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Expanding the Political Nation: *Gorboduc* at the Inns of Court and Succession Revisited

The early modern English law schools, the inns of court, enjoyed a vibrant tradition of dramatic production. The record of this tradition is especially rich for the 1560s when we have full texts and accounts of a host dramatic shows, including Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton's *Gorboduc* (1562), George Gascoigne's *Supposes* and *Jocasta* (both 1566), Thomas Pound's two marriage masques for members of Lincoln's Inn (both 1566), and the multi-authored *Gismond of Salerne* (1567–8). In the most comprehensive and influential survey of inns of court drama in this decade, Marie Axton observes that such works intervened in one of the most pressing political debates of the day, the succession question. Members of the inns used drama to participate in this political conversation, urging Elizabeth to marry, bear an heir, and resolve the line to the throne.¹ Axton pinpoints a crucial context for inns of court drama. Her discussion nevertheless flattens out a dynamic and multivalent realm of cultural production into a uniform and monologic area of political expression. Members of the inns were hardly homogeneous in their positions on the succession and drama was never produced or viewed as such a consistent or narrowly focused form.² Almost everywhere in England in the early part of the sixteenth century, plays were collaborative and occasional activities, and at the inns they were occasions in which members presented themselves to themselves and often to those in power – the monarch, the privy council, and members of the nobility. Even individual plays served multiple purposes and were the combined expression of a series of overlapping interests and needs.

This essay aims to revise and expand our account of inns of court drama by looking at the complex social function of the most well known play from this period, *Gorboduc*. A case study of this work is both long overdue and timely. While critics have consistently recognized that the play intervened in the succession debates, the discovery in the early 1990s of an eyewitness account of the first performance has helped to solidify a narrow reading of this intervention: the play comments on the marriage negotiations of Lord

Robert Dudley and King Eric XIV of Sweden.³ This manuscript is only one of a number of documents concerning the occasion, production, and reception of the play, and together these offer a broad view of its social context and political significance. As I shall argue in more detail below, *Gorboduc* began as an entertainment to fit a specific social occasion, the Christmas revels of 1561–2, and developed into a play on the succession. Nonetheless, the content, staging, and reception of the play suggest that the political statement it makes is less specific and more challenging than previous critics or even our eyewitness supposed. *Gorboduc* addresses the nature and make up of the English political nation, broadly defined as those individuals and institutions that could legitimately contribute to discussions of matters of state. As they performed the play at the Inner Temple, members of the Inn claimed for themselves the authority to counsel the privy council and made themselves in a significant way, and even if only for the duration of the play, part of the political nation itself.⁴

The Occasional Politics of *Gorboduc*

Gorboduc was first performed as part of the annual Christmas revels at the Inner Temple in 1561–2 and viewing the play in this institutional and festive context shows its collaborative and occasional nature. Traditionally in the revels members of the inns imitated and parodied the court. Some unusual events in 1561–2 involved prominent figures from court in the celebrations, including Lord Robert Dudley and members of the privy council. As a result, the festivities opened up a fairly novel opportunity to create a play on the succession, or more broadly speaking, to use the imitative court of the revels to create a mirror for the magistrates from the court. In this context, *Gorboduc* looks less like a specific topical political commentary than a variegated response to the multifaceted circumstances in which it was initially performed.

The history of *Gorboduc* then best begins with the tradition of inns of court Christmas revels. While their specific origins are unknown, the tradition goes back to at least the fifteenth century.⁵ By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the law schools had established a set of complex conventions around their Christmas celebrations, which involved electing a prince or lord of misrule, as well as a retinue of attendants and officers – for instance, a lord chancellor, chief baron of the exchequer, and chief butler – to preside over their realms or provinces during the festival period. The revels typically consisted of a set of events surrounding the prince himself: banqueting, the reception of ambassadors from so-called foreign lands (members of the other

inns), the creation of members as knights of the prince, visits to the court, progresses along the Thames, and the production of a play.⁶ Combining elements of a carnival and a high school mock-congress, the revels allowed members of the inns to take on positions of prestige that they did not and often would not hold.

The revels offered an opportunity for self-fashioning, but their mock-courts must have become traditional for other reasons as well. They contributed to the festive character of the Christmas celebrations, since the exaggerated parody of the national court lent an air of outlandish humor to the events. In addition, many men came to the inns searching for social and political advancement and aiming in particular for positions in the Elizabethan court and government.⁷ The revels allowed such men to train themselves in the comportment and bearing they would need to obtain posts in the court and state. According to one sixteenth-century observer, attendants and officers at the revels were to be the same as those 'in the King's Highness house, and other Noble men, and this is done onely to the intent, that they should in time come to know how to use themselves'.⁸ Drama especially helped inns of court men to 'know how to use themselves', since such performances allowed them to practice the rhetorical skills that they would need to possess as courtiers and civil servants.⁹

Like typical Christmas events, the Inner Temple revels of 1561–2 parodied the court and prepared participants for courtly life. One contemporary account of those revels tells us that the Inn blasted various 'double cannons in so great a number and so terrible that it darkened the whole air' and that these served as 'warning shot to the officers of the Constable Marshall of the Inner Temple, to prepare dinner'.¹⁰ Revellers imitated and caricatured the court, firing off their cannons, weapons usually reserved for events of national significance, to add hyperbolic importance to their own activity, the preparation of the evening meal.¹¹ The account also indicates that the revels fulfilled their other traditional function: training future members of the court and servants of the state. Men come to this special revels court to learn 'to yield their fleece to their prince and commonwealth'. In part they do this by participating in the court's 'exercises of body and mind', which help them to master 'speaking, countenance, gesture, and use of apparel'.¹²

The revels of 1561–2 were characteristic festivities, but they were unique as well, celebrating the end of a conflict between the Inner and Middle Temples. In 1561, the governors of the Middle Temple had only one subsidiary inn of chancery under their control. They approached their counterparts at the Inner Temple, who then had three inns of chancery, with a

proposal to transfer jurisdiction of one of these, Lyons Inn. To aid them in their plan, the Middle Temple enlisted the assistance of the powerful lord keeper Nicholas Bacon. The Inner Temple opposed the move and asked Lord Robert Dudley, master of the queen's horse and later earl of Leicester, to help them to prevent the transfer. Dudley successfully petitioned Queen Elizabeth, who spoke to Bacon telling him 'to cease and no further to proceed or meddle in the same matter' and promptly brought the dispute to a close.¹³

The end of the conflict occasioned an unusually lavish celebration, for which the inn named Dudley its lord of misrule. An entry in the diary of the merchant Henry Machyn shows the magnificence of the festivities. Relating the progress of the lord of misrule, Dudley, through the city of London, he writes:

The xxvij day of Desember cam rydyng thugh London a lord of mysrull, in clene complett harnes, gylt, with a hondered grett horse and gentyll-men rydyng gorgously with chenes of gold, and there horses godly trapytt, unto the Tempull, for ther was grett cher al Cryustynmas tyll (*blank*), and grett revels as ever was for the gentyllmen of the Tempull evere day, for mony of the conselle was there.¹⁴

Machyn describes the splendid procession, which with its prince and one hundred men on horses arrayed in gold rivals the opulent extravagance of royal progresses. He indicates as well the importance and exceptional nature of the revels, which involved 'mony of the [privy] conselle' and were 'grett revels as ever was'.

For the finale to such great revels members of the Inner Temple needed a suitable play and this was Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc*, a dramatization of the ancient civil war between the sons of King Gorboduc for control of the English throne. Sackville and Norton likely adapted this history expressly for the occasion. The story responds in a variety of ways to the particular circumstances of the festivities. First, the tale about the division of the empire reflects the events that led up to the revels, the dispute between the Middle and Inner Temples over the property of Lyons Inn.¹⁵ Second, it encapsulates the psychic and rhetorical logic of the revels, turning a local place and event into a kingdom and incident on a national and dynastic scale. Finally, it provides an opportunity for rhetorical training. The authors filled out their source, enhancing a brief narrative from the chronicles with numerous scenes of counsel that served as exercises in 'speaking, countenance, gesture, and use of apparel'.

Sackville and Norton may have composed the play to respond to domestic events, but they deliberately adapted the plot in order to comment as well on

a national political issue. The tale of Gorboduc goes back as far as Geoffrey of Monmouth, appearing with changes in detail in chronicles up through the sixteenth century. In a brief version, in the *The Cronycles of Englonde* (1528), King Gorbodian reigns for fifteen years and then dies. His two sons then, becoming 'stoute *and* proude', 'euer warred togider for the londe'. The younger son kills his brother, and the act prompts his mother to murder him in revenge. The sons die without heirs, with 'neyther sone ne daughter ne none other of the kynrede yt might enheryte ye londe', and the kingdom plunges into fifty years of civil war.¹⁶ While the source used by Sackville and Norton is not clear, it is likely that they picked particular details and adapted a variety of sources in particular ways.¹⁷ They shaped the beginning in order to present a king who abdicates while he is still alive, and made this the act that causes civil war. They also enhanced the extent of the civil turmoil, introducing a rebellion among the commoners; added a foreign invader, Fergus, who threatens to take the crown by force; and fleshed out the ending, concluding the play with Gorboduc's former counsellors debating the future of the kingdom and with that future still undecided. The alterations, especially the opening and closing debates about the appropriate heir, shift the emphasis of the story from fraternal strife to the succession.

The inheritance of the throne was one of the most politically charged and complex issues of the day, touching a range of other matters, including debates about primogeniture, the will of Henry VIII, the legitimacy of female rule, the national religion, and the relative power of the monarch, privy council, and parliament. The issue is too complicated to be described in detail here, but suffice it to say that in the early 1560s the succession crisis centred on two main debates. One concerned the rightful heir to the throne, an issue that divided supporters of the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots from the supporters of the Protestant Catherine Grey. The second concerned Queen Elizabeth's marriage policy. Elizabeth was frequently urged resolve the succession by marrying and having a child of her own. Yet there were disputes about an appropriate husband. At the time of *Gorboduc*, at least two men actively sought Elizabeth's hand, King Eric of Sweden and the Inner Temple's patron and lord of misrule, Lord Robert Dudley himself.¹⁸ Indeed, Sackville and Norton probably chose to address the succession in their play since the issue appealed to nearly every segment of the audience: Dudley, who wanted to marry Elizabeth; members of the privy council, who sought to have the question resolved; and members of the inns, who were likely were drawn to the thorny common law legal issues at the heart of the succession crisis.¹⁹

It must have been a fairly natural step to turn the imitative revels court into a mirror for the real court and shape historical fiction to comment on the realities of the political world. As it did with the revels, *Gorboduc* responded to the succession question in a variety of ways, offering as critics have shown numerous statements on the issue. In the foreign invader, Fergus, *Gorboduc* warns against a match with a foreigner, such as the King of Sweden and signals the unsuitability of Mary, Queen of Scots. In one of the final speeches of the play, in which a counsellor argues that someone native-born should rule, it urges that a native heir such as Lady Catherine Grey should be named as the successor. Finally, in performance with another revels entertainment, it presents Dudley himself as a worthy royal husband.²⁰

Despite the scholarly temptation to determine which if any of such readings is most authoritative, such potential research seems unnecessary, since the topical references tend toward the same advice: the succession needs to be resolved and better through a native heir than a foreign one. Moreover, the differences in the specific topical recommendations most likely reflect the diversity of attitudes that must have existed among the members of the audience of *Gorboduc*. Overall, the range of comments on the succession reminds us of the play's complex social function. *Gorboduc* came about as a variegated response to the traditional needs of the revels, as well as the particular circumstances of the conflict with the Middle Temple, and the audience's interests in the succession question. The play served many purposes, encapsulating and expressing an array of communal, institutional, and national concerns.

Collaborative Counsel

Gorboduc is a broadly topical response to a particular social occasion and political question. In their production of the play, members of the Inner Temple also capitalized on the occasion in order to offer a less topical and more general comment on the nature and make-up of the early Elizabethan political nation, those groups and institutions that had the authority to contribute to discussions of matters of state. Indeed, as we continue to unpack the complex social function of the play, it is crucial to recognize the drawback of reading it only as a topical commentary on the succession. Those arguments overlook not only the occasional nature of the play but also and more importantly the limitation of such topical readings themselves: to the extent that *Gorboduc* comments on particular solutions to the succession question, it does so only obliquely and vaguely. The foreign invader Fergus might represent Mary,

Queen of Scots or the King of Sweden. The native heir might refer to Catherine Grey or the offspring of a marriage with Lord Robert Dudley. In both cases, the intended reference is impossible to determine. In contrast to such shadowed allusions, *Gorboduc* advances one line of argument about the succession quite directly: it must be decided through conversation and consultation among the three main institutions of the political nation, monarch, council, and parliament. Hence, even as *Gorboduc* gestures at different answers to the succession question, it presents an argument for *how* such answers should be arrived at. The play counsels collaboration and counsel as a way to settle the most significant debate of the day.

This line of argument is evident in *Gorboduc*'s structure. The play is built around a series of scenes depicting different models of governance each of which fails to maintain the stability of the state. In the opening act, King Gorboduc discusses the proposal to divide the realm with his counsellors. The first, Arostus, whose name means 'flabby and weak', agrees with the proposal. The second, Philander, whose name means 'friend of mankind', urges delay. The third, Eubulus, the king's secretary, whose name means 'wise counsellor', opposes the plan.²¹ At the end of the scene, Gorboduc concurs with Arostus and divides the realm, a decision that plunges the country into civil war.

In act 1, the government consists of the king-in-council, but this model fails to secure the wise decision of the king, in other words his agreement with Eubulus, the wise counsellor. Act 2 repeats the scene. At first, Ferrex succumbs to the counsel of Hermon, who disastrously urges the prince to build up his army in case of an attack, a piece of advice described by another advisor as 'traitorous counsel' (2.1.207). In the next scene, Porrex follows the counsel of Tyndar, who argues that the prince should protect himself from Ferrex's growing army, advice that leads Porrex to murder his brother. In act 2, the monarch-in-council again fails to prevent a ruinous turn of events, and as a model of governance, does not guarantee the stability of the state. More than that governance by the king-in-council hastens the disintegration of the political order. Acts 3 and 4 then illustrate the consequences of such failures, describing the murder of Ferrex by Porrex, the vengeful murder of Porrex by Queen Videna, and the murder of Videna and Gorboduc in an uprising by the commoners.

Marie Axton argues that the main protagonist in *Gorboduc* is the monarch-in-council.²² The monarch-in-council, however, disappears by act 5 and in its place appear several models of governance.²³ First, we find a number of lords who, as Eubulus puts it, 'consent in one' to put down the rebellion among the commoners (5.1.30). For a moment, a small coalition of the

nobility appears as a possible model of governance. The peers soon lose their strength and resolve though when faced with the threat of Fergus, the foreign invader. At the end of the play, the king's former counsellors debate the future of the realm. The council of counsellors then emerges vaguely as yet another model, but they quickly focus our attention on two other forms of rule.

The first is rule by parliament. In an effort to bring the civil war to an end Arostus suggests that the nobles convene parliament in order to choose a new ruler. In the penultimate speech of the play, he urges the nobles to lay down their arms:

Till first by common counsel of you all
 In parliament the regal diadem
 Be set in certain place of governance;
 In which your parliament, and in your choice,
 Prefer the right, my lords, without respect
 Of strength or friends, or whatsoever cause
 That may set forward any other's part.
 For right will last, and wrong cannot endure. (5.2.157–64)

Arostus argues that the 'common counsel' of parliament will bring peace to the state. As his name, flabby and weak, signals, however, there is a problem with this plan. Eubulus, the wise counsellor, observes there is little likelihood that parliament will reach consent:

Alas, in parliament what hope can be,
 When is of parliament no hope at all,
 Which, though it be assembled by consent,
 Yet is not likely with consent to end;
 While each one for himself, or for his friend,
 Against his foe shall travail what he may;
 While now the state, left open to the man
 That shall with greatest force invade the same,
 Shall fill ambitious minds with gaping hope;
 When will they once with yielding hearts agree?
 Or in the while, how shall the realm be used? (253–63)

In the eyes of Eubulus parliament alone fails to provide an adequate model of governance. Parliaments create factions, men acting 'each one for himself, or for his friend, / Against his foe'. While Eubulus suggests that parliament might work in times of peace, he points out that it cannot work in times of crisis,

with the state 'left open'. At such moments, it is unlikely that 'ambitious minds with gaping hope' will 'with yielding hearts agree'.

The monarch-in-council, the coalition of nobility, rule by council, and rule by parliament all fail as models of governance. Eubulus concludes his speech and the play, however, with a suggestion for yet another model, one created by a union of the king and parliament. In reference to the debated succession, he asserts:

No, no; then parliament should have been holden,
And certain heirs appointed to the crown,
To stay the title of established right
And in the people plant obedience
While yet the prince did live whose name and power
By lawful summons and authority
Might make a parliament to be of force
And might have set the state in quiet stay. (264–71)

Arguing that the king and parliament should work together to 'stay the title of established right' and 'set the state in quiet stay', Eubulus turns a debate about the succession into a policy recommendation on how to avoid the very question the counsellors discuss, delineating a form of government that is different from any we have seen earlier. The way to prevent turmoil is to resolve the problem through the collaborative government of the monarch and parliament. It is not entirely clear from the syntax of Eubulus's speech who appoints heirs to the crown, parliament or the king. One thing is certain nonetheless. The mutual action of the two institutions can 'set the state in quiet stay'. Moreover, since Eubulus himself makes the recommendation, he suggests that the king's council has a crucial role to play in bringing such stability to the commonwealth as well.²⁴

Eubulus recommends that the government exist in essence as a mixed polity, as a combination of a variety of institutions of the state. In a contemporary succession treatise, John Aylmer nicely summarizes a broad version of the concept: 'The regiment of Englande is not a mere Monarchie, as some for lacke of consideracion thinke, nor a meere Oligarchie nor Democracie, but a rule mixte of all these, wherein ech one of these haue or shoulde haue like authoritie'.²⁵ Of course, as Aylmer's 'have or should have' indicates, one issue in the succession debates concerned whether the monarch, parliament, and council 'had or should have had' similar authority. At the heart of the conflict was uncertainty over who exactly had the authority to speak on and decide the issue. In his recent study of the early Elizabethan polity, Stephen Alford

shows that *Gorboduc* is significant in this context since it investigates precisely this problem, ‘explor[ing] the relationship between monarch, councilors, and counsel, and plac[ing] it in the context of the British succession’. The play does not so much offer advice on the succession as it counsels against the power of monarch and the king-in-council, arguing instead for a form of government in which different institutions of the political nation play equally authoritative and mutually reinforcing roles. In the 1560s, as Alford puts it, ‘the settlement rested on counsel and firm action by the three elements of the mixed polity: monarch, [c]ouncil, and parliament’.²⁶

Strikingly, the narrative of the play reinforces and extends this argument. The play begins with a private conversation between Queen Videna and Ferrex about the succession and then moves to the discussion between Gorboduc and his council. In both scenes, private passions mix with political theory, allowing decisions about the inheritance of the throne to appear as private whims justified by abstract argument.²⁷ The play ends somewhere near the field of battle, where the counsellors, joined by the lords Clotyn, Mandud, and Gwenard, discuss the future of the state. Hence, in the course of the play, the space of political deliberation shifts from the royal household to a rarified but more open political sphere involving the king’s council and the peers.²⁸ Over the whole of *Gorboduc*, then, Sackville and Norton thus offer a variety of topical comments on the succession. Such references work to highlight and open up a broader point, that the issue must be decided through dialogue, consultation, and agreement among the monarch, the privy council, and parliament. At a time of crisis, with the state ‘left open’, any single institution of the political nation by itself will fail to maintain the stability of the state.

The Place of the Play

What did it mean for members of the Inner Temple to offer such advice? In general the suggestion was not radical for the time, fitting well with the climate of political cooperation that existed among the council and parliament in the early 1560s. As Alford puts it, both groups were ‘collegial, focused, and galvanized into action by Elizabeth’s refusal to marry or settle the kingdom’s succession’.²⁹ Even so, the location and staging of the play helped to make a subtle and challenging point: that members of the Inner Temple could participate in the conversation about the succession as well. Indeed, as we further tease out the social significance of the work, we should bear in mind that it was above all the product of its institutional environment, the inns of court. Critics traditionally group the play with courtly productions as a work

created at the centre of national power.³⁰ The inns however existed in a geographically and socially separate sphere from the court and were an institution with no official relationship to the government.³¹ It is true that members of the inns came from the landed gentry and aristocracy, and many went into parliament and served at court, but these were unofficial, informal, and traditional arrangements.³² Moreover, the inns had their own literary and political culture, one that often as in this case responded critically to the crown.³³ The inns were connected to but separate from the centre of political power. Viewed from this perspective, the performance of *Gorboduc* at the Inner Temple has some striking implications. The play shifted the debate away from the core of the polity. At the same time, it turned members of the inn into counsellors to the privy council. As a result, the play pressed to expand the dialogue about the succession beyond the central government, implicitly making a claim that members of the Inn were part of the political nation too, that they too could legitimately contribute to discussions of matters of state.

A brief look at the audience and layout of the performance illustrates how the play turned the performers into counsellors. We know that the audience included members of the Inner Temple, Gray's Inn, and the privy council, as well as courtiers and potentially ladies from the court.³⁴ The staging of the performance is less certain, but we can reconstruct its likely outlines. During many plays at the inns, visitors and high-ranking members sat at the high table. The performances themselves then took place in front of these figures on a purpose-built raised platform set between the high table and the large, central fireplace (see figure 1).³⁵ Scaffolding was erected along the sides of the

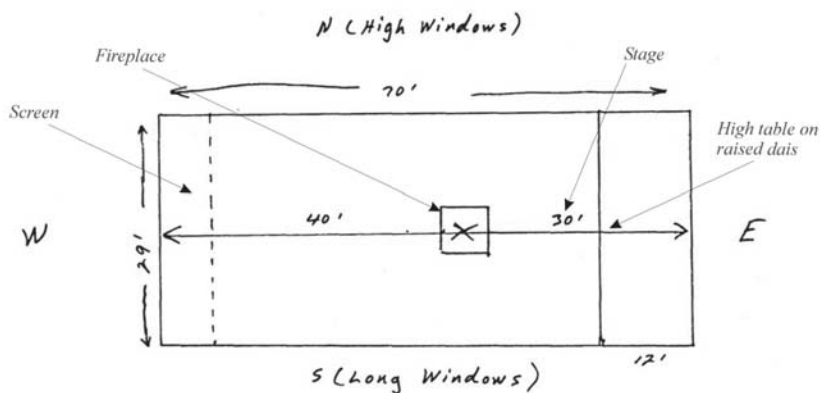


Fig. 1. A drawing of the old hall of the Inner Temple, indicating the probable layout of the performance.

halls to provide additional seating for the audience.³⁶ This layout was probably the one used for *Gorboduc*, since the Inner Temple would have had to accommodate important visitors, such as Dudley and the councilors, as well as a number of other guests for their festivities.³⁷ Staged in this way, *Gorboduc* turned the Inner Temple hall into something like a modified arena, one in which members of the Inner Temple stood in front of members of the court, delivering counsel to the political establishment, and becoming counsellors to members of the privy council themselves.

The performance of *Gorboduc*, in other words, took the succession debates out of the royal household, away from court, past parliament, and to a space that existed separately from the core of the polity. In that space, members of the Inn argued for the necessity of political dialogue in resolving the succession crisis. They also broadened participation in that dialogue, making themselves figuratively and almost literally in terms of the performance space central to conversations on the issue. The move is subtle but significant. *Gorboduc* takes place against the backdrop of the coalescence of a conciliar class. As Kevin Dunn observes, '*Gorboduc* shows the conciliar class instantiating itself as the representative of the state, the entity that persists through changes of monarch and government'.³⁸ Dunn here incisively pinpoints the social shift underlying the play, but he merges the privy council and inns together into a single group and consequently pushes the point too far. For him such counsellors *are* the political nation. *Gorboduc* though does not offer a particular resolution to the succession crisis nor does it show that counsellors themselves should provide the answer. Rather the play urges a form of collaborative counsel. Its political import lies in the way it transforms members of the Inn into counsellors and hence into contributors to a major debate about the future of the state. *Gorboduc* asserts that the inns can and should play a crucial (but not definitive) role in the political nation too.

Authorising Counsel

The move to participate explicitly in contemporary political debates was hardly unproblematic. At the time, drama was restricted as a form of political expression. On 16 May 1559, Queen Elizabeth issued a proclamation limiting plays on 'matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the commonweal'. These topics were 'no meet matters to be written or treated upon but by men of authority, learning, and wisdom', nor were they 'to be handled before any audience but of grave and discreet persons'.³⁹ The edict appears to prohibit all political drama, but also provides some detail to explain why no one

censored the inn for the production. The performers were ‘men of authority, learning, and wisdom’ playing before ‘grave and discreet persons’. Still, Sackville and Norton could not have known how the play would be received. Earlier in the century, John Roo of Gray’s Inn was arrested and held in the Tower for a play that Wolsey considered too political.⁴⁰ *Gorboduc* was moreover an unprecedented combination of innovative drama and political advice. It remains the first recorded play in blank verse, the first recorded play to use dumb shows, one of the earliest English tragedies, one of the earliest adaptations of Senecan drama, the first adaptation of the material used by authors of the *Mirror for Magistrates* (1559) in dramatic form, and the first play in a series of the plays in the period on the succession.⁴¹

Sackville and Norton likely risked creating the drama for a number of reasons. In part, as they turned their play into a comment on the succession, they may have found it difficult despite the proclamation to hold back their political advice. In addition, they may have felt that the revels context and the patronage of men such as Lord Robert Dudley in some sense licensed the production. Finally, they may have concluded that it was worth the risk, since drama gave them a means to participate in the succession debates. This final suggestion makes particular sense in light of the interests and social aspirations of members of the inns themselves. Some of them aimed to be common law lawyers and many additionally hoped for positions in the Elizabethan court and government. Naturally men with such goals and training would have found the legal and political issues of the succession captivating. Still, it was not clear that they had the authority to speak openly on the issue. Later in the decade, Elizabeth plainly stated that the matter should rest solely in herself, saying: ‘As for handling the succession, not one of them [her subjects] should do it; she would reserve that for herself.’⁴² No such a firm prohibition existed in 1561–2. Even so, for men seeking preferment into the government it was risky to offer an opinion in the debate. Drama allowed them to make a foray into the deliberations on the succession in a protected way, under the cover of fiction and by virtue of Elizabeth’s proclamation with the rules of engagement in some sense laid out. *Gorboduc* offered members of the Inn a legitimate but guarded means to enter the charged debate and to offer their ideas, however general and conciliatory, on the issue.

That said, Sackville and Norton took no chances and built into the play some authorization for the counsel they offered. In the content of the drama, they allowed the players to show their ‘learning and wisdom’ through a number of references to events and myths concerning rule of the self and commonwealth. These include the English legends of Morgan and Cunedag,

who tragically divided the realm between them, and Brutus, who also disastrously divided Britain among his three sons; the Trojan legend of Priam and Hecuba, which links the fall of Gorboduc and Videna with the fall of Troy; and the Greek myths of Phaeton and Tantalus, who like Ferrex and Porrex both rose above their traditionally appropriate positions in the social and cosmic order and suffered as a result.⁴³

They also authorized their counsel through their innovative genre. We know that they modeled their work on the *Mirror for Magistrates* (1559) and Senecan drama, kinds of tragedy that describe the downfall of historical and mythological magistrates in part in order to warn leaders against the dangers of tyranny, ambition, and pride. Thus, for instance, in the preface to the *Mirror*, William Baldwin explains to noble readers: 'For here as in a loking glas, you shall see (if any vice be in you) howe the like hath bene punished in other heretofore, whereby admonished, I trust it will be a good occasion to move you to the soner amendment'.⁴⁴ In a similar vein, at the end of a contemporary translation of Seneca's *Oedipus* (1563) the chorus tells the audience that Oedipus is 'A Mirrour meete. A Patern playne, / of Princes carefull thrall'.⁴⁵ Sackville and Norton obviously picked up on the *Mirror* and Seneca. At the end of Act 1, we learn that the king, 'A mirror shall become to princes all / To learn to shun the cause of such a fall' (1.2.392–3). By working within these traditions, the authors created a political drama suitable for 'grave and discreet persons'. The play is, in the words of Sir Philip Sidney, 'full of stately speeches, and well-sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca's style, and as full of notable morality'.⁴⁶ More importantly, by turning to such sources, the authors signaled that there was a precedent for the combination of drama and counsel offered in the play itself.

Conclusion: The Reception of *Gorboduc*

Gorboduc is then a response to a specific occasion as well as a comment on the nature and make-up of the political nation. To those familiar with criticism of the play such a view may still seem too broad. For an eyewitness account of the first performance states that the drama explicitly supports the royal marriage bid of Lord Robert Dudley. How can one allow that *Gorboduc* has such broad significance when a contemporary observer read it so narrowly? It is important to bear in mind though that in assessing its political significance the location and occasion of the play are as important as its content. At the same time, as Mike Pincombe has persuasively shown, the account itself is hardly as straightforward as it initially appears, indicating the lawyers' resis-

tance to rather than support of Dudley's marriage plans.⁴⁷ I would suggest that we should neither lean too heavily on nor sideline this account. In light of the argument I have made here, it provides crucial and telling insight into the reception of the play, that it was received as political advice. In *Gorboduc*, members of the Inner Temple sought to contribute to a national conversation and they did so neither too allusively nor ambiguously to be heard. If they aimed to turn their play into a form of political participation, they succeeded and admirably so.

Even a brief look at the eyewitness account indicates both its evidentiary problems and promise. The account appears in a manuscript collection of working notes from the early years of Elizabeth's reign in the British Library. The papers are anonymous, but in a discussion of the collection Norman Jones and Paul Whitfield White observe that the author was a 'well-educated minor courtier who had extensive contacts with such diplomats as Roger Ascham [...], access to diplomatic correspondence, and a place at Court'.⁴⁸ This courtier attended the performance of *Gorboduc* at the Inner Temple and offers the following description:

Ther was a Tragedie played in the Inner Temple of the two Brethren Porrex and Ferrex *Kings* of Brytayne Betwene whome the father had devyded the Realme, the one slewe the other, and the mother slewe the Manquiller It was thus vsed. firste wilde men cam in and woulde haue broken a whole fagott, but coulde not, the stickes they brake being severed. Then cam in a king to whome was given a clere glasse, and a golden cupp of Golde covered, full of poison. The glasse he caste vnder his fote and brake hyt, the poyson he dranck of, after cam in *mourners* The [shando] shadowes were declared by the Chore. first to signify vnytie, the 2. howe that men refused the certen and tooke the uncerten, wherby was ment that yt was better for the Quene to marye *with* the *Lord Robert* knowen then *with* the *king* of Sweden. The thryde to declare yt cyvill discention bredeth morning. Many thinges were handled of mariage, and that the matter was to be debated in *parliament*, because yt was much banding [because] but *yat* hit ought to be determined by the councell. There was also declared howe a straunge duke seying the Realme at dyvysion, would haue taken upon him the Crowne, but the people would none of hytt. And many thinges were saied for the Succession to putt thinges in certenty.⁴⁹

The courtier describes the first three of the play's dumb shows, an interpretation of each, and the conclusion to the last act, observing that 'many things were saied for the Succession to putt things in certenty'. The account is interesting for a number of reasons. We might note, as other critics have, that

the description concentrates on the dumb shows and consider why this is the case. Analyses of this account, however, focus on the second dumb show, which indicates, ‘howe that men refused the certen and tooke the uncerten, whereby was ment that yt was better for the Quene to marye with the L[ord] R[obert] knowen than with the K[ing] of Sweden’. The courtier explicitly refers to Lord Robert Dudley’s marriage negotiations with Elizabeth and to the ill-fated efforts of the King of Sweden. Critics argue that the comment conclusively shows the play dealt mainly with the Dudley marriage efforts.⁵⁰

Should we trust the interpretation of the eyewitness entirely? Printed editions of the play contain no references resembling the courtier’s remark on Dudley, and since we do not have a corroborating description there is no way to tell whether the comment was the courtier’s interpretation or part of the performance.⁵¹ Moreover, in general the account seems more personal than objective, since it offers as one historian puts it, ‘an extremely selective reaction to the performance’.⁵² As we have seen, the entire play is made up of far more than a series of dumb shows and a final act, responding to a range of institutional and national concerns, and commenting on the important role of the monarch, parliament, and council in resolving the crisis.

The report is significant nonetheless since it provides crucial information about the reception of the play. At least one viewer saw it as a comment on the succession and Queen Elizabeth’s marriage policy. In other words, *Gorboduc* did not just offer but was heard as a piece of counsel. Members of the Inner Temple not only performed as but became counsellors to the council itself. The account is also important for its matter-of-fact tone. We might expect the eyewitness to register some anxiety about the play’s political advice. Instead, he boldly and briskly interprets the contemporary relevance of the drama. The tone suggests that the performers became during the performance legitimate contributors to a discussion about matters of state, demonstrating that they had, in the language of Elizabeth’s proclamation, the ‘authority, learning, and wisdom’ to comment on ‘matters of the governance of the estate of the commonweal’.

Less than two weeks later, Elizabeth herself heard what the men of the Inner Temple had to say. On 18 January 1562, they performed *Gorboduc* for her at Whitehall. The significance of this move is difficult to interpret. On the one hand, it helped to complete the transition that many members of the inns sought to make. When they went to the queen, they became counsellors in their own right. At the Inner Temple, they counselled the council. At Whitehall, they counselled the queen herself. On the other hand, the shift also neutralized some of the political power of the play, bringing its discussion

of politics back within the firmly established institutional, spatial, and political centre of England, Whitehall, and turning the play itself into a piece of counsel drama of the sort that was common in Tudor aristocratic households.⁵³ Still in its initial performance at the Inner Temple, at an institution that was relatively speaking on the periphery of national power, *Gorboduc* made a claim for the authority of members of the Inner Temple to speak on the succession and pushed at the boundaries of the political nation itself.

Throughout the 1560s, the inns of court capitalized on the success of *Gorboduc*, producing a series of plays that touch on issues of marriage and succession: Gascoigne's *Jocasta*, Thomas Pound's two marriage masques for members of Lincoln's Inn, and the multi-authored *Gismond of Salerne*. Nevertheless, such political expression was limited to drama. Attempts to participate in the succession debates in other ways did not go well. In the middle of the decade, Edmund Plowden, a member of the Middle Temple, wrote a treatise on the succession, but kept it in closely guarded manuscript, since 'in dealing in tytles of kyngdomes there is mutche danger, and specially to the subiects, and in these cases ... the surest waie is to be sylent'.⁵⁴ In the same year, members of Lincoln's Inn found this out when they performed a moot (a mock debate), concluding that Mary, Queen of Scots, should not inherit the throne. Cecil intervened to put an end to the criticism of the queen and the affair ended with one of the governors of the Inn in prison.⁵⁵ Participation by means other than drama could be dangerous. Nonetheless, in a climate in which there was 'mutche danger' in political speech, *Gorboduc* is important. With it, members of the inns tested and explored drama as a means to enter the debates about the succession, and found a restricted, but still effective way to participate in a national debate concerning the governance of the commonwealth.

In *Power in Tudor England*, David Loades observes that one of the major characteristics of the sixteenth century is the expansion of the political nation. Over the course of the period, the significance of the 'great private households' of the fifteenth century slowly 'ebbed away under the pressures of royal policy'. Such households were, however, replaced by 'a much broader ruling class, the "political nation", linked to the crown directly by a network of offices and preferments'. Hence, by the turn of the century, 'England was highly unified, but not particularly centralised'.⁵⁶ Such expansion involved not just the growth of the English bureaucracy, but also an altered understanding of the sorts of people and the institutions that could legitimately contribute to conversations about the governance of the realm. At the beginning of the century, one could argue that the political nation was made

up of a male monarch, the privy council, parliament, and peers. By the end of the century, one could argue that it included a female queen, a variety of members of the aristocracy and gentry, as well as noble and gentlewomen, merchants, tradesmen, yeomen, and even poets and playwrights, such as Spenser, Shakespeare, and Jonson. There was of course struggle involved in this expansion, and it would take centuries for all but the most rarified and elite groups to have a securely legitimate and effective voice in matters of state. *Gorboduc* played an important role in this process. Those who performed and produced it pushed to expand legitimate political discourse beyond the centre of national power. The play – and indeed all of the succession dramas at the inns in the 1560s – contributed in a limited but nonetheless significant way to the contested expansion of the political nation in the sixteenth century.

Notes

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- 1 Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London, 1977), 38–60.
- 2 In 1566 the Middle Templar Edmund Plowden produced a legal treatise explicitly supporting Mary Stuart's claim to the throne. In the same year, members of Lincoln's Inn held a moot (a mock debate) arguing against Mary Stuart's claim. On Plowden, see Marie Axton, 'The Influence of Edmund Plowden's Succession Treatise', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 37:3 (1974), 209–26 and Geoffrey de C. Parmiter, *Edmund Plowden: An Elizabethan Recusant Lawyer* (London, 1987), 84–95. On the Lincoln's Inn moot see *Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots 1547–1603, vol 2: 1563–1569*; Joseph Bain (ed) (Edinburgh, 1900), 304. *A Collection of State Papers... Left by W. Cecill Lord Burghley*, Samuel Haynes and William Murdin (eds) 2 vols (London, 1740–59), 2.762; and J.E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1559–1581* (New York, 1953), 133.
- 3 On *Gorboduc* and succession, see Ernest William Talbert, 'The Political Import and the First Two Audiences of *Gorboduc*', *Studies in Honor of DeWitt T. Starnes*, Thomas P. Harrison, Archibald A. Hill, Ernest C. Mossner, and James Sledd (eds) (Austin, 1967), 89–115; David Bevington, *Tudor Drama and*

- Politics: A Critical Approach to Topical Meaning* (Cambridge, 1968), 141–7; Marie Axton, ‘Robert Dudley and the Inner Temple Revels’, *The Historical Journal* 13 (1970), 365–78; Axton, *The Queen’s Two Bodies*, 39–47; and Susan Doran, ‘Juno versus Diana: The Treatment of Elizabeth I’s Marriage in Plays and Entertainments, 1561–1581’, *The Historical Journal* 38 (1995), 257–74. On the eyewitness account, see Henry James and Greg Walker, ‘The Politics of *Gorboduc*’, *English Historical Review* 110 (1995), 109–21; and Norman Jones and Paul Whitfield White, ‘*Gorboduc* and Royal Marriage Politics: An Elizabethan Playgoer’s Report of the Premiere Performance’, *English Literary Renaissance* 26 (1996), 3–16.
- 4 In tracing the broad and complex social function of *Gorboduc* this essay participates in a very recent interest, evident in three essays published in 2003, in reevaluating topical readings of the play. Mike Pincombe persuasively illustrates problems with the manuscript evidence on which such readings depend in ‘Robert Dudley, *Gorboduc*, and “The Masque of Beauty and Desire”: A Reconsideration of the Evidence for Political Intervention’, *Parergon* 20:1 (January 2003), 19–44. Kevin Dunn and Dermot Cavanagh show that the play contributes to debates about the function and purpose of counsel. See Dunn, ‘Representing Counsel: *Gorboduc* and the Elizabethan Privy Council’, *English Literary Renaissance* 33:3 (2003), 279–308. Cavanagh’s essay, the best recent work on the play, appears as a chapter on ‘The Language of Counsel in *Gorboduc*’ in *Language and Politics in the Sixteenth-Century History Play* (Basingstoke, 2003), 36–57. Peter C. Herman also provides a precedent for these essays, arguing that the play highlights problems of interpretation and certainty: “‘He Said What?!?’: Misdemeing *Gorboduc*, or Problematizing Form, Service, and Certainty’, *Exemplaria* 13:1 (2001), 287–321.
- 5 D.S. Bland, ‘Interludes in Fifteenth-Century Revels at Furnivall’s Inn’, *Review of English Studies* 3 (1952), 263–8.
- 6 On the Christmas revels, see A. Wigfall Green, *The Inns of Court and Early English Drama* (1931; rpt New York, 1965), 56–96; Philip J. Finkelpearl, *John Marston of the Middle Temple: An Elizabethan Dramatist in His Social Setting* (Cambridge, 1969), 32–44; and D.S. Bland, introduction, *Gesta Grayorum: Or the History of the High and Mighty Prince Henry, Prince of Purpoole, Anno Domini 1594* (Liverpool, 1968), xvi–xxiv. All references to the *Gesta Grayorum* will be to this edition.
- 7 On the careerist milieu of the inns, see Wilfrid Prest, *The Inns of Court under Elizabeth I and the Early Stuarts, 1590–1640* (London, 1972), 21–7; and M.A.R. Graves, *Thomas Norton: Parliament Man* (Oxford, 1994), 27–8. The

link between the inns and parliament was particularly strong. See M.A.R. Graves, 'The Management of the Elizabethan House of Commons: The Council's "Men-of-Business"', *Parliamentary History* 2 (1983), 11–38; Patrick Collinson, 'Puritans, Men of Business and Elizabethan Parliaments', *Parliamentary History* 7 (1988), 187–211; and M.A.R. Graves, 'The Common Lawyers and the Privy Council's Parliamentary Men-of-Business, 1584–1601', *Parliamentary History* 8 (1989), 189–215.

- 8 From a report to Henry VIII on the inns of court, printed in Edward Waterhouse, *Fortescutus Illustratus, Or a Commentary on that Nervous Treatise De Laudibus Legum Angliae* (London, 1663; stc Wing: W1046), 546.
- 9 On drama as rhetorical training, see D.S. Bland, 'Rhetoric and the Law Student in Sixteenth-Century England', *Studies in Philology* 54 (1957), 498–508.
- 10 D.S. Bland (ed), *Three Revels from the Inns of Court* (Amersham, 1984), pp. 26–7. The curious and often-cited source for this account is Gerard Legh's treatise on heraldry, *The Accedens of Armory* (London 1562; STC 15388). The description of the revels appears as part of a description of the importance of the heraldic device, the Pegasus, which is the symbol of the Inner Temple. Legh offers some flattering and exaggerated description of the Inn, for instance as a place of "ancient in true nobility" (Bland, *Three Revels*, 27). Despite the exaggeration, the account does indicate something of the nature of the revels, and many of the events, such as the creation of knights of the prince or the firing of cannons, appear as well in accounts of other revels later in the period. On the creation of knights, see Bland, *Gesta Grayorum*, 37–43. On firing cannons, see note 11 below. For a discussion of some of the difficulties of using this account to interpret *Gorboduc* as an argument in support of Dudley's marriage plans, see Pincombe, 'Robert Dudley, *Gorboduc*, and "The Masque of Beauty and Desire"', 23–31.
- 11 Evidently, this was not an isolated incident. In 1621/2, Gray's Inn put the city into a commotion when as part of its Christmas festivities it fired off cannons in the middle of the night, prompting a sleeping King James to start from his bed yelling, 'Treason, treason!' The revels were (and plainly created) burlesque of the court and courtly world. The full account is in *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First*, John Nichols (ed) 4 vols (London, 1828), 4.751–2.
- 12 Bland, *Three Revels*, 27.
- 13 F.A. Inderwick, *A Calendar of Inner Temple Records* 3 vols (London, 1896), 1.217.
- 14 J.G. Nichols (ed), *The Diary of Henry Machyn* (London, 1848), 273–4.

- 15 A discussion of this possibility appears in Bland, *Three Revels*, 21–2.
- 16 *The Cronycles of Englonde with The Dedes of Popes and Emperours, and also The Descripcyon of Englonde* (London, 1528; stc 10002), 16–16v.
- 17 On the sources for the Gorboduc story, see Irby B. Cauthen, introduction, Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex* (Lincoln, 1970), xiv–xvi. All references to *Gorboduc* will be to this edition.
- 18 On the major issues in the succession, see Mortimer Levine, *The Early Elizabethan Succession Question, 1558–1568* (Stanford, 1966). On the marriage negotiations of Robert Dudley and Eric XIV of Sweden, see James and Walker, ‘The Politics of *Gorboduc*’, 110–2 and Jones and White, ‘*Gorboduc* and Royal Marriage Politics’, 7–10.
- 19 On the legal issues involved in the succession, see Axton, *The Queen’s Two Bodies*, 11–37.
- 20 On *Gorboduc* as support for Lady Catherine Grey, see Levine, *The Elizabethan Succession Question*, 39–44. On *Gorboduc* as support for Dudley, see Axton, *The Queen’s Two Bodies*, 46 and ‘Robert Dudley and the Inner Temple Revels’, 374–5 and passim; Doran, ‘Juno versus Diana’, 260–3; James and Walker, ‘The Politics of *Gorboduc*’ and Jones and White, ‘*Gorboduc* and Royal Marriage Politics’. Mike Pincombe has persuasively countered this criticism, showing in ‘Robert Dudley, *Gorboduc*, and “The Masque of Beauty and Desire”’ that the play and its accompanying masque were not intended, as has been suggested by Marie Axton and others, to make an argument for Robert Dudley as a royal husband.
- 21 On the names of the counsellors, see Cauthen, introduction, *Gorboduc*, xviii. There is some ambiguity surrounding the status of the three speakers. Arostus and Philander are both referred to in the play’s opening list of speakers as ‘counsellors’, while Eubulus is a ‘secretary’. The designation implies that Eubulus is a figure like William Cecil, who as one ‘entrusted with private or secret matters’ (OED) has a privileged relationship with the king, and makes Gorboduc’s decision not to listen to Eubulus all the more striking.
- 22 Axton, *The Queen’s Two Bodies*, 46.
- 23 Dunn also observes that the monarch-in-council disappears by Act 5 (‘Representing Council’, 297). While he asserts that the Council itself is a remains the protagonist in the play, I argue that act 5 introduces several other forms of rule.
- 24 Cavanagh argues that Eubulus’s advice is compromised in part because he fails to address the complex and changing nature of the present situation (*Language and Politics*, 54). Despite the inadequacy of his counsel for the situation at the

- end of the play, Eubulus nevertheless offers good advice on what ‘should have’ been done by Gorboduc in the first instance before events got out of hand.
- 25 John Aylmer, *An Harborowe for Faithful and Trewe Subiectes, agaynst the Late Blowne Blaste, Concerninge the Government of Wemen* (London 1559; STC: 1005), sigs. H2v–H3.
- 26 Stephen Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis, 1558–1569* (Cambridge, 1998), 100 and 102.
- 27 This observation reinforces Franco Moretti’s argument that the principal tension in the play lies in the conflict between will and reason. See *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*. Susan Fischer, David Forgacs, David Miller (trans) (London 1983), esp 43–50.
- 28 James Emmanuel Berg impressively examines this shift from the perspective of contemporary concerns about feudal householding: ‘*Gorboduc* as a Tragic Discovery of “Feudalism”’, *SEL* 40:2 (spring 2000), 199–226.
- 29 Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity*, 98.
- 30 The best recent example of this tendency appears in the work of Greg Walker, who examines *Gorboduc* as an example of the traditional genre of Tudor courtly and aristocratic counsel drama. See *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge, 1998), 196–221. Although Axton sets up her discussion of *Gorboduc* with a lengthy discussion of revels at the Inns, she views *Gorboduc* as a courtly drama with Elizabeth as the primary audience. See ‘The Choice of a Goddess: Entertainments of the 1560s at Court and the Inns of Court’, *The Queen’s Two Bodies*, 38–60. Doran follows Axton, recognizing that *Gorboduc* was ‘part of the whole revels’, but still argues that it was ‘designed to send out a clear message to Elizabeth’ (‘Juno versus Diana’, 261).
- 31 Dunn observes that critics overly emphasize the play’s connection to Elizabeth, noting the ‘critical literature’ is marked by ‘a preoccupation with the succession question and with Elizabeth as the play’s audience. This preoccupation has included an unfortunate tendency to ignore the play’s original audience and exaggerate its status as a piece of counsel to Elizabeth I’ (‘Representing Counsel’, 296). As I argue further below the significance of political debate in *Gorboduc* is precisely that it takes place outside of the purview of the queen.
- 32 On the social backgrounds of members of the inns, see Wilfrid Prest, ‘Legal Education of the Gentry at the Inns of Court, 1560–1640’, *Past and Present* 38 (December 1967), 20–39; Prest, *The Inns of Court*, 27–32; and Louis A. Knafla, ‘The Matriculation Revolution and Education at the Inns of Court in Renaissance England’, *Tudor Men and Institutions: Studies in English Law and*

- Government*, Arthur J. Slavin (ed) (Baton Rouge, 1972), 232–64. On the link between the inns of court and parliament, see note 7 above.
- 33 For a further discussion of the relationship between the inns of court and the court, which focuses on a later period, see Michelle O’Callaghan, *The ‘Shepherds Nation’: Jacobean Spenserians and Early Stuart Political Culture, 1612–1625* (Oxford, 2000), esp. 17–18.
- 34 On the presence of privy councillors, see Nichols, *Diary of Henry Machyn*, 273–4. On the presence of at least one courtier, see Jones and White, ‘*Gorboduc* and Royal Marriage Politics’, 4–5. On the presence of members of Gray’s Inn, see Bland, *Gesta Grayorum*, 30 and 90 n.30.24. There is no direct evidence that women were present at the 1561–2 revels, but it is likely since we know that they attended revels later in the century. See Bland, *Gesta Grayorum*, 29 and William Dugdale, *Origines Juridiciales* (London, 1666), 157.
- 35 Margaret Knapp and Michal Kobiialka, ‘Shakespeare and the Prince of Purpoole: The 1594 Production of *The Comedy of Errors* at Gray’s Inn Hall’, *Theatre History Studies* 4 (1984), 70–81; and Robert E. Burkhart, ‘The Surviving Shakespearean Playhouses: The Halls of the Inns of Court and the Excavation of the Rose’, *Theatre History Studies* 12 (1992), 192–3. The drawing is reprinted from Burkhart, 179. The arrows and external labels are mine.
- 36 Knapp and Kobiialka, ‘Shakespeare and the Prince of Purpoole’, 75. Dugdale, *Origines Juridiciales*, 157.
- 37 This staging also makes sense of the direction in the dumb show preceding act 4 that three furies come ‘forth from under the stage’, since they could emerge from under a raised platform but not from under the solid dais.
- 38 Dunn, ‘Representing Counsel’, 304.
- 39 Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations* 3 vols (New Haven, 1969), 2.115–6.
- 40 Edward Hall, *Chronicle*, Henry Ellis (ed) (London, 1809), 719; *Holinshed’s Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, Henry Ellis (ed) 6 vols (London, 1807–8), 3.714; and *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, 8 vols (London, 1843–9), 4.657.
- 41 On the innovative form of *Gorboduc*, see Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (London, 1965), 37–49; Dieter Mehl, *The Elizabethan Dumb Show: The History of a Dramatic Convention* (London, 1965), 30–41; Irby B. Cauthen, introduction, *Gorboduc*, xvi–xix; and Eric Rasmussen, ‘The Implications of Past Tense Verbs in Early Elizabethan Dumb Shows’, *English Studies* 67:5 (1986), 417–19. Alan T. Bradford qualifies the

extent of the innovations of the play, showing that Sackville and Norton combine and blend native and classical traditions: 'Drama and Architecture under Elizabeth I: The "Regular" Phase', *English Literary Renaissance* 14 (1984), 3–28.

- 42 Qtd in Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies*, 11.
- 43 For a discussion of these references, see Cauthen, introduction, *Gorboduc*, xxii–xxiii.
- 44 Lily B. Campbell (ed), *The Mirror for Magistrates: Edited from Original Texts in the Huntington Library* (1938; reprint New York, 1960), 65.
- 45 *The Lamentable Tragedie of Oedipvs the Sonne of Laius Kyng of Thebes out of Seneca*, Alexander Neville (trans) (London, 1563; stc: 22225), D2v.
- 46 Sir Philip Sidney, 'The Defence of Poesy', *Renaissance Literature: An Anthology*, Michael Payne and John Hunter (eds) (Oxford, 2003), 523
- 47 Pincombe, 'Robert Dudley, *Gorboduc*, and 'The Masque of Beauty and Desire', 19.
- 48 Jones and White, 'Gorboduc and Royal Marriage Politics', 4.
- 49 BL: Additional ms 48, 023, f359v. This folio is reproduced in Jones and White, 'Gorboduc and Royal Marriage Politics', 16, with their own transcription on pp 3–4.
- 50 See Jones and White, 'Gorboduc and Royal Marriage Politics'; James and Walker, 'The Politics of *Gorboduc*'; and Walker, *The Politics of Performance*, 196–221.
- 51 For a discussion of this point, see James and Walker, 'The Politics of *Gorboduc*', 114–5.
- 52 Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity*, 100.
- 53 See Walker, *The Politics of Performance*, esp. 51–75.
- 54 Qtd in Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies*, 20.
- 55 On the Lincoln's Inn moot, see note 2 above.
- 56 David Loades, *Power in Tudor England* (New York, 1997), 4.