This is a repository copy of *Remaking the drunkard in early Stuart England*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/183089/

Version: Accepted Version

Article:
Withington, P. (2022) Remaking the drunkard in early Stuart England. English Language Notes, 60 (1). pp. 16-38. ISSN 0013-8282

https://doi.org/10.1215/00138282-9560199

© 2022 Regents of the University of Colorado. This is an author-produced version of a paper subsequently published in English Language Notes. Uploaded in accordance with the publisher's self-archiving policy.

Reuse
Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

Takedown
If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.

eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/

Remaking the Drunkard in Early Stuart England

Phil Withington

Biography:

Phil Withington is Professor of Social and Cultural History at the University of Sheffield. He has worked extensively on intoxicants and intoxication, publishing numerous articles and chapters on the subject (most recently in *The Economic History Review* and *The Journal of Modern History*) and co-editing the *Past & Present* Special Supplement, *Cultures of Intoxication* (2014) and *The Historical Journal* Special Issue, *Intoxicants and Early Modern European Globalisation* (2021). He is currently leading the HERA-funded project 'Intoxicating Spaces' (www.intoxicatingspaces.org/) and is writing a monograph provisionally called *The Holy Herb and Other Stories*. Other research interests and specialisms include the history of urbanism and urbanization and the intersections between 'renaissance' and 'popular culture' in early modern England and the wider world.

Abstract:

This article traces the changing semantics of 'drunkard' in English during the first half of the seventeenth century. Combining methods of 'distant reading' (made possible by the Early English Books Online–Text Creation Partnership) and the 'close reading' of didactic printed materials, it shows how this venerable Middle English word became unusually prevalent and ideologically charged in the six decades after the ascension of James VI and I to the English throne. Key to these developments was the new monarch's *Counterblaste to tobacco* (1604), in which James I at once delineated a capacious concept of "drunkard" as someone who simply liked drinking, rather than became demonstrably drunk, and confirmed the consumption of tobacco and alcohol as an appropriate subject for the burgeoning printed "public sphere". The article suggests that the separation of "drunkard" from "drunkenness" proved incredibly useful for ministers and moralists concerned with the moral and economic consequences of unnecessary and 'superfluous' consumption for individuals, households, and communities. Resorting to populist and didactic genres like pamphlets, sermons, dialogues, and treatises, writers ranging from the Calvinist John Downame to the regicide John Cook deployed the category of drunkard to critique not only English drinking habits, but social and economic practices more generally. In pushing the concept so hard, however, reformers inevitably rubbed against more conventional notions of "civil society" and the sociable practices constituting it.

I Introduction

When John Downame decided to publicly discuss "drunkenness, and what it is" in 1609 he began by defining his subject.[1] On the one hand, the influential Calvinist minister observed that men engaged in drunkenness "when by immoderate swilling and tippling they are deprived of the use of their reason, understanding, and memory; so as for the time, they become like unto beasts." On the other hand, he argued that drunkenness involved habitual "excess, when as they addict themselves to much drinking, and make it their usual practise to sit at the wine or strong drink." Downame immediately followed this identification of singular and repetitive "excess" with an important gloss: that "neither are they alone to be esteemed as drunkards who deprive themselves of the use of reason, and become brutish; but those who take their chief pleasure in drinking and carousing, though their brain will bear it without any great alteration."[2] For Downame, that is, it was not simply intoxication that marked a man as a drunkard, be it occasional or habitual. Rather a drunkard was someone who derived pleasure from the consumption of alcohol whatever its physiological and cognitive affects.

The same year Robert Elton, a husbandman from Blackburn in Lancashire, also struggled with the definition of "drunkard." However, the circumstances were somewhat different. Elton had been called as witness to a case of defamation in the church courts between his master's wife, Beatrice Bolton, and a local man called Adam Clayton. Bolton accused Clayton of calling her "his whore" and declaring to her husband and anyone who would listen that "he had had his pleasure of her in every corner of that house where they dwelled and at every apple and plum tree in the orchard."[3] When on the 15th June 1609 Elton testified to the court that he had heard Clayton defame Bolton in these terms, he was also asked about the reliability of another witness for Bolton, John Salisbury, who had been with Elton when Clayton made his boasts. Clayton had queried Salisbury's trustworthiness as a witness by characterising him as "a common haunter and frequenter of alehouses and a common drunkard a quarreller a brawler and a fighter [who] used to be so drunk or overcome in drink that he cannot go stand or speak."[4] Elton now responded, "That Salisbury is taken for an honest man but saith that he will be merry amongst the gent and good fellows but cannot discern of a drunkard."[5] It seems that for Elton, *contra* Downame, simply taking pleasure from drinking rituals and sociability – from making merry and enjoying good fellowship – did not make someone a "common drunkard"; with the implication that becoming senseless through drinking still did.

---

[1] Downame, *Foure Treatises Tending to Disswade*, 83.
[2] Downame, *Foure Treatises Tending to Disswade*, 83.
[3] EDC 5/1609/17 (unfol.) Bolton c Clayton, available on the *Intoxicants and early modernity database* at https://www.intoxicantsproject.org/publications/database.
[4] EDC 5/1609/17 (unfol.) Bolton c Clayton, deposition of Adam Clayton.
[5] EDC 5/1609/17 (unfol.) Bolton c Clayton, deposition of Robert Elton.

This article is about the label "drunkard" – a venerable Middle English word that, it argues, became unusually prevalent and ideologically charged in the first half of the seventeenth century. What follows outlines a spike in discursive noise about drunkards after the ascension of James VI and I to the English throne and looks at the role of learned and godly discussions of the term in populist and didactic genres – such as pamphlets, sermons and dialogues – in amplifying the sound. Downame was an early and influential contributor to this literature, helping drunkards become a minor obsession of the early Stuart printed "public sphere." Following the example of his monarch, he and other reformers developed a new and capacious conception of drunkard that could be deployed as a critical tool not only of English drinking habits, but of society, culture, and economy more generally. The "discernment" of Elton indicates, in turn, the difficulties and potential resistance facing reformers – a reluctance to recognise a more extensive and intrusive sense of drunkard that perhaps helps explain the relative dissipation of the concept after 1660. This article examines the intellectual influences and analytical techniques that went into the Jacobean remaking of drunkard and shows, semantically speaking, how new wine could be served in old wineskins.

From a historiographical perspective, the public interest in drunkards in Jacobean England should not be especially surprising. Social historians have long identified the first half of the seventeenth century as a moment in which magisterial concerns with drunkenness, articulated through parliamentary legislation and governmental orders, were extensively implemented across English communities.[6] Not only did Jacobean legislators add the final details to the pre-modern system of licensing alehouses – the most popular institution for the public retail of alcohol – but certain sorts of householder increasingly embraced licensing as a way to regulate the public retail and consumption of alcohol in their neighbourhoods.[7] In the meantime, however, this was also a period in which the commercialisation of the drinks trade (especially beers and wines) gathered pace and tobacco was first popularised as an accompaniment and possible incitement to drinking.[8] And it was when different kinds of drink-fuelled sociability were valorised across the social spectrum – not least forms of merriment and fellowship alluded to by Elton.[9] The prominent role of religious writers in framing these antithetical developments has likewise been noted. While for Keith Wrightson it

---

[6] Walter and Wrightson, "Dearth and the Social Order," 22–42; Wrightson, *English Society 1580–1680* chap. 6.

[7] Brown, "Alehouse Licensing and State Formation," 110–32; Wrightson, "Alehouses, Order and Reformation in Rural England," 1–27.

[8] Stephens, "English Wine Imports," 141–72; Taylor, "Tobacco Retail and State Formation," 433–58; Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, chap. 6; Withington, "Intoxicants and the Early Modern City," 135–64; Withington, "Intoxicants and the Invention of Consumption," 384–408.

[9] Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship*, especially section II; Hailwood, "Sociability, Work and Labouring Identity," 9–29; McShane, "Material Culture and Political Drinking," 247–276; McShane, "Drink, Song and Politics," 166–90; Withington, "Intoxicants and Society," 631–57. See also the essays in Smyth, ed.,Adam, *A Pleasing Sinne*.

was ministers who provided the ideological urgency to regulate alehouses, with drunkenness a prominent and often controversial target of the more widespread "reformation of manners", for Jessica Warner it was Downame and other Jacobean preachers who first elucidated the insights and principles upon which a "disease" based concept of alcohol addiction would subsequently be based.[10] As Rebecca Lemon notes, it was precisely this generation of "puritans" who were instrumental in transforming drunkenness from one of the familiar "deadly sins" of medieval culture into a source of "disease and reprobation."[11]

Examining how drunkard was redefined in print provides an opportunity to explore in more detail these cultural and social developments and, more particularly, how didactic writers pulled together a range of moral, economic, medical and social ideas to outline a new concept of the drunkard. So doing helps to delineate a key moment in both the longer history of the reformation of manners and the modern conceptualisation and regulation of intoxicants.[12] The first section accordingly uses digitised "distant reading" to trace the diachronic history of the term over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[13] Sections two and three then focus on the moment when reformers and moralists distinguished the character of the drunkard from singular or repetitive acts of drunkenness and, in creating this conceptual space, remade a familiar stereotype into a tool of social, economic, and cultural critique. The article shows that these reformers were quite as concerned with the economic ramifications of superfluous drinking as the spiritual or physiological damage it might cause. And it argues that, by imposing in increasingly capacious concept of the drunkard, they risked jeopardising the habits and customs upon which civil society depended.

II The rise and fall of drunkard

It is possible to trace diachronically the use of "drunkard" in vernacular print using the "Early English Books Online–Text Creation Partnership" (EEBO-TCP), which has so far made around 45% of texts catalogued on EEBO fully searchable between 1473 and 1700. This large sample of text can be supplemented with a full search of *all* the titlepages of texts catalogued on EEBO and the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) (see Table 1).[14]

---

[10] Wrightson, "Alehouses, Order and Reformation in Rural England," 11, 17–8; Warner, "Resolv'd to Drink No More," 685–91.
[11] Lemon, *Addiction and Devotion*, 13.
[12] Ingram, "Reformation of Manners", 47–88; Nicholls, *The Politics of Alcohol*, 1–2.
[13] For a smart use of "distant reading" to facilitate targeted semantic analysis see Cree, "Protestant Evangelicals and Addiction in Early Modern English," 447–52.
[14] Withington, *Society*, passim.

Table 1 Total number of English titles and text catalogued on ESTC and EEBO-TCP, 1490s to 1690s

Decadal	*All texts in the ESTC*	*All texts in EEBO*	*Nos of EEBO-TCP texts*	*% EEBO Texts in TCP*
1490s	142	118	52	44
1500s	248	430	74	17
1510s	268	208	70	34
1520s	382	336	103	31
1530s	807	807	274	34
1540s	1178	1235	422	34
1550s	1343	1280	444	35
1560s	1303	1297	533	41
1570s	1702	1730	699	40
1580s	2194	2140	951	44
1590s	2587	2562	1177	46
1600s	3562	3894	1682	43
1610s	4295	4169	1794	43
1620s	5220	5105	2147	42
1630s	5706	5585	1946	35
1640s	19135	26471	10629	40
1650s	12794	15408	6532	42
1660s	11503	11413	5492	48
1670s	12471	10936	5227	48
1680s	19898	18360	9322	51
1690s	19240	15407	7925	51
TOTAL	125978	128891	57495	45

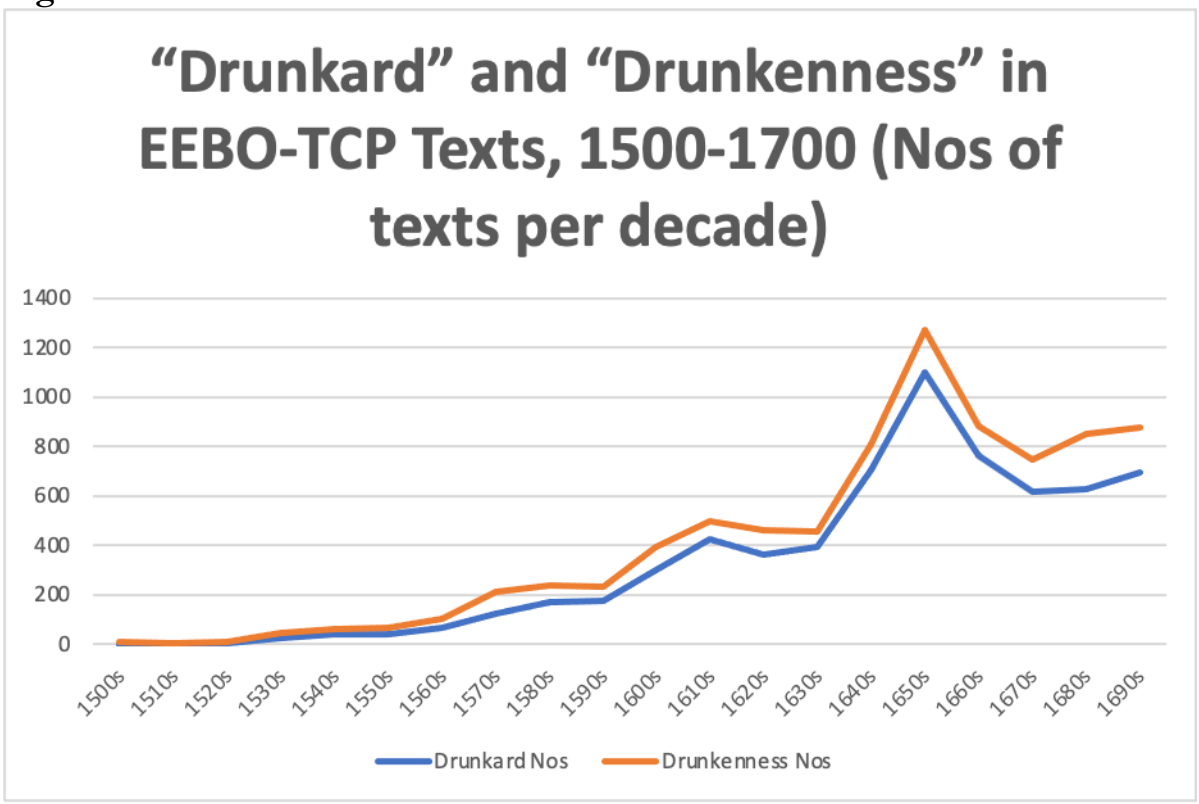
Source: English Short Title Catalogue at http://estc.bl.uk/F/?func=file&file_name=login-bl-estc and *Early English Books Online* at https://search-proquest-com.sheffield.idm.oclc.org/eebo/advanced. Figures collated in June 2020.

Trends evident from the printed data can in turn be compared with appearances of "drunkard" in depositional evidence from the ecclesiastical courts over a similar period: that is, from the kind of archive recording Robert Elton's understanding of drunkard in 1609. The ecclesiastical courts were a distinct jurisdiction in early modern England, hearing cases of a moral nature either brought by parishioners against each other or by the court itself against ecclesiastical officeholders, and the evidence of deponents offers unusual insight into quotidian language and

attitudes.[15] Series of depositions can be examined systematically using the database of the "Intoxicants and Early Modernity" project (IEM), which enables keyword searches of all legal cases with a drinking dimension heard in the ecclesiastical or consistory courts in Norwich and Chester between the 1570s and 1740s, with a gap in the records during 1640s and 1650s when the courts were discontinued (see below, Figure 5).[16] Although there is unfortunately no space here to unpack the depositional evidence in any detail, the extent to which deponents used the word drunkard over time is nevertheless a useful way to gauge whether printed discourse coincided with legal and everyday conversation.

Figure 1 shows the number of EEBO-TCP texts in which "drunkard" or "drunkenness" (with variant spellings) were used between 1500 and 1700. It reveals two trends.

Figure 1

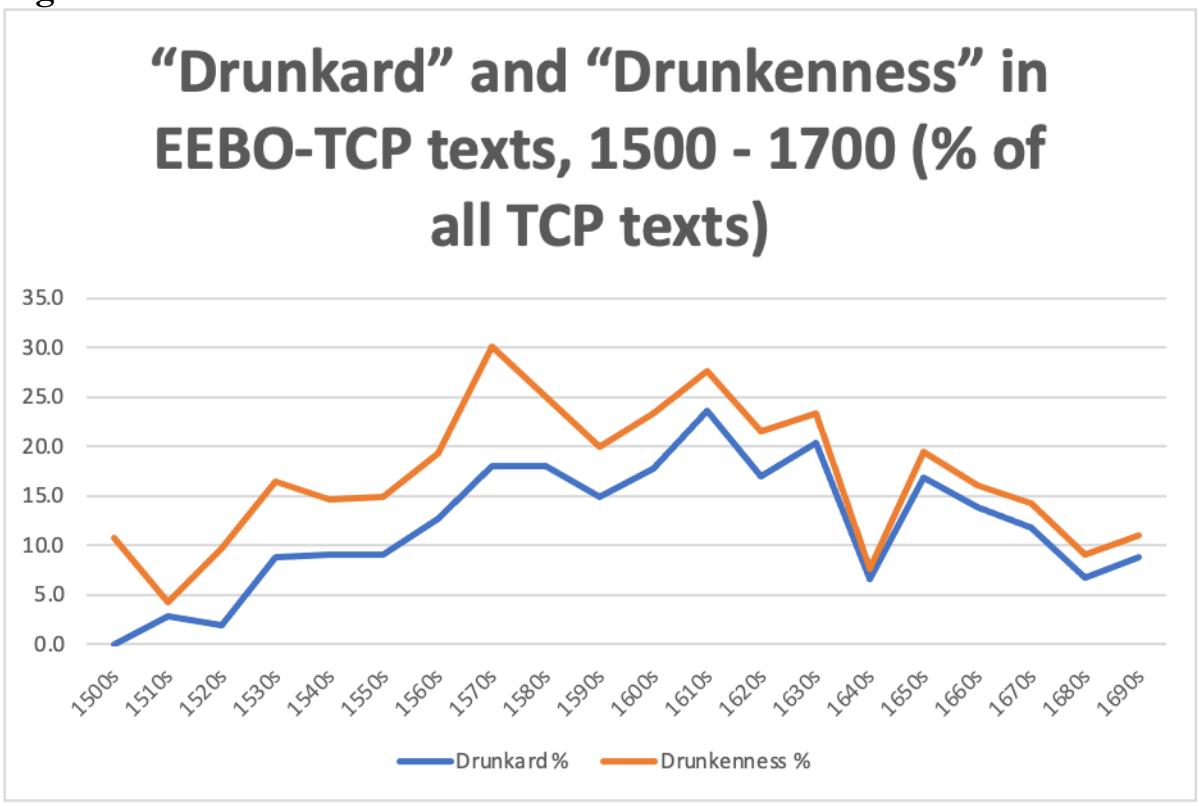


First, "drunkard" by and large shadowed the more commonplace "drunkenness" across the period. Second, both terms enjoyed successive changes in usage: a gradual rise in the last four decades of the sixteenth century; a steep rise between the 1600s and 1620s; a climactic spike in the 1640s and 1650s; and a significant dip and plateau at the Restoration. As Table 1 suggests, these trends reflect in part that

[15] For an introduction to the courts and their historical potential see Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, especially chap. 2.
[16] See "Database," *Intoxicants and Early Modernity Database*, https://www.intoxicantsproject.org/publications/database (accessed).

more texts were produced (and survived) over the course of the period, especially during the 1640s. Figure 2 shows that if we outline the *percentage* of EEBO-TCP texts in which "drunkard" or "drunkenness" were used then a slightly modified picture emerges. First, the gap in usage between "drunkenness" and "drunkard" becomes clearer (with drunkard less commonplace in the sixteenth century). Second, both terms dip significantly in the 1640s and 1650s amidst the anomalous slew of texts produced during the civil war and commonwealth era. Third, the climactic spike for "drunkard" is, in fact, the first four decades of the seventeenth century rather than the civil war era. This peak is preceded by a steady increase in use over the previous 100 or so years and is followed by a relative decline in the use of both drunkenness and drunkard – to round about pre-Reformation levels – after 1660.

Figure 2



These patterns of use within EEBO-TCP texts can be supplemented by the total number of vernacular texts in the ESTC and EEBO to have "drunkenness" and/or "drunkard" on their titlepage. This describes the number of texts advertised by the term drunkard; the smaller number of texts involved means, in addition, that it is also possible to categorise them according to subject and genre, as outlined in Table 2.

Figure 3 shows a significant increase in the number of vernacular printed texts explicitly about drunkenness or drunkards from the 1600s, with spikes of just below or above twenty titles in the 1620s, 1640s and 1670s.

Figure 3

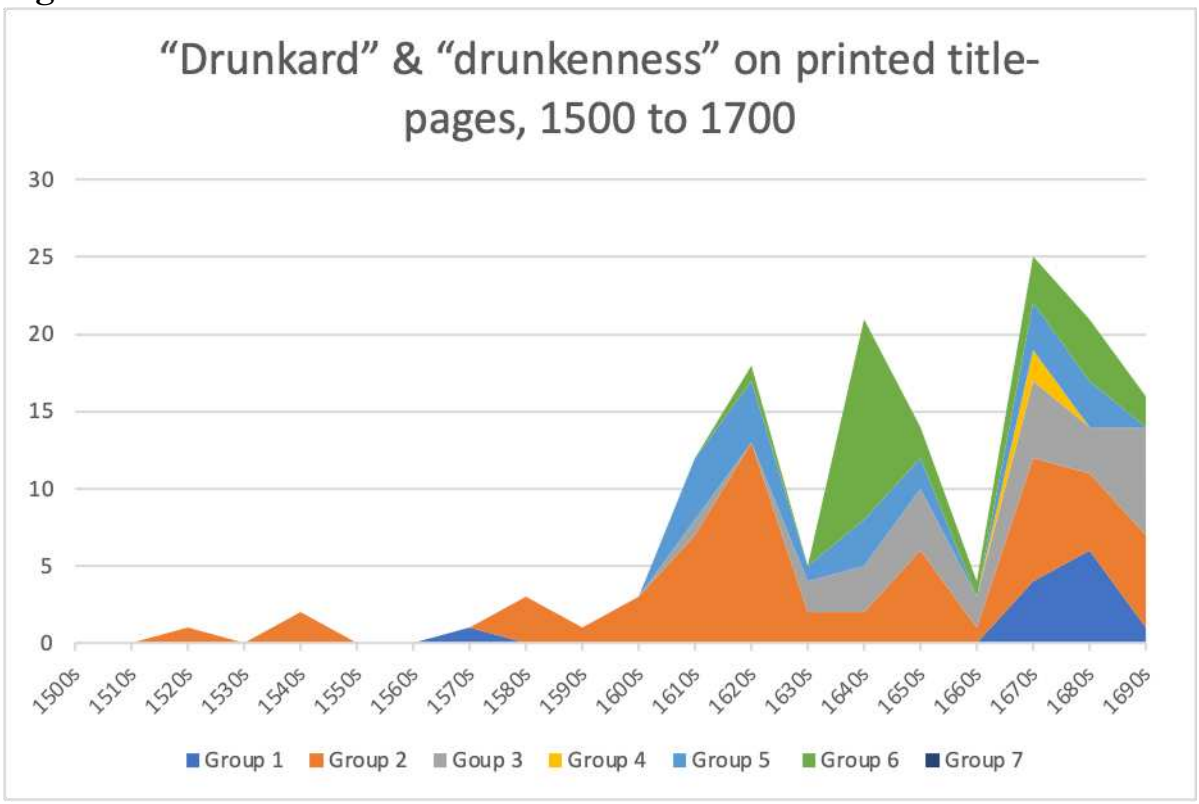


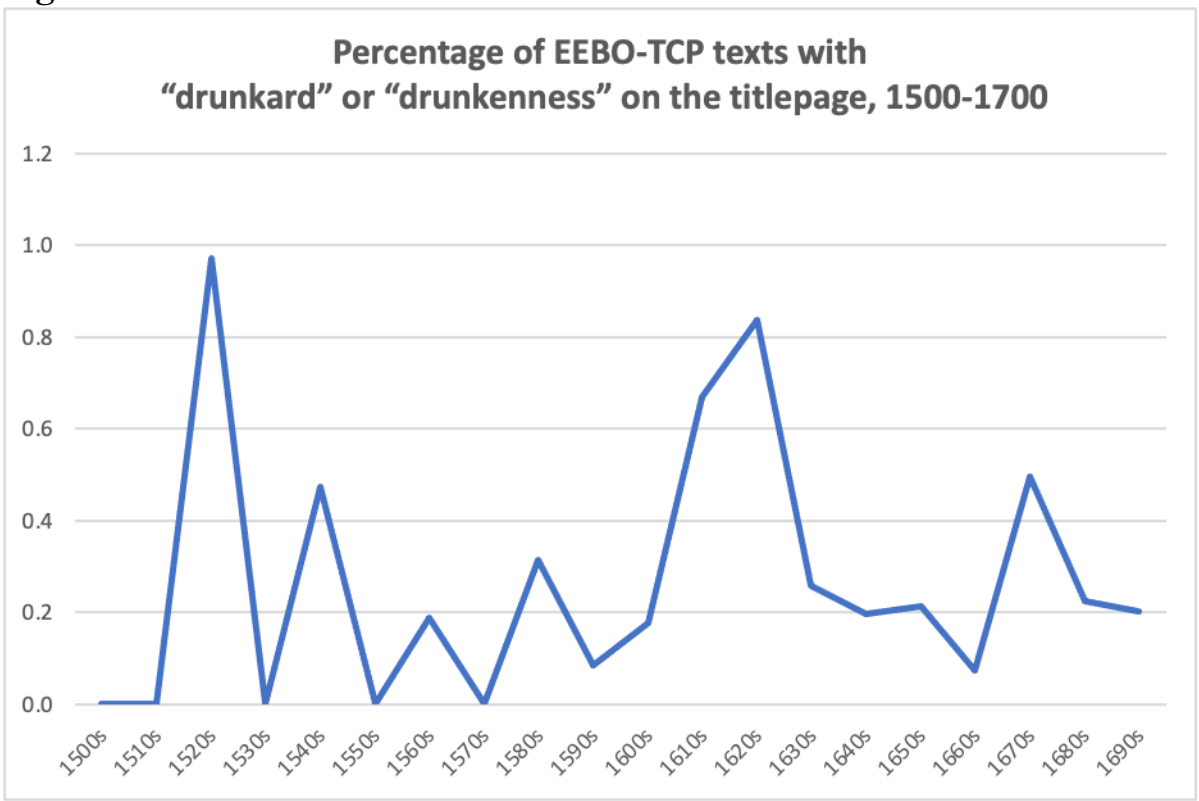
Table 2 Subject classifications of printed texts with "drunkenness" or "drunkard" on the titlepage, 1490s to 1690s

Group 1: "Liberal Arts":	Travel (A), History (B), Biography (C), Classics (E)
Group 2: "Religion":	Religious instruction (D), Religious controversy (M), Sermons (N)
Group 3: "Society":	Social Description (F), Occupational instruction (X), Education (AA)
Group 4: "Pragmatics":	Substance Specific (DD), Medical (G), Household Economy (I), Astrology (Y), Witchcraft (BB), Recipes (CC)
Group 5: "Literary":	Poetry (J), Language (K), Miscellanies (L), Folk Lore (H), Stage-plays (O), Prose fiction (P), Music (R), Ballads (W), Visual Culture (GG)

Group 6: "Public":	Public debate (II), Military (S), Political Economy (T), Legal (U), Political/Moral Theory (Z), Politicking (EE), News (V)
Group 7: "Spatial":	Spatial Designation (HH), Material Culture (JJ)

It also shows that until the 1620s it was "religious" texts (Group 2) – which includes texts of religious instruction, treatises, and sermons – that were the most likely to utilise this language, and to a much lesser extent literary works (Group 5), including works of popular literature like ballads and plays. Thereafter, however, the subject matter and genre became more diverse, with works of political and household economy also represented from the middle of the seventeenth century. Of course, throughout the period the number of titlepages inscribed with drunkenness or drunkards was a small proportion of all published works: Figure 4 shows that, when presented as a percentage of all EEBO-TCP texts, there was only one spike of note. This was in the 1610s and 1620s, when between 13 and 18 titlepages amounted to around 0.7%-0.8% of all EEBO-TCP texts (the peak in the 1520s is caused by one titlepage out of 104 catalogued texts).

Figure 4



Viewed quantitatively, then, the first three decades of the seventeenth century were clearly significant for printed discourse about drunkenness and, in

particular, drunkards. Not only did they see a marked jump in texts and titlepages using the terms; the language was proportionally more prominent. But as striking is how this intensification of Jacobean printed discourse correlated with trends in the ecclesiastical courts in Norwich and Chester. Figure 5 breaks down the number of cases heard in these courts in three ways. First, the figures show the entire number of cases with any kind of reference to intoxicants recorded between the 1570s and 1740s (these might range from innkeepers allegedly receiving stolen goods to violent arguments breaking out in an alehouse). Second, they show the number of cases involving references to alleged drunken behaviour (either as the main point of the case or an incidental feature). Third, they show the number of cases in which deponents or examinees explicitly used the term "drunkard" to describe another person.

Figure 5

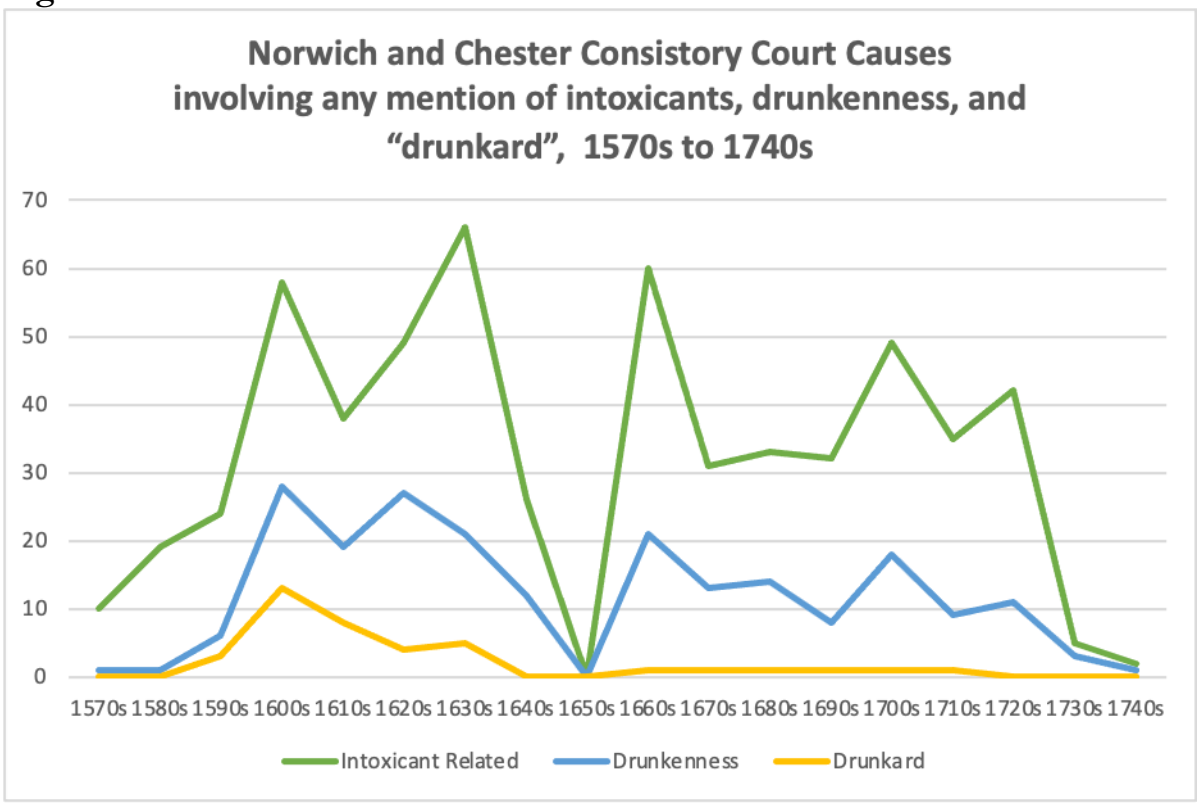


Figure 5 demonstrates that aside from the 1640s and 1650s, when court business was disrupted by political events, the ecclesiastical courts at Chester and Norwich recorded more than 30 cases per decade involving some reference to intoxicants, with that figure significantly higher in the first four decades of the seventeenth century (peaking in the 1630s), the 1660s, and the 1700s. It shows that within that trend, allegations of drunkenness were at a rate of between 20 and 30 cases per decade in the forty years before the civil war and between 10 and 20 cases per decade in the 60 years after 1660. And it shows that "drunkard" began to be mentioned in the depositional record in the 1590s; peaked in the 1600s; continued to appear – albeit less frequently – in legal and everyday conversations until the

1640s; but then all but disappeared at the Restoration (getting mentioned in one case per decade until the 1720s, when the term disappears entirely). Thus, while the printed data indicates the dissipation of drunkard after 1660, the depositional material suggests an even more marked degree of absence.

III Making the Jacobean drunkard

The rise of drunkard in print can be understood as one example of a more general public concern among vernacular religious preachers and writers for the moral and spiritual condition of the populace following the break with Rome in the middle of the sixteenth century. As is well known, this "reformation of manners" was an English variant of a European-wide phenomenon whereby reformers in both Protestant and Catholic territories looked to establish institutional authority over the different aspects of Christian worship while exerting tangible influence over the behaviour and attitudes of their congregations. As part of this process, the "deadly sins" of pre-Reformation culture received renewed and energetic treatment, with the relatively new technology of print providing a convenient and powerful medium through which to reach wider audiences.[17]

As a variant of gluttony with complicated ramifications for both the self and society, drunkenness was an ideal sin to receive such reformatory treatment. As the influential preacher and writer Henry Smith explained in the early 1590s, "There is no sin but hath some shew of virtue, only the sin of drunkenness is like nothing but sin."[18] This was because whereas most sins were at least explicable in the sense that they resulted in worldly and material gain for the sinner (however misconceived), drunkenness was "so unthankful that it makes no recompense: so noisome, that it consumes the body." Smith accordingly wondered that "any man should be drunk that hath seen a drunkard before, swelling, and puffing, and foaming, and spewing, and grovelling like a beast for who would be like a beast, for all the world?"[19] Drunkards did not merely risk their soul and relinquish their humanity for no obvious return. Like pride, drunkenness was an "impudent sin, because she decries herself in the eye, in the speech, in the gesture, in the look, in the gait." Smith explained that "Many that know him not, shall point at him with their fingers in the streets, & say, there goes a proud fellow: which they pronounce of no [other] vice, but the drunkard, because these two betray themselves."[20] He accordingly beseeched his listeners to "Look upon the drunkard when his eyes stare; his mouth drivels, his tongue faulters, his face flames, his hands tremble, his feet reel" and consider "how ugly, how monstrous, how loathsome doth he seem

[17] Wrightson, *English Society*, chap. 6; Ingram, "Reformation of Manners in Early Modern England," 47–88; Ingram, *Carnal Knowledge*, 8–29.
[18] Smith, "A Looking Glass for Drunkards," 590–1.
[19] Smith, "A Looking Glass for Drunkards," 590–1; Shrank, "Beastly Metamorphoses," 193–209.
[20] Smith, "A Dissuasion from Pride," 441.

to thee, so loathsome dost thou seem to others when thou art in like taking? And how loathsome then dost thou seem to God."[21]

This intensification of public discourse about drunkards was driven in part by the increasing numbers of highly educated clerics coming through the universities. Trained in humanistic skills like rhetoric and philology, and conscious of the power of print as a means to patronage as well as propaganda, they treated drunkenness, like other sins, in increasingly sophisticated and persuasive terms. Educated in Cambridge in the 1570s, for example, Smith was recognised as one of the most skilful and effective communicators of the late Elizabethan era.[22] Thomas Nashe nicknamed him "silver-tongued" on account of his successful vernacularisation of classical literary techniques and eulogised that "I never saw abundant reading better mixt with delight, or sentences which no man can challenge of prophane affectation, sounding more melodious to the ear or piercing more deep to the heart."[23] Arthur Dent, a contemporary of Smith's at Cambridge, was another preaching and print sensation whose *The Plaine-Mans Pathway to Heaven*, published in 1601, reached its twenty-fifth edition by 1640. Like Smith, he drew on "some of the ancient writers, and some of the wise Heathen also" in order "to bear witness of the ugliness of some vices, which we in this age make light of."[24] Choosing the classical dialogic form in order to maximise his populist appeal, Dent nevertheless eschewed the relative light and shade discernible in Smith's analysis for something more absolute. He proclaimed that drunkenness was "so brutish and beastly a sin […] that all reasonable men should even abhor it, & quake to think of it." He lamented "yet almost nothing will make men leave it: for it is a most rife and over common vice." And he thundered that "All drunkards are notorious Reprobates, and hell-hounds, branded of Satan, and devoted to perpetual destruction and damnation."[25]

Dent's representation of drunkenness as the diametric opposite to godliness was consistent with an emergent vernacular Calvinism that, in its framing by polarities, vindicated more general tendencies within public life towards political conflict, religious "apartheid" and cultural "disassociation."[26] Over the next three decades a new generation of university graduates accordingly contributed to a corpus of work explicitly dedicated to the problem of drunkenness – and the drunkard – conceived broadly in these terms. They included Downame, with whom this article started, as well as other university educated and eminent

---

[21] Smith, "A Looking Glass for Drunkards," 590–1

[22] Gary W. Jenkins notes how Smith's London parishioners petitioned the church authorities in 1589 that he "had done more good among them than any other that had gone before or, which they doubted, could follow after ("Smith, Henry," Oxford Dictionary of National Biography).

[23] Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse*, D3r.

[24] Dent, *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen*, A3r.

[25]. Dent, *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen*, 162.

[26] Lake, "Anti-popery," 73–4; Collinson, "The Cohabitation of the Faithful with the Unfaithful," 63, 65; Walsham, "Ordeals of Conscience," 47–8; Wrightson, *English Society*, 232–6.

preachers like Robert Bolton, Robert Harris, and Samuel Ward.[27] So marked was this surge in vernacular moral critique that the young lawyer William Prynne could approvingly reference it as a distinctly "modern" tradition in his own polemic against drinking healths in 1628; and the likes of lawyer and regicide John Cook and reformer Richard Younge continued in the same vein into the 1640s and 1650s.[28]

There was, nevertheless, more to this characterisation of the drunkard than the ungodly and senseless reprobate against whom the godly and the elect could define themselves. First, early Stuart commentators inherited the humanistic training of previous generations and continued to look both to the primitive church and Greco-Roman writers to understand and reform their world. While this served to reinforce the Protestant emphasis on temperance and moderation, it also provided other intellectual tools to explain excessive and possibly compulsive consumption. Second, these commentators were responding to a world that was changing rapidly both in terms of the availability and consumption of alcohols – and their accompaniments, like tobacco – and the social, economic, material and legal contexts shaping consumption. In developing their critiques, they deployed modes of socio-economic and cultural analyses that supplemented core shibboleths about sin and damnation and extended the concept of drunkard in significant ways.

Influential in each of these respects was James VI and I. This was most obvious in his role as legislator. James agreed the definitive version of the *Constitutions and Canons of the Church of England* in 1603, reaffirming drunkenness as a crime to be presented to the ecclesiastical courts along with adultery, whoredom, and incest, and for perpetrators to be excluded from Holy Communion until they reformed.[29] A year later, James's first parliament passed an act outlining "Several penalties of alehouse-keepers, for their several offences." This confirmed the assumption of the statute of 1552 that it was the responsibility of licensed proprietors and local officeholders, in particular constables, to ensure that only "necessary" or "urgent" drinking occurred in alehouses and inns. But the subsequent act of 1606, entitled "The Penalty of the Drunkard, and of him that continues drinking in an Alehouse", made individuals culpable for "offences of Drunkenness and of excess and unmeasurable Drinking."[30] Two years later, Downame noted that "our days this vice more reigns then ever it did in former ages; as may appear in that our wise Statesmen thought it necessary in Parliament,

---

[27] Bolton, *Two Sermons Preached at Northampton*; Bolton, *Some Generall Directions for a Comfortable Walking with God*; Harris, *The Drunkards Cup*; Ward, *Woe to Drunkards*.

[28] Prynne, *Healthes: Sicknesse*, 35–6. Cook, *Unum Necessarium*; Younge, *The Drunkard's Character*; Younge, *The Blemish of Government*.

[29] *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical of the Church of England*, CIX.

[30] *A Collection of Certain Statutes*, 10–12, 14–17.

to enact a law for the suppressing of this sin."[31] Now was an opportunity for "Magistrates and Ministers to "join together, and not only labour by the sword of the word, but also by the sword of Justice, to suppress this vice."

Historians have noted how this legislation came to reshape relationships in local communities.[32] Less recognised is that, when it came to drunkards, James was an influence on the sword of the word as well as the sword of Justice. When he ascended the English throne in 1603 the Scottish king was already a distinguished contributor to the printed public sphere, with learned and humanistic treatises on kingship, biblical exegesis, civil conduct and witchcraft as well as books of poetry to his name.[33] These were now republished, along with a new short treatise that deployed cultural analysis and medical theory to argue against the pleasurable and excessive consumption of the American-Spanish intoxicant – an expensive luxury and "novelty" that had become deeply fashionable among the English ruling classes.[34]

Counterblaste to tobacco was an important intervention for the concept of drunkard for at least four reasons. First, James noted the similarities between tobacco and alcohol in terms of their effects on mind and body, recognising the abuse of tobacco as "a branch of the sin of drunkenness, which is the root of all sins."[35] Just as "the only delight that drunkards take in Wine is in the strength of the taste, & the force of the fume thereof that mounts up to the brain", so are "those (I meane the strong heat and the fume) the only qualities that make Tobacco so delectable to all the lovers of it."[36] More importantly, he suggested a process of acculturation by which people came to depend on the intoxicants. If "no man likes strong heady drink the first day […] but by custom is piece and piece allured […]", then "is not this the very case of all the great takers of Tobacco? which therefore they themselves do attribute to a bewitching quality in it."[37] Second, England's new king repurposed a classical conception of "custom" in order to explain more precisely this "bewitching quality."[38] Asking why "many in this kingdom have had such a continual use of taking this unsavoury smoke, as now they are not able to forbear the same, no more than an old drunkard can abide to be long sober, without falling into an incurable weakness and evil constitution", he answered "that for their continual custom hath made to them, *habitum, alterā naturam*": that is, the force of habit eventually became second

---

[31] Downame, *Foure Treatises Tending to Disswade*, 79–80.
[32] Wrightson, "Alehouses, Order and Reformation in Rural England," 11–12; Clark, *The English Alehouse,* 172–6; Nicholls, *Politics of Alcohol*, 13– 15.
[33] James VI and I, *His Maiesties Lepanto*; James VI and I, *A Fruitefull Meditation*; James VI and I, *Dæmonologie in Forme of a Dialogue;* James VI and I, *Basilikon dōron*; James VI and I, *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies.*
[34] James VI and I, *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* (1604).
[35] James VI and I, *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* (1604).
[36] James VI and I, *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* (1604).
[37] James VI and I, *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* (1604).
[38] Shapin, "Why was 'custom a second nature'?", 4.

nature, "so to those that from their birth have been continually nourished upon poison and things venomous, wholesome meats are only poisoned."[39] Third, *Counterbalste* reiterated that personal consumption did not simply carry cultural and social significations – nor merely compromise the individual's relationship to God – but was also an issue of political authority and economy. James asked his subjects whether it was "not the greatest sin of all, that you the people of all sorts of this Kingdom, who are created and ordained by God to bestow both your persons and goods for the maintenance both of the honour and safety of your King and Common-wealth, should disable yourselves in both?"[40] Fourthly, the drunkenness described by James was not the preserve of an impoverished and desperate people seeking consolation and respite through intoxication. Rather it was symptomatic of the "Peace and wealth [that] hath brought forth a general sluggishness, which makes us wallow in all sorts of idle delights, and soft delicacies."[41] Indeed, the drunkard was indicative of how "our Clergy are become negligent and lazy, our Nobility and Gentry prodigal, and sold to their private delights, Our Lawyers covetous, our Common-people prodigal and curious; and generally all sorts of people more careful for their private ends, then for their mother the Common-wealth."[42]

As well as sinful and inhumane, therefore, drunkards were the product of custom – by which social practices engendered powerful habits and biological dependencies – and subjects of political economy, exemplifying how the opportunities of affluence, excess, and private consumption rubbed against the demands of citizenship, commonwealth, and public virtue. These were not original insights: Elizabethan satirists like Thomas Lupton were aware of the economic and public problems posed by the "rich drunkard" who not only devoted himself to "drinking, bibbing and belly-cheer" but also "brags" about it when sober.[43] But articulated and authorised by a new monarch, these insights provided wide scope for addressing the problem of drunkenness with renewed and didactic intent.

Downame was especially concerned, for example, with how customs became "second nature" and why ostensibly rational men invented rituals and practices that led them into "slavery" and madness."[44] He reported in shocked tones how modern drinkers "use … glasses without feet, that so they may go about in a continual motion [because they cannot be put down]; they carouse by the bell, by the dye, the dozen, the yard, and so by measure, drink out of measure." The practices of drunkards were not only intended to manipulate behaviour, but also the physiology or nature of the person. Downame explained that because

---

[39] Shapin, "Why was 'custom a second nature' ?", C3r.
[40] Shapin, "Why was 'custom a second nature' ?", C4.
[41] Shapin, "Why was 'custom a second nature' ?", A3r.
[42] Shapin, "Why was 'custom a second nature' ?", A3r.
[43] Lupton, *Sivquila*, 56.
[44] Lemon, *Addiction*, 84–5.

"nature is content with a little, and soon cloyed and oppressed with excess, they use all their art and skill to strengthen it for these wicked exploits." Tricks included "salt meats to whet their appetite [… and …] tobacco, that by drunkenness they may expel drunkenness, and being glutted with wine, they drink smoke, that by this variety it may not grow tedious."[45] This sociological analysis was supplemented by Samuel Ward, who replaced the usual rhetorical technique of listing the fate of infamous classical and biblical drunkards – men like Noah, Lot, and Alexander the Great – with contemporary instances of God's judgement. In what was an early exercise in social surveying, Ward collated cases like the "two servants of a Brewer in Ipswich, drinking for a rump of a Turkey, struggling in their drink for it, fell into a scalding Caldron backwards: whereof the one dyed presently, the other lingeringly, and painfully since my coming to Ipswich."[46] And like any good social scientist, he was even careful to keep "The names of the parties thus punished" anonymous "for the kindred's sake yet living."[47]

Across this burgeoning reformatory discourse, it is possible to discern at least three analytical and methodological threads spinning across the didactic literature. These included concern with the social practices and customs that created the drunkard; the language determining how drunkards and their opponents were defined, condemned or valorised; and the relationship between drunkards and socio-economic structures over time. Each were meant to explain why contemporaries engaged in such calamitous behaviour and why, as pressingly, drunkards seemed to be more prevalent now than in the past. But by interrogating customs, language and political economy so critically, reformers also ratcheted up the likelihood of conflict over the concept of drunkard itself. Rather than someone simply overtaken by drunkenness – whether occasionally or recurringly – the drunkard morphed into anyone who drank for any reason other than necessity; with necessity defined in increasingly restricted terms.

Robert Harris's *The Drunkard's Cup* was a case in point. Harris prefaced his sermon, which he dedicated to Justices of the Peace in Oxfordshire, with various economic and political reasons for why "there is an Art of Drinking now, and in the world it has become a great profession.[48] One factor was the breakdown of the manorial system and the commercialisation of the drinks trade: just as "the want of Hospitality" in manor and parsonage required the establishment of paying alehouses, so "want of upholding tilling and husbandry" led to evictions, urban migration, and the re-employment of landless husbandmen as badgers, maltsters, and the Aleman.[49] Other causes included the bad example set by gentry households ("were I to seek a Tobacconist, I would as soon look him in a Gentleman's house,

[45] Downame, *Foure Treatises Tending to Disswade*, 80.
[46] Ward, *Woe to Drunkards*, 20.
[47] Ward, *Woe to* Drunkards, 29.
[48] Harris, *Drunkards Cup*, A2r.
[49] Harris, *Drunkards Cup*, A3r.

as in any man's") and the reluctance of governors to enforce the law against drunkards.[50] Having contextualised the problem, Harris elaborated on the concept of the drunkard that encompassed pleasurable as well as disordered drinking. Asking "who is a drunkard?" he invoked the ghost of Solomon to explain that drink "is not only abused when it turns up a man's heels, and makes the house run round (as one speaks) but when it steals away the affections": "if a man drink too much for his purse, too much for his calling and occasions, too much for his health and quiet of body and mind, Solomon calls him a drunkard."[51] Put simply, men need not have "lost their legs, tongues, senses" or "lie tumbling in their own vomit" to qualify. Like Ward, Harris did not rely on ancient or biblical exemplar to make the point. In a passage almost ethnographic in its details, Harris argued that

> It's your mannerly, sober Methodical drunkard, that drinks by the hour, and can tell the clock, that drinks by measure, and by rule, first so much Ale, then such a quantity of Beer, then of Sack, then to Rhenish … who knows his proportions, for wine, for sugar, for spring-water, Rose-water … [who] have his tools about him, Nutmegs, Rosemary, Tobacco … just so much as will make him hearty, cheerful, witty, healthful, and no more: this is the man that Solomon speaks of, a man of measures, and mixtures.[52]

Audiences were left in no doubt that these customs of "regular drinking" were as much "abusive drinking" – the drinking of the drunkard – as the descent into "senselessness."[53]

IV The drunkard and socio-economic critique

These analytical strands were pulled together most systematically by William Prynne in 1628 to explain "why Drunkenness doth so much increase and superabound among us."[54] Aside from the innate depravity of man and the demonstrable influence of the devil, for Prynne the cause of the current crisis of "excess, and Drunkards" in England was a particular convergence of custom, language, and social emulation. Prynne accordingly observed that while the "common ceremonies" involved in the "Art of Drinking" were described in "popular, goodly, flattering, and insinuating titles; so Temperance and Sobriety are deformed, vilified, derided, sentenced, condemned, and scoffed at, under […] opprobrious and disdainful names."[55] The result was that "Drunkards are likewise magnified, and extolled, under the amiable, reverenced, and applauded terms of good-fellows, wits; Poets; courteous, sociable, merry, jovial, and boon-companions." In the meantime, those "who make a conscience of excess" were

---

[50] Harris, *Drunkards Cup*, A4.
[51] Harris, *Drunkards Cup*, 11.
[52] Harris, *Drunkards Cup*, 12.
[53] Harris, *Drunkards Cup*, 16, 15; Bolton, *Some General Directions*, 204.
[54] Prynne, *Healthes: Sicknesse*, B2.
[55] Prynne, *Healthes: Sicknesse*, A3–A3r.

reviled as "Puritans, Praecisians, Stoics; unsociable, clownish, rustic, perverse, peevish, humorous, singular, discourteous niggardly, pragmatical, proud, unmannerly, degenerous, base, scrupulous, melancholic, sad or discontented persons."[56] As significant as this semantic politics was that "great men, Gentlemen, Clergymen, and others … instead of being patterns of temperance and sobriety unto inferior and meaner persons, are oft times made their presidents & plot-forms of Drunkenness and excess."[57] This was a deadly scenario given that "inferiors […] commonly adore [their] Superiors" chief and greatest vices, as so many glorious and resplendent virtues." It was even more so because of "the negligence and coldness of Justices, Magistrates, and inferior Officers, in the due and faithful execution of those laudable and pious Lawes and Statutes, enacted by our King, and State."[58] Prynne opined that if England's rulers were "as diligent to suppress and pulldown Drunkenness and Alehouses, as they are industrious and forwards to Patronize and set them up, [then] the wings of Drunkenness would soon be clipped."[59]

As well as triangulating the Jacobean concern with custom, semantics and emulation, Prynne conveyed the urgent social and economic critique informing the discussions of his predecessors. Following the initial example of James himself, this critique aimed at the affluent and powerful in the first instance. All commentators were conscious that poor drunkards could only make their families and neighbourhoods poorer and that drunkenness, like idleness, was antithetical to industriousness.[60] But in print it was those who could afford to be bewitched by tobacco in 1604 or 1609 and who, in the words of Harris, were guilty of the "unsufferable abuse of their wealth and plenty, partly in the getting, and partly in the spending", who attracted most ire.[61] This coupling of "the getting" – as "Covetousness and Ambition" – with "the spending" – as "riotous … and abusive drinking" – was a powerful fixture in the evaluative and critical lexicon that developed around the Jacobean conception of the drunkard.[62] Not only did it make the inequitable accumulation of wealth and its consumption two sides of the same economic and moral problem, but it also reinforced another assumption among reformers: that drunkards were the result of recent historical processes.[63] For Harris, as we have seen, their root cause was agrarian capitalism and the breakdown of manorialism: while "heretofore it was a strange sight to see a drunken man, now it is no news; heretofore it was the sin of Tinkers, Ostlers,

---

56 Prynne, *Healthes: Sicknesse*, A3r.
57 Prynne, *Healthes: Sicknesse*, B1.
58 Prynne, *Healthes: Sicknesse*, B1.
59 Prynne, *Healthes: Sicknesse*, B1.
60 Dent, *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen*, 166; Wrightson, *English Society*, 175; Clark, *The English Alehouse*, 167.
61 Harris, *Drunkards Cup*, 2.
62Harris, *Drunkards Cup*, 2.
63 McShane, "Material Culture and Political Drinking," 257–61.

Beggars, etc, now of Farmers, Esquires, Knights etc."[64] Another explanation was the Germanic dynamic within Protestantism, John Cook making the "sad observation that Drunkards came not into this Kingdome till the Reformation of Religion, and a sadder observation which I have found true, that Protestants generally are greater Drinkers then Papists, who are far more libidinous and unchaste."[65] For Prynne, the more specific problem of oathing and healthing lay not so much with the Germans – although he acknowledged the ancient and "modern Germans" were great drunkards he also made a specific point of explaining that rumours of Luther's dissoluteness were Catholic lies – as with the educated elites" obsession with classical culture and their adaptation of heathenish practices.[66]

Prynne, however, went a few steps further with this critique than his Jacobean predecessors. He implicated the monarchy in the problem of drunkenness by asserting that it was healths of love and loyalty to the king that were especially used to vindicate drunkenness; and he dedicated his analysis to the new king, James's son Charles, as a kind of challenge to do something about it.[67] Repeating the same trick a few years later over the related problem of stage-plays, he was tried for sedition and physically mutilated.[68] If this was one way to mark the end of the "Jacobethan consensus" – such as it was – then twenty years later John Cook could nevertheless adopt the insights of Harris to make the drunkard the pivot of his reformatory political economy.[69] As a lawyer and future regicide, Cook published *Unum Necessarium: or, The Poore Mans Case* from the albeit bedraggled centre of parliamentary power. After six years of civil war, Charles by 1648 was the prisoner of a regime struggling to deal with dearth and famine and a politically and religiously divided nation. It was these dire circumstances that prompted Cook to observe that the "English follow extremes too much." On the one hand, "one man is too prodigal, his mouth like a Sepulchre, his throat like a hot Oven, that consumes all; the Drunkard and intemperate person."[70] But "another is so extremely penurious, that he will not afford himself food, and raiment, according to his quality" – the sort of men Cook also labelled "cruel misers" and "covetous persons."[71] In times of scarcity and hardship – such as now – it was "between these two Millstones [that] the poor labouring man is squeezed to death": just as "covetous misers" looked to profit from grain shortages and inflated prices, so drunkards wasted scarce barley on unnecessary drinking.[72] Cook hazarded that "were it not for the hardness of some men's hearts; and the riotous excess and

---

[64] McShane, "Material Culture and Political Drinking," 22.
[65] Cook, *Unum Necessarium*, 9; Downame, *Foure Treatises Tending to Disswade*, 80.
[66] Prynne, *Healthes: Sicknesse*, 33, 19, 24.
[67] Prynne, *Healthes: Sicknesse*, "The Epistle Dedicatory."
[68] William Lamont, *Marginal Prynne*, 28–48; Kishlansky, "The Whipper Whipped," 603–27.
[69] Hunt, "Review Article," 131–40.
[70] Cook, *Unum Necessarium*, 70.
[71] Cook, *Unum Necessarium*, preface, 13, 16, 41, 43, 73, 70, 74.
[72] Cook, *Unum Necessarium*, 70, 74.

Intemperance of others, we need not much fear a Dearth."[73] Indeed, "would Christians were so merciful, to part with their superfluities, without question, that which is excessively spent in apparel and Diet would comfortably relieve all the poor in the Kingdom."[74]

In making these arguments Cook explicitly combined the humanism of Thomas More and Michel de Montaigne with Jacobean sermonising on drunkenness.[75] Not only did he elaborate on Harris's economic model of "getting" and "spending" as the key to understanding the socio-pathology of the drunkard. He also rejected popular conceptions of the drunkard as simply he who "staggers", "reels", or "does not understand himself" for the more capacious sense of him "who hath taken more than his body requires for health or strength inordinately."[76] Cook had in mind, that is, "no drunkard like the old Drunkard that can sit all day from morning to night, & by the help of that witch Tobacco (against the moderate or unlustful use whereof I except not,) as K. James calls it, which will make a drunken man sober, & a sober man drunk, will be as fresh at night as at the first cup."[77] But whereas his predecessors had mainly sought to deal with drunkards by the proper enforcement of laws against alehouses, the encouragement of Godliness and stoicism on the part of householders, and the wholesale withdrawal of the godly and honest from "bad company", Cook preferred an altogether more draconian remedy.[78] This involved an escalation from short imprisonment for the first offence, to a fine for the second offence, to a pardon for the third offence, and "for the fourth offence to sustain the pain of death, as unworthy to live in a well-governed Kingdome, a Drunkard being the greatest robber of poor people which are ready to famish for want of bread, a rebel against divine and humane authority, and a sworn enemy to all humanity."[79]

V Conclusion

Cook's treatise of 1648 coincided with widespread popular demand for governmental action against alehouses and middlemen that was driven by both "godly zeal" and fear of dearth.[80] The intersection of rhetoric and policy was not unprecedented. As Walter and Wrightson long ago demonstrated, over the previous forty years the reformatory tradition informing Cook's arguments had led to "concrete action" in times of economic hardship and was "certainly attractive to those of the "middling sort" of town and country who stood in an intermediate

---

73 Cook, *Unum Necessarium* 29.
74 Cook, *Unum Necessarium* 45.
75 Cook, *Unum Necessarium* 36, 52. 54,
76 Cook, *Unum Necessarium* 22.
77 Cook, *Unum Necessarium* 22.
78 Dent, *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen*, 166; Downame, *Foure Treatises Tending to Disswade*, 85, 95, 105, 114.
79 Cook, *Unum Necessarium*, 19.
80 Walter and Wrightson, "Dearth and the social order," 37–9.

position between the poor and the local representatives of church and state."[81] The campaigns against drunkenness are accordingly presented as religious and moral crusades, centring primarily on the alehouse, that were most likely to engender popular assent when linked to the pressures of economic necessity.[82] Focus on how early Stuart moralists constructed the character of the drunkard points, however, to a multiple rather than singularly religious identity. Rather than simply moral agents defined in terms of sin and damnation, early Stuart drunkards were also perceived by moralists as economic beings – what contemporaries were learning to describe as "consumptioners" and "consumers" – whose excessive and superfluous consumption had obvious economic consequences in much the same way that the behaviour of "covetous misers" broke salient codes of equity and religion.[83] Indeed, just as contemporary economic theorists were far from shy in importing moral assumptions and prerequisites into their discussions, so reformers and moralists eagerly engaged in political – moral – economy.[84] In this sense, the rise and fall of the drunkard is as much a part of economic history as the history of drinking and manners.

It is also the story of much more besides. The remaking of the drunkard involved classical as well as biblical learning; it built on Elizabethan fears about drunkenness and encouraged a range of contemporary socio-economic and cultural analyses. The result was a powerful tool of criticism and didacticism which was not only economic and moral in nature, but also social, medical and political. This character of the drunkard proscribed not only the loss of reason and humanity but also the pursuit of pleasure and recreation. It warned against mannerly, regular and sober drinking as well as intoxication of the instant. It drew a sharp distinction between superfluous and necessary consumption of not simply alcohols but also other intoxicants – most notably tobacco. It held all social groups – but especially social and political elites – to serious public account. And from the mid-1620s it was conflated with partisan and anti-puritan identities, with conflict about intoxicants personalised in the character of the drunkard in the same way that it was spatialised in the alehouse. Given the force of this reformatory discourse it is hardly surprising that churchwardens in Northamptonshire should declare in 1619 that "We cannot define a … drunkard and therefore crave advice (how to present such) until the next court".[85] Martin Ingram argues this was a canny way to resist the intensification of regulatory tendencies that can be traced back well into the medieval era.[86] But it also indicates more immediate and unprecedented attempts to redefine the drunkard and the social confusion this caused.

---

[81]Walter and Wrightson, "Dearth and the social order," 29.
[82]Walter and Wrightson, "Dearth and the social order," 38.
[83] Withington, "Intoxicants and the Invention of Consumption," 390–93.
[84] Withington, "Intoxicants and the Invention of Consumption," 394–98; Waddell, "Economic immorality," 165–7, 176–77.
[85] Cited in Ingram, "Reformation of Manners", 76.
[86] Ingram, "Reformation of Manners", 68–69, 80–81.

Telling this story has meant focusing on the rise of drunkard rather than its decline. It has also left no time to consider concurrent and alternative discourses that valorised drinking, nor the history of the label in the kind of depositional material from which Robert Elton's more "discerning" definition was recorded. While these issues must be treated in more detail elsewhere, it is worth concluding with a couple of speculative points. The first concerns the popular purchase of reformist ideas about drunkards, about which this discussion has raised more questions than answers. One is whether the critique of social elites explicit to the tag drunkard also resonated with the "middling sort": did their activism work upwards, as the rhetoric against drunkards encouraged, or was it mostly directed towards the poor, as regulation of alehouses seemed to encourage?[87] Another is whether the attendant and more complicated notions of drunkard propagated by reformers found purchase with parishioners: not least ideas about custom, habituation, and second nature. Did they take seriously, for example, Richard Younge's warning in 1658 that "if physick be taken too oft, it will not like physick: but nature entertains it as a friend, not as a Physician: yea poison by a familiar use becomes natural food. As Aristotle (in an example of a Maid, who used to pick spiders off the walls and eat them) makes plain"?.[88] Younge suspected not: "it is sad to consider, how many Drunkards will hear this Charge, for one that will apply it to himself. For confident I am that fifteen of twenty, all this City over, are Drunkards."[89] He explained that "Perhaps by the Laws of the Land, a man is not taken for drunk, except his eyes stare, his tongue stutter, and his legs stagger; but "he that drinks more for lust, or pride, or covetousness, or fear, or good fellowship, or to drive away time, or to still conscience, then for thirst, is a Drunkard in Solomon's esteem."[90]

But here, perhaps, was the crux of the reformist problem. Although rooted in concerns about inequity, addiction and waste – as well as sin – the centrality of alcohol to most aspects of early modern life meant that an expansive concept of drunkard risked criminalising the customs by which civil and commercial society functioned. Reformers in the 1600s had been sensitive to the tension, Dent arguing that it was "pot-companionship" rather than "brotherly fellowship" that "the plain man" should avoid and even Downame reassuring readers that it was not only lawful to drink "for necessity, but also for honest delight, and that not only in Christian and religious feasting, when for some public benefit we offer unto God public thanks and praise, but also in love feasts and civil meetings, for the maintenance and increase of amity and friendship amongst neighbours."[91] By the

---

[87] Wrightson, "Alehouses, order and reformation in rural England," 16–17; Clark, *The English Alehouse*, 166–8.
[88] Younge, Richard, *The Blemish of Government*, 2.
[89] Younge, Richard, *The Blemish of Government*, 10.
[90] Younge, Richard, *The Blemish of Government*, 10.
[91] Dent, *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen*, 166; Downame, *Foure Treatises Tending to Disswade*, 82.

mid-century these sensitivities, at least for some, had hardened. For Younge, "in cases of this nature, things are rather measured by the intention and affection of the doer, than of the issue, and event." On this basis, the archetypal drunkard "constantly clubs it, first for his mornings draught, secondly at Exchange time, thirdly at night when shops are shut in; as is the common, but base custom of most Tradesmen; and the Devil so blinds them, that they will plead a necessity of it; and that it is for their profit."[92] This was not so much an assault on superfluity and waste as the very practices of everyday life.[93]

The imperialism of this concept of drunkard – together with the relentlessness of its didacticism and increasing politicisation from the mid-1620s – perhaps explains why it could not survive in its evolved semantic state at the Restoration. Like other terms that underwent discursive enclosure after 1660 – "commonwealth" comes to mind – the language of drunkard was too compromised by the revolutionary era to be current thereafter.[94] It did not disappear in print in the way it slipped from the depositional record, however; indeed, its revival in the 1670s (as described in Figures 3 and 4) was driven by re-editions of early Stuart texts and new popular genres that worked their didacticism through balladry and fiction. But Wilkin's influential *Essay towards a real character, and a philosophical language* relegated drunkard to a subset of "sot" and collocated it with "fool", "dull" and "dotage" rather than confirm the more capacious concept.[95] Medical writers began to take an altogether more benign interest in the relationship between intoxicants and second nature.[96] And Enlightenment definitions of drunkard accordingly retreated to denote "one given to excessive use of strong liquor, one addicted to habitual ebriety."[97] In the meantime, powerful counter-discourses proclaiming the public benefits of private consumption, pleasure, and happiness began to pose serious questions of the civic asceticism promulgated earlier in the century.[98] As importantly, the economic conditions that had made the pre-civil era so challenging – and the emphases of drunkard so plausible – relented: real wages rose, inflation abated, and demographic pressures eased.[99]

That is not to say that the insights and methodologies of early Stuart reformists were lost. Increase Mather transported the reformist concept of drunkard to New England in 1673, berating those colonists who "love to drink Wine to excess, though he should seldom be overcome thereby" and additionally lamenting how "Some amongst us (who they are the Lord knows) out of

92 Younge, *The Blemish of Government*, 10.
93 Wrightson, "Alehouses, order and reformation in rural England," 6.
94 Withington, *Society in Early Modern England*, chap. 5.
95 Wilkins, *An Essay*, entry for "sot", unpaginated.
96 Withington, "Addiction, Intoxicants," forthcoming.
97 Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English language*, entry for "drunkard", Pp2.
98 Slack, "The Politics of Consumption," 611–16.
99 Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, Section Three.

Covetousness have sold Liquors and strong drinks to these poor *Indians*, whose lands we possess, and have made them drunk therewith."[100] Aside from critiquing the political and economic purposing of liquor by his fellow colonists, Mather delineated the "traditional" and "puritan" definition of drunkard that, according to Harry Levine, preceded the coining of a modern "disease" concept of addiction a hundred years later.[101] But it is now clear that not only was this "traditional" concept itself a relatively recent construction; it was out of the insistent corralling of ideas and observation by reformers that "modern" and medicalised conceptions of temperance and addiction – including "disease" conceptions – emerged.[102] More ironic, perhaps, is that as the primary describers of drunkards in early Stuart print, it was reformers who did most both to promulgate the "lurid" customs they ostensibly abhorred and to establish the importance of representing them in print.[103] Their conception of drunkard may have been contested; but the construction of a prurient public sphere was more perennial.

Works Cited

W. B. *A Collection of Certain Statutes in Force [electronic Resource] : with Full and Ready Notes in the Margent, Containing Their Effect in Briefe as Also the Ordinances for the Better Observation of the Lords Day, and the Fast Dayes, Published for the Better Caution of Such as Are Inclinable to Delinquency Against the Severall Effects of Those Statutes and Ordinances : and Also for the Better Information of All Such Officers and Ministers as Are by Late Speciall Warrants Authorised and Commanded to Put the Same Statutes and Ordinances in Execution for the Better Suppressing ...,* London: By Robert White, 1644.

Bolton, Robert, *Two Sermons Preached at Northampton at Two Severall Assises There The One in the Time of the Shrevalty of Sir Erasmus Dryden Baronet. Anno Domini, 1621. The Other in the Time of the Shrevalty of Sir Henry Robinson Knight, Anno Domini, 1629*, London: By George Miller, 1635.

Bolton, Robert, *Some Generall Directions for a Comfortable Walking with God Deliuered in the Lecture at Kettering in Northhamptonshire, With Enlargement* , London: By Felix Kyngston, For Edmund Weauer, 1626.

Brown, James, "Alehouse Licensing and State Formation in Early Modern England." In *Intoxication and Society: Problematic Pleasures of Drugs and Alcohol*, edited by J. Herring et al., 110-32, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2013,

Clark, Peter, *The English Alehouse: A Social History 1200–1830*, London 1983.

[100] Mather, *Wo [sic] to Drunkards*, 21.
[101] Levine, "The Discovery of Addiction," 45.
[102] Porter, "The Drinking Man's Disease," 393; Warner, "Resolv"d to Drink No More," 689–90; Lemon, *Addiction*, 84, Withington, "Addiction, Intoxicants, and the Humoral Body," forthcoming.
[103] Wrightson, "Alehouses, order and reformation in rural England," 6;

Collinson, Patrick, "The Cohabitation of the Faithful with the Unfaithful." In *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England*. Edited by O. P Grell, J. I Israel and N. Tyacke, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

"Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical of the Church of England (1603)", *Anglican*, https://www.anglican.net/doctrines/1604-canon-law/#p1-1 (accessed:).

Cook, John, *Unum necessarium: or, The Poore Mans Case: Being an Expedient to Make Provision of All Poore People in the Kingdome*. London: For Matthew Wallblanke,1648.

Cree, Jose, "Protestant Evangelicals and Addiction in Early Modern English", *Renaissance Studies* 32, no. 3 (2017): 446–62.

Dent, Arthur, *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen. Wherein Euery Man May Clearly See, Whether He Shall be Saued or Damned. Set Forth Dialogue Wise, or the Better Understanding of the Simple*. London: By Ja. Young, For G.Lathum,1601).

Downame, John, *Foure Treatises Tending to Disswade All Christians rom Foure No Lesse Hainous Then Common Sinnes; Namely, the Abuses of Swearing, Drunkennesse, Whoredome, and Briberie*. London: By Felix Kyngston, For William Welby, 1609.,

Gowing, Laura, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Hailwood, Mark, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014.

Hailwood, Mark, "Sociability, Work and Labouring Identity in Seventeenth Century England." *Cultural and Social History* 8, no. 1 (2011): 9–29.

Harris, Robert, *The Drunkards Cup*, London: By Felix Kyngston, For Thomas Man, 1619.

Hunt, Arnold, "Review Article: A Jacobean Consensus? The Religious Policy of James VI and I." *The Seventeenth Century* 17, no. 1 (2002): 131–40.

Ingram, Martin, "Reformation of Manners in Early Modern England" in Fox, Griffiths, and Hindle, *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* 47–88, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996.

Ingram, Martin, *Carnal Knowledge: Regulating Sex in England, 1470–1600,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

James VI and I, *His Maiesties Lepanto, or heroicall song being part of his poeticall exercises at vacant hours*, London: By Simon Stafford and Henry Hooke, 1603.

James VI and I, *A fruitefull meditation containing. A plaine and easie exposition, or laying open of the 7. 8. 9. and 10. verses of the 20. chap. of the Reuelation, in forme and maner of a sermon*, London: Imprinted first in Scottish at Edenburgh, by Henry Charteris. 1588. Reprinted By V.S., For Iohn Harrison the Yonger,1603.

James VI and I, *Dæmonologie in Forme of a Dialogue, Diuided into Three Books*, Edinburgh: By Robert Walde-gaue,1603.

James VI and I, *Basilikon dōron. Or His Maiesties Instructions to His Dearest Sonne, Henry the Prince*, Edinburgh: By Robert Walde-gaue, 1603.

James VI and I, *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies, or, The Reciprock and Mutuall Dutie Betwixt a Free King, and His Naturall Subiects*, London: By T.P, 1603, ,

James VI and I, A *Counterblaste to Tobacco,* London: By R. B[arker], Anno, 1604,

Johnson, Samuel, *A Dictionary of the English Language: in Which the Words are Deduced from Their Originals, Explained in Their Different Meanings, and Authorized by the Names of the Writers in Whose Works they are Found* … Volume 1, London, 1770.

Kishlansky, Mark, "The Whipper Whipped": the Sedition of William Prynne", *Historical Journal* 56 (2003): 603–27.

Lake, Peter, "Anti-popery: the Structure of a Prejudice." In *Conflict in Early Stuart England, Studies in Religion and Politics 1603–42* edited by Richard Cust and Ann Hughes, 72–106. London: Routledge, 1989.

Lemon, Rebecca, *Addiction and Devotion in Early Modern England.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018.

Lamont, William, *Marginal Prynne*, *1600–1669*.,London: 1963.

Levine, Harry Gene, "The Discovery of Addiction: Changing Conceptions of Habitual Drunkenness in America," 1978; repr., In *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment* 2, no. 1 (1985): 43–57.

Lupton, Thomas, *Sivquila Too Good, to Be True: Omen: Though so at a Vewe Yet All I Tolde You is True, I Upholde You, Now Cease to Aske Why? For I Can Not Lye : Herein is Shewed by Way of Dialogue, the Wonderful Maners of the People of Mauqsun, with Other Talke not Friuolous,* London: By H. Bynneman, 1580,

Mather, Increase, *Wo [sic] to Drunkards Two Sermons Testifying Against the Sin of Drunkenness, Wherein the Wofulness of That Evil, and the Misery of All That are Addicted to it, is Discovered from the Word of God*, Boston: By Timothy Green, 1673,.

McShane, Angela, "Material Culture and Political Drinking in Seventeenth-Century England", *Past & Present* 222, Supplement no. 9, (2014): 247–276.

McShane, Angela, "Drink, Politics and Politics in Early Modern England", *Popular Music* 35, no. 2 (2016): 166–90.

Nashe, Thomas, *Pierce Penilesse HIS SUPPLICATION to the Divell.* London: By Abell Iesses, 1592.

Nicholls, James, *The Politics of Alcohol: A History of the Drink Question in England.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009.

Porter, Roy, "The Drinking Man's Disease: The "Pre-History" of Alcoholism in Georgian Britain," *British Journal of Addiction* 80, no. 4 (1985): 385–396.

Prynne, William, *Healthes: Sicknesse. Or A Compendious and Briefe Discourse; Prouing, the Drinking and Pledging of Healthes, to be Sinfull, and Utterly Unlawfull Unto Christians by Arguments, Scriptures, Fathers, Moderne Diuines, Christian Authors, Historians, Councels; Imperiall Lawes and Constitutions; and by the Voyce and Verdict of Prophane and Heathen Writers: Wherein All those Ordinary Obiections, Excuses, or Pretences Which are Made to Justifie, Extenuate, or Excuse the Drinking or Pledging of Healthes, are Likewise Cleared and Answered,* London: By Augustine Mathewes, 1628,.

Steven Shapin, "Why was "custom a second nature" in early modern medicine?" *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 93, no. 1 (2019): 1–26.

Shrank, Cathy, "Beastly Metamorphoses: Losing Control in Early Modern Literary Culture." In *Intoxication and Society: Problematic Pleasures of Drugs and Alcohol*, edited by J. Herring et al., 193-209. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2013.

Slack, Paul, "The Politics of Consumption and England's Happiness in the Later Seventeenth Century." *The English Historical Review* 122, no. 497 (2007): 609–63.

Smith, Henry, "A looking glass for drunkards." In *The Sermons of Henrie Smith, Gathered in One Volume,* 1593.

Smith, Henry, "A dissuasion from pride." In *The Sermons of Henrie Smith, Gathered in One Volume,* 1593.

Smyth, Adam, *A Pleasing Sinne: Drink and Conviviality in Seventeenth-Century England.* Cambridge: Boydell 2004.

Stephens, W. B. "English Wine Imports c. 1603–1640, with Special Reference to the Devon Ports." In Audrey Erskine, Margery M, Rowe, Todd, Gray, eds. *Tudor and Stuart Devon : the Common Estate and Government : Essays Presented to Joyce Youings,* Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1992, 141–72.

Taylor, Alexander, "Tobacco Retail and State Formation in Early Modern England and Wales." In *Economic History Review* 72, no. 2 (2019): 433–58.

Unger, Richard, *Beer in the Middle Ages and Renaissance,* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

Waddell, Brodie, "Economic immorality and social reformation in English popular preaching, 1585–1625." *Cultural and Social History* 5,no. 2 (2008): 165–82

Walsham, Alexandra, "Ordeals of Conscience: Casuistry, Conformity and Confessional Identity in Post-Reformation England." In *Contexts of Conscience in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700* edited by Harald E. Braun and Edward Vallance, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Walter, John and Wrightson, Keith, "Dearth and the Social Order in Early Modern England," *Past & Present* 71 no. 1 (1976): 22–42.

Samuel Ward, *Woe to Drunkards A Sermon*, London: By A[ugustine] Math[ewes], For Iohn Marriott, and Iohn Grismand, 1622.

Warner, Jessica, "Resolv"d to Drink No More. Addiction as a Pre-Industrial Construct." *Journal of Studies of Alcohol* 55 (1994): 685–91.

Wilkins, John, *An Essay Towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language,* London: For Sa. Gellibrand, and John Martyn, 1668.

Withington, Phil, *Society in Early Modern England; the Vernacular Origins of Powerful Ideas.* Cambridge: Polity Press 2010.

Withington, Phil, "Intoxicants and the Early Modern City." In *Remaking English Society. Social Relations and Social Change in Early Modern England,* Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013, 135–64.

Withington, Phil, "Intoxicants and Society in Early Modern England." *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 3(2011): 631–57.

Withington, Phil, "Intoxicants and the Invention of Consumption." *Economic History Review* 73, no. 2 (2020): 384–408.

Withington, Phil, "Addiction, Intoxicants, and the Humoral Body." In *Intoxicants and Early-Modern European Globalisation*: *Spaces, Practices, Material Culture*, edited by Kathryn James and Phil Withington, Special Issue, *The Historical Journal*, 2022.

Wrightson, Keith "Alehouses, Order and Reformation in Rural England, 1590–1660." *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914: Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure*, edited by Eileen Yeo, 1-27, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981.

Wrightson, Keith, *English Society 1580–1680,* London: 1982.

Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities. Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain, 1470–1750,* London: Routledge, 2002.

Younge, Richard, *The Drunkard's Character, or, A True Drunkard with Such Sinnes as Raigne in Him Viz. Pride. Ignorance. Enmity. Atheisme. Idlenesse. Adultery. Murther. with Aany the Like*, London: By R. Badger, For George Latham, 1638.

Younge, Richard, *The Blemish of Government, the Shame of Religion, the Disgrace of Mankind, or, A Charge Drawn Up Against Drunkards and Presented to His Highness the Lord Protector, in the Name of All the Sober Party in the Three Nations, Humbly Craving that They May be Kept Alone by Themselves from Infecting Others,* London: By A.M., 1658.