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'The "inward warre": William Habington's *Castara* (1640) and an early modern Catholic poetics'[1]

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This article explores the third edition of William Habington (1605-1654)'s lyric poems, *Castara* (1640). This final edition of *Castara*—originally published in 1634 as a series of love poems to his wife, Lucy Herbert—was transformed by a prose sketch of 'A Holy Man' and twenty-two devotional poems. The article draws on Habington's recusant roots and his engagement with French, Counter-Reformation Catholicism emanating from Queen Henrietta Maria's court circle, and argues for an early modern Catholic poetics. It explores why these poems were published in 1640 and argues that this edition of *Castara*, by one of the ablest Catholics of his generation, offers a unique glimpse into, and understanding of, English Catholicism at the volatile political moment prior to the outbreak of the English Civil War.

Keywords: William Habington, *Castara*, lyric poetry, 1640, Catholic poetics

This article examines poet, playwright and courtier, William Habington's third edition of his lyric poems, *Castara* (1640).[2] The first edition of *Castara* was published anonymously in 1634 and celebrated Habington's courtship of Lucy Herbert, daughter of William Herbert, first Baron Powis and granddaughter of Henry Percy, eighth Earl of Northumberland.[3] The enlarged second edition, published a year later, with Habington's name, includes a series of elegies on the death of Habington's close friend, George Talbot, brother of the tenth Earl of Shrewsbury.[4] The popularity of *Castara* both inside and outside

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[1] William Habington '*Et fugit velut umbra* [*He fled as it were a shadow*]. To the Right Honourable the Lord *Kintyre*' in Kenneth Allott, ed. *The Poems of William Habington* (London: Liverpool University Press, 1948), 125-126 at 126, line 54.

[2] William Habington, *Castara* (London: William Cooke, 1640).

[3] William Habington, *Castara* (London: William Cooke, 1634).

[4] William Habingon, *Castara* (London: William Cooke, 1635). The Talbots of Grafton were a prominent recusant family who in 1618 had assumed the title of the Earl of Shrewsbury. The Talbots had close ties of friendship with the Habington family. John, tenth Earl of

Catholic circles is suggested by the publication of three editions in six years. Habington's poems repeatedly emphasise chaste married love which would particularly have appealed to King Charles and Queen Henrietta Maria. For, as '*To* CASTARA, *Vpon the mutuall love of their Majesties*' makes clear, 'loyall subjects, must true lovers be'.[5]

Focusing on the third edition, published in 1640, this article explores the transformation of *Castara* by a new final section which consists of a short prose reflection, 'A Holy Man', and twenty-two devotional poems. William Habington was a member of a staunchly recusant family and this article will examine how his 1640 edition of *Castara* offers a discerning glimpse into, and understanding of, English Catholicism at the volatile political moment prior to the outbreak of the English Civil War—a time of renewed anxiety for the early modern Catholic community within the wider religio-political landscape of Caroline England.[6] As Brad S. Gregory reminds us, early modern English Catholicism (over the tortuous journey from the break with Rome in 1534 to the Emancipation Act of 1791) was repeatedly 'forced' to 'redefine what it meant to be Catholic'.[7] Habington's definition of English Catholicism offers an important insight at a renewed moment of struggle for English Catholics. Additionally, this focus on the 1640 edition of *Castara* engages with current debates voiced by Susannah Brietz Monta about the importance of recovering Catholic devotional lyric and of creating a 'richer account of the many interconnections between religious change and literary history'.[8]

William Habington's religio-political milieu

From a brief review of the documented evidence William Habington's Catholic lineage is unquestionable.[9] Rather fittingly, Habington was

Shrewsbury (1601-1654), had lent money to both William Habington and his father Thomas, whilst William's closest friend was the Earl's younger brother, George, as is memorialised in this second edition of *Castara*.

[5] Habington, '*To* CASTARA, *Vpon the mutuall love of their Majesties*' in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 57, line 14.

[6] For further information on William Habington see Robert Wilcher, 'William Habington, 1605-1654' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter *ODNB*), online edn September 2004, [https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/11833. Accessed 21 July 2025]. See also Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis 1632-42* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Jerome de Groot, 'Coteries, Complications and the Question of Female Agency' in Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders, eds. *The 1630s: Interdisciplinary Essays on Culture and Politics in the Caroline Era* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 189-209; Bailey, 'William Habington (1605-1654): New Biographical Information', 40-41; Rebecca A. Bailey, 'Staging "a Queene opprest": William Habington's Exploration of the Politics of Queenship on the Caroline Stage', *Theatre Journal*, 65.2 (2013), 197-214.

[7] Brad S. Gregory, 'Situating Early Modern English Catholicism' in James E. Kelly and Susan Royal, eds. *Early Modern Catholicism: Identity, Memory and Counter-Reformation* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 17-40 at 40.

[8] Susannah Brietz Monta, 'John Austin's *Devotions*: Voicing Lyric, Voicing Prayer' in Kelly and Royal, eds. *Early Modern Catholicism*, 226-245 at 245.

[9] See n. 6.

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born on the very eve of the Gunpowder Plot (4 November 1605) into a steadfastly recusant family at Hindlip Hall near Worcester. His uncle, Edward Habington, had been executed in 1586 for his involvement in the Babington Plot, whilst his father, Thomas Habington, twice narrowly escaped execution for his recusant beliefs.[10] Indeed, in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot, his father provided refuge at Hindlip Hall to the fleeing Jesuit priests, Edward Oldcorne and Henry Garnet. According to tradition, it was Habington's mother, Mary, who alerted her brother, Lord Monteagle, to the plot through a secret letter.[11] Even Hindlip Hall itself was the epitome of an English recusant's home. As Charles Knight recalled, with some astonishment, the home into which Habington was born had been built as a Catholic stronghold by the master builder, Nicholas Owen: 'that house was full of secret apartments, which had been constructed by Thomas Abington [Habington], a devoted recusant. There were staircases concealed in the walls, hiding places in chimneys, trapdoors, double wainscots'.[12] Thus, from the moment of his birth, with his father facing death for harbouring Jesuit traitors, Habington was plunged into the problematic and dangerous realm of English Catholicism. In his youth, William Habington continued in the typical trajectory for the son of a recusant gentleman, being sent to St. Omer in France to receive his education. Maurice Whitehead reminds us of the 'strong emphasis on public speaking, debating, drama and literary studies' at St. Omer.[13] The overarching aim of the *Ratio Studiorum* as documented in 'The Customs Book of St. Omers, 1617-c.1655' and noted by Janet Graffius was for boys 'to see a right path themselves and lead the way for others'.[14] As Liesbeth Corens argues, sending English Catholic children abroad had a dual purpose, with these schools serving as 'both a safe haven and a seedbed' which strengthened 'the children for combat' once they returned to England (either through becoming

[10] Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, xiv-xvii. See also Jan Broadway. '"To Equall their Virtues": Thomas Habington, Recusancy and the Gentry of Early Stuart Worcestershire', *Midland History*, 29.1 (2004), 1-24.

[11] See Antonia Fraser, *Faith and Treason: The Story of the Gunpowder Plot* (New York: Doubleday Press, 1996), 152-56.

[12] The priests were finally discovered at Hindlip Hall in January 1606 and executed as traitors at Worcester; see Charles Knight, *The Popular History of England*, vol. 3 (London: 1857), 336. For further details see Michael Hodgetts, 'Elizabethan Priest-Holes: III – East Anglia, Baddersley Clinton, Hindlip', *Recusant History*, 12.2 (1973), 171-197; C. Don Gilbert, 'Thomas Habington's Account of the 1606 Search at Hindlip', *Recusant History*, 25.3 (2001), 415-422.

[13] Maurice Whitehead, '"The strictest, orderlyest and best bredd in the world": Students at the English Jesuit College at Saint-Omer, 1593-1662', *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, 93.1 (2017), 33–49 at 39.

[14] Cited by Janet Graffius, 'Relics and Cultures of Commemoration in the English Jesuit College of St. Omers in the Spanish Netherlands' in James E. Kelly and Hannah Thomas, eds. *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange Between England and Mainland Europe, c. 1580-1789* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 113-132 at 117.

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parents themselves and continuing the faith or acting as teachers and missionaries).[15] According to a rather sensational account by James Wadsworth, Habington was apparently 'handpicked' by St. Ignatius himself for the Jesuit order:

> Father Francis Wallis … seeing [Habington] passe by his window went after him, … saying unto him that a little before hee had heard a divine revelation from *St Ignatius Loiola*, that the first Student hee saw going by his doore, he should declare unto him he had chosen him to be one of his Apostles; … All which the young Gentleman attentively hears … but before he would be entered a Iesuite, hee craved the space of a moneth to take farewell of his friends in England, … with a promise of a speedy returne.[16]

Habington clearly had no intention of returning to St. Omer. Instead, during the 1620s and 1630s, he deftly situated himself within the burgeoning Catholic court circle of Queen Henrietta Maria.[17] Crucially, the Queen's open practice of her faith could not be limited to the confines of her court. As early as 1632, her Capuchin priests had become prominent visual figures in the city. Father Cyprien of Gamache, with some obvious bias, recounted how:

> The Catholics looked with joy upon the Capuchins as men sent by Heaven to show, in the profession of their life, the truth of the faith which they had received from their ancestors … They could not turn their eyes from that dress, in which they contemplated the poverty of Jesus Christ … and thanked God for having kept them in that religion.[18]

The arrival of the Papal Agent, George Conn in 1635, with 'permission to profess' his religion 'publicly' was a further symbol of overt Catholicism, as were occasions such as the Queen's solemn consecration of her purpose-built, Catholic chapel at Somerset House on 8 December 1635. Hostile Protestant commentators articulated their disdain: 'Ceremonies lasted three days, massing, preaching, singing of the litanies, and such a glorious scene built over their altar, the Glory of Heaven, Inigo Jones never presented a more curious piece in any of the masques at Whitehall: with this our ignorant papists are mightily

[15] Liesbeth Corens, *Confessional Mobility and English Catholics in Counter-Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 80-81.
[16] James Wadsworth, *The English Spanish Pilgrime. Or a New Discoverie of Spanish Popery, and Jesuiticall Stratagems* (London: 1629), 21-22.
[17] Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Erin Griffey, ed. *Henrietta Maria: Piety, Politics and Patronage* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Rebecca A. Bailey, *Staging the Old Faith: Queen Henrietta Maria and the Theatre of Caroline England, 1625-1642* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009, 2nd edition 2018).
[18] Father Cyprien of Gamache, 'Memoirs of the Mission in England of the Capuchin Friars of the Province of Paris, from the year 1630 to 1669' in Thomas Birch, ed. *The Court and Times of Charles I* (London: Henry Colburn, 1848), 302.

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taken.'[19] Buoyed by such success, by the later 1630s, as Peter Fitton remarked to the French ambassador, Henrietta Maria was increasingly perceived as the leader of her English Catholic subjects:

> The wishes of the Queen are to be preferred to those of other English Catholics for two particular reasons. The first is because she is the chief of all the English Catholics, and as the Mother of all the community she is not particularly attached in affection to any individual … The second reason is that she knows very well the sentiments of the King in this affair, and his understanding, so that consequently, she can judge better than anyone those things which will best serve Catholic needs.[20]

Habington is particularly fascinating as he acted as a bridging figure between the English Catholic laity who had suffered persecution for their faith, as is evident from Habington's own recusant lineage, and the increasingly powerful French brand of Counter-Reformation Catholicism flourishing at court under the auspices of Queen Henrietta Maria.[21] For instance, on Habington's return to England, his continued links with long-standing Catholic families are evident from a scattering of occasional poems in earlier editions of *Castara* addressed to known recusants.[22] In the 1634 edition, for instance, Habington addressed Robert Brudenell, grandson of Sir Thomas Tresham of Coughton, Warwickshire.[23] Habington also dedicated

[19] Cited by Diane Purkiss, *The English Civil Wars: Papists, Gentlewomen, Soldiers and Witchfinders in the Birth of Modern Britain* (Boulder, Colorado: Basic Books, 2006), 31.

[20] Draft of Memorial by Peter Fitton to the French ambassador, 25 April 1633, Archives at Westminster Cathedral, Series A, A27, 127. The English translation is my own, for the original French see the following: 'le souhaict de la Reigne sont prefére a celluy des autres Catholiques Anglais pour deux raisons particulierement. La premiere est a cause quelle est chef de tous le Catholiques d'Angleterre, et que comme Mere commune de tous elle n'est point attachée d'affection particuliere a aucun … mais elle regarde en cela simplement la gloire de Dieu at le bien de tous. La seconde est quelle scaiet tres bien quels sont les sentiments du Roy en cette affaire, et de son conseil, et que par consequent elle peut mieux juger que aucun des choses qui peuvent servir au bien des Catholiques'.

[21] Note the competing circles of Catholicism in 1620s and 1630s England. Prior to Queen Henrietta Maria's arrival in England, Spanish inflected Catholicism led to a wave of virulent anti-popish fervour as is evident from the Protestant celebrations when the negotiations for the Spanish Match collapsed in 1624. See Kathryn Marshalek, 'An Unsettled Religious Settlement and the Crisis of the 1620s: English Catholics, Anti-Popery, and the Spanish Match, 1622-4', *English Historical Review*, 140 (2025), 367-397; Thomas Cogswell, *Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621–24* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 6–53; B. Pursell, 'The End of the Spanish Match', *Historical Journal*, xlv (2002), 699–726.

[22] See also Helen Hackett's work on the Catholic cultural connections of the Aston-Thimbleby circle which demonstrates how Habington's poetry was neatly copied into Constance Aston Fowler's commonplace miscellany; 'Women and Catholic Manuscript Networks in Seventeenth-Century England: New Research on Constance Aston Fowler's Miscellany of Sacred and Secular Verse', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 65.4 (2012), 1094-1124.

[23] '*To the Honourable my much honoured friend* R. B. *Esquire*' in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 16-17. Robert Brudenell (1607-1703) had strong Catholic connections. His mother, Mary, was the daughter of Sir Thomas Tresham and his father, Thomas, was frequently prosecuted for recusancy. Brudenell is best remembered for his founding role as Prefect of the Chapel of the Confraternity of the Rosary in London. This Chapel was dedicated to Our Lady of Power and was established at Brudenell's home of Cardigan House

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poems to Anne, the Countess of Argyll, and second wife of the seventh Earl of Argyll, and to John Talbot, tenth Earl of Shrewsbury.[24] In the 1635 edition, Habington extended and deepened this Catholic network, writing a poem on the death of George Talbot, ninth Earl of Shrewsbury (1566-1630), and dedicating poems to Archibald, seventh Earl of Argyll (1575-1638), together with an elegy on the death of Argyll's son, Henry Campbell.[25] The main focus of this nexus of dedications to known Catholics was a series of funeral elegies which Habington wrote on the death of his close friend (and younger brother of the tenth Earl of Shrewsbury), George Talbot, to whom Habington also addressed the prose piece, 'A Friend' which closed the second edition of *Castara*.[26] Simultaneously, Habington's willingness to locate himself within the queen's orbit is strongly suggested by his position as one of the leading, if ultimately unsuccessful, contenders in the mid-1630s for the role of Papal Agent.[27] The qualifications essential for this key post were as Kenneth Allott notes: 'good birth, appearance and education, exemplary Catholic life, and, if possible,

in Lincoln's Inn Fields during the 1650s by the English Benedictines of the Southern Province. The Chapel flourished until its suspension around the time of the Popish Plot in 1681. Dom Hugh Connolly, 'The Benedictine Chapel of the Rosary in London (circa 1650-1681)', *The Downside Review*, 52.2 (1934), 320-329; Anne Dillon, '"To seek out some comforts and companions of his own kind and condition": The Benedictine Rosary Confraternity and Chapel of Cardigan House, London' in Lowell Gallagher, ed. *Redrawing the Map of Early Modern English Catholicism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 272-308.

[24] '*To the right honourable the Countesse of* Ar.' in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 19-20; *'To the right honourable the Earle of* SHREWES' in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 31-32. Anne Cornwallis (1590-1635) was the second wife of the seventh Earl of Argyll (1575-1638). A devout Catholic with close connections to the Jesuit order, Anne was instrumental in her Presbyterian husband's prominent conversion to Catholicism in 1618, whereby they moved to the Spanish Netherlands and Argyll entered the military service of the King of Spain. Consequently, Argyll was declared a traitor in Edinburgh. By 1627, Argyll returned to London where he lived in retirement in Drury Lane. Anne died in January 1635 and four of her five daughters became nuns. See Rosalind K. Marshall, 'Cornwallis, Anne, Countess of Argyll', *ODNB*, online edn Sept 2024, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/68036. Accessed 21 July 2025].

[25] *'On the death of the Right Honourable,* GEORGE *Earle of* S.' in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 75-77; '*To the Right Honourable* Archibald *Earle of* Ar.' in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 85-86; '*An Elegy upon The Honourable* Henry Cambell, *sonne to the Earle of* Ar.' in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 87-88. George, ninth Earl of Shrewsbury (1566-1630) succeeded to the title in 1618. Rumours abounded that he was an ordained Catholic priest but as Bazil Fitzgibbon, S.J., argues this is unlikely. Rather, he was a strong recusant and records document his generous gift to the Jesuit foundations at Louvain and at Liége. See Bazil Fitzgibbon, S.J., 'George Talbot, Ninth Earl of Shrewsbury', *Recusant History*, 2.2 (1953), 96-110. Henry Campbell was born in 1615 and as this poem demonstrates had died by 1635 (despite undocumented internet sites which suggest he died in 1646).

[26] 'A Friend' in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 99-100; *'The Funerals of the Honourable, my best friend and Kinsman,* GEORGE TALBOT, Esquire', in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 101-111. I have not been able to uncover further information on George Talbot beyond his friendship with Habington as documented in these poems.

[27] For further background to this event, see Gordon Albion, *Charles I and the Court of Rome: A Study in 17th Century Diplomacy* (London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, Ltd., 1935).

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some private means'.[28] In 1636, there were two main candidates for this position: Sir William Hamilton, brother of the Earl of Abercorn, whom Henrietta Maria preferred and was ultimately chosen, and William Habington, who had the support of his Puritan kinsman, Lord Pembroke, and was described by Cardinal Panzani as 'a young, noble Englishman, with a creative/sharp mind'.[29]

Most likely, it was Habington's intimate knowledge of the well-rehearsed contradictions and hardships of recusant daily life, together with his familiarity with the queen's court circle, that made him a prime candidate to assist Henrietta Maria in her controversial scheme to raise Catholic financial aid for Charles I during the Bishops' Wars of 1639 to 1640. In 1639, in a desperate attempt to consolidate the astonishing gains achieved by Catholics under her leadership, Henrietta Maria urged English Catholics to show their support for the King's campaign 'by some considerable summe of money, freely and cheerefully presented'.[30] Sir Kenelm Digby swiftly organised this levy, requesting recusants in each county to nominate 'such persons as shall in your opinions be agreed of for the ablest and best disposed in every severall County, not onely to sollicite, but to collect such voluntary contributions, as every bodies conscience and duty shall proffer'.[31] Henrietta Maria had two representatives in Worcester, one of whom is recorded as '*Mr*. William Abingdon' (a common spelling of Habington's name).[32] As a designated collector for Worcestershire, answering the direct call of the queen, Habington was urged to 'sollicite' all those Catholics 'that you have relation unto, as powerfully as you can, to contribute cheerefully and bountifully upon this occasion' in order to 'really demonstrate your selves as good Subjects, as God and nature requires of you'.[33] Such active engagement in a specifically recusant endeavour that was the brainchild of the queen brilliantly illuminates the nuances of Habington's religio-political affiliations.

Remarkably, the Catholic collection to assist Charles I financially in the Bishops' Wars amounted to some £10,000. As John Dauncey recorded, 'almost as great a sum was gathered from them, as from the more numerous Protestants, many of them proportioning their

[28] Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, xxxv.
[29] The National Archives, London, *Roman Transcripts* 9/17, *Panzani Correspondence* (from the Barberini Library), 1634-1637, 9 April/16 May. Cited by Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, xxxiv, my translation. The original Italian reads 'giouane nobile Inglese, et bell ingengo'.
[30] *Copy of First, the Letter Sent by the Queenes Majestie Concerning the Collection of the Recusants Money for the Scottish War. April 17, 1639* (London: 1641), 1.
[31] *Ibid*., 'The Letter Sent by Sir *Kenelme Digby* and Mr *Mountague* Concerning the Contribution', 4.
[32] *Ibid*., 'The Names of the Collectors for Gathering the Recusants Money', 7-10 at 9.
[33] *Ibid*., The Copy of the Letter Sent by those Assembled in *London,* to every Shire, 6; *Ibid., A Coppy of the Letter Sent by the Queenes Majestie*, 3.

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affections beyond their abilities'.[34] Evidently, a key ambition of this collection was to prove Catholic loyalty. As has been well documented, Henrietta Maria persistently figured in the Protestant imagination as an overly powerful Catholic consort whose self-adopted, Counter-Reformation mission menaced the well-being of the nation.[35] Protestant anxiety was exacerbated by the rise of the Laudian reform movement and the real fear (albeit unfounded) that Charles I might turn to the fold of Rome under the influence of his wife. Even a moderate figure like Sir Edmund Verney, bearer of the King's standard, remarked in 1639 how 'the catholiks' use 'all the means and ways they can to sett uss by the ears, and I thinck they will not faile of theyr plot'.[36] Sensational pamphlets like *The Black Box of Rome* threw down a more lurid gauntlet: 'let every true patriot and lover of his Country not end ure to see the bowels of his deare Mother Country to be gnawne out by these Vipers, but as much as in him lyeth, discover, and oppose all such traitor-hearted adversaries'.[37] It is striking that in 1640, at this moment of acute instability for the nation and in particular for the Catholic community—described by Habington in a rare extant letter to his mother as 'ye many tumults'—that Habington published his third edition of *Castara* which contained a short prose reflection 'A Holy Man' and twenty two devotional lyrics.[38] It is especially noteworthy that Habington published what was effectively a reflection on English Catholicism within his popular volume of love poetry, a volume which had previously circulated as a-political and largely non-denominational (apart from several occasional poems to known Catholics such as the Talbot and Argyll families).[39]

'A Holy Man is onely happie'[40]

In exploring the significance of the new section of the third edition of *Castara*, a focus on the opening prose character sketch allows for a delineation of what Habington considered to be 'A Holy Man'. The characteristics that form the bed-rock of Habington's 'Holy Man' are the essential, cross-confessional tenets of Christianity. For instance, 'Pride he disdaines, when he findes it swelling in himselfe; but easily

[34] John Dauncey, *The History of the Thrice Illustrious Princess Henrietta Maria de Bourbon, Queen of England* (London, 1660), 59.
[35] See Leanda de Lisle, *Henrietta Maria: Conspirator, Warrior, Phoenix, Queen* (Milton Keynes: Chatto & Windus, 2022), xxi-xxii.
[36] John Bruce, ed. *Letters and Papers of the Verney Family Down to the End of the Yeare 1639* (London: John Bowyer Nichols, 1853), 228.
[37] *The Black Box of Roome* [sic] *Opened. From Whence are Revealed the Damnable Bloody Plots, Practises, and Behaviour of Iesuites, Priests, Papists and other Recusants in Generall* (London: 1641), 19.
[38] The letter is transcribed in full in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, xxxiii.
[39] See n. 23-26.
[40] 'A Holy Man' in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 115.

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forgiveth it in another'.[41] Similarly, 'when he lookes on others vices, he values not himselfe vertuous by comparison, but examines his owne defects, and finds matter enough at home for reprehension'.[42] Likewise, we find this beautiful insight into early modern prayer:

> In prayer he is frequent not apparent: yet as he labours not the opinion, so he feares not the scandall of being thought good. He every day travailes his meditations up to heaven, and never findes himself wearied with the journey; but when the necessities of nature returne him downe to earth, he esteemes it a place, hee is condemned to.[43]

However, that this 'Holy Man' is an unapologetic English Catholic is apparent from the very opening paragraph of the prose reflection. Habington announces that the 'Catholique faith is the foundation on which he erects Religion; knowing it a ruinous madnesse to build in the ayre of a private spirit, or on the sands of any new schisme'.[44] More definitively, a truly 'Holy Man' can only be 'happie' if he eschews church papism.[45] As Habington states in no uncertain terms 'it were the basest cowardize, by dissimulation of religion, to preserve temporall respects'.[46] He continues that a 'Holy Man' should remain cheerful through the tyranny of poverty which was particularly pertinent for those Catholics (like himself) who had endured financial loss for their faith:

> Poverty he neither feares nor covets, but cheerefully entertaines: imagining it the fire which tries vertue. Nor how tyrannically soever it usurpe on him, doth he pay to it a sigh or wrinckle: for he who suffers want without reluctancie, may be poore not miserable.[47]

Most crucially and bearing in mind Habington's own recusant family history, it is notable that he insists that rebellion is to be avoided at all costs: 'His obedience moves still by direction of the Magistrate: And should conscience informe him that the command is unjust; he judgeth it neverthelesse high treason by rebellion to make good his tenets'.[48] This directive against rebellion is by no means empty rhetoric. Habington repeats this injunction in other writings such as his *Observations Upon Historie* (London: 1641) and in his only stage play, *The Queene of Arragon* which was performed at court and published in 1640.[49] Finally, like all good Christians, 'A Holy Man' is sanguine in

[41] *Ibid.*
[42] *Ibid.*, 116.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] *Ibid.*, 115.
[45] *Ibid.*
[46] *Ibid.*
[47] *Ibid.*
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] William Habington, *Observations Upon Historie* (London: William Cooke, 1641); William Habington, *The Queene of Arragon A Tragi-Comedie* (London: William Cooke, 1640).

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the face of death which 'how deformed soever an aspect it weares, he is not frighted with: since it not annihilates, but uncloudes the soule. He therefore stands every moment prepared to dye'.[50] But, again, this directive has a specifically Catholic inflection. Habington's holy man 'freely yeelds up himselfe, when age or sickenesse sommon him, yet he with more alacritie puts off his earth, when the profession of faith crownes him a martyr'.[51] Perhaps, what is equally interesting is what is absent from this reflection. There is no explicit mention of papal authority with the recurring vexed question of resistance or compromise. However, the emphasis in the final line, that the best death is that of being crowned a martyr, does suggest the overhanging shadow of this debate and implies an uneasy tension between this 'Holy Man's' undying obedience to the Magistrate and his 'alacritie' to face martyrdom for his 'profession' of the Catholic faith.[52]

'Open my lippes, great God'[53]: new poems from Castara (1640)

In the new final section of *Castara*, the reader dwells on Habington's prose sketch of a 'A Holy Man' through a series of twenty-two poems which employ as a motif key biblical lines. The engagement is largely from the Book of Psalms, although the Book of Job and parts of the New Testament also feature.[54] Just as with Habington's depiction of 'A Holy Man' so these poems are both cross-confessional yet imbued with Catholic inflections. The Book of Psalms was fundamental to the literature and culture of early modern England, as is emphasised by the fact that in the Reformed Liturgy the whole of the Book of Psalms had to be read every month.[55] A key component of the compelling nature of the psalms was their capacity to be at once, as Ramie Targoff puts it, both 'individual and representative, human and divine'.[56] In translating the psalms, Habington joined an array of poets and musicians ranging from Thomas Wyatt, Philip and Mary Sidney to John Donne, George Herbert and Richard Verstegan. For as Puritan bishop, Richard Bernard, remarked in his preface to *David's Musicke*: 'There is no condition of any in prosperity or adversity, peace or wars, health or

[50] Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 116.
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] *Ibid.*
[53] William Habington, '*Domine labia mea aperies*', ['*Thou O Lord will open my lips*'], in *Ibid.*, 117-118 at 117, line16.
[54] There are thirteen poems engaging with the Book of Psalms, four based on the Book of Job, three on the New Testament, one on the Book of Isaiah, and four poems addressed to known Catholics.
[55] See Hannibal Hamlin, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Ramie Targoff, 'The Poetics of Common Prayer: George Herbert and the Seventeenth-Century Devotional Lyric', *English Literary Renaissance*, 29.3 (1999), 468-490.
[56] Ramie Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 66.

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sickness, inward or outward distresse, with many particular causes in all these kinds, but he shall find some Psalms, which he may think almost to have been composed upon his own occasion'.[57]

There is a markedly different tone in the new section of Habington's 1640 edition from the love poetry which had made the earlier editions of *Castara* so popular. As Heather Dubrow points out, in the early modern lyric collection, the introductory poem acts as a 'headnote, situating both the reader and other texts'.[58] This is undoubtedly the case in the opening poem to this final section of *Castara* (1640), '*Domine labia mea aperies*' ['*Thou O Lord will open my lips*'], where the 'humble flight of carnall love' is deliberately set aside.[59] The speaker, a Davidic figure, focuses on line 15 from Psalm 51 and beseeches God to 'Open my lippes' to 'soare above' and 'trace no path of vulgar men'.[60] It is notable that Habington chooses to open this section by engaging with one of the seven Penitential Psalms which were largely seen as individual psalms of lament and mourning. Cross-confessionally, these Penitential Psalms were understood as an aid to penance, but for Catholics the Penitential Psalms were also a specific means of praying for the souls of the dead.[61] Indeed, Habington returns to psalm 51 in '*Quid gloriaris in malicia*' ['*Why do you glory in malice*'] halfway through the collection, intensifying the focus on this psalm.[62] In '*Domine labia mea aperies*' ['*Thou O Lord will open my lips*'], the speaker repeatedly repudiates worldly concerns as in stanzas six and seven where he ponders:

> Should I my selfe ingratiate
> T'a Princes smile;
> How soone may death my hopes beguile?
> And should I farme the proudest state,
> I'me Tennant to uncertaine fate.
>
> If I court gold; will it not rust?
> And if my love
> Toward a female beauty move;
> How will that surfet of our lust
> Distast us, when resolv'd to dust?[63]

[57] Richard Bernard, *David's Musicke: or Psalmes of that Royal Prophet* (London: 1616), sig. A2b.
[58] Heather Dubrow, *The Challenges of Orpheus: Lyric Poetry and Early Modern England* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 2008), 126.
[59] Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 117.
[60] *Ibid*.
[61] See Claire Costley King'oo, *Miserere Mei: The Penitential Psalms in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012). Additionally, Habington engages with Penitential Psalm 101 with '*Paucitatem dierum meorum nuncia mihi*' ['*Declare to me the brevity of my days*'] and twice returns to Penitential Psalm 37 with '*Quoniam ego in flagella paratus sum*' ['*Because I am ready for scourges*'] and '*Cogitabo pro peccato meo*' ['*I will think about my sin*'] in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 121-123, 136, 145-146.
[62] Habington, '*Quid gloriaris in malicia*' ['*Why do you glory in malice*'] in *Ibid*., 134-135.
[63] *Ibid*., 117-18.

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This conceit of alienation from worldly pleasure—of what Hannibal Hamlin terms a 'broken and contrite heart'—was a powerful cross-confessional image from psalm 51 in sixteenth and seventeenth century England.[64] As is well established, the emblem of the heart itself was influential with both emblematists and poets at this time and so it would seem to be no accident that this final edition of *Castara* (1640) is accompanied by a frontispiece depicting a cherub setting alight a veritable blaze from a tiny heart in the centre of the image (Figure 1). In '*Domine labia mea aperies*' ['*Thou O Lord will open my lips*'], Habington's opening and most anthologised poem, the speaker urges the reader to focus on eternal rewards rather than the temporary illusions of earthly pleasure:

> But thou AEternall banquet! Where
> For ever we
> May feede without satietie!
> Who harmonie art to the eare,
> Who art, while all things else appeare![65]

Thus, Habington in his opening poem of this final section of *Castara* shifts the focus from earthly love to spiritual reward employing cross-confessional tenets which would appeal to a wider audience yet with specific Catholic nuances—much like his prose sketch of 'A Holy Man is onely happie'.[66]

Habington's poems have a distinctive simplicity and clarity—a 'plain style'— that St. Augustine believed to be at the heart of all good writing.[67] Yet, it is important to note how Habington also draws on his religious lyric forerunners, from Catholic martyr St. Robert Southwell to John Donne and George Herbert. Alison Shell has argued how 'Southwell's significance as a precursor' to the seventeenth-century religious lyric is 'a commonplace'.[68] Indeed, Habington engages with Southwell's exploration of chaste love throughout *Castara*, consistently advocating for 'a heart where no impure/Disorder'd passions rage'.[69] Habington's paraphrase of Psalm 102, '*Non nobis Domine*' ['*Not to us, Lord*'] even reimagines for a Caroline reader Southwell's own recasting of this psalm in

[64] Hamlin, *Psalm Culture,* 201.
[65] Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 118.
[66] *Ibid*., 115.
[67] Cited by Anthony D. Cousins, *The Catholic Religious Poets from Southwell to Crashaw: A Critical Study* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1991), 4.
[68] Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 58. For a comprehensive discussion of Southwell's poetry see Peter Davidson and Anne Sweeney, eds. *St Robert Southwell Collected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2007); Anne Sweeney, *Robert Southwell. Snow in Arcadia: Rewriting the English Lyric Landscape* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Scott R. Pilarz S.J., *Robert Southwell and the Mission of Literature, 1561-1595: Writing Reconciliation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).
[69] '*To* CASTARA' in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 93-94, lines 1-2.

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Figure 1. William Habington, *Castara* (1640), frontispiece. Courtesy of the British Library.

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'*Davids Peccavi*'.[70] But the influence of John Donne and George Herbert is also evident in Habington's poems not only from the immediacy of Habington's language and his use of colloquialism but through his employment of paradox. For instance, the curious vision Habington's speaker creates in '*Domine labia mea aperies*' ['*Thou O Lord will open my lips*'] of a 'holy death/that murders sence' chimes with Donne's advocacy for rhetoric that 'troubles the understanding, to displace, and to discompose'.[71] In this third edition of *Castara*, Habington can be seen to engage with noted writers across the confessional divide; this refashions the devotional lyric for a 1640s readership and deepens our understanding of the interconnections between religious lyrics.

A key reason the Psalms were such a popular genre in the early modern period was that as St. Athanasius observed everyone 'may see and perceive the notions and affections of his heart and soul'.[72] As already discussed, the Psalms were seen as both individual and collectively representative. Drawing on this model, Susannah Brietz Monta writes compellingly about how John Austin in his *Devotions* (1688) gives 'an insistent present' to his verse—what she terms 'the liturgical now'—through the collective praying of Austin's hymn lyrics.[73] Through this paradigm, Monta enters the debate about the lyric 'I' and the vexed territory in the lyric of subjectivity and the speaking voice.[74] Northrop Frye defined the lyric as an 'utterance that is overheard, [so there is a] tendency to read these poems as implied dramatic monologues'.[75] However, Monta argues that Austin's *Devotions*, rather than offering a lyric 'I' or an expression of self, instead assert the value of what she terms 'the artful lyric': 'language into which the self may step, by which the self may be shaped'.[76] A similar process can be seen in Habington's devotional poems (written over forty years before Austin's *Devotions*) as, for example, in '*Et alta a longè congnoscit*' ['*And the proud he knows from afar*'].[77] Based on Psalm 138, line 6, the Davidic speaker focuses on the mutability of life to highlight the all-encompassing omnipotence of God:

> Ambition! Whither wilt thou climbe,
> Knowing thy art, the mockery of time?

[70] *Ibid*., 123-24; '*Davids Peccavi*' in Davidson and Sweeney, *St Robert Southwell Collected Poems*, 31-32.
[71] *Ibid*., 118; John Donne, *Sermons of John Donne,* edited by George Potter and Evelyn Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953–1962), 3:259.
[72] Cited by Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979), 13.
[73] Monta, 'John Austin's *Devotions*', 241.
[74] For more on this debate see Chaviva Hošek and Patricia Parker, eds. *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985).
[75] Northrop Frye, 'Approaching the Lyric' in Hošek and Parker, eds. *Lyric Poetry*, 17.
[76] Monta, 'John Austin's *Devotions*', 239.
[77] '*Et alta a longè congnoscit*' ['*And the proud he knows from afar*'] in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 128-29.

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Which by examples tells the high
Rich structures, they must as their owners dye:
And while they stand, their tennants are
Detraction, flatt'ry, wantonnesse, and care,
Pride, envie, arrogance, and doubt.[78]

When read through the lens of the 'artful lyric', and considering the volatility of 1640, Habington can be seen to create in his devotional lyrics a 'liturgical now' for his Catholic and wider readership.

As this examination of Habington's poems has suggested, many of the tenets of Habington's devotional lyrics are cross-confessional which, as with Southwell's poetry, would have appealed to a general readership and encouraged ecumenism. However, as with Habington's reflection, 'A Holy Man', there are both nuanced and explicit inflections of Catholicism which make Habington's poems specifically relevant to Catholic readers. Anthony D. Cousins was the first to point out how Habington's poems are rooted in the meditative style of St. Francis de Sales whom Louis Martz deemed to offer a 'gentler method of meditation' than St. Ignatius Loyola, who was a great influence on Southwell.[79] Accordingly, in poems such as '*Qui quasi flos egreditur*' ['*He cometh forth like a flower*'] we can see the influence of Henrietta Maria's court.[80] This poem demonstrates how Habington's lyrics bridged the worlds of English and French Catholicism. The ideal of Catholic femininity emerging from contemporary French devotional works at this time was one of gentle passivity. Francis de Sales advocated the need for his reader to be cordial to all: 'to gentlie and sweetly follow on their way'.[81] De Sales promoted the ideal of the 'honnête femme' which, as Erica Veevers first argued, particularly appealed to Henrietta Maria; the feminine qualities of piety, chastity and compassion were celebrated as a valuable means of converting unbelieving spouses.[82] Nicolas Caussin in *The Holy Court* (which is dedicated to Henrietta Maria) even suggested a new model for the Queen in the figure of Clotilda, the first Catholic Queen of France, who converted her husband Clodeus rather by 'the example of a good life, & her humble prayers presented on Aultars, then by any other way'.[83]

[78] *Ibid*., 128.
[79] Cousins, *The Catholic Religious Poets*, 119-120. Louis Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2nd ed, 1955), 56-7.
[80] '*Qui quasi flos egreditur*' ['*He cometh forth like a flower*'] in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 132–33.
[81] Francis de Sales, *Delicious Entertainments of the Soule*, trans. Agnes More (Douai: 1632), 14–15.
[82] *Ibid*. See also Jacques Du Bosc, *L'Honnête Femme* (Paris: 1632). For scholarship on the appeal to Henrietta Maria of these French devotional works see Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion*; Griffey, *Henrietta Maria: Piety, Politics and Patronage*; Bailey, *Staging the Old Faith*.
[83] Nicolas Caussin, *The Holy Court. Or the Christian Institution of Men of Quality*, trans. Thomas Hawkins, 2 vols, (Paris [St Omers]: 1626), 2, 497.

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The speaker in '*Qui quasi flos egreditur*', which takes as its inspiration verse 14 of the Book of Job, 'He cometh forth like a flower', first meditates on the rose as a symbol of man's pride:

> Poore silly flowre!
> Though in thy beauty thou presume,
> And breath which doth the spring perfume;
> Thou may'st be cropt this very houre.[84]

These lines resonate with Robert Herrick's 'To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time' (first published in 1648). However, whereas Herrick focuses on virgins seizing the day and gathering 'ye Rose-buds while ye may', Habington dedicates his poem to a young daughter of the Catholic, tenth Earl of Shrewsbury, Lady Catherine Talbot, who lives 'as th' Angels in one perfect state . . . /By vertues great preservative'.[85] In '*Qui quasi flos egreditur*', Habington creates a vision of womanhood that would be particularly appealing to Queen Henrietta Maria and her circle through the arresting final image with its sharp focus on chastity, which was openly celebrated as the cornerstone of Henrietta Maria's own marriage:

> And though we see
> Beautie enough to warme each heart;
> Yet you by a chaste Chimicke Art,
> Calcine fraile love to pietie.[86]

This image of Lady Catherine warming 'fraile love to pietie' also resonates with the fretwork of Catholic dedications contained within the first two secular editions of *Castara* (1634, 1635), such as to Anne, Countess of Argyll, whose own faith was so influential in the conversion to Catholicism of her Presbyterian husband, the seventh Earl of Argyll.[87] Indeed, considering the 1640 volume as a whole has the effect of reframing our understanding of the impact of the scattering of occasional poems to recusant individuals: from the Countess of Argyll who unites 'Honour with sweetenesse, vertue with delight' to Habington's elegy for his great friend, George Talbot whose 'vertue did appeare' in 'this darke mist of error with a cleare/Vnspotted light'.[88] Like the prose reflection on 'A Holy Man', repeatedly we see a

[84] Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 132.
[85] Lady Catherine Talbot was the second daughter of John, tenth Earl of Shrewsbury. She married Thomas Whetenhall of East Peckham in Kent and died in Padua after a journey to Rome for the Jubilee of 1650. For further information on Lady Catherine see 'Thomas Whetenhall of East Peckham in Kent', *Downside Review*, vol 15.1 (1896), 29-48 at 41-47. Robert Herrick, 'To the Virgins to Make Much of Time', *The Complete Poems of Robert Herrick* (London: Sothis Press, 2023), 144; Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 133.
[86] *Ibid*., 133.
[87] See n. 24.
[88] *Ibid*; '*Elegie*, 7' in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 108-9 at 109.

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panoply of men and women shining forth who are steadfast in cross-confessional virtues yet ultimately rooted in their Catholic faith.

This Catholic tone deepens in the 1640 volume's final poem as Habington chooses to complete the collection on a specifically recusant note, the purifying of the soul in purgatory.[89] Based on the New Testament letter of St. Paul to the Philippians, the speaker of '*Cupio dissolvi*' ['*I wish to be dissolved*'] reminds the reader of what is of true importance for the English Catholic:

> My God! If 'tis thy great decree
> That this must the last moment be
> Wherein I breath this ayre;
> My heart obeyes joy'd to retreate
> From the false favours of the great
> And treachery of the faire. [. . .]
>
> For in the fire when Ore is tryed;
> And by that torment purified:
> Doe we deplore the losse?
> And when thou shalt my soule refine
> That it thereby may purer shine
> Shall I grieve for the drosse?[90]

Thus, this significant addition to the third edition of *Castara*, consisting of 'A Holy Man' together with twenty-two devotional poems, transforms a volume of courtly love into a timely engagement with the 'liturgical now' and offers a key insight to the twenty-first century reader into the ongoing redefinition of what it meant to be an early modern Catholic at a critical religio-political junction both for the nation and the recusant community.[91]

Conclusion: 'books penetrate where priests and religious cannot enter and serve as precursors to undeceive many'.[92]

Heather Dubrow in her significant book on the early modern lyric highlights the importance of the audience: remarking we 'should ask who are or will be or might be its audiences whether addressed or not'.[93] Habington's third edition of *Castara*, like Southwell before him, had audiences across the confessional divide. Indeed, the cross-

[89] For more on the doctrine of purgatory see David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
[90] Habington, '*Cupio dissolvi*' ['*I wish to be dissolved*'] in Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 148-149.
[91] See n. 73.
[92] John Wilson, 'Relation of the English Mission in the States of Flanders, 1616' in Allen. B. Hinds, ed. *Calendar of State Papers Milan, 1385-1618* (London: 1912), 654.
[93] Dubrow, *The Challenges of Orpheus*, 57.

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confessionalism inherent to Habington's poems would have been reassuring to Protestant readers—Habington notably writes of the dangers of pride and ambition rather than offering litanies to the Blessed Virgin Mary. However, his poems' rootedness in the meditative framework of St. Francis de Sales, together with his model of Catholic womanhood's engagement with the writings of Nicholas Caussin, would have been appreciated by Francophile readers of Henrietta Maria's circle. The specific English Catholic inflections—such as the celebration of English recusants through occasional poems—would have been invaluable for English Catholics struggling with what Habington termed the 'many tumults' of 1640.[94] This points towards the crucial question: what might be the larger purpose of Habington's revised edition of *Castara*?. 1640 was a moment of astonishing reversal of fortune for English Catholics in the long journey of Catholic negotiation with the establishment. In the 1630s, with events such as the erection of the Queen's Catholic chapel and open (if idle) talk of the King's imminent conversion, toleration at the very least seemed within the Catholic community's grasp. Yet, by Autumn 1640, Guistinian, the Venetian ambassador to the Doge recorded alarm within English Catholic circles. He noted that some were: 'hurriedly settling their goods with the intention of going to live quietly in some other country until the present ill feeling has softened and the troubled state of this kingdom has altered'.[95] Habington, documented as one of the ablest Catholics of his generation, offered encouragement in the midst of such uncertainty, gravely reminding his reader, through the figure of 'A Holy Man', how: 'In prosperity he gratefully admires the bounty of the Almighty giver … But in adversity hee remaines unshaken, and like some eminent mountaine hath his head above the clouds'.[96] These 'clouds' of English Catholic anxiety were well-founded. By 1642, the treacherous spectre of the Catholic community as a malevolent nemesis of the godly Englishman seemed to be re-entrenching itself within the Protestant imagination. The early 1640s were marked by a rash of alarmist tracts exposing multiple, alleged and apparently hare-brained, popish conspiracies.[97] Strikingly, if we turn to new works emanating from the Catholic press at this time, there is a marked note of resolution in the face of adversity. Lawrence Anderton, for instance, in his 1640 *Miscellenia* urged his reader to

[94] See n. 38.
[95] Guistinian to the Doge and Senate, November 1640, *Calendar of State Papers Venetian, 1640–42,* 93.
[96] Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, 115.
[97] *Treason Discovered From Holland: Or a Discoverie of a Most Damnable and Divellish Attempt of Two Jesuites and Three Other Catholiques Against the Life and Person of the Ladie Elisabeth* (London: 1641); *A Great Conspiracy of the Papists Against the Worthy Members of Both Houses of Parliament* (London: 1642).

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remain steadfast to the Catholic faith. Although, like Habington he emphasised that this should not be in any 'tumultuous or vndutifull manner' as we should 'beare all reuerence to the State, and Loyalty to his *Maiesty* … who is full of commiseration & pitty'.[98] Likewise, John Wilson's 1608 volume, *English Martyrologe* was reprinted in 1642 and 'much augmented' as a timely 'comfort and consolation' for Catholics who 'daily suffer so great and many Pressures'.[99] For as the Carmelite, Father Gervasius, privately observed in July 1641: 'with the persecution against Catholics … making headway … many Catholics take the oath acknowledging the Royal supremacy and conform to the Protestant Church in order to avoid punishment'.[100]

Thus, Habington's revised and final edition of *Castara* can be seen as a deliberate intervention, by a leading English Catholic, to encourage fellow Catholics to maintain their faith at a moment of acute pressure. Habington's measured depiction of a Catholic 'Holy Man' challenged the more lurid spectre of popery which was prevalent in the popular press. Habington's twenty-two devotional poems were influenced by his lyric forerunners, Southwell, Donne and Herbert, and engaged with French, Counter-Reformation Catholic ideals emanating from Henrietta Maria's court, such as those of Caussin and St. Francis de Sales. Acting as a bridging text between Catholic communities, these poems which mostly engaged with the Book of Psalms, serve as both a personal and communal form of prayer, that is crucial for our understanding of both the importance and development of Catholic devotional lyrics. With the psalms seen as 'points on a journey', once more, at the heart of the English Catholic dilemma was the perennial question of loyalty and allegiance.[101] Habington's own conduct in the 1640s offers insight into how one English Catholic managed his loyalties at such a testing time. Habington remained faithful to his King, fighting under the royal standard of Charles I during the Civil War.[102] Yet, he maintained his allegiance to the 'old faith' – fined along with his wife and parents for recusant beliefs at the Quarter Sessions held in Worcester on 19 April 1642.[103] Thus, Habington proved the truth of his own claim in *Castara* that for 'A Holy Man' — an English Catholic —'Vertue though rugged, is the safest way'.[104]

[98] Lawrence Anderton, *Miscellania or a Treatise Contayning Two Hundred Controversiall Animadversions 1640* in D. M. Rogers, ed. *English Recusant Literature Series* (York: Scholar Press, 1973), 389.
[99] John Wilson, *The English Martyrologe Conteyning a Summary of the Lives of the Glorious and Renowned Saintes of the Three Kingdomes* (2nd edition, 1640), title page and sig *2r.
[100] Cited in Benedictus Maria Zimmerman, *Carmel in England: A History of the English Mission of the Discalced Carmelites, 1615-1649* (London: Burns & Oates, 1899), 140-1.
[101] Dubrow, *The Challenges of Orpheus*, 209.
[102] Wilcher, 'William Habington, 1605-1654'.
[103] Allott, *The Poems of William Habington*, xl.
[104] Habington, '*To the Right Honourable* Archibald *Earle of* Ar' in *Ibid*., 85-86 at 86.

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