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Puritan Martyrs in Island Prisons

David Cressy

Abstract Charles I's Star Chamber prosecution of the lawyer William Prynne, the minister Henry Burton, and the physician John Bastwick generated both contemporary and historiographical controversy, mostly concerned with their writings, their trial, and their punishment in London. This article turns attention to their unusual offshore incarceration on the islands of Jersey, Guernsey, and the Scillies between 1637 and 1640. It examines the material, social, and spiritual circumstances of island detention, and shows how the "puritan martyrs"[1] coped with separation from the world. Though the discourse of martyrdom invited a compilation of miseries, invoking scriptural comparisons, this triumvirate experienced isolation that did not necessarily incapacitate them. Prynne savored the hospitality of his jailers, Burton smuggled out polemical tracts, and all three found inspiration in the book of Revelation, written by St. John while a prisoner on the island of Patmos. Each returned to the fray in the 1640s, writing works of witness and justification. Their experience of island imprisonment provided a model and an inspiration for dozens more who were similarly confined during the Protectorate and the Restoration.

When the government of Charles I retaliated in 1637 against its most outspoken puritan critics, it subjected the clergyman Henry Burton, the physician John Bastwick, and the lawyer William Prynne to a controversial repertoire of legal degrading, pillorying, physical disfigurement, fines, and imprisonment. Their prosecution and sentence in Star Chamber was, in Kevin Sharpe's words, "one of the *causes célèbres* … of seventeenth-century English history,"[2] the fount of a vibrant historiography. Puritan martyrs or seditious libelers, according to one's point of view, Burton, Bastwick, and Prynne play leading roles in studies of early Stuart politics, religion, jurisprudence, and the press. Most recent work attends to the anti-episcopal publications that got them into trouble, their treatment in Star Chamber, the savagery or justice of their punishment, and their tumultuous homecoming on the threshold of the English revolution.[3] Very little attention

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[1] Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne are commonly called "puritan martyrs," as in Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven, 1992), 758.

[2] Sharpe, *Personal Rule of Charles I*, 758.

[3] Reports of the Star Chamber proceedings survive in manuscript, the most accessible, though not the most complete, printed in William Cobbett, ed., *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials*, 34 vols. (1809–28), 3:711–70. Related documents, with their compiler's commentary, appear in William Prynne, *A New Discovery of the Prelates Tyranny* (1641). The most salient modern historiography includes Ethyn Williams Kirby, *William Prynne: A Study in Puritanism* (Cambridge, MA, 1931), 36–50; William A. Lamont, *Marginal Prynne, 1600–1669* (Toronto, 1963), 28–50; Paul Christianson, *Reformers and*

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has been paid to the unusual nature of their imprisonment on England's remote islands and the ways that they coped with banishment and exile.

This article examines the incarceration of Prynne, Burton, and Bastwick, respectively, on Jersey, Guernsey, and the Isles of Scilly between 1637 and 1640. It contributes to scholarship on early Stuart law and politics, religious culture, island communities, and the burgeoning field of prison studies. It reveals the determination of the Caroline regime to isolate its enemies, the logistics of prisoner transfer across seas, and the resilience of men of faith in the face of such punishment. It also shows the resourcefulness and persistence of their wives and friends in giving them support during and after their ordeal. Prynne, Burton, and Bastwick found solace in prayer and comfort in the Bible, and their writings drew parallels between their unjust imprisonment and those of biblical sufferers for the Lord, allowing them to reimagine England's islands as Patmos, the ancient Aegean island where John the Theologian experienced his Revelation.

Literary scholars have recently validated prison writing as "one of the most influential cultural practices of the early modern period," engaged with "counter publics,"[4] though few of their studies cite the "puritan martyrs" or work produced on England's islands.

Custodial sentences were not normal features of early modern judicial practice. Prisons were primarily intended for suspects under examination or plaintiffs awaiting trial. The courts could order the mutilation of criminals' bodies, the mulcting of their purses, or the end of their lives but rarely deprived them of their liberty. Guilty felons faced corporeal or capital punishment, often within days of conviction. If they subsequently found mercy, they were normally released on bond.[5] A small number of political offenders, suspected or found guilty of treason, were imprisoned in the Tower until the government ordered their release or execution. The royal prerogative

Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Civil War (Toronto, 1978), 136–78; Stephen Foster, *Notes from the Caroline Underground* (Camden, 1978), 47–71; Sharpe, "'Factious and Schismatical Humours': Puritanism and Opposition," in *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, 758–65; David Cressy, "The Portraiture of Prynne's Pictures: Performance on the Public Stage," in *Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 2000), 213–33; Alastair Bellany, "Libels in Action: Subversion and the English Literary Underground," in *The Politics of the Excluded, c. 1500–1850*, ed. Tim Harris (Basingstoke, 2001), 99–152; Andrew McRae, *Literature, Satire and the Early Modern State* (London, 2004), 188–207; Andrew McRae, "Stigmatizing Prynne: Seditious Libel, Political Satire and the Construction of Opposition," in *The 1630s: Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders (Manchester, 2006), 171–88; Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Caroline England* (Cambridge, 2008), 176–82; Mark Kishlanskky, "A Whipper Whipped: The Sedition of William Prynne," *Historical Journal* 56, no. 3 (September 2013): 603–27; Mark Kishlansky, "Martyrs' Tales," *Journal of British Studies* 53, no. 2 (April 2014): 334–55.

[4] Ruth Ahnert, *The Rise of Prison Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2013), 201, 32. See also Molly Murray, "Measured Sentences: Forming Literature in the Early Modern Prison," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (June 2009): 147–67; Jerome de Groot, "Prison Writing, Writing Prison during the 1640s and 1650s," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (June 2009): 193–215; Philip Edward Phillips, ed., *Prison Narratives from Boethius to Zana* (New York, 2014); Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York, 2002).

[5] Philip Jenkins, "From Gallows to Prison? The Execution Rate in Early Modern England," *Criminal Justice History* 7 (1986): 51–71; Martin Ingram, "Shame and Pain: Themes and Variations in Tudor Punishments," in *Penal Practice and Culture, 1500–1900: Punishing the English*, ed. Simon Devereaux and Paul Griffiths (Basingstoke, 2004), 36–62.

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enabled the king to incarcerate someone at his pleasure until further notice, but political internment was used sparingly. Most of London's long-term prisoners were civil offenders, usually debtors, held in places like Newgate, the Fleet, or the King's Bench prison until their obligations were discharged.

London's prisons were places of grim durance, with varying degrees of squalor and privation, but they were not cut off from the life of the metropolis. Social rank, money, good connections, and a pleasing manner could secure a range of privileges and comforts, including day release and almost unlimited discourse with visitors. Even from behind bars, such prisoners could participate in the capital's public sphere.[6] Few mitigations of this sort prevailed on remote islands.

Until the Star Chamber trials of 1637, England's most notable political prisoners or prisoners of conscience (leaving aside Mary Queen of Scots and Sir Walter Raleigh) were the anti-episcopal agitator Alexander Leighton; the former prebendary of Durham, Peter Smart; and Prynne himself, who had been in the Fleet and the Tower since 1634. Each spent years behind bars for offending against Charles I's state church. Arrested in 1630 for his reckless publication against bishops, Leighton went first to Newgate, "a nasty dog-hole full of rats and mice,"[7] and then languished in the Fleet. Smart spent his prime as a prisoner of King's Bench after refusing to pay a £500 fine in 1631 for his attack on Arminian ceremonies. Prynne suffered mutilation and imprisonment for his anti-theatrical treatise *Histriomastix*, which was construed as scandalous and seditious.[8] The worst that anyone might have anticipated for them in 1637 was further degradation, fines, and confinement, which, however miserable, would at least have allowed them contact with supporters.

Though not directly associated with each other, Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne mounted the most vigorous collective challenge to the absolutist, Arminian, and ceremonialist tendencies of the Caroline Church of England. Bastwick published a series of underground tracts including *Apologeticus ad Praesules Anglicanos*, and *The Letany of John Bastwick*, praying for delivery from the episcopal Antichrist and stirring discontent against the king's ecclesiastical government. Burton published his defiant Gunpowder Treason sermons *For God, and the King*, the unapologetic *Apologie of an Appeale*, and his collection of providences against Sabbath-breakers, *A Divine Tragedie*. Prynne, despite confinement in the Tower, published agitational anti-episcopal pamphlets, including the scandalous *Newes from Ipswich*.[9] Against this barrage of scurrility and invective, which Mark Kishlansky has characterized as "a full frontal

[6] C. Dobb, "London's Prisons," *Shakespeare Survey* 17 (1964): 87–100; J. E. Thomas, *House of Care: Prisons and Prisoners in England, 1500–1800* (Nottingham, 1988); Peter Lake and Michael Questier, "Prisons, Priests and People," in *England's Long Reformation, 1500–1800*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (London, 1998), 195–233; see also Rachel Weil and Richard Bell, eds., *Early Modern Prisons* (blog), https://earlymodernprisons.org/.

[7] Frances Condick, s.v., "Leighton, Alexander (c. 1570–1649)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/16395.

[8] Elizabeth Allen, s.v., "Smart, Peter (1568/9–c. 1652)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/25745; William Lamont, s.v., "Prynne, William (1600–1669)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/22854.

[9] The National Archives (hereafter TNA), State Papers (hereafter SP) 16/354, fols. 379–98; Samuel Rawson Gardiner, ed., *Documents Relating to the Proceedings against William Prynne, in 1634 and 1637*, Camden Society, n.s., vol. 18 (1877), 63–64.

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assault on the foundation of English ecclesiastical government," the government of Charles I used the prerogative court of Star Chamber (rather than the common law court of King's Bench and trial by jury) to silence and crush its critics.[10]

The Star Chamber judges—privy councilors sitting with the chief justices—convicted Prynne, Burton, and Bastwick of seditious libel. When the plaintiffs refused to plead, they were deemed to be guilty *pro confesso*, as though they had confessed. They were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment in separate and remote bastions, in addition to degrading, pillorying, physical disfigurement, and fines of £5,000 each. Star Chamber fines of such magnitude were impossible to pay but were normally mitigated, commuted, or forgiven; in these cases, without remission, the convicts became perpetual debtors to the king. Burton was committed to the Castle of Lancaster, Bastwick to Launceston Castle in Cornwall, and Prynne to Caernarvon Castle in Wales, there to remain close and isolated at the king's pleasure.[11] Their removal from the metropolitan environment was designed to break their spirits, silence their pens, and isolate them from well-wishers and supporters. These were arbitrary exercises of royal authority, but they were only the beginning.

Kishlansky claims that "there was nothing innovative in the sentences the martyrs received," because "they were typical in such cases." Controversially, he insists upon the legality, the justice, and even the "mercy" of the Star Chamber proceedings, despite the protestations of its victims, the shock of many contemporaries, and the verdict of most historians.[12] Tendentious though this may appear, there were indeed precedents for mutilation, huge fines, and prolonged imprisonment, though detention at the king's pleasure seldom extended more than a few months.[13] Truly innovative, however, and compounding the severity of the punishment, was the regime's decision to remove its prisoners into island exile and to leave them there in perpetuity.

Within a month of the trial, the government revised the sentence, declaring the initial punishment insufficient and mainland prisons inadequate to the task. By Privy Council order of 27 August 1637 (rather than sentence in the court of Star Chamber), the libelers were instead reassigned to more remote places. Prynne would be removed to a castle on Jersey, 120 miles from England, Burton to the island of Guernsey, more than ninety miles off shore, and Bastwick "to the castle or fort of the Isles of Scillies," some twenty-eight miles out from Land's End.[14]

[10] Kishlansky, "Martyr's Tales," 342. The texts that allegedly constituted seditious libel included John Bastwick, *Apologeticus ad Praesules Anglicanos* (Leiden, 1636); Bastwick, *The Letany of John Bastwick* (Leiden, 1637); Henry Burton, *For God, and the King* (Amsterdam, 1636); Burton, *An Apologie of an Appeale* (Amsterdam, 1636); Burton, *A Divine Tragedie Lately Acted* (1636); William Prynne, *Newes from Ipswich* ([Edinburgh?], 1636).

[11] TNA, SP 16/362, fols. 141, 208.

[12] Kishlansky, "Martyrs' Tales," 334, 342, 355.

[13] Henry E. I. Phillips, "The Last Years of the Court of Star Chamber, 1630–41," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th ser., 21 (1939): 103–31; Thomas G. Barnes, "Star Chamber Mythology," *American Journal of Legal History* 5, no. 1 (January 1961): 1–11, at 7; Brian A. Harrison, *The Tower of London Prisoner Book. A Complete Chronology of the Persons known to have been Detained at Their Majesties' Pleasure, 1100–1941* (Leeds, 2004), 280–95.

[14] TNA, PC 2/48, fols. 93–93v; TNA, SP 16/367, fols. 192–95; *Documents Relating to the Proceedings against William Prynne*, 63–66.

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These places, it was believed, were too distant for family or friends to follow, and lay beyond the effective reach of such instruments as the writ of habeas corpus, which provided judicial oversight. The Channel Islands, as relics of the Duchy of Normandy, claimed exemption from mainland jurisdiction, except under the authority of the king's Great Seal. Channel Island jurats repeatedly claimed exemption from writs of Chancery and Star Chamber, though these claims were often contested.[15] The Scillies, as part of Cornwall, enjoyed no such historic privilege, but their rocky remoteness made effective appeals from London unlikely. As Paul Halliday has observed, it was the practical difficulty of serving the writ and the political obstacles of securing compliance that made habeas corpus ineffective, rather than the niceties of jurisdiction.[16]

The use of these islands as political prisons was a novel feature of the 1630s but would not be forgotten in later decades when more state prisoners were sent there. Where the idea originated cannot be learned, but it is possible that Archbishop Laud's chaplain, Peter Heylin, who had visited Jersey and Guernsey a few years earlier, shared information about the Channel Islands. Prynne certainly counted Heylin among his persecutors. Heylin's learning also reminded him that the fourth-century heretic Instantius, "a very near kinsman of the English puritan," had been banished to the Isles of Scilly.[17] The Caroline regime had lost control of the narrative—"the semiotics of loyalty and criminality," in Andrew McRae's phrase[18]—when the prisoners at their mutilation redefined themselves as martyrs, and when well-wishers cheered them to their mainland castles. By consigning the prisoners to island isolation, the Privy Council regained the initiative and prevented further "contagion."[19]

Marooned on their remote fastnesses, Prynne, Burton, and Bastwick were ordered to be "safely kept close prisoners in their chambers; and that to prevent the danger of spreading their schismatical and seditious opinions … none be admitted to have conference with them, or to have access unto them, but only such as being faithful and discreet persons shall be appointed by the governor or captains of those castles or their deputies for attendance upon them, to give them their daily sustenance and

[15] TNA, SP 16/439, fol. 5; TNA, SP 16/450, fol. 120; TNA, SP 16/536, fol. 79; TNA, SP 16/538, fol. 102. The peculiarity of island jurisdiction is discussed in A. J. Eagleston, *The Channel Islands under Tudor Government, 1485–1642* (Cambridge, 1949); Darryl Ogier, *Reformation and Society in Guernsey* (Woodbridge, 1996); Ogier, *The Government and Law of Guernsey* (St. Peter Port, 2005); Tim Thornton, *The Channel Islands, 1370–1640: Between England and Normandy* (Woodbridge, 2012).

[16] Paul D. Halliday, *Habeas Corpus from England to Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 81–85, 204, 227–29, 437; Halliday, "11,000 Prisoners: Habeas Corpus, 1500–1800," in *Judges and Judging in the History of the Common Law and Civil Law: From Antiquity to Modern Times*, ed. Paul Brand and Joshua Getzler (Cambridge, 2012), 259–76.

[17] Peter Heylin, *A Full Relation of Two Journeys… , The Second Journey: Containing a Survey of the Estate of the Two Islands Guernzey and Jarsey* (1656), 279–89; Heylin, *Cyprianus Anglicus: or, the History of the Life and Death of the Most Reverend and Renowned Prelate William, by Divine Providence Lord Archbishop of Canterbury* (1668), 334–35; *The Severall Humble Petitions of D. Bastwicke, M Burton, M. Prynne* (1641), 9. For Instantius, banished "in Sylinancim insulam, quae utltra Britannia sita est," see Daniel Washburn, *Banishment in the Later Roman Empire, 284–476 CE* (London, 2012), 31.

[18] McRae, Literature, Satire and the Early Modern State, 189.

[19] Heylin, *Cyprianus Anglicusm*, 334; Edward Hyde Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil War in England*, ed. W. Dunn Macray, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1888), 1:267.

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necessaries."[20] They would be allowed to read the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, and other devotional books "consonant to the doctrine and discipline established in the Church of England,"[21] but otherwise kept incommunicado. They would be forbidden the use of any pen, paper, or ink; no letters or writing would be permitted to be brought to them, and no written communications would be allowed from them "to any person or place whatsoever." The island prisons were intended to cut them off forever from the business of the world.[22] Archbishop Laud and his confederates had entombed him, Prynne later wrote, "as a dead man out of mind, whom they remember no more, reputing me among the number of those that go down into the pit, and as one quite cut off by their hands, never likely to rise up again till the general resurrection."[23] Escape was not impossible, as a few earlier prisoners had proved, but it needed local knowledge, support, and a boat to leave an island.[24]

The "puritan martyrs" used heightened biblical language to describe their experience in exile. Their vocabulary was infused by the Scriptures and histories of evangelism rather than stoicism or the consolations of philosophy. Burton, Bastwick, and Prynne explicitly placed themselves in the martyrological tradition, enduring cruelty alongside Christ, his saints, and the martyrs of reformed religion, though their experiences were not so extreme or so lethal.[25] They harnessed the narrative of martyrdom to emphasize both their sufferings as prisoners and the cruelty of their opponents, with a compilation of miseries that lent itself to exaggeration.

Island isolation meant the end of the social and familial intimacy that might have been maintained during imprisonment on the mainland. Prynne was unmarried, but Bastwick and Burton both had wives and children. Fearing that Susanna Bastwick and Sarah Burton would be "evil instruments to disperse and scatter abroad these dangerous opinions and designs,"[26] the government prevented them from following their husbands as they had on the mainland. In the very first weeks of the men's sentences, state intelligence revealed, "the wives of the said Bastwick and Burton … have made some attempts to procure access to their said husbands, and to convey letters unto them."[27] It was therefore decreed that "they shall not be permitted to land nor abide in any of the islands. And if contrary hereunto it should happen through the inadvertency of officers or otherwise that they or either of them should land in any of the said islands, that the same being discovered and made known … they or either of them so offending should be forthwith committed to prison."[28] Though

[20] TNA, PC 2/48, fols. 93–93v; Prynne, *New Discovery of the Prelates Tyranny*, 2nd pagination, 85–88.
[21] *Documents Relating to the Proceedings against William Prynne*, 65.
[22] Thomas May, *The History of the Parliament of England, Which Began November the Third, MDCXL* (1647), 79–80.
[23] William Prynne, *Romes Master-Peece, or, The Grand Conspiracy of the Pope and His Iesuited Instruments* (1644), epistle dedicatory.
[24] An imprisoned debtor escaped from Mount Orgeuil on Jersey in 1631 after two years confinement and fled to France. TNA, SP 16/533, fols. 105, 186.
[25] John R. Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563–1694* (Cambridge, 1993), 4, 134–35; Thomas S. Freeman, "'*Imitatio Christi* with a Vengeance': The Politicisation of Martyrdom in Early Modern England," in *Martyrs and Martyrdom in England, c. 1400–1700*, ed. Thomas S. Freeman and Thomas F. Mayer (Woodbridge, 2007), 35–69.
[26] *Documents Relating to the Proceedings against William Prynne*, 65–66.
[27] Ibid., 65–66.
[28] Ibid.,, 65–66.

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not allowed to communicate with the prisoners, the women remained active on their husbands' behalf in puritan circles in London.

More than three years passed before a revolutionary parliament determined to undo the policies of Charles I's personal rule. Strong pressure built to reverse the sentence of the so-called puritan martyrs. Petitioning in November 1640 for Henry Burton's release, Sarah Burton described how her husband had been cruelly and unjustly censured in Star Chamber, and after being sent to Lancaster was transferred to Guernsey "by what order she knows not," where he was "kept in strict durance of exile and imprisonment" for over three years, cut off from his wife, "debarred of the access of friends," and denied "the use of pen, ink, and paper … to make known his just complaints."[29] Susannah Bastwick similarly stressed the irregularity of her husband's transfer to Scilly—"an island so barren and necessitated that it affords not ordinary necessaries"—and emphasized the "great straits, want, and misery" that she and their children suffered in his absence.[30] The House of Commons immediately agreed that all three prisoners should be sent for "forthwith in safe custody," and that their keepers should "certify this House by whose warrant and authority they are detained."[31] All three returned to a rapturous homecoming and full vindication. The warrants and accounts of their transfers, petitions for relief and redress, and the writings they published in the 1640s reveal little-known aspects of their time in England's islands.

PRYNNE ON JERSEY

The English phase of Prynne's imprisonment was tumultuous and controversial, like much of that lawyer's life. Though disgraced and condemned, he was mobbed by well-wishers. His journey from London to North Wales in the summer of 1637 had some of the attributes of a defiant progress. Sir Kenelm Digby referred to it as a "pilgrimage," attended by "great flocking of the people." At every halt along the way, the prisoner was greeted with cries of "God bless you" and "God be with you," as supporters jostled to shake his hand. Adulation reached a pitch at Chester, where Prynne was cheered and feasted, and a local artist was commissioned to paint his portrait.[32] Incarceration in Caernarvon Castle, within spitting distance of the Isle of Anglesey, was more austere, though not as restricted as the government intended. Plans were soon made to transfer him to Jersey, "with all privacy and secrecy … to prevent all concourse of people" in his passage.[33]

Prynne's winter journey from North Wales began on 9 October 1637, but he did not reach Jersey until the following 18 January. Petitioning the House of Commons three years later, he recalled how he was "embarked among papists, in a bruised shipwracked vessel, full of leaks, and after fourteen weeks voyage in the winter season,

[29] TNA, SP 16/471, fols. 65–68.

[30] *Severall Humble Petitions*, 9–20.

[31] Maija Jansson, ed., *Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament*, 7 vols. (Rochester, 2000–2007), 1:28–29, 48–50.

[32] TNA, SP 16/364, fol. 131; TNA, SP 16/368, fols. 24–25; TNA, SP 16/370, fol. 71. See also Cressy, "Portraiture of Prynne's Pictures," 226–29.

[33] TNA, SP 16/385, fol. 87; *Documents Relating to the Proceedings against William Prynne*, 64–65.

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through dangerous storms and seas, which spoiled most of his stuff and bedding, and threatening often to shipwreck him, arrived at the said isle, and was conveyed close prisoner into Mount Orgeuil Castle." Isolation competed with discomfort, for throughout this time Prynne's conductors were charged "not to admit any person whatsoever, but themselves only, to speak with [him] in his passage."[34] A detailed account of Prynne's voyage survives in his escort's claim for expenses.[35]

After casting off from Caernarvon on 9 October, the ill-equipped ship encountered "very tempestuous" conditions and was forced to shelter for three weeks along a dangerous coast, the crew and passengers "lying aboard the said barque in our clothes without bedding all that time." They hoisted sail again on 1 November, but renewed bad weather drove them to "a creek abutting on the coast of Merionith and Cardiganshire," near where they hove to for another six weeks. The crew used the time to trim the vessel and to take on cable and sail, "all this while having no bedding." How Prynne occupied himself is unknown, but he surely read his Bible and said his prayers, perhaps meditating on the perils of St. Paul. The voyage resumed on 13 December, but "extraordinary foul weather" blew them "towards Sidwalls, a little island upon the coast of Caernarvonshire." The next day they sailed as far as St. David's Head, "where such a terrible tempest arose (that place of all others being most dangerous) that we did all in a manner despair of our lives, expecting every minute to be devoured by the raging billows." The ship was leaking, and only continuous pumping allowed them to approach Milford Haven, though not to enter the port. Anchored at night off Milford Castle, the ship was struck by "such a storm of hail and wind" that she lost "our best anchor and thirteen fathoms of our new cable."[36] This was a most unprosperous voyage—already two months at sea, and they had not yet cleared Welsh waters.

Short of an anchor and still leaking, the ship pressed on towards Lands End, and after "much difficulty and exceeding danger," limped into Falmouth on 17 December. There they stopped the leak, took on stores, and enquired unsuccessfully for a pilot to conduct them to Jersey. They passed Christmas at Falmouth, still sleeping on board, and finally sailed into the Channel on 27 December, joining a convoy towards Plymouth. There they stayed for just over two weeks, eventually finding a pilot who knew the Channel Islands. They left England behind on 14 January, sailing day and night, and soon sighted land that could have been Alderney or Guernsey. These were difficult waters, with swirling currents and "abundance of rocks," so proximity did not mean safety; after a night at anchor, they "made towards a little island named Sark, but a great mist arising, after four or five hours sail, our pilot fearing some rocks," the ship stood out to sea for safety.[37] Jersey was now within reach, but more frustrations were in store. "A very high wind arising, and contrary to our course," the ship was blown back toward Sark, where they anchored "one day and one night in very great peril and extremity."[38] At last, "by God"s mercy,"[39] they arrived at Jersey on 18 January 1638, after more than fourteen

[34] *Severall Humble Petitions*, 8–9.
[35] TNA, SP 16/385, fols. 87–89.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.

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weeks of travel. Prynne's journey from Caernarvon Castle to his new island prison lasted longer than most emigrants took to cross the Atlantic and was probably more uncomfortable. The experience, a daunting and distressing one to professional mariners, must have been terrifying for an untested landsman. The man responsible for transporting Prynne, Robert Anwill, the son of the sheriff of Caernarvonshire, claimed expenses of £109 10s., including £40 for the hire of the ship.[40] The total cost of moving Prynne to Jersey may have been twice that amount, but to those who wished Prynne to perdition, it was money well spent.

The order for Prynne's transfer specified "one of the two castles of the isle of Jersey, which by the governor of the same shall be thought fittest."[41] Castle Elizabeth was by far the more modern, better furnished and better equipped, but Prynne's jailors chose the medieval pile of Mount Orgeuil, surrounded by rocks and water. There Prynne remained until his liberation in November 1640.

Like his fellow prisoners Burton and Bastwick, Prynne had no forgiveness for the Caroline regime, and no forgetting the privation and isolation of his imprisonment. But unlike his married co-sufferers who were deprived of conjugal company, Prynne was accustomed to living alone. His spiritual and intellectual armor, and his unquenchable sense of righteousness, equipped him to endure his incarceration. As he said in the verse compendium he published soon after his release, "where God is present, there no prison is." "Driven from country, lands, house, home," Prynne had Christ for company and time abundant for prayer and reflection.[42]

Mount Orgueil was indeed a place of exile, a fortress on a rock with the sea on three sides, but Prynne found the prospect "pleasant," the air "healthy," and his accommodation "ample."[43] It would have been a fair enough place to visit on a fine day. Prynne was an exceptional prisoner, held by royal prerogative, and his jailer, Sir Philip Carteret, lieutenant governor and bailiff of the Island of Jersey, treated him honorably. Petitioning Parliament in 1640, Prynne avowed that he would have "certainly perished in his almost three years close imprisonment there, had not the extraordinary providence of God … and the noble charity of those under whose custody he did remain, furnished him with such diet and necessaries, as preserved him both in health and life."[44] Over three cycles of the seasons, Carteret allowed Prynne to share his leisure, dine at his table, and socialize with members of his family. Prisoner and keeper enjoyed each other's company. An affectionate letter of April 1639 from Captain George Carteret (Sir Philip's nephew), on naval service in England, to his betrothed, Elizabeth, at the castle, ends with the postscript, "my services remembered to Mr. Prynne."[45] Prynne provided some wedding poetry, a godly verse, when the couple married at Mount Orgueil on 6 May 1640.[46]

It is not known how strictly the lieutenant governor enforced the ban on reading matter and writing materials, but little from Prynne's pen can be firmly dated to this

[40] Ibid.

[41] *Documents Relating to the Proceedings against William Prynne*, 64–65, 68.

[42] William Prynne, *Movnt-Orgveil: or Divine and Profitable Meditations* (1641), 7, 28. See also William Prynne, *Comfortable Cordials Against Discomfortable Feares of Imprisonment* (1641), sig, B2.

[43] Prynne, *Movnt-Orgveil*, sig Av.

[44] *Severall Humble Petitions*, 9.

[45] TNA, SP 16/418, fol. 198.

[46] G. R. Balleine, *All for the King: The Life Story of Sir George Carteret* (St. Helier, 1976), 18.

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period. His *Movnt-Orgveil: or Divine and Profitable Meditations* includes verse written before and after his island exile. Dedicating these poetic efforts to his former hosts, Prynne thanked "his ever honoured worthy friend, Sir Philip Carteret" for his "great favour and humanity," and offered further thanks to Sir Philip's wife, "the truly virtuous and religious Lady Anne Carteret," and the three Carteret daughters, Elizabeth, Margaret, and Mrs. Douse, recognizing them as "his honoured kind friends" who showed him "love and courtesy."[47] It seems that Prynne was free to move around the castle, though not to leave its limits. Visitors from across the island who had business with the Carterets may have gained permission from the lieutenant governor to meet his interesting charge.

More details of Prynne's imprisonment on Jersey became available during the 1640s. Prynne described Sir Philip Carteret as "a faithful, constant friend" and acknowledged yet again "what extraordinary favours and respects" he received from him and his lady.[48] It was through Carteret's good graces, Prynne reported, that his fellow sufferer Henry Burton procured "more liberty, respect, and better accommodations" during his imprisonment on nearby Guernsey.[49] Sir Philip's family, declared Prynne, "was the most orderly, pious, religious … and best nurtured by far of any in the island."[50] Hours of discourse led Prynne to represent Carteret as "an enemy to the bishops' tyranny and … innovations," who "much joyed at the calling of this and the former parliament."[51]

Carteret, however, had enemies, as perhaps would anyone who combined the offices of bailiff, lieutenant governor, and farmer of the king's revenues and also served as judge in the island court and captain of the militia. Jersey had already more than a century of infighting among leading families and interests and rivalry between governors and jurats, which became more acute as authority became concentrated. In 1642 a group of aggrieved inhabitants petitioned Parliament against Carteret, charging him with arbitrary exercise of excessive power, "being absolute in that island so far remote from the eyes of the state." His listed offences were mostly fiscal and administrative, involving licenses, imposts, and customs, but the petitioners also charged him with nepotism, awarding key positions to his son and nephew and filling island offices with kindred of his faction.[52]

When civil war erupted between the king and Parliament, Carteret, like many a moderate gentleman, attempted to "adhere to both, without siding against either," desiring "the parliament's friendship and [the] king's jointly."[53] Such a neutralist position proved untenable, and in February 1643, while many of the islanders sided with Parliament, Carteret promoted the king's commission of array, thereby earning the label "malignant." He died in August 1643, but his defiance in holding the two Jersey castles for his majesty played a part in subsequent royalist successes. For a few months after Carteret's death, parliamentary commissioners gained

[47] Prynne, *Movnt–Orgveil*, sigs. ¶3, Av, A4, 55, 113.
[48] William Prynne, *The Lyar Confounded or A Brief Refutation of John Lilburnes Miserably-Mistated Case* (1645), 33.
[49] Ibid., 42.
[50] Ibid., 42.
[51] Ibid., 42.
[52] *Articles Exhibited against Sir Philipp Carteret, Governour of the Isle of Jersy* (1642).
[53] Prynne, *Lyar Confounded*, 38, 39.

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temporary ascendancy, but royalists led by George Carteret regained control of the divided island and held it until 1651.

Sir Philip's emergence as a royalist was deeply compromising for Prynne, who had publicly praised him as a friend. Prynne's enemies in England and Carteret's enemies on the island combined to besmirch both men's reputations in a series of printed diatribes, to which Prynne responded with typically prolix vigor. Hostility between controversialists in civil-war London pitted the Independent John Lilburne against the Presbyterian Prynne, each attacking the other in print. The failure of parliamentary efforts to retake Jersey stirred further antagonism against the island's "malignants" and those who had taken their side. Critics charged Prynne with obstructing parliamentary plans to mount an expedition to Jersey in 1643, thereby ensuring the loss of the island. Prynne's 1645 counter-polemic *The Lyar Confounded* was answered at length in *Pseudo-Mastix: The Lyar's Whipp*, a full-scale assault on the administration of Sir Philip Carteret and his erstwhile puritan supporter that may have only circulated in manuscript. Leading the assault was Michael Lempriere, a jurat of Jersey and a long-time foe of Carteret; Lempriere had been instrumental in preparing the anonymous *Articles* of 1642.[54]

The authors of *Pseudo-Mastix* charged in essence that Prynne had allowed himself to be seduced by Carteret's wiles, "to maintain a particular man's pride and interest, against a whole and well affected commonwealth."[55] Prynne saw the island only from the castle's point of view and was oblivious to Carteret's "oppressions" in the parishes: "All he could know was only by Sir Philip's and his Lady's informations."[56] Indeed, they intimated, Prynne, the godly scourge of secular pastimes, had himself played cards into the night with the Carteret women, in an atmosphere of "fiddling, dancing … drinking of healths, and lascivious and filthy discourse."[57] By this account, Prynne was a dupe and a hypocrite as well as an enabler of the royalist cause[58]; his incarceration, although uncomfortable, was not the ordeal that Prynne the "martyr" depicted. Prynne renewed his praise for "the ancient family of the Carterets" in the changed circumstances of the Restoration, memorializing yet again "their favour to me whiles a close prisoner in Mount Orgeuil Castle in Jersey."[59] Island imprisonment was a life-changing experience, never to be forgotten, but in Prynne's case it was not as debilitating as his captors intended.

BURTON ON GUERNSEY

Henry Burton had already spent three months in Lancaster Castle when orders came at the beginning of November 1637 for his further removal. He was taken to

[54] Michael Lempriere, Henry Dumaresq, and Abraham Hérault, *Pseudo-Mastix: The Lyar's Whipp*, reprinted in *Société Jersiaise, Bulletin Annuel* 13 (1888): 309–55. No seventeenth-century edition of *Pseudo-Mastix* is known to survive.

[55] Ibid., 314–15.

[56] Ibid., 345.

[57] Ibid., 348.

[58] Ibid., 352.

[59] William Prynne, *Brief Animadversions on, and Additional Explanatory Amendments of* […] *the Fourth Part of the Institutes* (1669), 207.

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Liverpool and put on board a ship, and only then did his escort reveal that he was bound for "the castle of the isle of Guernsey," where his wife and family would not be allowed to join him.[60] There followed a "long, tedious, and perilous voyage" of six weeks' duration—"in the winter season, through dangerous seas"—in which Burton was "tumbled and tossed" by storms, and "even nigh unto death" with sea-sickness.[61] The leaking vessel made landfalls at Dublin, Milford Haven, and Dartmouth before reaching Guernsey on 16 December, but the prisoner was "not permitted to take the least refreshing on land."[62] It was a miserable and dangerous voyage, although mild compared to Prynne's harrowing experience. In his post-imprisonment *Narration*, burnishing his martyr's credentials, Burton explicitly compared himself to St. Paul, who also suffered "perils by sea" while bearing witness "to the truth of the gospel."[63]

"A true and perfect account of the money disbursed in and about the convoy of Mr. Henry Burton from the castle of Lancaster … to the Castle Cornet within the isle of Guernsey,"[64] filed in the Exchequer, detailed the £115 6s. 7d. spent to move him between prisons. It included the £20 1s 1d charge for Burton's conveyance forty miles from Lancaster to Liverpool, "with the moneys necessarily there expended before he went shipboard"[65]; £48 5s. 6d. incurred in victualing the ship "in regard of contrary winds occasioning delay in their journey"; and £15 to his conductor, Brian Burton (no relation), who "was absent by reason of storms and contrary winds from the 1st of November until the 21st of January … for his care and pains in all the same."[66]

Occupying a similar position to Jersey's Mount Orgeuil, Guernsey's Castle Cornet was a towering medieval fortress on a rocky islet close to the harbor of St. Peter Port. Burton found the castle an improvement on conditions at Lancaster, where he had been forced to share the jail with papists and witches. Guernsey had a Presbyterian heritage, and Burton was not without local sympathizers. The governor, the Earl of Danby, resisted Laudian demands to conform Guernsey's church discipline to the Church of England, because "it may well be thought dangerous to give a general discontent unto the inhabitants … by altering the form of their discipline so affected by them and long enjoyed."[67] (Similar advice would have been valuable regarding Presbyterian Scotland.) The castle lieutenant, Nathaniel Darrell, "a noble gentleman born in Kent," gave Burton "civil and courteous usage" and always provided him with "good and wholesome diet … the best the island and sea afforded, which he sent me warm from his table."[68] On at least one occasion Darrell gave Burton a bottle of muscadine

[60] TNA, SP 16/367, fol. 192.

[61] *Severall Humble Petitions* (1641), 12 (printer's error for 20); Henry Burton, *A Narration of the Life of Mr. Henry Burton* (1643), sig A2, 19. See also David Cressy, "The Vast and Furious Ocean: The Passage to Puritan New England," *New England Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (December 1984): 511–32.

[62] Burton, *Narration of the Life*, 19.

[63] Ibid., 32, 34.

[64] TNA, E 178/5400.

[65] Ibid.

[66] TNA, E 178/5400; TNA, SP 16/378, fol. 132; TNA, SP 16/537, fol. 90.

[67] TNA, SP 16/536, fol. 101; TNA, SP 16/537, fol. 27. See also Thornton, *Channel Islands*, 147; Ogier, *Reformation and Society in Guernsey*, 93.

[68] Burton, *Narration*, 20–21.

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wine sent to Castle Cornet by Captain George Carteret.[69] Though not allowed to leave the castle, Burton was not necessarily hidden from visiting Guernseymen, bent on paying their respects to a distinguished if notorious and now unfortunate minister.

Burton's initial accommodation was a bare cell with boarded-up windows, allowing glimpses of neither the sun by day nor the moon by night. But during his three years of island confinement, he graduated first to a room with a view, and a year and a half later to the highest chamber in the castle with a panoramic maritime prospect.[70] Burton's social isolation was severe, but he occupied himself with useful chores and a strenuous program of reading. "God made everything a recreation; the making of mine own bed, and the sweeping of my chamber, was an exercise of my body, so a recreation of my mind."[71] Like his fellow prisoner Prynne, Burton engaged in "meditations … to deceive the natural tedium of so horrid a solitariness."[72] And like the "birdman of Alcatraz," a much less salubrious island prisoner, he even fed pigeons at his windows.[73]

Burton spent most of his time with the Bible, studying Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, and English editions. He also treasured a volume of ecclesiastical history in Greek. His keeper, Lieutenant Darrell, maintained the strict conditions of his imprisonment, denying him access to controversial texts and enforcing the ban on writing materials (though not necessarily denying him visitors). Burton, however, discovered "an art to make ink, and for pens I had goose wings, which were to sweep the dust off my windows, and for paper a private friend in Guernsey town supplied me."[74] (This friend may have been the Guernsey Presbyterian minister Jean de la Marche, who had himself endured imprisonment at Castle Cornet for seven months in 1633 and who shared Burton's enthusiasm for Revelation.[75]) Like many prisoners worldwide, Burton kept this contraband secret. He even managed to smuggle out a few controversial writings, "some of which came to light, and some miscarried,"[76] including denunciations of Archbishop Laud. Burton's *Replie to a Relation of the Conference between William Laude and Mr. Fisher the Jesuite*, printed surreptitiously at Amsterdam in 1640, refers to the author as "a late minister of the Gospel" who "still suffereth both close imprisonment and punishment, with divorcement and separation from wife, children, and all friends whatsoever, as a man buried quick in a marble tomb of calamity, the very image of hell."[77] Exceeding

[69] TNA, SP 16/ 458, fol. 77

[70] W. Rolleston and T. W. M. de Guerir, eds., "Jean de la Marche … The Diary," *Report and Transactions Societé Guernesiase* 11 (1930–1932): 201.

[71] Burton, *Narration*, 20–21, 3.

[72] Burton, *The Sovnding of the Two Last Trvmpets* (1641), sig. A3.

[73] *The Birdman of Alacatraz*, directed by John Frankenheimer (1962), was an award-winning film on the life of inmate Robert Stroud.

[74] Burton, *Narration*, 22.

[75] Jean de la Marche, *A Complaint of the False Prophets Mariners upon the Drying Up of their Hierarchicall Euphrates* (1641), title page, Sigs. a–a2v, 1; Rolleston and de Guerir, "Jean de la Marche … The Diary," 198. An admirer of Burton, de la Marche was later a member of the Westminster Assembly, and may have been responsible for recommending the Channel Island "Orders for Ecclesiastical Discipline" as an alternative to episcopal government: *The Orders for Ecclesiastical Discipline according to That Which Hath Been Practiced since the Reformation of the Church in* […] *the Iles of Garnsey, Gersey, Spark and Alderny* (1642).

[76] Burton, *Narration*, 22.

[77] Ibid

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four hundred printed pages, this example of prison writing would have required a dozen quires of smuggled paper.[78]

Burton led almost an eremitic life on Guernsey and came to believe that he would have read and written less if his wife had been there to comfort him. He missed his family, and missed his pulpit and parish, but he was sustained, he later reported, by "an infallible knowledge that the cause for which I thus suffered was a noble, holy, righteous, and innocent cause … the cause of Christ, of his gospel, of his church, yea of the whole land, my native country."[79] The rainbow he saw on 25 April 1640—contemporary with the first parliament in England in eleven years—seemed to him to signify that "God's church in England especially should have a miraculous deliverance through a sea of troubles."[80] Looking back in 1641, he compared his three and a half years of imprisonment (including the time in England) to the forty-two months foretold in Revelation, when "the Beast out of the bottomless pit, that Antichrist, shall affront God's church," and saw his liberation in November 1640 as part of a general deliverance from "the bonds and chains of a Babylonian and Antichristian captivity."[81] His suffering was worthwhile, he reflected, because now "the Lord hath thus begun his great and glorious work of repairing his temple, and restoring religion."[82] His meditations on Revelation, "digested … during his banishment and close imprisonment in the Isle of Guernsey," indicated to him "a prophecy of these last times."[83] Burton is usually considered a congregational Independent, but his study of John's work on Patmos seems to have made him a millenarian Sixth Trumpeter, if not an early Fifth Monarchist.[84]

The Guernsey minister Jean de la Marche applauded Burton as "the faithful witness of Christ"[85] and drew parallels between the prisoner's suffering and the prophecies of St. John. De la Marche's own sermon on Revelation, preached on Guernsey in February 1640, referred to imprisonment and affliction. After Burton's release, when Prynne joined him from Jersey, de la Marche hosted a celebratory farewell banquet for the two "martyrs" before they set sail to England. They left Guernsey on 19 November 1640 and made landfall at Dartmouth on 22 November after an uneventful voyage. One week later they enjoyed their celebrity homecoming in London.[86]

BASTWICK ON SCILLY

John Bastwick's isolation was especially severe. Unlike the Channel Islands, with their parishes and ports and their active trade with England and France, which at

[78] Burton, *A Replie to a Relation of the Conference Between William Laude and Mr. Fisher the Jesuite* (Amsterdam, 1640), sigs. C2v–C3. The final page is dated 26 June 1639.

[79] Burton, *Narration*, 28.

[80] Ibid., 32.

[81] Burton, *Sovnding of the Two Last Trvmpets*, Sigs. A4, 33.

[82] Ibid., 41.

[83] Ibid., title page.

[84] Burton, *Sovnding of the Two Last Trvmpets*, Sig. B. See Henry Burton, *The Seven Vials or A Brief and Plain Exposition upon the 15: and 16: Chapters of the Revelation* (1628), which is concerned more with the Beast and the Antichrist than with the end of days.

[85] De la Marche, *Complaint of the False Prophets*, Sigs. A–A2, 48–49.

[86] Rolleston and de Guerir, "Jean de la Marche … The Diary," 204. See also Cressy, *Travesties*, 230.

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least brought the world to their shores, the Isles of Scilly were a slenderly populated and lightly trafficked sprinkle of rocks twenty-eight miles beyond Land's End. They seemed like the end of the world. Bastwick had a much shorter journey than his fellows, from one end of Cornwall to the other, followed by a day at sea; by 16 October 1637 he was ensconced in the island castle of St. Mary's.[87] Facilities there were barely adequate for its military defenders; a survey in 1637 noted "the want of conveniency" in the castle, which was "uncapable to lodge and accommodate a garrison of twenty soldiers, and so ill contrived in the fortification, that the least assault of an enemy could easily carry it."[88] There would be scant welcome and little comfort for a seditious gentleman prisoner.

Details of Bastwick's confinement are hard to find. Susanna Bastwick's petition of November 1640 to the House of Commons referred as much to her own suffering as her husband's. Bastwick's accompanying petition, subsequently printed, echoed that of his wife, and dwelt more on the injustice of his sentence than the circumstances of his imprisonment. Further petitions from Susanna Bastwick in October 1644 and John Bastwick in March 1646, seeking reparations, add few details.[89]

The 1641 edition of Bastwick's Latin treatise *Flagellum Pontificis et Episcoporum Latialium* refers to the Scillies by their old name, "Sorlings," and describes them as stony and inhospitable, devoid of civility and culture. Bastwick describes his keeper, Thomas Bassett, as a man of disgraceful and degenerate life, which is what any puritan might say of any cavalier.[90] Bassett was lieutenant governor of Scilly under his uncle Sir Francis Godolphin, and had hoped to do more than command a fort.[91] Susanna Bastwick in her 1644 petition says that Bassett "carried himself most unworthily and inhumanely" towards her husband.[92] St. Mary's Castle offered no cultivated evening conversation of the kind Prynne enjoyed at Mount Orgueil, and no supply of smuggled books and writing materials of the sort that sustained Burton at Castle Cornet. Instead, Bastwick complained in 1646, he "was kept close prisoner two years and four months and for seven days and nights, never came into any bed, but lay in a dungeon, and endured unsufferable misery from inhumane jailors."[93] One can imagine him marking the days on the wall. Susanna Bastwick had followed her husband to Launceston, declaring that she would "undergo any difficulty or misery" to live with him, but after his removal to Scilly she was ordered, "under pain of imprisonment, not to set her foot upon any part of the islands."[94] She was "forced to live in a disconsolate condition,"[95] while Bastwick endured "a living death and a dying life."[96]

Though he never lost his knack for polemic, renewing his attack on popery, episcopacy, hierarchy, and ceremony as soon as he was released, Bastwick dwelt little on his personal history. Even when drawn into controversy between Presbyterians and

[87] TNA, SP 16/369, fol. 242.
[88] TNA, SP 16/368, fol. 190.
[89] *Severall Humble Petitions*, 11–15; TNA, SP 16/471, fol. 68; TNA, SP 16/473, fol. 148; HL/PO/JO/101/174, HL/PO/JO/101/202, Parliamentary Archives.
[90] John Bastwick, *Flagellum Pontificis et Episcoporum Latialium* (1641), 8.
[91] TNA, SP 16/448, fol. 50.
[92] HL/PO/JO/101/174, Parliamentary Archives.
[93] HL/PO/JO/101/202, Parliamentary Archives.
[94] HL/PO/JO/101/174, Parliamentary Archives.
[95] Ibid.
[96] John Bastwick, *The Utter Routing of the Whole Army of all the Independents and Sectaries* (1646), 4.

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Independents in the course of the civil war, he chose not to flaunt his credentials as a martyr or witness. *A Iust Defence of John Bastwick, Doctor in Phisicke, against the Calumnies of John Lilburne* (1645) only mentions his own "banishment" indirectly, as a time when his wife offered friendship and assistance to Lilburne and Lilburne performed "small favours … in the time of my imprisonment."[97]

Susanna Bastwick took up the struggle in *Innocency Cleared* […] *in a Letter Sent to Mr Henry Burton* […] *in Defence of Dr Bastwick* (1645). She referred to Burton and Prynne as her husband's "quondam fellow sufferers" but made little other mention of their time in prison.[98] After Bastwick's death in 1654, she reminded the high court of Parliament of her late husband's "long exile in the Isles of Scilly … his many years cruel close imprisonment," and the loss of his hearing, his practice, and his property. Though Parliament had promised reparations, to be raised from the estates of delinquent royalists, the ordinance died when Parliament was dissolved. The distressed widow declared that "the sufferings, afflictions, and miseries" of herself and her children were now "daily more and more increased" and that John Bastwick's story demanded renewed public attention.[99]

PATMOS OR GUANTANAMO

The use of remote islands to confine offenders in perpetuity was an innovation of the Caroline regime, although there were ancient and medieval precedents for such a practice. Critics considered the punishment "not only cruel and inhumane, but most unjust and unchristian."[100] Agreeing with this assessment, Parliament restored Burton, Bastwick, and Prynne to their liberty, abolished the court of Star Chamber, and rebuked the Privy Council for assuming to itself "to determine of the estates and liberties of the subject contrary to the law of the land." Reaffirming the principle of Magna Carta that none should suffer arbitrary imprisonment, Parliament specifically permitted anyone so "restrained of his liberty" to be granted the writ of habeas corpus, under the king's protection. None henceforth should suffer "heavier punishments than by any law is warranted," though this was more a rhetorical than a substantive prohibition.[101]

Despite these provisions, strong governments wielding arbitrary power continued to hold state prisoners in remote detention. The Protectorate in the 1650s sent some of the leaders of radical religious dissent into island incarceration. Restoration

[97] John Bastwick, *A Iust Defence of John Bastwick* (1645), 14, 37. Neither John Bastwick, *The Confession of the Faithfull Witnesse of Christ* (1641), nor John Bastwick, *A Declaration Demonstrating and Infallibly Proving That All Malignants, Whether They Be Prelates, Popish-Cavaliers, with All Other Ill-Affected Persons, Are Enemies to God and the King* (1643), mention his imprisonment in Scilly.

[98] Susanna Bastwick, *Innocency Cleared, True Worth Predicated, Against False Aspertions: in a Letter sent to Mr Henry Burton. From a Christian Friend; In Defence of Dr Bastwick, one of His Quondam Fellow Sufferers* (1645), title page, 3.

[99] *To the High Court of Parliament* […] *The Remonstrance and Humble Petition of Susanna Bastwick* (1654).

[100] Prynne, *New Discovery of the Prelates Tyranny*, 2nd pagination, 179. For ancient precedents, see Washburn, *Banishment in the Later Roman Empire*; Mary V. Braginton, "Exile under the Roman Emperors," *Classical Journal* 39, no. 7 (April 1944): 391–407. Richard II exiled John Lord Cobham to Jersey in 1398; Thornton, *Channel Islands, 1370–1640*, 19.

[101] Statutes of the Realm, 1641, 16 Car. 1, c. 10.

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authorities used some of those same island strongholds in the 1660s to detain unreconstructed republicans. Banishment became "part of the legal repertoire" of late Enlightenment powers, with offenders confined in isolated island garrisons from Sainte-Marguerite to St. Helena.[102] (Modern readers may reflect on America's Guantanamo Bay as a more recent site of offshore imprisonment, removed from effective judicial review.[103])

Among those dispatched to island prisons under the Protectorate were the Leveller John Lilburne, who spent a year and a half at Mount Orgueil, Jersey; the anti-trinitarian John Biddle, who was held almost three years on Scilly; the radical army officer Robert Overton, who was imprisoned for a year at Jersey's Castle Elizabeth; the radical millenarians Hugh Courtney, Christopher Feake, Thomas Harrison, John Rogers, and Sir Henry Vane, who served various terms on the Isle of Wight; and their colleagues Arthur Squibb and Colonel Matthew Allured, who were confined on the Isle of Man. Heavy use of the small island of St. Nicholas, offshore Plymouth, as a staging post or place of confinement, prompted the commander to request the Protector in April 1659 "to be as sparing as you can of sending prisoners to the island of Plymouth, in regard we have no place to imprison them in more than what is the soldier's quarters."[104]

The practice of dispatching enemies to island prisons, however, proved too useful for the restored Stuart monarchy to abandon. Faced with continuing sedition and recurrent threats of republican resurgence, Charles II's government moved several Interregnum grandees into island isolation. Among such men on the wrong side of the Restoration were Major General John Lambert, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Salmon, and Major Richard Creed, all sent to imprisonment in Guernsey; Colonel Ralph Cobbett, Major General Robert Overton (again), and the regicides Gilbert Millington, Henry Smith, James Temple, Thomas Waite, and Sir Hardress Waller were held on Jersey; Sir Henry Vane (again, but briefly), Sir John Ireton, and Colonel John Wildman, were sent to the Isles of Scilly; and James Harrington, Colonel Robert Lilburne, and John Lambert (for another ten years), were confined to St. Nicholas Island. Most of these men spent time in the Tower or other mainland prisons before being transferred overseas. They had offended against the state rather than against the law, and their treatment was governed by political rather than judicial determinations. Island confinement became less common after the 1679 "Act for the better secureing the Liberty of the Subject and for Prevention of Imprisonments beyond the Seas," better known as the habeas corpus act, which specifically noted its application to "the islands of Jersey and Guernsey."[105] However, several more years would pass before England's remaining political prisoners gained release from offshore detention.

Among many features shared by island prisoners of different regimes were anger at the cruelty and lawlessness of their treatment, assurance that they suffered for a

[102] Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900* (Cambridge, 2010), 35, 165–67, 220, 299.

[103] Stephen I. Vladeck with Gregory F. Jacob, "Detention Policies," in *Patriots Debate: Contemporary Issues in National Security Law*, ed. Harvey Rishikof, Stewart Baker, and Bernard Horowitz (Chicago, 2012), 205–23.

[104] TNA, SP 18/211, fol. 24.

[105] Statutes of the Realm, 1679, 31 Car. 2, c. 2.

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righteous cause, gratitude that God had strengthened them for their ordeal, and a propensity to identify with the prisoners of Scripture, especially the prophet Daniel, the apostle Paul, and John of Patmos. Deprived of worldly comforts and correspondence, the noise of London, the visits of friends, and even the fellowship of other prisoners, island detainees made as good use of their time as circumstances would permit. At the very least, they engaged in prayer and meditation; none were denied Bibles, and some read deeply in a range of godly works. Those with access to writing materials, and the means to smuggle out manuscripts, produced works of the sort that John Rogers called "Prison-born morning beams."[106] Some were effectively silenced, but many survived to pen passionate works of witness and justification. Like Burton and Bastwick under Charles I, John Lilburne and Feake and Rogers under the Protectorate and Lambert and Creed after the Restoration had formidable wives who petitioned on their behalf and kept their sufferings in view.

Political and religious prisoners of the 1650s shared with the puritan martyrs of the 1630s indignation at the injustice of their confinement. Indeed, Prynne himself was one of them, complaining that his imprisonment at Dunster, Taunton, and Pendennis from 1650 to 1653 was worse than that of John on Patmos, where at least the saint could write and send letters "without any perusal or restraint by his heathen guardians." (Prynne's sister tried to serve as a courier but was prevented.[107]) The sufferers were victims, they believed, of arbitrary, lawless cruelty. It proved, wrote Christopher Feake in 1655, that England had become Babylon, and that the new Protectorate and the monarchy of Charles I "are one and the same."[108] It was outrageous, wrote John Rogers, that he and his brethren were punished "as if we were felons or fearful villains and miscreants," when "cavaliers … Newgate thieves, and whores are not so cruelly handled at this day."[109] Supporters explicitly compared the "illegal imprisonment and banishment" of Major General Overton by Oliver Cromwell to the treatment of Prynne, Burton, and Bastwick under Charles I.[110]

Island captivity was different from mainland incarceration. The offshore location created additional barriers between the prisoner and the world. Wives and families were usually prevented from following. The very experience of crossing by water marked a separation, as Prynne's and Burton's harrowing journeys to the Channel Islands underscored. John Rogers, imprisoned on the Isle of Wight barely five miles from Portsmouth in the 1650s, wrote of himself as "a poor pilgrim, prisoner, and forsaken banished man" on "this mine isle of Patmos." He counted himself among the "royal persecuted ones in Patmos-isle exile … brethren indeed."[111]

Each prisoner's experience was different, depending upon local social resources, the attitude of the garrison, and the personality and politics of island governors. Prynne enjoyed conversation with the Carterets, and Burton had his books, but

[106] John Rogers, "To the Reader," *Jegar-Sahadutha: An Oyled Pillar. Set up for Posterity* (1657).

[107] William Prynne, *A New Discovery of Free-State Tyranny* (1655), 2nd pagination, 6, 14.

[108] Christopher Feake, *The Oppressed Close Prisoner in Windsor-Castle, His Defiance to the Father of Lyes, in the Strength of the God of Truth* (1655), sig. A2, 119; Rogers, *Jegar-Sahadutha*, 2–18.

[109] Rogers, "To the Reader" and introduction to *Jegar-Sahadutha*, 4, 23, 57.

[110] *The Plain Case of the Common-Weal Neer the Desperate Gulf of the Common-Woe* (1658–1659), 15–16; J. R., *The Sad Suffering Case of Major-General Rob. Overton, Prisoner in the Isle of Jersey* (1659), 1–10.

[111] Rogers, *Jegar-Sahadutha*, title page and 1, 20, 53, 61, 63, 72, 137.

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Bastwick could turn only to the company of his God or himself, or the surly Thomas Bassett. Cut off from external streams of discourse, each found common reading in the Bible, especially the book of Revelation. All three returned to the fray in the 1640s, when some of John's prophecies seemed to be fulfilled.

Mark Kishlansky considers Burton, Bastwick, and Prynne lucky not to be treated as traitors for opposing the Caroline regime. He views their claims to martyrdom as hyperbolic, observing that they lived to tell the tale.[112] But the court of Star Chamber had no power to execute anyone, even if their offence so warranted, and the Council could not order their deaths. Instead the government kept its prisoners alive, at a distance, and even paid for their keep. Their supporters considered them "martyrs," though their ordeal was not fatal; neither was it without occasional compensations.

In their tracts for public consumption, the prisoners described their situation using the image of entombment, of a living death walled off from the world. They used the language of exile, as if they had been banished abroad, although Jersey and Guernsey were English dominions and the Scillies part of an English county. Burton, Bastwick, and Prynne adopted this rhetoric not only to make sense of their predicament and to highlight the cruelty of their persecutors but also to associate their suffering with the exiles of scripture and history. Recognition of these tropes by no means undermines their force or their authenticity. Island imprisonment was unusual punishment, outside the norms of law, even if it was not necessarily the hell that its sufferers depicted. The "puritan martyrs" drew on their spiritual strength, generally maintained good health, and Prynne and Burton at least evaded the ban on reading and writing. They faced perpetual confinement with Christian resolve, until a providential change of circumstances brought them home.

[112] Kishlansky, "Martyrs' Tales," 342.

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