–31 at 1. A twenty-first-century Globe Theatre production of the cycle of *Henry VI* plays would seem to confirm this hypothesis. Eagerly awaiting the appearance of London Stone, this viewer was disappointed when the wooden scaffolding stairs doubled as a throne and the stone, see chapter 1, n. 49.

Iarbus emerges as a complex character who evokes laughter but also sympathy as the play unfolds. His intermixed speech patterns mask a surprisingly sophisticated, if somewhat jumbled, recounting of the monument's deep, and layered, history. Jutting out like a megalith from the text and accounting for over a hundred lines of the play's brief 940, Iarbus's disquisition entertains as it educates. It indexes what contemporary historian Alexandra Walsham notes as a "remarkable surge of interest in the origin and meaning of megalithic monuments" in England which "contributed to the making of a powerful intellectual and cultural myth."[83]

Iarbus begins his tour with a rhetorical qualification that recalls John Weever's seeming denigration of the "vulgar sort" who believe the prophecies that the Stone of Scone secures the throne. Iarbus starts "as men zay" (90), and later reiterates, "theyn zay" (128), and, nearing the end, "I woss" (131). Yet these small qualifications excuse a much more extensive cataloguing of popular Stonehenge legends: it was once the "Divells dwelling" until he and his wife "fell out" and his "beldame hot" scorched his heel with one of the stones (112); because enchanted, "none thilke number right mought tell," i.e., a spell prohibits any accurate stone count (122); the stones were picked by giants or they might be petrified giant bones; Merlin brought them without even a cart from Ireland by magic; they were hatched by thunder; they commemorate the treason of Vortiger and his "cruell Saxons" (147) against the "Kinge of Brittaine" (145); they are the burial ground for ancient kings including "Vtar Pedragron" (156); and lastly, most importantly for Iarbus, they host the shepherds singing contests where "shepherdesses take pleasure to heare them sing" (166).[84] If the rocks are reminders of violence, they are also tenders of erotic affect among the shepherds in ways reminiscent of the portrayal of Wall in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (to which I turn in chapter 6).

Among the legends of giants' bones and the angry wife of the Devil, Iarbus follows quite closely the details and even vocabulary of fairly recent chorographic descriptions of Stonehenge.[85] He records local, and oral, lore alongside that of learned, and academic, publications eschewing distinctions between supernatural story and an observation of the natural environment. When, for instance, Iarbus remarks on the "great stones," he says: "Zett rounde in A ringe & zome hangeinge yatewise" (142). As Nathan Szymanski and I argue elsewhere, "yateswise" is likely either a corruption or comic rusticism of *gatewise*, a word that the *OED* credits with first appearing in John Speed's chorographic theatres of Great Britain.[86] In one illustration, for instance, the chronicle details how "these [stones] are set in ye ground by towe & 2. / and a third laide gatewise over thwart fastned." Although Iarbus rather carelessly rattles off dates, the contours conform to the elder Speed's account of Stonehenge (who took much of his information from Camden), including the details about "great bones and huge Armour." The image below in Figure 1.8, a detail from the larger Wiltshire map in Speed's *Theatre*, shows these historical details but also further suggests how this rocky ring mimics a kind of theatre wherein humans move, gesticulate, and converse.

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[83] Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape*, 296–7.

[84] Other earlier stage plays that would similarly satirize and enlarge on debates around Stonehenge include William Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin* (*c.*1622). This play too includes dramatization of dynastic struggles between the early kings of Britain, Vortiger and Aurelius Ambrosius, and the Saxon invasions as well as a scurrilous account of Merlin's birth and the devil's lewd advances on his mother. See Vine, *In Defiance of Time: Antiquarian Writing in Early Modern England*, 132.

[85] John Speed is not the first to chronicle the measurements and stories of Stonehenge. Angus Vine records that Camden likely visited in 1596 and was in "the vanguard" of chorographical

As Angus Vine perceptively argues, the stones as shown in Speed's image are much more than dumb, dull heaps of rocks to be measured, circumscribed, and recorded for the wonder of their outstanding size and defiance of natural law. *Stonehenge*, the play, dramatizes the visual potential of Speed's cartographic image and amplifies examples found in earlier poetry that, in a vein similar to stories of London Stone, showcases the stone circles for their transcorporeal capacity, their seemingly human capacities of voice and movement. The medieval world had categorized Stonehenge as a marvel to rank alongside the wonders of the classical world, even as they propagated stories of is magical conveyance by the wizard Merlin.[87] As we've seen, Sir Philip Sidney makes a similar connection to their status as a natural wonder. Sidney invokes the natural wonder of them in his Petrarchan conceit when

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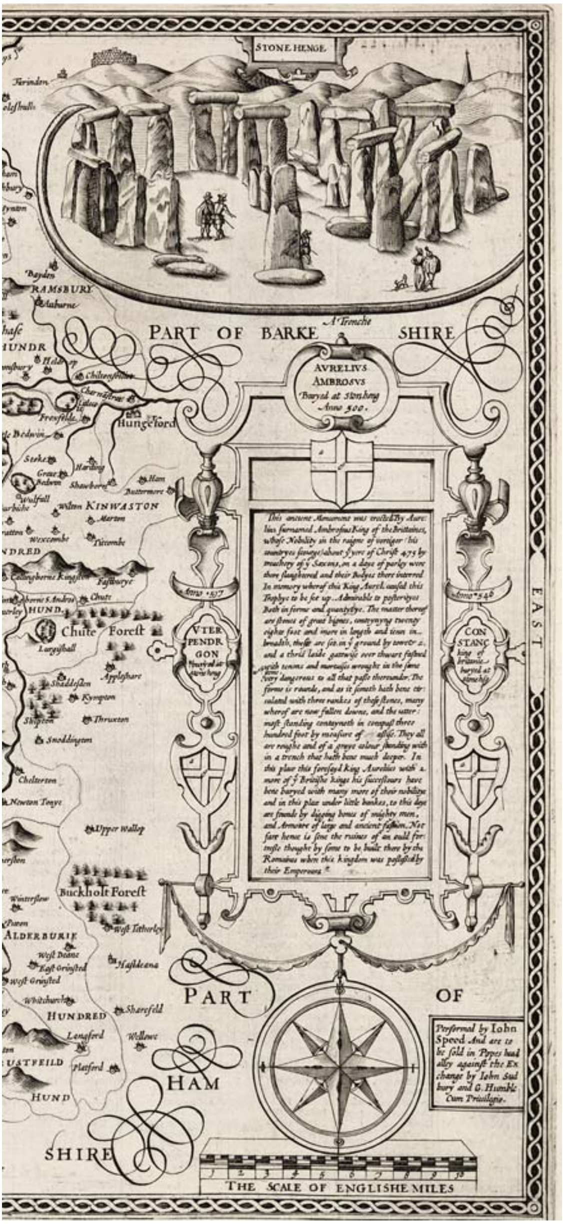
accounts. See ibid., 112–13, esp. n.14 that includes W. Jerome Harrison as a source for a partial account of early modern descriptions. Although we cannot know for sure, it is tempting to think that Speed quotes Camden for his details and numbers are similar. Vine sees this as showing how Stonehenge's influence reaches beyond mere antiquarian circles.

[86] See the introduction to Tiffany Werth and Nathan Syzmanski, "The Converted Robber, or Stonehenge, a Pastoral," *English Literary Renaissance* 48, no. 2 (2018): 191–255.

[87] See Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 88–9; Cohen, *Stories of Stone*, 8, 10, 33, 44, 56–60, 64, 89, 106–7, and 111–12. The legends surrounding Stonehenge reach back to the early twelfth century in the accounts of Geoffrey of Monmouth, see Lewis Thorpe, ed. *Geoffrey of Monmouth the History of* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), book 8, 10–3, 195–9. See also Richard Hayman, *Riddles in Stone: Myths, Archaeology and the Ancient Britons* (London and Rio Grande, OH: Hambledon, 1997), Chapter 1; Aubrey Burl, *The Stone Circles of Britain, Ireland, and Brittany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), chapter 2. For an account of the various hypotheses on Stonehenge in historical accounts, see Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape*, 297–300.


STONE HENGE
PART OF BARKE SHIRE
A Trenche
AVRELIVS
AMBROSVS
Buryed at Stonheng
Anno 500.
Anno 517
VTER
PENDR
GON
buryed at
Stonheng
Anno 546
CON
STANC
king of
Britanie
buryed at
Stonheng
EAST
Ferindon
Bayden
RAMSBURY
Aldburne
HUNDR
Chiltonfolliat
Hungerford
Frenfolde
Stoke
Harding
Shawborne
Ham
Buttermore
Grave Bedwin
Wulfall
Wilton
KINWASTON
Marton
Wexcombe
Titcombe
Collingborne Kingston
Fastburye
Collingborne S. Andrew
Chute
HUND.
Chute Forest
Lurgishall
Appleshare
Shaddesden
Kympton
Shipton
Thruxton
Snoddington
Cholterton
Newton Tonye
Upper Walloy
Buckholt Forest
Winterflow
West Tatherley
ALDERBURIE
West Deane
East Grinsted
West Grinsted
Hasldeana
Whitchurch
HUNDRED
Sharefeld
Longford
Wellowe
USTFEILD
Platford
HUND
PART OF HAM SHIRE
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
THE SCALE OF ENGLISHE MILES

This ancient Monument was erected by Aurelius ſurnamed Ambroſius King of the Brittaines, whoſe Nobility in the raigne of Vortiger (his countryes ſcourge) about ẏ yere of Chriſt 475 by treachery of ẏ Saxons, on a daye of parley were there ſlaughtered and their Bodyes there interred In memory whereof this King Aurel. cauſed this Trophye to be ſet up. Admirable to poſterityes Both in forme and quantytye. The matter thereof are ſtones of great bignes, conteyning twenty eighte foot and more in length and tenn in breadth, theſe are ſet in ẏ ground by two & 2. and a third laide gatewiſe over thwart faſtned with tenons and mortaiſes wrought in the ſame ſome very dangerous to all that paſſe thereunder. The forme is rounde, and as it ſemeth hath bene circulated with three rankes of theſe ſtones, many whereof are now fallen downe, and the uttermoſt ſtanding conteyneth in compaſs three hundred foot by meaſure of [illegible] aſſiſe. They all are roughe and of a graye colour ſtanding within a trench that hath bene much deeper. In this place this foreſayd King Aurelius with 2. more of ẏ Brittiſhe kings his ſucceſſours have bene buryed with many more of their nobilitye and in this place under little bankes, to this daye are founde by digging bones of mighty men, and Armoure of large and ancient faſhion. Not farr hence is ſeene the ruines of an ould fortreſſe thought by ſome to be built there by the Romaines when this kingdom was poſſeſſed by their Emperours.

Performed by Iohn Speed And are to be ſold in Pypes head alley againſt the Exchange by Iohn Sudbury and G. Humble Cum Privilegio.

Figure 1.8 Detail of Stonehenge from John Speed's *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* [. . .] vol. 1 (London: [William Hall], [1611, i.e., 1612]), RB 69520.

Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

he claims his beloved is as astonishing as the "huge heapes of stones" lying on Salisbury Plain.[88] In these accounts, the stones were a prodigy, a marvel, and a witness to more-than-human powers; in others, and as I discuss at length in later chapters, poets would evoke the stone as a simile for the vain hope of monuments to memorialize as compared to the power of verse.

Samuel Daniel, for instance, chastises Stonehenge for its inscrutability. No matter how "greedy" the "gazing passenger" looks with admiration, he confronts the "misery of darke Forgetfulnesse" in that "huge dumbe heap."[89] For Daniel's narrator, the stone circle's unknowability prompts an analogic poetic response akin to that of alchemy. It hosts an infinite number of possible correlations because none can be definitively proven. Angus Vine records how, in one account, the recusant Edmund Bolton ascribed particular emotive power to the stones because they lacked inscription. In his accounting, the stones might even be the burial place of the legendary Queen Boadicea.[90] Such a teasing prompt suggests how these stones, arranged in near amphitheatrical fashion across the landscape, might, like theatre itself, play host to an infinite range of voices and any number of plots. Speed's engraving suggests as much; the human characters appear as small figures deeply engaged in conversation with the surrounding stones. Even the little dog, caught in mid-scamper and possibly mid-bark, contributes to an image of animated lithic–creaturely exchange. In this image, lithic chorography begins to look like choreography.

Yet such promise, such wonder, could also in a certain light look like treachery. Stonehenge's teasing promise of knowledge could turn to treachery because, ultimately, the speculation and curiosity it evokes stymies in inscrutability. That inscrutability, in turn, prompts seemingly endless layers of human speculation.[91] The accretion of early modern stories in play that Iarbus rehearses continue to accumulate: in 2019, modern news outlets reported that this prehistoric stone circle remains "distinctive" attracting over a million and a half visitors annually, despite its remaining "mysterious" and continuing to thwart probes to determine the stones' origin.[92] It remains, write the editors to the exhibition catalogue for the first exhibition about Stonehenge in London (2022), "one of the best known, but most misunderstood, monuments in the world."[93] Modern efforts to examine its chemical, acoustic, as well as cultural roots encounter the same paradox as their early modern counterparts: Stonehenge simultaneously promises a hedge against oblivion even as it betrays that hope.

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[88] "Certain Sonnets 22," in Sidney, *Sir Philip Sidney*, 27–8.

[89] Samuel Daniel, "Musophilus, or Defence of All Learning," in *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Samuel Daniel*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London and Aylesbury: Printed by Hazell, Watson, and Viney, 1885), lns. 343–54.

[90] Vine, *In Defiance of Time*, 134–5.

[91] By way of example, see Dennis Harding, *Rewriting History: Changing Perceptions of the Archaeological Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 164–85.

[92] Steven Morris, "Stonehenge: Could Core Sample Missing for 60 Years Hold Answer to Site's Secrets?," *The Guardian*, May 8, 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/

This seems to be the undertone when Michael Drayton, who will closely limn Daniel's sentiment, describes the stone circle in *Poly-Olbion* (1612). It's a "dull heape," but nonetheless, the narrator records how "mightie men" are led "to trust thee with their storie" (3.53, 64).[94] In Drayton's words, "dull" does not seem to be the adjective that contemporary new materialists like Jane Bennett decry as referring to something inanimate and insensible.[95] For Drayton's narrator, the stones possess a personalized pronoun *thee* rather than a neutral *it*. The line hints at an unsettling receptivity. The stones invite as well as absorb the stories of great men, by earning their "trust." Only, later, to betray them, perhaps as we've seen with Jack Cade and London Stone or Macbeth and the Fatal Marble. Or, in Iarbus's narrative, so many stories coincide that it becomes as nearly impossible to enumerate them all as to number the allegedly spellbound stones. The strata multiply. The stories, rather than celebrate a singular hero or homogenous England, span a range of irreconcilable interpretations. As with London Stone and the *fatal marmor*, Stonehenge enumerates human and poetic speculation, the reassuringly solid yet mocking echo to human hubris. Stable geography fractures into hybridity.

The academic play satirizes Iarbus and his motley tale of Stonehenge, but the play also goes to some lengths to make him a sympathetic, and not merely foolish, character. Alcinous's thieving companions set upon Iarbus in the final acts, stealing his shoes and a lace favor he claims to have won of the nymph Daphne, and humiliating him by tarring his face with the pitch from his tarbox. Yet the rough robbers will later be chastised themselves and

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may/08/stonehenge-could-core-sample-missing-for-60-years-hold-answer-to-sites-secrets. While it is now known that Stonehenge's smaller bluestones are from the Preseli Hills in southwest Wales, the origin of the larger sarsens remains unknown.

[93] Duncan Garrow and Neil Wilkin, *The World of Stonehenge* (London: The British Museum Press, 2022).

[94] Michael Drayton, "Poly-Olbion," in *Works of Michael Drayton*, ed. Kathleen Tillotson, J. William Hebel, and Bernard H. Newdigate vol. 4 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), 49–50.

[95] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.

forced to apologize, and the last ringing words of warning are uttered by Iarbus, making him an elder voice with authority, drawn perhaps in part from his proximity to the stones and their stories he tells.

Iarbus never insists on one truth, nor a singular history, nor does he prioritize any particular story; instead he synthesizes the pagan and the Christian, the wives' tale and the erudite chorography, with similar zeal. He rehearses the storied layers of Stonehenge's travel through time but he himself refrains from judgment. All are ecumenically enumerated "as men zay" (90).

Thus, although Iarbus plucks freely from Spenser's archaic diction, his narration of Stonehenge considerably enlarges the moralizing tone of *The Faerie Queene*. When Arthur reads of Stonehenge in Alma's Castle, he learns of them only as "dolefull moniments . . . / Th'eternall markes of treason."[96] Sheared of their more preternatural history, the stones are merely a sad object lesson of human betrayal. In Iarbus's telling, by contrast, no single moralized, anthropocentric interpretation gets privileged. His narrative offers a counterpoint to scholarly distinctions that see only a growing sense of instrumentalization of lithic monuments such as Stonehenge in the sixteenth century.[97] His stories recall the mischievous dancing of London Stone and the turning fortunes of the Stone of Scone.

Angus Vine convincingly argues that Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* offers proof for Stonehenge's importance to the early modern imagination, and to English antiquarianism.[98] Moreover, the conjunction in *The Converted Robber, or Stonehenge, a Pastoral* of this lithic locus of poetic reflection with the shepherd's convocation bundles together the building blocks for what George Puttenham, almost a century earlier, influentially argues as the primary matter for poetic conceit: The "memoriall" or monument as a "registry" of "all great fortunes" and "the praise of vertue & reproofe of vice."[99] The rocks and rude speeches of the old shepherd Iarbus together form an exemplary hybrid geography. Together they form the meeting point between the regional, the local, the now, and a uniquely English sense of a deep global history wherein Roman, Saxons, Pan, and Christians coexist within the ring. Such an all-inclusive accounting of Stonehenge's history might be all the more remarked following James I's visit in 1620 and his commission to Inigo Jones, the neoclassical architect and maker of masque spectacles, to investigate the monument. Following his investigation, Jones dismissed the "ridiculous fables" involving magic and giants (edited and published posthumously in 1655).[100] Rather Jones concluded it was a Roman temple, built on mathematical principles, and thus well suited to the idealizations he envisioned of the Stuart and Caroline courts and the ongoing dream of a *translatio imperii* writ in stone.[101]

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[96] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (London: Longman, 2001), 2.10.66.

[97] Angus Vine argues that this play importantly shows how a monument and megalith such as Stonehenge were key opportunities for poets as residing at "the limits of historical knowledge and the nature of historical interpretation." See Vine, *In Defiance of Time*, 111.

[98] See ibid., 111.

[99] George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London: Printed by Richard Field, dwelling in the black-Friers, neere Ludgate, 1589), sig. E2^r.

Jones's univocal vision insists upon, and finds power in, a classical lineage that recruits lithic endurance as a conveyor of a desirable historical heritage of prophetic empire. Britannia rests upon the plinth of classical achievement and contributes its own distinctive rocky stamp. But in the contentious mid-seventeenth century, not all favored the classical harmonizing palimpsests supposedly made legible by Stonehenge. As Alexandra Walsham details, for some Puritan preachers, the "heap" of Stonehenge showed the hand of God at work. For just as Lot's wife became a Pillar of Salt for looking back at an idolatrous city, so too these "forlorne Pillars of Stone" remain to dissuade "us from looking back in our hearts upon anything of Idolatry."[102] The "greedy" visual fascination described by poets like Samuel Daniel, for some, smacked of idolatry and thus warranted destruction. Walsham records how during the civil war, one Hugh Peter, an Independent chaplain in Lord Fairfax's army which was encamped at Salisbury Plain, allegedly called for Stonehenge's destruction as a "monument of heathenism." "Fortunately for the British tourist industry," Walsham wryly remarks, "Fairfax had other priorities."[103] These polar accounts witness to Stonehenge's capacity to fascinate as well as repulse, to invite both iconophilia and iconoclasm, to foster grisly deaths and spark erotic songs. Each story shows how stone might be a collaborator recruited by competing agendas of what it meant to be "English."

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[100] Inigo Jones, *The Most Notable Antiquity of Great Britain, Vulgarly Called Stone-Heng on Salisbury Plain* (London: Printed by James Flesher for Daniel Pakeman . . . , and Laurence Chapman, 1655), sig. F3^{v}.

[101] Scholars have questioned how widely this survey was known prior to Webb's posthumous publication in 1655. For evidence that Inigo Jones's ideas about Stonehenge were in circulation earlier, see Vine, *In Defiance of Time*, 122–3.

[102] Quoted in Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape*, 149.

[103] Ibid., 140.

By contrast, Iarbus remembers and celebrates the competing claims behind the "Englishness" these stones represented from devils, old women, and giants to magicians, great heroic kings of ancient days, and humble shepherd poets singing of love. Richard Helgerson identifies Renaissance chorography as a genre that challenged a single focal power of national and sovereign identity in the monarch by displacing attention to the land.[104] In the play, attention focuses on the plain and its stones to reveal a hybrid geography composed of human and stone. Rather than foreground a monolithic Englishness, the play's evocation reveals instead the fissures—and fiction—behind any absolute English identity. Its multiple sedimentary layers contribute to the multiplicity. Although the play concludes with ascendant notes of harmony, a masque, and three sets of happy couples, behind the final lines looms Stonehenge. Iarbus's last words, perhaps underscored by an actor's gesture to the gatewise hanging stones, warn the freshly converted robbers: "Lett me chastise them for the future," he says, or "I'le warrante them A swingeinge Tutor" (894–5). His parting shot reminds players and audience alike of the retributive potential inherent to the *Chorea Gigantum*, charmed perhaps into quiescence by the singing shepherds, yet alive with the threat of flogging, and possibly hanging, human miscreants.

Performed as it was the college hall of St. Johns, Oxford, likely in 1635, the play flouts Puritan critique by authors like William Prynne, who two years earlier in *Histrio-Matrix* condemned students who preferred the "strutting on the Stage, before a pound of learning."[105] Yet its historical context at a college eager to please King Charles I and Henrietta Maria despite the growing unrest with the monarchy only serves to exacerbate and highlight the cracks that would shortly lead to the closing of the theatres and to civil war. Stonehenge and its poetic shepherds are culpable both in the construction and erosion of a monolithic English identity.

It might be tempting to read Stonehenge, as did Inigo Jones, as possessing an enduring monumental identity, a memorial to declare Roman and later English sovereign power. But, although long enduring, the stones nonetheless exhibit a troubling ductility, their identity mutable, debatable, and, above all, desirable. Stonehenge might be converted with each recounting of the ring. Even such a massive landmark could be transformed by a new narrative cloak as easily as a robber might be mistaken for a shepherd, or a girl for a boy. Its lithic metamorphosis is stable only insofar as it reveals an entangled mesh wherein humans and stones mutually construct an ongoing narrative.

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[104] See Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 131–9.

[105] William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix. The Players Scourge; or, Actors Tragædie, Divided into Two Parts. Wherein It Is Largely Evidenced by Divers Arguments . . . That Popular Stageplayes . . . Are Sinfull, Heathenish, Lewde, Ungodly Spectacles, Etc* (London: E. A. and W. I., for M. Sparke, 1633), sig. Rrr2^r.

Whereas stone might appear as pliant, dull matter, quiescent and instrumental in the construction of England's identity, the three lithic entities of London Stone, the Fatal Marble, and Stonehenge, tell a more nuanced tale. Stone acts in mysterious ways to thwart as well as support human hubris. They further complicate a narrative that regards stone as increasingly disenchanted following the Protestant Reformations. The riches of the mineral realm—notably gold—and the raw material of stone are notoriously downplayed in More's *Utopia* once we pass through its perilous rocky border. Its gardens are its crowning achievement. But no such imagined prophecy alters England's fascination with and for its primary lithic foundations.

Rather these stones remain, stubbornly, analogic, imaginative corollaries in the drama of human imagination. England drew recourse from its stones to form a distinctive, multilayered, fragile, yet defiant and contentious identity as Albion-Britannia, as Utopia. In the next chapter, I turn to a consideration for how England's human inhabitants also found their etiologies of human generation—and degeneration—as beginning and ending in stone.

2

"A Stonie Race Indeed"

> I have my part in the creation, I am a creature; but there are ignoble creatures. God comes nearer; in the great field of clay, of red earth, that man was made of, and mankind, I am a clod; I am a man, I have my part in the humanity; but man was worse than annihilated again.
>
> —John Donne, Sermon XXXII

My previous chapter examined how a lithic chorography from Dover cliffs to London Stone, the Fatal Marble, and Stonehenge reveals rocks as constituent in England's imagination of itself and its charter. This chapter turns from England to its human inhabitants, who, as John Donne illustrates in one of his sermons, also looked back to find their genesis embedded within a mineralized substrate—"the great field of clay, of red earth"—and shaped by the Creator.[1] Biblical exegesis, which Donne follows, of the hexameral creation account in Genesis is corroborated by another influential classical story from Ovid that tells how, in a postdiluvian world, the race of humankind sprang from stones. These mineralized origin stories garnered new attention as early modern religious Reformers debated theological beliefs around human predestination and as Renaissance collectors, contributing to the growing field of natural history, became ever more curious about the identity and origin of the fossils in their curiosity cabinets.[2] The resulting surge of interest in human genesis or, in early modern terms, "engendering"—as

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[1] John Donne, *The Works*, ed. Henry Alford, vol. 2 (London: John W. Parker, West Strand, 1839), 55.

[2] While there had yet to be any single prevailing theory as to what fossils were, their presence within the drawers of collectors, such as Conrad Gesner, reveal their fascination. Although most did not go against the church doctrine that saw them as relics from the Great Flood, their presence had begun to raise questions in the discourses of natural history. For the classic overview of early paleontology, see Martin J. S. Rudwick, *The Meaning of Fossils: Episodes in the History of Palaeontology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976). For their place in curiosity cabinets, see Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy*, Studies on the History of Society and Culture 20 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). And Sara Ketelsen, "Fossils: Problematic

The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton. Tiffany Jo Werth, Oxford University Press. © Tiffany Jo Werth (2024).
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well as interest in human devolution or "degendering," which was of equal import for Reformers—is this chapter's quarry. While the potentially idolatrous nature of stony matter has garnered the most attentive criticism within early modern English studies, it need be considered as but one perspective, albeit a loudly proclaimed one, within a broader cultural context wherein stoniness signified in multiple registers.[3] The narratives of human engendering (and degendering) suggest that all humans are walking and talking beings of a stony nature. They consider the implications of human matter as integral to an investigation of a cultural understanding of Englishness that is bundled within the Protestant exegetical narratives of human gendering or genesis but that also challenges anthropocentrism.

This chapter thus folds a broadly construed mineral realm into a chorography of humankind, marking the bounds of the human in relation to its embodied geological strata. In tracing what Ovid refers to as "a stonie race indeed," this chapter continues to explore a hybrid geography, but one that is enfolded within a conception of an elemental embodiment where flesh and mineral have a shared genesis.[4] In taking seriously the early modern idea of a "stonie race," this chapter points to the ways that an embodied understanding of humankind participates in the social construction of hierarchies: of the elect and damned, of the human and the non. In this respect, this chapter explores how such embodied understandings might be deployed to maintain an English social hierarchy and annihilate other, especially Irish, populations. But it also reveals a baseline stratum or substance that unsettles distinction amid categorical taxonomies still in the process of formation.[5] My study of an early modern "stonie race" thus joins an emerging conversation between premodern critical race studies and eco-studies by attending to the subterranean, material, elemental, substance of fleshly embodiment.[6]

Objects in Renaissance Cabinets," *The Gettysburg Cabinet* 8 (2012), https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/cabinet/8.

[3] Notable in this vein is the seminal work of Gilman, *Iconoclasm and Poetry in the English Reformation*.

[4] All citations to Ovid are from the following edition unless otherwise noted: *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation, 1567*, 1.490–4.

[5] I am in conversation with Lara Bovilsky's unpublished work that the categorical tags for the "human," as a kind or species was still very much in flux in early modern England, with much debate over its "substance," or base. Lara Bovilsky, "Variety and the Place of the Human: Profusion, Classification, and Challenges to Anthropocentrism" (paper, annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 2023).

[6] As a generative discussion of the coalition between ecocriticism and race studies that sparks new directions for bringing together the concerns of environment and embodiment, I refer to Hillary Eklund, Debapriya Sarkar, Jennifer Park, and Ayanna Thompson, "Shakespeare Futures Panel: Critical Futures of Early Modern Ecostudies and Race Studies" (panel, virtual meeting

In doing so, this chapter explores the intraconnections of inherited biblical and classical traditions of human genesis wherein an elemental mineral substrate complicates easy binaries of human and non.[7] A stony status licenses violence but also, critically, refuses human distinction.

Sir Walter Ralegh's multivolume *History of the World* (publ. 1614) provides a starting point to understand how an early modern habitus syncretized biblical and classical creation stories into a deeply materialist, and mineralized, account of human genesis. Ralegh analogizes human creation to "(as it were) a little World."[8] Taking primary authority from Genesis, and supplementing it with Ovid, Ralegh concludes that because man was formed "out of the earth," he was "therefore heauie and lumpish," a sentiment akin to Donne's in his use of "clod."[9] Furthermore, Ralegh continues, the "bones of his body wee may compare to the hard Rockes and Stones, and therefore strong and durable."[10] However, such stony matter in a Christian and post-Reformation context—as in Donne—bears a moral, spiritual cost. Via reference to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Ralegh explains: "From thence our kind hard-hearted is, enduring paine and care, / Approuving, that our bodies of a stone nature are."[11] The "stone nature" of humankind encompasses bodily, material composition as well as its moral, or spiritual, capacity. The interface of bone with stone in both Ralegh's and Donne's accounts exemplifies what Alaimo terms transcorporeality: The early modern human body is surprisingly, perhaps alarmingly, transmutable, permeable, and multiple.[12]

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of the Shakespeare Association of America, 2021). For an overview of critical race studies in the early modern period that offers a salutary reminder of how racial constructions enforce social hierarchies, see Peter Erikson and Kim Hall, "'A New Scholarly Song': Rereading Early Modern Race," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2016): 1–13. For a response to the use of a musical metaphor in premodern critical race studies, see Vanessa I. Corredera, "Where Are We in the Melody of the New Scholarly Song? A Reflection on the Present and Future of Shakespeare and Race," *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 33, no. 2 (2021): 184–96. For scholarship that specifically addresses Spenser's conceptions of race for its somatic markers, a good introduction is Dennis Austin Britton and Kimberly Anne Coles, "Spenser and Race: An Introduction" *Spenser Studies* 35, no. 1 (2021): 1–19.

[7] For a study that explore relationships of national lineage and race to religious principles, see Kimberly Anne Coles, *Bad Humor: in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022).

[8] Sir Walter Ralegh, *The History of the World* (London: Printed [by William Stansby] for Walter Burre, and are to be sold at his Shop in Paules Church-yard at the signe of the Crane, 1617), sig. D3^{v}.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] See also the discussion of transcorporealism in relationship to England's iconic stone in chapter 1. Both accounts draw from Alaimo, *Bodily Natures*.

This chapter begins by analyzing accounts of the stony engendering of humans and then turns to how such a stony etiology also makes possible its reverse: of being, as Edmund Spenser writes, "backwards bred" or "degendered" into stone (5.proem.2).[13] Humans might evolve from—but also devolve into—stone. Worth quoting in full, the second stanza of Spenser's proem to the fifth book of *The Faerie Queene* (which contains the "Legend of Artegall or of Justice") registers anxieties over the "stone nature"—as actuality and potentiality—inherent to humankind. The proem laments a general trend of human degeneration from a golden age, but it also keys into a particular English anxiety. As scholars such as Urvashi Chakravarty, Andrew Hadfield, and Willy Maley, among others, demonstrate, book 5 explores how the Irish landscape might "de-gender" or de-Anglicize settlers, a process it equates with dehumanization.[14] Book 5 sutures an understanding of human gendering and degendering to the sovereign body politic of England when Talus, the Iron Man, accompanies, but also doubles, the Knight of Justice, Artegall, in pursuit of Irenaes's quest:

> For from the golden age, that first was named,
> It's now at earst become a stonie one;
> And men themselues, the which at first were framed
> Of earthly mould, and form'd of flesh and bone,
> Are now transformed into hardest stone:

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[13] All citations to *The Faerie Queene* are to Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*.

[14] For recent scholarship on "the human" question and Spenser's relationship to Irishness, see Urvashi Chakravarty, "'Fitt for Faire Habitacion': Kinship and Race in a *Vewe of the Present State of Irelande,*" *Spenser Studies* 35, no. 1 (2021): 21–46; John Walters, "Human, All Too Human: Spenser and the Dangers of Irish Civilization," *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual* 30 (2015): 151–215. See also Katarzyna Lecky, "Irish Nonhumanness and English Inhumanity in a *Viewe of the Present State of Ireland*," *Spenser Studies* 30 (2015): 133–50. The critical tradition on Spenser and Ireland is deep and complex. Of particular relevance for the argument in my chapter is the seminal research of Andrew Hadfield, "English Colonialism and National Identity in Early Modern Ireland," *Éire-Ireland: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Irish Studies* 28, no. 1 (1993): 69–86; and Hadfield, "Spenser, Ireland, and Sixteenth-Century Political Theory," *Modern Language Review* 89, no. 1 (1994): 1–18. Also Willy Maley, "'To Weet to Work *Irenaes* Franchisement': *Irenaes* in *The Fairie Queene*", *Irish University Review* 26, no. 2 (1996): 301–19; and Maley, "The English Renaissance, the British Problem, and the Early Modern Archipelago," *Critical Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (2010): 23–36. For a historical overview of English concerns over the Irish landscape and its influence, see John Patrick Montaño, *The Roots of English Colonialism in Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). On questions of British identities more generally, see David J. Baker, *Between Nations: Shakespeare, Spenser, and Marvell, and the Question of Britain* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997); and David Baker and Willy Maley, eds., *British Identities and English Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Such as behind their backs (so backward bred)
Were throwne by Pyrrha and Deucalione:
And if then those may any worse be red,
They into that ere long will be degendered.

Here in the proem, Spenser's sense of "degendered" humans follows that of John Calvin. As Thomas Norton translates *The Institution of the Christian Religion*, when Adam fell, humankind "degendred from our fyrst estate."[15] As the reverse of "to gender" (or "to take form," "to come into being"), to be "degendered" implies a degradation into a lower state, or to "deprive or divest" a person of characteristic capacity: bones devolve into stones ("gender," *OED*, v.1.4; "degender," *OED*, v.2.2). Calvin's yoking of the mineral to a fallen, postlapsarian, and therefore "degendered," human condition draws from an interpretation of Genesis. God may have extracted Adam from clay, but the next generation to be more intimately associated with minerality (and degeneracy) descended from Cain, the first murderer. As Calvin argues, citing Genesis 4:22, Tubal-cain, the first human metalworker, who "cunningly" worked in the "craft of brasse and yron," forged weapons—in sharp contrast to the peaceful arts of herding and music.[16] The biblical foundation thus forges an associative network between metallurgy, murder (or the unmaking of being), and violence. Classical accounts further contributed to this habitus: as Ovid too says of the iron age, "Prodit bellum" (war came forth), making iron synonymous with weapons of death and humans with hard hearts of iron or stone.[17]

Although the focus of this chapter will be on humans and stories of their kind's mineralized genesis and degeneration, Spenser's "degendered" also engages what modern critics see as critical distinctions between masculine and feminine gender. As notable critics of Renaissance England and of Spenser show, gender and sovereignty, too, are closely linked in *The Faerie Queene* and in texts concerned with English history.[18] Katherine Eggert, for instance, reads the "degendering" in book 5 as entailing a loss of the feminine principles of equity and mercy, which might otherwise temper the absolutism of a dominant masculine gender.[19] In another vein, David Lee Miller likewise takes account of the book’s gendered politics, although from the view of the gods who underpin the theories of cosmological order.[20] For Miller, Astraea’s opening role as virginal divine patron of Justice “gives way” to the more “militant” sexuality of Isis and Osiris by canto 7, a shift that closes down the gender fluidity of the earlier books but also raises “awkward questions about the divine sanction of secular rule.”[21] At stake, Miller argues, is an insinuation about “the human origins of divine right.”[22] All the more critical, then, becomes the question of “human nature” a, “stonie race indeed,” with its concomitant entanglements with origins, as well as with concepts of justice as being in and on earth.

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[15] John Calvin, *The Institution of the Christian Religion* (London: Reinolde Wolfe & Richarde Harison, 1561), sig. A5^{r}.

[16] All biblical citations, unless noted otherwise, are to *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition.*

[17] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Frank Justus Miller, vol. 1, Latin and English Loeb Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), 142.

[18] The foundational work remains Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London: Routledge, 1997).

This chapter will seek to complicate the dialectic of a fleshly, and hence more “moral,” human (one worthy of salvation) and a “degendered” or “stonie” human (one, like the descendants of Cain, cursed by their associative mineral state). As a case study, the second section offers a new perspective on the controversial character Talus, the iron man and arm of justice in the fifth book of Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*. Like the proem’s “stonie” men, Talus does not exist as a simile, *like* an iron or stone man: rather, he *is* an iron man. Talus exists, as Jonathan Goldberg puts it, in a peculiar state of “dubiety,” “yron” and “man” simultaneously.[23] His “dubiety,” or what, following Heather James, I would like to term his “joint” nature, demands that we consider iron as constituent of the human.[24] Because the poem’s justice gets meted out by Talus, whose metallic physical hardness and largely obdurate emotional sensibility conjoins the seemingly nonhuman metal with human form, the poem portrays the violence of Talus as embedded within human nature, not distinct from it. The iron man exists on a stone–human continuum that binds the “gard” to the knight Artegall, but also binds reader and hero, reader and text in ways that refute any easy disentanglement from the book’s perpetrated violence (5.4.3). The (iron) arms are the (hu)man, a proposition that stretches the categorical bounds of humanness into a troubled hybrid geography.

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[19] Katherine Eggert, *Showing Like a Queen: Female Authority and Literary Experiment in Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

[20] David Lee Miller, “Gender, Justice and the Gods in *The Faerie Queene* Book 5,” in *Reading Renaissance Ethics*, ed. Marshall Grossman (New York: Routledge, 2007), 19–37.

[21] Ibid., 19.

[22] Ibid., 20.

[23] Jonathan Goldberg, *The Seeds of Things: Theorizing Sexuality and Materiality in Renaissance Representations* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 66.

[24] For the online text of her 2015 Hugh Maclean lecture, see Heather James, “The Problem of Poetry in The Faerie Queene, Book V,” Spenser Review 45, no. 1.1 (2015), http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/spenseronline/review/item/45.1.1. Her reading supplements the standard scholarly accounts discussed below. A. C. Hamilton glosses Talus as *Talos* from the pseudo-Platonic *Minos* who “upheld the laws inscribed in brazen tables” or as the man of bronze in Apollonius’s *Argonautica*. The name additionally suggests the Greek to endure or the Latin “talion” or retaliation. See Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 5.1.12n.

Throughout this chapter, I trace a sliding lithic substrate—from clay to stone and iron—that subtends human existence. Although clay, stone, and iron were recognized to have different material and cultural heritages, they are often synonymous within early modern discourse.[25] In Spenser's *Prosopopoia or Mother Hubberd's Tale*, for instance, the narrator laments how "This yron world . . . / Brings down the stowtest hearts to lowest state."[26] The "yron" world that brings human hearts to the "lowest state" (an allusion akin to stoniness) also found expression in sermons. The Anglican preacher Henry Smith corroborates a sinful heart with "fallowe" ground that cannot be sown, and that, like "yron," must be heated before it can be "fashioned."[27] My chapter thus engages with the broader category of *mineralia*, or "minerals," in its fullest sense—inclusive of metals, such as iron, as well as clay and stone—in order to correlate human generation and degeneration with an elemental material.

Engendering: Biblical Clay and Deucalion's Seed

In this chapter's epigraph, taken from a Whitsunday sermon preached before Londoners at St. Paul's, John Donne considers the ontological proposition "I am." Working backwards from Romans 8:16, which declares, "we are the children of God," the sermon traces humankind's genealogy. Who are these "we," and how are "we" of God? In a sophisticated clausal balancing act, Donne encircles his "I" as a "part" of God's creation, "a creature," but also "a man" who has "my part in the humanity." Capaciously imagined, "humanity" in Donne's phrasing encompasses "the great field of clay," the "clod" of man's matter, against God's approach.[28] Donne's "I am" interfaces with an elemental network that reaches from earth to heaven. It simultaneously asserts and denies distinction; it is partial, relational, imbricated, assertive. His meditation raises critical questions surrounding the generation and degeneration of humankind: Does God make the human *from* or *with* the elemental mineral realm? Donne's questions anticipate what contemporary theorist Donna Haraway might term "sympoiesis," that is, the ways that seemingly different components of a being relate.[29] As Haraway will phrase it, "it matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties."[30] Thinking *with* the mineral realm poses a particular challenge to biblically attuned early modern expositors of the Genesis story.

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[25] Iron was predominately associated with war and weaponry, but held multiple significations in the Renaissance, see Henry Kamen, "Golden Age, Iron Age: A Conflict of Concepts in the Renaissance," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1974): 135–55.

[26] Spenser, *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser* 254–5.

[27] Henry Smith, *The Sermons of Maister Henrie Smith Gathered into One Volume* (London: Printed by Richard Field, [T. Orwin, and R. Robinson] for Thomas Man, dwelling in Pater Noster row, at the signe of the Talbot, 1593), sig. Nnn^{v}.

[28] Donne, *The Works*, 2.55.

As an early modern thinker, Donne draws from a long tradition of Genesis commentary, whereby, as a translation of Calvin put it: "Mans origin is sufficient to beate down his pride."[31] The origin that Calvin identifies as "sufficient" to dampen "pride" refers to Donne's "great field of clay," which was humbling because of its gross, earthly, physicality residing along the *scala naturae*'s lowest rung.[32] The gloss references a critical biblical distinction cited to divide the mineral matter from the "living" ensouled human. Formed in the "likeness" of the Creator, man became a "living soule" when, crucially, the Lord God "breathed in his face the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7). The division into a body formed from clay and the "living soule" of humankind offered a standard theological accounting whereby vitality (and salvation) resided not in the material body, but the immortal soul.

Yet Calvin's gloss might be read as an attempt to simplify what was in fact a much more complex stance on human's mineral origins. While the "great field of clay" might be read as a "humbling" origin, it also insists on an embedded nature of humankind within the *scala naturae*. Donne's sermon suggests as much when it asks whether the "clod" from that "field of clay" might contain within it the spark that enables it to be—or to become—vital. A tension exists between these different interpretations of humankind's origins as to whether being of base matter voided a "living soul" or whether that base matter contained the spark of divinity. Either conclusion, however, confronts humankind's coextension with the material, mineral realm.

Faith and belief shaped the contours of the early modern human, and most accepted that God's creation—elements, minerals, plants and herbs, fish and fowl, creature and man—took place in six days' work. This was so fundamental a stance that it remains untouched by the controversies surrounding other elemental propositions of Christian faith, an idea nearly beyond scrutiny. A spectrum of confessional positions from Roman Catholic, to Anglican or Church of England, and even to the more Puritan godly accepted the hexameral account of Genesis as a literal, historical, and profoundly materialist truth. A well-circulated image, Figure 2.1, illustrates how the biblical story may have been imaginatively and concretely grasped. In the popular, widely circulated *Liber chronicarum* (Nuremberg, 1493), woodcuts visually demonstrate the world's creation in six days. The image below illustrates the work of the sixth day, which includes Adam's creation.

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[29] Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 58–98.

[30] Ibid., 12.

[31] Calvin, *A Commentarie of John Calvin, Upon the First Booke of Moses Called Genesis*, sig. D5^r.

[32] See the introduction to this book for a longer discussion of the *scala naturae*.

The image portrays an anthropocentric deity with a bearded face, enfolded by a billowing fabric shroud, who extends his hand to extract the first human from a round rock-like lump, popularly conceived, as I shall show, to be of clay. A hybrid figure composed of a stony bottom and fleshly torso, Adam reaches a hand towards his maker, who appears to be drawing him out of the rocky foundation. Suspended amid the creative act, the figure of Adam enshrines humankind's double nature. By contrast, the surrounding four-footed creatures are fully formed and already amble and graze amid the fertile Edenic landscape. From Genesis, readers would recognize Adam to be the final crowning creative act, but the image underscores his lowly origins, and his subsequent hybrid, or double, identity, which Donne's sermon seeks to understand.

The practice of biblical translation across the English Reformations further animated the debate over humankind's stony, hybrid nature. In his collation of early modern English Genesis commentary, Arnold Williams notes that God's method for making man received extensive annotation.[33] The first creation account specifies that the "earth brings forth the living thing" (Genesis 1:24) such as beasts, cattle, and creeping things. But while the first distinguishes humankind by recording that God creates Adam in his image, the second account counters that "the Lord God also made the man of the dust of the grounde" (Genesis 2:7), an English rendering that commentators glossed as either earth or clay. The second account lumps Adam among the creatures generated from earth on the sixth day. And who, commentators debated, is the Bible referencing in the use of the plural form "Let us make man" (Genesis 1:26)? Some speculated God was assisted by angels; others wondered, somewhat provocatively, if the plural denotes a

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[33] Arnold Williams, ed., *The Common Expositor: An Account of the Commentaries on Genesis, 1527–1633* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948). 67.

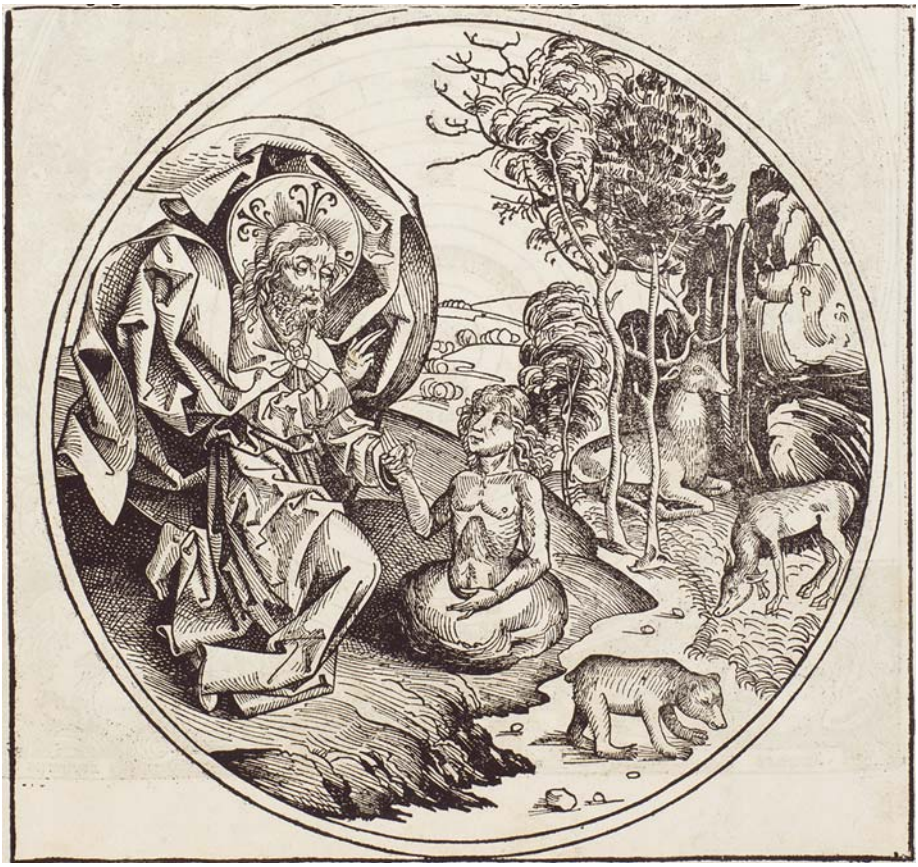

Figure 2.1 Sixth day of creation from Hartmann Schedel's *Liber chronicarum* ([Nuremberg]: [Anton Koberger], 1493), sig. V^r, RB 105176.
Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

godly consultation with the elements used in man's creation.[34] The speculation raised the possibility that clay may have played a more shaping role in human creation than being merely inert matter shaped into human form.

English translations of the biblical Genesis follow the language premiered by William Tyndale: man made of a "moulde of the erth," shaped out of "dust" (first used in the Great Bible of 1540), is then "breathed" into "a liuing soule" (Genesis 2:7). Although the English translates the Hebrew as "mould" or "dust," a gloss appearing in the 1549 Thomas Matthew Bible may explain how this origin of "dust" popularly becomes "clay." In the gloss to Genesis 2:7 we find "Slyme: dust or claye." The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "clay" as "the material of the human body (cf. Gen. ii. 7); hence, the human body (living or dead) as distinguished from the soul; the earthly or material part of man" (n.4a). The *OED* records this particular usage of "clay" as early as the *Cursor Mundi* (*c.*1300) wherein Adam was "wroght on clai." Similarly, Job 4:19 worries over men as creatures who "dwel in houses of clay, whose foundacion is in the dust." Humankind's origin lay within a "worldly muck."[35]

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[34] Ibid., 67.

Understanding "slime," "mould," and "dust" as synonymous with clay lands us in the realm of the mineral. The *OED's* first definition (n.1) of "clay" classifies it as "consist[ing] mainly of aluminum silicate derived from decomposition of felspathic rocks." The early modern definition was less crystalline and informed in part by Pliny the Elder, who describes and classifies "cley" in book 35 as a material whose content encompasses "The discourse in mines and metalls" and of "other Mineralls also" such as "sandry kinds of Earth and Stone."[36] Additional definitions and contexts for clay might have been drawn from gardening manuals. When described in early modern treatises on soil and its amendment, for instance, clay, unlike earth, holds an ambiguous status. Its "stiffe" nature requires mitigation; John Parkinson, an apothecary of London, goes so far as to advise that the good gardener "bring other good mould in the stead thereof," for clay needs "continuall labour" to produce pleasant flowers.[37] George Puttenham would adapt this language from period gardening manuals to suggest that a compost of "clay or sande" might season a deficient soil if mixed with "blood, oyle, wine, or stale" to aid plants to bring "foorth their flours and fruites in season."[38] His rhetorical aim seeks to describe how base material might be shaped by the poet into art, just as, the godly reader might understand by analogy, the breath of God might shape the material mold of the human. In brief, clay, although actively present in the garden, held more in common with the characteristic hardness of the mineral than with what Spenser calls the "blossome" of earth (5.proem.1).

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[35] For more on the material ramifications of human origins in Spenser, see Brent Dawson, "Worldly Muck: Translating Matter in Book 2 of the Faerie Queene," in *This Distracted Globe: Worldmaking in Early Modern Literature*, eds. Marcie Frank, Jonathan Goldberg, and Karen Newman (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 23–44.

[36] Pliny, the Elder, *The Historie of the World. Commonly Called, the Naturall Historie,* trans. Philemon Holland (London: printed by Adam Islip, 1601), sig. Yy3^{r}.

[37] My thanks to Frances Dolan for pointing me to John Parkinson, *Paradisi in sole Paradisus Terrestris: A Garden of all sorts of pleasant flowers which our English ayre will permitt to be noursed up* (London: Printed by Humfrey Lownes and Robert Young at the signe of the Starre on Bread-street hill, 1629), sig. A1^{v}. For more on soil and its relationship to "ground" and also humus and the human, see Frances E. Dolan, *Digging the Past: How and Why to Imagine Seventeenth-Century Agriculture*, Haney Foundation Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 14–44.

[38] Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, sig. Ll^{v}.

Moreover, Tyndale's translation's use of "mould" would have signaled "the distinctive nature of a person or thing, indicative of origin" and especially the "material of the human body," frequently cited as clay.[39] The Bible as well as classical natural history laid the groundwork for what would become a literary topos: that the mineral engenders human matter, be it "dust" or "clay," which when "baked" (if we follow Pliny the Elder) might make stone, or if "breathed" on by God, a human. The biblical history that understands the human "mould" to be of mineral origin draws, as I show in the next section, a close parallel to the mineralized iron "mould" substrate of Spenser's Talus (5.1.12).

Poetically, clay frequently appears as the "muddy vesture of decay" that "grossly" encloses the human, often standing as synecdoche for the man himself.[40] In its sixteen appearances across Shakespeare's canon, for example, "clay" denotes the human form. Thomas Mowbray, in *Richard II*, laments that in the absence of reputation, "Men are but gilded loam or painted clay."[41] Falstaff makes a similar point in *Henry IV part II* when he refers to "This foolish-compounded clay, man."[42] Imogen, in *Cymbeline*, remarks, "So man and man should be; / But clay and clay differs in dignity, / Whose dust is both alike."[43] So too Sir Philip Sidney refers to the "clay lodgings" of humankind who seek to range beyond its brazen confines to a golden realm and zodiac of wit.[44] These literary references waffle between thinking of humankind's material origins as the gross matter of decay and interpreting such "clay lodgings" as the integral matter of human identity.

Classical stories of human engendering countered the strain of moralized Christian thought that read stoniness as indicative of a postlapsarian and therefore sinful, fallen nature. The Deucalion story, as recounted in both

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[39] *Oxford English Dictionary*, n.3.1, n.1.21, and n.1.2a were called to my attention by the deep sleuthing of Bradley Tuggle who discovered that n.1.2a reads "cf. clay n.4a."

[40] William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, in Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, 5.1.63. All citations of Shakespeare are to this edition.

[41] William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, 1.1.180.

[42] William Shakespeare, *Henry IV part II*, 1.2.281.

[43] William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, 4.2.4–5.

[44] Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesie, 1595*, facsimile ed. (Menston, England: Scolar Press Limited, 1968), sig. C3^{r}. Memory of this phrase was prompted by Andrew Wadoski.

Virgil and Ovid, widely influenced early modern writers, as evidenced by Spenser's proem.[45] Ovid's *Metamorphoses* tells how Deucalion and Pyrrha, lone survivors in a post-fluvial world, pray to the goddess to repopulate their earth. As Virgil Solis's period engraving of Ovid shows in Figure 2.2, the goddess instructs them to throw "your Graundames bones," which they, eventually, surmise to be stones, over their shoulders (1.454).

As the stones strike earth, they unfurl into human shape. Thus "mankinde was restorde by stones" and as Arthur Golding renders Ovid's narration, "Of these are we the crooked ympes, and stonie race in deede, / Bewraying by our toyling life, from whence we doe proceede" (1.490, 492–4). The Ovidian story concludes that the "human," the "crooked ympes" (as Golding's translations renders us) were, or as Spenser writes, "at earst become . . . stonie" (5.2.2). Solis's engraving visualizes an intriguing morphology. The stones unfolding into human limbs and torsos, similar to the Adamic image in the Nuremberg chronicle, suggests a human latency within stone, as well as of stone within human, a "stonie race in deede." Ovid's tale deemphasizes the deity who breathes a human soul into a clay "mould"; rather, these backward-hurled stones "restore" the race of "mankinde."

The influential expounder of classical myths to a Renaissance audience, Natale Conti, adds an intriguing gloss to the Ovidian tale of lithic genealogy. In his entry on Deucalion, he describes the first concern Deucalion and Pyrrha faced as they emerged from the ark into a cleansed, but empty, earth: Will the gods restore the human race? While biblical accounts would have Noah as a kind of second Adam, repopulating the earth from his seed, the classical authors recount, instead, a lithic repopulation. As Conti records it, the gods respond to Deucalion and Pyrrha's fears by telling them to cover their heads and cast over their shoulders their "mother's bones."[46]

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[45] The link between Ovid's Deucalion and the biblical Noah received sustained attention during the Renaissance. The gods in both cases are moved to destroy mankind because of its degeneration and perversity. See Don Cameron Allen, *The Legend of Noah* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963), 188. See also Henry Gibbons Lotspeich, *Classical Mythology in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1932). Gibbons Lotspeich identifies the following classical source for Spenser's invocation of Deucalion: "The way he associates the myth with the stoniness of men since the Golden age may have been suggested by N.C.[Natales Contes] who thus interprets the story of the creation of men from stones: 'At cum rursus rudes homines et religionis cultusque deorum ignari nascerentur, dicti sunt lapides.'" For a broader study of mythography in Europe and Renaissance perspectives on these ancient and medieval mythographies, see Anna-Maria Hartmann, *English Mythography in Its European Context, 1500–1650* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[46] English translation from John Mulryan and Steven Brown, *Natale Conti's Mythologiae*, vol. 2 (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS [Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies], 2006), 768. The Latin original reads "At venit in mentem denique Deucalioni comunem omnium matrem

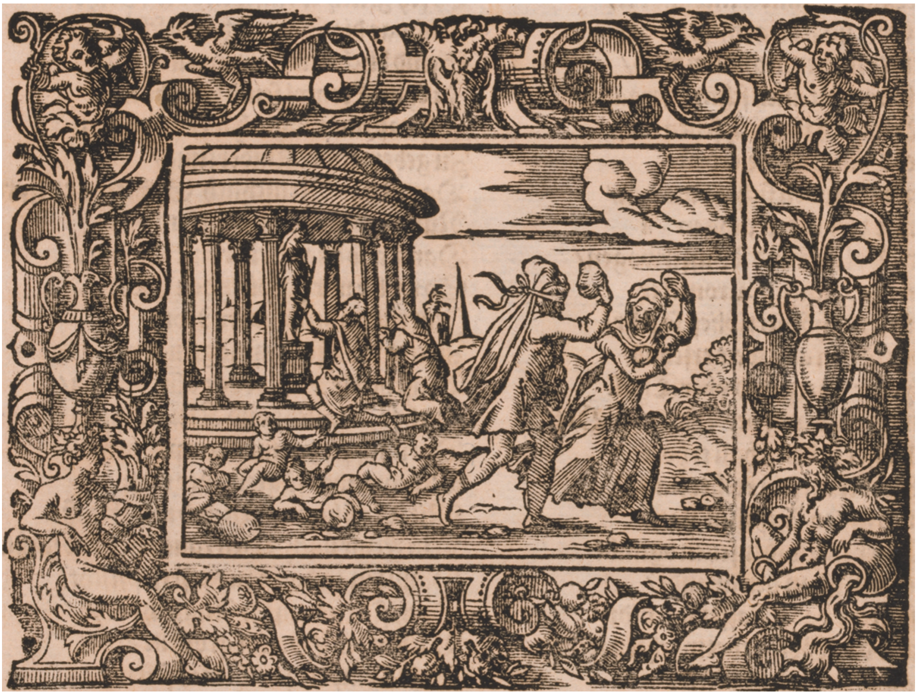

Figure 2.2 Detail of Deucalion and Pyrrha, engraving by Virgil Solis in *P. Ovidii Metamorphosis* (Frankfurt: Johann Feyerabendt, 1581), sig. B3^{v}, RB LODGE 1581 Ov4.

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Conti explains how initially Deucalion and Pyrrha were confused by the goddess's instruction. As they looked around the muddy world, they thought it impious to dig up the bones of those humans who perished in the flood, even if they could find them. But, eventually Conti explains how Deucalion and Pyrrha reason analogically that if the earth is the mother of humankind, then "because the stones on the earth are very hard, they [the stones] could be thought of as their mother's bones."[47] By the logic of analogical correspondence in the *scala naturae*, stones are the generative matrix and not merely the base matter. Conti corroborates this story of a lithic–human generation

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& altricem esse terram, cuius offaiure faxa ici ob duritiem possent"; Natale Conti, *Mythologiæ* ([Geneva]: Gabriel Carterius, 1596), sig. Bbb3^{r}.

[47] Ibid.

by adducing further evidence from Juvenal: “when the rain-clouds lifted up the waters . . . stones grew soft and warm with life, and Pyrrha [then] showed maidens in nature’s garb to men.”[48] Conti’s tantalizing gloss sees life—and human sexuality—engendered out of stone, not imposed on it. Although not fully made explicit, the passage’s language suggests that as the stones grow “soft and warm with life” they become “maidens” still in “nature’s garb” who arouse men’s desire and thus repopulate the earth. Conti adduces an etymological genealogy to further the argument: “The Greek storytellers,” he writes, “take the same line, for they call people *lai* and a stone *laos* as this verse confirms: ‘men were born from stones and called *lai*.’”[49] Conti’s account corroborates Ovid and further forges an etymological, as well as material, origin of humans as born with stone.

The classical stories of a “stonie race” of humankind wherein a lithic–human engendering appears symbiotic rather than merely instrumental at best or antagonistic at worst align with Pliny the Elder’s approach to the “natures and properties of Stones” in the thirty-sixth book of *The Historie of the World.* In a wide-ranging discussion on mineral matter, from diverse kinds of marble, obelisks and labyrinths, temples dedicated to Diana and Apollo, medicinal and magnetic stones, ivory, obsidian and glass, to paving and building stones, Pliny demonstrates stone’s astounding ductility and range of capacities.[50] Unlike a modern geologist, who might well categorize stones by their chief characteristics; distinguishing features, such as their mineral composition and crystalline structure; or utility, Pliny discusses stones as marble blocks, as temples, as healers, collaborators with every facet of human life.[51]

He prefaces the book by observing that while the earlier chapters on metal suggest it “to have beene made for man,” stone “Nature had framed . . . for her owne selfe” to support mountains, a phrase that makes stone a critical progenitor of earth itself.[52] Later, in a section on the “the medicinable virtues and properties” of the lodestone, Pliny addresses what he sees as problem of human misperception about the nature of stone: for, he writes, “what is there to our seeming more dull than the stiffe and hard stone?” and yet, he continues, “behold, Nature hath bestowed upon it, sence, yea and hands also," capable of a marvelous power to approach and arrest.[53] In another chapter, "of certain stones which soone eat & consume dead bodies that be laid therein," Pliny ascribes to stones a nutritive as well as preservative capacity in so far as stones take on a function often only ascribed to the vegetal realm, that of consumption.[54] In sum, in Pliny's natural history, a "stony nature" is one of procreative liveliness only misperceived by humans as "dull" or "stiffe."

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid. Latin, sig. Bbb5^{r}: “cum populi lai dicti sint a Graecis, & laus lapis, ut est in his.”

[50] Pliny, *The Historie of the World. Commonly Called, the Naturall Historie.*

[51] See, by way of example, Ronald Louis Bonewitz, *Smithsonian Rock and Gem: The Definitive Guide to Rocks, Minerals, Gems, and Fossils* (New York: DK Publishing, 2005).

[52] Pliny, *The Historie of the World. Commonly Called, the Naturall Historie*, sig. Bbb6^{v}.

Pliny's influential natural history also gestures to a primal figurative capacity within stone. For, he observes, if a man were to calculate backwards, "he shall find by the ordinarie course of Nature, that the art of cutting and graving in stone, is equall in antiquitie to the originall and beginning of the Olympiades."[55] The eldest of human creative acts, of greater antiquity even than painting or of casting statues, stone engraving, Pliny writes, first rendered the immaterial world into semiotic and material forms. Hewn stones, such as Egyptian obelisks, brought to life, as it were, the gods and great men. The sentiment at play reverses the usual order by suggesting that rather than the gods endowing stone with life, stone might give life to men as well as to the gods. The marble obelisks in Egypt, for instance, Pliny writes, bore material witness to "all the Philosophie and religion of the Aegyptians."[56]

Such figural potency within stone to engender life would trigger, for some godly Reformers, a renewed wariness of a lithic iconophilia. As Tom Blaen finds in his study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century lapidaries, the authoritative belief in the magical, medical powers of stones inherited from both classical and medieval tradition fostered, for Reformed English godly, a complicated response.[57] On the one hand, stones were precious and essential; but, on the other, as material objects they could be easily co-opted for the worship of false gods: pagan and, especially, Catholic.[58] Jean Véron, a Church of England clergyman, for instance, writes "Wo unto hym, that sayeth . . . unto the dumme stone: ryse uppe," for "Behold it is layed over with golde and silver, and there is no breathe in it."[59] Jennifer Waldron illuminates how Reformers voiced an added urgency for stone to be "dumme" and without "breathe," an attitude that shapes late-sixteenth-century rhetoric invested in casting stone as dull matter.[60] Desirous to distinguish their theology from their Catholic forefathers, English Reformers might construe stony liveliness as a capacity promoted by iconophilic, falsely worshipping Catholics, who confused matter for divinity.

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[53] Ibid., sig. Ddd5^{v}

[54] Ibid., table of contents.

[55] Ibid., sig. Bbb6^{v}.

[56] Ibid., sig. Ccc6^{v}. For more on the influence of obelisks on Renaissance culture, see Brian A. Curran, Anthony Grafton, Pamela O. Long, and Benjamin Weiss, *Obelisk: A History*, Burndy Library Publications, new ser., no. 2 (Cambridge, MA: Burndy Library, 2009).

[57] See Tom Blaen, *Medical Jewels, Magical Gems: Precious Stones in Early Modern Britain: Society, Culture, Belief* (Devon, England: The Medieval Press, 2012).

[58] Seminal studies on the problem idolatry poses to Reformation concerns include Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*; Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Gilman, *Iconoclasm and Poetry in the English Reformation*.

A less polemical voice such as that of the Anglican divine Richard Hooker in his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* might portray stones as having a "dignitie of nature" for their "firmenesse of strength and durability of being" yet "in degree of nature beneath men," lower than the "soule of man" which might reach toward a "higher" status of "divine perfection."[61] A more blunt phrasing emerges in 1597, when in *A Demonstration of God in his Works*, Sir George More, the querulous father-in-law to John Donne, set out to prove unequivocally the existence of God. As More established his proof, he elaborated on the state of the unfortunate godless, who were, he intoned, "as pictures or images, of wood or stone," carrying "the resemblance but not the substance, of those bodies which they represent."[62] In other words, More suggests that those who are godless look human in form, even as a statue might look like the deity or person it represents; but, it lacks the "substance"—that is the breath of God—that transforms it from stone to human. By demoting the nonbeliever or godless to nonhuman status, moral grounds emerge for humanizing the Christian, and especially the English, believer and dehumanizing that categorical "ungodly" other. Such distinction facilitated punishment by excluding the "ungodly" from the "human" category—even if they walked like, and therefore looked like, a (hu)man.[63] Polemically, a dialectic of human (fleshly) and nonhuman (hardened, stony) offered a useful justification of a particular human, godly and English, exceptionalism.

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[59] Jean Véron, *A Strong Battery against the Idolatrous Invocation of the Dead Saintes, and against the Having or Setting by of Images in the House of Prayer* (London: By Henry Sutton for Thomas Hacket, 1562), fol. 76. Similar sentiments are expressed in John Dod, *A Plaine and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandements. With a Methodicall Short Catechisme, Containing Briefly All the Principall Ground of Christian Religion* (London: Printed by George Eld for Thomas Man, dwelling in Pater-noster-row, at the signe of the Talbot., 1609), sig. B3^{v}: "Yea, but, will some say, no man will be so foolish as to say to the stone, arise. But indeed they doe say so for in that they kneele downe to them . . . all this implyeth, they to speede the better for that wood or stone, and by that mans to get themselves, some good: and this is all one, as if they should say, awake, arise, and helpe."

[60] See Jennifer Waldron, "Of Stones and Stony Hearts: Desdemona, Hermione, and Post-Reformation Theater," in *The Indistinct Human in Renaissance Literature*, 205–30.

[61] Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiasticall Politie* (London: By Iohn Windet, dwelling at the signe of the Crosse-keyes neare Paules wharffe, and are there to be solde, 1604), 1.6.56.

[62] George More, *A Demonstration of God in His Workes against All Such as Eyther in Word or Life Deny There Is a God* (London: Printed by I. R[oberts] for Thomas Charde, 1597), sig. E2^{r}.

As chapter 1 demonstrates, stone might also be recruited for its authorial, sovereign power with a capacity to uphold laws and justice as well as precipitate violence. Recall for instance that Edmund Spenser remembers Stonehenge as "moniments" to "eternall marks of treason" (2.10.66). A weaponized mineral capacity did not only belong to the race of Cain, but to all Adam's descendants—Ovid's "Stonie race indeed." While humans might wish to distinguish themselves from stone, the inherited networks of classical and biblical thought made it no easy task. Virgil, in his epic *Aeneid* may sing "Arma virumque cano," or as rendered into English in 1562: "Of armes, and of the man of Troy."[64] Edmund Spenser draws on this cultural heritage to create one of his most controversial characters, one frequently held responsible for the horrific slaughtering of "heapes" of enemies (5.5.19). In book 5 of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser deploys the mineral to collapse the distinction between the arms and the man; jointly, the Knight Artegall and Talus, the iron man, embody the legend of Justice.

Degendering: Edmund Spenser's Iron Man

The proem to the fifth book of *The Faerie Queene* ushers the reader into a world "runne quite out of square": gold degrades to iron, "spheares" jostle in the heavens, virtue flees, and "men themselues" are "now transformed into hardest stone" (5.proem.1, 5, 2). Far from a "golden age," Spenser's "stonie one" introduces the legend of Justice in a "degendered" world, one where humans "backwards bred" to a primal, mineralized state (5.proem.2). Book 5, writes Jessica Wolfe, imagines "humanity's degradation" to be "a process of petrification."[65]

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[63] For a longer discussion on the implications of stoniness and atheism, see my essay Tiffany Werth, "A Heart of Stone: The Ungodly in Early Modern England," in *The Indistinct Human in Renaissance Literature*, 181–204.

[64] I am grateful to David Lee Miller for this insight. For the Latin, see *Virgil*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, in the *Latin and English Loeb Library*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935). The English is taken from Virgil, *The Nyne Fyrst Bookes of the Eneidos of Virgil Conuerted into Englishe Vearse by Thomas Phaer Doctour of Phisike* (London: By Rouland Hall, for Nicholas Englande, 1562), sig. A1^r.

[65] *Humanism, Machinery, and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 216.

Instead of an engendering—of stone becoming bone, the fleshly human forms depicted by Solis "from whence we doe proceede"—men, in Spenser's metamorphic fifth line, "Are now transformed into hardest stone" (5.proem.2). Behind Spenser's narrative of mineralized degeneration lies iron, itself, in Ovid's vision of the four ages, a metal degraded from gold, and implicated, in both biblical and Ovidean terms, with a lapsed—and violence-prone—civilization. This degradation narrative runs athwart, and also complicates, the impulse traced in this book's first chapter that saw stone being recruited as foundation for empire, crown, and civilizing cities. Here, the "stonie" and "iron" become synonymous with a lost estate, hardness, and inhuman coldness, but also, perhaps counterintuitively, with the nature of justice. The mineral might be both seed and flail.

Iron, in another classical account by Pliny, might be considered the "best and worst" mineral. It is "necessary," as its strength allows men to break the earth to plant groves and improve their living.[66] But its craft, as the biblical example of Cain illustrates, also facilitates murder and war. Pliny delineates iron's dual nature: to make—but also unmake—humans and their civilizations. When Georg Agricola published his comprehensive exposition of European mining, *De re metallica* (1556), he felt it necessary to justify the growing industry by untangling the poetic nexus that associated "wicked men" as products of the "iron age."[67] Spenser's book 5 draws on this uneasy allusive network, wherein a cold hard iron age correlates with a "stony" condition of a "hard," violent, fallen humankind that might only be, paradoxically, redeemed via a mineralized justice.

If Spenser's "stonie"-age men of "hardest stone" look backwards to bone and a lost golden estate, so too the etymology of the "yron man" Talus harkens back to an etiology of bone (5.proem.2; 5.1.12). Talus, made of an "yron mould" (5.1.12), hails from matter yet deeper in earth's core, below the "earthly mould" of Spenser's "stonie"-age, "backwards bred" men (5.proem.2).[68] In classical Latin, *talus*, as Heather James reminds us, literally means a knucklebone, a joint. This linguistic trace of bone in the iron man's name unsettles distinct natures to propose a "jointed" one. It is crudely fitting that Talus's first act will be to dismember, or disjoint, Munera's golden hands and silver feet from what is a composite mineral–flesh "sclender"-waisted body of bone and blood (5.2.27). The allegory's semiotic violence draws its force from exploiting the power but also the vulnerability of its jointed fleshly mineralized bodies.

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[66] See Pliny, *The Historie of the World*. Book 34, chapter 14 treats metal and the mining of iron.

[67] Georg Agricola, *De re metallica*, trans. Herbert Hoover (New York: Dover, 1950), book 1, 6–7.

[68] For the significance of the earthly, and earthy, to the poetic constitution of holiness in book 1, see Joseph Campana, *The Pain of Reformation: Vulnerability and the Ethics of Masculinity* (Fordham, NY: Fordham University Press, 2012), 75–106.

Spenser's iron man fuses Aristotelian realms that delineate vitality upward from matter and the mineral, through the vegetative, to the sensible; he combines the strength and durability of the mineral realm with the movement and reason that were the capacities of the sensible, and human, realm.[69] Talus's composite nature has excited much critical commentary, but the most persuasive of these readings have focused on him, as Lynsey McCulloch writes, as "man and machine."[70] As a proto-Robocop or Terminator, Talus emerges as a harbinger of cyborgs to come. For Jessica Wolfe, Talus acts as a kind of mechanical automaton whose unemotional hardness proves an indispensable—if troubling—aspect of justice.[71] In these readings, his exemplary "inhumanism" results from his hard iron "mould" (5.1.12), which makes him machine-like in his imperviousness to most assaults; although bipedal, he moves "swift as swallow in her flight" (5.1.20) and his "immovable," what some might call hard, heart "resistlesse" leaves "heapes" of bodies in his iron flail's wake (5.1.12; 5.5.19). These critical readings interpret him as an in-between figure, both of "sub- and super-human status."[72] They distinguish him from the human as either above, below, or in-between. Instead, I suggest we see him as the poem insists: an iron man, a walking mineral, a stony human, human and mineral simultaneously, irreducible to neither "iron" nor "man." This joint nature of Talus is not, however, so different from the early modern human, who too originated from a mineralized "mould." What troubles readers, I propose, is not his *inhumanness* or his machine-like power but rather his *humanness*.

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[69] For the powerful impact of Aristotle's divisions of matter on early modern conceptions of vitality, see Sullivan, *Sleep, Romance and Human Embodiment*.

[70] Lynsey McCulloch, "Antique Myth, Early Modern Mechanism: The Secret History of Spenser's Iron Man," in *The Automaton in English Renaissance Literature* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 61–79 at 61. See also Jonathan Sawday, "'Forms Such as Never Were in Nature': The Renaissance Cyborg," in *At the Borders of the Human*, 171–95 at 90.

[71] In *Humanism, Machinery, and Renaissance Literature*, 208–25, Wolfe argues that Talus exposes the inadequacy of the "iron philosophy" of a neo-Stoic militarism expounded for a time by those in Essex's circle.

[72] McCulloch, *Antique Myth, Early Modern Mechanism*, 62.

Talus performs a critical role in *The Faerie Queene's* aim to "fashion a gentleman," that is, to discover the principles that "fashion"—represent, train, "mould," or even create—the gentle man, the civilized human.[73] What, then, is at stake when we see ourselves—and our legends of justice—in ostensibly iron entities like Talus? What happens when we recognize that the iron and stone lie within? To paraphrase David Miller, reading Spenser takes us into the realms of "cognition, recognition, and metacognition," where we are compelled, in book 5, to see ourselves reflected in the actions of the mineralized man.[74]

Edmund Spenser's poetic world anticipates the taxonomic questioning that has driven posthumanist studies of late to dismantle the "distinct" human. Interrogating the legacy of nineteenth-century critical categories that asserted human centrality and primacy during the early modern era, new materialist and posthumanist scholars have decentered the human. The alleged exception of the early modern human has been tempered by what Laurie Shannon calls an equally "negative human exceptionalism," represented in Lear's "poor, bare, forked" humanity.[75] Through this lens, human incapacity renders the human vulnerable to a creaturely world that may be less vocal but is clearly better caparisoned. Eloquence, laughter, reason, speech, the soul—all supposed markers of human distinction—recede before what Jane Bennett terms "ever more horizontal" studies that discover a lively agency in plants, shells, metals, and even earth.[76] Even that most hard, seemingly inhuman realm of stone possesses vitality, as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen reveals in his powerful reading that traces how lithic force and agency act within and on the medieval world.[77] Mineral virtues, moreover, as Valerie Allen shows in a medieval context and Mary Floyd-Wilson in an early modern, possess a fascination—at times baleful, at times therapeutic—that influences human behavior.[78] My study builds on this work to argue that the human may not only be acted upon by the mineral, but that the human itself may be constituted from the mineral. To extend Shannon's concept of "negative human exceptionalism" to its furthermost reach, how might it redirect our gaze to see "the human" like Marullus in *Julius Caesar*, not just as "bare, forked," but as "you blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things / O you hard hearts."[79]

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[73] Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 714.

[74] David Lee Miller, "How to Read the Faerie Queene: A Forum," *Spenser Review* 44, no. 3.56 (2015). http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/spenseronline/review/item/44.3.56

[75] Laurie Shannon, "Poor, Bare, Forked: Human Exceptionalism, Animal Sovereignty, and the Natural History of *King Lear*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2009): 168–96. Not all critics agree with this reading and propose instead that the early modern focus on the nonhuman only further asserts the distinction of the human. For this counterargument, see Bradley Davin Tuggle, *Intricate Movements: Experimental Thinking and Human Analogies in Sidney and Spenser*, Routledge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture (New York: Routledge, 2019).

[76] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 36.

[77] In addition to *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman*, see Cohen's "Time Out of Memory," in *The Post-Historical Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 37–61; and "Stories of Stone," *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies* 1 (2010): 56–63.

Talus forces us to look backwards to our own "stone nature" and in doing so redraws the boundaries of human and nonhuman distinction. His troubling of ontological categories, moreover, tasks the literary critic with rethinking Spenser's use of the literary figure known as prosopopoeia. As Henry Peacham writes, a "thing senseless" in which "we fain a fit person" defines prosopopoeia within early modern English usage.[80] "Any humane quality, as reason or speech to dombe creatures or other insensible things," George Puttenham writes in a similar vein In *The Arte of English Poesie*, the rhetorical trope of prosopopoeia "gives them a humane person."[81] In his modern taxonomy of the trope, James Paxson too sees prosopopoeia as a composite of a "thing senseless" and a "personifier."[82] While from a modern viewpoint prosopopoeia may have the effect of leading us "from the realm of the person and toward the realm of nonhuman things," in the premodern world it worked in the reverse direction, starting with the inanimate and imbuing them with "animation and vitality."[83] Simplified, these two entities might be termed, first, the form, the container, or in Talus's case we might say his "mould," which we know to be iron. The second entity, the "personifier," is the mobile and active faculty, including speech (in particular) but also representative of other specific "human" psychological or physiological essences.

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[78] Valerie Allen, "Mineral Virtue," in *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral: Ethics and Objects*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Washington, DC: Olliphaunt Books, 2012), 123–52; Floyd-Wilson, "The Preternatural Ecology of 'a Lover's Complaint,'" 43–53.

[79] William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, in Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, 1.1.34.

[80] Henry Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence*, 2nd ed. (London: Printed by R[ichard] F[ield] for H. Iackson dvvelling in Fleetstrete, 1593), 135–7. For a similar definition, see Abraham Fraunce, *The Arcadian Rhetorike* (London: Printed by Thomas Orwin, 1588), sig. G5^r. For an historical survey of the trope, see James Paxson, *The Poetics of Personification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For its importance within the realm of ethics, see Gavin Alexander, "Prosopopoeia: The Speaking Figure," in *Renaissance Figures of Speech* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 96–112.

[81] Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, sig. Ddii^v.

[82] Paxson, *The Poetics of Personification*, 40.

[83] Andrew Escobedo, *Volition's Face: Personification and the Will in Renaissance Literature*, Reformations: Medieval and Early Modern (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017), 3.

Critics assume the inhuman and hence prosopopoeial nature of Talus based on the narrator who tells us that "he wanted sence" (5.6.9). Talus seems to embody these two aspects of prosopopoeia: a "senceless" iron mold and a personifying power of speech. The confusion begins, however, when we begin to parse his inanimate iron mold: where does the iron end and the man begin? We meet Talus just after the proem's lament over the "stonie" men of "present time" (5.proem.1). Although not made of stone precisely, he too hails from the mineral realm, compounding the transmutations that seem inherent to the "stonie" age where all things wander from their course and kind. The descriptive and poetic epithet that introduces him to the poem as an "yron man" (5.1.12) signifies both mineral and human and thus troubles the biblical distinction that saw the divine breath as giving life to, presumably, inert matter. Talus shares a mold near in kind to "men themselves" who at "first were framed / Of earthly mould" and of late "degendered" into "stone" (5.proem.2).

Humans and Talus, by these accounts, are engendered by a nearly synonymous mineralized "mould," which we've seen, was never entirely inanimate. Moreover, Talus, human-like, walks upright, a stance that Ovid's *Metamorphoses* privileges as a marker of human distinction: "And where all other beasts behold the ground with groveling eie, / He gave to Man a stately looke replete with majestie. / And wilde him to behold the Heaven wyth countnance cast on hie."[84] Early modern commentators frequently gloss this Ovidean passage by highlighting the correlation between rational thought and standing upright: As God gave man privilege with his upright stance, so it was man's duty to contemplate Creation. Talus thus shares two key formal elements with humankind: a mineral mold and an upright stance. Crucially, allegedly, he lacks but one thing—the divine spark that "transmews" mineral to man.

In biblical accounting, the divine breath provides the vital distinction between mere mold and man. Elsewhere in the Bible, references abound to God's power to transform the human stony heart into one of flesh. We can gloss man's "degendering" into the "stonie" in accordance with various biblical passages, such as one from Zechariah (7:12). Zechariah writes that men who denied the prophets' warnings "made their hearts as an adamāt stone," a passage rendered with a simile in all major English translations.[85] A. C. Hamilton glosses Spenser's "stonie" age stanza in just this way—as emblematic of a "world's increasing degeneration" where men ignore the word of God, which "heralds the Last Judgment."[86]

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[84] *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation, 1567*, 1.98. Whether or not Talus is also a giant remains debatable. According to James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of the Faerie Queene* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 417, he is the "helpful giant who aids the hero on his quest," but I agree with Lynsey McCulloch *Antique Myth, Early Modern Mechanism*, 67, that his label of "groom or page" suggests him as a more human-shaped attendant, although whether he is youthful or not seems unspecified.

The passage from Zechariah is clear; a hardened heart against God's word renders it *as* an adamant stone. George Puttenham refers to this as a "*simile dissimile*": a rhetorical figure that expresses "a wish by way of resemblaunce."[87] By the logic of simile, a hardened human heart bears "resemblaunce" to "an adamant stone" and justifies the figure of speech. As chapter 4 demonstrates, early modern readers were very familiar with the lithic figuration of a "stony heart." Humans who ignore God risk losing their human status and "degender" into stone, slipping symbolically down the scale of nature from "homo" to "lapis" or mineral.

In Zechariah, a human may develop a hard heart *like* a stone by turning away from God's word. But elsewhere in Isaiah, the Bible clarifies that God alone possesses the power to change a stony heart backward to one of flesh. In Spenser's *Fowre Hymns*, the narrator limns the biblical precept; although humans might be formed "of clay, base, vile," through "His might" they are "form'd by wondrous skill" (106–7) into human beings. In other words, we can "degender" or lapse into stone, but only God's breath can engender human from stone.[88]

Spenser seemingly espouses such a biblical position in book 5 when we learn that Talus lacks "sence" (5.6.9). From this line, we might infer that despite Talus's shared mineral gendering and human-like upright mobility, he nonetheless possesses a mineral, hard heart. Thus, on one hand, Spenser seems orthodox because if Talus lacks "sence" he must be inhuman. If Talus is inhuman, he, and his actions, must be scaled and weighed apart from the knights within the poem as well as from the human reader. Talus can be distinctly blamed. If, however, as I have argued, he shares with the human a mineralized making or engendering, and thus an underlying material sameness, his performance, or his persona, will go yet further to complicate his relationship to the poem as a nonhuman figure of prosopopoeia, an external inhuman agent, for justice.

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[85] The Miles Coverdale (1535), The Great Bible (1540), Bishop's Bible (1568), and the Geneva (1587).

[86] Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 5.proem.1n.

[87] Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, sig. N5^r.

[88] Spenser, *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*.

Spenser's characteristically slippery pronouns make Talus's performance unsettling from the moment he enters the poem. We learn that Astraea left her iron man "with *Artegall* to wend, / And doe what euer thing he did intend" (5.1.12)—but whether the intentions belong to Arthur or to Talus remains stubbornly recalcitrant. In book 4, the narrator tells us that Artegall travels alone after he parts from Britomart: "Ne wight him to attend, or way to guide" (4.6.44), a line repeated in book 5—"Ne wight with him for his assistance went" (5.4.3). Thus, the gloss to A. C. Hamilton's edition concludes that we may well regard Talus as a "Robocop" (5.1.12). Yet the poem's distinction seems less assured; throughout book 5, Artegall's performance gets entangled with the enforcement meted out by Talus, who is described as "his gard and gouernment" (5.4.3). We never overhear Artegall ordering Talus nor Talus speaking back. In almost telepathic fashion, the two seemingly in concert "doe what euer thing he did intend."[89] The singular masculine pronoun encompasses the man in metal (the knight in armor) and the metal man. Indeed, as far back as book 3, Britomart questions Artegall's status as a "living wight" when she sees him for the first time in Merlin's mirror, a vision of a creature fully encased in knightly metal armor (3.2.38). Might the metal man in fact be more the "man" than the man in metal? Artegall's captivity and subsequent passivity in book 5 might convince some readers that he may, in fact, be less the man, despite the fact that he carries a sword made "of most perfect metall" (5.1.10).

The effect of Artegall and Talus threshing their way through the legend of Justice depletes the concept of a singular "human" "gouernment" assisted by a robotic "gard" (5.4.3). Talus, on one hand, seems to exemplify the great power of iron to "gard" and to unmake the "human" characters. His associated verbs are violent and warlike: he pursues and binds Sangliere (5.1.20–2); as he can "all things secrete" wisely "bewray," he finds, dismembers, then drowns Munera in mud, and razes her castle (5.2.20–8); when he finds the Giant with the scales "so lewdly minded," he tumbles him over a cliff into the sea and hounds his followers (5.2.49–54); he baffles and despoils Braggadocchio and scourges Trompart (5.3.37–8); he "sowces" the Amazons who want to hang Terpine and then vexes Radigund's "warlike maides" (5.4.24, 44); he conducts Clarinda to Artegall to parley (5.4.51); he refrains from rescuing "his owne Lorde" but instead speeds to Britomart with news and then guides her to him; as they travel, he protects her from Dolon's treachery and routs his men (5.6.9–18, 26, 29–30); stands guard outside Isis's Church (5.7.3); lies in watch at Britomart's tent before her battle with Radigund and then slaughters her Amazons until Britomart wills his fury "to slake" (5.6. 26, 5.7.35–6); later at the stirrup of Arthur, he plays "his pages part" (5.8.29), hunts and kills Melengin (5.9.16–19), diffuses the mob attacking Burbon (5.11.47, 59, 65), and wades ashore to establish a beachhead on Irenae's island (5.12.5–8); and afterward he searches the land to find robbers and rebels (5.12.26–7). His final action obeys Artegall's request not to chastise Detraction and instead suffers her stone throwing and scolding (5.12.43). The stones cast by Detraction return us to the proem's stony turn, whereby all join the iron man and his metal knight. Yet as the extensive roll call for his performance demonstrates, Talus acts not only as an extreme impersonal power, a "gard" with horrific agentive capacity, but also as one with reason, "government," even judgment who can "thresh" falsehood and truth "unfould" (5.1.12).

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[89] In an unpublished conference paper, Andrew Tumminia makes a provocative case that we never hear Artegall commanding Talus, for to do so would raise the question as to whether or not Artegall commands Talus via magic, since to command something to move that does not move would be contrary to God and hence a kind of magic. The Sixteenth Century Society annual conference, New Orleans, LA, October 2014.

Britomart and Artegall may seem to embody "government," to exhibit more humanity, when each of them, at different narrative moments, restrains the iron "gard." When Britomart sees "the heaps, which Talus did make" of "slaughtred carkasses," her "heart did quake / for very ruth" and she "his fury willed him to slake" (5.7.36). But the verb that describes her heart as "quaking" echoes back to its last occurrence in the poem, when Talus does "inly chill and quake" for his "ill newes" (5.6.9). To "quake" especially refers to the earth, but its second referent is to a person, who can shudder or shake in emotion (*OED*, v.1.1 and 1.2).[90] The verb links the mineral-engendered Talus to the earthly engendered Britomart, suggestive in its reverberation of a synonymous mineral–person emotional capacity. It also further correlates the motions of the subterranean earthly and mineral realms with the human.[91]

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[90] *Quake* occurs five times throughout book 5. First with Talus, 5.6.9; next with Britomart, 5.7.36; again in reference to Arthur's and Artegall's response to Mercilla's majesty, which made "so many quake", 5.9.35; the temple from where Geryoneo's monster blazes forth "did quake", 5.11.27; and finally, the woods and rocks "began to quake and tremble" with dismay when the Blatant beast barks and brays in the third to last stanza, 5.12.41. Such instances in book 5 revisit Spenser's earlier portrayal of the polyvalent Orgoglio, who is likened to an earthquake, as well as the sins of pride and lust; see 1.7.9. For the complex relations of such elemental substances to flesh, spirit, and form in Spenser's allegory, see Tamsin Badcoe, "Cascading Hazards: Earthquakes, Allegory, and the Steadfast Globe," *Spenser Studies* 36 (2022): 137–78.

[91] For the early modern perspective on earthquakes, see Rebecca Totaro, *Meterorology and Physiology in Early Modern Culture: Earthquakes, Human Identity, and Textual Representation* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

Near book 5's end, Artegall seems to feel a similar shuddering when the "raskall manie" surrounding Burbon are overthrown (5.11.59). The "yron man" pursues them into the sea: "But Artegall seeing his cruell deed, / Commaunded him from slaughter to recoyle" (5.11.65). Interpreting this moment as one where Artegall restrains the cruelty of Talus misses the pronoun slippage. As the line reads, "his" immediately follows the noun Artegall and thus implicates him in "his cruell deed" (5.11.65). Talus and Artegall's performance rests on a series of unstable masculine pronouns—"he" "him," and "his." The linguistic pronomial slide marks more than an underlying material sameness; it also blurs the persona and performance. The metal man and the man in metal perform increasingly indistinguishable violence as the book ends.

Their entanglement emerges most clearly when they are separated. When Britomart anxiously awaits news of her beloved, sending him by her "winged thoughts" the "message of her mind" (5.6.7), Talus appears. In a piercing essay on "conscience" in Spenser's allegory, Abraham Stoll demonstrates how Talus enacts a "Hamlet-like conscientiousness" when in canto 6 he develops an inner life that we hear voiced in speech.[92] In this startling moment, the bare prosopopoetic personification of a "senceless" iron man simultaneously fully exemplifies the trope and unmakes the distinction between "dumb thing" and "persona:"

> The yron man, albe he wanted sence
> And sorrowes feeling, yet with conscience
> Of his ill newes, did inly chill and quake,
> And stood still mute, as one in great suspence,
> As if that by his silence he would make
> Her rather reade his meaning, then him self it spake. (5.6.9)

More than robotic programming drives Talus's first uncharacteristic moment of hesitation. As Stoll writes, this moment complicates Talus's status as a simple figure of personification that acts with a "daemonic single-mindedness."[93] Separated here from Artegall, he is no "longer merely a figure of action. He is also a figure of thought."[94] "Conscience" rhymes with and subsumes "sence" to imply that the "yron man" possesses a more complex being than previously thought. In Stoll's reading, Talus here stands in the "throes of the unstable, subjective experience" that marks early modern Protestant conscience; such a reflexive impulse and glimpse at inner life when he does "inly chill and quake," I argue, further entangles the mineral–human "mould" continuum previewed in the proem. Talus does not just look and move human-like, he also *performs* in "human" ways.

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[92] Abraham Stoll, "Spenser's Allegorical Conscience," *Modern Philology: Critical and Historical Studies in Literature, Medieval Through Contemporary* 111, no. 2 (2013): 181–204 at 182.

[93] Ibid., 193.

[94] Ibid, 194.

For contrast, we might remember his stony, prosopopoeial literary ancestor, Thomas Elyot's talkative stone statue, Pasquil, from *Pasquil the Playne* (1533). Pasquil exhibits humanness in so far as he speaks; but his physical form, a stone statue, feels anecdotal to his dialogue. Beyond his polemical position, he exhibits no other sense. Talus, by contrast, possesses a range of human-like capacities. He has human-like (although swifter) motion, a keen sense of deception ("all things secrete wisely could bewray" [5.2.25]), affective capacities including loyalty, obedience, shame, and at times greater perception even than his "human" counterparts.

When Talus finally speaks, he might seemingly embody the rhetorical trope of prosopopoeia. For, as Puttenham insists, speech animates the "senseless thing," the iron mold, that readers have been told "wanted sence" (5.6.9). An oft-invoked marker of human distinction, speech registers as a distinguishing marker of prosopopoeia and, hence, of humanizing or making "persons" of things. The inherited rhetorical context of prosopopoeia, "a maker of persons," as Gavin Alexander shows, bound together within the mind of early modern authors issues of moral agency and ethos.[95] The human capacity to speak, and more importantly to be eloquent, was a central contention in arguments that wished to promote "human exceptionalism."[96] The persuasive orator could arouse emotion in the audience by correlating speaker to role in such a manner as to erase the distinction between identity and performance: "when we read prosopopoeia in the light of ethopoeia we are presented with the possibility that to perform a role is to identify with, to become that role."[97] In other words, performance, as opposed to "sence," may be the paramount factor in determining personhood. Identity emerges in what one does, or performs, what and how one speaks, but perhaps above all, how one moves others.[98]

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[95] Alexander, *Prosopopoeia: The Speaking Figure*, 105.

[96] See Kenneth Gouwens, "Human Exceptionalism," in *The Renaissance World*, ed. John Jeffries Martin (London: Routledge, 2007), 415–34.

[97] Alexander, *Prosopopoeia: The Speaking Figure*, 102.

As Alexander summarizes, the good orator (or narrator) was one who could communicate his passion to his audience, such that they, to use Spenser's terms, might be "fashioned" by his example. An effective performance, in brief, transfers affect from speaker, or actor, to audience, or, in Spenser's case, to reader. As Talus confronts Britomart at one of book 5's affective cruxes, he appears sympathetic to her emotional turmoil. Sympathetic in that he seems to catch her emotion: for as her heart "was fild with hope and drede," he now stands "as one in great suspence" (5.6.8, 9). And although we as readers already know of Artegall's thralldom, we too wait for the next stanza to see how Talus answers—and how Britomart responds to "his ill newes" (5.6.9).

It is within this context that the narrator informs us that Talus "wanted sence" (5.6.9). But the very next line of the stanza unravels the simplicity of that assertion. Following the midline caesura of the fifth line, that hinge in Spenser's stanzas, what follows contradicts, or at least complicates, what it means to want "sence." For it confirms that Talus possesses "conscience / Of his ill news" (5.6.9). Even "still mute," he communicates his distress to Britomart who "rather reade his meaning" (5.6.9). When further urged to "be bold," he haltingly speaks of Artegall's "haplesse woe" with ambiguity and sensitivity, tactfully skirting the question of Artegall's culpability by labeling it a "hard mishap" (5.6.10). Talus's two-line hesitation, and snarled syntax, marked by multiple commas, hesitation, repetition, and passive voice ("him captived hath" [5.6.11]), communicates to Britomart his own inner "chill and quake" (5.6.9).

Talus intuits Britomart's dread and responds in kind. In response to his moving, if halting, narration, she sympathizes with his "chill and quake," and it takes a few stanzas for her to master her "rage" over Artegall's questionable loyalty (5.6.11). Upon mastering her "unquiet fits," she enquires of Talus to "at large . . . dilate"; he obliges the "whole discourse," but we no longer hear him, for the narrator interrupts with "in sort as ye haue heard the same of late" (5.6.16, 17). It is a fascinating moment. It seems, at first, like a simple, transparent narratological intrusion that spares the reader repetition of an already told tale. But it also intimates a joint tale that aligns Talus's speech to that of the poem's narrator. Through this subtle collapse of roles, the poem gives the iron man an even larger, powerful voice. Poetically efficacious, in a handful of stanzas it renders us as readers more sympathetic to the violent, chilling iron man to know that even he can have an inner "chill and quake" (5.6.9). The arms have become the man.

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[98] Andrew Escobedo, "Daemon Lovers: Will, Personification, and Character," *Spenser Studies* 22 (2007): 203–25 at 214 refers to how the "force" of personification functions as a kind of "energy" that then affects all around it.

His sensitivity, moreover, to the nuances of human behavior shows Talus reasoning, at Artegall's capture, about the importance of upholding Artegall's vow at 5.4.49 to obey Radigund if defeated. He does not "reskew his owne Lorde," but instead bears the tidings to Britomart, revealing a moment of independent reasoning and agency that show him well versed in a knight's moral and ethical code of honor. More than mere guardian and executor of justice, he shows the capacity to reason and to persuade. His language mobilizes Britomart to "armor don," and she follows his guidance (5.6.17). From here forwards, we see Talus performing in other ostensibly human ways: he plays "his pages part" to better surprise the Souldan with his "flale" (5.8.29), and near the book's bitter end, Talus's perceptive power that "could reueale" hidden crimes is put to use as he searches out thieves and robbers whom he punishes. Such behavior shows that Talus shares more than a mineral mold with humans; like them, he can organize his experience into narrative, empathize and communicate emotion, rouse passion in his audience, be loyal but not merely subservient, rationalize a code of conduct, perceptively read guilt or innocence, and in his final act, show obedient restraint as Artegall exits book 5 harried by a loudly railing Envie, who, in an appropriate final image, "stones did cast" after his retreating figure (5.12.43). Talus, by book's end, seems less "degendered," perhaps more human than even the knight Artegall.

By refusing to conform to categorical exclusives of "human" or nonhuman "iron," Talus demands that we synthesize our role with his in the execution of justice. In book 5, man, iron, stone, and clay are entangled. To extend a question that Julian Yates has posed of sheep, what happens when a human interpreter becomes a point within a transactional mineral network alongside clay, stone, and iron?[99] When we encounter "a piteous slaughter"

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[99] Julian Yates has written extensively on how the trope of prosopopoeia might translate posthumanist thinking into Renaissance studies. He also proposes that we engage in a reverse prosopopoeia in order to ask what it would entail to read like an orange, or a sheep. See "Towards a Theory of Agentive Drift; Or, A Particular Fondness for Oranges Circa 1597," *Parallax* 8, no. 1 (2002): 47–58; Yates, "Accidental Shakespeare," *Shakespeare Studies* 34 (2006): 90–122; and Yates, "What are 'Things' Saying in Renaissance Studies," *Literature Compass* 3, no. 5 (2006): 992–1010.

(5.7.35), “heapes . . . Of slaughtred carkasses” (5.7.36), we can no longer distinguish the arms from the man, and, thus, lay the blame solely on the iron, mechanical arms. Talus’s actions are Artegall’s actions, and through reader identity with the book’s hero, they are also our actions. As Talus lends complexity to prosopopoeia, it becomes less clear where the human ends and the thing begins, what is the poem, and what is us. When his “yron flayle” breaks Malengin’s bones “as small as sandy grayle . . . and did his bowels disentrayle” (5.9.19), we are entangled in the carnage (perhaps even a little pleased to see such a villain obliterated) and cannot simply assign blame to Talus for the poem’s grim violence.

In Talus, we see Spenser “fashioning” an iron man through a kind of literary alchemy. Talus’s jointed nature portrays a lively congruent and transactional—as opposed to static hierarchical—view of “the human.” Through him, like so much else in the poem, Spenser does not seek to reconcile or even reduce opposites such as “human” and “mineral” in some symbolic, spiritualized, or allegorical way. His figuration redraws what it means to be alive, to be human, with all of its legends about justice. Yet, Spenser, ever as slippery as his pronouns, leaves a question mark behind as to whether the poet has endorsed—or fled—the iron capacity of stony-hearted humans. In our last glimpse of them, Talus and Artegall, together, are bound for Faery Court.

This chapter has worked to illuminate the double-edged nature of grounding English human identity within or among, *with*, stoniness. If stone signaled for an early modern audience a more civilized culture, as Stow seems to indicate, it also equally signaled a violent, degenerate nature. Book 5 closes with the failure of the English enterprise in Ireland. That failure might be blamed at least in part on the inherent violence in the jointed, double-natured human whose “stonie race” destined it for war. Stone bears with it the power to create and destroy just as my first chapter demonstrates how it might inspire trust and treachery in equal measure. Its dual nature reveals the instability of the hierarchies *The Faerie Queene* seemingly erects. My next chapter turns to stone’s pivotal role in another pillar of English identity: its faith and its church.

3

“Upon this Rock”

Founding England’s Church

The last two chapters argue that stones, rocks, and the broader mineral realm paved a durable imaginative path on which early modern England and its human inhabitants founded their history and traced their genealogy. England’s lithic imagination of its origins—as distinctly realized as “Albion” yet hewn from a classical Greek and Roman lineage syncretized with the biblical Genesis—remains deeply embedded within the material realm across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This chapter turns to England’s search for an authoritative bedrock for its church in response to Henry VIII’s breach with Rome and the consequent crisis of religious identity across the long Reformation.

In 1555, a couple of years into Queen Mary’s reign, violence erupted in the town of Hadley’s parish church. Recorded in John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* (1563), the story tells of a priest dispatched to reinstitute the “popyshe Masse” in Hadley.[1] Hadley’s parish minister, one Doctor Taylour, had retained “the godlye Churche seruice” and “preached agaynste the Popyshe idolatries” that “infected the whole Countrye” (Book 5, 1135). To comply with the Marian injunctions for altar restoration, the priest with “al hast possible” rebuilt the church’s stone altar, which had, under the young king Edward’s rule, been dismantled and replaced with a wooden communion table. “But,” Foxe’s narrative continues with evident satisfaction, “their deuise tooke none effecte.” For during the night, “the Aulter was beaten downe again.” Forced to rebuild the stone altar a second time, the queen’s embassy “layde diligent watche, leaste any shoulde agayne breake it downe.” The following day, the “popyshe Sacrificer” came “with all his implementes, and garments, to play in hys papish Pageaunt” (Book 5, 1135). Shortly thereafter, when Doctor Taylour arrived to minister to his flock, he found himself barred from entry by men with drawn swords. A vehement verbal

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[1] All citations of Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* are to “The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO,” (The Digital Humanities Institute Sheffeld, 2011). Available from: https://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe/.

The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton. Tiffany Jo Werth, Oxford University Press. © Tiffany Jo Werth (2024).
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198903963.003.0004

exchange ensued wherein Taylour claimed authority against the incursion of the “popishe Woulfe” who insisted on barring his entry by citing canon law, “which commanudeth that no Masse be sayde, but at a consecrate Aultar” (Book 5, 1135).

Confusion followed as to whether or not the hastily rebuilt altar was properly consecrated. The “popyshe Sacrificer” began to “shrincke backe,” declaring he “woulde haue left hys saying of Masse.” He relented only upon assurance from one John Clarke, who said to him, “Be not afrayd, ye haue a Superaltare” (Book 5, 1135). Clarke’s “Superaltare” refers to portable stone slabs that were blessed according to Catholic regulations, and that might be carried about by priests and used for the Mass. The quarrel escalated as armed men forcibly removed Doctor Taylor. In an irony lost on the earnest godly narrator, congregation members, upset by Taylor’s forced ejection, lobbed “great stones” at the church windows, narrowly missing the “popishe Masser” who was saying mass within and whom “the people would haue rent . . . in peeces.” Doctor Taylour was not so fortunate. Queen Mary’s men arrested him and eventually burned him as a heretic.

The stone altar of the Hadley parish church sparked an imbroglio about legitimate spiritual authority. Foxe’s narrative emphasizes “how with out the consent of the people, the popishe Masse was agayne set up, with battayle araye, [and] with violence and tyranny” against the “righteous lawe” of scripture (Book 5, 1135). In this chapter, the Hadley stone altar opens a study into how the spiritual authority of England’s fledgling church sought grounding in stone. As Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke show, altars—their position, their orientation, and their very “fabric”—were a “vital battleground” from 1547 onward, first between “Catholics and protestants, and then among protestants.”[2] Scholars have lingered over altar placement, orientation, and replacement with the Lord’s board, but this chapter turns to a closer consideration of their “fabric,” that is, the medieval, Catholic heritage that bequeathed a tradition for altars to be made of stone.

Moreover, the consecrated stony fabric was held to be critical to the central Christian miracle of the Real Presence in transubstantiation. The iconoclastic fervor that periodically gripped England meant that stone altars in churches would be periodically destroyed and rebuilt, as the Hadley stone altar episode vividly details. Such destructive episodes, and the need for recusant Catholics to have access to properly consecrated stone altars, furthered the importance and circulation of superaltars within Counter-Reformational English culture. The relative portability and hence, at least from the perspective of Protestant magistrates, alarming mobility of the superaltars epitomize the material transcorporeality of stone within spiritual belief in England. Just as the mobility of the Stone of Scone would beget bloodshed, so too the foundational authority of stone altars as critical to religious sacrifice would unleash a Talus-like fury that rages into the present. Figuratively, as this chapter shows, superaltars and the stone altars they represented recalled a literal origin stone, known as the Foundation Stone in Jerusalem, which would become popularly associated with Jesus Christ. From this rock would spring foundational spiritual authority, and its contested location would beget religious violence spanning millennia.

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[2] Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547–c.1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1. These contentious elements of church furniture, moreover, would also feature in early modern theatre, where ongoing debates about “idolatrous” Catholic altars versus Protestant, godly communion tables highlight their use as literal and figural objects. For more on their theatrical role, see Elizabeth Williamson, *The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern English Drama* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 71–109.

Composed of three parts, this chapter traces the biblical legacy of the patriarchs' stony altars and pillars—starting with a rocky outcropping in Jerusalem; moving to Rome and London to consider essential but controversial church furniture; and concluding with the printed book, as exemplified by Protestant devotional frontispieces, which ultimately locate the altar in the human heart. Throughout, the lithic is figural but also transcorporeal, moving through and across differently mattered bodies. Stoniness perdures through its multiple material instantiations—as altar, as printed word, as embodied flesh—yet is no less material for its migrations.

Stone plays a critical role in the long English Reformation, undergirding the English and Christian practice of religious supersession and rivalry, whose story begins with St. Paul's New Testament elevation of the "spirit" over an Old Testament, and hence Jewish, materialism (2 Corinthians 3:7–8). In *The Accommodated Jew*, Kathy Lavezzo traces the tension surrounding materialism within Christian belief across the early English church writings of Bede and Cynewulf and all the way to Milton. Lavezzo demonstrates stoniness to be constituent of what she calls a "sepulchral Jewishness," which medieval Catholic Christians sought to supplant. As she details, the fascination of influential writers—such as Bede and Cynewulf—with the literal stones of Jewish temples, and thus biblical architecture, undermined the rhetoric that Christian spirituality superseded Jewish materiality.[3] Protestant Reformers would reanimate the tension between materiality and

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[3] Kathy Lavezzo, *The Accommodated Jew: English Antisemitism from Bede to Milton* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016).

St. Paul's exaltation of the "spirit." By claiming to follow St. Paul and elevate the scriptural word, Reformers sought to supersede what they regarded as a Catholic materialism that had never fully broken with a pagan, but also Jewish, attachment to materiality. The aftershocks of England's break with Rome and its Catholic Church, which claimed Apostle Peter, the "rock" upon which Christian succession rested, cut close to the soon-to-be stony heart of the religious culture of Tudor and Stuart England, supplying us with an important perspective on the fabric—the very material—of identity formation for the English church, as well as for the post-Reformation human.

Jerusalem to Rome

The genealogy of the Hadley altar furor traces its origins back to an Old Testament narrative touchstone and its alleged geographical location in Jerusalem, a fabled stone now enshrined below the Dome of the Rock. According to Jewish sources, from this rock the Earth came into existence.[4] Christiana Whitehead notes that, "reputed to live at the centre of the world, the great temple rock was considered the oldest part of creation: the first point of dry land" and, thus, the "germinal point of creation."[5] Rabbinic literature mentions a "foundation stone" from which "the world was founded," a paradigm that many modern scholars now identify as a manifestation of the ancient notion of the omphalos, or "navel of the world," a place of creation—but also of sacrifice.[6] Josephus further propagated this link in association with the Jewish temples, making their location the center of earthly geography as well as spiritual authority.[7] Here too God allegedly gathered the earth that formed Adam, the stony mineralized "clay," which I discuss in chapter 2, that according to Genesis forms the substance of human matter.[8]

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[4] Yaron Z. Eliav, *God's Mountain: The Temple Mount in Time, Place, and Memory* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 225–7.

[5] Christiania Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind: A Study of Medieval Architectural Allegory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 8.

[6] Eliav, *God's Mountain*, esp. 1–45 on the omphalos, and 224–7. Traditions, facts, and legends mingle here, making it difficult to trace with certainty the developments in the image of this stone, which in some stories is associated with the original temple, while in others it becomes an autonomous character, see for instance, ibid., 298n.108.

[7] Ibid., 225. For his influential, comprehensive account of the building of the second temple, see also Josephus Flavius, *The Famous and Memorable Workes of Iosephus* (London: Printed [by Peter Short] at the charges of G. Bishop, S. Waterson, P. Short, and Tho. Adams, 1602), Book 15, chapter 14, sig. Ppii^{r}.

A complex mythology of Jewish sources further identify this rock as the rock upon which Adam, and later Cain, Able, and Noah sacrificed to God. The author of the biblical Chronicles further identified it with Mount Moriah, where, according to Genesis 22:2, God tested Abraham's faith by demanding the sacrifice of Isaac. Yet still others point to it as the stony pillow upon which Jacob dreamed of angels descending and ascending to heaven. In all these variant stories lies an interpretive trend to identify a particular geographic stone, and mount, with a place of sacrifice, transformation of matter, and sacred worship. In the succeeding lithic controversy that would engulf this founding stone, we witness how both pre- and post-Reformation belief relied upon a grounding in stone. Not merely a stepping stone to a higher rank of being, stones were the literal keystones of spiritual authority.

Key to later Christian concepts through assimilation in 2 Chronicles 3:1, the mount of Abraham's sacrifice, and his binding of Isaac, then became the mount associated with the hill where Solomon built the temple. In particular, the binding of Isaac within Christian interpretation prefigures the ritual model of the sacrifice story so critical to the celebration of the Mass. The momentous event of Abraham's ascent to Mount Moriah sealed the bond between the patriarch (and his seed) and God and cemented the footprint of the primeval altar as the locus of divinely sanctioned sacrifice. The traditional identification of Mount Moriah with the Temple Mount (and so the Dome of the Rock and, hence, the Foundation Stone) stems from one of three etymological interpretations.[9] In the Genesis account, upon arriving where God directed, Abraham "buylded an altar there" on which to offer in sacrifice what God demands: his only son, Isaac (Genesis 22:9).[10]

The story is likely familiar, but its role in establishing a lithic template for worship and sacrifice merits more study. At the Old Testament story's pivot, as Abraham's knife descends, an angel intervenes and God provides a ram substitute for the burnt offering of Abraham's only son, Isaac. God rewards the obedient Abraham for his steadfast faith with a further promise for a multiplication of seed "as the starres of the heauen" (Genesis 22:17). Some Talmudic parables would latch onto the omission of any mention of Isaac's returning from the mount as evidence that Isaac was actually slain and later resurrected.[11] While this did not become a standard Christian reading, later commentators nonetheless read Abraham's sacrifice as typological for Christ, the only son of God the father who offered himself as sacrifice for the redemption of humankind, and who was later resurrected. Although the Genesis account does not specify the altar's building materials, it became a common motif to associate Abraham's altar with the legendary founding stone.

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[8] This belief stems from at least one Talmudic opinion that not only the universe but also Adam, the first human, was created from the rock and also buried under it. See Rivka Gonen, *Contested Holiness: Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Perspectives on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem* (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 2003), 116–8.

[9] See Herbert Marks, ed., *The English Bible, King James Version*, vol. 1, *The Old Testament* A Norton Critical Edition (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), Genesis 22:2, note.

[10] Unless otherwise noted, all biblical citations are to *The Geneva Bible, A Facsimile* of the 1560 edition.

The Old Testament heritage of God's earthly preference for stone altars crops up elsewhere in numerous stories. Biblical tradition included explicit instructions for altars, which solidified under Mosaic law in Exodus and Deuteronomy. When, in Exodus 19, Moses meets the Lord upon Mount Sinai, He demands that Moses build an altar of unhewn stone, unpolluted by human tools, on whose steps God will talk with him from heaven (Exodus 20:21–6).[12] When the tribes of Israel at the mountain's foot demand instead a god forged out of gold and silver, their rejection of the instruction for the stone altar earns divine wrath. Neither timber, nor fruit nor vegetable, nor animal, nor even worked metal, but rough stone proves to be God's chosen base matter for communicating with, and dwelling among, his people. The "tables of stone" (Exodus 24:12) that Moses returns with from Sinai after meeting God literalize this trope by being the material conduit for divine law communicated to the people of Israel. Later, when Israel passes into the promised land, they are enjoined by Moses and the Elders to "set thee vp great stones" inscribed with the words of the law: "an altar, euen an altar of stones, you shalt life none yron instrument vpon them" but use "whole stones" (Deuteronomy 27:2, 5, 6). The later prophet, Elijah, too, would be instructed to build an altar of "twelue stones" "according to the nomber of the tribes of the sonnes of Iaakob" (1 Kings 18:31). When Solomon builds the temple, Moses's stone tablets were thought to dwell in the Ark of the Covenant above the Foundation Stone.

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[11] Marks, ed., *The English Bible, King James Version*, Genesis 22:19, note.

[12] A similar injunction is given to Joshua (Joshua 8:31–2): to build "an altar of whole stones . . . he wrote there vpon the stones a rehearsal of the Lawe of Moses."

Old Testament biblical and Jewish tradition thus establishes stone altars as spiritually ordained sites where sacrifice might bind, transform—or loose—matter. The New Testament injunction of Christ to Peter reiterates this Old Testament bond. As I have also suggested, another well-known and oft-rehearsed patriarchal story connected the Foundation Stone with Jacob's dream; the rock on which Jacob slept became identified with the Foundation Stone. This story, along with the numerous narratives of sacrificial atonement, lent a cosmic dimension to stone as more than merely a sacred earthly entity; it was the elemental material capable of a transformative bond between earth and heaven, human and divine.

The deeply layered strata of inherited lithic narratives laid a powerful rhetorical groundwork that consequently informed the central mystery of the Christian faith: the transformation of the host into the body of Christ during the Mass. They established the narrative template wherein stone became critical matter for redemption and transformation. The ram as stand-in for Isaac typologically heralds the sacrifice of Christ, whose death and transformation will result in salvation for the faithful. The postbiblical interpretation equated the physical "sacrifice" of Isaac with ideas of spiritual atonement that were taken up in the Christian understanding of the crucifixion.

Although Christ himself was not believed to have been crucified above the Foundation Stone, the configuration of Golgotha as the holy mountain of sacrifice holds a complex relationship with the Temple Mount and its associations with Old Testament stone altars. The church of the Holy Sepulcher was allegedly built over Golgotha, the site where, according to various sources, including Helen, the mother of Constantine, Christ was crucified. According to Yaron Eliav, early commenters' description of the site's physical topography was anchored in reality. They identify Golgotha "with a large rocky outcropping," a description that lends a material reality to the popular conception of it as a "rocky mount" (*mons petrus*).[13] Modern excavations in the 1970s, moreover, reveal that the place of crucifixion may well have been a stone quarry.[14] A rock, traditionally believed to be all that remains of Golgotha, can be visited by pilgrims. The figural, spiritual connections—and the stories and legends that accompanied them—were grounded within a literal landscape, a material geography of place. The sacrifice of Christ on the "rocky mount" transferred to the sacrifice on an altar of stone whereon a human was sacrificed in atonement for Adam's sin.[15]

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[13] Eliav, *God's Mountain*, 182–5.

[14] For more on twentieth-century archaeological excavations around the Temple Mount, see Gonen, *Contested Holiness*, 161–7.

These Judaic, biblical traditions about the Foundation Stone in Jerusalem were familiar stories to Renaissance Christian pilgrims. At least from the time of the crusades, Christians knew of Jewish attachment to the rock and to its significance. The Bordeaux pilgrim, a Christian pilgrim who traveled across Europe, Constantinople, and finally Jerusalem by way of Syria (in approximately AD 333), memorably describes what he sees as a "perforated stone, to which the Jews come every year and anoint it, bewail themselves with groans, rend their garments, and so depart."[16] Legends grew that crusaders consequently chipped away at it for souvenirs to take home, damaging the rock so severely that some stories claim Christian kings of Jerusalem covered it with a marble slab to protect it.[17] During the early Islamic period, ʿAbd al-Malik constructed the Dome of the Rock mosque (*c.* AD 688–691), built atop the slab of rock, and its fame seeped into the early modern Christian imagination. The rock itself became an oft mentioned geographic feature and textual trope explicated by biblical exegesis and remarked upon by generations of pilgrims.

As described by art historian Elizabeth Ross, when the late fifteenth-century German pilgrim and author, Bernard von Breydenbach (discussed in greater detail in this chapter), reports on the rock below the Temple Mount, he meditates on at least eight strata of relevance to Christian pilgrims: Melchizedek, the high priest, offered oblations on it; Jacob used it as a pillow; David saw an angel on it with a sword; priests of the Temple burnt offerings on it; Jeremiah allowed it to absorb the Tablets of the Law (the Ten Commandments brought back by Moses from Mount Sinai). But Breydenbach does not stop with the accretive power of Old Testament story; he extends its reach to the New Testament.[18] Breydenbach records how, for instance, Simeon reached across it for the infant Jesus; a twelve-year-old Jesus sat on it while disputing with rabbis; later, Jesus would return to it to begin his ministry. Other sources would claim it was the site for the most holy of holies, the Ark of the Covenant, and a well of souls.[19] Breydenbach's rhetorical accumulation of story thus figures the Old Testament reverence for the stone as but a prefiguration of Christ and, ultimately, of the ritual of Christ's sacrifice. He thus cements the rock's importance to Christians as well as those faiths that were its rivals: Jews and Muslims.

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[15] See ibid., 123.

[16] The Bordeaux Pilgrim, "A Very Early Pilgrim, AD 332–33," in *A Jerusalem Anthology: Travel Writing through the Centuries*, ed. T. J. Gorton and Andree Feghali Gorton (Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2017), 9–10. For the original source, see "Itinerarium Burdigalense," in *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina (CCSL)*, eds. P. Geyer et al., vol. 175 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1965) 589:7–591:7.

[17] Joan Comay, *The Temple of Jerusalem with the History of the Temple Mount* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975), 32.

[18] Elizabeth Ross, *Picturing Experience in the Early Printed Book: Breydenbach's Peregrinatio from Venice to Jerusalem* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 175–6. Ross describes the meaning of this sacred rock to late fifteenth-century accounts of pilgrimage.

These medieval pilgrim stories circulated well into the seventeenth century. John Lightfoot, an English naturalist, Hebraist, and biblical scholar, who displayed a remarkable knowledge of the "archaeological, historical, philological" and biblical past, wrote *The Temple* (1649–50) wherein he noted the presence of a stone below the Ark: "the most pregnant and proper resemblance of our Savior, in whom God dwelleth among men . . . was set upon a stone, up toward the West end of the Most holy place."[20] Through the encrustation of story, an otherwise ordinary outcropping of limestone served as the stone altar whereon Old Testament priests offered sacrifice and, translated into Christian typology, became a Catholic mensa (a table) or stone sanctioned for sacrifice.[21] For centuries, and generations of conquers from King David to the Turkish Suleyman, its patriarchal lineage assured that its possession signaled religious supersession. That is, whoever possessed rights of access held the keys, literally and figuratively, to the place where earthly material might be transformed into the heavens.

In 1516, the Ottoman Turks invaded and re-conquered the site for Islam. They then held, literally, the keys to one of the world's holiest sites.[22] Surrounding the Dome, a plateau known as the Temple Mount in Judaism holds the legacy as a former (and future) site of the two earlier destroyed Jewish temples. Equally sacred in Islam, it is known as the Haram al-Sharif, or noble sanctuary, and held fame for being visited by Muhammad as part of his miraculous night journey (Koran 17:1). As one early seventeenth-century English merchant and traveler, Henry Timberlake, recalls he saw, but could not enter, "the East gate of the Temple, which Salomon built vpon mount Moria, in which Temple was the place of Sanctum Sancterum: but now in that place is builded a goodly greate Church, belonging to the Turkes."[23] Possessing the keys to access the Foundation Stone held spiritual, as well as geopolitical, importance. It is hardly surprising that shortly after the Islamic forces claimed the Dome of the Rock, the Catholic Church went to great expense to highlight how the lithic, spiritual authority of the Foundation Stone passed to their own founding apostle, Peter, the "rock" who allegedly had received from Christ the keys that might bind and transform earth to heaven. The apostle Peter's tomb, moreover, lay in Rome, below the magnificently inscribed new dome.

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[19] J. Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land: An Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*, third edition, rev. and expanded (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 57 records it as "foundation for the Holy of Holies . . . or the altar of sacrifice."

[20] John Lightfoot, *The Temple, Especially as It Stood in the Dayes of Our Savior* (London: Printed by R. C. for Andrew Crook, 1650), sig. N^r. A little later Lightfoot again references the stone: "the Arke stood in its place, upon the stone mentioned," sig. N2^r.

[21] Ross, *Picturing Experience in the Early Printed Book*, 176.

[22] Throughout the Ottoman rule, it was only with reluctance that non-Muslims were allowed to visit the site; Jews were barred from entering until 1967. See Gonen, *Contested Holiness*, 107.

A late fifteenth-century painting by Pietro Perugino adorning the Sistine Chapel connects the dots that transfer lithic authority from Jerusalem's storied ʾ*Even ha-shetiyah* (the Foundation Stone) to Peter. In *Picturing Experience in the Early Printed Book*, Elizabeth Ross tracks how important Renaissance pictorial "views" of the Holy Land, and of Jerusalem in particular, use the elements of linear perspective to render center stage the Dome of the Rock.[24] Through a close study of the *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam* (Journey to the Holy Land) by Breydenbach, Ross illustrates how the printed woodcuts diagrammed by the painter Erhard Reuwich use linear perspective to create a "view" of Jerusalem that centers the eye, and thus the Holy City, around this most holy spiritual site.[25] Figure 3.1 demonstrates how in these early, influential, foldout maps, the Dome of the Rock is the iconographic centerfold.[26] Although fewer English pilgrims traveled to

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[23] Henry Timberlake, *A True and Strange Discourse of the Trauailes of Two English Pilgrimes What Admirable Accidents Befell Them in Their Iourney to Ierusalem, Gaza, Grand Cayro, Alexandria, and Other Places* (London: [By R. Bradock] for Thomas Archer, and are to be solde at his shoppe by the Royall Exchange, 1603), sig. B2^{v}.

[24] Ross, *Picturing Experience in the Early Printed Book*, 36–7.

[25] The full gatefold image, hand-colored woodcut on vellum, can be viewed digitally on the website of the Beinecke Library at Yale University in their digital collections. This seminal book of early printing is the first illustrated travelogue that chronicled Christian European encounters with the Ottoman Empire, particularly featuring the successful spiritual domination of Jerusalem's built environment. The book was intended to inspire pilgrimage and was published in Latin, German, Dutch, and later French, Spanish, and Czech all prior to 1500. See ibid., introduction, 1–6.

[26] Other early bird's-eye-view woodcut representations of Jerusalem that place an imaginary rendering of the "Teplum Saomois" or Temple of Solomon in the middle of Jerusalem include the influential *Liber chronicarum*, or the "Nuremberg Chronicle" (Nuremberg, Anton Koberger, 1493). See Folio XVII in the online digitized edition at the World Digital Library, https://www.wdl.org/en/item/4108/view/1/103/. A rocky competitor for occupying Jerusalem's center within Christian map making tradition is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and sometimes the rock at Golgotha. In his dissertation, Phillip John Usher notes how in other

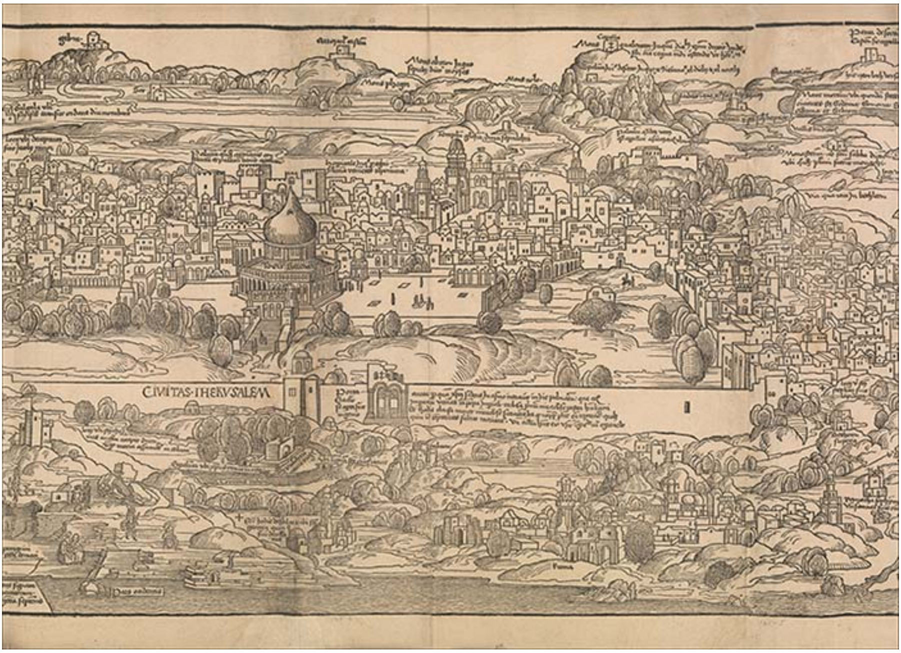

Figure 3.1 *Civitatis Jherusalem*, a map of the Holy Land with a view of Jerusalem, created by Erhard Reuwich. In *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam* (Mainz: Erhard Reuwich, 1486), fols. 143^{v}–144^{r}. Rogers Fund 19.49.3.

Open Access in the Public Domain. Image courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.

Jerusalem due to its great distance, it nonetheless occupied a special place within pilgrim narratives as model for understanding spiritual pilgrimage as a whole.[27]

The cynosure of the Dome of the Rock in the map of Jerusalem finds echo in Perugino's painting for the Sistine Chapel commissioned by Pope Sixtus IV (1471–84). In Perugino's painting, his vision of the second temple dominates the perspective center point (Figure 3.2). It looms as backdrop to

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Christian pilgrimage accounts, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was thought to be the navel of the world or omphalos, perhaps because of its uniquely Christian importance. I am grateful to Phillip John Usher for sharing this work with me. See Phillip John Usher, "The Holy Lands in Early Modern Literature: Negotiations of Christian Geography and Textual Space" (Ph.D. diss. Harvard University, 2004), esp. 305–47.

[27] For a wider study of the English pilgrimage experience, see Colin Morris and Peter Roberts, eds., *Pilgrimage: The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

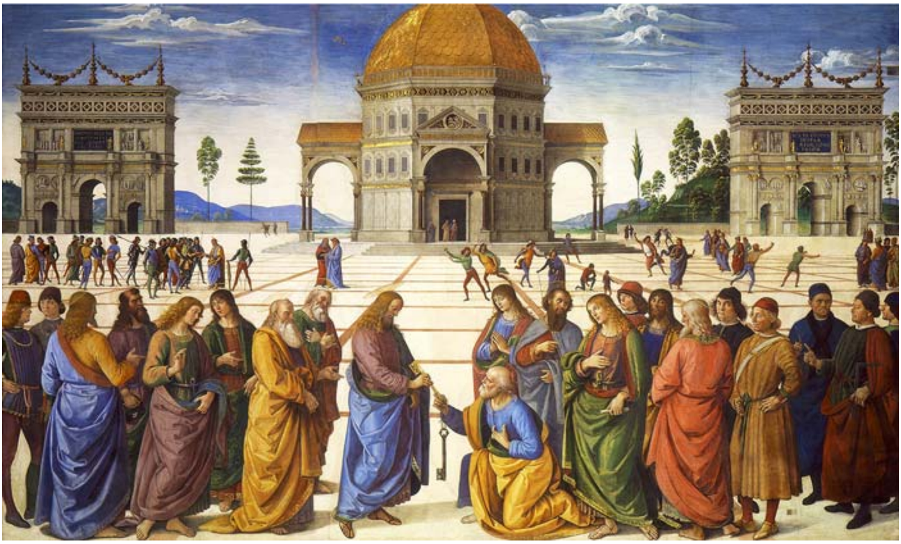

Figure 3.2 Pietro Perugino's fresco, *Delivering the Keys to St. Peter* (1482), depicting Jesus handing the keys to the kingdom of heaven to St. Peter. Sistine Chapel, Vatican City.

Vatican Museums and Galleries, Vatican City/Bridgeman Images. This image is not covered by the terms of the Creative Commons license of this publication. For permission to reuse, please contact the rights holder.

Matthew's story of Christ handing a kneeling, humble apostle Peter the keys to bind heaven and earth. The second temple, whose shape closely recalls the actual and existing architectural details of the Dome of the Rock may be the perspective point of the painting, but it recedes behind the foregrounded dramatic interaction of Christ and Peter. Between them, the key dangles vertically down the axis of the vanishing point, suggesting its central role in the pictorial drama meant to frame the Catholic doctrine of apostolic succession from Peter to the popes. The open portal to the second temple is suggestive, as pilgrims who visited the Holy Land associated the Temple of Solomon with the Dome of the Rock, a belief inherited from the crusaders.[28] Beyond this central dark doorway, where two figures appear to enter, lies the sacred Foundation Stone thought to be beneath the Holy of Holies where Solomon had placed the Ark of the Covenant.

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[28] See Gonen, *Contested Holiness*, 102. The crusader identification and propagation of the "Dome of the Rock with Solomon's temple was adopted in both Christian and Jewish visual depictions as the authentic shape of the ancient temple."

Perugino's painting captures the Catholic desire to inherit the mantle of absolute spiritual authority, imagined as an apostolic, and lithic, succession. Hardly singular in its ambitions, the painting's aspirations might also be glimpsed in other narrative forms. The desire to imagine Rome's sacred geography superseding that of Jerusalem could sometimes be taken quite literally. Phillip Usher describes how one French pilgrim, Greffin Affagart, traveled to Jerusalem in 1519 and again in 1533–34. Creating a spatial palimpsest, Affagart visited Renaissance Rome as if he were in the New Testament Jerusalem, mapping one geography onto another.[29] The subtext of these narratives illustrated how the Catholic faith, and Rome, anxiously worked to create a narrative that was based on—but also superseded—the geographic and lithic authority of Judaism and Jerusalem. They forged a lithic supersession to rival their Islamic counterparts, who held the key to the Dome of the Rock. In this effort, a symbolic supersession was mapped onto a literal, material geography.

The New Testament vivifies the Old Testament practice of using hallowed stones as places of worship when Matthew's gospel records Christ's words to his disciple, Peter: *Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam et tibi dabo claves regni caelorum*, or, as the Geneva Bible translates it: "And I wil give vnto thee the keyes of the kingdome of heauen, and whatsoeuer thou shalt binde upon earth, shalbe bound in heaven: and whatsoeuer thou shalt lose on earth, shalbe losed in heauen" (Matthew 16:19). Christ's words grant the human disciple Peter (or *Petrus*) the power of binding that which is above, the heavens, to that which is below. The Catholic Church would extend this interpretive reach to include Peter's bones, which lay in Rome. Peter, or *Petrus*, acquired similar sacred associations and authority for Christians to those that Jews and Muslims alleged to reside within the outcropping of rough limestone rock now hidden below Jerusalem's famous Dome of the Rock. The powers granted to Peter's keys will echo in the alchemical "keys" (or formulas) such as that found on the so-called emerald tablet, "That which is below is like that which is above."[30] The sacred nature of lithic altars thus also interweaves with the mineral processes

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[29] Phillip John Usher, *Errance et cohérence: Essai sur la littérature transfrontalière à la Renaissance* (Paris: Éditions Classiques Garnier, 2010), 27–58. Affagart did not, however, map the Dome of the Rock over St. Peter's Basilica, instead preferring to imagine the Church of the Sepulcher, the more immediately Christian site; see Usher, 45.

[30] For a transcription of the emerald tablet translation as made by Isaac Newton, see William Newman, *Newton the Alchemist: Science, Enigma, and the Quest for Nature's "Secret Fire"* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019), 145.

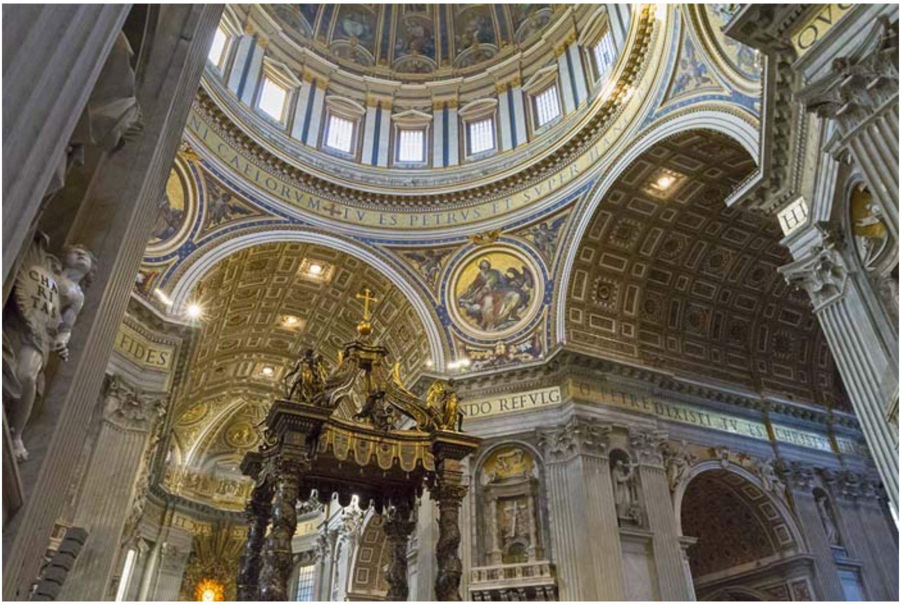

Figure 3.3 Detail of St. Peter's Basilica Dome inscription, SUPER HANC PETRAM.

Photo © Stefano Baldini/Bridgeman Images. This image is not covered by the terms of the Creative Commons license of this publication. For permission to reuse, please contact the rights holder.

of alchemy to create a potent cultural reverence for stone as relational, but also foundational, to human salvation and of humans' transformation from base to spiritual matter.

The soaring dome of one of Christianity's most visible landmarks and holy pilgrimage sites, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, features engraved letters encircling the dome's interior that remind visitors of Christ's words to Peter: *Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam et tibi dabo claves regni caelorum*. Labored on by Michelangelo (from 1546 to 1564), the dome crowns the alleged grave of the apostle beneath the high altar (Figure 3.3). Christ's words, as interpreted by Catholics, proclaimed Peter prince of apostles, head of the earthly church; generations of popes drew authority from this line of succession.

Constructed when the Church was on the offensive during the Council of Trent (1545–63), amid the new focus and fervor of the Counter-Reformation, the grand dome engraves the founding words of the Catholic Church in Rome. Etymologically, Peter or *Petrus*, the founding stone, grounded churchly authority in an unbroken line of papal succession from the apostle, reaching back through time in Church tradition to the very beginnings of early written records of Christianity. It mattered seemingly little that, as Eamon Duffy argues, this genealogy was "a pious romance, not history."[31] Much was at stake in the "pious romance" of a lithic genealogy, for with it, the axis of earthly, spiritual authority gravitated from Jerusalem to Rome. "Upon this rock" pivots the supersession of spiritual empire. From a besieged Foundation Stone in Jerusalem, the timely revival of the lithic legend of St. Peter thus conferred legitimacy on the Catholic Church, which saw itself embattled by Reforming Protestants and a rivalrous Islamic faith and power.

When the Christian gospels recount Peter's, and hence, Rome's authority to bind and loose heaven and earth, a power granted the cornerstone, they draw from a long tangled Jewish heritage that bound religious sacrifice to stone. The crisis of the English separation from Rome, Achsah Guibbory argues, meant that Protestants, like the early Christians, found themselves negotiating anew the relationship between Christianity and Judaism.[32] Sixteenth-century Reformers were faced with a double lithic succession as they had to reckon with the Dome of the Rock but also with Rome's claim to the Petrine apostolic and lithic succession. The accretive force of these biblical, cultural, and historical narratives provides the backdrop for the altar controversies with which I opened this chapter. For much of the significance of the Foundation Stone derived in large part from its alleged use as an altar. As the story of Hadley's parish altar illustrates, the Catholic Church, following the biblical model, enshrined consecrated stone as the sacrificial bedrock for religious worship.

The violence of passions that erupted over Hadley's parish altar may seem part of a distant confessional past, but the Foundation Stone, and its long shadow, continues to spark violent confrontation. The Foundation Stone now lies enshrined in the sacred site variously known as the Dome of the Rock or Solomon's temple, and remains a most sacred place for today's Jews. But it is also the third most sacred place for Islam, as the alleged site where the prophet Muhammad, accompanied by the angel Gabriel, ascended to heaven, and known by its Arabic name as the Haram al-Sharif.[33] Ongoing violent clashes between the Islamist Palestinians and the Jewish inhabitants of Israel vividly illustrate that this rock still matters to faith in ways that continue to draw blood. In a dispiritingly familiar encounter in October of 2014, Israel ordered the Temple Mount temporarily closed after an assassination attempt against a right-wing Jewish activist by a Palestinian. The Jewish activist wished Jews to be able to pray at the site where, currently, they can only visit.[34] As in the Renaissance, the surrounding area and complex of the Dome of the Rock is reserved exclusively for Muslims. The ongoing fight to worship at the Foundation Stone anticipates, but also recalls, the confessional violence that erupted around Hadley's stone altar between the Reformed pastor and the "popyshe Sacrificer." All share in a tangled, enduring lithic heritage wherein stone functions as the material manifestation of an encounter between a God and his chosen people.

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[31] See Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes* (London: The Folio Society by arrangement with Yale University Press, 2009), 2. Eamon Duffy notes that the New Testament is silent on this tradition of apostolic pedigree. No reliable accounts exist for the Petrine succession at Rome. Regardless of its historicity, rhetorically it held powerful authoritative sway.

[32] Achsah Guibbory, *Christian Identity, Jews, and Israel in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

We can thus trace how the material elements of the Temple Mount further etched into consciousness the lithic—simultaneously figural and literal—as a central element of Christian sacred imagery. Abraham's sacrificial altar, and by cultural extension the Foundation Stone, Christ's place of crucifixion, and, later, St. Peter's tomb, typologically ground the central liturgical transformation of the Christian faith: the Eucharist. Across the long English Reformations, the place and process of the Mass was a central battleground, an illustration that theoretical and theological belief cannot be extricated from its stony origins.

Rome to London

Late medieval ecclesiastical life centered around the Mass and its sacrifice of the altar, so when reform upended England's devotional life, it is not strange to find that the sacrifice of the altar occupied a prominent, controversial place.[35] As Reformation historian Korey D. Maas demonstrates, the first English rebuttal of Lutheranism addressed that "keystone of the church's sacramental theology and practice, the sacrament of the altar."[36] As I have been arguing, I propose that we read even the Protestant concept of a "keystone" literally, or materially. That is, to borrow a phrase from Jay Zysk, that we consider both the "shadow and substance" behind the English controversies over the Eucharist.[37] Within Catholic practice as it developed by the early Renaissance, it was customary to perform the Eucharistic ceremony—the host's elevation and its transformation from wafer to Christ's flesh—over a fixed altar of stone. The Latin or Catholic Church in the West drew from 1 Peter 2:4 the tradition that a fixed altar more permanently signifies Christ: "To whome ye come as vnto a liuing stone." Across the Reformation divide, stone altars and the more portable superaltars would be touchstones of devotional identity, embodying a key conflict across pre- and post-Reformation forms of belief.

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[33] Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land*, 56–62. See also Solomon H. Steckoll, *The Temple Mount: An Illustrated History of Mount Moriah in Jerusalem* (London: Garden City Press, 1972; Gonen, *Contested Holiness*; Hersel Shanks, *Jerusalem's Temple Mount: From Solomon to the Golden Dome* (New York; London: Continuum, 2007), 9–32.

[34] Krishanadev Calamur, "Palestinians Condemn Close of Disputed Religious Site in Jerusalem," The Two-Way (blog), NPR.org, October 30, 2014, https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2014/10/30/360114377/palestinians-condemn-closure-of-disputed-religious-site-in-jerusalem. For a longer view of the site's entangled religious history, see Gonen, *Contested Holiness.*

Although Jewish practice advocated building altars of unhewn stones, initially early Christian altars were likely of wood and shaped more like ordinary house tables. This began to change when, in 517, the council of Epaon in Gaul forbade the consecration of any altar not of stone, although in practice altars of wood remained widespread.[38] From the ninth century onward in Latin Christendom, fewer traces of wooden altars remain. The code of canon law stipulates that a "fixed altar" is to be of stone, and "indeed of a single natural stone" (although if a conference of bishops judges another solid material worthy, it could be substituted).[39] One version of history speculates that in Christian tradition the first stone altars were on the tombs of early martyrs interred in the Roman catacombs, over which a mass was offered.[40] Whether of Judaic, biblical inspiration or from the custom of celebrating the anniversaries and other feasts in honor of those who died for the faith, the stone altar between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries became almost universal in the Catholic West.[41] At the outset of the Edwardian evangelical controversies in England over the Mass in 1548, communion was still being celebrated at an altar "usually constructed of stone although sometimes partly of brick."[42]

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[35] For a prominent example of this assertion, see William Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants: 1520–1535* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), 128. For the debates over the Eucharist and their effect on literature, see Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage*, 94–124; and Jay Zysk, *Shadow and Substance: Eucharistic Controversy and English Drama across the Reformation Divide* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017).

[36] Korey D. Maas, "Authority and Method in the Eucharistic Debates of the Early English Reformation," in *The Search for Authority in Reformation Europe*, ed. Helen Parish, Elaine Fulton, and Peter Webster (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 107–20 at 108. See also Peter Marshall, "Identifying Religion in Henry VIII's England," in *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 1–18. Marshall notes that by the end of Henry's reign, this had "become the single most important marker of religious difference," 9.

[37] Zysk, *Shadow and Substance*. See also Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[38] Images of Eucharistic frescoes inside the catacombs provide evidence for such table-like altars; the later prohibition against such altars is recorded by Giovan Domenico Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. 8 (Florence and Venice, 1762), 562. Despite the sixth-century injunctions for stone, as late as the reign of Charlemagne, additional injunctions suggest that wood was likely in use, which necessitated further injunctions to be issued that forbade the celebration of the Mass except on stone tables that had been consecrated by a bishop: "*in mensis lapideis ab episcopis consecrates missas celebrare praesumat*"; see Abbe Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 97, 124, https://patristica.net/latina/?. For a concise history of Catholic Church altar use, see Maurice Hassett, "History of the Christian Altar," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907).

Appropriating the biblical lithic heritage, Rome and its Church drew spiritual and temporal authority from its claim to the apostolic cornerstone, St. Peter, the rock upon which Christ founded his church and which every stone church altar memorialized. Petrine authority subsequently lay behind the bishop's consecration of stone altars and, of particular concern in England, of superaltars, which were hallowed with the sign of the cross. In 1590s England a small octavo volume signed only G. B. A. F. begrudged in its title the "great subtiltie and wonderful wisedome of the Italians whereby they beare sway ouer the most part of Christendome" by virtue of their claim to Rome's holding St. Peter's keys. The author fulminates how, by creating the Petrine apostolic succession, "Italians entred into possession of a farre more excellent Domination."[43] The "first remedy" for Reformers must be "by ouerthrowing the foundation stone, upon the which the Romane

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[39] Code of Canon Law, Can. 1236 §1, in *Code of Canon Law, Latin–English Edition: New English Translation* (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1999). Also available online in the Vatican archive for the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) Code of Canon Law, Book IV, Part III, Title I, Chapter IV, Can. 1236 §1: "According to the traditional practice of the Church, the table of a fixed altar is to be of stone, and indeed of a single natural stone. Nevertheless, another worthy and solid material can also be used in the judgment of the conference of bishops. The supports or base, however, can be made of any material," https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic_index_en.html,accessed March 13, 2024.

[40] Augustin Joseph Schulte, "Consecration," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1913), https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_(1913)/Consecration.

[41] Walter Howard Frere, *A Collection of His Papers on Liturgical and Historical Subjects*, ed. J. H. Arnold and E. G. P. Wyatt (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 142–58.

[42] Fincham, *Altars Restored*, 18.

[43] G. B. A. F., *A Discouery of the Great Subtiltie and Wonderful Wisedome of the Italians Whereby They Beare Sway Ouer the Most Part of Christendome* (London: Printed by Iohn Wolfe, 1591), sig. C3^{v}. A translation of *Traité de la grande prudence et subtilité des Italiens*, the volume's dedication is to King Henry IV, King of France and Navarre.

Domination is builded,” namely, that “Saint Peter had his Aposles seate at Rome” and therefore “that the Romane Bishop is his successour.”[44] The Reformation found it necessary to look elsewhere for its lithic authority.

When Henry VIII proclaimed himself head of the English church, England lost its heritage of the Christian Church’s foundation stone, St. Peter’s, in Rome. Reformers faced a conundrum, for, as any good Bible reader would know, the wise man built “his house upon a rock” while the “foolish man” built his house “upon the sand,” words drawn from Matthew 7:24–7:

> Whosoeuer then heareth of me these wordes, and doeth the same, I wil liken him to a wise man, which hathe buylded his house on a rocke: and the raine fell, and the floods came, and the windes blewe, and beat vpon that house, and it fell not: for it was grounded on a rocke. But whosoever heareth these my wordes, and doeth them not, shalbe lickened vnto a foolish man, which hathe buylded his house upon the sand: and the raine fell and the floods came, and the windes blewe, and beat vpon that house, and it fell, and the fall thereof was great.

In this well-known biblical parable, a “rocke” or foundation stone proves critical to survival, which the parable equates to salvation. England had lost the traditional rock upon which its house, or church, was built and, in order that it would not suffer a great fall, enterprising polemicists tried to change the narrative and to find an alternative lithic grounding.

In Figure 3.4, a woodcut from *The Christal Glass*, the English divine and translator Stephen Batman slyly substitutes the terms. By looking closely at the woodcut, the viewer might notice that the house floating away on the flood bears the Keys of Peter. A figure dressed in what look to be clerical robes frantically waves out the window as the flood bears him downstream past the castle firmly ensconced on the rock, presumably, by Batman’s logic, the recently established Protestant church and most decidedly not St. Peter’s in Rome. In case the visual iconography proved too subtle, the text elaborates: “the house which standeth on the rocke, signifieth stedfast beliefe of the faythfull” while the other “on sandy ground, is the church of Antichrist and all popishe preaching.”[45]

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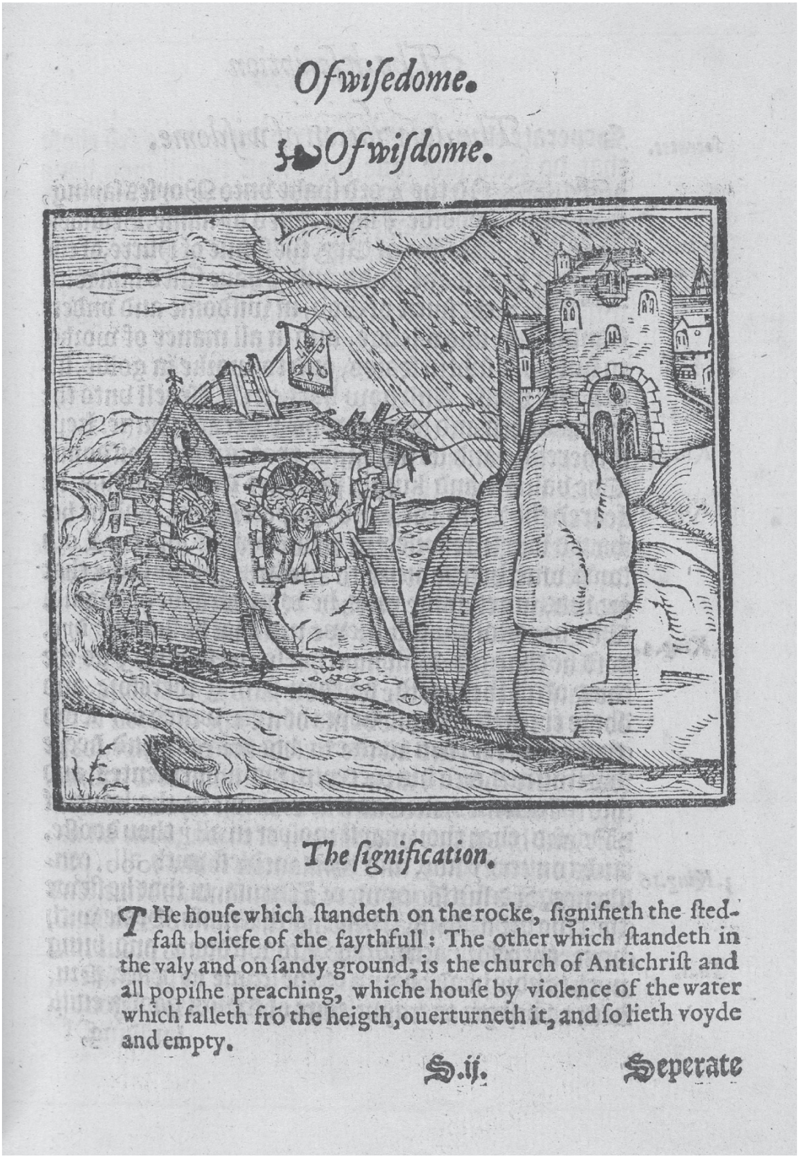
[44] Ibid., sig. H4^{r}.

[45] Stephen Batman, *A Christall Glasse of Christian Reformation* (London: By Iohn day dwelling ouer Aldersgate, 1569), sig. S2^{r}.



Of wiſedome.

Of wiſdome.

The ſignification.

THe houſe which ſtandeth on the rocke, ſignifieth the ſtedfaſt beliefe of the faythfull: The other which ſtandeth in the valy and on ſandy ground, is the church of Antichriſt and all popiſhe preaching, whiche houſe by violence of the water which falleth frō the heigth, ouerturneth it, and ſo lieth voyde and empty.

S.ij. Seperate

Figure 3.4 “Of wisedome” from Stephen Batman’s *The Christall Glasse* [. . .] (London: Iohn Day, 1569), sig. S2^{r}, BEIN 1975 381.

Reproduced by permission of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

While polemicists like the unnamed G. B. A. F. or translators like Stephen Batman might try a rhetorical sleight of hand, other godly theologians took a more systematic approach to the problem of a foundation stone.

Just as Roman Catholics claimed Christ's words to Peter to shift the axis of spiritual authority from Jerusalem, Protestant Reformers created a counterclaim to St. Peter's. Drawing authority from 1 Corinthians 3:11, which reads in the Geneva translation, "For other foundacion can no man lay, then that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."[46] From this scriptural authority, Théodore de Bèze could claim, "Iesus Christ is truely the only foundation stone."[47] John Calvin, harmonizing the three gospels, elaborates.[48] To supersede the Catholic claim that the "rock" upon which the church was built was indeed in Rome, Calvin returns to the Old Testament Psalms and the kingdom of David. In a canny typological reading, Calvin argues that the kingdom of David was never meant only as a *temporal* kingdom, but as a "shadow" of the eternal kingdom. He then returns to the parable of the stone to conclude: "For because the Churche is the holy house of God, Christ vpon whom it is builded, is called the corner stone"; triumphantly, this passage refers to Christ for authority rather than any temporal, literal stone.[49] The English martyrologist John Foxe also weighs in by including a vigorous letter written by "Cutbert Tonstall Byshop of Duresme and John Stokesley Byshop of London, to Cardinall Pooole" in the 1583 edition of *Actes and Monuments*, reaching many folios that accuses the Catholic Church for having "vsurped that name vniuersally ouer all the Church" under "pretence" (Book 8, 1089).[50] For "the very lowest foundation stone" upon which" the church is builded" is "Christe" and "No other foundation can any man lay, besides that which is layd, which is Christ Iesus" (Book 8, 1089). In brief, the church in Rome has no "special superioritie" (Book 8, 1089).

In the epistle dedicatory to Henry, King of Navarre, Philippe de Mornay further illuminates Christ's role as the foundation stone within Protestant theology. As Philip Sidney will later translate it, de Mornay interprets Christ as "the foundation-stone of the wonderfull building of the Church, and the seede whereof men were to be regenerated new againe, whome God did as it were create, beget, and adopt new againe in his sonne."[51] De Mornay's language of regeneration and of a "seede" recalls the promise made to Abraham and Jacob whereby their seed would populate the earth; only here the foundation stone, that is, Christ, is the crucible by which the sinner and the church might be born again, transformed, redeemed. De Mornay's language as rendered by Sidney bears notice: an incarnate embodied Christ as cornerstone does "create, beget, and adopt anew" each individual person. The Reformers thus envision a lithic engendering (creating, begetting) within the body of Christ: the word, but also the cornerstone. As I will show later in this chapter, this rhetorical transposition will have profound implications for the individual godly believer. It also suggests how stone might engender or beget the spiritual human, just as chapter 2 details how God created humankind from stone.

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[46] Sixteenth-century Protestants were hardly the first to make this claim; earlier voices, including Dante, and later Marsilius of Padua, physician to Louis of Bavaria in his bid to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1328, had insisted the church had no temporal kingdom. See Irena Dorata Backus, *Historical Method and Confessional Identity in the Era of the Reformation 1378–1615* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 26–7, 35.

[47] Théodore de Bèze, *Master Bezaes Sermons Upon Three Chapters of the Canticle of Canticles*, STC (2nd ed.) 2025 (Oxford: Printed by Ioseph Barnes, and are to be sould [in London by T. Cooke] in Pauls Church-yard at the Tygers Head, 1587), sig. Aaa^{v}.

[48] John Calvin, *A Harmonie Upon the Three Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, STC (2nd ed.) 2962 (London: [Printed by Thomas Dawson] impensis Geor. Bishop, 1584), sig. Nn8^{v}.

[49] Ibid., sig. Oo2^{v}.

[50] Foxe, "The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO," Book 8, 1089.

Once Christ superseded Peter's authority as the Church's bedrock, the Reformers could lay claim to spiritual mobility and equality with Rome. To further obliterate Rome's stony grip on the imagination of the newly godly English, stone altars were to be destroyed as reminders of Peter's alleged keys and popish practice. In her seminal *England's Iconoclasts*, Margaret Aston describes the destruction of stone altars as part of the iconoclastic onslaught that gripped England during different moments of church reform. The politically charged role of altars, as Kathleen Lynch and Achsah Guibbory show, would reach one crescendo during Laudian church reforms (*c.*1636–38).[52] My argument builds on their pioneering insights but follows Fincham and Tyacke in marking the Edwardian moment when England's seedling church first dismantled the lithic reminders of Petrine authority. In the readings of Guibbory and Lynch, Protestant wariness over altars stems in part from the concern I briefly raised in my introduction, namely, that stones might incite a pagan adoration, an idolatry for the stone rather than the indwelling god. Idolatry explains some of the godly wariness over stone altars, but to read only for Dagon overlooks stone's long storied part in rituals of binding, of sacrifice and transformation.[53]

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[51] Philippe de Mornay, *A Worke Concerning the Trewnesse of the Christian Religion, Written in French: Against Atheists, Epicures, Paynims, Iewes, Mahumetists, and Other Infidels*, STC (2nd ed.) 18149 (London, [By John Charlewood and George Robinson] for Thomas Cadman, 1587), sig. $**2^r$.

[52] See Achsah Guibbory, *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). See also Kathleen Lynch, "George Herbert's Holy 'Altar,' Name and Thing," *George Herbert Journal* 17, no. 1 (1993): 41–60.

Stone altars were integral to a consecrated Mass; they underlay the transformation of wafer to flesh, of wine to blood. As the Hadley story illustrates, the "popyshe Sacrificer" sent by Queen Mary shrank from performing Mass on the rebuilt altar until reassured that there was available a consecrated "superaltar." Having a properly consecrated and constituted altar for the Mass mattered to liturgical service because of the Real Presence in transubstantiation. In Figure 3.5, a large block cut from a beautiful edition of the Missal in use at Salisbury illustrates how the altar might literally constitute the consecrated ground above which the risen Christ might appear during Mass.[54]

Depicting the Mass of St. Gregory, celebrated the first Sunday of Advent, the 1555 Paris *Missale ad usum insignis ecclesiae Sarisburiensis* portrays a risen Christ, who appears above the stony altar that visually doubles as a tomb. Adjacent to him a ladder recalls the cosmic dimension of Jacob's dream that connected earth to heaven. Perched atop a nearby pillar, the rooster may recall St. Peter's denial, later forgiveness, and designation as apostolic cornerstone by Christ. The presiding tonsured bishop and kneeling figures all testify to the miracle. The story's depiction of the Real Presence and its iconography outline central doctrinal beliefs of the Catholic Church.

The widespread belief in this miracle of the Mass might be gauged by John Foxe's satiric inversion of it as one of the popish traditions Protestants unmasked. The frontispiece to the 1570 *Actes and Monuments* includes a tableau of priests kneeling before an altar with an elevated host held aloft. But, instead of the body of the crucified and risen Christ appearing as we see in the *Missale*, Foxe's woodcut parodies the belief in the Real Presence during the Eucharist by having devils appear where Catholic iconography would locate Christ. As Foxe's image illustrates (see upper right quadrant in Figure 3.6), altars were a contested bedrock of religious identity, authority, and host to the most orthodox miracle—or the biggest Catholic hoax, according to Reformers such as Foxe.

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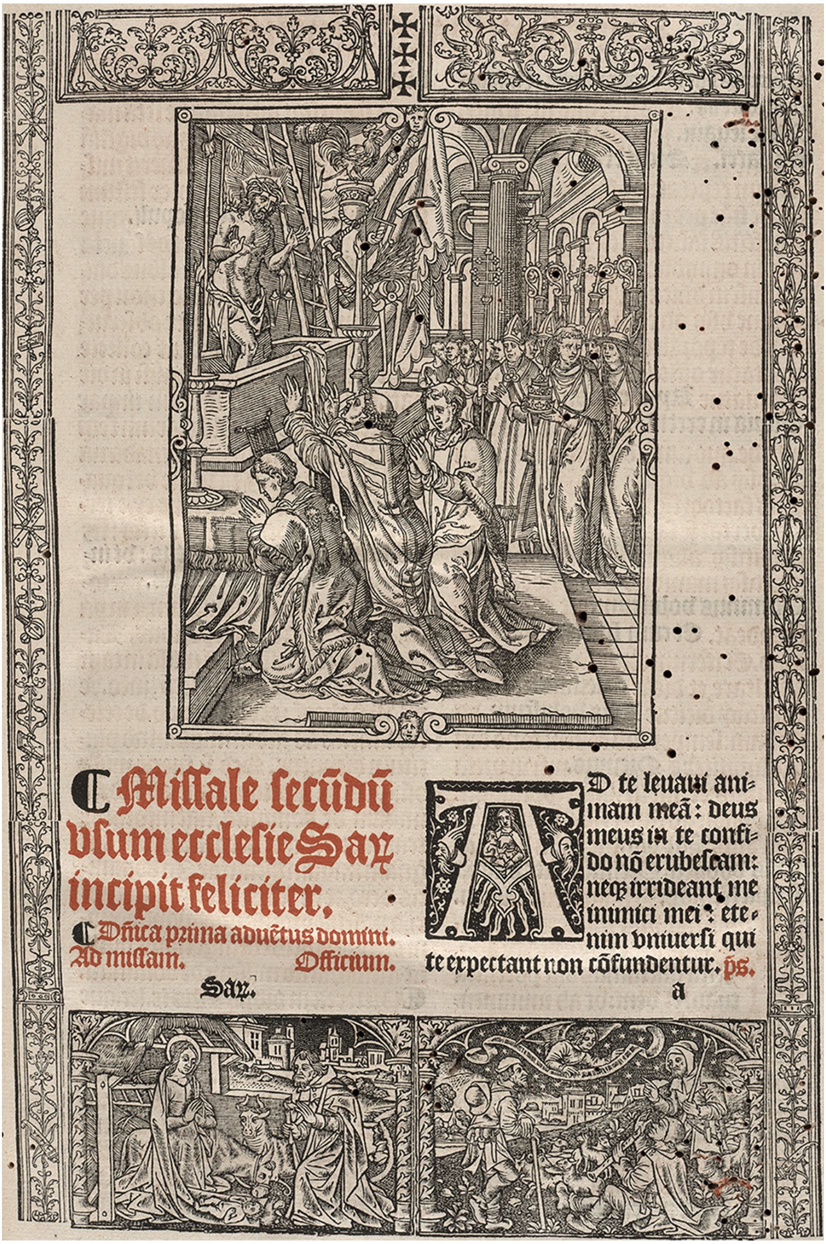
[53] In addition to Margaret Aston, see Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England*, 9–39, as well as Carlos M. N. Eire, *War against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge, Cambridgeshire; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and Gilman, *Iconoclasm and Poetry in the English Reformation*.

[54] For details on this edition, see Stanley Morison, *English Prayer Books: An Introduction to the Literature of Christian Public Worship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1945), 56.



¶ Miſſale ſecūdū vſum eccleſie Sar incipit feliciter.

¶ Dñica prima aduētus domini. Ad miſſam. Officium.

Sar.

AD te leuaui animam meā: deus meus in te confido nō erubeſcam: neq; irrideant me inimici mei: etenim vniuerſi qui te expectant non cōfundentur. ps.

a

Figure 3.5 The Mass of St. Gregory from the Catholic Church's *Missale ad usum insignis ecclesiae Sarisburiensis* (Paris: [Ioannis Amazeur] and Guillelmum Merlin, 1555), sig. A1^r, RB 62286.

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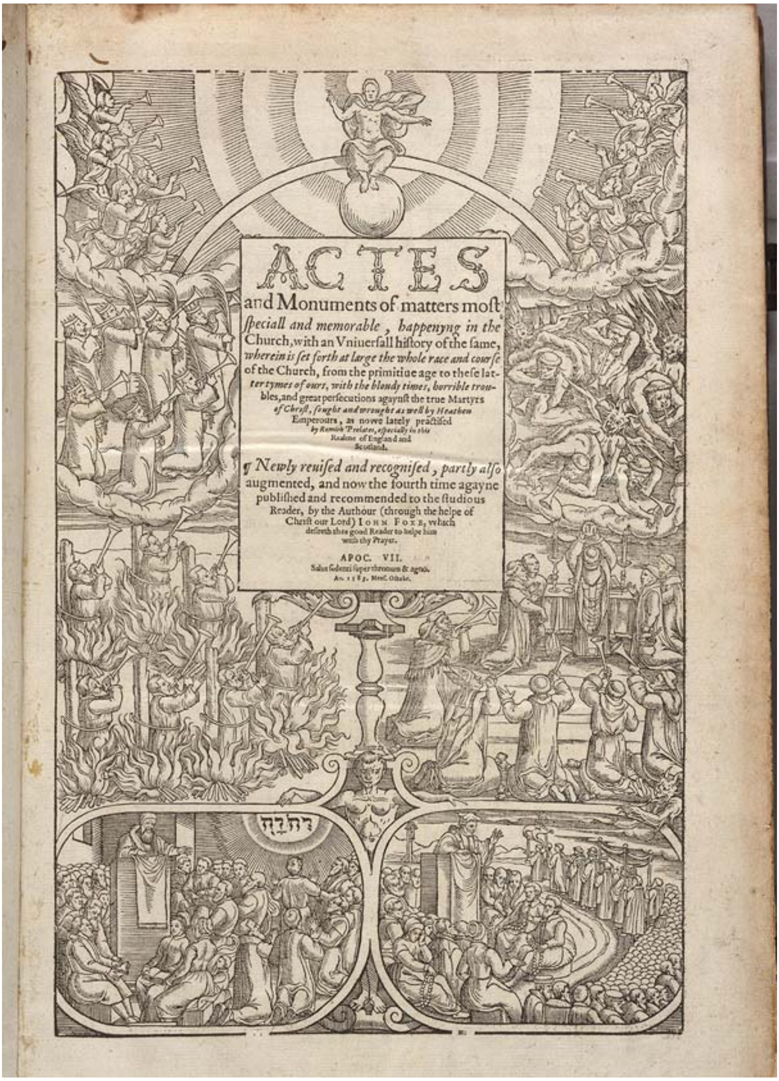

ACTES
and Monuments of matters moſt
ſpeciall and memorable, happenyng in the
Church, with an Vniuerſall hiſtory of the ſame,
wherein is ſet forth at large the whole race and courſe
of the Church, from the primitiue age to theſe lat-
ter tymes of ours, with the bloudy times, horrible trou-
bles, and great perſecutions agaynſt the true Martyrs
of Chriſt, ſought and wrought as well by Heathen
Emperours, as nowe lately practiſed
by Romish Prelates, eſpecially in this
Realme of England and
Scotland.

¶ *Newly reuiſed and recogniſed, partly alſo*
augmented, and now the fourth time agayne
publiſhed and recommended to the ſtudious
Reader, by the Authour (through the helpe of
Chriſt our Lord) IOHN FOXE, which
deſireth thee good Reader to helpe him
with thy Prayer.

APOC. VII.
Salus ſedenti ſuper thronum & agno.
An. 1583. Menſ. Octob.

Figure 3.6 A Catholic Mass (upper right), on the title page to John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* [. . .] ([London]: [Iohn Daye], 1583), RB 59843.

Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

John Bale, an early English Reformer, suggests why stone altars smacked of Rome and thus were targeted as what he labels "first poisons." According to Bale, English churches received from Rome a steady supply of articles that linked the authority of Rome to England's local bishops. Among "their fyrst spiriituall prouysyons" from Rome brought into England, alongside surplices, vestments, and candlesticks, were "super altares."[55] These, as well as the fixed stone altars below them, would become, under Edward's brief reign, charged material remainders of Rome's lithic genealogy that had to be eradicated. The superaltars, akin to the Stone of Scone, were attractively more mobile, and their ability to be carried made them of potentially greater threat than even the parish stone altars. Lithic authority might now be more easily moved not just from Jerusalem to Rome, but from Rome to London and the countryside beyond.

Another illustration from John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* concerning Edward VI and his Privy Council speaks to the enthusiasm with which some Reformers would undertake to purge the English church of Rome's material "first poisons." As Margaret Aston details in her reading of Reformation iconography, after the young King Edward's death, John Foxe completely overhauled his entry on the king and, in the 1570 edition, included a nearly full-page illustration that commemorated Edward's role as Josiah, purging the church.[56]

In Figure 3.7, the top panel portrays a procession of "Papistes" emptying the church. The figures bear several devotional items of "papistrye": Mass books, a censor, staffs, a tiara, a candlestick. Led by a figure carrying an aspergillum and sacring bell, they trudge away from the cleansed church towards the "ship of the Romish church." Near the procession's middle, a figure staggers with a burden of a sack labeled with the sign of St. Peter's keys. While one cannot be certain what his pack contains, a shrewd observer might suspect it to contain the newly forbidden superaltars, the consecrated altar stones which signified Peter's—and hence Rome's—power, the material "keys" that might bind an earthly to heavenly kingdom during the Mass.

Stone altars, then, were not the only church furniture that might be dismantled by a Josiah-like fury. Other "popes wares" singled out for purging were superaltars, which one anti-Catholic polemicist, Barnard Garter,

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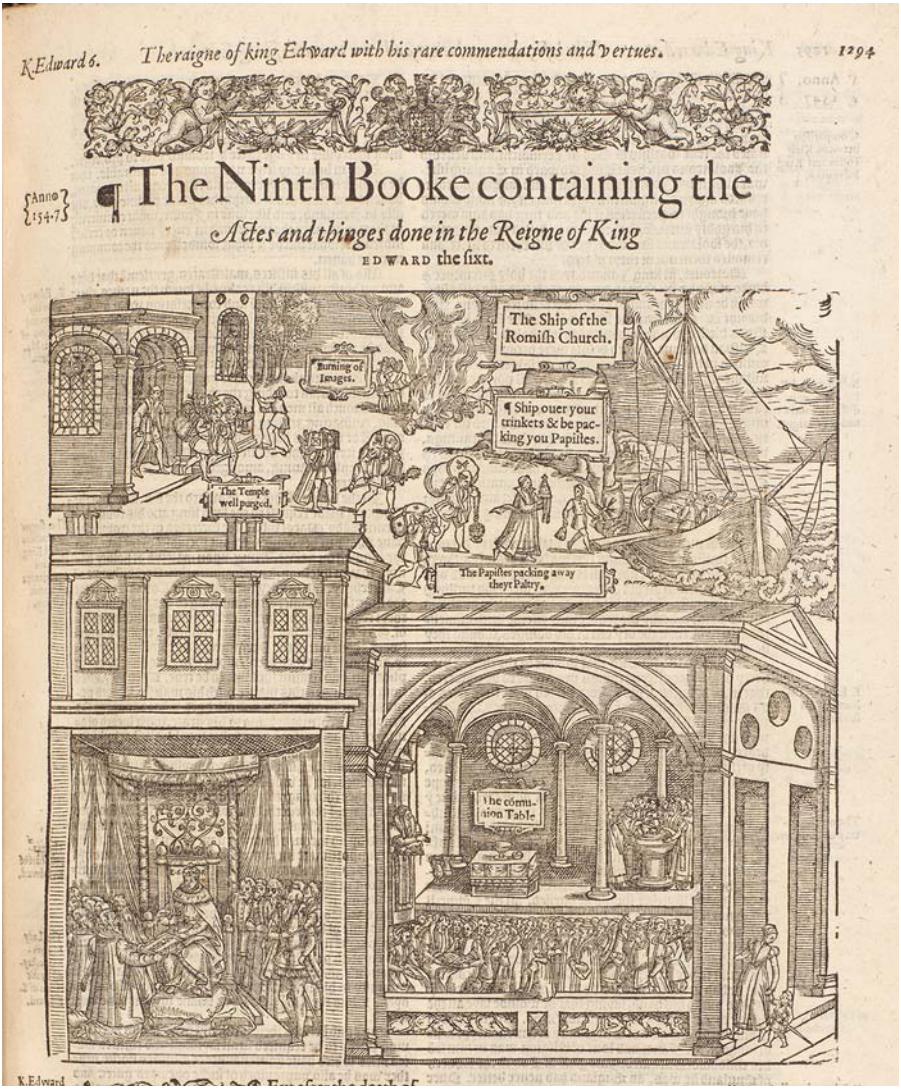
[55] John Bale, *The First Two Partes of the Actes or Vnchast Examples of the Englysh Votaryes*, STC (2nd ed.) 1273.5 (London: For John Bale . . . and are to be solde wythin Paules chayne, at the sygne of S. John Baptist, 1551), sigs. C8^{v}–D^{r}.

[56] Margaret Aston, *The King's Bedpost: Reformation and Iconography in a Tudor Group Portrait* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 159–61.



K.Edward 6. The raigne of king Edward with his rare commendations and vertues. 1294

Anno 1547.

¶ The Ninth Booke containing the Actes and thinges done in the Reigne of King EDWARD the ſixt.

The Ship of the Romiſh Church.
Burning of Images.
¶ Ship ouer your trinkets & be packing you Papiſtes.
The Temple well purged.
The Papiſtes packing away theyr Paltry.
The cōmunion Table

Figure 3.7 Detail of the purging of the English church from John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* [. . .] (London: Iohn Daye, 1570), sig. AAAa1^r, RB 114920:731 (fragment).

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defines as "a quadrant or stone, four square of Marble, and hathe at euerye corner, and in the middest, a Crosse, and is halowed."[57] Portrayed, presumably to help in identifying them, in a foldout of popish merchandize, they literalize Rome's lithic keys (Figure 3.8).

These portable stone slabs could be used as a substitute altar on which the Mass might be said, particularly in recusant homes. As Jay Zysk shows, these superaltars materialized the importance within Catholic worship of sanctified bodies and sacrifice.[58] In many cathedrals, parts of a saint's body might be found entombed under an altar or shrine, and in some cases, they would

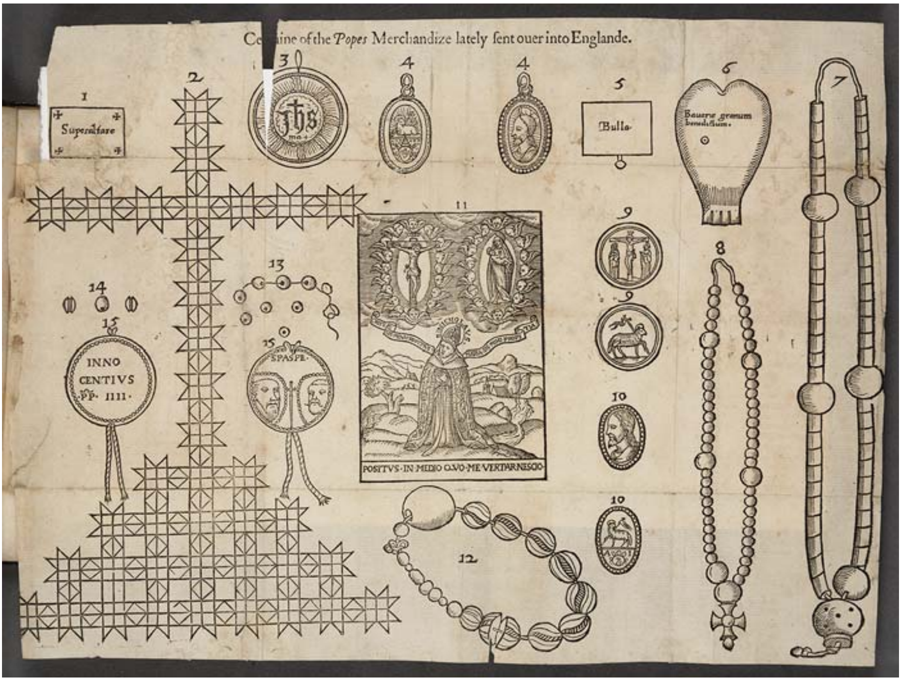
Ce ine of the Popes Merchandize lately ſent ouer into Englande.
1
Superaltare
2
3
IHS
4
4
5
Bulla
6
7
11
9
9
8
13
14
15
INNO CENTIVS PP. IIII.
15
SPASPE
POSITVS IN MEDIO QVO ME VERTAM NESCIO
10
10
12

Figure 3.8 A superaltar (upper left) among other items of the "Popes Merchandize lately sent over into Englande," from a foldout illustration in B. G. [Bernard Garter], *A newyeares gifte: dedicated to the Popes Holinesse, and all Catholikes addicted to the Sea of Rome* [. . .] (London: Henry Bynneman, 1579), foldout prior to sig. A1^{r}, RB 59895.

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[57] B. G. [Bernard Garter], *A newyeares gifte: dedicated to the Popes Holinesse, and all Catholikes addicted to the Sea of Rome* (London: Printed by Henry Bynneman, 1579), sig. H2^{r}.

[58] Zysk, *Shadow and Substance*, 159–60.

be encased within the superaltar, rendering the bones within the stones key to host transformation.[59] Such a bone to stone transformation in a spiritual key recalls the anxieties of human engendering and degendering into stone I discuss in chapter 2 in regard to Edmund Spenser's iron man, Talus.

That Spenser also had in mind these stony spiritual remainders might be glimpsed in an episode from *The Faerie Queene*, book 1. Whether or not the allusion is deliberate, the figure of Kirkrapine recalls the procession from Foxe's illustration. The narrator introduces Kirkrapine, whose name literally describes his profession, a robber of churches, as "a stout and sturdy thiefe" (1.3.17). "Wont to robbe Churches of their ornaments," Kirkrapine "in at the window crept" to spoil the churches in "nightly selths and pillage seuerall" (1.3.17, 16). He would then bestow all he found, not in the "ship of the Romish Church" but with Abessa, whose name is suggestive of "abbess" and who is the deaf and nonspeaking daughter to a "woman blind" Corceca (1.3.18). Spenser's allegorically resonant names point to those who have "blindness of heart" (from the Latin *cor* or heart and *caecum* blind) and the Catholic abbeys and monasteries ("Abessa") that within Reformed rhetoric were products of ignorant superstition that robbed the true church.

On the particular night recounted, Kirkrapine arrives laden down with "a heauy load he bare" and is angered to find the door locked (1.3.16). As in Foxe's woodcut, Spenser's narrator leaves the contents of the "heauy load" to the reader's imagination (1.3.16). But he does prompt readers to note its "great weight." Although many church ornaments are weighty, the text leaves open the possibility that Kirkrapine might carry, along with "gold and rings" as gifts to Abessa, the consecrated stone altar slabs of a superaltar (1.3.18).[60] Unlike in Foxe, however, the anti-papal stance is less strident because Kirkrapine is a robber, not a godly iconoclast. And, while Foxe's procession of Papists might sail away in their Romish ship, Kirkrapine pays for his crimes. When he forces entry, Una's lion (the true church) surprises him, and "straight him rent in thousand peeces small," a fate not entirely dissimilar to the destroyed stone altars rent apart by the enterprising godly (1.3.20). With the spoils of a consecrated superaltar, Corceca or Abessa might have the Mass administered in their small, remote cottage, a tradition, as we shall see, that recusant priests often practiced when traveling to and from remote recusant households in England.

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[59] W. H. Sewell, "On Sealed Altar-Slabs," *Norfolk Archaeology: Or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to the Antiquities of the County of Norfolk*, vol. 8 (Norwich: Miller and Leavins, 1879), 87–118. Sewell notes that a portable altar might contain relics within it.

[60] The ambiguity of the episode has long troubled critics eager to promote Spenser's godly sensibilities, as Kirkrapine would seemingly also indict iconoclasts such as those under King Edward VI who dismantled churches. For those who have sought to read the thefts as neutral, see Mother Mary Robert Falls, "Spenser's Kirkrapine and the Elizabethans," *Studies in Philology* 1 (1953): 457–75. For those who see it as a misappropriation of ecclesiastical wealth, see Darryl J. Gless, "Abessa, Corceca, Kirkrapine," in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 3–4. Many simply read the items as the "material trappings of religion," as does Sean Kane, *Spenser's Moral Allegory* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1989), 38. It is likely that Kirkrapine is both an example of misappropriated wealth in the Catholic Church but also of the excesses of Protestant reform; see John N. King, *Spenser's Poetry and the Reformation Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 56–7. That Kirkrapine's crime is one against people, rather than a mere building, see Kathryn Walls,

I will return to the variety of practical uses to which stones from altars and superaltars were put in a moment, but even as many an enterprising Kirkrapine was busy making off with holy church furniture, Reformers proposed a logical substitute to the Catholic stone altar. John Foxe's woodcut illustrates their solution. In the lower right panel of Foxe's image, a room contains "The communion Table," below which a crowd of people read and listen to the gospel (Figure 1.3.7). The 1570 edition describes how this "Table" or communion "bord" was moveable and typically made of wood. In response to centuries of stony tradition, Foxe records how Bishop Ridley issued a rationale composed of six answers as to why wood would be preferable to stone. The first reason goes straight to the biblical heart of the matter: "For the vse of an aultar is to make sacrifice vpon it: the vse of a table is to serue for men to eate vpon" (Book 9, 1558).[61] It was, Ridley says, but "popishe opinion" that the Mass "might not be celebrated but upon an aultar, or at the least upon a superaltare" (Book 9, 1558).[62] Underlying these injunctions lay anxiety over the relationship among stone, altars, and the Real Presence.

Unsurprisingly, confusion existed over whether the altars needed to be abolished, replaced, or merely renamed. In 1547, as reported in London's Greyfriars church, the more zealous believers took it upon themselves to purge "the tombs, great stones, all the altars."[63] Bishop Ridley's injunctions for the London diocese in 1550 listed among other forbidden church ornaments that "neither that there be used any superaltaries."[64] The injunctions target not only fixed stone altars, but also the "Superaltaries," which were the slabs of stone marked with five crosses that might be laid upon a wooden

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"Archbishop Cranmer's 'Poor Box' Injunction and *The Faerie Queene*, I.iii.16–18," *Notes and Queries*, no. 3 (2001): 251–54.

[61] Foxe, "The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO."

[62] Ibid.

[63] For this incident, see Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 269 and 269n.38.

[64] Walter Howard Frere, *Visitation Articles and Injunctions*, 3 vols. (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1910), 2:241.

frame, similar to but less portable than a superaltar. Edward himself noted in his own journal in mid-1550 the instruction for the removal of *all* London altars.[65] The relative success of such an injunction, despite the shock waves of Marian reform, can be seen in the records cited by Fincham and Tyacke showing that by 1625 "virtually the only stone altar known then to be in use by English protestants was that recently erected at Durham cathedral."[66]

Other accounts highlight the rechristening of the "altar" as an "honest" table or the Lord's board. For instance, it was remembered in 1550 that "the sacrifice of the masse abolished (for which sacrifice only alters were erected), these (call them wat you please) are no more altars, but tables of stone or timber."[67] Even if, it goes on to argue, the "tables" were made of stone, they were not in effect altars, but rather tables. But such a rechristening, later ecclesiastic courts argue, were lost on most worshippers: "stone tables might have been continued, but it was feared, without their removal, the notion among the simple, that a real sacrifice was offered up, would have remained."[68] Later, more established Anglican churches would not entirely banish stone as substance for the "lord's bord," but typically, "wood or similarly suitable material" would be the preferred material.[69] At stake, then, is not just the form, shape, or even placement of the "lord's bord" but also the *matter* of it. "Altars in Poperie," in contradistinction to the Lord's board, were of stone, "*quia Petra erat Christus*, because the Rock was Christ."[70]

Following Edward's death and the Catholic Mary's accession, a great stone hunt began, making manifest the extent of Kirkrapine's pillage. The fate of Hadley's stone altar was that of many parish churches. In Cardinal Pole's own diocese of Canterbury, an "altar stone headed the list" in an inquiry into the fate of alienated church goods led by Archdeacon Harpsfield. Parishes were told to "enquire of the altar stones" to find out "where the altar stones became," and to return a certificate about it.[71] Henry Machyn's diary for December 1553 recalls how "evere parryche" was "to make a auter."[72] Following Mary's orders entailed numerous expenses and prompted a variety of creative, and sometimes outraged, responses on the part of parishioners seeking to comply.[73]

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[65] According to Aston, "Edward noted in his journal in June 1550 this instruction for the removal of London altars, 5 months before the government order of 23 Nov. which referred to the already accomplished removal of many altars:" Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 270n.40.

[66] Fincham, *Altars Restored*, 129.

[67] The recording of the Edwardian injunctions during a nineteenth-century court case are illustrative as they recap and affirm many of the concerns of the Reformation church in Anglican culture. See Faulkner v. Litchfield (1845) in *The English Reports* (London: Stevens & Sons, 1900–32), 1027. This case references, among others, the Edwardian injunctions of November 24, 1550. See also *The Royal Injunctions of Edward VI* (Transc. Grafton's Edition, 1547), cited in Walter Howard Frere, ed., *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation: Volume II: 1536–1557* (London: Longmans Green & Company, 1910), 243.

[68] *The English Reports*, 1027.

[69] For the Protestant preference for wooden tables, see Fincham, *Altars Restored*, 4, 25, 73, 135.

[70] The Bishop of Worcester, for instance, dwelt at length on the construction of altars in the Book of Exodus to argue the primitive church differed from "Popish" use of stone altars, see Gervase Babington, *Comfortable Notes Upon the Bookes of Exodus and Leviticus* (London, Printed [by H. Lownes and T. Purfoot] for Thomas Chard, 1604), sig. X3$^{r–v}$ or 326; and sig. Cc3^{r} or 403.

Despite the evident fervor to restore the proper foundation stones to the mass, finding the scattered stones proved a challenge. Eamon Duffy recalls the difficulties of enacting the orders to set up stone altars, yet "the Kent returns make it clear that in virtually every parish by 1557 there was a high altar of stone."[74] While it was reported that some late vicars, such as one Patrick Browne, had destroyed the altar table, most altars had been swiftly repurposed by enterprising locals.[75] At Smarden in Kent, the altar stone had to be dug out of the highway. The high altar stones from Sutton Valence and Harlip had to be recouped from the fireplaces of Master Harper and Master Norton of Norwood, who had built them into their chimneys.[76] In some cases, altar-stones would play important roles in later uprisings when they would be unearthed from "middens and quarries" where they had been hidden.[77] Other stone altar components, such as the alabaster tables and reredos, ended up as far away as France, as one archaeological account would have it, "sold at the time of the Reformation, when England voluntarily deprived herself of such ornaments."[78]

Finding the dismantled altar stones thus required digging up roadways, toppling chimneys, searching quarries and middens, or traveling abroad to restore church furnishings. Some parishioners, however, hit on a more immediate, less labor-intensive solution. During Archdeacon Harpsfield's 1557 Canterbury visitation, he kept encountering "gravestones in use as altar tables, as well as an altarstone that had been placed on a grave."[79] "Seemly stone altars" emphasized a harassed Bishop Bonner, not just "any gravestone taken from the burial, or other unseemly place, and put up for an altar, but a meet and convenient stone, as hath been accustomed in times past, were needed on which to celebrate mass."[80] Bishop Bonner's response regarding the "unseemly" use of gravestones for altars suggests that the Counter Reformation church made distinctions between sacred relics and bones such as those of St. Peter, and those repurposed from the church graveyard. A crucial aspect of this process of restoring altar stones revolved around the proper and "seemly" steps to consecration.

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[71] Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 286n.82.

[72] Henry Machyn, *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, from AD 1550–AD 1563*, ed. John Gogh Nichols (London: Camden Society, 1848), 50.

[73] See D. M. Loades, *The Reign of Mary Tudor: Politics, Government, and Religion in England, 1553–1558* (London: Ernest Benn, 1979), 172, 343ff.

[74] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400—1580* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 557.

[75] Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 286n.83.

[76] Machyn, *The Diary of Henry Machyn,* 37, 42.

[77] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 583.

[78] Paul Biver, "Some Examples of English Alabaster Tables in France," *The Archaeological Journal* 67, no. 1 (1910): 66–87 at 78.

But the reconstruction and re-consecration of lithic altars was to be short-lived. For, following Mary's death, the religious tide would again turn, and much of this stonework was, in the first year of Queen Elizabeth, once again ordered destroyed. As Henry Machyn recounts in his diary, a James Anderson was paid for two days of work carrying away "the stones and rubbishe abowt th'altars" and three poore men were tasked with "burying of the alter table to [a] Mr. Hodgis."[81] In the Diocese of Norwich, John Parkhurst's 1561 visitation included an injunction that the "stones, foundations" and altars designed to advance Catholic worship be made "quiet clean and taken away"; in addition, the people were to be asked as to "whether any man is knowen" who "reserveth . . . superalteries" or "other instruments of this supersticion" relating to the Catholic Mass.[82] In an Englished rebuttal to sermons delivered by a bishop under Mary regarding the Real Presence in the Mass, Robert Crowley storms that if one follows scripture, then that believer must abandon "Altars, and Superaltaries" as "Apishe toyes."[83] Edward Dering, as part of a polemical exchange in the preface to "the Christian reader," fulminates that the pope "hath no Warrant in the Word of God," and thus neither do "Superaltaries."[84] Yet despite such rhetorical vehemence, the fact that the Convocation of 1571 felt it necessary to enjoin churchwardens to see that a "joined handsome table" be erected for Holy Communion and that all "reliques of superstition be cleane away" suggests that in practice there was either confusion or reluctance to dismantle stone altars.[85] Likely both.

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[79] Nicholas Harpsfield, *Archdeacon Harpsfield's Visitation*, ed. W. Sharp and L. E. Whatmore, vol. 1 (London: Catholic Record Society, 1950–1), 74, 98, 115, 130; 2.180, 201, 204, 206, 210, 227, 246.

[80] Frere, *Visitation Articles and Injunctions*, 2.344 no.53; see also Bishop White's articles for Lincoln in 1556, ibid., 2.397 no. 5.

[81] Machyn, *The Diary of Henry Machyn*, 50.

[82] Frere, *Visitation Articles and Injunctions*, 3. 100 no. 13, 104 no. 36, 105 no. 53.

[83] Robert Crowley, *A Setting Open of the Subtyle Sophistrie of Thomas Vvatson Doctor of Diuinitie Which He Vsed in Hys Two Sermons Made before Queene Mary* (London: By Henry Denham, 1569), sig. C^r.

[84] Edward Dering, *A Sparing Restraint of Many Lavishe Untruthes* (London: By Henry Denham, for Humfrey Toy, dwelling in Poules Church yarde, at the signe of the Helmet, 1568), sig. **3^r.

From Edward's reign throughout the remainder of the long Reformation, stones were alternately a charged focus of devotion or of alleged superstition. Stone altars were a material trace of a Real Presence, indexical of sacrifice, across space and time. For instance, in 1627 a dispute over altar placement was given further charge by opponents who claimed that the instigator not only wished to change the position of the communion table, but that he also promised to "erect a stone altar which could not be moved."[86] In 1635 a local bishop, John Bridgeman, allowed a medieval stone altar to be re-erected at the east end of Chester cathedral; grievances presented to the Long Parliament levied this charge against him as well as the charge that he "paid for the replacement of a wooden communion table at Bangor . . . with a railed stone altar."[87] Although Laudian reforms of cathedrals on occasion featured the replacement with a stone altar, as at Durham Cathedral in 1626, there was not any official encouragement of it and stone or marble altars "remained rarities."[88] Such idiosyncrasy, however, likely contributes to later Puritan reaction that returned to an Edwardian fury of iconoclasm.[89] The prohibitions in August of 1643 included "all altars and tables of stone" along with images and pictures of saints.[90] When eventually churches and altars were restored in the period of 1660–*c.*1700, with an influential model being Christopher Wren's city churches of London, "most altars were also of wood" with a few notable exceptions, such as the piece of marble comprising the table at All Hallows the Great.[91]

As the historical as well as the imaginative narratives show, the fabric of altars was neither an indifferent nor a dull matter. The repeated injunctions to assemble or dismantle stone altars from their central place in the Christian liturgical service at various points across the long Reformation reveal that churchly cornerstones and stone altars remained a locus of Christian sacrifice and could not quite be forgotten. While debates over altar fabric festered on in ecclesiastical settings, enterprising writers and publishers resituated the stone altar within another location of great authority: the printed page. The final section of this chapter turns to a new site for the building and display of stone altars that ranged beyond the architectural church and into books of pious devotion. This stony locus engendered a newly material practice, one whose mobility augured an increasingly hybrid geography wherein stone altar and fleshly human would dwell together as one encased in a new binding.

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[85] William Edward Collins, ed., *The Canons of 1571 in English and Latin* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1899), 64.

[86] Fincham, *Altars Restored*, 178–9.

[87] Ibid., 200–1.

[88] Ibid., 232–3, 241, and 254.

[89] Jacqueline Eales, "Iconoclasm, Iconography and the Altar in the English Civil War," *The Church and the Arts, Studies in Church History* 28 (1992): 318.

[90] Fincham, *Altars Restored*, 277.

[91] Ibid., 348.

Church Furniture to Printed Frontispiece

Although stone altars were periodically banished from the church, they were not easily eradicated from the lithic imagination of English devotional culture. The last great edition of the Bishop's Bible, published in 1602, features an elaborate title page at whose cynosure stands an altar that appears to be a stone plinth (Figure 3.9). In the central title cartouche, the altar bears a sacrificial lamb, trussed with his four legs bound and his neck dangling from the altar's top. Directly underneath the altar, Luke and John pause in the middle of writing their gospels to gaze at the sacrificial lamb.

As Corbett and Lightbown observe in *The Comely Frontispie*ce, "below the table is a large cut stone" which rests on the inscription *cum priuilegio*, the words, of course, that grant authority for publication.[92] Following the upward gaze of the apostles above the sacrificial altar, the reader discovers at the image's apex the Paschal Lamb. No longer trussed up for sacrifice, the spritely lamb sports a nimbus at its head rather than an altar. The title page's central vertical axis thus portrays the transformation of the lamb, signifying Christ, from sacrifice and death to heavenly resurrection. Here on the central book of Protestant devotional practice, the lithic continues to underwrite the central Christian miracle and transformation. Following the Edwardian and Elizabethan controversies over the Lord's board versus a stone altar that were waged in church parishes with the mantling and dismantling of altars, the title image poses a provocative foundation. Although less explicit than the images of the Mass of St. Gregory where the risen Christ appears above the elevated host and stone altar, it tells the same story coded in familiar semiotics of holy matter.

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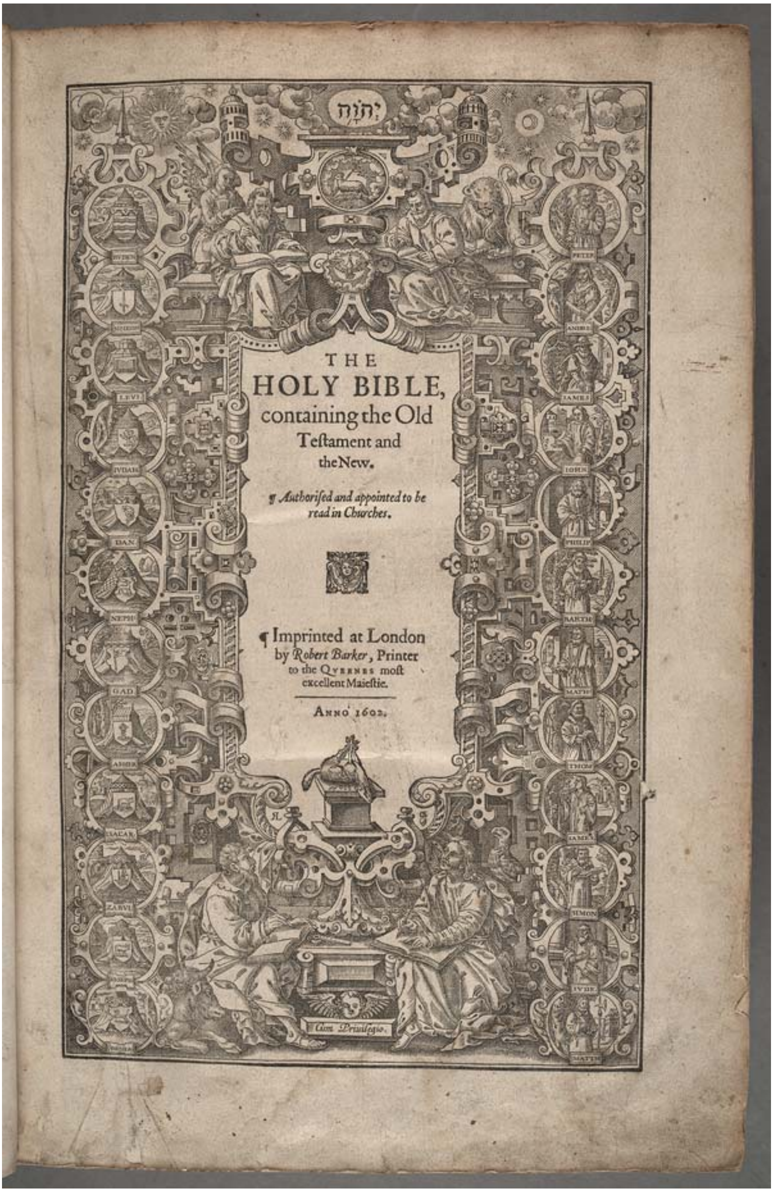
[92] Mary Corbett and Ronald Lightbown, *The Comely Frontispiece: The Emblematic Title-Page in England, 1550–1660* (London, Henley, and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 91. I follow Corbett and Lightbown and use the early modern sense of *frontispiece*: "The first page of a book, pamphlet, or magazine, or what is printed on it; the title page including illustrations and table of contents; an introduction, a preface" (*OED*, n.2a).



THE
HOLY BIBLE,
containing the Old
Teſtament and
the New.

¶ *Authoriſed and appointed to be*
read in Churches.

¶ Imprinted at London
by *Robert Barker*, Printer
to the QVEENES moſt
excellent Maieſtie.

ANNO 1602.

Cum Priuilegio.

יְהֹוָה
LEVI
IVDAH
DAN
NEPH
GAD
ASHER
ISACAR
ZABVL
PETER
ANDRE
IAMES
IOHN
PHILIP
BARTH
MATH
THOM
IAMES
SIMON
IVDE

Figure 3.9 Title page to *The Holy Bible* [. . .], Bishops' Version (London: Robert Barker, 1602), RB 3347.

Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

As Paul Dyck compellingly argues, this elaborate, distinguished title page marks a new departure in the series of pictorial Bible and religious title pages wherein the altar with a sacrifice, either the lamb or, later, a heart, appear as central emblematic elements, not of the architectural church, but of its authorizing scripture, the Bible.[93] Dyck's work tracks how the altar becomes a common feature of the pious book and concludes with a reading of Herbert's "The Altar" as situated within this tradition of devotional reading practice. Subject of controversy and consistent theme, stone perdures into post-Reformation culture.

Building on Dyck's insights, I argue that these altar frontispieces do more than engage a debate over the word versus the image. Their pictorial rhetoric shifts the lithic locus of authority to the printed word in ways that recall the Catholic Church's claim to St. Peter's keys. If, as much Reformed polemic worked so hard to prove, Christ is the cornerstone, then the vernacular Bible with His words might be claimed as the foundation stone for the Church of England. The shift from stony outcropping in Jerusalem, to St. Peter's keys, to Christ's word as translated in the English Bible might seem to confirm the dematerialization of spirituality often associated with the emphasis within Protestantism on the word. In its contours it enacts a Pauline supersession from the "letters and ingrauen in stones" of the Old Testament to a New "ministration of the spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:7–8). Yet the reemergence of the stone altar complicates a seemingly immaterialized "spirit" of rhetoric. Its presence insists upon reminding readers of an all-important material grounding. In an almost circular fashion, it asks its readers to equate the letters within as a manifestation of those old words "ingrauen in stones" (2 Corinthians 3:7). James Kearney argues that the combined polemic that emphasizes Christ as word made flesh and material book culture fostered what he terms an "incarnate text."[94] The rhetoric at work in the visual layout of the biblical title page might also arguably foster a "lithic text." By relocating the keystone of salvation within the Bible, the Church of England's cornerstone, the book itself now held the keys to grant authority and, by extension, the transformative power inherent to the sacrificial binding crucial to salvation.

Two later title pages of books that were also cornerstones of the English church further illustrate the fascination with relocating a lithic materialism.

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[93] Paul Dyck, "Altar, Heart, Title-Page: The Image of Holy Reading," *English Literary Renaissance* 43, no. 3 (2013): 541–71.

[94] See James Kearney, *The Incarnate Text: Imagining the Book in Reformation England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

With King James's ascent to the throne in 1603, a new appeal to the authority of the English church as against that of the papacy appears to have been warranted. Devotional title pages that amplify the altar architecture of the 1602 Bible proliferate. The title page to *The Book of Common Prayer* (Figure 3.10) as printed by Robert Parker in 1615, for instance, features an architectural stony plinth as base for an altar. On the altar top, the Tetragrammaton hovers in a triangular nimbus of glory above the altar's sacrifice: here symbolized by a flaming heart rather than a Paschal Lamb. At the image's base, David kneels with his harp. This frontispiece was reprinted in thirteen successive editions through 1639. It also appears as frontispiece to *The Holy Bible* as printed by B. Norton and J. Bill in 1618 with seven successive editions up to 1638.[95]

Another religious pillar of England's faith, Lewis Bayley's bestselling *Practise of Pietie* (entered into the Stationer's Register in 1612, although the earliest extant edition is the third), similarly deploys a stony altar (Figure 3.11). Divided into a vertical triptych, the book title appears within the central arch, housed within an altar. At the altar's top kneels a penitent believer before another smaller altar, where a heart flames in the place of sacrifice. The tagline reads: "A broken heart o lord despise not." The bottom part of the triptych shows a landscape reminiscent of King Josiah's cleansing of the temple, a cleansing that destroyed pagan groves and stone pillars. Its import for the Edwardian reform has already been noted, and the "spirit, flesh, faith, prayer, and fasting" further gesture to an entanglement of body and matter within worship practice.

Two emblematic elements of these new frontispieces contribute to the lithic supersession within these three cornerstone devotional texts of the English church. The first concerns the figure of David, who kneels, harp in hand, below the altar. The second concerns the pictorial transformation for the sacrifice of the altar from the Catholic host, to lamb, to human heart. Tradition has it that David, as shown earlier in this chapter, chose the site for the first Jewish temple. Acting on God's advice, David purchased the threshing floor of a Jebusite farmer, Araunah, and thereon erected an altar and offered sacrifices. It was generally accepted that the threshing floor and sacrificial altar stood atop the same Foundation Stone on Mount Moriah, now below the Dome of the Rock.[96] 2 Samuel records how David envisioned an

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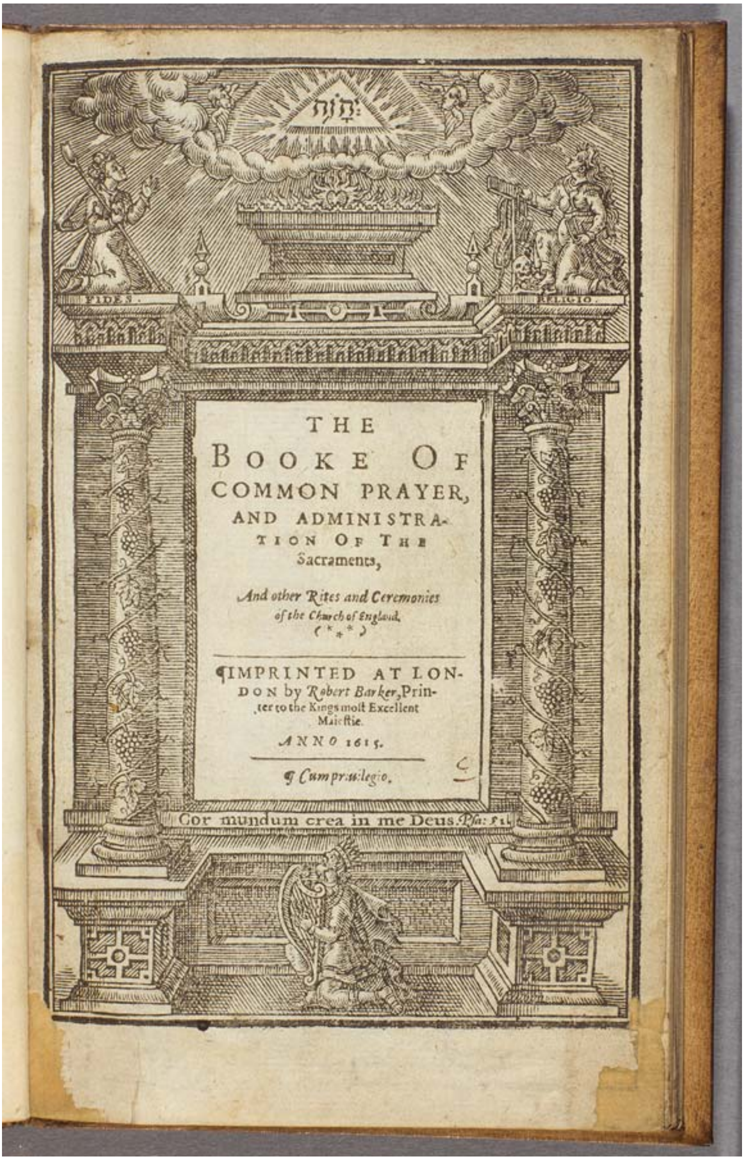
[95] See entry 272 in R. B. McKerrow and F. S. Ferguson, *Title-Page Borders Used in England & Scotland, 1485–1640* (London: Bibliographical Society at the Oxford University Press, 1932).

[96] For more on the choosing of the temple site, see Comay, *The Temple of Jerusalem with the History of the Temple Mount*, 28–32; and Eliav, *God's Mountain*, 6–7, 227.


יְהוָה
FIDES.
RELIGIO.

THE
BOOKE OF
COMMON PRAYER,
AND ADMINISTRA-
TION OF THE
Sacraments,

And other Rites and Ceremonies
of the Church of England.
(*.*)

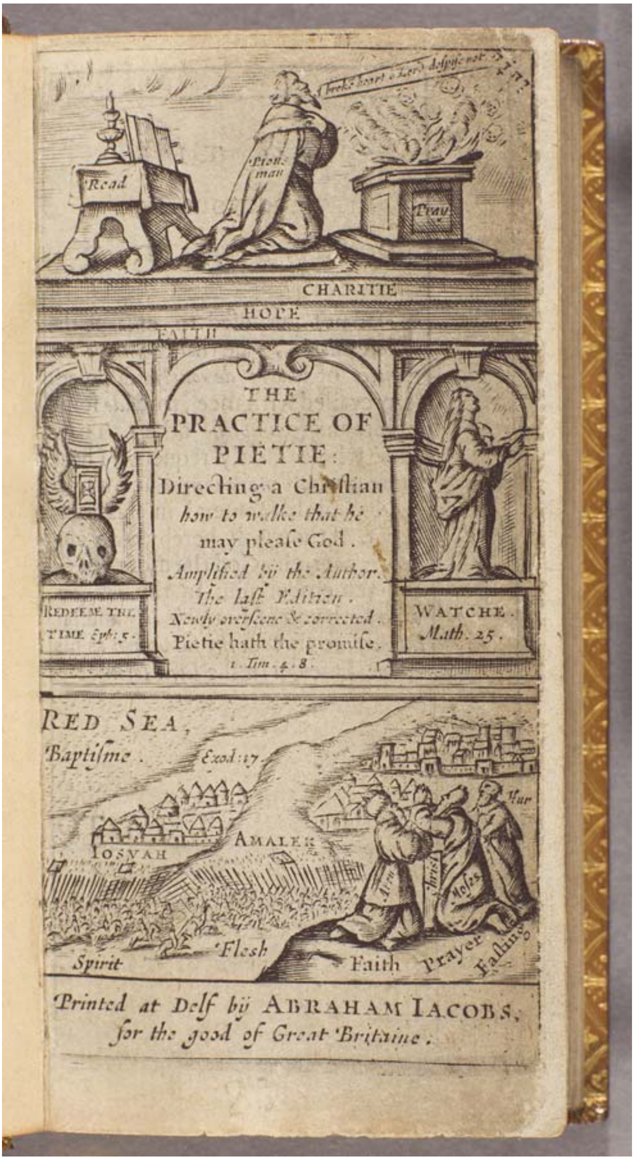
¶IMPRINTED AT LON-
DON by *Robert Barker*, Prin-
ter to the Kings moſt Excellent
Maieſtie.
ANNO 1615.

¶ *Cum privilegio.*

Cor mundum crea in me Deus. *Psa:* 51.

Figure 3.10 Title page to *The Booke Of Common Prayer* (London: Robert Barker, 1615), RB 45358.

Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.



THE
PRACTICE OF
PIETIE:
Directing a Chriſtian
how to walke that he
may pleaſe God.
Amplified bÿ the Author.
The laſt Edition.
Newly overſeene & corrected.
Pietie hath the promiſe.
1. Tim. 4. 8.

Printed at Delf bÿ ABRAHAM IACOBS,
for the good of Great Britaine.

Read
Pious man
A broken heart o Lord despise not
Pray
CHARITIE
HOPE
FAITH
REDEEME THE TIME *Eph: 5.*
WATCHE. *Math. 25.*
RED SEA,
Baptiſme.
Exod: 17.
IOSVAH
AMALEK
Hur
Aron
Christ
Moses
Flesh
Spirit
Faith
Prayer
Faſting

Figure 3.11 Title page to Lewis Bayley's *The Practice of Pietie* [. . .] (Delft: Abraham Iacobs, [1635?]), RB 111964.

Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

angel with a sword on the rock where God would direct him to build an altar, and later the temple.[97] David's appearance, harp in hand before the altar in an image from a fifteenth-century psalter (Figure 3.12), testifies to this long biblical, and Jewish, heritage. His presence before the altar (above which the viewer glimpses the risen Christ) further cements an associative link between David's transformative powers and those of the stone altar.

As Anne Lake Prescott demonstrates, David, author of the Psalms and soother of King Saul's devilish melancholy, held close allusive connections with the classical figure of Orpheus and other musicians who could produce "astonishing effects" on both spiritual and physical worlds.[98] David, like Orpheus, mediated between earthly and heavenly worlds. The "orphic David," moreover, was a type of Christ and thus a generative figure with transformative power. David's location before the altar highlights the transformative power of the altar stones as a sacrificial place where matter might be bound and loosed—where the host, and the human heart, would be transformed.[99] David, like Orpheus, might move and transform stone.

As a biblical figure, and especially as author of the Psalms, David would become an ever more central figure within English Protestantism. Although in the late medieval imagery he might have been understood to have an almost alchemical role in the transformation of matter, later he'd be associated with the Orphic and classical myth as a figure who might be interpreted to illustrate the superiority of words to the matter they shape.[100] As a figural human catalyst, he seemingly holds the power to create harmonies that, as

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[97] The biblical source for this episode is 2 Samuel 24:18–25. An angel of the Lord is about to visit a pestilence upon the Israelites for King David's transgression. But as an angel extended his hand to destroy the people, the Lord renounced punishment and stayed his hand; the angel with the sword that David sees was standing on the threshing floor that would become an altar and later the temple. For pilgrims' accounts of David's vision, see Ross, *Picturing Experience in the Early Printed Book*, 176. See also Shanks, *Jerusalem's Temple Mount*, 171–3.

[98] Anne Lake Prescott, "'Forms of Joy and Art': Donne, David, and the Power of Music," *John Donne Journal* 25 (2006): 3–36. See also John Warden, ed., *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

[99] For a classic examination of Orpheus's portrayal that gradually brought the pagan poet into Judaic and hence Christian culture during the late antique and medieval periods, see John Block Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). Friedman writes that as the myth evolved, there was a fairly early conflation of Orpheus and David with Christ: "the association of Orpheus with David came naturally to medieval writers as the association of Orpheus with Christ," 148. See also D. P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972).

[100] In her eloquent consideration of the Orpheus myth in early modern England, David's analogous role is somewhat surprisingly not mentioned by Jenny C. Mann, *The Trials of Orpheus: Poetry, Science, and the Early Modern Sublime* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021).

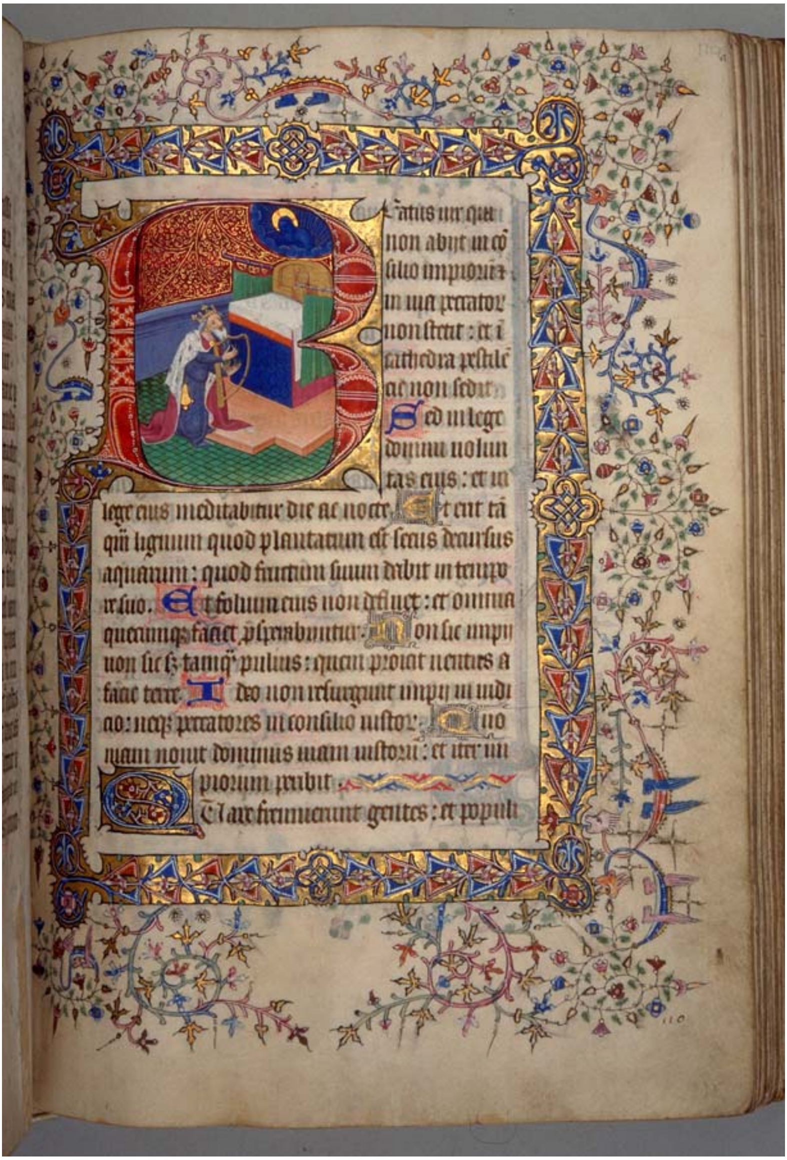

Figure 3.12 David kneeling, harp in hand, during the Mass from *The Burnet Psalter*. Early fifteenth century, fol. 125^{r}, MS 25.

Reproduced by permission of the University of Aberdeen Special Collections.

Whitney's emblem *Orphei musica* details, tames savage beasts, make "the trees, and rockes" to leave "their rooms," and pierces "hartes like marble harde."[101]

An influential generation of critics understood this attitude to be characteristic of Protestant anti-materialism in so far as they argued over the physical, bodily presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Illustrative of this, for instance, Malcom Mackenzie Ross argues that Protestant tradition reduces the material to "merely verbal shadow."[102] Even Jennifer Waldron, who sees a crosshatching of stony and human matter in Shakespeare's theatre, suggests that "for Protestant polemics, stones became paradigmatic of a category of dead matter that was arguably in the process of being invented and defined in relation to the lively human being."[103] In other words, within the Reforming culture of England, words and music, not stony matter, were transformative catalyst. By extension, the transference of stone altars' transformative powers to the devotional word might reduce immanent matter to verbal shadow, leaving behind substance. In such interpretive readings, stone loses its force, replaced by the shaping power of the word and of human rhetoric.

Yet, as Richard Strier argues, from the early sacramental view of nature present in Martin Luther's theology, Protestantism never fully severs matter from word.[104] Huston Diehl argues that Protestant Reformers in England repeatedly underscore that images are material objects, a reminder of their physicality even in acts of denunciation.[105] The figure of an Orphic David crouched below the altar on the title pages of Protestant devotional books may not be a symbol of an ascendant verbal power but instead point to a more generative, even alchemical, interaction of word and matter, as is his role in late medieval imagery. In her research on the figure of Orpheus, Jenny Mann shows how early modern thought emphasized the "preternatural force" of eloquent language to move gods, vegetal life, and even stones.[106] Yet even this seemingly potent force to control elemental matter is not as absolute as it might at first appear. As Mann illuminates, Orpheus's brutal dismemberment and impotence to rescue Eurydice suggest that even this myth of the great power of words is "under the purview of physics" and a "natural science of matter and motion," albeit one attuned to occult traditions.[107] Mann reads the Orphic figure of eloquence as one embedded and working with, and not merely over and against, a physical world. The figure of Orpheus (and by extension, David) thus point not to verbal ascendency but to the "palpable materiality" of language.[108] Mann poses a provocative question: if we approach the power of words from the "perspective of natural philosophy, we might ask, what constitutes the almighty 'power of persuasion' and how does it affect the body?"[109] Rephrasing her question slightly, I ask, what kind of material power might language draw from the lithic? David/Orpheus's appearance below the stone altar on the major frontispieces of Anglican devotional literature indexes the word to a foundational lithic bedrock.

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[101] Geffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes* (Leiden: In the house of Christopher Plantyn, by Francis Raphelengius, 1586), sig. a^{v}.

[102] Malcolm Mackenzie Ross, *Poetry and Dogma: The Transfiguration of Eucharistic Symbols in Seventeenth Century English Poetry* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1954), 69. See also R. V. Young, *Doctrine and Devotion in 17th-Century Poetry* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), 82–4.

[103] Jennifer Waldron, "Of Stones and Stony Hearts," 209.

[104] Richard Strier, "Martin Luther and the Real Presence in Nature," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37, no. 2 (2007): 271–303.

[105] Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage*, esp. 9–39.

Mann's research highlights that the ultimate aim of early modern persuasion and rhetoric is physical, to alter or change the physical bodies it encounters. But in the Orpheus story we witness more than a simple animation of elements by words; instead we see a precarious tension between the power of words and force of matter. The presence of the stone altar in the devotional frontispiece augurs another religious supersession, from St. Peter's stony keys and altars, to a new crucible, the Protestant printed word, which nonetheless relies on its authorizing power, the cornerstone, the sacrificial altar, Christ. In this rhetorical shift, the polemic, perhaps unwittingly, sutures ever more closely an immaterial deity to a foundational stone. Metaphor, not simile, makes Christ, not *like* the cornerstone, but *the* cornerstone. We witness a fully lithic incarnation.

The second element of these English devotional frontispieces that augurs a counterintuitive incarnation of stone into flesh concerns the transposition of the altar sacrifice. Catholic missals and devotional images often show a raised or elevated host above the altar. In the Church of England devotional frontispieces, instead, the viewer finds first the Paschal Lamb (that is Christ), and then, in the final apotheosis, a flaming heart. The pictorial logic substitutes human heart for host. George Whetstone's 1576 *The Rock*

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[106] Mann, "The Orphic Physics of Early Modern Eloquence," 231.
[107] Ibid., 233.
[108] Ibid., 234.
[109] Ibid., 235.

of Regard literalizes this trope: "A contrite heart is the sweete sacrifice / That thou dost seeke."[110] The stone altars within Catholic faith enshrined holy matter within them. The rhetoric of reform would enfold the lithic within the human body, as a stony heart, in need of transformation, a trope I take up in detail in chapter 4.

Henry Moore's Altar and St. Stephen Walbrook: "A Particular Chunk of Stone"

Foxe's recounting of the Hadley parish church furor that erupted with the rebuilding of the stone altar under the reign of Queen Mary opened this chapter. I close with another controversial altar,[111] this time in London, in the historic St. Stephen Walbrook church constructed in 1672, illustrated in Figure 3.13.[112] As Fincham and Tyacke detail, during the restoration of altars and churches in 1670s and 1680s London, the architect Sir Christopher Wren designed this church with an altarwise communion table that was to stand on a low ascent of marble paving.[113] Following damage sustained during the Second World War, the interior of the church needed repair. The congregation took a controversial step by commissioning the modernist sculptor Henry Moore to devise a new altar that made a statement about belief and what was seen to be the gospel's relationship to the modern world. What followed led to a lengthy controversy that was resolved only after it reached the highest ecclesiastical court, the Court of Ecclesiastical Cases Reserved.[114]

Drawing upon the Renaissance and Restoration history of St. Stephen Walbrook church, Henry Moore proposed an altar to be made of travertine marble, fittingly cut, the official website for St. Stephen Walbrook notes, from the quarry that once provided the marble for Michelangelo's work.

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[110] George Whetstone, *The Rocke of Regard* (London: [By H. Middleton] for Robert Waley, 1576), sig. Q3^{v}.

[111] The quotation in my section heading is from Mike Mee, "Henry Moore's Altar: A Particular Chunk of Stone," letter to the editor, *The New York Times*, November 6, 1988. https://www.nytimes.com/1988/11/06/arts/l-henry-moore-s-altar-a-particular-chunk-of-stone-953488.html.

[112] I'm grateful to Gambirasi Heathcliff, who first told me of this unique stone altar at St. Stephen Walbrook.

[113] Fincham, *Altars Restored*, 325.

[114] Formed in 1963, this court was created with appellate jurisdiction in cases of doctrine, ritual, or ceremonial. To date, it has judged two cases. The first had to do with an introduction of an icon and candlestick and the second was the use of Moore's marble sculpture as an altar table.

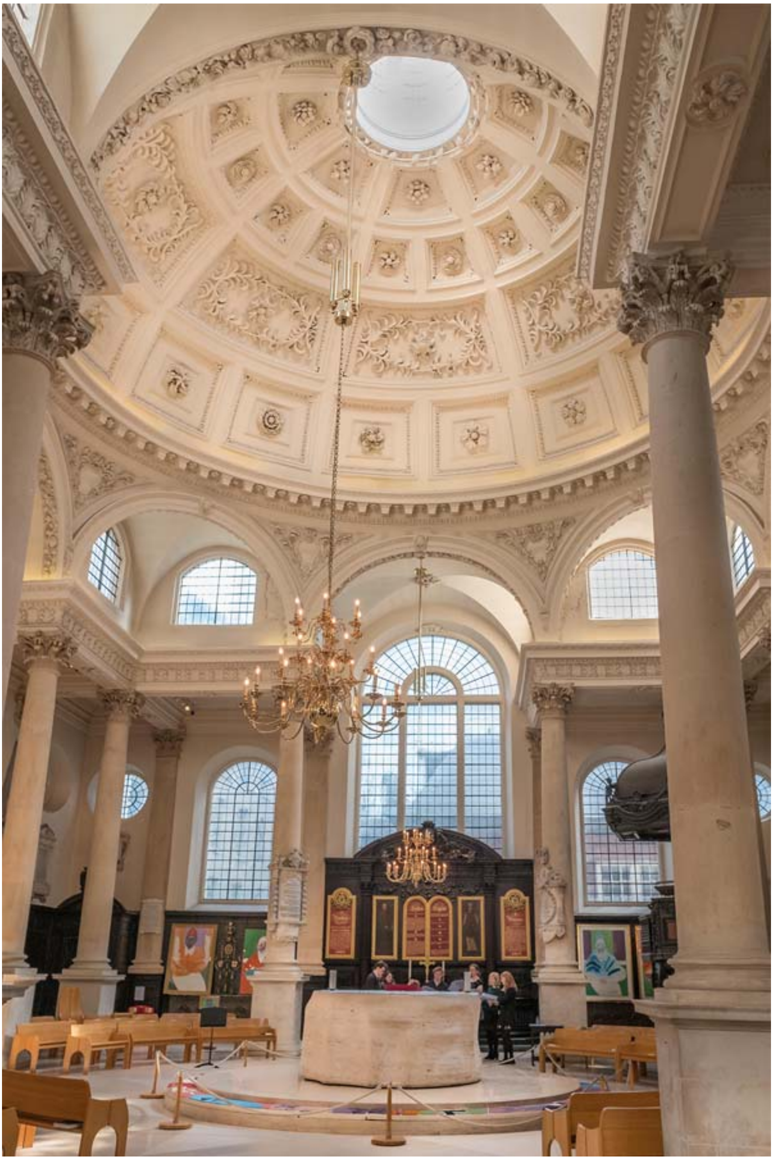

Figure 3.13 *Altar* by Henry Moore at St. Stephen Walbrook.

Miscellany / Alamy Stock Photo. This image is not covered by the terms of the Creative Commons license of this publication. For permission to reuse, please contact the rights holder.

This citational gesture creates an allusive network to the soaring dome of St. Peter's cathedral labored on by Michelangelo. St. Peter's dome with its large engraved letters would enshrine the Petrine authority of the Catholic Church in its stone face. Moreover, the church's titular patron saint, Stephen, famously died by stoning, yet one more lithic allusion within the church's complex symbolism. But Moore's citation to the long and vexed history of altars goes deeper. If the fabric of the altar itself invited controversy, so too would its unusual shape and central placement. Moore carved a round altar table with cuts into the circular sides that gesture to the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The side cuts into the circular slab create a perspective recollective of the octagonal plan of the Dome's architecture, a visual allusion made more resonant because of the altar's placement directly below Wren's now famous dome. Moore's modern altar thus knowingly commemorates the Old and New Testament sacrifices on the Foundation Stone as prefiguring the place of celebrating the Eucharist, the heart of Christian worship. Designed for people to gather as a community, and to express a postwar conception of worship, this round centrally placed stone altar drew vocal objection as to whether or not it was an acceptable altar for the Church of England.[115]

In 1986, a decision by the London Diocesan Consistory Court ruled that the modern sculpture "could not be considered a holy table" and had to be removed. Dubbed by critics as "the Camembert," the *New York Times* recorded that "under Anglican Law, an altar must function as a table, in remembrance of Christ's Last Supper."[116] Unusually shaped, made of marble, lacking legs, and centrally placed, this altar made a dramatic statement. Radically modern in many respects, the altar now boasts a place on Trip Advisor and other tourist websites as a must-see in London churches. Working in strange and mysterious ways, the presence of Moore's controversial stone altar draws a new generation of tourist pilgrims to its site.

This chapter has traced a material as well as imaginative lithic pathway from the Foundation Stone below the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem with its encrustation of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian story, on to the "rock" of St. Peter's tomb and cathedral in Rome, which, in its turn, bequeathed a contested progeny of stony altars on England's churches, to bound and printed books of devotion, to arrive at a counterintuitively incarnational end in the heart of every believer. Stone does not become quietly buried in roadways following waves of Protestant iconoclastic fury; rather, stone insinuates itself into the very center of the post-Reformation human: the much-feared "stony heart" of reprobates. This book's first section has focused on hybrid geographies, the next turns to hybrid anatomies. My next section considers how within the embodied human, stone might be found both as "principal parts" and as bodily byproducts with a surprisingly curative capacity.

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[115] A brief history is available on the church's official website: https://ststephenwalbrook.net/history/henry-moore/ and as an informational pamphlet for visitors. See also: http://www.artway.eu/artway.php?id=703&action=show&lang=en

[116] The Court of Ecclesiastical Cases Reserved ultimately overturned this decision; AP, "Moore Sculpture Approved to be Altar," *The New York Times*, February 19, 1987, Late Edition (East Coast), https://search.proquest.com/docview/426409468?accountid=14505.

PART II.

LITHIC CONVERSIONS

Petrification and Petrosexuality

Sometime after Amphion's triumphant erection of Thebes's stone walls, domestic tragedy obliterates him and his lineage and leaves only the stones themselves to remember and mourn him. Recorded in the sixth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the tragedy of Amphion's wife, Niobe (the queen of Thebes), pivots my narrative to the next consideration of lithic–human relations: the convertibility of flesh and stone. Niobe's fate is to become the very material that her husband shaped into the great Theban stone walls. "Neyther . . . the towne / The which hir husband builded had" nor her illustrious genealogy nor the strength of Thebes gives Niobe more delight than her children (6.190–1).[1] Because her offspring stir her pride to such heights, she fatally scorns the goddess Latona. In revenge, the deity strikes down Niobe's seven sons and seven daughters. "Bereft of her children quite," Niobe finds herself converting to stone: "Hir cheeks waxt hard," her "pulses ceased for to beate," and "into stone hir verie wombe and bowels" turned; "[I]n all hir bodie was no life" (6.383, 385, 390, 392, 388). Yet even now, "There upon a mountaines top / she she weepeth still in stone" (6.394–5).

Although Niobe converts into a craggy rock as her fleshly entrails harden, her weeping reveals a ceaseless interior human affective torment. As Lara Bovilsky shows, the Niobe myth explores calcification as a ground for obtaining the "capacity for extreme sorrow." Analogically, it figures extreme emotional experience rather than its lack.[2] The adverbial "still" might suggest "quietly, silently; in a low voice" (*OED*, adv.1a) as well as "motionless, without change of place or attitude" (*OED*, adv.2) and "continually, constantly" (*OED*, adv.3). Simultaneously lithic in form and human in affect, she perdures, preserved—or damned?—to weep "still" in perpetuity. Amphion's stone walls offer a template for how human life and identity might emerge from and draw on lithic power. His wife's fate exemplifies a more troubling relationship. My following three chapters engage the Renaissance fascination with the mineralized human, focusing on the stories where human and lithic bend, turn, incline, meet, desire, and even at times convert or transform into one another. In some cases, the conversion appears desired, even willed; in others, as with Niobe, the conversion is a forced punishment. As these chapters demonstrate, stony–fleshly conversions reveal an enticing—but also disturbing—possibility for a continuum of matter across categories along the *scala naturae*. Human–lithic conversions, such as that of Niobe, generate a range of (to borrow Bovilsky's phrasing) "mineral emotions" that induce wonder, produce marvels, offer panaceas, spark desires, promise fecundity and futurity, herald pain, shatter hope, and signal salvation or damnation.

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[1] *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation of 1567.*

[2] Bovilsky, "Shakespeare's Mineral Emotions," 255–9 at 56.

The three chapters that compose "Lithic Conversions" foreground the convertibility of mineral and flesh, of human bodies and their stony encrustations, endo-colonies, and stases. Here, the mineral shows a paradoxical capacity for ductility and petrification. I gather these three chapters together to establish stone's relationality to human anatomy as more than simply antagonistic or inhuman. Through a study of four stony entities that are both literal and figurative—two anatomically principal parts (heart and testes) and two creaturely byproducts (kidney and bezoar stones)—I demonstrate how conversion might take literal, material, and physical form, while being simultaneously metaphorical and spiritual. The chiastic relations of lithic–human interchange thus challenge human anatomical bounds.

Chapter 4 opens with the proposition within Calvinist thought that a reprobate Christian might indeed possess a stone heart rather than one of flesh. This contentious theological proposition bleeds into an emerging anatomical understanding of the human body, where the heart was held as a principal part, vital to human life. Chapter 5 turns to a study of lithic calculi grown within creaturely bodies; in early modern perception, these calculi might be painful and detrimental to health but simultaneously possess great capacity for healing. Finally, chapter 6 examines how repeated exhortations about the adamantine heart hardened to God's mercy coexist with poetic secular analogies, from Petrarch onward, that simultaneously idolize and denounce the flinty or marble heart of a beloved. While scholars of early modern sex practices frequently neglect the extensive and often intimate erotic entanglement between the human and the lithic, I trace its pervasiveness across multiple literary registers. Taken together, these narratives of lithic–human conversion show the mineral to be integral rather than tangential to a discourse about what constitutes—and reproduces—the human.

4

The Callous Stony Heart and Conversion

"You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!" (1.1.34).[1] When Marullus, in the opening act of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, rails against the "cruel men of Rome," he articulates a proverbial sentiment that equates their inhuman behavior with a "hard," stony heart (1.1.35). Similarly, when Othello turns murderous, he proclaims: "No, my heart is turned to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand" (4.1.171). In *Richard III*, Queen Elizabeth condemns the Duke of Gloucester whose "murd'rous knife" was "dull and blunt" until "whetted" on his "stone-hard heart" lodged in a "rocky bosom" (4.4.227–35).[2] Presumably his possession of a "stone-hard heart" also allows him to "revel in the entrails" of Queen Elizabeth's slain children or "lambs" (4.4.227, 229). Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice* decries the impossibility to soften Shylock, for his "Jewish heart" is "that which what's harder," and in need of a forcible conversion (4.1.80, 79). In *Twelfth Night*, Olivia berates herself for saying "too much unto a heart of stone" (3.4.179)—that is, Cesario, who rebuffs her affections and tramples her honor. Across the genres of tragedy, history, and comedy, Shakespeare's characters lay the groundwork for the stony-hearted human as one who is "senseless": cruel, murderous, unresponsive, and damned, the antithesis to one who is fleshly, receptive, alive, and capable of love and salvation.

Shakespeare's disparaging voices condemn stoniness as the antonym of a desired human capacity. But their condemnation also calls to attention the troubling material bond between the embodied human and the lithic. These characters fixate on the potential turn—the conversion of flesh to stone or stone to flesh. In doing so, they reveal what Jonathan Goldberg terms the

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[1] All citations to Shakespeare are taken from Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*.

[2] These lines from *Richard III* are not included in the Norton print edition, which is based on the Quarto. For their citation, see the digital edition, which includes the Folio text: http://digital.wwnorton.com/shakespeare3.

The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton. Tiffany Jo Werth, Oxford University Press. © Tiffany Jo Werth (2024).
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198903963.003.0005

potential "dubiety" inherent to human anatomy.[3] The exclamatory vehemence within these dramatic lines is far from celebratory. Rather, Othello's sense that his hard heart "hurts" his hand or Queen Elizabeth's anger that the whetstone of a "stone-hard heart" finds joy in the "entrails" of innocent slain boys stresses just how upsetting it must have been to early modern readers to find that the very anatomical and spiritual center of humankind might be stony. These now famous lines spotlight how, in Shakespeare's England, the stone-to-human continuum generated consternation and condemnation. Yet the material grounds for condemnation—stoniness—could also be reclaimed and turned for redemptive purposes.

This chapter examines the human heart as the contentious site for conversion, as a repurposed devotional stony altar. It analyzes how the stony-hearted human "block" featured on devotional title pages might, through pious reading and prayer, claim the biblical promise of Ezekiel 11:19 or Paul in 2 Corinthians to turn from stony to fleshly (and therefore saved) human being, one of the paschal, redeemed elect. I trace how the combined influence of Calvin's theology and the rekindled interest in the composition of the human body, which was sparked by Vesalius's anatomomical drawings, informs the rocky relations—among stone, human, and divine—that fascinate mid-seventeenth-century English devotional poets. I consider these cultural texts and their preoccupations as resources for better understanding the stakes in the intensely interiorized lyric poems of George Herbert, the widely popular emblems of Christopher Harvey, and the enigmatic alchemical verse of Henry Vaughan. I conclude with a consideration of how the flinty spiritual agony present in these masculine voices, which worry over their relationship with a paternal God, also finds voice in the poems of Hester Pulter, who reprises a common motif from mothers' prayers that their children—both living and dead—might have their hearts of stone replaced with ones of flesh.

"Know Thyself": Stony Spiritual and Anatomical Lessons

In his *Devotions*, John Donne meditates that "I find stonie hearts too," and he worries, "I have made mine such."[4] This is a condition he feels indicative of his morbidity. A modern reader might dismiss Donne's anxious self-diagnosis of a stony heart as tropological, a literary device. Yet as I have been arguing, for the early modern reader such a lithic–fleshly convergence bore a material as well as rhetorical charge. Preachers, poets, engravers, and ordinary mothers alike contemplate the very real presence of a stone within and the spiritual consequences of confronting it.

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[3] Goldberg, *The Seeds of Things*, 73, 103, and 113.

[4] John Donne, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions, and Severall Steps in My Sicknes* (London: Printed by A. M. for Thomas Jones, 1624), sig. N3^{r-v}.

Donne's devotions confirm the mineral substrate of human matter even as they read the stony condition as harbinger of sickness and death, physical and spiritual. Donne's fear comes from an oft-revisited biblical and Christian motif expressed by Catholics and Protestants alike. An anonymous, popular mother's prayer for her children attests to the cultural pervasiveness of the biblical heritage that bequeathed to the human a latent stoniness: "Hew and square the rough table of their hearts," the prayer petitions in images that anticipate Donne and later Herbert, "of stonie, make them fleshie, that being softened by the deaw of thy blessings, they may beare the seales of adoption in thy Sonne Christ."[5] Both expressions assume stoniness to be a human condition but one that heralds spiritual exclusion from God's "seales of adoption." The corporeality of these prayers acknowledges humankind's stony nature but also uses it to mark exclusion from salvation. Donne's phrasing and the mother's prayer follow biblical precedent when they align the stony-hearted human with sickness and damnation, as signs of being cast beyond God's breath and grace.

Such devotional prayers reflect concerns for the stony-hearted human that would become acute across England's long Reformation. While the biblical tradition does not question the human capacity to converge with stone and even transform from flesh to stone, the catalyst for the turn remains troublingly ambiguous. As King Lear demands: "Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts" (3.6.76–8)? For those in England, this question would come to prominence at different moments of reform. John Calvin's influence in the final decades of the sixteenth century sparked renewed scrutiny that would then flare to prominence again with the Laudian controversies of the 1630s. One measure of this can be glimpsed in the smoothed data graph for the bigram "stonie heart" in Figure 4.1. The graph visualizes

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[5] Thomas Bentley, *The Fift Lampe of Virginitie: Conteining Sundrie Forms of Christian Praiers and Meditations* (London: By H. Denham, dwelling in Pater noster Rowe, at the signe of the Starre, being the assigne of William Seres, 1582), sig. L^{r}. I am grateful to Dympna Callaghan, who suggested this reference as we sat upon a bench in the Huntington Library gardens.

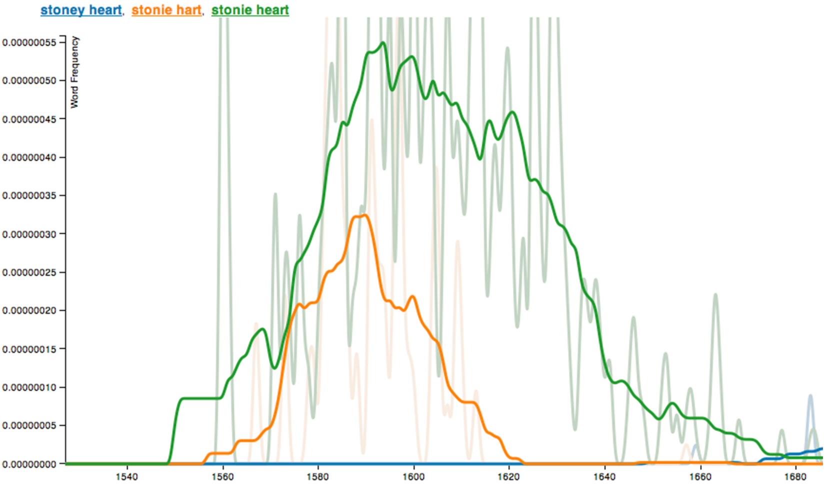

Figure 4.1 Bigram of "stoney," "stonie," "heart," and "hart." "N-gram Browser," developed by Anupam Basu, *Early Print*, https://earlyprint.org/

how this phrase spiked in use in the 1580s to be followed by a smaller surge in the 1630s, and then a decrescendo into the1660s.[6]

The Renaissance does not inaugurate belief in, or even rediscover, the stony heart, but the double scrutiny of religious polemic and anatomical dissection served to call it to greater attention, and account. The heart's place within early acts of recording selfhood, traced across the medieval period by Eric Jager, can be seen in the writings of St. Augustine.[7] Catholic primers, moreover, reference the "stonyshe" heart in a book of prayers printed in England in 1534 that were "very necessary for all people that understonde not the Latyne tongue." The prayer, not dissimilar to that of the mother's prayer cited above, intones: take away, oh Lord, "this stonyshe herte, and geue vs a flesshen herte, a softe herte, an obedient herte."[8] Thus, while the trope of the stony heart stood in a well-established medieval tradition, a shift, according to early modern critic William Slights, occurs in the sixteenth century because of the increasing quest for interiority that accompanied many Protestant beliefs.[9] An increased interest in interiority focuses attention on the heart as place of revelation but also of inscrutability. As the human locus wherein God's seal, or his word and commandments are inscribed, its interiority ensured its impenetrability. That condition of impenetrability would anguish Protestants, especially those in Calvin's wake, more acutely than their Catholic counterparts.

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[6] Although the data from Washington University's EEBO n-gram browser is not complete, since it only includes texts that have been added into the TCIP database, it is broadly suggestive of usage trends.

[7] Eric Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). The interest in St. Augustine's meditation on the stony heart can be seen in early modern translations such as those by John Scory, former bishop of Chichester: see St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, *Two Bokes of the Noble Doctor and B.S. Augustine Thone Entiteled of the Predstiuacion of Saints*, trans. John Scory ([Emden?]: [Egidius van der Erve], 1556).

[8] *A Prymer in Englyshe with Certeyn Prayers [et] Godly Meditations* (London: In Fletestrete by Johan Byddell, 1534), sig. R5^r.

Historiography has tended to emphasize Protestant polemics as presenting stones as paradigmatic of dull matter, the potentially idolatrous blocks that lack sensory response in opposition to the lively human being.[10] The more zealous godly forms of rhetoric will often seemingly invoke such a binary, yet, as the torturous explanations of one Puritan preacher illustrate (discussed later in this chapter), often by drawing this boundary, stony matter becomes more, not less, mobile and further embedded at the very center of every human being. As Calvinists became fixated on the stony heart as the sign of a reprobate sinner, they turned to the Old Testament prophets to mine passages where humans possess a double-mattered heart of stone and of flesh.

As discussed in chapter 2, Genesis's second creation account inaugurates an entire nexus of biblical reference to mineralized, stony humans from which the later prophets build. David's instructions to his son Solomon typify the role that the organ of moral and spiritual health plays in biblical narratives: "Knowe thou the God of thy father, and serue him with a perfit hearte, and with a willing minde: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, an vnderstandeth all the imaginacions of the thoughtes: if thou seke him, he wil be founde of thee; but if thou forsake him, he wil cast thee off for euer."[11] Biblical commentators understood the "perfect" heart to be the fleshly heart, which by forsaking God, might be rendered stony and "cast off." Other Old Testament prophets follow David, so that Ezekiel too describes how faith might make a stone heart flesh. The Geneva gloss explains: the stony human heart "whereunto nothing can enter" must be "regenerate" "a newe" to receive salvation (Ezekiel 36:26, 11:19; Psalms 51:10–14).[12]

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[9] See William Slights, *The Heart in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Slights's argument builds from early modern studies of interiority for his argument, including that of Anne Ferry, *The "Inward" Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983). The application of such interiority to political villains, whose outward appearance does not match what is in their hearts, is traced further by Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 222.

[10] For an account for how the Protestant Reformation is often marked as creating a distinction between dead idols and lively images, and how Shakespeare exploits "this newly charged opposition," see Waldron, "Of Stones and Stony Hearts: Desdemona, Hermione, and Post-Reformation Theater," 207–15.

Seared, purified, circumcised: the post-Reformation heart can, in fact, *must* (according to a crucial oft debated passage from Deuteronomy 30:6) convert and change matter. The Geneva translation reads: "And the Lord thy God wil circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy sede, that thou maist loue the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soule, that thou maist liue." John Calvin glosses this as: "The hardness of mans heart before he be regenerate, is as a stone table but being regenerate by the Spirit of God, it is as soft as flesh, with the grace of the Gospel may be written in it is, as in new tables."[13] Calvin can be held largely responsible for making the heart an indicator of an elect human. His extensive gloss upon Deuteronomy, translated into English by Arthur Golding (who also translated Ovid's *Metamorphoses*) reckons with the conundrum raised by the biblical proposition that the embodied human possesses a "stonie" or "fleshy" heart, dependent for its status upon God's will or election. That a heart's matter might converge with and convert to stone by divine election reinforces its anatomical lithic substrate.

But who could turn a heart's matter and how might such a conversion happen? This question becomes a frequent one among Reformers. One rhetorical touchstone refers to the Old Testament Egyptian Pharaoh, whom Exodus variously describes as hardening his heart against the God of Moses (Exodus 8:15) or having it hardened by God (7:14). In *Othello*, Shakespeare's use of ambiguously passive phrasing for Othello's stony heart reveals the problem: is his heart "turned to stone" by some divine efficacy, some supernatural agency, or does Othello willfully turn it to stone himself? An anxious uncertainty drives such inquiry: the shifting, often confusing rhetoric at different moments in England's long Reformation contributed to believers' doubt. One could never be certain whether she or he (or their fellows) held reprobate or elect, stone or human, status. As Musa Gurnis argues, oftentimes an individual might be "ignorant of what he's most assured," and, consequently, "predestinarian theology" became a form of "cultural judgment" as well as an "epistemological problem."[14] As a result, the heart became an ever more critical anatomical part: for bodily health and for spiritual salvation. The consequent scrutiny that studied and looked for signs of a stony or of a fleshly heart muddled the divisions between literal and symbolic realms. The matter of the heart signaled very real spiritual consequences: It determined whether one were saved, godly, or damned.

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[11] All biblical citations are to *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*. See 1 Chronicles 28:9. Compare with Deuteronomy 19:6; 1 Samuel 25:37; Psalms 13:2 and 27:14.

[12] Ibid. For a New Testament example, see 2 Corinthians 3:3 which reads "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts . . . In that ye are manifest by us, and written, not with ynke, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshlie tables of the heart."

[13] John Calvin, *The Sermons of M. Iohn Caluin Vpon the Fifth Booke of Moses Called Deuteronomie. Translated out of French by Arthur Golding* (London: Printed by Henry Middleton for George Bishop, 1583). The sermon relevant to Deuteronomy 30:6 was preached on "munday the xx. Of Aprill, 1556," sig. Tttt4^{v} and ff.

In the third chapter of the second book of *The Institution of the Christian Religion*, Calvin employs the biblical similitude of the stony versus fleshly heart to deny human agency in turning from stone to flesh: "If there be any softeness in a stone which by some help being made tenderer will abide to be bowed every way, then wil I graunt that the heart of man is pliable." But Calvin concludes that, just as this is impossible, so is man's role in conversion.[15] "Truly," he writes later in the third book, "the turning is in the hand of God."[16] In a belabored argument, Calvin explains predestination as "stablished by the callying of God"; yet lest God be held accountable for damning the unborn, Calvin assures the reader in a torturous passage of circular logic that "the reprobrate do bryng vpon themselues the iust destruction wherunto they are apoynted."[17] Those whom "he [God] hath predestinat to saluacion" are those "he promiseth that he will geue a fleshly heart," whereas those denied such benediction are identified by "leauyng a stony heart."[18] Scrutinizing one's own, as well as one's neighbors, hearts for signs of stoniness, as we shall see, emerges as *the* activity by which one can be reasonably assured of possessing a fleshly heart, harbored by God's blessing in the elect, and human, camp. The vital and tricky question lay in how to determine the criteria for distinguishing the flesh from the stone heart.

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[14] Musa Gurnis, "'Most Ignorant of What He's Most Assured': The Hermeneutics of Predestination in Measure for Measure," *Shakespeare Studies* 42 (2014): 141–69 at 141.

[15] Calvin, *The Institution of the Christian Religion*, sig. C4r.

[16] Ibid., sig. Kk6r.

[17] Ibid., sig. Llvv.

[18] Ibid.

The verbal network of associations that align the reprobate—within Calvinism and various strains of godly rhetoric, the unsaved, opposed to the elect—with the "hardened" or stony heart returns us to another Old Testament prophet: Jeremiah. Its theological roots can be found in the Geneva Bible's rendering for Jeremiah 6:30: "Thei shal call them reprobate siluer, because the Lord hath reiected them." The gloss aligns the unbeliever with an adulterated metal or "drosse" as the opposite of "pure metal." It a short rhetorical leap to claim, as does Pierre de La Primaudaye, one of Shakespeare's likely sources, that "the reprobate and . . . them that are hardened, . . . are all Atheists."[19] Stoniness of heart, then, characterizes the "hardened," ungodly unbeliever.

To see this logic at work in literature, we need only return to Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* and the episode discussed in chapter 3 featuring Kirkrapine. Alongside the fleeing Una, the reader meets Corceca and Abessa (1.3.10–25).[20] Here, as elsewhere, Spenser's character names epitomize their qualities. Literally "blind of heart," "Corceca" derives from Paul's references to the "foolish heart . . . full of darkness" (Romans 1:21 and Ephesians 4:18), which is glossed by the Geneva Bible as "their cogitation darkened . . . because of the hardenes of their heart." Similarly, Abessa's name plays off of "abbess," and thus a Catholic religious house, but also her name *ab esse* suggests the Latin for "absence or deficiency of being," polemically aligned in Spenser's poem with Catholicism. Coreca shorthands how a stony or hard heart might be mobilized to render inhuman the confessionally or religiously different other. As I've argued elsewhere, atheists, Catholics, perjurers, sodomites, and jugglers could all be homeopathically stoned because of their alleged stony state.[21] By worrying over the stone within, post-Reformation polemics made it constituent with the embodied human even as it became a pretext for denying those of a different faith their humanness.

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[19] Pierre de La Primaudaye, *The Second Part of the French Academie Vvherein, as It Were by a Naturall Historie of the Bodie and Soule of Man, the Creation, Matter, Composition, Forme, Nature, Profite and Vse of All the Partes of the Frame of Man Are Handled*, trans. Thomas Bowes (London: Printed by G. B[ishop] R[alph] N[ewbery] R. B[arker], 1594), sig. A4^r. For the relevance of La Primaudaye in England as a "prose compendium of scientific, moral and philosophical knowledge," see Stuart Gillespie, *Shakespeare's Books: A Dictionary of Shakespeare Sources*, Athlone Shakespeare Dictionary Series (London: Athlone, 2001), 277.

[20] All citations of *The Fairie Queene* are to Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*. For the critical context of this episode in Spenser, see chapter 3, n. 59.

[21] See Werth, "A Heart of Stone," 181–204. See also David Hillman, who considers the somatic fallout "of not sharing a faith" in *Shakespeare's Entrails: Belief, Scepticism and the Interior of the Body* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 36.

Contention mounted as to whether the heart turned stony or whether the lithic transformation was meant metaphorically, or symbolically. The debate over the actual or symbolic nature of the heart's conversion embroiled the stony heart within similarly mattered debates and religious divisions over the Eucharistic host and transubstantiation.[22] As I argue in chapter 3, the Protestant substitution whereby the human heart replaces the Catholic host (or even the Paschal Lamb) as an emblem of sacrifice shifts focus from the sacred heart of Christ transformed during the Eucharist within Catholic iconography to the heart of every devout Protestant. Through pious reading and prayer, every human might claim the biblical promise of Ezekiel 11:19 or Paul in 2 Corinthians. The religiously motivated enfolding of what one nonconformist preacher, John Shawe, called "the spiritual stone" within the human breast made distinctions between the "inner" body and the "outside" world less secure.[23]

Before turning to poetic engagement with the stony heart, I begin with a small printed octavo published in 1630 that prints "diuers Sermons" preached by one Master Welsthed (Robert Welsteede), who lived "in Doricetshire."[24] *The Cure of a Hard-Heart* undertakes to explain the "Causes, Effects, *and* Remedies" for "*Hardness of Hart*," a telltale sign of "Everlasting Destruction" (sig. A4^r).[25] Conceived as a dialogue between a Minister and a Scholar, the text is remarkable for its painstaking attempt to disentangle literal, physical stoniness from symbolic and imaginative stoniness. Its aim, in theory, endorses the dematerialization of a hard heart by reading it symbolically and spiritually. But in practice, it treats the stony heart much like a kidney stone, as a bodily condition in need of cure. Its conviction of difference between—and simultaneous confusion of—literal and figurative registers instructively provides a backdrop for reading poems wherein the narrator seeks to break, mend, or transform his stony heart. For literary scholars, what may be most arresting in this small tract is its address of the basic terms of literary figuration. It opens with the vexed question of materiality versus immateriality, framed as "flesh" versus "spirit." This, in turn, leads to the critical difference of simile versus metaphor. In its conclusion, the dialogue affirms a concept of performance as critical to being.

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[22] For a discussion of matter theory and transubstantiation, see Eggert, *Disknowledge*, 64–70.

[23] John Shawe (1608–1672), a nonconformist minister, describes the human heart in similar terms to Welsteede. By nature, Shawe writes, "our hearts are flinty, stony, rocky, hard, need breaking, such are we, such are our Children by nature" in *A Broken Heart, or the Grand Sacrifice* (London, 1643), sigs. C3^v–C4^r. Later he grants God's agency to mend and cure "the spiritual stone" (sig. D2^r). In *Shakespeare's Entrails*, David Hillman traces how the body lost its "ontological standing of primacy" in early modern England.

[24] My thanks to John Craig for further sleuthing on Robert Welsteede or Welstead (1597–1641), who was a reverend orthodox divine and was ordained both deacon and priest in 1597. He was subsequently instituted to the living of Bloxworth in Dorset. See entry in *The Clergy of the Church of England Database (CCEd)* at: https://theclergydatabase.org.uk.

[25] All citations are to Robert Welsteede, *The Cure of a Hard-Heart* (London: Will Stansby for Samuel Man, 1630).

What does it mean to possess a "hardness of heart" (sig. A4^{r})? Minister's explanation recalls Eucharistic debates over the physical as opposed to symbolic presence of Christ. "[F]irst," Minister clarifies, "by the heart you may not understand that fleshly substance in mans body, which *Philosophers* observe" to be a principal part (that is to say, necessary to life); for, "although in that sense the word bee sometimes used in Scripture, as 2.Kings 9:24, but that more spiritual part of man, which is, as it were, the heart of that heart, that is, the soule . . . the Conscience" (sigs. A6^{v}–A7^{r}). The referent, Minister claims, is not the physical heart, which (to use the 2 Kings example) might be pierced with an arrow and cause death, but rather the immaterial "spiritual part," or the soul. Minister tries to persuade Scholar that the analogy divests the physical heart of its matter in favor of a dematerialized "spiritual part." But, despite his best rhetoric, Minister's comparison tethers the signifier to its signified so that an immaterial and a material part coexist to make an explanatory point.

Scholar, like this reader, remains confused as to how a spiritual substance (which lacks substance) can possess the quality of being "hard" or "hardened," as the adjective implies physicality. His questions anticipate Adam's questioning of Raphael regarding the angels' physicality in *Paradise Lost.* As with Adam and Raphael, the Minister's reply bewilders. "The soule of man confirmed in sinfull courses," Minister patiently explains, "is compared in Scripture to a stone, as in expresse termes to an Adamant, Zech. 7:12. Which as it is the hardest of other bodies, so it hath sundry properties arising from, or ioyned with this hardnes, which doe notably set forth the disposition of the soule in such a state, wherein it is usually said to be hardned" (sig. A8^{r}). Minister intends a parallel between a spiritual heart "hardened" in sin and that of an adamant stone. "Adamant," as used in the early modern period, could refer to any especially hard or strong rock or mineral without specifying a particular one, an "embodiment of a surpassing hardness" (*OED*, n. and adj.1).

But the (perhaps unwitting) capitalization of "Adamant" also prompts a more biblical etymology. In Zechariah, the prophet uses the simile of an “adamant stone” to describe the hearts of those who refused to hear the Lord’s voice. But Minister’s capitalization may profitably confuse “Adamantine”—as a very hard substance—with “Adam,” who, according to some Reformist Christian theology, represents the fallen state of humankind in sin. Adam, as discussed in chapter 2, was popularly understood to be formed from an earthen mineral substrate, clay. The Adam/Adamantine overlap underscores a material sameness, a joint property in hardness grounded within an embodied physical reality. A more outspoken Puritan contemporary, one John Shawe, will be less coy and describe the human heart itself as “flinty, stony, rocky, hard” and in “need [of] breaking, such are we, such are our Children by nature.”[26]

Scholar seizes on this potential joint or double nature and asks, wherefore is the heart of man so fitly resembled to a stone? It is tempting to wonder whether “Scholar” may have had in mind contemporary anatomical drawings wherein the human heart does not, to the eye, resemble or look like a stone. Vesalius’s copperplate illustration of a human heart with pericardium, for instance, shows an organ that might resemble a root more than a stone, replete with organic-looking tissue and circulatory lines for the veins. Based on firsthand observation and human dissection, its visual representation does not suggest an anatomical morphology akin to stoniness. Later English anatomical manuals, such as that of Helkiah Crooke in Figure 4.2, offer similar visual illustrations for the principal body part of the human heart. In these visual depictions, it does not fitly resemble a stone. The accompanying description, moreover, emphasizes that the heart “is so much softer than a bone.”[27]

Crooke follows classical authority from Aristotle onwards and believes the heart to be a primary organ. As the primary organ of spiritual activity and human operations, or, to put it in early modern terms, the place of conscience and of passions, the heart was, literally and figuratively, the keystone to conceptions of the human. Renaissance philosophers, theologians, anatomists, and poets alike “found in the heart the origins of human-ness.”[28] As William Slights convincingly shows, although the heart changed in its understood functions from the time of Plato to the Renaissance, it remained the source that distinguished all living things.[29] Following Aristotle, the heart held a position of centrality and instrumentality for life-giving and

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[26] Shawe, *A Broken Heart, or the Grand Sacrifice*, sig. C4^r.

[27] Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia* (London: William Iaggard, 1615), sig. Hh6^r.

[28] William Slights, *The Heart in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 101.

[29] Ibid., see esp. chapter 3.

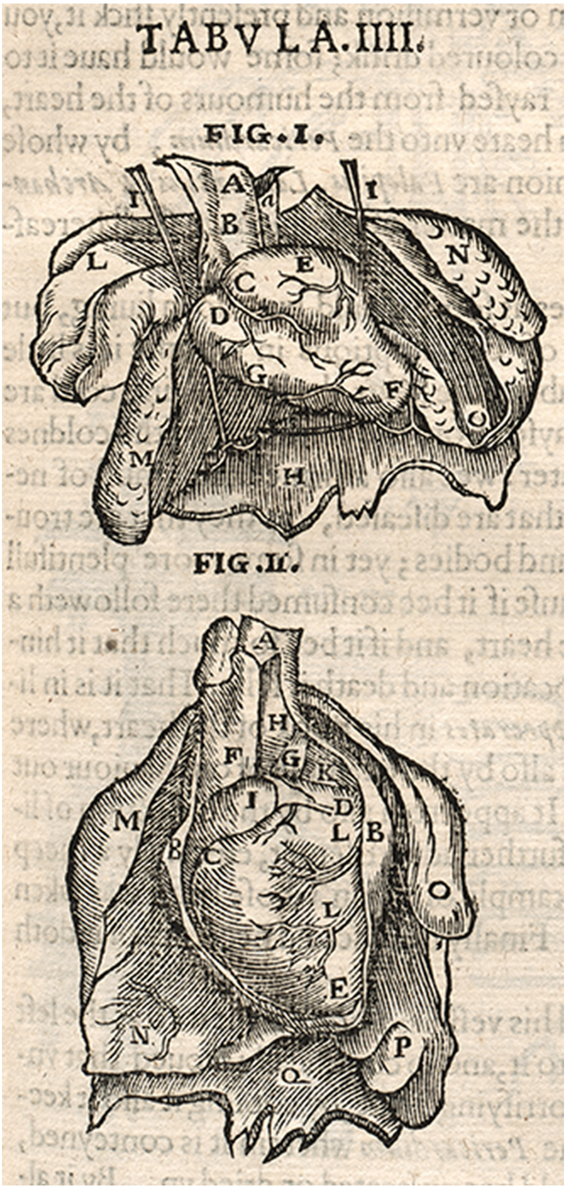
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Figure 4.2 "[T]he heart included within his purse or Pericardium," from Helkiah Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia* [. . .] ([London]: William Laggard, 1615), sig. Hh6^{r}, RB 53894.

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such revered figures as Hippocrates, and the later Galen, corroborated biblical thought with classical authority. Although these authorities were being radically transformed by Renaissance physicians following the work of the German Paracelsus, anatomists such as Vesalius in Padua (1514–1564), Ambroise Paré in France (1509–1590), John Banister in London (1533–1610), and of course William Harvey in England (1578–1657), were rethinking the inner mechanisms of bodily functions. Their investigations into the human body did not end, but rather, reinvigorated the tradition of heart metaphors drawn from the Bible.

These leading anatomists "uniformly insisted in their published writings on two things: (1) the heart was the furnace that fired all animal and human life, and (2) their studies of the human body, in its parts and in its entirety, were intended to demonstrate to the rational mind the majesty of God's creation."[30] Their systematic observation and description that flung open the window on human anatomy underscored the biblical injunction that began to be inscribed within manuals of anatomy: *nosce te ipsum* or know thyself.[31] The dictum gained currency not only in conjunction with the biblical study of the soul, but also in medical discourse and vernacular texts. An embodied knowledge of the self in matters of health was encouraged. Anatomical manuals, then, were inviting readers to scrutinize the interior heart, to "know thyself," but in doing so they palpitated only soft flesh. Hence Scholar's question, how might a heart so fitly resemble a stone?

"A stone, you know," Minister replies, "is a dead, and senselesse bodie, cold, dry, uncapable of moisture, unpliable, unyielding; nay resisting, and beating backe whatsoever lights on it" (sig. A8^{r}). Is then, Scholar asks, a man's heart "also a dead, and senseles body?" (sig. A8^{v}). Minister tries to uncouple the literal comparison that collapses the physical referent and its spiritual counterpart. But in responding, Minister begins to sound like the skeptical, all-too-literal-minded Theseus from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, who sees only poets as possessing the "fine frenzy" that can see in a bush, a bear (5.1.12). Scholar, for his part, sees only the bush, that is, the dead "senseless body," and not the full bear or "stone." In what might be exasperation, Minister retorts that "it is said" that the heart is "dead in sin" (sig. A8^{v}). Minister's sudden recourse to a vague agential "it" and the slip into passive voice reveals the linguistic slipperiness of Minister's argument to detach material stoniness from spiritual stoniness.

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[30] Ibid., 1–38 at 8.

[31] I am grateful for an introduction to this topic from an unpublished conference paper by Lyle Massey, "Nosce Te Ipsum: Looking for the 'Human' in Early Modern Anatomy" (paper, Sixteenth Century Society annual conference, Vancouver, 2015). According to Massey, the earliest use of the phrase in an anatomical text was in that of a Venetian physician, Nicolaus Massa's *Liber introductiorius anatomiae* (Venice, 1536). It then began to appear in flap sheets in Germany, France, Italy, and England. A popular flap sheet issued by the engraver Gilles Godet, for instance, appears bound into multiple copies of Thomas Géminus's *Compendiosa totius anatomi*[*a*]*e* (London, 1559). See also Deborah E. Harkness, "Nosce Teipsum: Curiosity, the Humoural Body and the Culture of Therapeutics in Late Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century England," in *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. Robert John Weston Evans, and Alexander Marr (New York: Routledge, 2006), 171–92.

To recover, Minister further parses what "dead and senselesse" entails: the stony-hearted human is "destitute of the life of grace, even whilest alive to nature; in as much as it is altogether unactive to the performance of any good, nay insensible of any thing that may tend to the spiritual good thereof" (sig. A8^{v}). In this remarkable phrasing, Minister posits two kinds of life: one of grace and one of nature, that exist simultaneously and potentially apart from one another. A stony-hearted human may be spiritually dead or "hard" whilst yet "alive to nature," and hence, by appearance, not resemble a stone. Minister's arguments stress the spiritual part's necessity to human life, but, by doing so, he imbues hard "dead" matter as also "alive to nature."

At this impasse, Minister abandons the simile that the stony-hearted human is only *like* a stone in favor of an adamantine metaphor that converts stone to flesh. Zechariah 7:12, and Minister's early phrasing, insists that "thei made their hearts *as* an adamat stone" (italics mine); the *as*, indicating a simile, slips into metaphor (Geneva translation). Every descendant from the "corrupt loines of old *Adam*," elect and reprobate alike, Minister explains, are born with a "natural" hardness of heart; for this reason, God promises his chosen that he "will take out of their bodies the stonie hearts, which they haue by nature, and give them an heart of flesh" (sigs. A12^{v}–B^{r}). Descended from Adam, humans "haue by nature" an adamant or "stonie" heart, which God alone can convert to flesh. "Are you more dead than the dust of the earth," asks Minister, "yet out of that did god form Adam & breath into his face the breath of life and he can even of stones raise up children unto Abraham: are not all things possible to him?" (sig. C11^{r}). If God can transform stone into "children of Abraham," not unlike the gods of Ovid who turn Deucalion's stones into a new race of men (albeit "a stonie race indeed"), then the distinction between human and stone is not one of matter so much as of faith.

The original stony condition, the slim tract persists, can be cured by cultivating a heart attentive to God: "a circumcised heart, an honest & good heart, a broken and contrite, a fleshy and relenting, melting, trembling, humble and obedient heart, sprinkled with the blood of Christ, washed by his grace, heated, and inflamed by his holy spirit" (sig. A11^{r}). The onus then falls on each individual human to search his or her own heart for signs of its original stony nature. For the conversion happens "not suddenly, but by degrees . . . like the sweating of a stone in moyst weather, which yet retaines its natural hardnesse, and drinesse" (sig. C5^{v}–C6^{r}). Vigilance and effort must be constant, for only "A senseless stone doth not feele its owne hardnesse; neither doth he that is soundly asleepe perceiue that hee sleepeth" (sig. C12^{v}). As Garrett Sullivan argues, sleep complicates binaries of vitality.[32] The analogy of stony-hearted human to one asleep suggests that a spark might serve to quicken the second life of grace, a state recognizable by its fluidity rather than rigidity.

At this point in the debate, Minister raises the question of agential capacity. If a heart can convert from stone to flesh, who can turn it, or in Minister's terms, who can cure it? Once again, parsing difference is both critical—and nearly impossible. On one hand, the "reprobate," the stone that refuses to be awakened, is described as being so due to a "voluntary" hardness that leads to the "unpardonable sinne" which is "a plaine marke of a reprobate" (sig. B5^{v}). Only the "reprobate" having "meanes of grace" does "willfully abuse them or neglect them"; but on the other hand, "In the reprobate this hardnesse of heart is both total, that is, in the whole mind, will, and affections, and final, that is ever to continue without all change or alteration (sig. B3^{v}–B4^{r}). Is the stony-hearted human so because he "willfully" neglects the second life of grace, or is he always-already condemned to continue so "without all change or alteration" due to predestination?

At this narrative juncture, Scholar grows increasingly agitated, convinced that he harbors a stony heart despite appearing sensible. Minister tries to reassure him. If Scholar frets over his stony heart, it means he has sense, and if he has sense, then he cannot be a stone: "For where there is no sense, their commonly is no life. If you have a stone in your bladd, or reines, you presently complaine, and are exceedingly troubled. And it is possible, think you, that a man should have a stone in his heart, and bee alive, and not perceive it?" (sig. B10^{r-v}). The kidney stone bred and expelled in flesh was neither rhetorical nor uncommon, as chapter 5 will detail. By drawing this comparison, Minister belies a merely symbolic relationship of stone and flesh to propose that human nature embodies both flesh and mineral. Thus, because he feels the pain of his stony heart, Scholar can be assured of elect, or "sensible" status. The awareness of such a human dubiety must be constant, for as Minister concludes, "we are never in greater danger, then we are thus secure" (sig. C3^{r}). Scholar's anxiety, his feeling and awareness of the pain of his stony heart, proves his salvation.

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[32] See Sullivan, *Sleep, Romance and Human Embodiment*.

The heart's interiority and its inscrutability make its true matter (its true nature) visible only as a matter of performance. Minister anticipates the cyborg dilemma, for if a human possessed of a stony heart is identical to one with a fleshly, how might one distinguish the reprobate from the elect, the non/human because damned, from the elect? As he cautions Scholar: "Let no affliction on your selfe, or judgement of God upon others, passe without the due observation . . . Malice is a good informer, though an ill judge" (sig. D11^{r}). Minister voices a frequent Calvinist-inflected position when he advocates for the symbolic and tropological reading of the stony heart that divests it from the physical human heart. Yet his difficulty in extricating the analogy from its matter is telling. The highest of human concerns tangle with the basest of matter: stone matters to salvation.

The Trying of the Heart in Mid-Seventeenth-Century Devotional Lyric

Religiously alert poets writing after the Laudian controversies over the Lord's board and the altar sacrifice frequently feature an anguished lyric speaker who scrutinizes a sinful, stony heart. The concept of this enfolded "spiritual stone" does not result in a Protestant dematerialization; rather by bringing the stone within, Calvinist and later Puritan thought would further entangle symbolic and imaginative stoniness with real material human consequences. The anxiety voiced by Scholar will find echo, as the remainder of this chapter demonstrates, across confessional positions throughout the mid-seventeenth century. A foundational influence on his near contemporaries, the Anglican divine George Herbert erects a poetic spiritual paradigm grounded in the stones of the temple, literal and figurative. A similarly spiritualized lithic imagination undergirds the slim volume of poems and emblems *Schola Cordis* ("School of the heart") adapted from the Benedictine Jesuit Benedictus van Haeften and published by the English clergyman Christopher Harvey, brother to the better-known William Harvey (the anatomist whose studies of the heart proposed the systolic propulsion of blood through the circulatory system). Herbert's lithic imagination also informs the Welsh royalist poet Henry Vaughan, whose *Silex Scintillans* or the "flint flashing" reflects an alchemical stance towards the stony heart. Finally, the chapter ends with the recusant Hester Pulter, who mourns her lost daughters in terms that reprise the mother's prayer with which this chapter opens. Each of these lyric voices seeks to know his or her interior stony heart as the material substrate of salvation.

George Herbert's Stony Temple

George Herbert diverges in many respects from Welsteede's Puritanism, but like Welsteede he too grapples with the biblical nexus of the stony heart in his personal salvation. His oft-canonized shaped poem, "The Altar," graphically visualizes the conundrum the stony heart poses to the penitent devout. As Michael Schoenfeldt so influentially argues, throughout his poetic volume *The Temple*, Herbert assumes no easy and natural disentanglement of the tropological from the physical or the spiritual self from the body.[33] As Brent Dawson asks, how do we make sense of Herbert's insistence that the "traditionally lowest forms of existence" relate to the highest, "the soul's spiritual quest?"[34] "The Altar" insists on shaping the human heart—and its salvation—from its base lithic matter. Their fusion, not their separation, enlivens the potentiality for salvific life or the life of grace.

The poem's shape—simultaneously an altar or pillar, a poem, and a capital *I*—collapses the subjective human "I" and narrative voice with the stone altar it presents.[35] As Figure 4.3 shows, an edition from 1641 graphically highlights the conflation of these three elements. Although the first 1633 edition prints the poem text shaped as a pillar, the inclusion in 1641 of a single line that outlines the text further enhances the ocular impact. The pillar-I-poem convergence supports the broadly Protestant position that enfolds

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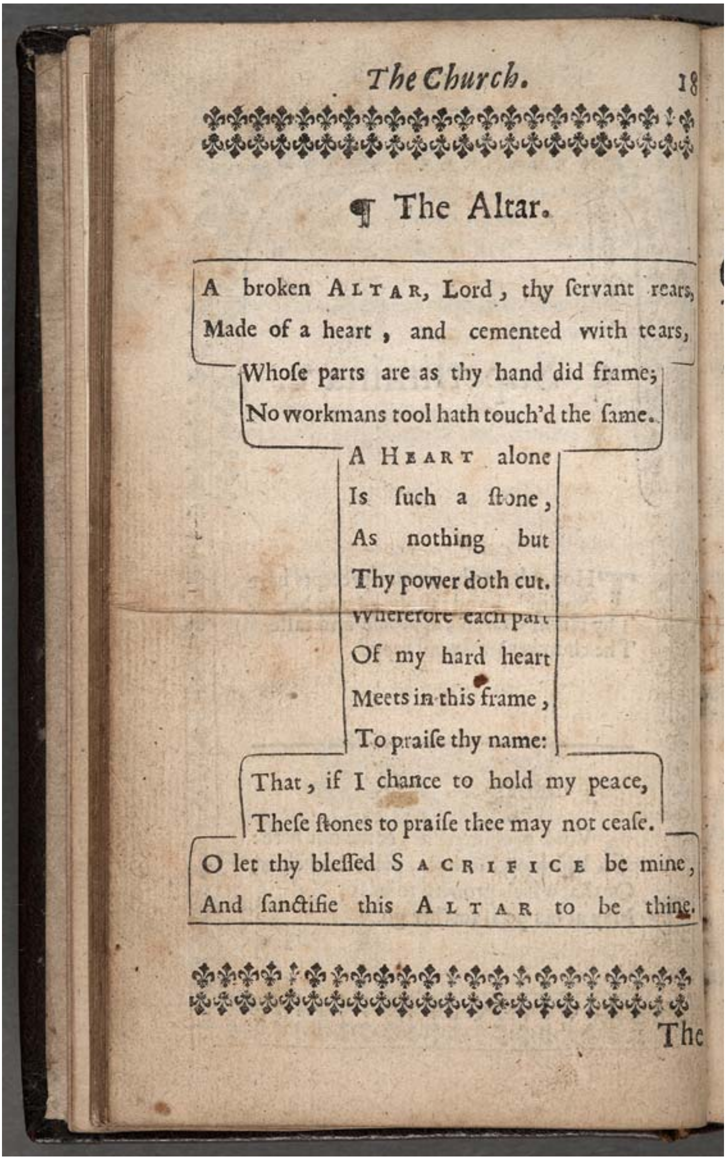
[33] Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[34] Brent Dawson, "The Life of the Mind: George Herbert, Early Modern Meditation, and Materialist Cognition," *ELH: English Literary History* 86, no. 4 (2019): 895–918 at 896. Although Dawson discusses materialism in terms of Herbert's interest in vegetal life, the questions might also be posed, as I do here, of stone.

[35] Regardless of an altar's placement within the church, its referent to pagan altars as well as medieval and possibly Laudian altars is described by Guibbory, *Christian Identity, Jews, and Israel in Seventeenth-Century England*; see also Dyck, "Altar, Heart, Title Page," 541–71.



The Church. 18

¶ The Altar.

A broken ALTAR, Lord, thy ſervant rears,
Made of a heart, and cemented with tears,
Whoſe parts are as thy hand did frame;
No workmans tool hath touch'd the ſame.
A HEART alone
Is ſuch a ſtone,
As nothing but
Thy power doth cut.
Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart
Meets in this frame,
To praiſe thy name:
That, if I chance to hold my peace,
Theſe ſtones to praiſe thee may not ceaſe.
O let thy bleſſed SACRIFICE be mine,
And ſanctifie this ALTAR to be thine.

The

Figure 4.3 “The Altar” from George Herbert’s *The Temple: Sacred poems, and private ejaculations* ([Cambridge]: Roger Daniel, 1641), sig. A9^{v}, RB 109134.

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the Old Testament stone altar, and especially Jacob's stony pillar, within the heart of a human supplicant. In her critical edition of Herbert's poetry, Helen Wilcox summarizes the scholarly tradition to note that "Herbert's choice of a visually defined stone altar as the form of his first lyric in *The Church* knowingly evokes contemporary frictions with the Church of England over the removal of the wooden communion tables and replacing them with stone altars."[36] The poem provocatively engages its reader in a contested conversion process that analogizes the debates over church furniture to that over human anatomy.

The shaping of Herbert's "The Altar" may look to modern eyes more like a capital *I* or a classical pillar than an altar, but as Chana Bloch points out, it may also have a visual precedent in the Geneva Bible illustrations.[37] The woodcut accompanying 1 Kings 6, entitled the "Temple Uncovered," offers arresting visual parallels to Herbert's poem and further cements the correlation of a heart's sacrifice being linked to the material Old Testament altar. In Figure 4.4, from the narrative of Solomon's rebuilding of the original temple, the reader is offered what the image gloss refers to as a "more lively" view of the interior temple's furniture. The last item listed in the gloss, Item X, is the altar to which Bloch refers. Although not the altar of burnt sacrifice, it is the "incense" altar whose shape resembles that of Herbert's poem. The biblical instructions for the second temple altars specify that they be built of "Shittim wood" and covered with gold. Although not stone as were the altars of Abraham and Isaac, their shape, as imagined by the compilers of the Geneva Bible, resembles the pillar of Herbert's poem. Herbert's choice to imagine the place of sacrifice as a stone altar, rather than one of wood, further supports critical readings that see his choice of material as significant and in conversation with debates over church altars in the early 1630s.[38] It

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[36] George Herbert, *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 89. For Herbert's familiarity with these controversies, see Achsah Guibbory, *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton: Literature, Religion, and Cultural Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 46–47; and Lynch, "George Herbert's Holy 'Altar,' Name and Thing," 48–54.

[37] See Chana Bloch, *Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California, 1985), 124.

[38] Critics have debated the significance of Herbert's altar shape at length. Notable interventions include Joseph H. Summers, *George Herbert: His Religion & Art*, 2nd ed. (Binghampton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1981), 140–3, 227, which suggests that this altar celebrates the "new" sacrifice of a believer's heart, rather than a blood sacrifice; Richard Strier, *Love Known: Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 153, which argues that Herbert had in mind the classical and Hebrew altars associated with sacrifice; and Sara William Hanley, "Temples in *the Temple*: George Herbert's Study of the Church," *Studies in English Literature* 8 (1968): 121–35.

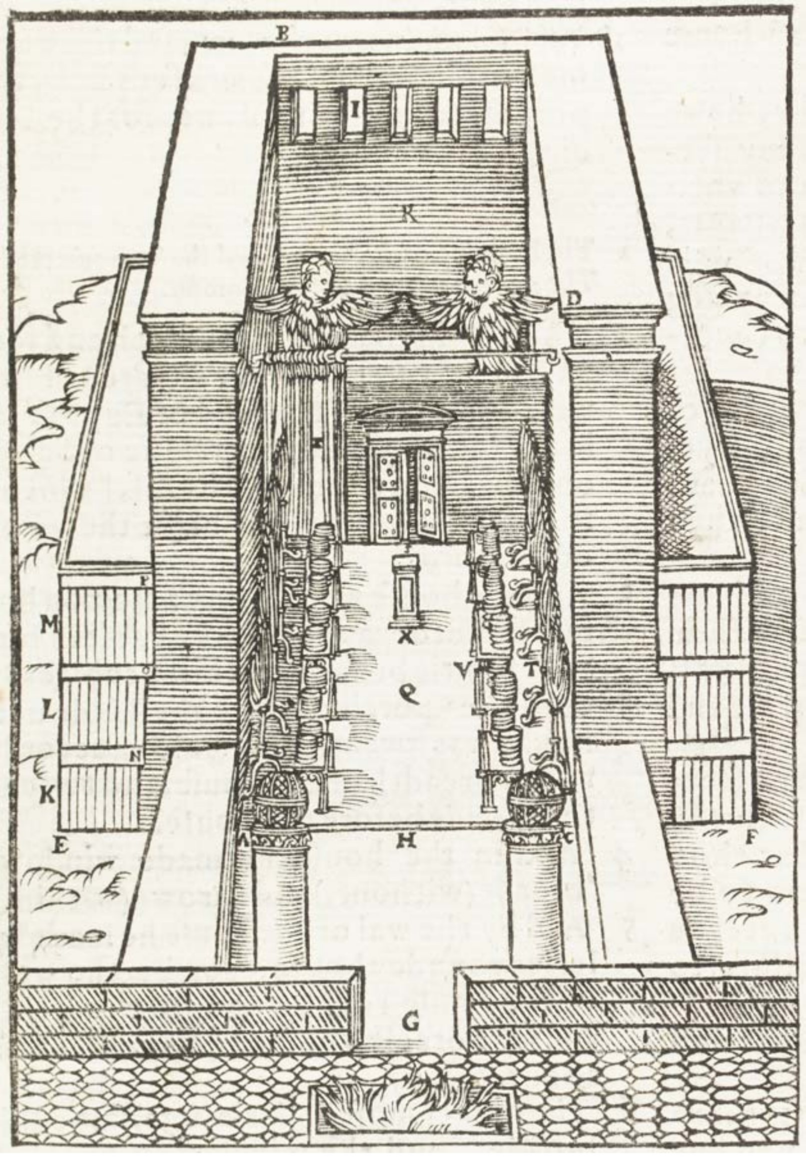

Figure 4.4 "The Temple Uncovered" with item "X" as the "incense altar" from 1 Kings 6, *The Bible and Holy Scriptures* [. . .] (Geneva: [s.n.], [1562, i.e., 1561]), sig. Bb1^{v}, IUQ00032.

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was also possible that Herbert would have known that the traditional place for the most holy of holies was believed to be directly above the Foundation Stone.

The visual tradition of the heart's sacrifice on the altar as a popular design for early modern devotional works furthers the parallel of the *schola cordis* imagery that Herbert's poem also evokes, in addition to Old Testament altars. Chapter 3 gives several examples of these, but yet another title page from 1627 illustrates the ubiquity of the image within works of Protestant devotion as well as the complex theological positions it might signal. This title page in Figure 4.5 adorns the 1627 work of John Cosin, the bishop of Durham, and a Laudian whose anti-Calvinist stance complemented his position as an "unofficial censor of puritan books."[39] It is likely not coincidental that Durham Cathedral had a history of altar controversies. They were one of the early churches to reposition their altar "altarwise," more in keeping with pre-Reformation tradition, and in 1620, they had a pink and black marble altar installed.[40] As pictured in Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke's *Altars Restored*, the marble altar consists of three pillars supporting a marble slab.[41] This altar, erected by Dean Hunt, further suggests the influence of a pillar-altar construction whose shape anticipates Herbert's. The altar at the title page apex of Cosin's book of devotion, featuring the flaming heart and the tag lines invoking "sacrifice" could, then, be appropriated by those with a Puritan leaning, mainstream Anglicans, or potential Catholic sympathizers.

While Cosin's book of devotion itself was a popular seller, it also drew heavy critique from Puritans for being "riddled with popery" and for Cosin's alleged belief in a Eucharist where "the very flesh of Christ was eaten with our teeth."[42] I recall this title page and the subsequent controversy to call attention to how this visual tradition of the *schola cordis* that Herbert arguably raises in "The Altar" holds Eucharistic overtones of import to interpreting the poem's altar and its central sacrifice. While Richard Strier flatly denies that the poem has any references to the Eucharist, other critics, such as Thomas Stroup and John Booty, find parallels to Eucharistic liturgy.[43] The

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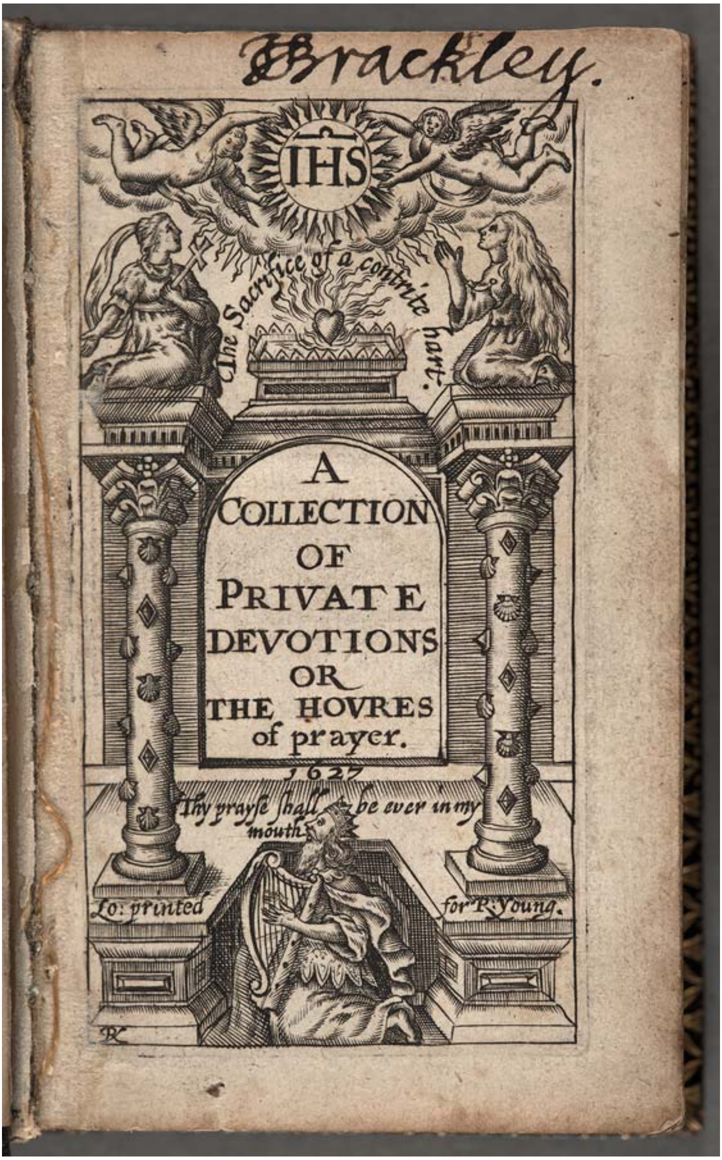
[39] Anthony Milton, "Cosin, John (1595–1672), Bishop of Durham," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-6372.

[40] Fincham, *Altars Restored*, 114–18.

[41] Ibid., figure 9.

[42] Cited in Milton, "Cosin, John (1595–1672), Bishop of Durham."

[43] See Strier, *Love Known: Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry*, 191; by contrast, the traces of Eucharistic liturgy and imagery are argued by Thomas Stroup, "'A Reasonable, Holy, and Living Sacrifice': Herbert's 'The Altar,'" *Essays in Literature* 2 (1975):



Brackley.

IHS

The Sacrifice of a contrite hart.

A
COLLECTION
OF
PRIVATE
DEVOTIONS
OR
THE HOVRES
of prayer.
1627

Thy prayſe ſhall be ever in my mouth.

Lo: printed for R: Young.

Figure 4.5 Title page to John Cosin's *A collection of private deuotions* [. . .] (London: R. Young, 1627), RB 60875.

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poem's engagement with altar controversies cannot be disentangled from the role altars played in the "sacrifice" of the Mass. Reading the poem's shape as an altar pillar has ramifications for how we read the poem's lithic imagination. The poem's text will yet further cement—and confuse—stone altar and human heart. The "servant"—the speaker—who "rears" and whose tears cement the parts cannot be distinguished from the blocks or strata of stone that compose "the altar." The Old Testament stone altar merges with the penitent and contrite heart sought by the Psalmist David and by the lyric speaker.

The "broken altar" in the opening line alludes not only to the penitent, broken heart of the Psalmist David but also to the body of Christ, broken at the Eucharist. The adjective "broken" meets the conditions that are necessary for God to transform the stone heart to one of flesh. The poem's next couplet develops the consanguinity between biblical stone altars and human heart. Its description details how its parts "are as thy hand did frame, / No workmans tool hath touch'd the same." As a number of readers have noted, the line echoes the Exodus injunction (itself echoed in Deuteronomy 27:2–6) that specified altars were to be built from unhewn stone "for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou has polluted it" (Exodus 20:25). God's hand framed the human heart even as rough natural stone exists as God created it without human chisel, saw, or other tool. The tension between the poem's visual shape as a whole stone pillar and the verbal syntax of its "broken" state prefigures the poem's transformative power to "cement" its components.[44] An alchemical referent, *cement* or *cementation* as defined by Ruland's 1612 *A Lexicon of Alchemy* means "to unite."[45] This crucial verb insists on a dubiety of matter, a stone–human assemblage required to reach spiritual apotheosis.

The heart's embedding within the altar stones once again finds visual expression in a single surviving fragment of an unidentified edition of Herbert's work, shown in Figure 4.6. Here the heart's image appears inscribed on the altar's foundational pillar. The presence on either side of what appear to be tears furthers the allusive meaning behind "cemented," as the poem itself occupies the place where one might expect to see the flaming heart of the

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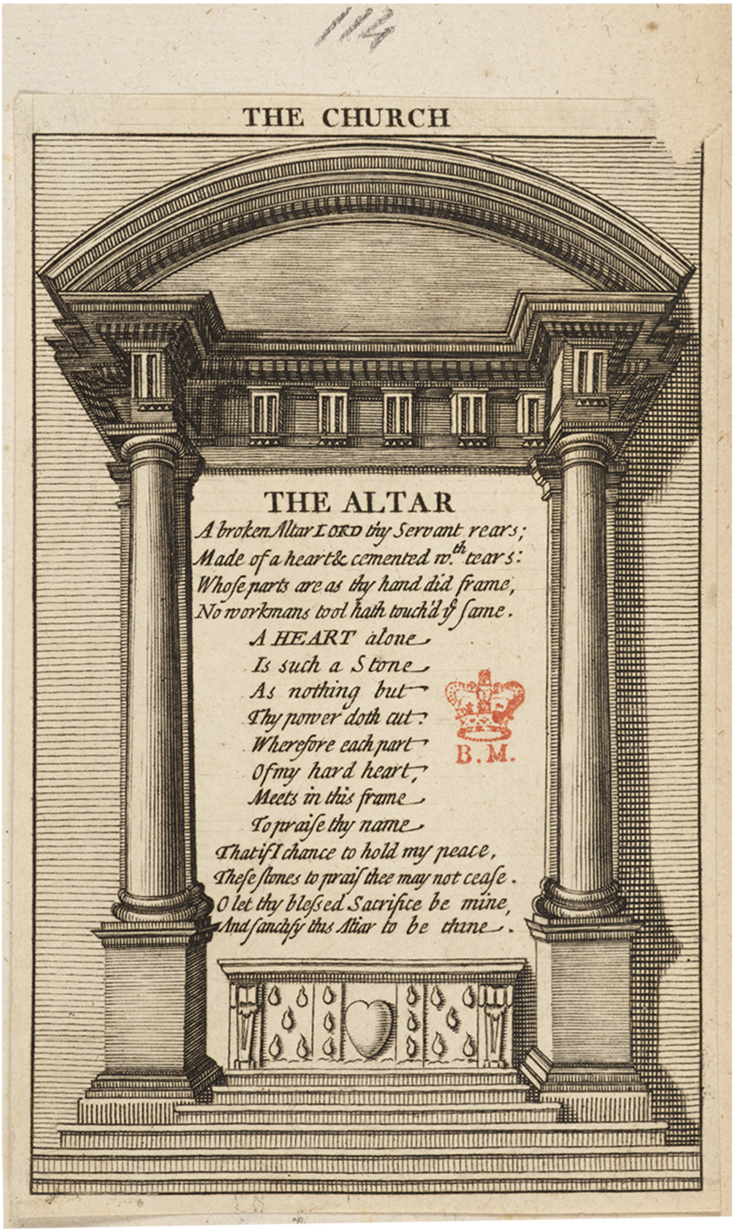
149–63; and John E. Booty, "George Herbert: *The Temple* and *the Book of Common Prayer*," *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 12, no. 2 (1979): 75–90.

[44] Paul Dyck, "Altar, Heart, Title-Page," 541–71 at 44. As Paul Dyck's reading of the poem notes, the alchemical possibilities inherent to the word *cemented* dramatizes the possibility of changing state.

[45] Abraham, *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, 32.



114

THE CHURCH

THE ALTAR

A broken Altar LORD *thy Servant rears;*
Made of a heart & cemented w.th tears:
Whoſe parts are as thy hand did frame,
No workmans tool hath touch'd ye ſame.
A HEART alone
Is such a Stone
As nothing but
Thy power doth cut:
Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart,
Meets in this frame
To praiſe thy name
That if I chance to hold my peace,
Theſe ſtones to praiſ thee may not ceaſe.
O let thy bleſsed Sacrifice be mine,
And ſanctify this Altar to be thine.

B.M.

Figure 4.6 "The Altar" by George Herbert ([England: s.n., 16–?]), fragment from the Bagford Collection.

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schola cordis. The I-poem-stone is the sacrifice. The visual and verbal unite and "cement" penitent human, stone, and divine "sacrifice."

As we know from the following poem in Herbert's volume, titled "The Sacrifice," this word alludes to Christ, the host, the foundation stone, but also within Anglican devotion, the individual penitent heart of the human believer. In a knowing glance back to "The Altar," the narrator declares in "The Sacrifice" how Christ "with patience [will] prove / If stonie hearts will melt with gentle love" (lns. 89–90). The imagery of Christ's melting the stone heart furthers the alchemical allusions from "The Altar." Alchemy assumes that all metals might be converted and multiplied, but the discourse surrounding the stony heart pushes that process beyond one of like kinds—base metal to gold—to an even more Ovidian transformation across boundaries of kind, from human to stone, from stone to divine.

The pervasive imagery of sacrifice within "The Altar" crosshatches stone and human capacities. The narrator's penultimate lines declare "that if I chance to hold my peace / these stones to praise thee may not cease." The lines echo a biblical passage from Luke 19:40. Christ rebukes the Pharisees for silencing the multitude, claiming that if they were silent "the stones would immediately cry out." The animation, the sense of liveliness, cuts across the human-stone distinction. The lithic cry of praise embodies an oft-touted distinguishing mark of the human: speech, and even more specifically, praise of the divine. To paraphrase Duke Senior from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, "tongues" are indeed speaking from "Sermons in stones" (2.1.16–7).[46] Yet Herbert's lines no longer—if they ever did—distinguish between the subjective human "I" and the altar stones. In an untimely manner, the sequence has already been completed when the reader enters the poem. The crying words of praise on the poet's lips are inseparable from the voices of the stones: "mine" and "thine," sacrifice and altar, are cemented in rhyme.

The stony foundations of these early poems within Herbert's poetic sequence of *The Temple* will reoccur throughout later poems. Stones, stoniness, and a variety of lithic entities underlie Herbert's verse, and I will return to some of these in chapter 7 in a discussion of tombs, sepulchers, and a stony–human continuum into the afterlife. Here, I next turn to the influential reach of Herbert's lithic imagination on English devotional lyric in the later seventeenth century.

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[46] Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare.*

Christopher Harvey and the *Schola Cordis* (1647)

Poets who consciously wrote in conversation with Herbert's *The Temple* also wrangled with the stony heart. Christopher Harvey (1597–1663), was, like Herbert, a Church of England clergyman as well as poet. His best-known slim volume of poems recalls the foundational stones of *The Temple* and opens with a poetic "stepping-stone" that leads into the "Synagogue," a nod to the foundational stoniness of church architecture, but also to that of the human penitent and reader.[47] Harvey's fascination with a mineralized devotional practice grew rather than diminished in the face of Puritan attack on established church doctrine and practice as the 1640s progressed.

In 1647 his adaptation of the Jesuit Benedict van Haeften's Latin emblem book *Schola Cordis* appeared anonymously in print with forty-seven engravings that depicted the spiritual anguish of the human heart as a stone being tortured and tried by fire, anvil, and a creative array of physical battery. As R. Freeman notes, the verbal adaptations that Harvey undertakes to describe the process of converting the stony heart into one of flesh exploit a "mixture of literalness and symbolism" that refuses distinctions of mineral and flesh.[48] Each entry in *Schola Cordis* features an image, a biblical text, and an epigram and ode. This multimodal literary form was newly popularized in England by Francis Quarles. It demands a complex interplay of visual and textual meaning which erodes easy distinction between symbolic and literal registers.

Throughout this collection, Harvey adopts physical, alchemical language to describe the conversion process. The "school of the heart" recalls Welsteede's sermon in so far as it imagines the causes and regimen that might "cure" or "school" a heart from base hard mineral to become "more precious than gold" when softened (emblem 21).[49] A series of physical trials describe how to cure—that is convert—the penitent's heart and secure salvation. The first emblem opens with "the infection of the heart" and subsequent emblems offer strategies to mitigate "hardness of the heart" (emblem 8) via "circumcision" (emblem 13), "sacrifice" (emblem 19),

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[47] Christopher Harvey, *The synagogue, or, The shadow of the temple sacred poems and private ejaculations, in imitation of Mr. George Herbert* (London: Printed by J. L. for Philemon Stephens, 1647), sig. A2^{v}.

[48] Rosemary Freeman, *English Emblem Books* (New York: Octagon Books, 1948; repr., 1967), 134–7 at 135.

[49] Christopher Harvey, *Schola Cordis, or, the Heart of It selfe* (London: Printed for H. Blunden, 1647).

"levelling" (emblem 23), "tilling" (emblem 27), "wounding" (emblem 32), and "inflaming" (emblem 36) to arrive, finally, at a "softening" (emblem 46) that results in the final "new wine of the heart" (emblem 47).

"What have we here," the narrator queries early in the sequence in emblem 8, "an heart?" (sig. C5^r). The next lines confirm that "It looks like one, / The shape, and colour speake it such" (sig. C5r). "But," the narrator counters, "having brought it to the touch / I find it no better than a stone. / Adamants are / softer by far" (sig. C5^r). Visually, in "shape" and "colour" the "cordis" resembles traditional iconic representations of a human heart, but upon palpation, its qualities are stony because it is hard rather than fleshly. The accompanying emblem features a winged angel wielding an anvil, poised to strike a heart-shaped object atop a stony plinth or altar (Figure 4.7). Throughout the volume, the heart's placement on a variety of stone tables, altars, or columns visually emphasizes its lithic substrate.

The language Harvey deploys to cure or "school" the stony adamant heart underscores the visual cues provided by the stony props; it invokes the processes or steps typical to an alchemical formula whose ultimate aim was to transform mineral matter. The "Ode" for this emblem, for instance, invokes distillation (sig. C5^v), congelation (sig. C5^v), and dissolution to dust, only to conclude that "hearts of steel" resist conversion (sig. C6^r). Each of these was often included within alchemical formulae as steps or keys in the process of achieving the philosopher's stone. Later, in emblem 21, "The trying of the Heart," the penitent learns that "thine heart" must be purified of "all the dross" of whatever "metal it is made" so that neither "drosse, / Nor base allayes" survive its capitulation in God's furnace that "refine" it until "more precious than gold" (sig. E7^r). The alchemical images rely on mineral matter with its associative capacities of hardness (adamant) or softness (gold) to determine the salvation of the penitent human heart.

Christopher Harvey's fascination with the matter of the saved heart (and hence human) shares as its focus the human organ that preoccupied his more famous brother, William Harvey, in his anatomical studies.[50] In *De*

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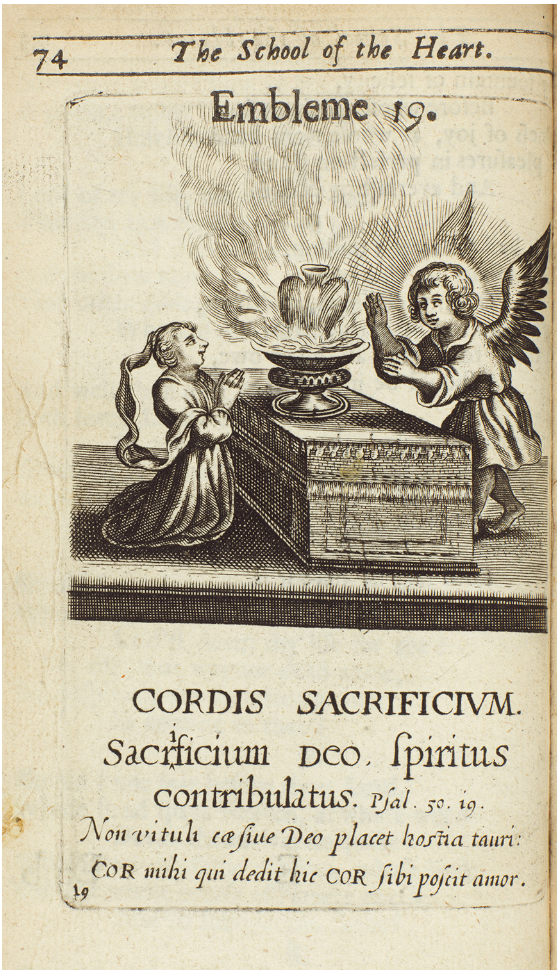
[50] For recent studies that suggest William Harvey's understanding of the heart was less mechanistic than assumed and that the heart was not entirely "dethroned" as argued, see Graham Holderness, "The Human Heart, from Harvey to Hobbes," *Critical Survey* 32, no. 3 (2020): 20–32; M. Healy, "Was the Heart 'Dethroned'? Harvey's Discoveries and the Politics of Blood, Heart, and Circulation," in *Blood Matters: Studies in European Literature and Thought, 1400–1700*, eds. Bonnie Lander-Johnson and Eleanor Decamp (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 15–30.



74 The School of the Heart.

Embleme 19.

CORDIS SACRIFICIVM.

Sacrificium[1] Deo, ſpiritus
contribulatus. Pſal. 50. 19.
Non vituli cæſiue Deo placet hoſtia tauri:
COR mihi qui dedit hic COR ſibi poſcit amor.
19

Figure 4.7 "Embleme 19" from Christopher Harvey's *The School of the Heart* [. . .] (London: Lodowick Lloyd, 1675), sig. E1$^{\mathrm{v}}$, RB 432408.

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Motu Cordis (1628), William Harvey saw the heart due to its function of circulating blood as the "starting point of life."[51] Both brothers shared an interest in the vital functions of the heart to deliver life; but whereas William became increasingly interested in the blood's circulation, Christopher imagined its vital capacities to be conjoined with the realms of the mineral, as well as the biological and vegetal. In other emblems, the reader learns the agrarian care also needed to cure the heart: "seeding" (emblem 28), "watering" (emblem 29), "tilling" (emblem 27), and even "hedging" (emblem 45). The various methods to cure the opening "infection" of the stony heart understand it to encompass multiple materialities of organic and nonorganic substances and processes. The human heart troubles a simple opposition, or distinction, between categories of life as its needs are simultaneously material, nutritive, and spiritual. Both Harveys were keenly interested in relations between spirit and matter.

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[51] William Harvey, "De Motu Cordis (1628)," in *The Circulation of Blood and Other Writings* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons 1990), 2–88 at 46.

Across the forty-seven emblems of Harvey's adaptation, the heart's physical qualities as an inward part critically indicate infection or health. Its physical status determines its spiritual one. The upshot of the emblem's earnest advice echoes that found in Welsteede's sermon: only through constant vigilance or "watching" (emblem 32), might the heart be kept tender and fleshly. Once again the paradox surfaces that the inward heart might only be known by outward performance. The series of dynamic physical exercises offered as lessons in *Schola Cordis* of searching, palpating, and shattering alone reveal the spark within the flint of the human heart.

Henry Vaughan's Flashing Flint

A fascination with the heart's material doubleness was not limited to the hotter sort of godly nor the Anglican clergy. The Welsh royalist poet Henry Vaughan opens *Silex Scintillans* (1650) with a mineralized self-portrait written as a Latin verbal emblem "*Authoris (de se) Emblema*."[52] Unresponsive to the voice, breath, or love of the Divine, the Author acknowledges that "*Surdus eram, mutusque silex*" (I was deaf and dumb; a flint). Throughout the opening inscription the author refers to himself (*de se*) in mineral terms: "Silex," "Lapis," "Adamante," and "Petras," "Scopulosque" (sig. A^{v}). These nouns coupled with "fractas" and "Fragmenta" invite the reader to imagine the body of the lyric speaker to break, fracture, or shatter—or spark—as might a mineral.

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[52] All citations are to Henry Vaughan, *Silex Scintillans, or, Sacred Poems and Priuate Eiaculations* (London: Printed by T. W. for H. Blunden, 1650).

But once the Divine begins an assault on this "Silex," stone gives way to flesh: "You draw nearer and break that mass which is my rocky heart, and that which was formerly stone is now made flesh . . . and tears from the flint staining my cheeks. So it was once before when you provided springing rocks and gushing cliffs."[53] Here, as elsewhere in the volume, Vaughan scrutinizes what lies hidden below the surface. What seems dry rock hides water; what appears a stony flint, cries tears. In Figure 4.8, Vaughan's use of "flint" on the title-page emblem registers a potentiality that the speaker will seek in the poems to follow. Flint harbors below its hard surface a latent vitality, awaiting a strike. The stony exterior hides but also provides protection for the interior divine spark.

On the page, the printed poem's capitalization and non-italicized font of the rocky referents reinforce the correlation of human author with mineral nature. The punning on "Adamante" and "Petras" is especially resonant. As discussed above with reference to Welsteede's "Adamant," it allusively invokes the biblical Adam, who bequeathed his fallen, and subsequently "natural" (to use Welsteede's language) stony heart to all humans. Peter, as chapter 3 demonstrates, was the "rock of the church," but also infamous for denying Christ. The poem's opening address thus connects humankind's relapse to an adamantine state with Peter's denial of Christ. Yet the poem's lithic imagery hints that, despite this double heritage of original sin and subsequent denial of Christ, the penitent stony-hearted individual, much like a sleeping senseless human, appears dormant, but remain responsive to divine touch.

To reveal the hidden flesh or spark within, for Vaughan, requires an alchemical process not unlike that described in Harvey's adapted emblems. Vaughan's interest in the alchemical theories of hermeticism, and professional interest in medicine, coincides with the chemical work of his twin brother, Thomas, who was a practicing alchemist steeped in theories of transfiguration and transformation.[54] Both were steeped in an animist

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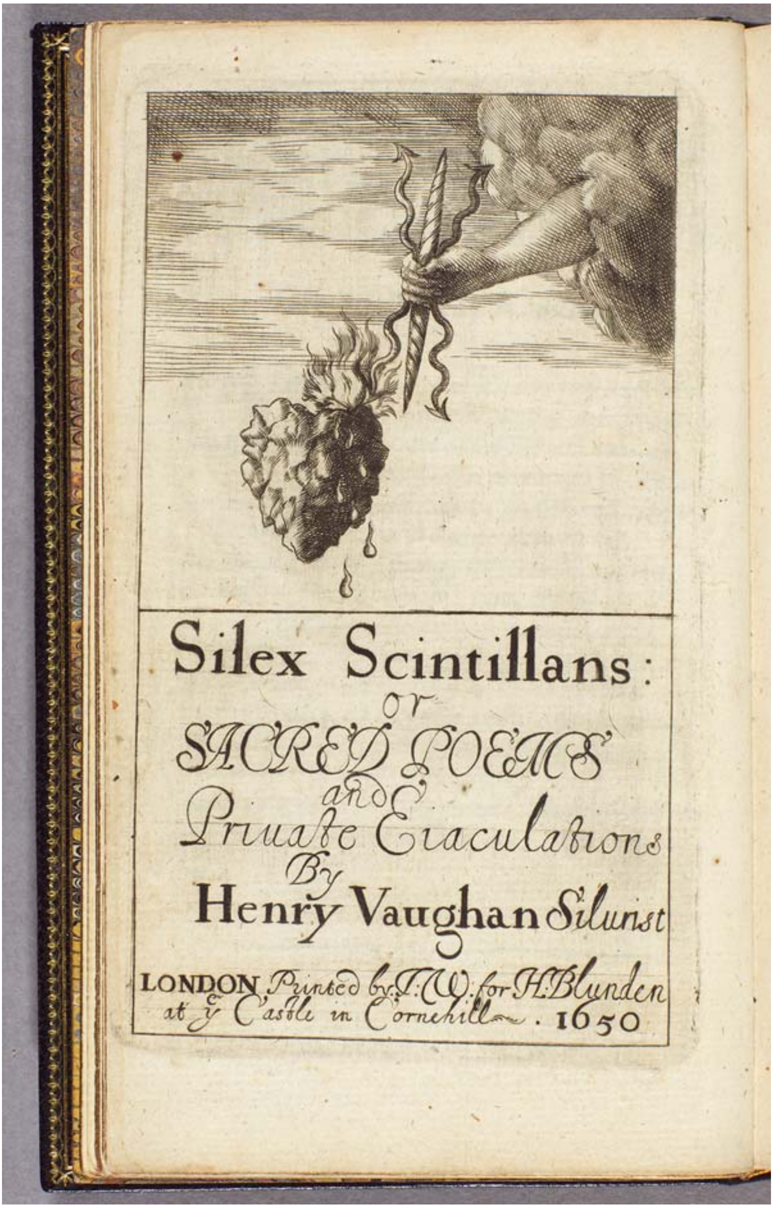
[53] As rendered into English by Alan Rudrum in *Henry Vaughan: The Complete Poems*, 137.

[54] Henry Vaughan's alchemical connections are well documented as a matter of critical controversy. The seminal study is Elizabeth Holmes, *Henry Vaughan and the Hermetic Philosophy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1932). For a brief introduction, see Nigel Smith, "Henry Vaughan and Thomas Vaughan: Welsh Anglicanism, 'Chymick,' and the English Revolution,"



Silex Scintillans:
or
SACRED POEMS
and
Priuate Eiaculations
By
Henry Vaughan Silurist
LONDON Printed by T:W: for H:Blunden
at yͤ Castle in Cornehill. 1650

Figure 4.8 Title page to Henry Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans, or Sacred Poems and Priuate Eiaculations* (London, 1650), RB 109301.

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philosophy.[55] In Vaughan, the "silex" imagery corresponds to the alchemical search for the elixir or philosopher's stone.[56] Its occult referent insists on the necessity of a material underpinning to a spiritual metamorphosis. The catalyst to spark the "silex" lay in the "Holy Scriptures": for "In thee the hidden stone, the *Manna* lies, / Thou art the great *Elixir* . . . / The Key that opens all Mysteries" (sig. D6^{v}). The speaker wishes "that I had deep Cut in my hard heart / Each line in thee!" (sig. D6^{v}). The poem literalizes the trope that the title pages of England's devotional works augured: If the foundation stone now lay in scripture rather than in Rome, by inscribing the scriptures in one's heart, one might activate the natural human stony heart into a new, salvific life of grace. To so inscribe scripture, the poem suggests, would catalyze the potentiality lying hidden within. Rather than being merely a barrier to salvation, the heart's dual flinty nature facilitates alchemical transmutation and the desired concomitant spiritual regeneration.

In Vaughan's poetry, spiritual regeneration entails an embodied process. Like Herbert and Harvey before him, the process requires human and divine to participate at an elemental level with the natural world in order to actualize potentialities.[57] As the title page image and opening poem suggest, the porosity of the human and the lithic figures frequently in the poems of *Silex Scintillans*. As in *Schola Cordis*, Vaughan too will use a mix of vegetal and mineral referents to express how hidden qualities might awaken to new life and transfiguration.[58] But when it comes to the corruption and possible regeneration of "Man," he most frequently turns to figurations of

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in *The Oxford Handbook of Literature and the English Revolution*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 409–25 at 417. See also Stanton J. Linden, *Darke Hierogliphicks: Alchemy in English Literature from Chaucer to the Restoration*, Studies in the English Renaissance (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 224–60.

[55] Hilary Llewellyn-Williams, "'As Above, So Below': Reflections of the Hermetic Philosophy," *Scintilla: The Journal of the Vaughan Association* 1 (1997): 69–76.

[56] My aim here is not to argue that Vaughan was a Rosicrucian, but to point out the ways in which alchemical language entangles the materiality of nature with spiritual metamorphosis. For his investment in hermetic philosophy, see Thomas O. Calhoun, *Henry Vaughan: The Achievement of Silex Scintillans* (Newark, DE and London: University of Delaware Press; Associated University Presses, 1981). For a more explicit argument of Vaughan's imagination as steeped in Rosicrucian thought, see Michael Martin, *Literature and the Encounter with God in Post-Reformation England* (Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2014), 132ff. Similarly, I'm less interested in Vaughan's confessional identity as Catholic or godly, noting only his interest in the immanence of God's presence in the human experience.

[57] See also Arthur Clements, *The Poetry of Contemplation: John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, and the Modern Period* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

[58] For Vaughan's use of plant imagery, see Glyn Pursglove, "Not with Leaf Only, but with Some Fruit Also," *Scintilla: The Journal of the Vaughan Association* 12 (2008): 34–52.

earth and stone.[59] Critics of Vaughan's poetry have traditionally understood his references to a flinty stone heart as representative of the "unregenerate heart" aligned with "the Jews" who have closed their hearts to Christ.[60] Although such readings rightly note the Old Testament referent to Ezekiel 36, they overlook the critical role that the flinty heart plays elsewhere. It is the foundational material that, when refined and regenerated, harbors Christ's indwelling. Its materiality holds the memory of divinity within.

The poem "Corruption" exemplifies how even an adamantine postlapsarian human might remember "his birth" (sig. D6^{r}). Drawing on the title page imagery of flint and flame, the narrator declares "Sure, it was so. Man in those early days / was not all stone, and Earth, / He shin'd a little" (sig. D6^{r}). Such an inward shining or glimmering endures, its presence only now obscured by sin's corruption. A couple of poems later, the narrator in "The Check" marvels how the divine "pow'r doth so excel / As to make Clay / A spirit, and true glory dwell / In dust, and stones" (sig. D8^{v}). In a similar vein, in "Repentance," the mineralized embodied human might be "vile clay," but the "quickning" of the "sacred Ray" implanted by the "Lord" resides in it, so that the "Dust, of which I am part / The Stones much softer than my heart" contain the "beams" that promise, with the poem's titular act of "Repentance," a regeneration (sig. E3^{r-v}).

In the second, greatly expanded edition of *Silex Scintillans* (1655), Vaughan adds an "Authors Preface" to a series of new hymns interpellated with the earlier poems. In the new preface, Vaughan describes how "I was nigh unto death" (1655 sig. B3^{v}), an experience that may explain some of the later poems' urgent engagement with human transfiguration.[61] "Ascension Hymn" pleads that "Dust and clay," which are "mans antient wear!" might with God's power be made to rejoin the stars; "Make clay ascend more quick then light," the closing line implores (1655 sig. C2^{r-v}). The clay in this "Ascension" hymn is integral to the process of ascending to the light; it is not merely unregenerate matter. As Daniel Juan Gil notes, Vaughan's belief in bodily resurrection reaches back to Paul and the foundations of the church fathers for its grounding in a corporeal materialism. But what remains unique to Vaughan's perception of resurrection is that it is not only some future event, but is also immanent, glimpsable, and unfolding in the natural world of bodies, rocks, and fountains.[62] In "Vanity of Spirit," the poetic narrator need only diligently "search my self," having "passed / through all the creatures" to discover "Traces and sounds of a strange kind" (1650 sig. C^{r}). The "strange kind" the poet finds through interior searching, as the title page emblematizes, is the flinty mineral material substrate within that keeps "the mystery" and "That little light" (sig. C^{r}). An alchemical renewal provides the way to regeneration, and its base materials lie deeply embedded within the anatomical center of the human.

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[59] For Vaughan's consideration of the more-than-human world as part of God's fellow creatures and capable too of regeneration, see Alan J. Rudrum, "God's Second Book and the Regenerate Mind: Some Early Modern Conversion Narratives," in *Renaissance Ecology: Imagining Eden in Milton's England*, ed. Ken Hiltner (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2008), 201–16.

[60] Clements, *The Poetry of Contemplation*, 136.

[61] Henry Vaughan, *Silex Scintillans: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (London: Printed for Henry Crips and Lodowick Lloyd . . . , 1655).

The "meek heart" is "That secret Ark," the narrator declares near the end of the augmented 1655 *Silex Scintillans* (1655, sig. F7^{v}). In a poem cited in my introduction, "Jacob's Pillow, and Pillar," the secret dwelling place of the "Maker," and the "sure Guardian," is "the solemn temple" of Jacob's stony pillow "sunk again / Into a pillar, and concealed from men" (1655 sig. F7^{v}). That humble stone of Bethel is "but type" for "we" who "the substance have" and "on him rest" (1655 sig. F8^{r}). This poem's final stanza collapses biblical stony pillar, human supplicant, and divine. It considers "stone" to be the substance through which the divine sparks the human. Just as Jacob lay his head on a stony pillar to dream of a ladder reaching to the heavens, so too these mid-seventeenth-century poets communicate their human spiritual longing via the medium of a lithic embodiment as the means by which to reach the "Day-star" which lies above (1655 sig. F8^{r}).

Hester Pulter and A Mother's Prayer

The male devotional lyric voices explored above imagine that salvation exists within the stony substrate of human matter. Their lyric meditations argue that the stony heart is more than a harbinger of death or damnation. By embracing, sparking, and wrestling with the stone within, the penitent finds the key to conversion, the foundational rung of Jacob's ladder that reaches to the sky—and divinity—below as well as above. The fleshly lithic conjunction is tortuous, but the very pain itself signals life, a new birth, and regeneration. The erotics inherent to lyric devotional pain have been wonderfully illuminated by Richard Rambuss.[63] Lithic erotics are a further topic of discussion in chapter 6, where I explore in more detail a lithic sexuality and its links with fertility. Such a regeneration and eroticism in stone, however, appears more accessible and congenial to an embodied masculine perspective. For the female penitent, such as the anonymous mother whose prayer for her child's stony heart, cited near this chapter's opening, there appears less assurance of an alchemical apotheosis via mineralized matter.

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[62] Daniel Juan Gil, "The Resurrection of the Body and the Life of the Flesh in Henry Vaughan's Religious Verse," *English Literary History* 82 (2015): 59–86.

I close this chapter with a consideration of how the lyric voice of one mother finds in stone not the portal to heaven, nor new birth into eternal life, but a petrified endurance in oblivion that might recall the fate of Niobe, whose story opens my book's second part on "Lithic Conversions." The recusant poet Hester Pulter too will explore alchemical transformations, and this poetic fascination, as well as her royalist convictions, connect her to a poet like Henry Vaughan. But much of her poetry that treats a mineralized substrate of a stony heart and potential alchemical transformation lack the flashing spark that in Vaughan foretells salvation here and to come.

In "Upon the Death of My Dear and Lovely Daughter J.[ane] P.[ulter]," Hester Pulter laments the unending grief wherein "tears (alas) give sorrow no relief" (ln. 13) at the loss of her "lovely daughter" who possesses "sparkling diamond eyes" (ln. 25).[64] Although the poem gives no evidence as to whether this child still possessed her stony heart—which would not have carried the Calvinist reprobate charge for the recusant Pulter—the daughter's lithic eyes provide a window into the grieving mother's soul that anticipates the final couplet. "But what a heart had I when I did stand," the narrator muses as the child's "bright spirit flies" to heaven (ln. 48). The last lines, however, do not conclude with the comforting image of a child's soul winking like diamonds in the sky. Rather, suddenly, the poem plummets both mother and daughter downward: "Her soul being seated in her place of birth, I turned a Niobe as she turned earth" (lns. 50–1). The penultimate line would seem to promise that the "soul" is "in her place of birth," which read against the poem's preceding lines would point to "heaven." But the rhyme leads the reader, not to heaven, but to "earth."

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[63] Richard Rambuss, "Pleasure and Devotion: The Body of Jesus and Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric," in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 253–79.

[64] Lady Hester Pulter, *Poems, Emblems, And the Unfortunate Florinda*, ed. Alice Eardley, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe (Toronto: Iter Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2014).

The final image then is not of apotheosis or ascension, but of a lithic future where the preserved, crying human mother endures as stone like Niobe.

A similar sentiment defines "The Circle (2)," a sonnet whose alchemical imagery creates the philosopher's stone, but rather than providing regenerative life, the poem notes that the bodies "to dust are all calcined / Lying obliviated in their urn" so that "His primitive's dust (alas) doth end his story" (lns. 10–11, 14) and the poem. The flashing flint of Vaughan's redemption falls into earth and silence.[65] The alchemical conversion does not result in an eternal life above, but instead a burial vessel (the urn) where the embodied clay remains. Instead of the creation of new life as promised by the altar sacrifice, in Pulter the elemental conversion of stone and flesh is a return of "earth to earth" ("The Invocation of the Elements, the Longest Night in the Year, 1655," ln. 72), a double death of elements. As Frances Dolan notes, it is not unlikely that Pulter performed her own experiments with domestic branches of alchemy, such as distillation and palingenesis. But the poems and emblems frequently question the ability to reanimate life and thus open up a terrain of theological doubt that scrutinizes the "material substrate of her figurations" that "unsettles rather than grounds" her praxis in ways that diverge from the more affirmative masculine voices.[66]

In making the argument that the early modern human cannot be extricated from its stony matter, I do not intend to posit this as a simple fantasy of greater interpellation within the world. Rather, the relation to the mineral as a principal human part poses a problem that produces ambivalence, contradiction, and potential despair. Whether conceptualized as material or as only tropological, lithic human kinship is hard-edged. The dubiety of mineral and human matter might, in some instances, promise salvation. But its presence more likely prompts pain, suffering, and in some cases a desperate urge to be shorn of stony matter. Emphasizing the stony heart as literal and figurative reality both promises salvation and consolation while it unsettles through its suggestion of damnation in an undistinguished clay. While the stony heart may be the most infamous convertible body part in early modern literature, other body parts too were known as well as imagined to transform from flesh into lithic matter. As with the stony heart, the conversion might herald sickness but also promise a vital cure to the human condition. My next chapter takes up two embodied lithic byproducts, the dreaded kidney stone and the near-magical bezoar stone.

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[65] For a longer discussion on Pulter's use of alchemy across the four poems that compose "The Circle," see Jayne Elisabeth Archer, "A 'Perfect Circle'? Alchemy in the Poetry of Hester Pulter," *Literature Compass* 2, no. 1 (2005): 1–14.

[66] Frances E. Dolan, "Hester Pulter's Renaissance," *English Literary Renaissance* 50, no. 1 (2020): 32–9 at 37. Others have also argued that Pulter presents her poetry as a parallel to resurrection via a kind of atomized persistence; see Leah Knight and Wendy Wall, "Ecologies of Texts and World: Hester Pulter and the Art of Making" (plenary, The Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies Congress, Vancouver, June 2019).

5

Lithic Encrustations and Embodied "Quarries of Stones"

For many in late seventeenth-century England, the stony heart's latent presence as a principal anatomical and spiritual part demanded rigorous scrutiny: a source of agony but also succor. The heart, however, was not alone in its capacity for stony–fleshly conversions. Biological and geological convertibility on a macro-scale can be glimpsed in John Donne's *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, written during a serious illness in 1623. Here Donne confronts what he believes will be imminent death. Concerned for his soul, he contemplates his body. He flips his earlier poetic conceit (from the "Holy Sonnets") that "man is a little world," a microcosm, to imagine instead the human body as the macrocosm. The human body "consists of more pieces, more parts, than the world," for the world is "but the map" and "the Man the World" (sig. D8^{r}).[1] He anatomizes the world by mapping the human body onto it: "If all the Veines in our bodies, were extended to Rivers, and all the Sinewes, to Vaines of Mines, and all the Muscles, that lye upon one another, to Hilles, and all the bones to Quarries of Stones . . . [then] the *Aire* would be too little for this Orbe" (sig. D9^{r-v}). Donne's geographic "Orbe" of human anatomy coextends the veins, sinews, muscles, and bones of the body's matter into the rivers, mines, hills, and quarries of the natural material world. The conceit creates strange intimacies as an animacy ripples across fleshly membranes and earthly elements.[2] Metonymy flows into metaphor as the bones become "Quarries of Stones" and the sinews branch like the veins of underground minerals. In Donne's expansive formulation, the animate human body is not only coextensive with the organic (animal and vegetal) but also with the nonorganic, mineral realm. The mineral realm too possesses convertible capacities and its own qualities of animate liveliness.

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[1] Donne, *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*.

[2] For a discussion of how stones and metals have a long-standing connection to the animate or potentially animate, see Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies*, 4–7.

The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton. Tiffany Jo Werth, Oxford University Press. © Tiffany Jo Werth (2024).
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Early modern scholars of embodiment—prominent among them Mary Floyd-Wilson, David Hillman, Carla Mazzio, Gail Kern Paster, Jonathan Sawday, Michael Schoenfeldt, and Garrett Sullivan—have mapped the centrality of the corporeal to Shakespeare and his contemporaries, revivifying the language of bodily sensation (smell, touch, sound, sight, and taste), of interiority and entrails, for modern readers.[3] This chapter builds on their work, extending our reading of what constitutes the human "body" by exploring its interanimation with the geological and mineral. This chapter also takes a cue from Phillip John Usher, who has taught us to focus on the *exterranean*: the conjunction of "land/ground/place where extraction occurs (terra)" and "to think-feel" all the material continuity of human and nonhuman agents.[4] Following Usher, I ask: What happens when the body itself is imagined as a mine? Reading a broadly conceived literary archive, I contextualize Donne's geographic, geologic, anatomy amid other early modern accounts of bodily mines and mineralized flesh. Specifically, I follow the stories around the growth and expulsion of stony bodily encrustations, such as the kidney stone in humans, and the bezoar stone in certain deer and goats. These embodied stones that humans and ruminants extrude are, like mined minerals, simultaneously dangerous and valuable, equally toxin and cure. The medical anatomies, essays, recipes, fictional dramatizations, and poetic meditations reveal how *exterranean* activity with its convertibility of flesh to lithic calculi generated both awe and consternation.

The stories about, anatomies of, and cures for, embodied stones offer authors a durable set of analogies that, like the stony heart, blur literal and imaginative domains. As Jessica Wolfe notes, "reciprocal transmutability" between mineral and creaturely or animal bodies was "especially baffling."[5] The discourse around such stony byproducts contributes to the early modern lithic imagination in ways that anticipate the large-scale-systems theory, or "geontologies," of what Elizabeth Povinelli terms a "carbon imaginary."[6] In the twenty-first-century carbon imaginary, the technical divisions between creaturely, biological life and mineral life are largely a scalar question. Natural sciences, for instance, now suggest that a separation between bio- and geochemistry may not be as clean as believed; rather, in the long view, although "rocks cannot exactly die . . . , they do come into existence."[7] In the carbon imaginary, symbiotic (and metabolic) relationships between geological and biological forms are being recognized. The early modern fascination with the growth of stones within organic, creaturely bodies similarly denies that one kind or form of matter is hermetically sealed from its environment. Embodied stones are hybrids that occupy a scalar position to human animacy on the dynamic early modern *scala naturae*.

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[3] See especially Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*; as well as Floyd-Wilson and Sullivan, *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England*; and Hillman, *Shakespeare's Entrails.* Other influential scholars include Carla Mazzio and David Hillman, eds., *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997); Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

[4] Usher, *Exterranean*, 3.

[5] Wolfe, "Gorgonick Spirits, 103–27 at 103.

As my previous chapter on the stony heart argues, the anxiety over the conversion of flesh and stone animates both anatomical, medical, and religious discourse with the sense that one form of matter might turn (convert), grow into, or become, another. The results of such matter conversion were potentially toxic or salvatory, depending on perspective. This chapter turns to kidney stones and bezoar stones as additional examples of bodily conversions of flesh to mineral. Like the stony heart, these embodied stones further disrupt categorization that separates life from nonlife. They mark a continuum among the biologic, the geologic, and even the supernatural. These hybrid encrustations incite a marvelous and often even miraculous affective response from authors. Their more-than-human, frequently supernatural penumbrae imbue the strange stones with talismanic power that elevates them as dreaded, lucrative relics.

"Fitte of the Stonne": Kidney Stones, Lithotomy, and *Exterranean* Minerals

A near contemporary of John Donne, the physician Helkiah Crooke, best known for his popular anatomy *Mikrokosmographia: A Description of the Human Body* (first publ. 1615; republ. 1631), opens his volume with a discourse on the correspondence of the human body to the cosmos. Whereas Donne imagines bones as stone quarries, Crooke describes the human body itself as a mine capable of producing minerals and subject to inner weather systems and tempests. He dissects the "Meteorologie of this Litle world" wherein weather systems, atmosphere, and geological forces swirl amid the flesh, membranes, tissue, and sinews (sig. B4^{v}).[8] To illustrate, he describes how the stones of the kidney and bladder, "to which all ages and sexes are very prone and subject" (sig. O4^{r}), "doe carie a resemblance of Mines and Minerals" (sig. B4^{v}). "There are also found in our Bodyes, mines and quarries," he elaborates, "out of which metals and stones are digged" (sig. B4^{v}). But the bodily growth of such mineral calculi, while a cause for wonder, was not a marvelous repository of wealth; rather these metals and stones were injurious to health, grown, Crooke notes, "not to build, but to pull downe the House" (sig. B4^{v}). Crooke's Galenic medical account, supplemented with graphic visual illustrations, documents how the formation of stones within human entrails animates an unsettling convertibility of flesh to mineral as part of the body's cosmic circulatory imaginary.

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[6] Povinelli, *Geontologies*, 30–56.

[7] Ibid., 43.

Crooke's anatomical understanding of the body's microcosmic, geological and even subterranean forces that might yield metals and stones shares ground with early modern alchemical theories that would find expression in Isaac Newton's startling explanation of the "planet as a biological organism" wherein metals and minerals generate and degenerate underground.[9] As William Newman compellingly argues, Newton developed a theory of a "hidden life of metals" that drew from early various influential sixteenth- and seventeenth-century alchemists, among them Basilius Valentius and Michael Maier.[10] These theories built on information from miners and metallurgists as well as early modern chymists, who argued that minerals and metals formed within the earth. Newton would see it as a "cyclical process" that paired the generation and degeneration of minerals with the subterranean sulfurous and mercurial flames, that under the influence of heat, would cycle through "birth, death, and rebirth" as part of an "organismic structure" of a living planet.[11] From this perspective, the subterranean minerals contain a vital principle of life which made them valuable and gave them an attractive power.

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[8] All subsequent references are to the 1631 edition. Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man*, 2nd ed. (London: by Thomas and Richard Cotes, 1631).

[9] First developed in an early essay, historian of science William Newman further explores this thesis in his pathbreaking reading of Isaac Newton and his indebtedness to early modern alchemical theories of the subterranean world. See Newman, *Newton the Alchemist*; and Newman, "Geochemical Concepts in Isaac Newton's Early Alchemy," in *The Revolution in Geology from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. Gary D. Rosenberg (Boulder, CO: Geological Society of America Memoir, 2009), 41–9.

[10] *Newton the Alchemist*, 64–87 and 146.

[11] Ibid., 64–5.

The unsettling, strange imaginary of a bodily mine that could convert flesh to mineral ensured that embodied stones, like mined metals and minerals, were remarkable, often expensive rarities. The specimen of a kidney stone in Figure 5.1 illustrates their place among a collection of "natural and artificial rarities" that formed part of an early Royal Society display at Gresham College later in the seventeenth century. Pictured here, "a Stone voyded by ye Urethra of a Man: after ye life" shares the page alongside four additional "rarities" and marvels: a "weesle headed armadillo, the head of a baby-Roussa (sig. F3^{r})," the circular tusk of "a Wild Boar," and the head of a "hippopotamus or behemoth" (sig. F3^{r}). Later images also show a "stone out of a dogs bladder," unusual shells, and coral specimens (sig. F3^{v}). These

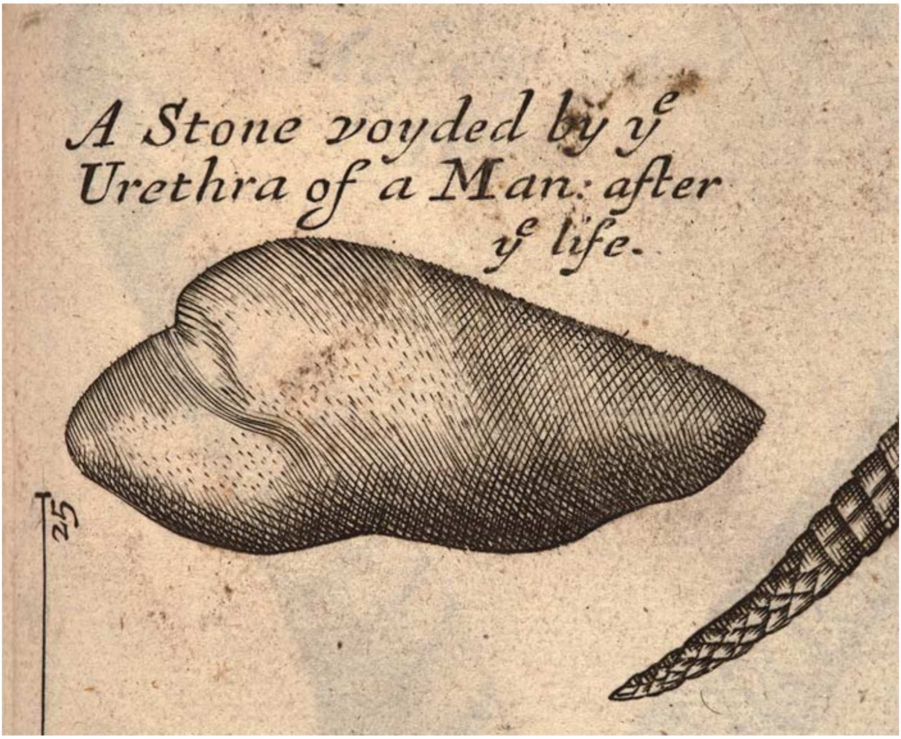
A Stone voyded by y^{e} Urethra of a Man: after y^{e} life.
25

Figure 5.1 Detail of a stone from Nehemiah Grew's *The Comparative Anatomy of Stomach and Guts Begun*. In *Musaeum Regalis Societatis* [. . .] (London: W. Rawlins, 1681), sig. F3^{r}, RB 618880.

Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

embodied stones shared shelf space with items worthy of a curiosity cabinet or *Wunderkammer*. Such lithic specimens, as historian of science Paula Findlen memorably details, often sat athwart natural historical categories and thus were tinged with an aura of the strange and miraculous.[12]

Gresham College's catalogue of rarities that tabulates a voided stone alongside curiosities of the natural world visually signals the imaginative possibility that these painful physical processes prompted. It also stages how such curiosities imbricate the human within a vital, larger, more-than-human, often mysterious, macrocosmic system.[13]

While Helkiah Crooke's description clinically details the body's mineralization, other writers seize on such gritty growth as indicative of a larger human–geological cycle. In 1603, the English translator John Florio published *The Essays of Montaigne*. In one of his most memorable essays, "Of Experience," Michel de Montaigne meditates on a "hard, gretty and massie body . . . concocted and petrified in our kidneis" (sig. Iii3^{r}).[14] Envisioning how flesh turns "hard, gretty," "concocted and petrified" deep within his bowels, Montaigne interprets it as a natural, if unpleasant, aspect of the health cycle. His account demonstrates what Jennifer H. Oliver describes as "Montaigne's openness to the force of matter" that invites us to see him as consubstantial with stone itself.[15] Florio's verb choice in translation offers a fascinating insight into the process: to "concoct" (*OED*, v.1a) is to "prepare by the action of heat" a phrasing that had a specifically geological cast to it in the early seventeenth century. The *OED* illustrates the "obsolete physical science" definition (v.2a) as specifying to "bring (metals, minerals, etc.) to their perfect or mature state by heat." The kidneys, in Galenic theory as articulated by Crooke, were thought to be "very hot" and might "bake, yea burne Flegme into stones" (sig. I3^{v}). The *OED* examples from 1555 and 1612 turn to the formation of metals and minerals in the earth as being "concocted." Florio's lexical choice implies a process whereby the bodily heat of the kidneys might "mature" an underlying latent mineral potential within the bowel, thereby converting an organic body into a "calcareous, siliceous, or other mineral deposit"—the definition the *OED* gives for "petrify" (v.1).

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[12] Findlen, *Possessing Nature*.

[13] For a study of this collection and its vitalist connections, see Brian Garrett, "Vitalism and Teleology in the Natural Philosophy of Nehemiah Grew (1641–1712)," *British Journal for the History of Science* 36, no. 1 (2003): 63–81.

[14] Montaigne, *Essays Vvritten in French by Michael Lord of Montaigne*, trans. John Florio (London: Printed by Melch. Bradvvood for Edvvard Blount and William Barret, 1613). Montaigne is not the only Renaissance artist fascinated by kidney functions. Some scholars also argue for its influence on Michelangelo's painting of the Creation in the Sistine Chapel; see Garabed Eknoyan, "Michelangelo: Art, Anatomy, and the Kidney," *Kidney International* 57 (2000): 190–201.

[15] Jennifer H. Oliver's argument goes beyond Montaigne's obsession with his kidney stone to trace his broader identification with stone through his imagery of architecture that is linked to his materiality of thought, see "Lithic Montaigne: Stone, 'bastiment,' and 'Du repentir' (III,2)" *Montaigne Studies* 35(2023): 1–14 at 2.

Montaigne understands the growth cycle of his kidney stone as a natural bodily curative. Jonathan Sawday writes how Montaigne, in his *Essays*, dwelt at length upon his suffering from his stone; passing it meant a "return to being human."[16] Montaigne documents how he returns to "the faire Sunneshine of health" when "I come by the voyding of my stone" (sig. Iii3^{r}). Unlike other maladies that take many degrees to cure, "the gravell hath this privilege, that it is cleane carried away" and so "nature voydeth in these stones and gravell, whatsoever is superfluous and hurtfull to her" (sig. Iii3^{r}). "Let no man tell me," Montaigne continues, "that it is a medicine too deere sold" (sig. Iii3^{r}). Montaigne correlates mineral concretion with bodily sensation in the growth and expulsion of his kidney stone. The *exterranean* activity was necessary to avoid stasis so that the blockage in his interior world, his bodily microcosm, analogized to the flow of the macrocosm and exterior world. The rapidity of bodily conversion from flesh to calculi he found marvelous, its "sodaine change," remarkable (sig. Iii3^{r}). And, although the stone was not a pleasant companion, unlike most maladies, Montaigne describes its presence as a cyclical component, a purgative, to health: for "since I have had the stone chollike," he writes, "I finde myself discharged of other accidents" (sig. Iii3^{r}). Montaigne's feelings about his kidney stone accords with records from one Parish church record in Perth, Scotland that describes payment made for an individual who was shorn of the stone. The verb *shorn* captures an early modern sensibility; the stone is not exactly a foreign body to be extracted.[17] Rather, mineral matter might grow in an analogous way to other organic matter that might be shorn, such as hair or fingernails. The kidney stone was, for Montaigne, both a bodily commonplace and one that was also potentially miraculous for its incomprehensibility.

Not all writers, however, were as equanimous as Montaigne about the "gravell" or kidney stone's salutary (if miraculously difficult) place within a health cycle. Although most early modern medical authorities concur with Montaigne about a kidney stone's genesis or concoction within the bowels, theories proliferated as to how it might be best, and quickly, shorn or voided. Writing later in the seventeenth century, Sir Thomas Browne, for example, expresses skepticism over common remedies that invite a miraculous explanation. One frequently cited cure for kidney stones that dates back to the medieval writings of Albertus Magnus prescribes "the blood of a Goat" as being "Soveraign for the Stone."[18] But the goat whose blood was believed to be efficacious, Browne points out, must eat a special diet: "the Goat [must] drink wine, and be fed with *Siler monatanum*, and such herbs as are conceived of power to break the stone on the bladder" (sig. M3^r). Browne dubiously concludes, "For although inwardly received, it may be very diuretick, and expulse the stone in the kidney; yet how it should dissolve . . . will require further dispute" (sig. M3^v). Browne would wish to explain the miraculous goat's blood as due to a recipe of diuretic herbs but can conclude only that it requires additional "dispute." His equivocation on such interstitial organisms and cures are reflective of within the wider debate of natural philosophy.[19]

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[16] Jonathan Sawday, "In Search of the Philosopher's Stone: Montaigne, Interiority and Machines," *The Dalhousie Review* 85, no. 2 (2005): 195–218 at 201. While Sawday sees Montaigne's obsession with the flow of his urine as an imaginary corollary to a machine, I read it for its embodied *exterranean* activity.

[17] Reference thanks to Margo Todd. *National Records of Scotland* CH2/521/345. Perth kirk, 1622. The *OED* also lists for shear, v.1d, "to cut for the stone. Const. of Scottish," with references from 1572 and 1600. "Shear," v.3a, reads, "remove (the hair or beard) by means of some sharp instrument."

Still others would assume a need for a more natural, vigorous method of expelling the stone. Richard Mulcaster, a sixteenth-century Protestant schoolteacher and educator, in *Positions wherin those primitiue circumstances be examined, which are necessarie for the training vp of children, either for skill in their booke, or health in their bodie* (1581), promotes football as an exercise that "by provoking superfluities downeward, it dischargeth the head, and upper partes, it is good for the bowells, and to drive downe the stone and gravell from both the bladder and kidneies" (sig. O^r).[20] Other popular exercises such as dancing, leaping, trotting, and even riding while hunting might accomplish the same end. Such exercises were thought to increase the body's natural heat and, consequently, its vigor in moving and expelling "superfluities." Here, as in Montaigne, Mulcaster describes the gravel's expulsion from the body as a "superfluity" that might be discharged within a health regimen requiring no additional, external, or supernatural, medicines.

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[18] All citations of Thomas Browne are to Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (London: Edward Dodd, 1669), sig. M3^r.

[19] For a fuller account of Browne's own idiosyncratic interpretation and wrestling with metamorphosed animal and stone bodies, see Wolfe, "Gorgonick Spirits."

[20] Richard Mulcaster, *Positions . . . for the Trianing up of Children* (London, 1581).

These words of a godly Protestant cast calling for exercise to "drive" out the stone through heat-generating activity are supplemented in women's recipes and domestic domains of healing by other natural remedies to treat a "fitte of the stonne" (an attack of the kidney stone).[21] For instance, the letters of Anne Bacon (*c*.1528–1610), wife to Nicholas Bacon, privy councilor and lord keeper of the great seal to Queen Elizabeth, show her concern for her son Anthony, asking details of his health and expressing concern for its cause. In a letter to her, Anthony writes that he had a "verie shrewd fitte of the stonne" which passed, "having voided three, the leaste as bigge as a barlie corne" by which discharge, "God be thanked," he concludes, "I am muche eased."[22] The calculus apparently reoccurred about six months later as Anne writes to Anthony again with further advice, urging him take special care to take no "violent things to break it, for the peece wyll so cut yow raw the place" and urges him to follow his father's example by taking the seeds of various vegetables to help with the "avoiding," and she offers to come make the recipe for him.[23] These different approaches indicate that there was no medical or popular consensus for how to expedite a voiding of the stone. But none disputed its mineralized nature nor its strange, intimate growth as a byproduct of heat within the body.

If heat were understood to be a cause for the stone's growth within the body, the nature of and source for such heat was a cause for debate. Just as the stony heart might be a divinely predestined condition or a willfully cultivated state, some attribute kidney stone growth to be a natural part of the bodily cycle while others saw it as facilitated by willful, appetitive behavior. Anne Bacon worries that her son's ill health stems from his loose living and indulging of bodily pleasures (especially his "supper late or full"). Her concern echoes the homily of a sharp morality play written in early sixteenth-century France that personifies a kidney stone among maladies who ambush diners at a banquet.[24] *The Condemnation of Banquet* (*La Condamnation de Banquet* [Paris, 1507]) dramatizes aristocratic debauchery and gluttony to urge and praise a diet of temperance.[25] Figure 5.2 is one of a

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[21] Gemma Allen, *The Letters of Lady Anne Bacon* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 145. Recipes "for the stone" abound, including that found in Elizabeth Spiller, ed., *Seventeenth-Century English Recipe Books: Cooking, Physic and Chururgery in the Works of Elizabeth Talbot Grey and Altheteia Talbot Howard*, vol. 3 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 127.

[22] Allen, *The Letters of Lady Anne Bacon.*

[23] Ibid., 84. Anne Bacon to Anthony Bacon 4 February [1594], 162.

[24] Ibid., 27. Anne Bacon to Anthony Bacon, 24 May 1592, 105.

[25] Citations to the original as well as translation are to Nicole de la Chesnaye, *The Condemnation of Banquet*, ed. and trans. Timothy Tomasik, Early European Drama in Translation Series

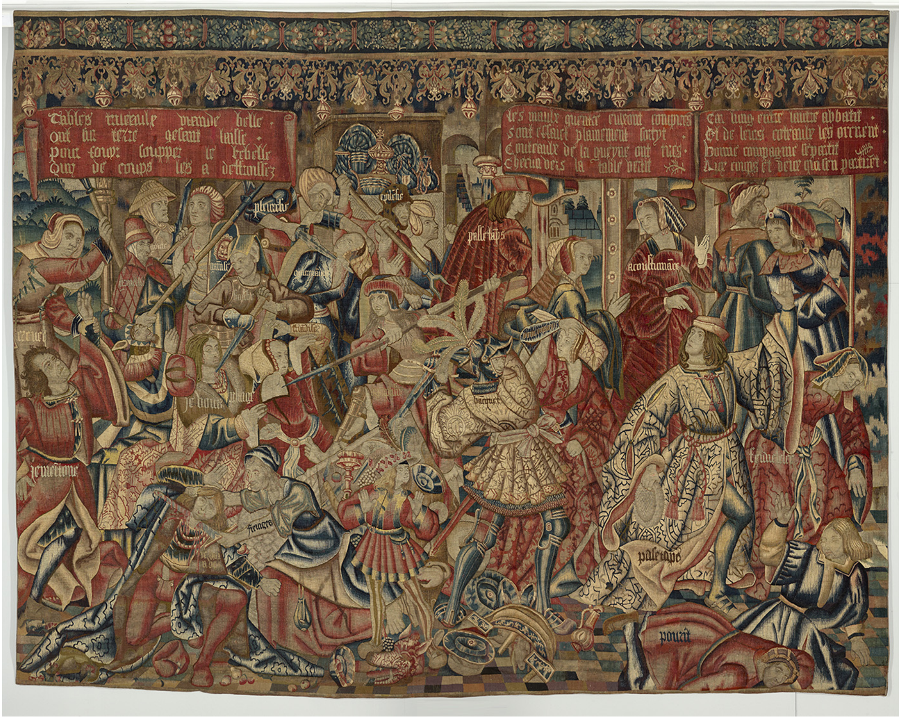

Figure 5.2 Atelier de Tournai, *Tenture de la condamnation de Banquet. 3, L’assaut des maladies*. Tapisserie de haute-lice de laine et de soie, 1er quart du 16^{e} siècle. Dépôt de la Ville de Nancy (54) Inv. D.95.1582.3.

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series of tapestries that illustrate this play and where the maladies appear as human characters, indistinguishable from the human diners except for the identity tags which name their disease. The characters, who include Jaundice (Jaunisse), Kidney Stone (Gravelle), Gout (Goutte), Colic (Colicque) and a rabble of like ailments, attack, knocking down the tables, trestles, and dishes, leaving none of the diners unscathed.[26] The disordered scene recalls

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(Tempe, AZ: Medieval Texts and Studies, forthcoming). Originally published as *La condemnation de banquet* (Paris: Antoine Vérard, 1507). My thanks to Timothy Tomasik for sharing an advance draft with me. For this history and argument of this drama, see Timothy Tomasik, “*La Condamnation de banquet* et les fins du plaisir,” in *Illustration inconscientes: Écritures de la Renaissance. Mélanges offert à Tom Conley*, eds., Bernd Renner and Phillip Usher (Paris: Classiques Garnier 2014), 251–75.

[26] There are multiple maladies including: Apoplexie, Paralysie, Épilepsie, Pleurésie, Colicque, Esquinancie, Hydropisie, Jaunisse, Gravelle, Goutte.

the chaos to which the body might fall due to "meteorological" tempests and forces such as Helkiah Crooke describes, yet the moral thrust of the play suggests that these ailments attack the body because of human overindulgence in appetites. In the magnificent set of tapestries that illustrate the banquet, the maladies, including "Gravelle" (Kidney Stone), assault the diners, creating mayhem in a densely woven melee of rich fabrics, weapons, and human parts. The maladies appear indistinguishable from the diners in human form. The viewer can identify them only by deciphering their taglines.

Despite the chaos, the diners are not dissuaded from their feasting by the attacking maladies. To underscore the moral, a Doctor enters and sermonizes moderation. "Where," the Doctor asks rhetorically, "do unwelcome stones come from" (*Dont vient Gravelle peu prisie*) (ln. 1432)? His sermon blames "bad mouth management" (*Tout vient de mal garder la bouche*) (ln. 1431). The diners, in other words, willfully convert themselves, although they lay the blame on the maladies for their pain. As the play's Fool laments:

> Stones has got me by the kidneys.
>   Come hear my most pitiful cries.
>   You, jeweler and apothecary,
> Stones, who is giving me some grief,
> Has made me a lapidary. (lns. 1741–6)[27]

The Fool's claim that Stones have "made him a lapidary" humorously literalizes Donne's imaginative bodily quarry. While the *Banquet* turns such cries into laughter, Fool's "pitiful cries" at being turned to stone and unable to "take a piss" likely resonated with many in the audience (it certainly would have with Montaigne). Many might also have identified with the profound catharsis near the scene's end: The voiding of "Gravelle" allows the Fool an exuberant piss in a basket (rather than a chamber pot), which flows right through and soaks nearby diners. In the remainder of the play, the "mortal combat" of Stones and his fellows (ln. 1765) is condemned by Diet, Remedy, Help, and a host of famous doctors including Hippocrates, Galen, Avicenna, and Averroes. In court, they try Banquet and Supper, who are then taken out to the gallows to be hanged. Temperance receives praise.

Bodily stones were a common if often "unwelcome" evidence of the conversion of fleshly body parts to mineral calculi. The experience and its bodily sensation of pain followed by relief after voiding illustrate a very literal sympathy—but also antipathy—of human and mineral. Flesh might petrify into stone and dissolve again in a natural, if excruciatingly painful, cyclical process. Although no one, not even Montaigne, wished to remain "a lapidary," the stone's mineral presence attests to a material dubiety wherein human flesh and mineral matter coexist.

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[27] "La Gravelle me tient aux rains, / Venez ouyr mes piteux clayns. / Vous, l'orfecre et l'appoticaire, / La Gravelle, dont je me plains, / M'a fait devenir lappidaire."

By enfolding mineral matter within a bodily, vegetal process, the kidney and other stony bodily calculi provide an early modern instance of what theorist Elizabeth Povinelli terms a "propositional hinge" wherein a "carbon imaginary" disrupts propositions about an absolute separation of organic life from nonorganic, nonlife.[28] With the generation of a kidney or other bodily stone, the mineral cycles through a birth, growth, and expulsion that extends vitality relationally between human and nonhuman entity. Its trajectory models how distinctions of biological and geological life might dissolve. The vogue for anatomy manuals such as Crooke's, which seemingly spotlight human functions, in fact reveal a macrocosm wherein an epidermally bound, enclosed human body dissolves amid a swirl of atmospheric, meteorological, and subterranean forces. From these early modern medical accounts, recipes, or even moralizing fictions, it is never entirely clear whether human behavior wills the fleshly–lithic conversion or whether an agnostic, nonhuman force prompts the conversion process.

The indeterminate nature of the human–lithic homology brought to light by embodied stones cast them as marvels or miraculous inscrutable processes. Hidden deep within the mines of human entrails, the process of conversion was mysterious but verifiable. The bodily sensations that indicated their presence were painful and inimical to health. Yet, their voiding brought such rapid relief that some found it indicative of their salutary role within a larger health cycle of superfluous bodily elimination. The knottings of lithic and fleshly human matter enact an *exterranean* process that makes visible connections otherwise often overlooked. Their embodied growth and transmutative nature made them sources of curiosity but also imbued them with potential talismanic properties. This talismanic potency emerges in the Renaissance vogue for the bezoar stone, which, like kidney stones, was a byproduct from organic fleshly bodies (in some etymologies; in others tears produced them) or an encrustation. Unlike the "unwelcome" kidney stone, bezoar stones were an expensive, rare, and coveted artifact believed to promote physical, but also metaphysical, wellness. Thought, like the kidney stone, to be purgative, the bezoar was sought after for its bodily, but also spiritual, salvific healing properties.

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[28] Povinelli, *Geontologies*, 36–7.

Bezoar Stones

To many modern readers, the bezoar may be familiar from J. K. Rowling's novel *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, when a quick-thinking Harry saves his best friend's life by making him swallow a bezoar stone.[29] Harry believes, as did many Renaissance physicians, that the stone served as a universal antidote to poison.[30] *Bezoar* is likely of Arabic or Persian origin where it literally means "counter-poison" or "antidote" (*OED*, n.). Not strictly a stone, but rather a calcified hairball, the bezoar, like the kidney stone, is an organic, animal bodily byproduct, an encrustation. The bezoar stone's efficacy was put to the test in 1567, when Ambroise Paré, physician to King Charles IX of France, proposed a medical trial of sorts. He convinced a prisoner facing hanging to swallow poison along with the bezoar. If he survived, he'd be pardoned. The prisoner agreed and then, unlike Harry's friend Ron who recovered, the condemned man died hours later, bleeding from every orifice and vomiting profusely, crying that death by gallows would have been better.[31]

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[29] Harry finds it listed an antidote in the Half-Blood Prince's book with scrawled instructions just to "shove a bezoar down their throats," in J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (New York: Scholastic, 2005), 373–98 at 77. It is also referenced by Prof. Snape as an antidote to wolfsbane/monkshead in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (New York: Scholastic, 1997), 137–8.

[30] For a discussion of the traditional use of bezoars as antidotes in ancient alexipharmic practice, and experiments to test their efficacy in the sixteenth century, as well as a few recent studies on their pharmacological composition and therapeutic properties, see Maria Do Sameiro Barroso, "Bezoar Stones, Magic, Science and Art," *Geological Society, London, Special Publications* 375 (2013): 193–207. For a broader overview of their use in toxicology from a global perspective, see also "Animal Stones and the Dark Age of Bezoars," in *Toxicology in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Philip Wexler (San Diego: Elsevier Science & Technology, 2017), 115–23.

[31] Ambroise Paré's records his skepticism about the medical efficacy of the "behazar" in Ambroise Paré, *Discours D'ambroise Paré, . . . Asçavoir, de la mvmie, des venins, de la licorne et de la peste, avec une table des plus notables matières contenues esdits Discours* (Paris: G. Buon, 1582), sig. K3^r. The full incident is described by Wallace Hamby, *Ambroise Paré Surgeon of the Renaissance* (St. Louis, MO: Warren Green Inc., 1967), 128–9. Taken from J. F. Malgaigne, ed., *Œuvres Complètes D'Ambroise Paré*, vol. 3 (Paris: Chez J.-B. Baillière, libraire de l'Académie Royale de Médecine, Rue de l'École-de-Médecine, 1840), 341. For the vogue for bezoar stones in early modern English medical practice, see Blaen, *Medical Jewels, Magical Gems*, 208–311. For their role in early modern poison trials, see Alisha Rankin, *The Poison Trials: Wonder Drugs, Experiment, and the Battle for Authority in Renaissance Science* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2021), 145–82.

Despite this 1567 exposé, the strange stone penetrated multiple markets and fascinated monarchs, aristocracy, merchants, physicians, preachers, poets, and housewives up through the late seventeenth century. As Alisha Rankin demonstrates, these "powerful and artful substances" were not only thought to cure poison, but were also "wonder drugs that would work on disease in general—both in traditional learned Galenic medicine . . . and in alchemical medicine."[32] Bezoars appeared in inventories of monarchs from the Hapsburg Rudolph II to England's Queen Elizabeth and later King James I. Inventoried and displayed proudly alongside their royal jewels, bezoars were a familiar enough commodity to be an eponymous color in Elizabeth's wardrobe. The Stowe inventory, for example, records a "gowne," "kirtle," and "petycoate" of "Beasar colour."[33] The bezoar's alleged medical powers were likely familiar to Elizabeth. For in the 1583–4 "Newyeres-tide," she received "a besart stone" from a Portuguese merchant. Born Jewish as Gonsalvo, Anglicized as Dunstan Anes, this merchant's eldest daughter was married to the queen's physician, Rodrigo Lopez. The gift of a bezoar from one with ties to the queen's medical advisor suggests that this gift may have been intended as a pharmaceutical as well as a collectible or wearable jewel. Its place among the inventory of her gold jewelry and various precious agates, diamonds, and rubies speaks to its high cultural status.[34] After her death, "one greate Bezar stone, sett in goudle" and "one other large Bezar stone, broken in peeces" as well as a "Unicorne's horn" were among her inventory of jewels.[35] The bezoar "broken in peeces" indicates further likelihood of the queen's use of the bezoar in medicinal tinctures as recipes, such as that of Gascoin's powder, detail how to shave off parts and drink the stone.

Like his predecessor, James I too recognized the bezoar's cultural status. In 1606, just three years after coming to the throne, he received from the King of Bantam "two Besar stones" for the preservation of his health as recorded in Sir Henry Middleton's letters from *The Last East Indian Voyage*.[36] While little extant evidence exists as to the look of these bezoars of the English monarchs, similar exchanges on the Continent provide a glimpse. Among some of the best recorded examples come from Rudolf II's collection and display the creaturely calculus encased by decorative jewels and gold filigree. The lapidary and precious metal decoration supplements the rather plain, dull, unremarkable bezoar to reveal the prestige with which they were held.

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[32] *The Poison Trials*, 149. For its status as a decorative object as well as antidote, see also Marnie Stark, "Mounted Bezoar Stones, Seychelles Nuts, and Rhinoceros Horns: Decorative Objects as Antidotes in Early Modern Europe," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 11, no. 1 (2003): 69–94.

[33] Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (Leeds, England: W. S. Maney & Sons Ltd., 1988), f26v/29 at 273; f42v/89 at 86; f63/108 at 304.

[34] John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth* (London: Printers to the Society of Antiquaries, 1823), 420.

[35] Elusive in origin, this comment is cited in Blaen, *Medical Jewels, Magical Gems*, 199. Blaen's source is Wyndham B. Blanton, "Madstones: With an Account of Several from Virginia," *Annals of Medical History* 7 (1935): 267–73 at 70. Blanton, in turn, cites George Frederick Kunz, *The Magic of Jewels and Charms* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott Company 1915), 201–40 at 15. Kunz lists his source as *Archaelogia*, 21 (1837): 153, from a Warrant of Indemnity given by King James I to the guardians of crown jewels.

The rich mounting elevates the bezoar from mere lithic waste or curious byproduct to precious artifact. The decorative bezoar on display in Figure 5.3, as Michael Ryan and Ivana Horacek argue, evokes encased reliquaries. Similar to a bejeweled saint's bone, the decorative work elevates the bodily part within.[37] Just as the superaltars discussed in chapter 3 that encased saint's bones within the stone, the decorative bezoar works via analogy. It illustrates how the bezoar might, in relic-like fashion, mediate across states of being, in particular between sickness, poison and health. The gold-encrusted bezoar or "animal-stone" crosses the creaturely animal with the mineral and infuses the natural realm with an aura of the supernatural.

The bezoar's allure grows out of its strange biological origin and mineralized form that encompasses animal and mineral kingdoms. In the Renaissance, two different traditions exist about its genesis. Both emphasize the bezoar's conversion from one material form to another. In one tradition, the bezoar grows like a kidney stone, only in the entrails of a ruminant animal, such as wild goats, or in various types of antelope. In an alternative story, the bezoar form from the congealed tear of a unique species of hart, or deer. Each emphasizes a creaturely, embodied origin, a conversion of form, and the stone's subsequent potential for healing and curing the bodies' toxins or poison. But in the first tradition, its bodily kinship or sympathy gives it its physical, affective healing properties. In the second, the bezoar's restorative powers are most importantly spiritual.

The first tradition of the bezoar as an embodied growth likens the bezoar to a kidney stone, but one notable for its rarity. This tradition will show the bezoar in cabinets of curiosity as being catalogued next to other natural, if rare, forms. In Figure 5.4, a painting also from Rudolf II's collections, three bezoar stones (one in a jeweled casing) surround a pronghorn. The arrangement suggests that both the horn and the bezoar share an organic, creaturely

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[36] Henry Middleton, *The Last East-Indian Voyage* (London, 1606), sig. K4^v.

[37] Ivana Horacek, "Alchemy of the Gift: Things and Material Transformation at the Court of Rudolf II" (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2015), 160; Michael A. Ryan, "The Horn and the Relic: Mapping the Contours of Authority and Religiosity in the Late Medieval Crown of Aragorn," *Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural* 1, no. 1 (2012): 49–71 at 58.

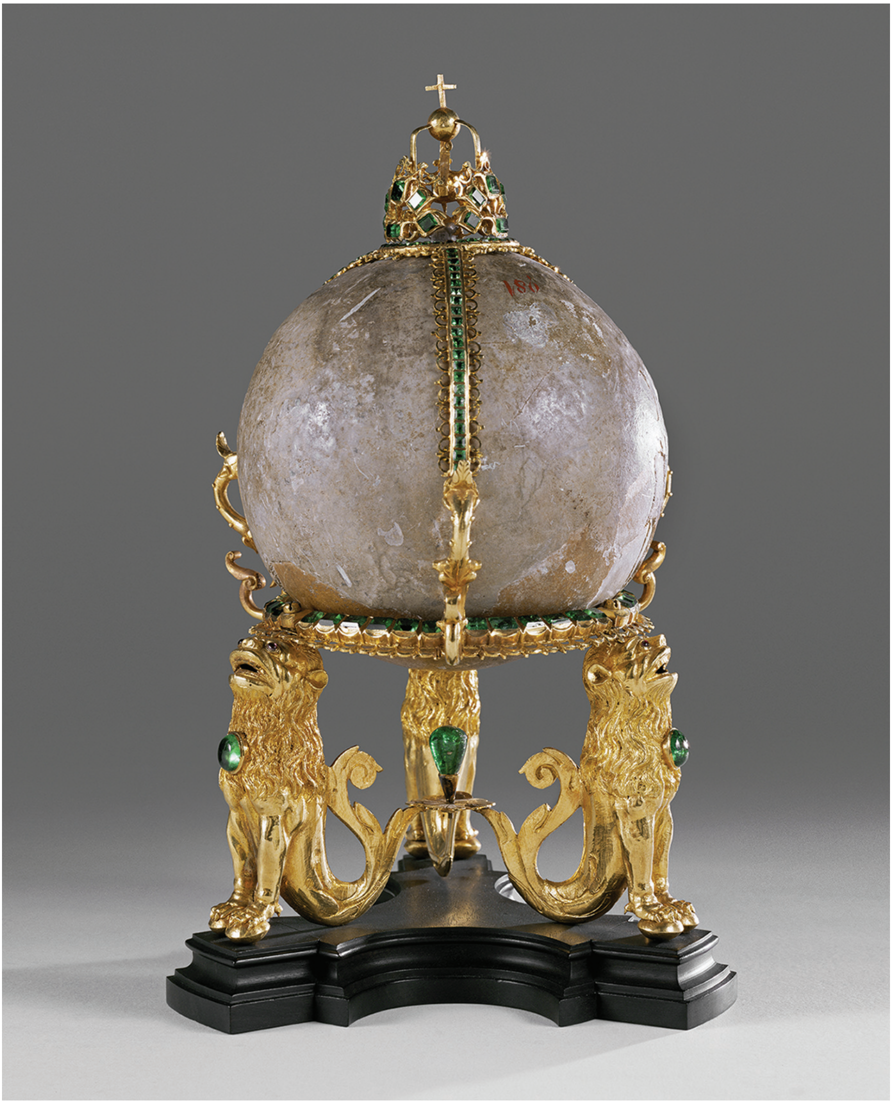

Figure 5.3 Bezoar, Spanish, third quarter of the sixteenth century, bezoar, gold, emeralds, rubies, 25.5 × 16 × 13.3 cm, Kunstkammer 981, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

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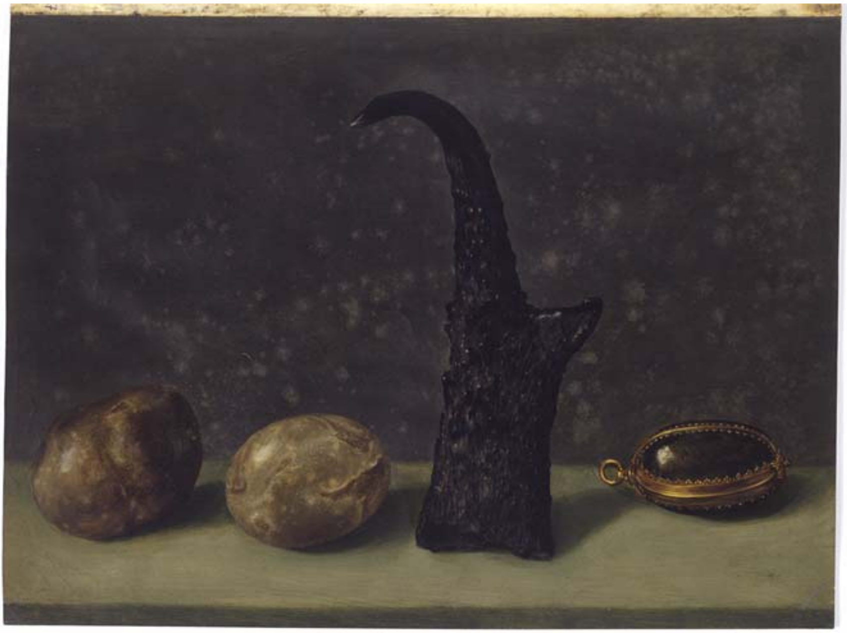

Figure 5.4 Three bezoar stones and a pronghorn from *Cod. Min. 129, fol. 17ʳ: Bestiarium Rudolfs. II., Band 1, c.* 1600, oil on parchment, 40.2 × 30.2 cm, E 13.643-C, Austrian National Library, Vienna.

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origin. The curational shelving furthers the association of embodied stones to other natural bodily growths such as nails, horn, and hoof. Visually, the placement of the three bezoars around a horn supports the belief that the bezoar's alleged origin was from a horned deer, hart, or goat.

Although a natural bodily growth, or what now might be referred to as an endogenous animal concretion, the bezoar was not common. Its shelving next to a horn in this painting and its association with the unicorn horn highlight its rare and exotic nature. The English physician John Parkinson, for instance, includes a chapter on the "*lapis Bezar*" in his *Theatrum Botanicum* (*Theatre of Plants*) because of its high esteem "even next unto Unicorne's horn" (sig. Tttttt5ʳ).[38] The illustration in Figure 5.5 shows the

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[38] *Theatrum Botanicum* (London: Printed by Tho. Cotes, 1640).

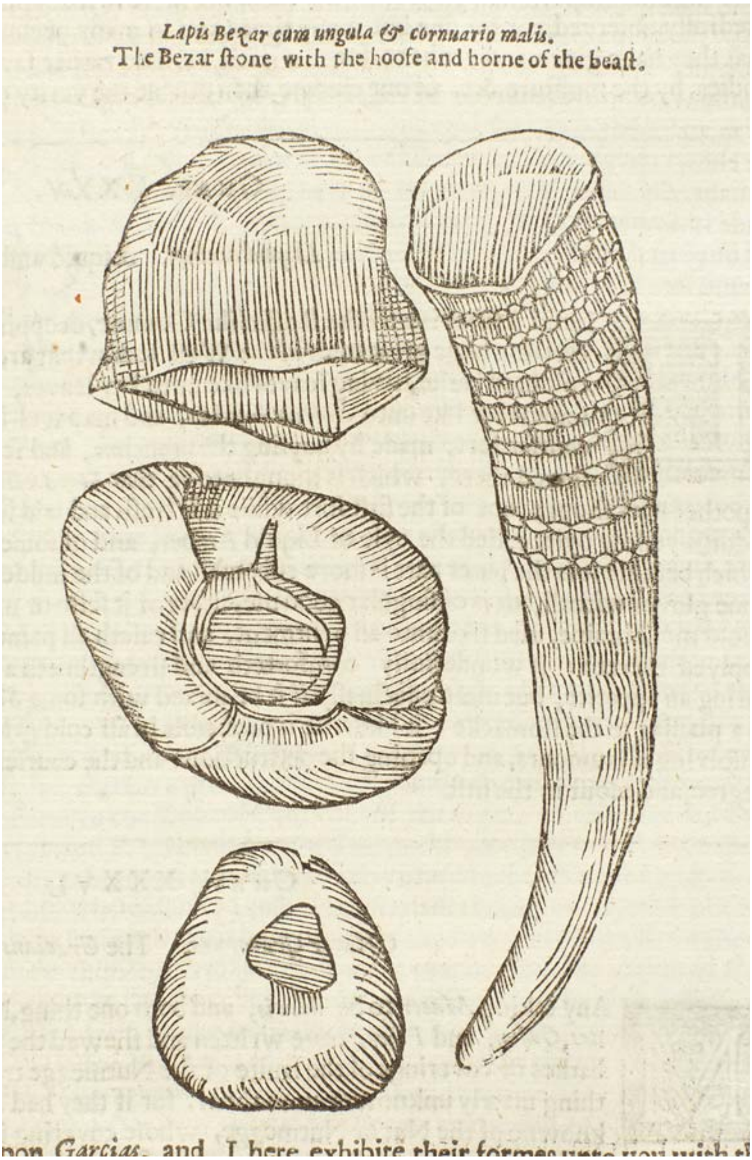
Lapis Bezar cum ungula & cornuario mali.
The Bezar ſtone with the hoofe and horne of the beaſt.
non *Garcias*, and I here exhibite their formes unto you with th

Figure 5.5 "The Bezar stone with the hoofe and horne of the beast," from John Parkinson's *Theatrum Botanicum* [. . .] (London: Tho. Cotes, 1640), sig. Ttttt5^r, RB 69075.

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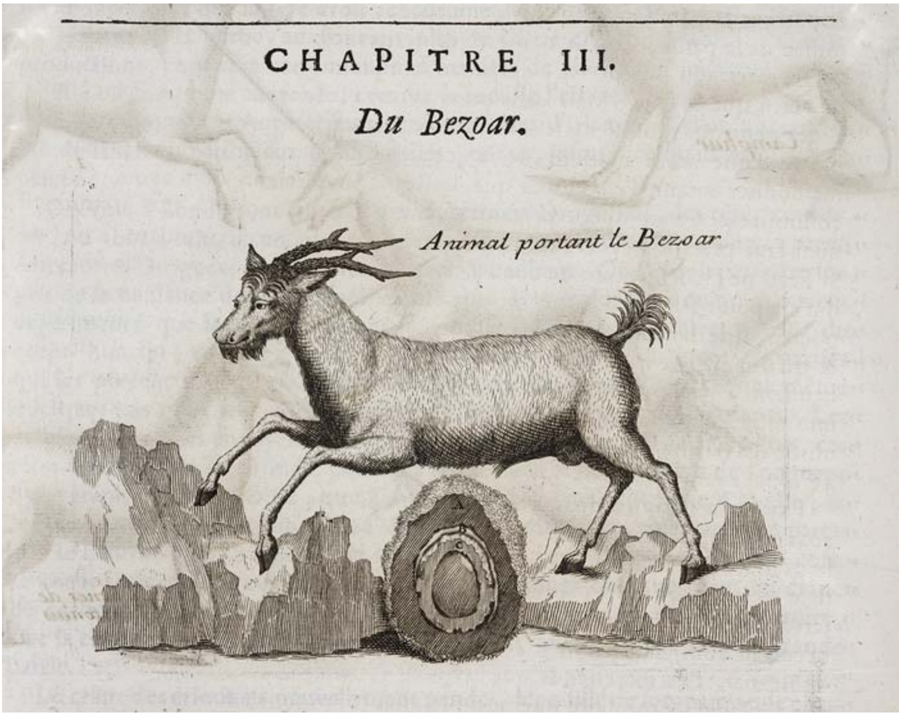

Figure 5.6 Detail of "*Du Bezoar*" from Pierre Pomet's *Histoire générale des drogues* [. . .] (Paris: J.B. Loyson, 1694), fol. 135, RB 180713.
Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

stone alongside the hoof and horn as if all share a common biological origin. In medical use, the bezoar might be scraped and made into a powder, similar to medicinal recipes involving unicorn horns.

Bezoars are curiosities on account of their hybridity but also because of their rarity, like the unicorn's horn. Pierre Pomet, a French apothecary, summarizes a century's worth of tradition when he describes how the bezoar might only be found in the maw of wild goats from afar: Persia, the East Indies, or Malaca. Like Rudolph's curiosity cabinet, Pomet's accompanying engraving emphasizes the bezoar stone's animal origin and kinship.

Figure 5.6 portrays a tuft-tailed, horned, and bearded goat, who gambols pleasantly above rocky cliffs. At image center rests a cutaway diagram of an egg-shaped bezoar that appears to have just dropped from the animal's belly. The synecdochic visual logic portrays the animal as well as the intestinal cavity that nourished the stone's growth. By portraying both, the image simultaneously verifies the stone's creaturely origin while gesturing to its mineral composition via the rocky cliff backdrop. The image thus stages the relationship of the part (bezoar) to the whole (animal) so as to dramatize the conversion, but also relation, of animal to mineral.

The embodied growth of the bezoar, which collectors compared with a rare horn, indicates a relational, synecdochic status with organic bodies. A second tradition will emphasize its metaphoric quality as an entity capable of converting from one state to another, from liquid to solid state as well as from creaturely to crystalline. This second tradition emphasizes the salvific and yet miraculous potential of the bezoar to expel poison, from not only the body, but also the soul. The tradition that bezoars were the congealed tears of a stag reaches back at least to Isidore of Seville.[39] Early modern encyclopedias of "four-footed beasts," hunting manuals, emblem books, and even Psalters detail the cause and salvific effect of lithic weeping. For instance, Edward Topsell in *The Historie of Foure-footed Beastes* (1607), following Conrad Gesner, describes how a certain kind of hart, or deer, habitually regenerated itself by eating venomous serpents. The hart then dispelled the poison by submerging itself in water where "she sendeth forth certaine teares, which are turned into a stone (called *Bezahar*) . . . The teares of this beast . . . being thus transubstantiated doe cure all manner of venom (sigs. M4^r, M7^v).[40] Topsell's "transubstantiated" bezoar places the stone within a network of transformative cures that extends to spiritual—as well as bodily—cures. The diction of "transubstantiated" enfolds the bezoar into the charged language surrounding Eucharistic debates, which question whether or not Christ's body might be literally, or only symbolically, converted or "transubstantiated" to the communion wafer, or host.

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[39] One of the many channels for transmission of this Eastern belief, according to Kaspar Bauhin, *De Lapidis Bezaar Orient. Et Occident. Cervni Item Et Germanici Ortu, Natura, Differentiis, Veroque Usu* (Basel, 1613). For the relationship of the "ruminating and melancholic cervoid" who cries bezoar tears to Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, see Winifred Schleiner, "Jacques and the Melancholy Stag," *English Language Notes* 17, no. 3 (1980): 175–9. For its emblematic tradition, see Michael Bath, "Weeping Stags and Melancholy Lovers: The Iconography of *As You Like It*, II,i," *Emblematica* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 13–52.

[40] Topsell's account, taken from the Swiss naturalist Conrad Gesner, has classical precedent in Pliny, Aelian, and Oppian. It is also frequently applied to Psalm 41 by Christian fathers such as St. Augustine as an allegory for sin and redemption. For a fuller accounting of its transmission, see Michael Bath, "Weeping Stags and Melancholy Lovers."

The story of the hart who cries bezoar tears in Topsell's history of "four-footed beasts" remains in circulation, and appears in a mid-seventeenth-century lapidary by Thomas Nicols (1652), who cites for his authority Martinus Rulandus (1532–1602) (see Figure 5.7). The same story's inclusion in both a natural history of "beasts" and in a lapidary testifies to its categorical slippage. Nicols's lapidary recounts how, in spring, the eastern deer searches the caverns for serpents, which it stuffs up its nose. They do so to "purge themselves of their annuall distempers" after which they run to the rivers until "their eyes shed forth abundance of tears which are coagulated and congealed about them; these coagulated dryed tears Marinus Rulandus calleth the *Bezoar*" (sig. Bb2^{v}).[41] Nichols's description of the bezoar as emerging during an annual purge to rid the body of toxins recalls Montaigne's meditation on the voiding of his kidney stone. The embodied stones are proof of, but also antidotal to, interior distempers and bodily toxins.

The tradition that tells of how a stag might weep a pharmacologically useful tear also appears in George Gascoigne's *The Noble Art of Venerie* (1575). In this treatise, devoted to the "art" of hunting, we might note how the body as quarry, or site for extruding stone, now becomes its homonym, a quarry or a hunted animal tracked down for its alleged ability to produce bezoars. In one of the verse interludes wherein the hunted deer or hart turns and addresses his human adversary, we hear the stag reproach his would-be-killer for wanting "to take in worth my teares" which "congeald to gumme, by peeces from me fall" in order that the human hunter might be "preserve[d] from Pestilence, in Pomander or Ball" (sig. Iv^{r}).[42] In Gascoigne's accounting, by hunting the deer, the human hunter might force it to cry the tears that would then crystallize into a powerful antidote to toxic pestilence.

As the weeping quarry tell us, the bezoar's alleged preservative, curative, near-miraculous, properties made it a coveted ingredient in the everyday and domestic spheres of human health. In addition to nullifying the effects of poison, the fabulous stone reputedly cured worms, dispelled melancholy,

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[41] Thomas Nicols, *Lapidary or the History of Pretious Stones* (Cambridge: Printed by Thomas Buck, 1652).

[42] George Gascoigne, *The Noble Art of Venerie or Hunting* (London: Imprinted by Henry Bynneman, for Christopher Barker, 1575). Similarly, Conrad Gesner provides the gloss to Batman's sixteenth-century translation: "There is a stone of great valew against poison, called the Beswar stone . . . when the harte is sicke, and hath eaten manye Serpent for his recoverie, is brought into so greate a heate, that he hasteth to water, and there couereth his body, unto the very eares & eyes, at which time, distilleth many teares, from the which, the sayd stone is gendred," in Anglicus Bartholomaeus, *Batman Vppon Bartholome, His Booke De Proprietatibus Rerum* (London: imprinted by Thomas East, dwelling by Paules wharfe, 1582), sig. Ppp4r.

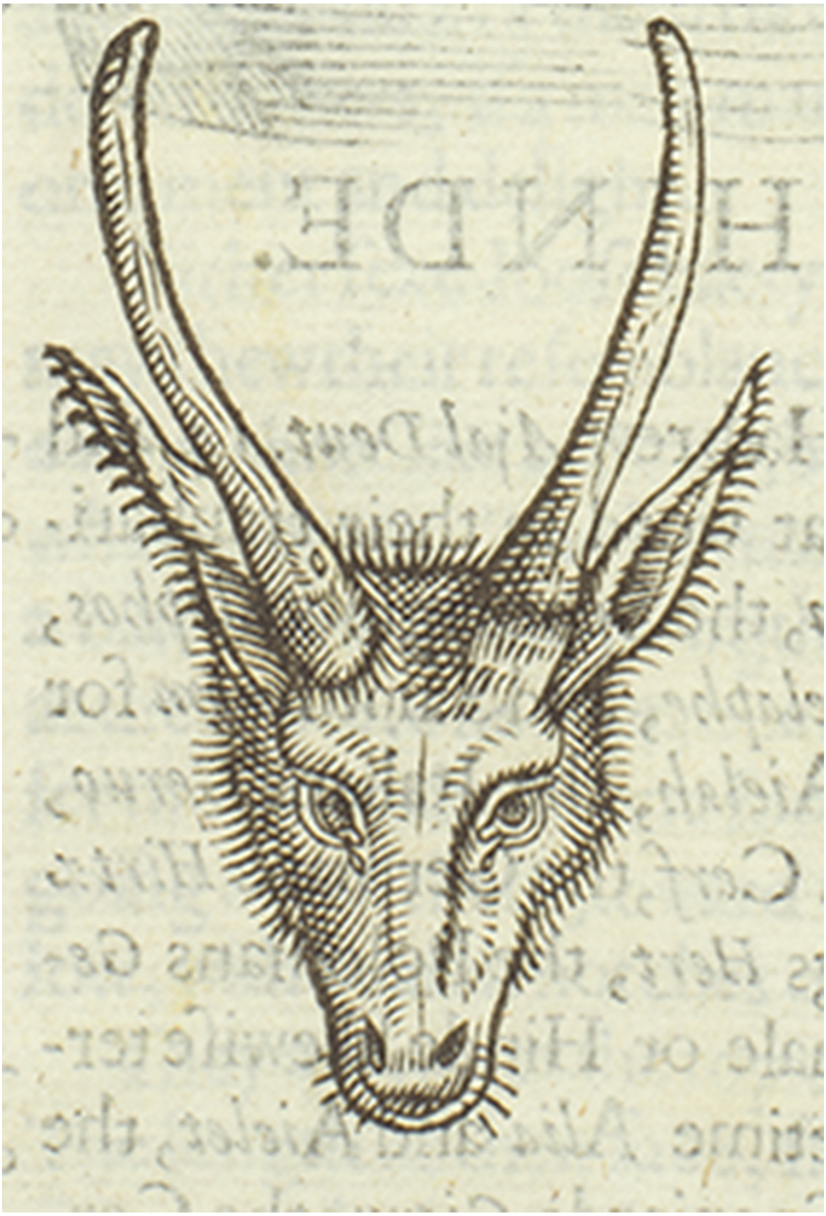

Figure 5.7 Detail of the face and horns showing the tears-turned-bezoar of a rare hart from Edward Topsell's *The Historie of Foure-footed Beastes* [. . .] (London: William Iaggard, 1607), sig. M7^{v}, RB 17726.

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and preserved youth. Just as the bezoar had multiple origin narratives, so too its efficacy in transforming the sick human body, or the melancholy sinner's soul, had multiple explanations. Marsilio Ficino, the Florentine Neoplatonist, for example, singles out "the stone which the Arabs call bezoar" as "endowed with the occult properties" so powerful that "even if they touch the flesh . . . they introduce celestial force into the spirits."[43] Ficino later defines the "stone bezoar" as meaning "liberating from death" (*id est a morte liberans*).[44] His Neoplatonic theory explains how metal and stones absorb heavenly rays during their gestation; even though it may appear they are too hard to be penetrated by celestial rays, they hold the imprint longer to marvelous effects.[45] The bezoar's properties grow in proportion to its affinity to both creaturely life and to greater mineral, celestial bodies and forces.

Mary Floyd-Wilson argues that Ficino's theories of sympathies likely influenced "an expanding medical interest in occult qualities" and encouraged a range of medical explanations for the bezoar's alleged efficacy against poison.[46] One favored explanation ascribes the stone's efficacy to the animal's diet of herbs, which were thought to inoculate them by drawing the poison to itself.[47] Hugh Plat's description of the bezoar's curative process in *The Jewel House of Art and Nature* (publ. 1594), an oft-referenced book of secrets, describes a process similar to Topsell. An animal, a "beast in India much like a Hart," with his breath draws serpents from their dens, whereby he devours them (sig. Ff2^r).[48] Afterwards, he plunges himself in water. Topsell describe the bezoar as the tears cried by the hart when the poison reaches its full strength; Plat differs in suggesting that "very strangely" the stone is engendered "within them" (sig. Ff2^{r}). Both accounts outline how a diet of certain herbs when mixed with serpent venom produce a virtue in the bezoar that gives it antidotal properties.[49] As Plat writes, "it is often given in high Fevers, and to defend and support the heart, and drive any evil matter from it" (sig. Ff2^{r}). Figure 5.8, an image from the late fifteenth-century *Hortus sanitatis*, visually demonstrates the multiple entities as well as conversions that contribute to the bezoar's curative properties.

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[43] Marsillio Ficino, *Three Books on Life* [De Vita], eds. and trans. Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark (Binghamton, New York: The Renaissance Society of America, 1989), 301. The Latin reads: "praecipue vero lapis bezaar apud Arabes appellatus occultis Gratiarum propietatibus praedita sunt. Et idcirco non solum intus assumpta, sed etiam si carnem tangant ibique calefacta virutem suam promant, vim inde coelestem spiritbus inserunt, qua se contra pestem tuentur atque venena." See also book III, chapter 16.

[44] Ibid., book III, chapter 16, esp. 327. For earlier discussions of the occult properties of the stone bezoar, see Lynn Thorndike, ed., *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 8 vols., (New York, Columbia University Press, 1923–58), 2:909–10, citing Peter of Abano, and 4:224–5, on Antonio Guaineri, who went so far as to say that bezoars were "discovered by divine inspiration rather than human reason."

[45] Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, book III, chapter 16 at large on the power of rays to penetrate the whole earth.

[46] Mary Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 8.

[47] See Marnie Stark, "Mounted Bezoar Stones, Seychelles Nuts, and Rhinoceros Horns," 69–94 at 72.

[48] Citations are to Sir Hugh Plat, *The Jewel House of Art and Nature* (London: Printed by Bernard Alsop, 1653).

The poisonous snakes rear their heads bottom left, the stag cries tears which become bezoars, and at foreground an apothecary sits at a table with several bezoars. The image underscores how the animal and mineral conjoin with the botanical in a process of conversions that facilitate health. The deer eats an herb to dispel serpent venom; their tears congeal into the lapidary mineralized bezoar, which, in turn, heals human flesh.

Despite his skepticism, even the French physician Ambroise Paré explains the bezoar's drawing of poison as reputedly working "*ainsi q l'Aimant fait* [*avec*] *le fer*," as magnet attracts iron (sig. K3^{r}).[50] That is, an attraction, or what in the early modern period might be called "sympathy," creates a mutual relationship that correspondingly affects seemingly different bodies. The English lapidary writer, Thomas Nicols, in similar terms, describe the bezoar's efficacy as a result of "unspeakable sympathies" (sig. Bb4^{r}).[51] He tells how the bezoar, due to its lack of the elemental characteristics of heat, cold, moistness or dryness, acts or draws on those characteristics within humans. As he puts it, because the bezoar is neither "hot [n]or moist, [n]or cold or dry . . . it is insipid and void of all tast and favour" (sig. Bb4^{r}). Its lack of these qualities in turns draws their excess from humans. A clearer explanation of this process occurs in the work of the English physician John Parkinson, who sums up the bezoar's curative effect as follows: it "provoke[s] sweate" and "thereby" works "to expel evill vapours from the heart and vitall spirits" against "melancholly" which has the wonderful result to "preserve strength and youth" (sig. Tttttt5^{v}).[52]

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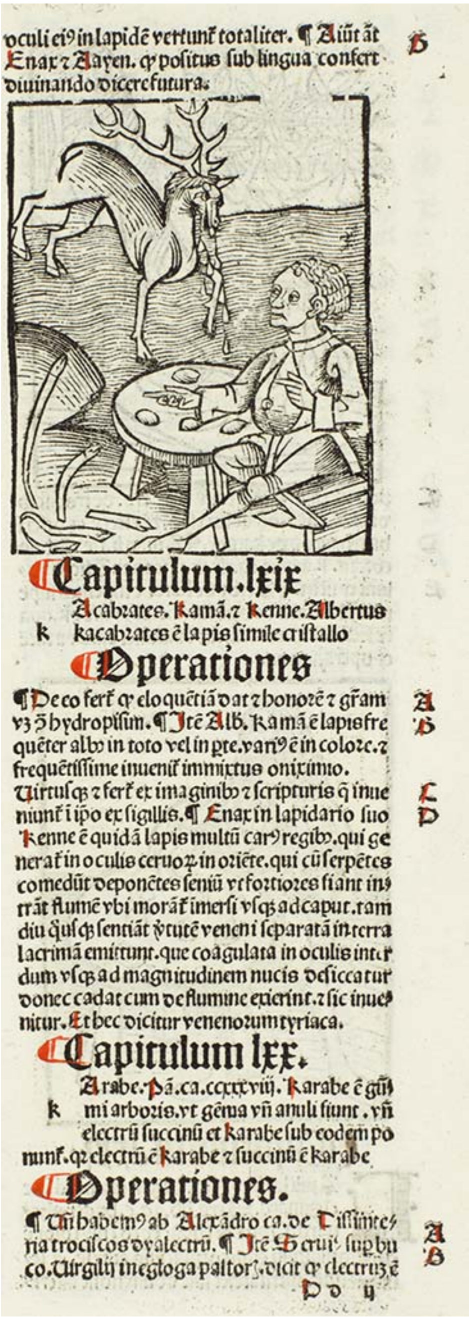
[49] Mary Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage*, 104 discusses the debate as to whether the curative properties stem from antipathetic or sympathetic action.

[50] Paré, *Discours D'ambroise Paré.*

[51] Nicols, *Lapidary or the History of Pretious Stones.*

[52] Parkinson, *Theatrum Botanicum.* His account is corroborated by other respected seventeenth-century physicians, including Daniel Sennert, *Danielis Sennerti Vratislaviensis Epitome Naturalis Scientiæ* (Oxford: Excudebat Iohannes Lichfield impensis Henrici Cripps, 1632), sig. Aa5r (lib. 5., cap. 4, p. 383).



oculi eiꝰ in lapidē vertunť totaliter. ¶ Aiūt āt B
Enax ⁊ Aayen. ꝙ poſitus ſub lingua confert
diuinando dicere futura.

Capitulum.lxix

Acabꝛates. Kamā. ⁊ Kenne. Albertus
k kacabꝛates ē lapis ſimile criſtallo

Operationes

¶ De eo ferť ꝙ eloquētiā dat ⁊ honorē ⁊ grām A
vꝫ ꝯ hydropiſim. ¶ Itē Alb. Kamā ē lapis fre B
quēter albꝰ in toto vel in pte. variꝰ ē in colore. ⁊
frequētiſſime inueniť immixtus oniximo.
Virtuſqꝫ ⁊ ferť ex imaginibꝰ ⁊ ſcripturis q̄ inue C
niunť i ip̄o ex ſigillis. ¶ Enax in lapidario ſuo D
Kenne ē quidā lapis multū carꝰ regibꝰ. qui ge
nerať in oculis ceruoꝝ in oriēte. qui cū ſerpētes
comedūt deponētes ſeniū vt fortiores fiant inꝰ
trāt flumē vbi morať imerſi vſqꝫ ad caput. tam
diu q̄uſqꝫ ſentiāt ꝟtutē veneni ſeparatā in terra
lacrimā emittunt. que coagulata in oculis inter
dum vſqꝫ ad magnitudinem nucis deſiccatur
donec cadat cum de flumine exierint. ⁊ ſic inueꝰ
nitur. Et hec dicitur venenorum tyriaca.

Capitulum lxx.

Arabe. Pā. ca. cccxxviij. Karabe ē gūꝰ
k mi arboris. vt gēma vn̄ anuli fiunt. vn̄
electrū ſuccinū et Karabe ſub eodē po
nunť. qꝛ electrū ē Karabe ⁊ ſuccinū ē Karabe

Operationes.

¶ Vn̄ habemꝰ ab Alexādro ca. de Diſſinte/ A
ria trociſcos dyalectrū. ¶ Itē Seruiꝰ ſup bu B
co. Virgilij in egloga paſtorꝫ. dicit ꝙ electrū ē
Dd ij

Figure 5.8 Detail of the operations of the bezoar stone from *Hortus sanitatis* (Strassbourg: Johann Prüss, approximately 1507), sig. Ddij^{r}, RB 103538.

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Parkinson will ascribe to the bezoar a range of curative powers, prescribing it for ailments ranging from the physical (plague, worms, fevers, pains in the womb—and especially poison) to the affective (melancholy, madness).[53] As a physical, medical remedy its most common form was as an ingredient in a powder sold by apothecaries known as "Gascoin's Powder," that might also include white amber, crab's eyes, and powdered hartshorn.[54] Bezoars also appear as key ingredients in tonics and home remedies advised by mothers and wives. One example occurs in the domestic medical text of Elizabeth Grey, the Countess of Kent, *A Choice Manual of Rare and Select Secret in Physick and Chyurgery* (1653) and another in Hannah Woolley's complete housewife's guide *The Accomplish'd Ladies delight*.[55] As part of a recipe for "medicine for the falling Sickness," Grey lists "eight grains of Bezar" to be compounded and drank with a "good draught of Endive water" (sig. B2^r).[56]

As these potions and recipes suggest, bezoar acts through magnet-like powers of sympathy to extract poisons and toxins from the body; but they also were thought to be an affective cure for a melancholic human heart. Robert Burton, in *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), recommends the bezoar for its "especiall vertue against all melancholy affections" because "it comforts the heart and corroborats the whole body" (sig. Gg6^r).[57] Burton's recommendation follows practice on the Continent by numerous kings, princes, and dukes, including the "Saturnine" Rudolf II, who used the stone to combat melancholy and whose cousins sought on occasion to procure bezoars through him to cure their own heavy thoughts.[58] The bezoar's potential cure for the spiritual stony hard heart will build from this cultural matrix of sympathetic antidote.

As the above range of prescribed uses warrant, the bezoar's alleged powers of healing made it a rare, valuable commodity. It also made the bezoar highly suspect. In addition to the range of antidotal and healing properties outlined above, bezoar stones within early modern usage are almost as synonymous with fraud, counterfeiting, and gulling as with salvific healing.[59] A couple of examples serve to illustrate how a belief in its powers might be exploited. In *The Prayse of the Red Herring* (1599), with his usual bombastic verve Thomas Nash uses the "bezer" as similitude for fraudulent counter-poisons:

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[53] *Theatrum Botanicum*. A partial list of the bezoar's many curative uses appears in Nicolás Monardes, *Ioyfull Newes out of the Newfound World* (London: In Paules Churchyard at the signe of the Quenes Armes, by Thomas Dawson for William Norton, 1580), fol. 99.

[54] Kunz, *The Magic of Jewels and Charms*, 127.

[55] Elizabeth Grey includes it in a recipe for "the falling sickness" that also calls for "powder of a dead mans scull"; Elizabeth Grey, *A choice manual of rare and select secrets in physick and chyrurgery* (London: Printed by G.D and are to be sold by William Shears, 1653). sig. B2^r. Emperor Rudolf II took powdered bezoar and drank from a bezoar cup created especially for him in 1602. He believed it would frustrate attempts to poison him and cure his melancholy. For its use in "Gascoin's powder," see Blaen, *Medical Jewels, Magical Gems*, 226, 40ff.

[56] Grey, *A choice manual of rare and select secrets in physick and chyrurgery.*

[57] Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford: Printed by Iohn Lichfield and Iames Short, for Henry Cripps, 1621).

[58] See Stark, "Mounted Bezoar Stones, Seychelles Nuts, and Rhinoceros Horns," 69–94 at 73.

> The Rhomish rotten *Pithagoreans or Carthusian* friers, that mumpe on nothing but fishe, in what a flegmatique predicament would they be, did not this counterpoyson of the spitting sickenesse (sixtiefolde more restorative then *Bezer*) patch them out and preserve them; which, being dubble rosted and dryde as it is, not onely sucks up all rhewmatique inundations, but is a shooing-horne for a pinte of wine ouer-plus (sig. E4^{r}).[60]

In Nash's send-up, the "bezer" operates as calculus against which other dubious remedies might be compared. Similarly, in his satirical *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1600), Ben Jonson sports with human follies, cocking an eyebrow at many of London's "motions"—from almanac reading, tobacco-smoking, to believing in bezoars.[61] After the favored dog of the established courtier and knight, Puntarvolo, is found dead, likely poisoned, Carlo Buffone, the play's irreverent jester gibes: "Bodie a mee, a shrewd mischaunce: why had you no Vnicorne horne, nor Bezars stone about you? ha?" (sig. P4^{v}). Puntarvolo throughout the play has been the stalking horse for Arthurian knightly pretensions and so his presumed belief in the "Bezars" efficacy would be but one more opportunity for the audience to laugh alongside the play's malcontent at the expense of the earnest, but benighted, character.

Yet the bezoar's reputed fraudulence seemingly only further sparked its ongoing popularity as a commodity within the burgeoning trade networks. According to one historian of early modern lapidaries, Tom Blaen, the bezoar remained an "astonishingly popular and expensive" commodity late into the seventeenth century.[62] Despite attempts (such as Paré's infamous medical experiment) to expose them, and various skeptics' denouncement of them, bezoars were resilient. One Elizabethan skeptic of supernaturally enhanced marvels, Reginald Scot, exposes how various lapidaries opportunistically seize on belief. While "God hath bestowed upon these stones, and such other like bodies, most excellent and woonderfull virtues," humans, he continues, according to their "follies" ascribe "unto them either more vertues, or others than they have . . . And herin consisteth a . . . common cousening used sometins of the Lapidaries for gaines; sometimes of others for cousening purposes" (sig. Cc^{r-v}).[63] As Scot warns, counterfeiting bezoar for "cousening purposes" enriched a few enterprising individuals. "Cousening" would not be possible, however, without the pervasive cultural belief in virtues bestowed by God "upon these stones."

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[59] In a short "show and tell" essay, Drew Daniel illustrates that bezoar stones still flourish in the murkier corners of eBay and modern markets, see Drew Daniel, "Show and Tell," in *Object Oriented Environs*, eds. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Julian Yates (Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Books, 2016), 67–71.

[60] Thomas Nash, *Nashes Lenten Stuffe Containing, the Description and First Procreation and Increase of the Towne of Great Yarmouth in Norffolke: With a New Play Neuer Played before, of the Praise of the Red Herring* (London: Printed [by Thomas Judson and Valentine Simmes] for N[icholas] L[ing] and C[uthbert] B[urby] and are to be sold at the west end of Paules, 1599).

[61] Ben Jonson, *The Comicall Satyre of Euery Man out of His Humor* (London: Printed [by Adam Islip] for William Holme, and are to be sold at his shop at Sarjeants Inne gate in Fleetstreet, 1600).

At least one medical practitioner in Cologne, Johann Moriaen, a member of the correspondence network established by Samuel Hartlib, admits in a letter dated 1636 to having been busy "making Bezoar for some time," although whether his motives were charitable or profitable remains debatable.[64] In England, a protracted law case (1597–1606) evolved around a London goldsmith who sold a bezoar stone to the plaintiff, one Portuguese merchant Geronimo Lopez, who complained to the court that the stone "possessed no healing powers." The resultant verdict found the goldsmith not guilty and warned *caveat emptor*: let the buyer beware.[65]

The material efficacy of the bezoar to work its "unspeakable sympathies" to purge toxins from a human body and its passions drew believers and scoffers alike into its orbit. Its material popularity lay the groundwork for its equally influential spiritual deployment. Anecdotes from Topsell's *Historie* and others corroborate a stricken, weeping stag or hart with the medicinal bezoar. In emblem iconography, a thirsty weeping stag might signal the soul longing for God's grace. The proof text came from the penitential Psalms of

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[62] Blaen, *Medical Jewels, Magical Gems*; see also Rankin, *The Poison Trials*, 151–67.

[63] Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, by [Henry Denham for] William Brome, 1584).

[64] J. T. Young, *Faith, Medical Alchemy and Natural Philosophy: Johann Moriaen, Reformed Intelligencer, and the Hartlib Circle* (1998), 23–4. For original in German, see 34n.134.

[65] John Baker, "Bezoar Stones, Gall-Stones, and Gem-Stones: A Chapter in the History of the Tort of Deceit," in *Mapping the Law: Essays in Memory of Peter Birks*, eds. Andrew Burrows and Alan Rodger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 552–5. See also Blaen, *Medical Jewels, Magical Gems*, 229–31, who discusses how by the close of the seventeenth century, critics were increasingly concerned about the scale of fraudulent activity and scientific criticism of the stone's effectiveness.

David (Psalm 41 or 42). The weeping stag or hart as a visual emblem often accompanies these Psalms within various Catholic versions of the Book of Hours. The Berry Book of Hours (Figure 5.9) shows but one example, which was then adapted into Protestant traditions. The translation of the Sidney Psalter provides the verbal imagery:

> As the chafed hart, which brayeth
> Seeking some refreshing brook,
> So my soul in panting playeth,
> Thirsting on my God to look.[66]

The tired, "panting" hart/soul turns for its succor to "God." The allusive register Sidney and others play on requires some unpacking for modern readers. The Psalmist David's spiritual thirst reprises the physical thirst of the Israelites on their journey to the Promised Land. In a memorable instance, Moses saved them from thirst by striking a rock in the desert, from which water poured. This image from the Berry Book of Hours more explicitly links the rock from which water pours in the book of Exodus to the panting hart of the Psalms. The stag's lithic tears, like the rock-turned-fountain—a typology for Christ—provides the salvation. The bezoar's healing powers symbolize Christ's powers to heal the thirsty, sinful soul, or to use the language of the last chapter, the hard-hearted "stony" human.

Sidney's Psalm translation might be further illuminated in tandem with Figure 5.10, an emblem from Geoffrey Whitney's collection that references Psalm 41. This emblem includes what at first might seem an odd illustration and *inscriptio* or verse. The image shows the penitent kneeling with hands clasped in prayer directing his gaze towards the heavens. Across from him, the panting "hart" dips its head into a brook to quench its thirst. The pictorial analogy asks the reader to draw the parallel of the thirsty hart to the questing penitent, both of whom seek the relief voiced in Psalm 41. The accompanying inscription details the attraction, the "virtue hidde," that draws loadstone to iron and provides the navigational guide for the "seaman," who like the penitent looks to the heavens to reach port. As Ambroise Paré explains it, the bezoar works much like the attraction between magnet or loadstone and

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[66] Hannibal Hamlin, ed., *The Sidney Psalter: The Psalms of Sir Philip and Mary Sidney*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

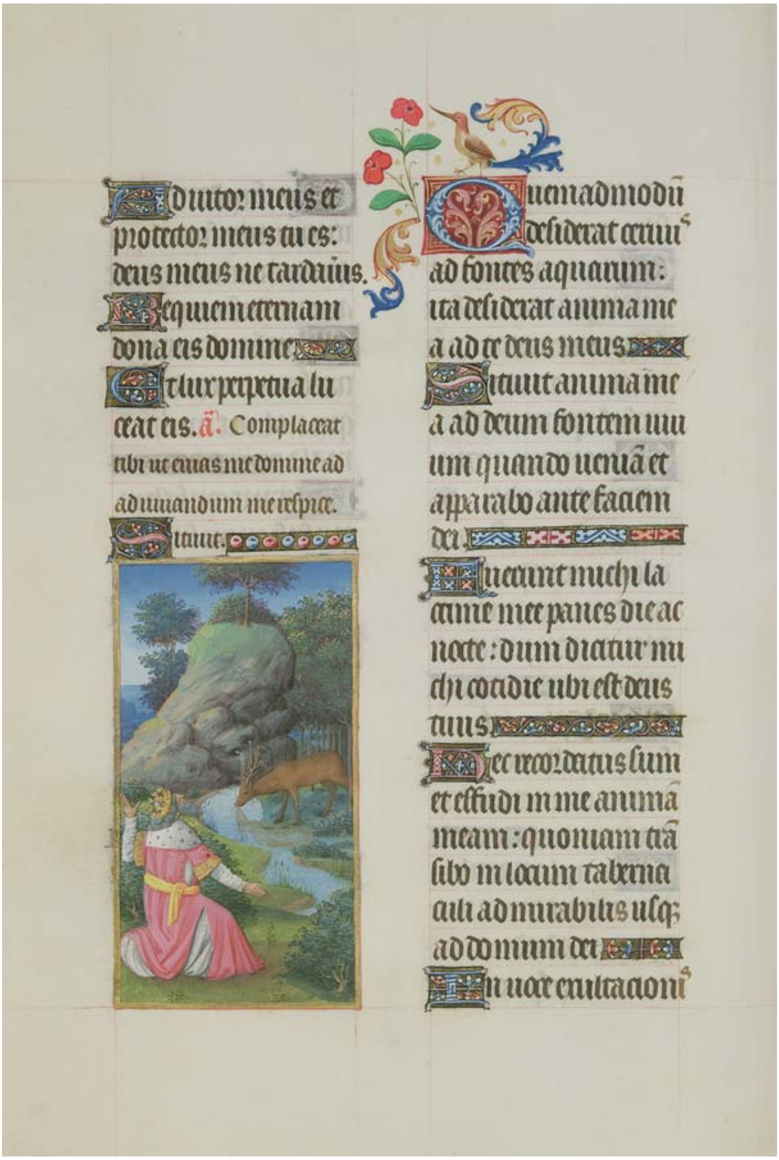

Figure 5.9 Psalm 41, David in prayer with deer drinking, from *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, vellum, fol. 97^{v}, by Jean Colombe (*c.* 1430–*c.* 1493), 65/1284. Musée Condé, Chantilly, France.

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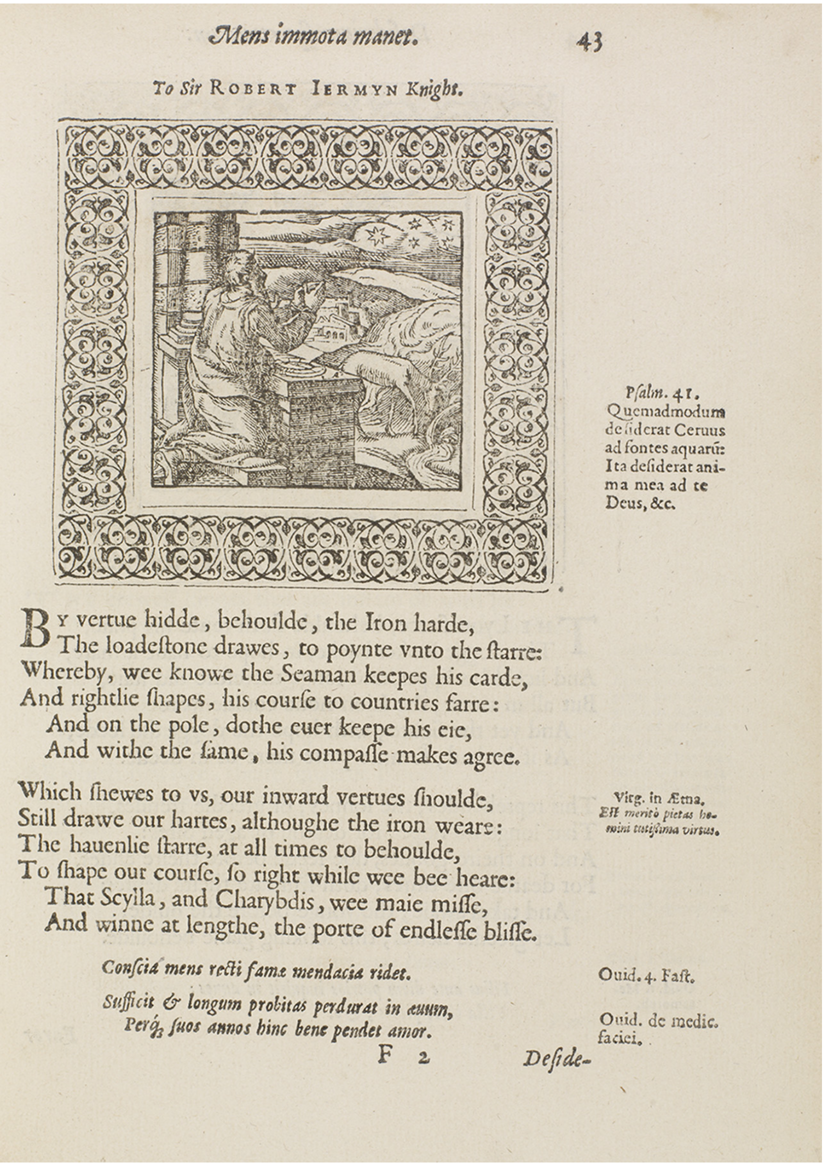

Mens immota manet. 43

To Sir ROBERT IERMYN *Knight.*

BY vertue hidde, behoulde, the Iron harde,
The loadeſtone drawes, to poynte vnto the ſtarre:
Whereby, wee knowe the Seaman keepes his carde,
And rightlie ſhapes, his courſe to countries farre:
And on the pole, dothe euer keepe his eie,
And withe the ſame, his compaſſe makes agree.

Which ſhewes to vs, our inward vertues ſhoulde,
Still drawe our hartes, althoughe the iron weare:
The hauenlie ſtarre, at all times to behoulde,
To ſhape our courſe, ſo right while wee bee heare:
That Scyla, and Charybdis, wee maie miſſe,
And winne at lengthe, the porte of endleſſe bliſſe.

Conſcia mens recti famæ mendacia ridet.

Sufficit & longum probitas perdurat in æuum,
Perq; ſuos annos hinc bene pendet amor.

F 2 *Deſide-*

Pſalm. 41.
Quemadmodum
deſiderat Ceruus
ad fontes aquarũ:
Ita deſiderat ani-
ma mea ad te
Deus, &c.

Virg. in Ætna.
Eſt meritò pietas ho-
mini tutiſſima virtus.

Ouid. 4. Faſt.

Ouid. de medic.
facici.

Figure 5.10 Psalm 41 *Mens immota manet* emblem from Geoffrey Whitney’s *A Choice of Emblemes* [. . .] (Leiden: In the house of Christopher Plantyn, by Francis Raphelengius, [1586]), sig. F2^{r}, RB 79714.

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iron. Here the analogy extends to that of the compass for the stars, the soul for Christ (the stag, the bezoar).

The densely allusive religious register of play with heart/hart, sin/poison, salvific power (Christ, bezoar), and consequent conversion (stone to flesh) proves as culturally pervasive as the bezoar itself. The two traditions likely contributed to beliefs in bezoar's alleged parasympathetic efficacy as remedy against a range of threats to the human body—and soul. In a sermon, preached at Whitehall, the First Friday in Lent, 1622, John Donne meditates on John 11:35, the shortest biblical verse: "Jesus wept."[67] The sermon focuses on the three times that Christ allegedly wept: expanding from the personal tears in this verse for the death of Lazarus, to those wept for Jerusalem, and, finally, to those wept for sin. Donne imagines Christ's incredible power that resurrected Lazarus, whose human body was, after three days, decomposing. Donne traces a series of transformations, from the literal decomposition of a human body to human nature deformed by sin:

> I have but three words to say of these tears of this weeping. What it is, what it is for, what it does; the nature, the use, the benefit of these tears, is all. And in the first, I forbear to insist upon St. Basil's metaphor, *Lachrymae sudor animi male sani*; Sin is my sickness, the blood of Christ Jesus is my bezoar, tears is the sweat that that produceth.[68]

Christ's weeping, and thus that of any penitent individual, is the "sweat" or liquid that transforms Lazarus from death to life, the sinner from a state of damnation to one of grace, from the sick body to the healthy soul. At its emblematic center stands "Christ Jesus . . . my bezoar" thus completing the associative network whereby the strange stone figures Christ, who holds the power to transform humankind from unhealthy sin to salvific health.

Donne returns to the bezoar again in another sermon:

> Salvation in the decree, is as the bezoar stone in the maw of that creature; there it grows. Salvation in Christ's death, is as that bezoar in the merchant's, or apothecary's provision; but salvation in the church, In the distribution, and application thereof, by the Holy Ghost, is as that bezoar working in my veins, expelling my peccant humours, and rectifying my

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[67] John Donne *The Works of John Donne*, vol. 1, ed. Henry Alford (London: John W. Parker, 1839).

[68] Ibid., 267.

> former defects. The last work, the seal, and the consummation of all, is of the Holy Ghost.[69]

In both passages, Donne thinks with the bezoar stone to understand the operations of Christian salvation. Salvation grows as it does in the "maw" of "that creature" where it is then multiplied by Christ's death imagined like the multiplication of wealth given to the merchant or apothecary who profits from its sale; and, finally, it is the mysterious "working" comparable to the Holy Ghost whose presence in the veins dispels "peccant humours" to rectify human defects, resulting in the "last work" that is the consummation. The mysterious material growth and subsequent power of the bezoar stone becomes the literal grounding for the invisible, immaterial operations of grace within the individual experience of salvation. It offers a tangible material example of fleshly conversion.

The triangulation of fleshly stony conversion, human penitent, and salvation crops up frequently in seventeenth-century religious lyric with the bezoar its implied physical tether and reference. Its ongoing currency as an iconographic emblem, for instance, can be glimpsed in George Herbert's 1633 poem "Love Unknown." The poem draws upon the allusive threads between the penitential Psalms and the individual penitent's prayers for salvation in religious emblem books. The poem's narrator describes how his heart, seized by "The servant" (a type for Christ) is thrown before a "font, wherein did fall / A stream of bloud, which issu'd from the side / Of a great rock" (lines 13–15).[70] The blood from the rock offers a new covenant of redemption.[71] The rock that gave water to the Israelites prefigures Christ, the "great rock."[72] The operations of the "great rock" work on the penitent's heart which "*was hard*" (italics in original). The speaker admits "I found callous matter / Began to spread and expatiate there." "Callous," according to the *OED* (adj.1a), refers to "hardened" or "indurated" "animal tissue" that specifically in reference to skin implies a "thickened horny layer." Herbert's poetic description of the penitent's hardened heart draws on the bezoar's calculi, that like horn or nails, might turn flesh. The conversion of this lithic callous to be "new, tender, quick" requires the "wine" of Christ's blood in order to reverse its ontological indurate status (line 70). Christ's blood might be experienced via weeping, a reverse process from the bezoar congealed from tears. Through an allusive network, the bezoar facilitates conversions whereby stony tears catalyze Christ's sacrifice to purge the venom of sin from human supplicant just as the bezoar itself purged poison from the physical body of the hart and the human.

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[69] Ibid., 520.
[70] All citations of Herbert's poetry are to Herbert, *The English Poems of George Herbert.*
[71] See Hebrews 9: 12–14.
[72] I discuss this allusion in further detail in chapter 3.

One final example shows the popularity of the bezoar as a salvific agent with which to meditate. In Hester Pulter's emblem 22, the speaker draws on the imagery of the "hunted hart" whose "vital spirits doth expire" and who with "weeping eye" seeks "her longed-for dittany," which "having eat" it "doth her fainting spirit so revive."[73] Even so, "a soul" suffering from "her sins in their true color" might find that with "tears / Being quite dissolved" quench the "despair" to let the speaker enjoy "everlasting peace." Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich's "curations" for the online Pulter Project edition helpfully points out the multiple allusions in this poem to the imagery of the hunted hart who seeks respite, and whose consumption of "dittany" dispels poison and the hunter's arrow.[74] While the emblem does not explicitly name the bezoar, its citation of the hunted hart who seeks dittany raises its allusive presence. The harts who ate dittany were the same whose tears produce the bezoar stones, the catalytic agents of health and salvation.

A final emblem from Joachim Camerarius's *Symbolorum & emblematum* (Nuremberg, 1595) cements the allusive register among healing plants, weeping harts, and congealed mineral bezoars (Figure 5.11). In this Emblem, the stag, who has eaten poisonous serpents, seeks the dittany to heal him. To find the dittany, the snake-encrusted deer swims desperately towards what looks to be a rock, from which a fountain flows. Presumably, the herb growing from the ledge just opposite the fountain's basin is the sought for balm and herb. While the viewer cannot see the stag's tears, the abundantly present water suggests copious weeping. The bezoar's efficacious conversions of plant, animal, and mineral to produce a protection again poison—as well as sin—proves a powerful durable metaphor.[75]

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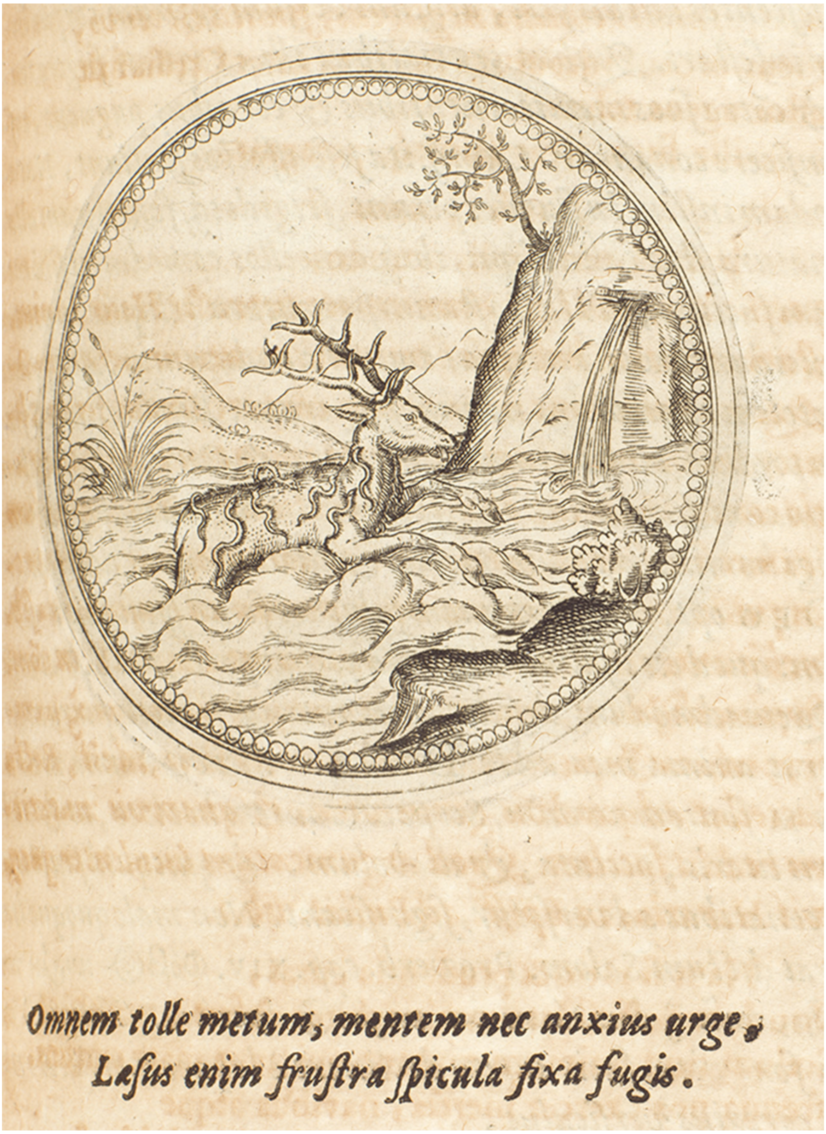
[73] All textual citations of Pulter's works are to Pulter, *Poems, Emblems, and the Unfortunate Florinda*.

[74] https://pulterproject.northwestern.edu/poems/ee/the-hunted-hart-emblem-22/#seeking-dittany. See also Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich, "In Defense of Indulgence: Hester Pulter's Maternal Elegies," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 20, no. 2 (2020): 43–70.

[75] Other notable treatments of the bezoar include the Swiss physician who published a masterful summary of previous scholarship; see Bauhin, *De Lapidis Bezaar Orient*. A briefer treatment is also offered by Marcello Donati, *De Medica Historia Mirabili* (Mantua, 1586), fol. 265^{r}.



Omnem tolle metum, mentem nec anxius urge,
Læſus enim fruſtra ſpicula fixa fugis.

Figure 5.11 Detail of a stag who has eaten poisonous serpents seeking dittany from Joachim Camerarius's *Symbolorum & emblematum ex animalibus quadrupedibus desumtorum centuria altera collecta* [. . .] ([Nuremberg?], [1595]), sig. L3^{r}, RB 601253.

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Looking back at the religious, medicinal, and poetic fascination with embodied stones—both the unwelcome kidney stone and the prized bezoar—can show us the power of a lithic imagination to influence physical as well as metaphysical practices. The extrusion of these stones from the bodily quarry reinforces the cosmology of the human body correspondent with the earthly one. The lithic imagination might turn pathology, such as the excruciating pain of the kidney stone, into salutary evidence of a larger beneficial design just as the bezoar might expel toxins in order to save. Lithic calculi, whether generated in a stag or human organ, or the congealed tears of a hart, smudge easy distinctions of animal and mineral. The possibility of matter's conversion from one state to another held out the tantalizing possibility of further transformations. The tangibility of kidney and bezoar stones testify to the convertibility of animal to mineral, of liquid to crystalline solidity, and deepen awareness of a mineral capacity (or mines) within embodied creaturely life. These physical testaments of fleshly conversion to stone contextualize the charged accusations of a spiritually hardened heart explored in chapter 4. The allusive registers activated by the congealed stony tears of the stricken hart who weeps because of a melancholic sickness also point us to the next chapter, which considers how the crying hart infiltrates the tradition of the Petrarchan lover and brings the lithic into the iconography not only of bodily health but also of bodily intimacy: sex, love, and procreation.

6

Lithic Intimacies and Marmorization

For physicians, preachers, and poets in early modern England, the body could be quarried for multiple stony, mineralized parts. The principal anatomical part (the heart) and bodily waste products (such as kidney and bezoar stones) might be scrutinized, extracted, shorn, and read for their indications of physical, but also spiritual, health. Mostly, these bodily minerals signal morbidity. As synecdoche, as parts of a bodily microcosm, they represent the whole macrocosm. As metaphor, they testify to the convertibility of flesh to stone. Their lithic presence frequently symbolizes a loss of liveliness and receptivity, which has fostered the popular notion of the dull and stony as antithetical to the lively and human. As Carolyn Dean observes, most often Western tradition has “identified stone as the binary opposite of, rather than a complement to, things recognized as animate.”[1] But these stony parts show only one facet of a more complex story. Yet one more embodied stone—or, more precisely, pair of stones—was believed to be a principal bodily part upon which the entire species of humans depended. This chapter turns to masculine anatomy to explore how the embodied organs of procreation—the testes, or stones—synecdochally contribute an erotic charge and fecundity to the lithic imagination.

In the first act of Shakespeare’s domestic comedy *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1599), rivalry between two suitors, Sir Hugh Evans and Doctor Caius, for the love of Mistress Anne Page erupts into verbal threats. Doctor Caius sputters, “By gar, I will cut all his [Sir Hugh Evans’s] two stones. By gar, he shall not have a stone to throw at his dog” (1.4.100–1).[2] The lines’ humor relies on a homonym. “Stones” the Norton edition glosses (perhaps unnecessarily given the bawdy context) as “testicles.” Put into modern slang, Doctor Caius threatens to break his rival’s balls so that Sir Hugh will not have even a ball left to throw at his dog, let alone at young Mistress Anne Page. The verbal play on “stones” as testicles rather than literal stones confirms the

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[1] Carolyn Dean, *A Culture of Stone: Inka Perspectives on Rock* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 8.

[2] All citations of Shakespeare’s plays are to Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*.

The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton. Tiffany Jo Werth, Oxford University Press. © Tiffany Jo Werth (2024).
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198903963.003.0007

vulgar popularity of another embodied stone. Only this lithic quarry proves fecund rather than morbid.

Beyond the ribald stage joke, early modern anatomy manuals confirm that, indeed, testicles were synonymous with stones. Helkiah Crooke's second edition of *Mikrokosmographia* includes a section on the male reproductive body headed "Testicles or Stones" (sig. T^v).[3] Crooke begins by explaining the etymological equivalence: "The Stones are called *Testes* because they are witnesse of *virilitie* in Greek" (sig. T^v). Their "*virilitie*" is apparent because the body has not one but two testicles (or stones); they are "twinnes," a condition that, Crooke notes, foretells their "fruitfulnesse" (sig. T^v). The "stones," in other words, confirm masculine virility because they exist as a pair, "twinnes." The doubling of the generative organs was thought to indicate their sexual, procreative fertility, but this etymological equivalence does not explain why testes are popularly known as "stones."

Crooke further explains why they might be known as "stones," through visual morphology. The testes's physical appearance recalls that of stones in relation to earth "because of the protuberation or bunching out of the *Parastate*, as if they were two small stones" (sig. $T2^v$). Crooke's simile, "as if," likens the body to earth or loam, and the testes to stones that protrude or lie on its surface. Figure 6.1 shows an engraved copperplate image detailing the kidneys and testes that diagrams the relationship of this body part, the testes, to the whole body. Although it was a plagiarized edition of Andreas Vesalius's great 1543 anatomy *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, the *Compendiosa totius anatomi*[*a*]*e delineatio* represents a popular, highly successful anatomy which went through five editions in England (1545–59). The illustration shows the relationship of the protruding parts of the testes to the inward anatomy and further connects them via veins to the kidneys above. The cutaway diagrams emphasize the testes's round shape and resemblance to stones. Unlike the anatomical heart (discussed in chapter 4), which does not "fitly resemble a stone," at least in visual morphology, the testes offered a more likely visual resemblance. The diagram also makes visible the anatomical connection between the kidneys, which as we saw in chapter 5 might grow lithic calculi, and the testes or stones. Thus, while not possessed themselves of lithic calculi or substance, their shape as well as their procreative function correlated to stone. This visual correlative imbued the lithic and stony with human sexual anatomy and its concomitant masculine virility or "fruitfulnesse."

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[3] Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia*, 1631.

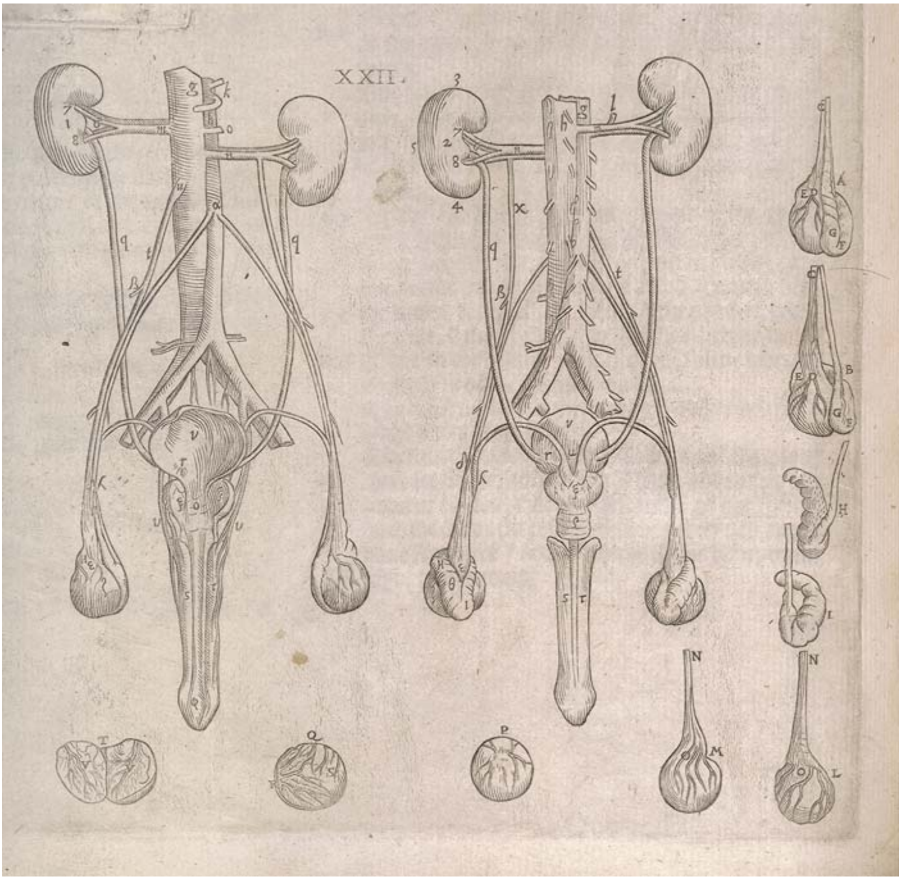

Figure 6.1 Illustration of the kidneys and testicles from *Compendiosa totius anatomi*[*a*]*e delineatio* [. . .] (London: [Thomas Gemini], 1559), sig. H2^{r}, RB 618647–8.

Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

For Crooke, who closely follows the anatomies of the influential Andreas Vesalius, testes and stones are synonymous. In contrast to kidney and bezoar stones, they do not convert or grow stony but, like the heart, are always already human parts. In fact, ancient and early modern medical experts considered the testicles not just *a* part but one of *the* principal, or necessary and definitive, parts of the human body. As Crooke puts it: "In excellency the Testicles are like unto the heart" (sig. T3^{r}). Crooke recapitulates the ancient debate: Aristotle considers only the heart to be the principal part, but Galen considers the heart and testes to be equally principal (sig. Y2^{r}). Crooke sides with Galen to conclude that the heart and the testes are both principal bodily parts. But he goes even one step further. He proposes that the testes are even more critical to humankind than the heart:

> The Testicles, because they are the chiefe Organes or instruments of procreation and by procreation mankind is preserved, are therefore to be accounted principall parts; and haply so much are they more excellent than the heart, by how much the species or whole kinde is more noble than on *indiuiduum* or particular of the kinde. (sig. Y2^{r})

The stones as "chief Organes" of procreation give life not only to the individual human but also to the entire "kinde" or species. Far from being dull, lifeless parts or bodily waste, the stones bear the fertile seeds of human life and existence. They are the generative sex by which "mankind is preserved."

Doctor Caius's threat to "cut" his rival's "two stones" shows the theatre exploiting a common knowledge of lithic anatomy for its bawdy humor. Under its humor, however, lies a probing question. If Doctor Caius were to carry out his threat, would Sir Hugh still be a man? Is a man, in other words, a (Hugh)man without his stones? Crooke anticipates this question. He defends his position that the stones be "principall" parts via a discussion of "gelt men" or "Eunuchs" (sig. Y2^{r}). Crooke describes how, in men who have lost their stones, "there is a change of the whole habit and proper substance of the body" that results in "their manners themselves" making such men "dull and blockish"—adjectives often used to signal humans turned to stone (sig. Y2^{r-v}). But Crooke reverses the commonplace that to possess a stony part confirms a lack of humanness. Rather, to *lack* stones is to lack masculine vitality, to exist in a state of dull blockishness. Although Crooke stops just short of stripping eunuchs of their status as humans, his adjective choices—"dull" and "blockish"—point to a less-than-human status. As critic Abdulhamit Arvas shows, in early modern England eunuchs were often "pushed outside the boundaries of normativity" and considered other, "foreign," and "monstrous."[4] In Mel Y. Chen's terms, the denial of animacy to men without their stones as "dull" lays the grounds for devaluing certain human lives. But as Arvas shows, the figure of the eunuch is not simply marginalized, as the eunuch upsets "dichotomous gender models."[5] I suggest that in Crooke's example, the embedded corporality of stony testes also further disrupts dichotomous models of human and animate versus stony and inanimate. Rather, in many instances, stones constitute an alternative, reproductive vitality—and futurity—of the human species.

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[4] Abdulhamit Arvas, "Early Modern Eunuchs and the Transing of Gender and Race," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies (JEMCS)* 19, no. 4 (2019): 116–36 at 117.

Crooke's "Testicles or Stones" provide an anatomical and biological underpinning that informs early modern discourses of sexuality. The stony testes will, in some cases, align with a masculine, heteronormative understanding of biological reproduction and sexual desire, affirming a patriarchal hierarchy. This framework arguably underlies Crooke's description of eunuchs as "dull and blockish"—that is, incapable of normative biological procreation. These critical embodied stones, however, counterintuitively provide a baseline for animacy that undoes binary systems of difference. My reading of these early modern sources draws from contemporary theorist Mel Y. Chen's construction of "animacy" as a figuration that might rewrite "conditions of intimacy" between seemingly antithetical entities.[6] *Lithic intimacies*, as I call them, trouble biological taxonomies that might privilege the human and masculine as well as normative human reproductive futures. The fecund embodied stony mattering generates a potential for an erotic affiliation between fleshly human (organic, biological) and nonhuman (nonorganic, mineral) that offers a rich imaginative and literal vein.

This chapter begins by exploring how the Renaissance trope of a stony mistress, frequently found in lyric poems, sonnets, and romances, flummoxes normative categories of penitence, desire, and sex practice. Via a reading of the metatheatrical mechanicals' play in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I show how the motif of the stony beloved rests on a bawdy anatomical plinth, ripe for a humorous, and slightly uneasy, exploitation. Next, I explore how the masculine fantasy of a stony beloved crystalizes in the Petrarchan tradition and the Pygmalion myth, but finds refractions in multiple poetic forms, including Shakespeare's sonnets and John Harington's poetic translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. Composed of multiple strata of desire, these *donna petrosa* tropes are, at first blush, heteronormative. When scrutinized, however, they propose stranger intimacies and unlikely alternative reproductive futures. The chapter then turns to the repercussions of feminine petrification. It explores central episodes in Lady Mary Wroth's prose romance *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*; the role of Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*; and the pervasive cultural influence of the biblical figure of Lot's wife. These female figures who are denied their animacy in a suspended lithic state of existence lose their access to critical rights of autonomy and agency. But their intimacy with the lithic begets an alternative nonnormative futurity that elevates them into icons of resistance to patriarchal norms. The chapter concludes that lithic intimacies are a vital partner of literary engendering and act as a preservative against time, extending a biologic human futurity into the geologic. Lithic intimacies offer up surprising, but also troubling, modes of resistance to normative taxonomies of sex practice and human desire.

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Chen, *Animacies*, 3.

Rocky Sex and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

In January of 2017, HBO launched a new series starring Jude Law called *The Young Pope*.[7] Its premiere episode features an intimate scene in a Vatican confessional, where the power behind the papacy, an Italian Cardinal Voiello, confesses to "having had impure thoughts." His confessor asks perfunctorily: "about whom?" The cardinal pauses . . . and says quietly: "about the Venus de Willendorf." Confused silence follows, finally, the confessor prompts: "about whom?" Cardinal Voiello replies: "about the Venus de Willendorf . . . The Paleolithic statue the pope keeps in his library." Another pause. Finally, the confessor responds in exasperation: "What sort of penance can I assign for THAT? You're making things difficult for me, Voiello."

The incident reveals something about the twenty-first-century culture around sexual arousal and stones, or what I term "rocky sex." If the cardinal had impure thoughts about Sister Mary, or perhaps a wealthy papal donor, the confessor implies he would know the proper penance to assign for such a venial sin. But the stony, ancient object of the cardinal's desire flummoxes the church's usual penitential categories. In this scenario, the cardinal's erotic attraction for the ancient stone statue qualifies as what Jesse Bering, author of the popular book *Perv: The Sexual Deviant in All of Us*, catalogues in an array of deviant desires or what he calls "erotic outliers." Among his examples are cases of a woman in love with the Eiffel

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[7] Paolo Sorrentino, dir., "The Young Pope," *The Young Pope*, season 1, episode 1, HBO (2016).

Tower and an entire chapter devoted to those with a penchant for statues, or agalmatophilia (a paraphilia involving a sexual attraction to a statue, doll, or mannequin).[8]

Cardinal Voiello's "impure" desire for the stony voluptuous woman reinforces what I assume to be our modern sense of agalmatophilia or petrophilia as an erotic outlier. Yet, what we think we know about petrophilia has not always been so. In the early modern period, petrophilia was not so much an erotic outlier as a central, oft-revisited tenant of the early modern literary imagination. One may think, for instance, of the *donna petrosa* of Dante and lyric poetry or the Renaissance revival of perhaps the most famous example: Pygmalion's statue. While Pygmalion's story (and Cardinal Voiello's fantasy) might be categorized as agalmatophilia, the matter of these statues might be as critical as their form. Much early modern statuary was of mineral origin, whether metal or stone. And while Ovid may refer to Galatea as Pygmalion's "ivory girl," many Renaissance authors, including John Marston, provocatively confuse ivory and stone. Their popularity sets a backdrop to probe the fascination with "rocky sex."

While scholars of early modern sex practice remain mostly silent on "rocky sex" or "petrophilia," I consider it an opportunity to explore the ways it challenges the boundaries of what constitutes human desire, inviting a look beyond an erotic anthropocentrism. Lithic intimacies challenge cherished models of procreation and of liveliness and in this capacity, this chapter speaks to an eco-materialist call to rethink the categories of life and matter as being divided between living and nonliving, vital and dull. Finally, to take seriously lithic intimacies as a form of human desire enlarges what might be considered a "sex practice" in the early modern period by expanding practice to the literary realm of imaginative acts.

In Renaissance literature, petrophilia is both, to paraphrase Kenneth Gross, the dream of erotic immobility—petrification—but also, perhaps more counterintuitively, vivification.[9] This chapter explores these two seemingly opposite impulses as productively in tension within Renaissance "rocky sex" fantasies. In their introduction to *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson posit that scholars might productively explore how "understandings of nature inform discourses of sexuality" and vice versa.[10] This chapter takes up that challenge to ask how the lithic—as an embodied human part and as an element of the mineral realm—complicates narratives of human desire. Rocky sex "makes things difficult" because it enfolds the seemingly nonsexual and nonreproductive inhuman mineral realm within an erotic matrix. How can hard cold stone without arms, without eyes, without sense, yield to human embrace or incite desire? How can it be that the stony is germinal to human sexuality and procreation?

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[8] Jesse Bering, *Perv: The Sexual Deviant in All of Us* (New York: Scientific American/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013).

[9] Kenneth Gross, *The Dream of the Moving Statue* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992). See also George L. Hersey, *Falling in Love with Statues: Artificial Humans from Pygmalion to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2009).

Such an indistinct human dimension may be what renders "rocky sex" invisible to the scholars who have catalogued various early modern sex practices—whether actual or imaginative. Early modern scholar Will Fisher explores a wide array of sex practices that range from the pornographic to what Jesse Bering might call "erotic outliers." Fisher analyzes, for instance, the practice of chin-chucking or bisexual eroticism, figured in vegetal terms as peaches and figs, but he includes no examples of petrophiliac practices.[11] Likewise, Ian Moulton, who catalogues a broad archive of erotic writing in early modern England, from Ovidian erotics to Nashe's dildo, says nothing of petrophilia.[12] Still other recent approaches examine sexuality and race to explore how material instantiations of race shaped romantic fantasies of erotic similitude and difference yet remain mostly devoted to human bodies.[13] Finally, Valerie Traub, who has thought quite a lot about early modern sex and written extensively on queer forms of early modern desire, stays focused on human-to-human desire. To date, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen carries the vanguard by proposing that we might "queer the inorganic" by considering the allure of stone, especially diamonds.[14] Yet even his "queering" account dismisses the "Pygmalion syndrome" that features petrification or vivification as provocative erotica because Cohen considers it "hopelessly anthropocentric." My contribution explores instead the animacy that draws writers and poets to desire stone. Why is it that matter as seemingly unsexy as stone or rock excites the human literary imagination? In doing so, I follow Mario DiGangi's call for a rethinking of the materiality of bodies by thinking through its literal stony bottom.[15]

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[10] Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, introduction to *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, eds. Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 2–3.

[11] Will Fisher, "The Erotics of Chin Chucking in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Sex Before Sex: Figuring the Act in Early Modern England*, eds. James Bromley and Will Stockton (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 141–69; and Fisher, "Peaches and Figs: 'Bisexual Eroticism' in Bronzino's Venus and Cupid Paintings and Burlesque Poetry," in *Sex Acts in Early Modern Italy: Practice, Performance, Perversion, Punishment*, ed. Allison Levy (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010), 151–64.

[12] Ian Moulton, *Before Pornography: Erotic Writings in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[13] For an overview, see Mario DiGangi, "Rethinking Early Modern Sexuality through Race," *English Literary Renaissance* 50, no. 1 (2020): 25–31.

[14] Although early modern scholars of Renaissance sex practice have thus far largely remained silent on the topic of lithic love, medieval scholar Cohen paves the way with what he calls an inorganic queerness; see Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Queering the Inorganic," in *Queer Futures: Reconsidering Ethics, Activism, and the Political*, eds. Elahe Haschemi Yekani, Eveline Killian, and Beatrice Michaelis (Burlington, VT: Routledge, 2013), 149–64 at 157. Cohen argues for a

A partial answer to this question might be found in Shakespeare's comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the mechanicals' play. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s emphasis on "fruitful issue" has been raised by Patricia Parker, who explores the sexually erotic valences behind the name of the mechanical Peter Quince, who speaks the interlude's prologue.[16] Parker's reading highlights how the "quince" fruit in the sixteenth century was linked to sexuality, matrimony, and fecundity. Meanwhile, "Peter" invokes a network of "bodily and biblical 'stones'" including the cornerstone as well as the "living stones" of 1 Peter 2.[17] The allusive network then, Parker argues, combines a bawdy sexual double entendre that extends the body's sex into the vegetal, but also mineral realm. As Parker concludes, the suggestive name choice introduces a much wider and important resonance that goes beyond the emphasis on human, and heteronormative, fruitfulness and fruitful issue. Parker suggests it raises the question as to whether "Athenian weddings could also be queer" with implications for "preposterous or back-door sexual entry."[18] Other critics, have extended this "queering" to read for erotic pairings that frustrate gender binaries as well as the human–animal divide.[19]

"lithic allure," where stone solicits our engagement, and suggests how diamonds, for instance, might have found a way to insinuate themselves into our desires, 156. In a related vein, Mary Floyd-Wilson argues that gemstones in Shakespeare's works quite often literally fascinate and even ensnare characters. In these accounts, stone possesses agency, compels our desire. See Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage*. But neither Cohen nor Floyd-Wilson go quite so far as to say that stone *requites* human love.

[15] Mario DiGangi, "Early Modern Bodies That Matter," in *The Routledge Companion to Women, Sex, and Gender in the Early British Colonial World*, eds. Kimberly Anne Coles and Eve Keller (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 33–45.

[16] Patricia A. Parker, *Shakespearean Intersections: Language, Contexts, Critical Keywords* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 126.

[17] Ibid., 143.

[18] Ibid., 147.

[19] See, for example, Richard Rambuss, "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Shakespeare's Ass Play," in *Shakesqueer: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Madhavi Menon (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 234–44, who argues for the character of Bottom as one who straddles species; see also Boehrer, *Shakespeare among the Animals*; and Boehrer, "Economies of Desire in *a Midsummer Night's Dream*," *Shakespeare Studies* 32 (2004): 99–117. See also Melissa E. Sanchez, "'Use Me but as Your Spaniel': Feminism, Queer

Vin Nardizzi, for instance, pushes a queering into the botanical realm and reveals a coextension between human and vegetal in a process that he calls "transplant poetics."[20] My contribution builds from Parker's suggestive allusion to the bodily and biblical stones invoked by the name "Peter" and reads a more extensive taxonomic breach into the nonorganic and mineral. Peter Quince's prologue is but foreplay to the transfiguring performance of Wall.

"Wall," along with Moonshine, represents one of the two non/creaturely roles in the mechanicals' interlude. "Wall" recalls the prosopopoeial figures of Kidney Stone, Gout, and other diseases in the French *The Condemnation of Banquet* discussed in chapter 5. Like them, "Wall" is a human actor personifying a nonhuman object or condition, a "wall," that is, on stage, also the human body. Wall provides the physical boundary, the literal, but also human, barrier to the lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe.[21] As Henry Turner deftly illustrates, the mechanicals' insistence on a literalism of meaning that collapses word or symbol into a body only calls attention to the artificiality that separates them.[22] Wall will comically beg the question as to whether a human is distinct from his stone(s).

In Act 3, the mechanicals gather to discuss their transformation into their respective parts. Snout worries how they will present the wall—and its chink—through which Pyramus and Thisbe conspire. Bottom sensibly suggests that "some man" will "present Wall" with "some plaster, or some loam, or some roughcast about him, to signify wall; or let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisbe whisper" (3.1.57–60).

Theory, and Early Modern Sexualities," *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 127, no. 3 (2012): 493–511. For the play's multiple erotic investments among its humans, see Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Kathryn Schwarz, *What You Will: Gender, Contract, and Shakespearean Social Space* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Kirk Quinsland, "The Sport of Asses: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," in *Queer Shakespeare: Desire and Sexuality*, ed. Goran Stanivukovic (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), 69–85.

[20] Vin Nardizzi, "Shakespeare's Transplant Poetics: Vegetable Blazons and the Seasons of Pyramus's Face," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies (JEMCS)* 19, no. 4 (Fall 2019): 156–77.

[21] For the bawdy wordplay on "Wall," see Patricia A. Parker, "Teaching and Wordplay: The 'Wall' of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," in *Teaching with Shakespeare: Critics in the Classroom*, eds. Bruce McIver and Ruth Stevenson (Newark, DE and London: University of Delaware Press 1994), 205–21. And Patricia A. Parker, "Hysteron Proteron: Or the Preposterous," in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, ed. Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 133–48.

[22] Henry S. Turner, "Life Science: Rude Mechanicals, Human Mortals, Posthuman Shakespeare," *South Central Review* 26, nos. 1 & 2 (Winter & Spring 2009): 197–217.

Before I discuss the critical digits, I want to dwell for a moment on the matter that will "signify wall." Bottom explains that the "man" who will present "Wall" will have some "plaster, or some loam, or some roughcast about him to signify 'wall'" (3.1.57–9).

The *OED* (n.2) defines plaster as a "soft, pliable mixture of sand with gypsum or lime with fibre or hair then added as a binder." This "mixture" of mineral with the organic compound of "hair" heralds the interlude's comic collapse of distinct creaturely entities and dividing Walls. Loam furthers erodes the distinction between "the man" actor and the "Wall" he performs. The *OED*'s first entry (n.1) defines *loam* as "'earth' or 'clay' the material of the human body." Alternatively, *loam* might be "moistened clay mixed with horse dung or straw." *Loam* then might refer to an additive "about" the actor's body to signify "Wall" but it might equally refer to the human actor's *prima materia* or first matter as being the clay described in Genesis. Lastly, *roughcast* is a "semi-fluid composition of lime, water, and fine gravel" (*OED*, n.2a). In sum, all three of Bottom's suggested additives to transform "the man" into a wall are mineral compounds whose adhesive properties create a wall. But they are also suggestive of human body matter.

After listing these three compounds as useful to "present Wall," Bottom continues "and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisbe whisper" (3.1.65–6). A well-established editorial tradition inserted stage directions to indicate that the actor would horizontally part his fingers, represented in the text as <, to facilitate Pyramus's and Thisbe's whispering, as "says the story" through a "chink of a wall" (3.1.55). A still shot in Figure 6.2 from a Royal Shakespeare Company production in the "Shakespeare learning zone" illustrates a frequent staging with an actor's horizontally parted fingers, with Pyramus and Thisbe speaking across the horizontal access of "Wall."

Thomas Clayton argues that an appropriate staging of this scene between what he delightfully terms the "stone crossed lovers" entails that the "chink" be staged as the parting between Wall, or Snout's, legs, perhaps in addition to a hand gesture that parts the middle two fingers from the index and little finger to create a "W" that could conceivably either be held up, or down between the actor's legs.[23] Clayton's bawdy staging seems consonant with the scene's ribald puns.[24] Such a vertical aperture conflates Wall and the human

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[23] Thomas Clayton, "'Fie What a Question's That If Thou Wert near a Lewd Interpreter': The Wall Scene in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," *Shakespeare Studies* 7 (1974): 101–12 at 111.

[24] At the time of Thomas Clayton's publication in 1974, he notes that his interpretation of Wall seemed to many "almost radically 'indecent,'" but that such an interpretation by the

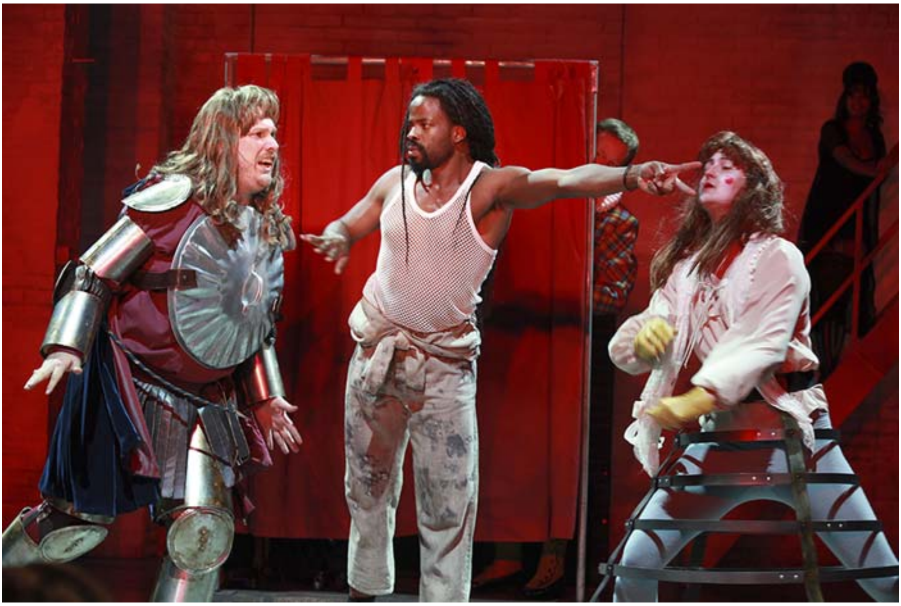

Figure 6.2 Bottom as Pyramus, Snout as Wall, and Flute as Thisbe in the 2011 Royal Shakespeare Company production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Photo by Ellie Kurtis.

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player, Snout, via its stony parts. Figure 6.3, a still image taken from a 2008 Royal Shakespeare Company production better grasps the anatomical posture, but in focusing on the human Bottom, still misses the pun where the stone wall and human stones become indistinguishably desirable.

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standards of "*Theatre à Nu*" was actually "quite decorous." See ibid., 112n.2. See also Clifford Leech and G. B. Shand, "Chinks," *Times Literary Supplement*, December 25, 1970, 1516. Performance history tells us little about the staging of Wall, dwelling instead on the settings, and more often than not, its fairies. For a recent conspectus of performances, see Jeremy Lopez, "Dream: The Performance History," in *A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Critical Guide*, ed. Regina Buccola, Arden Early Modern Drama Guides (London: Continuum, 2010), 44–73. The most recent Arden Shakespeare, edited by Sukana Chaudhuri, includes a stage direction note that some recent productions present a "bawdy enactment" where the lovers speak between Snout's "parted legs"; the introduction also notes a South African production where Wall symbolized a "racial as well as sexual segregation"; see William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, The Arden Shakespeare, 3rd ser. (London, UK: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 260n.176, 33.

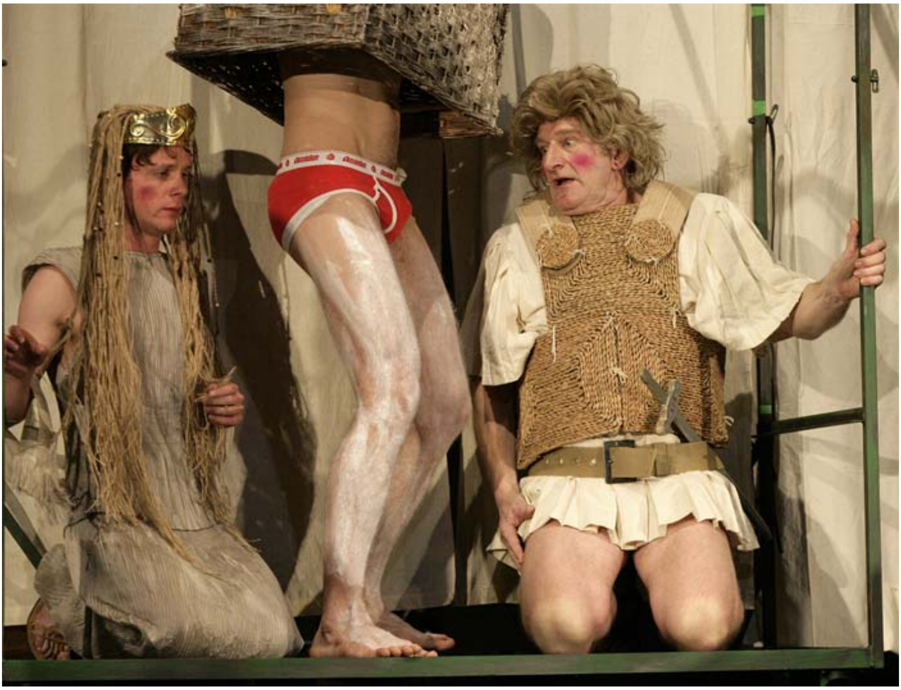

Figure 6.3 Flute as Thisbe, Snout as Wall, and Bottom as Pyramus in the 2008 Royal Shakespeare Company production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Photo by John Haynes.

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When two acts later, Snout comes on stage as "Wall," he rehearses how "this loam, this roughcast, and this stone doth show that I am that same wall; the truth is so; And this the cranny is, right and sinister" (5.1.160–63). Theseus interjects "Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?" If staged as Clayton suggests, Wall's stance with parted legs and "stone," makes anatomical sense of the "cranny" lying between "right and sinister." Since all actors on the English Renaissance stage were male, the cranny might well refer to the posterior of the actor. Hanging below the "cranny" would be the stones or testes. The stony anatomical grounds the metaphorical sense of the interlude's portrayal of the wall as a "sinister" block to the lovers' passion. It furthers a bawdy cast to "this loam, this roughcast, and this stone." "Loam," as I traced above, in Shakespeare's day could double as a referral to earth or clay as the material of the human body (*OED*, n.1), making the reference to stone a double entendre: as reference to the wall's building blocks, and if the actor were to gesture downward, also to his testes, a double reading that the remaining lines of the interlude take delight to capitalize on.

When Pyramus peers through Wall's "chink," he cries: "Cursed be thy stones, for thus deceiving me"; the *Norton Complete Shakespeare Anthology* (2016) glosses it as "Punning, unintentionally, on 'testicles.'"[25] The pun, I posit, can hardly be unintentional. As Flute-as-Thisbe sidles up to the chink a few lines later, the joke seems well rehearsed: "O Wall, full often hast thou heard my moans," pants Thisbe as she reminisces how "My cherry lips have often kissed thy stones, / Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee" (5.1.187–8). While Tudor walls were indeed made of lime and stone, with hair used to help blind the plaster, the hair also comprises a very animal or human ingredient naturally adjacent to, and even growing from, the stones.

If one understands the joke here to be punning on testicles, the "stones with lime and hair" points to an anatomical geography. It contributes to the laughter generated when Bottom-as-Pyramus, presumably from Wall's frontside, begs Flute-as-Thisbe to "kiss me through the hole of this vile wall" (5.1.197–8). The adjective "vile" simultaneously points to the moral character of the wall for separating the lovers, but it also gestures to a literal, and lithic, anatomical baseness. Presenting the lovers who "whisper often very secretly" with kissing and sighing through Wall's "cranny," the natural conclusion to such provocation follows when Flute-as-Thisbe says: "Tide life, tide death, I come without delay" (5.1.159, 201). To "come" then as now was slang for sexual orgasm, and the language "betide" or "come life, come death" further exploits the embodied frisson of stone and sexuality. Wall completes the joke with his concluding couplet: "Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so; / And, being done, thus Wall away doth go" (5.1.202–3).

The customary stage directions, "Wall parts his fingers," normalizes, or humanizes, the mechanicals' sexuality from a lithic entanglement and directs the audience gaze not at the stones or the "hole" or "chink" but at the human digits (5.1.174, 193, 199–200). In doing so, it loses the play's layered representation of a more-than-human erotic frisson that Wall's verbal and physical performance courts. Between the onstage aristocratic audience of the Duke and his bride-to-be there is literally no Wall. Behind the interlude's comic naivety and literal-minded interpretation lies a serious question: What is the fruitful "issue" expected from the multiple nuptials within the play?

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[25] Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, 1090n.6.

Much of the humor of the mechanicals' interlude turns on their insistence that the audience lacks the power either to imagine, or to discriminate between, the thing and the imagination. We may wish to join Theseus's skepticism of their rudimentary "palpable-gross play," a remark that scales the mechanicals as lower on the *scala naturae*, and therefore, by such hierarchical logic, as less valuable or notable (5.1.353). Yet Theseus, and not they, proves the more rigidly simplistic and naïve within the play's concluding logic. Hippolyta's countering argument that the lovers have been "transfigured" (5.1.26) implies a convertibility of mind and matter. The stone/human nexus that Wall portrays transfigures the boundaries of the human body, the figurative role as player, and the matter that subtends both thing and imagination. As Bottom so presciently remarks, "the wall is down that parted their fathers" (5.1.337).

Denied an epilogue by Theseus, the mechanicals cede the stage and Theseus ushers the human players to bed and utters what sounds like a typical epilogue. But the play overgoes him, and gives the concluding epilogue to Oberon, Titania, and lastly, Puck or Robin Goodfellow, a fairy, the only quasi- or non/human player granted an epilogue in all of Shakespeare's corpus.[26] As Mary Crane argues, the fairies urge us to imagine material, "geological, and climactic forces" that work against the human actor's anthropomorphism by dissolving the wall between elemental matter and human actors and bodies.[27] Puck's epilogue reinforces the play's concentric ontological categories that transfigure human, fairy, creature, or wall. His epilogue hangs on a conditional "if" that provides the Theseuses of the audience an out. If they are "offended" they need only mend the breach, erect a wall, between dream and wakefulness, between human and non/human, between imaginative shadow and substantive reality, by branding Puck "a liar" (5.2). But the play's epilogue leaves the audience applauding the benediction bestowed by the fairies, who throughout the play demonstrate the porous membranes between realms of being.[28] Here in *A Midsummer Night's*

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[26] Plays in which quasi- or non/human actants play a role might arguably encompass the witches in *Macbeth*, the resurrected poet Gower in *Pericles*, the figure of Time in *The Winter's Tale*, the soothsayer in *Cymbeline*, and the sprites of *The Tempest*. None of these speak the final lines.

[27] Thomas Crane, "Meteorology, Embodiment, and Environment in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," in *Geographies of Embodiment in Early Modern England*, eds. Floyd-Wilson and Sullivan, 134–51 at 37.

[28] For the early modern audience's likely acceptance of the fairies' or spirits' interaction with humans as well as their concern over the "deficiencies of human perception," see Mary Floyd-Wilson, "The Habitation of Airy Nothings in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," 243–61 at 46. In a related vein, Robert N. Watson reads the fairies as "in the role of microbes," which suggests

Dream the "unspeakable sympathy" or lithic intimacy of human and stone might be an agent of humor but also of erotic desire and fruitful issue, a wall that proves no wall. Humoral human embodiment interpenetrates with even the most rocky of bottoms.

Masculine Vivification: Pygmalion's Fantasy, Petrification, and the *Donna Petrosa*

As a bawdy staging of Wall demonstrates, the synonym of the testes with the stones invites largely masculine—if not always entirely heteronormative—perspectives knitted to male anatomy. From the perspective of male poets and writers, a lithic erotic lure frequently takes the form of a rejection: unrequited love. The trope of unrequited love is a familiar one to scholars of the Renaissance. The trope has a rich trajectory stretching back at least as far as the Italian poet Petrarch, whose own name in Italian is based on "petra" or stone, and who establishes the template wherein a subjective pun and poetic trope intermingle.[29]

In *Rime Sparse 23* at his beloved Laura's behest, Petrarch finds himself transformed "an almost living and terrified stone,": "d'un quasi vivo et sbigottito sasso," a "quasi-living," amazed, bewildered, or dismayed stone.[30] Petrarch's association of spurned love with a stony state summarizes the frustration of a human lover denied physical, but also emotional, satisfaction. Critics have often read this "human burden of unfulfilled love" as being "replaced by the gigantic task of petrification, of annihilating life in form."[31] Rather than reading the stony turn as one that annihilates life in form (or matter) into a "passionless stone," I want to explore how it produces a counterintuitive effect. Rather than engendering only a dull sterility or

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a dissolution of human distinction, and as participants in (rather than mere manipulators of) an ecosystem; see Robert N. Watson, "The Ecology of Self in *Midsummer Night's Dream*," in *Ecocritical Shakespeare*, 33–56.

[29] For the ways in which this trope creates a self-referentiality between human poet and material matter of the sonnet, see Martina Lauster, "Stone Imagery and the Sonnet Form: Petrarch, Michelangelo, Baudelaire, Rilke," *Comparative Literature* 45, no. 2 (1993): 146–74.

[30] Francesco Petrarch, *Petrarch's Lyric Poems*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976). Durling translates this as "an almost living and terrified stone," although the sense of quasi-living better captures the intensity of pathos as well as the hybridity of the human/lithic.

[31] Lauster, "Stone Imagery and the Sonnet Form," 150.

fruitlessness, the turn to a lithic metaphor materializes an elemental yearning, an ardent eroticism, albeit one whose gendered repercussions grant masculinity further animacy and primacy.

Petrarch's lithic figuring of being himself turned quasi-stone or in other instances of desiring a stony mistress proves poetically generative; nearly all the major Elizabethan sonneteers will engage the *donna petrosa* motif, often enlarging the Petrarchan "petra" or "rock" and "stone" to be inclusive more broadly of minerals including flint, iron, and steel.[32] The *donna petrosa* trope holds connections to the early modern habit for the construction of funeral monuments of stone, a topic that the final section of this book explores.[33] But such lithic figuration is not always only a dead end. The imagination of a monumentally stony beloved lays the groundwork for an alternative to a biological "fruitful issue." The eroticism driven by an assemblage of lithic and human samples a more-than-human and nonbiological model of futurity and generation.

A few examples from English sonnets and lyric sketch the range of typical uses of the Petrarchan conceit of the stony lover. A sonnet is, after all, nearly an anagram of "stone."[34] Sir Thomas Wyatt, one of the first to translate Petrarch's sonnets into English, will, for instance, lament that his sonnets or songs are as likely to pierce his beloved mistress's heart as "lead to grave in marble stone" (CIX).[35] The refrain will echo throughout the sequence. In CX, the speaker laments that not even his long faithfulness is able "to grave within your stony heart."[36] The stony hard-hearted lover, more obdurate than stone itself, resists human inscription but inspires erotic obsession. Drawing from Petrarch's *Rime* 265, Wyatt's song CXXXVII laments that even rocks may be worn down by water, so surely no heart can be so hard: "For though hard rocks among / She seems to have been bred . . . Hard stones doth pierce at length, / So in her stony heart / My plaints at length shall grave, / And rigour set apart, / Cause her grant that I crave."[37] If water can soften rock, surely tears (and their expression in verse) can convert a rocky heart. The rhetorical trope may not garner the human reciprocity it purportedly craves, and the narrator of Wyatt's sequence will claim that even the rocks "do not so cruelly / Repulse" as does his beloved (CIX). Yet the sentiment's expression achieves durability via an act of poetic engraving.

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[32] In her reading of Michelangelo's poetic work, Lauster notes that stone functions quite differently and becomes a trope of process and transformation, even of the attainment of life through dissolution into stone. Its "stone theme is not primarily linked to the notion of coldness, stasis, death"; see ibid., 153–7 at 156; see also Robert J. Clements, *The Poetry of Michelangelo* (London: Peter Owen, 1966), 273.

[33] I'm indebted to J. K. Barret for pointing me to an unpublished dissertation that explores how a trope of stoniness within English lyric contributes to an "architectural poetics" and a monumentalizing of English verse. See Jason Robert Leubner, "Renaissance Lyric, Architectural Poetics, and the Monuments of English Verse" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2012).

[34] I give the credit to Thomas Herron for this quip.

[35] All citations of Wyatt's works are to Wyatt, *Sir Thomas Wyatt: The Complete Poems*, 144.

[36] Ibid., 145.

Later poets take up the trope in similar veins. Even Edmund Spenser, who writes the only sonnet sequence that finds reciprocity in the beloved, contributes to it in the *Amoretti*. Early in the sequence the narrator bemoans that despite his "long intreaty" he cannot "soften her hard heart," and "she as steele and flint doth still remayne" (Sonnet XVIII).[38] In Spenser's sonnet, this stony state hardens the ardor and sustains the *amor* that will proliferate the sonnets to eighty-nine in total.[39] Syntactically the line implies that her conversion to "steele and flint" is what facilitates her to "still remayne" or continue in a lexicon that recalls Niobe's transformation. In "Caelica" XLI, Fulke Greville laments that his mistress has "Like Gorgon's head transform'd her heart to stone," a condition which leaves her indifferent to his postures but keeps his sonnets coming.[40] Similarly, Samuel Daniel will accuse the titular beloved Delia: "Yet nought the rock of that hard hart can moue" (Sonnet XLIII).[41] Although the mineral similes and metaphors that lament a hard, unmoved stony lover would, one might suppose, soften desire, they seem instead to stiffen its resolve and lengthen its endurance. By envisioning flesh turned to stone, the sonneteer fixes his devotion. Like the flint invoked in Spenser's beloved, the stoniness of the beloved sparks desire that flames into life.

John Marston's lyric poem *Pigmalion* (1598), a few years later, similarly will fascinate on the allure of the quasi-stone, quasi-human beloved. When Pygmalion addresses Venus in stanza 23, he beseeches the goddess to show

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[37] Ibid., 173.

[38] Spenser, *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, 611.

[39] By contrast, the following sequence, *Epithalamion*, contains neither sonnets nor stones, and stretches only as long the interval of a day: twenty-four hours, twenty-four songs.

[40] Fulke Baron Brooke Greville, *Certaine Learned and Elegant Vvorkes of the Right Honorable Fulke Lord Brooke Written in His Youth, and Familiar Exercise with Sir Philip Sidney* (London: Printed by E[lizabeth] P[urslowe] for Henry Seyle, and are to be sold at his shop at the signe of the Tygers head in St. Paules Church-yard, 1633), sig. Dd3^{r}.

[41] Samuel Daniel, *Delia and Rosamond Augmented Cleopatra* (London: [By James Roberts and Edward Allde] for Simon Waterson, and are to be sold in Paules Church-yarde at the signe of the Crowne, 1594), sig. D6^{r}.

"powerfulnesse / In changing stone to flesh."[42] How much of Marston's slippage between referring to the statue as "ivory" or "stone" may be haunted by Ovid's preceding tale of the Propoetides, where breathing women prostitutes are turned into stone by Venus, is impossible to gage, but the material matter of the stone prostitutes seems to have colored how later poets imagine Pygmalion's statue. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, in his discussion of queering the in/organic, dismisses Pygmalion as an "ordinary misogynist" who prefers a "petrified masculine fantasy" as opposed to "lived femininity."[43] As Cohen concludes: "What could be more tiresome in its heteronormativity than Pygmalion's idolatrous love?" While I take Cohen's point, Pygmalion's ardor for his stony creation might also gesture beyond a reductive heteronormativity. A catalyzing more-than-human eroticism, a desire for lithic intimacy, also seems to be at play.

Marston's poem offers one of the fullest examples of an arousing lithic blazon, a Petrarchan conceit wherein the human body is imagined to be a compelling mixture of stone and flesh.[44] Patricia Phillippy refers to this process as "marmorization," wherein bodies are experienced as or turned into stone. She borrows the term from geology as the term for the transformation of limestone into marble (*OED*, n.1).[45] Marston's stanzas detail a tantalizing hue lurking within the stone statue. Stanza 6 details her "amber-coloured" and "shining haire"; her cheeks are the Petrachan standard "redde" and "white."[46] But the referent here is not a fleshly human woman but a statue, with the "white" hue alluding to its marble or ivory matter, while the "redde" may point to a more human element, blood. Here the fairness of the statue stemming from its desirable ivory or marble matter, coalesces with the powerful trope of whiteness that permeates the sonnet genre to pique erotic allure.[47] The poem's sexual ideology articulates an allure to a white beauty whose stony matter enhances its perdurance and whose animacy pulses in blood. The double taxonomic possibility of stone and human accords with the opening description of her hair as being "amber." As Shannon Kelley demonstrates in the poetry of Andrew Marvell, the literary significance of amber resonates as a long-standing poetic trope. The allusion invites the reader to imagine the fossil resin that had the value of a gemstone. As a substance, amber defies taxonomies either vegetal or mineral. As a cultural trope it often signifies an experience of being trapped or petrified.[48] In Pygmalion's blazon, the amber, along with the ivory/stone and flush of blood mixes organic and nonorganic forms of life; but rather than arouse fear over being trapped or petrified, the commixture enflames masculine poetic desire. The breasts too invoke an in-between substance as they like "polisht Iuory appeare" (stanza 8) and draw the poet's and reader's gaze yet further down the body to "Loue's pauillion" (stanza 9) and her "Iuorie" thigh (stanza 12). The "same parts of secrecie" are open to the gaze and raise the narrator's—and presumably the reader's—envy as well as desire for her "blameless" "perfections" (stanza 11). She is all the more perfect, desirable, the blazon suggests, because the intermingled fleshly and mineral qualities make her flawless.

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[42] John Marston, *The Metamorphosis of Pigmalions Image and Certaine Satyres* (London, 1598), sig. B3^{v}.

[43] Cohen, "Queering the Inorganic," 84.

[44] For the effects of the vegetal blazon on poetic ardor, see Nardizzi, "Shakespeare's Transplant Poetics."

[45] Phillippy, *Shaping Remembrance from Shakespeare to Milton*, 192. Phillippy discusses this term in relationship to memory and burial in church monuments, but the process might also extend to the *donna petrosa* figurations.

[46] Marston, *The Metamorphosis of Pigmalions Image and Certaine Satyres*, sig. A7^{r}.

[47] For a seminal account of this trope within much early modern lyric and its colonial ramifications, see Kim F. Hall, "'These Bastard Signs of Fair': Literary Whiteness in Shakespeare's Sonnets," in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, ed. Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin, New Accents (London: Routledge, 1998), 64–83.

Despite Pygmalion's best efforts—"fondly doting" and kissing the lips, dallying with her "ioury" breasts and other "amorous embracements" (stanzas 13, 16)—she remains "relentlesse stone" (stanza 21) that rebuffs his caress but stokes his ardor. His insistent caresses inspire Venus to answer. She transfigures the "stonie substance" into "living creature" (stanza 28). The seduction poem drives home its pitch: "though flinty hard, of her you soone should see / As strange a transformation wrought by me," and wonder not that "flesh transformed was a stone" (stanza 32). The poet coyly omits what happens next, but winks at readers, whom he believes his poem has incited with "itching eare[s]" to "lustful thoughts," and asks them to imagine further "willing agents in loves luxurie" (stanzas 33 and 38). The final stanza declares that the delights of that night result in the conception of Paphos. The intimacy of flesh with mineral drives the erotic encounter and the poetic sequence turns a dream into a fruitful, procreative, generative, reality.

The dedication "to his Mistress" that precedes Marston's poem likens a "dead, and dull conceit" as one that might paradoxically "life inspire." The imagery invokes "that rare and rich Elixar stone" (that is, the philosopher's stone) as the catalyst that might "turne to gold, leaden invention."[49] Pygmalion's fantasy credits mineral matter as a spark to poetic invention. In so doing, Marston, like the mechanicals' Wall, erodes distinctions (or walls) that divide human from mineral and poetic conceit from material realm. Pygmalion's story has often been interpreted as a metaphor for the ways in which representational modes (such as poetry) bring matter into vivid, human, poetic life.[50] But the formula for the poetic "Elixar stone" might also be read in reverse: not only does poetry vivify matter; matter vivifies poetry. Pygmalion's story, as Marston reimagines it, reveals to us a surprising turn of events wherein cross-scalar (human to stone) desire engenders "fruitful issue," the baby Paphos as well as the poem itself. In Marston's poem, vitality and a ready fertility animates the seemingly cold, unreproductive, unresponsive stony form.

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[48] Shannon Kelley, "Amber, the Heliades, and the Poetics of Trauma in Marvell's 'the Nymph Complaining,'" *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 55, no. 1 (2015): 151–74.

Marston's Pygmalion is not alone in finding an animating passion within the *donna petrosa*. A more familiar example for how lithic embodiment might spark, as opposed to dull, human passion, occurs in Shakespeare's Sonnet 94. To facilitate the close reading that follows, I include it in entirety here:

> They that have power to hurt, and will do none,
> That do not do the thing they most do show,
> Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
> Unmovèd, cold, and to temptation slow—
> They rightly do inherit heaven's graces
> And husband nature's riches from expense;
> They are the lords and owners of their faces,
> Others, but stewards of their excellence:
> The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
> Though to it self, it only live and die,
> But if that flower with base infection meet,
> The basest weed outbraves his dignity:
> For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
> Lilies that fester, smell far worse than weeds[51]

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[49] Marston, *The Metamorphosis of Pigmalions Image and Certaine Satyres*, sig. A5^r.

[50] See Stephen Guy-Bray, "Beddos, Pygmalion, and the Art of Onanism," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 52 (1998): 446–470.

[51] Sonnet citation from William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Stephen Booth (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977).

The sonnet's first quatrain opens with the familiar simile where the beloved "they" who are "unmoved," "cold," and "to temptation slow," are "themselves as stone." These stony ones "do inherit heaven's graces" and keep "nature's riches" from "expense"—or from loss, waste, or decay. The stony ones possess the "power," "moving others." This power to move others, Philip Martin argues, likens the beloved not only to stone, but also to a lodestone that has the power to remain motionless, yet draw others into its orbit.[52] The agential capacity to draw others, to spark their desire, inheres to the stony, not fleshly, aspect of the beloved. The first two quatrains form a logical unit reminiscent of a Petrarchan octave and evoke familiar Petrarchan imagery that aligns "pow'r," "graces," "riches," and "excellence" with the lithic qualities of the beloved. The stony qualities of a magnetic petrification (unmoving, attracting others, lacking heat, durability) render others "but stewards" to them. The series of negations—"none," "do not," "unmoved"—add up to conservation. The stoniness acts as preservative, keeping "nature's riches from expense."

Although Shakespeare's is an English sonnet in rhyme scheme, the ninth line works much like an Italian volta and shifts the poetic simile register from lithic to botanic or vegetal. The speaker now muses on "summer's flower" that critics agree refers back to the "them" of the first stanza because of the rhyme of "pow'r'" with "flow'r." Like the stone, the addressee (now like the flower) seems to exist only for itself but gives off a sweetness and presumably pleases and, like the lodestone, may attract the human who smells it. But unlike the stone that saves "nature's riches from expense," the summer flower risks decay, death, and, "infection." The couplet drives home the sonnet's warning that the lover-as-lily is not spared "from expense" and preserved. Rather, the beloved risks "infection" which may "sweetest things" turn "sour." The final progression of rhyme in the closing couplet threatens that "deeds," which references those in the second line who "do not do the thing they most do show." That is, those who do not succumb to their lover's demands, face a fate "worse than weeds" for "Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds." In the first octave, when compared to stone, the unrelenting lover domineers and preserves the lover's ardor because "they are lords and owners of their faces." However, when the poet changes registers and imagines his beloved as a summer flower, when "lily" replaces "stone," then the lover's ardor threatens to wilt alongside the lily's (and human) festering vegetal, biologic, decay.

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[52] Philip Martin, *Shakespeare's Sonnets: Self, Love, and Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 34–5.

The sonnet's sestet swerves from adoration to admonition as embodied "excellence" putrefies. When imagined in biological life terms, denial begets a repellant image of "base infection" and rot from lack of reciprocity. The beloved, via the vegetal simile, loses, rather than gains, sex appeal. That which was most fair becomes most foul. Shakespeare's sonnet supplies some insight into why the lithic state might so compel desire within Renaissance lyric poetry. In a larger discussion of Shakespeare's sonnets, John Archer remarks on what generations of critics have noted: Namely, that within Shakespeare's sonnets, one realizes acutely that "to love, or rather to be loved and thus live, reaches only as far as the human life."[53] Bodily temporal dissolution, fading and dying, is the business of lilies and humans, which is why they must seize the day. Only the stony may preserve "nature's riches." By shifting domain registers, the speaker shifts tactics in hopes to better achieve a biological imperative of fleshly satisfaction. To imagine the beloved as stone serves only to preserve them and their denial. They do yet "still remayne."

Petrarch and the later English sonneteers who imagine unrequited love as a stony state speaks to the frustration of a human lover denied conventional satisfaction and potential procreative futures. Yet, it is precisely the denial of conventional biological human satisfaction that intensifies, but also complicates, how these lyric voices yearn for a lithic intimacy to animate them. Because the lithic makes things difficult, because it eschews normative categories, the correlation of lover to stone carries the seed of a greater figural significance.

The *donna petrosa* lyric motif also proves popular within romance narratives. Popular iterations retell the Ovidian story of Perseus and Andromeda, which lays the template for an erotic suspension between the petrification and vivification of the beloved. In the *Metamorphoses* as translated by Arthur Golding (1567), Perseus spies afar off a figure pinioned "to a rocke by both arms." He "would have thought of Marble stone shee had some image beene" (4.824–5), except for a telling organic detail: Her hair blows in the wind (4.824–5).[54] A female figure so pinioned as to be believed (or wished?) coextensive with her rocky plinth, alone amid a vast sea, harried by a ferocious monster, will become what Helen Cooper calls a "meme" or Barbara Fuch's a "narrative strategy," oft revisited by writers (and painters).[55] Andromeda literalizes the *donna petrosa* motif and embodies a rocky erotic and sexualized fantasy. As a kind of stony–human assemblage (to borrow a phrase of Latour), this figure of incipient petrification enflames a hero's—usually male—ardor.

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[53] John Michael Archer, *Technically Alive: Shakespeare's Sonnets* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012), 89.

[54] *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation, 1567.*

Ariosto revisits the episode in *Orlando Furioso* and features Angelica as Andromeda while Rogero (the beloved of Bradamante) plays the part of Perseus. In Figure 6.4 the reader can spy the episode portrayed in the upper left corner of Sir John Harington's 1591 English translation, which includes copies of the Italian plates.

A closer look reveals the rock to emerge from the watery background with a series of vertical strokes. By contrast, a cross-hatched series of lines compose the rock's face, a backdrop to the pinioned Angelica that doubles as a kind of shadow. The shadowing wherein the rock's horizontal lines harmonize with the horizontal lines that trace Angelica's human form previews what the text will highlight: Angelica appears to be quasi- human quasi-stone. Faceless, a craggily statuesque humanoid, she shimmers somewhere in-between, her form an assemblage of flesh and stone that heightens, not diminishes, her erotic appeal to the male gaze.

Angelica, like Andromeda, is bound "unto the rocke," left to perish "With nothing but the rocks and seas in sight" (10.78, 81).[56] Rogero, as his hippogriff nears, sees that while "at the first" he thought "She was some image made of allablaster, / Or of white marble curiously wrought" (10.82), by "viewing nearer," he "was quickly taught" that she "had some parts that were not made of plaster" (10.82). Like Perseus, he too sees her eyes "did shed such wofull teares / And that the wind did wave her golden hears" (10.82). As with Pygmalion in Marston, the ekphrastic gaze of the poem lingers on a suggestive human/mineral assemblage as the "golden" hairs might refer to color but the referent is also metallic. Like the amber colored hair of Pygmalion's statue, or that of Wall's loam, the mix of mineral sheen with human hair provokes desire. Neither Andromeda nor Angelica are, upon closer inspection, marble stone or "made of allablaster," yet the textual titillation stems

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[55] See Helen Cooper, *Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Barbara Fuchs, *Romance* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[56] All citations are to Lodovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso in English Heroical Verse, by Iohn Haringto*[*n*] (London: By Richard Field dwelling in the Black-friers by Ludgate, 1591).

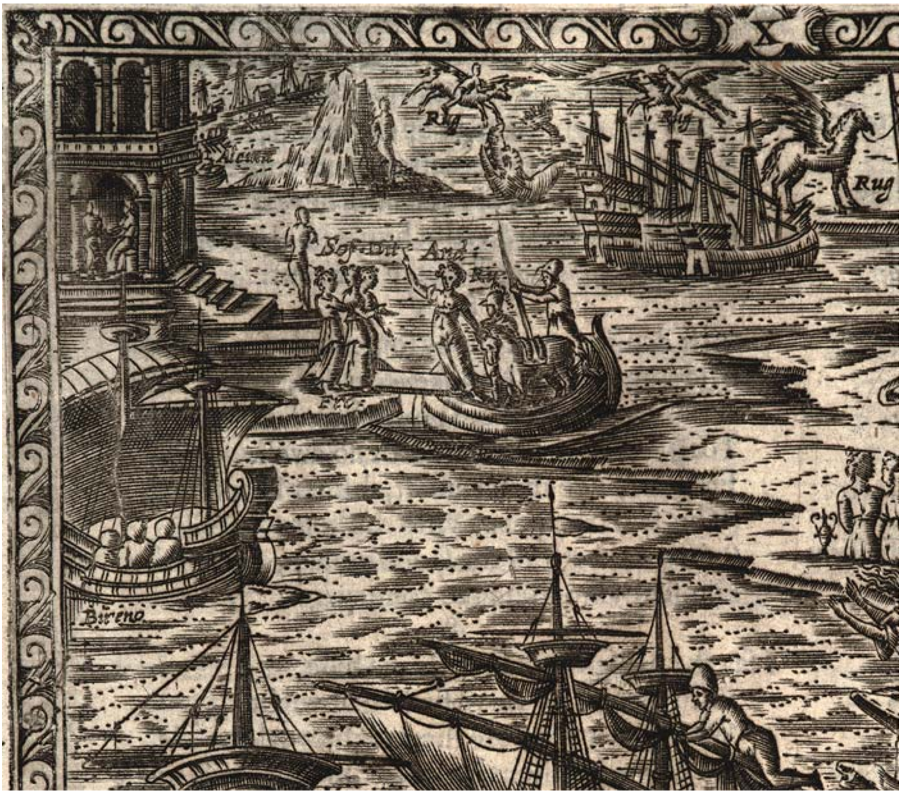

Figure 6.4 Detail from Sir John Harington's translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* ([London]: [Richard Field], [1591]), sig. G1^{v}, RB 62722.

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from the indeterminacy. As we can see from what follows, this rocky vision is foreplay.

Sir John Harington, ever mindful of his perhaps more prudish English audience, supplies a "moral" at the canto's end. He, like Cardinal Voiello's confessor, finds it simpler to parse the fantasy as one of naked human flesh. He makes no mention of the suggestive "allablaster" image but explains: "to see some *Angelicas* naked . . . will tempt men of very stanch government and stayd years to that which they shall after repent as *Rogero* did of his wantonnesse." While the normalizing gloss indicts Angelica's nakedness for provoking Rogero and readers to "wantonnesse," the story's language and imagery pique the hero's (and reader's) desire with Angelica's more-than-human allure of "allablaster." Her fleshly rocky indeterminacy spurs on masculine "wantonnesse" to a sexual end goal.

In Ovid's version as Englished by Arthur Golding, Perseus first bargains with Andromeda's parents for permission to marry her before he vanquishes the monster, rescues, and presumably beds, the maiden. Rogero, more roguish than Perseus, dispenses with parental niceties. As he flies off with his "allablaster" prize seated behind him on the hippogriff, he turns to "her in loving sort" and gives her "many a sweet and friendly kisse" until he alights in a "pleasant groue" (10.83). Here, in this "pleasant groue," the narrator informs us, "Philomela used still to sing" and Rogero succeeds a "better beast to mount" (10.83, 95, 96). The Philomela allusion promises sexual satisfaction, by force, if necessary. Ariosto, however, ever the ironic narrator, cuts off the reader's own desire for narrative satisfaction as he "abruptly" cuts "here my rime/And keep[s] my tale "for another time." The reader last spies Rogero rushing out of his metal armor as he "knits with hast two knots while one untyde" (10.97)—a conclusion which leaves the reader in little suspense as to which one knot he successfully unties. Like Pygmalion, Rogero finds his satisfaction.

Viewed by the masculine gaze from Rogero's (and the narrator's) vantage on the flying hippogriff, Angelica's fleshly form merges into the rocky outcropping behind her for a vision of lithic intimacy that excites sexual desire and male ardor. But a differently gendered perspective might be glimpsed in Angelica's second double in the image that appears just below and to the left of her. Similarly positioned into a statuesque pose, the second figure brings into focus a feminine perspective. The same canto also tells of "Olympia faire," who, jilted by her lover Bireno, finds herself abandoned on a remote, rocky isle when her beloved sails away during the night (10.32). When she awakes and finds herself left behind, and alone, she falls into a frenzied anger and grief until "at last she sitteth on the rocks alone / And seemes as sencelesse as the sencelesse stone" (10.32). Harington's rough rhyme of "alone" with "stone" isolates Olympia while the language of "sencelesse" devalues her torment. The narrator seems nonplussed by such lithic torment, and segues to another tale, remarking breezily that "And in this state I meane to let her stay" until it suits him to return (10.33).

These pinioned, petrified "allablaster" romance heroines seem hardly to be deviant examples, "erotic outliers" of interspecies intimacies. Rather they appear exemplary of a particular narrowness within which sexed embodiment, even at its seemingly most inhuman, stone, plays into gendered stereotypes. Jesse Bering catalogues agalmatophilia as deviant; yet the desire for a quasi-lithic woman within these early modern texts seemingly replicates male heterosexuality at its most banal: Petrified into passivity, the woman is subjected to a male gaze and will. As Barbara Johnson argues in her work on the French Parnassian poets of the nineteenth century, when "romancing the stone," "the fantasy of conquest looms large."[57] Rescue, but also domination, are key motivations. We can see then, how "rocky sex" and its lithic intimacies might be mobilized to replicate, and reproduce, a patriarchal model of sexual attraction and a devaluing of human female lives that fits with the animacy hierarchies of Mel Y. Chen. That it was understood to be such by early modern women writers emerges in the work of Lady Mary Wroth, who will regularly revisit stony enchantments in her two-volume *Urania* from a differently embodied perspective where stones are not a principal part.

As I argue in the next section, Wroth's depictions of mineralized women overlap with a biblical touchstone: the Old Testament story of Lot's wife who was turned into a pillar of salt during the flight from Sodom. Hermione, marmorized to and from a marblesque statue in *The Winter's Tale*, offers an analogous, dramatic, perspective. Together, their stories underscore how the entangled lithic intimacies of stone and human have gendered repercussions. Lithic intimacies are not always seductive and ultimately satisfying. They are also rife with tensions between the qualities and capacities of beings and their social and cultural relations.

Feminine Petrification: Lot's Wife, Lady Mary Wroth's "Throne of Love," and Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*

The tale of Lot's family fleeing before God's wrath visited upon Sodom and Gomorah offers a biblical touchstone for the trope of feminine petrification into a mineralized form. As mapped here, the story of Lot's wife provides the basis for two related claims about the feminine experience of being mineralized. First, her fleshly transformation results from a patriarchal punishment meant to endure as "a notable monument of Gods vengeance."[58] That is, like the stony-hearted reprobate, the lithic property is intended to punish and to devalue her for having sinned against biblical, patriarchal, commandments.

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[57] Barbara Johnson, *Persons and Things* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 119.

[58] Gloss for Genesis 19:26 in *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition.*

Like an Andromeda, Lot's nameless wife is pinioned, arrested, no longer capable of movement and left behind. But her transformative punishment does more than witness to her alleged sins; her salty marmorization exempts her from an organic death. This detail stands out for Sir Thomas Browne, who notes she becomes a "lasting and durable column, according to the nature of Salt, which admitteth no corruption."[59] She exists under the cover of the enduring figural surrogate, an inorganic life form: a pillar of salt in the Hebrew text and in later English translations such as the Geneva, but as a *statuam*, a stony statue, in Jerome's Latin Vulgate translation.[60] Second, her disobedience to the divine interdiction against looking back ties her to the charged critical legacy of the word *Sodom* with its erotic deviance from heteronormative models of "fruitful issue." The figural plasticity of Lot's wife draws attention to the female experience of petrification as one of torment and punishment, of being de-scaled and devalued, but it also speaks to a flinty resistance to and refusal of religious, cultural, and sexual norms that looms large in imaginative history.

By the early modern period, the fate of Lot's wife had accrued a body of legend. As part of the cycle of Abraham and Lot stories, Genesis 19 tells how the Lord, offended by the wickedness of the cities Sodom and Gomorrah, determined to destroy them. The nature of the wickedness that led God to annihilate the cities underlies the still charged connotations for *Sodom* as synonymous with nonreproductive, perverse "or notoriously depraved" sexuality.[61] While "sodomy" had less specific parameters in the Renaissance than it does today, it still pointed to sex practices perceived to be a "wicked" perversion of normative alliances (Genesis 19:7).[62] Because God promised Abraham to spare the righteous, he made provision for the escape of Lot (Abraham's nephew) and his family. Two angels are dispatched to the city to bring them forth. Yet, Lot and his wife leave only reluctantly, necessitating the Angels to take them "by the handes" and escort them beyond the city wall. The angels depart with a stern warning: "loke not behinde thee, nether tarie thou in all the plain; escape to the mountaine, lest thou be destroied" (Genesis 19:16–7). Lot's wife disobeys and turns her gaze backwards. Instantly, she is "turned into a piller of salt" (Genesis 19:26). The Old Testament often portrays a vengeful deity, but this punishment raised questions among biblical commentators: Why turn Lot's wife into a salt pillar? Why this fate rather than some other?

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[59] Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (London: Edward Dod, 1646), sig. Yy5^{v}. For a longer discussion of Sir Thomas Browne's attitude towards the biblical story of Lot's Wife, see Wolfe, "Gorgonick Spirits," 109–11.

[60] The *OED* lists as the earliest example of the word "statue" n.1 (*c.*1400) as a reference to Lot's wife in the alliterative poem *Cleanness* "For his make [*sc.* Lot's wife] watz myst, þat on þe mount lenged In a stonen statue þat salt savor habbes. (l. 995).

[61] "Sodom, n." *OED*.

[62] The linguistic foundations for this reading as founded in Genesis are explained in Roger A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 71–90. For its early modern connotations, see Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010). See also Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger, eds. *Queering the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

The biblical text withholds the motives that led Lot's wife to turn her head. Biblical commentators on Genesis felt obliged to justify the punishment for what appeared to be a trivial fault (although those familiar with the classical story of Orpheus and Euridice were likely not shocked by such godly vengeance).[63] The exact nature of the material transformation, moreover, in particular excited comment. The Hebrew text specifies "salt," and later Protestant commentary aligns with Calvin's interpretation. Calvin explains that this substance was "not to the name of salt to sauorinesse" a shapeless, malleable (and melt-able) mineral, but rather more like to that of a statue that preserved her features.[64] The preservative capacity of salt seems critical. The Geneva glosses that "this was a notable monument of Gods vengeance to all for them that passed that way." If Lot's wife were turned to the savory kind of salt, her altered form might remain as a monument to God's punishment, since salt acts as a preservative. Other commentators explained Lot's wife's monumentality by relying on Pliny's description of a kind of salt hard enough to build houses. Lot's wife's enduring monumentality was testified to by a legend from Josephus, who claims to have seen this "piller of salt" "for it remaineth euen vntill this day."[65] Indeed, even modern pilgrims can still be directed to a jutting rocky outcropping near the Dead Sea, alleged to be the wife of Lot.[66] The slippage between a rocky and salty pillar retains the underlying sense of the necessity of preserving the figure of Lot's wife as enduring witness to "Gods vengeance" for all who "passed" or acted as she did.

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[63] See Arnold Williams, *The Common Expositor: An Account of the Commentaries on Genesis 1527–1633* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1948). The following early modern commentators addressed this passage specifically after Calvin: Bento Pereyra, a Jesuit who taught rhetoric at Rome in his *disputationum in Genesin* (Rome, 1589); David Pareus, a prominent Calvinist theologian at Heidelberg in *In Genesin Mosis Commentarius* (Leipzig, 1598); Andrew Willet in *Andrew Hexapla in Genesis* (Cambridge, 1605); and Andraeus Rivetus, a Huguenot who taught at Leyden and an orthodox Calvinist in his *Operum Theologicorum* (Leyden, 1633).

[64] Calvin, *A Commentarie of John Calvin, Upon the First Booke of Moses Called Genesis*, sig. Dd3^{v}.

[65] Flavius, *The Famous and Memorable Workes of Iosephus*, sig. B2^{v}.

[66] As a tourist destination, one might yet currently visit the rocky outcropping, on Jordanian side of Dead Sea, known as Lot's Wife https://www.seetheholyland.net/tag/lots-wife/.

As Lowell Gallagher demonstrates, whether Lot's wife becomes a pillar (thereby losing more of her human body) or a statue (thereby retaining more human form) hinges on early difficulties with translation.[67] In Figure 6.5, an image from the Nuremberg chronicles suggests the difficulty in visualizing Lot's wife's transformation from human woman to salty pillar.

The image portrays her as simultaneously human and mineralized plinth. Her human head and face sit atop a pillar-shaped body. Her pillar-like body contrasts with her family's dynamic, flowing fabric garments and their gesturing limbs. She, or at least her body, more closely resembles the stony guard towers composing the walls of a toppling Sodom behind her than the human figures being guided to safety by an angel.

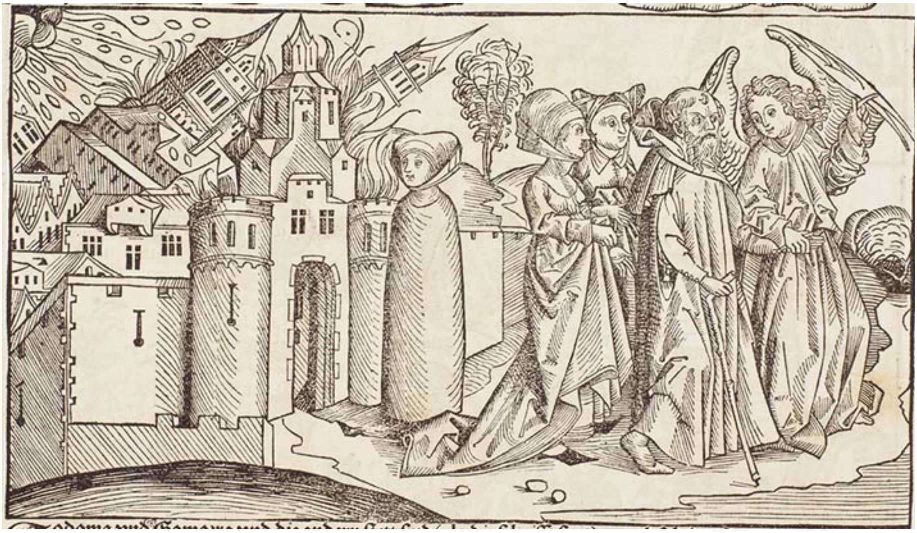

Figure 6.5 Lot's wife turning to a pillar of salt from Hartmann Schedel's *Liber chronicarum* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1493), sig. XXI^{r}, RB 95858.

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[67] Lowell Gallagher, "Remembering Lot's Wife: The Structure of Testimony in the Painted Life of Mary Ward," in *Religious Diversity and Early Modern English Texts*, eds. Arthur F. Marotti, Chanita Goodblatt, and Phebe Jensen (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2013), 77–104.

For readers in early modern England, Calvin's commentary likely held the widest influence. Calvin declaims "scoffing and peevish men" who "deride Moses" for this "Metamorphosis" that "hath no more colour, than those which Ouid feigned."[68] The turning of Lot's wife, Calvin insists, is not a "feigned" (i.e. only imaginative) transformation. Rather, Calvin proclaims that it is "the subtiltie of Satan" at work in Ovid's "trifling with fables" that "derogated indirectly, the credite from so notable an example of Gods vengeance."[69] Calvin's upshot, in plain form, discredits the Ovidean metamorphoses as being a copy, or derivative, of the biblical corpus. Calvin continues, if God creates humans from nothing then

> why it is not lawful for him to bring them unto nothing, so often as it seemeth good unto him. If this be granted, as needs it must be, why also if it please him, may he not turne them into stones? Yea, these notable Philosophers, which in derogating the power of God set forth their wit, does beholde daily no lesse miracles in the course of nature. For howe doth the christall stone growe to his hardnesse? . . . Why then is a miracle ridiculous unto them in one worke . . . and which do not thinke it likely that the body of a woman was turned into a pillar of salt, how will they believe it shall come to passe, that the resurrection, shall restore the carcase, being rotten and consumed to dust?[70]

If it pleases God to "turne them into stones," to bring them to "nothing" just as he "created men of nothing," this miraculous transformation of a woman's body turned into an enduring pillar of salt should be heeded by a believer as a proof of faith.

Why should the Lord punish (but also erect a "monument" to) a "miserable" woman for looking behind her?[71] Calvin explains that God's mercy delivered her and she did not keep his word, which is no small sin. But this was not her only deviance for "we gather by the words of Christ that she was moued with some wicked desire: and that she did not willingly leaue Sodome," which Calvin justifies from a close reading of the biblical language that records how she came "behind" her husband and "she looked backe." To these early modern commentators, Lot's wife's backwards look betrays a longing for Sodom's way of life—its "wicked desire" and sexuality. Early modern commentators put this rather decorously; Lot's wife was too much addicted to the pleasures of the world, as typified by Sodom. Her backwards gaze takes in Sodom's extinction and her turn risks the genealogical issue of Lot, her husband in favor of a different kind of libidinal curiosity.

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[68] Calvin, *A Commentarie of John Calvin, Upon the First Booke of Moses Called Genesis*, sig. Dd3^{v}.

[69] Ibid., sig. Dd3^{v}.

[70] Ibid., sig. Dd3^{v}.

[71] Ibid.

The turn of Lot's wife into a mineralized-lithic monument has dangerous repercussions for Lot's reproductive lineage. Shortly after leaving their mother's mineralized body behind in the plains, Lot's two daughters, concerned that their father will have no issue, get him drunk so that they may sleep with him. "[S]o were they and their posteritie vile and wicked," the Geneva gloss concludes because "they were borne in moste horrible incest" (Genesis 19:37). Most biblical commentators condemn Lot's wife's erotic deviancy as an act that eschews the patriarchal model of reproduction and condemns Lot's posterity to being "vile and wicked." As Patricia Parker writes, the figural and significance of the backward turn, encapsulated in the rhetorical trope hysteron proteron, is an inversion, but also often a reversal of hierarchies and teleologies.[72] Its enactment raises anxieties around reversibility of any seemingly solid position or state from gendered identities, religious identities, and, even, to human identity. It is not surprising, then, that the figural surrogate of Lot's wife continues to excite engagement, commentary, and newly imagined artistic renderings. Her preserved pillar memorializes alternate erotic desires.

Lot's wife's legacy, as Lowell Gallagher demonstrates, operates in early modern England as simultaneously negative exemplar of erotic deviance, but also as a symbol of a durable, feminine, and often recusant, resistance.[73] Her turn to salt subverts embodied gender functions, denying any "fruitful issue" for her husband, but compelling future readers to ponder her gaze and form, following her defiant look backwards as an act of refusal.[74] The figural afterlife witnesses to what was annihilated in the destruction of Sodom and establishes her as a figure whose futurity does not depend upon biological reproduction or heteronormative desire. Yet, of course, the cost of such transfiguration remains high: a legacy in lieu of a human, female life.

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[72] See Parker, "Hysteron Proteron: Or the Preposterous," in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, 133–48.

[73] Lowell Gallagher, *Sodomscapes: Hospitality in the Flesh* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 72.

[74] For the ways in which notions of sexuality that are nonreproductive have long been understood as deviant, see Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson, introduction to *Queer Ecologies*, 7. They also posit that in modern discourse "the presence of nonreproductive sexual activities is frequently read as a sign of ecological decline," which is but another twist on "degeneracy theory," 11.

Lot's wife provides a popular biblical template for the mineralized female form that links her to networks of alternate sexuality and futurity, but it also renders her mute, a resistant, but silent, witness. Up to this point, the literary examples I have traced draw from an embodied masculine and patriarchal position. I now turn to Lady Mary Wroth, who in so many instances, proves a savvy reader of masculine romance and storytelling memes. Notably, her sonnet sequence "Amphilanthus to Pamphilia" lacks a single stony reference or simile, although flaming hearts and wounded bosoms abound. The narrator's beloved Amphilanthus is often fickle but never stony. In the larger canvas of the two-volume *The Countess of Pembroke's Urania*, though, Wroth provides an echo chamber for how a woman might experience the masculine erotic fantasy of a quasi- or wholly lithic intimacy.

In the first Part of the published *Urania*, the two major enchantments that imprison principal characters are stony. The inaugural stony enchantment happens in "The House of Love," an episode singled out for representation on the frontispiece engraving (see Figure 6.6). In the narrative, the enchantment cast by the throne of love has long repercussions that permanently alter the course of the two-volume romance. Among other things, it forever sunders the titular heroine Urania from her beloved knight, Parselius. The adventure begins when a violent storm blows the company's ship off course to the "barbarous" "Iland of Ciprus" (1.46).[75] Cyprus, for the *Urania* crew as for early modern mapmakers, occupies a liminal in-between space, geographically as well as imaginatively.[76] Imaginatively, Cyprus was, in Ortelius' words, where "Fabulous antiquity did verily beleeue that the goddesse Venus . . . first came up out of the sea." "Vulgarly," he records, "it was supposed to have been dedicated to Venus, the goddess of loue" and had a reputation for "wanton" women.[77] This remote island landscape allusively resonates with

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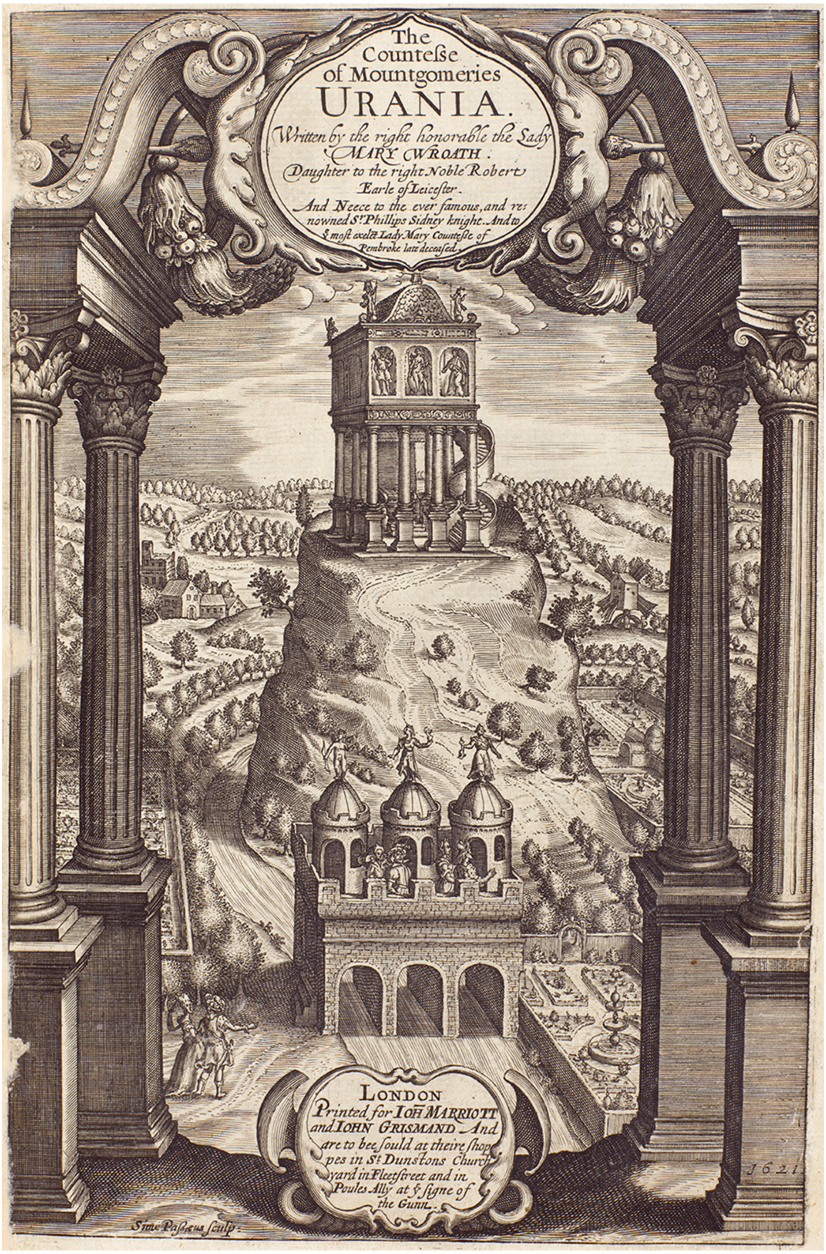
[75] All citations are to Lady Mary Wroth, *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, ed. Josephine A. Roberts (Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1995).

[76] For a brief reading of Wroth's *Urania* for its envisioning of "barbarous" islands and their correlation not only to sexual wantonness but also to racial difference, see Debapriya Sarkar, "Ecocriticism and the Geographies of Race," *The Sundial (ACMRS)*, March 30, 2021, https://medium.com/the-sundial-acmrs/ecocriticism-and-the-geographies-of-race-951611f6ca3b.

[77] Abraham Ortelius, *The Theatre of the Whole World* (London: John Norton, 1606), fol. 90.



The
Counteſſe
of Mountgomeries
URANIA.
Written by the right honorable the Lady
MARY WROATH.
Daughter to the right Noble Robert
Earle of Leiceſter.
And Neece to the ever famous, and re:
nowned S^r. Phillips Sidney knight. And to
yͤ moſt exelēt Lady Mary Counteſſe of
Pembroke late deceaſed.

LONDON
Printed for IOH̄ MARRIOTT
and IOHN GRISMAND And
are to bee ſould at theire ſhop
pes in S^t. Dunstons Church
yard in Fleetſtreet and in
Poules Ally at yͤ ſigne of
the Gunn.

1621

Sim: Paſſæus ſculp.

Figure 6.6 Detail of the title page to Mary Wroth's *The Countesse of Mountgomeries Urania*. (London: [Augustine Mathewes], [1621]), RB 60769.

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Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* where Rogero spies the bound Angelica: "with nothing but the rocks and seas in sight."

As soon as the company—that includes Urania, her shepherdess maid, Parselius, Selarina, Leandrus, Steriamus and Selarinus—reaches shore, their boat mysteriously erupts in flames, stranding them below a rocky hill. Looking up, they spy a "rare and admirable Pallace . . . set all upon Pillars of blacke Marble, the ground paved with the same" (1.47). Upon closer inspection, they realize that the "Pillars" are constituted of "the lively Image as perfectly as carving could demonstrate" of brave men and "delicate" ladies such as "had been conquer'd by loves power" (1.48). Like Lot's wife turned to a pillar by her gaze backwards to her beloved Sodom, these architectural pillars suggest a similar mineralized fate for any "conquer'd by loves power."

These "lively" pillars of those conquered by love literalize the *donna petrosa* conceit. The central pillar shows Venus carved in "white marble" who "might for rarenesse, and exquisitenesse have beene taken for the Goddesse her selfe" (1.48) To ensure the reader does not miss the Pygmalion allusion, the narrator continues with a simile. This stony marbleized Venus will induce "as strange an affection as the Image did to her maker, when he fell in love with his owne worke" (1.48). The Pygmalion echo invokes the male fantasy when the ivory-come-lithic female statue incites and, ultimately, reciprocates human masculine desire. Wroth, however, reverses our perspective of petrification.

What happens next explores the gendered stakes of a stony Pygmalion eroticism wherein the lithic incarcerates its feminine subjects. As Wroth tells it, the shipwrecked party grew thirsty and the characters unwisely drink from a nearby stream. Its enchanted waters enflame them to pursue their heart's desires. Parselius, and the company's other men, think only of adventure and dash away to the next port to sea. Meanwhile, Urania, Selarina, and Urania's maid—the three women in the company—charge through the House's pillars, believing they spy their beloved beyond. The "women for their punishment," the narrator explains, found themselves "prisoners in the throne of *Love:* which throne and punishments are daily built in all humane hearts" (1.50). The authorial commentary concludes the narrative with a not-so-subtle jab to the "punishments" inherent to "all humane hearts," but particularly the men who retain their freedom of movement.

The marmorized heroines in the *Urania's* Throne of Love are not the sexy stony-hearted Petrarchan mistress, nor the titillating alabaster-like Angelica pinioned to stone; rather, from their rocky plinth, desire punishes them by petrifying them as exemplars among Love's trophies. The silent tears of

Angelica or Andromeda and Niobe here find voice. Although the narrator never fully defines the nature of the women's enchantment, if the stony images gracing the Palace pillars are any clue, the reader is invited to imagine Urania petrified alongside the other "lively" marble statues that support the "palace of love." Like Lot's wife, petrified, left behind, all three women remain imprisoned for hundreds of pages while their men adventure and find love elsewhere. Petrification, from Wroth's female perspective, is not an incubator for desire. Instead, petrification entails a state of suspension. Neither dead nor alive, the petrified lovers in the palace of love endure in a state of perpetual, affective, immobile torment, a queer-erotic suffering, while the story continues without them. The imprisoned women will be rescued, hundreds of pages later, but by then their beloveds will have dallied with, and married, other women.

From a feminine perspective being transfigured to marble, alabaster, salt, or flint, with its concomitant loss of biological reciprocity and physical satisfaction, results in a suspended in-between state of affective torment rather than an enhanced animacy or vitality. But their intimacy with a lithic state and its concomitant queerly erotic suffering nonetheless produces a resistant form of perdurance. That such lithic perdurance, to "still remayne," might also threaten heteronormative models of reproductive "fruitful issue" appears in Shakespeare's late dramatic romance *The Winter's Tale*, which draws much of its plot from Robert Greene's earlier prose romance, *Pandosto* (1588). The play puts at point the wintry, sterile Sicily and the green festivity of a Bohemian spring in its exploration of paternity and its discontents. Its culminating spectacle flirts with Pygmalion's fantasy and agalmatophilia. Whether or not Hermione turns to stone and back again is of less interest than what the consequences might be of the imaginative act that asks the audience to believe in the transfiguration.

In Shakespeare's reworking of what Kenneth Gross calls "the dream of the moving statue," we can see the gendered repercussions inherent to a lithic transfiguration from a feminine, but also a masculine, perspective.[78] Hermione's lithic suspension, not unlike those of Wroth's feminine heroines imprisoned in the Throne of Love, sees the passing of sixteen years and the loss of her fruitful years. For Leontes, it entails the loss of paternal male issue. But Shakespeare's version eschews the threat of incest as one result of the transfiguration of a wife and mother into a stony pillar, opting instead for an alternate model of nonprocreative continuity.

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[78] For how transformational bodies, as gendered beings, allow us to interrogate how subjects come into being through matter, with the exemplary case being Hermione, see Phillippy, *Shaping Remembrance from Shakespeare to Milton*, 190–227.

Before turning to the climactic statue scene in *The Winter's Tale*, however, it is worth recounting the changes that Shakespeare makes to Robert Greene's pastoral prose romance plot in *Pandosto or the Triumph of Time* that have bearing on a reading of Hermione's transfiguration.[79] Most of the early plot details are similar with the queen Bellaria (so named in *Pandosto*) and Shakespeare's queen Hermione. Both stories have the queen imprisoned and questioned, despite the oracle's proclamation of innocence. But in Pandosto's story, Bellaria when she hers the news of her son's death, was "surcharged . . . suppressed with heavie sorrowe, her vitall spirites were so stopped, that she fell downe presently dead" (sig. C3^{r}).[80] The queen is embalmed and entombed in a "rich an famous Sepulchre" with an epitaph asks that he who condemned her be cursed (sig. C3^{v}). Queen Bellaria never emerges transfigured from her tomb. Rather, in the end, when Fawnia (the lost Perdita in Shakespeare) turns up in the Sicilian court with beloved Dorastus (disguised Prince of the Bohemian court), the King Pandosto lusts after her and is only deterred in his pursuit when a shepherd reveals her to be his lost daughter. The King seemingly rejoices that "there was an heire aparant to his Kingdome" and throws jousts and tourneys to celebrate. But, "eigteene daies" after such "princely sports" Pandosto, "calling to mind . . . how his jealousie was the cause of Beallarias death, that contrarie to the law of nature hee had lusted after his owne daughter" fell into "desperate thoughts" and a "melancholie fit" which led him to "slewe himself" (sig. G5^{r}). Pandosto's paternity via male issue is lost and the romance ends with tragic overtones.

The plot mechanics by which Shakespeare turns from a tragic to comic ending in his dramatic romance hinge on the miracle—as well as the erotics—of Hermione's transfiguration from stony entombment to fleshly human. Elsewhere, I have offered a reading of this scene as one that blurs the onto-theological boundaries between human and stone, Christian and atheist.[81] I return to the scene to offer a different perspective, one less notable for its pious and/or blasphemous investments than its erotic, petrophiliac, ones. Crediting the creation of Hermione's statue to the Italian master, Guilio Romano, foregrounds the statue's provocation to erotic play.[82] Scandalously famous for his drawings of sexual positions, Romano's name prompts the audience to be beguiled "with all greediness of affection" (5.2.95).[83] Paulina calculates that the statue's presentation will arouse wonder among all viewers, but also masculine, and specifically Leontes's, desire. It works. For upon beholding her statuesque form, it stirs him to such a passion that he bursts out "I will kiss her," despite Paulina's warning that "the ruddiness upon her lip is wet, / You'll mar it if you kiss it, stain your own / With oily painting" (5.3.79, 81–3). Like the vision of the quasi-stone Andromeda or Angelica, the statue of Hermione seemingly enflames Leontes's ardor because of its unsettling composition that appears simultaneously biologically human (Leontes swear it breathes, that "those veins / Did verily bear blood" (5.3.64))and lithic.[84] As with Pygmalion's statue, below the seemingly stone surface pumps an alluring red vitality.

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[79] For the ways that Shakespeare's version rewrites both Ovid and Greene, see Martin Mueller, "Hermione's Wrinkles, or, Ovid Transformed: An Essay on *The Winter's Tale*," *Comparative Drama* 5 (1971): 226–39.

[80] All citations are to Robert Greene, *Pandosto the Triumph of Time* (London: By Thomas Orwin for Thomas Cadman, dwelling at the signe of the Bible, neere vnto the north doore of Paules, 1588).

[81] See my earlier essay, Werth, "A Heart of Stone," 181–204.

As he gazes on her as a stone statue, he overcomes his first affective response which recoils from her "wrinkled" and "aged" appearance (5.3.27–8). Paulina remarks that the signs of age reflect "our carver's excellence / Which lets go by some sixteen years" (5.3.31–2). The scene elicits gendered responses. From the King's perspective, his cold desire requires the kindling fantasy of Pygmalion's where flesh merges with stone, erasing the biological traces of lost years. But for Hermione, being cast in stone was only so that she might be "preserved" in order to "see the issue" herself of her lost daughter (5.3.126–7). As Jennifer Munroe remarks, return to biological life has feminine consequences.[85] Hermione never addresses Leontes, and speaks only to her daughter. The verbal script gives no direction for the patriarchal fantasy of possessing the stony beloved in erotic embrace. Whether or not Hermione reciprocates Leontes's ardor remains an interpretive choice. For Hermione, the stakes are high, her fertility has passed to her daughter, her son Mamilius, who bears the name of his mother's breast, is dead, and the gap of time can never be recovered. The human body count in the play is high and the restoration ever partial. While the play shies from the incest that marks the ending of *Pandosto* or of Lot's tale, its suggested issue seems less invested in the pregnant female body than in the potential restoration offered in the miraculously preservative fantasy of a stony statue.

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[82] For the ongoing question of how Shakespeare knew of Giulio Romano, and for the reference's significance, see Tom Rutter, "Shakespeare, Serlio, and Giulio Romano," *English Literary Renaissance* 49, no. 2 (2019): 248–72.

[83] All citations of Shakespeare are to Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*.

[84] For a reading of this scene as Shakespeare reworking a Catholic-style idol into a lively embodied human onstage, see Waldron, "Of Stones and Stony Hearts," 210–16.

[85] Jennifer Munroe, "It's All About the Gillyvors: Engendering Art and Nature in *The Winter's Tale*," in *Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity*, eds. Dan Brayton, Lynne Bruckner, Greg Garrard, and Simon C. Estok (Surrey, England: Routledge, 2011), 139–54.

Perduring Lithic Intimacies

This chapter has tracked how a meme that flirts with lithic intimacy may retrench stone within the ambit of an all-too-human heteronormativity wherein petrifying lyrics contain romance heroines for violent ends. Yet the obsession for a "fruitful issue," a biological imperative might coopt this figural meme of "rocky sex" to signify beyond the confines of an embodied, binary human gender. The imaginative act projects the organs of masculine procreation, the stones, on to the material mattering of the object of desire, the beloved. It transforms a fleshly female to a stony block and in some cases a desiring male into a quasi-stone. The resulting lithic intimacy that the stony beloved then inspires complicates opposite-sex desire as the narcissus-like gaze suggests an infatuation with the masculine sex, the stones, writ large as a body. Barbara Johnson would have it that "what is desired in a beloved or self of stone is precisely the hardness, the coldness, the inanimateness, of a statue" concomitant with its rejection of a human embrace.[86] I propose that the stony, flinty marmorized lover literalizes what Aaron Kunin calls "the poetic preservation fantasy."[87] He argues that poems, although themselves not living things, preserve human life. The procreative fantasy of Shakespeare's sonnets, Kunin argues, should be understood to be a preservative fantasy. The fantasy of surviving through poetic representation is a synecdoche: A fragment of the person persists in the poetry. Building on his argument, we might read the *donna petrosa* meme as a knowing recruitment of stone for its material endurance but also for it as a masculine form of androgenesis, wherein reproduction requires no feminine womb or egg.

This suggestion may crystalize if compared to analogous artistic process in the strangely wonderful ceramics of Barnard Palissy, an early sixteenth-century French artisan.

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[86] Johnson, *Persons and Things*, 119.

[87] Ibid.; Aaron Kunin, "Shakespeare's Preservation Fantasy," *PMLA* 124, no. 1 (2009): 92–106.

Palissy would capture live creatures—lizards, toads, small snakes, ferns—and glaze them, turning them into baked stone; in effect, embalming and preserving the organic creatures by petrification (see Figure 6.7).[88] As fossils preserved, the organic creatures perdure into an afterlife. Arguably, a similar impulse underlies the poetic trope of human bodies appearing "curiously wrought" stone in the ekphrastic poetic or narrative meme. Like the fossilized lizards, the poetic glaze turns women to stone and embalms them within a book, a figural process that enacts a material preservation. The

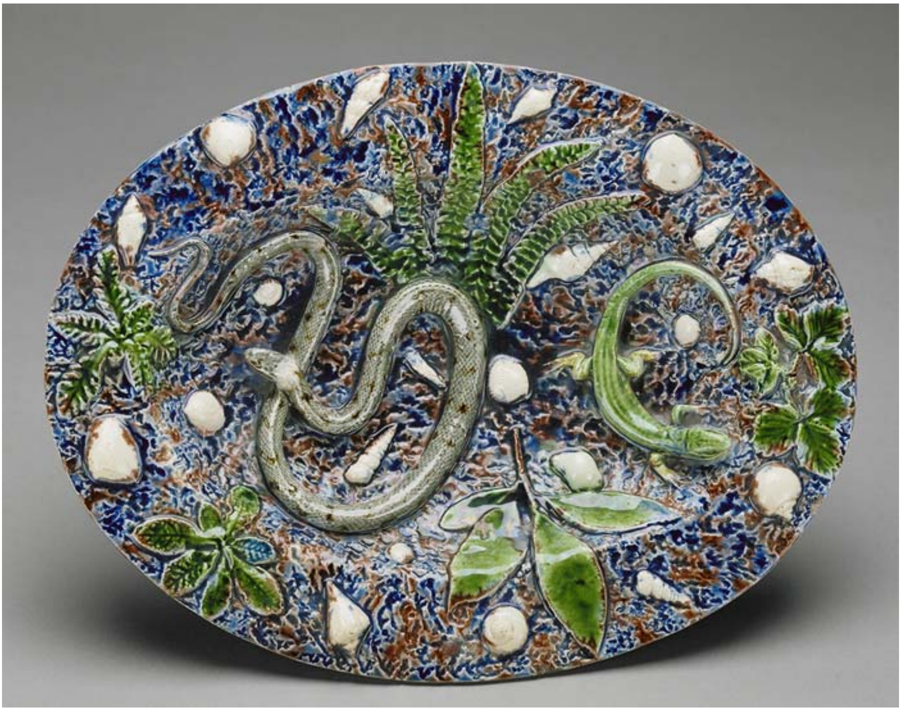

Figure 6.7 Bernard Palissy's *Oval Plate*. Mid-sixteenth-century, lead-glazed earthenware, 6.2 × 33 25.3 cm, 97.DE.46.

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Pacific Palisades, California. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

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[88] For more on Palissy's "casting life," see Hanna Rose Shell, "Casting Life, Recasting Experience: Bernard Palissy's Occupation between Maker and Nature," *Configurations* 12, no. 1 (2004):1–40.

fossilized or petrified organic forms below the artistic glaze are transfigured into an alternate material form that endures.

Yet the preservation fantasy can only partially explain the allure of "rocky sex." Another answer as to why the human–stone assemblage is so erotically compelling returns us to the Cardinal's beloved Venus of Willendorf. She, like the stony Galatea, rocky Andromeda, or Angelica, entangles stoniness with an unlooked for, unlikely, fertility. Stone, a category of matter that in the Renaissance—as now—had no obvious sexual reproductive capacities, is nonetheless deeply embedded within early modern concepts of biological human fertility and procreation. As I note in chapter 2, the popular *Mythologiae* by Natalie Conti affirms via a Greek etymology that "call people *lai*, and a stone *laos*, as this verse confirms: 'Men were born from stones and called *lai*.'"[89] As this chapter suggests, the etymology may stem from an embodied synecdoche: the stone "part"—that is, the testes—as indicative of the whole human species. Even the Latin n. "testis" singular or "testes" plural is often regarded as a special use of testis, meaning "witness" because of its bearing witness to "male virility," according to the *OED* (n.1) definition.

If we follow the philological logic wherein stony matter produces—and thus also seduces—humans, we might construe how stone acts as the literal matter that sparks a figural and poetic imitation of divine (re)creation. Stone not only preserves or perpetuates but also populates poetic as well as human life. Sir Philip Sidney describes how imaginative acts might proliferate their creations. In his *Defence of Poesy*, he details the process by which a singular, exemplary historical Cyrus might be multiplied by acts of literary androgenesis: "to bestow a Cyrus upon the world" might "make many Cyruses."[90] Such a paternal model of literary multiplication provides an alternative model of reproduction that offers a nonbiological means to satisfy the biblical injunction to "be fruitful and multiply." While this might not be what Stephen Guy-Bray describes as "Against Reproduction," it does reconfigure the mattering of sexual and literary production as entailing more-than-human intimacies.[91] Arguably, the bonds within rocky sex fantasies are queer in multiple ways as they evoke not only male–male bonds but lithic–human ones as well.[92] As Katherine Eggert argues, Sidney's vision of fiction-making associates it with an alchemical model of transfiguring metal, from brazen to golden.[93] We might extend that alchemical underpinning to one that offers a nonbiological model of proliferation that relies on the mineralized elixir of a stony transfiguration.

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[89] Conti, *Mythologiæ*, vol. 2, 769.

[90] Philip Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," in *Sir Philip Sidney: A Critical Edition of the Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 271.

[91] Stephen Guy-Bray, *Against Reproduction: Where Renaissance Poems Come From* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

Stone, then, compels human desire not simply because of its obdurate inanimateness but also because of its strangely more-than-human, latent fertility. Even Wroth's stony imprisonments might be read against the grain of petrification as a condition deprived of feeling, of inanimacy, and coldness. For within the long narrative lives of Wroth's characters, petrification results in neither death nor life—but, rather, suspension. Suspended within an affectively dynamic stasis, Wroth's women experience an "unexpressable torture" (1.49) whose affective pitch recalls Niobe's profusion of tears when turned to stone. Yet, from within that state of material suspension, narrative unfolds, multiplies. Even Hermione credits her preservation to being rendered into lithic form. As Kenneth Gross writes in his *Dream of a Living Statue*, "we can no longer dwell easily within figurations of life and death that we might once have taken for granted."[94] While I do not disavow the potential violence done to humans, especially women, in the imaginative human–lithic assemblage, or in lithic intimacy, its strange fruitfulness proves a rich vein of literary engendering.

I conclude with an image from the Edmund Spenser's 1590 *The Faerie Queene* book 3, which in its original version concludes with an evocative stony hermaphroditic emblem. Britomart, who has just destroyed Busirane's castle with its violently metamorphic Ovidian/Petrarchan eroticism, sees the woman she has rescued, Amoret, reunited in ecstasy with her lover, Scudamore. They embrace, the narrator says, "like two senceles stocks," a phrasing that heralds a turn to stone, although not to lifelessness (3.12.45).[95] Their bodies entwining, "Had ye them scene" the line concludes in provocatively modal grammar, "ye would have surely thought" you saw that "faire *Hermaphrodite*, / Which that rich *Romane* of white marble wrought, / And in his costly Bath causd to bee site" (3.12.46).[96] The Book of Chastity concludes with an imaginative grammar "had ye them scene," of a fecund figure who glimmers with mineral potency and lively reciprocity. The next line reinforces the erotic mineralized fecundity with an ambiguous midline noun, "Bath." "Bath" may be read as proper or common, to refer to a "site" or a process. If read without its capital, it alludes to a strand of alchemical thought that referenced the "bath" as the procedure that catalyzed matter's convergence: male and female, gold and silver, human and mineral. Within philosophical alchemy, the hermaphroditic fusion heralded the ultimate alchemical goal, the philosopher's stone—the metamorphic agent of transformation and proliferation.

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[92] For a description of how the sonnet tradition in England treats male to male bonds as of even greater importance than male-female ones, see Stephen Guy-Bray, "Petrarch, Wyatt, and Surrey: Sonnets, Teleology, and Sexuality," *Textual Practice* 33, no. 3 (2019): 297–309.

[93] Eggert, *Disknowledge*, 207–9.

[94] Gross, *The Dream of the Moving Statue*, 107.

[95] All citations are to Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*.

[96] For a reading of this image's mineral quality that enhances its nonfigurative object status as one that gives it the power to immobilize its viewers and thus delay their quest, see Jane Grogan,

Spenser's rhetorically dense, mineralized, marbleized hermaphroditic emblem fuses with "sweet countervayle" a human sexual biology to a poetic one via a human–lithic eroticism and an interspecies lithic intimacy. Its provocation lies in its confusion "as growne together quite" of male and female, but also of human and stone so that, the final stanza reads, "Each other of loves bitter fruit" do despoil. As an imaginative trope, "rocky sex" does not simply result in a static, inanimate, dull inhumanness; rather it catalyzes lively, even ecstatic, sensation. But it is also "no earthly thing they felt" (3.12.45). Like Britomart, or Cardinal Voiello, we may find ourselves "much empassiond" in our "sprite" by the latent promise of lithic sexuality that veers into uncharted couplings. But readers familiar with Spenser with know this is not the end; Spenser overwrites this ending for reasons never satisfactorily explained by critics. Perhaps "rocky sex" with its potential fusion of human and stone threatens embodied sexual difference and, thus, undermines human exceptionalism. Even now it may be too difficult, to radical a dream, so that "fate n'ould let her yet possesse."

While this chapter has explored lithic intimacies as a troubled, but powerful, dream of the continuation of the human species—rooted in biological anatomy but yearning for perduring nonbiological futurities—the next book section takes a cue from Lot's wife and turns to the preservative capacities of the lithic.

"Style, Objects, and Heroic Values in Early Modern Epic," *SEL Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 57, no. 1 (2017): 23–44 at 35–37.

PART III.

LITHIC CONTINUUM

Petrologic Ontologies

In the first two parts of this book, I consider how the lithic imagination encompasses human life. Whether in stories of creation and founding myths, in concerns about bodily calcification and encrustation, among hopes for salvific healing, or in erotic, procreative, and preservative intimacies, stone supplies much of the mattering of human desire. Inextricably bound up with narratives of the human self, stone also figures (perhaps more familiarly) in the experience of loss, mourning, and commemoration. This final, third section turns to a consideration of how stone speaks across common geographies that would delimit lively human life from inert non- or afterlife. The lithic imaginary subtends broad conceptual—and pragmatic—attempts to overcome distinctions between forms of existence. In this role, it often plays the part of a transitional, geographic gateway within a hybrid geography that enfolds categories of living and nonliving.

The potentiality of stone—its plasticity—and its remarkable durability make it an ideal medium for thinking through transitions through time and across realms of existence. In his theoretical account of the Aristotelian problematic, Eugene Thacker describes how "any concept of life must be transcendent to life in order to account for its ephemeral nature and its propensity for change."[1] In stone, these competing conceptions of life—the ephemeral and the transcendent—collide. "Whether its invitation is to contemplate thousands or millions of years, eternity or infinity," Jeffrey Jerome Cohen writes, "stone vexes human history, admixing the transient and the perdurable."[2] Cohen reminds us of the ability for stone to remember, but also, to vex human history. Stone not only serves the past and its memory, however, it also facilitates a contemplation of "eternity" and future temporalities. In this capacity, stone offers a material example of how literary texts too facilitate glimpses into future moments. J. K. Barret has taught us how language-level operations enable "literary production to imagine, and render legible, futures predicated on their uncertain potential."[3] This section builds on her linguistic insights to propose that the lithic plays a critical role in the literary imagination of last things with its "untimely persistence" that projects the human beyond death into a future eternity. As Mel Y. Chen might have it, the "animacies" of stone blur a division between the living and the dead and thus also between temporalities—and forms—of existence. Yet while stone might blur the partitions between the living and the dead, it often enshrines other divisions and social hierarchies into the afterlife.

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[1] Thacker, *After Life*, 11.

[2] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 79.

In its entangling of hierarchies of life into death, stone also engages the conflicting religious perspectives of a classical, Ovidian paganism and a particularly English Reformed godly understanding of the afterlife. It makes manifest the tension between an ongoing biological, metamorphic concept of life as change, growth, and decay and a concept that extends these attributes across a vast temporality, even into eternity. Stone's transience, its metamorphic potential, highlights change, a process epitomized in various pagan mythologies and Ovidian stories. Its perdurability, its long-lasting potentiality, its literal range beyond or above physical human experience—these traits make stone transcendent and thus a favored element in the Christian eschatological imaginary. The concept of human continuance after death is, Peter Marshall demonstrates, a "hallmark of Christian belief."[4] Stone is thus troublingly, stubbornly syncretic across the long Reformation.

The literal and conceptual geography of the English afterlife is strewn with stones.[5] Gravestones, sepulchers, tombs, stone effigies, epitaphs carved into stone, and lithic sonnets capture human traces from this world for the next. Although a heavenly city, the longed-for New Jerusalem prophesied in Revelation is described as glittering with living stone. To elucidate this stony geography across post-Reformation culture, I engage the metaphorical, metaphysical, and physical realms. Central to this concluding section is a concern for how stone's polyvocality sustains seemingly opposite strains of human desire for eternity.

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[3] J. K. Barret, *Untold Futures: Time and Literary Culture in Renaissance England* (Cornell, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 4.

[4] Peter Marshall, "'The Map of God's World': Geographies of the Afterlife in Tudor and Early Stuart England," in *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 110–30 at 10.

[5] In addition to Peter Marshall for the fundamental changes in conceptions of geographies of the afterlife as a result of changing doctrines of purgatory, and for the developments of a "conceptual geography of salvation," see David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 396.

Despite the ubiquity of various motivating fantasies about stony afterlives, early modern literature bequeaths to us a narrative wherein stone appears merely instrumental and indifferent: "grave-stones" are but "cold consolations unto Students of perpetuity," as Sir Thomas Browne phrases it.[6] Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in the critical tradition of Shakespeare's sonnet 55, whose claim "Not marble nor the gilded monuments / . . . shall outlive this pow'rful rhyme" echoes a classical trope from Ovid and Horace onward.[7] The use made of stone in these arenas of perpetuity has, traditionally, been one of human mastery. Stone is quarried, shaped, carved, inscribed, or invoked, but ultimately it is superseded by lively human ingenuity or rhetorical force.

Yet stone—as matter, as metaphor, for conceptualizing human afterlife—has a greater range of nuance, within a broader spectrum, of early modern thought than the poet's words might wish us to believe. While there is no disputing the longevity of verse as part of what Aaron Kunin refers to as a "preservation fantasy,"[8] the guiding question for my final section is this: Why is stone so integral to the figuration of human endurance beyond biological life? To cite ecocritic Ursula Heise, human interactions with elements of the natural world often raise a series of conceptual tensions that reveal human longing to "overcome the limitations of biological form."[9] "A kind of being that humans have always aspired to" Heise explains "where temporality and space are no longer issues of existential concern."[10] Lithic nature possesses the capacity to exceed human temporal spans. We might glimpse this "kind of being that humans have always aspired to" if we turn from the literary to a concurrent discourse within religious and occult tradition that throws into relief figurations of what I call, after Nigel Llewellyn's "monumental bodies," the *monumental human*. Llewellyn coined this expression to describe how monuments were objects "designed to mark permanently the site of a funeral"; the monumental bodies were "always signs of life" with a cultural and political impact.[11] I adapt the phrase to articulate the material and metaphorical conjunction where stone and human vanish into one another to sustain an impression, whether with a gravestone, a sepulcher, or a sonnet.

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[6] Sir Thomas Browne, *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 150–1.

[7] All citations to the sonnets are from William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Stephen Booth (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977). John Archer summarizes this critical sentiment when he writes of this sonnet at providing a "ringing endorsement of verse as something better than the gilded monuments of princes," despite the ironies the verse evokes. See *Technically Alive*, 101–2.

[8] Kunin, "Shakespeare's Preservation Fantasy," 92–106.

[9] Ursula Heise, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 19. The context for Heise is a discussion of the interactions within science fiction and its presentation of human fascination with the forest.

[10] Ibid.

The expression *monumental human* suggests the chiastic relationship of stone to human in the afterlife. Stone is not only the "cold" (as Sir Thomas Browne would have it) instrument but also the medium, the continuum, between realms of being. Its conceptual antipathy to humanness (its coldness, its relative durability) provides the basis for its role in establishing authority and longevity. Yet as I have been arguing throughout this book, stone is not simply inhuman; it is also constituent within figural matter whose untimeliness complicates posthuman futures. As with the origin myths of humankind that I discuss in chapter 2, stony matter undergirds this final liminal stage of human passage. Stony matter persists despite its alleged supersession by spiritual forms of the afterlife. Stone thus plays a key role in imaginative and actual physical death; its role in the early modern afterlife demands closer inspection.

The final three chapters in Part III, "Lithic Continuum," focus on the paradox of lively entombment, sepulchral verse, and on the strangely stony afterlife in heaven. Chapter 7 reads the Ovidian myths of Echo and Narcissus for their separate figurations of the desire for life after death. It traces the competing but interrelated figurations of Echo and Narcissus through a few iconic tombs in early modern English culture: the startling effigy of John Donne in St. Paul's Cathedral; the biblical story of Christ's sepulcher refracted through the religious devotional lyric; and finally, the Renaissance romance reanimation of Merlin's voice following his stony entombment. Chapter 8 opens with the claim of *Scripta manent* only to double back to the insistent lithic imaginary that inserts itself into a textual corpora. It offers a reading of the enduring influence of the Mosaic tablets and their alchemical counterpart in the so-called emerald tablet that imbue engraved stones with the virtue of temporal futurity and transfiguration. It then reads this cultural habitus in chiastic relationship to the Orphic claim of poets to transcend monuments of marble in two iconic lyrics, Shakespeare's Sonnet 55 and Milton's "On Shakespeare." It concludes that claims of verbal supersession over stone creates a paradox that renders the verse itself as a sepulchral vault with reverberatory echoes of life. Finally, chapter 9, recounting the revived godly fascination with the New Jerusalem, turns the reader's gaze upward beyond the grave to the afterlife in the heavenly city.

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[11] See Nigel Llewellyn, "Monuments to the Dead, for the Living," in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture, c.1540–1660*, eds. Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), 218–40.

For readers in the Anthropocene, there is a broader irony to the human desire to be writ in stone. On a planetary scale, humankind has succeeded in enshrining its presence into the geological record of earth's history. One hypothetical starting date for human inscription into the fossil record takes us back to 1610.[12] Returning to that point, we might find a material, physical manifestation of the lithic imagination traced in this book.

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[12] For evidence around dating the Anthropocene, see introduction, n.19.

7

Hewing the Human

The Ovidian story of Echo and Narcissus offers two contrasting lithic templates that play out across funerary monuments in post-Reformation England. The classical myth of Echo and Narcissus fascinated poets in the Renaissance and literary critics have traced their presence and effects as poets sought to grapple with their own identity.[1] Jacques Derrida's gloss on this tale demonstrates that Echo and Narcissus might figure two modes of self-relations, and I suggest here that they might also represent two human–lithic relations that gesture to the human experience of loss and mourning as well as the desire for eternity.[2] Narcissus, attempting to trace his own image, ultimately has to do so through the "resonance of Echo."[3] To find where the lithic enters this set of relations, I turn first to a recall of the figure of Echo.

In book 3 of *Metamorphoses*, Ovid tells of the nymph Echo's unrequited love for the beautiful youth Narcissus, who is fated to love none other than himself. Unfortunately for Echo, she has been cursed by Juno and can only speak by repeating the final words or syllables of others. Finding herself rejected by Narcissus, with whom she can only communicate in mirrored snippets, Echo fades into the woods to live alone "in dennes and hollow Caues" (3.492).[4] Yet her love continues and "dayly" she "raues" until, from "restlesse carke and care," her body "waxeth wonderous bare" and "nought is left but voyce and bones." Finally, "the voyce" only "still remaynes," and "hir bones they say were turnde to stones" (3.492, 494, 496–7). Echo is never

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[1] For a critical conspectus of the pervasive influence of the myth of Echo, and the contentious gendering in the creation of a lyric self in pastoral poetry, see Aurélie Griffin, "Echo, Pastoral Tradition and the Lyric Self in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* and Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*," *Sidney Journal* 39, no. 2 (2021): 61–85. See also Ross Lerner, "'Doubly Resounded': Narcissus and Echo in Petrarch, Donne, and Wroth," *Modern Philology* 118, no. 2 (2020): 159–80.

[2] I am grateful to Mike Ziser for prompting me to consider how Jacques Derrida returns to this Ovidian tale in numerous later texts and interviews. Fragments of these may be found in Jacques Derrida, "Rogues: Two Essays on Reason," eds. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005); "By Force of Mourning," in *The Work of Mourning*, eds. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2001), 142–64.

[3] Derrida, "By Force of Mourning," 164.

[4] All citations of Ovid's work are to *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation, 1567*.

The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton. Tiffany Jo Werth, Oxford University Press. © Tiffany Jo Werth (2024).
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seen again, but her voice is nonetheless "heard of euery man" as she repeats the laments of Narcissus (3.499).

The ubiquity of Echo, as story and as figure, operates across multiple modes of early modern discourse, including the poetic, aesthetic, and moral.[5] Echo's imitative and modulatory functions for the human voice and language are staged in well-known iterations across the early modern literary corpus, but critics have paid less attention to her material figuration in their pursuit of the audible, sonic traces she returns or the place she inhabits.[6] Cursed by Juno, the reverberatory effects of Echo's voice become heard by "every man," but only after we learn that "hir bones . . . were turnde to stones." It is only here, at the end of the story, when her bones have become stones that her echoing voice becomes audible. In Ovid's sixteenth-century translator, Golding, Echo's bodily metamorphosis pivots the narration out of past tense ("turnde to stones") to a continuous present ("Yet is she heard of every man"). Echo's lithic transformation into stone is seldom remarked. But in contrast to Spenser's "degendered" stony humans that I discussed in chapter 2, here the turn to stone facilitates a reverberatory voice capable of projection into the future. By portraying Echo's voice as correlative with stone, her metamorphosis creates a lithic echo chamber. The narrative thus identifies her with the otherwise silent medium of stone. The human–lithic assemblage, in turn, facilitates the iteration and extension of human vocalization. Echo's organic body may be dissolved, but through a lithic transfiguration, she continues to be heard and recognized. An alternate stony identity allows for the exercise of poetic voice.

Echo's story solicits its hearers to extend the boundaries of what constitutes human life. Its call-and-response invites those who hear it to think beyond and outside the embodied human, to consider what Jami Weinstein and Claire Colebrook refer to as "posthumous life."[7] Weinstein and Colebrook's conception of "posthumous life" critiques assumptions about the range of capacities the constitute humanistic “life.” The normative boundaries of humanistic life are often understood, they argue, to include metabolic and perceptive functions limited to an organic biology. Echo’s continued, even amplified, existence—despite her loss of bodily autonomy—renders her an apt figure for human desire that endures beyond a fleshly death. Her endurance proposes alternate eternities, ways to survive and to preserve memory. Within early modern literature, Echo’s story points the way to a complex nexus that figures the lithic as a critical collaborator in the afterlife.

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[5] The literature on the malleability and permanence of Echo in Western culture is extensive, but seminal accounts include John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); and Anne-Emmanuelle Berger, "The Latest Word from Echo," *New Literary History* 27, no. 4 (1996): 620–37. Studies of Echo effects often include those related to the sonic, see in particular Susan L. Anderson, *Echo and Meaning on Early Modern English Stages*, Palgrave Studies in Music and Literature (New York: Palgrave, 2018).

[6] The materiality of sound and voice that she represents, for example, as well as her links to concepts of gender construction, have been analyzed in Gina Bloom, *Voice in Motion: Staging Gender, Shaping Sound in Early Modern England*, Material Texts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

[7] Weinstein and Colebrook, *Posthumous Life.*

Yet her echoes are not without anxiety. From one perspective, Echo’s replies are always only imitative. The embodied female nymph recedes into silence.[8] She only emerges when called, a seemingly collaborative gesture that may be mocking as well as iterative. The figure vanishes into the figurative and representational. But, if we follow Derrida, her story also invites a form of appropriation and intentionality that allows her to continue to speak and declare herself.[9] My revision is to show that Echo, not Narcissus (or men in general), is co-constitutive—and not merely passive respondent—in such collaborative utterances. From the angle this chapter pursues, Echo’s stony continuance, her perdurance, collaborates in the creation of future meaning. Her stony reverberation makes audible how the lithic might be more than merely a memorial marker, a representational trace of vanished organic life. Rather than diminishing in value as she turns to stone, her stoniness affords her access to new forms of vitality and animacy. The lithic refracts living energies and channels them into future patterns of organic utterance.

Echo outlasts bodily decay and dissolution. She thus illustrates one way that human desire can transcend biological life. By following the traces of Echo from stone back into voice, readers of her story experience the alienating alterity of stone but also its comforting reification of their own desires for transcendence. Hers is an ongoing iterative metamorphosis with each new voice she returns. In the recitation of epitaphs and the creation of poetic monuments, for instance, it is possible to hear the refraction of one's voice spoken by future generations. The resulting meaning draws from a collaborative assemblage of human, stone, and voice. It is a manifestation, Aurélie Griffin argues, of *echolalia*, the dialogic engagement of words pronounced by the self—or another.[10]

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[8] For the gendered complications inherent to Echo’s representation, see by way of example, Susan L. Wiseman, “What Echo Says: Echo in Seventeenth-Century Women’s Poetry: Wroth, Behn,” in *Renaissance Configurations: Voices, Bodies, Space, 1580–1690*, ed. Gordon McMullan (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 212–33; Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke, *This Double Voice: Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*, Early Modern Literature in History (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000).

[9] While the literature that reads Derrida’s gloss on Echo’s myth is large, an argument for how her iteration is also an appropriation can be found in Pleshette DeArmitt, “Resonances of Echo: A Derridean Allegory,” *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 42, no. 2 (2009): 89–100.

In contrast to the dialogic, collaborative *echolalia* of Echo's posthumous life, Narcissus's fate provides an alternative masculine fantasy whereby the self is preserved through the creation of a mirrored self, hewn in elemental material. In the classical accounts, Narcissus longs for his reflection writ in a pool of water. This impulse to capture one's own likeness in an elemental form finds parallel in the changing memorial traditions of late sixteenth-century England. Through a reading of John Donne's effigy in St. Paul's Cathedral, this chapter will demonstrate how the desire of living humans to create lifelike stony effigies literalizes the masculine fantasy of petrification discussed in chapter 6 as a synecdochic preservative.

This Narcissistic impulse to harness the preservative, extensive capacity of stone in effigy emerges at an unlikely historical moment. For while an effigy might inspire devotion and spark memory for the deceased body, in iconoclastic Reformed Christian belief, it might also provoke idolatry and be indicative of too much love of the self and the fleshly body. As the Narcissus story illustrates, the desire to find oneself in a different elemental medium can be fatal. By gazing upon a mirrored, stony self, one encounters an almost unrecognizable alterity in what should be familiar. The resultant reflective figure induces fascination, adoration, and harbors the suggestion of posthumous life, a continuum of existence via the lithic medium that refuses to abandon the material form for an immaterial afterlife.

My exploration into how humans across the crisis of England's long Reformation sought to hew their existence into a lithic posthumous life begins with the stony matter through which they paved the way into a future imaginary. Narcissus's desire to love himself through and across time informs poetic discourse. But, perhaps less familiar is the story for how that desire also finds expression in the counterintuitive proliferation of monumental tombs and effigies—also known as church monuments. After considering how church monuments might literalize Narcissistic desire for a human continuum into the afterlife, I next turn to how Echo's story offers an alternative posthumous fantasy, but one nonetheless reliant upon stone. I trace the Echo effect in the reverberating voices that arise from two iconic sepulchers—that of Christ and that of Merlin. The desire to find life after death in stony chambers shows a surprisingly syncretic resonance between a classical, pagan story and that of the Christian savior. These stony places of the dead set the stage for this chapter's central contention that stone subtends stories of the monumental human as a life-that-was and a life-that-will-be, representative of what Jonathan Gil Harris calls an "untimely persistence."[11]

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[10] See Griffin, "Echo, Pastoral Tradition and the Lyric Self," 62–3. Griffin notes that the term draws from the fields of psychiatry and linguistics and credits her study of the term to Véronique Gély-Ghedira, "Echolalies: Dialogues Ou Monologues?," *L'Esprit créateur* 38, no. 4 (1998): 52–63.

The Narcissus Effect: A "Calleton of Whi Marbell," John Donne's Effigy and the Monumental Human

The narrator of George Herbert's poem "Church-monuments" (1633) meditates on an encounter between a penitent human and the crumbling "Ieat, and Marble" monuments "put for signes" to the dead found inside the church (ln. 12).[12] The biblical meditation confronts the dissolution of the fleshly human to "this heap of dust," the "elements" of "his birth" (lns. 3, 8). Although the ostensible gaze of the "soul" who "repairs to her devotion" (ln. 1) might be traditionally understood to look to the heavens, the poem instead turns its gaze on the church monuments. The stony church monuments initially appear as strangers with whom the "flesh" might "take acquaintance" (lns. 2–3). But as critics agree, the poem's syntax also invites a recognition of the self.[13] The seeming object, the "other," of contemplation, the stony monument, is also a study of the self. In such a Narcissistic moment of recognition, the dust and base "element" of the stone and marble subtends lively human and church monument alike.

In recognition of such similitude, the poem dissolves the boundary between the penitent human reader and the monuments. For "Deare flesh" encounters "here," in the poem and in the stony church monument, its "stemme," or origin, and its end, or "true descent" (lns. 17–18). Simultaneously genealogical origin and omega, the marble and jeat monuments encompass the human biological process of gendering and degendering. Herbert's twenty-four-line poem highlights how a stony human monument serves as a geographic locator meant to "Mark" the measure, the relatively brief hour-glass or twenty-four lines, of human time (ln. 22). Although stony marble and jeat too might "be crumbled into dust," their comparative longevity renders them as a geographic gateway that bridges the abyss inherent to binary categories of life, death, earth, and heaven. Scaled to the individual human, the church monuments recall the soaring Dome of St. Peter's cathedral and its inspiration to eternity even as it admonishes and vexes such human desire by recalling their bodily decay (ln. 22).

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[11] Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare*.

[12] All citations are to Herbert, *The English Poems of George Herbert*.

[13] Two such notable examples include Barbara Leah Harman, *Costly Monuments: Representations of the Self in George Herbert's Poetry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 114; Stanley Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 166.

The presence of church monuments within Herbert's *Temple* thus replicates their ever present status within English cathedrals and churches where they held a conflicted status within seventeenth-century devotional practice. The poem's syntax of "bow," "kneel," and "fall down flat" as well as the invocation of those who "kiss" those "heaps" (i.e. church monuments) (lns. 14–15) recalls the debate as to whether such monuments were capable of "inspiring devotion" or "provocative idolatry."[14] As Joshua Scodel details, by changing relationships between the living and the dead, Protestantism "contributed to both the popularity of tombs and the conflicts surrounding them."[15] On the one hand, church monuments might provide a substitute for chantries as an acceptable commemoration of the dead. But at the same time, much Protestant thought was wary of grand tombs. Caught up in the theological debates over images, church monuments risked either being attacked by iconoclasts or, conversely, ignored and left to decay in monastic churches.[16] Their simultaneous durability and fragility prompt John Weever in his 1631 *Ancient funerall monuments* to lament the "barbarous" state of monuments within England for being "broken downe, and vtterly almost all ruinated, their brazen Inscriptions erazed, torne away, and pilfered, by which inhumane, deformidable act, the honourable memory of many veruous and noble persons deceased, is extinguished . . . the true course of their inheritance is thereby partly interrupted."[17] Weever notes that some may object to his condemnation of "Religious Persons that from their primitiue zealous ardour of piety, . . . in their dissolution of the Abbeyes" did much to erase the memories of the funeral monuments, a critique that constitutes a direct accusation against Protestant practice.[18] And, indeed, Weever's accounts detail how successive waves of Protestant reform with their periodic bursts of iconoclastic fervor dealt a blow to the preservation of stone monuments. As these records indicate, the potential idolatrous effect of church monuments, which might inspire a Narcissus-like devotional gaze and thus encourage popery, makes them charged monuments with which to think and meditate as does the narrator of Herbert's poem.

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[14] Scott Newstok, *Quoting Death in Early Modern England: The Poetics of Epitaphs Beyond the Tomb* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 16.

[15] Joshua Scodel, *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and Conflict from Jonson to Wordsworth* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 15–50 at 21. See also Ramie Targoff, *Posthumous Love: Eros and the Afterlife in Renaissance England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 29–45.

[16] Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2008), 97–127; Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Yet such iconoclastic tension, ironically, coincided with a changing funerary practice that catered to the fashion for increasingly life-like, personalized effigies. The long Reformation's "almost total demolition of the primary institutions that had been dedicated to perpetuating the dead" resulted in a counterintuitive effect.[19] Among those who might afford it, there was a marked proliferation to commission grand, personalized tomb effigies. Such a trend serves to highlight how a lithic intimacy with and to stone's animacy might perpetrate the bodies of the elite into the afterlife thus ensuring access to those with the means. Keith Thomas documents how in moving away from more generic imagery, funeral monuments became increasingly individualized, and more truly Narcissistic.[20] This trend, and the stonemasons and craftsmen who were hired to execute such designs, too grew out of the effects of the Reformational hammer. As Douglas Knoop and G.P. Jones detail in their study of stonemasons, the sixteenth century was a "calamitous" time for such craftsmanship.[21] The dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII had long reaching effects beyond those lamented by John Weever. The dissolution of the abbeys also heralded a period in England that saw almost no important churches being built and an abundance of dressed and undressed stone rendered available, diminishing the need for stonecutters and quarry demand.[22] As a result, the church, once the largest employer of stonemasons, was replaced by the nobility and gentry, whose increasing connection to commerce gave them the means to erect elaborate manor halls and to commission expensive funerary monuments, often enriched with urns and statuary.[23] Enterprising stonemasons turned their craft towards the lucrative growing market in personalized tomb effigies, rife as they were with symbolic complexity. What had once commemorated the institution of the church, in other words, now commemorated the individual wealthy enough to afford access to stone and its masons.

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[17] Weever, *Ancient Funeral Monuments within the United Monarchie of Great Britaine, Ireland, and the Ilands Adjacent* (London: Thomas Harper, 1631), The Avthor to the Reader.

[18] Ibid., sig. A2^r.

[19] Newstok, *Quoting Death in Early Modern England*, 16.

[20] Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 249–50.

[21] Douglas Knoop and G. P. Jones, *The Medieval Mason: An Economic History of English Stone Building in the Later Middle Ages and the Early Modern Times* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1933); *The Sixteenth Century Mason* (London: The Quatuor Coronati Lodge No.2076, 1937).

One significant innovation to tomb effigies that came into fashion during the late sixteenth-century entailed a turn from the medieval habit for commissioning an effigy type, such as a knight or lady, in preference for a recognizable likeness of the effigy to the person it commemorates.[24] Such commissions reflect rank and degree as John Weever notes that the "meaner Gentrie" are interred with a flat gravestone while "Gentlemen had their effigies or representation, cut or carved" so that it "did beare a true resemblance."[25] In a later chapter that asks why the habit became common for many to make their own monuments during their lifetimes, Weever writes that they do so in order to ensure they have a place to put their tomb, but also "partly to please themselves, in the beholding of their dead countenance in marble" and "most especially because thereby they thought to preserve their memories from oblivion."[26] These two impulses—the Narcissistic pleasure in seeing one's face in stone and the desire to transcend a human time scale—come vividly to life in the extraordinary monument of John Donne hewn by the aptly named Nicholas Stone, one of the foremost master masons of the seventeenth-century.

In 1631, Nicholas Stone records in his account book that "I mad a tomb for Doctor Done and sett it up in St Palles London for the which I was payed by Doctor Montford."[27] According to historical accounts, Nicholas Stone did his best work on effigies, of which nearly forty-one life-size ones yet remain. Of these, most are lying on their back, with hands folded, and made of alabaster or veined white marble.[28] Elsewhere in his account book, Stone refers to the blocks of marble that were to be hewn into effigies as the "calleton [skeleton] of whi marbell" that were to be fashioned into a "tombe."[29] This reference to the blocks of unhewn marble as "skeletons," typically the bony framework constituent to an animal or creaturely organism, correlates bone to stone as a material substrate. In Donne's effigy, the marble "calleton" literally stands in for Donne's bones. Donne himself would have been buried, not cremated, and the effigy does not enclose his actual remains. As Izaak Walton records, and contemporary Collections Department staff at St. Paul's confirm, the grave with Donne's actual bones is unmarked, somewhere in the Cathedral crypt.[30]

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[22] *The Medieval Mason*, 187–8.

[23] Douglas Knoop and G. P. Jones, *The London Mason in the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Manchester University Press, 1935), 4.

[24] On the growing interest in portraits and life-likeness on monuments, see Eric Mercer, *English Art, 1553–1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 238–41; Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper 1977), 225–6; Brian Kemp, *English Church Monuments* (London: B. T. Batford, 1980), 15–22; Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 102–10; Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England*, 41–70.

[25] Weever, *Ancient Funeral Monuments within the United Monarchie of Great Britaine, Ireland, and the Ilands Adjacent*, sig. B5^{v}.

[26] Ibid., sig. C3^{v}.

[27] Nicholas Stone, *The Note-Book and Account Book of Nicholas Stone*, ed. Walter Lewis Spiers, The Walpole Society 7 (Oxford: The Walpole Society, 1919), 63.

As Roze Hentschell reminds us in her study of St. Paul's Cathedral, the space of the cathedral used for worship by the living was—and remains—conspicuously "a space surrounded by the dead."[31] Throughout the cathedral interior were hundreds of "tombs, monuments, brass grave markers, tablets on walls, and other forms of remembrance for the dead."[32] Church interiors, writes Patricia Phillippy, were "dynamic sites of interaction" that were rife with "acts of memory" as the very stones spoke to and through the eyes and tongues of the human worshippers and visitors.[33] As surrogate for the entombed body, the effigy of Donne commemorates a conceptual meditation on transitory states: between bones and stones, between descent and ascent, between human body and the afterlife. It is a motif that runs through one of his later, and most famous, sermons, "Deaths Duell"; Donne's portrait on the printed frontispiece became the model of his epitaph. In the sermon, Donne describes the relation of life and death as one of movement, a series of exits and entrances: "this *exitus a morte*, is but *introitus in mortem*."[34] The dissolution of one form of life on earth enters into the next one of eternal life. Matthias Bauer and Angelika Zirker describe how the idea of life in the grave "preoccupied Donne's imagination."[35]

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[28] Ibid., 14–16.

[29] Ibid., 111.

[30] Izaak Walton, *The Life of John Donne, Dr. In Divinity and Late Dean of Saint Pauls Church* (London 1658), sigs. B6^{v}–C. For confirmation of this fact by St. Paul's Cathedral Collections Department, see Theresa M. DiPasquale, "Ways of Reading Donne's St. Paul's Epitaph: Close, Comparative, Contextu[R]Al, Concrete," *Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate* 27 (2018): 175n.7.

[31] Roze Hentschell, *St Paul's Cathedral Precinct in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 54–5. For the proximity in the cathedral of the dead to the living, see also Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500–1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). As well as Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England*, 294.

[32] Hentschell, *St Paul's Cathedral Precinct in Early Modern Literature and Culture*, 55.

[33] Phillippy, *Shaping Remembrance from Shakespeare to Milton*, 8.

Donne's obsession with forms of bodily resurrection, therefore, is well marked, but less has been noted about how the lithic figures in his desires for an afterlife.[36] Joshua Calhoun demonstrates that Donne takes a "mixed media" approach and memorializes himself in multiple "sheets": the engraved frontispiece on the paper of *Death's Duel* and the sheets of paper presents as *Poems* (1633), the cloth winding sheet around his corpse, and the sheet of white marble on the effigy in St. Paul's.[37] I'd like to shift focus from the organic elements of Calhoun's media ecologies. For underlying the multiple rhetorical and textual ecologies of these commemorative gestures is an ecology of stone.

To imagine the afterlife, Donne thinks with—and looks to—the lithic. As Ann Hurley argues, Donne's poetic sensibility was deeply engaged with the larger canvas of early modern visual culture, including painting and sculpture.[38] To see this lithic multimedia impulse at work, I turn to John Donne's monument that endures still in St. Paul's Cathedral having outlasted multiple catastrophes, including the upheavals of the English Civil War, the Great Fire of London in 1666, and World War II.[39] Its improbable endurance makes it the only surviving monument from before the great fire at St. Paul's. The effigy might joint two states and even two worlds together, a place where in the afterlife of Christian geography, Philip Sheldrake asserts “contrasting worlds might meet.”[40] The monumental human figure, although fixed in stone, poses as a geographic threshold, rife with a dynamic interanimation.

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[34] John Donne, *The Sermons of John Donne*, eds. Evelyn Simpson and George R. Potter, vol. 10 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 228–48, 33.

[35] Matthias Bauer and Angelika Zirker, "Sites of Death as Sites of Interaction in Donne and Shakespeare," in *Shakespeare and Donne: Generic Hybrids and the Cultural Imaginary*, eds. Judith H. Anderson and Jennifer C. Vaught (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 17–37 at 18.

[36] The point is underscored by Ramie Targoff, *John Donne, Body and Soul* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

[37] Joshua Calhoun, *The Nature of the Page: Poetry, Papermaking, and the Ecology of Texts in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 143–50.

[38] Ann Hurley, *John Donne's Poetry and Early Modern Visual Culture* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2005).

[39] "Explore the Cathedral: South Quite Aisle," St. Paul's Cathedral: https://www.stpauls.co.uk/visits/visits/explore-the-cathedral. Despite the monument's presence in St. Paul's Cathedral, the modern viewer must keep in mind that the position of the statue has changed from its original place in the choir aisle to the south wall. The epitaph above it is a nineteenth-century facsimile. For more on the facsimile of the inscription, see Richard S. Peterson, "New Evidence on Donne's Monument: I," *John Donne Journal* 20 (2001): 1–51. For the effect of the spatial and inscriptural dislocations, see DiPasquale, "Ways of Reading Donne's St. Paul's Epitaph," 167–9.

As Nigel Foxell observes, an odd tension exists between the account that Sir Izaak Walton gives of Donne’s commissioning of a painting that then later became the model for the monument and its execution in stone. In his early biography of the poet, Walton recounts how Donne, ill since the previous autumn, was persuaded by Dr. Fox “to have a Monument made for him.”[41] This being resolved, Donne summoned a carver to make a wood figure of an urn and a board cut to his height. He then summoned a painter and went into his study with “his winding-sheet in his hand” and put “his sheet” on him, and tied it “with knots at his head and feet” then stood on the Urn with his eyes shut to show his “lean, pale, and death-like face, which was purposely turned toward the East, from whence he expected the second coming of our Saviour.”[42] Once the painting was finished, Donne set the image near his bedside for nightly meditation. According to Walton, upon Donne’s death, the painting was given to Donne’s friend and executor, Dr. King, who then had “him to be thus carved in one entire piece of white Marble.”[43] Although the painting has since been lost, the half-length portrait that Droeshout engraved as a frontispiece for the published edition of “Death’s Duel” is likely copied from it (see Figure 7.1).

Droeshout’s frontispiece engraving of Donne in his death shroud differs in striking—and notable—details from the stony effigy at St. Paul’s. The engraving illustrates the head knot that Walton describes and the shroud drapes in long descending folds from the erect posture of the dying man. The head knot wilts slightly with the weight of gravity and the face below it shows the forehead creases, sunken eyes, hollow cheeks, and suffering of a sick man. The picture accords with Walton’s description of a “lean, pale, and death-like face.”

The marble effigy presents the viewer with something stranger. On multiple points, it contradicts seventeenth-century funerary practice and its aesthetics depart remarkably from Nicholas Stone’s other monuments. As a funeral monument, it ignores the convention that portrays the body of the deceased in the costly, worldly splendor their station affords. It eschews the

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[40] Philip Sheldrake, *Places for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 48.

[41] Walton, *The Life of John Donne, Dr. In Divinity and Late Dean of Saint Pauls Church*, 111.

[42] Ibid., 112.

[43] Ibid., 113.

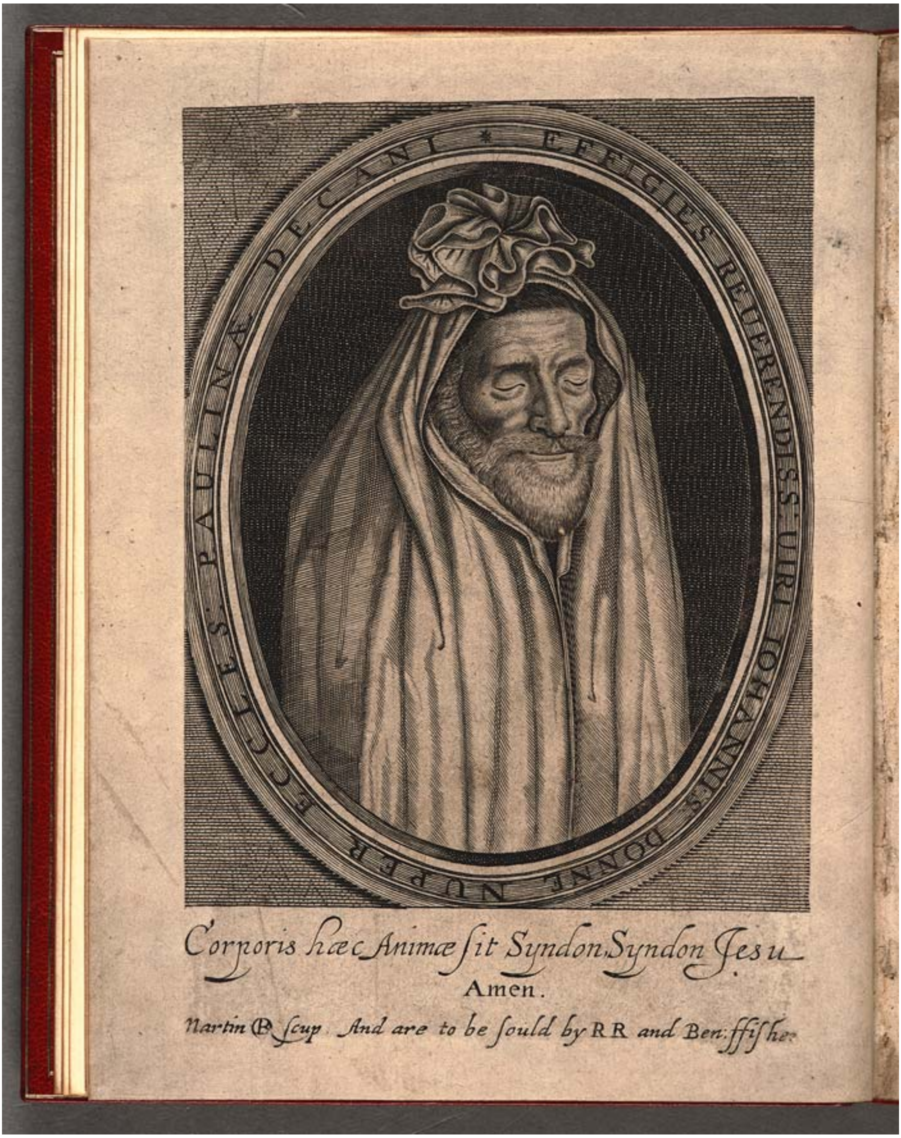
EFFIGIES REUERENDISS. UIRI IOHANNIS DONNE NUPER ECCLES. PAULINÆ DECANI *
Corporis hæc Animæ ſit Syndon, Syndon Jesu
Amen.
Martin D ſcup And are to be ſould by RR and Ben: ffiſher

Figure 7.1 Portrait of John Donne engraved by Martin Droeshout. In John Donne's *Deaths Duell* [. . .] (London: B. Alsop and T. Fawcet, [1633]), RB 60135.

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sense of degree so often displayed in monuments after death.[44] But neither is it a grim skeletal *momento mori.* As Kathleen Cohen points out in her study of *transi* tombs, typically the transitory state between life and death was mirrored in a double representation of dead person figures: the upper portrayed the person in life, typically clothed in the garments of their social station, while the lower might portray putrefaction or the decaying body in a shroud.[45] These contrasting images might heighten distinctions between the bodily decay of the corpse and the commemoration of the individual (see Figure 7.2). Donne, by contrast, appears as in life, but wearing the material of the dead, his shroud.

The shroud itself defies organic physics. As Nigel Foxell puts the case, although ostensibly executed from the painting, the folds of the shroud defy gravity and do not hang towards the feet, as they do in the Droeshout frontispiece to *Deaths Duell.* Various editors and biographers posit that although the statue itself is erect it appears that the drapery is that of a recumbent model, which would have been standard for an effigy.[46] Foxell interprets Stone's recumbent drapery as deliberate for "the chief aid to our recognizing that the shroud is a shroud" is to "sculpt the figure as if it were recumbent, even though standing; thus we will recognize it as a man in a shroud, and not mistake it for a man who has been tied in a sack."[47] Stone's drapery denies any descent into the grave for the "absence of downward pull facilitates our seeing it as rising as well as descending."[48] To underscore this visual paradox, Foxell also notes that the knots described by Walton as at the head and feet remain surprisingly uncrushed so that the one "that must have been pressed by his feet" looks like a "starched ruff." Notably too the shroud's top knot stands stiffly erect almost like a crown. Finally, in keeping with the counter-intuitive drapery folds, the marble face lacks the wan, care-lined appearance of the engraving. It is instead smooth, fully fleshed, and reconstituted as in a peaceful sleep. Even the beard appears fuller and almost jaunty, with a nearly upturned mustache. Foxell is led to conclude that the "monument represents not only death but the resurrection of the body."[49]

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[44] Typically, post-Reformation monuments sustained a fantasy of a "sense of degree after death," *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England*, 298.

[45] Kathleen Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

[46] The drapery contradictions are summarized with relish by Nigel Foxell, *A Sermon in Stone: John Donne and His Monument in St. Paul's Cathedral* (London: Menard Press, 1978), 4–6. Foxell cites the editor Sir Edmund Gosse and his *The Life and Letters of John Donne* and the biographer R. C. Bald's *John Donne: A Life.*

[47] Ibid., 5.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., 7.

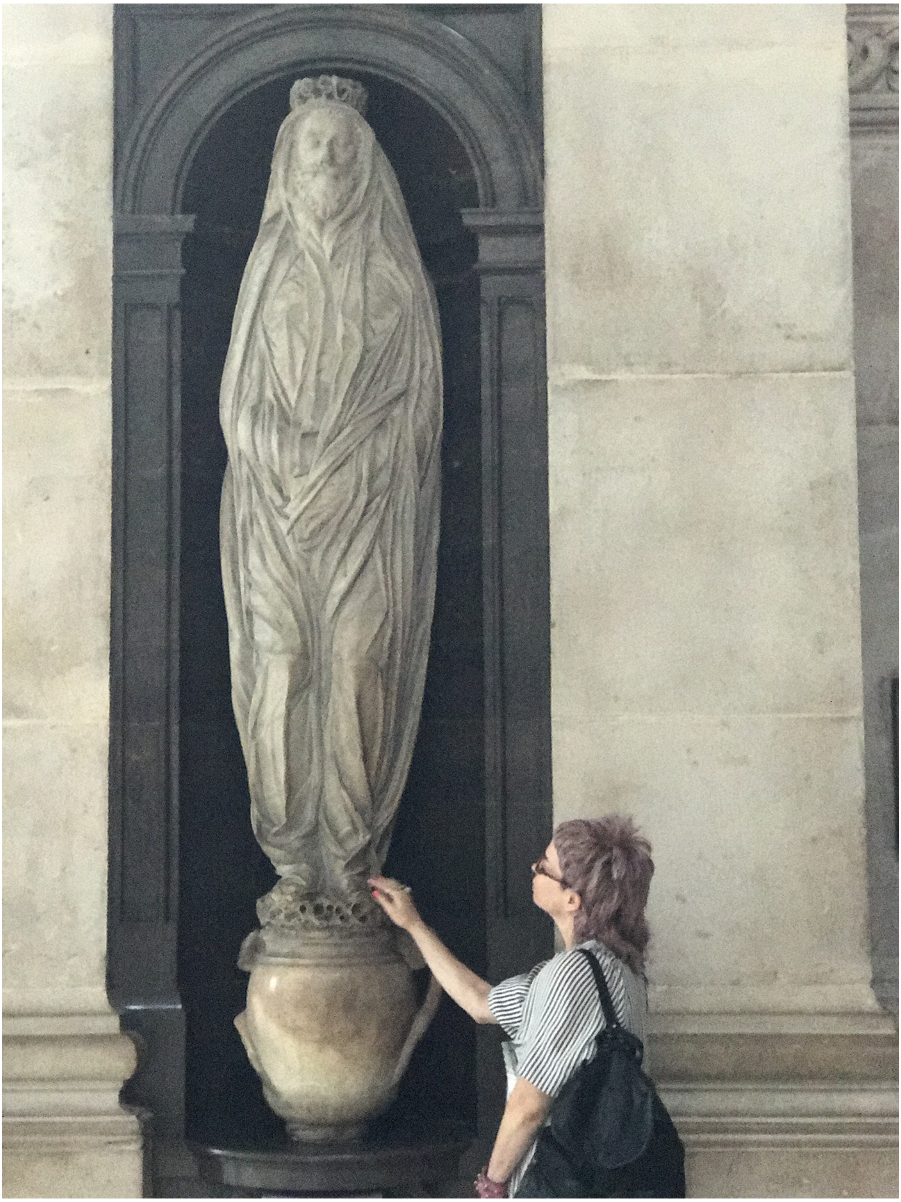

Figure 7.2 Donne's effigy in St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

Photograph by the author.

That effigy's resistance to a descent into the grave aligns with interpretations of the epitaph carved in stone above the monument: *HIC LICET IN OCCIDO CINERE ASPICIT EVM CVIVS NOMEN EST ORIENS* which might be translated as "Here, though in western dust, he looks towards Him whose name is East" or as "Here, though in descending dust, he looks towards Him whose name is Ascent."[50] Moreover, the marble retains memory of the bones it transforms as despite the flowing folds of the shroud, the skeletal outline of elbows and knees protrude. The epitaphic lines combined with the visual effect of the effigy's "calleton" underscore the sense that though Donne's body may be dead, he is still—in potential—alive. As Carolyn Walker Bynum writes in regards to Ovidian metamorphoses "something perdures."[51]

Even as Donne becomes stone, something of his essential human identity remains and is carried across into future viewings. As a physical medium, it represents a site of tension between ephemerality and eternity. Theresa DiPasquale argues that Donne is drawn to epitaphs as a genre because they mediate between poles of "fixity and fluidity."[52] The epitaph claims, Rachel Eisendrath argues, to "overcome the space of referentiality by collapsing the distinction between word and thing."[53] The effigy's stony medium adds further credence to the epitaphic sentiment of Donne as caught in a moment of transitory, transcorporeality. His effigy exudes the uncanny qualities of animation that Kenneth Gross describes exist via statues in spaces that speak to emptiness and death all the while invoking "signs of life."[54]

When Donne posed for the painter, he deliberately put on his shroud or sheet which in turn transforms into the "sheet of marble." For Donne, his sheet or shroud held resonance with belief in the afterlife as one where the believer might join with Jesus Christ. The effigy's overall ovular shape invites its viewers to recall the poetic commonplace that rhymes "womb" with "tomb," an associate link that Donne himself invokes throughout his sermon *Deaths Duell*.[55] In *Deaths Duell*, the surrounding folds of the winding sheet are likened to the umbilical cord in the womb. As Donne writes, "wee haue a winding sheete in our Mothers wombe, which growes with vs from our conception, and we come into this world, would up in that *winding sheet*, for we seek a graue."[56] From tomb to womb, the resonant winding sheet, now enfolding the marble revenant, symbolizes not only the umbilical cord in the womb, but also the transfigurative shroud of Christ. This point is driven home in the *Epigraph to the Portrait of Donne in his Shroud, prefixed to Death's Duel*: "*Corporis haec animae sit syndon, syndon Jesu. Amen*." Helen Gardner provides this translation: "May this shroud of the body be (i.e. typify) the shroud of the soul: the shroud of Jesus."[57] In typical Donnean compression, the lines transfigure the body in its shroud to that of the body clothed by the righteousness of Christ Jesus, and thus made one with the divine.

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[50] Ibid., 6–7. The translations are proffered by Foxell but the translation of this epitaph, as well as its complicated textual variants, continues to excite critical commentary. See, for instance, DiPasquale, "Ways of Reading Donne's St. Paul's Epitaph," 171–2; Anita Gilman Sherman, *Skepticism and Memory in Shakespeare and Donne* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 153–68; Scodel, *The English Poetic Epitaph*, 113–29.

[51] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Zone Books, 2001), 32–3.

[52] DiPasquale, "Ways of Reading Donne's St. Paul's Epitaph," 167–89. A similar sentiment of epitaphs as "monumental writing" can be found in Helen J. Swift, *Representing the Dead: Epitaph Fictions in Late-Medieval France* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2016).

[53] Rachel Eisendrath, "Object Lessons: Reification and English Renaissance Epitaphic," in *The Insistence of Art: Philosophy and Aesthetics after Early*, ed. Paul Kottman (New York: Fordham, 2017), 55–76 at 63.

[54] Gross, *The Dream of the Moving Statue*, 1–14.

In an earlier sermon, Donne preaches that at the Second Coming, "my flesh shall be assimilated to the flesh of my Savior, and made the same flesh with Him too."[58] Donne's understanding of the Christian afterlife follows a tradition of biblical exegesis wherein Christ is understood to be the chief cornerstone. Typologically forecast in Psalms, the promised messiah (that is, for Christians, Christ) is referred to as "the stone, which the buylders refused, is the head of the corner" (118:22). Both the gospels of Matthew and Mark recall this phrase wherein Jesus asks "Red ye neuer in the Scriptures, The stone which the buylders refused, the same is made the head of the corner?" (Matthew 21:42).[59] The "*exitus mortis*" or our issue in death, shall be "*introitus in vitam*" an entrance into eternity, or everlasting life in heaven. To be cast in a sheet of marble marks the transfiguration to where the resurrected body in Christ, the cornerstone, is of the same material as the terrestrial stone marble. Here, HIC, the common deictic marker of epitaphs and tombs, is the entry into the eternal on earth and the language of the afterlife hewn in stone.[60] Like Herbert's "Church-monuments," descent and ascent converge in stone.

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[55] I'm thankful to Jessica Hanselman Gray for reminding me of this essay that discusses the pervasive use of this rhyme in seventeenth-century poetry. See G. A. E. Parfitt, "Renaissance Wombs, Renaissance Tombs," *Culture, Theory, and Critique* 15, no. 1 (1971): 22–33.

[56] John Donne, *Deaths Duell, or, a Consolation to the Soule, against the Dying Life, and Living Death of the Body Deliuered in a Sermon at White-Hall* (London: Printed by B. Alsop, and T. Fawcet, for Beniamin Fisher, and are to be sold at the signe of the Talbot in Aldersgate-street, 1633), sig. B4^{r}.

[57] John Donne, *John Donne: The Divine Poems*, ed. Helen Gardner (Clarendon: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[58] Simpson, *The Sermons of John Donne* III.3.802–3.

[59] See also Mark 12:10.

Later in his *Life of John Donne*, Izaak Walton records that the monument to Donne in St. Paul's was "as lively a representation . . . as Marble can express; a Statue indeed so like Dr. Donne, that (as his friend Sir Henry Wotton hath expressed himself) it seems to breath faintly, and Posterity shall look upon it as a kind of artificiall Miracle."[61] The revenant, lively marble which records Donne's likeness affords a Narcissus-like gaze at the elemental, earthly self, but also affords a glimpse into the heavenly life, and posterity, wherein penitent human joins with the "cornerstone" that is Jesus Christ in Christian theology. Walton ends the *Life*, by referring to Donne's body as a "Temple of the Holy Ghost," a simultaneous reference to the corporeal body as a temple in the Pauline sense, but also one that invokes its edifying function.[62] The body of the faithful might literally become a part of the stony edifice that makes up the church. The material structure complements the image of the godly human as church monument. Donne himself will offer a near paraphrase of sentiments in Herbert's "Church-monuments" when he employs the image in his 1633 poem "The Holy Ghost:" "O Holy Ghost, whose temple I / Am, but of mudde walls, and condensed dust," where ". . . Sacrifice, Priest, Altar be the same."[63] To see oneself in the condensed elemental dust of stone might facilitate the vision of a resurrected self now in unity with the cornerstone.

Donne's predilection for polarity and affinity crystalizes in the stony effigy, whose lifelikeness simultaneously prompts reflection on death and life, ephemerality and eternity. Later early twentieth-century editions of Walton's *Lives* include an intriguing anecdote about how later an "unknown" friend of Donne wrote an epitaph "with a cole on the wall, over his grave" that expresses the sentiment that Donne's body may be here "below" but "the grave" cannot "his Soul comprize."[64] The writing in "cole" on the wall emphasizes the ephemeral quality of what Jessica Martin describes as a "mortal message which promises immortality beyond the body's death" but its inscription only underscores its fleeting nature because the anecdote, and the inscription, only survive in Walton's printed volume.[65] Yet the material, the medium, of inscription—the fossilized matter of "cole" as well the stone wall itself—reflect the human turn to stone to enshrine memory of the self.

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[60] For a study as to how the deictic also engages the physical, material realm, see Heather Dubrow, *Deixis in the Early Modern English Lyric: Unsettling Spatial Anchors Like "Here," "This," "Come"* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[61] Walton, *The Life of John Donne, Dr. In Divinity and Late Dean of Saint Pauls Church*, sig. F10^{v}.

[62] The Pauline reference refers to 1 Corinthians 3:16, ibid., 122, sig. F11^{v}. For a discussion of "Godly Protoypes" that might assign real buildings to deceased figures for the consecrated glory of God, see Jessica Martin, *Walton's Lives: Conformist Commemorations and the Rise of Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 66–163.

[63] John Donne, *Poems, by J.D. With elegies on the authors death* (London, Printed by M[iles] F[lesher] for Iohn Marriot, and are to be sold at his shop in St Dunstans Church-yard in Fleetstreet, 1633), sig. Z3^{r}.

In a prelude to his own death and stony effigy, John Donne wrote an epitaph for his dead wife, Anne. On "a letell tombe in a wall," and carved by Nicholas Stone into the chancel in St. Clement Danes chapel, Anne's epithet was recorded in print by John Stow's 1633 *Survey of London*.[66] The parenthetical lines (Quod hoc saxum farj iussit / Ipse, prae dolore Infans), as John Donne's biographer, John Stubbs, translates them read "At this the widower himself, infant with grief, / Commanded that this stone speak."[67] The Latin original "*infans*" might translate as literally without voice, but it also might refer to an elemental phase of human existence prior to speech, suggesting that in his grief, Donne subsumes his voice to that of an elemental, original state: stone. This sentiment echoes elsewhere in Donne. As various editors note, the lines of Anne's epitaph also recall Donne's "Epitaph on Himself" to the Countess of Bedford, that reflects how "when we are speechless grown" we "make stones speak."[68]

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[64] This anecdote is missing from the 1670 and 1675 editions (1670 Wing W671 and 1675 Wing W672) but can be found in later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century editions such as Charles Hill Dick, ed., *The Lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert, and Dr. Robert Sanderson: By Izaak Walton* (London: Walter Scott, Ltd, 1927), 50.

[65] Martin, *Walton's Lives*, 98.

[66] John Stow, *The Survey of London* (London: Printed by Elizabeth Purslovv, and are to be sold by Nicholas Bourne, at his shop at the south entrance of the Royall Exchange, 1633), sig. Ffff5^r. In a haunting reading on biodeterioration and "the poetry of loss," Joshua Calhoun reflects on the irony that while the poem is linked "rhetorically and ecologically with stone," it only exists in manuscript copies as transcribed on paper. See *The Nature of the Page*, 145–50.

[67] See John Stubbs, *John Donne: The Reformed Soul; A Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008), 318. An alternative translation, more frequently cited, reads "(at which he himself, speechless when confronted with the sorrow, commanded this stone tablet to speak)" lacks the critical stress on the Latin *Infans*, see John Donne, *The Epithalamions, Anniversaries, and Epicedes*, ed. W. Milgate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 78, 215.

[68] See John Donne, *The Epithalamions, Anniversaries, and Epicedes*, 215, 18; Donne, *The Complete Poetry of John Donne*, ed. John T. Shawcross (New York: New York University Press 1968), 233; II.8, 21. For a discussion of Donne's "iconoclastic novelty" in his epitaphs, see Scodel, *The English Poetic Epitaph*, 113–39.

Although, as Herbert's "Church-monuments" acknowledges, the stone too crumbles into dust, it nonetheless "measures all our time" (lns. 20,22); or, as Donne put it, "when we are speechless grown . . . we make stones speak." The deep time resources of stone make it an attractive geological media within which to mirror—and carry across—traces of the human figure. Donne's stone effigy stands: still yet bursting with vitality, silent yet speaking. Its commanding endurance invokes inhuman animacies, calling its human viewers to recall their dissolution all the while articulating their desire for commemoration into the afterlife.

As what Tobias Menely and Jesse Oak Taylor term "anthropocene readers," we may not share the eschatological vision of the Anglican divine, but we may hear an echo in John Donne's desire to be monumentalized in a "lively representation" in a "sheet of marble."[69] Our own epoch is one where humans' influence on earth can be read in the strata, literally reading our shaping influence on the planet in the rocky record of geological time. We do so at a moment when we also face the threat of species extinction, a reminder of an end not just of an individual but of a kind. Yet, even those fossil remains of human activity inscribed in the geological strata will likely be challenging to decipher. As Jan Zalasiewicz muses in *The Earth After Us*, how might future stratigraphers understand our traces in stone?[70] Just as Derrida describes the Narcissus encounter of the self, seeing oneself in another medium is both familiar and alien. In its reflection of the human, the lithic record captures a self-reflexive moment of recognition and utter alterity and strangeness.

Echoing into Eternity: The Sepulchers of Christ and Merlin

The Narcissistic impulse to see and transfix oneself in stone provides a partial explanation for the rising popularity of personalized funerary monuments, effigies, and epitaphs that mark passage between realms of existence, from this world to the Christian afterlife. The post-Reformation fantasy of becoming a part of the edifice that is the cornerstone—church and Christ—provides yet a further spiritual imperative to erect a posthumous life in stone. The powerful hold of the lithic imagination across death in these figurations persists despite the radical changes to beliefs about the afterlife. But the desire to transcorporate oneself via church monuments tells only one part of the story about the desire to communicate with, even haunt, later generations. If the Narcissus effect reifies the individual human into a monumental afterlife, Echo's fate exemplifies a more collaborative, sonic, transcorporeal afterlife among the tombs and sepulchers of the dead.

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[69] See *Anthropocene Reading.*

[70] J. A. Zalasiewicz, *The Earth After Us: What Legacy Will Humans Leave in the Rocks?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 118.

Tombs and sepulchers, mostly cut or carved in stone, are geographic spaces that span worlds, the portals or gateways from one form of existence to another. The tomb could be conceptualized as a visual space to mark the body of the departed, an impulse at work in the Narcissus-like gaze of many church monuments. But, as Donne writes, tombs might also speak. Their sonic resonance signifies in Echo's story. Not only visually commemorative sites, tombs also held a further cultural function as collaborative spaces where sound as well as sight carried on an embodied legacy. While Donne's effigy speaks to a Christian eschatological belief, the desire to find echoes of life in the stony tombs of the dead is stubbornly syncretic across the English Renaissance. Arthurian legends also trafficked with stone tombs as sites for bodily transfiguration. The Echo effect figures in two iconic tombs within English culture: that of Merlin, the medieval, wizardly progenitor of Arthurian legend and architect of stone, and that of Jesus Christ, the foundational cornerstone.[71] Both figures—and their tombs—engender new and surprisingly unorthodox narratives in the wake of religious change regarding the state of the dead.

The biblical story of Christ's tomb becomes the locus for meditation on the transitional, reverberatory nature of the grave for George Herbert, whose imagination is so often sedimented in stony forms. The gospel accounts of Christ's burial in—and subsequent resurrection from—the sepulcher of Joseph of Arimathaea, "hewen out of a rocke" (Mark 15:46) exemplifies how tombs were more than spaces of bodily decay and marmoreal memorials; they were dynamic places of bodily transfiguration.[72] Matthew's gospel recounts how, after the crucifixion, the two Mary's came "to se the sepulcher." As the two women near the sepulcher, the ground under them trembles, and an angel descends to roll back the stone seal. The "kepers," soldiers meant to guard the tomb, are "astonied, and became as dead men"; but, the women hear a voice saying to them, "He [Jesus] is not here, for he is risen" (Matthew 28:1–6). In these gospel accounts, Christ's sepulcher transforms from a site of obdurate stasis, a "here," to one of dynamic transition: Living guards are "astonied" and "as dead men" while Christ, who was dead, lives. The angel's words (as translated in the Geneva Bible) reverse what Scott Newstok refers to as a "graue forme," the *locus mortis* conceit whose "locative 'here' entails the core claims of most epitaphs and their tombs."[73] What startles the women and subsequent readers is not that "he is here" but that "He is *not* here." One can almost imagine the echo of "here" ringing throughout the stone tomb no longer possessed of a bodily corpse. The deictic insistence of the angel's "here" invokes bodily presence to underscore its absence for "he is risen." Christ enters the stony sepulcher as a crucified corpse and emerges out of it altered in form, the spiritual "rock" (1 Corinthians 10:4). As we saw with John Donne, who meditates in his own epigraph prefixed to *Deaths Duell*, the shroud and site of death transforms into a testimony to the afterlife.

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[71] For Merlin's legend within medieval culture, see Cohen, *Stone*, 119; Zalasiewicz, *The Earth After Us*, 26.

[72] All biblical citations are to *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition.*

This transfigurative biblical account underlies later poetic returns to the rocky sepulcher of Christ. In "Sepulchre" George Herbert draws on the rich strata of biblical passages concerning stone. Herbert tries to reckon between passages that condemn the spiritually dead "stony heart" of the Israelite tribes in passages such as Ezekiel 36:26 and those that point to the salvific "rock" which (or who?) is "Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4). The polarity of reference demonstrates the metamorphic, rather than stable, capacity of stone. But the poem's lithic reverberatory effects have receded from critical views that instead strive to distinguish between human and divine agency.[74] By focusing on the binary of human versus divine realms, these interpretative speculations miss the relational force of the material medium cementing the halves. Such anthropo- or theo- centric readings overlook the critical analogical turn that erodes its seeming binary: Human nature and divinity intermingle vis-à-vis stone.

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[73] Newstok, *Quoting Death in Early Modern England*, 34.

[74] Critically compelling arguments that treat "Sepulchre" as a face-off between an obdurate stony-hearted sinner and the superiority of God's love are made by Stanley Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), 170–3. Richard Strier, *Love Known: Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry*, 15, disagrees to contend that the distinction between the "old dispensation and the new, stone and heart" is less clearly articulated here than elsewhere in Herbert. But Strier does not go as far as Jonathan Gil Harris to insist on "matter's legibility" as a palimpsest within *The Temple*, see Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare*, 35.

The poem's lithic penumbra radiates from a literal geographic place, a sepulcher hewn from rock for Joseph of Arimathaea, not far from Jerusalem, to reverberate in later geographically far-flung generations of stony hearts who reject Christ, who is the "pure rock" (ln. 10). The poem's "pure rock" is indistinguishably the divine Christ and the stony sepulcher.[75] In a surprisingly ductile associative network, the poem attributes a radical polarity to stoniness: it can be "cold hard," a means "of murder" to "brain" and "arraigne" the savior; but it can also be a "pure," "quiet" host, ordered, capable of communicating "old" law, and thus critical to salvation (lines 1, 12, 13–14, 15–16, 21). Stone's resonance as "old" matter, the law "writ in stone" and simultaneously as incarnate Christ "which thou art" as written in the human heart muddles a supersession of spirit and flesh over stone. Instead, the stony sepulcher is instrumental in human and divine intermingling.

As Jonathan Gil Harris reads Herbert, the polytemporality inherent in *The Temple* also refuses a simple religious supersession of Christian belief over Jewish sources.[76] This stubborn polytemporality adds a charge to Herbert's view of materiality for, as Gil Harris argues, "it equally materializes the past in the future" and while this may appear to permit a "fantasy of dematerialization" it instead "unleashes the specter of material reinscription."[77] Rather, the "heav'nly art" "writ in stone" carries across the Old Testament letters and law into the New Testament gospels. The echo resounds from divine voice via stony sepulcher into the tables of the human heart and its trace transfigures death into life everlasting. The poem's ambiguous penultimate line "loving man" initiates a reverberatory echo between the action of Christ's "loving" humankind and of humans reciprocating by "loving" in return. Both possibilities of the gerundive echo within the lithic sepulcher whose imaginary is carved by the poem's lines.[78] Fittingly, the next poem in Herbert's sequence is "Easter" that describes how the "death" of Christ "calcined" all "to dust" (ln. 5) and whose "crosse" taught all the natural world to "resound his name" (ln. 7): the saved human echoes "ever" (ln. 30). Herbert's religious meditation on the afterlife may not be as narcissistically carved in stone as is Donne's effigy, but he too affords surprising emphasis to the stony as the lively echo chamber wherein divine and human meet for eternity. Both Herbert and Donne meditate on, and solicit, a surprisingly material lithic afterlife.

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[75] Although disagreement exists over the biblical echoes of this phrase, see Chana Bloch, *Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 57, who argues that Herbert was very aware of the "symbolic penumbra" of his words.

[76] Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare*, 32–65. Harris offers a critical summary of critics who view Herbert as a poet who favors the immaterial as opposed to those who see him as resolutely invested in material forms. See ibid., 40–2.

[77] Ibid., 49.

[78] For the ironies in these lines, see Coburn Freer, *Music for a King: George Herbert's Style and the Metrical Psalms* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 147; for the casuistry, see Camille Wells Slights, *The Casuistical Tradition in Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert, and Milton* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 202.

Christ's tomb and the later Christian edifice of the temple or church thus remain vibrantly interactive spaces within the religious meditations of Anglican divines. Its lively persistence undercuts the proposal that a disenchantment with stone characterizes the broad umbrella of Protestant reform movements, particularly when it came to death. Within a deeply religious Christian culture, the echoic and reverberatory transfiguration within Christ's tomb might be understood as an expression of orthodox piety. Yet the tomb's echoic chamber and material substrate confounds easy extrication of body and soul in unorthodox ways.

Christ's tomb, moreover, is not the only one revisited by Renaissance writers. The prophet and magician Merlin's posthumous condition too underwent its own kind of resurrection in Renaissance narratives, trailing with it the heresy (at least for most Reformed or Protestant believers) that the dead might communicate with the living.[79] Medieval accounts, including Arthurian fictions, shaped Merlin's legend as an "architect of stone" who grasped but also manipulated the equivocal power of stone.[80] His "wondrous stratagems" wrought on the stones at Stonehenge, for instance, that I discuss in chapter 1, show his alleged power to mysteriously move stone. It is then, writes Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "especially cruel that his eventual fate will be entombment within immobile stone."[81] Medieval accounts, such as the *Suite du Merlin*, still Merlin into silence, his tomb sealed: "the last we hear from Merlin is a wordless cry of pain that travels the world, diminishing into the muteness of death."[82]

Renaissance accounts, by contrast, refute Merlin's entombed muteness and obscurity. His tomb becomes the site of posthumous vitality, a reverberatory place whose stones speak. Like Christ's sepulcher believed to be a geographical place and tomb of Joseph of Arimethea, Merlin's burial place existed as imaginative literary fiction, but also, at least, hypothetically, as locatable monument. The tomb's hybrid geography layers imaginative accounts with the tomb's deictic funerary "here" as cartographically mapped into the English landscape. In his translation of Ariosto, John Harington dwells in extensive marginal as well as endnote glosses on the location of Merlin's tomb. Harington's paratextual guides offer conflicting pinpoints on the map for its "here." The margin offers a textual genealogy: Ariosto took "the description of Merlins tombe out of the book of king Arthur" (3.11).[83] But, Harington quickly reassures his English readers, that it "is poeticall licens to faine it to be in France," for "it is in Wales" (3.11 marginal gloss). That the geographical location matters to Harington becomes obvious when he returns to the tomb's location in his concluding commentary:

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[79] An influential literary account of what it meant to speak to the dead in Renaissance England is Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[80] Cohen, *Stone*, 119.

[81] Ibid., 124.

[82] Ibid.

> I know many are hard of beleef and thinke it a mere fable . . . I hold it certaine; that he had a castle in Wiltshire called after him *Merlins*burie (now Marleborow) it is very likely, the old ruines whereof are yet seen in our highway from Bath to London . . . But for the manner of his death and place of his burial, it is so diversly written of and by so many sundry countrys challenged as a man may be bolder to say all of them are false then that any of them be true . . . [yet] the rest of the booke is in a manner all a true historie (sig. B6^{v}).

Harington finds both etymological and physical traces of Merlin's passing in "Marleborow" and the "old ruines," likely the stony heaps at Stonehenge, visible between the topographical markers of well-known English cities. For Harington, the material and metaphoric are mutually reinforcing. While he concedes that many of Merlin's stories are "*hard of beleef*," such as his role in regards to the "*great stones at Stonage on Salis[. . .]*)," he nonetheless looks to their monumental traces in the landscape to lend credence to the echoes from Merlin's tale (sig. B6^{v}). Harington's musing, in turn, prompts readers to seek the traces and "old ruins" of Merlin's burial site along the English highway, and, perhaps to listen for his voice.

For Renaissance epic romance writers, Merlin does not diminish into the muteness of death in some obscure rocky tomb. Instead, they transfigured his stony entombment into a figuration of Echo. In the stories of Ariosto and of Spenser, Merlin's tomb is a vibrant chamber wherein "his voice doth live" (3.12). As Spenser's briefer account of Merlin's tomb draws from that of

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[83] All citations are to canto and stanza in Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso in English Heroical Verse, by Iohn Haringto[n].*

Ariosto, I begin with the *Orlando Furioso* where Merlin's tomb bursts with posthumous human life to come. Occurring relatively early in the narrative, his tomb hosts the heroine Bradamante as she seeks to understand her future. The Third Book comprises the visit by the "Faire Bradamant" who has "falne" in "Marlins cave"; here she finds the prophetess Melissa and sees a conjured procession of her numerous, illustrious progeny (Argument). Book 3's copperplate engraving, reproduced in Figure 7.3, offers a God's-eye view of Merlin's cave and tomb as a subterranean environment bifurcated by a twisted, petrified tree-like column whose torque recalls biological life, but whose matter is stone.

The central lithic column directs the viewers' gaze upward to where "a church most solemne and devout" "small and round" of "marble pillars "raised by art on arches all about" (3.8) stands as the portal to the underground cavern or crypt, whose flying stony buttresses make "ech voice" to "yeeld a double sound" (3.8). The "double sound," or "dubiety," to refer back to Jonathan Goldberg's phrase, calls attention to the tomb's echoic function, a germinal seed for future life.[84] To the viewer's left just below the church stands a "stately toombe" of "marble pure" surrounded by spirits who double as Bradamante's and Rogero's prophesied progeny (3.15).

The viewer's right-side panel shows two tableaux: Bradamante kneels in a prayerful posture, her hands raised in supplication, ambiguously directed either at the rocky column itself or to Melissa, who appears from behind the central column. The central column's torsion recalls that of a petrified tree. And the text itself invites such a reading as it explicitly alludes to Christ's death on the cross and his tomb. For Bradamante prays to "him" "Whose holy side was perst with cruell speare" (3.9). In case an English reader misses the allusion, John Harington helpfully includes a marginal gloss specifying "Christ our savior." His way, perhaps, to prompt the reader to remember Christ's echoic sepulcher from the gospels and to legitimize the conversation that follows with the dead Merlin. Bradamante's prayer to Christ puts a Christian glaze over the scene. For further yet to the right in the pictorial narrative, Melissa and Bradamante stand before and gesture towards what is likely an effigy of the Prophet Merlin that sits athwart the tomb with an inscription that reads "Arcadi Merlin."[85] "Here," Melissa informs

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[84] See my discussion of humankind's material "dubiety" in chapter 2 which draws on Goldberg, *The Seeds of Things*.

[85] If read as "arca di Merlino," the "arca" might point to a casket for relics, a reference that furthers the sense of Merlin's bones as relics enshrined within the gleaming stone funerary monument, whose light and liveliness witness to a *pietra dura* composed of human and

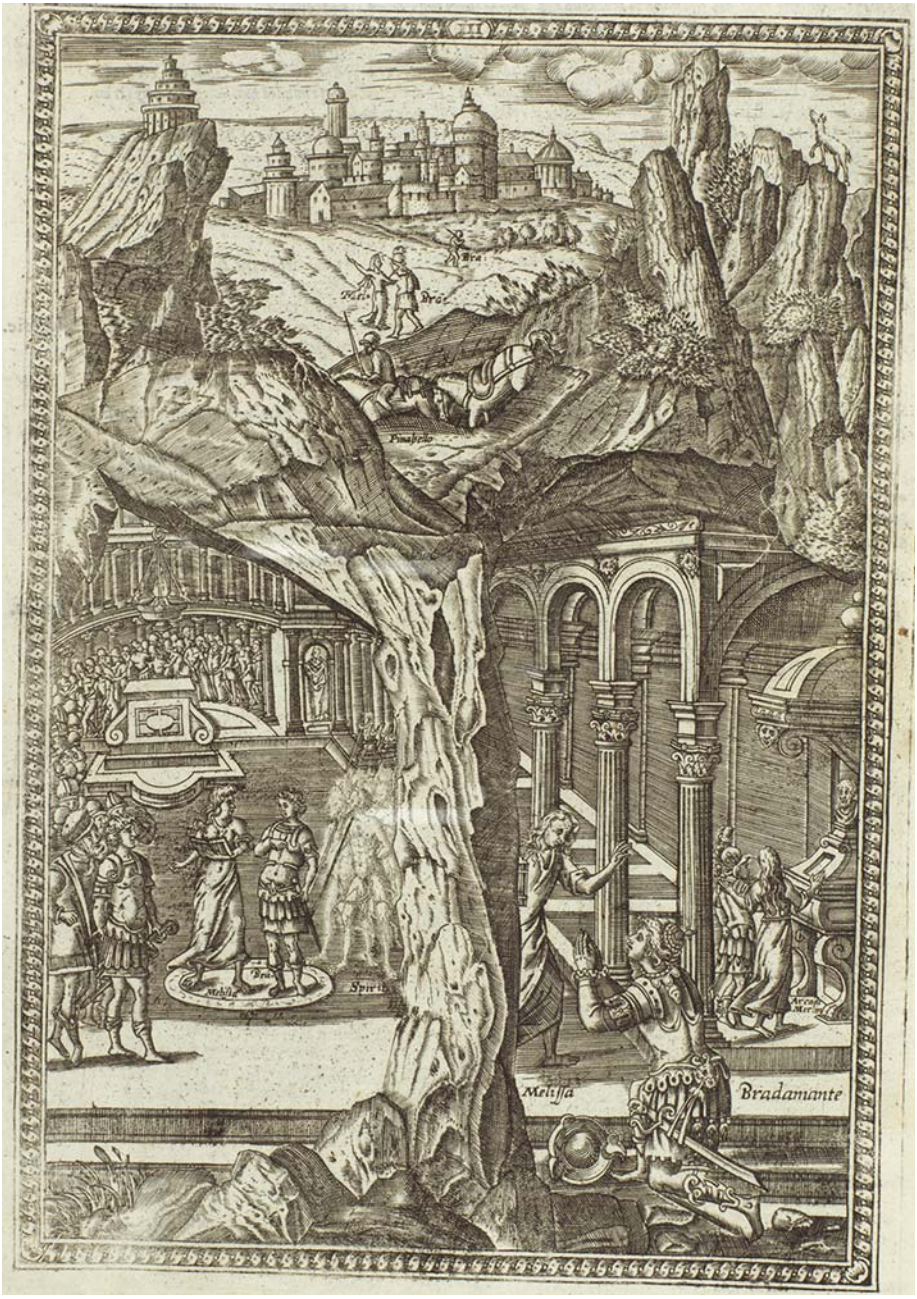

Figure 7.3 Depiction of Merlin's cave. Plate to Book 3 of Sir John Harington's translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* [. . .] ([London]: [Richard Field], [1591], sig. B3^{v}, RB 62722.

Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Bradamante, is "the tombe that *Merline* erst did make," a locative declaration that the body is "here," and invites comparison to the common trope of tomb epitaphs: *Hic situs est* or Here lieth (3.11).[86] And, indeed, in Harington's translation of Ariosto, a "carkase dead" is invoked as "here" present, but a "living" liveliness refuses the *commoratio* that twice reiterates the sense of bodily death (3.12). The rocky strata of the textual and visual corpora layers biblical story with Arthurian myth in its hybrid geographic and temporal warp.

Rocks—as castle walls and towers, as cliffs, as marble columns, as carved sepulchers, as paving stones—dominate the entire perspective. They dwarf the human figures, create, and divide the pictorial narrative. The elemental mineralized materials with their twisting fissures aping organic forms appear as lively and animate as the human characters. And, indeed, there seems to be a transfiguration of form at work in the tomb between lithic and human characters as well as between spirit and flesh, dead and alive. Upon entering the tomb, Bradamante transfigures into stoniness. Harington translates her falling "silent" and "still" but even more poignantly, as being "Astonished" (3.14). "Astonished" appears after 1500 to be an alteration of the earlier "astony," which itself was shortly to be aphetized to "stonish," resembling or the having the character of stone (*OED*, v.).[87] Various English writers, Spenser as well as Harington among them, fancied the word as a variant of "stony" meaning "petrified" (*OED*, adj.). As Ross Lerner notes in another context, the word likely has a Latin origin "from *ex-tonare*" (to be stunned out of oneself) but also might pun on the "old English *stan* or stone."[88] Bradamante's statuesque posture of supplication coupled with the textual description of her affective stony state momentarily cast her as but yet another petrified entity within the crypt. Her turn to stone, however, does not premonish her death, but rather forecasts her as a germinal maternal seed to futurity.

While Bradamante is "astonished," the tomb around her speaks. As she approaches the "strange toombe where *Merlins* bones were plast," "Forth of the stones" she hears "His lively voice" (3.17). The "strange toombe" "speeches out doth cast" in Merlin's voice (3.17). The vocalizations of

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stone. I am grateful to Kirsten Shuhmacher and Sarah van der Laan for their insight into this inscription.

[86] See Newstok, *Quoting Death in Early Modern England*, 33–57.

[87] For a longer discussion of the etymology of this term, see Ross Lerner, "The Astonied Body in *Paradise Lost*," *English Literary History* 87 (2020): 434–5.

[88] Ibid.

Merlin's tomb anticipate the desire preserved in Donne's effigy to communicate with its embodied future viewers. But here the perdurable template is a sonic Echo rather than a marmoreal Narcissus. Just as Echo's bones turning to stone facilitates the echoic effect, the "verie marble . . . so cleare and bright" (3.16) of Merlin's tomb, facilitates "his lively voice," emanating from within. Harington's translation, aimed at its English Anglican readership, treads carefully around the seemingly supernatural miracle of a long-dead prophet Merlin being able to speak. The "double sound" does not result from "magike art alone" (3.8, 16). Rather through a conjunctive series of clauses, stanza 16 enumerates multiple potential forces at play in the *echolalia*. For "whether be the nature of some stone" or "were it done by magike art alone," or by "help of Mathematike skill" "sure it was most curious to behold" (3.16). The conjunctive merger of human desire and skill, the "prophet Merlines cunning" (3.10), combined with a perduring mineral capacity, "the nature of some stone" (3.16), makes possible that "transparencies . . . meete in one" (3.16). The resultant "strange toombe" amplifies Merlin's voice across time and space and invokes Echo's ability to be "heard of every man."

Ariosto imagines Merlin's tomb to speak, his "lively voice" echoing throughout the subterranean space. Edmund Spenser, who relies heavily on this scene for Britomart's encounter with Merlin in book 3, alters the details slightly so that Merlin's voice is also imagined as an act of inscription in stone, an epitaphic gesture to another grave trope that invites the viewer to supply the sonic echo of the words. Alongside Britomart in *The Faerie Queene* book 3, the reader visits Merlin's tomb "Vnder a Rock," from which "hollow caue (they say)" he remains actively present "busied" with "writing straunge characters" (3.3.8,14). Here in his subterranean cavern, Merlin does not slumber in death but is "deepe busied bout worke of wondrous end" (3.3.14).[89]

Among other "worke," Merlin is binding a host of "stubborne feendes" to construct a "brasen wall" (3.3.14,11), suggesting that even in the afterlife Merlin continues to wield the power of binding the mineral realm. His busy inscription further underscores a set of transfigural, binding relations between lithic and human that casts spoken and written voice into the future. Merlin's "characters" purportedly contain what A. C. Hamilton glosses as "magical power to bind."[90] In such a binding, the reader might glimpse the "hidden skill" that Merlin wields in Harington's translation of Ariosto. As I demonstrated in chapter 3, stone figures prominently in biblical examples of binding (and loosing) matter between and across forms, realms, and dominions.

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[89] Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*.

[90] For more on Spenser's "characters," and their powers, see Elizabeth Harvey, "'Strange Characters': Spenser's Busirane and Donne's 'a Valediction of My Name, in the Window,'" in *Spenser and Donne: Thinking Poets*, ed. Yulia Ryzhik (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2019), 151–70.

While the "grownd" that Merlin "characters" or inscribes on may be earth or dirt, when read against the earlier descriptions of his rocky cave, it seems probable that he writes on stone. The *OED* (n.1a) defines the "ground" as the "lowest part or downward limit of anything" a definition that might, in the Renaissance, accord to the *scala naturae* and its stony bottom. Yet the distinction may not need parsing as "ground" is, literally, the "base" or "foundation," and also, figuratively, "the heart" (n.2, and n.1c). Merlin, in his Renaissance afterlives, despite entombment, conspires with stone to shape the future. As in Herbert's poem and the biblical sepulcher of Christ, Merlin's stony tomb is a place of transfiguration, a place of binding and of loosing, as the voice casts itself from beyond the confines of a "carkase dead"(Ariosto 3.15).[91] Merlin's tomb lacks the redemptive resurrection hoped for in Herbert and implicit within Matthew's gospel, yet his echoic voice prophesies a different kind of afterlife figured as human seed in generations of a powerful dynastic lineage.

When Merlin speaks from within his "stately tomb" of "marble pure" (Ariosto, 3.16), his double voice prophesies more than an individual perdurance. For, while astonied in Merlin's rocky cavern, both Britomart and Ariosto's Bradamante envision a parade of spirits "from out of whose wombe an issue shall proceed, / That all the world in glorie shall exceed" (Ariosto, 3.17). The echoic resonance of "tomb" and "womb," as in Donne, once again linguistically plays off the elemental substrate of a stony fertility. Merlin's prophecy and its long parade of spirits transforms his rocky subterranean tomb into a womb-like theatre that stages both heroines' future fecundity (3.17). But, while Donne might envision being united via stone to the cornerstone of Christ, and, thus resurrected into the afterlife, Merlin's echoic existence within his stony tomb is midwife to a dynastic and literary lineage that goes beyond a singular, Narcissistic perdurance or resurrection to one of kind or species, and, critically, of a nation.

Yet even in the fecund transfiguration within Merlin's tomb—a host of ghostly human figures crowd the cavern—the deictic pronouncement

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[91] Numerous examples of Christ-as-sepulcher and sepulcher-as-human heart occur in lyric poetry. One vivid example is Lever's "Crucifixe or Holie Passion" that reads "Now (holy Joseph) help me to interre / This sacred corse; my hart's a fitting place, / Wherein thou maist His sepulcher prepare," see Alexander B. Grosart, ed. *Miscellanies of the Fuller Worthies' Library*, vol. 3 (Blackburn, 1876), 660.

"here" calls attention to the stony cavern's temporal and embodied dislocations. Harington's translation places emphasis on the recursive, polychronic nature of time "here" noting that Merlin's tomb can of "present, past, and future tell" (3.12). Similarly, as J.K. Barret notes in Spenser's cave of Merlin, temporality refuses a linear course.[92] Such polychronic potential, I suggest, relies on a material lithic substrate. Time, in Merlin's tomb, does not move linearly from past, through present, to future. Its untimely flow grammatically places the past and future after "here." Rather like Donne's phrasing of "*exitus mortis*" as "*introitus in vitam*," the grammatical syntax upsets a teleological progression from life into death. The engraving of Merlin's tomb (Figure 7.3) captures these haunting dislocations of form and time. The hordes of half-lined shades that adumbrate human form recall the slow, accretive dissolution and reformations of mineral metamorphosis. Visually, their outlines evoke a material untimeliness where the transfigurative capacities of the lithic dissolve and reconfigure material bodies as a continuum of shade, fleshly human, and effigy.

The polychronic nature and palimpsestic materiality of tombs render them untimely places. Their echoic effects confuse time, history with story, terrestrial with celestial, and the divine with human. The effects of these enfolded warps in identity and time appear in Echo's fate. Like Merlin, her voice returns traces of her past and future existence. But locating her within a fixed place, time, or form, becomes nearly impossible. Her "here" is always in motion, everywhere and nowhere. The stony echo chambers of the tomb deny humans their orienting markers: here and not here, past and future coalesce in strangely alien ways.

The engraving that illustrates Merlin's cavern captures this disorienting effect as it eschews any single point perspective. Although in the viewer's far right, an inscription reads "*arcadi Merlin*," the receding arched recesses and church monument like tomb and effigy register only a haunting present absence. Merlin's echo, readers learn, will continue to reverberate, or "sound," from its entombment "Till Doomesday" (3.12 and marginal gloss). "Doomesday" is suggestive of eternity but announces the Protestant fascination with Judgment Day, and the New Jerusalem, which follows the apocalyptic "doomsday" as prophesied in the Revelations of St. Paul that concludes the New Testament. The time marker thus stretches into eternity but also only until the eschatological Christian end, the day of final dissolution: two competing frames for the afterlife that stone encapsulates.

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[92] J. K. Barret, *Untold Futures: Time and Literary Culture in Renaissance England* (Cornell, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 84–92.

In my final chapter, I turn to a consideration for how the vision of the New Jerusalem, supposedly the apotheosis of a heavenly and spiritual realm, in its iteration remains grounded in a very material culture of stone. Such a material reanimation via stone is forecast by Isaac Walton's powerful closing lines to his *Life of John Donne*. In them, he anticipates a resurrection phrased as a reanimation: "that body, which once was a Temple of the Holy Ghost, and is now become a small quantity of Christian dust: *But I shall see it reanimated*."[93] As the stones of the temple dissolve into dust the marble effigy, John Donne, is transfigured and reanimated. The Narcissus and Echo myths offer one way to think through the desire for a posthumous lithic continuum that extends an embodied form and its capacities. Before turning to the lithic afterlife in heaven, I consider in the next chapter an additional preservation fantasy that seemingly excludes the stony, but, is in fact, predicated on its presence: sepulchral verse that links linguistic force to a lithic intercessory virtue.

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[93] Walton, *The Life of John Donne, Dr. In Divinity and Late Dean of Saint Pauls Church*, sig. F11^{v}.

8

“Not Marble, Nor the Gilded Monuments”: Sepúlchred Verse

As Izaak Walton informs later generations, John Donne began to prepare his effigy while yet alive. His conscious reflection on his memorialization within, as Calhoun notes, “four sheets,” encompasses a multimedia archive of ecological material: from the white marble sheet made into the effigy, to the sheets of paper that make his winding sheet, to the printed page on which the engraved frontispiece and poems appear.[1] Calhoun notes that Donne was likely aware of the ultimate fragility of all these media as a preservation strategy. That Donne’s poetic epitaph for his wife, Anne, still exists after being destroyed from the church wall is due in part to its preservation in paper kept from biodeterioration within The Folger Library vaults. Calhoun argues that the uncertainties of climate change may, in the long run, impact our sentiment that we can keep books—and their commemorations—alive by saving them in an ideal climate.[2]

This very twenty-first-century Anthropocene concern over paper preservation amid fears of global warming, however, has early modern antecedents. Such concerns arguably underlie and amplify the popular topos, *scripta manent*, or writing remains, while time “weares the marble stone,” a well-known, favored early modern sentiment that echoes classical precedent from the famous concluding lines of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* as well as Horace’s *Odes*.[3] Its reproduction in Whitney’s emblems as well as reiterations by poets from Edmund Spenser, to Shakespeare, Milton and writers like Sir Thomas Browne show its appeal to the literary imagination of

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[1] Calhoun, *The Nature of the Page*, 148.

[2] Ibid., 145.

[3] *Ovid’s Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation, 1567*, 15.871–9. See also Horace, *Odes* III. xxx: “I have finished a monument more lasting than bronze and loftier than the Pyramids’ royal pile, one that no wasting rain, no furious north wind can destroy, or the countless chain of years and the ages’ flight. I shall not altogether die, but a mighty part of me shall escape the death-goddess. On and on shall I grow, ever fresh with the glory of after time.” Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, ed. Niall Rudd, Loeb Classical Library 33 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton. Tiffany Jo Werth, Oxford University Press. © Tiffany Jo Werth (2024).
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198903963.003.0009

early modern England.[4] Writers hold a vested stake in the enduring power of words when they bid for patronage; and their boasts were not entirely rhetorical as new editions and translations revived classical texts, while many classical monuments disappeared or existed in ruined fragments.[5] Yet this classical trope (passed down from Ovid and Horace) that vaunts poetic perdurance as outliving "marble monuments" rests on a material paradox. The very language of supersession grounds itself in the lithic.

A long-running critical tradition, one endorsed by early modern writers themselves, relies on the classical tales of two often related figures, Amphion and Orpheus, to argue that words empower matter but not the reverse. Sir Philip Sidney writes, for instance, that "Amphion was said to move stone with his poetry to build Thebes."[6] And George Chapman's 1594 *The Shadow of Night* provides a typical example for how the power of Orphean eloquence "wonne / Rockes, forests, floods, and winds to leaue their course / In his attendance."[7] A close reading, however, of a few examples suggests that even this case reveals a dangerous reciprocity, a circulatory logic, rather than simple mastery or hierarchical order. Orpheus, and to a less extent Amphion, as Jenny C. Mann argues, were fabled figures for the power of language to move or enliven the things it touches, with the power to change "their native hardness."[8] Orpheus makes stones (and other things of the natural world) dance, and Amphion charms the stones to repair ruined walls. Yet as Mann admits, this anthropocentric view adheres to what writers want their readers to believe; the full picture is more nuanced. The power of words to change matter always ran the risk of being influenced by the material upon which it works. The fate of Orpheus is a warning. Ultimately, he is silenced and brutally dismembered when the Bacchantes hurl spears and stones at him. The very matter he proclaims to move in fact determines his life limit.

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[4] As Sir Thomas Browne writes: "Our Fathers finde their graves in our short memories . . . Grave-stones tell truth scarce fourty years. . . . To be read by bare Inscriptions . . . to hope for Eternity by Enigmaticall Epithetes, or first letters of our names, to be studied by Antiquaries . . . are cold consolations unto Students of perpetuity." Browne, *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, 1, 166–7.

[5] See William N. West, "Less Well-Wrought Urns: Henry Vaughan and the Decay of the Poetic Monument," *English Literary History* 75, no. 1 (2008): 197–217. For more on the early modern fascination for classical ruins and its reflection in poetic tropes, see Rebeca Helfer, *Spenser's Ruins and the Art of Recollection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

[6] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 213.

[7] George Chapman, *Skia Nyktos. = the Shaddovv of Night Containing Two Poeticall Hymnes, Deuised by G.C. Gent* (London: Printed by R[ichard] F[ield] for William Ponsonby, 1594), sig. B^{r}.

[8] Mann, *The Trials of Orpheus*, 134.

The reciprocity of force between stones and empowering words might be glimpsed in Edmund Spenser in Sonnet 25 of *The Ruins of Rome*. The narrator wishes to have the powers of the "Thracian poet" (Orpheus) or "that I had *Amphions* instrument, / To quicken with his vitall notes accord, / The stonie joynts of these old walls not rent" (lines 5–7).[9] To "quicken" can mean to "give or restore life." If read solely as to "give" to quicken might grant all agency to the instrument or even to Amphion, but it might also be understood "to restore" to life, a rendering that suggests the "stonie joynts" are once again made vital in conjunction *with* Amphion's lyre rather than only because of it. A perhaps even more evocative phrasing can be found in a simile from Sir John Davies' poem "Orchestra." The narrator describes how "Amphion with his charming Lire / Begot so sweet a Syren of the ayre, / That with her Rethorike made the stones conspire / The ruines of a Citty to repayre."[10] To "conspire" means literally to "breathe or blow together" (*OED*, v.3 and 6). The phrasing, at first, grants power to words (rhetoric) that "made" the object, "stone," to conspire. But "conspire" troubles a simple agent–object response as it entails two agents working "together" to produce an effect. Human breath, instrument, and stone must work together to "repayre" the "ruines" of a ravaged city. These passages subtly undermine the supremacy of word over inert, receptive matter as well as the word's alleged endurance. Instead, they hint that words and stone must work together to enhance each other's power. Fittingly this is the sentiment voiced at the end of Davie's stanza, which concludes: "... they joyn'd hands, and so the world was wrought." The imagery of "joyn'd hands" is one of mutual attraction and inclination between human and rocky intention.

This chapter explores the complexity of a linguistic lithic bond that does not merely assume the primacy of one or the other. Instead, it extends medieval philosophical understandings of a mineral charisma into the religious materiality of Protestant belief and poetics. To trace this persistent lithic allure across the Reformation, I open with an analysis of the claim of *scripta manent* only to double back to the insistent lithic imaginary that inserts itself into textual corpora. I then turn to a reading of intercessory stones—the Mosaic tablets and their alchemical counterpart in the so-called emerald tablet as well as individualized talismans—that were thought to solicit, entreat, and intercede between human and divine. Not merely indexical or protective of a human state, engraved stones were also a determiner of salvific grace and of transfiguration. Rocks thus play an exemplary role in English religious and cultural systems that in turn informs the period's poetics. If words might enhance the natural virtues within stones, I ask, can stone be imagined to enhance, even determine, the virtues of the word? I conclude by reading this cultural habitus in chiastic relationship to the Orphic claim of poets to transcend monuments of marble in two iconic poems, Shakespeare's Sonnet 55 and Milton's "On Shakespeare." The claims of verbal supersession over stone creates a paradox that renders the verse itself as a sepulchral vault with reverberatory echoes of life.

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[9] All citations of Spenser's sonnets are to Spenser, *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*.

[10] John Sir Davies, *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, ed. Ruby Nemser (Clarendon: Oxford University Press, 1975), 95.

Scripta Manent: Mosaic Tablets, Lithic Testimony, and the Emerald Tablet

The woodcut *pictura* that illustrates the emblem for *scripta manent* in Geffrey Whitney's popular *A Choice of Emblemes* reveals the material paradox inherent to the claim of a "monument more lasting."[11] In it, both words—as transmitted by books—and monuments composed of mineral matter share a fragility that stems from their material composition. In Figure 8.1, Whitney's emblem, and especially its woodcut, critiques—even as it asserts—its proclamation *scripta manent*. The Latin motto *scripta manent* makes the proclamation that written words remain. The *subscriptio*, a poem composed of twenty-four lines of cross-rhymed six-line stanzas, keeps in theme with the motto as it describes how mighty cities of history (Troy, Carthage, Thebes, Babel, Athens, Numantia) have "suffered spoile" and all their monuments are gone.[12] Time "weares the marble stone;" but "writinges laste." All the great acts of history's heroes (Samson, Joshua, David, Alexander, Caesar, and Scipio) would also be "gone with them to graue" were it not for "books." In typical emblem fashion, the words on the page agree: *scripta manent* words last.

The emblem's *pictura*, however, complicates the singular verbal assertion. An emblem's representational presentation of a concept typically requires multimodal reading of all parts of the emblem, word and image. Toppling stone towers and pillars (emblematic of monumental cities) dominate the top portion of the woodcut and destabilize the two classical arches at

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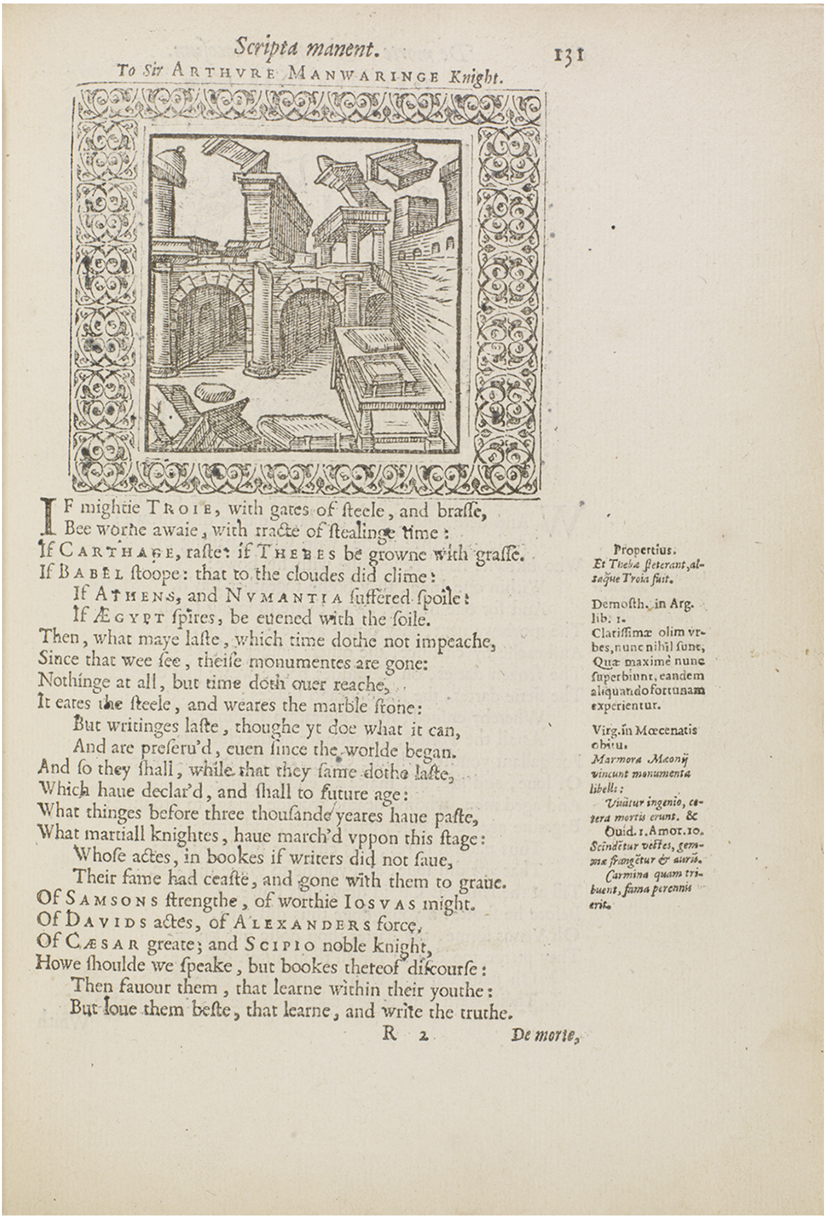
[11] From Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, ed. Rudd, III.xxx.

[12] Citations are from Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes*, sig. R2^{r}.



Scripta manent. 131

To Sir ARTHVRE MANWARINGE *Knight.*

IF mightie TROIE, with gates of ſteele, and braſſe,
Bee worne awaie, with tracte of ſtealinge time:
If CARTHAGE, raſte: if THEBES be growne with graſſe.
If BABEL ſtoope: that to the cloudes did clime:
If ATHENS, and NVMANTIA ſuffered ſpoile:
If ÆGYPT ſpires, be euened with the ſoile.
Then, what maye laſte, which time dothe not impeache,
Since that wee ſee, theiſe monumentes are gone:
Nothinge at all, but time doth ouer reache,
It eates the ſteele, and weares the marble ſtone:
But writinges laſte, thoughe yt doe what it can,
And are preſeru'd, euen ſince the worlde began.
And ſo they ſhall, while that they ſame dothe laſte,
Which haue declar'd, and ſhall to future age:
What thinges before three thouſande yeares haue paſte,
What martiall knightes, haue march'd vppon this ſtage:
Whoſe actes, in bookes if writers did not ſaue,
Their fame had ceaſte, and gone with them to graue.
Of SAMSONS ſtrengthe, of worthie IOSVAS might.
Of DAVIDS actes, of ALEXANDERS force,
Of CÆSAR greate; and SCIPIO noble knight,
Howe ſhoulde we ſpeake, but bookes thereof diſcourſe:
Then fauour them, that learne within their youthe:
But loue them beſte, that learne, and write the truthe.

Propertius.
Et Thebæ ſteterant, altaque Troia fuit.

Demoſth. in Arg. lib. 1.
Clariſſimæ olim vrbes, nunc nihil ſunt, Quæ maximè nunc ſuperbiunt, eandem aliquando fortunam experientur.

Virg. in Mœcenatis obitu.
Marmora Mæonij vincunt monumenta libelli:
Viuitur ingenio, cætera mortis erunt. &
Ouid. 1. Amor. 10.
Scindētur veſtes, gemmæ frangētur & auris.
Carmina quam tribuent, fama perennis erit.

R 2 *De morte,*

Figure 8.1 *Scripta manent* from Geffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblemes* [. . .] (Leiden: In the house of Christopher Plantyn, by Francis Raphelengius, [1586]), sig. R2^r, RB 79714.

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their base. In the foreground, seemingly secure, stands a solid-looking table holding what appear to be two large folio volumes. The foreground interior presumably depicts a reading room or library that secures its written contents even as the background masonry collapses. At first glance, the *pictura* aligns its message with the surrounding words. An intruding stone, however, disrupts the neat pictorial divide between the stone walls collapsing in the background and the securely clasped books in the foreground. The stone appears to have landed in the library, knocking over a pillar that has narrowly missed smashing the image focal point: a book perched on the picture frame edge. Jennifer Summit has conclusively argued that early modern libraries were recognizably fragile ecosystems, subject to natural decay and political destruction.[13] Like the cities and empires "with gates of steele, and brasse," the libraries they housed, too, were vulnerable to "stealinge time."[14] The large-scale destruction and dismantling of monastic and abbey libraries had made the point salient in recent English memory. The emblem serves as a reminder that despite their vociferous claims to the contrary, early modern authors were keenly aware of the perishability of their printed books.

Rather than viewing the relationship between writing and stone monuments as rivalrous preservation technologies, a more nuanced reading uncovers a symbiotic and even alchemical bond between language and the lithic. The desired authority and longevity sought in these English poetic claims for rhetorical or verbal ascendency relies on a complex biblical inheritance as well as classical rhetoric. Earlier in chapters 3 and 4, I traced the abiding scriptural correlation of human heart and stone, a figural relationship with far-reaching imaginative and material repercussions. Scriptural tradition also bequeaths a long-running history whereby stone interweaves with testimony in its narratives of human–divine interactions. Specifically, inscribed or engraved stone harnesses the powers of stone to that of human "characters" as we saw in chapter 7 with the strange echoic tomb of Merlin, which in Spenser's version, foregrounds the binding process of inscribing stone.

The biblical touchstone for the peculiar power of a lithic–language binding is the story of Moses receiving, on Mount Sinai, two tablets of stone inscribed with God's commandments. These stony tablets set a precedent for how stone's raw material power of endurance might be bound to divine inscription. When Moses ascends Mount Sinai to receive God's commandments to the twelve tribes of Israel, the Lord informs him: "I wil giue thee tables of stone, and the Lawe & the commandement, which I haue written, for to teache them" (Exodus 24:12).[15] The first set of tablets comes directly from God, an intriguing parsing of the divine form. For when Moses begs God to see his "glorie" (Exodus 33:18), God warns him that humans cannot look upon him and live; but he proposes a compromise whereby he places Moses "upon the rocke," tucks him safely into the "cleft of the rocke," and passes by, allowing the mortal human the sight of his "backepartes" (Exodus 33:21,22, and 23). Rocky, stony clefts protect the human prophet from—and thus afford access to—God's inhuman lithic glory. The stone tablets received after this mountaintop visitation are the material reminders of God's word and presence. As it did in Jacob's vision, stone acts as material mediator between human and divine. The engraved tablets remain as witness to the meeting of human with divine presence.[16]

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[13] Jennifer Summit, *Memory's Library: Medieval Books in Early Modern England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

[14] Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes*, sig. R2^{r}.

When Moses returns from the mount carrying the stone tables, he sees the children of Israel flagrantly denying God and worshipping a golden calf. In anger, Moses shatters the divinely inscribed stone tables. Moses's fury and his destruction of the stone tablets illustrates their fragility despite being of divine origin. But, nonetheless, God, not-so-patiently, orders a second set. Only this time he makes the human, Moses, a participant in their fabrication. He commands Moses to "hewe thee two Tables of stone, like unto the first, and I wil write upon the Tables, the wordes that were in the first Tables, which thou brakest in pieces" (Exodus 34:1). Although the stone tablets might be broken in pieces, God persists with the stony medium "like unto the first." Genevan glossers take the tale as emblematic for how the "tables of stone" signal "the hardenes of our hearts, except God do write his laws therin by his Spirit." This vein of Protestant glossing on the Old Testament supplies an argument for a dematerialization of matter, a supersession of Old Law for a spiritually immaterial New. Yet, it also provides evidence for the fact that the Spirit of God and his laws written in language must pass through—and therefore relies on—a material medium with material effects.

That material medium is the bond between the immaterial divine law and the fleshly human heart. Although in a classical and Orphic, as opposed to biblical and divine framework, Jenny C. Mann argues that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers and philosophers understood that there needs be a "bond" that conjoins "force and matter in nature" to human capacity.[17] In the gloss to Exodus, the text invokes a physical force and its effects show how words might petrify or soften the human heart. Jonathan Gil Harris has given us the valuable analysis that material culture persists despite Christian claims for supersession of Jewish materiality.[18] For Harris, the resulting palimpsestic temporality allows us to glimpse strata of Christian and Jewish traditions. Similar "material paradoxes" (as Caroline Walker Bynum terms them) appear, I argue, if we probe poets' claims to negate and supersede the stony material of memory with the claim *scripta manent*.[19]

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[15] All biblical citations are to *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition.*

[16] For further commentary on the biblical exegesis of the texts from Exodus, see Marks, ed. *The English Bible: King James Version.*

The divine insistence that Moses hew a second set of stone tablets underscores the critical matter of stone and not just its allegorical significance. Scriptural verses will interchangeably conflate the "tables of stone" with the "tables of testimony," a further figural substitution of stone with, and as, testimony. Moreover, the second set of stone tablets is yet more explicitly a collaborative fabrication as human, stone, and divine finger together to create the second set of divine commandments. Moses must hew the stone upon which God's finger then engraves the commandments. Readers are thus twice directed to visualize the commandments engraved on stone tablets. As Juliet Fleming has demonstrated in her reading of printer's flowers, the materiality of type, ornament, design, and paper all often functioned to call attention to a specific kind of "consumer good" or text.[20] For her, writing, or "graphology" can be inscribed on all surfaces, not just paper, and the choice of material matters to interpretation.[21] By calling attention to the stony materiality upon which God's commandments are engraved, not once, but twice, readers are prompted to understand the making of the engraved stone tables as critical to their rhetorical function as "tables of testimony."

The Mosaic stony tablets bind together hewn stone, human labor, and divine language in the making of a covenant, a memorial perseveration intended to speak to the generations to come. Even the Protestant Genevan glossing acknowledges that a petrified human heart requires the divine engraving for a salvific afterlife. The virtues inherent to engraved stone—whether hewn tablet or the hard human heart—facilitate intercession between a profane earthly and sacred heavenly domain. As I demonstrate in chapter 3, the controversy over St. Peter's and stone altars within Catholic and Reformed culture reveal stones to be almost sacramental in nature. They possess an aura of contact relics. Although Protestants held more skepticism about the virtues inhering to stone, they could not quite shake the belief that even if stones were natural entities, they were nonetheless imbued with special virtues.[22] Engraved stones, moreover, were thought in several arenas to possess particular binding powers.

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[17] Mann, *The Trials of Orpheus*, 4.

[18] Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare*, 29–40.

[19] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011).

[20] Juliet Fleming, "How Not to Look at a Printed Flower," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 2 (2008): 345–71at 48.

[21] "Toward a Cultural History of the Material World," in *Cultural Histories of the Material World*, ed. Peter N. Miller, The Bard Graduate Center Cultural Histories of the Material World (New York: Bard Graduate Center, 2019), 197–203. See also her introduction to *Cultural Graphology: Writing after Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

The Jewish and biblical heritage of inscribing words in stone was not the only cultural influence that found a special bond to inhere between stone and engraved words. An analogue to the conjunctive power of the Mosaic stone tablets appears in alchemical discourse in the traditions surrounding the so-called "emerald tablet" of Hermes. The emerald tablet was considered the urtext of Hermetic art to transform base matter into gold. I bring it briefly into focus because it offers another cultural nexus that finds transfigurative force within a lithic–linguistic inscriptive collaboration. The legends surrounding the emerald tablet emerge from the *Book of Secret Creation*, a pastiche by an early ninth-century, and likely Arabic, author who took the name of an earlier Greek author, Apollonios of Tyana, and who claims to have discovered this powerful, inscribed stone. A green stone tablet, covered with Syriac text, clenched by a corpse, the story goes, was found buried in a sepulcher below a statue of Hermes Trismegestus.[23] A foundational text for many practicing alchemists, the emerald tablet's obscure—and likely apocryphal origins—little hampered its influence.

Just as the Mosaic tablets were thought to transform stony hearted humans into the divine elect, the emerald tablet's inscribed formula was also believed to be transformational. Not of stony disobedient hearts to fleshy forgiven ones, but a transformation of an equally material nature. Its inscribed formula contained the key to transform base metals to gold. It held the keys for making the philosopher's stone. As etched in Heinrich Khunrath's *Ampitheatrum sapientiae aeternaie* (*Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom)*

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[22] See Blaen, *Medical Jewels, Magical Gems*, 86–7. Blaen refers to Batman upon Bartholome, whose *De Proprietaribus Rerum* treats the virtues of stone as only possibly miraculous because they contain a "magic" so "hid" as to be understood by "God's Oracle alone," Bartholomaeus, *Batman Vppon Bartholome, His Booke De Proprietatibus Rerum*, 172.

[23] For a history of the textual muddle, see Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy*, 31–3.

(publ.1595; 1609), a work that promoted alchemy for transformative spiritual regeneration, its monumental stone face and crowded multilingual inscription relies on a multimodal reading practice wherein physical, mineral agents subtend spiritual process. A book of divine alchemy, the *Ampitheatre's* remarkable sequence of hieroglyphic emblems were recognized for their spiritual alchemy, but also, as Peter Forshaw argues, for their interest in the properties of matter and “practical physical-chemistry.”[24] The complex verbal–visual constructions attempt to harmonize principles of biblical scripture with the alchemical occult to promote greater knowledge of primal matter and its transformative capacity.

Khunrath defines his approach to the relations between the philosopher's stone and its tie to the natural, material world and the human body as “[T]he art of chemically dissolving, purifying and rightly reuniting Physical Things by Nature's method: the Universal (Macro-Cosmically, the Philosophers' Stone; Micro-Cosmically, the parts of the human body) [...] and ALL particulars of the inferior globe.”[25] In this iconic image (Figure 8.2), the emerald tablet is represented as a megalith rock that spews sparks from its peak, illustrative of the divine presence within base matter. The emblem visually animates the emerald tablet's gnomic pronouncement that might be translated “as above so below,” whereby raw matter conjoins with a heavenly spirit. The visual depiction of the famous emerald tablet is writ large as a gigantic cliff face as opposed to a tablet that might be clutched by a corpse or prophet. The image invites the reader to join a huddle of six men conversing and gesturing towards the Latin and German precepts of the philosopher's stone inscribed across the enormous stone face. Below these precepts, the inscription includes the opening lines to the *Pimander*, a text that relays Hermes's cosmic vision. In Hermes's vision, the human bridges realms of matter and spirit. Khunrath imagines that the philosopher's stone will synthesize these realms. As the most perfect expression of spirit and matter, the philosopher's stone brings with it the power to perfect and transform.

The potential transformation across categories of being holds resonance for the men gathered before the emerald tablet. They labor to decipher the stone in order to master hermetic secrets that, in the words of the late Elizabethan writer, soldier, and alchemist Thomas Churchyard might “make stife stones, or steele to bend or bowe” and to understand “How out of stones,

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[24] Peter Forshaw, “Alchemy in the Ampitheatre,” in *Art and Alchemy*, ed. Jacob Wamberg (Copenhagen: Museum of Tusculanum, 2006), 195–220 at 196.

[25] Translation from ibid., 205.

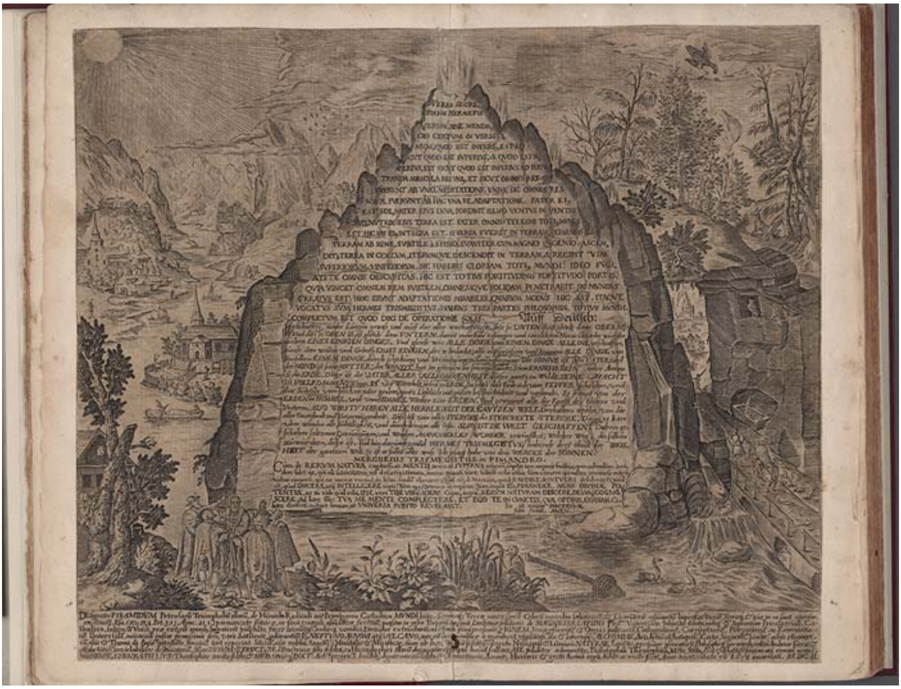

Figure 8.2 The emerald tablet from Heinrich Khunrath’s *Amphiteatrum sapientiæ æternæ* [. . .] ([Hanau]: Excudebat Guilielmus Antonius, 1609), KB+ 1609.

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comes dewe like drops of raine, / And how dry dust, and earth that seemes nought worth, / Hides gold in hord, yet brings great treasure forth.”[26] Within this alchemical pursuit, the stone possesses—and might speak—secrets that will enable men to transform, or at the very least hasten, the natures and properties of the material world, making “stife stones” to bend and gold to be brought forth from dry dust. Its story offers a parallel material exemplar equivalent to the spiritual rendering of the Genevan gloss. In both stories, the stone serves as crucial conduit for and to the divine wisdom.[27] Albeit communicated via text, the original stony inscription *matters* to its alleged powers. Much more than rivalrous technologies, the written or inscribed word and the stony surfaces, material monuments, and tablets forged an enduring, alchemical bond capable of transformative powers.

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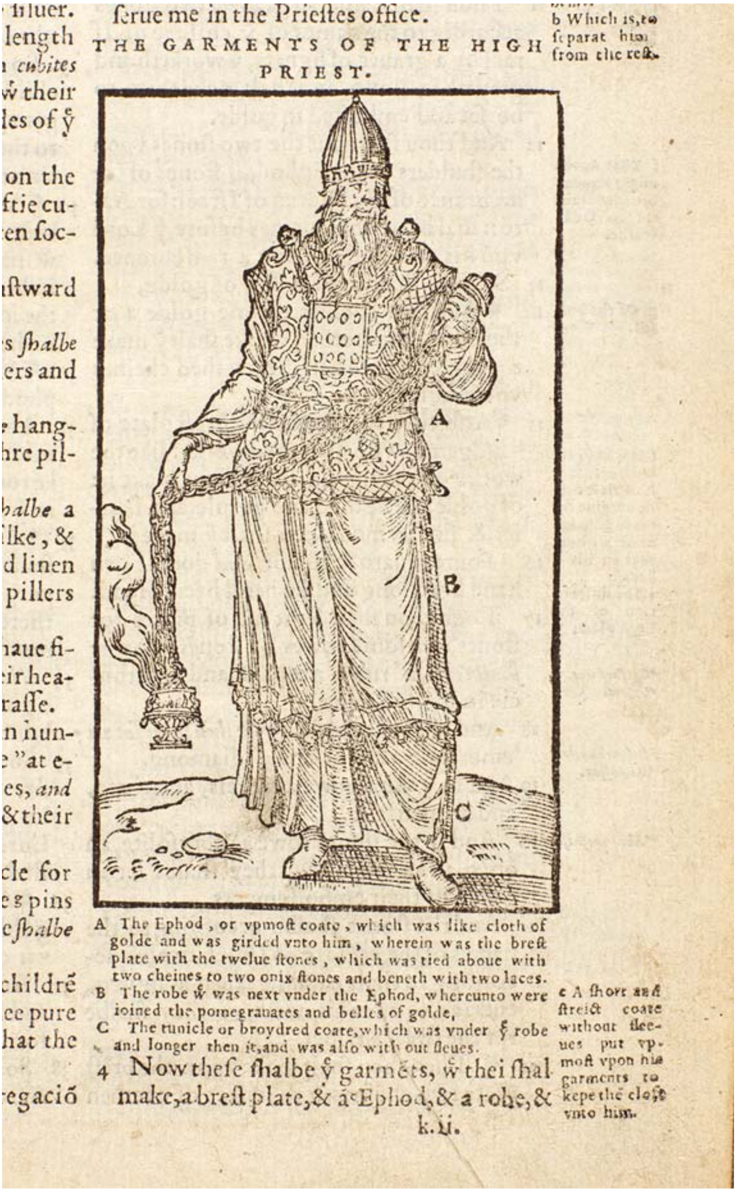
[26] Thomas Churchyard, *Churchyards Challenge* (London, Printed by Iohn Wolfe, 1593), sig. S3^{r}.

[27] The power of stones to act as conduits for divination also appear in the habit of scrying in Crystal stones, most notable the example of John Dee, but Blaen identifies a much more widespread practice in Britain, Scotland, and on the Continent in Germany, see Blaen, *Medical Jewels, Magical Gems*, 163–82.

Mineral Charisma and the Virtues of Intercessory Stones

The stony tablets of Moses, which contained on them the Ten Commandments for ensuring those who kept them salvation under the law, and, in later Protestant theology, under the spirit of Christ, offer one religious exemplar of the powerful capacity of inscribed stone to act as posthumous witness, testimony, and catalyst for transformation. The alchemical emerald tablet also acts as a key to spiritual—and practical—transformative power. These two examples show stone mediating in the macrocosmic scale of relations between divine and human. The correspondence between celestial, divine power and the body politic resides in the letters carved into the stone. The iconic status of these exemplary stony tablets became a topos for a human appeal to the spiritual and occult virtues of engraved rocks. While not everyone might access the Mosaic tablets or the emerald tablet, many still sought to access their powers or virtues. My point in exploring different cultural scales, and arenas, for engraved stones is not to argue for either their veracity or their fraudulence. Rather, I wish to show how both macro- and micro-arenas reveal a cultural fascination with the peculiar power unleashed when the linguistic conspires with the lithic.

In scriptural as well as alchemical occult sensibilities, inscribed stone was a protective, prognostic, and, intercessory media. Another biblical touchstone serves to illustrate how this endures across the Reformation. A few chapters earlier in Exodus, Moses describes the garments, and especially the breastplate, to be worn by the most high priest when interceding with God for the children of Jacob (renamed as Israel). The breastplate of the high priest played a critical part in the office and ceremony that sought redemption for the iniquities of the tribes. The biblical text explains that the precise material make and measurement for the garments is given in order "to consecrate him, that he may serve . . . in the Priestes office" (Exodus 28:3). Like other critical furniture of worship in the tabernacle, the image of the high priest with his consecrated vestments appears in the Geneva Bible, Figure 8.3, giving his vestments the same status as the altar of burnt



ſerue me in the Prieſtes office.

THE GARMENTS OF THE HIGH PRIEST.

b Which is, to ſeparat him from the reſt.

A The Ephod, or vpmoſt coate, which was like cloth of golde and was girded vnto him, wherein was the breſt plate with the twelue ſtones, which was tied aboue with two cheines to two onix ſtones and beneth with two laces.
B The robe ẇ was next vnder the Ephod, whereunto were ioined the pomegranates and belles of golde,
C The tunicle or broydred coate, which was vnder ẏ robe and longer then it, and was alſo with out ſleues.

4 Now theſe ſhalbe ẏ garmẽts, ẇ thei ſhal make, a breſt plate, & a ᶜEphod, & a robe, &

c A ſhort and ſtreict coate without ſleeues put vpmoſt vpon his garments to kepe thẽ cloſe vnto him.

k.ii.

Figure 8.3 The garments of the high priest and the Ephod of Aaron from Exodus 28 in *The Bible and Holy Scriptures* [. . .] (Geneva: [s.n.], 1560), sig. Kii^{r}, RB 55362.

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offering, candlesticks, and the Ark of the Testimony (which contained the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments inscribed upon them).

The biblical instructions detail how "two onix stones" were to have "graue upon them the names of the children of Israel," six on one, and six on the other by a "grauer of signets, y^{t} worketh and graueth in stone" (Exodus 28: 9, 11). These two stones were to be set upon the shoulders of the Ephod (the upper outer garment) as the "remembrance of y^{e} children of Israel" and Aaron was to "beare their names" thus "before the Lord." The breastplate, too, was to hold four rows containing three stones each; each of which, also, was to be "grauen as signets, euerie one after his name, & they shalbe for the twelue tribes" (Exodus 28:21). The stones were to be ruby, topaz, carbuncle, emerald, sapphire, diamond, turkeis, achate, hematite, chrysolite, onix, and jasper. The Geneva gloss notes that the high priest could "not give sentence in judgement" without the breastplate of engraved stone or signets (Exodus 28:15). The engraved twelve stones of the breastplate, and the two engraved onyx stones on the shoulder, were critical material elements in the judgment process. They were the literal touchstones to guarantee the judgment's validity. Their placement on the priest's body, rather than in the tabernacle as a piece of furniture, is suggestive of them working like a contact relic. Their power lay in the material overlay of flesh and engraved stone.

In Jewish practice, the high priest would meditate upon the stones. Once he reached a level of divine inspiration, he would seek to understand God's decision on critical questions. He would then see with an inspired vision that allowed him to obtain an oracular decision.[28] The critical role of these engraved stones in Aaron's Ephod and their role in Judaic ceremonial laws governing priestly apparel might be assumed to be superseded by Protestant belief in *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*. As David Nirenberg discusses, the "Judaic" practices, and often also for Protestants, the "Catholic" Roman church's idolatrous reenactment, that designated material components to worship were often understood as an "incomplete, fleshly" conception of worship "brought about by idolatry."[29] Thus, radical Protestant communities, in particular, defined themselves in opposition to a materialist

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[28] For more on the Jewish practice for reading the high priest breastplate and rabbinic commentary, see Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds. *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 173. Aryeh Kaplan, ed. *The Living Torah: The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Maznaim Publishing Corp, 1981), 248; and Michael D. Coogan, ed. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 122–3.

[29] "The Judasim of Christian Art," in *Judaism in Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism*, eds. Herbert L. Kessler and David Nirenberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 394. See also Eire, *War against the Idols*.

"idolatrous" worship practice. But as George Moore argues, the Geneva Bible, created by particularly zealous translators and Marian exiles in a Calvinist city, surprisingly shows a more complex, and ambiguous, relationship to the Mosaic ritual artifacts, including those of Aaron's vestment and their sacred stones.[30] According to Moore, rather than maligning Aaron's priestly clothing as inciting idolatry, the Geneva Bible regards it as "emblematic of" the "required absolute obedience to divine commands" that would ground the "new reformed faith upon a rigorous commitment to the biblical text."[31] The materiality of the Judaic ritual artifact, despite alleged attempts to spiritualize it, draws attention to "the material basis of Puritan piety itself."[32] The stones, as integral material elements in Aaron's vestments, align with the arguments of Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass who see in early modern garments what they term "material memories."[33] In the case of Aaron's stony breastplate, the stones comprise the material of religious experience. They are the specific material reminder of the tribes whose sins the high priest was to atone before the divine presence. These stones of remembrance, inscribed with the names of the sons of Jacob (which became the tribes of Israel) are marked in the Genevan gloss as essential elements in the spiritual process of judgment.

Later English Reformers would advance the tricky argument that appropriation of material forms of Jewish, and Roman Catholic, ornaments might be governed by how they were to be used. The retention of these elements of Aaron's vestments in the Genevan gloss reveal a complex appropriation of these powerful stones. Again, as George Moore argues, the particular translation of the Geneva Bible (as contrasted to that of the early Tyndale), grants the priests an active role in rendering judgment by means of material media. The priest's binding judgment is transmitted via his special access to the divine on account of his material vestments, especially the stony breastplate.[34] Because of its importance, Moore argues, the Geneva Bible includes a woodcut of the high priest along with the captions that detail the ritual artifact precisely and accurately. While traditional rabbinic commentary read these material elements as used for divination, the Geneva Bible would have them point to spiritual efficacy. This spiritual efficacy might be found via the new material artifact of the translated words of the Bible itself. The material presence of the biblical translation, with its precise descriptions of Aaron's stones of remembrance might then, in turn, facilitate spiritual judgment. Thus, as Moore concludes, while the Geneva "translators aimed to spiritualize the vestments and ornaments of the past" they "also created a new materialization of spirituality" through the technology of the scholarly Bible and printed text, which was intended to edify the faithful.[35] In the early modern context, "religious materiality" came to depend on a renewed "semiotic and symbolic" life in the relations between old and new religious cultures.[36] The materials of religious worship, in Protestant practice, were embedded in contested relations between old and new, human and divine, as encapsulated in the critical, but also often contested, intercessory stony media.

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[30] "The 'Ornament of the Law': Vestments and the Translation of Judaism in the Geneva Bible," *Prose Studies* 37, no. 3 (2015): 161–80.

[31] Ibid., 162.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2.

[34] Moore, "The 'Ornament of the Law': Vestments and the Translation of Judaism in the Geneva Bible," 176.

As even the Old Testament exemplar of Aaron's stony breastplate reveals, the concern for the material ornaments as a religious artifact that might ensnare Protestant readers with vestiges of Old Testament, Jewish ritual, and Catholic idolatry remain. This complex English religious environment rendered engraved stones especially charged material with which to speak across terrestrial human, and supernatural divine, realms. Reginald Scot's *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (publ.1584), for example, includes a chapter dedicated to "the propheticall use of the twelve precious stones" of Aaron's Ephod and their containing "of the divine voice called Eccho."[37] Scot recalls how the "priests by the brightnesse of the twelve pretious stones contained therein, could prognosticate or expound any thing" but that since that time "no answers were yielded thereby of Gods will and pleasure" and that calling upon such entities might as likely produce a devil as a message from God.[38] In Scot's concern, we catch a glimpse of what we saw in Merlin's tomb: that "charactered" stone might "prognosticate" but also materialize supernatural visions, as in the genealogical shades of Bradamante's progeny. The "Eccho" vivified, and vilified, in Scot's condemnation recalls how Echo's myth might be recruited for unorthodox Christian afterlives. The ongoing controversy over engraved stones or metal shows how they touched a religious nerve sensitive enough to elicit condemnations of sorcery, demonology, and idolatry along both sides of the Protestant and Catholic divide. Engraved stone might be an intercessory media to access God, but a devil might be just as likely to answer the call.

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Suzanna Ivanic, Mary Laven, and Andrew Morrall, eds. *Religious Materiality in the Early Modern World* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 21.

[37] Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 9.5.

[38] Ibid.

A contested area of early modern science that held occult resonance to the theological debates over the role of Aaron's breastplate and its stones was the cultural practice of engraving stones with sigils to produce talismans that could then be worn as protective, intercessory media. As witchcraft historian Stuart Clark explains "talismans could be thought to work if pneumatic links were assumed between *spiritus* and *materia* and if the characters and figures placed on them were capable of natural activity."[39] Although talismans could be almost any material, in his history of early modern lapidaries, Tom Blaen demonstrates that talismans were frequently "marked" precious stones.[40] Blaen explains how wearing a gem for various kinds of protection or enhancements "was acceptable so long as its actions could be seen as natural," i.e. in accordance with the inner virtues possessed of the stone.[41] The "virtue" resonant within stone, in short, might be harnessed, directed, and activated by binding it to written character. As the example of Aaron's engraved stones illustrates, the vital property of the stones themselves might be leveraged by the priest or practitioner to reveal hidden knowledge and to access the divine or supernatural realm. In this way, the engraved stones provide a pathway for an individual human as the micro- within the cosmos to access the macro-realm of the celestial and divine.

The early modern world inherits a rich medieval practice of using particular kinds of stones, gems, and rocks for their alleged virtues. Kellie Robertson details how medieval natural philosophy thought of rocks as "endowed with quasi-animate powers of charisma" that might traffic between human and more-than-human desires to compel and repel human bodies.[42] As Valerie Allen notes, the special powers of particular minerals and stones were often bound to particular saints so that the worlds of hagiography and lapidary were chiastic.[43] This late medieval heritage demonstrates how the power inherent within mineral matter and the holy power of the priest or saint might conjoin to effect and direct human relations in a manner that recalls the office of the high priest Aaron in rabbinic and Jewish practice. Albertus Magnus provides copious examples for how the particular virtue of a mineral or stone might be activated by the practician who understood the various sympathies within different types of stones. A stone's hidden virtues might only be seen and understood in its effects. As one example, Allen describes how a *crystallus* (rock crystal) might be administered under the tongue to decrease thirst. An observer might intuit its mineral powers through its effect.[44] In such cases, minerals might influence or determine human health and appetites.

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[39] Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 219.

[40] Blaen, *Medical Jewels, Magical Gems*, 147.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Robertson, *Nature Speaks*, 39. See also 238–40.

[43] Allen, "Mineral Virtue," 123–52.

This sense of a mineral charisma did not entirely disappear in the early modern period, despite mounting religious wariness. These theories persist into the early modern period, although even thinkers as occult-minded as the Italian Marsilio Ficino worry that engraving of stones might be religiously suspect and thus maintain as ambivalent a position as possible.[45] Another Italian, the mathematician and astrologer, Girolomo Cardano, saw a talisman's efficacy to stem from a conjunction between the nature of the mark or engraving, the material, the governing planet, and the individual person wielding or wearing it.[46] The German alchemist Paracelsus went further to argue that sigils and engraving were necessary to enhance inherent stony virtues so that a "magus can transfer many meadows of heaven into a small pebble" and keep the heavenly power until needed.[47] The macrocosm, the power of heaven, might thus be bound to the engraved stone and stored for use by the "magus," or individual. Paracelsianism was not without its controversy, but it usefully suggests the extent to which a talisman's powers inhered in the conjoined nature of stone and engraved sign or word.

English writers drew from continental thinkers like Ficino and Paracelsus with varying degrees of skepticism that did not always strictly adhere to what one might assume to be Catholic or more radical, Reformed Protestant positions. Again Blaen usefully traces the intellectual inheritance of pro- and anti- engraving divisions to note that even the schoolmaster and radical polemicist and skeptic of witchcraft, John Webster (1611–1682), follows Paracelsus in arguing that words themselves might draw heavenly power if framed and harnessed under an auspicious planet and fixed to objects.[48]

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[44] Ibid., 137–8.

[45] Blaen, *Medical Jewels, Magical Gems*, 147.

[46] For full citation from Girolamo Cardano *De Rerum Varietate* (1557), see P. G. Maxwell-Stuart, *The Occult in Early Modern Europe: A Documentary History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 124.

[47] Cited from *Paracelsus Astronomia Magna* (*c.*1537) in Blaen, *Medical Jewels, Magical Gems*, 149.

[48] Ibid., 149–50. Blaen also explores how in contrast to the later Webster, the earlier skeptic of witchcraft, Reginald Scot, condemned engraving in *Discoverie of Witchacraft* Book: XIII, chapter: 7, at 169.

Webster's belief in alchemy and natural magic in Reformed universities led him to stress the nature of divine illumination as being aided by the conjunction of words with matter.[49] This strain of thought may explain part of the popularity for metal talismans in England across the long Reformation; even Queen Elizabeth allegedly possessed a gold metal talisman "full of characters" that she resorted to towards the end of her life.[50] In these cases, the material that was engraved mattered.

Evidence for the continuing hold of such stones that might activate particular powers, or virtues, exists across the Shakespearean canon, from narrative poems to drama. Mary Floyd-Wilson, for instance, argues that the forsaken woman in Shakespeare's "A Lover's Complaint," reveals how she was seduced by precious stones accompanied by a series of sonnets that detail their occult virtues. Notably the "double voice" the narrator hears in the poem is explicitly, an echo (ln. 3).[51] Floyd-Wilson argues that the stone emits unseen but material effluvia that "collect and distribute the virtues and passions of humans and nonhumans."[52] The young man draws from the force within the stones to seduce the maid. Floyd-Wilson demonstrates how the early modern English understood that their physical body and its affective passions might be influenced by the invisible virtues in the natural world that had a profound sympathetic and antipathetic effect on humans.[53] Her research confirms the lines spoken by Friar Laurence in *Romeo & Juliet* who expounds on the "powerful grace that lies / In plants, herbs, stones, and their true qualities" (2.2.15–16). Cerimon too will extol a similar virtue in *Pericles* when he praises the virtue that "dwells in vegetives, in metals, stones" (3.2.36).

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[49] See Antonio Clericuzio, "Webster, John (1611–1682), Schoolmaster and Polemicist," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Although an eclectic thinker who provoked controversy from other Anglican divines and puritan preachers, Webster's thought shows how even within a Reformed curricula there might be room for a simultaneous "search of natural languages and the study of the Paracelsian doctrine of signatures."

[50] Blaen, *Medical Jewels, Magical Gems*, 150. Blaen finds this story about Queen Elizabeth as recorded in the relations of Lady Southwell on the late queen's death and republished Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*, vol. 4, 4th ed. (London, 1854), 769–70. This account recalls how Sir John Stanhope came and "presented her [Queen Elizabeth] with a piece of gold of the bigness of an angel, full of characters, which he said an old woman in Wales had bequeathed to her . . . by virtue of the piece of gold, lived to the age of 120 years," but then wishing to die, she passed it along to the queen.

[51] All citations to Shakespeare, "A Lover's Complaint," in Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*.

[52] Floyd-Wilson, "The Preternatural Ecology of 'a Lover's Complaint,'" 43–53 at 46.

[53] *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage.*

Notably, in the seduction tale of "A Lover's Complaint," the power of the "fair" stones is aided by "th'annexions" or additions of "deep-brained sonnets that did amplify / Each stone's dear nature, worth, and quality," which "enriched" their affect (lns. 208–10). Using engraved stone talismans for their harnessing of heavenly powers to sway human passions and fates was popular enough to be mocked in the late seventeenth century in Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* (first part publ.1663, all three parts first printed together 1684). In it, the mock hero, Hudibras, empties the pockets of the notorious cheat Sidrophel to find

> several Constellation-stones,
> Engrav'd in Planetary hours,
> That over Mortals had strange powers
> To make 'em thrive in Law, or Trade;
> And stab, or poyson, to evade;
> In Wit, or Wisdom to improve,
> And be victorious in Love. (3.3.1096–102)[54]

Hudibras calls attention to these "constellation" stones as possessing heavenly powers, in part, due to their being "engrav'd" by the "planetary" signs that then wielded "strange powers" to evoke love, produce wit, and even alter human fate. Lapidary belief—and mineral charisma—thus plays a part in overlapping spheres of religion, natural magic and natural philosophy, and the poetry of seduction. Their role within Judaic but also within medieval Catholic culture as forms of contact relics revealed the circulation between celestial and terrestrial, divine and human, supernatural and natural. They remain a potent cultural force despite Reformed attempts to supersede them. They were equally fabulous and suspicious. But above all, engraved stones were saturated with meaning, power, and magnetic attraction.[55]

The prevalence of intercessory stones shows a mutual inclination, an attractive force, between nonhuman or more-than-human matter and human art and ritual.[56] Engraved stones rely on the combined properties of the lithic entity and the sigil or words, a relationship less rivalrous than symbiotic. To use the terms of Bruno Latour, we might conceptualize the relationship as an assemblage wherein stone's natural virtue of endurance enhances the reach of human voice to forge, as Merlin's tomb demonstrates, a "liveliness" whose reverberation echoes across time, across death. The examples of Aaron's stony breastplate and the common use of stony talismans and sigils demonstrate the latent power of binding words to stone. It lays the groundwork for understanding how the reverse of this pattern might too create a mutual sympathy, rather than only a hierarchical relation, when stone is bound to words.

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[54] Samuel Butler, *Hudibras in Three Parts* (London: Printed, and are to be sold by W. Rogers, 1684).

[55] My reading of the importance of the matter to these religious and occult talismans draws in part from the insights of Ulinka Rublack, "Matter in the Material Renaissance," *Past and Present* 219, no. 1 (2013): 41–85. See also Bynum, *Christian Materiality*.

[56] For a discussion focused on how significant cultural objects become evocative, see also Lorraine Daston, *Things That Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science* (New York: Zone Books, 2004).

Inscribing the Poetic Vault

In this final chapter section, I challenge the assertion that immaterial poetic fame supersedes its material counterparts. Rather, I propose that writers actively recruit material matter as they seek to bind their words with stone. The result is what I term "sepúlchral verse" wherein the poetry itself becomes sepulcher and tomb, chiseled from and engraved in stone that inters the human reader. To do so, I read two of the most commonly recruited lyrics in the cause of "writings last": Shakespeare's Sonnet 55 and Milton's "On Shakespeare."

Shakespeare's Sonnet 55 occurs about a third of the way through a poetic sonnet sequence that proposes a "preservation fantasy" that seemingly touts "powerful rhyme" to outlast other bearers of human memory, such as sexual reproduction or "gilded monuments."[57] I include it in its entirety here:

> Not marble nor the gilded monuments
> Of princes shall outlive this pow'rful rhyme,
> But you shall shine more bright in these conténts
> Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.
> When wasteful war shall statues overturn,

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[57] Aaron Kunin, "Shakespeare's Preservation Fantasy," *PMLA* 124, no. 1 (2009): 92–106. John Archer summarizes this sentiment as the sonnet providing a "ringing endorsement of verse as something better than the gilded monuments of princes," although Archer notes that it does contains ironies, in Archer, *Technically Alive: Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 101–2. Similar sentiments underlie other poetic epitaphs. See, for example, "On Sir Thomas Bodley's Library" that shows a similar obsession around transforming flesh (blood, bones) to ink in order to possess "eternity" but also "life" "unto the Resurrection-day," Vaughan, *Henry Vaughan: The Complete Poems*, 336–7.

> And broils root out the work of masonry,
> Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
> The living record of your memory.
> 'Gainst death and all oblivious enmity
> Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room,
> Ev'n in the eyes of all posterity
> That wear this world out to the ending doom.
> So, till the judgement that yourself arise,
> You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.[58]

Deeply engaged within the *scripta manent* tradition of Whitney's emblem and its numerous classical precedents, the poem's opening lines are quite literally an echo chamber of famous lines where poets vaunt to have completed monuments more lasting. Its opening quatrain negates marble and monuments to assert that "rhyme" will outlast "unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time." The grammatical thrust of the sentence leads to this conclusion; yet as in the engraving or the *pictura* to Whitney's emblem, the stanzaic rhyme progression poses a countercurrent to the lines' grammatical syntax. The "monuments" are transfigured into the "contents," and "time" supersedes "rhyme" as the last word in the quatrain. As Stephen Booth (among others) writes, the third line, "in these conténts," casts the poem's lines themselves as a type of "receptacle" that "carries the suggestion of 'in this coffin.'"[59] In this reading, one might visualize the constraint of the sonnet form itself to construct the monument or sepulcher, within which echoes might then reverberate as they did within Christ's and Merlin's tomb vaults.

But "conténts" has yet another possible, now obsolete, sense: *OED*, n.3 of a "contention, dispute, or quarrel." This additional meaning adds a complicating textual layer. The sonnet-sepulcher reverberates (or we might say "echoes") with the quarrel between a material and an immaterial endurance. The echoing quarrel is what endures. Both monument and verse might be "besmeared" or outlasted by time's inexorable pollution. The implied neglect in the "unswept stone" might extend to the sonnet itself once its "conténts" or quarrels are no longer rehearsed or read. As I demonstrated with the Mosaic stone tablets, their perdurance relies on the assemblage of stone, inscription, and human interpreter or reader.

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[58] Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 228–29.
[59] Ibid., 228.

This meaning takes more precedence when considered with the intervening lines which claim that the beloved, the "you" will "shine more bright" in the poem's "conténts" than in "unswept stone." The phrasing equates a memorial endurance with the qualities of light to "shine" and be "bright." It raises two possibilities: First, might the "you" be producing the light or might the subjective "you" be reflective of light (like a moon or planet) cast by the sonnet lines, the "conténts"? If the latter, one might then scroll down to *OED* "Bright" adj. and n.3 where "bright" refers to a "gem" or other "highly reflective light," a verbal echo that circles back to an insistent material, lithic presence even in something as seemingly immaterial as light. Like a neglected tomb, an unread sonnet, encasing a gemlike reflective "you," will cease to shine, its "conténts" or quarrels silenced without future hosts or readers.

The first stanza of the sonnet establishes the verse form as a "receptacle," "monument," or tomb composed of lines with "rhyme" that oddly, too, ends in "time." The stanza's crossed rhyme pattern of ABAB mimics a reflective, but also reverberatory linguistic echo. It concludes with "time," and in the absence of any future B-rhymes, forecloses possibility for further rhyme, at least within the schema of an English, or Shakespearean, sonnet. Written verse, or for that matter any written language, is, as András Kiséry notes in an unpublished work, "always already the language of the dead," because it speaks posthumously.[60] The poetic verse, and voice, is an echo, disembodied, but now, like Echo, turned from bone to sonnet stone vault.

The second stanza seemingly elaborates the perdurance of the verbal echo, as "living record" outlasts the ravages of Mars (war) and its fires. "[S]tatues," frequently, although not exclusively, of mineral matter, whether a metal such as bronze, marble alabaster, or jeat, might be cast down and "broils" (that is, quarrels) might destroy the foundational matter of "masonry." Yet as Stephen Booth notes, the "phonetic likeness and mythological identification" traditionally "paired destroyers *sword* and *fire*," in ways that, despite the assertion of an immortal verse, calls to mind the "flimsiness and vulnerability of anything written on paper."[61] In particular, it calls to mind paper's vulnerability to flame. And, once again, oddly the rhyme progression undermines the claim of the stanza: "masonry" becomes "memory." "Memory," according to *OED*, n.1, relates to the "action or process of commemoration, esp. of the dead."

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[60] I'm grateful to András Kiséry for sharing with me part of an unpublished chapter, András Kiséry, "The Voice and the Vault."

[61] *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 229.

The third stanza builds on the idea of the sonnet as edifice, with its invocation of the beloved having "room" where "you" "Shall . . . pace forth," a "living memory" that obviates oblivion. But notably that existence is one reflected in "the eyes of all posterity" as they "pace" or steadily move forward through the sonnet's verse vault. Their paces "wear this world out" as if even geologic time might not match the longevity of the beloved's memory. Yet again, this verbal vault or "room" concludes in the final stanzaic cross rhyme of "doom." The bright, shining "you," of the first stanza exists as but a reflection in the eyes of posthumous "after" readers. It is, then, left to the concluding couplet to effect the resurrection and ongoing present tense "live" that the sonnet proclaims at its outset. Its final terms imply radically different parameters for the limits—and life—of the human.

Yet, even here, as I will argue further in the concluding chapter 9, the sonnet's recourse to the Day of Judgment further retrenches the lithic presence. The "living record" relies on the eschatological Christian understanding of the day of doom as being the Day of Judgment. Here, and then, the sonnet proclaims, the poem's beloved "you" will "arise"—an iambic allusion whose rising rhythm underscores St. John's vision in the book of Revelation. The "doom," ruin and death, will be overturned by a universal resurrection or rising up of the dead, a triumph over death and mortality. St. John's vision recounts how at this time, there will be a translation of select humans, saints, to the New Jerusalem, a crystalline, but ultimately, stony city. Herein lies one of the subtle ironies of the sonnet: Should the young man rise again and be judged worthy of an immortal life, his renewed life will be one of "dwelling" or inhabiting an eternal, heavenly, lithic monument; a city of precious stone. Even the final line of seeming human embodiment in "lover's eyes" invokes a miniaturized reflection rather than an immortal soul.

In proclaiming its verbal victory, the poem constructs itself from the material negation of its own lithic metaphor; it builds itself from *the material it purports to supersede.* Like Whitney's emblem, despite the verbal assertion of immortality, the realization of the fragility of paper (which burns more readily than stone) and the books that bind the words on paper haunts the poem, leading to the proposition that other human hosts (as gestured to synecdochically by "lovers' eyes") bear the memory until the final couplet that foresees the potential for translation, a resurrection, an "arising" into the New Jerusalem, a city of stone. The lithic paradox seals the vault. Throughout the sonnet, despite the poet's declaration of verbal supersession, a stony imaginary buttresses human endurance. Its lyric voice constructs a sepúlchral vault, a monumental human writ in stone. The sonnet form itself, which unlike other classical forms of verse, concludes in its couplet, negating any possible response, or even Echo, as its finality of form does not allow for a chorus, a call and response, or an epistrophe to its strophe. Rosalie L. Colie notes that a characteristic feature of sonnets is that they are a closed literary form.[62] The monumental sepúlchered verse, however, has not simply preserved or immortalized either the speaker or the "you" of the sonnet. Rather, it has invoked the echoing vault as a place of transformative identity. The idea of a "living" human presence is challenged in that the afterlife of the poetic "you" is forever altered or at least exists in a strangely inhuman reflection that resonates within the sepúlchral verse.

After Shakespeare's sonnets, Milton's "On Shakespeare" stands as one of the most well-known and oft-cited exemplars that critics point to as evidence for how "powerful rhyme" "shall outlive" the marble, and gilded monuments of Princes. Exemplary in this regard is Jenny C. Mann's argument that the poem reveals the physicality of language wherein the "living" subject to be moved is the reader. Her reading of the occult relationships between word and human embodiment conclude that "petrification and death" are synonymous and that the reader runs a risk of being "deadened by a turn to stone."[63] While I agree with her analysis of the physical power of language, I question the conclusion that to be turned to stone equates death. John Guillory similarly sees Milton's lyric as oppositional to the fluid motion of Shakespeare's verse because it induces the reader into stasis. For Guillory and Mann, Milton's transformation of Shakespeare's readers into stony figures is negative: a "condition of paralysis" not unlike "being buried alive."[64] The upshot of this critical tradition concludes that "eloquence in the early modern mind equals a particular force differentiated from the material under its sway."[65] To be monumentalized in stone was to fall under a spell of an insentient petrification, that is, to die and fall into oblivion like the marble tomb monuments of kings.

When Milton's "On Shakespeare" appears as part of the Second Folio of Shakespeare's plays (1632), it appears under the title of an *Epitaph on the*

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[62] I'm indebted to András Kiséry for reminding me of this discussion in Rosalie L. Colie, *Shakespeare's Living Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974).

[63] Mann, "The Orphic Physics of Early Modern Eloquence," 231–56 at 40.

[64] John D. Guillory, *Poetic Authority: Spenser, Milton, and Literary History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); and Mann, "The Orphic Physics of Early Modern Eloquence," 244.

[65] "The Orphic Physics of Early Modern Eloquence," 246. See also Leah Knight, "Orpheus and the Poetic Animation of the Natural World," in *The Automaton in English Renaissance Literature*, ed. Wendy Beth Hyman, Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity (Surrey, England: Routledge, 2011), 79–94.

Admirable Dramatic Poet W. Shakespear. The heading calls attention to its status as an epitaph, a verse, as we've seen, typically engraved in stone above a tomb. The poem's heading thus invites its readers to find the poem below to be the tomb, the sepulcher, whose characters are scored on quarried stone. Its imaginative conceit relies on lithic inscription. If we step back to widen the lens, Milton's poem itself, too, resides in a physical, material object, the referenced "unvalu'd Book" of line 11.[66] Although a modern reader might construe this to mean "not valuable," its early modern connotation was quite the opposite: a "precious" or "extremely great or valuable" book.[67] That is, the poetic epitaph of Milton's poem resides within a material object that might be construed as a sepulcher for—and of—Shakespeare's verse. But this sepulcher, like the tomb of Christ or that of Merlin, does not simply herald death. Like Merlin's voice which prophesies from within his marble tomb, an oracular voice resonates within Milton's poem. Just a few lines later the verse explicitly invokes the second Folio's "Delphic lines" (ln. 12). The allusion to the Delphic oracle recalls the inspiration received by poets at Apollo's shrine in Delphos. The Delphic resonance with divine inspiration also calls to mind the intercessory Geneva Bible whose descriptive recounting was critical to memory of the stony material necessary to Aaron's intercession and communication with the divine.

I quote Milton's "On Shakespeare" in full:

> What needs my Shakespeare for his honor'd Bones,
> The labor of an age in piled stones,
> Or that his hallow'd relics should be hid
> Under a Star-ypointing *Pyramid*?
> Dear son of memory, great heir of Fame,
> What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
> Thou in our wonder and astonishment
> Hast built thyself a livelong Monument.
> For whilst to th' shame of slow-endeavouring art,
> Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
> Hath from the leaves of thy unvalu'd Book
> Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
> Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,

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[66] Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 63–4.

[67] See Hughes's n.11, ibid., and "unvalued," adj., *OED*. I am grateful to Gregory Mackie and Vin Nardizzi for reminding me of this resonance in their work of bringing a copy of Shakespeare's Folio to the University of British Columbia's Rare Books Library in 2021–22.

Dost make us Marble with too much conceiving;
And so Sepúlcher'd in such pomp dost lie,
That Kings for such a Tomb would wish to die.[68]

A sixteen-line lyric written in rhyming couplets of iambic pentamer, the poem invites comparison to the sonnet forms of Shakespeare even as it extends its length. It thereby "outlives," by two lines, Shakespeare's sonnet. Moreover, the poem's volta after line six gestures to the Italian or Petrarchan sonnet that consists of two parts: typically an octave followed by a sestet. Except that here the sestet poses the questions that then inform the extended octave's reply. As John Savoie argues, the poem is a "gateway" for Milton to range "widely among the Sonnets" (of Shakespeare) and to explore a "variety of topoi, images, and key words including monuments, tombs, royalty, and stars, to link, and sometimes oppose sonnet to sonnet."[69] Whereas Savoie concludes (following a long venerable critical tradition) that both "Shakespeare and Milton reject the crudeness of material monuments for the better remembrances of posterity," I argue the two sepúlchral verses carve tombs imagined to lie next to—and speak to—one another in the memory of future readers.[70]

The six-line opening sestet poses two related questions: "what needs" *Shakespeare* to have his "bones" in "piled stones" or his "relics" hid beneath a "Star-ypointing *Pyramid?*" A surface reading of the rhetorical answer to these entangled questions proposes that the stones and "pyramid" (also presumably a stony monument, and likely an obelisk) are "weak witness" (ln. 6). But if we read these lines with the context of sepulchers as energy-charged sites of transformative power, we might reconstrue their power to channel witness. Within the sestet, the imagery opens with the material calculi of human bone, which the rhyme transforms into "Stones" (ln. 2). These "Stones," then, are presumably the "relics" whose pyramidal shape "points" towards the "Star." Critics often see Milton rejecting this pyramidal monument, a reference that may well be influenced by an epitaph on Sir Edward Stanley that describes "sky-aspiring Piramides" as being "outlived" by the epitaphic lines.[71] But we might linger a moment longer on this, literally, "pointing" image.

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[68] *Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 63–4.

[69] John Savoie, "Monuments Men: Milton on Shakespeare," *Literary Imagination* 19, no. 1 (2017): 19–29 at 20.

[70] Ibid.

[71] The Stanley Epitaphs are widely thought to be influential on Milton, see Gordon Campbell, "Shakespeare and the Youth of Milton," *Milton Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1999): 95–105.

"Pyramids," that might yet still be seen, albeit dilapidated, in Rome, were, according to early humanists such as the Italian Niccolò Perotti, the large mass constructions that tapered from the broad base to a point. In typical humanist fashion, Perotti also speculates on a relationship between material structure and the etymology for its name. "Pyramid" derives from "their resemblance to flames, since the Greek call fire *pur*" and thus signals their elemental upward thrust whose top points towards the heavens; relatedly, obelisks were stone beams, smaller than pyramids, but dedicated to the sun god and meant to resemble a "ray."[72] They were material structures that pointed the gaze upward to the celestial realm above. But these sky-pointing stones were also understood to be tombs and were frequently inscribed with ancient writing or hieroglyphs. These early humanist glosses on "Pyramids" suggest that in the Renaissance many scholars would have been familiar with the multiple layers of meaning that clung to these heaps of engraved stones. They were terrestrial conduits, shrines of death, pointing towards the stars and divinity beyond in the afterlife.

Their potential power took on a significance similar to the engraved talismanic stones thought to contain within them virtues of the heavens. Stony pyramids and obelisks might harness the power of planets and stars via their inscription. Furthermore, the European revival of interest in Egyptian obelisks from the late fourteenth century onwards attracted the attention of astronomers who were interested in their inscriptions as well as in their use as royal tombs.[73] These astronomers and early humanists sought a connection between the "sacred letters of the Egyptians" and their material form which points to the "starry" (and sunny) heavens. Pilgrims were known to chip off small pieces to use in incantations. Others, such as the architect Leon Battista Alberti, sought to measure them and provide an accurate description of them and their material composition as a way to understand their charismatic power.[74] In short, the power of obelisks or pyramids to bind or transmit starry or heavenly power to aid divination bound up with ancient tombs fascinated many early moderns.

The pyramid and obelisk also became connected to the religious and philosophical dialogues attributed to the Egyptian sage, and critical figure within European alchemy, Hermes Trismegistus, whose supposed emerald tablet contains the formula for the philosopher's stone, the ultimate transformative elixir.[75] In the *Asclepius*, Hermes Trismegistus predicted that after the destruction of Egypt, only "words sculped in stone would survive to attest to the pious of the Egyptians."[76] The stony remains of pyramids and obelisks pointed to a lost astrology and ancient secrets of medicine, powers of divination, and predictions of the future. In a 1589 book *Concerning the Obelisks of Rome*, Michele Mercati, the personal physician of the pope, concludes that this manner of writing and inscribing stone was meant to "preserve memory for the long term."[77] While much of the fascination with pyramids and obelisks radiated from Rome in the wake of Pope Sixtus's revitalization, one did not have to visit Rome to see such wonders. Protestants too might see and read about them in a growing trade of lavishly illustrated publications. As Curran wryly notes in his study of the widespread reception of Egyptian "pyramids" across Christian Europe in the Renaissance, most of the attention was devoted less to the theme of Christian supersession or triumph, and more to the object of that triumph that the stony piles embodied.[78] The polymath Athanasius Kircher continued the fascination with carved, inscribed stone obelisks into the seventeenth century and published a richly illustrated volume, the *Obeliscus Pamphilius* (1650). Scholars have speculated that Milton's interest in the music of the heavenly spheres in early works such as the "Nativity Ode" may draw from some of Kircher's theories on cosmic harmony.[79] How might the cosmic power of the stars be drawn to—and harnessed in—the terrestrial? Via stone. The "pyramid" is not merely Savoie's or earlier critics' "inanimate earthbound object" but a dynamic intercessory pathway between earth and heaven.[80]

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[72] Cited in Brian A. Curran, Anthony Grafton, Pamela O. Long, and Benjamin Weiss, eds. *Obelisk: A History* (Cambridge, MA: Burndy Library 2009), 83.

[73] See ibid., 61–79.

[74] Ibid., 74, 77.

In light of the complex symbolic and material presence of the "Starypointing *Pyramid*," one might find, in the opening sestet, a meditation on how a "pyramid," is, in actuality, a powerful, charged witness to ancient "bones," and might, thus, provide a template for a "livelong Monument." A stony monument that transmits a human "thou" (Shakespeare) and "our" (Milton, the reader) via "Sepúlcher'd" verse (ln. 8), whose "easy numbers" are calculated to turn each "heart" (ln. 10) to "make us Marble" (ln. 14). To be turned to stone by poetic inscription is the transfigurative key to "livelong."

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[75] Ibid., 85 and following. The Hermetic dialogue were presented as the *Pimander* and also formed part of the inscription on the so-called emerald tablet discussed in greater length above.

[76] Ibid., 155.

[77] Cited in ibid.

[78] Ibid., 162.

[79] Helen Williams and Peter Williams, "Milton and Music; or the Pandaemonic Organ," *The Musical Times* 107, no. 1483 (1966): 760–3.

[80] Savoie, "Monuments Men," 24.

The poetic sensibility of a "living stone" that Milton here invokes finds echo in some of the poems included within Robert Herrick's *Hesperides* (publ. 1648).[81] In "His Poetrie his Pillar," the poetic narrator imagines but a "flying minute" until he must "bid the world Good-night" (lns. 5, 4). The memorial that the poet seeks is his poetic pillar that will endure while many others "rot" forgot in "vaults beneath" (lns. 14–5). But, the poetic voice proclaims, "behold this living stone" that "I reare for me" that might be "my *Pyramides*" (lns. 17–18, 24). This sentiment is typographically underscored by the last piece in the book titled "The Pillar of Fame," Figure 8.4, a shaped poem whose form, like that of Herbert's "The Altar," is critical to its meaning. Shaped simultaneously as a pillar and a capital "I," the poem asks the eye to see a "living stone" that the poem enacts on the page.[82] It invokes the virtue, "charm'd and enchanted so" that might inhere within the special virtues of sepúlchral verse. The pillar's final foundation "firm" rests on lines engraved in the paradox of stony supersession. The poetic funerary monument is bound to the corpora of the poet's life engraved within an epitaph that will speak on his behalf to future generations.

In Milton's poem, critical to this transfigurative turn is the affective readerly experience, "our wonder and astonishment," which comprises the volta from the questioning sestet to the extended ten-line octave response. What "needs" has one of a pyramid when the embodied human—heart and all—might metamorphose into "livelong" marble? The inscriptive act of writing, and of reading, the sepúlchural lyric transforms the human back into the material conduit of memory. Like the Old Testament tablets of stone, transformed by the New Testament into word, and inscribed in flesh, the process turns words (and their humans) into epitaphic statues. As Ross Lerner writes in a longer discussion of petrification in *Paradise Lost*, the "oscillation between petrification" and a dynamic metamorphic flow or transformation, is a "long-standing interest" of Milton in the "affective complexity that inhere in astonishment."[83] But while for Lerner to be "astonished" is proleptic of a postlapsarian experience of immobility and death, I suggest in "On Shakespeare," we find a paradoxical after life in affective astonishment.

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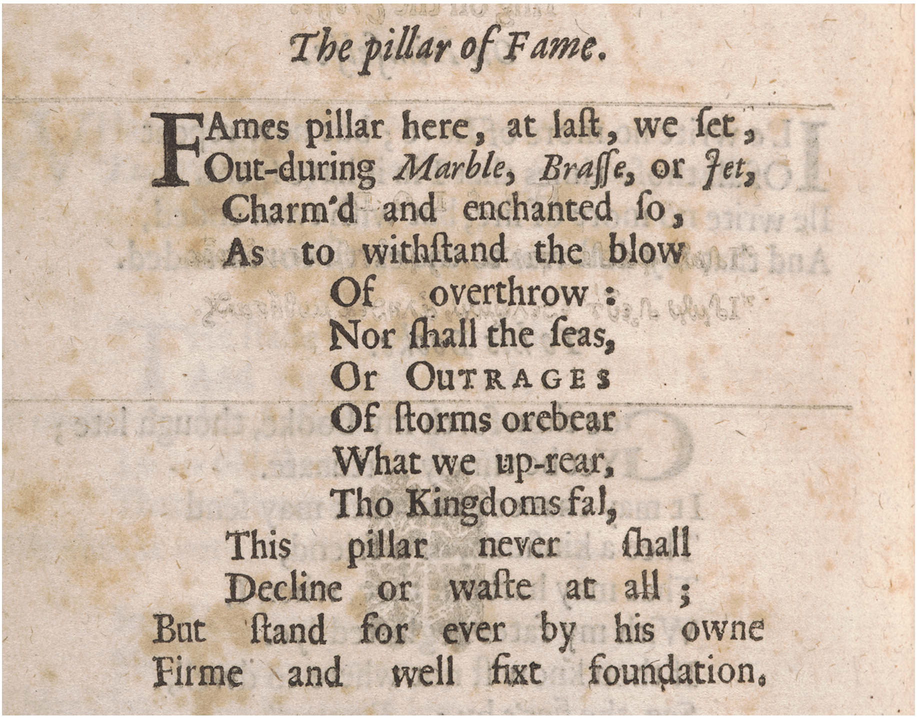
[81] Robert Herrick, *Hesperides: Or, the Works Both Humane & Divine of Robert Herrick* (London: Printed for John Williams, and Francis Eglesfield, and are to be sold by Tho: Hunt, Book-seller in Exon, 1648), sig. G8^{v}.

[82] Ibid., sig. Cc7^{v}.

[83] Lerner, "The Astonied Body in *Paradise Lost*," 433–61 at 435.



The pillar of Fame.

FAmes pillar here, at laſt, we ſet,
Out-during *Marble*, *Braſſe*, or *Jet*,
Charm'd and enchanted ſo,
As to withſtand the blow
Of overthrow:
Nor ſhall the ſeas,
Or OUTRAGES
Of ſtorms orebear
What we up-rear,
Tho Kingdoms fal,
This pillar never ſhall
Decline or waſte at all;
But ſtand for ever by his owne
Firme and well fixt foundation.

Figure 8.4 "The Pillar of Fame" from Robert Herrick's *Hesperides; or, the Works Both Humane and Divine of Robert Herrick Esq.* (London: Printed for John Williams and Francis Eglesfield, and are to be sold by Tho. Hunt, 1648), sig. Cc7^{v}, RB 105743.

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To "wonder" might literally mean a "systole of the heart," a pause in the operations of a fleshly human organ that might then turn to stone.[84] For, as discussed elsewhere, "astonishment's" etymological parallels saw it abbreviated to "stonish," which implies having or resembling "the character of a stone."[85] As Lerner suggests, "astonied" likely derives from the Latin *extonare* or to be "stunned" out of oneself. A potential pun that Lerner reads as closely related to "*stunona*" which is the Old English word for "*stan* or stone."[86] The affective thrust of the line suggests that the affective "wonder" stops the heart and the following "astonishment" turns it to stone. The poem reinforces this hint a few lines later when "lines with deep impressions," that is with engraving, "dost make us marble." We are, the poem suggests, the stony tablets of testimony or witness to Shakespeare's relics, his "art." The inverted adjective–participle compound of "live-long" (as opposed to long-lived memory) highlights across its hyphenation the conjunction of the human, the "life" or "live" with the "long" endurance of the lithic monument. Buried in its etymological development are the etymons that contribute to the confusion between "live" as an adjective and "live" as a verb.[87] Its effect produces a seemingly oxymoronic pregnant sepulcher, a reading given a further underscoring by the feminine endings of the penultimate rhymed couplet that turns "bereaving" into "conceiving." The lyric is not merely a sepúlchral tomb; it is also a "conceiving" womb.

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[84] Albertus Magnus conceived of "wonder" as a "systole of the heart;" for a longer discussion see Peter G. Platt, *Reason Diminished: Shakespeare and the Marvelous* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

[85] *OED*, "astonish," v. forms.

The poem does not end with a sense of an insentient petrification; rather, Milton and his readers too are animated in a suspended dynamic moment of ossification. The poem's immaterial voice is not what triumphs or lasts; rather, the poem's insistent grounding in a paradoxically live stone matter creates an oracular Apollonian shrine. The mortal, fleshly, organic has been transmogrified into a lithic echo that extends the temporality, even as Milton's "On Shakespeare" extends beyond the conventional fourteen lines of a sonnet by a full couplet. The narrator, subject, and reader are all fixed into a conditional future where the final grammatical tense "would wish" belies its final word "die" as an always-future possibility. The individual reader turns to stone via the efficacy of the inscriptive words and is transmuted into a cosmic existence, fixed as the stars above. Not unlike the Deucalion and Pyrrha story, these sepúlchered lyrics play on a flux between the lithic and life. They remember that the stone remains within and that life itself may emerge from and dissolve into stone in a larger pattern of cosmic circularity. As Kiséry notes, "one cannot speak at one's own funeral service," but stone can, and the enchantment rests on the conscription of an engraved stony talisman that remains accessible via a literary reliquary whose foundational imaginary is stone.[88] The transcendence—and transmission—of the enshrined life is paradoxically grounded in the material.

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[86] Lerner, "The Astonied Body in *Paradise Lost*," 434.

[87] *OED*, "livelong," adj. origin and etymology.

[88] Kiséry, "The Voice and the Vault," 39.

Sepúlchred verse, stony sonnets, and marmoreal poetic coffins, like Milton's starry pointing pyramids, gesture towards the Gate of Paradise, a propositional hinge between realms and forms of existence. In book 4 of *Paradise Lost*, after Satan has completed his "sly circumspection" of the Garden of Eden, the angel Uriel glides to where Gabriel sits between "rocky Pillars" at the eastern Gate of Paradise to warn him of a strange Spirit's circling around Eden (4.537, 549).[89] Milton describes this eastern Gate as "a rock / Of Alabaster, pil'd up to the Clouds" and "winding with one ascent / Accessible from Earth" (4.543–5). This rocky plinth offers passage into heaven. As with Jacob's vision, the stony paves the way into the heavens and the afterlife. My next chapter considers how the lithic imagination does not end at the eastern Gate of Paradise but also manifests on the other side.

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[89] All citations of Milton are to Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose.*

9

The New Jerusalem, Geologic Election, and Lithic Afterlives in Heaven's Marble Vault

When in Act 3, Othello, deeply ensnared within Iago's deceptions, redoubles his vow for revenge, he swears "by yond marble heaven" the "due reverence of a sacred vow" (3.4.54–5).[1] Having just compared his steadfastness to the ebb and flow of the "Pontic Sea," Othello, feet planted on earth, makes the heavens surety for his words. All the hexameral domains—land, waters, and heaven—are called to witness Othello's vow. Locating ultimate authority, as well as deity above, Othello affords us a momentary glance into how the early modern world imagined life "yond"—the farther side of, or beyond, the life on earth. Although Othello intends "yond marble heaven" to be the "sacred" surety of his words, they also proleptically herald the play's tragic arc. By play's end, Othello will follow his murdered wife, Desdemona, into death, leaving behind "the hollow mine of earth" (4.2.78). The play enacts a human catastrophe on a domestic scale, and while it leaves its readers no vision of transcendence, or of life after death on earth, we might follow Othello's heavenward gaze to ask, *what* did the early modern mind imagine lay "yond" in the heavens? Perhaps more critically, Othello's vision also asks of its viewers, *who* might enter that "marble heaven"?

The *Lithic Imagination* opens with an exploration for how England's identity grew from geologic, rocky formations whose heritage provided a founding mythology for what would become its earthly empire. This vision, like that of Jacob's dream, founded itself on a lithic pillar of paternal imagining wherein Jacob, or Israel's seed, was seen to germinate, to reach even "up to heaven" (Genesis 28:12).[2] My exploration across this book has sought to visualize how this *scala naturae* might afford horizontal, interrelational

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[1] Citations of Shakespeare's plays are from Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*.

[2] All biblical citations are to *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*.

The Lithic Imagination from More to Milton. Tiffany Jo Werth, Oxford University Press. © Tiffany Jo Werth (2024).
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198903963.003.0010

drifts across kinds, undercutting the vertical thrust of the ladder imagery by focusing on its stony base and laying the groundwork for a variety of hybrid geographies. But while Jacob's dream looses a circular charismatic force that flattens ontologies of human exceptionalism, it also binds a notion of a particular seed, patriarch, and nation as being in kinship with stone. For Jacob's dream anticipates a cultural capital that inheres to stony proximity: of masculinity with its possession of the twinned fertility "stones," of Christianity with its cornerstone in the New Testament figure of Jesus, but also of whiteness as invoked by marble and alabaster's hue. Such a kinship, I have been suggesting, is double edged; it affords aspirational fantasies predicated on exclusion. Othello's gaze reminds us of the exclusions such a vision further affords. Jacob's dream seeds the dream vision of an elect that English Protestants—and their Puritan fringes—would embrace as a criterion, a touchstone, for who might reach "up to heaven," and thus, exist transfigured into a posthuman afterlife.

As exemplified by the *Norton Shakespeare*, most modern editions feel no need to gloss Othello's words. Presumably they are self-evident. Or, perhaps, we as an audience are meant to recognize Othello's misprision of the world around him just as he cannot see Iago's ill intent. Or, as Ian Smith writes, such seeming self-evidence results from critics' ignoring the dynamics of Othello's being marginalized because he is black and Muslim.[3] Both suggestions should prompt us to note the poetic, but strange, even counterfactual adjective–noun pairing of "marble" with "heaven." What is *marble* about the *heavens?* What cosmology does Shakespeare envision?

Marble's first, and most immediately obvious, sense as a noun relates it to stone, usually whitish in color (*OED*, n.I.1). Elsewhere in Shakespeare, in *Henry VIII*, it works metonymically as being the "material of which a tomb or tombstone is made" (*OED*, n.I.3).[4] Finally, it might also refer to a "mottled or dappled colour resembling that of variegated marble" (*OED*, n.I.4). Each of these potential connotations returns us to, or asks us to visualize, elements or conditions pertaining to earth and an embodied hue rather than the sky or the heavens: stone, death, marble. Othello's vision of an implicitly marbled, and hence usually white, heaven aligns with the play's concerns around darkness, illumination, Christian as opposed to Muslim faith, and its categories of European, English, and Moor.[5]

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[3] Ian Smith, "We Are Othello: Speaking of Race in Early Modern Studies," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2016): 104–24.

[4] The *OED* references *Henry VIII*: "When I am forgotten . . . and sleepe in dull cold Marble" (3.2.434). This is the voice of Cardinal Wolsey speaking to Cromwell.

What prompts Othello to conjoin "marble" with the "heavens"? An *Early English Books Online* (EEBO) TCP search, although by no means comprehensive due to its inherent database limitations, is nonetheless indicative of the singularity of Othello's phrasing. EEBO finds two uses, the first is that of Othello as printed in the 1623 Folio, and the second is Joshua Poole's 1657 collection of "choice epithets," *The English Parnassus*, that cites Othello. Othello's phrase appears in a section whose title "Wicked Foole. Voluptuous. Formes of protesting" should draw attention.[6] Poole's subsequent mid-seventeenth-century documentation points towards a reading where Othello's descriptive invocation of a "yond marble heaven" foreshadows his exclusion from the Christian afterlife and the death that ultimately silences his speech. Unlike Merlin whose tomb lives on and speaks, Othello imagines that Desdemona's deeds—and his own demise—herald a "hushed" place "within the hollow mine of earth" (4.2.78), an evocation of an emptied site of extraction and violence, not salvific grace and voice. An early modern, white, largely Anglican audience at the Globe Theatre might incline to concur with the scholar Joan Larsen Klein, who argues that Othello's strange vision of the heavens also signals his wickedness, as he can only perceive heaven as a nonbeliever or devil might: impenetrable. And, therefore, as stony rather than as a portal to the divine presence.[7]

What, then, is at stake if we comprehend the heavens as might a "wicked," "voluptuous," non-European, non-Christian, black Moor? If we read backwards from "heaven," some logic to Othello's strangely earthly heavens might appear. In his recreation of Shakespeare's "phenomenology of the sky," John Gillies begins by delineating the words used to describe sky. They include, he demonstrates, "Sky," "welkin," "vault," "heavens," "firmament," and "element."[8] Gillies parses the early modern sense of the words further into two classes, one of which comprises the words “Heaven/s,” “vault,” and “firmament,” wherein, he argues, the sky is understood as “an object of knowledge” that might be comprehended intellectually by the mind (rather than as it appears to the senses).

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[5] Foundational scholarship includes Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*, Oxford Shakespeare Topics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Ambereen Dadabhoy, "Two Faced: The Problem of Othello's Visage," in *Othello: The State of Play*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 121–47.

[6] Joshua Poole, *The English Parnassus, or, a Helpe to English Poesie* (London, Printed for Tho. Johnson, 1657), sig. Ss3^{v}.

[7] Joan Larsen Klein, "Iago and the Arts of Satan: A Homiletic Reading," *Cithara* 52, no. 1 (2012): 22–49 at 39.

[8] John Gillies, "Towards a Phenomenology of Shakespeare's Sky," *Linguaculture* 14, no. 1 (2023): 69–81 at 70. See also Sophie Chiari, "Climatic Issues in Early Modern England: Shakespeare's Views of the Sky," *WIREs Climate Change* (2019): 1–10.

The *OED* suggests that “heaven” has three synonyms. N.1 defines “heaven” as “the expanse in which the sun, moon, and stars are seen (esp. in earlier use) regarded as having the appearance of a vast vault arched over the earth; the sky, the firmament.” Understanding “heaven” as synonymous with “vault” moves us, connotatively, closer to “marble.” Readers may hear in prolepsis the later, now-famous lines of Andrew Marvell, whose narrator in iconic lines from “To His Coy Mistress” threatens that his lady’s beauty “shall no more be found” nor, he intimates, “in thy marble vault” shall sound the echo of human desire.[9] The phrasing, albeit later, of a “marble vault” brings us into an orbit around Othello’s meaning. His descriptive epithet relies not on sense perception of what the sky looks like, but rather an intellectual inkling of what “the vault” of “heaven” might portend for him.

Othello’s “yond marble heaven” proleptically envisions the afterlife beyond earth as death, an ominous prophecy of Othello’s fate. A “marble vault” lies beyond, for Desdemona, and for him by Act 5. In such a vein, Othello rehearses an oft-quoted sentiment encapsulated in the lines from Shakespeare and Fletcher’s *Henry VIII* wherein Cardinal Wolsey voices his belief that he will be “forgotten” as soon as he lies “in dull cold Marble,” i.e., as soon as he lies dead in a tomb (3.2.432–3). The “yond marble heaven” may be the revered residence of deities, but for the human, fallen from kingly grace as with the Catholic Cardinal Wolsey, or excluded from the “marble” elect as Othello, the afterlife is a “dull” stony grave, a silent non-echoic vault, not the longed-for afterlife of a biblically promised heavenly kingdom. Within the play’s tragic universe, Othello’s lines evince his non-Christian, nonwhite status as one who, like the period’s atheists, might not imagine an afterlife, or at least not share in the Elect’s vision of the New Jerusalem.

An alternative framing within early modern eschatology for the “yond marble heaven” points to a different interpretation of the heavenly afterlife, albeit one also resolutely stony and promised only to an elect. An influential vision of life-after-death seized the minds of religious dissidents across the long English Reformation, revivifying a centuries-old medieval, Christian motif. Their Reformist vision also foresaw a "marble heaven," albeit one rife with new life rather than death: the crystal, bejeweled heavenly city, the New Jerusalem of St. John's vision in Revelation. This last chapter turns to this city within early modern cosmology to ask what alternative frames—besides tragedy and death—it might offer the privileged few who were thought to inherit Jacob's stony mantle. The New Jerusalem presents its readers, then and now, with a material paradox: a city meant to symbolize the immateriality of the spiritual divine afterlife, but one that, instead, prophesies an enhanced afterlife via stony translation.

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[9] Nigel Smith, ed., *The Poems of Andrew Marvell,* rev. ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 82.

The early modern vision of a "marble heaven" and the New Jerusalem complicates a simple dichotomy of salvation versus damnation as tied to stoniness. The stony-hearted reprobate might have signaled damnation to some, making it all the stranger that a salvific elect might, in the end, aspire to a mineralized heaven. The New Jerusalem's Christian eschatological vision of an irresolvable paradox that extinguishes and extends human life raises questions that resonate into the twenty-first century: Is the vision of a "marble heaven" one of, if not damnation, then extinction in so far as we understand organic, human life on earth? Or at least extinction of all but the transfigured elect? Or is it a limitation of our imagination, our training within the systems of biopower, that makes us dependent on distinctions between human and nonhuman forms of existence? In the final section of this chapter, I show how twenty-first-century humans living in the Anthropocene who are facing the prospect of what David Wallace-Wells labels "the uninhabitable earth" resort to a surprisingly similar vision of post-earth, after-human futures.[10] The early modern vision of "yond marble heaven" and of the New Jerusalem provides a fascinating—and troubling—homologous structure to twenty-first-century philosophical theories of transhumanism or H+ futures that operate on the premise that the human species might enhance its endurance, and even its very survival, in the face of an existential apocalypse such as the current climate crisis.[11] A spectacular glittering future twinkles in these accounts, but, as I demonstrate, they bring with them all the attendant ethical dilemmas of a lithic imagination bound to an elemental material whose capacities might be solid, ancient, and enduring, but also indifferent, extractive, elitist, and willful.

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[10] David Wallace-Wells, *The Uninhabitable Earth* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2019).

[11] The aims of transhumanism are summarized in a popular and award-winning account, see Mark O'Connell, *To Be a Machine: Adventures among Cyborgs, Utopians, Hackers, and the Futurists Solving the Modest Problem of Death* (New York: Doubleday, 2017).

Redcrosse Knight, St. John, and Geological Election in the "New Hierusalem"

About a decade before *Othello*'s performance (c.1601–3), Edmund Spenser's hero of *The Faerie Queene*'s first book, Redcrosse Knight, peers into heaven from atop the Mount of Contemplation. He too will see stone in the heavens. Having faced death in Orgoglio's dungeons, the Redcrosse Knight recuperates at the House of Holiness. While there, his guide leads him to a hilltop, from where he spies a far distant celestial city, the "new Hierusalem" (1.10.57).[12] Perched atop "that sacred hill" he views a "goodly Citty" whose walls "were builded high and strong / Of perle and precious stone," a description matching St. John's vision in Revelation (1.10.54, 55). In Redcrosse's vision, the mineralized distant heaven beckons; it is pearly and precious, not an impenetrable, dead-end marble vault. As Redcrosse stands "gazing" he sees "blessed Angels to and fro descend," and he enquires of his guide "what unknowen nation there empeopled were" (1.10.56). "Empeopled," the "goodly Citty" of Redcrosse's crystalline, stony heaven teems with life—human and more-than-human beings in a constant swirl of motion "to and fro."

Redcrosse's description of angels "to and fro" references the earlier biblical vision of the patriarch Jacob that opens this book. As I discuss in the introduction, Genesis recounts a dream Jacob had while he slept with his head pillowed on a stone near Haran (28:11–12) wherein angels too traverse "to and fro" between the stony field and the heavens above. In Jacob's dream, the ladder that stretches into heaven affords a prophecy wherein his seed multiplies across the earth. It prophesies that Jacob's sons, who will become the twelve tribes of Israel, shall empeople the earth. Spenser's language thus alludes to both Jacob's and St. John's vision to conflate Old and New Testament prophecy within Redcrosse's gaze. It suggests that Redcrosse Knight, as a Protestant exemplar, might claim the legacy of Jacob's dream. In Jacob's dream, the stone pillow intermediates between heaven and earth. It also prefigures the translation of Jacob's seed into the heavenly afterlife as their names are inscribed over the twelve gates.

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[12] All citations of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* are to Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Hamilton.

In St. John's Revelation, after the Last Judgment, the New Jerusalem descends from heaven to a "new earth" (Revelation 21:1). It is a vision of a lithic cosmology: precious stones glisten from high walls of jasper, the city's towers twinkle with stars of precious stones, and the pavement is crystal. In addition to Jacob's seed, the twelve tribes of Israel inscribed over the twelve gates, the foundation stones of the city wall contain the names of the twelve apostles inscribed thereon. Norman Cohn notes that the heavenly city offers a "Christian conclusion to the prophetic tradition of Israel" or Jacob, a testimony to an apostolic supersession and genealogy of belief.[13] Within Protestant Reformed theology, especially as inflected by John Calvin, a distinction was made between an elect and chosen children who believed, and who were hence marked out for eternal salvation, as opposed to those who were reprobate, whom Revelation details as "the feareful and unbeleuing, and the abominable and murderers . . . and sorcerers, and idolaters, & all liars" who will not enter into the New Jerusalem, but rather, be consigned to burn "in the lake which burneth with fyre and brimstone" (Revelation 21:8).[14] Revelation specifies that only an elect might enter this "new heaven" (Revelation 21:1). But who, or perhaps what, are we to understand constituted this elect who might "empeople" such an eternal city?

Figure 9.1, an engraving from the 1630 Strasbourg Bible for Revelation 21, provides a visual illustration of what Redcrosse sees as "the new Hierusalem." Redcrosse may be looking upward from the Mount of Contemplation, but he describes a most materially earthly city. Similarly, in this image, St. John and his angelic guide appear to be standing on a Mount of Contemplation but looking down upon a goodly city. In this vision, the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem to earth makes heaven and earth "indissolubly one," in Christ's eternal kingdom.[15]

Thus, although a vision into a "new" heavenly eternity, a granular concreteness of material detail contradicts its immaterial premise. The vision affords the reader a glimpse of a very medieval-looking stone-walled, moated city, complete with twelve towers and numerous dwellings, but all within a modern square-grid design. The city's architecture affords a

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[13] Norman Cohn, "Biblical Origins of the Apocalyptic Tradition," in *The Apocalypse and the Shape of Things to Come*, ed. Frances Carey (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 28–42 at 37.

[14] For a longer discussion of these terms vis-à-vis the stony heart, see chapter 4. For the belief in an English elect, see John von Rohr, "Covenant and Assurance in Early English Puritanism," *Church History* 34, no. 2 (1965): 195–203.

[15] Cohn, "Biblical Origins of the Apocalyptic Tradition," 40.

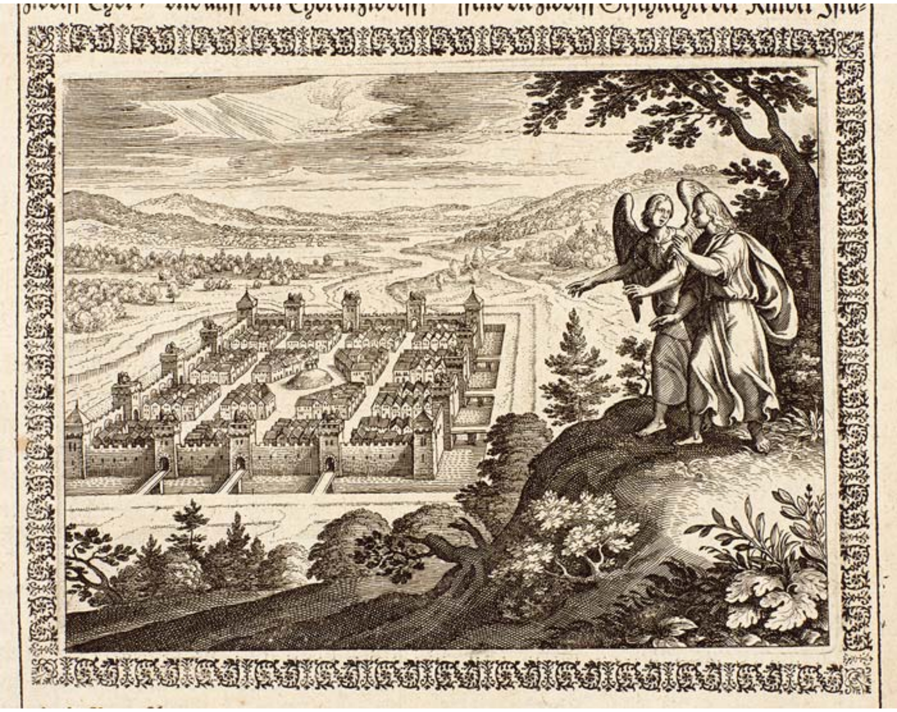

Figure 9.1 Illustration for St. John's vision of the New Jerusalem from Revelation 21, *Biblia* (Strassburg: In Verlegung L. Zetzners seligen Erben, 1630), 268, RB 41130.

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palimpsestic time warp with its walled medieval city built on the grid blueprint of future cities not yet realized. The image foreground, the outcropping below St. John's and the angel's feet, teems with organic life. Shrubs, bushes, trees and plants spring from the ground around the human prophet's bare feet. But the city itself appears strangely empty of organic or figural life beyond its populated, orderly, stony edifices. Redcrosse describes it as "empeopled," yet early modern visual illustrations do not portray human or other creaturely figures within the city walls.[16] Furthermore, its location in the engraving cements its foundational, material nature as it lies below the gaze of the angel and St. John. The visual depiction underscores the material paradox of the heavenly city.

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[16] For an overview of typical depictions of the heavenly city in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century images, see Peter Parshall, "The Vision of the Apocalypse in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Apocalypse and the Shape of Things to Come*, 99–207. See esp. 139 cat.20; 152 cat.41; 157 cat.53; 176 cat.78.

The New Jerusalem is not like Prospero's vanished "cloud-capped towers," described in *The Tempest* as built of "thin air," an immaterial corporeality (4.1.153, 150). Rather, St. John and Redcrosse reveal what some alchemists, following the metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, would refer to as the "heavenly body" or the *corpus coeleste*, a city built of a strangely persistent, stony "matter fully actuated by its form and therefore imperishable."[17] It is "the beginning and the end" (Revelation 21:6). In Spenser's telling, Redcrosse tries to comprehend this stony heavenly city by comparing it to cities he knows, such as great *Cleopolis*, an allegorical rendering of London, which the "new Hierusalem" "does far surpass" (1.10.57, 58). *The Faerie Queene* follows a familiar emblem tradition whereby the "holie Citie," the "new" Jerusalem, supersedes earthly cities, even as in Christian biblical typology the New superseded the Jewish Old Testament Jerusalem. These earthly cities, as readers of Spenser's first published work would recognize, appear in his rendition of the Dutch Jan van der Noot's *Theatre for Worldings* (1568). In this earlier text, Spenser pairs "Sonets" translated from the French Huguenot Du Bellay and epitomes of Revelation cast in sonnet form with illustrative woodcuts. They anticipate Redcrosse Knight's vision and participate in the tropes of sepúlchral verse discussed in chapter 8.

The sonnet sequence concludes in the New Jerusalem, built of gems and paved with "precious stone" (484); its material likened to a "garnisht" "loved spouse" (484).[18] In the sonnet, the narrator records that St. John sees a "new Earth, new Heaven" where the "sea" is "no more" and earth and heaven are one (484). The pictorial composition of the accompanying woodcut anticipates the one featured in the later Strasbourg Bible. Here too the goodly heavenly city, having descended from "hye," appears *below* the figures of a kneeling St. John and his angelic guide.

Yet, in Figure 9.2, the figures appear to gaze heavenwards, following the pointing hand and rod of the angelic guide while below their rocky promontory sits a perfectly square stone-walled city. The text calls attention to its "twelve gates" made of an "orient perfect pearle" and the houses of "golde"

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[17] See Thomas Aquinas, *Of God and His Creatures: An Annotated Translation (With Some Abridgement) of the "Summa contra gentiles" of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, ed. and trans. Joseph Rickaby (London: Burns & Oates, 1905), 334n.505. For more on St. Thomas Aquinas's view on heavenly bodies, see book 3, chapters 82–7.

[18] All citations of this sonnet sequence are to Spenser, *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, 466–84.

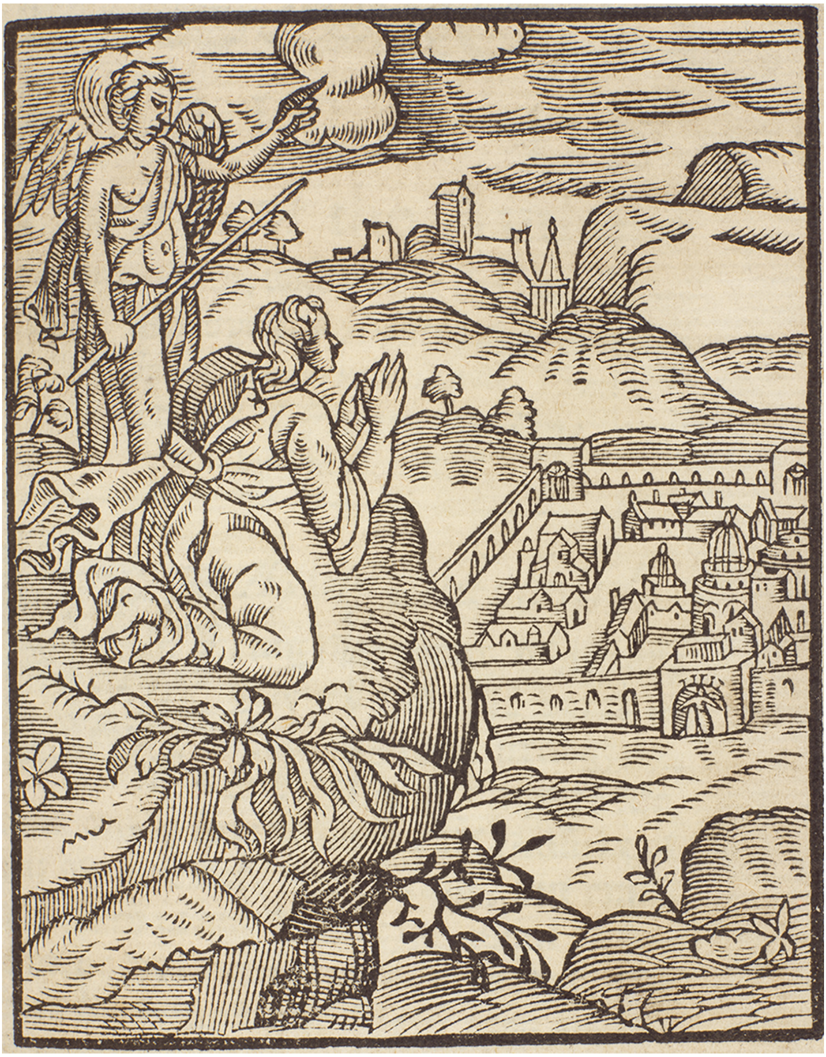

Figure 9.2 Woodcut from Edmund Spenser, *A theatre wherein be represented as wel the miseries & calamities that follow the voluptuous worldlings* [. . .] (London: Henry Bynneman, 1569), sig. D6^r, RB 62764. A partial translation of a work by the Dutch author Jan van der Noot, this volume's woodcuts are copied from the etchings by Marcus Gheeraerts the elder.

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and pavement of "precious stone" (484). As in the Strasbourg engraving, the image depicts an entirely mineralized, constructed city that contrasts with the landscape outside its walls where several varieties of plants protrude and grow from rocky promontories and hills. Its nonorganic materiality as well as its futuristic grid-like linearity distinguishes this city of stone from the more contoured, variegated surrounding hills and clouds.

A "lively" stream "more cleere than Christall" flows from the city, where, according to the sonnet, "growes lifes fruite unto the Churches good" (484). The sonnet's vision of the holy city as the spiritual bride of Christ that yields "lifes fruite" starkly contrasts with the earthly stony cities of the earlier sonnets, but also with the woodcut illustration. The sonnets preceding it in the sequence decry the worldly vanity that leads to the construction of stony temples or monuments which will only crumble down "to the lowest stone" (sonnet 2, p.471), "falling broken all to dust" (sonnet 4, p. 473). Distinct in its futurity, although not in its material, only the sequence's final theatre, the New Jerusalem, transfigures into a prophetic hereafter, a city from whose stones flows a fertile, rich, everlasting afterlife. Although the nature and form of that life appear oddly crystallized, a "lifes fruite" that seems nonbiologic, as the only life on view is of a stony variety.

St. John's biblical account establishes the template for a salvific eschatology of the afterlife as an architectural form undergirded by a persistent stony materiality. Over centuries, medieval allegory and theology brooded on—and cemented—these bonds. In *Medieval Allegory and the Building of the New Jerusalem*, Ann R. Meyer traces how Augustine's influential reading of Plotinus provided an extensive theological foundation for the "medieval representation of the New Jerusalem" wherein the human being is a citizen of "one of two cities"—an earthly Babylon, which crumbles, or the heavenly New Jerusalem, which persists.[19] English writers such as Bede strengthened this architectural approach to divine revelation in the medieval West, an approach that Meyer also finds infiltrating the imaginative landscape of the *Pearl* poet as well as the built environments of popular English chantry chapels. Given the medieval heritage that saw ecclesiastical buildings as "earthly representations of the New Jerusalem," it is not so surprising that woodcuts visualize the heavenly city as a replica of any number of late medieval walled cities, albeit they imagine those cities to be perfectly square as prescribed in Revelation. These illustrations follow the templates laid down by a variety of published bibles depicting the Old Jerusalem, the Old Testament temple, and the New Jerusalem—all characterized by a large square, typically with the Ark or temple at its center.[20]

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[19] Ann R. Meyer, *Medieval Allegory and the Building of the New Jerusalem* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), 8.

The long-running fascination with the New Jerusalem—and its genesis in Revelation—would reach a political and cultural apex in the century following Redcrosse's vision, but its potential for a political and national application was immediately evident.[21] While, like the city in Redcrosse's vision, it lies "yond," that is, according to *OED*, adj.1 and pron., some place "more distant" or farther, it might also be symbolically proximate via a dream or vision to more literal, concrete English and Protestant aspirations.[22] Its typological aspirations make a connection between a future, celestial city of elect believers and a Reformed London and England, and later in its geographic reach to New Haven and other American colonial outposts.[23]

The transposition of historic earthly stony cities to a future heavenly cosmos might give us pause because of its unconformity to temporal sequencing. Jonathan Gil Harris aptly describes what he terms "matter's untimely persistence" so that what the apocalypse destroys in the Jewish and Christian cities of the past it forecasts into a future moment.[24] Protestant writers frequently engage in the typology that creates a temporal fold wherein Old and New Jerusalem confuse past and future. So, for instance, when John Milton's Satan tempts Christ in *Paradise Regained*, he shows him a vision where:

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[20] Such imagery drew from a reversed image of the eternal city in the popular *Iconum Biblicarum* of Matthaus Meria as well as other German Bibles. See Parshall, "The Vision of the Apocalypse in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," 99–207.

[21] Popular among early modern preachers, it also appealed to a variety of readers, as evidenced by publications such as Franciscus Junius, *Apocalypsis. A Briefe and Learned Commentarie vupon the Revelation of Saint John* (London: By Richard Field for Robert Dexter, 1592); and John Napier, *A Plaine Discouery of the whole Reuelation of Saint John* (Edinburgh: Printed by Robert Walde-graue, printer to the Kings Majestie, 1593). For Shakespeare's treatment of the New Jerusalem in the Henriad as bound up with national destiny, see Beatrice Groves, "England's Jerusalem in Shakespeare's Henriad," in *The Bible on the Shakespearean Stage: Cultures of Interpretation in Reformation England*, eds. Thomas Fulton and Kristen Poole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 87–102.

[22] On the critical importance of the apocalypse and St. John's vision to English Protestant identity, see Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530–1645*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); B. W. Ball, *A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660* (Leiden: Brill, 1975); Esther Gilman Richey, *The Politics of Revelation in the English Renaissance* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998).

[23] For a listing of the biblical illustrations that influence the map of New Haven, see Francis J. Bremer, *Building a New Jerusalem: John Davenport, a Puritan in Three Worlds* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univeristy Press, 2012), 179.

[24] Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009) 35.

> fair Jerusalem,
> The holy City, lifted high her Towers,
> And higher yet the glorious Temple rear'd
> Her pile, far off appearing like a Mount
> Of Alabaster, top't with golden Spires . . . (4.540–50)[25]

Milton's "Alabaster" city with golden spires offers a vision of "fair Jerusalem" as one whose stones are already transfiguring into the clear light of the heavenly city. A Protestant vision of a "marble heaven," like onto a "Mount / Of Alabaster" then, could promise a posthumous life beyond looming apocalypse, but only to an elect. The alabaster, marble, bejeweled city of Jerusalem exists simultaneously in multiple temporal registers, Old and New. Its untimely persistence disrupts human timelines and categories. It reimagines, even as it literalizes, in urban architectural form the alchemical formula of "as above, so below." But if its untimeliness suggests a perduring materiality, it also enfolds a perduring bias of a particular geologic election. As critics from Kim Hall to Patricia Akhimie point out, "fair" provides a hue that aligns marble and alabaster with the elect of this heavenly city: Protestant, English, white.[26]

A marble, alabaster, stony heavenly city troubles our human categories of earth and heaven, below and above, as well as of life and death but still preserves its "elect" sensibilities. Othello's tragic end, and Revelation's apocalypse, envision earthly human extinction, albeit at different scales, from one of religious and racial kind to one of biological species. From these tragic perspectives, we might draw affective comparisons to our own state of crisis with global warming, climate change, and an ever closer "Uninhabitable Earth" with tragedy at an unfathomable scale. Might these biblical and premodern narrative templates of the New Jerusalem or a "marble heaven" still facilitate our theorizing life after or "yond" the human on earth? Thus far, I have tracked the stony materiality of the New Jerusalem itself as an entity and a city whose palimpsest scrambles distinct domains of heaven and earth, material and immaterial. But, it further disrupts how we understand what it means to be an embodied human. To return to Redcrosse's question: Who—or what—dwells in that city beyond earth?

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[25] Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose.*

[26] Hall, "'These Bastard Signs of Fair': Literary Whiteness in Shakespeare's Sonnets"; Patricia Akhimie, *Shakespeare and the Cultivation of Difference: Race and Conduct in the Early Modern World*, Routledge Studies in Shakespeare (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2018). For its relevance to Spenser, see Melissa E. Sanchez, "'To Giue Faire Colour': Sexuality, Courtesy, and Whiteness in the Faerie Queene," *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual* 35 (2021): 245–84.

Redcrosse's keenest questions focus on habitation. He wants to know "what unknowen nation there empeopled were" in this city of "perle and precious stone" (1.10.56, 55). His guide, Contemplation, answers that although Redcrosse cannot yet enter, one day he will: "For thou emongst those Saints, whom thou doest see, / Shalt be a Saint and thine owne nations frend" (1.10.61). Contemplation proffers a rather orthodox Christian explanation whereby transfigured saints "empeople" the New Jerusalem, ones such as Redcrosse Knight, or St. George, and St. John "shalt be." The verb presages transfiguration from earthly to heavenly form, knight to saint "shalt be." As James Nohrnberg and John E. Hankins show, among the episode's many symbolic allusions is the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–4).[27] The links between the mount "with fruitfull Oliues all arownd" (1.10.54) and Mt. Tabor (the site of Christ's transfiguration) becomes clearer when read with Acts 1:12 that describes the Christian tradition regarding the Mount of Olives as the place where Christ's Ascension took place. Redcrosse, then, stands on the Mount of Contemplation, a figural threshold of transformation from an earthly material world into the next heavenly and spiritual one. What he sees beyond is the *corpus coeleste*, a transhuman vision wherein Christ and his faithful church (imagined as his bride) live into eternity.

In biblical terms, the transfiguration and later ascension of Christ from the Mount of Olives to heaven prefigured his shedding of human form. The transfiguration was understood to be a literal translation from human form to spiritual divinity, yet biblical exegesis cannot shake its reliance on a persistent stony materiality, even for divine states. The materialist strain becomes more, not less, apparent in a variety of godly, Puritan thought. One of the clearest elucidations of this contradiction emerges in the later works of John Bunyan, who devotes an entire small book to expounding the material dimensions of *The Holy City: or the new Jerusalem.* Its title page declares: "And the Name of the City from that day shall be called, THE LORD IS THERE."[28] By this phrasing Bunyan follows both Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles. As he explains it, "This Stone it is to represent unto us the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose light and clearness this City comes out of *Babylon* . . . both the prophet *Isaiah*, and the Apostle *Peter*, do apply to the Lord Jesus, and none else; the one calling him, *A precious Corner-Stone*, the other calling him *The chief Corner-Stone, elect and precious* (Isa.28.16, 1 Pet.2.6)."[29] Bunyan's reading—one inherited as I shall show from an earlier godly tradition closer to Spenser's time—likely drew from the slippage within English translation of biblical passages that transfigure the faithful human into the stones, "elect and precious," of the eternal city.

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[27] Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of the Faerie Queene*, 181; John Erskine Hankins, *Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory: A Study of the Faerie Queene* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

[28] John Bunyan, *The Holy Citie, or, the New-Jerusalem* (London: Printed for Francis Smith, 1669).

Isaiah 54 offers an example. It prophesies how God will, for a time, abandon his chosen people, only to return to "thou afflicted . . . that hath no comfort" (verse 11). When He returns to those tempest-tossed faithful, He promises to "lay thy stones with the carbuncle . . . thy gates shining stones, and all thy borders of pleasant stones"; for this "is the heritage of the Lords servants" (verses 12, 17). This chapter was correlated frequently with the New Testament passage from Ephesians which reads: the citizen saints of the new Jerusalem "are buylt upon the fundacion of the Apostles and Prophetes, Jesus Christ him self being the chief corner stone, in whom all the buylding coupled together, growth unto an holie Temple in the Lord, in whome ye also are buylt together to be the habitation of God by the spirit" (2:20–2). The pronoun slippage in these passages must have appealed to Spenser, who himself notoriously renders his characters' pronoun referents ambiguous.

The grammar of these passages proposes a radical ontological mobility or transcorporeality between the citizen saints, the "empeopled" inhabitants and a geological entity, the stones of the city itself. To borrow a term from contemporary theorist Elizabeth Povinelli, we witness a transfigurative perforation where categorical enclosures dissolve, a slippage that she terms "geontologies." She describes an ontological shift from a world "dependent [on] oppositions of life (*bios*) and death (*thanatos*) and of Life (*bios*) and Nonlife (*geos, meteros*)" to a "world in which these enclosures are no longer, or have never been, relevant, sensible, or practical."[30]

Protestant expositors, perhaps surprisingly, anticipate Povinelli's sense of "geontologies" when they glossed biblical passages. John Marbeck's 1581 commentary is illustrative. Marbeck, a composer and church organist, became Protestant in the 1530s; Foxe erroneously has him burned at the stake for heresy in an early edition of the *Actes and Monuments*, but he was in fact granted a royal pardon and went on to write laboriously thick notes and concordances to theological works from the Bible to the Book of Common Prayer. Under the heading "Edifieing" or "what it is to edifie," an alphabetical section within "commonplaces with their expositions," he explains the importance of Christian neighbors. Perhaps playing off the etymology for "edification" from the Latin *aedificere* (to construct a building), Marbeck points his reader to a consideration of passages from Isaiah 54 and Ephesians 2:20 in conjunction with the passage from St. John's Revelation. Marbeck writes: "for the faithfull are called the Temple of God, wherein is resident his holie spirit," and, he continues, "these faithful are the stones of new Hierusalem, that is the vniuersall Church . . . Of the which building, Christ is the corner stone."[31] Literally rendered in an unpoetic syntax, Marbeck's declarative gloss transforms "these faithful" into "the stones of new Hierusalem" of which "Christ is the corner stone." Here too readers will find the translated and transfigured seed of Israel, Jacob's twelve tribes. St. John describes how the city has a great high wall made of "Jasper" with "twelve gates" upon which are written "the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" (Revelations 21:12). The vision of Jacob that foretold of the spreading of his seed throughout the earth has now been transfigured into the heavenly city where the names are engraved in the jasper, a "stone most precious" (Revelations 21:11). Notably the engraved and woodcut depictions of the New Jerusalem uniformly show a city lacking any human figures; only the stones persist.

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[29] "The Holy City," in *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan*, ed. J. Sears McGee (Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, 1987), 68–200 at 91–2.

[30] Povinelli, *Geontologies*, 16.

One might counter that such a transformation, especially within Reformed rhetoric, was understood to have a spiritual sense in a similar manner to the Eucharist whose transformation was understood as symbolic, rather than literal. Yet reform movements of various Protestant persuasions had a vexing history (and a future) of slippage between the registers of the literal and the figural. The ill-starred "New Jerusalem" claimed by the Münster millenarians was likely an example with which Spenser would have been familiar; Redcrosse notably does not engage this speculation, as he only glimpses the celestial city (it resides beyond the pages of

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[31] John Marbeck, *A Booke of Notes and Common Places, with Their Expositions, Collected and Gathered out of the Workes of Diuers Singular Writers* (London: By Thomas East, 1581), sig. Y^{r}.

The Faerie Queene).[32] He does not enter it; nor does he try to build it. However, while sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers were wary of the temptation to build a new heaven on earth, the religious struggles of the seventeenth century would renew interest in the millenarian vision of Revelation when the saints reform the apostolic church.

In *Building a New Jerusalem: John Davenport, a Puritan in Three Worlds*, Francis Bremer argues that speculation on the millennial kingdom of the New Jerusalem was quite broad and "not limited to puritan nor even to Protestants."[33] Influential preachers such as John Davenport literalized the concept and imagined the building of a New Jerusalem in the American, so-called "New World" colonies, reading typologically the chosen people of the Old Testament as types for a transfigured "church to be expected on earth."[34] This intermittent but persistent literalizing strain complicates a straightforwardly immaterial or symbolic reading of the New Jerusalem. Rather it revitalizes the New Jerusalem's material futurity as envisioned by the biblical prophets and translated into the Protestant poetics of Spenser and Milton, among others. In John Davenport's vision for New Haven, for example, it dictated the physical layout of the town plan, which was based on the concrete, highly specific, description and dimensions given in Revelation.

The map shown in Figure 9.3, from 1641 of New Haven, shows the city's debt to the biblical templates in its large square focused around a central point. The symbolic and the actual coalesce to imprint a stronger spiritual reminder. As Davenport understood it, "creating a community that would physically represent the temple would provide a constant reminder" of their "covenanted union as a Christian body."[35]

That imagined covenanted Christian body, however, was persistently mineral rather than flesh. When Redcrosse Knight asks what unknown nation is there "empeopled," he glimpses what we now might call a posthumous vision of human life after earth. What he sees are more-than-human inhabitants, angels, but also, numerous "pretious stones." Anne Vaughan

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[32] For the millennium dreams of the Anabaptists and their belief in Münster as a New Jerusalem, see Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (Fairlawn [i.e., Fair Lawn] NJ: Essential Books, 1957), 261–71.

[33] Bremer, *Building a New Jerusalem: John Davenport, a Puritan in Three Worlds*, 169.

[34] See ibid., 174. For the longer tradition of Puritan striving for the way to the new Jerusalem, see William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism or the Way to the New Jerusalem as Set Forth in Pulpit and Press from Thomas Cartwright to John Lilburne and John Milton, 1570–1643* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938). A competing, although not unrelated intellectual ideal promoted the New World as the new Eden; see Zachary McLeod Hutchins, *Inventing Eden: Primitivism, Millennialism, and the Making of New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[35] Quoted in Bremer, *Building a New Jerusalem*, 177.

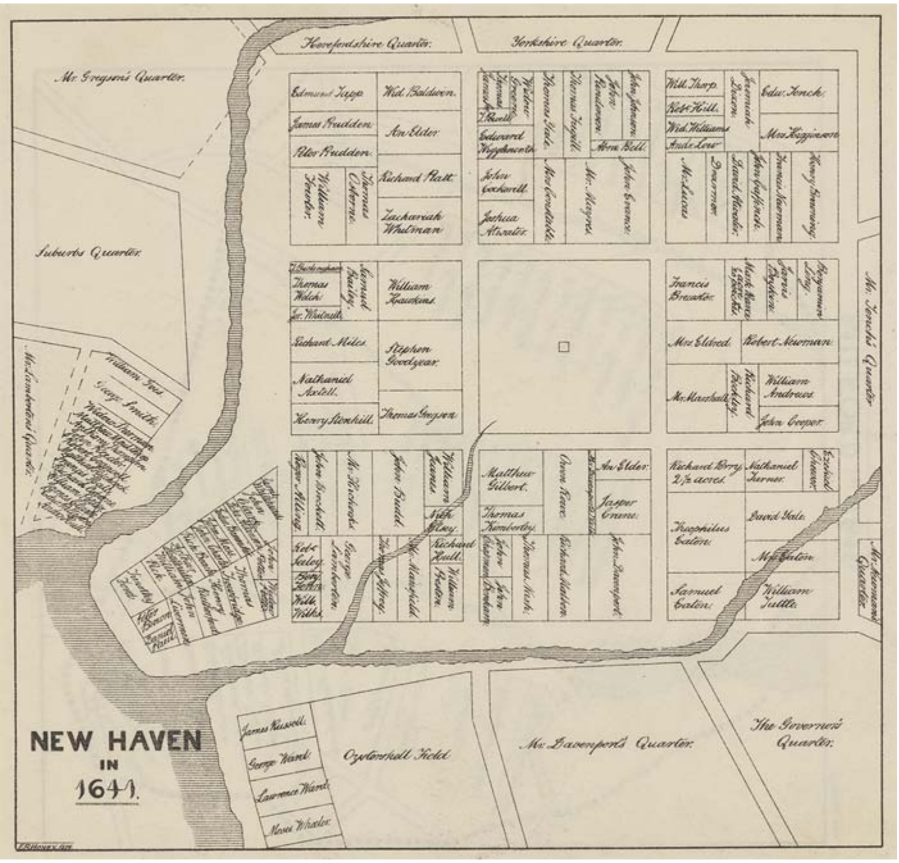
NEW HAVEN
IN
1641.
Herefordshire Quarter.
Yorkshire Quarter.
Mr. Gregson's Quarter.
Suburbs Quarter.
Mr. Lamberton's Quarter.
Mr. Jench's Quarter.
Mr. Newman's Quarter.
Oysterhill Field
Mr. Davenport's Quarter.
The Governor's Quarter.
Edmund Tapp
Wid. Baldwin.
James Prudden.
An Elder.
Peter Prudden.
Richard Platt.
Zachariah Whitman
Francis Brewster.
Mr. Eldred.
Robert Newman
William Andrews
John Cooper
Richard Perry 2½ acres.
Nathaniel Turner.
David Yale.
Theophilus Eaton.
Samuel Eaton.
William Tuttle.
Matthew Gilbert.
Thomas Kimberly.
Jasper Crane.
William Hawkins.
Stephen Goodyear.
Nathaniel Axtell.
Henry Stonhill.
Thomas Gregson.
Richard Miles.
James Russell.
George Ward.
Lawrence Ward.
Moses Wheeler.
Will Thorp.
Robt Hill.
Wid. Williams.
Andr. Low.
Edw. Jench.
Mrs. Higginson.
Edward Wigglesworth.
John Cockerell.
Joshua Atwater.
F.R.Honey, del.

Figure 9.3 F. R. Honey, reproduction of Brockett's map of New Haven in 1641. Public domain at the Yale University Art Gallery. https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/35283.

Lock's 1590 *Of the Markes of the Children of God*, a translation of John Taffin's French original, offers a gloss that might aid us in comprehending Redcrosse's vision for the afterlife. "[B]ecause great things by reason of my sex, I may not doo, and that which I may, I ought to doo, I have according to my duetie," she writes, "brought my poore basket of stones to the strengthning of the walles of that Jerusalem, whereof (by grace) wee are all both Citizens and members."[36] For when "our pilgrimage being finished, we shall be indeed the citizens of this heavenlie and holie Jerusalem, which shall be of pure gold like unto the cleere glasse: having the foundations of the wall garnished with pretious stones."[37] Vaughan Lock's "poore basket of stones" that contribute to the "walles of that Jerusalem" suggests that the believer in a salvific afterlife might too be transfigured like Christ, the twelve tribes, and the twelve apostles, into foundation stones. The holy New Jerusalem is "empeopled," or we might say "edified," playing off the Latin etymology of *aedificāre*, built of stony citizen saints who might inhabit the "fair Jerusalem" likened to a pile of "Alabaster." Their transfigured bodies are the "pretious stones" that configure the New Jerusalem's walls, just as the twelve tribes of Israel compose its jasper gates. It offers a reversal of typological, supersessionist logic. Whereas the Old Testament prophet Isaiah promises that God will replace stony hearts with ones of flesh; the New Testament Revelation reverses that transformation to envision the saintly afterlife as lithic. These glimpses into the heavenly city offer a counterintuitive and decidedly materialist vison whereby fleshly humans transfigure to become the jasper and marble of the New Jerusalem and perform the ongoing figuration of the English nation, church, and person into far-flung geographies "unto the heavens" and into space. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel engraven in stone supply an exemplary instance of human transfiguring into a lithic afterlife, an afterlife available to the few, geological elect.

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[36] Anne Prowse, *The Collected Works of Anne Vaughan Lock*, ed. Susan M. Felch (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999). 77.

Retro Futurism: Transhumanism (H+) and the Silicate Cloud Afterlife of the Twenty-First Century

The living stones of the New Jerusalem thus complicate the perspective that a "marble heaven" spells damnation; but its jasper, crystalline gates and towers do spell an extinction in so far as we understand organic, embodied human life on earth. It thus proleptically engages Elizabeth Povinelli's carbon imaginary with its concept of geontologies, a figuration that probes dependent oppositions between biological life and nonlife to suggest that these differences are one of perspective.[38] For as John Bunyan summarizes in his exegesis on the twelve foundation stones of the New Jerusalem: "the Foundations themselves are said to be precious Stones: so also the Saints in general, they go under the same names too. As Jeremiah saith, The precious Stones of the Sanctuary, are the precious Sons of Zion: As Peter also saith, in alluding to the precious Stones of the Temple: The Saints, are lively, or living precious stones."[39] In Bunyan's formulation the "Saints" perdure as "lively, or living precious stones." His formula extends the qualities and dynamics of form to suggest that the translated, transfigured, *transhuman*, elect continue as lithic, living entities. Such exegesis may partially explain why the visual illustrations refrain from "empeopling" the New Jerusalem with human figures. The former patriarchs and saints are there in the stones, the marble paving, the engraved jasper towers.

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[37] Ibid. For Anne Prowse's (later Vaughan Lock) positioning as authority and translator, see Kimberly Anne Coles, *Religion, Reform, and Women's Writing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 113–48.

[38] Povinelli, *Geontologies*, 1–29.

The concept that the lithic may provide a key to the afterlife itself proves remarkably durable, cropping up again in altered form in the visionary enhanced afterlives of the western world's secular tech elite. I live and write in the Bay Area, not far from what is often popularly known as "Silicon Valley." Silicon Valley is widely recognized as the geographical home that provides much of the impetus for the more extreme forms of H+ transhumanism. Its moniker, "Silicon," is itself a nineteenth-century etymological alteration, a transformation, of the Latin *silex* or flint/silica, on the pattern of carbon which a draft addition to the *OED* attributes in its capitalized form to "denoting geographical features, a place name for areas with a high density of industry devoted to information technology" (OED, s.v. *Silicon*, n.)The name thus connects the mineral material matter of *silex* or flint (silica) with the new geography of an area defined by its digital technology (and its silicon semiconductor chips). The etymological connection cements the relations between the foundational material that hosts most digital information networks: silicon. It may not quite be a marble heaven, but Silicon Valley affords many prophetic or at least futuristic visions of what "life after warming" might look like. In a back to the future flash, elements of these twenty-first-century Silicon-inspired visions reprise St. John's vision for the New Jerusalem concomitant with all its exclusionary elections that privilege an elite.

David Wallace-Wells concludes *The Uninhabitable Earth* with a chapter titled "The Church of Technology," where he considers what the "futurist" technologists of Silicon Valley might offer by way of solutions to an earth no longer habitable for human life. As he outlines the visions of many of Silicon Valley's futurist vanguard, he describes a "transhumanism," or "H+," that entails the "possibility that technology may quickly carry us across a threshold into a new state of being, so divergent from the one we know today that we would be forced to consider it a true rupture in the evolutionary line."[40] Some proponents see the potential continuum of existence worth the exchange of flesh for stone, or silicon. One industry insider is quoted as saying "if I can be 200 with a body of silicon, I'll take it."[41] For some, notably University of Oxford's Nick Bostrom, a pioneering philosopher of AI, the future consists of human life extracted from tangible reality and uploaded entirely to computers.[42] A network of computers, if we consider them from the mind's eye, might appear as a modern version of winking crystal towers in the modern "cloud" of the digital heavens. Riffing on *Othello*, we might envision a "silicon heaven"—one whose etymological traces return us, not to the clouds or the "Cloud," but to *silex*, flint, and the mineral earthly realm of stone, or at least the grains of sand from which it is built.[43] For thinkers like Bostrom, the very purpose of this current version of "humanity" is to engineer a "posthumanity" wherein technology is Jacob's ladder to the heavens.[44] For Bostrom and other architects of the imagined future, a silicate future promises an escape, a transcendence, from the material earth and its looming (climate) apocalypse. Like the New Jerusalem, it envisions an afterlife that transcends the biological limits and constrains of an embodied human. But, in a manner not entirely alien to St. John, the mode of "empeopling" it remains stubbornly powered by a carbon-based life form. The New-Old Jerusalem offers yet another vision of a species-scale survival strategy reliant upon mineral technologies and open to an elite, elect few.

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[39] Bunyan, *The Holy Citie, or, the New-Jerusalem*, sigs. $M2^v$–$M3^r$.

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[40] Wallace-Wells, *The Uninhabitable Earth*, 174. For a discussion of H+/- transhumanism and its critique, see *H+/-: Transhumanism and Its Critics*, eds. Gregory R. Hansell and William Grassie (Philadelphia, PA: Metanexus Institute, 2011). For its critique among contemporary Christians, see Ted Peters, "Boarding the Transhumanist Train: How Far Should the Christian Ride?," in *The Transhumanism Handbook*, ed. Newton Lee (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 795–804; Ronald Cole-Turner, "Introduction," in *Christian Perspectives on Transhumanism and the Church: Chips in the Brain, Immortality, and the World of Tomorrow*, eds., Steve Donaldson and Ronald Cole-Turner (New York: Palgrave 2018), 1–15.

[41] Quoted in Bill Joy, "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us," *Wired*, 2000.

[42] See Julian Savulescu and Nick Bostrom, *Human Enhancement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[43] For the uncanny correspondence between "clouds," data and "cloud" computing, and posthuman futures, see James Bridle, *New Dark Age: Technology and the End of the Future* (London: Verso, 2018). I'm grateful to Daniel Swift for pointing me to this book.

[44] Discussed in more detail below, it needs be noted that "transhumanist" manifestos and movements are not synonymous with the "posthumanist" philosophies of thinkers such as Rosi Braidotti, Katherine Hayles, and Cary Wolfe and others who distance themselves from the utopian optimism of such technological advancements to the human. Posthumanists, although by no means a homogenous label, by contrast, tend to be more critical. They note how such technological optimism ignores the harm done in terms of social and ecological justice and seek to eschew the binary dualism inherent to anthropocentric approaches. See Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge*; Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman* Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?*, 8.

These new technological churches and their prophet-gurus with their silicon dreams of transcendence recapitulate a centuries' - old Western Jewish and Christian paradigm that finds salvation in leaving earth by means of a transfiguration of mineralized and human forms. There is something unsettling about this strange homology that exists between the afterlife of St. John's Revelation and the late literature of the Anthropocene that both mark human passage from this earth by way of geological stratification: whether as a stone in the New Jerusalem's walls, an embedded digital code run on a silicon chip, or as a scar visible in the earth's geological record.

At play are the multiple and contradictory senses of a world devoid of life (the marble vault of a tomb, a digital hub reliant on silicon chips) versus a world in which humanity is free from the limits of biological and environmental needs (the gleaming vitality in the everlasting "pretious stones" of a New Jerusalem or the silicon basis of a brain-upload program). Both contradictory senses imagine a condition which radically alters the parameters of embodied life. Both also catch us in the untimely persistence and paradox of matter. "Empeopling" or populating a world where human, mineral, and deity (or machine) coalesce requires a reconfiguration of fundamental categories of what it means to exist, to live.

Neither the New Jerusalem nor the futurist technologies of Silicon Valley offer us a second Eden, a life or world yond earth akin to this one. Instead, they extinguish this earth and the way we exist in it. St. John promises a fiery end in a divine apocalypse, and many tech industries prepare for a climate apocalypse, whose signs include increasingly uncontrollable wild fires.[45] Technosolutionist orthodoxy reprises Christian orthodoxy, as both envision human futures to climax via transfiguration based on shedding human, biological and organic, flesh for lithic, mineralized forms. Yet in spite of their idealization of such an enduring state, both rely on crystalline products that are a result of extractive practice. The stones of the New Jerusalem are not raw matter, but precious stones presumably mined, extracted, pulled from earth and hewn by a divine architect. Technosolutionist options, despite their desire to avoid an extractive practice, frequently squander natural resources in order to build their new technologies. As Vince Beiser demonstrates, silicon is, after all, made from sand, a vanishing, valuable, and now often violently contested resource.[46] This is not a vision of a seed bank such as we might glimpse in the story of Noah's ark. Nor is it a selective refuge such as that explored by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Julian Yates, who consider how the myth of Noah "and his vessel of restricted preservation" might offer an "enduring narrative for how to survive life during climate change."[47] Rather, it is a turn to a crystalline, lithic form of life. In both St. John's vision of a crystalline New Jerusalem with its jasper tribes and stony saints and the twenty-first-century H+ vision of a postbiological, disembodied, cosmic transhumanist species, the continuum relies on radical alteration and transformation of form. They propose that life after death or life after warming cannot be the same or more of what we already are. They propose that what we are will no longer be.

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[45] For a popular accounting in the news, see Douglas Rushkoff, "How Tech's Richest Plan to Save Themselves after the Apocalypse," *The Guardian*.

[46] Vince Beiser, *The World in a Grain: The Story of Sand and How It Transformed Civilization* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2018).

Both visions of a silicate or lithic afterlife of an "empeopled" city also return us to the questions of empire and nation-building that underlay the lithic chorographies of England's stony heaps with which *The Lithic Imagination* began. In St. John's vision, as explained by an early seventeenth-century Vicar in Chudleigh, Robert Wolcomb, the "Citizens of the celestiall and new Jerusalem, whose walls are pure golde and the gates pearles" are the "Patriarkes, and holye Prophets, Apostles, Arkeangels, Angels and Saintes of all ages."[48] That is, the chosen, the elite, and those who share a common belief system. Similarly, the H+ transhumanist future is one most accessible to a Silicon Valley or high-tech elite that imagines itself as ethically forward. As a *New Yorker* reporter at large writes in "Trouble in Paradise," or "Big Tech searches for its soul," the elite of the tech industry in their search for "the best way to be fully human," often leave unquestioned the capitalist, class, and racialized underpinnings that create their upscale visions for making a better future.[49] The projection into the afterlife of the lithic imagination bears with it the entangled histories of harm that line the aspirations of humans for transcendence when they reach for stone.

The dreams of a New Jerusalem carry with them the English ideal as expressed in the bestselling prose narrative of John Lyly's *Euphues and His England* (1580) of being a "a new *Israel*."[50] That is, the tribe of Jacob, a "chosen and peculier people" destined to survive after the apocalypse, whether that be imagined in Christian eschatological terms or those of the Global North techno elite at climate crisis.[51] The post-Reformation English (and later North American) vision literalizes the theological ideal and lays claim to being the New Jerusalem, a national destiny whose foundation lies in stone. The human pilgrimage from earth to heaven, from Genesis to Revelation, traces its pathway in geographic terms from a foundational stone omphalos in Jerusalem to England's London, America's New Haven and eventually its Silicon Valley, and "yond" into the "cloud," a celestial crystalline afterlife.

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[47] *Noah's Arkive* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2023), vii.

[48] Robert Wolcomb, *The State of the Godly Both in This Life, and in the Life to Come Deliuered in a Sermon at Chudleigh in Devon* (London, Printed [by R. Bradock] for Roger Iackson, and are to be sold at his shoppe neere the Conduit in Fleetstreete, 1606), sig. F5^{v}.

[49] See Andrew Marantz, "Trouble in Paradise," *New Yorker* 95, no. 24 (2019): 60–7.

[50] John Lyly, *Euphues and His England* (London: [By T. East] for Gabriell Cawood, dwelling in Paules Church-yard, 1580), sig. Hh2^{r}.

Stone measures and closes the gap in between, a portal to draw human imagination as well as investigation. Its polysemic power a dangerous promise and its material reality a lure for dreams of breaching the heavens and of the spread "to the West, and to the East, and to the North, and to the South" of a species' seed (Genesis 28:14); or, as Todd Borlik puts it, of a tyranny—of religion, of race, and of species—in a form that turns a Jacobean doctrine of divine right into an "Anthropocratic Absolutism" or an ecological absolutism.[52] The vibrant, perduring cultural metaphor of a lithic supersession and conquest that point to England's—and humanity's—sacred future is one that might well invoke in readers the same affect as that of Jacob upon awakening: twinned passions of awe and fear. The magnitude of relations between human imaginaries and action and their resulting imprint on the material world are now recognized with urgency, as much Anthropocene planetary life faces extinction because of the indelible geological scars humans have engraved through their activities into the earth's mineral strata. Our human fascination with the deep temporality, and inherent plurality, of stone make it a vital and demanding force that prompts difficult questions about human—and planetary—futures. Jacob's dream continues to echo in the world.

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[51] Ibid. For news coverage detailing the technological elite and doomsday, see, as exemplary, Katie Canales, "The Silicon Valley Wealthy Have Become Super Doomsday Preppers by Buying Remote New Zealand Properties, Getting Eye Surgeries, and Stockpiling Ammo and Food," *Business Insider*, September 16, 2021; Mark O'Connell, "Why Silicon Valley Billionaires Are Prepping for the Apocalypse," *The Guardian*, February 15, 2018.

[52] Borlik, 5.

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