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‘Do not Give that which is Holy to Dogs’: Noble Hunting, the *Curée* Ritual, and the Eucharist

Andrew Pattison

Introduction

The importance of hunting in the late-medieval period cannot be overemphasized. From its origins of protecting society from wild animals and providing sustenance, hunting transformed during the Middle Ages into a privileged sport of the nobility, a ‘passion for kings and lords’, and, importantly, a way to underscore noble preeminence in society.¹ The right to hunt the king’s deer was amongst the most sought-after privileges in the Middle Ages. In late-medieval England, hunting was indeed a very royal affair. After the Conquest of 1066 the Norman kings had transformed the best woodlands of England into veritable hunting preserves in which the king alone reserved the prerogative to hunt.² With this in mind, hunting in the late-medieval era should be viewed as a performance of sorts, as a symbolic flaunting of social rank and power and affinity to royalty.³ Status and privilege were intrinsically linked in the medieval world, and both played important roles in maintaining order in society.⁴ In general terms, the social order of late-medieval England was underwritten by the understanding that each estate, indeed every person, even the humblest peasant, was owed certain privileges in return for certain duties — the terms of which were effectively the mortar that bound society together.⁵ Though the framework for such a system remained static as a matter of course,

¹ This theme has long interested historians and as such is oft articulated. See, for example, Roland Bechmann, *Trees and Man: The Forest in the Middle Ages* (New York: Paragon Press, 1990), pp. 27–36; Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2013), pp. 101–19; Ryan Judkins, ‘The Game of the Courtly Hunt: Chasing and Breaking Deer in Late Medieval English Literature’, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 112 (2013), 70–92.

² For a discussion of the Norman influence on royal forests and hunting in England, see Richard Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2003), pp. 13–18; Emma Griffin, *Blood Sport: Hunting in Britain since 1066* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 11–24 and 36–41.

³ These themes are developed by Almond, pp. 28–29, and Griffin, pp. 30–32.

⁴ See, for example, Robert Fossier, *The Axe and the Oath: Ordinary Life in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 252–85. See also Peter Cross, ‘An Age of Deference’, in *A Social History of England: 1200–1500*, ed. by Rosemary Horrox and W. Mark Ormrod (London: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Richard Kaeuper, ‘Social Ideals and Social Disruption’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Culture*, ed. by Andrew Galloway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 87–106.

⁵ Fossier, pp. 117–27, offers an overview of this notion: Phillipp Schofield, *Peasant and Community in Medieval*

medieval society was marked by an elemental state of contestation in which the prevailing social hierarchy need eternally be reaffirmed, lest it sunder and be recast anew.

In this context hunting takes on unique importance, a poignant social gesture in ‘the age of gesture’.⁶ Alexander Pluskowski could refer to hunting as part of a seigneurial semiotic system predicated on appropriated animal bodies — ‘a visual language expressing and negotiating power relations’.⁷ As a point of departure, this article will examine the prominent hunting ritual known as the *curée* in which the hounds are feasted upon freshly killed venison in a highly ritualized rite. In line with previous research, hunting ritual is examined as a projection of noble dominance over society. The paper deviates, however, from existing research in not seeking to understand the message of the noble hunt or what it communicated, but rather on examining *the resonance* of the message and thus on how, and to what end, ritual was used to present ideological messages. Although a number of researchers have posited a link between the rituals of the hunt and religious rites, the theme has not been explored exhaustively.⁸ This paper focuses on the *curée* as a unique ritual of the hunt that has not received due attention. Aside from a notable but brief foray by William Perry Marvin, the *curée* has been largely overlooked by researchers in their search for socially meaningful rituals in the hunt. This is presumably because it would seem to lack any clear link to social gesture, serving only as part of the ‘blood spectacle that commits the act to memory’, as Marvin puts it.⁹ Essentially, it has been seen as more ‘practical’ than ritual.¹⁰ This notwithstanding, the paper builds on the observation that the *curée* bears a marked resemblance to the liturgical rituals of the Catholic mass and therefore may have played an important role in the post-kill hunting rituals. I will argue that the *curée* is in fact closely intertwined with liturgical ritual in terms of form and idiom, and that the *curée* is the product of a unique historical context and temporal ideological needs. Through close contextualization and comparative reading, this paper examines how the interpellative thrust of the ideology inherent in noble hunting rituals was constructed and received in late-medieval England, and thereby suggests a nuanced conceptualization of non-sacred rituals as objects of historical research.

The article unfolds in four sections. First, the rituals of the noble hunt and the *curée* in particular are described and then examined against the backdrop of previous research and ritual theory. The next section further explores the *curée* ritual and aims to understand its ritual form as well as how it resonates with the Catholic liturgy. The third section will examine the rituals of the liturgy in as much as they pertain to the *curée* with the aim of better disclosing the ideology and dispositions inherent in their analogues in the *curée*, and will touch on the issue of reception. The final section will briefly trace the historical trajectory of the *curée* as a ritual within its cultural and social context, and will offer a few final observations. Together, the

England: 1200–1500, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pursues the subject in more detail in an English setting.

⁶ Fossier, p. 54.

⁷ Alexander Pluskowski, ‘Communicating through Skin and Bone: Appropriating Animal Bodies in Medieval Western European Seigneurial Culture’, in *Breaking and Shaping Beastly Bodies: Animals as Material Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Alexander Pluskowski (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), pp. 32–51 (pp. 46–47).

⁸ Typically these are relegated to broad pronouncements. Spearing, for example, referred to the hunt as ‘a sacrament, a ritual by which violent energies are at once expressed and contained’, but took the theme no further. A. C. Spearing, *The Gawain-Poet* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 9–10.

⁹ William Perry Marvin, *Hunting Law and Ritual in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2006), pp. 134–141. John Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988), pp. 41–42, briefly commented on the religious nature of the *curée* as well.

¹⁰ See Marvin, p. 118; Almond, pp. 77–78; Cummins, pp. 40–41, 44.

various points of concord between the two traditions (hunting and liturgy) are used to elucidate their mutual resonance and associability and, thereby, the ideological messages inherent in the noble hunt.

The *curée* and hunting ‘by strength’

Hunting ‘by strength’ was the most esteemed version of the noble hunt and the style of hunting that features most prominently in late-medieval England. Hunting by strength referred to the practice whereby a large hunting party, sometimes hundreds of people, would single out one animal, usually a male red deer, and chase it with relays of hounds and hunters on horseback. Groups of attendants would be stationed at predetermined intervals to ensure that the quarry advanced along the desired course. After the deer had been chased to near exhaustion, the entire hunting party (including the hounds) would approach for a view of the kill. After dispatching the creature, an intricate butchering of the carcass would ensue, and the hounds would then be rewarded in a ritual known as the *curée*. As it represented a central feature of hunting by strength, the rites of the *curée* are described in detail in most Middle English medieval hunting treatises, but occur in finest detail in Edward of Norwich’s *Master of Game*.¹¹ There the blood of the deer is carefully collected and then mixed with bread and offal on the hide. Next, the hide is rearranged — the mixture hidden within — to give the package a semblance of the creature’s natural form. For the climax, the head of the deer, already severed from its body, was then raised aloft by the ranking nobleman and then placed back in its natural position at the neck-end of the hide; the hounds were made to bay and the ‘package’ was opened, revealing the hounds’ reward. Afterwards, the head of the deer (aloft again) was taken back to the nobleman’s manor, with the entire hunting party following in procession. Specified parties would be allotted certain cuts of meat, according to tradition and hierarchy. The aim of the entire endeavor was to take one prized deer, in great spectacle.

In one form or another, the *curée* appears in all late-medieval Middle English hunting manuals and is commonly featured in the imaginative literature of the era. Although the totality of these sources will be considered in this paper, the focus will be on the *curée* as it occurs in *Master of Game*. The work represents the zenith of the hunting treatise genre in England. *Master of Game* is preserved in 27 medieval manuscripts and two modern editions; I follow the most recent edition, edited by James I. McNelis III.¹² With respect to historical context, the hunting treatises examined here are understood to generally describe English noble hunting practices of the thirteenth–early-fifteenth century. The treatises are not concerned with utilitarian issues but rather those features of the medieval hunt that made it courtly.¹³ *Master of Game* itself is dedicated to Henry of Monmouth, later Henry V, and

¹¹ James I. McNelis III, ‘The Uncollated Manuscripts of “The Master of Game”: Towards a New Edition’ (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1996). Largely a translation of Gaston de Phebus’ late-fourteenth-century *Livre de Chasse*, Edward’s work nevertheless contains much original writing about English circumstances including a chapter on hunting by strength that details the *curée*. *Livre de Chasse, Gaston Phébus*, ed. by Gunnar Tilander (Karlshamn: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1971).

¹² For a discussion of the manuscripts and editions, see McNelis, pp. 63–126. I also draw on William A. Baillie-Grohman’s 1909 edition, *Master of Game: The Oldest English Book on Hunting* (Milton Keynes: Lightning Source UK, 2010) [first publ. 1909].

¹³ Anne Rooney, *Tretyse off Huntyng* (Brussels: OMIREL, 1987), pp. 38–39.

Edward compiled the work while he held the title of master of game in Henry IV's court.¹⁴ *Master of Game* thus represents the epitome of courtly hunting.

A salient point about the hunting rituals described in the treatises is that, however superfluous and impracticable they may seem, they reflect actual hunting practices of the era. Recent archaeological findings imply that the ritual butchering and division of the carcass described in the treatises was in fact fairly common during the era.¹⁵ Given this, we can comfortably assume that the *curée* ritual was similarly prevalent. That the *curée* commonly features in imaginative literature would support this assumption.¹⁶ Although hunting by strength in the elaborate form depicted in *Master of Game* was practiced essentially by royalty and the high nobility, its features were surely known throughout society by virtue of multiple repetition and through its performative nature.¹⁷ In this sense, the hunting practices described in the treatises would likely have been viewed by a wide spectrum of society, and therefore were socially meaningful. Whether as active participants or passive spectators, all classes of society were involved in the hunt by strength, including peasants recruited to aid in the hunt. Thus, despite its noble tenor and focus, hunting by strength was in essence a performance that involved a wider audience. The practice seems to have developed before the thirteenth century and achieves a somewhat standardized form in the treatises by the early fourteenth century.¹⁸ Within the manuscript context of *Master of Game* the rituals of the noble hunt would have been widely familiar to medieval society.

That hunting was an important prerogative of the elite in the medieval era is not in question. Researchers have long noted the significance of hunting as a highly meaningful social gesture.¹⁹ A more recent research trend, however, has focused on the rituals of the hunt, generally interpreting them as indicative of the social and ideological complexion of medieval society. Ryan Judkins, for example, has argued that far from being an innocuous hobby, the noble hunt entailed acute social consequences: whereas a successful hunt projected a message of social cohesion and therefore reinforced existing hierarchies, an unsuccessful hunt communicated the opposite, a ritual failure.²⁰ Susan Crane for her part has argued convincingly that the rituals of the hunt involved an interpellative effect: working along the lines of

¹⁴ McNelis, pp. 9–12.

¹⁵ Naomi J. Sykes, 'The Impact of Normans on Hunting Practices in England', in *Food in Medieval England: Diet and Nutrition*, ed. by C. M. Woolgar, D. Serjeantson, and T. Waldron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 162–75 (pp. 170–75); Naomi J. Sykes, 'Animal Bones and Animal Parks', in *The Medieval Park: New Perspectives*, ed. by Robert Liddiard (Macclesfield: Windgather Press, 2007), pp. 49–62 (p. 155); Jean Birrell, 'Procuring, Preparing and Serving Venison in Late Medieval England', in *Food in Medieval England: Diet and Nutrition*, ed. by C. M. Woolgar, D. Serjeantson, and T. Waldron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 176–88. Sykes and Birrell espouse this view while Richard Thomas cautiously embraces it in 'Chasing the Ideal? Ritualism, Pragmatism and the Late Medieval Hunt', in *Breaking and Shaping Beastly Bodies*, ed. by Alexander Pluskowski (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), pp. 125–48.

¹⁶ The *curée* appears prominently in *Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Sir Tristan*, for example. See *Gawain and the Green Knight*, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. I, ed. by M. H. Abrams (New York: Norton, 2000), ll. 1319–64, and Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan, with the 'Tristan' of Thomas*, trans. by A. T. Hatto (St Ives: Penguin Classics, 2004), pp. 78–82.

¹⁷ Such diffusion would have been aided by the fact that, during the era under inspection, king and nobleman alike would have spent much of their time in itinerary, travelling from manor to manor, often hunting whenever conditions permitted. See Christopher Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 1–9.

¹⁸ Judkins, pp. 72–74.

¹⁹ Spearing, pp. 9–10, is an early example.

²⁰ Judkins, *passim*.

performativity theory, Crane posits that in presenting a message of aristocratic preeminence over society the noble hunt was ideologically coercive.²¹ The upshot of this research trend has been the drawing of a clear link between hunting ritual and social implication. Nevertheless, this research trend tends to hinge on a somewhat cursory employment of ritual theory, one that is partially at odds with classical definitions. That is to say, this line of research has tended to focus on social affect without always fully theorizing or contextualizing its ritual underpinnings.

An example from Susan Crane's essay 'The Noble Hunt as a Ritual Practice' is indicative of this phenomenon. Crane notes, quite correctly, that 'ritual' is commonly used in the scholarly discourse on hunting but 'typically receives little elaboration'.²² To address this shortcoming, she duly parses the classical interpretation of rituals, associated with Van Gennep and Victor Turner, and notes that the classical definitions would not seem to suit the practices of the noble hunt. There is no Gennepian liminal change, no inflection of roles as in Victor Turner, and, importantly, there is no invocation of the supernatural.²³ Crane nevertheless then turns to the notion of 'secular ritual' and switches to ritual as performance and interpellation, employing the work of Clifford Geertz and Eve Sedgwick. Thus, (classical) ritual is made to dovetail with (ideological) performativity, which she then uses to examine the interpellation of the noble hunt.²⁴ The concept she ultimately settles on is *mimetic ritual*, concluding that: 'the hunt à force is a mimetic ritual designed to celebrate and perpetuate noble authority'.²⁵ This and similar lines of argumentation betray a very simple fact: as a research subject, ritual is very tempting to use but utterly difficult to pin down.²⁶ The benefit of Crane's approach, however, is that it elucidates the wider potential of marrying ritual theory and performativity theory. While the nuance of her employment of ritual theory may be questioned, her instincts are correct and her work offers a refreshing take on medieval hunting ritual. This paper does not seek to question the recent shift toward interpellation and social indexing as critical components of the noble hunt, nor does it seek to argue that hunting rituals were of scant significance. Nevertheless, rituals occur in specific contexts, and as Catherine Bell notes, ritual acts must be considered 'within the semantic framework whereby the significance of an action is dependent upon its place and relationship within a context of all other ways of acting'.²⁷ Similarly, the limitations of ritual as an ideological tool should be noted: 'ritual alone cannot control communities' although it can 'ground arbitrary or necessary ideas in an understanding of the hegemonic order'.²⁸ Historians by and large have had a tendency to neglect the nuance of ritual.²⁹ Where this paper seeks to differentiate itself from the previous literature is in focusing not so much on discerning ideological messages but on examining the mode of messaging, on examining

²¹ Crane, pp. 101–19.

²² Crane, pp. 105–6.

²³ On these classical interpretations of ritual, see Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) and Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction, 2008).

²⁴ Crane, pp. 103–5.

²⁵ Crane, p. 107.

²⁶ For a discussion, see Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Modern Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 1–12.

²⁷ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 220.

²⁸ Bell, p. 222.

²⁹ Buc was highly critical on this point. See Buc, pp. 1–4.

the ritual of the medieval hunt in terms of ‘what it echoes, what it inverts, what it alludes to, what it denies’ in an attempt to better disclose its constitution.³⁰

In this line of thinking, a fruitful approach to ritual (and performance theory) is to be found in the work of anthropologist Stanley Tambiah. As a researcher, Tambiah is unusual in how he situates ritual within the framework of the cultural and the social. Tambiah sees in ritual a duality that entails two simultaneous thrusts: semantically, with respect to cultural pre-suppositions and cultural understandings, and pragmatically with respect to the social and interpersonal context of ritual action.³¹ Ritual, according to Tambiah, does not intentionally communicate but instead aims to instill a ‘permanent attitude’; it offers certain realities or dispositions against which others can be judged.³² Tambiah notes that the messages of ritual are linked to the status claims and interests of the participants, and therefore are open to contextual meanings. These contextual meanings represent ‘variable components’ around the solid core of ritual, but are nonetheless highly reliant on pre-existing ritual forms.³³ Tambiah highlights that in order for ritual to ‘perform anything’ a marriage of context and form is essential. Ritual is strongly constrained by prevailing ritual forms, as it ‘rides on the already existing grids of symbolic and indexical meanings’ but may also embrace ‘new resonances’.³⁴ Tambiah also emphasizes that cosmological understandings and social indexing are both critically involved in ritual performances, and indeed in ritual’s dynamics of cultural pre-suppositions and social indexing he sees a primary social mode of action. In terms of performativity theory, Tambiah understands ritual as performative in three ways:

in the Austinian sense of performative, wherein saying something is also doing something as a conventional act; in the quite different sense of a staged performance that uses multiple media by which the participants experience the event intensively; and in the sense of indexical values [...] being attached to and inferred by actors during the performance.³⁵

The theoretical point of departure in the present paper understands that ritual is inherently performative and involves instilling dispositions in the participant/spectator. Thus: 1) ritual can instill beliefs, that is, certain realities or dispositions against which others can be judged, 2) ritual involves interpellation through presenting ideological, socially indexing claims, and 3) ritual forms are strongly contingent on prevailing ritual forms, and are characteristically multimodal in drawing on multiple experiential channels.

³⁰ Bell, p. 226.

³¹ Stanley Tambiah, *Culture, Thought and Social Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 156: ‘important parts of a ritual enactment have a symbolic or iconic meaning associated with the cosmological plan of content, and at the same time how those same parts are existentially or indexically related to participants in the ritual, creating, affirming, or legitimating their social positions and powers’. The duality of ritual has two simultaneous thrusts: semantically, with respect to cultural pre-suppositions and cultural understandings, and pragmatically with respect to social and interpersonal context of ritual action, the lineup of the participants and the process by which they establish and infer meanings. Thus sacred and social are of equal importance.

³² Tambiah, p. 134. To explain how these are inferred, Tambiah (pp. 156–57) cites Grice’s formulation of conversational implicature: ‘by saying or enacting something a certain meaning is *implicated*, which can be readily understood [...] or is capable of being “worked out” [...] given certain contextual features and certain communicational understandings’.

³³ Tambiah, p. 125.

³⁴ Tambiah, pp. 129, 161.

³⁵ Tambiah, p. 128.

The resonance of the *curée* as ritual

As mentioned, the recent scholarly discourse has tended to see the rituals of the noble hunt as a message about the desired social order. In this research trend the focus has clearly been on the ritual butchering and division of the deer's carcass as well as the attendant social-ideological meanings involved (social indexing, social cohesion, noble preeminence in society/over nature).³⁶ The logic undergirding such arguments is that the interpellation of the noble hunt draws its potency from ritual. This is of course logical. The post-kill ceremony employs much imagery from the standard toolkit of ritual; the ritual forms of procession, elevation, revelation, ritual division and sacred space are all well-represented in the 'by strength' hunt. To this, we might add that themes of a more overtly supernatural nature are present as well: ritual sacrifice, sacred transformation and ritual feasting all appear in forms that have fairly recognizable analogues in the late-medieval Catholic liturgy.³⁷ These aspects of the post-kill ceremony pertain most directly to the *curée* and have generally been overlooked, perhaps because they would seem to have little relevance to the social-ideological messages that have attracted recent scholars.³⁸ See Marvin 2006, pp. 134–141. The religious significance of the *curée* has thus eluded the gaze of most scholars. The deeper import of the liturgical resonances of the *curée* is fully appreciated when once recalls that ritual is traditionally understood to entwine the twin axes of the sacred and the mundane, and that any ritual indexing of society need involve cosmological considerations as a matter of course. Thus any similarities between the *curée* and the liturgy would have implications for the social/supernatural nexus of ritual and would be meaningful with respect to the ideological messages and interpellation that have been claimed to underlie the noble hunt as a practice.

The wider issue of associability is in fact critical: similarly to how the intended messages must be capable of being inferred or worked out by the onlooker, in order for the interpellation purported to be at the heart of noble hunting rituals to be effective they must be recognizable as rituals. The effectiveness of ritual requires not only scrutable contextual features and messages but also fidelity to recognizable ritual forms.³⁹ Thus, any similarities between the *curée* and the Catholic liturgy would only have been as meaningful as they were resonant.

Meticulousness and sacred goods

In itself, the *curée* as described in the manuals was an extraordinary event. It took place only in the context of the hunt by strength and *Tretyse off Huntynge* associates the *curée* with the hart in particular.⁴⁰ In this sense, the undue level of care that is afforded to the hart's carcass should come as no surprise but is telling nonetheless. The post-kill rituals appear in sharp relief in comparison with the fairly unceremonious killing of the hart, which is not described

³⁶ Cummins, pp. 32–46; Marvin, pp. 118–40, Crane, *passim*, Judkins, *passim*.

³⁷ For a detailed consideration of the forms of the late-medieval Catholic mass, see James Monti, *A Sense of the Sacred: Roman Catholic Worship in the Middle Ages* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), pp. 26–104.

³⁸ However, Marvin did note a pseudo-spiritual aspect of the hunt in the breaking, though he sees only a 'tenuous' link to the spiritual realm in the noble hunt.

³⁹ Tambiah, pp. 156–57.

⁴⁰ 'How many venesonez bene þer? I answer, þe hert, þe boor, þe har [...] How many in quyrry? þe hert'. *Tretyse off Huntynge*, ed. by Anne Rooney (Brussels: OMIREL, 1987) ll. 171–72. On the hunting by strength, Cummins, pp 32–46; Judkins, *passim*.

in great detail in the manuals.⁴¹ Commenting on Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan*, Anne Rooney notes that there 'is a religious meticulousness in the precision with which Tristan breaks the deer' and finds significance in the fact that Tristan insists that the deer be brought into court in an order 'preserving the shape of a hart'.⁴² Tristan's emphasis on instructing King Mark's huntsmen on the particulars of the breaking is as telling as his shock at the specter of them undoing the hart improperly.⁴³ Baillie-Grohman also took especial note of the care dedicated to the breaking of the hart, noting that the hunter who undid the deer took pride in 'doing it according to laws of woodmancraft' and in 'performing everything so daintily that their garments should show no bloodstains; nobles, and princes themselves, made it a point of honour to be well versed in this art'.⁴⁴ It is notable that *Master of Game* clarifies that the hart is only broken (or 'undone') thus for a *curée*; this level of meticulousness only applies when the lord decides that a *curée* is merited. In other cases, a simpler reward for the hounds is prepared and a less fastidious breaking applies.⁴⁵ Additionally, whereas Edward does not delve to explain the undoing process ('I passe ouere lyghtly, for þer nys no wodman ne good hunter in Englonde þat þei ne can do it wel inow, and wele bettir þan I can tech hem'), he does go to the trouble of detailing how to choreograph the *curée*:⁴⁶

neuerthesse, when so is þat þe paunche is taken oute clene and hole, and þe smale guttes, one of þe gromes chacechiens shuld take þe paunch and go to þe next water withalle, and slytte it, and cast oute þe fylth, and wash it clene þat no fylth abyde þerynne, and þan bring it agein and kutte it in smale gobettes in þe blood that shuld be kept in þe skynne, and þe longes withall (if þei be hote, and ells noht), and alle the smale guttes withall, and brede broke thereynne, aftir that the houndes ben few or many; and alle this turned and mengled togyddres among þe blood till it be wele enbrowed in the blood.⁴⁷

In this passage several parallels emerge with respect to the Eucharist. As noted, the absolute precision of the breaking was accompanied by the social dictate that no drop of blood be spilled or stain the hunter's clothes. This would appear to parallel the dictates from medieval missals about how no crumb of the host nor drop of wine be lost during the consecration.⁴⁸ Although *Master of Game* only mentions 'þe blood that shuld be kept in þe skynne [...] wyth as moche blood as may be saued', *Boke of St Albans* clarifies the need to preserve the blood: 'withal the blode that ye may gete and wyn'.⁴⁹ The undoing was also marked by the prominent role of wine in the ceremony. Again, presumably because Edward assumes his reader is familiar with the undoing, *Master of Game* is silent on the point; however, *Boke of Saint Albans* notes that immediately before dissecting the carcass: 'and then shall ye goo l at

⁴¹ A typical example comes from *Master of Game*, which emphasizes the authority of the bidder rather than the specifics of the act itself: 'þan shuld whoso were moste maistir þere bydde som of þe hunters go spay hym, euen byhynde þe shulder forthewards to þe hert' ll. 2740–41.

⁴² Anne Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature* (Cambridge: The Boydell Press, 1993), pp. 87–93.

⁴³ *Tristan, with the 'Tristan' of Thomas*, pp. 78–82.

⁴⁴ William A. Baillie-Grohman, *Master of Game: The Oldest English Book on Hunting* (Milton Keynes: Lightning Source UK, 2010) [first publ. 1909], pp. 208–9. Though Gottfried has Tristan roll up his sleeves during the breaking. *Tristan, with the 'Tristan' of Thomas*, pp. 79–80.

⁴⁵ For the *curée* treatment, see *Master of Game*, ll. 2787–840; for the simple treatment, ll. 2779–87.

⁴⁶ *Master of Game*, ll. 2794–96.

⁴⁷ *Master of Game*, ll. 2796–804.

⁴⁸ On the treatment of the Eucharist goods, see Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004), p. 43.

⁴⁹ *Master of Game* l. 2806; *Boke of Saint Albans*, ed. by William Blades (London: Elliot Stock, 1901), fiiii.

chaulis: to begynne assone as ye may'.⁵⁰ Aside from the passage's resonance with the theme of communion,⁵¹ 'goo at chaulis' refers to the custom whereby before the hart is undone the huntsman must first drink 'a good harty draught' of red wine or else the deer's flesh would putrefy.⁵² In itself this enological invocation is conspicuous in its resonance with the themes of sacrifice, ritual feasting, incorrupted flesh and the Eucharist, and the presence of wine at the *curée* is further evidenced in *Master of Game*: 'and whanne he cometh home he cometh ioyfullich, for his lord haþ gyue him to drynke of his gode wyne at kirre'.⁵³ In the *curée* there may thus be echoes of the communal partaking of the Eucharistic goods after the ritual of the consecration.

The *curée* involves another possible echo of the Eucharist which touches on the other constituent of the Catholic secretory rite. Edward stipulates that to the hounds' reward should be added: 'brede broke therynne, aftir that the houndes ben few or many; and alle this turned and mengled togyddres among þe blood tille it be wele enbrowed'.⁵⁴ The theme of broken bread 'mengled togydders among þe blood' broadly recalls the commixture (the mixing of the consecrated host and wine).⁵⁵ Although the commixture would not have been visible to the parishioner during the liturgy (it being obscured by the rood screen), presumably the trope of body and blood, bread and wine mixing would familiar to the medieval audience. The carcass of the slain hart itself may have involved religious symbolism. The theme of Christ as a hunted stag is indeed well known in imaginative literature in the late-medieval period, and the image of the stag has long been associated with religious symbolism in the Christian tradition.⁵⁶ The conceit of the dead hart as a metaphor for the Crucified Christ may not have been fanciful or even difficult to make, and may have been readily recognizable to late-medieval audiences.⁵⁷ This question will be considered in more detail below but first a closer examination of the handling of the carcass and the preparation of the *curée* will examine further points of concord between the two ritual sets.

Visibility, gaze and sacred space

In being aimed at a wider spectatorship, the *curée* was clearly a performative act. And although *Master of Game* encourages 'euery man draweth þidder',⁵⁸ the kill itself was unceremoniously located wherever it chanced to occur. Presumably, the entire body of the hunt would not have been present. Conversely, in the *curée* the role of the audience could be better accommodated, and catering to the needs of the spectator is explicitly mentioned in the manuals. Edward notes

⁵⁰ *Boke of Saint Albans*, fiii.

⁵¹ See *OED*, s.v. 'chalice'.

⁵² Quoted in Baillie-Grohman, p. 209.

⁵³ *Master of Game*, ll. 225–27.

⁵⁴ *Master of Game*, ll. 2802–2804. Although Edward mentions that the intestines and sometimes the lungs are also to be included in the *curée* reward, the blood and bread were presumably the main constituents.

⁵⁵ The bread and blood are, of course, also mentioned in other treatises; they also feature in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. See *Livre de Chasse, Gaston Phébus*, ed. by Gunnar Tilander (Karlskrona: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1971), pp. 182, 220; *Boke of St Albans*, fiii; and *Gawain and the Green Knight*, l. 1361.

⁵⁶ An Smets and Baudouin van den Abeele, 'Medieval Hunting', in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Medieval Age*, ed. by Brigitte Resl (Oxford: Berg, 2011), p. 75; Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature*, pp. 102–39; Cummins, pp. 71–74.

⁵⁷ Matt Cartmill referred to the hunted hart's carcass as 'emblem of the crucified Christ'. Matt Cartmill, *A View to Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature through History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 69.

⁵⁸ *Master of Game*, ll. 2721–22.

that the *curée* should be in an open, well-known place to attain maximum visibility, or ‘þe place there as þe quirrees at huntynge haue been accustomed to be’.⁵⁹ In being affixed to a specific locus, embedded in a certain type of landscape, the *curée* is attuned to the necessities of ritual space. In the preparation for a larger hunt, the countryside would have been informed beforehand and presumably informed of the locale of the *curée*.⁶⁰ It is interesting to note that the performance of the *curée* is not fixed to the location of the kill. Edward specifies that whereas the undoing occurs on the spot of the kill, once the hounds’ reward is prepared the entire ‘package’ is removed to a suitable spot where the *curée* will be enacted: ‘and þan look where a smothe plot of grene is, and þidder bere all þis vpon þe skynne, wyth as moche blood as may be saued, and þere lay it, and sprede þe skynne þere vpon þe here syde vwarde’.⁶¹ While the practice of gathering at a sacred space in which something extraordinary habitually takes place is a standard in the playbook of ritual, the wider significance of the performative locus of the *curée* is better appreciated upon noticing the visual resonances with the Eucharist that such a novel space affords. The presentation of the *curée*, and specifically how hunter, hound and hart are situated, is revealing. After the hounds’ reward has been readied and moved to the requisite locale:

And þen the lorde shuld take vp þe hertes hede by the right side [...] and þe maistir of þe game the left syde in the same wyse, and holde þe hede vpright, and þat the nose touche þe erth. And þan euery man þat is there [...] shuld stonde afronte in eythir syde þe hede with roddes, that none houndes com aboute, noþir on þe sydes, but þat all stonde afore. And when this is redy, the maistir of þe game or the sergeaunt shuld bydde þe berners bring forth here houndes, and stonde stille aforne hem a small coytes cast fro thennes, as the abay is ordeyned.⁶²

The point of gaze and treatment of the hart’s head during and after the *curée* is noteworthy, with the severed head acting as the focal point of the line of hunters and drawing the audience’s gaze. And, although the manuals are unclear as to how high the head is in fact raised, the ‘taking up’ of the severed head of the hart broadly recalls the Elevation of the Host.⁶³ The line of hunters also brings to mind the obscuring of the rituals of the consecration, with the Host visible to the parishioner only at the moment of Elevation.⁶⁴ Here, the hunters themselves — each armed with a *fayre small rodde in his honde*, with the lord grasping the hart by one antler, the master of game by the other, broadly recalling the latticework of a rood screen — act as the barrier separating the realms of the sacred and the mundane, just as the rood screen ‘separated the realms of the clergy and the laity’.⁶⁵ The sense of sacred space is further evident in *Master of Game*: the hounds are kept away from the carcass while it is reassembled and only come to see the ‘reanimated’ hart at the *curée*.⁶⁶ At a larger hunt with multiple quarry,

⁵⁹ *Master of Game*, ll. 2998–99.

⁶⁰ Edward mentions that the forester should ‘warne þe shyreff of þe shyre’ when the king will hunt. *Master of Game*, l. 2996.

⁶¹ *Master of Game*, ll. 2804–6.

⁶² *Master of Game*, ll. 2815–22.

⁶³ *Tretyse off Huntynge* is equally vague on the point of elevation: ‘þan shall we take vp þe hede’ (l. 112). However, Edward’s summation of the *curée* implies elevation: ‘and a faire þing is þe kirree, and faire þing is to vndo him wel, and for to reise þe rightes wel; and fair þing and good is þe venisoun’. *Master of Game*, ll. 520–21.

⁶⁴ Daniel Thiery, *Polluting the Sacred: Violence, Faith and the ‘Civilizing’ of Parishioners in Late Medieval England* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 64. *Sarum Missal* instructs the priest to elevate the host ‘so that it can be seen by the people’. This is notable for in no other place is the issue of visibility or gaze mentioned in the missal. *The Sarum Missal, vol. 1*, ed. by Frederick E. Warren (London: De La More Press, 1911), p. 45.

⁶⁵ Thiery, p. 64.

⁶⁶ *Master of Game*, ll. 2815–22.

the hunters as well are excluded from the space of the *curée*. Edward writes that the servants ‘shuld kepe þat no man come withynne þe quire till þe kyng come, saue þe maistir of þe game’.⁶⁷

At this point the bay was ‘ordeyned’, or prepared: the hounds were organized a short distance from the *curée* space, presumably formed into a line, and then signaled to bay at the hart’s head, with the hunters sounding their horns in encouragement.⁶⁸ Medieval writers were apt to describe the baying of the hounds in terms of churchly ‘music’, and the cacophony of the hunt could be likened to the sacred music of the mass.⁶⁹ The metaphor is best evidenced in the foxhunt in *Gawain and the Green Knight*: ‘Hit watz þe myriest mute þat euer men herde, l þe rich rurd þat þer watz raysed for Renaude saule’, which Ad Putter interprets as a requiem mass for the dead fox.⁷⁰ Broadly, this aural mode of the *curée* could be interpreted as an analogue for churchly music.⁷¹ When the lord feels that the bay has lasted long enough, the head is skirted away, the package opened, and the hounds allowed to rush to their reward. When the meal is finished, the lord blows a final horn to signal the end of the *curée*. Here Edward specifies that the lord ‘shuld strake in his wyse, þat is to say: blow iiiii. moot; and stynt noght half ane Ave Marie while; and blow othir foure moot, a litill lengere þan the fyrst foure moot. And þus shuld no wight strake but when the hert is sleyn with stregthe’.⁷² The pause of ‘half ane Ave Marie while’ is interesting. The effect of using a prayer as a measure of time may have been to prompt the participant to contemplate the *curée* in religious terms, or even recite the prayer when reading the treatise.⁷³ That this injunction is to take place only when the hart is taken ‘by strength’ underscores its uniqueness as well as the uniqueness of the *curée*. (Other rewards have different protocols.) At this, the hunting party departs with the hart’s head at the fore of a procession. Although *Master of Game* is silent on this point, *The Art of Hunting* mentions that after a *curée*: ‘þo hed schalle be born hom before þo lord’.⁷⁴ As we have seen, the romance *Tristan* implies that the broken deer was brought into court in an order ‘preserving the shape of a hart’.⁷⁵ Presumably the body of the hunting party was hierarchically ordered in a similar fashion. Taken together the affair evokes the highly orchestrated *Corpus Christi* procession, with the hart’s head primarily positioned in the place of the venerated Host.⁷⁶

Thus, in terms of treatment of the body of the hart, demarcation of sacred space, and similar tropes, there is a degree of resonance at the level of metaphor between the ritual set

⁶⁷ *Master of Game*, ll. 3095–97.

⁶⁸ *Master of Game*, ll. 2822, 2824.

⁶⁹ Ad Putter, ‘The Ways and Words of the Hunt: Notes on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *The Master of Game*, *Sir Tristrem*, *Pearl*, and *Saint Erkenwald*’, *The Chaucer Review*, 40 (2006), 375–79.

⁷⁰ Putter, p. 376.

⁷¹ The ringing of the sacring bell attendant to the consecration comes to mind as a close parallel, or alternatively, chorale music.

⁷² *Master of Game*, ll. 2836–40.

⁷³ The prayer itself notably condenses the notions of birth, death, sin, salvation and Jesus. To this writer’s knowledge, the only other example of using a prayer as a measure of time in late-medieval literature is the ‘paternoster-while’ of *Piers Plowman*, ed. by J. A. W. Bennett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), *passus* v, l. 348. The passage uses the word to underscore the irreligiousness of Gluttony’s uncouth behavior. The evidence for common prayers as standards of time measurement would imply that such prayers functioned as invocations, for example in recipes. See, for example, E.P. Thompson, ‘Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism’, *Past and Present*, 38 (1967), 56–98.

⁷⁴ *The Middle English Text of ‘The Art of Hunting’ by William Twiti*, ed. by David Scott-Macnab (Heidelberg: Winter, 2009), p. 11, ll. 113–14.

⁷⁵ Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature*, p. 89.

⁷⁶ On the *Corpus Christi* procession, see Miri Rubin, pp. 243–71, *passim*.

of the *curée* and the Eucharist. The rituals attendant to the *curée* direct viewer and participant alike towards roles and perspectives analogous to those familiar from the Catholic mass. The overall effect may therefore have been to incline the hunting party to interpret the spectacle of the *curée* in terms of the liturgy. Explaining why this was the case, and to what end, will be addressed below. Before doing that, however, a closer look at the rituals of the liturgy is in order.

The dispositions and inculcations of the liturgy

According to the theory of interpellation, to gaze is tantamount to accepting a message.⁷⁷ Although securing the salvation of man was the doctrinal aim of the mass, to the parishioner the central point of the Catholic mass, particularly after acceptance of the theory of transubstantiation in the thirteenth century, was the real presence of Christ in the form of the Eucharistic goods coupled with the priest's ability to effect this. One went to 'hear mass' but went to see the actual body of Christ.⁷⁸ Fossier has noted that the Christian faith uniquely made this concrete dimension of truth a necessary and a requisite 'line of spiritual conduct'.⁷⁹ At its heart, then, the late-medieval mass was a visual ritual that encapsulated the concrete link between the natural and supernatural world. Its rites represented the perfect archetypes of late-medieval ritual, the condensed points of reference against which any ritual metaphor must be considered.⁸⁰ As the Elevation was the culmination of the mass, the moment when God's body was manifested to the laity, this moment in particular was pregnant with interpellative potential.

To further contextualize the messages embedded in the mass, the *Lay Folks Mass Book* is of aid. Popular amongst the literate during the late-medieval era as a type of layperson's guide to interpreting the mass, *Lay Folks Mass Book* can be used to disclose the concerns of the church with respect to its messaging. *Lay Folks Mass Book* makes clear that during the Elevation the parishioner was meant to consider the significance of the real presence of Christ, and the churchgoer is instructed to gaze upon the Host in reverence: 'and so þo leuacioun þou be-halde, I for þat is he þat iudas salde'.⁸¹

Added to this, the laity is also prompted to meditate on the promise of resurrection and salvation:

And sithen was scourged & don on rode,
and for mankind þere shad his blode
and dyed & ros & went to heuen,
and ȝit shal come to deme vs euen.⁸²

It is clear that the Elevation was meant to condition spectators to meditate on the significance of the moment, thus any parallel forms in the *curée* would have similarly encouraged the spectator to consider it as something revelatory and spiritually meaningful. The above excerpts

⁷⁷ For a brief discussion of interpellation, see Crane, pp. 104–5.

⁷⁸ For a discussion, see Monti, pp. 23–36.

⁷⁹ Fossier, p. 368–69.

⁸⁰ Burkert called the crucifixion the 'perfect sacrifice'. Quoted in Amity Reading, '“The Ende of Alle Kynez Flesch”: Ritual Sacrifice and Feasting in *Cleanness*', *Exemplaria*, 21 (2009), 274–95 (p. 279).

⁸¹ *Lay Folks Mass Book, or The Hearing of Mass*, ed. by Thomas Frederick Simmons, Early English Text Society, o. s. 71 (London: Early English Text Society, 1879), p. 38.

⁸² *Lay Folks Mass Book*, p. 38.

also highlight the visceral realism of the crucifixion tradition, which itself is a notable point of reference and informs the wider context of the liturgical rite. Widely depicted in religious settings, the imagery of the crucifixion adds a layer of associability with which the parishioner can frame his/her interpretation of the mass as a condensed rite. *Lay Folks Mass Book* enjoins the churchgoer to fixate on the violence of Jesus' death, in tones of darkness and light:

A knight smat him to þe hert, he had no mercy;
þe sone be-gane to wax myrk qwen iesu gon dy.
lord out of þi syd ran a ful fayre flude
As clere as well water our rannson bi þi blode.⁸³

With respect to the *curée*, the Eucharist's focus on the violent death of Jesus as well as on his sacred blood as the promise of salvation is relevant, particularly when considered against the blood/wine dyad's pervading the post-kill rituals. That here the knight's piercing of Jesus's side initiates the blood ritual would seem to bring the two traditions into even closer alignment, and the imagery in *Lay Folks Mass Book* recalls Edward's instructions for dispatching the cornered hart: a hunter should 'go spay hym, euen byhynde þe shulder forthewards to þe hert'.⁸⁴ In terms of visual mode, the visceral violence of the hunt would have had an analogue in the wider crucifixion tradition as well. Through visual and literary depictions, and also through countless reenactments of the mystery plays, the visual minutiae of the crucifixion would have been well conditioned in the viewer. The violent images of the Passion represented a vocabulary that could be drawn on to 'trigger certain feelings and reactions'.⁸⁵ This is all the more true of the mystery plays, which were explicitly realistic.⁸⁶

With respect to terminology, the two traditions also share a peculiar collocation of terms. For example, the term 'flay', which is prominent in religious texts on the crucifixion and *arma Christi*, is also a technical term of the noble hunt.⁸⁷ Which quarry are flayed and which are stripped is a point of great distinction in the treatises, with 'flay' emerging as the term that applies specifically to the hart.⁸⁸ The association of terms may have added a layer of resonance between the crucifixion tradition and the rituals of the hunt. In similar vein, the term 'scourge' evidences an interesting link between the traditions in that it shares a common etymology with *curée*.⁸⁹ It is even possible that during the Middle English period the words

⁸³ *Lay Folks Mass Book*, p. 86.

⁸⁴ *Master of Game*, ll. 2740–41.

⁸⁵ Mary Poellinger '“The Rosselde Spere to His Herte Rynnes”: Religious Violence in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and the Lincoln Thornton Manuscript', in *Robert Thornton and His Books: Essays on the Lincoln and London Thornton Manuscripts*, ed. by Susanna Fein and Michael Johnson (York: York Medieval Press, 2014), p. 170.

⁸⁶ It has been intimated, for example, that real blood and guts were used in the reenactments to emphasize the suffering of Jesus. See, Hans-Jürgen Diller, *The Middle English Mystery Plays: A Study in Dramatic Speech and Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 233–34.

⁸⁷ Aside from *LFBM*, examples are seen in *Lay Folks Catechism*, (ed. by Thomas Frederick Simmons and Henery Edward Nollath (London: Early English Text Society, 1901): 'beten with scourges that no skyn held' (p. 28); *The Pearl*, ed. by Sarah Stanbury (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001): 'wyth boffetes was Hys face flayn' (ll. 809); and the *York Play of Crucifixion*, ed. by Clifford Davidson (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2011): 'For alle his fare he schalle be flaid | That one assaie sone schalle ye see' (*Crucifixio Christi*, ll. 43–44).

⁸⁸ *Boke of St Albans* (eiii) for example lists 'wiche beestes shall be flayne & wich stripte', and *Art of Hunting* offers a similar list (p. 17). *Boke of St Albans* clarifies that the hart is flayed: 'than cut of the coddis the bely euen froo | Or ye begynne hym to flee' (fii); *Master of Game* concurs: 'and þan shuld þe huntere flene doune þe skynne, as fer as he may', ll. 2752–53; as does *Tretyse of Huntynge*: '& þen be we aboute to opyn hym & fleȳ hym' (l. 108).

⁸⁹ The terms derive from the Latin *excoriare*, which led to *curée* in French and *excoriaten* > *skourge* in Middle

were near homophonic.⁹⁰ The word *curée* may have evoked the religious register of ‘scourge’ and therefore the scourging of Jesus as well. A focus on terminology is indeed reasonable when considering the two traditions. It should be noted that the hunting treatises, which are fairly useless as practical guides to hunting, focus instead on detailing the proper comportment of the hunt but also heavily emphasize the proper terms of the hunt.⁹¹ Mastery of terms appears as a crucial aim of the manuals and the granular attention afforded to terminology indicates that it served as a type of sacred language of the hunt.⁹² The terminology of the noble hunt is closely linked to French, which occurs as somewhat of a sacred language akin to how Latin served as the sacred language of Christianity. In the manuscript context of *Master of Game* (late-fourteenth–early fifteenth century) French was of course still the language of prestige in England, and largely would have been as incomprehensible to the populace as the Latin of the mass.⁹³ It is notable that the English literary tradition treats Tristan as the father of the hunt in England and as something of a mythical conduit of hunting terminology.⁹⁴ His words are thus treated as a sacred revelation of sorts, and access to them had relevance in terms of social hierarchy, as Sir Thomas Malory writes:

all jantyllmen that beryth olde armys ought of ryght to honore sir Tristams for the goodly tearmys that jantylmen have and use and shall do unto the Day of Dome, that thereby in a manner all men of worshys may discever a jantylman frome a yoman and a yoman frome a vylayne.⁹⁵

The hunting treatises’ focus on explaining these terms, on decoding the messages as it were, in fact rather parallels the glossing of the Latin terms and rites of the liturgy that are at the core of the *Lay Folks Mass Book*.⁹⁶

Here it should be noted that the ritual efficacy of a sacred language does not necessarily hinge on intelligibility but rather on its recognition as such.⁹⁷ Nor does the audience of a ritual need to fully understand the allusions of the rites. To quote Walter Burkert, ‘the fact of understanding is thus more important than what is understood’.⁹⁸ In addressing ‘the collectivity of the faithful’ ritual therefore exploits the fact that the familiar spectator is already preconditioned to receive whatever disposition the ritual aims to inculcate by virtue of his very

English. On the Anglo-Norman heritage of *excoriate curée*, see Marvin, p. 137. *Scourge* of course had biblical resonances, achieving by the fourteenth century authoritative status as the word used to describe Jesus’s suffering at the pillar, replacing the earlier *swingan* of Ælfric. See ‘scourge’, *OED*.

⁹⁰ The first appearance of the *curée* in the form of ‘excoriate’ is in Gottfried von Strassburg’s *Tristan*, which putatively derives from an Anglo-Norman text (see Marvin, p. 137). Through metathetical shift ME *exoriaten* may well have led to a pronunciations close to the ME manifestations of *scourge*, which would possibly imply near homophonic pronunciation: *excoriaten* > **eskorge* > *skourge* (perhaps with orthographic interference from Latin resulting in the graph (g) representing the allophone [j]). On the various forms of these cognate doublets, cf. *OED*, s.vv. ‘excoriate’ and ‘scourge’.

⁹¹ *Tretyse off Huntyng*, ed. by Anne Rooney (Brussels: OMIREL, 1987), pp. 37–38.

⁹² Spearing noted (p. 10) that hunting ‘terminology forms the liturgy of this aristocratic sacrament’ but never investigated the link.

⁹³ Charles Barber, *The English Language: A Historical Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 140–44.

⁹⁴ Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature*, pp. 9, 14.

⁹⁵ *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, ed. by Eugène Vinaver, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), quoted in Spearing, p. 10. Spearing notably examines the heritage of hunting terms here as well.

⁹⁶ This notwithstanding the treatises’ similarities to the bestiary genre. On the parallel, see McNelis, pp. 39–49, and Crane, pp. 101–2.

⁹⁷ Tambiah, pp. 17–34.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Reading, p. 279.

familiarity with ritual forms.⁹⁹ Thus the numerous liturgical echoes and resonances evident in the rituals of the noble hunt together form a common mode of inculcation, communicated via various channels, whose resonance rides upon some of the central-most elements of the Christian religion but without appearing to overtly appropriate them. Multiple modes of communication are indeed seen as essential to effective ritual, as is the simultaneous use of different sensory channels.¹⁰⁰ Together, these are condensed into the single experience against which other experiences can be judged. A picture thus emerges in which the *curée* widely draws on the multimodal channels available in the liturgical tradition to seek its interpellative ends. The particular nature of these ends will be examined next.

Merita missae

What effect might these resonances have had? Aside from the abstract benefit of spiritual salvation, the liturgy tradition makes clear that the mass had many other benefits, often of a more earthly nature. The *merita missae* tradition in particular is helpful in contextualizing the wider functions of the mass. Popular from the thirteenth century on, the *merita missae* tradition (or the merits of the mass) heavily emphasizes the many, and often miraculous, benefits of hearing the mass and seeing the Host. Aside from miracles such as curing the sick, hearing the mass was also said to cause the parishioner to eschew the deadly sins, as well as promote a general piety but also sense of communal brotherhood in the spectators.¹⁰¹ This was particularly true of the rituals attendant on the Eucharist. This brotherhood amongst the parishioners, however, was an ordered one, and the mass involved socially indexing elements. The holy bread rite in particular serves as an example. Most parishioners only rarely communicated, typically once a year at Easter, and holy bread served as a substitute for the actual sacred goods. Blessed by the priest, its distribution after the mass was dictated by social hierarchy and the bread itself was provided by the community according to accepted social norms. A similar function has been seen in the pax blessing, in which social hierarchy determined the order in which the body of the parishioners is blessed with the altar paraphernalia.¹⁰² That both these rites are ostensibly directed at instilling brotherhood but actually enforce hierarchy is notable.

Interesting parallels can be found in the hunting literature. Similar to the *merita missae* tradition, the hunting literary tradition commonly emphasizes that hunting makes a man pure and pious.¹⁰³ This ethos is well espoused in the manuals, most notably in *Master of Game* but also in its source text *Livre de Chasse* in which Gaston de Phebus presents himself as a holy man.¹⁰⁴ Edward, too, has much to say about the spiritual benefits of the hunt, for in the introduction he writes that ‘this game causeth ofte a man to eschewe þe vii. dedely synnes’ (ll. 110–11). Indeed, *Master of Game* dedicates over 190 lines to delineating the benefits of the hunt (spiritual, social and physical).¹⁰⁵ Underlying such arguments is likely a need to justify

⁹⁹ Tambiah, p. 128.

¹⁰⁰ Tambiah, pp. 164–66.

¹⁰¹ On the miracles, see Rubin, pp. 63, 108, 341; for brotherhood, see, *LFMB*, pp. 48–53.

¹⁰² On holy bread and pax, see Rubin, pp. 73–74 and Thiery, pp. 117–18.

¹⁰³ On the spiritual benefits of hunting, see Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature*, pp. 127–30 and Hannele Klemettilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages: Evidence from the BnF MS fr. 616 of the Livre de chasse by Gaston Fébus* (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 187–91.

¹⁰⁴ Klemettilä, pp. 190–191.

¹⁰⁵ *Master of Game*, ll. 107–98.

the excesses of the noble hunt.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, this may also be linked to the arguments about hunting's wider aims of social cohesion and ordering.

Underlying their socially indexical functions, however, the pax and holy bread rituals also served as contestable elements of the mass and as such offered a mode for contesting the prevailing social hierarchy. The strict order of distribution prescribed by local tradition could be broken or challenged, even during the mass itself.¹⁰⁷ A hierarchy of distribution pervades the noble hunt as well,¹⁰⁸ and alongside it a degree of permissible contestation can be discerned. At a large-scale hunt, with many deer slain, *Master of Game* mentions quarrels regarding the division of the kill (ll. 3138–50) and that the master of the game is required to judge all of the 'striues and discordes þat long to huntyng' (l. 3150). Edward's mention of post-hunt feasting also typifies the social cohesion that underlies the wider endeavor. He relates that the master of game must ensure

that alle þe hunters soupere be wele ordeyned and that thei drynke none ale, for nothyng but alle wyne that nyght for þe good and grete labour that thei haue hadde for the lordes game and disporte, and for the exploite and makyng of the houndes; and also, þat þai may the more merely and gladly telle what iche of them hath done of all þe day, and whiche houndes haue best ronne, and boldlyast. (ll. 2861–66)

Fractious 'strifes and discords' settled and forgotten, the post-kill feast recapitulates the link between feasting, ritual and social obligation, and serves to cohere the group. Such invoking of unity would seem to imply that while social hierarchies may be threatened and perhaps even slightly altered in the hunt, the primary function is their reinforcement — a theme that runs deep in both the mass and hunting tradition.

As mentioned, there is a broad consensus amongst researchers that social cohesion and ordering lie at the heart of the noble hunt, chiefly with respect to the distributional and communal nature of the hunt.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, a degree of social looseness has also been discerned. Richard Almond, for example, sees a notable level of egalitarianism in the medieval hunt, an argument seconded by Sykes, who sees hierarchy within an imagined (and open) community.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, it is clear that hunting played a role in reinforcing society hierarchy and that game could function as an indicator of social status.¹¹¹ With respect to animal carcasses and hunting, Pluskowski has argued that seigneurial groups appropriated animal bodies and used them within a known semiotic system: 'a visual language expressing and negotiating power relations'.¹¹² In similar vein, Dorothy Yamamoto sees hunting as a discourse 'especially concerned with maintaining boundaries' and notes that animal 'bodies become counters in the game, claimed, manipulated, and marked over by the dominant side'.¹¹³ This line of thought is pertinent because it touches on the bi-directional link between

¹⁰⁶ Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature*, p. 197.

¹⁰⁷ On hierarchal distribution and disputes over holy bread and pax, see Thiery, pp. 69–71, 117–18.

¹⁰⁸ *Tretyse off Huntyng* offers the following: 'And also whoso breketh hym shall haue þe chyne, & þe parson þe ryght shulder, & a quarter to pore men, & the parker þe lyfte shulder', ll. 241–43. At a larger hunt, the hunter who fells the deer is allowed a share of the carcass.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Judkins, *passim*, Crane, pp. 101–19, and Marvin, pp. 133–57.

¹¹⁰ Almond, 'Crossing the Barriers', *passim*; Sykes, p. 155, also touches on this theme.

¹¹¹ Krish Seetah, 'The Middle Ages on the Block: Animals, Guilds and Meat in the Medieval English Period', in *Breaking and Shaping Beastly Bodies: Animals as Material Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Alexander Pluskowski (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), pp. 18–31 (pp. 24–25).

¹¹² Pluskowski, pp. 46–47.

¹¹³ Dorothy Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human in Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 99–102.

the social and the ritual: the socially indexical aspects of hunting are linked to ritual as a matter of course. In communicating the cosmos to a community, ritual (such as blood ritual) is forced to formalize itself and thus is forced to be socially ordering by virtue of the issue of access to rites.¹¹⁴ This, in turn, encourages cohesion amongst the viewers, a reverent deference to the prevailing order. Above all, ritual thus aims to convey a sense of prescribed order which its adherents are meant to accept. However ill-defined or vaguely alluded to, in order to instill beliefs a ritual must involve a supernatural power so as to vouchsafe the belief system. Like the socially indexical rituals of the mass, the rituals of the hunt likewise required an association with the supernatural to achieve their interpellative ends. That both ritual sets involved and even allowed a degree of contestation indicates the tension inherent in rituals of social hierarchy and social indexing. This tension is well exemplified in the late-medieval liturgical tradition and forms a thread that runs throughout the noble hunting tradition as well as English medieval hunting in general, particularly in the form of poaching.

Reception

Any performance is read against its contextual backdrop. Contextual and formal fidelity are essential constituents of the ritual effect. Participants understand ritual in varying measure, according to their lights, interests, and commitment.¹¹⁵ In addressing the 'collectivity of the faithful', ritual acts as such cannot be deemed false in terms of fidelity or legitimacy, but rather infelicitous or illegitimate.¹¹⁶ Additionally, some spectators may have been less receptive to the message conveyed in hunting rituals than others. Whereas the archaeological evidence suggests that deer were in fact broken and distributed in the manner described in treatises, this is not true in every social context.¹¹⁷ The lower classes may have rejected or ignored the rituals of the noble hunt in their own practices. Prominent use of the idiom also invited cooption, and it should not be forgotten that the noble hunting rituals could also be used for socially disruptive purposes or to mock authorities/institutions.¹¹⁸ And, although the nobility generally took a leading role, it is worth noting that poaching, and thus contestation, occurred across the social spectrum. In this sense poaching should be read in terms of contested social hierarchy, and appropriated hunting rituals as salient semiotic tools. This highlights that the rituals of the hunt could be used by different agents for different effects, ranging from contestation/reinforcement of hierarchies to subversion/buttredding of institutions. Miri Rubin has touched on a similar vein in the Eucharistic tradition, which was similarly open to contestation and appropriation by various actors.¹¹⁹

While the benefits of hunting were invariably lauded by the nobility, the noble hunt was criticized by some for its excesses but also on religious grounds. Criticism of the irreligious nature of hunting was a prominent theme in the literature of era and such critiques stand in contrast to *Master of Game's* defense of hunting.¹²⁰ Hunting was commonly criticized as a vain, worldly pursuit but may also have drawn the ire of critics due to its socially disruptive

¹¹⁴ Tambiah, pp. 155–56.

¹¹⁵ Tambiah, p. 166.

¹¹⁶ Tambiah, pp. 60–86, esp. 77–84.

¹¹⁷ Sykes, pp. 51–57.

¹¹⁸ See Barbara Hanawalt, 'Men's Games, King's Deer: Poaching in Medieval England', in *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 18 (1988), 133–53.

¹¹⁹ Rubin, pp. 334–46.

¹²⁰ Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature*, pp. 118–33.

potential or its vaguely sacrilegious undertones. Using ritual forms associable with those of the liturgy invited their being mocked as such. Erasmus' well-known critique of the rites of the noble hunt is a fitting example:

bareheaded, on bended knee, with a special sword for the purpose (it would be sacrilege to use any other), with ritual gestures in a ritual order he cuts the ritual number of pieces in due solemnity, while the crowd stands round in silence and admires the spectacle it has witnessed a thousand times and more as if it was some new rite. And then if anyone's lucky enough to get a taste of the creature, he fancies he's stepped up a bit in the world. All they achieve by this incessant hunting and eating wild game is their own degeneration.¹²¹

The link Erasmus draws between eating venison and social betterment (or degeneration) is interesting in its own right but the sarcasm of the passage acquires its biting edge when read against the background of the *merita missae* tradition and the benefits of communicating.¹²²

The proposition of an associative link between the noble hunting rituals and the Eucharist indeed raises the issue of sacrilege in general and the hounds' role in particular. While shocking at first glance, the notion that in the *curée* the hounds are partaking of a 'mass' may not have been so very shocking to the medieval onlooker. As the numerous pronouncements against the practice make clear, dogs were commonly brought to church in the era and in many ways were even elevated to the human legal plane at times.¹²³ Much has been made of the fact that dogs appear next to man in medieval Bestiaries and were even worshipped as saints occasionally.¹²⁴ Furthermore, the role of animals as mediators of the cosmic order was an accepted one in the medieval period.¹²⁵ It should not go without note that *Master of Game* includes two miracle fables about the preternaturally noble nature of hounds, underscoring the ambiguous place of hounds in terms of social hierarchy.¹²⁶ In this sense, the presence of the hounds at the *curée* may have been fairly unremarkable.

To this must be added that the Church's stance on hunting, which was one of general approval. And despite the countless denunciations in the historical record, churchmen often hunted, high church officials especially, and even popes.¹²⁷ Putter's example of an Anglo-Norman cleric-poet arguing that there is no good reason for churchmen to refrain from hunting is probably indicative of the general attitude.¹²⁸ And as with all traditions, there may have been a fundamental unwillingness to confront the inertia of custom and consider the full

¹²¹ *The Praise of Folly*, trans. by Betty Radice, quoted in Julián Jiménez Hefferman, *Shakespeare's Extremes: Wild Man, Monster, Beast* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 191.

¹²² The rather free translation by Hamilton, Adams & Co (London, 1887) further emphasizes the themes of mock Eucharist and social hierarchy: 'And he that can but dip his finger, and taste of the blood, shall think his own bettered by it' (p. 87). See also discussion of Roger B. Manning, *Hunters and Poachers: A Cultural and Social History of Unlawful Hunting in England 1485–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 39–40; and Frederika Bain, 'Dismemberment and Identity-Formation in the Medieval and Early-Modern English Imaginary' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii, 2014).

¹²³ Fossier, pp. 197–98.

¹²⁴ Crane, p. 68; Brigitte Resl, *A Cultural History of Animals in the Medieval Age*, p. 22.

¹²⁵ For a discussion of the place man and beast in Christian philosophy, see Sophie Page, 'Good Creation and Demonic Illusions: The Medieval Universe of Creatures', in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Medieval Age*, pp. 30–47; Crane, pp. 11–41.

¹²⁶ *Master of Game*, ll. 1198–374. In both anecdotes the hounds transcend their animal nature and comport with noble esteem.

¹²⁷ Cummins, p. 10; Smets and van den Abeele, pp. 73–75. Nicholas Orme, 'Medieval Hunting: Fact and Fancy', in *Chaucer's England: Literature in Historical Context*, ed. by Barbara Hanawalt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 133–53 (pp. 134–35), also touches on the theme of hunting icons in churchly settings.

¹²⁸ Putter, pp. 377–78.

implications of an association between hunting ritual and church ritual. That the noble hunt's aim of reinforcing the prevailing social hierarchy was seen as generally beneficial to society may have helped to quiet any counterarguments. Additionally, throughout the era, churchmen remained noblemen *de facto*, a central tension in the social-religious fabric of the medieval era, and one that would have complicated any attempts to condemn the practices of the hunt. Indeed, with respect to the relation between ritual and social, a social order can be as essential to a society's cosmology as the society's gods.¹²⁹

As we have seen, the interpellation of the *curée*, underscoring acceptance of the social order, hinges on the associability of the form of the rite with respect to the rituals of the Catholic Eucharist tradition. In terms of gaze, fastidious treatment, modes of inculcation and social prerogative, several parallels between the liturgical rituals and hunting rituals have been noted as priorities of form. Liturgical ritual appears as a point of reference for the post-kill rituals, informing the numerous parallels and points of concord pertaining thereto. As such, a general resonance can be posited between the two ritual sets. In similar vein, the tensions inherently involved in social indexing were seen to be alleviated by a ritual emphasis on brotherhood and unity under the gaze of the sacred. That the *curée* should emerge as the central ritual of the noble hunt in the same age that the real presence of Christ is embraced in medieval culture is notable and will serve as the focus of the next section, which considers the historical context and evolution of the post-kill hunting rituals in general and the *curée* in particular.

Blood sacrifice to Corpus Christi

There is, of course, a common heritage that binds the rituals of the hunt and the Christian ritual. The historical ritual forms of sacrifice and feasting widely inform both traditions. Walter Burkert even went so far as to deem hunting and blood sacrifice as central to the evolution of society and religion.¹³⁰ In this sense a certain degree of concord is to be expected. The long inheritance of the late-medieval English hunting rituals is evidenced by the fact that they include many antecedent, presumably pagan forms. One such example is the casting of the corbin's bone — a piece of inedible gristle offered to the ravens — which Marvin interpreted as 'hunting occult' and possibly 'a talisman for success in the next hunt', and likely of great antiquity.¹³¹ This propitiatory rite mirrors the chalice of wine that prevents the deer's carcass from putrefying and evidences that an element of superstition was embedded in the post-kill rituals. As mentioned above, ritual is strongly constrained by prevailing ritual forms, by 'existing grids of meaning', but also by the inertia of custom: together, these dictate the stable core around which the variable components of ritual may be arranged. Nevertheless, rituals always are performed in specific historical junctures and contexts, and 'participants understand ritual in varying measure, according to their lights, interests, and commitment'. In this they are open to 'opposite turnings and new resonances in light of shifts in conditions or contexts'.¹³²

Within the wider manuscript context of *Master of Game* and other late-medieval English hunting manuals a number of social and cultural shifts are pertinent. Foremost, the social reordering that accompanied the Black Death of 1348 and Peasant's Rebellion of 1381, in

¹²⁹ Tambiah, p. 130.

¹³⁰ Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 1–48.

¹³¹ Marvin, pp. 125–26.

¹³² Tambiah, pp. 161–66.

which the rebels notably demanded the freedom to hunt,¹³³ but also the attendant Game Law of 1389, which further curtailed the peasant's right to hunt.¹³⁴ If the *curée* could be seen to reach its apogee as a reinforcer of noble preeminence in society in *Master of Game*, then this development should be read within the context of the social turbulence of the fourteenth century and aristocratic anxiety pertaining thereto.¹³⁵ Turbulent times would seem to necessitate a re-articulation of recognized social hierarchies. That the semiotic system of the noble hunt as an expression of power relations becomes 'increasingly elaborate' starting in the late-fourteenth century would seem to underscore this point.¹³⁶ In addition, the archaeological record attests to a shift in finds during the thirteenth–fourteenth century, implying that the rituals later codified in the manuals were increasingly being taken into use in actual hunting settings.¹³⁷ Conversely, there is also a religious shift in the historical context as regards the evolution of the *curée*. Any examination of the noble hunting rituals as liturgy must take note of the rise of the real presence in Eucharist in the late-medieval era. According to Jacques le Goff, 'by the thirteenth century, the rich univocal power nexus and symbolic system of the Church was "running out of steam"', and the innovation of the real presence of Christ was in part a reflection of this problem.¹³⁸ As the Eucharist becomes the central gesture of the mass in the late-medieval era, the doctrine of transubstantiation brings with it changes in the ritual formulae and points of inflection of the liturgy in terms of gaze, handling of Host, spiritual purity, magical properties, and so on.¹³⁹ The rise of the *curée* as the central rite of the post-kill rituals is contemporaneous with the rise of the doctrine of the real presence and could be interpreted as partly inspired by it. This shift takes place at the same time as the Continent sees increased aristocratic interest in the cult of St. Hubert and St. Eustace, saints whose legends are linked to hunting, as well as the advent of the practice of using deer heads as amuletic trophies and occasionally devotional artifacts, a practice evidenced in England as well.¹⁴⁰ As we have seen, the metaphoric links between religion and hunting were strong in the late-medieval era, and the theme of Christ as the hunted stag must have added a layer of association to the post-kill rituals and the *curée* in particular.

Dispositions such as those associated with hunting ritual are inherently precarious because they have to be inculcated, preferably repeatedly.¹⁴¹ For the ritual to be effective requires a certain fidelity to convention, yet not at the expense of over-dissemination or redundancy. Although dissemination and repetition are central to the ritual effect, the overexposure of a rite can risk the ruination of its transfixing effect. Here Judkin's argument for a deliberate shift away from describing the butchering process in manuals is interesting. He interprets the shift as an effort to prevent overexposure of the rites, primarily their dissemination to

¹³³ Charles Oman, *The Great Revolt of 1389* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 95.

¹³⁴ See, for example, Griffin, pp. 61–62.

¹³⁵ It should not pass without note that it was Edward's cousin, Richard II, that confronted the peasants during the rebellion.

¹³⁶ Pluskowski, pp. 46–47.

¹³⁷ Thomas, pp. 144–45.

¹³⁸ Quoted in Barbara R. Walters, Vincent Corrigan and Peter T. Ricketts, *The Feast of Corpus Christi* (University Park: University of Pennsylvania, 2006), p. xvi.

¹³⁹ Rubin, pp. 13–82.

¹⁴⁰ See Pluskowski, pp. 40–42, 44–46. Nicholas Orme also discusses how hunting trophies and emblems permeated church life in late-medieval England (pp. 146–49).

¹⁴¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 71.

lower strata of society, hinting perhaps at the readership of the manuals.¹⁴² This echoes Miri Rubin's findings about a concern amongst churchmen regarding the over-dissemination of Eucharistic practices, and indicates that the fading efficacy of rituals was well understood by the illuminati.¹⁴³ A shift away from emphasis on the overexposed rituals of the hunt towards novel adaptations like the *curée* could be interpreted as an attempt to keep the rituals of the hunt sharp and fresh, but also elite. It may be that the increasing popularity of the rituals (and manuals) seen in the thirteenth–fourteenth century helped to instigate the deinstitutionalization of the breaking ritual as the apex of the hunt, and thus spurred a rupture in the genre evidenced by *Master of Game's* novel, extended treatment of the *curée*. Unexceptional and diffused, the earlier post-kill rituals may have lost their impact and were accordingly supplanted by more transfixing counterparts. The *curée* as the central rite of the post-kill rituals would seem to have evolved as an emergent ritual form in response to this need.

Ritual forms are in fact intrinsically linked to such evolution. To remain significant, any ritual tradition must embrace evolution in order to avoid atrophying into what Tambiah called 'the stagnancy of an exhausted style'.¹⁴⁴ Emergent meanings ride on preexisting forms but also need to display new resonances. These innovations do not interrupt but rather substitute and elaborate, and, over time, emergent meanings may become conventional and ultimately be incorporated into the existing framework of conventions. In Tambiah's words, 'Ritual oscillates in historical time between the poles of ossification and revivalism [...] substance nourishes formalism and conspires to empty it of meaning over time'.¹⁴⁵ The emergence of the *curée* and the Corpus Christi tradition could well be interpreted in this light.

Rituals evolve through the interplay of metaphor and metonymy.¹⁴⁶ It has been argued that the hunting manuals and religious literature of the era freely drew on the same allegories and images.¹⁴⁷ Here it is interesting to note Putter's observation that hunting terminology extends into religious metaphor in imaginative literature. He also touched on the interanimation of hunting metaphors in medieval religious literature, pointing out that such conceits are perhaps more expressive than is readily acknowledged.¹⁴⁸ A similar research trend has also pointed out how medieval romance could draw on the imagery of the Passion for literary effect, and how biblical tropes could be used to condense time, space and subject and thereby make audiences complicit in that which they view.¹⁴⁹ The wide borrowing from the Eucharistic idiom evidenced in the post-kill rituals of *Master of Game* may be indicative of a similar dynamic; it is not implausible that the ritual forms of the liturgy and the hunt work in a similar way, that is, that they interanimate one another. That there is not an explicit association between the two ritual traditions in no wise precludes effective interanimation. Like in any performance, the viewer of a ritual is prompted to take note of 'the abstract similarities' and thus to 'mobilize his past experience and stereotypical thinking'.¹⁵⁰ And while the *curée*

¹⁴² Judkins, pp. 91–95.

¹⁴³ Rubin, pp. 334–42.

¹⁴⁴ Tambiah, p. 165.

¹⁴⁵ Tambiah, pp. 161–65.

¹⁴⁶ Tambiah, p. 164.

¹⁴⁷ Klemettilä, p. 197.

¹⁴⁸ Putter, pp. 373, 374–80.

¹⁴⁹ See Poellinger, pp. 157–76, and also Daisy Black, '“Nayles Large and Lang”: Masculine Identity and Anachronic Object in the York *Crucifixion Play*', *Medieval Feminist Forum*, 50 (2015), 85–104.

¹⁵⁰ Erving Goffman, *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p. 36.

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could not have been construed as a true mass, it could nevertheless instill some of the same dispositions as conveyed in the Catholic mass, like respect for a divinely sanctioned social order. This relates to the philosopher of language J.L. Austin's observations on the etiolation of language and language parasitism, that is, that an unserious (or hollow) performative act can nonetheless impart serious effects on its audience.¹⁵¹ Indeed it has been noted that the etiolating parasite (the hollow performative act) may often play a not insignificant role in constituting that which it parasitizes (the host/serious performative act).¹⁵² Thus, a hollow performative act such as the *curée* which successfully resonates with its serious counterpart (the Catholic liturgy) plays a notable role in constituting that counterpart. Although certainly on unequal terms, through their reciprocal roles as target and source of metaphor they are mutually constitutive.

The *curée* thus is free to resonate with the liturgy without actually having to be anything like it in a salvational or essive sense. Indeed it could be argued that the *curée* served as a constituting element of the liturgical ritual which it parasitizes, interanimating it with novel resonances. Ultimately, the resonance of the *curée* as a meaningful ritual rests on its metaphorical alignment with respect to the rites of the mass. The converse could also be said to be true, albeit to a lesser degree. Given the shared heritage of the two ritual traditions as derivatives of blood sacrifice, it is not implausible to assume that their ritual forms have developed over time in tandem, sometimes drifting apart, sometimes lurching towards a closer proximity, but always more or less locked in an orbit of mutual influence. The many points of concord examined in the present article would support this interpretation, as would the historical link between hunting and religion. The observation that the ritual forms of the noble hunt evolved in a nexus of mutual influences that can be examined and described is germane to the wider contextualization of medieval hunting as a practice. That on occasion these ritual sets seem to shift in response to contemporary social expediencies could be read as felicitous happenstance, or alternatively as deliberate ideological manipulation, but is noteworthy nonetheless.

¹⁵¹ J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 21–22. For a discussion, also see James Loxley, *Performativity* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 13.

¹⁵² As Derrida points out, any attempt to judge one over the other is to take part in a dogmatic judgment whereby the corollary of the derivative that exists in the host is denied in the parasite. For a discussion, see Loxley, pp. 73–75.