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John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*
and the Lollard Legacy in the
Long English Reformation

Susan Royal

A Thesis Presented for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy



Durham University
Department of Theology and Religion
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Abstract

This thesis addresses a perennial historiographical question of the English Reformation: to what extent, if any, the late medieval dissenters known as lollards influenced the Protestant Reformation in England. To answer this question, this thesis looks at the appropriation of the lollards by evangelicals such as William Tyndale, John Bale, and especially John Foxe, and through them by their seventeenth century successors.

Because Foxe included lollardy in his influential tome, *The Acts and Monuments* (1563), he was the most important conduit for their beliefs and ecclesiology, and indeed, existence. His reorientation of the lollards from heretics and traitors to martyrs and model subjects portrayed the lollards as members of the true church and as Protestants' spiritual forebears. Scholars have generally argued that to accomplish this, Foxe heavily edited radical lollard views on episcopacy, baptism, preaching, conventicles, tithes, and oaths, either omitting them from his book or moulding them into forms compatible with a magisterial Reformation.

This thesis analyzes the lollard narratives in his tome and concludes that Foxe in fact made no systematic attempt to downplay radical lollard beliefs, demonstrating that a wealth of non-mainstream material is present in the text. This suggests that Foxe was more tolerant of radical ideas than previously recognized, and that some of his theological views lay outside Elizabethan orthodoxy. More significantly, these radical views, legitimized by Foxe's inclusion of them in his book, allowed for seventeenth-century separatists and religious radicals to appropriate the lollards, through Foxe, as historical validation of their theological and ecclesiological positions, including the act of separation. The thesis traces the ensuing struggle for the lollard, and indeed the Foxean, legacy between conformists and nonconformists, arguing that the same lollards that Foxe used to bolster the fledgling English church in the sixteenth century would play a role in its fragmentation in the seventeenth.

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List of Abbreviations

- AM* Foxe, John. *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or *TAMO* (1570 edition) (HRI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011). Available from: <http://www.johnfoxe.org> (accessed 16.8.13).
- Apologie* James, Thomas. *An apologie for Iohn Wickliffe shewing his conformitie with the now Church of England* (1608). STC II 14445.
- BC* John Bale, *A brefe chronycle concernynge the examinacyon and death of the blessed martyr of Christ syr Iohan Oldecastell the lorde Cobham, collected together by Iohan Bale*. Antwerp, 1544. STC II 1276.
- ESTC* Electronic English Short Title Catalog. British Library, London: <http://bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestyp/catblhold/estchistory/estchistory.html> (accessed 26.11.13)
- Image* Bale, John. *The image of bothe churches after the moste wonderfull and heauenly Reuelacion of Sainct Iohn the Euangelist, contayning a very frutefull exposicion or paraphrase vpon the same*. London, 1548. STC II 1297.
- JEH* *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*

- JWRR* Aston, Margaret. "John Wycliffes Reformation Reputation." *Past and Present* 30 (April 1965): 23-51. Reprinted in *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion*, edited by Margaret Aston, 243-272. London: Hambledon Press, 1984. Pages cited from the latter.
- LL* Thomson, John A.F. *The Later Lollards, 1415-1520*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Norwich Trials* Tanner, Norman, ed., *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428-31*. London: Royal Historical Society, 1977.
- NNT* Hudson, Anne. "No Newe Thing": The Printing of Medieval Texts in the Early Reformation Period. In *Middle English Studies Presented to Norman Davis*, edited by Douglas Gray and Eric Stanley, 153-74. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983. Reprinted in *Lollards and their Books*, edited by Anne Hudson, 217-26. London: Hambledon Press, 1985. Pages cited from the former.
- ODNB* *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by Lawrence Goldman, January 2008. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/> (accessed 17.10.2013).
- PR* Hudson, Anne. *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- RB* Evenden, Elizabeth, and Thomas S. Freeman. *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

- STC/STC II Pollard, A.W., and G.R. Redgrave, compilers. Revised and enlarged by W.A. Jackson, F.S. Ferguson and K. F. Pantzer. *A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English books printed abroad, 1475-1640*, 3 volumes. London, 1986-1991.
- TAMO* Essays *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or *TAMO* (1570 edition). (HRI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011). Available from: <http://www.johnfoxe.org> (Accessed: 01.11.13).
- Thorpe/Oldcastle* Constantine, George, and/or William Tyndale, *The examination of Master William Thorpe preste accused of heresy before Thomas Arundell, Archebishop of Ca(n)terbury, the yere of ower Lord .MCCCC. and seuen. The examinacion of the honorable knight syr Jhon Oldcastell Lorde Cobham, burnt bi the said Archebisshop, in the fyrste yere of Kynge Henry the Fyfth*. Antwerp, 1530. STC II 24045.
- Wing Wing, Donald, compiler. *Short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America, and of English books printed in other countries, 1641-1700*, 3 volumes. New York, 1945-1951.
- WL?* Hornbeck, J. Patrick. *What is a Lollard? Dissent and Belief in Late Medieval England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

A Note on Quotations

All the quotations from early modern texts have been expanded, with italicized letters indicating where expansions have been made.

Statement of Copyright

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Section I

Introductory Material

This thesis maps the formation of confessional identity in the Reformation. Specifically, it investigates the role of the lollards in the course of the long English Reformation, and the way that John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (*AM*) defined that role for late-sixteenth and seventeenth-century England. In order to bring together common themes into a narrative, the thesis is divided into five uneven sections. The first presents the topics and themes explored in later chapters; it outlines my argument and approach, and it sets my work into the scholarly landscape. It also lays the foundation of the thesis as a whole by exploring the significance of history in the Reformation, in particular, the historical place of the lollards. The second section looks at the process of appropriation by early evangelicals and its codification by John Foxe. It looks at the lengths to which John Bale, William Tyndale, and others went to neutralize lollardy's reputation for sedition and heresy, turning erstwhile traitors and dissenters into loyal subjects and persecuted members of the true church. The third section examines what evangelicals and Protestants gained from this rehabilitation: historical legitimacy for the establishment of the true church, marked according to Protestants by the correct administration of the sacraments and the true preaching of the Word. This section begins by examining the role of the clergy in performing these functions, analyzing the lollard narratives in the *AM* to see what Foxe's readers may have gleaned about the place of the priesthood in the reformed church. From here, the fourth section examines three aspects of reformed religious culture that became sources of contention in the late sixteenth

and seventeenth centuries. It details how advocates of the conventicling tradition and those who opposed tithes and oaths found ample historical examples of their positions in the lollard narratives that Foxe left fully intact.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter will explain my argument and approach, along with the limitations and scope of the project. Additionally, concerned as this thesis is with the development of religious identities over the long Reformation, this introduction describes who the lollards were and—more importantly for this study—who they were according to evangelicals and later Protestants. Then it will look at the figure of Foxe himself, who recognized these lollard men and women as kindred spirits and incorporated them into his tome as such. This thesis will seek to show that Foxe’s theological perspective looks more radical than scholars have acknowledged up to now, and that the way he edited the lollard narrative supports and elucidates this idea. From Foxe himself, this section will introduce his most acclaimed work, the *AM*, at the heart of the thesis. It will briefly describe the sixteenth and seventeenth editions of the *AM*, outlining how the narratives of the lollards shaped the book, from their central role in the *AM*’s first Latin edition to their eclipse by the Marian martyr stories in later abridgments. Noting its immense influence, it will specify how readers coalesced around the text—sometimes in shared ways, others differing.

Argument

This thesis argues that the same lollards that Foxe used to shore up the fledgling Church of England would also play a role in its irreparable fragmentation in the seventeenth century. Because Foxe cast a wide net in his hunt for medieval witnesses against the established church, those he claimed as theological predecessors held beliefs that spanned the theological spectrum, so long as they opposed the Roman church. While they mainly converged along the magisterial Protestant middle, some went much further in their rejection of the traditions of the late medieval Catholic church, looking much more like the forebears of the radical reformers than of Church of England divines like Thomas Cranmer, John Jewell, or Richard Hooker.

While many lollard beliefs fit easily into a traditional magisterial framework, others were more radical than mainstream reformers were willing to be, particularly with regard to the issues I will discuss here in this thesis. As a magisterial

reformer—that is, a Protestant who aimed to reform the church in line with the wider society and secular authority—Foxe was supposed to consider the radical strand of the Reformation to be a fanatical, sectarian liability to the evangelical movement.¹ This thesis will challenge those assumptions and show that Foxe was more comfortable with the radical views of the lollards than scholars recognize. Further, this had far-reaching consequences, played out in the fissiparous religious climate of the seventeenth century.

The lollards did not have a significant role in some of the era's biggest controversies. They were largely absent from the Antinomian Controversy, and had no place in the debates over adiaphora.² Perhaps surprisingly, given their penchant for dissimulation, they also played no part in the contention surrounding Nicodemism. The lollards featured largely in disputes about the visibility of the church and its corollary, separation, which will be detailed in chapter three. They also featured in discussions about root and branch episcopacy, the topic of chapter six, and in the *iure divino* establishment of tithes, discussed in chapter ten. Additionally, they served as areas of contention regarding the conventicling tradition and oath-taking, covered in chapters nine and eleven.

When the lollards were used by Reformation polemicists, they were typically offered as examples of ancient witnesses to the true church, sustained through the ages to the time of the Reformation. Historical-theological debates during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries mostly concerned the early church, which was seen as a purer time, uncorrupted by the entanglements progressive debasement that came with allegiance to the state that occurred when Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity.³ Because pre-Laudian conformists and nonconformists, including pu-

¹See Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 4th Ed (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 207-9.

²Weimer details the role of the Marian martyrs in the New England Antinomian Controversy: *Martyrs' Mirror*, 58-77.

³Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); T.L. Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War: The Baptist-Quaker Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

ritans, presbyterians, Baptists, and Quakers, rejected the claim of Catholics that they were preserving continuity, many seventeenth-century religious groups overlooked the doctors of the medieval church as authorities, in favour of early church fathers and, above all, Scripture.⁴

When looking at the historical consciousness of nonconformists in particular, scholars have emphasized the notion of primitivism, rightly pointing out that puritans, Baptists, and Quakers sought to imitate the ecclesiological and moral models set out in the New Testament.⁵ In developing these ideas, however, historians have overlooked the important ways that medieval witnesses were incorporated into nonconformists' arguments for historical legitimacy. This thesis will provide evidence of plenty of radicals who recognized their movement after Constantine's conversion, specifically in the lollards as Foxe chose to portray them, and by doing so, will recast our understanding of nonconformist perspectives on history.⁶

Approach

By exploring the way that *AM* presents issues that were central to the ecclesiology and beliefs of both lollards and reformers, we can better identify the points of con-

⁴The nonconformists were taking further the Christian humanist agenda of patristic revival; Underwood argues that Quakers even thought themselves to *be* the New Testament church, and to have understood their position in the world as ahistorical: 'the past and future were experienced in the present'. If this is true, then it leaves very little room for the medieval witnesses to the true church, examples of which appear often in Quaker writings. While those writings certainly favour Scripture over historical examples, they nonetheless incorporate them as part of their case, something Underwood neglects. Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War*, 5.

⁵Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives*; Euan Cameron, 'Primitivism, Patristics, and Polemic in Protestant Visions of History,' in *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World*, eds., Katherine Van Liere, Simon Ditchfield, and Howard Louthan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 27-51; Rosamund Oates, 'Elizabethan Histories of English Christian Origins,' in *ibid.*, 165-185; Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War*.

⁶In fact the most prolific early defenders of Quakerism, such as George Fox, George Whitehead, Isaac Penington, Francis Howgill, and William Penn, cited the lollards via *AM* as historical evidence of their persecuted church. For the polemical topics they discussed, see M.G.F. Bitterman, 'The Early Quaker Literature of Defense,' *Church History* 42/2 (1973): 203-28.

tact between the magisterial and the radical in the English Reformation. I aim to show that Foxe, far from eradicating or manipulating so-called ‘radical’ strains of lollardy, took pains *not* to omit this material. In fact, the wealth of perspectives Foxe presents in the lollard narratives suggests this reformer was open to a variety of understandings about adiaphoristic and even doctrinal issues. I aim to show that Foxe’s lollards represent a variety of beliefs that span (and sometimes exceed) the spectrum of reformed orthodoxy.⁷

The efforts of Foxe and other English reformers in appropriating lollardy for historical legitimacy are familiar terrain to historians, but less attention has been paid to the muddier issue of how these reformers understood the theological inheritance they claimed from the lollards.⁸ When scholars do look at how evangelical editors such as Foxe handled radical theology, they tend to claim that these editors removed material that was too radical for their tastes. For instance, Susan Wabuda has shown that Henry Bull and John Foxe ‘suppressed evidence that [Marian] prisoners...were well acquainted with the free will men’,⁹ and the commentary for the online edition of *AM* states that Foxe leaves out Walter Brute’s claim that women as well as men could preach and administer sacraments.¹⁰ Shannon McSheffrey and Norman Tanner show that with regard to his handling of the Coventry lollards’

⁷Patrick Collinson has said, for instance, that the lollards were ‘represented in Foxe’s rhetoric monochromatically as a ‘secret multitude of true professors,’ without nuances or shades of colouring,’ which I think is a bit overstated. Collinson, ‘Truth and Legend: The Veracity of John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*,’ in Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethan Essays* (London: Hambledon Press, 1994), 163.

⁸On early evangelicals’ search for historical legitimacy through Wyclif and his followers, see *JWRR*, and also Aston, ‘Lollardy and the Reformation: Survival or Revival?’ *History* 49 (1964): 149-70; reprinted in *Lollards and Reformers*, 219-42; Leslie P. Fairfield, *John Bale: Mythmaker for the English Reformation* (Purdue, IN: Purdue University Press, 1976), chapter 3; *NNT*; *PR*, chapter 10; Alec Ryrie, ‘The Problems of Legitimacy and Precedent in English Protestantism, 1539-47,’ in *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Bruce Gordon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996), 78-92. This list is by no means exhaustive, but these authors contribute most significantly to this area of scholarship.

⁹Susan Wabuda, ‘Henry Bull, Miles Coverdale, and the Making of Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*,’ in *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 245-58.

¹⁰See textual commentary in *TAMO* (1570), 614.

trials, 'Foxe's sins are those of omission rather than commission'.¹¹

Beyond deletions, scholars show that Foxe glossed what text could be smoothed over in order to create one mainstream view.¹² Brad Gregory has demonstrated the way Foxe's marginalia could 'clarify' beliefs that sounded too close to crude sacramentarianism, and Wabuda claims that puritan and moderate conformist tendencies 'were worked into a seamless, resolute stream by Foxe and his friends, at the cost of obscuring other, more minor species of Protestantism'.¹³ Thomas Freeman has argued that Foxe took lollards, evangelicals, and early English Protestants 'and incorporated them into one giant monopoly',¹⁴ while John Davis suggests that there

¹¹Shannon McSheffrey and Norman Tanner, eds. and trans., *Lollards of Coventry, 1486-1522*, Camden Fifth Series 23 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), write that 'beliefs that did not strictly conform with Scripturalism are silently passed over' (55). This charge is repeated by Euan Cameron, who claims that though Foxe on the whole 'did publish honestly, and did not significantly deform or misrepresent his material', nevertheless, '[i]n some cases Foxe may have misled by omission'; Cameron, 'Medieval Heretics as Protestant Martyrs' in *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, 191 n.21.

¹²John R. Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), for example, writes that 'Foxe tended to play down or ignore threats to the protestant unity that he so strongly desired', (115) and Susannah Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), asserts that he 'works to unify Protestant doctrine despite his martyrs' sometimes differing beliefs' (41). See also Stephen Mullaney, 'Reforming Resistance: Class, Gender, and Legitimacy in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*' in *Print, Manuscript, and Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England*, eds. Arthur F. Marotti and Michael D. Bristol (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2000), especially at 239-42, and Ronald E. Shields and James H. Forse, 'Creating the Image of a Martyr: John Porter, Bible Reader,' *Sixteenth Century Journal* 33/3 (2002): 725-34.

¹³Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 186; Susan Wabuda, *Preaching During the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 15.

¹⁴Thomas S. Freeman, 'Introduction: Over Their Dead Bodies: Concepts of Martyrdom in Late-Medieval and Early-Modern England,' in *Martyrs and Martyrdom, c. 1400-1700*, eds. Thomas S. Freeman and Thomas F. Mayer (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 20. I think this is perhaps a bit overstated. While I agree that Foxe incorporated all of these stories to suit his polemical purpose, I would suggest that these groups nevertheless retained some of their individual identities. For example, the Amersham lollards are presented in a table, differentiated from the narratives around them, and the Norwich sect get their own introduction and conclusion, which emphasizes

were cases ‘which Foxe either ignored or masked in order to present all the martyrs as adherents of the Edwardine settlement’.¹⁵

The work of Freeman, Wabuda, and others in examining the discrepancies between Foxe’s text and his primary sources has been tremendous and fruitful, but approaching Foxe in terms of his omissions can be problematic. One concern centres on how removed items are analyzed: scholars pay little attention to issues that are not damning to Foxe’s reputation as a good historian or magisterial reformer, and this can distort how we understand excised material itself and its relation to the included material. Scholars rarely discuss eliminated text that is mainstream in nature;¹⁶ when they do, it is dismissed.¹⁷ The resulting picture of Foxe’s editorial practices and theological outlook, then, emphasizes a rejection of radical tendencies, and comes with warnings that ‘we must always keep Foxe’s polemical purpose in mind when using the material he presents’.¹⁸

their cohesion as a (separate) group. For the Amersham table, see *AM*, 986-1000; for the Norwich introduction and conclusion, see *ibid.*, 804-805 and 811, respectively. For further examples of Foxe omitting/ manipulating lollard material, see Patrick Collinson, ‘John Foxe as Historian,’ *TAMO* Essays; *NNT*, *passim*; and Walsham, ‘Inventing the Lollard Past,’ 646.

¹⁵John F. Davis, *Heresy and Reformation in the South-East of England, 1520-1559* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1983), 143.

¹⁶For instance, Shannon McSheffrey, in *Gender and Heresy: Women and Men in Lollard Communities, 1420-1530* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), claims that Foxe ‘sometimes suppressed information he evidently considered to be unsatisfactory for his Protestant mission’, never mentioning mainstream opinions that Foxe may have cut (13). Also, Patrick Collinson presents no orthodox excisions in ‘Truth and Legend.’

¹⁷An example: Two scholars document the anticlerical claim made by Joan Baker (a London lollard persecuted under Bishop Fitzjames), that she could hear a better sermon at home than from a priest at St Paul’s Cross. Neither proffers reasons this could have been removed from the 1563 edition, where it first appeared; the *TAMO* commentary merely says, ‘Foxe abridges the articles against Joan Baker, although for the most part, he prints them accurately...he suppresses two of her replies. Interestingly, in bothcases [sic] where he did this, in was to conceal her anti-clericalism, not any doctrinaldeviance [sic].’ J. A. F. Thomson mentions the omitted items, ‘but these articles are comparatively unimportant’. See commentary on *TAMO* (1570), 966; and Thomson, ‘John Foxe and some Sources for Lollard History: Notes for a Critical Appraisal,’ in *Studies in Church History* 2, ed. G. J. Cuming (London: Nelson, 1965), 251-57. For more on this, see 223-24 below.

¹⁸McSheffrey and Tanner, eds., *Lollards of Coventry*, 52.

Another problem with approaching *AM* with a special focus on Foxean deletions is an a priori assumption by scholars that those deletions are theologically meaningful, and directly the result of a deliberate choice made by its author. Despite Foxe's strong editorial control, however, Evenden and Freeman have shown that the 1570 *AM* was an unwieldy text. The exigent nature of early modern printing—particularly a book on this scale—meant that there were limitations to Foxe's management. The most significant limitation was the paper supply, which resulted in 'difficult decisions, and occasional vacillations' and at least one 'frantic last-minute debate over what could and should be included in the edition'.¹⁹ Another impediment was the sheer amount of incoming source material, which resulted in misplaced duplications and historical content appearing out of chronological order.²⁰ Beyond this, they have detailed the sheer 'complexity of the supervisory process' used in the 1570 edition, which in the 1576 edition seems to have broken down, resulting in frequent errors, and in the 1583 edition meant that sometimes neither Day nor Foxe had responsibility for page composition.²¹ Thanks to the work of Evenden and Freeman, the manifold contingencies involved in the printing of *AM* are much clearer. With this in mind, this thesis will suggest that it is no longer tenable to recognize an omission as a necessarily deliberate choice based on doctrinal grounds. While this is certainly the case for some, it was clearly an inconsistent rubric; the next few chapters will demonstrate that, with very few exceptions, an idea excised from one lollard narrative was articulated in another.

Focusing on Foxe's omissions presents another challenge. While scholars tend to parse excised material carefully, theological matters that are incorporated into *AM* tend to be lumped together and considered to be evidence of what Foxe found acceptable, or believed himself.²² But this practice smoothes over and obscures potentially

¹⁹*RB*, 170, 173.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 174.

²¹*Ibid.*, 302.

²²One exception to this is Thomas Freeman's analysis of the Freewiller controversy in Foxe; see Freeman, 'Dissenters from a Dissenting Church: The Challenge of the Freewillers 1550-58,' in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, eds. Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 129-56.

fruitful, if subtle, indications that Foxe presented a wealth of views in his tome. By analyzing this spectrum, we can avoid generalizing and get to the heart of what Foxe understood to be proper beliefs, with emphasis on the plural. This methodology could also bring us closer to understanding what Foxe believed himself—which, given how far this spectrum extends into nonconformity (even within a ‘magisterial’ framework), indicates that Foxe could have been more radical than scholars have thought up to now.

This thesis will look at Foxe’s intentions, editing practices, and theological purpose, but it will also show that the key to understanding Foxe’s influence is not to look at just *AM*, but how people read *AM*. Scholars have understood Foxe’s idea of the lollards mainly by looking at what he edited *out* of the text. But a closer examination of what is *in* the text reveals that there were a variety of (often radical) views along a spectrum of belief. This is certainly how Foxe was read in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,²³ where there are few mentions of medieval heretics that Foxe deliberately omitted from *AM*. One rare case appears in a pamphlet debate over infant baptism between John Cragge, a preacher of Monmouthshire, and John Tombes, a minister whose rejection of paedobaptism resulted in his later ejection from his vicarage of Leominster in Herefordshire after failing to subscribe to the Act of Uniformity in 1662. In his defense of the Church of England’s practice of baptizing infants, Cragge preached in a sermon that, ‘Mr Foxe in his *Acts and Monuments* approves of the *Albigenses*, *Waldenses*, *Wickliffists*, *Lollards*, Poor men of *Lyons*, *Brownists*, *Barrowists*, as members of the Reformed Churches, but wholly excludes the Anabaptists, as erring fundamentally.’²⁴ In his reply, Tombes maintained that

²³For instance, Foxe’s Jesuit opponent Robert Persons claimed that through silence, Foxe was agreeing with the tenets of those he included in his book. Persons, *A treatise of three conversions* (St Omer, 1603), 168. Responding to an anonymous Jesuit attack on Foxe’s lauding of Wyclif, Jan Hus, and Jerome of Prague as members of the true church, the Scottish presbyterian John Menzies claimed that whatever their religious errors, ‘yet Mr. *Fox* avouches them to be Faithful Martyrs of Jesus Christ, which he could not have done, if he had not looked on them as agreeing with us in Fundamentals’. Menzies, *The Church of England vindicated against her chief adversaries* (1680), 185.

²⁴John Tombes, *A publick dispute betwixt John Tombs ... respondent, John Cragge, and Henry*

if Foxe had omitted Anabaptists from *AM*, it must have been due to other errors they held.²⁵ This exchange is illustrative for two reasons. First, it elucidates the authority that Foxe held for both conformists and nonconformists, both of whom were eager to stake a claim to the truth through history. Second, it shows that Foxe was successful in establishing a lineage of true belief, one to which later theological writers felt they could add. That Cragge thought he could add later separatists such as the followers of Robert Browne and Henry Barrow to a list of medieval dissenters to whom Foxe bestowed his approval demonstrates the ongoing purchase of *AM* in the early modern period.

Caveats

I have focused this vast topic by looking at the lollards as they were understood by members of the Church of England and those Protestant groups that broke from it in the late sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries. Of course, it is impossible to read polemical literature solely from one side of the confessional divide; a full understanding of the debates and discussions that preoccupied countless hours of Protestant time requires familiarity with Catholic writers whose treatises and arguments were constantly changing the nature of the debate. As a result, Thomas More, Nicholas Harpsfield, Thomas Harding, and Robert Persons will all make appearances, but only when their arguments forced Protestants to reevaluate their position on the lollards. The Catholic perspectives on lollardy were not monolithic and concerned the same issues as that Protestants explored, including the succession of the true church, radical beliefs, and treason.

Vaughan ... opponents, touching infant-baptism, the fifth of September, 1653 ... occasioned by a sermon preached the day before, by Mr. Tombs, upon St. Mark 16.16 ... : also a sermon preached by Mr. Cragge, the next Lords day following, upon the same text, wherein the necessity of dipping is refuted, and infant-baptism asserted (1654), 109. Cragge's listing of both the Waldenses and the Poor Men of Lyon, and the followers of Wyclif and the lollards, as separate sects, illustrates some of the confusion about the relationship of medieval heretical movements to one another; regardless of its veracity, the extra sects help to bolster Cragge's point.

²⁵John Tombes, *A plea for anti-paedobaptists* (1654), 42.

In order to explore the vast quantity of printed material in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, I have focused on published text. For reasons of time, I have concentrated on English material over Latin works, though I have consulted important Latin tracts that handle the lollards in great depth. These include Nicholas Harpsfield's *Historia Wicleffiana* (printed in 1622, but circulated in manuscript much earlier) and *Dialogi Sex*.

Of course, there is scope for further work on this issue. Any broader examination of the lollard legacy would need to incorporate sources such as Wyclif's original manuscripts; these survived into the Reformation era, though Anthony Kenny has pointed out that very few early modern writers, saving Thomas James, actually consulted Wyclif's own works.²⁶ John Bale consulted Wyclif's *De veritate scriptura* at Queen's College, Cambridge, as well as *De fide catholica*, and *De eucharistica confessio*. Used far more often were sources that were hostile to Wyclif and his followers. Included in this category were Thomas Netter's influential *Doctrinale*, printed in Paris between 1521 and 1532, and Ortwin Gratius' *Fasciculis Rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum*, published at Cologne in 1525; the latter was an important source for Wyclif's condemnation at the Council of Constance (1414-18).²⁷ The medieval chronicles served as another source of information about Wyclif and his followers: Polydore Vergil's *Anglica historia* (1534); Edward Hall's *The unyon of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancastre [and] Yorke* (1548, 1550); Fabian's chronicle (printed several times in the 1540s and 1550s); and Walsingham's chronicles (1574) each contained information about the early lollards. In addition, people could consult the medieval trial records that Foxe looked at himself, listed below. There were also early modern printings of 'lollard' texts,²⁸ such as *Wyclif's Wicket* (1612); Reginald Peacock's *A treatise proving Scripture to be the rule of faith* (1688)

²⁶Anthony Kenny, 'The Accursed Memory: The Counter-Reformation Reputation of John Wyclif,' in *Wyclif in His Times*, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 147-168.

²⁷For the role of the *Doctrinale* in the Reformation, see Kevin J. Alban, O. Carm., *The Teaching and Impact of the 'Doctrinale' of Thomas Netter of Walden, (c. 1374-1430)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 237-259.

²⁸For evidence of the influence of these texts on controversial writing in the sixteenth century, see Mike Rodman Jones, *Radical Pastoral, 1381-1594* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

could also provide information about lollard beliefs. Several of these have been consulted for the thesis, insofar as Foxe included them in his tome (for instance, *Jack Upland and The praier and complaynte of the ploweman*); fortunately many others have been covered by literary scholars.²⁹

Another fruitful avenue of research which unfortunately lies beyond the scope of the current project is the role that the lollards played on the development of continental Protestantism.³⁰ The histories of Sleidan, Matthias Flacius Illyricus and the Centuriators, and many others, included the lollards as witnesses to the true church, and collaborated with Foxe as he wrote his history of them.³¹ While this likely played a role in the identity formation of mainland Protestants, to keep this project manageable, I have restricted my focus to England.

Since William Haller's influential study *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* (1963), the question of what role *AM* has had in the formation of national sentiment in England has been revisited several times. Haller's contention was that Foxe portrayed England as an elect nation, and this was bound up in his apocalyptic views that anticipated an English paradise. Though Haller's thesis was largely discredited by Richard Bauckham, Katharine Firth, and Norskov Olsen, recently Andrew Escobedo has said that the 'anti-Haller position underestimates the genuine strain of nationalism in much early Elizabethan apocalyptic writing.'³² Patrick Collinson, writing two years before Escobedo's work, had also lifted some blame from Haller's shoulders, asserting that it was readers' understanding of the text that was nationalistic in nature, not Foxe's intentions.³³

While there will certainly be more studies devoted to the topic, this is not one of them. Foxe's idea of the lollards was grounded in an understanding of an era, not a

²⁹See recently, Andrew Cole, *Literature and Heresy in the Age of Chaucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

³⁰See Cameron, 'Medieval Heretics as Protestant Martyrs'.

³¹*RB*, 69-101.

³²Andrew Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historical Loss in Renaissance England: Foxe, Dee, Spenser, Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 96.

³³Patrick Collinson, 'John Foxe and National Consciousness,' in *John Foxe and his World*, eds. Christopher Highley and John N. King (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002) 1-32.

person or a country. He understood the medieval witnesses to be a very early pan-Protestant phenomenon, culminating in the form of John Wyclif, which initiated the Reformation. Foxe's book includes very clear connections between Wyclif and Hus (in fact, the former's fictional exile to Bohemia). Foxe thought the Hussites were directly influenced by Wyclif, making the connection explicit:

I declared a litle before how by the occasion of quene Anne, whiche was a Bohemian and married to kyng Richard 2. the Bohemians commyng therby to the knowledge of Wicleffes bookes here in England, began first to tast and sauoure of Christes Gospell, till at length by the preachyng of Iohn Hus, they increased more more in knowledge.³⁴

Foxe listed the lollards among ecumenical councils of Europe, disputes abroad, the Turks, and more.

Although Foxe himself did not intend for nationalistic sentiment to appear in the work, Collinson has shown that his work was read in that light. Where Collinson's arguments are convincing, they do not touch on whether the lollard material was viewed from a nationalistic perspective. Having looked at a significant number of texts where the lollards are considered, there is little evidence to suggest such a reading. While readers like the Church of England clergyman Thomas Fuller and John Milton are concerned, there does seem to be a pride in the fact that a local man's ideas spread to the whole world (see chapter three), but for the most part, Wyclif's name was invoked alongside that of Hus, Jerome of Prague, and Luther. As a result, early modern nationalism is not part of this story.

Identities

The Lollards

The topic of this thesis is the reception of lollardy among evangelicals and protestants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁵ The loosely connected groups

³⁴ *AM*, 722.

³⁵ Throughout this thesis, I will use the term 'evangelicals' to denote the early favorers of reform within the church, and 'Protestants' when referring to later Elizabethans who did not identify with

of late medieval English heretics whom scholars call ‘lollards’ have been a topic of contentious debate for centuries. Notoriously difficult to define, lollard heresy was, in broad terms, characterized by the rejection of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. In addition to denying transubstantiation, lollards generally denied the salvific effects of pilgrimages and auricular confession and were known for their critique of the clergy. They are best known for their preference for the vernacular Scripture over the Vulgate; their vernacular version was widely circulated. The lollard critiques of late medieval piety were based on the ideas of John Wyclif and other scholars at Oxford in the 1370s, and the relationship between Wyclif and later dissenters has received robust and ongoing attention.³⁶

The study of these men and women has been plagued by disagreements over terminology, so it will be helpful to clarify some terms used in this thesis.³⁷ The most recent monograph on the subject, Patrick Hornbeck’s *What is a Lollard?*, in fact deals almost exclusively with nomenclature. As its title suggests, the book

the Catholic Church. Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie have suggested that ‘evangelical’ is a more accurate term given that these reformers self-identified that way, and that it reflects the ‘fluid and indeterminate’ character of the early Reformation. More recently, Peter Marshall has argued that the term might not even be appropriate for the early Elizabethan period. See Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, eds., *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, 5-7 and Peter Marshall, ‘The Naming of Protestant England,’ *Past & Present* 214 (2012): 87-128.

³⁶By the mid-twentieth century, the story of the lollards ran thus: After being suppressed by secular and ecclesiastical authorities, the lollards were forced to hide their beliefs in order to avoid detection, and this suppression eradicated any favour from the university or the nobility. Without learned leaders to drive the movement, Wycliffite beliefs became corrupted and simplified. Although this argument is slightly oversimplified, this general narrative was espoused by K.B. MacFarlane. It was vigorously refuted by Anne Hudson’s magisterial *The Premature Reformation*, which argued through a close analysis of Wycliffite texts that lollardy could be seen as a movement, founded by Wyclif and continuous through later vernacular treatises. Hudson’s work, while nuanced by other scholars, remained largely unchallenged until the next major monograph to specifically address lollard theology appeared recently. In *What is a Lollard?*, Patrick Hornbeck argues that Hudson’s case was put too strongly, and he traces doctrinal differences chronologically through different lollard groups. See K. B. MacFarlane, *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity* (London: The English Universities Press Ltd, 1952); *PR*; *WL?*.

³⁷For an overview of the terminological debate, see *WL?*, 3-10.

further problematizes the name ‘lollard’; one solution Hornbeck employs is to use the traditional term, ‘lollard’, but with a lowercase ‘l’. This parallels a trend in studies of nonconformity in the late sixteenth century where scholars have adopted the use of ‘puritan’ and ‘presbyterian’ with a lowercase ‘p’.³⁸ These diminutive titles tend to downplay Whiggish definitions and precise meanings that bely the complexity and grey areas inherent in discussions of religious identity.³⁹ Throughout this thesis, ‘lollard’ will appear with a lowercase ‘l’. In keeping with Hornbeck’s findings, many of which build on earlier studies, I will restrict the adjective ‘Wycliffite’ to discussing Wyclif’s early followers.⁴⁰

The lowercase ‘l’ also signifies some distance between twenty-first century understandings of lollardy and what Foxe thought of the lollards. As will become clear in the following chapters, Foxe had his own opinions about who the lollards were and why they were historically significant. While this thesis focuses on Foxe’s opinions of the lollards and the way he edited their narratives, it should be made clear from the outset that Foxe’s thoughts about the lollards differed from some of his contemporaries (to be discussed shortly), and may have deviated from the way lollards thought of themselves. His understanding of the lollards certainly differs from that of modern historians.

The lollards were ripe for appropriation by early evangelicals, mainly on the basis of shared beliefs. The lollard favour of vernacular Scriptures and rejection of transubstantiation, auricular confession, and pilgrimages have been mentioned already; evangelicals also would have recognized lollard appeals against images and the veneration of saints, as well as calls for the reform of the clergy. The lollards also repudiated clerical celibacy and identified the papacy as antichrist, both of which chimed with evangelicals.⁴¹

³⁸See, for instance, Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Polly Ha, *English Presbyterianism, 1590-1640* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

³⁹On Whig definitions, see Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 274-75 n.8.

⁴⁰*WL?*, 6-7.

⁴¹On the theme of the Antichrist in lollard texts, see Curtis V. Bostick, *The Antichrist and the*

But to many evangelicals, the medieval dissenters seemed imperfectly reformed. There were many examples where lollard views might seem too conservative for evangelicals, and other cases where they went too far. Lollard perspectives on the Virgin Mary will serve to illustrate the point. Some lollards prayed to Mary—which evangelicals rejected as idolatrous—while others denigrated her, which also would have been unpalatable to evangelicals.⁴² These vastly divergent levels of reverence are also recorded in the lollards’ understandings of the Eucharist, which will be discussed in chapter seven.

In fact, while many of the lollards’ theological ideas ran parallel to those of evangelicals, many others were irreconcilable. Some lollards spoke of taking marriage outside of the church, promoted women’s ministry, and rejected tithes and oaths. Others went so far as to espouse pacifism and communitarianism. These issues will be discussed in the chapters to come. What will not be discussed are the instances of totally aberrant beliefs. For example, William Pottier, a London lollard who had apparently jumbled beliefs he found in a lollard text, was accused in 1508 of maintaining belief in six gods and of rejecting Christ’s passion, and Elizabeth Sampson, whose opinions were recorded in the same register, held that there were

Lollards: Apocalypticism in Late Medieval and Reformation England (Leidan: Brill, 2008).

⁴²Hudson shows that lollards expressed doubts about many aspects of the Virgin, including whether she birthed another child after Christ’s ascension: *PR*, 385-85; John Davis shows that lollards questioned if Christ took flesh of Mary: Davis, *Heresy and Reformation in the Southeast of England*, 37; Thomas Man was accused of having ‘blasphemed our blessed Ladie, calling her, Mablye’: *AM*, 981. Those who prayed to Mary include Alice Atkyns of the Chiltern lollards, who knew her Ave Maria in English; also, the wife of Robert Pope was accused of having a ‘boke of the seruice of the Virgine Marie in English’; see *AM*, 988, 993. For the significance of the ‘Ave Maria’ prayer in lollard literature, see Matti Peikola, “‘And After All, Myn Aue-Marie Almost To The Ende’: Pierce the Ploughman’s Crede and Lollard Expositions of the Ave Maria’, *English Studies* 81/4 (2000): 273-92

more souls in heaven than would come to heaven.⁴³ While these beliefs and their inclusion/exclusion by Foxe in *AM* (Pottier's was incorporated, Sampson's omitted) are fascinating, that they are so unusual meant that they were rejected by all later Protestants.⁴⁴

While it is clear that these aspects of lollardy did not mesh with evangelical religious beliefs, and that others did, there were areas in between. The most notable of these was the issue of conventicles, which will be discussed in chapter nine. Another grey area between lollardy and early evangelicalism was solifidianism. Hornbeck has shown that despite Wyclif's preference for predestination, works on that topic 'tended to enjoy relatively limited circulation in comparison with their works-oriented counterparts'. This is consistent with many of the lollards that Foxe discovered in the archives whose favorite reading included the Epistle of James, with its works-based soteriology.⁴⁵ Another murky issue was that of the priesthood of all believers. While many of the lollard trial transcripts recorded a belief to the effect that 'every good man is a priest', this unsophisticated epigram did little to convey the evangelical notion of a priesthood of all believers as articulated by Martin Luther. It will be discussed in chapter six.

The Lollards According to Evangelicals

This thesis is not about the lollards, but what they were according to early evangelicals, especially Foxe. As shown in chapters three, four, and five, Foxe built on

⁴³Foxe found these views in a register of Bishop Fitzjames of London. Cf. London Metropolitan Archives (henceforth LMA), Diocese of London, A/A/005/MS09531/009, fos. 4r-v (Sampson) and 26v (Pottier); cf. *AM*, 966 and 939. On Pottier's confusion stemming from a lollard text, see Andrew Hope, 'Lollardy: the Stone the Builders Rejected?' in *Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth Century England*, eds. Peter Lake and Maria Dowling (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 18.

⁴⁴Foxe included Pottier's views but claimed that they were slanders attributed to him by evil inquisitors; *ibid.* Later, Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715), the historian and later Bishop of Salisbury would try to distance Pottier from the then-respectable lollards: 'Whether he only spoke these things Impiously, or whether he held them in Opinion, is not clear. But certainly he was no *Lollard.*' Burnet, *The history of the reformation*, 29.

⁴⁵*WL?*, 64; Cf. *AM*, 996 for mention of the Epistle of James in lollard possession.

foundations laid for him by first-generation reformers, most notably William Tyndale and John Bale, who had recognized their own movement in the tenets and struggles of the lollards. When Foxe went to record their stories in his history of the true church, these men and women served as a crucial link in an unbroken chain of witnesses back to apostolic times. Foxe was fairly inclusive about whom he chose for his tome—he had to be, given the legitimacy, well-established roots, and firm history first established by Eusebius, that the Roman church enjoyed. Searching for opponents to this tradition, Foxe found those who assailed the papacy; while some, such as Marsilius of Padua, were easier fits than others (say, Robert Grosseteste), nonetheless Foxe included them all. When he discovered the Cathars, Waldensians, and lollards, though, he found groups of people whose opposition to the papacy was just one facet of their rejection of the Church of Rome. As will be seen in the following chapters, this led Foxe to pursue their stories and to develop their history.

From the very first stages of the Reformation, the lollards were seen as spiritual ancestors; as early as 1531, after returning to the Church of Rome briefly, William Barlow derided Luther for claiming the legacy of the lollards and Hussites, after initially rejecting them as heretics.⁴⁶ The earliest lollard tracts that appeared in print (excepting Wyclif's *Triologus* and a version of the Wycliffite *Opus Arduum*) were published in the early 1530s in Antwerp, from the same press responsible for Tyndale's other works.⁴⁷ Anne Hudson's research has ably covered these texts, their editors, the presses they emerged from, and their medieval exemplars, so this discussion will only focus on the work of Tyndale and Bale, whose works had a significant impact on *AM*.⁴⁸

Although Tyndale edited several lollard tracts, *The examinacion of Master William Thorpe*, printed together with *The examinacion of . . . syr Jhon Oldcastell*, had the most influence in the development of the martyrological genre that Bale and Foxe

⁴⁶William Barlow, *A dialoge describing the originall ground of these Lutheran faccions* (1531), sigs. C3v-4r.

⁴⁷The former was printed in Basel in 1525 and the latter was printed along with a preface by Martin Luther. See *NNT*, 153.

⁴⁸*NNT*

would take on. Although the identity of Thorpe and Oldcastle's first editor has been in dispute since the sixteenth century, historians generally believe it to be the work of William Tyndale and/or George Constantine.⁴⁹ The first text details the trial of the lollard preacher William Thorpe (d. 1407), and although no medieval exemplar is extant, there is no reason to believe it spurious.⁵⁰ In it, Thorpe claimed to be writing from prison, so readers get his own thoughts; equally, Sir John Oldcastle, a lollard knight, told much of his story through his confession despite the third-person narrative.⁵¹ These texts also exemplify the evangelical agenda behind their publication. The editor asked his readers to note how the prelates 'make all their examinacions in darkenes';⁵² he went on to say that just as this was the case for Thorpe, 'yet we haue daylye examples off more then one or two, that haue not spared nor feared for to speake and also preache opnlye the trouthe whiche haue ben taken of them prysoned and brent, besyde other that for feare of deathe haue abiured and caryed fagottes. Of whos articles and examinacion there ys no leye man that can shewe a worde.'⁵³ He then created a line of martyrs from Thorpe, citing the lollard martyrs of Coventry and the 'good preaste and holye martyr Syr Thomas hitton...brente...at maydstone yn Kent'.⁵⁴ This publication allowed its evangelical editor to draw a straight chronological line of persecution from his own movement to the lollard witnesses.

Attached to Thorpe's examination is the testimony of Sir John Oldcastle, an

⁴⁹John Bale ascribed a print version of the examination of Oldcastle to Tyndale (BC, sig. A3v.) Thomas More believed it to be George Constantine's work, and Hudson asserts (as did John Foxe) that it was a joint project between the two of them. See *PR*, 493, and Fairfield, *John Bale*, 212, n.10. Margaret Aston points out that Foxe had a copy of the work in Tyndale's own hand; see 'Lollardy and the Reformation,' 235. Hudson states that the medieval sources for this text are the same as those for Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Arundel's register and the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, a book of records from the Carmelite priory at Norwich. See *NNT*, 170.

⁵⁰*NNT*, 171.

⁵¹For the relationship between this text and its medieval manuscripts, see *NNT*, 170-71.

⁵²*Thorpe/Oldcastle*, sig. A1v. This will appear again in chapter five.

⁵³*Ibid.*, sig. A2r.

⁵⁴*Ibid.* Aston rightly notes that Thorpe was not an exemplary martyr, given that neither Bale nor Foxe knew how he died (which they both admitted). Aston, 'Lollardy and the Reformation,' 225. See chapter five.

infamous lollard traitor. This short text aims to reverse the traditional story of Oldcastle, presenting the noble martyrdom of a faithful subject. In doing so, it reveals the true traitors: the clergy. In 1530, establishing a close connection between the reformed movement and civil authorities was paramount to evangelical polemicists. After the German Peasants' Revolt in 1524-5, the evangelical movement was on the verge of acquiring the same dangerous association with sedition that had tainted lollardy since Oldcastle's revolt just over a century earlier. To remedy this, Tyndale wrote about issues of social order and authority while exiled in Antwerp in the late 1520s.⁵⁵ The themes in Tyndale's *The obedience of a Christen man* (1528), including the responsibilities of both governors and the governed, parallel those of Oldcastle's answer, making the text an ideal contribution to discourse surrounding the nature of a godly commonwealth. Oldcastle's seeming disobedience is portrayed as a misunderstanding, and an example of excessive cruelty by the prelacy.⁵⁶ Tyndale's work and Oldcastle's case will be discussed in chapter four.

Perhaps most significant for this thesis is Bale's 1544 tract, *A brefe chronycle concernynge the examinacyon and death of the blessed martyr of Christ syr Iohan Oldecastell the lorde Cobham*. Printed in Antwerp, where Bale had been exiled after his patron Thomas Cromwell's execution under Henry VIII, *A brefe chronycle* was published fourteen years after the Constantine/Tyndale edition. Bale fleshed out the 1530 text with evidence from other chronicles to vindicate Oldcastle's reputation and paint him as a protomartyr for his movement.⁵⁷ *A Brefe Chronycle* actually offers one of the best glimpses into Bale's theology, owing to its relative brevity, which gives the reader a distilled and clear explanation of Bale's religious thinking and historical methodology. Through the lenses of prophecy and apocalypticism, Bale saw this one historical event as encapsulating everything that was wrong with the church during the late Middle Ages, and sought through this single narrative

⁵⁵For Tyndale's biography, see 'Tyndale, William,' David Daniell in *ODNB*.

⁵⁶*Thorpe/Oldcastle*, sig. H1v.

⁵⁷*BC*, sig. A3v. His other sources include the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum* and Polydore Virgil's *Anglica historia*. Hudson corrects Aston's suggestion that Bale did not know of the 1530 Oldcastle narrative; see *NNT*, 170, n.49; cf. Aston, 'Lollardy and the Reformation,' 227, n.19.

to vindicate a man he saw as innocent, and in fact as an exemplar of the true, persecuted flock of Christ. Bale's scheme of history and the important role that prophecy played in it will be considered in chapter three.

Bale's *A breffe chronycle* combined his two passions: antiquarianism and religious controversy.⁵⁸ Aiding him in his broader investigation into England's lollard past was a manuscript written in the late fourteenth century but compiled in the 1340s by Thomas Netter; it was kept by his Carmelite order in Norfolk (the same order that Bale entered c.1514) as a record of their efforts against heterodoxy, the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*.⁵⁹ This manuscript, which Bale obtained from the order when he left in 1536, was a critical source for his younger friend and co-religionist, Foxe.⁶⁰ Thomas Freeman and Elizabeth Evenden rightly claim that Bale 'would be the dominant intellectual influence on Foxe in the early part of his life', and also suggest that Bale entrusted Foxe with this valuable manuscript in 1552, when he left for Ireland.⁶¹ Bale's contacts and evangelical network on the continent proved useful to Foxe, who in the final years of Edward VI's reign was already writing his first Latin martyrology, *Commentarii rerum in ecclesia gestarum* (1554).⁶²

If Bale's influence on the *Commentarii* was significant, Evenden and Freeman have recently shown that so too was Foxe's own research.⁶³ Foxe included material from Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica maiora*, Reginald Peacock's recantation, a letter of Archbishop Thomas Bourchier (who condemned Peacock), and another manuscript pertaining to the proceedings against him. Nevertheless, Bale's sources

⁵⁸On Bale's antiquarianism, see Timothy Graham and Andrew G. Watson, *The Recovery of the Past in Early Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge Bibliographical Society, 1998) and Honor McCusker, 'Books and Manuscripts Formerly in the Possession of John Bale,' *The Library* ser. 4, 16 (19356), 14465.

⁵⁹See 'John Bale,' John King in *ODNB*, and James Crompton, 'Fasciculi Zizaniorum,' *JEH* 12 (1961), 3545, 15566. *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, Bodley MS e Musaeo 86; W.W. Shirley, ed., *Fasciculi Zizaniorum* (London: Longman, 1858).

⁶⁰Bale annotated the entire notebook, filling up every bit of space in it.

⁶¹*RB*, 39 and 41.

⁶²This network included Matthias Flacius (Illyricus), Caspar von Nidbruck, and Alexander Aleisus. *Ibid.*, 73-74. For the timing of Foxe's writing, see *RB*, 52.

⁶³*RB*, 45-48.

and Bale's preoccupations pervade the text, and this influence would carry through to the later editions of *AM*, manifest in their concern with prophecy and the Antichrist, and with their emphasis on the medieval period, largely ignored by comparison in continental protestant histories.⁶⁴ Bale's influence on Foxe was perhaps most profound with regard to the lollard past: Freeman notes that a project to publish a complete edition of Wyclif's works, announced by both Bale and Foxe, was abandoned after Bale's death, when Foxe turned toward more pastoral concerns closer to his own interests.⁶⁵

Foxe was a more careful historian than Bale, however, and in the case of the lollards, he did not merely take his mentor's word for it when it came to historical facts. Margaret Aston points out that though he appropriated eulogistic words and images from Bale when discussing Wyclif, 'Foxe was not a blind borrower', displaying particular unease with the heresiarch's supposed numerous literary publications, possible exile, and death date.⁶⁶ In fact, where Foxe did borrow from others, he was soon corrected by a scathing publication of 1566. Three years after the first edition of his *AM* (an expanded martyrology in English based on the *Commentarii* and his 1559 *Rerum*), Catholic polemicist Nicholas Harpsfield accused Foxe of numerous inaccuracies, including many in his treatment of Oldcastle, which had been taken verbatim from Bale's *A breffe chronycle*.⁶⁷ Although Foxe discreetly removed some embarrassing errors pointed out by Harpsfield, for Oldcastle he launched a staunch defensive attack, eating up thirty precious pages in the next edition of his book.⁶⁸ It was a necessary use of John Day's scarce paper supply. By the mid-1560s, the lollards had become the lynchpin in the evangelicals' chain of witnesses stretching back to the early church, and Oldcastle himself had been used by evangelicals since the very beginning of their print endeavors as the primary exemplar of the medieval

⁶⁴*RB*, 61-62.

⁶⁵'John Foxe,' Thomas S. Freeman in *ODNB*.

⁶⁶*JWRR*, 246.

⁶⁷Nicholas Harpsfield, *Dialogi sex contra summi pontificatus, monasticae vitae, sanctorum, sacrarum imaginum oppugnatores, et pseudomartyres* (1566). Freeman, 'Over Their Dead Bodies,' 20-23.

⁶⁸See below, 131-34.

church's oppression and deceit.⁶⁹

This episode forced Foxe to consult new sources, such as parliamentary rolls and English chroniclers cited by Harpsfield, in order to buttress his original claims. By 1566 he was working on a second edition, and this greatly expanded work included a far more extensive section on lollardy. The lollard narratives form Book Five to Book Eight, appearing alongside medieval prophets and political matters, comprising roughly 20% of the overall book. While some text had appeared in the 1563 edition from *A compendious olde treatyse*, two other lollard works printed by early evangelicals were incorporated into Foxe's 1570 edition: part of Jack vp Lande and the entirety of *The praier and complaynte of the ploweman vnto Christe*, as stated above. He also expanded his treatment of the early lollard adherents such as Nicholas Hereford, William Swinderby, Walter Brute (with additional material from Bishop John Trefnant of Hereford's register⁷⁰), and in bishops' registers he found entire new communities of lollards in Leicester (from Archbishop William Courtenay's visitation of Leicester),⁷¹ Norwich (a court-book now Westminster Diocesan Archives MS. B.2),⁷² Coventry (which he had known and written about in the *Rerum*, but about which he received additional information from locals),⁷³ Kent (register of Archbishop William Warham of Canterbury),⁷⁴ London (through a courtbook of Bishop Fitzjames or diocesan court-books no longer extant),⁷⁵ and the diocese of Lincoln (via court books that are now lost).⁷⁶ What emerged from these sources was a wealth of new information about heterodoxy in Britain, including eclectic religious beliefs (some of which were excised, to be discussed throughout this thesis) and to Foxe, myriad examples of the oppression of the medieval church.

The way Foxe edited these lollard materials gives us the best evidence we have to

⁶⁹ *RB*, 165.

⁷⁰ Thomas Freeman, 'William Swinderby,' section 5.18. in *TAMO* commentary.

⁷¹ Thomas Freeman, 'Archbishop Courteney's persecution of Lollards,' section 5.20 in *TAMO* commentary.

⁷² *Norwich Trials*.

⁷³ Freeman, 'Persecution in Coventry,' section 8.1 in *TAMO* commentary.

⁷⁴ Freeman, 'Archbishop Warham's Persecution,' section 8.46, in *TAMO* commentary.

⁷⁵ Freeman, 'Persecution of Lollards,' section 7.3 in *TAMO* commentary.

⁷⁶ Freeman, 'Persecution in the Diocese of Lincoln,' section 7.6 in *TAMO* commentary.

comment on what exactly Foxe made of the lollards. When Foxe discussed Wyclif, he hailed him as a sign of the beginning of the Reformation.⁷⁷ But he did not necessarily account the lollards to be direct followers of Wyclif, a part of a single reform movement as described by Anne Hudson. Foxe identified Wyclif's lifetime as the dawn of an era of reform, rather than seeing Wyclif himself as the direct progenitor of the lollards. In the preface to the second edition of *AM*, Foxe detailed the gradual decline of the Roman Church; he continued with the latest age, beginning with Wyclif:

To descend now somewhat lower in drawing out the descent of the Church. What a multitude here commeth of faithful witnesses in the *time of Ioh. Wickleffe*, as Ocliffe, Wickleffe an. 1376. W. Thorpe, White, Puruey, Patshall, Payne, Gower, Chauser, Gascoyne, William Swynderby, Walter Brute, Roger Dexter, William Sautry about the yeare. 1400. Iohn Badby, an. 1410. Nicholas Tayler, Rich. Wagstaffe, Mich. Scriuener, W. Smith, Iohn Henry, W. Parchmenar, Roger Goldsmith...Lord Cobham, Syr Roger Acton Knight, Iohn Beuerlay preacher...with whom I might also adioyne Laurentius Valla, and Ioannes Picus ...But what do I stand vpon recitall of names, which almost are infinite.⁷⁸

Foxe, then, recognized each of these men as inspired by the Holy Spirit to continue the fight against the false church: that this list includes knights, preachers, martyrs, and medieval and humanist scholars underscores that Foxe considered them individual witnesses to the true church, not mere disciples of Wyclif. In many places where Foxe described the later lollards' trials, there seem to be few links with other lollards, such as the case of Richard Turmin and John Claydon.⁷⁹ The Amersham lollard accounts make no reference to Wyclif at all, with the exception of some of them reading *Wickleffes Wicket*, and neither the narratives of the lollards in Kent nor Coventry make mention of Wyclif. Foxe recorded that the Londoner John Stil-

⁷⁷Foxe had many reasons for this, not least Wyclif's place in history; this will be discussed in chapter three.

⁷⁸*AM*, 5.

⁷⁹*AM*, 778.

man ‘praysed Iohn Wickleffe, affirmyng that he was a saint in heauen, and that hys booke called the Wicket, was good and holy’, but this seems to be one of very few cases.⁸⁰ When discussing Londoners’ disapproval of Richard II, Foxe did claim that this was because ‘Londoners at that tyme were notoriously knowen to be fauourers of Wyckliffes side’, but even here, the term ‘Wyckliffes side’ suggests a multitude of individuals rather than a strict devotion to Wyclif himself.⁸¹ More than merely Wyclif’s followers, Foxe saw these men and women as individuals inspired by the Holy Spirit who were then proven by the persecution they endured at the hands of the established church.⁸²

In fact, use of phrases like ‘witnesses in the time of Ioh. Wickleffe’ or ‘fauourers of Wyckliffes side’ likely reflect a reluctance to use the term ‘lollard’. Although the murky origins of the term have been the topic of debate among scholars, Foxe attributed the phrase of opprobrium to the papacy: ‘lollardes, by the popes interpretation is a worde deriued of Lollium’, Latin for ‘tare’.⁸³ This reference was drawn from the Parable of the Tares in Matthew 13, and it marked late medieval dissenters (along with a host of others with eccentric beliefs) as sent from Satan. Consequently, when Foxe used the term, he usually distanced himself from it, making clear that he was quoting a register, or that the Catholic church had cruelly branded these people

⁸⁰Ibid., 979. Stilman’s praise of Wyclif might be understood better within the context of London lollards, many of whom evidently attributed saint-like qualities to their co-religionists. Although Stilman used the term ‘saint’, other London lollards understood their brethren as true martyrs, if perhaps not ‘saints’: Joan Baker referred to Jane Young as a ‘true martyr’ and Baker herself was lauded by Richard Hunne. For Baker, see Ibid., 966; cf. LMA, Diocese of London, A/A/005/MS09531/009, fo. 25v, and Andrew Hope, ‘The Lady and the Baliff: Lollardy among the Gentry in Yorkist and Early Tudor England,’ in *Lollardy and the Gentry in the Middle Ages*, ed. Margaret Aston and Colin Richmond (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), p. 260. For Hunne’s praise of Baker, see *AM*, 969-70.

⁸¹*AM*, 634.

⁸²Foxe’s influence in framing the lollards as witnesses who appeared in the ‘time of Wyclif’ is unmistakable in C17 antiquarian works, for example Henry Cave’s *Scriptorum ecclesiasticorum historia literaria* (1688), whose appendix lists the works of authors written in the ‘Saeculum Wicklevianum’ (489-522).

⁸³*AM*, 574.

in such a way.⁸⁴

Consistent with his recognition of Wyclif's age as the beginning of the reform movement, Foxe perceived many aspects of that era as a part of an overarching effort for reform.⁸⁵ Figuring that a sermon by Thomas Wimbledon given at Paul's Cross 'by the auncientnes of the phrase seemeth to be preached much aboute the tyme of Iohn Wickleffe', Foxe explained his editorial decision to place it close to William Thorpe's testimony, 'for the apte coherence both of the spirit, and of the matter'.⁸⁶ Trusting Bale's ascriptions in the *Index Britanniae scriptorum* (1557), Foxe identified Chaucer as the author of many anticlerical works, including *The praiser and complaynt of the ploweman vnto Christ*.⁸⁷ In these writings and those of John Gower, he interpreted reform-minded sentiments that predated those of his contemporaries, and declared Chaucer to be 'a right VVicleuian'.⁸⁸ Rather than signifying any direct allegiance to the theological claims of Wyclif himself, this designation likely signified the author as part of Wyclif's age, an era that Bale and Foxe saw as igniting the push for ecclesiastical reform that they understood themselves to be completing. This is underscored in the story of Peter Pateshull, an Augustinian friar who, 'hearing the doctrine of Iohn Wickleffe *and other of the same sorte*', began preaching against his former order; here, Foxe attributes Pateshull's change of heart not merely to Wyclif but to others as well, giving the idea of a larger climate of reform in that era.⁸⁹ Evangelicals also understood this time to be an era of reform because it fitted into their apocalyptic ideas, which considered Wyclif's

⁸⁴For example, 'deuised (as the Registre sayth) by the lollardes', (ibid., 620); 'whome he falslye suggested to be lollardes & traytors to the church' (ibid., 629); 'whiche is called the lollardes secte' (AM, 717).

⁸⁵See Andrew N. Wawn, 'Chaucer, The Plowman's Tale, and Reformation Propoganda: The Testimonies of Thomas Godfray and I Playne Piers, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 56 (1973-74): 174-92.

⁸⁶AM, 679. Cf. Alexandra Walsham, 'Inventing the Lollard Past: The Afterlife of a Medieval Sermon in Early Modern England,' *JEH* 58 (2007): 628-55.

⁸⁷*John Bale's Index of British and other writers*, ed. by Reginald Lane Poole with Mary Bateson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), 74-78.

⁸⁸AM, 1004.

⁸⁹Ibid., 625; italics mine.

teachings to herald an age in which the final battle between the true church and the false church would take place.⁹⁰

While Wyclif's was seen as an epoch of reformation, Foxe stressed its place as part of a long strand of dissent reaching back to the pure early church. While the lollards were the strongest link in this chain of medieval witnesses, the Hussites, Waldensians, and Cathars also played significant parts of the narrative, supplemented by the odd prophecy or outspoken opponent of transubstantiation. Foxe's narrative of dissenting succession, and the reaction it elicited in the seventeenth century, will be detailed in chapter four.

Tyndale, Bale, and Foxe, then, performed a massive project of historical revisionism which by the end of the sixteenth century had successfully recast the lollards—who at its beginning had looked like disgraced heretics and dangerous traitors—as the persecuted remnant of the apostolic church, and the spiritual forebears of the protestants. This thesis will detail important aspects of this transformation. Thanks to John Foxe, the significance of these lollard figures, afforded crucial importance in *AM*, would play a part in the English Reformation long after their deaths, and indeed long after his.

The Lollards According to Later Protestants

Only in the mid-twentieth century did the legacy of the lollards come under critical analysis. Before that time, they were seen largely as Foxe had portrayed them: John Wyclif and his dissenting message heralded reform, manifest not least in a vernacular translation of the Scriptures that claimed his authorship and adherents who survived brutal suppression by ecclesiastical and secular authorities to provide fertile ground for the ideas of Martin Luther. While the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries certainly saw many fluctuations in the perception of Wyclif, that has been documented elsewhere and this thesis will concentrate on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁹¹

⁹⁰See below, 80-84.

⁹¹James Crompton, 'John Wyclif: A Study in Mythology,' *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological Society* 42 (1966-67): 6-34.

Foxe's reluctance to use the term 'lollards' was shared by many of his seventeenth-century readers. Like Foxe, they used indirect speech to indicate distance from their own use of the term, claiming that the lollards had been given that name by a third party, and that they were using it on that basis.⁹² While the term appears in hundreds of historical and theological tracts, rarely does it appear to have been used in a positive light with no explanation.⁹³ These tracts reveal that writers did not use the term systematically. For some, it was synonymous with Wyclif's followers;⁹⁴ for others, it indicated specific dissenters who pre-dated Wyclif.⁹⁵ These writers were more comfortable with Foxe's notion of an era of reform, into which they could situate these dissenters. Phrases like 'time of Wickliffe', 'daies of Wickliffe and Huss', 'since the time of our Wickliffe', and 'began from the time of Wyclif' appear often.⁹⁶ Some of the reluctance to adopt the name 'lollards' was doubtless

⁹²For instance, George Abbot wrote that William Sawtrey and John Badby were burned because they were '*Lollardes*, (as they then called them)'. Abbot, *A treatise of the perpetuall visibilitie* (1624), 75; Thomas Hobbes made a point to say that the heretics were 'called *Lollardes*,' a point echoed by Gilbert Burnet, who said that heretics 'were then best known by the name of *Lollards*'. Hobbes, *An historical narration concerning heresie* (1680), 14, 15; Burnet, *The history of the reformation*, 26.

⁹³There were exceptions to this, especially among religious writers. Samuel Blackerby, a lawyer at Grays Inn (and not explicitly a religious writer) claimed that the term Lollard signified a 'professor of true religion'; Blackerby, *An Historical Account of making the Penal Laws by the Papists against the Protestants* (1689), 15. Robert Parker, the exiled puritan, explained when he used the term lollard, it meant 'true Christians'; Parker, *A scholasticall discourse against symbolizing with Antichrist in ceremonies* (1607), 107.

⁹⁴Robert Brady appears to have used these terms interchangeably: 'I find further of the *Wyclifists* or *Lollards* in this Reign'; Brady, *A continuation of the Complete history of England* (1700), 463; George Meriton did the same, maintaining that the medieval clergy had hated 'Lollards or Wickliffians'; Meriton, *Anglorum gesta, or, A brief history of England* (1675), 214.

⁹⁵Simon Birckbek wrote that the lollards were named from a former Franciscan monk who had come from abroad: 'But they were called Lollards from one *Raynard Lollard*'; Birckbek, *The Protestants evidence taken out of good records* (1635), 86. Samuel Clarke echoed this and fleshed it out, asserting that the appellation came from a Dutch heretic who had spent time preaching in England but who was then burned in Cologne for heresy in 1322: '*Lollard Walterus* (from whom our English professors were called *Lollards*)'; Clarke, *A Generall Martyrologie* (1660), 165.

⁹⁶John Boys, *An exposition of the dominical epistles and gospels* (1610), 26; idem, *An exposition*

entangled in the debates over the succession of the true church, which would break out in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as separatists threatened to leave the established church, and to take the lollard legacy with them. These debates will be outlined in chapter three.

The lollards, then, defy easy definitions and clear-cut religious delineations. The medieval manuscripts and trial records that came into Foxe's hands were, for him, evidence that his own aims for restoring the purity of the early church were mirrored in the efforts of earlier dissenters. While it is doubtful that he perceived of them as a cohesive movement, he would have noted the overriding narrative: men and women professing beliefs quite similar to his own and those of his co-religionists, beliefs which incited persecution and suffering, as his brethren had endured under Mary I. He recorded their stories, editing painstakingly in some places and more quickly in others, as more and more primary sources came his way. The way these narratives were shaped can help to reveal more about John Foxe's theological perspective than scholars have uncovered so far.

John Foxe

The success of the *Acts and Monuments* cemented Foxe's memory as an ecclesiastical historian and, as a consequence, this eclipsed his reputation as a theologian, religious writer, and minister. These vocations, though, were more significant to Foxe himself. Although of course one was related to the other (Foxe's theology drove his historical perspective, and aspects of his religious beliefs, such as his apocalyptic understanding, were rooted in his historical exegesis), Foxe's interests, particularly later in his life, lay in scholarly work and pastoral care. At various points in his life, he made attempts at altering the Book of Common Prayer and at re-writing canon law, and he wrote theological treatises, a commentary on the Book of Revelation, and had two sermons published. His passion for pastoral care is reflected in the contemporary popularity of his preaching style and demand as a spiritual physician

of the festiuall epistles and gospels (1615), 60; Henoeh Clapham, *A chronological discourse 'since the time of our Wickliffe'* (1609), 49; John De La March, *A complaint of the false prophets mariners* (1641), 30.

and exorcist.⁹⁷

A generation after his death, conformists to the Church of England considered Foxe to be a ‘Father of our Church’, an opinion cemented by Church of England historians such as Thomas Fuller, George Abbot, Gilbert Burnet, John Strype, and Josiah Pratt.⁹⁸ But divines like Fuller aimed to reform the Anglican Church in line

⁹⁷ *Two English Sermons of John Foxe*, ed. Warren W. Wooden (New York: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1978), vii; Thomas S. Freeman, ‘Through a Venetian Glass Darkly: John Foxe’s Most Famous Miracle,’ in *Signs, Wonders, Miracles*, ed. Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), 307-30; Kathleen Sands, ‘John Foxe: Exorcist,’ *History Today* 51/2 (2001): 37-43.

⁹⁸ Andrew Willet termed him one of the ‘Reverend and learned Fathers of our church,’ alongside Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, and Whitgift in his *A Christian Letter of certaine English protestants* (1599), 45. Also, for instance, Francis Burton calls him ‘Mr. Foxe that sometime reuerend Father of our Church’, in *The fierie tryall of Gods saints* (1612), 6. Two generations later, Edward Leigh referred to him as ‘John Fox a saint-like Historian,’ in *Foelix consortium* (1663), and Thomas Fuller maintained that ‘Queen Elizabeth constantly called him Her Father Fox,’ *The church-history of Britain* (1655), 105; he also lauded Foxe as ‘this Confessor’, in *Abel redevivus* (1652), 380; George Abbot constantly referenced Foxe, telling his readers that ‘diverse of our English men, as may bee seene to the everlasting infamie of you and yours, by the letters of the Martyrs in Master Foxes great volume, haue planted and watred & confirmed the faith’ in *The reasons vvhich Doctour Hill hath brought, for the vpholding of papistry, which is falselie termed the Catholike religion* (1604), 159; and Gilbert Burnet commended Foxe throughout his work, even feeling the need to specify why he is writing a history of the church (presumably since Foxe’s was so accurate). Burnet, *The history of the reformation*, 7. At some points Foxe’s puritan stance forced later Anglicans awkwardly to defend some of Foxe’s theological positions. For instance, Thomas Fuller printed Foxe’s letter to Queen Elizabeth on behalf of four Flemish Anabaptists sentenced to death in 1575, but Fuller claimed ‘I am loath this letter should stand alone’ and attached another letter, from Foxe to Dr Humphrey, President of Magdalen Hall, on his son’s behalf. In this letter, Foxe frets over the hotter sort of puritan, worrying about the disturbance they would make in the souls of the realm (‘Videor enim suboriri quoddam hontinum genus, qui si invalescant, viresque in hoc Regno colligant, piget hic referre, quid futurae perturbationis praesagit mihi animus’). Fuller claimed that this proves Foxe was against the nonconformist party, though he has to admit that Foxe had ‘scrupled *subscription* in some particulars;’ Fuller, *The church-history of Britain*, 106-107. Another example of an Anglican defender of Foxe having to accommodate his puritan opinions appears in Josiah Pratt’s essay ‘Life and Defence of John Foxe,’ where Pratt had to explain Foxe’s preface to the second edition of *Acts and Monuments*, which included railings against ceremonies. Pratt lamented, ‘In answering this question [whether the religion of Christ can be spiritual or corporeal]

with the Elizabethan Church, based on the Thirty-Nine Articles,⁹⁹ and cited Foxe as a great representative of that church. Consequently, Foxe's theological beliefs, when they have been discussed, are often depicted as adhering totally to the Elizabethan settlement of 1559,¹⁰⁰ or, enigmatically, as wanting the church to 'reform further,' with no indication of the shape that reform might take.¹⁰¹

Foxe, though, was not satisfied with the Elizabethan settlement. Thomas Betteridge notes that he was one of a party of 'radical Edwardian Protestants', and that 'while the Elizabethan religious settlement certainly did return the English Church to the Protestant fold it also embodied a potentially extreme Erastianism fundamentally at odds with the agenda of such godly Protestant writers such as Foxe.'¹⁰² But a closer, fresher look at Foxe's religious beliefs has eluded the recent surge of scholars working on Foxe and *AM*. None of the essays in the volumes that have come out of the conferences associated with the John Foxe Project, nor its online essays, reassess Foxe's theology as such.

he lightly values, I am sorry to say, not merely a large mass of the observances, ceremonies, and customs of the Church of Rome, but some of the rites and opinions which are valued by the members of the Church of England. He forgot that some outward ordinances are essential to the upholding the inward and spiritual religion which he approved.' Pratt, 'The Life and Defence of John Foxe,' in *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, Vol. 1, part 1 (London: Seely, 1870), 170.

⁹⁹'Thomas Fuller,' W. B. Patterson in *ODNB*.

¹⁰⁰See, for instance, David Loades' essay, 'Foxe in Theological Context,' *TAMO Essays*.

¹⁰¹The online textual commentary for a section of *AM* where Foxe outlines the role of a godly monarch opaquely states, 'This lengthy digression, tying the prosperity of monarchs and their [sic] reigns to their resistance to "papisty", is actually an attempt to goad Elizabeth and her councillors into further reforming the English Church.' See the commentary for *TAMO* (1570), 941. Similarly, Damian Nussbaum claims 'It is no secret that John Foxe was an ambiguous figure in the Elizabethan Church...he opposed aspects of the Elizabethan Settlement, and sought to change them'; yet Nussbaum does not explain this. Nussbaum, 'Whitgift's "Book of Martyrs": Archbishop Whitgift, Timothy Bright, and the Elizabethan Struggle over John Foxe's Legacy,' in *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 135. David Loades, looking to the work of Thomas Betteridge, has argued that though Foxe was worried about the lack of reform in the 1570s, by the time the 'mellow' 1583 edition was published, he was largely satisfied with the church. See Loades, 'The Early Reception,' *TAMO Essays*.

¹⁰²Thomas Betteridge, *Tudor Histories of the English Reformations, 1530-83* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 163.

This thesis will demonstrate that the Foxe's perspective on the lollards can serve as a path toward such a reassessment. One of the interpretive tools commonly used to understand *AM* is an assumption that Foxe's theological stance was that of a moderate puritan. There are reasons to question this, however: this is a man more closely associated with radical ideas than scholars usually recognise. This section will briefly highlight his puritanism, and then discuss two important strands that underlay his reformed beliefs, toleration and irenicism. I aim to show that Foxe's beliefs were more eclectic than those normally ascribed to him, with idiosyncratic traits that characterize him as more radical than previously thought.¹⁰³

His puritan influences were undoubtedly formed in the connections he made with other radical evangelicals when Tudor England reached its radical zenith under Edward VI, cemented during their time in exile, during which they saw their co-religionists suffering for that radical evangelicalism under Mary Tudor. A look at these influences will help to determine the nature of Foxe's puritanism, as will an analysis of the aforementioned stands he took against the establishment.

By 'puritan', I mean what David Como has described as the 'left-wing of English Protestantism'.¹⁰⁴ Branded 'puritans' by their enemies, they scrupled against the vestiges of the pre-Reformation church that remained in the English Church, an area

¹⁰³When I use the term 'radical', I am doing so with an eye to Foxe's historical context. I do not wish to indicate a blunt contrast between 'radicalism' and 'reform', as Ariel Hessayon and David Finnegan have rightly pointed out (when discussing later radicalism) that this relationship was 'flexible and interwoven'. In the 1560s, when what was considered 'moderate' and 'radical' was largely up for grabs (given the limited enforcement of conformity), I use the term 'radical' mainly in opposition to the term 'conservative'. Hessayon and Finnegan, 'Reappraising Early Modern Radicals and Radicalisms,' in Hessayon and Finnegan, eds., *Varieties of Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-Century English Radicalism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 12. For the varied enforcement of the canons and injunctions of the Elizabethan and Stuart churches, see Kenneth Fincham, 'Clerical Conformity from Whitgift to Laud,' in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560-1660*, eds. Peter Lake and Michael Questier (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), 125-158.

¹⁰⁴David R. Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil-War England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 12.

explored in-depth by Patrick Collinson.¹⁰⁵ Only a generation after Foxe's death, a Catholic writer called Foxe 'a great Puritan in England',¹⁰⁶ while even later sources in the Church of England considered him to be 'a man much over addicted to the Faction of the Puritans'.¹⁰⁷ Several nonconforming Calvinists also labelled him as a fellow nonconformist, such as Richard Baxter, an admirer of Foxe.¹⁰⁸ Other conformists who, somewhat paradoxically, consider Foxe to be a nonconformist within the Church of England are the anonymous author of *Certain considerations tending to promote peace* (1674) and Henry Hickman.¹⁰⁹ The work of Peter Lake, Michael Questier, and David Como in particular have helped to reconstruct the label 'puritan', freeing it 'from its dependence on a national Anglican establishment or essence'.¹¹⁰ Therefore, when discussing Foxe, I use the label 'puritan' to connote his dissatisfaction with the 1559 Elizabethan Settlement, evidenced by his refusal to wear clerical vestments, and his belief that the Reformation in England remained unfinished. Foxe was a 'puritan' because he hoped for the continued development of the Church of England along Reformed lines, with a revamped infrastructure. Though Foxe's opinion on the existence of the bishops within the church cannot be stated for sure, what is clear at the very least is that he wanted to see Catholic

¹⁰⁵Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), especially 29-44; Collinson, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983).

¹⁰⁶John Copinger, *The theatre of Catolique and Protestant religion* (1620), 15.

¹⁰⁷Simon Lowth, *A letter to Edw. Stillingfleet, D.D. &c. in answer to the epistle dedicatory before his sermon* (1687), 58.

¹⁰⁸Richard Baxter considered Foxe a nonconformist partially on the basis of his admiration for the belief of John Wyclif that excommunication for preaching is invalid; Baxter, *A second true defence of the meer nonconformists against the untrue accusations, reasonings, and history of Dr. Edward Stillingfleet* (1681), 35.

¹⁰⁹'Moderate Conformer' [Early English Books Online], *Certain considerations tending to promote peace* (1674), 21; Henry Hickman, *Plus ultra* (1661), 27.

¹¹⁰Lake, *Moderate Puritans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Michael Questier, *Conversion, Politics, and Religion in England, 1580-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Como, *Blown by the Spirit*. Quote in Lake and Questier, *Conformity and Orthodoxy*, xviii.

canon law eradicated, replaced by a godly legal framework.¹¹¹

It is also worth mentioning that Foxe's closest associates and allies were on the more radical side of religious reform. Many scholars have touched on John Bale's immense influence on Foxe as a historian, but they do not point out that Foxe's theological perspective may have taken cues from Bale.¹¹² But Bale's virulent anti-Catholicism meant that he was ready to condemn ceremonies at every turn, and at times this could take him into radical territory.¹¹³ For instance, it is probable that Bale even considered swearing oaths to be a type of ceremony, or worse, outlawed in Scripture—though he was quick to separate his beliefs from those of the Anabaptists in *A Christen exhortacion vnto customable swearers* (1543). Printed while Bale was in exile during Henry's reign, the tract casts doubt on even swearing magisterial oaths.¹¹⁴ Bale's low esteem of oaths may be present in later editions of *AM* where we see several martyrs (in particular lollard martyrs) openly declare that swearing oaths is wrong, with no mitigating comments from Foxe.¹¹⁵

Another important puritan who may have left his mark on Foxe's theology is Anthony Gilby, with whom he lived during his time in Frankfurt. There they both worked on liturgical reform, and therefore they either shared or debated radical religious views. Gilby sided with the puritans in the second Vestments Controversy, and this puritanism characterized his ministry in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, where was a lecturer. He set up well-known exercises there, and his writings on church government anticipated the *Admonition to the Parliament* and the Marprelate tracts. Another likely influence on Foxe's theological perspective was fellow Frankfurt ex-

¹¹¹On the reform of canon law and Foxe's role in it, see Gerald Bray, ed., *Tudor Church Reform: The Henrician Canons of 1535 and the 'Reformation Legum Ecclesiasticarum'* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000).

¹¹²For instance, *BR*, 39.

¹¹³See, for instance, 233-34 and 254-55 below.

¹¹⁴The attribution of this text to Bale is a matter of some debate, as it is sometimes attributed to Miles Coverdale. Fairfield, Happé, and Ryrie agree that it is Bale's. See Fairfield, *John Bale*, 200 n.6; Peter Happé, *John Bale* (London: Twayne, 1996), 34; and Alec Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 77. For Bale's scruples about magisterial oaths, see Bale, *A Christen exhortacion vnto customable swearers* (1543), sig. B1r.

¹¹⁵See chapter eleven.

ile Robert Crowley, whom Foxe knew from his days at Magdalen College, Oxford. Crowley later printed *A Briefe Discourse Against the Outwarde Apparell of the Popishe Church* (1566) after either resigning or being deprived of his preferments due to his rejection of clerical vestments. When he was imprisoned over the issue, it was John Foxe who likely served as an ‘unofficial surrogate’ for him in the parish of St Giles Cripplegate, London.¹¹⁶ Foxe, likely influenced by these men, went on to influence another. John Field was Foxe’s ‘protégé’, to use Thomas Freeman’s word, and Patrick Collinson shows that Field served as Foxe’s literary apprentice by researching materials for the second edition of *AM*, and he was likely close to Foxe’s friend, the ‘proto-nonconformist’ Laurence Humphrey.¹¹⁷ Field was co-writer of *The Admonition to the Parliament*, which argued for further reformation along Calvinist lines. Letters survive from him to Foxe. They attended the 1575 execution of the Flemish Anabaptists together, and Foxe visited Field in prison when he was arrested.¹¹⁸

Beyond his circle of religious associates, Foxe’s own actions betray radical sympathies. Despite his desire for the unity of the Protestant church, Foxe nevertheless defied that church when it appeared too close to Romanism. It is of great significance that Foxe was among those who left the Frankfurt exile community, given how highly he valued unity among Protestants. Beyond his irenicism, deciding to take a stand against the very prayerbook that his brethren back in England were suffering martyrdom to defend is very important, considering how highly he valued the martyrs’ testimony to truth.

So actions where Foxe had to take an unequivocal stance despite some hardship—especially professional hardship—were a feature of his evangelical life from the beginning. Scholars of Foxe believe that he did not rise to higher ranks in the Elizabethan episcopacy because of his aversion to vestments, but others held the same scruples and received preferments nevertheless.¹¹⁹ When he was given a prebend at Durham

¹¹⁶For Foxe acting as surrogate, see ‘John Foxe,’ in *ODNB*; ‘Robert Crowley,’ Basil Morgan in *ODNB*.

¹¹⁷‘John Foxe,’ *ODNB*; ‘John Field,’ Patrick Collinson in *ODNB*.

¹¹⁸*RB*, 250.

¹¹⁹George Townsend, the Victorian editor of *AM*, believed this; see Peter Nockles, ‘The Nineteenth

Cathedral, however, he was asked to resign it one year later. Though his resignation has been attributed to his uneasiness regarding vestments (it is thought that the Durham chapter was more conservative than that of Salisbury, where he also held a prebendary),¹²⁰ Thomas Freeman conjectures that ‘Foxe appears to have fallen victim to an effort by the Durham chapter to purge non-residents from their ranks; Thomas Lever, now archdeacon of Coventry, resigned a prebend there at exactly the same time.’¹²¹ But Lever’s biographer Ben Lowe claims that Lever was forced to leave due to his refusal to wear clerical vestments, so it seems possible that this was a cause of Foxe’s deprivation as well.¹²²

Two important features of Foxe’s theological outlook, toleration and evangelical irenicism, combined with Foxe’s puritan ideals to create an eclectic religious outlook that appears to have been more sympathetic to radical ideas than has been hitherto recognized. One of these, not shared by many in Elizabethan England, was a tolerance for ideas which mainstream reformers thought too extreme. I use the term ‘tolerance’ in line with what Alexandra Walsham has illustrated the term signified in early modern England:

‘Toleration’... emphatically did not mean religious freedom. Nor did it proceed from indifference or neutrality. To tolerate was not to recognize or to grant equal rights to a rival system of belief; it was to permit or license something of which one emphatically disapproved, to make a magnanimous concession to the adherents of an inherently false

Century Reception,’ *TAMO Essays*. J.F. Mozley also claims this to be the case in *John Foxe and his Book* (London: SPCK, 1940), 63. Evenden and Freeman disagree with this for two reasons: they believe he turned down an offer of the deanship of Christchurch, Oxford, in order to focus on the first edition of *AM*, and they also claim that the vestments issue was not a significant one in the early years of Elizabeth’s reign. While Evenden and Freeman may be correct that Foxe turned down preferment to work on *AM*, this still does not preclude the possibility that Foxe was denied preferment later on (when vestments did become an issue) due to his nonconformity on this matter. See *RB*, 104.

¹²⁰ Pratt, ‘The Life and Defense of John Foxe,’ 76.

¹²¹ ‘John Foxe,’ *ODNB*.

¹²² ‘Thomas Lever,’ Ben Lowe in *ODNB*.

religion.¹²³

Foxe's stance was this. While he hated the dangerous errors of his religious opponents, he sought to bring them to correction through historical proof and sheer force of persuasion.¹²⁴ *AM* was a means to shoring up the evangelical faith, but it was also an attempt to convert the opposite side.¹²⁵

This tolerance is best exhibited in Foxe's aversion to the death penalty for religious reasons, which he believed to be at odds with Paul's teachings on the need for patience in dealing with brethren who might be weak in the faith. Foxe identified the Roman church's seeming abandonment of this teaching, based on Paul's letter to the Romans (chapters 14 and 15), as a chief cause of the martyrdoms in Christendom. For Foxe, the spilling of Christian blood directly contradicted an inherent quality of the true church, which in his mind rested on Isaiah's prophecy that the wolf and the lamb would dwell in harmony with one another on Mount Zion.¹²⁶ He considered a peaceful spirit to be a hallmark of a redeemed soul, writing that 'through grace and workyng of the Gospel, [people] are altered, reformed, and chaunged to an other disposition: from stoutnes to softenes: from violence to sufferance: from fiercenes to forbearyng: from pride to humilitie: from crueltie to compassion: from wylynes to simplicite: from solemne singularitie, to humanitie and mekenes.'¹²⁷

Foxe thought this sufferance and humanity applied not merely to the individual, but to the church and the state. On Mount Zion, 'is not restrayned the publicke penalty of good lawes nedefull to be executed vpon publicke malefactours, but here is restrayned the fiercenes, reuenge, cruelty, and violence of mens affections.'¹²⁸ The use of the term 'restrained' is not an accident, and here Foxe employed both its

¹²³Alexandra Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 4.

¹²⁴'John Foxe', *ODNB*.

¹²⁵For example, Thomas Freeman argues that Foxe's inclusion of the English humanist John Redman's deathbed conversion to belief in justification by faith was motivated by a desire to convert Catholics, as evangelicals would have had little interest in the story; Freeman, 'John Redman.' *TAMO* (1570) commentary, 1334.

¹²⁶*AM*, 13.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*

¹²⁸*Ibid.*

definitions, ‘to forbid’ (now obsolete) and ‘to hold back, limit’. In the sixteenth century, though, this word could also mean ‘to deprive (a person) of liberty or rights’, and ‘to confine or imprison’,¹²⁹ so readers might well recognize that physical persecution—certainly death, and even imprisonment—were cruel acts that belie the benevolence of a Christian commonwealth.¹³⁰

So Foxe was appalled when in 1575, upon discovering a conventicle of Flemish Anabaptists in London’s East End, the English government (possibly to ease diplomatic relations with Philip II) decided to execute two men, Jan Pietersz and Hendric ter Woert for heresy.¹³¹ Foxe became personally involved with the case. He may have even known of the two men personally: Elizabeth Evenden has shown the extent to which Foxe’s printer, John Day, relied on Dutch immigrants, most of whom had come to London ‘for conscience sake’.¹³² Whether or not that spurred his decision, Foxe wrote letters to William Cecil, the judges of the case, the Anabaptists themselves, and even to Queen Elizabeth, attempting to have their sentence commuted.¹³³ Claiming that burning heretics was the Roman custom and not the reformed one, Foxe implored Elizabeth to keep the sacred Smithfield and its martyrs

¹²⁹‘restrain, v.1’. *OED*, Oxford University Press.

¹³⁰Foxe may have been influenced by his research on the lollards with regard to imprisonment. While the stories of the Marian martyrs’ sufferings in the conditions of imprisonment would have affected him, it was the belief of some lollards that imprisonment was wrong, evidence of the persecuting tendencies of the Roman Church. Foxe included the testimonies against imprisonment within the text of *AM*: William Swinderby was said to believe, ‘who so pursues his brother with malice, prisoneth him cruelly for det without mercy that fain would pay it if he might: he sinneth against Christes teachyng, estote misericordes, sicut pater vester misericors est.’ Foxe’s marginal note reads, ‘How det is to be pursued.’ *AM*, 577. One of Wyclif’s articles was ‘neither the Pope, nor any other prelate of the church, ought to haue prisons wherein to punishe transgressours;’ it received no mitigating comment from Foxe. *AM*, 550.

¹³¹Alistair Duke, ‘Martyrs with a Difference: Dutch Anabaptist Victims of Elizabethan Persecution,’ *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 80/3: 274.

¹³²Elizabeth Evenden, ‘The Fleeing Dutchmen? The Influence of Dutch Immigrants upon the Print Shop of John Day,’ in *John Foxe at Home and Abroad*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 64.

¹³³See below, 150.

undefiled.¹³⁴ In Foxe's reliance on the Catholic counterexample, the limits of his tolerance become clear. While he hated the errors of the Anabaptists, he was willing to step in on their behalf; he hated the errors of the Catholics but he wrote no letters to help save the lives of those who were executed by Elizabeth's government (who, of course, died as traitors, not heretics).¹³⁵

In Foxe's letter to the Queen, he cited Romans 15, and Foxe appears to have relied on this source to explain his tolerance and call for it in others. In the first verse of this chapter, Paul admonished, 'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.'¹³⁶ In *AM*, this verse appears in Foxe's defense of William Cowbridge, whose burning for heresy Foxe personally witnessed in 1538. Despite Cowbridge's unorthodox views, his narrative was included in Foxe's *Rerum in ecclesia gestarum* (1559) as well as the first edition of *AM*.¹³⁷ Foxe knew that Cowbridge's beliefs were not sound, and buttressed his narrative accordingly:

Yet Paule wryting vnto the Romains and in other places also saithe, that the weake are to be receiued into the faithe, and not to the determinations of disputations, but thimbecillity of the weake is to be born of them that are stronger c. And in an other place, we vnderstand the spirte of lenity and gentlenes to be requisite in such as are spirituall whyche shal haue to do with the weake flock of Christ.¹³⁸

This earned a sharp rebuttal from Catholic polemicist Nicholas Harpsfield in his *Dialogi Sex* (1566), who claimed that Foxe was wrong to count this madman for a martyr.¹³⁹ Foxe responded in his second edition: he counted Cowbridge as a martyr (but omitted his beliefs) specifically to make the point that if Cowbridge really had been mad, then the Catholic Church had acted all the more cruelly for

¹³⁴Duke, 'Martyrs with a Difference,' 271.

¹³⁵Simeon Foxes claims to the contrary, written in the biography of his father in the preface to the 1610 edition of *AM*, have no contemporary corroboration.

¹³⁶Geneva Bible translation.

¹³⁷John Foxe, *Rerum in ecclesia gestarum* (Strasbourg, 1559), 139, and *TAMO* (1563), 626-27.

¹³⁸Foxe, *TAMO* (1563), 626.

¹³⁹Nicholas Harpsfield, *Dialogi sex contra summi pontificatus, monasticae vitae, sanctorum, sacrarum imaginum oppugnatores, et pseudomartyres* (1566), 851-861, at 856.

putting him to death.¹⁴⁰ Sixteen years after Cowbridge's execution, Foxe would write a letter to the English nobility from exile after the burning of Ridley, Latimer and Cranmer, asking where the gentleness of Paul was?¹⁴¹ This scriptural mandate drove his tolerance in dealing with all evangelicals.

Although Foxe's tolerance was rooted in Scripture, it was likely watered while in exile to flower during Elizabeth's reign.¹⁴² Foxe's time spent in exile, most of which was spent in the heterogeneous religious climate of the Upper Rhine, would prove to be a formative experience.¹⁴³ Christopher Highley has shown that 'the space of exile... often represented a multicultural contact zone' for exiled English Catholics, but this can also be applied to exiled Marian evangelicals.¹⁴⁴ Foxe's

¹⁴⁰Foxe, *AM*, 1331.

¹⁴¹Pratt, ed. *Foxe's Acts and Monuments*, 29.

¹⁴²In fact, Foxe's toleration is detectable earlier than his period of exile. In one of his first polemical tracts, *De non plecendis morte adulteris consultatio* (1548), Foxe addressed the severity of church discipline, and argued in particular that the death penalty for adulterers was unduly harsh; instead, Foxe proposed excommunication. This provoked a swift and sharp condemnation from his co-religionist George Joye, who argued that excommunication was inappropriate because it was out of use. This first foray into polemical writing also gives an early indication of Foxe's evangelical irenicism (discussed below): Foxe shut down the controversy before it drew in others or grew any more hostile, only responding with a tract dealing with the wider issue of canon law reform. Even early in his career, Foxe seems to have had little appetite for strife among the brethren. See Joye, *A contrarye (to a certayne manis) consultacion: that adulterers ought to be punyshed wyth deathe Wyth the solucions of his argumentes for the contrarye* (1549); Foxe, *De lapsis in ecclesiam recipiendis consultatio cum pastoribus* (1549).

¹⁴³During this time in Basel there was significant overlap between what historians would later term 'the radical reformation' and 'the magisterial reformation.' For instance, the Anabaptist leader David Joris worked alongside some of the most significant magisterial reformers of the era until well into the 1550s (for example, Sebastian Castellio translated several of Joris' tracts into Latin, and at Castellio's request, Joris reviewed his preface to his Latin translation of the Bible when Foxe was in Basel). Foxe came into contact with a variety of unorthodox opinions, some of which he may not have dismissed out of hand. Joris resided in the city undetected until 1559, three years after his death. See Gary K. Waite, *David Joris and Dutch Anabaptism: 1524-1543* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1990), 182.

¹⁴⁴Christopher Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.

presence at the international humanist hub of the University of Basel brought him into a nexus of various translations and interpretations of Scripture, spurned by debate and difference; it would have given him the opportunity to interact with a variety of unorthodox views.¹⁴⁵ Also, the print shop where he worked brought him into a large network of historians and polemicists with Reformed, Lutheran, and possibly even Anabaptist sympathies.¹⁴⁶ Even the experience of exile itself may have driven some reformers to tolerant perspectives: Sebastian Castellio and David Joris were exiles when their works in favor of toleration were published, and Jacobus Acontius, an Italian immigrant and member of the Dutch stranger church in London, later wrote an influential tract on toleration, *Strategamata satanae* (1565).¹⁴⁷ So the strain of toleration that pervaded Foxe's works and actions was likely influenced by his time spent in exile.

Foxe's tolerance could be the reason he included so many radical lollards in *AM*. If he considered intolerance, characterized by persecution, to be a mark of a false church, then the fact that these witnesses suffered for their beliefs may have overridden his qualms about those beliefs, radical as they were. Because Foxe counted these men and women as martyrs for the true church—his own church—then it may appear that he was sanctioning their beliefs. Walsham has shown, however, that toleration was not approval; he gave license to the lollards despite his doubts about their radicalism. And yet this toleration of radicalism, unusual for Foxe's historical context, makes Foxe seem more radical himself.

¹⁴⁵For instance, Foxe's employer Oporinus was a professor of rhetoric there and knew Sebastian Castellio, having employed the Frenchman when he was in exile in the same way he was employing Foxe. Castellio, known best for his strong position favouring religious tolerance, had graduated MA from the university in 1553, and by the time Foxe matriculated three years later, he was professor of Greek. It is likely that Foxe would have known Castellio: despite the university's prestige and internationalism, it was never a large institution. On this last point see Amy Nelson Burnett, *Teaching the Reformation: Ministers and Their Message in Basel, 1529-1629* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 22.

¹⁴⁶For Foxe's network, facilitated by connections through his mentor Bale, see *RB*, 73-79.

¹⁴⁷Actonius also supported Adriaan van Haemstede's toleration of Anabaptists. Ole Peter Grell, Jonathan I. Israel, and Nicholas Tyacke, *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 2-3.

In addition to toleration, Foxe's theology reveals a commitment to evangelical irenicism, a desire to promote peace among the reformed. He was fully aware of the many differences that divided the evangelicals, and that the divisions went far beyond the most obvious gulf between Lutherans and the Reformed churches. In fact, Foxe was perhaps best placed to understand just how many varieties of dissenters there were, having combed through the historical records looking for them. Nonetheless Foxe sought to gloss over these inconsistencies—both in his own dealing with errant co-religionists and in his text—for the sake of evangelical unity. His irenic perspective was likely driven by the Scriptural impetus to support brothers weak in the faith that underpinned his tolerance; Mount Zion was characterized by tranquillity. Though his puritan ideals drove him to take stands against fellow brethren when necessary, which will be discussed in the next section, Foxe was keen to minimize the conflict between himself and others, and among his co-religionists.

Foxe reached the open-minded town of Basel only after exiting his first choice of exile community, in Frankfurt. The infamous 'troubles at Frankfurt' have been well-documented elsewhere, but it is relevant to point out Foxe's position.¹⁴⁸ In the factious dispute over which form of the prayerbook the exiled Edwardian divines should use, Foxe came down on the side of John Knox, who had believed that the 1552 Edwardian Prayer Book contained unnecessary ceremonies with too strong a Catholic flavor to them. It is worth noting that the letter written in December 1554 by Foxe and others stated that the *tolerabiles ineptiae* (Calvin's famous phrase for the ceremonies) should be eradicated out of respect to the sensibilities of their German evangelical hosts.¹⁴⁹ Whether this is an example of genuine irenicism or its use as a rhetorical tool, Foxe articulated it. It may well have been more than rhetoric: throughout the controversy, Foxe's behaviour showed nothing of the characteristic vehemence of Knox, nor of the factious manipulations of Richard Cox, leaders of

¹⁴⁸Patrick Collinson, 'The Authorship of *A Brieff Discours off the Troubles Begonne at Franckford*,' *JEH* 9/2 (1958): 188-208; Martin A. Simpson, *John Knox and the Troubles begun at Frankfurt* (West Linton: The Author, 1975); Ronald J. Vander Molen, 'Anglican Against Puritan: Ideological Origins during the Marian Exile,' *Church History* 42.1 (March 1973): 45-57.

¹⁴⁹Mozley, *John Foxe*, 45.

the two opposing parties. After Cox's betrayal of Knox to the authorities forcing his expulsion from the city, the unrevised prayerbook faction won. Foxe was a signatory on a letter written from the defeated group the following summer asking that arbiters solve the dispute.¹⁵⁰ Nothing came of this attempt at reconciliation, and Foxe left for Basel about three weeks later.

The bitterness at Frankfurt, where Foxe felt Knox was treated in an unchristian way, undoubtedly helped to form Foxe's ecumenist attitude. The episode was a searing experience, one that showed its scars later in Foxe's life, when he was editing *AM*. Thomas Freeman has alerted scholars to at least two places in the text, both in the narratives of leading evangelicals, where Foxe minimized the appearance of dissension among his co-religionists. One directly pertains to the 'troubles at Frankfurt'; when incorporating a letter from Ridley into *AM*, Foxe cut out a passage that disparaged Knox's behaviour with the Frankfurt exile community.¹⁵¹ Freeman has also elucidated the extent to which Foxe suppressed the schism among the Freewillers and predestinarians during Mary's reign; instead what readers find is a remarkably unified—and historically inaccurate—picture of Marian evangelicalism.¹⁵²

Beyond his editing practices, we can detect Foxe's evangelical irenicism in epistolary evidence, little that remains. In a letter of 1557, Edmund Grindal, a leader of the English exile community in Strasbourg, reassured Foxe, who was worried that his translation of Cranmer's Eucharistic debate with Stephen Gardiner into Latin would draw criticism from his co-religionists. Grindal's response was soothing: 'As to the variety of opinions, you need not be much concerned. Good men will speak well of you, bad men ill. It is enough to be praised by men of reputation; to please all men falls to the lot of none.'¹⁵³ Other evidence comes from Foxe's own pen, writing to Thomas Lever (who incidentally fell on the opposite side during the dispute

¹⁵⁰Ibid.,49.

¹⁵¹ 'John Foxe,' *ODNB*.

¹⁵²Freeman, 'Dissenters from a Dissenting Church,' in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, 129-156.

¹⁵³*Remains of Edmund Grindal*, ed. William Nicholson, Parker Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1843), 234.

at Frankfurt), in 1555.¹⁵⁴ Foxe admonished his friend: ‘I have reason to believe the rumour, that you are given to discord and quarrelling, and that you hate your fellow Englishmen who have never harmed you. Have we so few contentions in the world that you must needs add to them? Put off your old bitterness and return to peace. Your own sermons used ever to urge us to love.’¹⁵⁵ Foxe, then, while publicly downplaying strife in *AM*, was also actively mediating it through private letters.

This urge to stress unity among the brethren and toleration of unorthodox beliefs, added to Foxe’s puritanism, made for a quirky reformer. Being eclectic, Foxe’s exact religious views can be elusive; the scant documentary evidence that remains makes the task even more difficult. But this gap in the excellent work done on Foxe recently is an important one: understanding Foxe’s own beliefs about theology and ecclesiology adds another piece to the puzzle of *AM*. This attempt to reconstruct Foxe’s religious views—a difficult task with regard to any reformer, but especially one whose irenicism kept him out of intra-confessional polemical disputes—is necessarily speculative and circumstantial, but it nevertheless should be added to the analysis of the lollards in *AM* in order to round out the picture of how Foxe’s beliefs shaped *AM*. This thesis will suggest that Foxe, though largely seen as a ‘magisterial’ reformer, in fact held an idiosyncratic combination of theological beliefs that make it difficult to portray him in such black and white terms.

These idiosyncratic beliefs take on new meaning when looking at how Foxe edited the lollards’ stories. As shown above, scholars have approached Foxe’s treatment of lollard sources in terms of omission: they analyze what lollard beliefs Foxe did not include in the text. Scholars then compare those beliefs to the mainstream magisterial viewpoint (and even this belies the flexibility inherent in the Thirty-Nine Articles) and deduce that because Foxe omitted them, his views must have dovetailed with the mainstream.

In many ways, Foxe’s views did fit that mainstream. Olsen has demonstrated his

¹⁵⁴On this letter see John Wade, ‘John Foxe’s Latin Writings: Their Intellectual and Social Context, with special references to the period of exile, 1554-1559’ (PhD. diss, University of Sheffield, 2008), 137-39.

¹⁵⁵Quoted in Mozley, *John Foxe*, 47.

theological agreement with reformed views of the sacraments, and his own commitment to preaching and pastoral responsibility underscores his evangelical credentials. These observations must also appear alongside Foxe's stances that veered from mainstream reformed belief, as Olsen has rightly done with regard to Foxe's tolerance.¹⁵⁶ Though to this I would add that Foxe's emphasis on evangelical irenicism should be considered as well.

Given that Foxe's adherence to Elizabethan orthodoxy is not clear-cut, it seems misguided to assume that this orthodoxy was the sole driving force behind the deletions and additions within *AM*. In fact, the evidence from the way Foxe edited the lollard material would suggest otherwise. This thesis will demonstrate that in key areas of theology and ecclesiology, Foxe admitted lollard belief that pushed the boundaries of reformed doctrine, and in fact went far beyond it. Foxe included such material doubtless because the lollards could be excused as living in 'dark and misty times', but they were also likely included because Foxe was not as disturbed by their radical beliefs as scholars think he was.¹⁵⁷

While identifying Foxe's authorial intent is of course important, as will become evident in later chapters, reception of the work came to dominate its significance. But Foxe's audience could only read what they wanted to read into *AM* because Foxe's tolerance, evangelical irenicism, and puritanism allowed him to incorporate material that many would not have considered orthodox in the Elizabethan Church of England. The effect this interplay between authorial intent and audience reception would have on the development of early modern English religious culture will be explored in the chapters that follow.

¹⁵⁶V. Norskov Olsen, *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 197-219.

¹⁵⁷See chapter three below.

The ‘Book of Martyrs’

The Editions of the *Acts and Monuments*

Despite the fame that Foxe would achieve for chronicling the martyrs of the ‘bloody time of Queen Mary’, it was the lollards who launched Foxe’s career as a martyrologist. *AM* was an amalgamation of texts, not least its predecessors, *Commentarii in ecclesia gestarum rerum* (1554) and *Rerum in ecclesiam gestarum* (1559), printed during Foxe’s exile, in Strasbourg and Basel respectively.¹⁵⁸ The *Commentarii*, written at the end of Edward’s reign, detailed English history from Wyclif’s time to 1500.¹⁵⁹ Although few people had until recently considered the *Commentarii* significant, Evenden and Freeman have recently highlighted its influence on the development of continental martyrologies.¹⁶⁰ It was incorporated wholesale into the *Rerum*, with additional material from Fabian’s chronicle about Sir John Oldcastle and his coterie of lollard knights.¹⁶¹ The *Rerum* also updated the account of English persecution, moving chronologically through Henry’s reign; for this, he amalgamated material from Bale’s work and from the chronicle of Edward Hall.¹⁶²

The second edition of *AM* was followed by a third in 1576 and a fourth in 1583, the last to be printed in Foxe’s lifetime. Thomas Betteridge (among others) has suggested that the four texts published in Foxe’s lifetime should be studied as four separate texts with evolving motivations behind them, but this seems to be overstated.¹⁶³ The more recent in-depth analysis of Evenden and Freeman of Foxe and his printer John Day has drawn a fuller picture of the continuities and

¹⁵⁸For Foxe’s Latinity in these two works, see Wade, ‘John Foxe’s Latin Writings’, 97-146 and 195-200.

¹⁵⁹At the end of the *Commentarii*, Foxe wrote that it remained to write the other part of the story, encompassing the time of Luther; Foxe, *Commentarii in ecclesia gestarum rerum* (1554), 205r. Cf. Heinrich Pantaleon, *Martyrum Historia* (Basel, 1563).

¹⁶⁰*RB*, 56-60.

¹⁶¹Foxe, *Rerum in ecclesiam gestarum*, 97-109. *RB*, 52.

¹⁶²*RB*, 85-86.

¹⁶³Thomas Betteridge, ‘From Prophetic to Apocalyptic: John Foxe and the Writing of History,’ in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 210-32; Susan Felch examines the distinctions between the editions’ prefaces in her ‘Shaping the Reader in the Acts and Monuments,’ in *ibid.*, 52-65.

discontinuities of the editions. It has detailed the exigencies of the print industry, the urgency of grappling with surges of source material, and the actions of changing editorial teams. They show that the fourth edition was largely unchanged from the third edition, and that the third edition was essentially a duplicate of the second.¹⁶⁴

Evenden and Freeman also prove that Foxe was most intimately involved with editing the second edition. They show that he was preoccupied with another project while the third edition was being prepared, and that while he was certainly more involved with the fourth edition, even pursuing new research, ‘there is very little evidence of his being in the printing house and assuming the direct supervisory role that he had done with the 1570 edition.’¹⁶⁵ They also reveal the way that Foxe’s editorial control shaped the book, perhaps most significantly demonstrated by his marginal notes.¹⁶⁶ Because of Foxe’s direct supervision of it, this thesis will cite the 1570 edition throughout, noting instances of divergence from other editions. This version of the text contains far more marginal notes, which were ‘especially prominent...when Foxe was printing material with which he disagreed or at least had reservations’.¹⁶⁷ This thesis will pay special attention to marginal notes that Foxe used to mould meaning in subsequent chapters, noting in particular places where he might mitigate the impact of radical material.

The lollard narratives, central to the very beginning of Foxe’s martyrological efforts in the *Commentarii*, also played a role in the posthumous editions of *AM* (1596, 1610, 1632, 1641, 1684), even though their narratives remained the same.¹⁶⁸ Evenden and Freeman have downplayed the political dimension of these editions.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴Evenden and Freeman state that the scope, illustrations, and disorganization of the third edition remained unchanged for the 1583 edition, though some corrections were made and material that had appeared in the first edition but not the second or third was then reinstated. *RB*, 302-305. For the similarities between the second and third editions, see *RB*, 262-63.

¹⁶⁵John Day had essentially outsourced the work of printing the third edition to his son Richard while Foxe completed another polemical work; *RB*, 262. Quote at 311.

¹⁶⁶*RB*, 169-70.

¹⁶⁷*RB*, 178.

¹⁶⁸On the lack of textual change in posthumous editions, see *RB*, 325.

¹⁶⁹They reject John King’s claims that the appendix (the only real change to the text) had political undertones, asserting that ‘this edition does not seem to have been made for any political

For instance, they have disputed (on good grounds) the claims of other scholars that Archbishop William Laud, who had traditionally been seen as hostile to the legacy of Elizabethan puritanism, was in fact sympathetic to *AM*; instead, recognizing Anthony Milton's interpretation of a Laudian hostility to the Elizabethan puritan tradition, Evenden and Freeman have agreed with Damian Nussbaum's assessment that 'Laud may not have challenged Foxe directly but neither did he champion him.'¹⁷⁰ That view is based on the idea that Laud challenged 'the Elizabethan moderate puritan tradition of English Protestantism represented by figures such as John Foxe', but that presupposes that Foxe was a 'moderate puritan'. This thesis argues that Foxe's theological ideas were not so neatly boxed, looking more radical than that, and it will further show that Laudians—most clearly articulated by Peter Heylyn, a Laudian advocate and historian—openly recognized Foxe as such.¹⁷¹ This recognition was due in large part to the radical lollard narratives that feature in *AM*.

Political exigencies such as Laudian opposition had no effect on the content of *AM*, merely on when it was reprinted. Given that the lollard material remained unchanged from the 1583 edition, then, this thesis will not reference the seventeenth-century editions, though it should be noted that many later writers used those editions.

Influence of the *Acts and Monuments*

The far-reaching influence of *AM* is difficult to overstate. From its influence on Shakespeare and later theatre, to household decoration, to the broadsides and ballads that took their subject from it, the book proved ubiquitous in early modern England, despite the small number of copies.¹⁷² It spurred widely published abbre-

reason.' *RB*, 335. For the religio-political climate surrounding the 1632 edition, see Damian Nussbaum, 'Appropriating Martyrdom: Fears of Renewed Persecution and the 1632 Edition of *Acts and Monuments*' in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 178-91.

¹⁷⁰*RB*, 332-334, quote at 334.

¹⁷¹See chapter three.

¹⁷²Annabel Patterson has shown the significance of the Sir John Oldcastle in particular (as shaped by their editors Bale and Foxe) in theatre; Annabel Patterson, 'Sir John Oldcastle as Symbol of

viated versions, compiled by no less than John Taylor, ‘the Water Poet’.¹⁷³ In an age when reading ecclesiastical history was seen as second-best only to Bible reading in terms of spiritual edification, it is hardly surprising that *AM* proved to be a durable mainstay of sixteenth and seventeenth-century English culture.

The lollards were part of this culture. Though, like other aspects of Foxe’s history, not everyone accepted them wholesale, there is evidence that they were swiftly incorporated into contemporary attacks on Catholicism.¹⁷⁴ The Waldensians, too, benefited from favorable treatment of them by martyrologists of the sixteenth century.¹⁷⁵ Foxe included their story in the medieval section of *AM* and the account of the Massacre of Mérindol in 1545.¹⁷⁶ These medieval witnesses, though, played a secondary role to those of the Marian reign; the lollards especially, with their relatively quiet dissimulation and forced abjurations, would prove less saleable than the tortures of Anne Askew or drama of Cranmer’s burning.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, several abridgments such as Timothy Bright’s *An abridgement of the acts and*

Reformation Historiography,’ in *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540-1688*, eds. Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6-26; for an example of its influence in household decoration, see Tara Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 2; for ballads inspired by *AM*, see Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 90-96.

¹⁷³‘John Taylor,’ Bernard Capp in *ODNB*.

¹⁷⁴Susannah Brietz Monta and Thomas S. Freeman have shown that Holinshed rejected Foxe’s account of Oldcastle, preferring to use the chronicle of Edward Hall instead. Freeman and Monta, ‘Holinshed and Foxe,’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed’s Chronicles*, eds., Paulina Kewes, Ian W. Archer, and Felicity Heal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 217-34. For examples where Wyclif was accepted and used polemically, see William Fulke, *D. Heskins, D. Sanders, and M. Rastel, accounted (among their faction) three pillars and archpatriarches of the popish synagogue* (1579), 255; William Charke, *A treatise against the Defense of the censure* (1586), 149.

¹⁷⁵Euan Cameron notes that because of their treatment by martyrologists, the ‘term “Waldenses” became a respectable one for protestants to use from the mid-1550s onwards.’ Euan Cameron, *The Reformation of the Heretics: the Waldenses of the Alps, 1480-1580* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 237.

¹⁷⁶*AM*, 310-13, 1126-45

¹⁷⁷Evenden and Freeman point out that this was particularly the case in the eighteenth century. *RB*, 341.

monuments (1589) and Samuel Clarke's *A Generall martyrologie* (1651) did include lollard material, albeit drastically abbreviated.¹⁷⁸

Interpretive Communities

The influence of *AM* went far beyond the popularity of martyrologies in the printing industry. Scholars such as Patrick Collinson, John Knott, and Susannah Monta, among others, have discussed the role of Foxe in bringing together readers into a shared religious experience.¹⁷⁹ Groups drawn together to read from *AM* by the fireside give anecdotal examples of a much larger phenomenon: the book helped to shape a fledgling religious community in Elizabethan England by offering edifying examples of moral behaviour and selfless sacrifice, and by delineating doctrine.¹⁸⁰ This last point is particularly significant. *AM* provided examples of witnesses to the true church surrendering their lives for beliefs which caused them to be persecuted. Because persecution was considered a sign of the false church, suffering validated the beliefs of the godly. The circularity which characterized the relationship between martyrdom and correct belief will be discussed in detail in chapter four, but Foxe

¹⁷⁸For example, in Timothy Bright's abridgment the lengthy story of Walter Brute in *AM* is condensed to two pages. See Bright, *An abridgement of the acts and monumentes of the churche* (1589), 287-289. On this edition see Nussbaum, 'Whitgift's "Book of Martyrs"'; David Scott Kastan, 'Little Foxes,' in *John Foxe and His World*, 117-29. But shortening the lollard narratives or focusing more on persecution than the beliefs that caused it did not make these stories doctrinally neutral. For example, Robert Young's abridgment does not actually spell out Wyclif's opinions, but readers would have understood the anti-episcopal message in the one-sentence statement of Wyclif's beliefs: 'he perceiuing the true Doctrine of Christs Gospel to be adulterat and defiled with so many filthy inuentions of Bishops, Sects of Monks, and dark errors'; Young, *A breviary of the later persecutions* (Glasgow, 1663), 2. The abridgments typically spent very little time discussing the beliefs that led to persecution, and for that reason, it is likely that later polemicists who cited lollard precedents for their beliefs were using full editions of *AM*.

¹⁷⁹Collinson, 'John Foxe and National Consciousness'; John Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694*; Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England*, 35-51.

¹⁸⁰Brad Gregory writes, 'As evangelicals distinguished between essential and nonessential martyrs' beliefs, they were becoming aware of something 'Protestant' about themselves, an aspect of religious identity that intra-Protestant disputes over liturgy, ministry, or the sacraments fail to reveal.' Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 142.

understood the significance of these of these witnesses, and the part that *AM* had in preserving their memory; moreover, he was aware of the divergent ways his text might be read. Accordingly, he sought to control its reception through paratextual devices such as prefatory material and marginal comments. Monta details the lengths Foxe took to curate and unite a godly interpretive godly community, noting that ‘a number of Foxe’s martyrs seem presciently aware of the need to provide testimony around which a godly reading community may coalesce.’¹⁸¹

There have been several full-length studies that detail Foxe’s attempts to shape his readers and the reception of the text. While Monta argues that martyrologists shaped their text to respond to other martyrologists across the religious divide, this thesis will pick up where her study ends to explore the way Protestant readers understood that text. John R. Knott’s *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1530-1694* argues that the dynamic of martyrdom that Foxe established, which offered images of resistance to state-sponsored persecution by beleaguered minorities, was appropriated by later nonconformist writers. Knott covers much of the same ground as this thesis, especially chapter five below. Like Knott, Adrain Chastain Weimer’s *Martyrs’ Mirror* analyzes the reception of *AM*, but in early New England, arguing that *AM* spawned divergent apperceptions of martyrdom and its significance.

The work of Monta, Knott, and Weimer has illustrated ably how influential Foxe’s *AM* was in terms of developing confessional identity along martyrological lines. But I will argue that the martyrological tradition was only one of many ways that the *AM* influenced later dissenters, and I will show that the theological and ecclesiological legacies of the lollards were just as significant. Moreover, while these studies make the most minimal references to the lollards, this thesis will demonstrate that their influence did not end with their incorporation into Foxe’s tome. Also, this work, unlike that of Knott and Weimer, will go beyond reception to look at Foxe’s editorial methods.

Another influential study has illuminated this the idea of a Foxean interpretive

¹⁸¹Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England*, 38.

community. Most directly relevant is Patrick Collinson's essay 'John Foxe and National Consciousness', a publication of The John Foxe Project, which argues that to understand the impact of the *Acts and Monuments*, then scholars need to shift from the intentions of its author to its reception by readers.¹⁸² He lamented that 'the reception history of... "Foxe"... has remained almost unexplored, and I am not convinced that an adequate reception history can ever be written.' Despite this caveat, Collinson delved into the subject. Using theories of reception found in Brian Stock's study of early heretical circles and the Cistercian order, and Kate Peters' work on Quaker identity in the 1650s, Collinson suggested 'it [is] more likely Foxe was read in ways that were shared and mutually understood than that he was read in any number of ways', and 'that his book probably did achieve a high degree of... "interpretive coherence."' ¹⁸³ A textual community had formed around *AM*.

This thesis will follow Collinson's lead in looking for ways readers responded to a significant portion Foxe's text. In order to do so, I have looked at chiefly polemical writing from c.1580 to 1700. This large chronological span allows for understanding the ups and downs of the lollards' popularity, closely connected with that of Foxe. It will detail Foxe's reputation from the apex at the end of his life to its nadir in the 1630s (a process commonly attributed to Archbishop William Laud, but in fact initiated by Archbishop Richard Bancroft) from its resurgence in the puritan ascendancy of the Interregnum to its contested legacy as competing confessions claimed Foxe's authority.¹⁸⁴ This thesis will show that the radical material found in the lollard narratives, left intact by Foxe, played no small role in the fortunes of his reputation.

It is an important caveat that the religious climate of the seventeenth century was messy. Religious identities were shifting and porous, and are difficult for historians to pin down. To name only a few well-known examples, John Tombes was an antipaedobaptist who refused to join a Baptist congregation; John Bunyan fluctuated between Baptist groups and Quakerism; and Roger Williams eventually rejected all

¹⁸²Patrick Collinson, 'John Foxe and National Consciousness,' 18-19.

¹⁸³Ibid., 21.

¹⁸⁴See chapter six.

of them. This point is significant because, as competing religious groups shared membership at times, many textual communities shared ideas and sources.¹⁸⁵ In an age without copyright, writers might quote verbatim with no attribution, and some writers cited their sources only rarely anyway. Recognizing that textual communities were porous, I have made efforts to identify continuities as well as discontinuities between these communities.

Central to how later communities understood the lollards was their transformation from disgraced heretics and traitors into proto-Protestants. This process began with early evangelicals looking at the medieval records and identifying these men and women as evidence of the Holy Spirit's activity in the world, and then coming to understand their place in the historical scheme revealed through the Book of Revelation. That process, and its unintended consequences in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is outlined in chapter three, after a review of the scholarly literature on this topic.

¹⁸⁵For instance, William Lamont has shown that the Baptist Henry Jessey used Prynne's words in his own writing. 'William Prynne,' William Lamont in *ODNB*.

Chapter 2: Historiography

Introduction

The belief that the presence of medieval dissenters ‘sowed the ground’ in England for the Reformation has, largely, been a result of two factors: obvious doctrinal similarities between lollards and the evangelicals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the fact that the two movements have been linked in English history-writing since the sixteenth century. This chapter outlines the ways scholars of the last century or so have approached lollardy’s relationship to the English Reformation, detailing four broad approaches. It sets this thesis in its historiographical place, and explains the reasons underlying its methodology.

The study of the relationship between lollardy and evangelicalism is winding and often problematic; approaches beyond examining doctrinal links have varied from geographical and social studies to moral and behavioural perspectives.¹ To elucidate the literature surrounding the debate, four main themes will be explored in roughly chronological order. First, the debate about lollard and evangelical connections must be placed within the wider discussion surrounding the origins of the English Reformation, which dominated the field for the last half of the twentieth century. From there, I will note another direction of lollard and Reformation studies which ties lollardy not to the magisterial Reformation, but to its more radical cousin. The next theme I have called ‘points of contact’, which will explore the ways scholars have sought to explain more direct connections between lollards and reformers, and also between lollardy and orthodoxy. Finally, I will show the ways historians have depicted the link as mostly historiographical in nature.

¹A recent historiographical overview of this topic has been published; see Peter Marshall, ‘Lollards and Protestants Revisited,’ in *Wycliffite Controversies*, eds. Mishtooni Bose and J. Patrick Hornbeck II (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 295-318.

The Origins Debate

Discussions of lollardy's influence on the evangelical movement in England have, for the second half of the last century, largely reflected the wider discourse around the origins of the Reformation. This discourse, usually referred to as the 'from above or from below' debate, saw major changes in the praxis of the historical discipline within Reformation studies. Prior to the 1960s, the Reformation narrative was written largely with reference to the high church and government records.² This changed in 1964, with A.G. Dickens' seminal survey, *The English Reformation*, which used evidence found in local archives and parish records to place the ordinary people of England at the centre of reasons the Reformation succeeded.³ Responding to Dickens and to what they saw as essentially a 'Whiggish' interpretation of history, 'revisionists' such as J.J. Scarisbrick, Christopher Haigh, and Richard Rex have sought to demonstrate that England's Reformation was an 'anaemic substitute' for a real Reformation, unwanted by the general population whose spiritually-fulfilling world of 'traditional religion' was disrupted by the greed and political exigency of the various Tudor monarchs (with the exception, of course, of Mary).⁴

Before delving into how this debate shaped lollard studies, it will be useful to briefly illustrate the historiographical tradition these scholars inherited prior to the 1960s. In his *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, G.M. Trevelyan, perhaps the last great Whig historian, used bishops' records cited by John Foxe to prove that lollardy saw a revival between 1490 and 1521.⁵ Based on this evidence, Trevelyan did not believe that lollardy was ever 'extinguished' but rather 'merged in another party', the evangelicals.⁶ His sentiments were not echoed by James Gairdner, whose four-

²For a detailed account of the historiography of the English Reformation, see Patrick Collinson, 'The English Reformation, 1945-1960,' in *Companion to Historiography*, ed. Michael Bentley (New York: Routledge, 2002), 336-60. Cf. also Peter Heath, 'Between Reform and Reformation: The English Church in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries,' *JEH* 41/4 (1990): especially 668-9 and 677-8.

³A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964).

⁴*Ibid.*, 1-18. Collinson, 'The English Reformation,' 346-7.

⁵G.M. Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe* (London: Longmans Green, 1904), 348.

⁶*Ibid.*, 350.

volume tome, *Lollardy and the Reformation in England*, was published five years later; belying half its title, the lollards played a very small role in Gairdner's version of the Reformation. Instead, 'it was not from any protest against real abuses that the Reformation here took its origin'. Rather, Gairdner viewed the sea change as due more to monarchical impetus than the dwindling numbers of lollards in the sixteenth century.⁷ Two years later, William Frere referred to Gairdner's work as a 'disappointing study', and asserted that Gairdner was far too restricted in his analysis of the connections between lollards and sixteenth-century reformers. Whereas Gairdner looked merely at theological connections, Frere sought to associate the politics, theories and criticisms, social and economic makeup, and the philosophy and intellectualism of the two groups, and then to combine those with the theological links—a lofty aim he does not accomplish in his rather short article.⁸

Historiographically, little changed between Frere's article and Dickens' survey,⁹ save K.B. McFarlane's account of Wycliffe's life and influence on English religious dissidence in *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity* (1952).¹⁰ McFarlane seeks to disentangle the heresiarch from the highly partisan hands of Bale, Foxe, and what he saw as their nineteenth- and twentieth-century counterparts, such as Trevelyan. He points out Wycliffe's weakness as a practical reformer, citing 'a characteristic failure to mould events decisively' in the political realm, and claimed

⁷James Gairdner, *Lollardy and the Reformation in England* (London: MacMillan, 1908-13), 287-9. This position had been stated before by Mandell Creighton in his collection of essays found in *The Church and the Nation* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co: 1901), 164.

⁸William Frere, 'Lollardy and the Reformation,' *Church Quarterly Review* 69 (1910): 426-39.

⁹Collinson attributes this to a shift in historiographical emphasis which concentrated on the crisis of the aristocracy in attempts to explain the English Civil War. See Collinson, 'The English Reformation,' 338-9. A year after Dickens' survey appeared, William A. Clebsch's work on early evangelicals had startling little to say on the topic of Lollardy; the work is notable because unlike Gairdner or Dickens, he does not begin his examination of Protestantism with an analysis of the Lollard movement. It seems he cannot escape them for long; by the third page Clebsch notes that the earliest reformers were forming a 'moralistic theology and a scriptural religion' that would appeal both to intellectuals and the 'men and women still attached to old Lollardy.' See Clebsch, *The Earliest English Protestants, 1520-1535* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 3.

¹⁰McFarlane, *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity*.

that the movement had limited social appeal (only to the lower middle class) and thus little influence on the Reformation.¹¹ This is hardly a groundswell of religious fervor that seamlessly flowed into the Reformation, which is what Dickens would essentially, if not exactly, argue twelve years later.

Dickens' assertions, based on doctrinal links and evidence of contact between lollards and evangelicals, were put forth in two influential studies. In the first, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-1558*, Dickens argues for lollard continuity from 1509 through the end of Mary's reign, referring to lollardy as the 'native medieval tributary to the English Reformation' and claiming that 'the foreign seed fell upon a ground prepared for its reception, and prepared by something more than anti-clericalism or royal propaganda'.¹² This 'something' was not the initial reformers but rather a 'diffused but inveterate Lollardy revived by contact with continental Protestantism'.¹³ These sentiments are echoed and given fuller explanation in *The English Reformation* five years later (which was needed—for a title containing the word 'lollards', they were conspicuously absent for most of the book, save the introduction and conclusion). In this work, although in general the same ideas are expounded, Dickens moves beyond doctrinal similarities to discuss various points of contact between lollards and evangelicals. He cites evidence of lollards trading their old copies of the vernacular Scriptures for Tyndale's *New Testament* (cited by most other authors in this survey); a group of eleven lollard men gathering to hear the reports of Nicholas Field of London who had been to Germany and brought back news of reformers there; and a much weaker example of a seaman from Hull whose visits to ports in the Netherlands and Germany only bolstered heterodoxical interests he may have developed prior to leaving England.¹⁴ Dickens claims that this evidence is 'incontrovertible' and proof that lollardy survived and contributed significantly to the English Reformation.¹⁵

¹¹Ibid., 74, 170.

¹²A.G. Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-1558* (London: Published for the University of Hull by the Oxford University Press, 1959), 244, 245.

¹³Ibid., 243.

¹⁴Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 56-58.

¹⁵Ibid., 59. Dickens is not alone in this belief. Claire Cross' 1976 survey also cites 'criticism of

Rather unsurprisingly, Dickens' critics, who oppose his teleological perspective and long-term causes for the Reformation, have had relatively little to say on the issue of lollardy. J.J. Scarisbrick dismisses them in his collection of Ford Lectures published in 1984; he only mentions lollardy in three places.¹⁶ He characterizes the prevalence of religious dissidence in Buckinghamshire as due to a 'deep-rooted semi-paganism' and writes that lollardy was largely 'disparate, dispersed,' and 'undangerous'.¹⁷

Christopher Haigh follows suit. He claims that one *could* see the scant evidence of lollards as remains of what must have been a larger group, but that in fact, given the widespread hostility towards heresy, it is likely that the extant records fail to reveal very little.¹⁸ From here, Haigh seeks to revise Dickens' other underlying cause of the Reformation, anticlericalism, by showing that the majority of the English people were pleased with their clergymen. This view of a generally spiritually satisfied laity in late medieval England has been most deftly articulated and comprehensively researched by Eamon Duffy, whose *Stripping of the Altars* (1993) argued that 'traditional religion' was 'vigorous, adaptable, widely understood, and popular'.¹⁹ Duffy's seminal account of late medieval piety and English reform differed from other revisionists' views in that while they doubted the efficacy of Edwardian and Elizabethan reforms, Duffy asserted that by 1580, they had been effective, England's religious

the clergy from time immemorial. . . increasing in virulence' and Lollardy's survival and attraction of new adherents as reasons the Reformation succeeded in England. Cross, *The Church and the People, 1450-1660* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1976), 53.

¹⁶This not altogether unexpected from a book whose preface says that it will not 'adequately tackle' the spread of English Protestantism—but why the spread of English Protestantism does not merit examination in an attempt 'to trace some of the ways in which and some reasons why English society at large underwent and responded to the profound changes in religious loyalties, attitudes, and practices during the sixteenth century' is not obvious to me. See J.J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 2.

¹⁷J.J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People*, 46.

¹⁸Christopher Haigh, 'The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation,' in *The English Reformation Revised*, ed. Christopher Haigh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 5.

¹⁹Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 5.

history irrevocably lost. Duffy unreservedly claimed that his work would not cover the lollards extensively (and in fact it hardly touches on them), believing that scholars have inflated their importance in the first place.²⁰ When critics accused him of painting a rose-tinted picture of pre-Reformation England—in particular, devoid of lollards—he responded in the preface to the book’s second edition. Duffy reiterated his case for the ‘grossly exaggerated’ historiographical emphasis on lollardy’s significance, chiefly by demonstrating the overlapping impulses (such as a concern for the poor and desire for vernacular Scripture) that drove both lollards and non-Wycliffite members of the late medieval English church.²¹

Haigh claims, ‘It is far from clear what we should make of the Lollards’, but Richard Rex, another revisionist author writing fifteen years later, is less uncertain. Asserting that lollards were numerically insignificant and unimportant in English history, Rex strips lollardy of its causation of the English Reformation while allowing it connections with the reformers.²² He argues that far more converts came to evangelicalism from conservative religious backgrounds than from lollardy, and therefore the historian’s task is not to determine how lollards became Protestant converts, but how Catholics did.²³ While quick to dismiss the connections in terms of causation, he never addresses how these connections might be significant in other ways;²⁴ he merely drops the subject (referring to eight examples of non-book trade connections between lollards and evangelicals as ‘crumbs’) after stating that while some lollards may have been attracted towards influential reformers, ‘there is little if any sign that the evangelical leaders made a special effort to contact their “forerunners”’.²⁵ Rex sums up his chapter on the relationship between lollardy and

²⁰Ibid., 6, 2.

²¹Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*, 2nd Ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), Preface to the 2nd Edition.

²²Haigh, ‘The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation,’ 5. Richard Rex, *The Lollards* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 119. Rex states, ‘It is certainly not possible to maintain that Lollardy had no connections at all with English Protestantism.’

²³Ibid., 119, 142.

²⁴With the exception of the book trade, where he dismisses three examples; see below, p. 83-84.

²⁵Rex, *The Lollards*, 119. Here, Rex echoes Craig D’Alton in his article on Cuthbert Tunstall’s heresy proceedings: ‘Lollardy is sometimes seen as a ‘forerunner’ of reformed belief in England,

later evangelicalism by saying unequivocally that ‘The English Reformation did not come from Lollardy, owed nothing in practice to Lollardy, and would probably have developed along much of the same lines without Lollardy.’²⁶

Lollards and the Radical Reformation

Although Rex’s work is not the last word on the subject, in order to see how the discussion of links between the lollards and reformers has developed outside of the wider ‘from above/below’ debate, I will move on to discuss the relationship between lollardy and the radical Reformation, a second main theme in the literature. Historians have generally taken one of two approaches to establishing this connection: one tracing doctrinal links, the other, social and/or geographical links.

The shared doctrinal relationship between lollards and the radical Reformation, with its aversion to oaths, vehement anticlericalism (complete with calls to strip the clergy of endowments), and preference for the separation of church and state, are reasons that scholars such as W.H. Summers, a Congregationalist, called his first study of the movement *Our Lollard Ancestors*;²⁷ McFarlane asserts that the heirs of the lollards were ‘not the Anglicans, but the Brownists and the Independents’;²⁸ and Margaret Aston, in her seminal study of Wycliffe’s sixteenth-century renown, states that Wycliffism and Anglicanism ‘demonstrably parted company’.²⁹ Ernest Payne recognized the origins of the Baptists in the lollards, looking chiefly at doctrinal connections, as did Michael R. Watts in his analysis of dissenters from the late medieval to the modern era.³⁰ In his seminal tome *The Radical Reformation*, G.H. Williams

yet the earliest English Lutherans often held their Lollard brethren in something approaching contempt.’ See D’Alton, ‘Cuthbert Tunstal and Heresy in Essex and London, 1528’ *Albion* 35/2 (2003): 211.

²⁶Ibid., 142.

²⁷W.H. Summers, *Our Lollard Ancestors* (London: National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, 1904). This denominational historian also pioneered the social history of the Lollards; see below.

²⁸McFarlane, *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity*, 170.

²⁹*JWRR*, 268.

³⁰Ernest Payne, ‘Who Were the Baptists?’ *Baptist Quarterly* 16/8 (1956), 339-42. Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 7.

maintained that ‘the declining Lollards...for their part, surviving from the age of Wycliffe into an increasing biblicist and nationalist reformation, proved no longer to be possessed of the stuff of martyrs and about this time yielded place to a new Reformation biblical vitality, that of the more zealous Flemish and Dutch Anabaptists.’³¹ In J.A.F. Thomson’s study of the previously neglected later era of lollardy, he writes of a ‘tendency towards Puritanism’ based on a particular vitriol against bells being rung in church.³² In Claire Cross’ account of the Upleadon meetings in Gloucestershire (whose participants discussed the Eucharist, questioned confession to priests and the sacrament, and even the Incarnation), she writes, ‘These Upleadon men may conceivably have heard and approved of some of the more extreme ideas of continental Anabaptism, but their views could equally well have been derived from a version of popular Lollardy.’³³ Andrew Hope’s influential 1987 essay points out that the Lutheran perspective on the law was incongruent with that of the Chiltern lollards. He writes that this could be ‘glossed over by emphasizing the redundancy of the ceremonial law and the priority over it of practical charity and social justice’, but then suggests that the Freewillier controversy of the mid-1550s was a sign of ‘this divide opening up again’.³⁴ Susan Brigden draws more connections on a doctrinal basis in her important study of the Reformation in London. She states that for the

³¹G.H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd Ed (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publications, 1992), 605.

³²J.A.F. Thomson, *The Later Lollards, 1414-1520* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 129.

³³Cross, *The Church and the People*, 75. Cross does not elucidate how these men could have come into contact with Anabaptist ideas; for a fuller account of these men and their religious beliefs, see Alec Ryrie, ‘England’s Last Medieval Heresy Hunt: Gloucestershire, 1540,’ *Midland History* 30 (2005): 37-52, especially 47-50.

³⁴Andrew Hope, ‘Lollardy: the Stone the Builders Rejected?’, 24-5. Although there could be a possible link between Lollardy and the Freewillers, it is important to note that in my readings on the topic, Hope and Collinson are the only ones to make this connection. See Collinson, ‘Night Schools, Conventicles and Churches: Continuities and Discontinuities in Early Protestant Ecclesiology,’ in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, 228. Neither O.T. Hargrave nor Thomas Freeman mentions Lollard ties to the movement in their studies of it. See O.T. Hargrave, ‘The Freewillers in the English Reformation,’ *Church History* 37/3 (Sept 1968): 271-280 and Freeman, ‘Dissenters from a Dissenting Church.’

lollards, ‘as for their spiritual heirs the Puritans, to hear the Word was a kind of sacrament’ and notes that the radical view of the Mass, originating with Zwingli and the Swiss reformers, was ‘akin to Lollardy’.³⁵

The argument for lollard and evangelical continuity based on doctrinal links has been argued to be essentially untenable for the last hundred years,³⁶ yet historians seem reluctant to let go of it—this is undoubtedly because the doctrinal links are numerous and uncannily similar. Richard Rex is more aggressive on this point than Gairdner, and argues that historians who have attempted to draw these religious movements together on a theological basis are guilty of ‘nothing more than *post hoc ergo propter hoc*’.³⁷ Although Rex is right to point out that an association cannot be made on merely doctrinal links, he comes dangerously close here to setting up a straw man, as I have not come across any historians who *only* use doctrinal connections to make their point after Dickens’ 1959 study.³⁸ Even Dickens must have found that this line of argument needed padding; as was stated above, Dickens’ 1964 survey includes theological associations bolstered (admittedly, not very strongly) by other criteria, such as direct contact between lollards and reformers. Even Irvin Buckwalter Horst, whose *The Radical Brethren* argued for the existence of Anabaptism throughout the early Reformation in England, acknowledged that it would take more than doctrinal connections to make the case, turning to the book trade to bolster his point.³⁹ When discussing lollardy’s fate after the Reformation, Rex asserts, ‘If there were significant continuities between lollardy and subsequent religious developments, these are likely to be found in the “radical” rather than the “magisterial” Reformation,’ and he himself uses doctrinal associations (for example, the aversion to oaths, the anticlericalism, the antiformalism, and the avoidance of

³⁵Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 91, 124.

³⁶Beginning with Gairdner, *Lollardy and the Reformation in England*, 287-88.

³⁷Rex, *The Lollards*, 116. Rex praises Gairdner’s arguments, 115.

³⁸Thomson does not use anything other than doctrine to make his point about ‘Puritan tendencies’ but Thomson does not make the point in order to argue for continuity between the two movements; he merely notes a factual parallel. In fact, Thomson’s work is the least polemical of all the studies reviewed here.

³⁹Irvin Buckwalter Horst, *The Radical Brethren: Anabaptism and the English Reformation to 1558* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1972), 56.

difficult dogmas such as predestination), among other continuities, to bolster his argument.⁴⁰

Beyond doctrinal links, scholars have traced ecclesiological similarities between the lollards and later radicals. J.W. Martin's collection of essays entitled *Religious Radicals in Tudor England* begins with the lollard conventicling tradition. Martin chronicles conventicles throughout the Tudor reign, seeing them as a developing phenomenon rather than a random group of phenomena. Tying the lollards to the radicals, Martin maintains, 'Previous groups seem to have been generally content with an undeclared separatism in those aspects of the religious life which especially concerned them, leaving some aspects to the established church.'⁴¹ Patrick Collinson's important study, 'The English Conventicle', delineated the semi-separatist nature of these religious meetings. To explain the later ecclesiastical practice fully, Collinson went back to 'its earliest discernible origins, in the religious gatherings held in private house in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries...held by so-called "Lollards"'. Collinson contends, though, that with their church attendance and extra-parochial meetings, 'This resembles Elizabethan Puritanism more than Elizabethan Separatism'.⁴²

A third approach to connect the lollards with the radical Reformation has centred on social and/or geographical continuities. This approach was anticipated by W.H. Summers' *The Lollards of the Chiltern Hills*, which drew connections between dissenting families and known lollard towns in the Chiltern Hundreds, as did Dickens in 1959.⁴³ Christopher Hill used social and geographical links to draw parallels

⁴⁰Rex, *The Lollards*, 141.

⁴¹J.W. Martin, *Religious Radicals in Tudor England* (London: Hambledon Press, 1989), 35.

⁴²Patrick Collinson, 'The English Conventicle,' in *Voluntary Religion*, ed. W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood (London: Blackwell, 1986), 238.

⁴³Dickens asserted, 'The communities which displayed the most marked Lollardy-Protestant tendencies before 1558 proceeded in each case to develop puritan tendencies in Elizabethan and Jacobean times. The fact cannot be purely coincidental. . . It might be rash to call the Lollard wing of the movement the ancestor of Independency, yet the two appealed to the same sorts of people for similar reasons. That future research may even trace certain Protestant family-continuities. . . looks probable enough.' *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York*, 247-8. W.H. Summers, *The Lollards of the Chiltern Hills: Glimpses of English Dissent in the Middle Ages* (London: Francis

between lollards and seventeenth-century political radicals.⁴⁴ Like Rex and others, he begins his study with doctrinal links, such as refusing oaths, advocacy for communal property, a common position opposing ecclesiastical hierarchy, and close study of the Bible; adding to this, though, he briefly summarizes the social makeup of these men.⁴⁵

Aided by pioneering studies by Derek Plumb and Andrew Hope, Margaret Spufford has taken up the task of finding continuities between lollardy and the radical Reformation by using social/geographical approaches.⁴⁶ Her volume of collected essays, published in 1995, focuses on the Chilterns area and attempts to trace dissent through families' bloodlines. Particularly compelling are Plumb's contributions, which elucidate the social standing of later lollards and their involvement in their communities, and their corollary essays about later reformers by Bill Stevenson. Spufford's thesis has been far from accepted, centrally because it provides compelling information about lollardy and about the seventeenth-century dissidents, while omitting the crucial period in between.⁴⁷

Griffiths, 1906).

⁴⁴Christopher Hill, 'From Lollards to Levellers,' in *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill, Vol. II: Religion and Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1985) 89-116, originally published in *Rebels and their Causes*, ed. M. Conforth (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1978), 49-67.

⁴⁵See *Ibid.*, 56-63. Hill includes a rather dubious continuity, one of 'lower-class traditions' that is based more on his Marxist historical philosophy, now out of vogue, than a serious study of 'class hatred' among Lollards; see *ibid.*, 56.

⁴⁶Derek Plumb successfully dispels the previously widespread belief among historians that Lollardy only appealed to those in the lower economic strata; see Plumb, 'The Social and Economic Spread of Rural Lollardy: A Reappraisal,' in *Voluntary Religion*, eds. W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood (1986), 111-29. Hope, 'Lollardy: The Stone the Builders Rejected?' examines the social profiles of Lollards in provincial towns using tax lists to show that, contrary to what historians had initially thought about the social makeup of Lollardy, 'Incidence of Lollardy decreases strikingly going down the social scale.' That this was probably the case was suggested but not explored in 1976 by Cross, *The Church and the People*, 35. *The World of Rural Dissenters, 1520-1725*, ed. Margaret Spufford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁴⁷Collinson, 'Critical Conclusion,' in *The World of Rural Dissenters*, 394; Rex, *The Lollards*, 141.

Points of Contact

Beyond examining lollardy's links to the radical Reformation, scholars have also attempted to follow its connections to the magisterial Reformation. They have done so by tracing what I have called 'points of contact' between the two groups. These studies explore two main phenomena: interactions between lollards and evangelicals, and interactions between lollardy and orthodoxy.

First, I will examine how scholars have tied lollards to reformers by exploring points of contact between the two; these contacts come in the form of physical meetings, and in textual links. The historical discourse surrounding the points of contact between these two movements is not without its difficulties, and I will detail methodological approaches scholars have used in order to solve these problems. I have already discussed Dickens' attempts to draw together examples of lollard and evangelical interaction.⁴⁸ Other scholars have also discussed examples of these groups mixing: as stated above, the story of two lollards from Steeple Bumpstead who traveled to Austin Friars in London to trade their old copies of vernacular Scripture for Tyndale's *New Testament* is cited ubiquitously, and several studies tell of lollards listening to Thomas Bilney's preaching, which Brigden states sounded 'for all the world like Lollard invective, rather than... simple avowal of the doctrine of faith alone'.⁴⁹

Moving from doctrinal links and personal interactions, scholars have used textual associations to link the two religious ideologies. In an influential essay published in 1964, Margaret Aston argues that an important way of answering the question of lollard significance on the eve of the Reformation is via a literary approach; her methodology is to trace the appearance of certain pieces of lollard literature in print.⁵⁰ She covers important ground, discovering the misdating of sixteenth-century editors, demonstrating evangelical appreciation for the antiquity of their texts and

⁴⁸The attempt to list points of contact between Lollardy and evangelicalism was made before Dickens. W.H. Summers cited the Lollard meeting to hear Nicholas Field speak about heresies in Germany; see *The Lollards of the Chiltern Hills*, 146.

⁴⁹Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, 112.

⁵⁰Margaret Aston, 'Lollardy and the Reformation'.

how these editors obscured the origins of the texts.

Aston's findings using a literary approach were bolstered by intensive textual analysis provided by Anne Hudson, working twenty years later. Her analysis of lollard texts edited by sixteenth-century evangelicals reveals general 'fidelity to the exemplars', with the possible exception of omissions (on sensitive matters such as the Eucharist).⁵¹ Hudson's textual emphasis and Aston's literary approach are combined in what is still the most comprehensive work on the lollards, Hudson's *The Premature Reformation*. In the last chapter, which details the end of the lollard movement proper and the beginning of the Reformation, she uses Aston's literary approach, her own intimate knowledge of lollard texts, and doctrinal links to show the ways lollards were converted into evangelicals. Using a 'miniature of how an old Lollard became a new Lutheran', she employs the case of Thomas Harding, who was implicated because of the books he owned, which were both lollard and evangelical texts.⁵² Examining the lollard texts that evangelicals owned (or vice versa) is the clearest, most heavily-trodden path historians have taken.⁵³ Although Hudson has since rowed back from this methodology,⁵⁴ most scholars identify a lollard or a

⁵¹ *NNT*, 171.

⁵² *PR*, 505-7.

⁵³ Christopher Marsh takes this approach (in addition to noting a 'certain affinity between the positions of the Arminians and the Family of Love' and the geographical similarity of earlier and later adherents) when arguing for the existence of the Elizabethan Family of Love in the late seventeenth century. Although the doctrinal similarities between the later lollards and the Familists were closer than Marsh suggests—he downplays the belief in free will that Hornbeck shows was part of their theological beliefs closer to the Reformation—nonetheless, he makes the case that there were no real connections between these two dissenting groups. He rejects the idea based on their beliefs ('Lollards were more rational than mystical'), geographical occurrence, and allegedly divergent ways these groups referred to themselves and the established church. See Christopher Marsh, *The Family of Love in English Society, 1550-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 29-30. *WL*, 65-66.

⁵⁴ Hudson has recently published a volume of her numerous articles, which includes a new essay that documents the existence of Wyclif's texts from 1384 to 1530. With regard to the significance of these texts, she suggests that 'claims on both sides have arguably been over-stated,' and her survey of texts and the men they were associated with suggests 'that categories that speak of "orthodox"/"heretical" in regard to books of individuals in the fifteenth century are simplistic.'

reformer by the books they owned—a tactic that D’Alton demonstrates was used since the earliest days of the evangelical movement in his article documenting the heresy proceedings of Cuthbert Tunstall.⁵⁵

Rex finds this approach untenable. He points out that it is well documented that both movements shared a desire for vernacular Scripture, and that it is to be expected that a ‘cheap, uniform and readable printed translation’ would replace a laborious, expensive one. Alec Ryrie, in his *Gospel and Henry VIII*, finds a way around this. Eschewing attempts to make merely doctrinal or literary connections, Ryrie points out that evangelicals used the inveterate lollard book trade, and that this relationship traded not just Scriptures but also religious ideas.⁵⁶

Rex’s critique and Ryrie’s response to it brings up another troublesome aspect of the study of lollard and evangelical continuity that scholars have grappled with since Dickens’ work: Given the obvious doctrinal similarities between the two groups, how can one tell a lollard from an evangelical during the 1520s, ‘30s, or ‘40s? Serving as an example of the problem is problematic or unclear terminology. Dickens refers to ‘neo-Lollards’, ‘semi-Lollards’, ‘heretics’, and ‘early Protestants’; D’Alton to ‘proto-Lollard belief’; and Williams to ‘proto-Baptist’ belief. The problem goes beyond nomenclature to the heart of what the doctrines in which people believed. Dickens notes, ‘By the second half of the reign of Henry VIII everyone had heard of Luther, yet this did not make every heretic a Lutheran, let alone an informed Lutheran.’⁵⁷ John Davis’ account of heresy in southeastern England lists examples of combined lollard and Lutheran beliefs, and this is echoed in D’Alton’s research.⁵⁸ Brigden

Hudson, ‘Wyclif Texts in Fifteenth-century London,’ in Hudson, ed., *Studies in the Transmission of Wyclif’s Writings* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), XV 1-18, at 1 and 17.

⁵⁵D’Alton, ‘Cuthbert Tunstal and Heresy in Essex and London, 1528,’ *passim*. Nearly all the authors in this study have done this, usually in conjunction with listing doctrinal links. Also see John Scattergood and Guido Latr, ‘Trinity College Dublin MS 75: A Lollard Bible and Some Protestant Owners,’ in *Manuscripts and Ghosts: Essays on the Transmission of Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature*, ed. John Scattergood (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 163-180.

⁵⁶Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII*, 233-34.

⁵⁷Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 54.

⁵⁸Davis, *Heresy and Reformation in the Southeast of England*, 41; D’Alton ‘Cuthbert Tunstall and Heresy in Essex and London, 1528,’ 223.

asserts that ‘not all Scripture-men were Lollards’.⁵⁹ Collinson tells of Lollards who felt as if ‘their long-established beliefs and traditions... had been disturbed by intrusive new doctrines’, and that ‘their leadership had been hijacked by “learned men.”’⁶⁰ Perhaps, then, not all lollards were happy to be called evangelicals, and not all evangelicals were happy to be associated with lollards (as has been shown); given the similarities between the two, how can historians tell the difference?⁶¹

Scholars have proposed several answers. One option is to look for moral or behavioural links. Dickens refers to the ‘unheroic’, ‘evasive’, ‘ordinary courage’ of the average lollard and has noted their tendency to recant their beliefs under pressure, which has also been shown by Hudson, Ryrie, and Rex.⁶² Jonathan Gray’s recent work on early evangelicals’ ideas about oaths also draws similarities between the lollard tendency to abjure and the clever perjury committed by evangelicals. Though he shows that Henrician evangelicals were more canny with their oaths than the lollards, positioning themselves for maximum public sympathy, ‘[m]any early English evangelicals...inherited from their Lollard predecessors a willingness to lie under oath and to renounce their beliefs.’⁶³ Further, all scholars have noted that lollards partially conformed to the orthodox Church, and many claim that this was not the case with reformers. Yet, this approach has been repudiated by Ryrie, who rightly points out that ‘evangelicals too could be discreet and conformist’.⁶⁴ Also, Collinson states that partial conformity was a consistent practice for sixteenth- and

⁵⁹Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, 107.

⁶⁰Collinson, ‘Night Schools,’ 228.

⁶¹When proposing that scholars explain their terminology, I am mindful of the complications of assigning religious labels to people who did not necessarily devote time to categorizing their own beliefs. Alexandra Walsham elucidates the problems inherent in assigning labels; see her *Charitable Hatred*, 20.

⁶²Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York*, 244. See also *PR*, 158-62; Ryrie, ‘England’s Last Medieval Heresy Hunt,’ 49; Rex, *The Lollards*, 131-32. A parallel approach to distinguishing various evangelical sects has been taken by Thomas Freeman; see ‘Dissenters from a Dissenting Church,’ 130.

⁶³Jonathan Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 183.

⁶⁴Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII*, 234.

seventeenth-century dissenters.⁶⁵

Collinson suggests another option, based on convictions—and thus brings students of this debate back to the beginning, in a way. He argues that the main difference between lollards and evangelicals is that the latter sought to establish a visible church, whereas lollards had no intention of making their piety anything other than private, with shared Scripture-reading. Further, he draws the line between the two doctrinally, claiming that solifidianism is where the difference lies.⁶⁶ But a belief in justification by faith did not preclude Thomas Bilney from Diarmaid MacCulloch's determination that 'his views seem to have been a fusion of a reforming brand of Cambridge Erasmianism with Lollard ideas from his native county, and if this is so, this rare escapee from the proletarian ghetto of Tudor Lollardy did their cause sterling service'.⁶⁷ The notion of Bilney as a transitional figure was first espoused by John F. Davis, who argued that Bilney was one of several figures who were characterized by 'a superficial Lutheranism, and the espousal of Lollard or Wycliffite views by academics'.⁶⁸

Davis' methodology shows that for some historians, distinctions can be made between lollards and evangelicals on the basis of language and phraseology. Cross specifies that the lollard brand of late medieval anti-clericalism was 'crude'.⁶⁹ Hudson recognizes Thomas Bilney as a lollard based on doctrines that reflect 'traditional Lollard teaching', but also based on the phraseology that was used in his sermon preached in 1527. In his study of Gloucester dissenters, Ryrie also distinguishes between lollardy and evangelism using a combination of theological belief and the 'bluntness of their language and actions'.⁷⁰

Finally, Rex suggests a moral difference between the two movements. He claims that the bottom line is that reformers were evangelistic, vigorous, and eager to

⁶⁵Collinson, 'Night Schools,' 224.

⁶⁶Collinson, 'Night Schools,' 225, 230.

⁶⁷Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors: Politics and Religion in an English County, 1500-1600* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 150.

⁶⁸John F. Davis, 'The Trials of Thomas Bylney and the English Reformation,' *Historical Journal* 24 (1981), 775-90 at 90.

⁶⁹Cross, *The Church and the People*, 34.

⁷⁰Ryrie, 'England's Last Medieval Heresy Hunt,' 47.

share their faith and that lollards were ‘morally bankrupt, intellectually empty, and in a state of terminal decay’,⁷¹ and goes on to say that there were no great lollard missionaries on the eve of the Reformation. Rex’s statements go against Susan Brigden’s account of the conventicle of known men who ‘dared to meet in the heart of the City throughout the 1520s to rehearse and evangelize their Lollard convictions’.⁷² Regarding his accusations about lollard missionaries, Hudson would agree. In her view, though, these missionaries were not necessary; she asserts that ‘the shift in the second half of the period of Lollard activity from the dominance of the individual, peripatetic preacher to the centrality of the community as a whole’ is perhaps the most important change in the nature of fifteenth-century lollardy.⁷³

Increasingly, scholars of the lollard movement and its connections to the Reformation have not been interested in the points of contact between lollards and Lutherans, nor in the chronologically greater connection between lollardy and the radical Reformation, but in the points of contact between lollardy and orthodoxy. This has long been known to be a nebulous area: Cross notes that lollard confessions ‘illustrate the narrowness of the distinction between orthodox and heresy’, and Andrew Hope illustrates the extent to which orthodox and lollard texts entangled with one another.⁷⁴ Brigden uses the example of Humphrey Monmouth, who sheltered Tyndale prior to his exile and who read Scripture in the vernacular—yet burned his copies once the books were outlawed. For her, ‘Monmouth’s confession shows how, for men of his generation, orthodoxy and heterodoxy might well exist side by side.’⁷⁵ When discussing dissent in Gloucestershire, Ryrie mentions the ‘long-term and low-level problem of straightforward scoffing and scepticism’, something not necessarily heterodoxical.⁷⁶

Robert Lutton’s *Lollardy and Orthodox Religion in Pre-Reformation England*

⁷¹Rex, *The Lollards*, 132.

⁷²Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, 103.

⁷³PR, 449.

⁷⁴Cross, *The Church and the People*, 34. Hope, ‘Lollardy: The Stone the Builders Rejected?’, 18-19.

⁷⁵Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, 108.

⁷⁶Ryrie, ‘England’s Last Medieval Heresy Hunt,’ 42.

examines the relationships and tenuous boundaries between orthodox and heterodox pieties.⁷⁷ Lutton approaches the topic through the social and geographical methodology, employing the usual sources of social historians (including testamentary evidence and tax records) and emphasizing the role of the family in the transmission of religious belief and practice. He essentially argues that the Reformation can be better understood given a more accurate picture of pre-Reformation orthodox belief—which was, in the fifteenth century in Tenterden (Kent), a place where piety was increasingly Christocentric and orthodox evangelism was on the rise. His rather sprawling edited collection of essays (with Elisabeth Salter) largely seeks to discuss the various ways pieties were manifest while at their most amorphous.⁷⁸ In his contribution to the volume, he uses the same methodology to show how two comparable towns in Kent experienced the Reformation differently, and in doing so, he provides an illuminating look into the ways that similar but distinct towns could have differing religious trajectories.⁷⁹

Like Lutton, Alexandra Walsham's article on the transmission of a 'lollard' sermon clarifies the points of contact between lollardy and orthodoxy.⁸⁰ She notes throughout the article that the lines between the heretical and orthodox are often blurred, making the task of 'religious taxonomy' an imprecise science.⁸¹ Walsham adeptly demonstrates the heterogeneity of late medieval and Reformation religion by analyzing a possible lollard sermon, showing that often a text could be distinguished as either orthodox or heretical depending on nature of the other manuscripts in the collection in which it was bound. The sermon in question was only widely agreed to have heretical ideas in it when it was appropriated and printed by sixteenth-century evangelical editors—thus the 'afterlife' of this sermon really begins, and this 'am-

⁷⁷Robert Lutton, *Lollardy and Orthodox Religion in Pre-Reformation England: Reconstructing Piety* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006).

⁷⁸Robert Lutton and Elisabeth Salter, eds. *Pieties in Transition: Religious Practices and Experiences, c.1400-1640* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

⁷⁹Robert Lutton, 'Geographies and Materialities of Piety: Reconciling Competing Narratives of Religious Change in Pre-Reformation and Reformation England,' in *Pieties in Transition*, 11-40.

⁸⁰Walsham, 'Inventing the Lollard Past'.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 639.

biguous' text (ideal for moulding to fit reformers' purposes) became one of many whose medieval orthodox authors 'were subtly transmuted into proto-reformers'.⁸²

Perspectives on Lollardy in the English Reformation

Walsham's article on points of contact between lollardy and orthodoxy will serve as a springboard to a final theme in the study of the relationship between lollardy and the Reformation. The last methodology found among the numerous answers to the question of this relationship somewhat sidesteps the question; instead of looking directly at these links, it analyzes how they have been perceived in the past. This approach, a hybrid of history and historiography, sheds light on not just how sixteenth-century reformers have created their own historical perspective, but can also demonstrate how historians throughout the past five hundred years have subtly (and not-so-subtly) been influenced by that historiographical shift. Walsham's study, for instance, clarifies that the sermon's author most likely had no heretical leanings, yet as late as 1978, an author referred to him as a 'Lollard' preacher.⁸³ Studies such as hers, that illuminate how the success of the English evangelical movement so significantly changed the course of history writing, help us to redress and clarify what happened in the sixteenth century and seventeenth centuries.

Walsham acknowledges two writers who pioneered this methodology. The first is Anne Hudson (see above), whose painstaking translation and paleographical analysis of lollard texts has provided historians with huge amounts of new information. The second is Margaret Aston, whose 1964 article on the status of lollards just prior to the Reformation has been discussed; Walsham, though, acknowledges her other influential study, which chronicles John Wyclif's 'Reformation reputation'.⁸⁴ In it, Aston details the makeover of Wyclif that John Bale created and John Foxe cemented, helped along the way by evangelical editors such as Robert Crowley and John Leland. Aston helpfully explores the important areas where Wycliffe was re-touched: his 'authorship' of the vernacular Scripture, the apostolic nature of his

⁸²Ibid., 641.

⁸³Ibid., 653.

⁸⁴*JWRR*, passim.

ministry, his views on the Eucharist, and the development of his martyrology. Using a textual approach (as she did in her other important article, ‘Lollardy and the Reformation: Survival or Revival?’), Aston demonstrates the sources of these evangelical editors, and shows how their version of history was subsequently taken as truth when rewritten in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

About the same time as Aston’s essay, James Crompton, who had done meticulous work on the main manuscript source on lollards available to Bale and Foxe, chronicles ‘the Wyclif myth or myths’ rather than describing the ‘real Wyclif’.⁸⁵ Moving chronologically, Crompton details contemporary misconceptions of Wyclif, his reputation during the Reformation among Catholics and evangelicals, and the mixed reception of the late nineteenth century. Chronologically and geographically broader in scope than Aston’s article, Crompton’s analysis is particularly elucidating with regard to Wyclif’s influence outside of England.

Leslie Fairfield adopted a similar methodology to that of Crompton and Aston in an important article regarding John Bale’s role in the ‘development of Protestant hagiography in England’ (followed by a biography of Bale three years later).⁸⁶ Fairfield demonstrates how Bale carefully constructed the history of the Church in England, creating his own canon of witnesses to the truth. He lists the evangelical’s sources and influences, giving students of the Reformation a better understanding of how Bale shaped historical sources, most clearly evident in the example of Sir John Oldcastle, ‘a figure who would edify the faithful and persuade the unbelievers in England both with his life and with his doctrine’.⁸⁷

Oldcastle is the subject of another study that describes how evangelicals moulded their history through important lollard figures. Annabel Patterson’s essay follows the sixteenth-century revisions of the lollard rebel John Oldcastle by chroniclers of history, evangelical polemicists, and playwrights—and in the process proves that

⁸⁵James Crompton, ‘John Wyclif: A Study in Mythology,’ *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 42 (1966-67): 6-34.

⁸⁶Leslie P. Fairfield, ‘John Bale and the Development of Protestant Hagiography in England,’ *JEH* 24/2 (1973): 145-160; see also his *John Bale*.

⁸⁷Fairfield, ‘John Bale,’ 150.

these categories are not mutually exclusive in the sixteenth century.⁸⁸ Patterson's essay demonstrates more than just the re-writing of history; her work shows the deft ways that authors and editors crafted their versions of history to comment on the religio-political climate around them.

Like Patterson, Anthony Milton explores the legacy of the lollards, chiefly the figure of Wyclif, through the Stuart church until 1640.⁸⁹ Milton details their role in contemporary debates about the visibility and invisibility of the true church, a key issue in the Laudian/Puritan debates of the day. Milton's work, like Crompton's, does much to suggest that the legacy of the lollards was much less straightforward than the narratives of appropriation of Aston and Hudson suggest.⁹⁰

An overview of the historiographical situation in which evangelicals found themselves, and how they sought to solve their problem of legitimacy, is found in Alec Ryrie's essay for an important edited volume on the theme of the relationship between evangelical history and identity.⁹¹ From a more historical perspective than Aston and Fairfield (whose approach is more textually based), Ryrie narrates the twists and turns of English evangelicals' attempts to root the movement in history during the last eight years of Henry VIII's reign. He outlines their new theory of history, closely tied to the theme of the persecution of the true church, and like Patterson, describes how they were forced to either amend or abate their efforts according to the political atmosphere in which they found themselves.

This approach is not without its critics, but on the whole, scholars agree that the historical legitimization of their movement was a pressing need for evangelicals.⁹² Ryrie argues that this need is difficult to overstate and Patrick Collinson has claimed,

⁸⁸Annabel Patterson, 'Sir John Oldcastle as a Symbol of Reformation Historiography.'

⁸⁹Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in Protestant Thought, 1600-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), chapter six.

⁹⁰See introduction.

⁹¹Ryrie, 'The Problems of Legitimacy and Precedent in English Protestantism, 1539-47.'

⁹²Rex's previously mentioned quote, 'The English Reformation did not come from Lollardy, owed nothing in practice to Lollardy, and would probably have developed along much the same lines without Lollardy,' denies the extent to which sixteenth-century evangelicals needed the lollards for historical precedent. Rex, *The Lollards*, 142.

‘If the Lollards had not existed, it would have been necessary to invent them.’⁹³ This methodology is extremely useful to students of these movements: it is not mired in a debate on the Reformation’s origins that is increasingly outdated; it requires no conjecture about possible points of contact between the two groups; it does not rely on doctrinal similarities (and is in fact a good way of determining the differences between lollard and evangelical theologies); and it can demonstrate connections between lollardy and orthodoxy, the magisterial Reformation, and the radical Reformation. In some ways it does not answer the question of the exact nature of the link between lollardy and the Reformation (assuming, of course, there is one)—but perhaps this is a question that historians simply do not have the empirical evidence they need in order to answer (a point made by Hudson, Ryrie, and Rex, among others). In light of this, the historiographical approach seems the best way to move forward with the debate, thus far mired in suggestions and conjecture without the more concrete evidence of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century historiographical developments.

This thesis will aim to do just that. It will push aside questions of lollard influence on early evangelicals such as William Tyndale and instead search Tyndale’s works to determine what he made of the lollards.⁹⁴ It will look less at how the reluctance of some lollards to swear may have influenced Bale to espouse the suspicious views found in *A Christen Exhortacion vnto customable swearers* (1543) and more at Bale’s recognition of the lollards as the eschatological beginnings of the Reformation. And instead of examining Foxe’s editorial method in the traditional way, concerned mostly with his omissions, this thesis will analyze what is actually *in* the text.⁹⁵ Moving beyond these first- and second-generation reformers, the views of seventeenth-century writers about who the lollards were and what they signified across the Protestant spectrum will be examined. This methodology will bring us closer to understanding the real influence of the lollards in the English Reformation.

⁹³Ryrie, ‘The Problems of Legitimacy,’ 78. Patrick Collinson, ‘Night Schools,’ 225.

⁹⁴Donald Dean Smeeton, *Lollard Themes in the Reformation Theology of William Tyndale* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1986).

⁹⁵See above, pp. 5-11.

Chapter 3: The Lollards in Evangelical Histories

Introduction

The role that history played in the establishment of confessional identity has been revisited time and time again.¹ One necessity that connected evangelicals of all stripes was an explanation for their existence: it would not do to claim novelty in an era that condemned it. History was understood to be the unfolding of God's revelation to man and, as such, it provided a crucial source of legitimacy. It was strongly contested as confessional parties sought to recognize their own movements in the past, and this contention only reinforced its significance. The vitriol from both sides of the confessional divide that historians like Johannes Sleidan and John Foxe endured was enough to put off Henrich Bullinger, who chose not to publish his own historical writings during his lifetime.² That history was so contested indicates its importance in solidifying these fledgling evangelical movements.

This chapter delves into the English evangelical historical perspective. While scholars largely agree that evangelicals sought historical precedents and succeeded in portraying lollardy as a reform movement that bled into their own, they have missed the consequences of such a legacy in the seventeenth century, when debates about the visibility of the church were in full swing. It will outline the important idea of ongoing perfection: that the Holy Spirit illuminated more people—and more fully illuminated those people—as time progressed. This idea is central to how the evangelicals understood the lollards, and this chapter will outline the consequence of this idea that evangelicals bequeathed to later the Protestants—both conformists and dissenters—who inherited it. Because this idea served as the basis for later

¹ The literature on this is extensive. A few examples: Irena Backus, *Historical Method and Confessional Identity in the Era of the Reformation, 1378-1615* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Bruce Gordon, ed., *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Aldershot: Scholar, 1996); Arnoud S. Q. Visser, *Reading Augustine in the Reformation: The Flexibility of Intellectual Authority in Europe, 1500-1620* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Van Liere, Ditchfield, and Louthan, eds., *Sacred History*.

² Alexandra Kess, *Johann Sleidan and the Protestant Vision of History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 105.

writers' notions of history, it is a crucial part of the thesis, a necessary component for understanding English historical consciousness in Reformation religious culture, and consequently, the way the lollards were understood in that culture. Because Foxe identified Wyclif's message as the dawning of an age of incremental enlightenment, and not fully enlightened like his own contemporaries, this has implications for how scholars approach *AM*.

The Role of the Lollards in John Bale's Historical Imagination

Bale's writings were influential because they helped to delineate the corpus of beliefs that came to be considered reformed. In particular, his interest was historical: even his play, *King Johan* (1538) told the story of a legitimate monarch whose rule was disrupted by an international conspiracy originating from Rome.³ Bale's *The image of bothe Churches* (the first part of which was published in 1545) depicted Christian history as epic battle between the true church and the false church (led by the Antichrist, the bishops of Rome), and his *The actes of Englysh votaryes* (1546) filled in this framework with case studies from English history.⁴ In this latter work, Bale linked the sixteenth-century evangelical movement to English historical figures who had resisted Roman authority since Augustine's mission arrived in England in the late sixth century. By doing this, he attempted to associate his co-religionists with other godly members of the true church throughout each age of history, identifying these witnesses as the apostolic remnant from a purer time of the Church. One way that Bale identified these historical members of the true church was the suffering they had endured at the hands of the Catholic church. His works depicted the punishment of heretics as a cruelty distinctly antithetical to a true church. Bale tied the evangelical martyrs of his day to those of the early church in works such as

³ John Bale, *King Johan*, ed. Barry B. Adams (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1969).

⁴ *Image*; Bale, *The actes of Englysh votaryes* (1546).

The first examinacyon of Anne Askewe and the *Brefe Chronycle*.⁵ The distinctly historical nature of Bale's writings was not merely significant for its revision of the past, but also for its revision of the future. Bale's *Image* was a commentary on the Book of Revelation, and in it the reformer advocated an apocalyptic interpretation of times to come. The eschatological tenor of this work also pervades Bale's other texts, and heavily influenced the writings of Foxe.

Bale's understanding of the past was governed by a strong belief in the correct interpretation of prophecy. Before any other source, he turned to the Bible for knowledge of the past. He asserted that the Word 'is a full clerenes to all the cronicles and moste notable hystories which hath bene writen sens Christes ascension, openynge the true naturs of their ages tymes, and seasons. He that hath store of them, and shall diligently serche them ouer conferring the one with the other, tyme with tyme, and age with age shal perceyue most wonderful causes.'⁶ Bale believed that history could be understood by using prophetic Scripture as an exegetical tool, and he applied this to England's history in particular. While the *Image* contains examples from the continent (mostly Germany) and England, his *Actes of Englysh votaryes* and the *Brefe Chronycle* include passing mention to occasional figures from the continent (especially John Hus) but are chiefly concerned to tell the story of England's past. This past was illuminated in episodes that paralleled the history of the Israelites, and had the same repetitive, redemptive quality.

Just as in Israel's past, England's history reflected a series of sinful lapses that came about because the people of the nation did not heed the words of a prophet. Bale's understanding of the role of prophet is closely tied to history, often giving a sense that the role of historian and prophet may not be so different.⁷ Bale certainly saw the prophetic quality of the historian in his fellow countryman Gildas. Tying England's historical hardships to divine punishment for its people's apos-

⁵ John Bale, *The first examinacyon of Anne Askewe lately martyred in Smythfelde, by the Romysh popes vpholders, with the elucydacyon of Iohan Bale* (Wesel, 1546).

⁶ Bale, *Image*, sig. A4v.

⁷ Susan Royal, 'John Bale: Historian or Prophet?' in *The Church on its Past*, eds. Peter D. Clarke and Charlotte Methuen (Studies in Church History 49), 156-67.

tasy, he pointed out the dual role of historian and prophet: ‘Vere vehement was *Gildas* beyng than a monke of Bencornaburch not farre from Chestre, in hys dayly preachynges, both agaynst the clergye and layte, concernyng that vyce and soche other, and prophecyed afore hande of the subuersyon of thys realme by the Saxons for yt, lyke as yt sone after folowed in effect.’⁸ The trope of the historian-prophet would appear in Bale’s treatment of Sir John Oldcastle, which states that the punishment from God prophesied by *Gildas* was necessary again in the fifteenth century; in *A brefe chronycle*, Bale attributes the turbulence of the Wars of the Roses to punishment from God for not heeding Oldcastle’s call to a more pure spirituality, and for the laws that were enacted to repress true religion (presumably the *De heretico comburendo*).⁹ In the history of his own country, then, Bale saw direct parallels with the disobedience of the Israelites. His narrative of the English past depicted a nation bound to God on a cyclical yet teleological path, revealed through the exegetical tool of Scripture.

Bale’s history of Christendom is told through his commentary on the Book of Revelation. He believed that the Bible served as a mirror to the history of the world, and its topoi of the Antichrist, the Lamb of God, the body of believers, and exile each played a role in shaping his exegesis. The commentary, *The image of bothe churches*, interpreted the seven seal openings of Revelation as the seven ages of the world, and depicted each age as a struggle between the true church and the false church—a theme as old as Augustine of Hippo’s *De Civitate Dei*.¹⁰ Bale retold the story in light of his present-day plight in exile, sharing kinship with St. John, to whom the Book of Revelation was attributed at the time, and who claimed he wrote the work in exile at Patmos.¹¹

⁸ Bale, *The actes of Englysh votaryes*, sig. C6r.

⁹ *BC*, sigs. A8r-B1r.

¹⁰ Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse: Sixteenth Century Apocalypticism, Millenarianism, and the English Reformation: From John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman* (Oxford: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978), 58.

¹¹ Fairfield, *John Bale*, 71; King, *English Reformation Literature*, 63; Gretchen E. Minton, ‘“Suffer Me Not to be Separated, and Let my Cry Come unto Thee”: John Bale’s Apocalypse and the Exilic Imagination,’ *Reformation* 15 (2010): 83-97.

Bale's exegesis of the seven seals' openings did not come with exact dates; rather, each seal opening represented God's truth revealed through various (often vague, and indeed overlapping) times. The first seal stood for Christ and his Apostles, who brought the Word to the world, and the second seal opening occurred after the first heresies plagued the church, when God sent exemplars such as Polycarp and Justin Martyr. The third seal opening denoted an era of increasing heresy, including Donatism and Arianism. The time of the fourth seal opening saw the growth of the power of Muhammad and the Pope, and readers could see for the first time the hypocrites and false priests that adhered to the church of the Antichrist. Significantly, Bale recognized that these were times of the Antichrist because after 'the tyme of Berengarius in the Waldeanes, publicans and Albigeances', it was not possible 'without superstycion to confesse the name and verity of Christ'.¹² Bale, then, saw the increasing corruption of the church as simultaneous with the growth of extra-Biblical ceremonies in the liturgy. The fifth seal opening was concurrent with the fourth; instead of showing the enemies of Christ, his true disciples were depicted. Bale believed he was living in the sixth age, and that the sixth seal opening coincided with Wyclif's teachings; he associated the earthquake at the opening of the sixth seal with the 'Earthquake Synod' of 1382, when Wyclif's twenty-four propositions had been condemned. Bale noted that this latter age would bring on a renewal of martyrdom, and characterized the martyrs of his own day as fulfilling that prophecy. The seventh seal, which Bale believed was yet to come, would see Satan bound for one thousand years, and a time of peace in the church.

Bale's sense of history drove and shaped his formulations for the future. As has been noted by several authors, Bale's interests lay firmly in the past and not in the times to come.¹³ He often referred to the times he lived in as the 'latter age' of the world, and perceived of it as the stage for the last battle in an epic war between the true and false churches. He claimed that the reformation fulfilled the prophecy of the wounded Antichrist, which came about from the preaching of the

¹² Bale, *Image*, sig. J4v.

¹³ Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 42; Fairfield, *John Bale*, 81.

true gospel, stressing that already in England and Germany, the pope's authority had been cast aside. Bale's *Image* told of three predictions of Revelation: the people would hate the Antichrist's laws; they would reject his authority; and they would turn away from his customs.¹⁴ Bale then demonstrated that princes had already turned from the Antichrist (including the Kings of England and Denmark, the Duke of Saxon, and the Landgrave of Hesse), as well as bishops (including the Bishops of Chester, Westminster, Salisbury and Worcester), and both English and continental reformers.¹⁵ With the first part of this process in motion, Bale predicted that next, the Antichrist's authority would continue to be eroded because reformers had questioned the established church's scriptural interpretations, and he claimed that thirdly, people had stopped believing in the efficacy of their ceremonies—without which, they were nothing.¹⁶

Bale warned, though, that the Antichrist was not at present mortally wounded, and a great number of people would keep the laws of the false faith. He cited the Acts of Six Articles as evidence that this prophecy has been realized, and claimed that the survival of Stephen Gardiner and Cuthbert Tunstall in their bishoprics showed that the Antichrist's injury was in fact healing.¹⁷ Bale saw these events as indicative of an approaching end to the world and the coming of God's judgment.

Foxe's own eschatological scheme developed later than that of Bale. It was only in the 1563 edition of *AM* that he recognized the date 1000 as the time when Satan had been loosed.¹⁸ By the time the 1570 edition had been published, this was reconfigured to the year 1294, one thousand years since the end of the early church persecutions.¹⁹ He followed Bale's belief that there had been a precipitous moral decline of the church from the era of Gregory the Great's pontificate, around 600. Four hundred years later marked the ascendancy of the pope and the Turk, two powerful enemies to the true church. The first century under Antichrist, however,

¹⁴ Bale, *Image*, sig. S7v.

¹⁵ *Image*, sigs. S7v-S8r.

¹⁶ *Image*, sig. S8v.

¹⁷ *Image*, sig. T1v.

¹⁸ Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain*, 83.

¹⁹ *AM*, 515.

was that of Wyclif. Foxe marked 1360 (the supposed composition date of *The praier and complaynte of the ploweman*) as a new age of increased persecutions, and age that had extended until Elizabeth's reign.²⁰

As stated in the introduction, Foxe's understanding of the lollards' place in history rested on the notion of gradual enlightenment, connected to the idea of Wyclif representing an age of reform. Wyclif's appearance in the first edition of *AM* began a new section; by the second and subsequent editions, there had been prefatory material setting the stage for Wyclif's arrival, such as *The praier and complaynte of the ploweman* and other antipapal texts.²¹ In each edition, the section begins with a lengthy summary of the corrupt state of the church as Wyclif had found it, detailing the takeover of ceremonies pleasing to the eye but damaging to the soul, resulting in a church that followed Christ in name only. In no edition does Wyclif burst onto the scene and change the world instantly. Rather, historical realities such as Wyclif's rejection of transubstantiation only later in his career and the existence of beliefs inconsistent with Reformed doctrine among the lollards forced Foxe to mould the heresiarch and his followers into imperfect witnesses whose stance against the established church was nevertheless evidence of God's mercy. The lollards were providentially sent to initiate the Reformation—not to represent examples of its completion.

That the lollards were not wholly reformed was a belief developed by Foxe between the first edition of *AM* and the second. As Harpsfield derided Foxe for his choice of Wyclif as the initiator of the Reformation, this forced Foxe to add the caveat that though he held 'opinions and assertions, albeit some blemishes perhaps may be noted', nonetheless his value as a fighter against the papacy and the friars was far more valuable than the trumped-up errors attributed to him by his Catholic enemies.²² Harpsfield's jabs were only one reason Foxe came to understand the lollards as partially reformed. With the exception of the Coventry lollards and a few individuals, Foxe's information about the lollards had, until 1563, been concentrated

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ In 1563, this was Book Two; in second and subsequent editions, it was Book Five.

²² Nicholas Harpsfield, *Dialogi Sex*, 922-25. *AM*, 544.

around the learned scholars at Oxford. Preparing the second edition, he consulted new sources about the pre-Marian witnesses, and he must have been struck by their increasingly crude and at times radical rejections of late medieval religion. As he included the narratives of these men and women, he carefully prefaced their accounts with the caveat that they had been living in the darkest days of the church, and that their testimonies were all the more precious because they evidenced that the Holy Spirit was active even at that time when it seemed God was absent from the English church.²³ Until the more bright light of Luther and Henry VIII's break with Rome, the medieval witnesses were seen as only partially aware. Paradoxically, that these witnesses were imperfect only increased their worth.

Lollard Heirs in the Seventeenth Century

As the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559 came under increased scrutiny in the late sixteenth century, and separatist and nonconformist congregations began to form, the historical scheme Bale and Foxe established came into tension with current events. But it became clear that these groups wanted to leave behind the ceremonies and polity of the English church—not its claim to history. When they looked at English history in Foxe's *AM*, they saw grounds for further Reformation, some even for separation, in the lollard narratives. Conformists were alarmed by this development, which was tantamount to undermining the quasi-official historical foundations of the Church of England. The debate over who the direct heirs of the lollards were—those who adhered to the Church of England or those who refused to conform to it—is one that is still unanswered. Modern historians such as Christopher Hill and Margaret Spufford have contributed to a controversy which began only a generation after Foxe's death. This section will show that Foxe's portrayal of the lollards played a significant role in determining the contours and content of that debate.

Much of the contention over the visibility of the true church stemmed from

²³ For instance, Foxe says of the London lollards: 'in the fulnes of that darke and misty tymes of ignoraunce, had also some portion of Gods good spirite whiche induced them to the knowledge of his truth and Gospell...' *AM*, 966. Among these men and women was William Pottier, whose confused and idiosyncratic beliefs forced Foxe to explain them.

Foxe's problematic notion of 'imperfect' lollards. While this device did well to explain lollard beliefs that differed from those of Foxe and his contemporaries, it left the door open for later reformers who repudiated what they recognized as popish vestiges to explain that they were merely perfecting the Reformation. They fitted themselves neatly into Foxe's historical scheme, epitomized by the claim 'one trueth leades unto an other'.²⁴ The separatist John Robinson was only too happy to point out to his conformist opponent Richard Bernard that truth could be sown in one age and reaped in another: 'Iohn Husse and Ierom of Prage finished their testimony in Bohemia, and at Constance a hundred yeres before Luther, Wickliffe in England wel nigh as long before them, and yet neyther the one nor the other with the like successe vnto Luther.'²⁵ This appropriation of the Foxean idea of increasing reform can be seen in the writings of Thomas Ellwood, a Quaker. Ellwood, specifically citing Foxe's martyrology, pointed out that since times had been dark in the early days of the Reformation, those corruptions which the lollards spotted must have been the most egregious, glaring ones, including the payment of tithes.²⁶ He then went on to stress that their position in the earliest days of the Reformation in no way should invalidate their theological value:

Nor ought those *earlier* Testimonies to be weakned (much less rejected) by the example or practice of *later* Martyrs, since both the *former* and *later* are, by the *same Historian*, recorded to be *good* and *godly* men, stout *Champions* and valiant *Souldiers* for the Truth of Jesus Christ, *all* bearing Testimony against the Corruptions and Superstitions of the Church of *Rome*, though not all against the *self-same* particular Corruption.²⁷

Ellwood's defense of the lollards rested largely on their designation as such by John Foxe. Because Foxe was fairly liberal about the beliefs he included in his lollard narratives—and not very specific about which of them kept the lollards 'in

²⁴ Henry Barrow, *Mr Henry Barrowes platform* (1611), fo. I7v.

²⁵ John Robinson, *A iustification of separation* (1610), 61-62.

²⁶ Thomas Ellwood, *The foundation of tythes shaken* (1678), 313.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

darkness’—later readers, such as Ellwood, had the freedom to decide that for themselves.

Quakers like Ellwood quickly adopted the lollards as their medieval forebears on the basis of their tradition of suffering (see chapter five) and their theological views (discussed sections III and IV). But they also used them to explain their own place in the course of the Reformation, which they understood themselves to be perfecting.²⁸ John Robertson, for instance, paralleled his own beliefs with those of the lollards. Objecting to criticism from his presbyterian opponent William Jamison, Robertson taunted the presbyterians for abandoning the lollard religious tradition: ‘Had it not been as easie for him to have said, *The Lollards taught several Doctrines which the Quakers hold, and which we have neglected, tho we desire to be accounted their Successors.*’²⁹ Defending his own tradition, William Penn responded to personal attacks by Henry Hallywell, whose *An account of familism as it is revived and propagated by the Quakers* (1673) accused the Quakers of dredging up old heresies to form a new religion. It drew similarities between the Familists and Quakers on issues such as the nature of revelation, set forms of prayer, and tithes. Affronted by simultaneously being slandered as a fanatic and the attack on the historical basis of his religious beliefs, Penn responded by pointing out that contemporary Protestants did not consider Wyclif and Brute to be fanatics.³⁰ The rebuttal was succinct but powerful: if Hallywell wanted to brandish the Quakers in such a way, they would have to give up the lollards as well.³¹ Francis Bugg, a Quaker apostate writing to

²⁸ For instance, T.L. Underwood shows that the reason many Quakers split from the Baptists was because they were insufficiently reformed, the Baptists still being in the ‘night of apostasy’. Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb’s War*, 83.

²⁹ John Robertson, *Rusticus ad clericum* (1694), 164. Robertson never cited *AM* for his list of lollard beliefs, but he would have been familiar with them through the writings of William Penn and George Fox, both of whom he references (270).

³⁰ William Penn, *Wisdom Justified* (1673), 78.

³¹ The Quakers were not the only ones to call out this form of attack by their enemies. Henry Barrow pointed out that being called a ‘Brownist’ was just a tactic to undermine true Christians: ‘But let not the name offend you or any; for ther was never any trueth brought to light, but Satan through his notable craft and cunning, hath caused some to paint it out after the names of men, that it might seem base and contemptible in the eyes of all, and to be received of none.

his former co-religionists, clearly understood the importance that Quakers had attached to the lollards. In his alternative history of his former brethren, he stressed that Wyclif had been a precursor not to the Quakers but to Martin Luther and the Church of England.³²

There is evidence that this was a sacrifice some were willing to make. The lollards were part of the reasons that the Laudians downplayed Foxe's legacy.³³ A historical scheme that privileged Wyclif and his followers as providentially ordained took on new meaning for Laudians and later conformists after witnessing the take-over of Wyclif's historical legacy by separatists. Anthony Milton has drawn a magisterial portrait of the debates between Calvinists and Laudians over the visible church and its medieval adherents, so this will only receive a brief treatment here.³⁴ Laudian divines initiated revisionist writing on the medieval past, which rejected Foxe's characterization of a corrupt and deceiving church. The Laudian tradition emphasized the role of the episcopal hierarchy and castigated its opponents, including the lollards. Peter Heylyn, a Laudian historian, played a significant role in undermining the authority of Wyclif and his followers. In a spat with the Independent divine Henry Burton, Heylyn claimed that Independent ministers were descended from the same line as Church of England ministers. He asserted that though he and his fellow priests shared in their lineage, they did not share in their corruptions, and he challenged Burton to name an alternative line of succession: 'If you have any other pedegree, as perhaps you have, from *Wiclif, Hus, the Albigenses*, and the rest which you use to boast of; keepe it to your selfe. *Non tali auxilio*, the Church of *England* hath no neede of so poore a shift.'³⁵ This rejection of the lollard lineage was echoed

Hereupon haue Christians been called *Hussites, Hugonotes, Lutherans, Zuingliaus, Calvinists, Puritans, Brownists*, and the like.' Barrow, *Mr Henry Barrowes platform*, 70.

³² Francis Bugg, *A brief history of the rise, growth, and progress of Quakerism* (1697), unpaginated introduction.

³³ For Laud's attitude to *AM* see Damian Nussbaum, 'Laudian Foxe-Hunting? William Laud and the Status of John Foxe in the 1630s,' in *The Church Retrospective*, ed. Robert Swanson (Woodbridge: Studies in Church History, 1997), 329-42.

³⁴ Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 310-321.

³⁵ Peter Heylyn, *A briefe and moderate answer, to the seditious and scandalous challenges of Henry Burton* (1637), 72.

by William Chillingworth, Laud's godson. Although Chillingworth's *The religion of Protestants* (1638) sought to diminish dogmatic disputes, his uncertainty about doctrine did not extend to the succession of Protestantism through the lollards. He rejected them because of their beliefs, but also because:

They were not of all Ages, not in all Countries, But confined to certain places, and were interrupted in Time, against the notion and nature of the word *Catholique*. They had no Ecclesiasticall Hierarchy, nor Succession of Bishops, Priests, and Pastors. They differed among themselues, and from Protestants also.³⁶

Chillingworth's position rejected the logic of Barrow's claim that one truth would lead to another; he reminded his readers that the wine that sits for too long turns to vinegar.³⁷

But others were not happy to give up their claim to the lollards and the historical lineage that Foxe had provided. After the 1630s, the nadir of Foxe's popularity in the Church of England, many seemed ready to rely on the historical tradition of lollardy. John Milton's own push for further reform within the Church of England rested on Wyclif's initiation, but not completion of it:

[A]lthough indeed our *Wicklefs* preaching, at which all the succeeding *Reformers* more effectually lighted their *Tapers*, was to his Countrey-men but a short blaze soone damp't and stiff'd by the *Pope*, and the *Prelates* for sixe or seven Kings Reignes; yet me thinkes that the *Precedencie* which GOD gave this *Iland*, to be the first *Restorer* of *buried Truth*, should have beene followed with more happy successe, and sooner attain'd Perfection; in which, as yet we are amongst the last...³⁸

Milton's call for further reform was challenged by Thomas Fuller, a Church of England clergyman and historian who responded in print.³⁹ Fuller was given personal

³⁶ William Chillingworth, *The religion of protestants a safe vway to salvation* (1638), 252.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 250.

³⁸ John Milton, *Of Reformation* (1641), 7. For Milton's use of Foxe's *AM*, see Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 151-78.

³⁹ Thomas Fuller, *A Sermon of Reformation* (1643).

access to John Foxe's private papers, and his historical writing owes much to *AM*.⁴⁰ When writing *The church-history of Britain* (1655), years after his rebuttal to Milton's pamphlet, Fuller was fully aware of Milton's arguments about Wyclif when he repeated Foxe's warning that due to the dark age Wyclif had been living in, he held errors.⁴¹ For Fuller, this in no way invalidated Wyclif's role as a forerunner of the Church of England. He relayed the story of Wyclif's ashes being thrown into a river after his exhumed body had been burned. They were

cast...into *Swift* a Neighbouring Brook running hard by. Thus this *Brook* hath convey'd his ashes into *Avon*; *Avon* into *Severn*; *Severn* into the *narrow Seas*; they, into the *main Ocean*. And thus the *Ashes* of *Wickliff* are the *Emblem* of his *Doctrine*, which now, is dispersed all the *World* over.⁴²

Fuller's characterization of Wyclif is noteworthy because it is essentially the same as that of Milton. Both understood the heresiarch to have initiated the Reformation, and both were clearly proud that the Reformation had English roots; the difference is that one understood the Reformation to be incomplete and the other felt assured of the opposite. Foxe's depiction of Wyclif as only partially reformed bequeathed a contested legacy to later readers, even among those who stayed within the Church of England.

Even those who were not of the high church party in the Church of England pointed to the lollards' historical witness in order to bolster their cases for reform. The staunch presbyterian Zachary Crofton used Wyclif to prove to his Independent opponent that the branches of the true church were good:

[F]or in *Englands* worst times they may finde a persecuted *Elias*, a *John Wickliffe*, with many other most eminent branches, bringing forth the Clusters of Gospel Grapes, to the bleeding out their very lives, besides *Obadiah's fifties* hidden in Caves, by the violence of persecution;

⁴⁰ *RB*, 238.

⁴¹ Thomas Fuller, *The appeal of iniured innocence* (1659), 42.

⁴² Fuller, *The church-history of Britain*, 171.

certainly the *Root must abide*, or how, or whence could these branches spring?⁴³

Crofton's appeal to Wyclif evoked Foxe's claim that he had appeared in the darkest time in the church's history. Leaning on Wyclif as proof that the Holy Spirit never wholly left the church, Crofton maintained that rejecting the presbyterian congregations would signify a rejection of the true church. For Crofton and others in the Church of England, Wyclif served as proof that the Church of England was a true church—but one that still needed perfecting.

Conclusion

The examples of Crofton and others in and out of the Church of England who appealed to the lollards for historical legitimacy prove that the attempts Foxe made to control his readers' understanding of the lollards proved ineffective. The additional prefatory material Foxe added in the 1570 edition of *AM* warning that the lollards were imperfectly reformed did not stop later readers from adopting the medieval witnesses to give strength to a wealth of radical ideas that Foxe left in the text intact, which will be the subject of later chapters. In fact, that the lollards were imperfectly reformed only served to encourage presbyterians, Independents, and Quakers that the Reformation was a process, not a set event.

That Foxe understood the Reformation in this way, then, has had consequences not merely for seventeenth-century readers, but for modern scholars of Foxe and *AM*. It means that the martyrs of this text cannot be treated in a monolithic way, because Foxe had different expectations of witnesses who lived in different ages. This begs questions about how appropriate it is to look at 'women martyrs', for instance, given that a Marian martyr would have been expected to be more spiritually knowledgeable than her lollard counterpart. Looking at the martyrs in *AM* across historical periods requires nuancing that will do justice to Foxe's own understanding

⁴³Zachary Crofton, *Reformation not separation* (1662), 13. Although Crofton does not cite Foxe explicitly, he does refer to the 'English Stories of the eminent Martyrs of Christianity found in this Church, in all ages' (11).

of historical revelation.

Section II

Re-Creating the Lollards: Model Subjects, Model Martyrs

The historical perspective of evangelicals informed the way they saw the lollard witnesses, and made them eager to rescue them from what they saw as the calumnies of their contemporary historians. Their attempts to do this revolved around two imperatives: the need to redress the lollard reputation for sedition and schism.

The first chapter of this section addresses the former. It initially looks at defensive measures that evangelicals took to temper the lollards' more subversive theological claims. It goes on to show how evangelicals realigned the lollard position with temporal authorities, distancing them from the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 and correcting Sir John Oldcastle's reputation as a traitor. From this defensive position, the chapter moves to discuss the evangelical offensive: it details how Tyndale, Bale, and Foxe portrayed the lollards as Christ-like, having been falsely accused of causing dissension, and instead accused religious orders of social disruption. Beyond this, evangelicals used the lollards' tension with the state to critique monarchy. This chapter, then, argues that while the lollards presented challenges for evangelicals, they also offered opportunities.

The second chapter of this section similarly shows evangelical attempts to correct the lollard association with heresy. That the lollards had suffered was not enough to validate their actions; this, after all, looked to be just punishment for obstinately holding and spreading erroneous religious beliefs that endangered society. Moreover,

the lollards came with a martyrological liability: most of them either dissembled or recanted their views. So this chapter outlines the ways that *AM* built on the rescue attempts of early evangelicals, and in so doing, gave both later conformists and dissenters a martyrological legacy to claim.

This section will also address the successes and failures of these attempts, which were mostly, but not always, measured according to confessional divides. Generally, later Protestants accepted these reputation reversals, whereas Catholics, from the very beginning of the Reformation with Thomas More, rejected these efforts. That Protestants accepted this rehabilitation meant that sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries looked to the lollards as model subjects and model martyrs, which would have important, factious consequences in the changing religio-political environment of later sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England.

Chapter 4: The Christian Commonwealth

Introduction

From its very origins lollardy had been associated with the subversion of the natural order of the commonwealth. Wyclif's teachings that lords might take away the church's temporal possessions and that the laity could lawfully rebuke their ecclesiastical ministers, including the pope, were sufficient enough for contemporary chroniclers of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 to link the rebellion to Wyclif's beliefs.¹ A further link to civil disorder was more direct: Oldcastle's rebellion in 1414 cemented the connection, and Oldcastle's was not the only reputation sullied. His fellow knights who were put to death as traitors became infamous and lollardy in general became associated with sedition following Oldcastle's capture and execution.²

So the task of the sixteenth-century polemicists who saw themselves as the spiritual heirs of the lollards was to reconfigure the Wycliffite relationship to proper authority. To do this, they had to address Wyclif's more subversive theological claims as well as those of his followers. They also sought to realign the lollards' position with temporal authorities, distancing the lollards from the seditious actions of John Ball and Jack Straw, and Oldcastle's uprising in St Giles Fields. This chapter will explore this process, outlining the successes and failures of this rehabilitation effort and its legacy in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this section, I argue that though the lollard connection to sedition caused huge problems for evangelicals, it also provided opportunities. In the first place, it offered a direct association with Christ, who, as evangelicals were quick to point out, had also been

¹Margaret Aston, 'Lollardy and Seditious, 1381-1431,' in Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), 1-48.

²Anne Hudson rightly notes that the oppression of lollardy was not merely due to Oldcastle's rebellion but also the condemnation of over forty of Wyclif's propositions at the Council of Constance in May of 1415. See 'The Survival of Wyclif's Works in England and Bohemia,' in Anne Hudson, *Studies in the Transmission of Wyclif's Writings* (London: Hambledon Press, 2008), XVI, 2.

accused of causing dissension. (This in fact would work to reinforce the evangelicals' references to bishops who persecuted lollards and evangelicals as 'Pharisees'.) It also allowed them the chance to turn the tables on their opponents by highlighting ways that the false church had caused disorder, including the introduction of religious orders and the Bishop of Rome's usurpation of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. There is a third and more significant opportunity, and evangelicals exploited it: the historical 'place' of the lollards and their uneasy relationship with the state gave evangelicals a safe place to criticize the monarchy—both the role of the prince and individual princes.

To put the lollard reputation rehabilitation effort in context, the first section of this chapter will briefly explain the Anabaptist threat to the evangelical cause, even in England where no known adult baptisms took place until the seventeenth century. Then I will discuss the community of goods and pacifism, two subversive theological beliefs ascribed to the lollards that forced evangelicals to mollify their tenor in print. From here I will turn to the association of lollardy and sedition, outlining the sixteenth-century project of evangelical historians to correct what they saw as a smear job by corrupt medieval chroniclers; I will also show that the effort was only effective to an extent in the seventeenth century, as confessional allegiances drove interpretation. The last section in the chapter will see the evangelicals move from a defensive position to go on the offensive, showing how evangelicals including Tyndale, Bale, and Foxe accused medieval clerics of disorder, cemented their connection with Christ as an oppressed, wrongly accused but righteous figure, and took the opportunity to critique monarchy and even certain princes.

Anabaptism in Tudor England

There is not much evidence that organized Anabaptist congregations established a foothold in England during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI,³ and perhaps

³Carrie Euler, 'Anabaptism and Anti-Anabaptism in the Early English Reformation: Defining Protestant Heresy and Orthodoxy During the Reign of Edward VI,' in *Heresy, Literature, and Politics in Early Modern English Culture*, eds. David Lowenstein and John Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 41.

this is the reason one finds so little scholarship on this marginalized group.⁴ There appear to have been no cases of believer's baptism in England in this period, but historians agree that Anabaptist ideas surfaced in the 1530s, and between 1535 and 1538, numerous 'Flemings' and 'Anabaptists' living in England were executed for heresy. Henry's government condemned these heretics in various royal acts and proclamations, including the Ten Articles of 1536 and two distinct proclamations against Anabaptists and sectarians (1536 and 1538); Henry set up a royal commission to root out these heretics in 1538 and excluded them from the 1540 general pardon (though they had been pardoned in 1539).⁵ The Anabaptists were still seen as a threat in 1553, when the Forty-Two Articles condemned some sectarian beliefs, and the penultimate article of the Thirty Nine Articles speaks out against the community of property.⁶ The Reformation in England, then, was hardly removed from this continental movement, though it never gained the following it had in Germany, Switzerland, or the Netherlands and historians consider it to be a case of more bark than bite.⁷

Whether or not the Anabaptist infection was spreading from the European mainland, English evangelicals were hypersensitive to the threat it posed to their movement and, as will be shown below with regard to the community of goods and pacifism, evangelicals were keen to separate what they saw as their own orderly and obedient movement from the reputation of the Anabaptists. Biblical precepts informed the traditional evangelical perception of social order, and as such, Catharine

⁴See Horst, *The Radical Brethren* and Martin, *Religious Radicals in Tudor England*; M.T. Pearce, *Between Known Men and Visible Saints: A Study in Sixteenth-Century Dissent* (Toronto: Associated University Press, 1994). Articles are similarly low in number; see Euler, 'Anabaptism;' D. B. Hariot, 'Anabaptism in England During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,' *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society* 12 (1933-6): 256-71; and David Loades, 'Anabaptism and English sectarianism in the mid-sixteenth century,' in *Reform and Reformation: England and the Continent c1500- c1750*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 59-70.

⁵See *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, eds. P. L. Hughes and J. F. Larkin, 3 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 280; Euler, 'Anabaptism,' 42.

⁶Horst, *The Radical Brethren*, 43-44.

⁷Catharine Davies, *A Religion of the Word: The Defence of the Reformation in the Reign of Edward VI* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 73-9.

Davies is right to point out that reformers did not seek to alter the body politic in any fundamental way.⁸ Davies, along with Alec Ryrie, shows that when discussing obedience, reformers cited the Old Testament commandment to honour one's father and mother, and that these men saw the monarch as the head of a proper patriarchal family, to whom his subjects, the children, owed obedience.⁹ Invoked even more often was the analogy of the human body to the body politic. Just as Christ was the head of the church, so too was he the head of the commonwealth; Davies demonstrates that this plurality meant that the lines between the two were often 'blurred or overridden'.¹⁰

The medieval notion of the 'commonwealth' that the reformers inherited was two-fold: the term signified the people of the realm and the common good, and until the second half of the sixteenth century, as Anne McLaren has demonstrated, the word 'common weal' was interchangeable with the term 'commonwealth', after which it came to mostly refer to the body politic.¹¹ Both usages were related, and this becomes very clear when reading the works of two reformers in particular, Tyndale and Bale. Both authors pick up on the traditional concept of the body politic (one heavily structured according to worldly social rank) and argue that the stable, proper functioning of his body politic ensured the welfare of the realm.

The evangelical perspective on the relationship between secular authority and the duty of Christian subjects was perhaps best articulated by William Tyndale, who wrote about the issues of social order and authority while exiled in Antwerp in

⁸Ibid., 141.

⁹Ibid.; Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII*, 59.

¹⁰Davies, *A Religion of the Word*, 141.

¹¹A.N. McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth, 1558-1585* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5. For the idea of the 'commonwealth' as it refers to general social welfare in this period, see Ben Lowe, *Commonwealth and the English Reformation: Protestantism and the Politics of Religious Change in the Gloucester Vale, 1483-1560* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 200-209; and Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII*, 145-56. For the concept of the 'commonwealth' as it refers to the body politic, see: Davies, *A Religion of the Word*, 140-176; Steve Hindle, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 1-36. Susan Brigden also gives an account of social structure in Tudor England in *New Worlds, Lost Worlds: The Rule of the Tudors* (New York: Viking, 2001), 140-178.

1528. As stated earlier, to remedy his own movement's increasing association with the alleged lawlessness of Anabaptism, Tyndale wrote *The obedience of a Christen man and how Christen rulers ought to governe* (1528).¹² Calling for obedience from godly subjects and for justice from Christian rulers, Tyndale couched his assertions as integral to an ordered, properly functioning society. Although Tyndale had a somewhat cynical view of monarchs, he nevertheless encouraged obedience from subjects of the realm in all matters.¹³ Referencing Romans 13, Tyndale claimed that all earthly rulers were ordained by God, and therefore 'Who so ever. . . resisteth them resisteth God'.¹⁴ He reasoned that it is impossible for a person to judge himself, and needs a ruler in order to enforce God's judgments on earth. Of princely prerogative, he wrote, 'Here by seist thou that the kinge is in this worlde without lawe & maye at his lust doo right or wronge and shall geve a comptes, but to God only.'¹⁵ There were limits to Tyndale's submission to rulers, and he drew a line in the case of Christians ordered by civil authorities to sin. Here he struck a fine balance, urging Christians to refrain from evil, but to resist their authorities in no other way; he warned them to be prepared for death if this were the cost of obeying God's law.¹⁶

¹²Tyndale's interest in Lollard history combined with concern for the extent of princely power in *Thorpe/Oldcastle*; he saw in this Lollard examination a template for how to deal with issues of authority. Anne Hudson examines Thorpe's narrative with regard to civil authorities in her 'William Thorpe and the Question of Authority,' in *Christian Authority*, ed. G.R. Evans. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 127-37.

¹³See Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII*, 59.

¹⁴Tyndale, *The obedience of a Christen man and how Christen rulers ought to governe, where in also (if thou marke diligently) thou shalt fynde eyes to perceave the crafty conveyance of all iugglers* (1528), fo. 32r. For secondary sources on this work, see David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 223-249; Richard Y. Duerden, 'Justice and Justification: King and God in Tyndale's *The Obedience of a Christian Man*,' in *William Tyndale and the Law*, eds. John A.R. Dick and Anne Richardson (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994), 69-80; Francis Oakley, 'Christian Obedience and Authority, 1520-1550,' in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, ed. J.H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 176-178.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, fo. 31v.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, fo. 152r.

While some Catholic polemicists confined Wyclif's rebellion to the spiritual world, the very first in the Reformation era to connect it to the temporal world was Thomas More.¹⁷ Most scholars claim that the first mention of a lollard in the Reformation is William Tyndale's hagiographic treatment of Sir John Oldcastle in 1530. Actually, this publication may well have been a response to a claim made by More a year earlier. Responding to an evangelical tract that had accused the Catholic Church of usurping princely authority, More argued that in fact it was *heresy* and *sedition* who were natural bedfellows.¹⁸ He pointed a finger at the recent German Peasants' Revolt that had followed Luther's publications and, attempting to guard England from a similar catastrophe, brought the bugbear closer to home by reminding his readers of Oldcastle's rebellion within England's own borders. Tyndale's martyrology of Oldcastle might be seen as a rebuttal to this claim, a less direct feature of the famous controversy between Tyndale and More.

So Tyndale set out the evangelical agenda for maintaining good relations with the state, and his co-religionists followed suit by distancing themselves from Anabaptists and the disorderly mobs of the German Peasants' War. The author of *A bryefe and plaine declaracion of certayne sentences in this litle boke following* (1547), attributed to either John Bradford or John Bale,¹⁹ sets out to defend himself and other evangelicals against accusations of Anabaptist sympathies. He aimed to show not only that 'I am none of the fauourers and maintainers of that destable error, but also that I do (as much as in me lieth) impugne and resist the same'.²⁰ John Leland, the celebrated antiquarian and mentor to John Bale, impugned the Anabaptists because they burned libraries (as in fact had Jack Straw and Wat Tyler, the main rebels in the Peasants' Revolt)—clearly a far cry from Oldcastle, whom

¹⁷David Abercromby, *Scolding no scholarship in the abyss, or, Groundless grounds of the Protestant religion* (Douai, 1669), 137.

¹⁸Thomas More, *The supplycacyon of soulis* (1529), sig. D3v.

¹⁹Elizabeth Evenden, *Patents, Pictures, and Patronage: John Day and the Tudor Book Trade* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 7.

²⁰I.B., *A bryefe and plaine declaracion of certayne sente[n]ces in this litle boke folowing to satisfie the consciences of them that haue iudged me therby to be a fauourer of the Anabaptistes* (1547), sig. A2r.

Leland singled out as preserving Wyclif's writings at his own considerable expense, 'to the honour of [his] contrey'.²¹ Another way they fulfilled Tyndale's agenda was by addressing the seditious tinge connected to the lollard tradition, first by neutralizing some potentially subversive beliefs that were said to have been maintained by the lollards.

Subversive Theological Beliefs

Community of Goods

Later lollard articulation of Wyclif's teachings on temporalities branched out to attacks on tithes and, to a much lesser degree, the promotion of communitarianism. The debate about the rights of ecclesiastical authorities to exact tithes from parishioners will be covered in chapter ten; here, the focus will be on the idea of community of property in lollard thought.

The notion of communitarianism is one that has in many ways been thrust upon the lollards by twentieth-century historians, rather than a widely held or neatly articulated belief of their own.²² An ambiguous belief that everyone should be allowed to partake of the earth's riches equally does find some articulation in Foxe's *AM*, most commonly expressed as an apostolic ideal.²³ When extolling the example of the early church (while demonstrating that Peter was granted equal powers with other apostles to bind and loose), the lollard Walter Brute points out that 'they faithfully obserued the perfection of charitie' by living communally. He explained, 'They were of one harte, & one soule, neither called they any thyng that they possessed their

²¹John Leland, *The laboryouse iourney [and] serche of Iohan Leylande, for Englandes antiquitees* (1549), sigs. E8r-F3r, quote at F3r.

²²*PR*, 374-75.

²³Foxe was quick to disavow that the Waldensians believed in the community of property (a tenet which would nevertheless be subscribed to them in seventeenth-century writings): 'Wherupon came first their name, that they were called Valdenses, or pauperes de Lugduno not because thei would haue all thinges common amongst them: or that they professing any wilfull pouerty, wold imitate to liue as the Apostles did (as Syluius did falsly belie them) but because they beyng thrust out both of countrey & goods, were compelled to liue poorely, whether they woulde, or no.' *AM*, 310.

own, but all was *common amongst them*.²⁴ Another flash of communitarian ideas appears in Wimbledon's sermon in a lesson on the equality between rich and poor at birth and at death:

Kynde knoweth no riches, that bringeth forth all men poore. For we be not got with rich clothes ne borne with gold ne with syluer. Naked he bringeth them to this world, nedy of meate and of drinke and clothing. Naked the earth taketh vs, as she naked brought vs hither. She cannot close with vs our possession in sepulchre, for kinde maketh no difference betwene poore and ritch, in comming hyther, ne in going hence. All in...manner he bringeth forth, all in...manner he closeth in graue.²⁵

The leveling of classes is clearer in Wimbledon's question: 'Why put ye out your fellow by kinde, & chalenge to your self the possession comen by kinde. In commune to al ritch and poore the earth was made. Why wyll ye ritche chaunge proper right herein?'²⁶ When Foxe incorporated *The praier and complaynte of the ploweman vnto Christe* (1531) into his tome, readers heard another voice articulate the equality of people, this time referencing a wealthy vicar: 'Truly Lord, me thinketh [the vicar] knoweth litle of charitie. For who that beth in charitie, possesseth thy goods in common and not in proper at his neighbours nede. And then shall there none of them segge this is myne, but it is goods that God graunteth to vs to spenden it to hys worship.'²⁷

These glimpses of a communal ideal do not receive any correction or clarification from Foxe. For Foxe and his contemporaries, communitarianism, though scriptural, was a reminder of the Anabaptist heresy. The spectre of the violence and depravity of the Anabaptists in Münster only a generation before was a constant bugbear for Foxe and his contemporaries, who knew any association with Anabaptist beliefs would make for an easy target for their Catholic opponents. John Bale wrote against the notion of a community of goods as a dangerous heresy of the Anabaptists, and

²⁴ *AM*, 607.

²⁵ *AM*, 676.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *AM*, 521.

in classic Bale style, he turned the Catholic accusation on its head, claiming that the roots of communal living lay in monasticism.²⁸ To Foxe and his co-religionists, communitarianism was a dangerous idea that subverted the commonwealth, and it is perhaps because Brute, Wimbledon, and *The prayer and complaynte* were merely citing the Bible or expressing an ideal in praising a community of goods—instead of demanding that this happen—that Foxe did not omit the comment or explain it away.

While these examples exist in terms of an ideal, in one lollard's testimony the ideal seems like a real possibility. Ralph Mungyn held the belief that it was unlawful 'for any man to haue proprietye of goods, but the same to be common'.²⁹ Foxe claimed that Mungyn denied this claim, 'whereby we haue to obserue, how the crafty malice of these aduersaries vseth falsely to collect and surmise of men, what they neuer speake, whereby to oppresse them wrongfullye, whom by playne truth they cannot expugne'. We see then, that when the ideal shifts to real potential, Foxe intervened to mitigate the subversion of order. In another example of Foxe's mitigation, the Norwich lollard William Colin held that women should be held in common, but while his name is mentioned in the list of members of the true church and the evangelicals' predecessors, his beliefs are not discussed.³⁰ Instead, Foxe insisted that all these lollards believed the same things, and gave a list of items, from which Colin's opinion was excluded.

Foxe's efforts seem to have paid off: seventeenth-century Protestants stayed away from associating lollardy and the community of goods. Only a few texts even mentioned the association: Thomas James' *An apologie for John Wickliffe* (1610) clears the schoolman from this charge, instead drawing the Anabaptists of his own day with the priest John Ball in Wyclif's day; in this way he deftly manoeuvres the radicals of the past and present to one side while upright members of the Church of England such as Wyclif and himself are aligned on the other.³¹ The historian and

²⁸John Bale, *Yet a course at the Romish foxe* (1543), 91.

²⁹*AM*, 781-82.

³⁰*WL?*, 136, and *Norwich Trials*, 91: 'Item quod tu tenuitsti et asseruisti quod omnes mulieres deberent esse communes.' *AM*, 804.

³¹*Apologie*, 37.

royalist Sir Robert Howard mentioned John Ball's goal of a community of goods during the Peasants' Revolt, and made sure to distance Wyclif from these beliefs: 'But as we find nothing in that good mans real Positions (for several of his *Works* are yet extant) to foment such a lewd Rebellion; so neither do the more impartial Authors of that Age lay it at his Door'.³² In *The history of popery*, Henry Care, a defender of non-conformists,³³ rescued Oldcastle from any communitarian association, insisting, 'Yet we are not ignorant that the Old Monks, and the Modern Jesuite *Parsons*, bring several other *most false* Accusations against him, as that he was an *Anabaptist* and would have had *all things in common*, but this Calumny seems to have no other grounds, than his complaining of the superfluity of the Clergy in those timer [sic] and wishing that their abundance had been distributed to better uses'.³⁴ Holding goods in common, then, tidied away by Foxe as an apostolic ideal that called the wealthy church to account, rarely reappeared in seventeenth-century debates about lollardy.

But even in seventeenth-century tracts on the ideal of a community of goods, articulated most clearly by the Diggers, the lollards were not used as a historical precedent. This could be for numerous reasons: first, Foxe may have simply been effective in wiping out real examples of communalistic belief. A more probable explanation, though, lies in the beliefs of the Diggers, whose declarations of eternal salvation and Christ's immanence in humans saw no parallel in lollardy. The Diggers also seemed to rely little on historical precedent; in fact their historical references were restricted to the Norman Conquest, where they saw the influx of Norman bureaucrats, chiefly lawyers, as the origin of oppression through ownership.³⁵ The notion of a community of goods, then, was successfully mediated by sixteenth-century evangelicals, inasmuch as it was ever a real tenet of the lollards. Mitigating statements about the virtue of holding goods in common to mere ide-

³²Sir Robert Howard, *The life and reign of King Richard the Second by a person of quality* (1681) 15.

³³'Henry Care', Lois G.Schworer in *ODNB*.

³⁴Henry Care, *The history of popery* (1682), 132.

³⁵Ariel Hessayon, 'Restoring the Garden of Eden in England's Green and Pleasant Land: The Diggers and the Fruits of the Earth,' *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 2/2 (2009): 5.

als was a way that evangelical polemicists were able to rehabilitate the association of lollardy to sedition; instead they are seen as medieval examples of early church ideals.

Pacifism

A fundamental biblicism led lollards to question issues surrounding indulgences, warfare, and greed, along with the connection between them. Lollards contrasted this with the peace that Christ preached. The tenth of the Twelve Conclusions of 1395 (posted to the doors of Westminster Hall and St. Paul's Cathedral in London during the Parliament session of early 1395) prohibits manslaughter in no uncertain terms—'either by war or by any pretended law of iustice, for any temporall cause, or spirituall reuelation'—concluding with Christ's own words: 'he that striketh with the sword, shall perish with the sword.'³⁶ The lollard pacifism in medieval records made their way into *AM*—excepting the views of the Norwich lollards, which will be discussed below.

Indulgences were tied to the act of war for disgruntled lollards. Writings such as Wyclif's *De Mandatis* and the anonymous *Opus Arduum* took particular issue with Henry Despenser's crusade of 1383 as nuncio to Pope Urban VI.³⁷ Urban issued two bulls to Despenser in March 1381, granting indulgences to those who donated money or manpower in his war against the antipope Clement VII in Flanders.³⁸ Disgust with indulgences and the Despenser campaign is reflected in William Swinderby's testimony. He offered numerous examples, grounded in scripture, of Christ calling for peace instead of war: 'For that I say, if the pope hold men of armes in maintaining of his temporall lordship, to venge him on them that gilten and offenden hym, and geueth remission to fight and to slay them, that contrarien him, as men sayden he did by the bishop of Norwiche, not puttyng hys sword in his sheath, as God

³⁶*AM*, 628; Cf. Matthew 26:52.

³⁷*PR*, 367-68; Ben Lowe cites Lollard antipathy toward the Despenser campaign in Wyclif's *Of Prelates* and sermon 71 (using Hudson's classification system for the Lollard sermon-cycle); see Lowe, 'Teaching in the "Schole of Christ": Law, Learning, and Love in Early Lollard Pacifism,' *Catholic Historical Review* 40/3 (July 2004): 426-27.

³⁸Lowe, "'Schole of Christ,'" 426-27.

commaunded to Peter: he is Antichrist.'³⁹ Swinderby's companion Brute echoed Christ's commandment to Peter when speaking against the pope's crusades, contrasting the 'plaine & manifest doctrine of Christ' with those that 'do seeke corners of their imagining, to the intent they may approue fightinges and warres'.⁴⁰

Brute went further. In addition to claiming that a pope should not make war, he also disputed that Christians (including magistrates and clergy) could engage in war at all. This radicalization of a biblical mandate—one with which Foxe mostly agreed—had taken on a new color, and Foxe stepped in to 'clarify' Brute's statements for his readers. In the margins, Foxe explained,

This proposition of Walter Brute, concerning the war of Christians not to be lawfull, is not to bee taken vniuersally, but in perticular case as he meaneth, which is this: that such wars alowed of the pope, not for the necessary defence of publike peace, libertie, and saueguard of our countreies, or against publike iniuries offered: but only to go and kill the infidels, because thei beleue not hauing no other cause: those warres of the pope hee lyketh not.⁴¹

But Foxe's words do not match those of Brute, who claimed that 'the warres of Christians are not lawfull, for that by the doctrine and life of Christ they are prohibited, by reason of the euidency of the deceitfull miracles of those, whiche haue made warres amongst the Christians, as well agaynst the Christians, as also agaynst the infidels'.⁴² Later in Brut's testimony, Foxe reiterated this point by dedicating a paragraph—as Freeman's commentary on the text points out, interrupting Brute's words—dedicated to proving that Brute had been speaking about only the pope with respect to war, and not to civil magistrates.⁴³ In another section of Brute's testimony, the lollard again decried all forms of war and resistance, and called for patience, according to Christ's precepts; and here again, Foxe was forced to corral

³⁹*AM*, 583.

⁴⁰*AM*, 599.

⁴¹*AM*, 602.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³Freeman's commentary and Foxe's explanation are both found in *AM*, 518.

these statements into an acceptable form. In five separate places in the margins of this section, Foxe clarifies that Brute meant Christians should be patient and not resist in *private* cases of strife between Christian brethren; in cases of public necessity, Christian kings would be allowed to go to war.⁴⁴ Here, Foxe's gloss points to a difference in private and public conduct. This prevarication is in direct opposition to Brute's words, providing a good example of the magisterial reformation colliding with the radical strain.⁴⁵

While Foxe made clarifying notes about the lollard views he included in his text, most sixteenth-century readers would have been unaware of views omitted from *AM* altogether. As stated above, scholars have demonstrated that Foxe was capable of excluding information that did not suit his polemical purposes, and this was certainly the case with lollard primary source material.⁴⁶ An investigation into Foxe's sources reveals that nonresistance was a feature of the 1428-1431 trials of the Norwich lollards, whose beliefs were more radical than those of their brethren in other parts of the country.⁴⁷ Norman Tanner shows that the records intact in the extant manuscript (of some sixty men and women), reveal that the topic of 'fighting' was brought up in of these five trials, and 'killing' in eight of them.⁴⁸ We know that the former was an issue in the trial of William White, recorded in a separate manuscript.⁴⁹

⁴⁴*AM*, 599.

⁴⁵James M. Stayer, *Anabaptists and the Sword* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1976) gives attention to more militant strands of Anabaptism.

⁴⁶Shannon McSheffrey, *Gender & Heresy*, 13; McSheffrey and Tanner, *Lollards of Coventry*, 51-55; *Norwich Trials*, 8, n. 12; Thomson, 'John Foxe and some Sources for Lollard History.'

⁴⁷When discussing a Thomas Bikenore, Anne Hudson mentioned that his position on war and execution are shared by William White and other East Anglian lollards; she notes that 'like many of the views held by that group, this is an extreme position amongst Lollard opinions.' *PR*, 367.

⁴⁸Several folios of this manuscript have gone missing since Foxe first saw it, and as a result, Foxe is the only source for some of the Norwich lollards (see *Norwich Trials*, 2-7); Foxe puts the number of those on trial 'about the number of 120'; *AM*, 804.

⁴⁹White's trial is missing from the Norwich Lollard manuscript. Foxe got the details of White's trial from a manuscript that John Bale had lent to him, the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum* of Thomas Netter. See Shirley, ed., *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 417-32.

Foxe's treatment of the Norwich lollards is marked by repeated references to the similarity of their beliefs. When beginning his narrative of these men and women, Foxe divides them into three groups: those who were only suspected of eating meat on vigil days and consequently were given relatively light sentences (numbering 10); those who abjured and had harsher penalties applied to them (95); and those who were martyred (3). It is interesting to note that Foxe's division is based on the *suffering* of these men and women—and certainly not on their religious beliefs, which the reformer is at pains to stress were homogenous.

Foxe's preface to the specific articles alleged against the lollards serves as evidence: 'Nowe touchyng their Articles whiche they dyd mainteine and defend: first this is to be considered, as I finde it in the registers, such societie and agrement of doctrine to be amongst them, that almost in their assertions and Articles there was no difference. The doctrine of the one was the doctrine of all the other.'⁵⁰ After explaining the particular articles (and giving a defense for some that appear too radical for Foxe's tastes), Foxe again emphasized that the accused 'agree[d] in one vniforme faith, that what soeuer one did holde, all the other did mainteine and holde the same',⁵¹ noting that this was likely due to their association with the leader of these 'known men,' William White. In order to 'auoyd. . . prolixitie' Foxe deemed it 'sufficient briefly to touch certayne of the principals'.⁵²

A closer look at the 'vniforme faith' of the Norwich sect shows that there are details Foxe omitted—in particular, articles relating to fighting or killing. The reformer included no mention of pacifism in his list of articles that all these men and women were to believe. Among those 'certain notable examples' of lollards that Foxe *did* give a fuller treatment, three of them were accused of holding the belief that it is wrongful for any man to kill another, but these accusations are missing from *AM*.⁵³ In the case of Margery Backster, Foxe included her eccentric conviction that

⁵⁰ *AM*, 805.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *AM*, 806.

⁵³ John Pyrye of Martham, who believed that killing was wrong under any circumstances, is listed in the catalog of Norwich lollards who were forced to abjure and incurred harsh penalties, but do not get a more detailed narrative in the text; see *Norwich Trials*, 71. Avis (Hawise) Mone,

images are evil because devils fell from heaven with Lucifer and entered them, but omitted the accusation that she believed it was wrong for any man to kill another.⁵⁴ In another instance, the beliefs of John Skilley are glossed over as being the same as those held by everyone else; it seems that Skilley's narrative is included due to the heretic's harsh penance (he was confined to a monastery and only allowed to eat bread and water on Fridays for seven years) and not for any anomaly in his beliefs, which included the idea that it was wrong to fight for one's country or inheritance;⁵⁵ these same beliefs are omitted from the account of the preacher William White.⁵⁶

There may be a number of reasons that this material did not make it into *AM*. First, they may have seemed insignificant to the reformer. There is no way to prove that there were more than fourteen trials where the issues of 'fighting' or 'killing' are mentioned, though this seems unlikely because if Foxe is even close to accurate in his claim of the existence of 120 Norwich lollards, then we are missing about half of the documentary evidence concerning those heretics.⁵⁷ Considering the radical nature of the articles and their relatively low occurrence, could Foxe have simply thought of them as anomalies? Three factors work against this option. First, Foxe was very liberal about including any opposition to Rome prior to his own movement, and included other unusually doctrinal irregularities (such as Backster's opinion of images, mentioned above). Second, he could have included them but massaged their meaning, as he had to do on other points of doctrine espoused by this group, but still there is no mention of it.⁵⁸ Third, there are two points of doctrine that occur

who believed that it was 'not leful to slee a man for ony cause', is also mentioned but not detailed later in the text; see *ibid.*, 142. Another narrative not expounded but mentioned in the list of Norwich lollards is that of Richard Fletcher, who held that 'in no maner it is leful to sle a man'; see *ibid.*, 86.

⁵⁴Regarding images, see *AM*, 808 and *Norwich Trials*, 49. For her belief that 'quod nullo modo licet interficere quemquam', see *Norwich Trials*, 42.

⁵⁵*Norwich Trials*, 53.

⁵⁶Shirley, ed., *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 431.

⁵⁷Even accounting for the pages missing from the Norwich manuscript, Thomson suggests it is possible that Foxe used another original source no longer extant. See his 'John Foxe and some Sources for Lollard History,' 253.

⁵⁸The Norwich lollards were some of the more radical that Foxe encountered (save Swinderby and Brute), and he had to mould their words into acceptable forms at times. Baptism (in addition

even fewer times in the extant historical record (though of course, these could have cropped up more frequently in the missing sources) yet are still included: relics (only an issue in two trials) and the nature of the true church (which caused Foxe some trouble and is mentioned in four trials).⁵⁹

Given religious radicals' unwarranted contemporary reputation for violence, as shown by Catherine Davies, Carrie Euler, and Irvin Horst, it would seem unusual that Foxe did not take the opportunity to vindicate the radicals through historical precedent, the way he did other evangelicals; surely this inclusivity would only further Foxe's goal of unifying his church.⁶⁰ The answer to these questions may lie in the answers of the lollards themselves, though. As Tanner points out, each time a lollard is questioned about killing, his or her answer ties the issue to the process of the law.⁶¹ Margery Backster claimed that it is wrong to kill anyone, the record continues, 'neither by process of law to condemn the accused'.⁶² Richard Fletcher, mentioned by Foxe (but not given a fuller treatment in the text) held 'that in no maner is it lefull to sle a man, nether be processe of lawe to dampne a man that is guilty of thefte or of manslaughter.'⁶³ The East Anglian lollards, then, are speaking not about killing generally, but *execution* specifically.

This presented difficulties for Foxe. As shown earlier, Foxe was eager to shift Brute's emphasis from a universal rejection of warfare among Christians to the condemnation of the pope's crusades. This same tension—between the prerogatives of the state and the ecclesiastical realm—crops up in the issue of killing in the Nor-

to the nature of the church, and activity on holy days) serves as a particular example of this and will be discussed below. See Foxe's marginalia in *AM*, 805.

⁵⁹Foxe recorded that the Norwich lollards held that 'the catholicke church is onely the congregation of the elect'. While this vision of the true church suits the purposes of a persecuted sect, it does not fit nicely into the state church that Foxe was trying to construct; he clarified the comment in the margin: 'In thys article is ment that the wicked be in the church but not of the church.' See *AM*, 805.

⁶⁰Davies, *A Religion of the Word*, 76-77; Carrie Euler, 'Anabaptism and Anti-Anabaptism in the Early English Reformation' 50-52; Horst, *The Radical Brethren*, 107.

⁶¹*Norwich Trials*, 15.

⁶²'nec per processum legis dampnare reum', *ibid.*, 42.

⁶³*Norwich Trials*, 86.

wich trials. Denying the validity of canon law was generally not an issue for Foxe, a fact reflected in his inclusion of lollard opinions against a range of issues such as fasting and abstinence, holy days, tithes and other fees owed to the church, and the precepts and censures of the church.⁶⁴ Calling the legitimacy of *civil* law into question, though, undermined the authority of the state by curtailing its legislative power. Given that a central aim of Foxe's work was to develop the history of a national church, it is perhaps unsurprising that he thought the merits of including the nonresistant strain of lollard belief was outweighed by the cost. Also, there is little reason to think that Foxe's abhorrence of the death penalty would have influenced his editorial decision here, as there is no evidence that this applied to non-religiously motivated crimes. Through this omission, sixteenth-century English evangelicals saw opposition to state-sponsored execution (something Foxe had ambiguous opinions about himself, in certain circumstances) subtly written out of the history of their church, and a key Anabaptist association minimized.⁶⁵

Lollardy and Sedition

In addition to tackling subversive theological beliefs, to untangle the lollards from sedition the reformers had to explain Wyclif's association with the uprisings of 1381, as well as address Oldcastle's rebellion against his king—the very figure Wyclif had charged with disciplining and protecting the church—which made for a major overhaul of the knight's reputation. Oldcastle was a crucial figure for early reformers. In many ways, he was ideal for appropriation: aside from the admittedly damag-

⁶⁴The inclusion of tithes further suggests that Foxe was ready to include radical issues—to a point. This issue gave Foxe trouble, too; see *AM*, 805, and chapter ten below. I have used Tanner's taxonomy here, and cross-referenced it with issues Foxe included. See *Norwich Trials*, 11.

⁶⁵There are only subtle hints that there may be more to it: while one Quaker tract does claim that the lollards believed, like the Quakers, that 'It is not lawful to Fight for the *Faith*', its author John Robinson did not substantiate it with the names of lollards who thought that, or where he found that information. See Robertson, *Rusticus ad clericum* (1694), 165. Also, in his tract advocating magistrates' right to execute heretics, William Prynne felt he had to overcome Foxe's arguments as to why *De heretico comburendo* was legally void. See Prynne, *The sword of Christian magistracy supported* (1653), 54-70. Cf. below, 261-62.

ing accusation of rebellion, Oldcastle was a model proto-evangelical: his confession articulately and humbly expresses reverence for social order and high ideals for the church; it is without the embarrassingly radical or nonsensical material found in some other lollard narratives, particularly later ones; and his high social status lent the movement credibility. For these reasons, restoring his reputation was one of the first tasks of evangelical historians, and was essential to separating the lollard movement from its connection to treason. To do this, evangelical polemicists set out to expose the association as a smear campaign by corrupt medieval chroniclers, with a large degree of success; this section will show that their seventeenth-century co-religionists would pick up this line of reasoning when dealing with Catholic accusations of a history of sedition.

Leading the charge in condemning the medieval monastic chroniclers was John Bale, whose antiquarian interests dovetailed with his evangelical zeal at this very issue.⁶⁶ His works, in particular *The image of bothe churches* (1545) and the *Actes of the English Votaryes* (1546), exposed the lies he saw throughout the medieval chronicles he used as sources for his historical works. Bale believed that chroniclers had been in league with the Pope, even aiding him in his quest to seize spiritual authority from Scripture.

Although Bale attacked medieval historians on many points, their narrative of the lollards—especially that of Oldcastle—merited particularly close scrutiny from Bale. Bale counted hundreds of supposed errors in the chronicle of Polydore Vergil, an early sixteenth century historian, but saved his most loathsome words for Thomas Netter of Walden.⁶⁷ *A brefe chronycle* is full of invective from Bale about medieval chroniclers; even the title indicates that Oldcastle's narrative comes 'out of the bokes and writynges of those Popyshe Prelates which were present both at his con-

⁶⁶Helen L. Parish, *Monks, Miracles and Magic: Reformation Representations of the Medieval Church* (London: Routledge, 2005), 24-28.

⁶⁷Of Vergil's take on Oldcastle, Bale contended that he goes about 'pollutyng our Englyshe chronicles most shamefullye with his Romyshe lyes and other Itallyshe beggary'. See *BC*, sig. A5r. Leslie Fairfield interestingly notes that Bale had previously praised Netter's work as a chronicler, and states that this could have been a reason why Bale became interested in the idea of Lollards as proto-reformers later than other reformers, such as Tyndale. See Fairfield, *John Bale*, 51.

dempnacyon and iudgement'.⁶⁸ He asked his readers to join him in his truthful investigation into Oldcastle's life: 'Now lete vs expende what the true cause shuld be of this godlye mannys condemnacyon and death, all dreames of Papistes sett a part.'⁶⁹ Other charges of bias pepper the text: When discussing the 'craftye accusation of certen Prelates', Bale commented that, 'it hath in the chronicles an other color', and he tied together 'Pharisees and scribes' when referencing those prelates present at Oldcastle's examination.⁷⁰

Clearly making a virtue of necessity, Bale claimed that he used the chronicles as sources because by proving their chronicles wrong, the papacy would have to answer for itself. In the *Actes of the Englyshe Votaryes*, he explained,

For they haue yt of theyr popes lawe to answeere no man...I haue therfor thought yt best, seyng they regarde not the sacred scrypturs, to laye before them their abhomynable practyses and examples of fylthynesse, by their owne legendes, chronycles, and sayntes Lyues, that all men maye knowe what legerdemaynes they haue vsed, and what lecherouse lyues they haue led here in Englande sens the worldes begynnyng. Lete them now be ashamed of their beastlynesse...⁷¹

Although he was forced to use the medieval chronicles, Bale appealed to his fellow Englishmen to restore the history of England without the taint of the Roman Church: 'I wolde some lerned Englyshemanne (as there are now most excellent fresh wyttes) to set forth the Englyshe chronycles in theyr right shape. . . I can not thynke a more necessarye thyng to be laboured to the honour of God, bewtye of the realme, erudicyon of the people, and commodite of other landes, next the sacred scrypturs of the Bible, than that worke wolde be.'⁷² Bale, then, saw the task of redressing

⁶⁸ *BC*, sig. A2r.

⁶⁹ *BC*, sig. A7r.

⁷⁰ *BC*, sigs. A8r and D1r.

⁷¹ John Bale, *The actes of the Englysh votaryes* (1546), sig. A4v.

⁷² *BC*, sig. A5v. Annabel Patterson, 'Sir John Oldcastle as Symbol of Reformation Historiography,' 6. Bale's appeal echoes that of Leland's, who called for the chronicles to be preserved, if for more antiquarian than necessarily religious reasons. Both, though, claim this would benefit the health of the commonwealth. See Leland, *The laboryouse iourney*, sigs. F4v-Fvr.

the medieval chronicles as a way to restore the truth of how the papacy abused its power.

Bale and his fellow reformers saw their actions in a providential light: they believed that by correcting the historical fallacies of the medieval chroniclers, they were fulfilling God's promise to vindicate his true followers. Speaking of the London lollard Thomas Chase who was found hanged in his cell, Foxe wrote that his Catholic prisoners had murdered him and then slandered him by claiming he had committed suicide. Foxe saw exposing these supposed crimes as part of a providentially driven historical scheme whereby God 'hath promised at one tyme or at an other, to cleare his true seruauntes, not with lyes and fables, but by hys owne true worde. No secret sayth he, is so close but once shalbe opened: neither is any thyng so hid, that shall not at the last be knowen clearely'.⁷³ Foxe took this reference to Matthew 10:26 from Bale's *A brefe chronycle*, where he used the same Biblical reference to frame his exoneration of Oldcastle's treasonous actions.⁷⁴

After disparaging his medieval sources, Bale addressed Oldcastle's reputation for sedition. To transform the erstwhile traitor into a model of the servant of the commonwealth, Bale emphasized Oldcastle's family commitment to the country, stating that his 'father the lorde Reginolde of Cobham John Frosyart nombereth alwayes amongst the most worthy warryours of Englande'.⁷⁵ The line between church and commonwealth is porous in *A brefe chronycle*; Bale juxtaposed Oldcastle, a 'vertuose knyght', in a line of 'voleanunt warryours' who gave up their lives for the true church alongside biblical and classical examples of men who had 'eyther dyed for theyr naturall contreye or daungered theyr lyues for a commonwelthe'.⁷⁶ Bale emphasized the twin association of service to the commonwealth and service to the true church: 'In all aduenterouse actes of wordlye manhode, was he euer bolde, stronge, fortunate, doughtye, noble, and voleanunt. But neuer so worthy a conquerour as in this his present conflict with the cruell and furyouse frantyc

⁷³Foxe, *AM*, 939.

⁷⁴*BC*, sigs. G3v-G4r.

⁷⁵*BC*, sigs. A4r-v.

⁷⁶*BC*, sigs. A2r-v.

kyngdom of Antichrist.⁷⁷ He went to great lengths to vindicate Oldcastle's seditious reputation, insisting that his bishop examiners had slandered him with 'hateful names' such as 'that troubler of the publique peace, that enemye of the realm'.⁷⁸ The margin of the next paragraph reads that Oldcastle had been 'a mirroure of Christen knyghthode'.⁷⁹

Bale emphasized Oldcastle's allegiance by describing his notion of a properly ordered commonwealth. During Oldcastle's examination, the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum* states that the accused wrote a confession of faith, which Bale then relayed to the reader verbatim. Oldcastle's confession reveals that he believed in three estates of Christianity: one in heaven, one in purgatory ('yf anye soche he by the scripturs'), and one on earth.⁸⁰ He further divided the earthly estate into three parts, the priesthood, the knighthood, and the commons, listing their corresponding responsibilities. Unsurprisingly, Oldcastle believed that priests should be shielded from worldliness and 'conforme theyr lyues utterlye to the examples of Christ and his Apostles'.⁸¹ He added that they were to be 'more modest also, more louyng, gentyll, and lowlye in sprete. . . than anye other sortes of people'.⁸² The second order, knights, were to bear swords, and their role in the realm was to 'defende Gods lawes, and se that the Gospell were purelye taught, conformyng theyr lyues to the same and secludyng all false preachers'. They were also to protect the the clergy, 'so longe as they teache purelye, praye rightlye, and mynystre the sacramentes freely'.⁸³ The duty of common people, the last type, was 'to beare theyr good myndes and true obedience to the aforeseyd mynysters of God, theyr kynges, cyuyle gouernours and Prestes'.⁸⁴ The realm that Oldcastle depicted, then, was a traditionally ordered, healthy commonwealth, and the prelates examining him, who did not fit this model, looked to be subverting proper order.

⁷⁷BC, sig. A4v.

⁷⁸BC, sig. B7v.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰BC, sig. B8v. In the margin Bale noted, 'Contrary wrote he, Ad Parlamentium. Ex Vvaldeno.'

⁸¹BC., sig. C1r.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

Foxe was happy to rely on Bale's account, including it almost verbatim in the first edition of *AM*. Although he wrote not from exile, but from a much-changed and supportive domestic scene, the need to headline the relationship between a godly society and the true Church was still a priority in the era of Elizabethan reform. The first English edition of his martyrology, then, echoed Bale's defence of the knight as a model subject in support of a godly commonwealth, using the same examples and literary tropes.

The situation had changed by 1570 with the second edition, which required that Foxe reply to Harpsfield's *Dialogi Sex*, specifically his attack on Oldcastle's credibility as a martyr due to his treasonous actions. Harpsfield contended that the lollard knight should not be commended for a martyr, but rather reprov'd for a traitor.⁸⁵ Significantly, in the second edition, Foxe elided embarrassing details about other martyrs attacked in the *Dialogi Sex*, but in the narrative of the lollard knight, Foxe instead shored up his case.⁸⁶ Although he addressed Harpsfield's concerns, he did so after recounting Oldcastle's ordeal; the text of the knight's story remained largely the same, with the exception, notably, of Oldcastle's escape from the Tower. Foxe, until now following the chronology of his earlier edition (and Bale's *A breffe chronycle*), omitted the section about Henry arriving at St Giles Fields to find an insurrection, and addressed this matter later in his rebuttal to Harpsfield. He removed Bale's conjectured suggestion that his friends rescued him; instead, his terse end to his narrative states,

After all this, the sentence of death being geuen, the lord Cobham was sent away, syr Robert Morley carying him agayne vnto the tower, where as after he had remayned a certayne space, in the nyght season, (it is not knowen by what meanes) he escaped out and fled into Wales, where as he continued by the space of. iiij. yeares.⁸⁷

One element of the story where Foxe did adhere to Bale's version was the knight's direct flight into Wales, with no detours through St Giles Fields, and no rebellion.

⁸⁵Ibid. Harpsfield, *Dialogi Sex*, 747, 833, 837, 953-54.

⁸⁶'Nicholas Harpsfield ' *ODNB*.

⁸⁷*AM*, 697.

Foxe's rebuttal to Harpsfield began with the theme of obedience. The reformer offered a catalogue of examples: when Henry IV called Oldcastle to go to France, he had gone; his obedience had fostered a good relationship between the knight and Henry V, until Thomas Arundel 'made bate betwene them'; when the Archbishop had summoned him he admittedly had not appeared, but called by the king, he came; his confession of faith had been obedient in nature; and when he had been committed to the Tower after his first examination, he had willingly gone.⁸⁸ Following his second examination, 'after this deadly sentence, was thus awarded against him, the sayd Lord Cobham was then returneth agayne to the tower, which he *with patience and meeknes did obey*'.⁸⁹

Like Bale had, Foxe set up a model subject but then had to explain Oldcastle's evasion from civil authorities. Whereas Bale transferred the action from Oldcastle to his friends, Foxe attributed it to God: 'from the...tower if he afterward by the Lordes prouidence did escape, whether hath Alanus Copus [the pen name of Nicholas Harpsfield] herein more to prayse God for offering to hym the benefite, or to blame the man for taking that, which was offered...'⁹⁰ Foxe did not stop there, rhetorically asking Harpsfield what Catholic in all of Louvain 'hauyng his house ouer his head on fire, will not be glad to haue if he might, the doore set open to flee the perill?'⁹¹ Last, Foxe reminded readers that Oldcastle had not been the only person to flee from religious persecution, referencing the Catholic's exile in Louvain under Edward VI: 'why did Alanus Copus, flee hys countrey hauyng so litle nede, if this man, bleadyng almost vnder the butchers axe, mighte not enioye so greate an offer of so luckey deliuerance?'⁹² Foxe, then, painted Oldcastle's rescue as a providential allowance of God, who had rescued his servant from oppressors.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid., italics mine.

⁹⁰Ibid., 697-98.

⁹¹Foxe, *AM*, 698. Louvain served as a refuge for Elizabethan Catholic exiles such as Nicholas Harpsfield, who spent Edward VI's reign here. See 'Nicholas Harpsfield,' *ODNB*, and Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation in Early Modern Britain and Ireland*, chapter 2.

⁹²*AM*, 698.

From the knight's escape, Foxe returned to the important issue of his death. He insisted that despite the act of attainder, Oldcastle had died for religion, not treason. Foxe claimed that the cause at the root of his execution was 'principally. . . his religion, which first brought hym in hatred of the byshops: the bishops brought him in hatred of the Kyng: the hatred of the king brought hym to hys death and martirdome [sic].'⁹³ Foxe emphasized the role of right belief, over any subversion, as the driving force behind Oldcastle's death, creating a martyr where there had previously been a traitor.

Oldcastle's was not the only lollard whose reputation was tinged with sedition. The contemporaneous occurrence of Wyclif's teachings and the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 led contemporary chroniclers to claim that the former caused the latter, in particular Thomas Walsingham (d. 1422), a scribe of St Alban's Abbey and an opponent of lollardy.⁹⁴ Margaret Aston highlights aspects of the lollard movement that may have aroused seditious suspicions, including issues surrounding temporalities, tithes, and ultimately the sacraments (the disrespect for which, contemporaries pointed out, would lead to a disrespect for all law and authority).⁹⁵

Like Oldcastle, Wyclif's involvement in rebellion is decidedly downplayed in evangelicals' writings. In Bale's writings, the only mention of the Peasants' Revolt appears in *The epistle exhortatorye of an Englyshe Christyane* (1544) where the radical preacher John Ball is first in a long list of martyrs for the cause of true religion, including Oldcastle and the knights implicated in the St Giles' Field rebellion.⁹⁶ Like Bale, Foxe largely avoided the topic, only giving the Peasants' Revolt two sentences out of the entire *AM*: 'About the same time, also about iij. yeares after, there fell a cruell dissention in England, betwene the common people and the

⁹³ *AM*, 783.

⁹⁴ Walsingham criticized Oxford, very likely his own university, for its association with the lollards; see 'Thomas Walsingham' John Taylor in *ODNB*. For his claim that the Peasants' Revolt was due to the influence of Wyclif and his followers, see H.T. Riley, ed., *Thomae Walsingham, Quondam Monachi S. Albani, Historica Anglicana* (London: Longman, 1864), 11.

⁹⁵ Aston, 'Lollardy and Sedition,' 14.

⁹⁶ John Bale, *The epistle exhortatorye of an Englyshe Christyane* (1544), fo. 13r. See chapter five below.

nobilitie, the which did not a litle disturbe and trouble the common wealth. In this tumulte, Symon of Sudbery Archbishop of Canterbury, was taken by the rusticall and rude people, and was beheaded.⁹⁷ The marginalia significantly reads, ‘Rebellion in England by Iacke straw’, omitting mention of the preacher John Ball.⁹⁸ Foxe took the issue no further, immediately turning to Sudbury’s successor William Courtenay and his persecution of the early lollards. The lack of detail about the causality or lollard association with the events of 1381 is certainly intentional; he used Walsingham’s chronicle extensively and would have known about his claim. Foxe clearly avoided drawing an association between reform and revolution, and the fact that he felt no need to address this connection directly (a cue taken from Bale) would have consequences in the seventeenth century, where the connection between Wyclif and the Peasants’ Revolt served as another division between confessional polemicists.

The relationship between lollardy and sedition had a mixed reception in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Divided neatly along confessional lines, it is perhaps unsurprising that Catholic writers persisted in the assertion that Oldcastle was a traitor and Wyclif’s ideas incited rebellion, while Protestants claimed otherwise. Throughout the Reformation, Catholics continued this theme. Thomas Stapleton’s 1565 translation of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* came complete with a preface that reminded Queen Elizabeth of how her predecessors had (literally) fought heresy, singling out Henry V’s quelling of Oldcastle’s rebellion. Stapleton drew a direct link between the rebellious lollards of the medieval era and the seditious Protestants he saw outside of England’s borders, telling Elizabeth that Henry ‘appeased the rebellion of Iohn Oldecastle labouring by force and disobedience against his Souuerain (as the nev vVicleffs do presently in Fraunce and Scotland) to maintaine the heresy of vVicleff, and pronounced traturous all the adherents of that vvicked secte’.⁹⁹ Likewise, Robert Persons explicitly connected

⁹⁷ *AM*, 554.

⁹⁸ Ball’s involvement is in the *Commentarii* (fo. 175r-v) and the 1563 edition (192), but omitted from other *AM* editions.

⁹⁹ Thomas Stapleton, ed., *The history of the Church of Englande. Compiled by Venerable Bede, Englishman.* (1565), 2. Stapleton made a point of citing Polydore Vergil as his source, after condemning the histories of Bale and Foxe in the preface.

Wyclif and rebellion, and used the association to impugn his present day Protestant enemies. He maintained that for Wyclif, ‘euery Tyrant may be slayne meritoriously by any vassall or subiect of his, by free or secret treasons’, and that John Knox essentially approved of the same thing.¹⁰⁰ Persons, then, played the same game as Protestant polemicists, tying earlier dissenters with those of more recent history, but to *discredit* their allegiance to authority.

Persons got most of his anti-lollard arguments from Harpsfield. Harpsfield’s characters in the *Dialogi Sex* had also undermined Wyclif’s authority, reminding readers of the seditious potential inherent in heresy. The sixth dialogue between a Catholic Englishman, Irenaeus, and a heretical German, Critobulus, featured a counter-attack against Foxe’s version of the Oldcastle rebellion. Irenaeus tied the knight to the rest of the lollards, maintaining that this was their *modus operandi*: *seditione euangelicorum*, an uprising of the Gospellers.¹⁰¹ Harpsfield here was no doubt picking up on the association between sedition and heresy that Thomas More had drawn out nearly thirty years earlier; Harpsfield, after all, was responsible for the most famous of More’s hagiographies.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Protestants took up the reins from Foxe and defended Oldcastle against his detractors. The nonconformist Richard Baxter insisted that Wyclif obeyed the magistrates, while Thomas Beard, who abridged *AM*, went further, arguing that ignoring Wyclif’s demands for reform actually *created* rebellion, civil strife, and disorder (significantly, Bale had made a similar claim, that the Wars of the Roses occurred because Oldcastle’s call for reform was not heeded, as stated earlier).¹⁰² Simon Birckbek, whose *The Protestants evidence* (1635) went through two editions, readily included Oldcastle as an example of a lollard of high status, and Thomas Fuller protested his innocence.¹⁰³ The popular historian Nathaniel Crouch left the full narrative out of his text, only echoing Foxe’s assertion that Oldcastle

¹⁰⁰Robert Persons, *A quiet and sober reckoning vwith M. Thomas Morton* (1609), 319.

¹⁰¹Harpsfield, *Dialogi Sex* (1566), 835.

¹⁰²Richard Baxter, *A key for Catholicks* (1659), 132; Thomas Beard, *The theatre of god’s judgment* (1642), 144; see my ‘Historian or Prophet?’ Cf. 79-80 above.

¹⁰³Birckbek, *The Protestants evidence*, 115. Fuller, *The appeal of iniured innocence*, 40.

was executed for heresy, not sedition.¹⁰⁴

Later Protestant writers also continued the battle to exonerate Wyclif from his connection to the Peasants' Revolt. Thomas James' *An apologie for Iohn Wickliffe* denies that Wyclif's teachings were in any way seditious. Likewise, the Church of England divine Andrew Willet, replying to the 'raylings, slanders, forgeries, vntruthes' of Catholics, praised Wyclif for his loyalty to Edward III.¹⁰⁵ William Prynne went further, portraying the slain archbishop as the real traitor.¹⁰⁶ Prynne's narrative is significant because he does more than merely impugn the archbishop for the goal of vindicating his co-religionists for treason: his use of the Peasants' Revolt serves his overall polemical purpose to deride episcopacy.

Even the attempts of Tyndale, Bale, and Foxe to discredit the medieval chronicles had mixed results. Catholics who highlighted the rebellious nature of lollardy tended to use Walsingham's chronicle or that of conservative John Stow.¹⁰⁷ Persons even suggested to his readers where they could find out the truth; speaking of the rebellion of the lollard knights, he recommended, 'which Story you may read in *John Stow* truly related out of *Thomas Walsingham*, and other ancient Writers'.¹⁰⁸ On the opposite side of the confessional divide, Protestants tended to use Foxe as their historical proof, often directly citing his rebuttal to Harpsfield.¹⁰⁹ Early evangelicals, then, accomplished more than a mere recasting of the relationship between lollards and sedition. They also influenced how later readers would approach the chronicles: in a decidedly confessional way.

¹⁰⁴Nathaniel Crouch, *Historical remarques* (1681), 96.

¹⁰⁵Andrew Willet, *Tetrastylon papisticum* (1593), 19 (quote in title); *Apologie*, 34.

¹⁰⁶William Prynne, *The antipathie of the English Lordly prelates* (1641).

¹⁰⁷For instance, Roger Castlemaine and Oliver Almond, two Catholics who condemned Oldcastle's fellow knight Roger Acton as a traitor—not a martyr—explicitly cited Stow as the source. Almond, *The vncasing of heresie, or, The anatomie of protestancie* (1623), 28; Castlemaine, *A reply to the answer of the Catholique apology* (1668), 58.

¹⁰⁸Robert Persons, *A treatise of three conversions*, 168.

¹⁰⁹For instance, Fuller, *The appeal of iniured innocence*, 39. An exception to this is Gilbert Burnet, who cited Oldcastle's innocence but through Edward Hall, not Foxe. Burnet, *The history of the reformation*, 26.

But the long-standing lollard connection with sedition gave the evangelicals more than just grief. In fact, they used it to their advantage in three ways: to deride the religious orders; to more closely align their movement with Christ's own trials; and most significantly, to address the role of the state in religion, in particular the duties of the monarch. First, Bale and Tyndale articulated the position that evangelicals were not the cause of disorder but, instead, the established church was culpable. In the *Image*, Bale established that 'no peace is amonge the ungodly (sayth the Lord), no unite, no charyte nor mutuall Christen loue'.¹¹⁰ Tyndale painted a picture squarely opposed to the ordered ideal society of Oldcastle, where priests

have robbed all realmes, not of Gods worde only: but also of all wealth and prosperite, and have driven peace out of all londes & withdraune them selves from all obedience to princes and have separated them selves from the laye men, countinge them viler then dogges, have set vp that greate ydole the...Pope and have conspired agenst all commune wealthes.¹¹¹

Beyond this general disorder, both reformers accused the various religious orders of creating a state of confusion in the realm. In *A brefe chronycle*, Oldcastle compared friars and monks to the Pharisees, 'dyuyded in...outwarde aparell and vsages, so make the dyuysyon amonge the people'.¹¹² Tyndale attributed the origins of these religious orders to man's wisdom, which 'scattereth', only achieving disharmony.¹¹³

Bale and Tyndale developed this theme further, accusing the established church of causing disorder by inverting the truth and slandering the true church as heretical and false. Both writers bolstered their point through the poignant example of Christ himself. In *A brefe chronycle*, when answering Archbishop Arundel's accusation that he was guilty of making division and 'dyssensyon amonge the poore commons', Oldcastle responded, 'Both Christ and his Apostles were accused of sedycyon makynge,

¹¹⁰ *Image*, sig. F7v.

¹¹¹ Tyndale, *The obedience of a Christen man*, fo. 42r-v.

¹¹² *BC*, sig. D8v.

¹¹³ Tyndale, *The obedience of a Christen man*, fo. 19r-v.

yet were they most peceable menne.¹¹⁴ In *The obedience of a Christen man*, Tyndale pointed out that the Pharisees ‘said to Pilate, we have founde this felowe pervertinge the people and for biddinge to paye tribute to Cesar, and sayeth that he is Christ a kynge’.¹¹⁵ By demonstrating that it was the established church that distorted truth, Bale and Tyndale argued that the evangelical true church exemplified an ordered commonwealth.

There is a third more significant opportunity offered by the lollard association with treason. The historical ‘place’ of the lollards and their uneasy relationship with the state gave evangelicals a safe space in which to criticize the monarchy, including the institution and some individuals. The rejection of the pope’s authority by Henry VIII in the 1530s meant that, for better or for worse, the evangelical cause was bound up with the royal supremacy. The contingencies of this relationship have been well documented elsewhere, but essentially, for the evangelicals, the ‘better’ came in 1539 with the publication of a Henry-approved vernacular Bible, and the ‘worse’ occurred in a 1543 statute severely restricting who was allowed to read that Bible.

This and other vicissitudes of royal religious policy were made more significant by the end of the 1530s when, as one historian puts it, the ‘distinction between the authority of the crown to punish heresy and its authority to define heresy had been obliterated’.¹¹⁶ During the 1540s, this played out extraordinarily, when both conservatives and evangelicals faced execution for heresy and treason. And it was this issue—defining and punishing heresy—in which the lollards came to be a useful way for evangelicals to discuss godly kingship, a crucial component of the royal supremacy. Foxe’s history of the lollards begs some tricky questions about the nature of kingship and its role in protecting the true church. If princes were God’s representatives on earth, why were they responsible for persecuting the flock of Christ? Does the answer to this question have implications for erastianism in England? This section will explore these issues, and suggest that the lollards gave Foxe

¹¹⁴*BC*, sig. E1r.

¹¹⁵Tyndale, *The obedience of a Christen man*, fos. 21v-22r.

¹¹⁶Daniel Eppley, *Defending Royal Supremacy and Discerning God’s Will in Tudor England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 9.

an opportunity to voice concerns about the role of the monarch.

In *AM* Foxe declared that, ‘since the tyme of kyng Richard. 2. there is no reigne of any king to be asigned hetherto, wherein some good man or other hath not suffered the paynes of fire, for the religion and true testimonie of Christ Iesus’.¹¹⁷ Now, at the point when Foxe says ‘hitherto’, his chronology has reached the reign of Edward IV. Mark Rankin has shown that Foxe’s treatment of Henry VIII was ambivalent.¹¹⁸ Although, according to evangelical eyes, Henry had freed the church from centuries of papal tyranny, he had also been involved with the state-sanctioned burning of evangelical heretics, one of whom, William Cowbridge (executed in 1538), Foxe witnessed himself.¹¹⁹

When characterizing medieval kings and their persecution of the true church, Foxe was happy to blame the king’s counsellors, who conveniently happened to be high-ranking clergymen. All three evangelical editors of Oldcastle’s narrative pointed out quite rightly that Oldcastle had been in favor with King Henry V. In *AM*, the Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Arundel and his cohorts knew of the king’s affection for the knight, and plotted to get his ear. They went to the king and ‘layde foorth most greuouse complayntes against the sayd Lord Cobham, to hys great infamie and blemishe, being a man right godly. The king gently heard those blood thirstye prelates, and farre otherwise then became his princelye dignitie’.¹²⁰ The blame here lies with the prelates, not the king himself.

Yet, not all monarchs came out looking so innocent. Foxe impugned Henry IV in particular for being in league with the pope and persecuting lollards, specifically by allowing Archbishop Arundel to establish his infamous *Constitutions* in 1407,

¹¹⁷ *AM*, 870.

¹¹⁸ Mark Rankin, ‘Rereading Henry VIII in Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*,’ *Reformation* 12 (2007): 69-102.

¹¹⁹ Robert Persons pounced on Foxe’s portrayal of Henry VIII: ‘King *Henry* the Eighth as he did excel in knowledge of Learning, So was he nothing inferior to [former English kings] in zeal of defending the purity of Catholic Faith, as may appear by the multitude of Sectaries and Heretics as well *Waldensians, Arrians, Anabaptists, Lollards* and *Wickliffians*, as *Lutherans, Zuinglians, Calvinists*, and the like, burned by him...which *Fox* setteth down with great complaint and regret...’ Persons, *A treatise of three Conuersions*, 80.

¹²⁰ *AM*, 685.

which outlawed vernacular Scripture, preaching without a license, and halted other reforms. Foxe commented on the aftermath,

Thus the poore Christians...lyke to the ... Israelites vnder the tyranny of Pharao, were infested and oppressed in euery place, but especially here in England: and that so muche the more here, because that...Kyng...went ful whole within the Pope and hys prelates agaynst the Gospellers. By reason whereof, the kyngdome of the Pope and his members here in thys realm began to be so strong, that none durst styrre or once mute agaynst them. The bishops hauing the K. so ful on theyr side...reigned & ruled...as kings & princes within them selues.¹²¹

Henry IV seems to have been following a pattern; Foxe explained also that King Richard, ‘taking part with the Pope, and Romysh Prelates: waxed somthing strait and hard to the poore Christians of the contrary side of Wickleffe’.¹²²

In a few cases, though, the monarch was not given the mitigating excuse of heavy-handed clerics. In a powerful example of princely prerogative, Foxe detailed the burning of William Sawtre, a lollard priest of Norfolk. As the statute *De heretico comburento* had not come into force yet, Sawtre’s execution was authorized directly by the king himself, and Foxe offered a damning explanation.¹²³ Tying the execution to contemporaneous revolts in Henry’s kingdom, he explained to readers, ‘The king after the shedding of so much blood, seing himselfe so hardlye beloued of his subiects, thought to kepe in yet with the Clergy, & wyth the Bishop of Rome, seeking alwayes his chiefest stay at their hands. And therefore was compelled in all things, to serue their humour, as did appeare as well in condemning Sawtre’.¹²⁴ Foxe portrayed Sawtre’s death as a purely political act, the innocent victim a member of Christ’s true church.

So several lollard narratives portray monarchs unfavorably, a theme that continues through the reign of Henry VII. When speaking of the increase of persecutions

¹²¹ *AM*, 680.

¹²² *AM*, 624.

¹²³ ‘William Sawtre,’ Charles Kightly in *ODNB*.

¹²⁴ *AM*, 642.

in his reign, Foxe included an important aside that warned his readers that ‘the state of the *common* wealth commonly followeth the state of the church’.¹²⁵ He admonished,

Where the Church is quietly and moderately gouerned, and the flock of Christ defended by godly Princes in peace & safety, *from* deuouring and violence of bloody Wolues:the successe of ciuile estate...there doth florische, and the Princes long *continue* through Gods preseruation, in prosperous rest & tranquillitie. Contrariwise where the church of Christ...through the negligence of Princes...the poore members of Christ be persecuted and deuoured: shortly after ensueth some iust recompence of the Lord vpon those Princes, that eyther their liues do not long continue, or else they finde not that quiet in the common wealth, which they looke for.¹²⁶

Foxe went on to say that this had been proven in English history, moving from abstract ideas about godly kingship to concrete examples. King Henry II was, expectedly, explained as having flourished because of his resistance to Thomas Becket and Pope Alexander III. Similarly, King John, ‘so long as [he] kept out of the realme, the Popes authority and power, he continued safe and quiet with his nobles: but so soone as he brought the realme vnder tribute and *suietion* to that foreine Bishop, God stirred vp his Nobles against him’.¹²⁷ Foxe commended Edward I for keeping foreign influences out (the Scots are included with the pope in this), and ‘how valiantly [he and his nobles in Parliament]...stode in deniall of the Popes subsidies’.¹²⁸ He also lauded Edward III’s rejection of the pope’s sovereignty in his realm.¹²⁹

Stepping back from individual princes, Foxe returned to the role of the monarch:

¹²⁵ *AM*, 800.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *AM*, 801.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

[O]f the duty of Princes, I note and obserue by examples of histories, that such Princes as haue most defended the Church of Christ committed their gouernance, from...the B[i]shop of Rome, haue not lacked at Gods hand great blessing and felicitie: whereas contrarywise, they whiche either themselues haue bene persecutours of Christes members, or haue not shielded *them* by their protection from foreine tyranny and iniuries, haue lacked at Gods hand that protection, which the other had, as may appeare by King Edward the second, Richard the third, King Henry the fourth, King Henry the v. king Henry the vj, c. who because either negligently they haue suffered, or cruelly caused such persecuting lawes to be made, so much Christen blood iniuriously to be deuoured: therefore haue they bene *the* lesse prospered of the Lord, so that either they were deposed, or if they florished for a while, yet they did not long continue, almost not halfe the time of the other kings before named.¹³⁰

Foxe, then, offered a grave warning to the present monarch, Elizabeth, and to future monarchs. The lesson, pulled straight out of the medieval chronicles, was that it had always been the duty of the prince to protect God's flock—a lesson surely more meaningful in light of the royal supremacy. Foxe was clear: protect and wisely guide the church or face political consequences, like a providentially driven deposition or a curtailed lifespan. To maximize effect, Foxe closed this aside by returning to Henry VII's reign, where he stated that even though Henry VII had been for a good king for the most part, as soon as he started persecuting lollards, he died.¹³¹ So the lollard narratives offered a way for evangelicals to comment on the duties of a godly prince: the importance of keeping good counsel, protecting the English people from foreign influences, and promoting the true church.

The lollards provided a 'safe space' in which Foxe and his contemporaries could critique both the monarchy and specific monarchs. There were a few 'spaces' like this in Tudor England, spaces that the state did not particularly relish but that were used for critique nonetheless. For instance, Mike Rodman Jones recognizes Robert

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Ibid.

Crowley's publication of *Piers Plowman* to also be a non-threatening, yet very powerful, outlet for social critique.¹³² The Bible served as another space in which authority could be criticized: references to Old Testament figures offered both the sage examples of wise kings as well as sources of admonishment; as Daniel Eppley points out, 'For every David recorded in the Old Testament there was an Ahab.'¹³³ In addition to these 'safe spaces' for religious, social, and political critique, the lollards acted as another such 'safe space', an opportunity for evangelicals to discuss godly kingship and offer negative models of monarchy.

Beyond employing general examples of bad kings from history to illustrate a wider point about godly kingship, Foxe used the example of a tyrant persecuting lollards in a letter to William Cecil, in hopes of convincing him to persuade Elizabeth to commute the sentences of four convicted Flemish Anabaptists in 1575. When condemning the *De heretico comburendo* statute, Foxe claimed that the Commons had not legally assented to it, only the Lords and king had, and that this rendered it invalid. The letter indicated that there was no therefore statutory basis for burning heretics, and referred Cecil to his defense of Oldcastle in *AM*, where he had 'amply demonstrated' this from proof he found in the public records.¹³⁴ This letter demonstrates that the lollards offered Foxe more than a way to critique kingship in order to create a better future; they allowed him to make the past relevant in a way that might effect the immediate present.

The lollard connection to sedition forced evangelicals to defend subversive theological beliefs such as a community of goods and pacifism—anything that might hint toward Anabaptist beliefs. In order to dissociate the heretical group from its treasonous reputation, Tyndale, Bale, and Foxe countered the medieval chronicles that painted that picture, and wrote defences of the two most significant lollard figures, John Wyclif and Sir John Oldcastle. But the lollards' relationship with the

¹³²Jones, *Radical Pastoral*, 49-84.

¹³³Bale's hagiography of Oldcastle features the knight defending himself against the interrogators through the words of Elijah, prophet during the reign of Ahab; *BC*, sig. D7r; Daniel Eppley, *Defending royal supremacy and discerning God's will in Tudor England*, 17.

¹³⁴British Library Harley 417, fo. 110r.

state, relayed in Foxe's narratives, begged important questions about the nature of kingship and the significance of the royal supremacy, and evangelicals took advantage of that opportunity. The legacy of the lollards, then, typically—and for good reasons—considered by historians to be a *spiritual* one, was also used to comment on *political* matters; recognizing this offers a better understanding of the wide-ranging role of the lollards in the course of the English Reformation.

Chapter 5: The Lollard Legacy of Persecution

Introduction

The lollards were important to first-generation evangelical polemicists for more than their beliefs; just as significantly, they were persecuted for holding those beliefs. As numerous scholars have demonstrated, evangelicals adopted the New Testament model, most obviously and poignantly evidenced through Christ himself, of the man condemned to suffer for his righteousness in this world, to be redeemed and rewarded in heaven.¹ By portraying lollard sufferings at the hands of the Catholic clergy as persecution, first-generation evangelicals painted a picture of a beleaguered true church battling an oppressive, powerful false church. The lollards, whose trial records were dug out of archives and printed by evangelicals, served as proof that this true church had held God's favour since well before Luther's day.

So, first-generation evangelicals set themselves to the task of demonstrating to the world that these medieval heretics were actually their spiritual forebears. This chapter will outline this process, detailing the mammoth—but crucial—task of rehabilitating the lollards' reputations, developing a narrative of lollard suffering, and emphasising the importance of suffering for correct belief. Finally, it will demonstrate how these components contributed to the establishment of a lineage of what sixteenth- and seventeenth-century protestants understood to be holy martyrs.

¹Thomas S. Freeman, 'Over their Dead Bodies: Concepts of Martyrdom in Late-Medieval and Early-Modern England,' in Thomas S. Freeman and Thomas F. Mayer, eds., *Martyrs and Martyrdom in England, c.1400-1700* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 1-34; Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694*, chapters 2 and 3; Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England*; Alec Ryrie, 'The Afterlife of Lutheran England,' in *Sister Reformations: The Reformation in Germany and in England*, ed. Dorothea Wendebourg (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 227-34. Evangelicals adopted a martyrological model that had been preserved in the Middle Ages despite a reticence on the part of popes, from the mid-thirteenth century, to recognize violent deaths as martyrdoms. See Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 31-50; Danna Pirovansky, "'Thus May a Man Be a Martyr': The Notion, Language, and Experiences of Martyrdom in Late Medieval England,' in *Martyrs and Martyrdom in England*, 70-87; Miri Rubin, 'Martyrdom in Late Medieval Europe,' in *Martyrs and Martyrdom*, 153-184.

Rehabilitating the Lollard Reputation

The previous chapter demonstrated that an initial priority for early evangelicals was disassociating the lollards from sedition. Simultaneously, men like Tyndale, Constantine, and Bale were attentive to the reputation of lollards as schismatics and heretics. What late medieval Catholics had understood to be just punishment for endangering the spiritual community with heretical beliefs, early evangelicals cast as cruel persecutions by an overbearing false church against innocent victims. More specifically, Tyndale drew connections between the lollards and the apostles. In 1531, he published a text associated with the lollard tradition, *The praier and complaynte of the ploweman vnto Christe*, which asks readers in its preface to compare the persecution that Christ received to those of the evangelicals: ‘But it must nedes be that Christe and al his disciples were heretiques scismatiques and disceauers of the people and well worthy to be put to some shamefull deth for it, to the example of all other.’² Here the lollards appear as heirs to Christ instead of disruptors to the church.

This inversion permeates John Bale’s polemical writings. Like Tyndale, Bale praised the ‘simple menne’ persecuted by the ‘tyrauntes, tormentours, termagates, and the deuyls slaughter menne.’³ He detailed the beliefs for which they were persecuted, citing the Coventry lollards as proof that from Wyclif’s day to the sixteenth century, the true church had been persecuted. While it may have been easy enough to redeem a ⁴‘godlye woman at Couentre for hauinge but one chapter of sainen Matthewes Gospell’, Bale then threw down the gauntlet:

He that shall reade the causes of the imprysonmentes deathe of ser
Iohan Balle, master Iohan Astone, Nicolas Herforde, Walter Britte, Lau-

²William Tyndale, *The praierand [sic] complaynte of the ploweman vnto Christe* (1531), sig. A2r. Cf. *AM*, 515-22.

³Bale, *The epistle exhortatorye*, fo. 27r.

⁴The theme of suffering following the holy crops up in several evangelical treatises, including that of Christopher St German, who cited a lack of persecution among the monks as proof that they had abandoned the precepts of the early church. St German, *A treatise concernynge the diuision betwene the spirytualtie and temporaltie* (1532), fo. 38r.

rence Redenam, Daudi Gotray, Iohan Ashwarby, Robert Rygge, Walter Dashe, Iohan Hunteman, Willyam Swynderby, Rychard With, Henry Crompe, Willyam Iames, Thomas Britwell, Iohan Puruey, Vvillyam Sawre, Willyam Thorpe, Iohan Badby, Iohan Claydon Rycharde Turmyne, ser Roger Acton knyght, Iohan Browne esquyre, Iohan Beuerlaye, ser Iohan Olde castell the worthye lorde Cobham, Willyam Hawlam, Rafe Greenherst, The taylour of Worcestre, Peter Clarke, Peter Payne, Willyam taylour, Willyam Whyght and Ione his wyfe, Iohan Scut, Iohan Fowlyn, Willyam Euerdon, Vvillyam Caleser, Rycharde ownden, Thomas Bagley, Willyam Maundeuyle, Philip Noris, Regnolde Pecok Bisshop of Chychestre. . . with a great nombre more.⁵

Bale rehabilitated these notorious characters by addressing what he saw as a smear campaign run by the medieval clergy to ruin innocent men's reputations. Referring to Richard Scrope and Thomas Becket particularly, Bale derided the clergy for commemorating them as martyrs, while '[t]hese poore sowles, or true seruauntes of God, were put to deathe by the holy spirituall fathers Byshoppes, prestes, monkes, chanons, & fryers, for heresy & lollerye, they saye. These Christen martyrs were neuer solempnysed of them. . . But they haue bene holden for condempned heretykes euer sens.'⁶ These words give more credence to the text they preface: an account of the martyrdom Anne Askew, an evangelical.

Bale was not the only reformer to recognize that the false church would slander true martyrs. Writing from prison in late 1554, Laurence Saunders recorded that when asked where his church had been thirty years ago, 'Such (quoth I) as that Romyshe Antichrist and his rable had reputed and condemned as heretikes. Wicliffe, Thorpe, old castle (quoth he) c. Yea (quoth I) *with* many mo as storyes do tel.'⁷ This inversion caused Thomas More to lament, 'For the peple take yt that styll those that persequite be *the* myscreantys, and those pore peple *that* suffer yt, be vnder

⁵Bale, *The epistle exhortatorye*, fos. 12v and 13r.

⁶John Bale, *The first examinacion of Anne Askewe* (1546), sig. B6v.

⁷Miles Coverdale, *Certain most godly, fruitful, and comfortable letters of such true saintes and holy martyrs of God* (1564), 197.

the false name of heretyques the trew byleuyng men and very chrysten martyrs.’⁸ That Saunders recognized the lollards not as heretics properly punished, but as fellow sufferers for the Gospel shows that the martyrological legacy of the lollards, established by men such as Tyndale and Bale in exile, had made a lasting impression on those who would face persecution at home under Queen Mary. Foxe recorded, for instance, that the Marian martyr Thomas Wattes was condemned for believing ‘that Luther, Wickleffe, Doct. Barnes, and all others that haue holden agaynst the Sacrament of the aultar, and suffered death by fire or otherwise for the maintenaunce of the sayd opinion, were good men, and faythfull seruauntes and Martyrs of Christ in so beleuyng and dying.’⁹ Despite the fact that Wyclif endured no such death, John Philpot likewise turned to the heresiarch when questioned about where his church had been fifty years earlier. He replied, ‘It was in Germany apparent by the testimonies of Husse, Ierome of Prage, and Wickleffe, whom your generation a hundreth yeares ago and more did burne for preachyng the truth vnto you’.¹⁰ The memory of the lollard sufferings, then, was alive and well among the early evangelicals—despite its inconsistency with the historical record. The next section will show how Foxe reconciled these two.

Lollard Suffering

That evangelicals urgently sought a martyrological precedent has been noted by nearly all modern scholarly sources when mentioning the lollard legacy in the work of Bale, Foxe, and others, asserting that these medieval heretics provided martyrological continuity.¹¹ Yet, while some lollards look like excellent martyrs, according to the literary tropes and exemplary models provided in the Bible, many lollards—in fact, the majority—do not happily go to the stake and accept their ‘sharp breakfast’

⁸Thomas More, *A dialoge of syr Thomas More knyghte* (1529), fo. 4v.

⁹*AM*, 1809.

¹⁰*AM*, 2029-30.

¹¹For instance, Weimer writes, ‘The Lollards had been brutally suppressed as heretics. Building on Bale’s ideas, Foxe argued that proto-Protestant martyrs such as the Lollards, who had maintained their convictions while suffering intense oppression, formed a link to the early church and so were critical to justifying the Reformation on historical grounds. ‘See *Martyrs’ Mirror*, 21.

in anticipation of a ‘joyous dinner.’¹² In fact, the most influential figure associated with the lollards, Wyclif himself, was derided by Catholic polemicists who pointed out that he died quietly in his bed, and should not have been added to Foxe’s *Kalendar* as a martyr.¹³ As demonstrated in chapter four, several high profile lollards *had been* executed, but only after being condemned as traitors, such as Sir John Oldcastle and his fellow lollard knights, Sir Roger Acton and Sir John Beverley. Many lollard records are cut off after the legal trials, for instance, and Foxe had no information on how these men met their ends; this is the case for William Swinderby, Walter Brute, and William Thorpe, three lollards who receive comprehensive treatment in *AM*, and are cited as martyrs by numerous seventeenth-century sources.¹⁴ Even more problematically, however, the majority of lollards either hid their beliefs under a show of piety, or, when questioned about them, confessed their beliefs, abjured them, and quietly accepted their penance.¹⁵ Curiously, few scholars have noted the gap between Foxe’s ideal martyr and the clearly less-than-ideal lollards, despite simultaneously writing of their martyrological value for *AM*. This section seeks to address this tension, and show how Foxe moulded the lollards into martyrs—whether they died suffering or not.

Despite the relative lack of model martyrs among the lollards, Foxe still moulded their experiences into examples of suffering. To do this, he emphasized certain

¹²For Foxe’s moulding of his martyrs into a scripturally-based model, see John Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, chapters 2 and 3; quote at 100.

¹³On Foxe’s *Kalendar*, Wyclif is listed at January 2 as ‘preacher, martyr’. Wyclif’s life, death, and posthumous reputation have been analyzed in *JWRR*. Foxe’s treatment of Wyclif as a martyr relied a lot on his treatment *after* death. Later, Church of England clergyman Thomas Taylor included this ill treatment by the Church of Rome in his case opposing toleration for Catholics; he also noted Catholics’ treasonous activities under Elizabeth and James, which he clearly saw as a continuation of their medieval cruelty. Taylor, *A mappe of Rome* (1620), 21.

¹⁴For instance, Nicholas Billingsley refers to Thorpe, Sawtre, and Swinderby together as martyrs, despite the fact that Sawtre alone is credited with dying at the hands of the authorities in *AM*. See Billingsley, *Brachy-martyrologia* (1657), 163.

¹⁵Anne Hudson estimates 98%; *PR*, 372. For the inquisitorial procedure between 1382 and c.1450, see Ian Forrest, *The Detection of Heresy in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

aspects of these experiences: trial and imprisonment, abjuration, and penance. By going into detail about these aspects of suffering, Foxe presented a collection of narratives that conveyed the notion of a small beleaguered sect, oppressed for its true religious convictions.

Trial and Imprisonment

When speaking about the various lollard trials that Foxe found in a court book of Bishop Fitzjames of London, he commented that they ‘in the fulnes of that darke and misty tymes of ignoraunce, had also some portion of Gods good spirite whiche induced *them* to the knowledge of his truth and Gospell, and were diuersly troubled, persecuted, and imprisoned for the same’.¹⁶ In many cases, Foxe detailed the harassment that these men and women suffered during their trials and the pains they experienced while in prison. One form this harassment took was the inquisitors’ requests that the accused name their fellow co-religionists.¹⁷ In a particularly fruitful heresy hunt in 1520-1521, Bishop Longland of Lincoln targeted lollards who had abjured previously; as part of their second abjuration, they were required to detect others. This systematized methodology had been very successful (yielding about fifty heretics, four of whom were put to death while the rest were required to do penance), and Foxe found it especially abhorrent.¹⁸ He explained, ‘As [the lollards] were simple, and yet not vncircumspect in their doyngs, so the crafty serpent beyng more wylie *then* they, by fraudulent subiltie that they caused the wife to detect the husband, the husband the wife, the father *the* daughter, the daughter the father, *the* brother to disclose the brother, and neighbour the neighbor.’¹⁹ The account of these persecutions—twenty pages of material—is peppered with comments when a

¹⁶AM, 966.

¹⁷Foxe may have been sensitive about the lollard propensity to detect others of their sect. Thomas More was quite happy to mention in print that George Constantine had detected Robert Necton, and Foxe may have foreseen this to be a weakness of the lollard narratives. See More, *The confutacyon of Tyndales answere* (1532), sig. Cc1v.

¹⁸See Thomas S. Freeman, ‘Persecution in the diocese of Lincoln,’ *TAMO* Commentary. Available from: <http://www.johnfoxe.org> [Accessed: 01.01.13].

¹⁹AM, 985.

lollard was ‘forced to detect’ his own brother or ‘his own mother’.²⁰

Longland’s methods offer readers another form of suffering relating to the process of trial: the oath. In nearly every example where a lollard looked to be saving his own skin by detecting on one of his co-religionists, Foxe made it clear that this person had been forced to because of an oath. When telling of how ‘subtly & sleightly these Catholicque prelates did vse their inquisitions and examinations’, oaths had a central role. Of the interrogators, Foxe wrote, ‘such diligence they shewed in that behalfe, so violently & impudently they abused *the booke of the peaceable Euangelistes*, wreastyng mens consciences vpon their othe, swearing then vpon *the same* to detecte *them selues*, their fathers and mothers, and other of their kinred, with their frendes and neighbours, and that to death.’²¹ The chart in *AM* that details the lollard accuser, accused, and accusations against them does not list a single accuser who had not been ‘compelled by oth to detect’, ‘caused by hys othe to de-tecte’, or ‘by his othe... con-trayned [sic] to detect’.²² The image here, emphasized by the chart/list format, is one of constant pressure.

Foxe’s discomfort with this form of persecution may well go beyond his sympathy for the suffering lollards and hint closer to his own theological reticence about oaths. As shown in chapter eleven, Foxe let lollards’ blatant rejection of oaths remain in the text unedited, without even marginal comments to soften the sharp words. Foxe, like many of his co-religionists such as his mentor Bale, found oaths to be theologically suspect, as did many of his seventeenth-century readers.²³

While harassment produced mental anguish, imprisonment could bring about severe physical pain or even death. Foxe told of an unnamed old man who was due to be burned for heresy at Smithfield in 1500 but attempted an escape: the man, ‘vpon the tenth daye before he was burned, would haue stolen out of the Lolardes

²⁰*AM*, 992, 993.

²¹*AM*, 985. Foxe added, ‘And [the lollards]... [Longland] put to their othe, most violently con-streynyng them to vtter and confesse both them selues, and whom els so euer they knew.’ Later, Thomas Cartwright would quote Foxe’s opinion verbatim in his treatise against the *ex officio* oath; see below, 263-64.

²²These are all examples from the first page of the chart; there are many more. *Ibid.*, 986.

²³Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation*; Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII*, 76-80.

tower, and so fallyng out of the tower, did fowlye hurt him self'. Foxe relayed that he was taken on a cart to his burning.²⁴ *AM* shows that 'father Rogers' had been incarcerated for nine weeks, 'night and daye, where he was so cruellye handled, with colde, hunger, and yrons, that after his commyng out of the sayd prison, he was so lame in hys backe that hee could neuer go vpright as long as he lyued'.²⁵ Two lollards had been found dead in their cells: the infamous Richard Hunne and the less well-known Thomas Chase were both discovered hanged. While their deaths remain a mystery, Foxe assured his readers that neither man committed suicide, but was rather beaten and strangled by his jailers. He provided graphic detail about their suffering, citing heavy chains and manacles, extreme hunger, and beatings.²⁶

The legacy of lollard imprisonment was a mixed one, divided along confessional lines. Catholics such as Thomas More claimed that Hunne had clearly killed himself because if his enemies had truly wanted him to suffer, they would have waited for his more shameful death as a pseudomartyr.²⁷ His co-religionist Thomas Stapleton impugned the decision to mark Hunne as a martyr, claiming, 'I could here name a reblemente of like holy Martyrs, as Richard Hune, that hong him self'.²⁸ Alternatively, across the confessional divide, Thomas Fuller later recommended that his readers refer to *AM* for information on lollard sufferings, 'onely Thomas Chase of Amersham must not be here omitted, being barbarously butchered by bloody hands in the Prison of Wooburne. Who to cover their cruelty, gave it out that he had hang'd himself, and in colour thereof'.²⁹ Despite the lack of proof that William Thorpe died in prison, Thomas Bedford conjectured that he did.³⁰ He also marked John Purvey, an early lollard known for recanting, as a sufferer because of his time in prison, and the presbyterian minister Alexander Petrie went so far as to say that Purvey recanted precisely because he had been incarcerated.³¹

²⁴*AM*, 938.

²⁵*AM*, 939.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷Thomas More, *A dyalogue of syr Thomas More knyght*, fo. 93r.

²⁸Thomas Stapleton, *A counterblast to M. Hornes vayne blaste* (Louvain, 1567), fo. 61r.

²⁹Fuller, *The church-history of Britain*, 164.

³⁰Thomas Bedford, *Luthers predecessours* (1624), 17.

³¹*Ibid.*; Alexander Petrie, *A compendious history of the Catholick church from the year 600 untill*

In addition to these mainstream Protestants, there is evidence that the lollard experience of imprisonment likely served as a comforting example to later nonconformists. Richard Greaves suggests that Foxe's *AM* encouraged John Bunyan's willingness to suffer for his belief, and Bunyan was well acquainted with the lollard portions of the *AM*: he used Wyclif's words as reassurance of his convictions, which allowed him to endure imprisonment, refusing to modify his preaching in exchange for early release.³² Also, a prison letter by Francis Johnson, a Brownist, shows that he drew emotional strength from 'everywhere' in Foxe's book and, like Bunyan, Johnson cited lollard authority for his nonconformist beliefs. Foxe's narrative of lollard suffering, with its stress on imprisonment as persecution, would be recognized by later dissenters.

Abjuration

If the Foxean ideal and biblical model held up a martyr for his constancy in adversity, the lollards would disappoint, more often than not. The majority of lollards Foxe included in his tome had been willing to recant their beliefs rather than face death—in fact, the majority of Foxe's lollard martyrs had already abjured once.³³ Foxe navigated this chiefly by turning abjuration into its own kind of suffering.

Foxe had early Reformation precedents for this task.³⁴ In the anonymous *The metynge of Doctor Barons and doctor Powerll at Paradise gate*, Barnes listed tortures that he endured, including a forced abjuration.³⁵ Although Bale had sharp

the year 1600 (Hague, 1657), 504.

³²Richard Greaves, *John Bunyan and English Nonconformity* (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), 102-104.

³³Genelle Gertz has outlined the relationship between abjuration and confessional statements authored by defendants. See Gertz, 'Heresy Inquisition and Authorship, 1400-1560,' in *The Culture of Inquisition in Medieval England*, eds. Mary C. Flannery and Katie L. Walter (London: D.S. Brewer, 2013), 130-145.

³⁴On the culture of recantation and dissimulation being a possible hold-over from lollardy to evangelicalism in Henrician England, see Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation*, 175-76; Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII*, 81-89.

³⁵Anonymous, *The metynge of Doctor Barons and doctor Powell at Paradise gate* (1548), sig. A3r.

words for abjurers, nevertheless he laid the blame squarely on inquisitors, who made it so that ‘the scripturs of both testamentes reiected or ess ponnished by most terrible deathe’.³⁶ Bale named several lollards who had been forced by interrogators to abjure, but claimed that no case was as cruel as that of William Tolwyn, an evangelical forced to recant in 1541.³⁷ It is clear that abjuration was an embarrassment to evangelicals, and Thomas More’s polemic exploited this weakness.³⁸ In his *The confutation of Tyndales answer*, he discussed Richard Bayfield’s hope of abjuration, claiming that before George Constantine had escaped to safety, he had planned to abjure as well.³⁹ He attacked the martyr John Tewkesbury’s character and associated it with his hope for abjuration, surmising, ‘For though Tyndales bokes brought hym to burnynge, yet was he not so constante in his euangelycall doctryne’.⁴⁰

To prevent such claims about the lollards, Foxe turned abjuration into persecution by drawing the picture of a lollard recantation as a battle between ‘captious and crafty Interrogatories’ and ‘the simple poore men’.⁴¹ According to Foxe, the lollards had never been willing to abjure; rather, they had been threatened, moved, or forced into it.⁴² The prelates, for their part, in their ‘proud, cruell, bloody rage’ were exemplified in Cuthbert Tunstall’s interrogation of four London lollards, where

³⁶Bale condemned abjurers: ‘he that cowardlye recanteth sheweth himselfe to be but a faynt harted hypocrite.’ Bale, *The epistle exhortatorye*, fo. 25r; quote at fos. 7r-v.

³⁷John Bale, *Yet a course at the Romyshe foxe*, sig. A2v.

³⁸Recantation was not necessarily an embarrassment for all evangelicals. Susan Wabuda has thrown light on the way that evangelicals like Dr Edward Crome used recantations, through equivocation, ‘as a way to proclaim and affirm their faith’. She notes that Bale and Foxe, with their elevated reverence for persecution, held a different opinion on the matter, and this is one reason Crome was excluded in *AM*. Wabuda, ‘Equivocation and Recantation During the English Reformation: The ‘Subtle Shadows’ of Dr Edward Crome,’ *JEH* 44/2 (April 1993): 225-26. See also Jonathan Gray’s words on the evangelicals’ notions of recantation, which corroborates Wabuda’s views that recantation was a tool evangelicals used to further their movement; Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation*, 174-85.

³⁹More, *The confutacyon of Tyndales answer*, sigs. Cc1r-v.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, sig. Cc1r.

⁴¹*AM*, 985, for example.

⁴²For example, Foxe explained that John Florence’s abjuration came only after he was ‘threatned by the iudge’. *AM*, 803.

‘in the end, either for feare of his cruelty, and *the* rigour of death, or els through hope of his flatteryng promises (such was their weakenes)he compelled them to abiure and renounce their true professed fayth’.⁴³ Foxe admitted that the lollards were weak. He claimed that the London lollards had been ‘not in lyke perfection of knowledge and constancye in all’, but that they nevertheless warranted inclusion in his tome for their value for the historical precedent they provided for evangelical ideas.⁴⁴ Foxe wove a narrative in which the abjuration itself was a form of suffering: the infirm soldiers of Christ had been either fooled or threatened into abjuring by an evil prelacy.

For this reason Foxe was all the happier to announce a return to lollard thinking even after a public abjuration. Of William White, an influential preacher in Kent and East Anglia, he noted, ‘lyke as there he lost his courage and strength, so afterward he became againe much more stouter and stronger in Iesu Christ *confessed* hys own errour & offence.’⁴⁵ Foxe explained that White then taught and evangelized until he was apprehended again and burned for his crimes. In the cases of William Sweeting and John Brewster, Foxe had a more difficult task: these men originally abjured and were then caught again; they admitted their heresy and went to the stake but at the last minute, abjured again. Here, Foxe blamed the medieval record (reminiscent of Bale’s arguments discussed in chapter four), claiming ‘because many of the Registers notes and recordes in such cases may rightly be doubted of, and so called into question, I referre the certeine knowledge hereof vnto the Lord’.⁴⁶ Even here, Foxe turned (a second) abjuration into a kind of suffering. Foxe argued that if the register were true and these men had begged to be forgiven, then it demonstrated the cruelty and hypocrisy of the Catholic Church that they had not heeded Christ’s commandment of multiple forgiveness in Luke 17:3-4. So Foxe manoeuvred it both ways: If these men had not abjured a second time, they were worthy martyrs; if they had, then the Catholics had acted all the more cruelly.

⁴³ *AM*, 966; 968.

⁴⁴ *AM*, 966. He said the same thing about the Norwich lollards; cf. *AM*, 804.

⁴⁵ *AM*, 806.

⁴⁶ *AM*, 969.

By turning abjuration into a type of suffering, Foxe took the sting out of the inconstancy that plagued the lollard narratives—and he got away with it.⁴⁷ Thomas Fuller merely echoed Foxe's (and Bale's) assertions that the lollards had always been forced into abjuring, and he even parroted Foxe's position on Sweeting and Brewster's double recantation.⁴⁸ William Prynne, who in 1641 presented a copy of Foxe's *AM* to his Swainswick parish church, attributed Reginald Peacock's abjuration to the cruelty of the prelacy, not least because Peacock was of their own faith.⁴⁹ Henoah Clapham, a one-time Brownist who returned to the Church of England, answered Roman retorts of lollard weakness by contending that the lollards had converted the world as Christ had: 'the Foolish confounding the Wise, and the Weake ouerturning the Strong.'⁵⁰ Thomas Bedford wrote of abjuring lollards: 'Thus while Christ had the inward hearts of men, Antichrist would needs possesse the outward body'.⁵¹ Herein lies the efficacy of Foxe's shift in emphasis from lollard constancy to Catholic cruelty: By reinventing recantation as a form of suffering in itself, Foxe and other evangelicals maintained a claim to religious persecution, despite the lollard recantations and quiet abjurations that glared out of medieval records.

Penance

In the same way that abjuration was a potentially embarrassing feature of lollard accounts, the numerous instances of lollards performing their prescribed penance in order to come back into communion with the Catholic Church made Foxe treat penance carefully. Like abjuration, penance was a means to demonstrating the over-

⁴⁷Like imprisonment, Foxe's succeeded or failed according to confessional affiliation. For instance, the Jesuit writer Henry Fitzsimon cited Oldcastle, Thomas Cromwell, and John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland as examples of intelligent former Protestants, and juxtaposed this to the 'obstinate idiots, and willfull women' who remained resilient and were martyred. Henry Fitzsimon, *A Catholic confutation of M. Iohn Ridders clayme of antiquitie* (1608), 156.

⁴⁸Fuller, *The church-history of Britain*, 165-66.

⁴⁹'Prynne, William,' *ODNB*. Prynne, *The antipathie of the English lordly prelacie*, 346.

⁵⁰Clapham, *A chronological discourse*, sig. M2v.

⁵¹Bedford, *Luther's Predecessors*, 21.

bearing and overly powerful nature of the medieval church; also like abjuration, John Bale had laid many of the foundations that Foxe later built upon. In *Yet a course at the Romyshe foxe* (1543), Bale compared Christ unfavorably to Bishop Edmund Bonner, under whose authority William Tolwyn had recanted: ‘a farre other sort was Christ in takynge of synners to repentaunce, than ys my good lorde of London, for he compelled non of them to do soche open penaunce, nor yet shamefullye to slaunder them selues a fore the multytude.’⁵² Bale’s narrative set up the admitted heretic as the injured party, highlighting the difference between the example of Christ and the manifest actions of the Catholic church.

Although the lollard records included many types of penance, Foxe made them seem either out of proportion to the crime, laden with unnecessary ceremony, or utterly cruel.⁵³ He detailed several penances that seem to be extreme payments for the crimes committed, and that went well beyond the common wearing of an embroidered faggot on clothing.⁵⁴ For eating meat on Easter day, avoiding confession during Lent, and not receiving the Sacrament on Easter Sunday, John Beverley had been kept in irons in the Castle of Norwich until he confessed his crime, and as penance he was obliged to be whipped the following Friday and Saturday while walking around Norwich. After this, in Whitsun Week, Beverley was required to fast on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, only having one meal of fish on those days. After all this, Beverley had been banished from the diocese forever.

Banishment, even for a short time, is listed as one of the lollards’ forms of penance. John Skilley of Norwich, having ‘a most sharpe sentence of penaunce pronounced agaynst hym’ was (among other punishments) imprisoned at a Langley Abbey in Norfolk for seven years.⁵⁵ Like Skilley, Robert Bartlet was sent away for seven years, to Ashridge Priory. Foxe told his readers that he had been a wealthy

⁵²Bale, *Yet a course at the Romyshe foxe*, fo. 35r.

⁵³This is in contrast to what John Thomson has discovered in the records, which is that authorities often relaxed sentences, and were accepting of the sincerity of penitents. *LL*, 234-35.

⁵⁴For penances given to lollards, see *LL*, 231-36; Norman Tanner, ‘Penaunces Imposed on Kentish Lollards by Archbishop Warham, 1511-12,’ in *Lollardy and the Gentry in the Later Middle Ages*, eds. Margaret Aston and Colin Richmond (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), 229-49.

⁵⁵*AM*, 807.

man and, as part of his penance, his farm and goods were confiscated.⁵⁶

More common than banishment was to be humiliated in one's own town or village. The results of the Norwich heresy hunt meant that 'a great number both of men & women. . . [were] vexed and cast in prison, and after their abiuration, brought to open shame in churches and markets'.⁵⁷ John Florence had been told that for 'three Sondayes in a solemne procession in the Cathedrall church of Norwiche, he shoulde be displid before all the people', while John Finch of Colchester had been obliged to perform 'three displinges in solemne procession about the Cathedrall Church of Norwiche, three seuerall Sondayes, and three displinges aboute the market place of Norwiche three principall market dayes, hys head, necke and feete being bare'.⁵⁸ Thomas Pie and John Mendham were forced to endure six fustigations around their parish church of Aldborough 'before a solemne procession', as well as 'three displynge aboute the market place of Harelston of our sayde dioces, three pryncipall market dayes, bare necked, head, legs, and feete, theyr bodies being couered onely with their shiertes and breches'. There were further instructions that during their marketplace penance, they should stop at four central places to 'humbly and deuoutly receiue at your handes three displynge'.⁵⁹

The physical suffering of these martyrs, forced to undergo multiple fustigations as part of their penance, was only one form of penitential oppression described by Foxe. In other places, he offered graphic details about authorities burning lollards' cheeks as punishment: at the burning of 'father Rogers', Foxe claimed that thirty people were there who had had their cheeks burned: 'The maner of their burnyng in the cheeke was this: Their neckes were tyde fast to a post or stay, with towels, and their handes holden that they might not styrre, and so the yron beyng hoate was put to their cheekes, and thus bare they the printes and markes of the Lord Iesus about them.'⁶⁰ But the violent images of religious persecution continue to the extreme in the cases of William Tilesworth and John Scrivener, both of whom had

⁵⁶ *AM*, 938.

⁵⁷ *AM*, 804.

⁵⁸ *AM*, 803; 809.

⁵⁹ *AM*, 806.

⁶⁰ *AM*, 939.

been burned for heresy (in 1506 and 1521 respectively). Foxe records that in both cases, their children had been forced to set fire to them. The normally prolix Foxe gave merely one sentence to the vicious scenario: ‘The example of whiche crueltie, as it is contrary both to God & nature, so hath it not bene sene nor heard of in the memory of the heathen.’⁶¹ These examples of disproportionate penance and cruel treatment served to cast shadows on the Catholic Church, and while Foxe’s readers were doing that, they were less likely to blame the lollards who had abjured their beliefs and accepted these prescribed penances.

Unsurprisingly, these evocative images of abject humiliation and pain struck a chord with later writers. Thomas Fuller questioned the legality of cheek branding, and took the opportunity to show that ‘no doubt they had so well learned our Saviours precept, that rather then they would have revenged themselves, by unlawful means, to them that smit them on the one cheek, they would have turn’d the other also.’⁶² Fuller also detailed the atrocity of Joan Tyllsworth having been forced to set fire to her father. Nathaniel Crouch, printer to the nonconformists, stated that ‘it was usual with them to compel Children to accuse their Parents, and Parents their Children; Husbands their Wives, and Wives their Husbands; Intimate Friends, Brothers and Sisters to accuse one another; and many Hundreds were likewise forced to recant and abjure against their Consciencs [sic], or else be Burnt.’⁶³

Foxe’s efforts to create a tradition of suffering despite the apparent weakness of the lollards were largely successful. Shifting the emphasis from constancy to cruelty enabled Foxe to project an image of persecution through trial and imprisonment, abjuration, and penance; death became an unnecessary (even if more evocative) feature of lollard suffering. In the seventeenth century, Foxe would even have his defenders against those who attacked the lack of death in the lollard narratives. An example appears in a retaliatory exchange between the Quaker Thomas Ellwood and Thomas Comber, the rector of Stonegrave and later dean of Durham Cathedral. Publishing anonymously, Comber chided Ellwood for assigning Wyclif’s followers the

⁶¹ *AM*, 1003.

⁶² Fuller, *The church-history of Britain*, 164.

⁶³ R.B. [Nathaniel Crouch], *Martyrs in flames* (1693), 127.

title of ‘martyr’. In *The right of tythes asserted* (1677), Comber denied that the anti-tithe lollards should be connected to Thomas Cranmer and John Bradford—not on the basis of their beliefs, but their martyrological merit. For Comber, Cranmer and Bradford were ‘better Men’ than the lollards, ‘for these Martyrs were constant to the death, and sealed our Faith with their Blood; whereas most of those Opposers of Tythes recanted openly, and proved Apostates, as Mr. *Fox* himself confesseth’.⁶⁴ Ellwood was quick to defend Foxe and himself concerning the designation of ‘martyr’ to these men. Responding to Comber’s attacks a year later in *The foundation of tithes shaken* (1678), he explained, ‘The word *Martyr* properly signifies a *Witness*, and is applicable to them who make *confession* of the Truth, and *bear witness* to it, but more especially (and *per excellentia*) to them that *suffer* for the Truth. And though it is commonly understood of them that suffer *unto death*...many Sufferings which extend not unto Death, are as grievous and cruel as *death it self*’.⁶⁵ This is evidence that the lollard legacy of suffering, moulded by Foxe to include persecutions without death, appealed to religious radicals of the seventeenth century such as Quakers, who themselves faced fines, imprisonment, and banishment, if stopping short of making the ultimate sacrifice.⁶⁶ This is a significant connection: One common aspect between the lollards and later dissenters was that they suffered extensive, but rarely fatal, persecution.⁶⁷ Because Foxe turned their imprisonment, harassment, abjurations, and penance into legitimate suffering without death, the lollards served as a particularly attractive precedent to later nonconformists.

Suffering for Right Belief

The lollard legacy of persecution centred on not just suffering well, but suffering for the right causes. Reformation-era England saw martyrs of both confessions, and therefore the cause of suffering came to be seen as the most important component of

⁶⁴Thomas Comber, *The right of tythes asserted & proved, from divine institution, primitive practice, voluntary donations, and positive laws* (1677), 138-39.

⁶⁵Ellwood, *The foundation of tithes shaken*, 317-18.

⁶⁶For the influence of Foxe’s *AM* on George Fox, see Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 216-55.

⁶⁷For the significance of suffering to Quaker identity, see John Miller, ‘“A Suffering People”: English Quakers and their Neighbours, c. 1650-1700,’ *Past and Present* 188 (2005): 71-103.

martyrdom.⁶⁸ Dying for the wrong cause—the false church—rendered the sacrifice void, the victim a pseudomartyr.⁶⁹ Again, in this endeavor Bale led the way: when discussing the burnings of the lollard martyrs, he offered a litany of beliefs they died for: not allowing pilgrimages, believing in pardons, nor keeping fasts; not observing lent; disavowing purgatory, images, and praying to saints; consuming the Eucharist at Easter; not creeping to the cross; rejecting procession; eschewing holy water; and ‘other vayne tryfels of youre owne inuentinge.’⁷⁰

The notion that right belief was reflected in right suffering appealed to later dissenters, particularly the Quakers. Quakers looked to *AM* as proof that their own beliefs had historical longevity and had been proven by persecution. They found these beliefs (a rejection of tithes and oaths in particular) in Foxe’s lollard narratives. A Quaker, Ellis Hookes, claimed that there were ‘Above one hundred taken, whereof some were burned, some cruelly handled, and some were forced to abjure, who said, *It was not lawful to swear in private cases*’.⁷¹ Francis Howgill asserted that the anti-tithe lollards ‘suffered grievous Persecution in their dayes, whose Testimony yet livs, and will be priz’d in Generations to come, though they be gone to the Sepulchres of their Fathers’.⁷² Howgill’s words show that while suffering gave legitimacy to their doctrine, the legacy of correct belief was the most important gift the lollards bequeathed to the Reformation. Even if their lollard forbears disagreed on the technicalities surrounding their beliefs, Thomas Ellwood cautioned his readers that ‘to *oppose* the Martyrs one to another, and render them as *clashing and warring* amongst themselves’ would only serve to invalidate their sacrifice for the cause of Protestantism.⁷³

Dennis Hollister understood his rejection of tithes, oaths, and episcopacy as a form of homage to the sanctity of the martyrs’ sacrifice. One of his tracts rails

⁶⁸Freeman, ‘Over their Dead Bodies,’ 31.

⁶⁹About the pseudomartyr debate, see Anne Dillon, *The construction of martyrdom in the English Catholic community, 1535-1603* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

⁷⁰Bale, *The epistle exhortatorye*, fo. 10v.

⁷¹Ellis Hookes, *The Spirit of Christ* (1661), 12.

⁷²Francis Howgill, *The dawning of the gospel-day* (1676), 574.

⁷³Ellwood, *The foundation of tithes shaken*, 309-310.

against Richard Fowler, a Gloucestershire preacher who had for a time only accepted voluntary gifts as a wage; according to Hollister, upon becoming a vicar, he not only took tithes but turned in those who would not pay them to the authorities. Hollister blasted Fowler, portraying the vicar's behavior as a clear-cut abandonment of the principles for which lollards such as Walter Brute, William Thorpe, and John Wyclif had suffered:

And should I but mention all that is there recorded, and how they suffered imprisonment, yea, death it self, bearing testimony against swearing upon a book, and swearing at all, in any case, in any wise, by the creature, or by the Creator, and against Tythes, and covetous wickednesse of priests, Curates and Vicars; time would fail me, and what I have said may suffice for a taste. And by it may *Richard Fowler* and his Elders be tryed, yea, may try themselves, in whose steps they are, and whether they are one with the Saints and Martyrs of God, who were evilly entreated, imprisoned and persecuted by the wicked generation, for not swearing at all, and withstanding the payment of Tythes, oblations, and dues claimed by priests, or else one with the priests and persecutors that murdered the Saints, spoyling and imprisoning those that stood faithful to God, testifying against such evil things? and whether it is not as deep hypocrisie in them, outwardly to seem to approve the Martyrs, and condemn their persecutors, whilst themselves are doing the same things...And whether, in honesty, *Richard Fowler* and his people ought not to deny and disclaim the Martyrs, and justifie their persecutors, or else repent, and own the shame of their present practices, which by the testimony of Martyrs is condemned?⁷⁴

Hollister's tactic is one of several examples in this thesis where the lollards served as a battleground for intra-confessional disputes.⁷⁵ In this case, while Hollister did not explicitly identify Fowler as a former Quaker, his expression indicates that he felt

⁷⁴Dennis Hollister, *The harlots vail removed* (1658), 83-84.

⁷⁵See below, 174-75, 250-52.

Fowler had betrayed Quaker principles by accepting tithes and punishing those who refused to pay them. That Hollister employed the lollards in his bid to shame his former co-religionist demonstrates the respect their (once-)shared community had for the lollard martyrs.

Foxe's own explicit endorsement of these radical lollards appears to have been enough for some Quakers. In a pamphlet debate about tithes, Thorpe seems to have been derided as poor example, but George Whitehead (who had been imprisoned for his beliefs many times) defended the lollard: 'And does not *Jo. Fox* call him *A valiant Warriour under the triumphant Banner of Christ*; and commend him, as that *the Might, Spirit and Grace of God, to a marvel, appeared in him.*'⁷⁶ So the lollard legacy of persecution was significant because their sufferings, made legitimate and poignant through the first-generation evangelicals, bestowed authority on the beliefs for which they were persecuted.

A Lineage of Suffering

Alongside evangelical attempts to emphasize suffering for right belief, to create a dynamic narrative of suffering, and to rehabilitate the medieval heretics' reputations, evangelicals and seventeenth-century writers attempted to establish a lineage of suffering. Desiring to see their own roots in the early church, the lollards would prove to be a crucial link in the chain of persecuted believers that stretched back to the apostles. In the preface of the earliest printed lollard martyrology, Tyndale and Constantine implicitly placed their fellow evangelicals within a legacy of persecution by praising martyrs from their own day.⁷⁷ In *A present consolation for the sufferers of persecucion for ryghtwysenes* (1544), George Joye emphasized that persecution and discord followed holiness. He pointed out that in the medieval period 'vntill Erasmus, Ioha Hasse & Wycleue, Martyn Luther & other men began to wryte, there seemed to be good quiete concorde of the chrysten religion', but to him this was proof that Satan had control over the church. He emphasised that, according to

⁷⁶George Whitehead, *An antidote against the venome of The snake in the grass* (1697), 23.

⁷⁷*Thorpe/Oldcastle*, sig. A2r.

Scripture, ‘there was, and shall be euer, diuerse and sondre opinions of Christ and his religion and the worde of god euer to be agene sayd & persecuted as longe as this worlde standeth.’⁷⁸ Bale was just as concerned to see a lineage of cruelty as he was of holiness; addressing the bishops, he wrote, ‘Though youre forefathers in all ages sens theyr begynnyng hath murmured agaynst the verite, yet raged they neuer so vnreasonable as you do, nether sought they so cruell kyndes of death for the seruauntes of God.’⁷⁹

Like Bale, John Knox emphasized the cruelty of the clergy rather than the holiness of Christ’s witnesses. This is possibly because all the lollards of Kyle recanted, but it could also have to do with the fact that Knox had to tidy some of their more radical beliefs on marriage, swearing, and excommunication. Nevertheless, Knox placed the Scottish lollards, none of whom were put to death, in line with Scotland’s first protestant martyr, Patrick Hamilton.⁸⁰ Knox took his narrative of Hamilton from John Foxe who, of course, went to great lengths to establish the image of a lineage of suffering.⁸¹

The efforts of these evangelicals were picked up by seventeenth-century religious writers, who, like the Quakers, understood the history of persecution to validate their own beliefs and sufferings. William Prynne, who by the late 1630s was on his way to rejecting episcopacy, condemned the clerical hierarchy of his own day for perpetuating the cruelty against those that ‘the Church of England then deemed both heretickes and Schismatickes.’ He continued,

But our Prelates now silence, suspend, excommunicate, deprive, imprison, persecute those, who professe and maintaine the established doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, which themselves pretend to defend and strive for; those who are members, yea pillars of our owne

⁷⁸George Joye, *A present consolation for the sufferers of persecucion for ryghtwysenes* (1544), sigs. B1r-v.

⁷⁹Bale, *The epistle exhortatorye*, fo. 18v.

⁸⁰John Knox, *The historie of the reformation of the Church of Scotland* (1644), 2-4.

⁸¹For Foxe’s treatment of Hamilton, see Thomas S. Freeman, ‘“The Reik of Maister Patrik Hamyltoun”: John Foxe, John Winram, and the Martyrs of the Scottish Reformation,’ *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27 (1996), 43-60.

Orthodoxe Church and neither seperate from it in point of doctrine nor discipline, being likewise altogether spotles, innocent, undefiled in their lives, even because they preach, and defend Gods truth. . .⁸²

Like Prynne, the presbyterian minister Alexander Shields recognized the lollard lineage of suffering as a contemporary phenomenon. Tying the lollards to an even longer chain of witnesses who rejected episcopacy, he argued that these proto-presbyterians were the heirs of the Culdees, early medieval holy men who ‘abstracted themselves in a Monastical life, liveing & exercising their Religion in Cells. . . And their Government also, was that of the primitive order without *Bishops*, with litle vanity, but great simplicity & holyness.’⁸³ While it may seem a stretch to place the lollards in line with early medieval monastic cells, Shields clearly saw no problem, claiming that ‘Christs Priestly Office...was transmitted from the *Culdees* to the *Lollards*, And by them handed down to the Instruments of Reformation, in the following Period.’⁸⁴ For Shields, this common testimony was sealed by a shared approach to suffering: ‘Their Testimony indeed was not *Active*, by way of forcible resistance, against the Sovereign Powers; but *passive*, by way of Confession & Martyrdom, & sufferings & verbal contendings, & witnessings against the prevailing corruptions of the time.’⁸⁵

In line with these polemicists, the separatist Roger Williams recognized the importance of the lollard legacy of suffering. Williams, an advocate for toleration, included these medieval witnesses in his bid for peace among Protestants on the basis of their suffering:

Suche fierce flashes might well issue from the bloudie French Cardinalls against the poore Hugenots, from the English bloudie Bishops against the Lollards, from the bloudie Popes against the Hereticks and Lutherans: but a gentler Breath and stile might well beseeme a Protes-

⁸²William Prynne, *The unbishoping of Timothy and Titus* (Amsterdam, 1636), 145-46.

⁸³Alexander Shields, *A hind let loose, or, An historical representation of the testimonies of the Church of Scotland* (1687), 7.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 11.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

tant to a Protestant, engaged in common principles and Testimonies and sufferings of Jesus against those bloudie Tyrants.⁸⁶

Williams, like Shields and Prynne, understood the sufferings of their own day as an extension of the persecution of true witnesses to Christ, manifest in the medieval period in the trials and deaths of the lollards. The efforts of the early evangelicals to create a narrative for this suffering paved the way for discontented religious advocates to appropriate the lollards in line with the trials of their own religious traditions.

In establishing a lineage of sufferers, early evangelicals also established a tradition of persecutors. The Quaker apologist Isaac Penington cast the Friends as latter-day lollards like Brute and Thorpe, who were persecuted for opposing tithes: '[W]e suffer in this our day, even as they did in their day, from the same Spirit that persecuted them; which though it hath much changed its form and way of appearance, yet still retaineth the same nature.'⁸⁷ For the Quakers, the fines, imprisonments, and other abuses imposed by the magistrates were proof that the established church was more closely aligned to Antichrist than to Christ. When William Bingley wrote *A lamentation over England* (1682), his aim was to warn magistrates to 'leave off persecuting and afflicting the Innocent.' In his pamphlet, the 'innocent' were those who refused to pay tithes under the scruples of conscience, 'seeing they were denied and testified against by several of the first Reformed Protestants, as *Walter Brute*'.⁸⁸ Bingley's theological views were shaped by his understanding of the past, but so were his ideas about persecution. In making his case for the Church of England's status as antichrist, he turned to the past:

for we don't read that ever the true Ministers of Christ did oppress or persecute others, or leave any President for any such Practice, but the contrary; for it was many times their Lots to be persecuted, shamefully

⁸⁶Roger Williams, *The bloody tenent yet more bloody* (1652), 291.

⁸⁷Isaac Penington, *An answer to that common objection against the Quakers, that they condemn all but themselves with a loving and faithful advertisement to the nation and powers thereof* (1660), 2.

⁸⁸William Bingley, *A lamentation over England* (1682), 25.

abused, and cast into Prison by others, both in the primitive Times, and in the Reformation, and almost in every Age until this very day...⁸⁹

Some Quakers, then, understood their own persecutors to be the ancestors of those antichristian oppressors of each age back to Christ's, and Bingley's reference to Brute, a radical lollard whose beliefs were lauded by Foxe, indicates those lessons were learned through *AM*. Brute was one example of many lollards who were not put to death for their beliefs but were harassed by the authorities in some way, and it is likely not a coincidence that Bingley's tract cites fines, imprisonment, and banishment as the source of suffering put to his co-religionists (while pointing out that these often led to death). One Friend scoffed at the idea that Quakers should pay tithes to the very ministers who imprison and force men out of their estates for withholding them. In *A winding-sheet for England's ministry*, one T. Foster argued:

Now that Tithes is an oppression and an unrighteous thing, examine the sufferings of diverse of the Mattyrs [sic] in Queen *Maries* daies, recorded by *Fox* in his Acts and Monuments, as *John Wickliffe*, *Walter Brute*, *William Thorp*, and others, who suffered in flames for their testimony against Tithes: And that this Age is not without a faithful testimony. See the sufferings of the Christians until death in our daies; as *Thomas Bromby*, *John Cason*, *William Sykes*, *William Tucker*, *Stephen Yaton*, *Arnold Trueblood*, *William Serjeant*, and others, who in several Goals of this Nation finished their testimony also against Tithes, by suffering imprisonment until death, and thousands by spoiling of their goods.⁹⁰

Foster's position demonstrates that the legacy of persecution established a conceptual framework of persecutors (likely clergymen) and righteous victims. This flexible framework allowed him to add the names of his co-religionists to what he understood as an ongoing lineage of persecution. He recognized this lineage in two ways.

⁸⁹Ibid., 26.

⁹⁰T. Foster, *A winding-sheet for England's ministry* (1658), 2.

First, although few of his brethren had died, he noted that they nonetheless endured ‘imprisonment until death’ and ‘spoiling of their goods’. Second, Foster saw Quaker sufferings as valid because of the beliefs for which they drew such persecution. Although he cited the Marian martyrs in general, the *specific* martyrs he listed were those lollards who spoke against tithes in *AM*. Both of these reasons—suffering without death and radical beliefs—were features not of the Marian martyrs of the *AM*, but of the lollard narratives.

Conclusion

In light of how the lollard lineage of persecution was received by seventeenth-century Protestants, it is clear that the first-generation evangelicals successfully legitimized a tradition of suffering that stretched back well into the Middle Ages. Catholics, unsurprisingly, were not convinced: More’s initial rejection of the efforts of early evangelicals to recast the lollards as true martyrs instead of rightly-punished schismatics was followed by Nicholas Harpsfield’s robust efforts to discredit them. As shown in the last chapter, his *Dialogi Sex* focused on their reputation for sedition. While this was a concern also of his *Historia Wicleffia* (1622), where Harpsfield went through each belief of Wyclif and his disciples to emphasize their radicalism, places where they contradicted themselves, and their revival of ancient heresies such as Arianism and Pelagianism.⁹¹ The tract had circulated widely in manuscript prior to publication, and influenced Robert Persons’ arguments.⁹²

For Protestants, though, Foxe, through the efforts of Bale, Constantine, Joye, Tyndale and others, turned the weaknesses of the lollard martyrological tradition

⁹¹Nicholas Harpsfield, ‘Historia Wicleffia’ in *Historia Anglicana Ecclesiastica*, ed. Richard Gibbons (Douai, 1622). For lollards contradicting one another, see 678-82; for places where Wyclif contradicts himself, see 688-90; for the revival of ancient heresies, see 700-702. For Harpsfield’s characterization of radical lollards, see Royal, ‘Catholic Responses to Protestant Polemic on the Lollards’ in *Early Modern English Catholicism: Identity, Memory and Counter-Reformation*, edited by James Kelly and Susan Royal, forthcoming.

⁹² ‘Nicholas Harpsfield,’ Thomas Freeman in *ODNB*; Persons cites Harpsfield in *A treatise of three conuersions*, 90.

which included imprisonment, abjurations, and penances along with a glaring lack of good deaths into a collection of dynamic, worthy sufferings. This in turn provided a host of examples to religious radicals in the seventeenth century, whose own sufferings by the established church seemed reflected in *AM*. These writers saw the lollard persecution as significant because it validated the radical beliefs of the lollards, and established a historical precedent for their own struggles and beliefs.

This chapter has indicated that already, though, this inheritance was a contested one. Because Foxe had turned the lollards into legitimate martyrs, in the seventeenth century these witnesses became a source of contention because religious writers appropriated them for mutually exclusive truth claims. Like William Prynne, the Quaker writer Foster recognized priests as persecutors based on the lollard precedent in *AM*; but where Prynne was staunchly pro-tithe, Foster argued that it was impossible to separate the oppression of tithes and the ministers they maintained.⁹³ When debates became heated, some writers found it easy to deride the lollards not because of their beliefs, but based on their sufferings, as Thomas Comber's example proved. Still, Comber's questioning of the lollards as suitable martyrs is a rare case; most Protestants accepted the lollards as legitimate martyrs.

Precisely because of that, most of the controversy surrounding the lollards in the seventeenth century was not over their martyrological value, but about their theological value. Persecution followed holiness, and for that reason, the lollards were seen as early witnesses to the true church. But whether the true church looked more like the Church of England or the gathered churches would be an issue that itself further divided those groups.

⁹³See Prynne's position on tithes in chapter ten.

Section III

The Lollards and the True Church

Most analyses of the lollard legacy in the sixteenth century stop here. After detailing the rehabilitation efforts of early evangelicals, whose work became codified in the *AM*, most historians and literary critics have ended the lollard story in the mid-sixteenth century. There are good reasons for this: Anne Hudson rightly points out that her studies end with sixteenth-century appropriation of lollardy because seventeenth-century writings become entangled with the rise of antiquarianism, though admitting these movements are hardly mutually exclusive.¹ Beyond this complication, it is easy to assume a simple dichotomous understanding of the lollards in the seventeenth century, according to confessional affiliation. In fact, it was not so clear-cut on either the Catholic or Protestant side.² The remainder of this thesis will survey the latter. That later Protestants on the whole accepted evangelical attempts to redress the lollard reputation meant that these medieval witnesses were considered model subjects and martyrs; this is particularly significant because it made them theological models as well.

¹ *NNT*, 154.

² While Catholics did reject evangelical attempts to rehabilitate the lollards, the ways they approached this issue is a more complex story than scholars have recognized. See Royal, 'Catholic Responses to Protestant Polemic on the Lollards' in *Early Modern English Catholicism: Identity, Memory and Counter-Reformation*, forthcoming. Cf. Crompton, 'John Wyclif: A Study in Mythology,' and Kenny, 'The Accursed Memory: The Counter-Reformation Reputation of John Wyclif.'

In this section, I will look at the significance of the lollards in terms of the true church, characterized by sacraments correctly administered and the Word properly preached. I will lay the foundation for this with a chapter on the clergy, traditionally responsible for these marks of the godly church, showing that Foxe took few steps to mediate radical lollard assertions about clerical disendowment, episcopal hierarchy, and universal priesthood; then, I will point out the how those assertions became a source of contention for the various religious communities that interpreted this legacy differently. The second and third chapters of this section will turn to lollard ideas about the sacraments and preaching found in *AM*, focusing less on the interpretive community and more on Foxe's editorial choices. It parses his decisions and offers clues to why he made them, reassessing the scholarly consensus that he moulded martyrs' ideas into those consistent with Elizabethan orthodoxy.

This section will show that redeeming the lollards from the taint of sedition and heresy was only the first aspect of their Reformation appropriation. In their records, Foxe found that the lollards critiqued many aspects of the late medieval church, some fundamental in organizing any church, such as priests, rites, and proselyting. More than merely looking at the lollards for their martyrological value, this section gets to the heart of their theological value in the long Reformation. While the previous section looked closely at Foxe and his early evangelical precedents, the remainder of the thesis focuses on the text of *AM* and its interpretive communities. It will carefully analyze his editorial process, paying close attention to beliefs he omitted, but especially to beliefs he left intact. Each chapter will then go on to discuss the ways late-sixteenth and seventeenth-century readers understood the text and developed interpretive communities that often opposed one another.

Chapter 6: Priesthood and Episcopacy

Introduction

Throughout the lollard narratives of *AM*, these men and women noted in detail the difference between the beleaguered apostles of the early church and the powerful, wealthy prelates of their own time. This contrast, which fuelled magisterial and radical reformers as well as Catholics, drove Protestants of all stripes to return to the scriptural example of the primitive, pure church. Naturally, Foxe emphasized this parallel concern between lollards and later reformers.

The role of the priest as an intermediary between God and man had developed from Christ's High Priesthood to the Great Commission of the apostles to an office that, by the early Middle Ages saw a 'cultural and educational gap between clergy and laity', as well as a sacramental one.¹ The thirteenth century saw decrees from the church concerning the education of the clergy for the *cura animarum* (Fourth Lateran Council), and distinctions between the duties of a rector and his parishioners in the parish church (attributed to Archbishop Robert Winchelsey [1293-1313]).² The parish clergymen had the intermediate role of administering the sacraments (including sole responsibility for offering the mass) and hearing parishioners' confessions. He also served as the agent between official councils and the laity, charged with disseminating decrees to his flock. By the time of Wyclif's reforms, parish clergy were also channels to the wider Church and the papacy, a manifest medium between England and Rome.

Long thought to be a major contributor to the success of the Reformation, 'anticlericalism' (a term that 'seems to cover any assertive criticism of the clergy') has been reassessed by the work of Richard A. Cosgrove, Christopher Haigh, and R. N. Swanson, among others.³ These significant articles have shown that English anti-

¹ *WL?*, 147.

² *Pastors and the Care of Souls in Medieval England*, eds. John Shinnars and William J. Dohar (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 39, 219.

³ R.N. Swanson, 'Before the Protestant Clergy: The Construction and Deconstruction of Medieval Priesthood,' in *The Protestant Clergy of Early Modern Europe*, eds. C. Scott Dixon and Luise Schorn-Schutte (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), quote at 52. Richard A. Cosgrove,

clericalism was not nearly as rampant as once thought, and have also demonstrated that the nineteenth-century organizational term ‘anticlericalism’ in fact has more to tell us about Victorian sentiments than it does about those of pre-Reformation parishioners. J. Patrick Hornbeck has convincingly explained that lollard critiques of the clergy vacillated between two positions: one of *hyperclericalism*, which ‘subscribed to traditional theologies of the priesthood but desired the restoration of ideal standards of behavior among clergymen’, and one of *antisacerdotalism*, which ‘envision[ed] the abolition of a separate priestly class with the exclusive right to celebrate the sacraments’.⁴ Hornbeck claims that by using this terminology, historians can paint a more accurate picture of clerical critique prior to the Reformation. Being persuaded by Hornbeck’s distinctions due to their provision of greater clarity, I will use these terms throughout my discussion of how Foxe mediated lollard conceptions of the clergy.

This chapter will begin by looking at those categories to see how Foxe portrays the priesthood in the lollard narratives, showing that the examples of hyper clericalism and literary anticlericalism are in fact overwhelmed by the antisacerdotal material. It will then look at how Foxe presented the lollards’ own views on the priesthood and episcopal hierarchy. It then hones in on two radical concepts in the lollard narratives: clerical disendowment and the notion of temporal possessions more generally, and the idea of episcopacy. It then goes on to demonstrate that these ideas, preserved by Foxe in the *AM*, offered historical precedents for separatists as well as the Church of England. This chapter shows how quickly the radical lollards were adopted by those frustrated by what they understood to be the slow pace of reform in the English church; related to this, it reveals that the legacy of Foxe himself was a contested one. Though scholars place Foxe’s unpopularity in the 1630s

‘English Anticlericalism: A Programmatic Assessment,’ in *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 569-81; Christopher Haigh, ‘Anticlericalism and the English Reformation,’ *History* 68 (1983): 391-406; R. N. Swanson, ‘Problems of the Priesthood in Pre-Reformation England,’ *English Historical Review* 105 (1990): 846-69.

⁴ *WL?*, 144.

as part of the ascendancy of Laudianism, in fact this chapter demonstrates that the Foxean tradition was considered warily by conformists as quickly as the early 1590s.⁵ It will close by reassessing the notion of a single interpretive community.

Literary Anticlericalism, Hyperclericalism, and Antisacerdotalism

But did Foxe see such distinctions? If not these categories, are the qualities they signify found in the Reformation narrative of lollardy? Essentially, no. As Cosgrove rightly but all too briefly points out, ‘From the publication of John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* in 1563, the progressive unfolding of England’s Protestant destiny pushed the topic of anticlericalism into an intellectual box labelled Catholic only.’⁶ I aim to show that Foxe conflated ‘literary anticlericalism’, hyperclericalism, and antisacerdotalism to create overwhelming proof that the members of the true church were united against an oppressive, ungodly clergy who represented the false Church and the ‘Synagogue of Satan’.

Though literary critic Wendy Scase has argued for ‘new anticlericalism’ reflected in *Piers Plowman* in the late fourteenth century, though not all scholars have accepted this theory.⁷ Swanson, for instance, would like to see the term clarified, but beyond this critique, he argues (following the example of scholars of Italian literary anticlericalism) that literary anticlericalism might better be viewed as a ‘control mechanism’ that pointed out clerical excesses but was nevertheless had the ‘stabilizing factor’ of a social safety valve. While this may certainly be true, Foxe’s readers would not get that impression. Foxe made little explicit distinction between the literary fiction of the day and the council decrees, political treatises, and heresy trials he incorporated into his text to condemn the clergy. In fact, Book Five of *AM* (which details the renewed persecutions against the true church, one of the consequences of Satan’s ‘loosing from hell’) begins with the text of *The praier*

⁵Nussbaum, ‘Laudian Foxe-Hunting?’

⁶Cosgrove, ‘English Anticlericalism,’ 569.

⁷Wendy Scase, *Piers Plowman and the New Anticlericalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). For scholars’ disagreement about Scase’s theory, see *WL?*, 146, n.15.

and complaynt of the plowman, an ‘old auncient writing’, ‘written as seemeth about Wyclif’s time’.⁸ From here, Foxe moved into Johannes de Rupecissa’s prophecy that the papacy would decay, and Ralph FitzRalph’s rants against the mendicant orders. In the section that closes this era before Martin Luther in book seven, Foxe commended John Colet, John Gower, and above all, Geoffrey Chaucer, who Foxe said ‘semeth to bee a right VVicleuian’, noted earlier.⁹

So, the idea that literary anticlericalism might be separated from hyperclericalism or antisacerdotalism evaporated in Foxe’s appropriation of literary works and figures as proof of clerical critique that stretched back to Wyclif’s day. But what can we say about the distinction between hyperclericalism and antisacerdotalism? The hyperclericalism that Hornbeck gleans from Wycliffite works has been transformed in Foxe’s text to antisacerdotalism, nearly across the board. This, though, is hardly surprising given that Foxe’s goal in *AM* was to furnish the evangelical church with examples from the past to justify the present. As a sixteenth-century reformer, Foxe was happy to see the sacrament of orders desacralized, mass-offering priests turned into preaching ministers, and the eradication of an intermediary between man and God. Because of this, the few examples of hyperclericalism (and it should be reiterated that this was one end of a spectrum of beliefs concerning the clergy) that are in *AM* are quickly subsumed by antisacerdotal sentiments.

A few examples will suffice. One place where it is clear that the clerical estate had been corrupted and reformed is in Foxe’s narrative of Christopher Shomaker’s martyrdom. Arguing his church existed well before Luther, Foxe maintained that ‘this Religion and forme of doctrine first planted by the Apostles, and taught by *true Bishops*, afterward decayed, and now reformed agayne, althoughe it was not receaued nor admitted of the Popes clergie before Luthers tyme. . . .’¹⁰ This seems to suggest not only that there was a pure ideal to which England might return, but also preserves the notion of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. Readers might note, however, other instances in which Foxe directly associates bishops with persecution.

⁸*AM*, 515.

⁹*AM*, 1004. See above, p. 27.

¹⁰*AM*, 984, my italics.

For instance, in the case of Wyclif disciple Philip Repingdon, who abjured his beliefs and went on to become Bishop of Lincoln (overseeing William Thorpe's case), Foxe wrote of his appointment that he was 'made a bishop and a persecutor'.¹¹

In another instance of hyperclericalism, Sir John Oldcastle detailed lengthily his belief in the three estates of the commonwealth, preserving perfectly the estate of the clergy—though also calling for its reform. In no other lollard testimony preserved by Foxe is the clerical estate laid out so clearly; Oldcastle declared that priests should be 'More modest...more louyng, gentill, and lowly in spirit, should they be, then any other sortes of people'.¹² Oldcastle's testimony, though, only served to show how far the priesthood had strayed from this ideal, as copious marginal notes and later testimony reveal. It can also safely be argued that Foxe's inclusion of this material served the purpose of exonerating Oldcastle of treason against the state rather than upholding a separate priestly class (see chapter four above).

The issue of clerical wealth will serve as another example of hyperclericalism in *AM*. Calls for the disendowment of the Church and a return to apostolic poverty in order to preserve model priesthood abound in lollard writings, and are present in Foxe. In the same way that the pope's authority was rendered void due to his divergence from Peter's scriptural example, for some lollards, priests' abandonment of their true calling of preaching and teaching in lieu the rewards of this world limited their ability to understand the message of Christ and perform their duties fully. Walter Brute claimed that God will not hear the prayer of a sinful priest, and William Thorpe wrote that God takes away understanding from 'great lettered men' and those who 'presume to vnderstand high things, & will be holden wise men, and desire maistership and high state and dignitie'.¹³ John Purvey asserted that priests held those who are truly learned and wise in contempt,¹⁴ and Richard Hun was accused of declaring, 'that poore men and Jdiotes haue the truth of the holy Scripture, more then a thousand Prelates and religious men, and Clerkes of the

¹¹ *AM*, 654.

¹² *AM*, 686.

¹³ *AM*, 665.

¹⁴ *AM*, 670.

schole'.¹⁵

But in *AM*, Foxe did not use these examples as a warning or a corrective device. They are placed firmly within the past to show the extent of the Roman clergy's corruption and the resulting spiritual poverty of England. Instances of hyperclericalism, then, were easily overwhelmed by counter-examples closer to antisacerdotalism, and there was little urge for reform: just proof of how far the Roman prelates had strayed from the examples set for them in the New Testament, manifest in a catalogue of abuses.

Nature of the Clergy in Foxe's Lollards

From here we can turn to talk about the nature of lollard antisacerdotalism as narrated by Foxe. Much of the evidence for this is manifest in the lollards' denunciation of the parish priests for neglecting nearly all of their traditional duties. Beginning with the most central duty, celebrating the mass, lollards cut off the priesthood at the knees. Their rejection of transubstantiation was closely tied to role of the priest. Richard Belward of the Norwich sect, for instance, was accused of believing that 'curates do sell God vppon Easter day, when as they receiue offerings of such as should communicate before they do minister the Sacrament vnto them'.¹⁶ It was objected against John Burrell of the same sect that not only were holy bread and water 'but trifles', but that they were made worse 'for the coniurations & characters which *the* priestes made ouer *them*'.¹⁷ Christopher Shomaker, martyr under Bishop Longland, colored transubstantiation as a deliberate deceit of the priests, and warned John Say not to believe in the physical presence of Christ, as the 'Priestes did phantasie'.¹⁸

Beyond celebrating the mass, a central responsibility of the priests was the care of their parishioners' spiritual well being. Their mandate to 'guide souls' was seen as having been abandoned by lollards such as the wife of David Lews, who was charged with heresy for saying that 'the Churche men in the olde time did leade

¹⁵ *AM*, 971.

¹⁶ *AM*, 803.

¹⁷ *AM*, 809.

¹⁸ *AM*, 984.

the people as the henne doth leade her chickines: but our Priestes now do lead the people to the deuil'.¹⁹ Central to caring for souls was instruction in the faith, and numerous lollard narratives reject clergymen as ignorant,²⁰ while still others went further, claiming that their lay instruction was just as good as that of a priest.²¹

Parish priests were also charged with hearing confession at least once a year, and also for instructing parishioners to do penance. The lollards' denial of auricular confession severely undercut the authority of the priest in this regard, and penance was questioned as well. Thomas Clerke claimed that the clergy's feigned authority to give pardons for sins was merely a ruse to blind the people and take their money.²² John Purvey was condemned for believing that 'auricular confession or priuate penaunce, is a certaine whisperyng, destroying the libertie of the gspell, and newly brought in by the Pope and the Clergie, to intangle the consciences of men in sinne, and to drawe their soules into hell'.²³ These are merely two samples from a long list provided by Foxe.

One other clerical distinction that lollards rejected was the tonsure and regulated clothing. More than merely rejecting this, the issue served as a lightning rod and easy visual image to draw upon. Purvey had much to say on this topic as well:

But the worldly shauelinges doe more magnifie the naked and bare signes of priesthoode (inuented by sinfull men) then the true and perfecte prieffhood of God, grounded by a true and liuely faith, annexed with good woorkes. Also, if it were needefull to haue such shaueynges, God knoweth howe, and can make when it pleaseth him, priestes (without mans woorking and sinfull signes, that is to say, without eyther Sacramentes or characters) to be knowen and discerned of the people, by their vertuous lyfe and example, and by their true preaching of the

¹⁹ *AM*, 988.

²⁰ For example see Elizabeth Copland; *AM*, 992.

²¹ For example see the daughter of John Fippe, who said that with the exception of saying the mass, she was just as learned as her priest; *AM*, 993.

²² *AM*, 995.

²³ *AM*, 670.

law of God.²⁴

The second of the Twelve Conclusions of 1395 also condemned these ceremonies, stating that at ordinations, bishops ‘geue crownes for their characters & markes, in stede of white hartes, and this character is the marke of Antichrist, brought into the holye church to cloke and colour their idlenes’.²⁵

Among this plethora of examples, readers can see the power of the priesthood called into question. Even the notion of *ex opere operantis* cast a shadow over the errant priests more than the fallacious lollards who held this position; William Swinburn believed that sacraments offered by priests in mortal sin were invalid, and though Brute recognized the sacraments of these men, he claimed somewhat contradictorily that God will not hear their prayers.²⁶ From these examples, readers can see that examples of antisacerdotalism abound in *AM*, even if it is an implicit rejection of priestly power and status instead of an overt rejection of their estate—but Foxe incorporated numerous examples of that rejection into his text, as well.

Radical Antisacerdotalism

Clerical Disendowment by Secular Lords

Wyclif’s argument that the temporal lords should be responsible for protecting the church was not radical in itself, but his suggested means of accomplishing this—that secular lords should disendow the church and distribute its worldly goods among the temporal lords—brought condemnation from the spirituality. Wyclif saw the issue of clerical wealth and possessions as a problem mainly to be solved by the temporal lords, but he also encouraged the laity to take part in this ‘programme of disendowment’ by withholding tithes from corrupt clergymen.²⁷ This overt subversion of the three estates of the church militant (clergy, nobility, and commoners) roused outrage among Wyclif’s contemporaries, and in fact the tenor of these beliefs did not sit well with later evangelicals. John Foxe, for instance, felt compelled to mediate

²⁴ *AM*, 671.

²⁵ *AM*, 627.

²⁶ *AM* 579, 522.

²⁷ *WL?*, 154.

Wyclif's statements on the church's temporal possessions. In his list of heretical opinions and errors of Wyclif condemned at the Blackfriars Council of 1382, Foxe included Wyclif's blanket statement that it was 'agaynst the Scripture, that ecclesiasticall ministers should haue any temporall possessions', as well as 'that the temporall Lordes, may accordyng to their owne will and discretion, take away the temporall goodes from the churche men, when soeuer they do offende', but with asterisks beside them.²⁸ His marginal note reads, 'He meaneth church goods not be so peculiar to ministers but that they may be taken away if they so deserue.'²⁹ This position would have been concerning for Foxe for more than its threat to the social status quo; Wyclif's article is explicitly based on Scripture, making the position more difficult for advocates of *sola scriptura*.

While Foxe added a correcting marginal note to Wyclif's narrative, he let a similar condemnation of priestly possessions go unmitigated in the answers of William Swinderby to the Bishop of Hereford, John Trefnant. Of worldly possessions and positions, Swinderby asserted, 'Yf men speken of worldly power and Lordships and worships, with other vices that raignen therein, what priest that desires and hase most herof (in what degree so he be) he is most Antechrist of all the priestes that ben in earth.'³⁰ Swinderby took Wyclif's position and ran with it: while Wyclif couched his denunciation of clerical possessions in terms of their abuse by prelates (or at least this is what Foxe wanted his readers to make of it), Swinderby claimed here that those possessions and positions are inherently 'vices'. Sir John Oldcastle identified lordships and possessions held by prelates as coincidental with the corruption of Christ's true church. Foxe recorded that when Archbishop Arundel asked him what he meant by 'venom' corrupting the church: 'The L. Cobham sayd: your

²⁸Ibid., 555.

²⁹AM, 555. Foxe makes the same mitigating comments when listing the errors of the Hussites: 'The second Article is, that riches ought to be taken from the Pope and all his priestes, from the highest to the lowest, and they ought to be made poore, as the Disciples of our Lorde Iesus Christe were: who had nothyng of their owne, neyther possessions in this worlde, neyther worldly power.' Although the article itself is very clear, Foxe nevertheless adds, 'He meaneth the immoderate riches and temporall possessions.' AM, 797.

³⁰AM, 579.

possessions & lordships. For then cryed an Angel in *the ayre* (as your own chronicles mencioneth) wo, wo, wo: this day is venim shed into the church of God.’³¹ Oldcastle’s words echo those of John Purvey: ‘Further, that it is a great abhominacion, that Byshoppes, Monkes, and other prelates, be so great Lords in this world, where as Christ with his Apostles, & disciples, neuer toke vpon them secular dominion neither did they appropriat vnto them Churches as these men do: but led a pore life, and gaue a good testimony of their priesthood.’³² Purvey drew a direct comparison between the great prelates of his own day and the priesthood as Christ understood it, and Foxe reiterated Purvey’s point in a marginal comment: ‘Belly cheare [worldly authority] of ill disposed prelats, and of Monasteries not to be nourished by temporalities and appropriations.’ Whereas Foxe was quick to temper Wyclif’s words on temporal possessions, he left intact and even enhances the admonitions of other lollards. Although the latter could be seen as more radical (as it denies that any priest should hold worldly possessions or positions of authority, whereas at least the second of Wyclif’s statements seems to validate this only in the case of clerical abuse), in fact it seems Foxe was more concerned with Wyclif’s assertion that the secular lords should disendow the clergy and give themselves the spoils, an issue that would vex the godly in Elizabeth’s reign and beyond.

Despite Foxe’s attempt to guide the reader’s interpretation of Wyclif’s radical belief, seventeenth-century writers nevertheless understood the text in various ways. Depending on their polemical goals, some writers toned down Wyclif’s sentiment, as Foxe did, while others sharpened it. Like Foxe, the presbyterian nonconformist Richard Baxter found Wyclif’s disendowment policy too extreme. In his *Church-history* (1680), he listed Wyclif’s article ‘Temporal Lords may take away temporal goods from the Church, from a Possessor habitually criminal, but qualifies it in a parenthetical comment: ‘(*Not from the sacred use in general, but from that man that forfeiteth them.*)’.³³ Andrew Willet, who sympathized with the established

³¹AM, 690.

³²AM, 673.

³³Richard Baxter, *Church-history of the government of bishops and their councils abbreviated* (1680), 432.

church, used Wyclif and Hus (though Foxe) to prove, ‘in [the] case [that clerics] doe notoriously spend and wast the Church goods, the Prince, by whose authoritie they were giuen to the Church, may iustly take from them their superfluities, not leauing the Church destitute of sufficient maintenance’.³⁴ It is noteworthy that though non-separatists were uncomfortable with Wyclif’s program of disendowment, they were reluctant to abandon his memory. Instead, they used Wyclif’s words as historical instruction concerning godly clericalism and princely prerogative.

Wyclif’s words were read differently by the nonconformist ‘E. K.’, author of *That neither temporallitie[s] nor tythes is due to the bishops, prelates nor clergy, by a Gospel rule* (1672). This author cited Wyclif’s belief that the temporal lords must deprive the spiritual lords from their temporalities and that the laity should withhold tithes as proof of his own position against the church’s right to have any temporal goods.³⁵ He listed other lollard precedents as well: Sir John Oldcastle against ‘possessions and lordships’ for the church;³⁶ John Claydon and Richard Turming, martyrs who died for the belief that the church should not own ‘temporalities and superfluous goods’;³⁷ Walter Brute who opposed ‘tythes, temporalities and wordly

³⁴Andrew Willet, *Synopsis papismi, that is, A generall viewe of papistry wherein the whole mysterie of iniquitie* (1592), 224. Like Willet and Baxter, Richard Hooker was also reluctant to accept Wyclif’s statements on church temporalities: ‘If *Wickliff* therefore were of that opinion which is Adversaries ascribe unto him (whether truly, or of purpose to make him odious, I cannot tell, for in his Writings I do not finde it) namely, *That Constantine, and others following his steps did evil, as having no sufficient ground whereby they might gather, that such Donations are acceptable to Iesus Christ*, it was in *Wickleffe* a palpable error.’ Though Hooker cites Foxe elsewhere, here he used Walsingham’s chronicle. Hooker, *The works of Mr. Richard Hooker* (1666), 431.

³⁵Netherlands. Emancipatiekommissie, *That neither temporallities nor tythes is due to the bishops, prelates nor clergy, by a Gospel rule And that kings, princes and lords temporal, may j[ust]ly take the temporallities and tythes from them* (1672), 6, 7, 10, 13, and 25. This work may be a second edition of a tract written c. 1630 by ‘T.E.’ with the title *That neither temporallities nor tythes is due to the bishops* (1630).

³⁶Ibid., 37.

³⁷Ibid., 46.

dominion';³⁸ Wimbledon's sermon that condemned temporalities;³⁹ Swinderby's opposition to possessions of the church;⁴⁰ and Nicolas Herford, Philip Ripingdon, and John Aston against clerical possessions and tithes.⁴¹ 'E. K.' cited Foxe's *AM* in many places throughout the text;⁴² though he does not specifically refer to Foxe when discussing Wyclif, we know by the way the text closely follows *AM* that it must at least have been one of its sources.⁴³ What is striking in the case of 'E. K.' is that this nonconformist author did not merely pick up lollard examples from a polemical work he had read; this is a case of an author deliberately combing Foxe's work to find historical examples of his own radical beliefs, and striking gold.⁴⁴

Seventeenth-century writers appropriated the words of Wyclif and other lollards that it was improper for a priest to hold any type of worldly possessions or positions of authority. As one would expect, more radical polemicists picked up this more radical position. The nonconformist minister James Owen cited these lollards and

³⁸Ibid., 52.

³⁹Ibid., 39.

⁴⁰Ibid., 39-40.

⁴¹Ibid., 53.

⁴²This tract cites Foxe in the usual ways, as a reference for lollard narratives (see, for instance, 35 above), but also as evidence for medieval anticlericalism in Parliament. The author references a commons bill presented to Parliament suggesting disendowment after 1400 (12; cf. *AM*, 684).

⁴³For instance, compare 'The Testimony of the University of Oxford in Behalf of John Wickliffe' (10) with Foxe's 'The publike testimonie geuen out by the vniuersitie of Oxford, touchyng the commendation of the great learnyng and good lyfe of Ihon Wickleffe' in *AM*, 569.

⁴⁴Wyclif's position on disendowment was used for more than religious purposes; as in Wyclif's own day, opportunists saw his words as a way to increase the power of the aristocracy. Writing less for religious reasons and more to shore up the divine right of kings, Sir Robert Howard wrote of Wyclif in *The life and reign of King Richard the Second*. Listing the same set of heresies and errors condemned in 1382, Howard added his own marginal note to the same article that disallowed clerical possessions according to Scripture. Instead of massaging Wyclif's words, Howard blamed his interpreters for taking this belief so literally: 'This is wrested to a worse sense than Wickliff intended' (42). Howard wished to conserve the thrust of Wyclif's statement to suit his own writing purpose, and seems to have had little appetite for religious controversy. (In a later work, Howard suggested that the back-and-forth controversy over particular points of religion was 'useless'. It was only after this work, ironically, that he became embroiled in a debate with those who took issue with his writings. Howard, *The history of religion written by a person of quality* [1694], iv.)

excerpted their words in *AM* to prove that ‘the Lordly Titles and Dominion of the Clergy were very offensive to several Confessors, and Martyrs in this Kingdom before the Reformation’.⁴⁵ He drew a connection between the lollard movement, via Foxe, to his co-religionists: ‘The *Dissenters* are not the only Persons who have opposed the Secular Dominion, and Lordly Titles of Bishops.’⁴⁶ Like Owen, the separatist minister Francis Johnson referenced the beliefs of Foxe’s martyrs, including the lollards, to prove that those who suffered for the true church held beliefs closer to those of the separatists than the Church of England. Johnson found part of his proof in the lollard rejection of temporalities, as presented by *AM*, and he added them to John Bale’s identification of temporalities with the beast in the Book of Revelation:

John Bale (an exile for the testimonie of Iesu) writing vpon the Revelation affirmeth, *That the names of Blasphemy written vpon the Beasts head (Rev. 13. and 17.) are none other then the proud glittering tytles, wherewith they garnish their usurped authority, to make it seeme glorious to the world, having within them conteined the great mystery of iniquitie. What other els (saith he) is Pope, Cardinal, Metropolitan, Primate, Archbishop, Diocesan, Archdeacon, Officiall, Chauncelour, Commissarie, Deane, Prebend, Parson, Vicar, and such like, but very names of blasphemy?*⁴⁷

⁴⁵James Owen, *Tutamen evangelicum, or, A defence of Scripture-ordination* (1697), 14. A central point of Owen’s case rested on the fact that the medieval Waldensians had no bishops, and he references John Paul Perrin’s *History of the Waldenses* (1624). Owen notes that the lollards in England were the ‘off-spring of the Ancient Waldenses’ (32).

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 11. Owen’s use of the lollards for this purpose drew attack from the conformist writer Thomas Gibbs, who pointed out that the lollards also believed that fasting and observing the Sabbath were invalid; because of this, their views on episcopacy were discredited. He was reluctant to disavow the lollards, though: ‘In short, I think they were a well meaning, but ignorant People, who had Wit and Knowledge enough to discover the gross Superstition, Idolatry and Corruptions of the Romish Church; but not to define the true Doctrine of the Gospel, about Government and Discipline.’ Gipps, *Tentamen novum Continuatum* (1699), 108.

⁴⁷Francis Johnson, *An answer to Maister H. Iacob his defence of the churches and ministry of England* (1600), 163.

To bolster Bale's point (and his own), Johnson immediately included historical witnesses against clerical possessions, including Wyclif, Swinberby, and Oldcastle.⁴⁸

Wyclif's comment that lords might take away possessions from errant clergymen was incorporated into a variety of contexts in the seventeenth century, despite Foxe's marginal comment, meant to take the sting away. Baxter, as a Calvinist nonconformist, was eager to mitigate Wyclif's comment, in line with Foxe's own perspective, but the radical author of *That neither temporallitie[s] nor tythes is due to the bishops* used these words to identify historical scruples concerning temporalities. Foxe's reticence concerning this article, then, was reflected in later works, but its subversive potential was realized in seventeenth-century polemical works nonetheless. The more radical position of Swinberby, Purvey, and Oldcastle were unsurprisingly appropriated by seventeenth-century nonconformists, who saw their doctrines (which they considered grounds for separation) reflected in the words of the lollards in *AM*.

Episcopacy

Foxe incorporated lollard ideas about episcopacy within his history of the pre-Reformation church, two radical concepts in particular. One rejected a clerical hierarchy altogether, essentially maintaining that all priests were equal. The other went further, dismantling the priesthood altogether, and argued that there was no difference between priests and the laity.

Several lollard statements in *AM* call into question the role of a priestly hierarchy. In Wyclif's own narrative, Foxe culled beliefs from monastic writers John Tyssington, Thomas Walden, and William Wodeford, including, 'There be xij. disciples of Antichrist. Popes, Cardinalls, Patriarches, Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, Officialls, Deanes, Monkes, Chanons, Fryers, and Pardoners.'⁴⁹ This condemnation also appears in the testimony of John Claydon, who had been accused of maintaining that 'the Archbishops and Bishops, speaking indifferently, are the seates of the beast Antichrist, when he sitteth in *them* and rayneth aboute other people in the

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹*AM*, 572.

darke caues of errours and heresies'.⁵⁰ William Swinderby had been charged with taking the view that bishops were no more powerful than other curates, claiming 'that all priests been of euen power in all things, notwithstanding that some in this world been of hygher dignitie or more passing in highnesse of degree'.⁵¹ None of these statements received a word of qualification from Foxe.

Lollard statements explicitly rejecting a divide between the clergy and the laity appear in the testimony of Walter Brute. Brute claimed, 'Christ by expresse words speketh but litle, to make any difference between *the* priests and the rest of the people, neyther yet doth he vse thys name of Sacerdos or prsbiter in the Gospell.'⁵² He backed up his statement by asserting that Paul also made no distinction among priests and people. Foxe recorded that William Thorpe believed that 'aswell the Bishop, the simple man, the priest, and the lay man, be of lyke authoritie (as long as they liue well.)'⁵³ John Purvey was said to have claimed, 'And eevery holy man which is a minister of Christ, although he be not shauen, is a true priest ordained of God, although no mitred bishop euer lay his charecter vpon him...all those that are predestinate, are true priestes made of hym.'⁵⁴ The testimonies of Purvey, Thorpe, and Brute offer good examples of Patrick Hornbeck's analysis of lollard understanding of the role of the clergy. In his examination of lollard heresy trials, Hornbeck explains, 'For these dissenters, the idea of universal priesthood did not mean ascribing to all Christians the exalted character of the late medieval clergy; instead, it entailed the deconstruction of what defendants took to be clerics' exaggerated claims about their own powers.'⁵⁵

The role of the episcopate would become a major source of contention as the English church began to fracture in the late sixteenth century, and would continue to drive polemicists into debate with one another throughout the next century. For the writers that turned to history to defend their position, the lollards often

⁵⁰ *AM*, 778.

⁵¹ *AM*, 579.

⁵² *AM*, 613.

⁵³ *AM*, 650.

⁵⁴ *AM*, 672.

⁵⁵ *WL?*, 167.

supplied what they were looking for. Puritans and nonconformists of many kinds often went to *AM* for historical evidence. For instance, William Prynne, during the brief period he had flirted with presbyterianism (which he had eschewed by 1645), blasted bishops throughout history in *The antipathie of the English lordly prelatie* (1641).⁵⁶ Rejecting the Laudian veneration of episcopacy, Prynne catalogued a litany of abuses by bishops, incorporating large lollard extracts from *AM*. He used the words of Wyclif, Swinburne, Brute, *Piers Plowman*, Oldcastle, Purvey, and others to shore up his arguments against *iure divino* episcopacy. Gilbert Rule, a presbyterian minister, incorporated Wyclif's declaration that there were only two valid types of minister, priests and deacons, into his own treatise against a clerical hierarchy by divine right.⁵⁷

It was not just conformist puritans who defended their positions through Foxe's lollards. The nonconformist minister James Owen cited Wyclif's authority as proof that there was no difference between bishops and presbyters.⁵⁸ The separatist Henry Barrow referenced Wyclif's characterization of the episcopate as disciples of the Antichrist, along with other lollards who claimed that the clerical hierarchy was *itself* antichrist.⁵⁹ Barrow's fellow advocate for separation, Francis Johnson, claimed that the anti-episcopal convictions of England's martyrs spoke of the evils of a clerical hierarchy, referring specifically to Wyclif, Swinburne, Oldcastle, and Claydon.⁶⁰ He also included these lollards in a list of true Christians, with others such as the writers of *An Admonition to the Parliament*, who wanted to reform ecclesiastical hierarchy. He asked his polemical opponent to consult the lollard histories in *AM* 'and then see whether it have or can have so much as any colour of truth; that *the Prelates* should be Ministers of the Gospell: or that *ordination* may be receyved from them,

⁵⁶ 'William Prynne,' *ODNB*.

⁵⁷ Gilbert Rule, *The good old way defended against the attempts of A.M. D.D.* (1697), 2.

⁵⁸ James Owen, *A plea for Scripture ordination* (1694), 111 and 112. Though Owen cites the sessions of the Council of Constance as his source, we know that he was reading Foxe alongside it: the very next sentence cites John Lambert (via Foxe) as a 'holy martyr' who was also anti-episcopacy.

⁵⁹ Barrow, *Mr Henry Barrowes platform*, 19. Barrow also cited Bale and Barnes. Also, he agreed with the Brownists on this issue and made a point of saying so.

⁶⁰ Johnson, *An answer to Maister H. Iacob*, 163-64.

who are not members (much lesse officers) of the body of Christs Church'.⁶¹ John Penry, associated with the Marprelate tracts, believed that the martyrdom of Jan Hus (for the sake of the equality of ministers) and John Claydon (for his ownership of a book that held that the episcopate was antichrist) bolstered his position that the Church of England was insufficiently reformed.⁶²

Perhaps unsurprisingly, radicals also incorporated these witnesses into their defenses. The Quaker activist Edward Burrough took the lollard example to its natural conclusion, as historical grounds that priests have no more authority to administer sacraments than laymen.⁶³ His co-religionist Thomas Lawson cited the anti-tithe position of Swinderby, Brute, and Thorpe in *AM*, concluding it to be 'Sound Testimony and true, but opposed by Man made Ministers', rejecting the notion of a *iure divino* episcopate.⁶⁴ Likewise John Rogers, the Fifth Monarchist writer, referenced Brute's testimony in *AM* that Christ used the term *presbyter* and not *sacerdos*, 'that there might be no difference between *Ministers* and the *people*'.⁶⁵

Nonconformists and puritans of all stripes used Foxe's lollards to corroborate their positions on episcopacy, but it is interesting to note that few conformists did. Richard Bancroft, writing against puritans, asserted that Wyclif made a distinction between bishops and other priests, but bypassed Foxe for this information, citing Wyclif's own works.⁶⁶ George Downham, Bishop of Derry, did not cite Foxe when he defended *iure divino* episcopacy by claiming that the lollards and Waldensians 'neuer once dreamed of. . . lay presbyteries, and much lesse of [the] new-found parish discipline [of Calvin and Beza]'.⁶⁷ In *An apologie for Iohn Wickliffe* (1608), Thomas

⁶¹Francis Johnson, *A treatise of the ministry of the Church of England Wherein is handled this question, whether it be to be separated from, or joyned vnto* (1595), 131.

⁶²John Penry, *A treatise vwherein is manifestlie proued, that reformation and those that sincerely fauor the same, are vnjustly charged to be enemies, vnto hir Maiestie* (1590), fo. I2v.

⁶³Edward Burrough, *The memorable works of a son of thunder* (1672), 801.

⁶⁴Thomas Lawson, *A treatise relating to the call, work & wages of the ministers of Christ as also to the call, work & wages of the ministers of antichrist* (1680), 116.

⁶⁵John Rogers, *Ohel or Beth-shemesh A tabernacle for the sun, or, Irenicum evangelicum* (1653), 486-87.

⁶⁶Richard Bancroft, *A suruay of the pretended holy discipline* (1593), 395-96.

⁶⁷George Downham, *A defence of the sermon preached at the consecration of the L. Bishop of*

James specifically avoided using Foxe throughout his text, only mentioning him once, to claim that his characterization of Wyclif was marred due to his reliance on Walsingham's chronicle.⁶⁸ James explicitly criticized Foxe's treatment of Wyclif, referring to him (alongside others) in a marginal note explaining that he did not have the sources available to properly explain Wyclif's beliefs.⁶⁹

The discipline of the church, in particular the issue of ecclesiastical government, featured on James' agenda in the *Apologie*. In this section, he claimed that Wyclif was fully aware that there were 'Reuerend, learned, and vncorrupt Prelates in his time', so while the lollard progenitor was happy to note their abuses, he never called anyone out by name. James set out Wyclif's view straight away in plain terms: 'For the government of the Church by the Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and Officials, he was (to my seeming) a plaine conformitan.'⁷⁰ In confirming Wyclif's approval of the episcopacy, James brought the theologian back into the fold of the Church of England, and safely away from the nonconformists. Far from drawing out the differences between Wyclif and the Catholics of his day, on church hierarchy, Wyclif's beliefs look quite similar; one wonders if he was really responding to Catholics here (his stated aim of the book), or if he was addressing what he considered a puritan threat to the prelates of the Church of England.

In fact, likely due to the fact that the lollards of *AM* were so readily employed by nonconformists to back up their anti-episcopal message, Foxe's own opinions on a clerical hierarchy became a topic of some debate. Seventeenth-century polemicists extracted Foxe's own perspective on the validity of a clerical hierarchy from introductory material of the *Acts and Monuments*. In Foxe's attempt to disprove early church theologians who claimed Rome's supremacy over all other churches (and its consequent conclusion, that the Bishop of Rome is head of all other bishops), he maintained that all bishops are equal to other bishops, archbishops to other archbishops, ministers to other ministers, and deacons to deacons—but that ministers

Bath and VVelles (1611), 141.

⁶⁸ *Apologie*, 67-68.

⁶⁹ *Apologie*, 2.

⁷⁰ *Apologie*, 39.

are above deacons, bishops above ministers, and archbishops above bishops.⁷¹ Problematically, though, about thirty pages earlier in the book, in Foxe's preface to the reader, he included the 'outward succession of Byshops' in a list of things that Foxe felt served no spiritual purpose. In the Church of England, noted for its peculiar maintaining of episcopacy, this is a bold and critical statement.⁷² Noteworthy also is the role of the bishops in *AM*, which was ambiguous: though it contained lollard persecutors like Bishop Longland or Archbishop Arundel, it also held the bishop martyrs in highest esteem.

Richard Bancroft cited Foxe's praise of episcopacy to counter the presbyterian Thomas Cartwright's appeal to Martin Bucer, who had supposedly rejected the surplice:

Maister Fox in like sorte setting downe his full approbation, of the present state ecclesiasticall: that *Archbishops* should be in degree aboue Bishops, and Bishops in degree aboue other Ministers: and relying for this his iudgement partly vpon the scriptures, and partly vppon the primatiue Church: and concluding, that this is to keepe an order duely and truely in the Church, according to the true nature and definition of order. . . .⁷³

Bancroft was joined by Downham, who quoted Foxe's preface to the second edition of *AM* at length to assure readers that Foxe fully approved of an episcopal hierarchy, despite the words of dissenters who selectively quoted from Foxe.⁷⁴ And the nonconformists would have been hit significantly in 1606, with the publication of Peter Fairlambe's *The recantation of a Brownist*, a manuscript controversy with a separatist minister, one Mr Barnhere. Peter Lake has shown that Fairlambe was 'if not in the employ, then certainly under the wing, of Archbishop Bancroft', so it seems likely that Bancroft used Foxe's words in favor of episcopacy to persuade

⁷¹*AM*, 45-46.

⁷²*AM*, 15.

⁷³Bancroft, *A suruay of the pretended holy discipline*, 355-56.

⁷⁴Downham, *A defence of the sermon*, 163-64.

him; in his tract, he quotes the exact segment of Foxe that Bancroft's tract did.⁷⁵ In fact, Fairlambe delved much deeper into *AM* than Bancroft, addressing the beliefs of Swinderby, Oldcastle, and Claydon individually. That these examples were likely more known to and referenced by nonconformists rather than their conformist opponents is supported by Fairlambe's taunt: 'And whereas you doe maruell that I will alleadge the Booke of Martyrs, seeing M. Foxe (*as you say*) hath many things against the gouernment of our Church by Bishops. I maruell much more, why you should *dislike* the alleging of it, seeing it is the vniuersall iudgement of Gods Church.'⁷⁶ This provides a real glimpse into the way different factions read *AM*: the Brownists (and the conforming puritans that they interacted with, part of Peter Lake's 'London puritan underground') considered the medieval lollard examples to be evidence of the true church, clearly their own medieval forebears; this is obviously something Fairlambe used to believe, too.⁷⁷ But as he returned to the fold of the established church, his attitude toward the validity of *AM* changed: 'But men read the Book of Martyrs, as a booke of credit, next to the booke of God. At least, I meane, that part which concerneth the state of the poore Churches, for 300. yeares after Christ.'⁷⁸ He had suddenly rejected the value of the medieval material of the book. This shift in the way Fairlambe interpreted Foxe suggests that his conformist circle understood the lollard material in *The Acts and Monuments* one way, while conformists read them very differently. This doubt about the beliefs of Foxe's lollards, due to their radical nature at odds with the Church of England—and again, completely unmitigated by Foxe—looks to be the reason conformists were reluctant to use Foxe when trying to convince others of the lollards' orthodoxy.

Universal Priesthood

⁷⁵Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge: 'Orthodoxy,' 'Heterodoxy,' and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 184. Peter Fairlambe, *The recantation of a Brownist* (1606), sigs. D2r and E2r.

⁷⁶Fairlambe, *The recantation of a Brownist*, sigs. E1v-E2r.

⁷⁷Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge*, 184.

⁷⁸Fairlambe, *The recantation of a Brownist*, sig. E1v.

But Foxe also drew attention to claims that went beyond deconstruction and offered a more positive view of priesthood. He incorporated Thomas Man's declaration that 'all holie men of his secte were onely Priestes',⁷⁹ and included the declaration that 'euery true Christian man is a priest to God'.⁸⁰ In fact, what is strange about Foxe's inclusion of these beliefs is the somewhat muted way he treated them. While the notion of the priesthood of all believers is by no means abundant in Wycliffite writings and heresy trials, Foxe hardly seized on the opportunities that did arise. Although many Norwich lollards espoused this belief, including individuals who receive a larger treatment in the text (such as Margery Backster, John Skilley, Avisa Moone, and John Goddesel), Foxe merely listed it as a belief they all held (which was not true), among many others.

Perhaps one reason for this was the tenor of these lollards' words. While Foxe captured something close to what they said (instead of saying that every Christian man was a priest to God, most said that every *good* man was a priest⁸¹), in other cases, Foxe took what is closer to Hornbeck's deconstruction of the priesthood in the trial documents and moulded them into the positive statement above. A closer look at Skilley's trial record yields that he abjured 'that every trewe man and woman being in charite is a prest, and that no prest hath more poar in mynstryng of the sacramentes than a lewed man hath'.⁸² A similar phenomenon occurs in John Purvey's narrative. Whereas Purvey is recorded as saying, 'Euery lay man being holy, and predestinate vnto euer lastyng lyfe (albeit he be a lay man) yet is he a true priest before God', Foxe was quick to tone it down. He cautioned in the margin: 'He speketh of priestes here, & not of publique ministers appointed in the Churche.'⁸³

⁷⁹*AM*, 980.

⁸⁰*AM*, 805.

⁸¹See for example, Margery Baxter's testimony, which says she was accused of believing 'quod quilibet bonus homo est sacerdos'. *Norwich Trials*, 42. While this may be the case, nevertheless in William Thorpe's testimony, we see his exact words being repeated by Foxe; he was accused that 'euery good man (though he be vnlearned) is a priest'. This may be yet another case of inconsistency in *AM*. See *AM*, 650.

⁸²*Norwich Trials*, 57.

⁸³*AM*, 670. While Foxe leaves intact the belief of the Leicestershire lollards that 'euery good man although he bee vnlearned is a priest,' the distinction seems to be in unlearned men being

The radical tendencies inherent in the notion of the priesthood of all believers could have deterred Foxe from emphasizing their presence in the text. There were limits to the magisterial notion of the priesthood of all believers. While evangelicals believed they needed no intermediary to God, they still preserved a special role for ministers of the church. There is a clear line between the priesthood of all believers and all believers having the authority of ministers, and we see that Foxe drew that line while editing the lollard narratives in *AM*.

Conclusion

Foxe's depiction of lollard critiques of the clergy was central to his history of the true church. Perhaps more than any other grievance with the medieval Catholic church, an abhorrence of the abuses by the clergy tied the medieval reformers to the sixteenth-century evangelicals. The antisacerdotal overwhelms the few examples of hyperclericalism found in the lollard narratives, and subsumes the literary anticlericalism. Found within Foxe's text, then, was an implicit denial of sacerdotal powers, such as the ability provide a conduit to God through sacramental efficacy or the forgiveness of sins. Beyond this denial, which might be expected, Foxe also incorporated an explicit rejection of an episcopal hierarchy, and even the idea of a separation between the clergy and the laity.

That late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century polemicists picked up these elements in Foxe's text and ran with them is unsurprising. What is remarkable about these examples is not merely their number, but the lollards' wide appeal to polemicists of such different religious affiliations. Due to the variety of lollard critiques that Foxe incorporated into the text, these medieval dissenters were able to be appropriated for puritans and radicals of all types. Perhaps most telling of the influence these narratives had was the staying power of the lollards. Penry was writing in the early 1590s, and Owen's works were published just over a hundred years later. In very different religious environments, the lollards—as seen in and validated by

allowed to be priests. Though this has a radical tinge, Foxe would have considered it a jab at scholastic theology in universities and left it intact. See *AM*, 624.

Foxe—were still considered as legitimate corroboration of true belief.

The reception history of the lollard views of the clergy elucidates the role of the lollards in the course of the long English Reformation. When shoring up their arguments against the clerical hierarchy in the Church of England, Protestants of all stripes approached *AM* to bolster their cases, and they often found them not in the testimonies of the Marian martyrs, but in the more radical material in the lollard narratives that Foxe relayed to his readers. And when conformists went back to the text, they found Foxe's voice accepting episcopacy. Although the scholars pinpoint the first sign of Foxe's unpopularity in the rise of Laudianism in the 1630s, in fact, beginning with the early 1590s, conformists were uncomfortable with his portrayal of episcopacy, especially in the lollard narratives.

This variety of interpretations may force a reassessment of Collinson's suggestion of a Foxean textual community. This is where the divide between authorial intent and reader reception widens: while Foxe no doubt would have wanted a collective understanding of his text, events did not unfold that way in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Foxe included of a variety of religious beliefs of the martyrs, even radical lollards, in order to shore up the evangelical church as the true church through a wealth of historical examples. While this served his purposes in the mid-sixteenth century, by the seventeenth century, those same examples—in particular the radical ones—were used to support further reform, and even separation from that church. If those textual communities did exist (and I agree that they did), then their boundaries need to be redrawn: what the Fairlambe case seems to suggest is that Brownists read *AM* one way, and conformists another. When Quakers approached this material, they would have identified with certain characters based on their own beliefs. This would likely have reinforced their connection to history and to one another. In strengthening their own bonds, it would have weakened their ties with those who held mutually exclusive ideas, such as conformists in the Church of England. The idea of one interpretive community coalescing around *AM*, then, is inconsistent with the evidence when considering the reception history of Foxe's lollard material. Instead, many interpretive communities were entrenched through the examples Foxe left in his history intact. No topic in seventeenth-century England

could have divided the church as much as the role of the priesthood, and Foxe's lollards helped to make sure that it did.

Chapter 7: Sacraments

Introduction

Every one of the seven traditional sacraments of the medieval church was called into question or even rejected wholesale by some lollards. Most lollards viewed the sacraments as being under the direct control of a corrupt clerical hierarchy, laden with unnecessary ceremony, and/or a means for priests to obtain money from lay folk. While some lollard groups were more outspoken about other issues, the early lollards such as John Purvey and Walter Brute, as well as the Norwich community, spoke out about nearly all the sacraments.¹ And while a rejection of transubstantiation characterized most lollard critiques of Catholic Eucharistic theology, in fact trial records—and indeed Foxe’s *AM*—suggest a wide diversity of opinion among the dissenters with regard to the efficacy and value of the sacraments as a whole.

This chapter will examine lollard beliefs on the sacraments as mediated by Foxe in order to delineate Foxe’s editorial practices. The first section will detail how the lollards articulated their disappointment with nearly all the constituent parts of the traditional sacramental framework. From there, it will turn to the two sacraments that reformers upheld as valid: the Eucharist and baptism. Although a staunch rejection of transubstantiation unsurprisingly passed muster with Foxe, the range of views concerning baptism—which included even a blunt rejection of its efficacy—forced Foxe into an uncomfortable position. Baptism, then, will serve as a case study in order to analyse Foxe’s editorial practices, revealing that he was inconsistent with his deletions. This suggests that while some scholars have assigned Foxe the label of ‘magisterial reformer’ and attributed his radical omissions to that reason, in fact Foxe’s editing practices are less straightforward.² By pinpointing what Foxe found acceptable for inclusion, we can nuance the way we consider his editorial style; this

¹While the majority of lollards were questioned about their views of transubstantiation, several groups were in fact characterized by other features; for instance, the Chiltern lollards were noted mostly for their reading of the vernacular Bible and the lollard tracts that were found in their possession. *Norwich Trials*, 10.

²See chapter one.

chapter will test scholars' claims that Foxe neatly edited sacramental belief according to Elizabethan orthodoxy, and offer reasons for his editorial choices.

Questioning the Seven Sacraments

In fact well before Wyclif's rejection of the doctrine of transubstantiation in the late fourteenth century (which will be discussed below), there had been several scholars who had expressed doubt about the Real Presence, and Foxe included the words of these men, such as Berengar of Tours, into *AM* as early witnesses against transubstantiation.³ But in England, it was not until the time of the lollards that nearly all the sacraments were questioned. Chapter four showed how reformers used the lollards to construe the sacrament of orders as evidence of disorder in the world, a sign of a false church, but lollards also questioned the sacraments of confirmation, penance, and matrimony.⁴

Foxe told his readers that the Council of Constance condemned Wyclif for believing that the 'confirmation of children...be reserued to the pope & bishops onely for the respecte of temporall lucre', and that his solution to this problem was apparently to democratize its administration.⁵ Foxe culled this belief of Wyclif from his opponent's text: 'The administration of the sacrament of confirmation, is not only reserued to byshops.'⁶ Where Wyclif may have been happy to see confirmation modified, some of his followers rejected it wholesale; for instance, Robert Griggess of Martham in Norfolk was forced to abjure his belief that the sacrament of confirmation was inconsequential to salvation.

Like the sacrament of confirmation, penance was rejected by several lollards of *AM*. Chapter five demonstrated how Foxe used the lollard persecutions to highlight the bishops' abuse of the sacrament of penance, and this was given more weight through the lollards' own condemnation of it.⁷ Walter Brute rejected auricular

³*AM*, 233.

⁴Above, 121-22.

⁵*AM*, 571. Cf. *PR*, 292.

⁶*AM*, 572. Cf. Ortwin Gratius, *Fasciculis rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum* (Cologne, 1535), fo. 95v.

⁷See chapter five.

confession and penance, claiming ‘I can not finde that Christ assigned any penaunce vnto sinners for their sinnes, but that he willed them to sinne no more.’⁸ Whereas Brute rejected it, Purvey was merely keen to see it modified to a more humane form; Foxe relayed that he thought ‘the penance and paines. . . be vnreasonable and vniuste, for the austeritie and rigorousnes which they contein, more then are taxed by Gods law’.⁹ As with most other lollard beliefs, the scholastic logic that gave birth to them was far diminished by the time they reached the later lollards, where they were manifest in crude, simplistic similes. The Coventry lollard John Falkes asserted that ‘no priest hath power to assoyle any man from hys sinnes, when as he can not make one heare of hys head’.¹⁰

In *AM*, readers would have also found opposition to elevating the status of matrimony to sacramental. While reformers certainly would have found this demotion agreeable, in fact it was because Foxe moulded it that way. Of the lollard groups found in *AM*, only the Norwich lollards, whose prosecutors specifically questioned them along the line of the sacramental belief, criticized the rite of marriage. The issue came up in 28 depositions, where typically defendants held something similar to John Skyly’s belief that ‘only consent of love betuxe man and woman is sufficient for matrimonie, withowte expressing of wordis and withowte solempnizacion in churche’.¹¹ While Foxe would have been happy for marriage to be desacralized, he clearly had qualms about taking it out of the church, both its physical building and the wider congregation; he did not include Skyly’s words in his fuller treatment of Skyly, or in the specific narratives of other Norwich lollards.¹² While Foxe did not go into the details of these lollard perspectives, he did cover his back: in case others would be cross-referencing *AM* with the original records, Foxe claimed that the notaries taking down the lollard testimony infused their beliefs with disagreeable positions:

⁸ *AM*, 608.

⁹ *AM*, 671.

¹⁰ *AM*, 943.

¹¹ *Norwich Trials*, 11, 57.

¹² *AM*, 807.

And likewise for matrimony, wherin they are reported to holde & affirme as though it consisted onely in themutuall consent betwixt the man & woman, nedyng no other solempnising in the publicke church, all because (as it is lyke) they denied it to be a Sacrament.

The margin here reads, ‘The papistes are but quarepickers.’

In addition to matrimony, Foxe’s readers would have found that even extreme unction, despite its Scriptural presence in the lollards’ favorite reading material, the Epistle of James, came into doubt when Thomas Man denied its efficacy.¹³ So Foxe’s sixteenth- and seventeenth-century readers would have read lollard views that ran the gamut from mere calls for better management to comprehensive rejection. Mediated by Foxe (especially in the case of matrimony), these would have been palatable to evangelicals, who believed that the two sacraments found in Scripture, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, were the only valid ones.¹⁴

The Eucharist

The Eucharistic theology of the late medieval church, promulgated officially in 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council as the doctrine of transubstantiation, was born out of disputes over the type of changes the substances of bread and wine were said to have undergone when affected by a priest’s words.¹⁵ Despite being declared official Catholic doctrine, skepticism remained about the tenet of transubstantiation, which held that after a priest’s consecration, the substance of the wine and unleavened bread altered into the blood and body of Christ while its accidents miraculously remained in its original material form. John Wyclif himself would ultimately reject

¹³AM, 980. Cf. James 5:14.

¹⁴ Luther had discarded confirmation, ordination, marriage, and extreme unction by late 1519—and penance was not far behind. See Richard Marius, *Martin Luther: The Christian Between God and Death* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 189. Marius asserts that Luther’s idea of penance changed when as he wrote his *Babylonian Captivity*—he regarded it afterward as a good practice, but not a sacrament; see *ibid.*, 257.

¹⁵ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 202-204.

transubstantiation in favor of understanding Christ to be in the sacrament ‘virtually, spiritually, and sacramentally’,¹⁶ and favoured a view that saw a union of Christ’s body and the material substance. As with other articles of belief, Wyclif’s sophisticated and explicated views became muddier versions among the unlearned, and as a result, late medieval records revealed to Foxe a variety of Eucharistic interpretations. Patrick Hornbeck points out that because views of the sacrament were ‘a useful litmus test for dissenting belief’, employed by bishops and inquisitors, this issue featured more frequently than any other in English heresy trials in the late medieval period.¹⁷

With a rejection of transubstantiation, Foxe would be in agreement with the lollards.¹⁸ Although England’s Thirty-Nine Articles left the topic of eucharistic belief ambiguous, which deliberately allowed for a range of understanding, Brian Spinks has shown that the most influential catechisms and theological treatises of the day recognized the sacrament as closest to Calvin’s symbolic instrumentalism.¹⁹ As for *AM*, David Loades’ essay in the *TAMO* apparatus maintains, ‘Foxe was careful to mediate his martyrs’ views in line with Cranmer’s theology of God’s presence in the Lord’s Supper in a spiritual sense only.’²⁰ But does this bear further scrutiny?

¹⁶ *WL?*, 74.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁸ For Foxe’s view of the Eucharist, see Foxe, *Syllogisticon hoc est argumenta, seu probationes & resolutiones, ...de re & materia sacramenti eucharistici* (1563).

¹⁹ Brian D. Spinks, *Sacraments, Ceremonies and the Stuart Divines: Sacramental Theology and Liturgy in England and Scotland 1603-1662* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 19-24. See also B. A. Gerrish, ‘Sign and Reality: The Lord’s Supper in the Reformed Confessions’ in *idem, The Old Protestantism and the New: Essays on the Reformation Heritage* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982), 118-30. Neither Luther’s sacramental union nor Zwingli’s memorialist approach, Cranmer’s eucharistic theology was akin to Bullinger’s symbolic parallelism, whereby ‘Christ is not bodily present in the bread and wine, but is joined to our hearts and minds by his Spirit.’ Spinks, *Sacraments*, 9. Foxe himself was tasked with translating Cranmer’s debate with Stephen Gardiner on the Eucharist into Latin, an assignment from Peter Martyr Vermigli that vexed Foxe due to its complicated linguistic nature and Foxe’s difficulty finding a printer in exile. See *RB*, 73.

²⁰ David Loades, ‘Foxe in Theological Context,’ *TAMO* Essays. Similarly Thomson has used a single example (discussed below) of Foxe excising a belief about baptism to prove that Foxe ‘the polemicist in Foxe...prevailed over the historian,’ without analyzing those that *were* in his text.

As with the sacraments of confirmation, penance, and matrimony mentioned previously, in fact Foxe offered a spectrum of beliefs about the Eucharist. Many, of course, were straightforward rejections of transubstantiation, without further explanations. The author(s) of the Twelve Conclusions essentially called the doctrine of transubstantiation a sham invented by Thomas Aquinas—a belief also written by William Thorpe.²¹ Simple denials of Christ's physicality in the sacrament characterized the now-lost records of the Chiltern lollards, evidenced in the testimonies of Robert Rave, Thomas Man, Thurstan Littlepage and his wife Emma, and the extended Colyns family, including their servants.²²

Other denials of transubstantiation were based on physical grounds. In *AM*, several lollards asserted that if God were truly in the sacraments then, impossibly, multiple gods would exist simultaneously. John Badby, a lollard from the Worcester area, claimed that 'if euery hoste beyng consecrated at the aulter were the Lordes body, that then there be 20000. gods in England', and a similar explanation is given by Christopher Tinker of the Chiltern community, as well as Margery Backster of the Norwich group.²³ Other rejections based on physicality were given by another of the Norwich group, Nicholas Canon, who explained with mock reason that a priest's mouth is too small for both God and man;²⁴ Elynor Heges of Burford, who doubted the holiness of something she could burn in the oven;²⁵ and John Butler, who testified that he learned from Richard Vulford and Thomas Gefferay that the sacrament could not really be Christ's body if a mouse would eat it.²⁶

While these doubts about the transubstantiated Eucharist lay in the bread's physical properties, lollards of *AM* also refused to accept it on scriptural and theological grounds. For Christopher Tinker, mentioned above, 'the Sacrament of the altar was a holie thing, but not the flesh and bloud of Christ' because Christ had

Thomson, 'John Foxe and some Sources for Lollard History,' 252. Cf. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 218-20.

²¹ *AM*, 627. Thorpe also maintained that Aquinas' doctrine 'losed' the 'fiend'; see *AM*, 659.

²² *AM*, 981, 995-1001.

²³ *AM*, 644, 995.

²⁴ *AM*, 810.

²⁵ *AM*, 998.

²⁶ *AM*, 992.

been 'yll dealt with' while alive on Earth, and therefore would not be returning in the flesh, and his fellow deponent Thomas Rave was reported to have said this as well.²⁷ John Badby asserted that believing Christ's words 'This is my body' to be literal was tantamount to denying Christ's original incarnation.²⁸

Although these explicit rejections of transubstantiation were based on somewhat dubious physical and theological grounds, they feature in the lollard corpus of *AM*, even alongside cruder treatments of the sacrament. The same Thomas Rave who thought Christ would not come back to earth, and therefore could not exist in the sacrament, admitted to the authorities that he had 'made water in the chappell at Masse tyme, excusing afterward that he did it of necessitie'.²⁹ Several lollard statements verged on an unrefined sacramentarianism, yet nevertheless, Foxe relays them. Perhaps his readers would best remember the remarkable testimony of Margery Backster, who, after hearing that her neighbor believed that Christ was physically in the sacrament, responded to her:

your believe is nought. For if euery such sacrament were God, and the very body of Christ, there shoulde be an infinite number of Gods, because that a thousande priestes and more do euery day make a thousand such Gods, and afterward eate them, and voyde them out againe by their hinder partes filthely stinking vnder the hedges, whereas you may finde a great many such Gods, if you wyll seeke for them. And therefore know for a certainty, that by the grace of God it shall neuer be my God, because it is falsly and disceitfully ordayned by the priests in the Church, to induce the simple people to idolatry, for it is onely materiall bread.³⁰

Foxe only glossed the statement: 'The sacrament is not God.' And while Backster's statement may have been the most colorful, *AM* gave other examples that inclined too closely to Zwingli's view of the Lord's Supper. The Chiltern lollard Henry Ulman was found guilty 'for speakyng and teaching agyng the Sacrament of the

²⁷ *AM*, 995, 994.

²⁸ *AM*, 644.

²⁹ *AM*, 994.

³⁰ *AM*, 807.

altar eleuen yeares agoe, and saying it was but a trifle'.³¹ Isabell Tracher had to abjure because 'she cursed the priest after he was gone, whiche had geuen to her the Eucharist, saying, that he had geuen to her bitter gall'.³² Other statements debased Eucharistic sanctity by refusing to fast prior to partaking: Alice Harding claimed she 'might as well drinke vpon the Sonday before Masse, as any other day' and Isabel Tracher told Alice Holting that eating prior to participating in the rite was not wrong.³³

Among the wealth of sacramentarian-sounding lollard beliefs, there were only a couple of instances where lollard Eucharistic views came much closer to those held by Foxe. Walter Brute, after a typically meandering exposition of transubstantiation and consubstantiation, arrived at the notion of the sacrament as a sign or memorial of Christ; beside Brute's rejection of transubstantiation, Foxe glossed, 'Note well, gentle reader', and faithfully repeated Brute's memorialism in the margin.³⁴ Thomas Colins of the Chiltern group taught his son something similar: 'that hee should not worship the Sacrament of the altare as God, for that it was but a token of the Lordes body'.³⁵

Other lollard views did not dovetail so cleanly with the perspectives of sixteenth-century reformers, including those of John Wyclif. While Wyclif's understanding of the Eucharist was characterized by remanence, this is not immediately clear in *AM*. Foxe found Wyclif's Eucharistic positions in two sources. The first, the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, was lent to him by Bale, and contained three sentences that deny transubstantiation but do not affirm remanence;³⁶ Foxe faithfully copied these.³⁷

³¹ *AM*, 994.

³² *AM*, 990.

³³ *AM*, 991, 990; Foxe notes that Holting was 'greate with childe' at the time.

³⁴ *AM*, 611.

³⁵ *AM*, 997.

³⁶ Wyclif's articles concerning the Eucharist were: 1) 'The substaunce of material bread and wine, doth remayne in the sacrament of the aulter after the consecration'; 2) 'The accidentis, do not remayne without the subiecte in the same sacrament, after the consecration'; 3) 'That Christ is not in the sacrament of *the* alter truely and really, in his proper and corporall person'. *AM*, 555.

³⁷ *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, Bodley Library MS e Musaeo 86, fo. 71r-v; cf. commentary in *TAMO* (1570), 555.

The second source was Ortwin Gratius' *Fasciculus rerum expetendarum ac fugiendarum* (1535), where the schoolman's position on the sacrament is among eighteen other articles gathered by Wyclif's Franciscan opponent William Woodford, who responded to Wyclif's unorthodox eucharistic beliefs in 1383.³⁸ These statements were shown to the Council of Constance, which condemned them and wrote commentaries explaining why they were heretical.³⁹ While Foxe omitted three of the Council's articles listed in the *Fasciculus rerum*, none of them concerned the Eucharist, though Foxe did leave out the commentaries (as he did for all the articles).⁴⁰ Since Foxe's primary sources were not Wyclif's own works,⁴¹ but hostile reactions, readers of *AM* were left understanding Wyclif's views as merely against transubstantiation, which was the particular interest of his opponents, including the members of the Council of Constance.

Nevertheless, Wyclif's ideas about the Eucharist were shared by co-religionists and revealed in the testimonies of early lollards such as William Swinderby. Swinderby

³⁸ 'William Woodford,' Jeremy Catto in *ODNB*. Foxe relays Woodford's collected eucharistic errors of Wyclif: 1) 'The bread remaineth in his owne substance, after the consecration thereof upon the altare, and ceaseth not to be bread still'; 2) 'As Iohn was figuratiuely Helias, and not personally: so the bread figuratiuely is the body of Christe, and not naturally. And that without all doubt, this is a figuratiue speache, to say: this is my body, as to say: This Iohn, is Helias'; 3) 'In the decree, Ego Berengarius, the court of Rome hath determined that the sacrament of the holy Eucharist, is naturally true bread'. Cf. Gratius, *Fasciculus rerum*, fo. 95v. *AM*, 572.

³⁹For the particular articles on the Eucharist, see Gratius, *Fasciculus rerum*, fos. 140v-141r.

⁴⁰The full list of Wyclif's articles condemned at the Council of Constance, see Gratius, *Fasciculus rerum*, fos. 140v-148r. As for eucharistic beliefs, the Council's commentary suggests nothing about Wyclif's belief in remanence, so Foxe would not have omitted the commentary because of positions that did not align with the later Church of England. For a discussion of the articles Foxe did not include, see the commentary on *TAMO* (1570), 571.

⁴¹Foxe, relying on Bale's *Illustrium Maioris Britanniae scriptorum...summarium* (1548), claimed that over two hundred of Wyclif's books had been burned by the Archbishop of Prague. Bale, *Summarium*, fo. 157v. He knew of Wyclif's *De veritate Scripturae*, *De fide catholica*, and *De eucharistia minor confessio*, and consulted it via the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*. The editor and translator of Wyclif's *Triologus*, Stephen Lahey, asserts that neither Foxe nor Bale had read this tract, printed in 1525. John Wyclif, *Triologus*, ed. and trans. Stephen LeHay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 25.

asserted, ‘*the Sacrament of the aulter made by vertue of heauenly wordes, that Christ him selfe sayd in the Cene, when he made this Sacrament, that it is bread and Christes body, so as Christ hym selfe sayes in the Gospell*’, and Foxe stayed faithful to Swin Derby’s message, glossing ‘Bread and Christes body in the Sacrament’.⁴² Swin Derby’s belief was echoed by John Purvey, and John Oldcastle reasoned that just as Christ was both man and God on earth, the sacrament was both bread and Christ.⁴³

The way Foxe and Bale handled remanence among lollard narratives is revealing. Although by definition a repudiation of transubstantiation, this position was nevertheless inconsistent with the view of the Eucharist taken by Foxe and other English reformers. John Bale felt he had to explain Oldcastle’s sacramental belief in *A brefe chronycle* when describing why the bishops allegedly felt they should forge a document of abjuration.⁴⁴ While the 1530 edition of the trials of Thorpe and Oldcastle made no mention of this document, Bale claimed that after the trial of Oldcastle, the bishops and priests were ‘in moche obloquye both of the nobylte and commons, partlye for that they had so cruellye handeled the good lorde Cobham, and partlye agayne *bycause his opynyon (as they thought at that tyme) was perfyght concernynge the sacrament*’.⁴⁵ In Bale’s explanation (and in Foxe’s verbatim repetition of it in all four editions), the reformer employs the device of history to distance himself and his co-religionists from this imperfect view of the sacrament.⁴⁶

This use of historical distance explains the variety of eucharistic belief found in *AM*.⁴⁷ These views run the gamut, from straightforward rejections of transub-

⁴²*AM*, 579.

⁴³*AM*, 670, 689; cf. *BC*, fo. 29r.

⁴⁴*BC*, fo. 42r.

⁴⁵*BC*, fo. 42r, italics mine. Cf. *AM*, 693.

⁴⁶Foxe, *TAMO* (1563), 325; (1570), 693; (1576), 567; (1583), 588.

⁴⁷This was a device that Foxe would continue to use. Evenden and Freeman have pointed out that by the time Foxe set out to print the works of Henrician reformers Robert Barnes, John Frith, and William Tyndale, their Eucharistic theology was too conservative for his Elizabethan readers; when relaying Frith’s belief that the Mass represented the crucifixion, Foxe glossed, ‘Frith writeth of the Masse according to the common opinion that was at that time.’ Foxe, *The whole workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes, three worthy martyrs* (London, 1573), 128, quoted in

stantiation (based on crude theological or physical explanations) to memorialism, including semi-sacramentarianism and remanence. In contrast to David Loades' claim that Foxe aggregated his martyrs' views into a Cranmer-friendly version, the lollard narratives reveal myriad understandings of the Eucharist that resulted from Foxe's high fidelity to his primary sources, but also from his ability to excuse them based on their historical place at the very dawn of the process Foxe considered to be the Reformation.

The issue of remanence also demonstrates the trouble with looking for consistency in *AM*. While Foxe included Bale's caveat about Oldcastle's belief in remanence, he did not add one of his own to the narratives of Swinderby or Purvey. Here, Patrick Collinson's designation of Foxe as 'creative editor' rather than 'author' is helpful.⁴⁸ Foxe never sat down to write this book from beginning to end. His work as a compiler of historical records as well as oral histories was never complete, evidenced by the book's occasional disorganization; among the lollard materials, for instance, it is likely that the Kent persecutions—erroneously placed among events occurring after 1546 though the trials took place in 1511-12—were being translated and transcribed from Archbishop Warham's register even as the 1570 edition was being printed.⁴⁹ Evenden and Freeman have thoroughly demonstrated the rapid pace and paper deficits that forced Foxe and Day to use multiple copy texts and make last-minute decisions regarding content in the rush to complete the 1570 edition.⁵⁰ They have also shown that once material was in this edition, it likely stayed there.⁵¹ This indicates that historians should use caution when hastily assigning religious designs to Foxe's inclusions and omissions. Prioritizing philosophical purposes over practical ones could serve to tell us more about (post-)modern historians than about

RB, 244.

⁴⁸Patrick Collinson, 'John Foxe as Historian,' *TAMO* Essays.

⁴⁹*TAMO* (1570) commentary, 1492. *RB*, 143 n.32.

⁵⁰*RB*, 135-85.

⁵¹Evenden and Freeman show that Foxe had nearly nothing to do with the 1576 edition, and that even though some material that had been excised from the 1570 edition made it back into the 1583 edition, in fact the main difference between the 1583 edition and its predecessors was the appendix of martyrs' writings at the end of it, and increased readability due to better paper quality and new black letter type; no new lollard material appeared. See *RB*, 305-312.

Foxe's endeavour.

Foxe as Editor of Lollard Beliefs: The Case Study of Baptism

The second sacrament upheld by the reformed churches was baptism. All Christians recognized that this rite welcomed a new member into the church, and was a prerequisite for participation in communion. While Anabaptist groups emphasized individual choice and cognizance as paramount when committing to join the church, most Protestant churches recognized the sacrament as 'a public sign of the commitment of both God and the human Christian community to an infant too young and unaware to understand or articulate his or her own need for that support'.⁵² Deemed as scripturally mandated, it continued to be identified as a sacrament in the evangelical churches and though in the Church of England it was a source of contention, this was only because getting it right was considered paramount.⁵³

Foxe would have found lollard critiques of the ceremonies surrounding baptism to be a welcome find in the archives—if there had been any. What he found instead tended to go much further than mere condemnations of popish excesses. The issue of baptism only emerges three times in lollard narratives of *AM*. One of the beliefs shared by John Edwards, John Purvey, Richard Herbert, Emmot Willy, John Becke, and John Seynons, was 'that the infant (although he dye vnbaptized) shalbe saued'.⁵⁴ While in the medieval Catholic Church, this would have been a heretical position, by Foxe's day the mainstream position of the English church was that 'baptism had limited efficacy', and was recognized as a 'seal' of the Holy Spirit—not automatic salvation.⁵⁵ Therefore, the lollard position would not have been contentious.

Two other places where baptism appears in lollard narratives proved more difficult for Foxe. First, Walter Brute denied Augustine's decree that unbaptized infants were eternally damned. He supported his claim by stating that the sacrament of

⁵²Karen E. Spierling, *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva, 1536-1564* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 5.

⁵³David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 97-148.

⁵⁴*AM*, 650.

⁵⁵Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 111, 110.

baptism was not necessary for salvation, and claimed that in fact, many adult martyrs had not been baptized and yet were members of the church triumphant. He continued, ‘Are not all baptized with the holy Ghost and with fire? But yet not with materiall fire, no more is the lotion of water corporally necessary to washe away sinnes, but onely spirituall water, that is to say, the water of fayth.’⁵⁶ Brute bolstered his case by adding that a just and merciful God would not condemn someone who had no knowledge of his or her own sin. Anticipating Luther’s belief that an infant could have faith, Brute reasoned that because it was certainly possible that ‘God speaketh inwardly by way of illumination of the intelligence of the infant, as he speaketh vnto Aungels’, there would be no way for anyone to even know whether or not the infant has received the faith of Christ.⁵⁷

Like other lollards, Brute’s reshaping of the sacrament was biblically rooted. He cited 1 Corinthians 15 as proof that the living could be baptized for the dead, and asked rhetorically, ‘Why then is not the infant saued by the baptisme of his parentes: seeing the infant it selfe is impotent at the time of death, and not able to require baptisme?’⁵⁸ Finally, Brute also undermined the link between salvation and baptism by arguing, ‘Christ sayth, he that beleueth and is baptized, shalbe saued. He sayth not, he that is not baptized: but he that beleueth not shall be damned.’ Foxe merely glossed this text as he did throughout most of the other texts, listing biblical references and minor subject headings in the margins.

Aside from Brute’s assertion that parental baptism should suffice for children, thus far, these statements did not deviate too far from the understanding of baptism in the reformed English church. Where readers would see Brute run off course, Foxe’s editorial voice appears: claiming that he was cutting the material ‘for breuitie’, the reformer remained faithful to his medieval source by acknowledging Brute’s arguments, but quickly passing over them. The crucial passage concerned the role of women in administering the sacraments. Brute reasoned that because the Catholic Church permitted baptism by laywomen—and the Catholic Church’s understanding

⁵⁶*AM*, 608.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸This is incorrectly glossed as 2 Corinthians 15 in the 1570, 1676, and 1583 editions of *AM*.

of baptism was that the rite remitted sins—women were therefore capable of absolving sin. It was a short hop from there to administering the Eucharist: if women could ‘loose’ individuals from their sins, it followed that they could ‘bind’ them as well, and that, of course, was the role of a priest. The other duty of a priest was to administer the Eucharist.⁵⁹ Foxe drew the line here, explaining to his readers:

After these things thus discussed, he inferreth consequently vpon the same, an other briefe tractation of wemen and lay men, whether in defecte of the other, they may exercise the action of prayer, and ministration of Sacraments belonging to priestes: wherin he declareth the vse receaued in the Popes church, for women to baptise, which, saith he, cannot be wythout remission of sins. wherfore seinge that wemen haue power by the Pope to remitte sinne, and to baptise, why may they not aswell bee admitted to minister the Lordes supper, in like case of necessitie?...All whiche for breuitie I pretermitte, procedyng to the ministration of prayer. . .⁶⁰

Foxe readily escaped the situation, but it is important to note that he admitted Brute’s claims and, significantly, made no effort to mitigate or explain away these comments.⁶¹

⁵⁹Alastair Minnis, “Respondet Walterus Bryth. . .” Walter Brute in Debate on Women Priests,’ in *Text and Controversy from Wyclif to Bale*, eds. Helen Barr and Ann M. Hutchinson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 229-49. Cf. William W. Capes, ed., *Registrum Johannis Trefnant* (London: Canterbury and York Society 20, 1916), 345-47. Another duty of the priest was to preach, and Brute pondered about the validity of this as well; see chapter eight.

⁶⁰*AM*, 614.

⁶¹ It could be significant here that Foxe seems sensitive to the idea of a layperson administering the sacrament, regardless of gender. In the case of the Kent lollards, whom Foxe claimed had held ‘That no power is geuen of God to Priestes of minystring sacramentes, saying Masse, or other Diuine seruice, more then to lay men,’ Foxe steps in to make a marginal clarification. He blatantly corrects: ‘Their meaning was thys: that Priestes *can* claime no more vertue or hie estate by their orders, then can a lay man.’ We will see in chapter eight that Foxe was also protective of the right to preach, amending views so that it looked like lollards believed only ministers could preach. See *AM*, 1493.

This is very different from the approach he took in the second place where baptism is mentioned contentiously in the lollard narratives. In the records of the Norwich lollards, Foxe found beliefs that went a long way toward denying that baptism was efficacious at all. After listing the names of the Norwich lollards who were forced to abjure under William Alnwick, Bishop of Norwich, between 1428-1431, *AM* gives a lengthy account of these lollards' beliefs. Foxe opened his explanation by claiming that, as was often the prerogative of popish inquisitors, many of these lollards were falsely accused of certain heresies. He explained,

it is to be thought concerning these Articles that many of them either were falsly obiected agaynst them, or not truely reported of the notaryes, according as the *common* maner is of these aduersaryes, where the matter is good, there to make heresy, and of a litle occasion, to styrre vp great matter of slaunder. . . either mistaking that which they said, or misunderstanding that which they ment.⁶²

He went on to defend the lollards against their accusers' alleged manipulations, insisting that while the East Anglian lollards had merely decried 'the ceremonicall and superfluous traditions then vsed in baptisme, as salt, oile, spittle, taper, light crisomes, exorcising of the water, with such other', the notaries at the trial had slanderously applied heresies to these people in order to make their doctrines unpalatable to good Christians. He claimed that the notaries would have it that the lollards 'should holde that the sacrament of Baptisme vsed in the church by water, is but a light matter and of small effect', but said that this was far from the truth.

As Foxe continued, he revealed more of what these lollards were said to have believed. He wrote that they were accused of objecting to midwives' christening babies in private houses, and of speaking against those who believe unbaptized infants are damned. Foxe relayed that the lollards were falsely reported to have believed that 'Christen people be sufficiently baptized in the bloud of Christ, and nedeth no water, and that infants be sufficiently baptized, if their parents be baptized before them'—words strikingly similar to those of Brute. Foxe's last word on the sub-

⁶²*AM*, 805.

ject strongly condemned these beliefs: ‘Whiche thing is so contrary to the manifest worde, that it is not to bee thoughte anye to bee so ignoraunt of the gospell, that euer would or did affirme the same.’ It is worth mentioning that Foxe denied that the lollards believed such a thing, and not denounce the lollards themselves.

The contrast between Foxe’s reaction to these beliefs and those of Brute is puzzling. Very similar ideas are espoused, yet Foxe did not say a negative word in Brute’s testimony. Foxe closely edited Brute’s narrative, omitting material he deemed too radical; still, curiously, he left Brute’s testimony intact concerning baptism. One reason this material may have been included was precisely because Foxe had already removed unacceptable material; as Foxe had discovered in 1566 with the publication of Nicolas Harpsfield’s *Dialogi Sex* (which attacked Foxe’s accuracy in significant ways), people would be double-checking his work. Perhaps Foxe considered it best to include as much material as he could, lest he be seen as selective to the point of misleading.

Even if we accept that as a possibility, it does not explain Foxe’s permissive marginal comments. There are only three of these glossing the passage: two scriptural references (2 Corinthians 15 and John 12) and one sentence, ‘Children departing before baptisme not condemned.’⁶³ As we have seen, Foxe was adept at mediating lollards’ beliefs, and shifting their emphases through the use of marginal asides—why did he not use this technique with Brute’s beliefs on infant baptism is mystifying and contradictory. On several occasions, Foxe would excuse lollard behaviour by interrupting the text;⁶⁴ given Foxe’s zeal for setting the record straight, it is curious that he let Brute’s belief in infant salvation remain in the text intact and without gloss.

One possible reason for this might be that Brute’s testimony is slightly different from that of the Norwich lollards. While his question, ‘Why then is not the infant sauued by the baptisme of his parentes: seeing the infant it selfe is impotent at the

⁶³ *AM*, 608.

⁶⁴ For instance, when Joanne John venerated a saint, Foxe was able to excuse it on account of her ‘ignorant simplicitie’ and ‘lack of better instruction’, directly in the middle of the narrative. See *AM*, 967.

time of death, and not able to require baptisme?’ makes it clear that his concern is over infants in danger of dying before receiving the sacrament, there are no such indications in the Norwich records. The blanket statement Foxe relays, ‘Christen people be sufficiently baptized in the bloud of Christ, and nedeth no water, and that infants be sufficiently baptized, if their parents be baptized before them’—does not leave any room for the infant to eventually *become* baptized. In fact, if ‘Christen people be sufficiently baptized in the bloud of Christ, and nedeth no water’, then there is no real indication that baptism is necessary or efficacious at all, and here Foxe objected openly.

Another possible reconciliation lies in cases where Foxe completely omitted all mention of baptism from heresy trials much closer to his own time. In the case of Margery Goyte, persecuted with the Coventry group in 1488, Foxe repeated all but two of her errors: first, that Mary was not a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus, and second, that ‘a child conceived of Christian parents does not need the sacrament of baptism’.⁶⁵ Why Foxe would cut out the first is clear, and we have already seen that Foxe openly condemned the second. While the *TAMO* commentary claims that Foxe’s omission of Goyte’s views was because he felt uncomfortable with it, we might be surprised that of the Norwich lollards, which assert almost the same, remain intact.⁶⁶

In another instance of complete omission (that is, where Foxe makes no mention that the article even existed), the Kent heresy proceedings of 1511-12 reveal that defendants were asked about each of the seven sacraments, and they all were said to claim that baptism was neither necessary nor profitable for a person’s soul.⁶⁷ As stated earlier, mainstream reformers in the English church would have been sympa-

⁶⁵McSheffrey and Tanner, *Lollards of Coventry*, 91.

⁶⁶The *TAMO* commentary for Goyte reads, ‘Foxe is using the example of the Coventry Lollards to demonstrate that ‘true’ [sic] Christianity existed before Luther and that the Protestants did not invent their doctrines. This apologetic requirement explains why Foxe purged his accounts of the Coventry [sic] Lollards of articles attributed to them that he regarded as unorthodox.’ See *TAMO* commentary (1570), 943.

⁶⁷Norman Tanner, ed., *Kent Heresy Proceedings, 1511-12* (Maidstone: Kent Archaeological Society, 1997), vii-viii. Cf. *AM*, 1492-93.

thetic to the first idea, but certainly not to the second. Denying baptism's efficacy undermined the very foundations of the church community. This stretched beyond other lollard statements tinged with radicalism, and Foxe excised these statements from *AM*.⁶⁸

But why were some radical lollard sentiments about baptism recorded in *AM* while others were eradicated? With the exception of the very last statement, which went far beyond how Foxe and his co-religionists would have understood the sacrament, these ideas were relayed in Brute's testimony, admitted but condemned by Foxe in the Norwich records, and cut out completely from Goyte and the Kent lollards. There are three possibilities here. The first has to do with the relative status of the defendants. Brute was learned; his ideas are defended articulately, and though radical, are thoroughly grounded in Scripture. This is certainly not the case in the other lollard testimonies, which record crude understandings and blanket denials of efficacious sacraments. The second reason Foxe may have included some statements but omitted similar ones lies in the historical chronology of *AM*. Foxe's narrative painted Wyclif as the dawn of the Reformation, the faint light emerging from misty darkness. Foxe claimed that as time went on, despite the draconian efforts of the oppressive medieval church, the Gospel began to spread, and his narrative culminates in Luther's time. Considering the Kentish trials happened merely six years before Luther's reforming efforts began, Foxe may have thought he was cutting it a bit fine. This explanation might reconcile why the words of an early lollard like Brute could get by while testimony in the 1420s earns Foxe's rebuttal, despite its presence in the text, and why the lollards closer to Foxe's own day were expected to look more like proto-Protestants than faint morning stars of the Reformation.

The third, more frustrating reason is inconsistency on Foxe's part. As stated earlier with regard to the variety of lollard eucharistic interpretations found within *AM*, this text was an unwieldy one, even (or perhaps especially) for Foxe. While

⁶⁸Foxe also omitted the London lollard William Pottier's belief that he 'cold not tell what the blessid sacrament of baptism doth a vayle'. LMA, Diocese of London, A/A/005/MS09531/009, fo. 26v. Because Potter's views on the Trinity were so eccentric, he has not been part of this study (see above, pp. 17-18, 84).

there are indications that he closely edited the narratives of Brute and the Norwich lollards, there is less evidence with regard to the Coventry lot (Goyte's); as stated earlier, the stories of the Kent group were a late and hasty addition. In such scenarios, it may have been easy for Foxe to make the quick decision to omit dubious material, forgetting that nearly 1000 pages earlier, a similar position was permitted or glossed beyond recognition.

Later Reception of Lollard Baptismal Views in *Acts and Monuments*

Not until the mid-seventeenth century do the lollards look to have been noted for their rejection of infant baptism; this seems to have begun when the Baptist John Tombes began debating with Richard Baxter. Tombes had begun writing polemical tracts against paedobaptism in the 1640s, some of which would reach the New World.⁶⁹ Baxter had wrestled with the question during the same period, and when he ultimately decided in favor of infant baptism, he engaged Tombes in debate. Baxter eventually published these debates as *Plain Scripture proof of infants church-membership and baptism* (1649), and in an appendix he included a section of Wyclif's *Trialogus* to support his point.⁷⁰ In his response, *Anti-paedobaptism* (1657), Tombes claimed that Wyclif would agree with his own statements against infant baptism, based on the very same passage Baxter provided.⁷¹ What is significant about this, one of the two most important and well-known debates over paedobaptism in the seventeenth century, is that Foxe's lollards do not feature. As stated above, Foxe had not read the *Trialogus*, and although Tombes perused Foxe to find historical evidence of his position, he only looked as far as the early church examples.⁷² In

⁶⁹ 'John Tombes,' Julia J. Smith in *ODNB*.

⁷⁰Richard Baxter, *Plain Scripture proof of infants church-membership and baptism* (1651), 291. Cf. p. 19 above.

⁷¹John Tombes, *Anti-paedobaptism, or, The third part being a full review of the dispute concerning infant baptism* (1657), 553.

⁷²*Ibid.*, *Anti-paedobaptism, or, The second part of the full review of the dispute concerning infant-baptism* (1654), 69-70. In *Anti-paedobaptism, or, The third part being a full review of the dispute*, Tombes did cite Foxe's defense of Oldcastle, but only to prove he was not a traitor; he was not

fact, only one of Tombes' (many) adversaries called up the lollards from *AM*; it is worth repeating the debate over paedobaptism from the introduction of the thesis. In a sermon published in the debates among John Cragg, Henry Vaughan, and Tombes, Cragg made an appeal to Foxe's authority: 'Mr. Fox in his Acts and Monuments approves of the Albigenses, Waldenses, Wickliffists, Lollards, Poor men of Lyons, Brownists, Barrowists, as members of the Reformed Churches, but wholly excludes the Anabaptists, as erring fundamentally.'⁷³ Significantly, in this list of nonconformists, the lollards are tied to the Brownists and Barrowists, whom Cragg seems willing to accept; he saw that Foxe drew the line at believers' baptism, and this served as proof that others should do the same.

The other high profile debate regarding infant baptism was initiated by the Fifth Monarchist, Baptist, and rebel Henry Danvers, whose *A treatise of baptism* (1674) dedicated an entire section to 'An Account of that Eminent Servant and Confessor of Jesus Christ, Mr. John Wickliff'.⁷⁴ Like Cragg, Danvers also appealed to Foxe's authority, but to prove that Wyclif disapproved of infant baptism. Since *AM* is silent on Wyclif's views on this point, Danvers used a wealth of other sources, including (incredibly, given its conformist slant) Thomas James' *An Apologie for Iohn Wickliffe*. Danvers had done his homework: he searched out Wyclif's own works, including the *Trialogus* (as shown, Baxter had referenced this text, and Danvers debated with Baxter as well) though it should be said that most of these were cited via James' *Apologie*; he also relied heavily on Thomas Walden's accusations against Wyclif. Unsurprisingly, Danvers had to perform some rhetorical gymnastics to achieve his desired goal. While he was on safe ground demonstrating (from Wyclif's own works) that the schoolman believed that infants who died unbaptized were not damned, he shifted sources to show that Wyclif asserted believers' baptism.⁷⁵ Through James' *Apologie*, Danvers showed that Wyclif spoke against the

claiming that Oldcastle believed in infant baptism (755). This is significant because it proves that Tombes had read Foxe's lollard narratives, and chose not to employ them.

⁷³John Tombes, *A publick dispute betwixt John Tombs ... respondent, John Cragge, and Henry Vaughan ... opponents, touching infant-baptism*, 109.

⁷⁴Henry Danvers, *A treatise of baptism* (1674), 280.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 285.

ceremonial aspects of baptism, including the salt, oil, spittle, and chrism, but he went on to use ‘consequential reasoning’ to also claim that Wyclif was against infant baptism.⁷⁶ Shifting from this tack to Wyclif’s ‘more positive Assertions’, Danvers employs not Wyclif’s words, but those of Thomas Walden against him, and in fact against all lollards: ‘*Thomas Walden* doth...so vehemently charge and inveigh against him, as one of the seven Heads that comes out of the Bottomless Pit, *for denying Infants Baptism*; as also that it was the Heresie of the *Lollards*, of whom he was so great a Ring-leader.’⁷⁷ In the end, this exaggeration of Wyclif’s position as that of all lollards is simply stated in the margin: ‘As a lollard, he denies infant Baptism.’⁷⁸

While Danvers’ attempts to make Wyclif a proto-Baptist were questionable, in fact he was on surer ground with the Norwich lollards, whose testimony he mined from *AM*. Even here, Danvers had to shift the meaning of the text. As shown previously, the Norwich lollards disavowed baptism’s necessity, but this was not Danvers’ position; Danvers was merely denying the necessity of *infant* baptism. He explained, ‘[T]hey slighted Infants-Baptism; which they called slighting of *Baptism* it self, (because to them in those days it was the *Principal*, if not the only *Baptism*)...’⁷⁹ Danvers did admit that Foxe tried to deny this belief belonged to the Norwich lollards, but claimed that since it was consistent with Wyclif’s own tenets, and those of ‘their forefathers the Waldenses’, that it was probably true.⁸⁰

The rhetorical attempts of Tombes and Danvers did not go unanswered. In fact, both were impugned for using sources hostile to the lollards in order to ascertain their true beliefs, and this is a debt probably owed to Tyndale, Bale, and Foxe, who worked so hard to discredit those sources (in particular Walden);⁸¹ but this

⁷⁶Ibid., 287; cf. *Apologie*, 15.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid., 304.

⁸⁰Ibid., 306.

⁸¹Stephen Marshall attacked Tombes for using Walden, whom he claimed unfairly ‘imputed’ this heresy to the lollards; see Stephen Marshall, *A defence of infant-baptism* (1646), 65. Obadiah Wills retorted to Danvers that the Council of Constance never accused Wyclif of belief in adult baptism, and he likely searched Foxe for this. (Although he does not reference Foxe in this place, he does

is likely the extent of the legacy of Foxe's lollards in this debate. Those in favor of paedobaptism typically defended it on the terms that the Baptists set, and that appears to have been rooted in examples from the early church, not the medieval church. While both sides quarried *AM* for its early church witnesses, the lollards were rarely employed, and this seems to be due to the shape of the debate itself, not Foxe's content. As seen in the example of Danvers, it would be possible to use Foxe's lollard examples if need be; they did exist (if not in ready supply or endorsed by Foxe), shown in testimony of the Norwich lollards.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the variety of sacramental interpretations found among the lollard primary sources, and also shown the high level of fidelity with which Foxe treated them. Despite Loades' assertion that Foxe excised material or moulded it to fit into his mainstream Elizabethan agenda, in fact, Foxe offered opinions about the Eucharist from across the Protestant spectrum to readers of *AM*. Using the sacrament of baptism as a case study, I have explored Foxe's editorial practice, delineating places where he drew firm lines, in particular with regard to women (and probably lay people more generally) administering sacraments. I have also demonstrated that the ways Foxe dealt with radical ideas that ran the gamut: at times, beliefs were excised completely; others were explained away through the lollards' historical place or by blaming court clerks; yet others were briefly admitted if not discussed. Looking in detail at the reasons for Foxe's inconsistency, I have explored the possibility that he allowed more learned interpretations while eschewing cruder statements, or that radical claims made earlier in history, when the Holy Spirit had only revealed the truth partially, were allowed in *AM* while later ones were excised. Finally, I have pointed out that *AM* was an unwieldy text, full of functional problems such as paper supply and time constraints, suggesting that historians should lay aside the *a priori* assumption of a neat and considered vetting

in other places in his text.) For Walden, see Obadiah Wills, *Vindiciae vindiciarum* (1675), 45. Cf. above, 111.

process. Such assumptions privilege philosophical reasons over practical ones, with little basis as far as the lollard material is concerned.

This chapter has paid special attention to Foxe's editorial practice, analyzing how he chose to portray one of the marks of the true church. That he gave his readers many examples of sacramental interpretation reflects his process with notions of the priesthood, seen in the last chapter. It will also be the case in the next chapter, where I will explore lollard ideas about preaching in *AM*.

Chapter 8: Preaching

Introduction

Closely tied to lollard ideas about the sacraments, preaching was an important concern to the ‘known men’, and like other issues in this thesis, we find Foxe presenting a variety of perspectives on the topic. Foxe’s lollards held opinions that spanned the hyperclerical-antisacerdotal spectrum (see chapter six), and he presented nearly all of them in the text. By looking at these various inclusions (and at the one exclusion) we can delineate the degree to which these beliefs were deemed acceptable by Foxe.

This chapter will begin by detailing the variety of lollard views regarding preaching, which was, for the majority of Foxe’s lollards, inextricably linked to the role of the priest. This section will pay close attention to Foxe’s editorial choices, moving from radical material he allowed to remain intact or even strengthened by a marginal comment, to beliefs he attempted to mitigate, moving finally to a view he cut out altogether. From there, I will discuss the late-sixteenth and seventeenth-century readings of these lollard beliefs. The chapter will close by showing how lollard views on preaching provide a good litmus test for evaluating the way Foxe selectively edited *AM*.

Lollard Views of Preaching in Acts and Monuments

Perhaps more than any other issue, preaching serves to show how Foxe made editorial decisions. As with other topics in this thesis, an analysis of these decisions could bring us closer to a more nuanced understanding of the ‘magisterial’ and ‘radical’ Reformations.

One aspect of lollard views on preaching cannot be divorced from what these dissenters saw as an overall failure of the clergy (as seen in chapter six). Sir John Oldcastle asserted that the estate of the clergy should be ‘occupied in preachyng and teachyng the Scriptures purely’ and that it was the responsibility of the knighthood to ensure their compliance.¹ This concern for priests who neglected preaching was

¹*AM*, 686.

reflected in a perceived shift in priorities: Walter Brute lamented that priests were more interested in saying Mass than in preaching, and William Sawtrey was accused of espousing that the duty of preaching should supercede that of saying the canonical hours.²

John Purvey echoed these high standards for priestly preaching by inextricably tying the onus of promulgating the word to the very identity of the priest. He contrasted the tonsure, a 'naked and bare' sign of priesthood with that of preaching, a sign of 'the true and perfecte priesthood of God'.³ That William Thorpe was himself a priest steered his own deposition into an opportunity to declare it the responsibility of all priests to preach, despite the preaching licences.⁴ Thorpe claimed simply that every man that goes into the priesthood takes on the charge of preaching. Concurring, Foxe glossed, 'Priestes in that thei take the priesthoode, they are sent to preach'; 'The office of priesthood is the office of preaching'; and 'Priestes that preach not, are slayers of soules'.⁵ Thorpe asserted that priests should be properly trained to preach. Any priest that neglects this responsibility 'is Antichrist and Sathanas, A night thief, & a day thefe, a slayer of soules, and an angell of light turned into darkenes'.⁶ Like Purvey, Thorpe ultimately believed that preaching should reflect the character of the preacher himself: he stressed that the words of a priests's sermon were approved by his virtuous life, and linked poverty and preaching through the example of the apostolic church.⁷ Any priest who rejected 'willful pouerty... and true preaching' was a priest in name alone.

Tied to the charge that all priests should preach, many lollards in *AM* voice contempt for the institution of preaching licences. Wyclif's beliefs concerning what he understood as impediments to regular preaching are recorded in two places in *AM*. In the first, the Blackfriars Council of 1382, Wyclif is recorded as holding that

²*AM*, 636.

³*AM*, 671.

⁴*WL?*, 91, and Anne Hudson, 'William Thorpe and the Question of Authority,' in *Christian Authority: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. G.R. Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 131.

⁵*AM*, 657.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*AM*, 662.

‘That all such which do leue of preaching or hearyng the worde of God or preachyng of the Gospell, for feare of excommunication: they are all ready excommunicated, and in the day of Iudgement, shalbe counted as traitors vnto God.’⁸ This incendiary belief was followed by his contention, ‘That it is lawfull for any man, either deacon or priest, to preach the word of God, without *the* autoritie or licence of the apostolicke see or any other of his catholickes.’ Readers of *AM* would have found that this condemnation of preaching licences was also listed as an error at the Council of Constance.⁹ Wyclif’s follower William Swinderby claimed that the power of deacons and priests to preach was ordained by God and not the bishops, and Thorpe echoed this, claiming he and all priests preach according to God’s law and not according to the limited terms of the bishops’ licences. Foxe’s gloss here reads, ‘The inconueniences of seking of the bishops letters or licence.’¹⁰ Richard Hun accused the clerks brought in by lords and prelates of impeding the free preaching of God’s law,¹¹ and John Claydon went further: ‘the Bishops licence for a man to preach the word of God, is the true character of the beast. . . Antichrist, & therefore simple and faythfull Priestes may preache when they will agaynst the prohibition of that Antichrist, and without licence.’¹² Foxe makes little effort to mollify or clarify these views: even his mis-characterising of Thorpe’s view of the preaching licence as an ‘inconvenience’ does little to change the thrust of the lollard’s argument.

These criticisms have all been concerned with preaching and the priesthood. When it came to the issue of lay preaching, we do see Foxe stepping in to mitigate a radical position. When John Edwards, John Purvey, Richard Herbert, Emmot Willy, John Becke, and John Seynons abjured in various dioceses, one article they were all said to have shared was that ‘any lay man may preach the Gospel in euery place, and may teach it by his owne autoritie, without the licence of his ordinary’.¹³ Foxe’s

⁸*AM*, 555.

⁹*AM*, 571.

¹⁰*AM*, 656.

¹¹*AM*, 971.

¹²*AM*, 778-79.

¹³*AM*, 650. It is of real interest that the views of Purvey, who received a much longer treatment in *AM*, were grouped together with these men, who (Foxe claimed) abjured the same beliefs. This could be a matter of source material; for the group of men mentioned, Foxe’s source was the

marginal comment reads, ‘Their article commonly was thus, that who so taketh vpon him the office of a priest though he haue no cure of soules, nor licence of his ordinary, is bound to preach the gospell.’ In one way, this toned down the statement; obviously Foxe changed ‘any lay man’ to mean someone holding the ‘office of a priest’. In another way, though, it still had incendiary possibilities. First, Foxe’s qualification makes no mention of authority. There is no word of being ordained (Foxe’s gloss says ‘who so ever *taketh vpon him* the office’), nor is a bishop’s licence necessary. Second, below this statement two other articles are abjured, unglossed by Foxe: ‘that eury good man (though he be vnlearned) is a priest’ and ‘that aswell the Bishop, the simple man, the priest, and the lay man, be of lyke authoritie (as long as they liue well.)’ The radical implications of these statements are left for readers to interpret, and Foxe’s marginal gloss is left looking like a token.

His weak comment appears all the more impotent compared to other places in *AM*, where Foxe’s marginal comments on lay preaching are much stronger. When John Purvey claimed that ‘all good Christians, are predestinate & be ordained of God, and made true priests to offer Christ in themselues, and to Christe, themselues’, Foxe’s marginal comment merely reads, ‘The order of the priesthode.’ But when Purvey extends this to its natural conclusion, ‘as also to teache and preach the Gospell to their neyghbours, as well in worde as in example of liuyng’, Foxe was quick to point out that ‘he meaneth of priuate preaching to their neyghbours’. Of such priests, the reformer later clarifies that ‘priests here haue pryuat not a publike vnderstanding’.¹⁴

Why would Foxe put his foot down here, while leaving similarly radical implications in tact in case of Edwards and others? The answer may lie in a subtle difference between the two statements. Whereas Edwards and others abjured that any lay *man* may preach, Purvey’s article charges *all good Christians* with this re-

Arundel Register at Lambeth, and for Purvey in particular, Foxe used the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*. We should remember that his device of tying lollards together through common doctrines is also used in his section on the Norwich lollards, and that in fact not all of them believed the same things.

¹⁴*AM*, 671.

sponsibility, and there is no indication that this is the remit of men alone. This could be the reason Foxe seems eager to restrict the parameters to private places, the traditional domain of women.

Two reasons point us to this conclusion. First, we know that Foxe happily included examples of lollard women reciting scripture and teaching about the sacrament of the altar, saints, and images.¹⁵ Isabel Tracher, a Chiltern lollard, was accused of wanting to send her daughter to Alice Hardyng because ‘she could better instructe her then many other’.¹⁶ Alice Littlepage taught her brother-in-law the Ten Commandments,¹⁷ and James Morden went to Agnes Ashforde multiple times to learn passages from the Gospel of Matthew from her; on two occasions, he came to her house so that she could teach him the Beatitudes.¹⁸ These are merely a few of Foxe’s examples, but all of them take place in the domestic sphere.

There is another reason to suggest gender as the reason for Foxe’s censorship in Purvey’s case. The only espousal of lay preaching that Foxe omitted from a lollard text was that of Walter Brute, whose deposition revealed that he suggested—but crucially, did not *confirm* (‘net ego audio affirmare’) that women might be allowed to preach publicly.¹⁹ Brute recited Paul’s warning that women should not teach and should be submissive to men, but then went on to say that Paul never claimed that women were incapable of such things. Unwilling to commit to the position that women *should* preach, Brute nevertheless claimed that there were many examples of holy women converting men to the faith while priests did not dare to do so.²⁰

¹⁵H. Leith Spencer notes, ‘The distinction between reading and preaching, *lectio* and *praedicationis*, had always been thinly drawn and, by the late Middle Ages and early modern period, the two were evidently perceived as complementary practices by some lay people. . . .’ See Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 36.

¹⁶AM, 990.

¹⁷AM, 991.

¹⁸AM, 988.

¹⁹Capes, ed., *Registrum Johannis Trefnant*, 345.

²⁰ ‘Quod tamen non possunt docere neque in virus dominari non dicit Paulus, net ego audeo affirmare cum mulieres, sancte virgines, constanter predicament verbum Dei et multis ad fidem converterunt sacerdotibus tunc non audentibus loqui verbum. . . .’ Ibid. Cf. Margaret Aston, ‘Lollard Women Priests?’ in *Lollards and Reformers*, 49-70; Alcuin Blamires, ‘Women and Preaching in

While Foxe included several other aspects of Brute's radical theology (including, as demonstrated earlier, his beliefs concerning warfare, infant baptism, and, as I will demonstrate in chapter ten, tithing), here Foxe cuts the relevant passages from Brute's narrative. Significantly, though, Foxe is up front about this exclusion: 'to omit here the question whether women may pray in churches, in lacke of other meete persons'.²¹ He passes over the issue and immediately heads for safer ground in Brute's praises of the Lord's Prayer.

Here then, we can begin to delineate the theological boundaries of what Foxe finds acceptable—and notably, it is not just one mainstream view. While we should expect that Foxe was happy to recount the lollards' critiques of non-preaching clergy, Foxe's acceptance of lollard condemnation of preaching licences might surprise those that consider Foxe to be a 'magisterial reformer'. As we have seen, Foxe offered his readers the opportunity to draw their own conclusions with regard to lay men's preaching, through weak marginal clarifications; with regard, however, to women, readers find Foxe relegating their preaching and teaching to the domestic sphere.

Late Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Interpretations

Because Foxe provided many diverse lollard ideas about preaching, they were incorporated into a variety of works in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. While several readers were happy to incorporate the more tame ideas surrounding preaching, others seized upon the more radical aspects of the lollards' views, outlined earlier. For the godly writer and theologian Thomas Bedford, Wyclif's views on preaching, gleaned from Foxe, served the same purpose as Foxe had intended: in *Luthers predecessors* (1624), Bedford's bid to augment the case of his co-religionist Daniel Featley against the Jesuits, he attempted to prove the longevity and visi-

Medieval Orthodoxy, Heresy, and Saints' Lives, *Viator* 26 (1995), 136-137; and Alastair Minnis, "Respondet Walterus Bryth. . .".

²¹ *AM*, 614. Foxe was mollifying Brute's position here; Brute never made this qualification about women preaching (though, having not confirmed it, he may have felt it unnecessary). He did say this about women administering the Eucharist, in the same passage where he discusses their ability to preach, though; see above, pp. 192-93.

bility of the Protestant church. Wyclif featured in the text, with his ideas about preaching faithfully culled from Foxe.²² He also noted that Sir John Oldcastle, ‘in the diocesse of London, Hereford, and Rochester, set... them vp to preach, whom the Bishops had not licensed’, and noted that this was the cause of the efficacy of lollard preachers in spreading the Gospel.²³ But while Bedford was content to include the views of Wyclif and Oldcastle, who both thought it was the responsibility of ordained clergy to preach, he tempered Purvey’s less traditional perspective to an acceptable form, merely adding ‘preaching of the Gospel’ to a laundry list of Purvey’s more conservative views on such issues as transubstantiation, papal authority, and religious orders.²⁴ Bedford’s work, though purporting to vindicate all Protestants, must be seen as an authorized text of the established church: *Luthers predecessors* was meant to bolster Daniel Featley’s historical case against the Jesuits, and Featley, who was serving as the ecclesiastical licencer for the press when Bedford’s tract was written, was in a prime position to make sure its contents were in line with conformist views.²⁵

Like Bedford, other polemicists used Wyclif’s words on preaching for their own purposes. For many who opposed episcopacy, the preaching licences were an indictment of the bishops’ place in the church. William Prynne’s *The unbishoping of Timothy and Titus* (1636), drew together these issues, claiming that ‘the *Lollards* and *Wicleuists*, (the Protestants of that age) beleeeved, that the power of Ordination belonged as much to Presbiters by Gods Law, as to Bishops; that one of them might as well, as lawfully ordayne Ministers as the other; and *that as they might lawfully preach the Gospell without the Bishops licence...*’²⁶ For Prynne, Wyclif’s words served as yet another historical example of abuse by bishops. For the presbyterian David Calderwood, preaching licences were another example of how bishoprics

²²Bedford, *Luthers predecessors*, 9-10.

²³Ibid., 19-20.

²⁴Ibid., 17.

²⁵Although Featley was largely friendly to puritan writers, he had edited tracts to omit statements that ‘implicitly’ criticized the practices of the Church of England. ‘Daniel Featley,’ Arnold Hunt in *ODNB*.

²⁶William Prynne, *The unbishoping of Timothy and Titus*, 167.

were even still holding back the Reformation; after quoting *An Amonition to the Parliament* (1572), which castigated the Church of England for its retention of bishops' preaching licences, Calderwood backed up this statement with historical proof, specifically Wyclif's words on preaching.²⁷ The nonconformist minister William Ames argued in *A second manuduction, for Mr. Robinson* (1615) that prophesyings were historically based, and used the public preaching of the lollards to bolster his claim. Prophesyings, of course, had been a major source of contention in the late Elizabethan church—an issue where the matter of preaching and authority was paramount.²⁸ Although an advocate of 'a kind of non-separatist Congregationalism', (and opposed to John Robinson's advocacy of separatism), *A second manuduction* bolstered Robinson's declaration that even preaching done in conventicles constituted public preaching (and thus should be lawful in the parish assemblies).²⁹ Each of these authors—a godly conformist, two presbyterians, and a non-separating congregationalist incorporated Foxe's testimony of the lollards into his text in order to drive their diverse agendas through historical proof, validated through Foxe's *AM*.

While authors such as Bedford, Prynne, Calderwood and Ames appropriated the lollards for polemical purposes, John Bunyan and Roger Williams may have understood the lollard legacy of preaching differently. Bunyan's biographer Richard Greaves points out that Bunyan deliberately relied on little more than Scripture and Foxe's *AM* in his writings, and John Knott has likewise demonstrated the immense debt that Bunyan's works owed to *AM*.³⁰ Further, Greaves has shown that Bunyan, when jailed for preaching, turned to these sources for reassurance of his convictions. When a clerk, Paul Cobb, was asked by the justices of the peace to convince Bunyan to abstain from preaching, Bunyan quoted Wyclif's admonition that 'that he which

²⁷David Calderwood, *The altar of Damascus* (Amsterdam, 1621), 175. Although *AM* is not cited here, Calderwood cites lollard material out of Foxe's book in other places in this text (for instance, 26).

²⁸See Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), 233-53. Also see chapter nine.

²⁹'Ames, William,' Keith L. Sprunger in *ODNB*. William Ames, *A second manuduction, for Mr. Robinson* (1615), 5.

³⁰'Bunyan, John,' Richard L. Greaves in *ODNB*.

leaveth off preaching and hearing the word of God for the fear of excommunication of men, he is already excommunicated of God, and shall in the day of judgment be counted a traitor to Christ'.³¹ For Bunyan, Wyclif's authority offered not only an explanation about why he could not give in to Cobb's request, but also served as a source of support during his imprisonment.

Roger Williams, the dissenter whose conscience took him through the Baptist and Independent churches before eschewing religious congregations altogether, may have understood Wyclif's authority in the same way as Bunyan, on a more personal level than those of the polemicists mentioned above. Williams preached 'by way of prophesy', while in Salem, Massachusetts, as the congregation there had allowed for lay preaching,³² and his contemporary Cotton Mather said that as a preacher, Williams 'had less light than fire in him'.³³ There is reason to think that his understanding of the call to preach was underpinned by edifying historical examples. In *The bloody tenent yet more bloody* (1652), Williams spelled out the three ways Christ sent out preachers.³⁴ First, Christ gave himself to the church; second, by establishing the ministers of the church; and third, by sending the Holy Spirit to inspire laymen. He included Wyclif in a handful of reformers like Jan Hus and Martin Luther, who, according to Williams, were not permitted to preach: 'I say, no true ordinary Ministerial calling can they ever shew; but Christ Jesus by the secret motion of his own holy *Spirit* extraordinarily excited, in couraged and sent them abroad as an Angel or messenger (Rev. 14.) with the everlasting Gospel &c.'³⁵ That same year, Williams' *The hirelings ministry none of Christs* painted Wyclif (again, along

³¹John Bunyan, *A relation of thf [sic] imprisonment of Mr. John Bunyan* (1765), 35. This work existed in manuscript form until it was published in 1765. See Roger Sharrock, 'The Origin of *A Relation of the Imprisonment of Mr John Bunyan*' *The Review of English Studies* 10/39 (1959), 250-256. Quoted in Greaves, *John Bunyan and English Nonconformity*, 105.

³²'Williams, Roger,' Francis J. Bremer in *ODNB*.

³³Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), quoted in LeRoy Moore, Jr, 'Roger Williams and the Historians,' *Church History* 32/4 (1963): 438.

³⁴That the tripartite configuration maps neatly onto the traditional Catholic understanding of the priesthood in three forms underscores the inextricable connection between the priesthood and preaching in the eyes of the reformed.

³⁵Williams, *The bloody tenant yet more bloody*, 99.

with Luther, Calvin, and this time Peter Waldo) as a ‘holy prophet’.³⁶ Williams understood Wyclif to be more than just a preacher; he played a significant role in the fulfillment of the Book of Revelation. Wyclif’s own actions against the Catholic Church, including his words against restricted preaching, may have factored into Williams’ understanding of his own call to preach by prophesying.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the views of the lollards on preaching within *AM*. Given the importance of preaching to the reformed agenda, it is no great shock that Foxe clearly identified the lollard opposition to the medieval Catholic Church as the historical predecessor to his own movement, focused as it was on the promulgation of the Gospel. The issue was, for Foxe, more than merely abstract; Foxe himself was a popular voice in the pulpit, asked to preach at two high-profile events, and whose own sermons were published in Latin and English. In his own *Sermon of Christ Crucified*, Foxe expounded on the importance of preaching: ‘First and especially your preachers had need here to help in setting forth the promises and glory of Christes kingdom: Wherby your hearers may bee established in the faith of this word, and assured in hope of things to come’.³⁷ So not only would Foxe have recognized the urgent necessity of preachers in Elizabethan England; he understood himself to be part of the remedy. So he likely took a great interest in the lollard critique of non-preaching clergy. But when that critique spilled into unfamiliar territory, such as lay preaching, readers might be surprised to find that Foxe relayed these ideas without much correction or clarification at all. Even when it came to women, Foxe’s readers would have found exhorted examples of women teaching—a stone’s throw from preaching.³⁸ As far as these activities took place in the home, they passed muster with Foxe. Even when a lollard suggested a woman might legitimately preach publicly in a church, though, Foxe stayed faithful to the medieval record by mentioning

³⁶Roger Williams, *The hirelings ministry none of Christs* (1652), 2 and 5.

³⁷John Foxe, *A sermon of Christ crucified preached at Paules Crosse the Fridaie before Easter, commonly called Goodfridaie* (1575), fo. 22v.

³⁸See chapter nine.

its existence, but did not relay its contents or elaborate on the dissenter's reasoning.

The fact that Foxe included a panoply of medieval perspectives on preaching reflects the same approach he took to lollard views of the priesthood and an episcopal hierarchy, as well as those of the sacraments. This section has shown, then, that though Foxe has traditionally been seen as an editor calculatingly amending or omitting martyrs' radical beliefs in order to portray one mainstream view in line with the Elizabethan Settlement, in fact, in the case of the lollards this does not appear to be the case.³⁹ This is likely due to Foxe's relative historical distance from the lollards, unlike the Marian martyrs, his contemporaries. By casting the lollards as imperfect witnesses who were living in dark and misty times, Foxe had the freedom to include ideas which may have raised eyebrows or brought ignominy on the very martyrs he sought to exonerate. That these ideas *were* incorporated into the text is significant for two reasons. First, it suggests that Foxe's fidelity to his sources might have been much more important to him than scholars have thought up to now. As we have seen, even when Foxe was uncomfortable with a radical lollard tenet, such as Brute's suggestion that women might be allowed to preach in churches, he admitted that the radical material existed. Now, of course, Brute's testimony appeared in the second edition of *AM*, making his narrative a post-Harpsfield (and thus more careful) addition. Foxe knew his work would be cross-referenced to original sources by hostile readers. But if the reformer only included it out of a sense of obligation (and he likely did), it is important to note that he did not condemn, deny, or explain it away, which he had been quick to do with other radical sentiments.⁴⁰ Second, the fact that Foxe allowed radical material on preaching into *AM* suggests that scholars of Foxe should re-think their conception of Foxe's theological perspective. Looking at material left intact, readers would have taken away a damning critique of authorized preaching licences (and possibly the role of the bishops in granting those licences); a fervent call to preach for even lay

³⁹See Introduction.

⁴⁰See, for instance, Foxe's marginal comments covering Brute's assertion that Christians should not go to war (105-106).

men; and a view of clergy that essentially did little else but preach, and back up that preaching with a holy life. If Foxe was allowed leeway with lollard material, its content should lead us to ask questions about how Foxe himself felt about preaching: was he happy with Elizabethan preaching licences? Did he think there was room for preaching and/or teaching in the home? Was being ordained a requirement for preaching the Word?

Regardless of what Foxe himself thought, his readers took away the lollards' radical views on preaching and incorporated them into their own various polemical works. While some used Wyclif's words to shore up the established church, it was more likely that the presbyterians position of those such as Prynne and Calderwood would identify the lollard position as proof that the ministry of the Stuart church remained insufficiently reformed. There were those who went further, such as Ames, who thought that preaching should legitimately take place outside of the parish church, in conventicles, and used Foxe's lollards to prove that this was part and parcel of the ecclesiology of the historical true church. The diverse ways that the late-sixteenth and seventeenth-century readers interpreted the lollards, as read in *AM*, reflects the heterogenous examples Foxe provided. As the issue of preaching—who was allowed to do it, where it should take place, and whose authority it should come under—contributed to schism within the Church of England, the lollards' role seems by no means marginal. Preaching, along with episcopacy and sacraments, comprised the basis of a true church. This section has demonstrated, then, that those who might challenge that the Church of England was a true church, would find ample evidence to support their claims in the lollard narratives, preserved by Foxe.

Section IV

Reformed Religious Culture

Foxe recognized godliness in the lollards for more than their opinions regarding the marks of the true church. Significantly, their critiques about late medieval religious culture struck a chord with evangelicals and therefore feature in *AM*. This section looks at three aspects of lollard belief that later nonconformists recognized as historical evidence of godly practice, and defended their own actions by citing their example. While the last section explained how the lollards were seen as forebears of the true church, with sacraments correctly administered and the Word properly preached, this section will demonstrate how, accordingly, their religious practices served as historical legitimacy to nonconformists who practiced Christianity in the same way.

The first chapter in this section analyzes the practice of some lollards who held religious meetings in places other than the parish church. It argues that of all the lollard religious practices, this one was upheld by Foxe as especially worthy of commemoration and mimicry. As conventicles became a subject of concern, and even legislation, in the seventeenth century, Foxe's outright praise of this lollard practice took on a different colour. The second chapter analyzes how lollard theological and practical objections to tithing were preserved in *AM*. It goes on to explain the role that these objections played in the two significant waves of controversy surrounding tithes (1600s and 1650s), arguing that neither conformists nor radicals wanted to cede the lollard precedent to the other group. The last chapter details how Foxe included lollard reticence about swearing oaths into his tome, and discusses Foxe's

own sharp words about the *ex officio* oath. It then chronicles debates about the validity of oaths in the seventeenth century, arguing that Foxe's portrayal of the lollards was crucial in allowing later radicals to picture themselves in this lineage of dissent.

Chapter 9: Conventicles

Introduction

Scholars have seen Foxe's treatment of the lollards chiefly in the light of the lollards' *historical* significance for his polemical purposes, and have argued that he shaped their *theological* thrust to temper their more radical ideas.¹ What remains to be studied is how Foxe and other English polemicists handled the lollard *ecclesiological* legacy, based as it was not in the traditional parish church, but firmly in unconsecrated places, especially the home. Their 'privy assemblies' served as a model for ecclesiological practice, where the reading of vernacular scripture and its exposition, recitation of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, and even hints of liturgical activity, all took place in the home or in the fields.

Since the lollards' own day, conventicles had been tinged with sedition. This association was made even more prominent after Oldcastle's failed rebellion in 1414, which fixed lollardy and sedition together, most obviously in the language of Archbishop Arundel's Constitutions (1409) and the *De heretico comburendo* (1401), which forbade forming conventicles or holding schools.² From that point, the religious nature of conventicles was also laced with treason and subversion of political order.

In this chapter, I will illustrate that *AM* offers a more flexible ecclesiology than thought previously, providing models of pious practice that go beyond martyrdom. After detailing the variety of ecclesiological experiences found within the lollard narratives, I will then go on to discuss how Foxe could be so liberal with his inclusions of private (and even subversive) religious activities; for this, I will use Patrick Collinson's analysis of 'The English Conventicle'. I will then show how the lollard conventicling tradition, transmitted and specifically lauded by Foxe, was then appropriated and cited by seventeenth-century Protestants as an example of godly religious practice.

¹See chapter one.

²Henry IV cap. 15, *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 2 (London: M. Basket, 1810-1828), 125-28. Cf. *AM*, 645.

Ecclesiological Models of the Lollards in *Acts and Monuments*

Susan Brigden rightly states, ‘Lollardy was a faith practised in homes, not in churches.’³ This faith was rooted in the books that gave lollards the spiritual sustenance missing from their parochial activities, and they gathered to read and listen to them in their homes. Extant evidence reveals no liturgical or sacramental activities took place; rather, these meetings were centred on the book. Foxe’s chronology is replete with examples: Margery Backster of the Norwich group was accused of inviting a neighbour and her maid into her chamber to hear her husband ‘reade the lawe of Christ’, and Christopher Shoomaker of Great Missenden went to the house of John Say four times to read ‘out of a litle boke the wordes whiche Christ spake to his disciples.’⁴ Thomas Pope was said to stay up often reading his book until midnight.⁵

While books of Scripture were undoubtedly lollards’ favorite reading material (Foxe mentioned the Acts of the Apostles, the gospels, and Paul’s epistles), books such as *The King of Beeme* (Bohemia) and *Wyclif’s Wicket* were noted, the latter getting John Stilman into trouble when the authorities found it hidden in ‘an old oke’.⁶ Foxe relayed that when Robert Freeman, a parish priest, was seen reading an unnamed ‘suspected booke’, he carried it to his chamber.⁷ Often Foxe was tantalizingly enigmatic about which books were read, only saying that lollards would meet at the house of Richard Ashford to hear a ‘certaine little booke’, or that Thomas Carder would meet others to read ‘in a certayne Englishe booke’.⁸

Often conventicles contained an element of communing that yielded more than just spiritual food. Nicholas Durdant recited verses out of Paul’s letters and the gospels to his extended family over dinner, clearly intended as a private moment for

³Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, 93.

⁴*AM*, 808, 984.

⁵*AM*, 989.

⁶*AM*, 999. Cf. Margaret Aston, ‘Lollardy and Literacy,’ in her *Lollards and Reformers*, 201, n. 37; quote at *AM*, 979.

⁷*AM*, 995.

⁸*AM*, 851.

the family since he asked a boy standing nearby to leave his home before he did it.⁹ John Butler, Richard Butler, and William King of Uxbridge stayed up all night in the Durdants' home reading Scripture—it seems unlikely that their host would not have offered them victuals while there. The notion of eating was closely tied to a common lesson taught in the home: that the Eucharist was bread and not the true body of Christ. Foxe reported that Alice Hardyng taught Richard Bennette what do if a priest came to his house to administer the sacrament, and Agnes Grebill had not believed in transubstantiation for nearly thirty years, and she discussed her beliefs with her husband and sons 'wythin theyr house diuers times'.¹⁰

Very often Foxe used the verb 'communed' to describe the actions of these men and women, complete with its connotation of communication, spiritual engagement, and Eucharistic flavor. Foxe told of John Claydon who communed in a house with a known heretic, and the lollard priest William Thorpe reported that he himself was 'oft right homely & communed with [other known men]'.¹¹ The notion of conferring and discussing is evident in the testimony of Christopher Tinker, who offered to show Thomas Clerke proof that the bread of the Eucharist was not the very body of Christ—but urged him not to tell his wife or her brother, a priest.¹²

This lesson was perhaps laced with secrecy because in these meetings Tinker would foretell of the 'day of dome'.¹³ Similarly John Ryburne met in a farm-yard to prophesy, 'that a tyme shall come that no eleuation shall bee made.'¹⁴ John Harrys and his friend Richard Colyns met together with their wives to talk of the Apocalypse, and Foxe reported that the Lyvord conventicle met to read a book of exposition on Revelation, where they 'communed concernyng the matter of openyng the booke with seuen clapses [sic]'.¹⁵

⁹ *AM*, 992. This notion of a family activity is echoed in the narrative of John Barret, who was heard reciting the Epistle of James to his wife and maid. *AM*, 991.

¹⁰ *AM*, 987, 1493.

¹¹ *AM*, 655.

¹² *AM*, 995.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *AM*, 1158.

¹⁵ *AM*, 997.

Instruction and learning was at the core of these meetings, which in the records are termed ‘scholes of heresy’ just as often as ‘conventicle’. Notably, Foxe never used the term ‘schole’, which appears to have been a term with Catholic associations.¹⁶ Lollard conventicles were described as places of conversation, learning, instruction, teaching, and fellowship, while ‘schole doctors’ are connected to ‘canonists and friars’; ‘schole matters’ are ‘subtile sophistry’; and Foxe relayed that Agnes Wells, who had refused to confess to her dissenting opinions, ‘sone after beyng otherwise schooled, I *can* not tell how, by the Catholiques’, eventually gave in.¹⁷

Foxe did convey the essence of teaching and didactic practice in lollard conventicles. Among other verses, Agnes Asforde of Chesham taught James Morden the words, ‘Teende ye not a candle and put it vnder a bushell, but set it on a candlestick that it may geue a light to all in the house.’ Foxe made no attempt to address the tension between this lesson and the private meeting in which it was taught. The bishops may have had the impression that she had taught many men this way; Foxe relayed that they enjoined her not to teach this to any more men, and especially not to her children.¹⁸

Another man who came to learn from a woman was John Morden, who went to Alice Littlepage to learn the Ten Commandments. In fact, the Littlepages were accused of teaching others the sayings of Solomon, the Ave Maria and the Pater Noster in English; Alice’s husband taught fellow lollards the Apostle’s Creed in English as well, which he had learned from his grandmother. Agnes Edmundes, who was brought by her father to the house of Richard Colyns ‘to seruice, to thee intent

¹⁶With one exception: Foxe recorded that one charge of Norwich lollard Richard Belward was, ‘that the sayd Richard kepeth scholes of lollardy in the English tounge, in the towne of Dychingham, and a certayne parchment maker bryngeth him all the bookes contayning that doctrine from London.’ Belward’s trial record is not extant, but we might surmise that Foxe was using this term verbatim from the text. See *AM*, 803. Despite that Foxe did not use it, and that Thomas Fuller’s *The church-history of Britain* relied heavily on *AM*, Fuller explained: ‘Now as *Conventicles* were the Name of disgrace cast on, *Schools* was the terme of Credit owned by, the *Wicklivists* for the place of their meeting.’ Fuller, *The church-history of Britain*, 163.

¹⁷*AM*, 987.

¹⁸*AM*, 988.

that she myght bee instructed there in God's law'.¹⁹ Recitation seems to have been part of learning: Robert Pope would join John Morden and his wife to recite the Ten Commandments, and Foxe told readers that Alice Colyns (Richard's wife²⁰) had an excellent memory, and was often sent for by conventicles of men who met at Burford in order to recite the Ten Commandments and the Epistles of Peter and James.²¹

The idea of learning should not merely indicate one-way intellectual traffic. Foxe offered numerous examples of neighbours 'resort[ing] and conferr[ing] together' and 'conferring and communing together among themselues'.²² Thomas Grove would meet with others in Amersham to 'resort and confer together in matters of Religion', and Foxe said not that the conventicle at John Harrys' house *read* the Apocalypse and Acts of the Apostles, but that they *talked of them*.²³

The move from reading Scripture to discussing its implications is not a long leap. Foxe told of three sixteenth-century lollards who went to hear Nicholas Field of London 'to reade a parcell of scripture in English' at the house of John Taylor in Hichenden; afterward, he expounded upon its meaning, teaching them on matters such as holy days and the Eucharist.²⁴ That this sounds like a sermon may be because Field had imbibed the German Reformation's emphasis on preaching while 'beyond the Sea in Almany'. In fact the focus on preaching—and preaching anywhere—had been home grown. As early as 1391, William Swinderby had been accused of preaching and singing in unconsecrated spaces.²⁵ John Purvey and other early lollards abjured the belief that any layman could preach the Gospel in every place.²⁶

¹⁹ *AM*, 991.

²⁰ *AM*, 999.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² For example, see *AM*, 986 and 1001.

²³ *AM*, 991 and 996.

²⁴ *AM*, 1158.

²⁵ *AM*, 580. Swinderby and other lollards would meet outdoors or in barns; see Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 234-36.

²⁶ *AM*, 650.

Meeting to hear a ‘sermon’ and its exposition may have constituted an act of worship and there is evidence of others. Foxe relays John Claydon’s belief that people ought to worship in ‘meane and simple houses’, not in great buildings, and Walter Brute insisted that it was right to pray secretly and in the clothes chamber, juxtaposing this with the public actions of priests.²⁷ Margery Backster lambasted her neighbour for going to church to worship dead images, declaring, ‘And if you desire so much to see the true crosse of Christ, I wyll shew it you at home in your own house.’ Foxe continued,

Which this deponent being desirous to see, the sayd Margery stretching out her armes abroad, sayd to thys deponent, this is the true crosse of Christ, and thys crosse thou oughtest and mayest euery day beholde and worship in thine own house, and therefore it is but vain to run to the church to worship dead crosses & images.²⁸

Backster’s rejection of worship in a place considered consecrated reflects a wider lollard suspicion of holy sites. Brute claimed that necromancers and conjurers believe that they can be heard better in one place than in another, and John Clerke declared that ‘all the world was as well halowed as in the Church or churchyard. And that it was as good to be buryed in the field, as in the Church or churchyard.’²⁹ Coventry lollard John Blomston asserted that ‘a man might as well worship the blessed Virgin by the fire side in the kitchin’, and Foxe³⁰’s *Rerum* reveals that ‘a considerable number of citizens and craftsmen . . . converging in groups in the various ditches of the suburbs, to hear the holy word of the Lord’.³¹

Conventicles and Foxe’s Editing Practices

Having detailed how Foxe has characterized lollard conventicles, this section will examine at how he incorporated the lollard trials into his book, and from there, go

²⁷ *AM*, 779, 614.

²⁸ *AM*, 807-808.

²⁹ *AM*, 614, 996.

³⁰ *AM*, 942.

³¹ McSheffrey and Tanner, *Lollards of Coventry*, 296. Cf. *Rerum*, 117.

on to draw out the implications of this material. With regard to domestic piety, there are two places where Foxe either adjusted or omitted lollard testimony. One concerns the issue of sacred space generally. According to the trial records of the Norwich lollards, many of them did not believe that marriages needed to be solemnized in the public church. Foxe was quick to explain that they merely denied that marriage was a sacrament, and that their testimony was twisted by papist ‘quarelpickers’.³² Foxe was clearly reluctant to take the exchange of marriage vows from the oversight of the church—and thus state.³³

Foxe also elided information in the case of Joan Baker, a London lollard, who stated that she ‘cold here a better sermond at home in hur howse than any doctor or priste colde make at Paules crosse or any other place’.³⁴ Foxe would not have withheld it because of its overt anticlericalism: evangelicals shared this sentiment with their lollard forebears, as shown in chapter eight. Also the aspect of place does not seem to be a crucial factor; after all, Foxe provided many examples of lollards gathering to hear a scripture reading and exposition thereafter. One possible reason is the term ‘sermon’: Foxe may have felt that the explicit words ‘hear a sermon at home’ would be too overtly subversive. The case of John Claydon, however, works against this theory: this illiterate London lollard confessed to having a very expensive book read out to him—a book of the Sermon at the Horsedoun.³⁵ So, the act of hearing a sermon at home did not merit Foxe’s exclusion per se, but these words, unqualified by notions of hearing a sermon *read* or *repeated* at home, could have been worthy of censorship.

As has been the case in many of the lollard narratives, though, this may be a simple case of inconsistency. While it is tempting to seek ideologically-driven

³²The same adjustment occurs in the testimony of Agnes Grebill from the Kent group; see *AM*, 805, and Tanner, ed., *Kent Heresy Proceedings*, 18-21.

³³On lollard views of marriage as a sacrament, see chapter seven.

³⁴LMA, Diocese of London, A/A/005/MS09531/009, fo. 25v; *TAMO* (1570) commentary on 966. This claim is present in the 1563 edition but removed from all others; *TAMO* (1563), 425.

³⁵*AM*, 778. According to Anne Hudson, sole copy of this text exists in Bodleian Douce 53, fos. 30-32v. For Claydon’s ownership of it, see Hudson, *Two Wycliffite Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 133-36.

reasons for omissions and inclusions (as shown Foxe's handling of material related to the sacraments) philosophical reasons may not have superseded practical ones in the making of *AM*. Freeman and Evenden have shown how the ballooned second edition of *AM* ran into serious paper deficits, forcing Foxe to make drastic cuts from the volume in an effort to save precious paper, and this is to speak nothing of the rush Day was in to get the book published.³⁶ Perhaps in the case of Joan Baker's belief that she could hear a better sermon at home, Foxe, in an effort to conserve paper, chose to cut out a practice that had been made explicit elsewhere.

The examples of the Norwich lollards and Baker demonstrate that Foxe made little effort to eradicate systematically the radical implications of conventicling. Moreover, there appears to be little reason to assume that statements that were removed were done so out of Foxe's religious conservatism. In fact, focusing on what Foxe *included* in the text instead of his omissions leads to the conclusion that potentially subversive ecclesiological practices appear nearly everywhere in his lollard narratives.

Foxe's Editing of Radical Material

To see how Foxe could get away with including radical material, Patrick Collinson's authoritative essay on the conventicling tradition in England will be very helpful.³⁷ This essay, along with his other works, illuminate the ambiguous legality of conventicles, and also their inherently separatist potential. He shows that in Foxe's day, extra-parochial meetings held in homes constituted a grey area in Elizabethan policy, and he characterizes conventicles as not strictly legal or illegal, but extra-legal.³⁸ This helpful analysis shows exactly how Foxe got away with offering examples of religious practice that had little to do with the parish church.³⁹ Because of the

³⁶See above, p. 17; *RB*, 165.

³⁷Collinson, 'The English Conventicle'.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 230.

³⁹I say 'little to do with' because although Collinson argues that lollards are semi-separatist due to their attendance at church, Foxe actually gives at least four separate examples of lollards who refused to attend services. See *ibid.*, 237-8. Foxe's examples include Katherine Bartlett, Thomas Grove, Thomas Man, Isabel Tracher; see *AM*, 989, 990, 981, and 990, respectively.

ambiguous legal status of conventicles, Foxe could use this space to offer a variety of ecclesiological exempla without confronting the legal status quo.

Foxe takes advantage of this flexibility in several ways. First, we see the reformer giving the lollards high praise for these extra-parochial meetings. While it seems typical that Foxe would laud those he considered to be his spiritual ancestors, as we have seen, there were aspects of lollardy that Foxe found hard to square with his own model of reformed faith. Historically, they presented a problem: in a book about an unbroken chain of martyrs for the true church, the numerous lollards who quietly abjured and accepted their penance were a glaring aberration.⁴⁰ Theologically, they could also be problematic, as we have seen.⁴¹ Foxe used a number of polemical tools to excuse these anomalies, as seen in chapters three and five. But there is one area in particular where Foxe had exuberant praise for the lollards. Of the Chiltern group—whose description is marked by conventicles—Foxe lauded, ‘To see their trauailes, their earnest seekyng, their burnyng zeales, theyr readinges, their watchynges, their sweete assemblies, their loue and concorde, their godly lyuing, their faithfull marying with the faithfull, may make vs nowe in these our dayes of free profession to blushe for shame’.⁴² This passage’s significance lies in its uniqueness. It is the only place in *AM* where Foxe claimed that the lollards were more perfect than their evangelical heirs. And this is not because of correct theological beliefs or their physical sacrifice for the true church: it is based squarely on their tradition of holding conventicles, their ‘sweete assemblies’.

Beyond praising the lollards’ conventicling, Foxe attacked its problematic association with sedition head-on. We have seen that while lollardy and sedition were tied together from its origins in Wyclif’s time, that this connection was magnified in the infamous rebellion of Sir John Oldcastle.⁴³ In the 1563 narrative of Oldcastle, taken directly from John Bale’s 1544 martyrological text of Oldcastle, Foxe denied that the knight’s intentions were ever anything but obedient to his king, Henry V.

⁴⁰See chapter five.

⁴¹For example, see Foxe’s discomfort with lollard views on women preaching and women administering the sacraments in chapters seven and eight, respectively.

⁴²*AM*, 984.

⁴³See chapter four.

But in 1566, when Nicholas Harpsfield asked what other possible explanation Foxe could offer about the reason Oldcastle and his fellow knights were caught gathering in a field, Foxe responded in the 1570 edition:

Yet might they not come vnto those thicketts nere to the field of S. Gyles, hauyng Beuerly their preacher with them (as ye say your selfe) as well to pray and preache in that woody place. . . Is this such a straunge thing in the church of Christ, in time of persecution, for Christians to resorte into desolate woodes, and secrete thicketts, from the sight of enemyes, when they would assemble in praying & hearyng *the* word of God?⁴⁴

Foxe's explanation, then, was that the rebellion in Oldcastle's name was actually a misunderstanding on the part of the authorities, and one that in fact served to expose the cruelty of the Catholic clergy: because they connected heresy and sedition indeterminately, these pious men may have been executed for holding a conventicle (which he would later in the text portray as a praiseworthy practice)—not for rebelling against their king. Foxe's focus on the assemblers' motives was a deliberate move; as Collinson has shown, the definition of unlawful assembly was concerned with 'motives and actions'.⁴⁵

While Foxe was quick to exonerate Oldcastle of any malicious intentions, these motives and actions do appear in lollard narratives of *AM*. Foxe showed that the home could be a place for more than mutual exhortation, and in fact he offered more insidious uses. Examples range from the odd wry complaint about the established church (grumbling about church bells, for instance) to potentially incendiary interchanges (talk of prophecies and the Antichrist) to the outright subversive.⁴⁶ Instances of the latter include John Wikes, who hid heretical fugitives in his home, and Andrew Randal and his wife, who did the same for Thomas Man while he was

⁴⁴*AM*, 698.

⁴⁵Collinson, 'The English Conventicle,' 230.

⁴⁶Meeting in a butcher's house, John Eaton and his wife complained about bells; see *AM*, 1158. For prophecies, see *AM*, 997.

on the run.⁴⁷ I have mentioned the suggestive relationship between domestic food and the Eucharist, and Foxe gives examples of other, more explicit ties between food and theology. He reported that John Ryburn ate butter and eggs on the evening before Assumption Day, and Marjorie Backster was accused of breaking the Lenten fast when her neighbour entered her kitchen and found bacon and oatmeal baking in a pot.⁴⁸ Foxe, then, presented his readers with a picture of the home that goes beyond happy Scripture reading; it could also be a place of private and deliberate defiance.

Lollard Conventicles as a Precedent for Later Dissenters

Examples of this defiance, based on the examples of Foxe's lollards, are not found in seventeenth-century texts, unsurprisingly; it is important to note, however, that those subversive elements are plain in the text. What does feature in the writings of seventeenth-century nonconformists is an appropriation of the lollard conventicling tradition as historical proof that it was right for groups to assemble for religious purposes. Thomas James either anticipated this or was responding to nonconformists who had already done so: he was concerned to distance Wyclif from conventicling in the *Apologie*, assuring readers that he 'was not for hedge Priests, such as our *Familists*, which refuse the Church, as prophane, and chuse the open fields, or there houses, for their disordered *conventicles* and meetings...he thought the Church, to be the fittest place for Gods service, for manie reasons'.⁴⁹ Despite the fact that conventicles were seen as potentially seditious throughout the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (perhaps evidence of Foxe's inability to untangle them from the association with treason), nevertheless even conformists cited Foxe's Chiltern community as a model of piety.⁵⁰ For instance, Thomas Bedford noted

⁴⁷ *AM*, 967, 989.

⁴⁸ *AM*, 1158, 808.

⁴⁹ *Apologie*, 30.

⁵⁰ For evidence that conventicles were still tinged with sedition, look at the uproar extra-parochial assemblies caused in Scotland in the early seventeenth century. Andrew Spicer, '“What Kind of House a Kirk Is”: Conventicles, Consecrations, and the Concept of Sacred Space in Post-Reformation Scotland,' in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Will Coster and Andrew

that, ‘notwithstanding [the lollards] had not with them any learned man to ground them in the doctrine, yet they conferring together, did conuert one another’, and he went on to use Foxe’s own praises of their conventicles verbatim.⁵¹

A look at seventeenth-century tracts also show that Foxe’s defence of Oldcastle was effective: Henry Care, a defender of nonconformity, repeated Foxe’s claim that Oldcastle’s case was a stitch-up, because the woody area of St Giles’ Fields was a good place for conventiclers to go undetected.⁵² And the appeal of proper conventicles was not merely restricted to nonconformists; the puritan-leaning Bishop of Lincoln William Barlow’s *Answer to a Catholicke English-man* showed that the lollards’ conventicles had been exonerated by Foxe through the case of Oldcastle, and went on to defend religious assemblies: ‘*Subiection* to Princes we preach; *Insurrections* we defie: lawfull *Conuentions* for Gods service we allow; *mutinous* bandings or *Conuenticles* seditious we condemne.’⁵³ It is clear, then, that the lollard conventicling tradition, upheld by Foxe, demonstrated a potentially radical religious practice. That lollard conventicles were cited in the seventeenth century shows the extent of the lollard legacy: whereas sacraments, preaching, and the ministry were rooted in theological debates, conventicling is concerned with ecclesiological practice. This indicates that there was a wider range of protestant religious ideas that explicitly claimed a lollard inheritance than previously thought.

Conclusion

A few suggestions emerge from a closer look at Foxe’s treatment of lollard conventicles. First, this chapter’s evidence reiterates that it would be more fruitful to scholars of Foxe to look at what is *included* in *AM* than it is to concentrate on his omissions. As I have tried to show, a radical or subversive practice omitted in one narrative such as that of Joan Baker, more often than not, is present in another, such

Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 81-103.

⁵¹Bedford, *Luthers predecessours*, 26.

⁵²Care, *The history of popery*, 115. Care blamed the historians, who were monks; he did not attribute this excuse to Foxe but it is not found in Bale’s martyrology.

⁵³William Barlow, *An answer to a Catholike English-man* (1609), 121.

as the testimony of John Claydon—even in the case of conventicling, a contentious issue during the lollard persecutions as well as in Foxe's day. This in turn forces us to reevaluate Foxe's own adherence to Elizabethan religious orthodoxy, and the way he coped with religious reform he considered far from complete.

Another suggestion is that Foxe offers a greater variety of ecclesiological models than previously thought. The contemporary legal ambiguity surrounding conventicles allowed Foxe to applaud and tacitly recommend them, as seen in the case of the Chiltern lollards. Conventicles were depicted as a praiseworthy practice for those who do not believe that the established church was meeting their spiritual needs. As the 'established church' shifted from Catholic to reformed, but not reformed enough for some, Foxe's lollards had the potential to serve as models of religious praxis for discontented separatists and semi-separatists (and even pliant conformists). These lollard narratives, then, reveal the extent to which Foxe was willing to suggest to others, through examples of godly ecclesiology, how to supplement, or even replace, their own parochial activities with religious traditions long-recognized as edifying and upright by their spiritual ancestors, all taking place outside of the parish church.

Chapter 10: Tithes

Introduction

Lollard railings against priestly avarice were closely connected to a possible solution to this problem: with regard to mendicant friars and amoral parish priests, many lollards believed it best to deny payments.¹ The issue of withholding tithes and offerings crops up in each major section of Foxe's lollard narrative, making it a minor—but consistent—concern throughout the text up to Mary's reign. The first indication of lollard attitude to tithes occurs in the Council of Constance's condemnation of Wyclif's claim that 'tenthes are pure almose, and that the parissoners may for the offence of their Curates, deteine & kepe them backe, and bestow them vpon others, at theyr own will and pleasures'.² It resurfaces with in the narratives of early Wycliffites (such as Swinderby, Brute, and Thorpe), the Norwich lollards tried in 1428-31, London lollards of the 1510s, and even the Chiltern lollards of the 1510s.³

¹John Goddesel, a parchment maker of Ditchingham in Norfolk, held the opinion that people should only give alms to those that come begging directly to their doors; earlier in the text, Foxe included Ralph FitzRalph's *Defensio Curatis* in order to show that even St Francis had railed against idleness. Foxe (through FitzRalph) shows that Francis said 'let them resorte to the Lordes table, and aske theyr almes from doore to doore' but only if their labors were not enough to support them. Goddesel also believed it was lawful to take tithes and offerings from priests and give them to the poor instead (though Foxe omitted this in Goddesel's narrative): 'licitum est subtrahere et auferre decimes et oblaciones ab ecclesiis et curatis, et dare eas pauperibus'; see *Norwich Trials*, 61. For Goddesel, see *AM*, 803; for Francis in Ralph FitzRalph, see *AM*, 531.

²*AM*, 555.

³There is only one mention of tithes in Foxe's record of the Chilterns, and Foxe does not seem sure what to make of it. He noted that Thomas Clerke was accused of 'these wordes, or such like: "If a man do sow xx quarters of corne, as wheate or barley, or other corne, he ought to deduct his sede, and of the residue to tithe, or els he hath wrong. &c."' It is tempting to speculate why Foxe would have included this material. Was it the only mention of tithing in the record? Did Foxe include it to stay true to the medieval source? It seems to be a relatively conservative opinion; could Foxe have included it to demonstrate the diverse opinions among the lollards regarding tithes, or by including it, is he endorsing this opinion? Foxe's silence (and the absence of the original source, a court book of Archbishop Longland no longer extant) leaves answers to these questions in the speculative realm.

On issues of tithing and oath-taking (to be discussed in the next chapter), the trial records and medieval accounts presented Foxe with a disjointed, and in some ways an inchoate, set of beliefs.⁴ While scholars recognize this variety, they assert that Foxe was uncomfortable with those on the radical end of the spectrum; consequently, when they have seen these views omitted, they attribute this to Foxe's relative conservatism, or his desire to provide a tidy, mainstream account of the proto-protestants. For instance, the *TAMO* commentary points out that Foxe omitted an article of the Leicester lollards about tithing, that 'tithes should not be paid to rectors or vicars while they are in mortal sin', and explained that this is due to 'usual sensitivity to Lollard denunciations of tithes'.⁵ This assertion echoes scholars' assertions that he sought to mould these ideas so they were compatible with those of mainstream protestants, a point this chapter will continue to challenge. A closer look at the lollard narratives in *AM* exposes the variation and inherent radicalism found in lollard records—and demonstrates that Foxe makes few efforts to focus these beliefs into a coherent magisterial account.

As a result, the reader of *AM* encountered many ideas about tithing, some eccentric, others mainstream. This chapter will begin by offering some background on tithing, and then move on to discuss how lollard ideas about tithes, oblations, and fees are presented in *AM*. Like other chapters, it reveals that Foxe offered a variety of lollard opinions. From here, it shows the consequences of this diversity later in the sixteenth century and in the seventeenth century, a diversity which ostensibly garnered Foxe's approval. This chapter will highlight the role that lollard beliefs about tithing played in major debates about the maintenance of ministers, the nature of historical proof, and the visibility of the true church.

⁴ 'Inchoate' because most lollards who called for withdrawing tithe support from the clergy had no formulated idea of how these men were to be supported. *WL?*, 171.

⁵ *TAMO* commentary in (1570), 624. The commentary also points out that Foxe omitted this because 'Foxe was also concerned with the implications of parishioners judging whether or not their priests were in a state of mortal sin', but this seems inconsistent with Foxe's inclusion of their belief that 'Item, that no curate or prieste taken in anye crimecan [sic] consecrate, here confessions, nor minister any of the Sacramentes of the churche'; *AM*, 624.

Background

Before delving into the lollard narratives that concern clerical taxes, a little background on the development of tithing will be helpful. By the late fourteenth century, a tithe had come to signify a tenth of the annual increase of the fruits of the soil. From its voluntary origins in the early medieval period, it had cemented into canon law in the twelfth century, when Gratian's *Decretum* charged bishops with maintenance of the poor using tithes.⁶ Tithes, a 'persistent and universal tax', came in three forms: predial tithes were due on the products of the earth, such as grain and wood, and the natural increase of livestock; mixed tithes were payable on profits from animal products such as milk or wool, and personal tithes were owed on goods or monies made from individual art, labor, or industry, such as fishing or milling. These were further separated into 'great tithes', levied on corn, hay, and wood (owed to the rector) and 'lesser tithes', levied on all other commodities. It is important to note that these were not static rules and that customs were different in various parishes at different times.⁷

The Scriptural basis for tithing was rooted chiefly in the Old Testament, though R. N. Swanson has shown that there was little concern about theories and principles underpinning the tax, even in sermons; rather, 'tithing was a matter of rules and regulations.'⁸ The theories that Swanson *did* find concerning tithing revolved around the notion of reciprocity between humans and God. Canon law spoke of fourfold rewards for faithful tithe-payers, and the early fifteenth-century instructional dialogue

⁶Giles Constable, *Monastic Tithes: From their Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 19. James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London: Pearson Longman, 1995), 28, 84-86; see also Brian Tierney, *Medieval Poor Law: A Sketch of Canonical Theory and Its Application in England* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1956), 67-70.

⁷Laura Brace, *The Idea of Property in Seventeenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), chapter one, quote at 15; Roger J.P. Kain and Hugh C. Prince, *The Tithe Surveys of England and Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), chapter one; and R.N. Swanson, 'Profits, Priests, and People' in *The Parish in Late Medieval England*, eds. Clive Burgess and Eamon Duffy (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2006), 146-159.

⁸R.N. Swanson, 'Pay Back Time? Tithes and Tithing in Late Medieval England,' *Studies in Church History* 46 (2010): 124-33.

Dives and Pauper associated failure to tithe with a violation of the seventh commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal.'⁹ But without sermons reinforcing the principle behind tithing in late medieval England, it is hard to know how agricultural workers and artisans (those hit hardest by tithes because profits in towns were 'seriously under-assessed' and peasants were likely to tithe on all their produce rather than on increases alone) understood clerical taxes.¹⁰ Citizens in London claimed the clergy failed to inform parishioners of their rights in a significant court case over tithes in 1527-28.¹¹ Doubtless they recognized the duty owed to God, whose bounty was a gift that should be received back in part; but how the laity perceived the middle man, the priest (on behalf of the church), was much hazier.

The clergy's income varied significantly across the country's nearly 9000 parishes, where each living supported a rector, to whom tithes were due. In parishes that had been appropriated by monasteries, bishops, or colleges, the rectors would often appoint vicars to run the parish's day-to-day business, and when the monasteries were dissolved in the 1530s, the tithes formerly due to the monastic houses were impropriated by lay people. In addition to tithes and a freehold glebe, parish clergymen were sustained by oblations (offerings made by parishioners paid either four times a year on feast days or in a lump sum at Easter). Also, fees for clerical duties were a source of income, and were exacted for blessings, churching of women, marriage banns, bells for funeral or marriages, mortuaries, and, increasing in the mid-sixteenth century with the evangelical emphasis on preaching, pew rentals.¹²

Although polemical debates about tithes do not feature regularly until the seventeenth century, there is evidence that early evangelicals may have been considering

⁹Ibid., 127.

¹⁰This had changed, perhaps because it needed to, by the sixteenth century; Susan Brigden, referencing Margaret Bowker's *Secular Clergy Diocese of Lincoln, 1495-1520*, writes that 'Scripture, sermons, and tracts proclaimed men's duty to reder to God's ministers a tenth', in 'Tithe Controversy in Reformation London,' *JEH* 32/3 (July 1981): 288. On the differences in tithe payments by townspeople and rural folk see Brace, *The Idea of Property in Seventeenth-Century England*, 17.

¹¹Brigden, 'Tithe Controversy in Reformation London,' 294-95.

¹²Christopher Hill, *Economic Problems of the Church: From Archbishop Whitgift to the Long Parliament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 168-82.

these issues and their place in the church. Foxe's mentor John Bale considered tithes to be part of the ceremonial accoutrement of the false church. In *Yet a course at the Romishe foxe*, he recounted the interrogation of William Tolwyn, who denounced 'ceremonyes and tythes' in one breath, and condemned the clergymen who 'eate vp the labour of the poore manne that ysmore [sic] vertuose than you'; Bale's marginal comment reads 'The clergye hath robbed the poore'.¹³ This concern for the poor is echoed in *A mysterye of inyquyte* (1545), where Bale lamented that 'there is not a poore wenche that taketh wages, but ye must haue *the* tent part for preuye tythes.'¹⁴ While Bale's concern here is for the practical side of tithes, he also questioned their status as an institution. In *The actes of Englysh votaryes*, Bale tied tithes to other ceremonies, such as mass offerings, church hallowings, churching women, and bishops' seats.¹⁵ *The image of both churches* depicts the post-Wyclif world as one where all superstitions, such as images, pardons, and auricular confessions, were rejected—including tithes.¹⁶ In *The pageant of popes*, translated from Latin in 1574, he indicates that privy tithes were instituted by Innocent III in 1215.¹⁷ So in Foxe's religious circle, there appear to have been concerns about how this mandate originated, and certainly about its alleged abuse by prelates.

Tithing in the Lollard Narratives of *Acts and Monuments*

Lollard resistance to tithing lay at the intersection of ideological and economic opposition.¹⁸ In Foxe's lollard narratives, perspectives on tithing can be divided into two

¹³Bale, *Yet a course at the Romishe foxe*, fos. 57r, 66r.

¹⁴This concern for the poor is echoed in *A mysterye of inyquyte*, where Bale lamented that 'there is not a poore wenche that taketh wages, but ye must haue *the* tent part for preuye tythes.' Bale, *A mysterye of inyquyte* (1545), fo. 27r.

¹⁵Bale, *The actes of Englysh votaryes*, fo. 25v.

¹⁶*Image*, sig. c7r.

¹⁷Bale, *The pageant of popes* (1574), fo. 106v.

¹⁸It should be stressed that opposition to tithing was hardly restricted to lollards, and in most tithe litigation, there are actually very few instances where reasons for refusal to pay are revealed; in some cases, it is clear that there are personal grievances between the parties (see Brigden, 'Tithe Controversy in Reformation England,' 289). For studies that delve into litigation and possible reasons behind them, see Brace, *The Idea of Property in Seventeenth-Century England*, 21-42;

groups—one concerning principle and one regarding practice. The former considers the philosophical validity of tithes based on Scripture. The second deals with tithes the parochial level, where some lollards linked tithes and oblations to attacks on clerical wealth, negligence, or impiety, which inevitably resulted in the poverty—more than just spiritual poverty—of the parishioners.

In *AM*, Walter Brute argued that tithes were an aspect of the Old Law, now obsolete due to Christ's sacrifice. He explained that tithes and first fruits had been given to the levitical priests, warranted by their responsibilities for killing sacrificial animals, ritual washings, the act of the sacrifice, and serving in the tabernacle.¹⁹ Brute claimed that if Christians were to accept the ceremony of tithes as valid, then they should also be bound to circumcision and eating the paschal lamb.

Brute's attack on tithes was comprehensive: at length he detailed why tithes and first fruits depicted in the Old Testament should no longer be valid, and Foxe went along with this, staying close enough to Brute's meanings in his marginal comments. From here, Brute went on to disprove the claim that Christ allowed tithes in the New Testament, and Foxe glossed, 'Tithes not expresselye commaunded a new by Christ in the Gospell'—a statement true enough to Brute's narrative.²⁰ The lollard marches forward chronologically, arguing that tithes were not required in the early church, which Foxe repeats in the margins. Brute summarized his lengthy case by claiming, 'Wherefore, seying that neither Christ, nor any of the Apostles, commaunded to pay tythes, it is manifest and playne, that neither by the law of Moses, nor by Christes law, Christen people are bounde to pay tythes: but by the tradicion of men: they are bound.'²¹ Foxe's marginal comment says, 'Tythes dew to be paied by the positieue law of men.'

This comment, staying largely true to Brute's words, nevertheless takes the lollard's largely negative connotation of tithes and legitimizes clerical tax by giving

Paula Simpson, 'The Continuum of Resistance to Tithe, c. 1400-1600,' in *Pieties in Transition*, 93-108; and William J. Shiels, 'The Right of the Church: The Clergy, Tithe, and the Courts at York, 1540-1640,' *Studies in Church History* 24 (1987): 231-55.

¹⁹ *AM*, 598.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *AM*, 599.

it a legal (if not biblical) basis. Foxe's note, though, invokes positive law, showing that the basis for tithing lay outside of natural law, and it explicitly echoes Brute's comment that the tax is of man's making. Through this finely balanced comment, readers could interpret that Foxe concurred with Brute; equally they could interpret that tithes were rooted in the law and should be paid. What they were sure to walk away with, though, was the idea that tithes were ordained by humans—and in a book whose main theme is the historical discrepancy between God's authority and that of man, this would have been a significant comment.

William Thorpe reiterated Brute's insistence that accepting the Old Testament mandate to tithe would also logically bind Christians to all its other aspects.²² Thorpe claimed that the clergymen who exact tithes from parishioners are consequently denying Christ's incarnation and sacrifice.²³ Thorpe's biblically-based assertion that tithes were invalid was based on Paul's letter to the Hebrews (7:12): 'For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.' Claiming that the Levitical priesthood had been made obsolete by Christ's priesthood, Thorpe maintained that the law (which, under the Levitical priests had mandated tithes) should be changed as well.²⁴ Thorpe asserted that in the New Law, 'neither Christ nor any of his apostles tooke tithes of the people nor commanded the people to pay tithes, neither to Priests nor to deacons.'²⁵ This was directly contradicted by an act of the papacy in the high Middle Ages: 'But (as Cisterciensis telleth) in the thousand yeare of our Lord Iesu Christ, 211. yeare, one pope the x. Gregory: ordayned new tithes first to be geuen to priestes nowe in the new law.'²⁶ He argued that instead, Christ taught the people to give alms, and that Christ and his apostles were sustained that way. Beside this comment, Foxe noted, 'Christ commaundeth almes, not tithes, except tithes be almes.' This statement

²² *AM*, 661.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *AM*, 663.

²⁵ *AM*, 662.

²⁶ This assertion, often repeated in the seventeenth century, was an error in the copying of the MS; Thorpe had actually attributed this to Pope Gregory IX. John Selden later caught the mistake Thorpe had made; this will be discussed below.

reveals Foxe's understanding of tithing, which he sees as only validated by their use as offerings not to priests, but to the poor. Foxe also tied himself (and Thorpe) to Wyclif, whose statement that 'tenthes are pure almose' was condemned by the Council of Constance.

Lollard doubts about tithes spanned beyond philosophical considerations to the economic and parochial side of the issue. It is clear from Foxe's text that many lollards saw tithes and oblations as an overbearing financial burden. William Swinderby, accused of advocating the withholding of tithes, insisted he had been asking merely for priests to take mercy on those who cannot afford them.²⁷ Like that of Swinderby, William Thorpe's understanding of avaricious priests was grounded in a concern for 'the poore men & women specially of the parish, of whome they take this temporall liuyng', who were then neglected by these priests, and the resulting collective responsibility of the very parishioners that paid their tithes.²⁸ These financial concerns were echoed in other lollard trials. Although the narrative of Norwich lollard William Hardy is not fleshed out in Foxe's text (his trial record is similar to many others of the sect), he believed that feast days were created by the priests in order to receive oblations, and Margerie Backster believed it was more economical to eat leftovers from a Thursday night 'then to go to the market to bring them selues in dette to bye fishe' on a Friday in order to abstain from eating meat.²⁹ These are additional instances of the relationship between food consumption and defiance of authority that was spelled out in the previous chapter on conventicles. Readers of *AM* would find the latter examples from the narrative of the Norwich lollards echoed in the later account of the Chiltern lollards, underscoring the repressive, persecutory nature of the established church on issues as wide-ranging as tithes and domestic piety.

For many lollards, tithing was an inextricable part of their antisacerdotalism (seen in chapter six).³⁰ Whereas Swinderby merely called for the benevolence of

²⁷*AM*, 577.

²⁸*AM*, 662.

²⁹*AM*, 808. For Hardy, see *Norwich Trials*, 154.

³⁰Peter Marshall rightly warns against using tithe complaints as a barometer of anticlerical sentiment on the eve of the Reformation; nevertheless, in *AM*, a connection is clear. Peter Marshall,

prelates when collecting tithes, Thorpe advocated that good priests should take only the amount of tithes they need to have a 'bare liuing', distributing the rest to the poor. As for priests who did not perform their office justly, Thorpe claimed that their tithes should be withheld, lest parishioners become enablers of whatever sin kept the priest from doing fulfilling his office fairly: 'Also sir, the parishners that paye their temporall goods (be they tythes or offerings) to priestes that do not their office amonge them iustlye, are partners of euey sinne of those priestes: because that they sustaine those priests folly in their sinne, with their temporall goodes.'³¹

On Foxe's account, some lollards went further than Thorpe, believing that tithes should not go to priests at all; rather, alms should be distributed directly to the poor.³² Foxe was quick to claim that the confusion over whether lollards were tithe-dodgers stemmed from this belief. In the introduction to the articles held by Norwich lollards, he defended them:

Moreouer, they thought or sayd peradventure that in certeine cases, tithes might be withholden from wicked priestes sometyme, and be conferred to better vses, to the behoufe of the poore: Therefore they are falsly slaundered, as saying and affirmyng that no tithes were to be geuen to the ministers and curates of the churches.³³

One of John Florence's heretical opinions was that curates should not take tithes of their parishioners; rather, those monies should be divided among the poor. This is the only place where Foxe 'clarified' one of Turner's beliefs, noting in the margin, 'He meaneth they should not claime such tithes by any exaction.'³⁴ Foxe emphasized the

The Catholic Priesthood and the English Reformation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 216-18.

³¹ *AM*, 662.

³² There seems to have been genuine confusion over whether this was lawful by at least one Norwich lollard, Thomas Plowman, who was accused of not having paid tithes for seven years; he claimed that he had given alms to the poor instead. Plowman is listed by Foxe as a Norwich lollard but does not get a full treatment. See *Norwich Trials*, 16. There does not seem to have been agreement in late medieval England as to whether or not alms to the poor were *included* in one's tithes; see Swanson, 'Pay Back Time?', 126, 130.

³³ *AM*, 805.

³⁴ *AM*, 802.

act of ordering and enforcing payment, which could sometimes see curates withholding sacraments (despite the disapproval of local authorities—and canon law) from the people, which Susan Brigden has shown was a concern for Londoners; the tithe controversy in London had been resolved only the year before Foxe moved there in 1547.³⁵

Florence's case is noteworthy because it is the only place in a Norwich lollard's narrative where Foxe specifically mentions their beliefs about tithing. This might be expected, as the register indicates that numerous Norwich lollards believed it acceptable to withhold tithes and give them to the poor instead.³⁶ The substitution of alms for tithes was not restricted to the Norwich lollards, as the belief of Richard Hilmin demonstrated. This lollard of the Coventry community was the only one whose trial indicated an opposition to tithes, and Foxe was faithful to the register here, recording that Hilmin maintained 'that it was better to depart with money to the poore, then to geue tythes to priestes.'³⁷

Foxe then, included evidence of parishioners withholding tithes as long as they were given to the poor as alms instead. It appears that it is in cases where a lollard denied outright the validity of tithing that Foxe stepped in to make clarifications, as in the testimonies of Brute and Thorpe, as well as in the prefatory comments concerning the articles of the Norwich lollards. But then how are readers to interpret Foxe's unglossed inclusion of Richard Hunne's beliefs on tithing and oblations? The case of Richard Hunne, after all, began over mortuary fees, and the first article against Hunne concerned tithing. Foxe recorded that it was held against him that 'first, that he had red, taught, preached, published, and obstinately defended, agaynst the lawes of almightie God: that tythes, or paying of tythes was neuer

³⁵Brigden, 'Tithe Controversy in Reformation London,' 290, 301; cf. 'John Foxe,' *ODNB*.

³⁶For instance, John Finch and Auisa Moone claimed that people were bound to withhold tithes and give to the poor (*Norwich Trials*, 183 and 141); numerous others claimed that it was okay to withhold tithes, with the caveat that 'it is done prudently' (for instance, Richard Knobbing of Beccles, 116, and John Pert, 170). Each of these lollards is listed by Foxe as having abjured, but not given a fuller treatment.

³⁷*AM*, 943. Cf. McSheffrey and Tanner, eds., *Lollards of Coventry*, 72.

ordained to be due, sauing onely by the couetousnes of Priestes.³⁸ Foxe left the comment alone, letting readers interpret what they might.

Thus far we have been focusing on the radical beliefs that Foxe incorporated into his text, despite the historiographical emphasis on radical material he purposefully excluded. An investigation into this material actually reveals, though, that Foxe included the same principles in other narratives. For instance, the Norwich preacher William White received a larger treatment in *AM*, but his views on tithes are omitted. A closer look at Foxe's source, the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum* shows that White's beliefs were the same as those held by Brute and Thorpe: that the mandate to tithe ended during the time of Christ.³⁹ The emphasis on tithes as mandated by man and not God is reflected in the omitted comments of John Burrell, who also received a fuller narrative.⁴⁰ Hilman's and Florence's insistence that tithes should be withheld and given to the poor instead mirrors the words of John Finch, Auisa Moone, Richard Knobbing, and John Pert.⁴¹ It is clear, then, that there are very few, if any, radical beliefs concerning tithing that Foxe deliberately and systematically excluded. The radical material excised in certain instances was in fact replicated in other lollard testimonies.

A closer look at Foxe's lollard narratives reveals, then, that over the issue of payments ordained by—and made to—the established church, Foxe did not articulate a strong position, but rather to let readers form their own opinions, guided by (the relatively unmitigated) exempla in his tome. The result is a reading that offers a variety of understandings regarding the premise underlying tithing and the way this idea is put into practice. Beyond the diversity found in these narratives, readers were also given a glimpse of the notion of voluntarism and choice with regard to financial piety.⁴²

³⁸ *AM*, 969.

³⁹ 'quod decimae sunt a clericis et ecclesiis subtrahendae, dum tamen hoc prudenter fiat, *pro eo quod decimarum solutio cessabat in passione Christi*', italics mine. Shirley, ed., *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 428.

⁴⁰ *AM*, 809; cf. *Norwich Trials*, 77.

⁴¹ *AM*, 802; cf. *Norwich Trials*, 185 (Finch), 141 (Moone), 116 (Knobbing), 170 (Pert).

⁴² On financial independence with regard to personal piety, see Brace, *The Idea of Property in Seventeenth-Century England*, 30-42 for the sectarian perspective, and Gervase Rosser, 'Parochial

Later Interpretations of Tithing in Foxe's Lollard Narratives

Like the issue of episcopacy, Foxe's unwillingness or inability to corral lollard views on tithing into a mainstream, cohesive idea meant that myriad views concerning financial piety were available to his readers. And as in the case of episcopacy and other radical lollard ideas, this variety appeared in the writings of many controversialists with mutually competing claims to truth, none of whom were happy to relinquish the lollard legacy established by Foxe. In their claims to the lollards, manifest several pamphlet debates, it is clear that these groups interpreted *AM* in radically divergent ways, and that the lollards became a source of contention among these interpretive communities.

There are indications that readers of *AM* understood the radical lollard positions on tithing as evidence of pious practice, even a mere generation after its publication. Patrick Collinson rightly asserts that the separatist Henry Barrow 'self-consciously recapitulat[ed] the martyr experiences and narratives of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*', but Barrow may have taken more than just martyrological models away from his reading of *AM*.⁴³ In November of 1587, at Lambeth Palace before Archbishop Whitgift, Archdeacon Mullins, and Richard Cosins, Barrow maintained that tithes were 'abrogated and vnlawful'. When asked by these officials how clergymen should make a living, Barrow responded, '*Ex pura eleemosyna*, of clere almes as Christ in his Testament hath ordeyned, and as he and his Apostles.'⁴⁴ The biblical verses he cited in support of his position, Hebrews 7:12 and Galatians 6:6, did not include the phrase, which he may well have taken from Wyclif's condemnation at the Blackfriars Council described by Foxe. Barrow knew of Wyclif's views, having cited the heresiarch's identification of a hierarchical clerical estate as antichrist.⁴⁵

Conformity and Voluntary Religion in Late-Medieval England,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series 1 (1991): 173-89, for the orthodox perspective.

⁴³ 'Henry Barrow,' Patrick Collinson in *ODNB*.

⁴⁴ Henry Barrow, *The examinations of Henry Barrowe Iohn Grenewood and Iohn Penrie, before the high commissioners, and Lordes of the Counsel* (1596), sigs. B4v-C1r.

⁴⁵ See above, p. 169.

It is also clear that the narratives of the lollards were known to Barrow's co-religionist, John Penry. In March of 1593, Penry told his interrogators Henry Fanshaw and Justice Young that he opposed 'the false ecclesiastical offices... [and] the the maintenance or livinges, wherby they are mainteyned in their offices', which he believed stemmed not from Christ but his enemy. When Fanshaw and Young asked him if any learned men or martyrs shared his religious opinions, Penry replied, 'I hold nothing, but what I wilbe bound to proue out of the written word of God, and wil shew in regard of the special pointes controverted, to haue bene mainteyned by the holy martyrs of this land, who first assailed the Babylonist Romane kingdome, as namely by Mr. Wicliffe. Mr. Brute, Mr. Purvey, Mr. White etc', and tied these to martyrs closer to his own time like Robert Barnes and William Tyndale.⁴⁶ Separatists would continue to cite the lollards as historical precedents for their anti-tithe position well into the seventeenth century. John Canne, an exiled separatist printer living in the Low Countries, relied mainly on Foxe's *AM* for his historical proof that tithes were unlawful. As a result, he repeated the erroneous charge found in William Thorpe's testimony that Pope Gregory X had newly instituted tithes.⁴⁷ Canne's polemical opponent William Prynne rightly argued that Canne was misquoting Thorpe: 'He mis-recites *Thorps* words, who speaks not of Tithes in general, but only of *New Tithes*'.⁴⁸ That Canne was employing the same argument as Barrow, seventy-five years later, testifies to the longevity of the lollard inheritance as articulated by Foxe.

This inheritance was a contested one. Prynne, who regularly cited the lollard precedent in his railings against episcopacy, refused to cede them to the anti-tithe contingent. Outraged that 'the Opinions of John Wickliff, Husse, Thorp, are produced by the Anabaptists', he addressed the issue in a pamphlet responding to Canne in 1653, and expanded in 1659 and 1660.⁴⁹ Prynne outlined Thorpe's ar-

⁴⁶Barrow, *The examinations of Henry Barrowe Iohn Greenwood and Iohn Penrie*, sig. C3r.

⁴⁷John Canne, *A second voyce from the temple to the higher powers* (1653), 13-14. Canne also relied on Willet's *Synopsis papismi*.

⁴⁸William Prynne, *The remainder, or second part of a Gospel plea* (1659), 80. Cf. *AM*, 662.

⁴⁹William Prynne, *A gospel plea (interwoven with a rational and legal) for the lawfulness and continuance fo [sic] the antient settled maintenance and tenths of the ministers of the Gospel in two*

gument against tithes in *AM*, detailing his belief that Christ's priesthood had superseded the Levitical priesthood.⁵⁰ Prynne rejected Thorpe's conclusion by citing Psalm 110:4, God's declaration that Christ would be 'a priest for ever after the order of Melchisdeck'. Prynne went on to state that Abraham had paid tithes to this high priest, and therefore tithing was a valid ecclesiological practice.⁵¹

Prynne also addressed Wyclif's statement that tithes are mere alms, which Prynne admitted was corroborated by John Hus, as recorded by Foxe. Instead of showing that Wyclif's statement was incorrect, Prynne explained what he considered to be Wyclif's true sentiment. Claiming that Wyclif understood tithes as 'debts' to be paid, he went on to list the biblical mandates for debtors to pay what is owed to their debtors and to the poor, according to the debtor's ability and the creditor's necessity.⁵² What is clear about Prynne's defense of Wyclif and Thorpe is that he refused to relinquish them to the separatists. He referred to Wyclif as '*our* famous English Apostle', and to Thorpe as 'one of *our* Martyres'—both possessive statements make clear that these early witnesses belong to the established church.

Prynne's pro-tithe tracts, written in the 1650s, were part of a second generation of defensive literature concerning the unorthodox lollards. Like the issue of episcopacy, the withholding of tithes sparked contentious debate in the early years of the seventeenth century, and there was a similar backlash by conformists, beginning with Richard Bancroft, against the radical lollard beliefs found in Foxe's *AM*. Writing against Henry Barrow and other separatists, Bancroft explained that he did not blame the laity for their misunderstanding about tithes, but rather 'sundrie men of the Clergie', in particular Wyclif. He asserted that Wyclif's claim that tithes were

parts (1660), 68.

⁵⁰This argument was commonly used by those who stood in opposition to tithes in the seventeenth century, without reference to the lollards. John Milton put it succinctly in his attack on tithes: 'Levitical priesthood was excelld by the priesthood of Christ.' John Milton, *Considerations touching the likeliest means to remove hirelings out of the church* (1659), 27. A typical response to this type of claim can be seen in John Havighurst, *Festered consciences new launced* (1650), 4-7.

⁵¹William Prynne, *A Gospel plea (interwoven with a rational and legal) for the lawfulness & continuance of the ancient settled maintenance and tenthes of the ministers of the Gospel* (1653), 82-83.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 53-54.

mere alms was a radical position: ‘But of all extremities, that passeth, where some now a daies would haue all taken from the Church, that so Ministers might liue, as they did in the Apostles times’.

By the time James’ *Apologie* was published, a decade before John Selden’s controversial *Historie of tithes*, it appears that the Church of England establishment wanted an alternative narrative. George Carleton, later Bishop of Chichester, was forced to respond to attacks on tithing in 1606, but he had been working on his response ‘for a long time’—so these issues were not new.⁵³ The first chapter in Carleton’s *Tithes Examined and proued to bee due to the clergie by diuine right* sought to redress three common opinions about tithes, the first providing a clue to how the lollards influenced discussions of tithe-paying in the late sixteenth century. Carleton relayed the way Wyclif came to hold this belief, relying on the traditional early modern belief that the Waldensians influenced the Oxford scholar. Interestingly, though, he took the opportunity not to repeat the traditional genealogy of the true church, as laid down by Foxe and appropriated by later (even conformist) writers. Whereas this scheme saw the Waldensians influencing Wyclif who in turn taught the Husites, the progenitors of Luther, Carleton not so subtly implied that this radical belief spread, similarly beginning the Waldensians as influencers of Wyclif, but then takes a dramatic and dangerous detour: ‘The same opinion hath beene since taught by Anabaptists, and Trinitaries’.⁵⁴ Carleton then went on to use Scriptural examples to show that as those who plant a garden would of course expect to eat of its fruit, of course a minister would subsist on the tithes of his parishioners.

But where Carleton seems to consign Wyclif to the lineage of the radical Reformation, James appears unwilling to follow. Having reconciled the sources Foxe used with Wyclif’s own writings, James still had to admit: ‘That Tythes are meere almes, I say, it was his error. He trusted too much vnto the Common Lawyers, whose iudgment hee seemes to follow’...They held: ‘Tythes were not due vnto any particular Church, before the Council of Lateran; but that men might bestowe them, where

⁵³George Carleton, *Tithes Examined and proued to bee due to the clergie by diuine right* (1606), sig. A3r.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, sig. B1r.

they would.⁵⁵ He then commended Carleton's book, fully endorsing his analysis of the duty to tithe, and returning to Wyclif, softened the sharp edges of the lollard's statement by explaining that even if, in very extreme cases, such as when a priest is a 'lewd companion, a verie varlet, an open drunkard, adulterer or Fornicator, or a murderer of mens soules, aswel as of their bodies'—*then* an individual may withhold their tithe, but only to 'sequester' it, and keep it until such time as there is a new incumbent.⁵⁶ Although James was explicitly answering the accusations of Robert Persons, there is an indication that he might not only be talking to Catholic polemicists. When describing Wyclif's position, he relates the anticlericalism of Wyclif's day to that of his own: 'as they doe to this day, in many places, too ill affected vnto the Ministry'.⁵⁷ Even in the first decade of the seventeenth century, the conformists were concerned to claim Wyclif as their own at the expense of the nonconformists.

In the same year as the *Apologie* was published, James also edited two tracts by Wyclif against the mendicant orders, which were presented to Parliament in 1376. In the preface of his *Tvvo short treatises, against the orders of the begging friars* (1608), James stated his purpose for writing, drawing similarities between the friars of Wyclif's day and the Jesuits of his own time; his more likely purpose was to vindicate Wyclif's reputation concerning tithing, which he had largely failed to accomplish in his *Apologie*. The third article in the petition concerned tithes, where Wyclif expanded on his belief that men could lawfully withdraw tithes from a sinful curate. This position stressed the intent of God's commandment to tithe, which

⁵⁵*Apologie*, 52-53. James' admission of Wyclif's position and his weak defense of it was picked up by the Quaker writer Henry Lavor, writing fifty years after James' *Apologie* was published. Lavor used James' inability to substantiate the pro-tithe position historically to bolster his own case: '*Tho. James*, where he industriously maintaineth the Ministers right to tythes, allegeth yet no such dedication made by our Ancestors, but is forced therein to flye to the Analogy of Scriptures (as he calls it) where he also confesseth, That the judgement of our Common-Lawyers was, That tyths were not due to any particular Church, before the Council of *Lateran*, (which was yet a very sandy foundation) but that men might bestow them where they would. . . .' See Lavor, *Replies made to the antiqueries of Thomas Lye* (1658), 8.

⁵⁶*Apologie*, 54-55.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

he asserted was a voluntary offering ('should not bee axed by strength, by violence or cursing, youen [sic] freeilie withouten exaction or constraining') that could be removed if a priest were to turn from God's principles.⁵⁸

James' attempts to remove the radical edge from Wyclif's stance on tithes convinced Carleton. When the latter published his next tract, a vindication of princely prerogative within their own realms, Wyclif featured. In a section of *Jurisdiction regall, episcopall, papall* (1610) that detailed the medieval friars' part in usurping the king's jurisdiction, Carleton used Wyclif's tracts. As an aside, he revised his verdict of Wyclif's stance on tithing given in *Tithes Examined*: 'Let me obserue this by the way, as being now better instructed in the opinion of *John Wicliffe*, concerning tithes. . . [he] would have had tithes reduced to their ancient vse againe'.⁵⁹ He went on to outline Wyclif's views, citing James' *Tvvo short treatises*.

John Selden likely consulted the *Tvvo short treatises*, as he cited Wyclif's petition to Parliament in his *Historie of Tithes* (1618). The lollards feature only briefly in the *Historie of Tithes*, where Selden searched painstakingly through the medieval records to prove that Carleton and others, who had argued against impropriation, were incorrect in their use of historical evidence; he also refuted the claim that tithes should be considered valid on the basis of consistent usage throughout history. Selden mentioned Wyclif, Brute, Thorpe, 'and some such more whose Arguments for their opinions are at large in *Foxes Acts and Moniments of the Church of England*, wither I had rather send the Reader then stuff this place with them'.⁶⁰ He showed that they were to have believed 'Tithes to be *meere Almes*, and not to be paid to the Ministers of the Gospel by any Parochiall right, as a necessarie dutie to the Euangelicall Priesthood, but that they might be retained and disposed of at the owners will especially if the Pastor well performed not his function.' Selden debunked William Thorpe's assertion in *AM* that tithes had been introduced by

⁵⁸Thomas James, *Tvvo short treatises, against the orders of the begging friars* (1608), 11-15 at 12.

⁵⁹George Carleton, *Jurisdiction regall, episcopall, papall* (1610), 116.

⁶⁰John Selden, *The historie of tithes that is, the practice of payment of them, the positieve laws made for them, the opinions touching the right of them* (1618), 167.

Pope Gregory X, correctly suggesting that Thorpe had relied on Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* for this claim.⁶¹ As for Wyclif, Selden demonstrated that he and the friars, famously opposed to one another, agreed on this point, largely taking his cue from *Two short treatises* and bolstering it with evidence from the decretals and canon law.⁶² Prynne's *A Gospel plea* relied on Selden's arguments, and in an expanded version of this tract, Prynne added to his defense of Wycliffe, Hus, and Thorpe by claiming that they had received those documents from the medieval mendicants. By assigning the blame to the medieval monks, Prynne was able 'to shew how *Canne* and the rest of our *Anabaptistical Tithe-Oppugners*, revive only these old greedy *Monks, Friars Tenents and practices* for their own private ends and lucre'; here he connected the anti-tithe position to the medieval Catholic practice, downplaying the role of the lollards in this lineage.⁶³

At the height of the Laudian backlash against puritanical appeals to history, Peter Heylyn stepped in to refute the radical claims of the lollards. Wyclif's status as heresiarch and his radical views made him Heylyn's main target when attempting to recast the narrative of the visible true church espoused by Foxe.⁶⁴ He rejected the status and acclaim Wyclif had achieved by the mid-seventeenth century, and accused Wyclif of holding many opinions that 'were so far from the truth, so contrary to peace and civil Order, so inconsistent with the Government of the Church of *Christ*'.⁶⁵

These efforts of the early conformists and their later reinforcers to claim the lollards proved unconvincing to many nonconformists who continued to appropriate the lollards. Recognizing their own rejection of tithing in the medieval past, the radical lollards proved useful to a motley set of radicals. Baptist supporter Edward

⁶¹Selden, *The historie of tithes*, 147-48. Only one of the medieval manuscripts of *The examination of William Thorpe*, out of the extant four, has the correct reading of Gregory IX; the others, which include the basis for the print version that Foxe consulted for *AM*, all read 'Gregory the tenth'. See Hudson, *Two Wycliffite Texts* (Oxford: Early English Texts Society, 1993), 124-25. Cf. Margaret Aston, "'Caim's Castles": Poverty, Politics, and Disendowment,' in *The Church, Politics, and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Barrie Dobson (Gloucester: A. Sutton, 1984), 77 n.79.

⁶²Selden, *The historie of tithes*, 165-68.

⁶³Prynne, *A gospel plea* (1660), 75.

⁶⁴Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 285-303.

⁶⁵Peter Heylyn, *Examen historicum* (1659), 65.

Harrison, writing from the Baptist hub in Kensworth, Hertfordshire, echoed the rejection of tithes by Brute and Thorpe, urging readers to find a copy of Foxe's book, where 'you will finde it clearly proved, That Tythes are not in any sence due by any Law of God'.⁶⁶ The Fifth Monarchist writer John Rogers included Wyclif's anti-tithe stance in his petition to the Barebone's Parliament, *Sagrir, or, Doomes-Day Drawing Nigh* (1654), which urged the government to initiate reforms that included the decentralization of courts, eradication of professional lawyers, and the abolition of tithes. His arguments against the latter likely reflected his arguments presented before the committee considering the issue of tithes, and history was one arrow in his quiver; he noted that Wyclif was a martyr for his opinion 'that the Civill Magistrate might alter or take away such *maintenance* from the *Spirituality* (so called) that offended *habitualiter*; as these doe', and that with regard to his anti-tithe position, 'the blood of *Martyrs* will witnesse with me'.⁶⁷ A manicule in the margin served to stress this point, and within the text itself, Rogers referred readers to Foxe's lollard narratives. Although the anonymous author of *The countreys plea against tythes* (1646) did not cite the lollards explicitly, his effort to establish a historical lineage of tithe opposition included nameless witnesses of the time after the early church: '[E]ven then when the true light of the Gospell began to be wholly obscured, there was yet much trouble and a great deale of stirre to bring this old Ceremoniall Law into use againe, and much opposition there was then against it'.⁶⁸ And while *AM* is not mentioned by name, the author's arguments for the novelty of tithing in the medieval era echo Thorpe's case against tithes. Laying the blame on Catholic innovators, the author pressed, 'We know you have read the Ecclesiasticall Histories, and do know much better then we can tell you, (had you but the conscience to acknowledge it) how and in what manner Tythes were brought into use in the Church

⁶⁶Edward Harrison, *Plain dealing* (1649), 13. Harrison was vicar of Kensworth in 1645; see 'Parishes: Kensworth,' *A History of the County of Hertford: volume 2* (1908), 231-234. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=43273> Date accessed: 02 September 2012.

⁶⁷John Rogers, *Sagrir, or, Doomes-day drawing nigh* (1654), sigs. C1r-v.

⁶⁸Anonymous, *The countreys plea against tythes* (1646), 2.

by the Pope and his superstitious Adherents'.⁶⁹ Even though the lollards were not explicitly recognized here, Sir Henry Spelman's response to the tract indicated that Wyclif's position needed addressing (and a quick dismissal): that tithes 'are meere Almes, which is imputed to *Wickleff* in the 8 session of the councell of Constance; but that admits of no dispute since it is repugnant to all appearance of reason.'⁷⁰

While Spelman targeted Wyclif, many authors of anti-tithe pamphlets named several lollards, evidently having searched through *AM* to find evidence of their position. Anonymously written, *The inditement of tythes* (1646) tied John Wyclif's statement about tithes as alms to John Oldcastle's indictment of clerical possessions and Thorpe's suspicion of tithes.⁷¹ This same conflation occurred in *An indictment against tythes* (1659), where the Quaker John Osborne drew together the stance of Thorpe and Brute on tithes with the actions of Thomas Cromwell, 'by whose counsel King *Henry* the eighth dissolved the Abbies', thereby giving this position a whiff of royal authority.⁷²

Osborne was one of many Quakers who linked their opposition to tithes to the historical anti-tithe position of the lollards. Consistent with the Quaker emphasis on suffering, many Friends highlighted not merely that their own views had existed for hundreds of years, but that medieval witnesses had been persecuted for them. In Francis Howgill's treatise against tithes, for instance, the fact that Wyclif and his followers suffered for their beliefs received nearly as much attention as the beliefs themselves. Taken from *AM*, Howgill argued,

A cloud of witnesses might be brought out of the ancient Fathers, and also latter testimonies who witnessed against them, and divers Martyrs, some whereof were put to death, others grievously troubled, and suffered long and great imprisonments, as *John Hus*, *Jerome of Prague*, the famous Reformer *John Wickliffe*...and *Walter Brute*, *William Thorpe*,

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Sir Henry Spelman, *An apology of the treatise De non temerandis ecclesiis ...also his epistle to Richard Carew Esquire, of Anthony in Cornwall concerning tithes* (1646), 23.

⁷¹ Anonymous, *The inditement of tythes* (London: S.N., 1646), 24-27.

⁷²John Osborne, *An indictment against tythes* (1659), 29.

William Swinderby, and it was generally the judgment of all the *Wickliffians* and the predecessors of the Protestants...that all Priests or Ministers ought to be poor, and to be content with free gift. . .⁷³

Like Howgill, his fellow Quaker William Bingley bound this historicity of his own anti-tithe feeling with his outrage at the persecution of himself and his co-religionists. According to Bingley, tithes ‘were denyed and testified against by several of the first Reformed Protestants, as *Walter Brute, &c. Therefore, for you to demand them, and to cast men into Prison for the Non-Payment of them, manifests you to be Cursed Children, which have forsaken the Right Way*’.⁷⁴

Bingley did not refer to Foxe specifically, but his reliance on Foxe can be deduced for two reasons. First, Brute’s testimony was only disseminated in English though Foxe’s *AM*. While authors could reference high profile figures like John Purvey, and especially John Wyclif, through Netter’s *Doctrinale* or James’ *Apologie*, Brute’s testimony was kept in a Latin register held at Lambeth Palace. Another reason Foxe was the likely source for this evidence lies in the interpretive community of the Quakers. Like the separatists who recognized their anti-episcopal stance in the testimony of the radical lollards, the Quakers likely saw their own beliefs proved by the persecution of the anti-tithe lollards. Quaker authors regularly referenced the same lollards, Wyclif, Brute, and Thorpe, as proof for their beliefs. While they often mentioned Jerome of Prague or Jan Hus, these three lollards regularly featured. As shown earlier, though, there were numerous examples of lollards who rejected tithes in Foxe’s *AM*; that these three are regularly cited suggests that the Quakers were reading one another’s texts and going back to Foxe’s text to corroborate it, or merely copying it.⁷⁵ That Quakers wrote polemic aimed at an outward audience

⁷³ Francis Howgill, *The great case of the tythes and forced maitenance* (1655), 26.

⁷⁴ Bingley, *A lamentation over England*, 25.

⁷⁵The lollards did not feature evenly in the Quaker tracts. While they generally served the same purpose (as a key historical link, always listed in between the early church witnesses against tithes and the Quakers themselves), some writers, such as Dennis Hollister, carefully outlined the objections of Wyclif, Brute, and Thorpe against tithes. Hollister laid out the lollard positions ‘because every Reader may not have the advantage of reading those Books being of so large a volumn and price...’ Others, such as Anthony Pearson, merely listed them as holding opinions

but also for themselves is evidenced by James Patterson's advice in *The pamphlet of the lyar discovered* (1678), where he recommends readers to the works of fellow Friends Howgill, Thomas Rudyard, and Anthony Pearson.⁷⁶ A final indication that Quakers understood the lollards of *AM* in the same way can be seen in the polemical dispute between Quaker apostate Francis Bugg and his former brethren. Like Peter Fairlambe's approach in *The recantation of a Brownist*, Bugg attacked his former community for claiming the lollards. Returned to the fold of the established church, Bugg sought to reclaim these medieval witnesses. Attacking his former co-religionist George Whitehead, Bugg quipped, 'You say...*That* Wickliff, Suinderly, &c. *Testified against the Popish Clergy, and Tithes, &c.* By which you seem to make no difference between a Popish and Protestant Clergy, for which the Church of *England* will not thank you.'⁷⁷

That Foxe's martyrs themselves disagreed on the degree to which tithes were lawful was fully acknowledged by one Quaker. Thomas Ellwood noted that while some lollards believed that tithes should be given as a free gift and not exacted, others thought it an unlawful practice entirely. Ellwood's ideas about the many different witnesses to the truth drove his understanding of the Reformation process more generally. This Quaker was able to recognize that all the Reformation-era martyrs had some truth in their beliefs, but he gave more weight to some than others. For instance, Ellwood respected Cranmer's sacrifice, but held other, more radical, reformers in higher regard, namely John Hooper and John Foxe, who had both rejected clerical vestments.⁷⁸ In Ellwood's treatise, the way the Quakers understood the radical lollards, mediated through *AM*, becomes clearer. The persecution that Foxe documented validated the beliefs of those he chose to incorporate into his text. Foxe's own status, simultaneously as a vanguard and preserver of the Reformation

against tithes, without detailing their narratives from *AM*. See Hollister, *The harlots vail removed*, 81-84; Anthony Pearson, *The great case of tythes truly stated* (1657), 14.

⁷⁶James Pearson, *The pamphlet of the lyar discovered* (1678), 5. Cf. Thomas Rudyard, *Tythes ended by Christ* (1673), 18, where Rudyard lists Wyclif, Brute, Swinderby, Hus, and Thorpe as anti-tithe witnesses from the Middle Ages; see Pearson, *The great case of tythes truly stated*, 14.

⁷⁷Francis Bugg, *A second summons to the city of Abel* (1695), 1.

⁷⁸Thomas Ellwood, *The foundation of tithes shaken*, 314-15.

struggle, lent credibility to the martyrs of *AM*. The Quakers could recognize the flaws of some of these martyrs—for instance, the conservative stance of Cranmer—while seeing themselves as descendants of other, more radical witnesses.

Conclusion

The lollard attitude to tithing was neither simple nor straightforward, and Foxe made little effort to present it as such. Tithes serve as another area which saw no systematic deletions of radical material. When a view was omitted in one place, it was typically present in another. Far from streamlining a magisterial perspective, *AM* presented an array of views, based both on philosophical ideas and on practical terms.

Foxe was likely more comfortable with the latter; the practical opposition to tithe seemed to stem mainly from a concern for the poor. That he would have been comfortable with tithes as connected to alms rather than payments to clergy, though, does not seem to be an unknown idea in his religious circle. Considering Bale's statements about tithing mentioned earlier, it does not seem far-fetched to assume that Foxe may have questioned this mandate as well—or at least have had sympathy with those who did.

These philosophical grounds for rejecting tithes found an audience in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For separatists and Quakers, forced maintenance seemed to be an objectionable remnant of the Old Law, something Christ's sacrifice had rendered moot, and had been brought back in by medieval Catholics; the testimony of Brute and Thorpe only corroborated these views. Despite the best efforts of conformists to tone down Wyclif's views at the very least, these proved unconvincing for nonconformists who claimed 'famous Wickliff' for themselves.⁷⁹ The struggle for the lollard legacy among various conformists, Baptists, Fifth Monarchists, and Quakers elucidates just how much was at stake: the lineage of the true church revealed in history was an inheritance too valuable to give up.

⁷⁹Dennis Hollister, *The harlots vail removed*, 83.

Chapter 11: Oaths

Introduction

Like tithing, lollard reticence about swearing oaths meant that a potentially radical belief was seemingly endorsed by Foxe in *AM*. This chapter will chart the implications of Foxe's inclusion. Like the topics of sacraments, episcopacy, preaching, and tithes, Foxe made no systematic effort to amalgamate the array of lollard opinions into one evangelical party line. After briefly touching on the background of oaths, I will discuss the variety of lollard beliefs about swearing. From here, I will look at the seventeenth-century reception of those beliefs, as mediated by Foxe, which were (perhaps unsurprisingly) incorporated into Quaker polemical works in particular. The next section will delve into the *ex officio* oath, which was originally created to force lollards into swearing to answer truthfully to all the questions put to them, before having seen any charges levied against them,¹ but which gained prominence in the early seventeenth century due to its increased use against the dissenters of that era. This oath remained legal throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and Foxe had strong opinions about this perceived injustice; later writers not only used the lollard examples of *AM* to speak against it, but also rested on the authority of Foxe as well. Finally, this chapter will draw together these strands to assess the role of the lollards in early modern debates about oaths.

Background

The same biblical literalism that yielded lollard questions about the theoretical underpinning of tithes similarly led to a questioning of oaths. Oaths were an important component in the running of an orderly commonwealth, which princes used as a means of confirming loyalty to authority.² Jonathan Gray has recently illustrated

¹Jonathan Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation*, 171.

²See Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII*, 77. It should be noted also that oaths were also taken in matters of disloyalty to authority; John Spurr, points out that the pilgrims of 1536 took an oath to restore traditional religion and hold back the heretics. See Spurr, 'A Profane History of Early Modern Oaths,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6:11 (2001): 47.

the essential role they played during the English Reformation under Henry in particular. He shows that oaths were so effective in testing allegiance to authority because they were intimately connected with the worship of God; it was for this reason that medieval Catholics swore their oaths upon objects which connected them to God, such as relics, saints, Mass books, and the Gospels.³

Gray has shown that ‘the more a particular object on or by which one swore had access to God, the more convincing and binding was one’s oath.’⁴ From this statement it is easier to understand the lollard reticence concerning oaths; after all, a rejection of holy objects came to characterize nearly all lollard grievances with the medieval Church. In addition to their suspicion of the holiness of objects, a deep reverence for Scripture meant that lollards and evangelicals were wary of this practice; some lollards believed that swearing was explicitly banned in Matthew 5. James 5:12, ‘Before all things, my brethren, do not ye swear, neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by whatever other oath. But be your word Yea, yea, Nay, nay, that ye fall not under doom’, would have been known to many of them, the book of James being a lollard favorite.⁵

For reformers like Constantine, Tyndale, Bale, and Foxe, oaths were an important but tricky topic. Because of the refusal of radical reformers to swear oaths to magistrates, magisterial reformers had to choose their words on taking oaths carefully. This applied not least George Constantine and William Tyndale in the autobiographical trial of the lollard William Thorpe. Thorpe’s refusal to swear upon a book before Archbishop Arundel was accompanied by an explicit rejection of oaths, which was kept intact by its evangelical editors, and Foxe after them.⁶ The omnipresent threat of seeming too close to Anabaptist beliefs was an issue that Tyndale was forced to negotiate, and it also informs Bale’s *A Christen exhortacion vnto customable swearers*.⁷

³Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation*, chapter 1.

⁴Ibid., 26.

⁵James 5:12, King James Bible.

⁶*Thorpe/Oldcastle*, B2v. For Thorpe’s opinion in *AM*, see below.

⁷An entire section of this text is devoted to the misinterpretation of Matthew 5 on the part of Anabaptists. See Bale, *A Christen exhortacion vnto customable swearers*, sigs. B1v-B2r.

When considering Bale's perspectives of swearing, it is important to remember that he (like many other early evangelicals) renounced his religious vows after deciding to join the evangelical cause.⁸ *Customable swearers* underscores Bale's doubts about oaths. The general sense readers get is that Bale begrudgingly found oaths to be a necessary component of a properly functioning society. While he used Scripture to assure readers that the act of swearing in itself was not contrary to God's law, he simultaneously restricted their usage. Bale freed those sworn to do evil from their oaths, and had specific instructions for judges that required an oath. He claimed that a magistrate could demand an oath from a subject when it was 'eyther to the glorye of God, the profit of ovr neyboure, or for the comon welthe', but urged judges to show restraint when choosing to ask a subject to swear.⁹ Bale prohibited swearing in one's private life; he asserted that it was the place of an authority to decide when to demand an oath, and that men should not swear oaths in private conversations with one another. He illustrated this with the example of killing, arguing it should not be done without an order from a magistrate.¹⁰ Readers would take away that oaths should be used sparingly and only in instances when it would further the relationship between the individual and his neighbor, or the individual and his temporal ruler. They should above all be regulated by authorities of the commonwealth, and only employed to ensure its proper order.

Lollard Opinion on Oath-Taking in *The Acts and Monuments*

⁸When discussing vows and oaths, Bale was careful to spell out the correct conditions for making a valid oath. He also stated that a vow to religious orders was invalid: 'Wicked vowes were in no case to be obserued, but to be broken, reiected, & abhorred, as thinges not of faith but of errour & blasphemy. As are now the vowes of monkes and of prestes, professynge theyr owne inuencious'. Bale, *The apology of Iohan Bale agaynste a ranke papyst* (1550), sig. C7v.

⁹Bale, *A Christen exhortacion vnto customable swearers*, sig. B1r. See evangelicals' objections to the *ex officio* oath below.

¹⁰Ibid., sig. A6v. Ryrie points out that this is an extreme comparison and demonstrates how uncomfortable this issue is for Bale. See Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII*, 77.

Not all of Foxe's lollards concurred on the degree to which this mandate from Christ had to be obeyed—disagreement about biblical interpretation would prove to be a hallmark of lollardy, just as it was for evangelicals. Some lollards in *AM* seem to think it was appropriate to swear oaths: Thomas Man's objection to the sworn witness speaking against him was not the fact that this witness had taken an oath, but rather that he was too young to act as a sworn witness in a case of life or death.¹¹ Some lollard statements on swearing even fit nicely into Protestant theological beliefs, such as the declaration of Richard Hun, the infamous London lollard, that 'euery man swearyng by our Lady, or any other Sainct or creature, geueth more honour to the Saints, then to the holy Trinitie' and is thus an idolater.¹² Another example of lollard stances on oaths was that of William Sawtre and John Purvey, both of whom stated that the oaths or vows taken when entering holy orders should not be taken, and could never be kept.¹³ There is also evidence that one lollard group may have found oaths useful in protecting their secret meetings and beliefs: Foxe relayed that when Sir John Drury, a vicar among the Chiltern lollards, hired a new servant Roger Dods, he 'sware him [Dods] vppon a booke to keep his counsaills in all thinges'; when this was done, Drury showed Dods a woman who was living with him as his wife, and related the household policy against fasting on ember days.¹⁴

Most statements, however, did not fit so straightforwardly into the framework of a magisterial reformer. The Council of Constance condemned John Wyclif's position that 'All othes which be made for any contracte or ciuile bargaine betwixt man and man, be vnlawful.'¹⁵ Citing Christ's mandate to not swear by any creatures, William Thorpe refused to swear on a copy of the Bible, saying, 'it was not leful neither to geue nor to take anye suche charge vppon a booke: for euerye booke is nothyng els, but diuers creatures, of which it is made of. Therefore, to sweare vpon a booke, is to

¹¹ *AM*, 981.

¹² *AM*, 971.

¹³ *AM*, 650, 672.

¹⁴ *AM*, 998.

¹⁵ *AM*, 571.

swear by creatures, and this swearynge is euer vnlefull.¹⁶ Still others had their own interpretations; those under the cure of the itinerant lollard preacher William White believed that it was lawful only to swear in private cases, while yet another, John Burrell (servant to a prominent Lollard Thomas Moone, of the East Anglian sect), believed it was only lawful to swear in a case of life or death.¹⁷ Some lollards of *AM*, though, understood Christ's words to be a complete ban on oaths, such as Swinderby and Brute, and John Florence claimed that anyone who died without repenting of swearing an oath would be damned.¹⁸ Margery Backster, another lollard of the Norwich sect, told her female neighbor (who then immediately reported her words to the ecclesiastical authorities), 'dame beware of the Bee, for euerye bee will styng, and therefore take heede you swere not, neyther by God, neither by our Lady, neyther by none other saint: and if ye do the contrary, the bee will styng your tounge, and venome your soule.'¹⁹

Perhaps these ambiguities surrounding swearing forced Foxe finally to add his own opinion on oaths. While safely couched in terms of opposing *ecclesiastical* authority, Foxe remarked on the oaths required of ecclesiastical inquisitors. He denounced the form of the oath mandated by the prelates (which required an oath taker to swear by the four Evangelists, with their three middle fingers stretched out, and placed upon the book as a 'signe of the Trinitie and Catholique faith' and the thumb and the little finger put underneath the book, 'in token of damnation of body and soule'). Foxe condemned it: 'This ceremoniall order and exposition of theirs...is of their owne fonde inuention, without any grounde or example of the Scriptures of God'.²⁰ Readers might note that this is hardly a rejection of oaths overall, even to ecclesiastical leaders—let alone to secular magistrates.

Still, readers could take this another way. Foxe's objections to the oaths imposed by the established church surround only the ceremonial aspects of the core issue. Referring to them as 'apish toies & ridicles' and as 'things worthy to be laught at',

¹⁶ *AM*, 664.

¹⁷ *AM*, 805, 809.

¹⁸ *AM*, 580, 618, 802.

¹⁹ *AM*, 807.

²⁰ *AM*, 981.

he minimizes the central issue of Christ's commandment prohibiting oaths. Thus, while Foxe's statement does not dismiss oaths outright, equally, it does not hold them up as fundamentally scriptural and necessary.

There is another dynamic to consider. Foxe's biographer Tom Freeman has written of Foxe's 'profound hostil[ity] to the death penalty', citing Foxe's letters to the Queen, Lord Burghley, Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the Privy Council in 1575, urging them to commute the death sentences of religious heretics—notably, Flemish Anabaptists.²¹ Although Freeman warns that this should not be construed as toleration for Anabaptist doctrines, nevertheless 'he did believe that in time all misbelievers could be converted by persuasion. There was no merit—or salvation—in an enforced conscience.'²² If we take this apart, Foxe's stance becomes clearer. The reformer's opposition to coercion may not have merely been reflected in his rejection of the death penalty. The reason authorities found oaths so effective was rooted the belief that if one swore an oath and lied, God would know it and punish the individual in the afterlife. In this way, an oath can be seen as coercion: a person must choose whether to be punished in this life or in the next.

Foxe was more explicit elsewhere regarding ecclesiastical oaths; he repeatedly condemned the bishops who forced the lollards upon their oath to bear witness against their families, and closely associated this practice with the cruelty of a false church. As shown in chapter five, in the case of Bishop Longland's interrogation in Lincolnshire—for which Foxe is our only source—entire families were exposed because one member would admit to heresy.²³ In over forty-three different places in the Longland investigation alone, Foxe recorded that these witness were compelled, forced, put to, put upon, or charged with an oath.²⁴ Foxe found this practice

²¹Freeman, 'John Foxe: A Biography,' *TAMO* Essays.

²²Ibid.

²³Foxe construed these actions as abuse by the prelates, and was able to turn the oath of abjuration into a form of persecution; see chapter five.

²⁴*AM*, 986-1000. Foxe emphasized this perceived injustice in other lollard narratives as well; he recorded that Thomas Harding, 'beyng put to his othe, to detect other, because he contrary to hys othe dissembled, and did not disclose them, was therfore enioyned in penaunce'. See *AM*, 1117. Cf also the case of Elizabeth Whyththil and Alice Doly, where Foxe spoke of their oath-taking as

abhorrent, writing that the inquisitors ‘so violently & impudently...abused *the* booke of *the* peaceable Euangelistes, wreastyng mens consciences vpon their othe, swearing then vpon *the* same to detecte *them* selues, their fathers and mothers, and other of their kinred, with their frendes and neighbours, and that to death.’²⁵ These are strong words, and they draw us closer to understanding Foxe’s view of these lollards’ ‘radical’ beliefs; far from toning down lollard testimony or adding in a mitigating marginal comment, this indictment of the ecclesiastical oath—writing that the Gospel would be abused by its employment with oath-taking—are in Foxe’s own words.

Twice, then, Foxe interrupts lollard narratives to impugn the employment of oaths by the authorities. While this could be read as an outright condemnation of oaths, in fact Foxe seems to be decrying the *abuse* of the oath rather than its use. In both cases, the interrogators applied pressure on the lollards to incriminate themselves and their brethren, an act which added to Foxe’s understanding of the medieval church as a false one.

Although these were negative words from Foxe, rejecting both the form of the inquisitors’ oath and its abuse on lollard consciences, there is a glimpse of Foxe’s positive views on the matter in the narratives of the Coventry lollards. In his closing words describing their community’s persecution, he revealed, ‘This is certeine that in godlynes of life they differed from all the rest of the Citie: Neither in their occupyng they would vse any othe: nor could abyde it in them that occupyed with them.’²⁶ Here, Foxe praises the fact that the Coventry lollards did not use oaths while conducting their business affairs, stepping beyond the realm of ecclesiastical inquisitors and the use of an oath to apply undue pressure. For Foxe, the eschewing oaths in daily practices constituted evidence of ‘godlynes of life’. It is also worth mentioning that this testimony came to Foxe by word of mouth; it is possible that ‘mother Halle’ was a family contact, as Foxe’s wife Agnes came from Coventry.²⁷ There-

harassment: ‘Note here, good reader, in this tyme, which was aboue 46. yeaes a go, what good matter here was to accuse and moleste good wemen for.’ Ibid.

²⁵ *AM*, 985.

²⁶ *AM*, 1146.

²⁷ See commentary in *TAMO* (1570), 1146.

fore, Foxe would be less subject to the same double-checking that occurred when Catholics like Harpsfield or Stapleton investigated medieval archives. The limited liability involved in this case makes Foxe's positive stance all the more revealing.

Foxe's position on oaths differed from that of other mainstream protestants. Jonathan Gray has shown that while evangelicals ended the practice of swearing by Mass and the saints, they did not end oath-taking on and by the Gospels in general. He also points out, though, that John Bale took an identical stance to that of William Thorpe, whose testimony was incorporated into Bale's *Yet a course at the Romyshe foxe* (1543), asserting that men should only swear by God and not any book.²⁸ Bale's own view, inherited from lollard testimony, may have influenced Foxe's perspective. We have shown how his apocalyptic ideas and historical interests shaped Foxe; it seems no great leap to think that Bale's reticence about oaths (and indeed tithes, as shown chapter ten) also made an impact.²⁹

Later Interpretations of Lollard Oaths in *The Acts and Monuments*

Wyclif's stance on oaths was a matter of some debate in the seventeenth century. It appears that by 1608, conformists were concerned enough about Wyclif's anti-oath position to explain it away.³⁰ This was to no avail: Catholics charged Wyclif with the belief until well into the seventeenth century, and radicals repeatedly took up the opportunity Foxe provided for them.³¹ This is most evident in Quaker polemical works, where writers cited numerous lollards in *AM*, not merely Wyclif.

Quaker writers read Foxe's examples as proof that oaths were to be avoided generally. Many Quaker tracts cited the lollards' beliefs (via Foxe) as evidence that their position—a ban on oaths to magistrates and ecclesiastical leaders—was his-

²⁸Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation*, 32.

²⁹Gray claims (contrary to Ryrie) that Bale's reticence about the form of oaths does not indicate that he questioned their value; in fact, he claims that Bale in fact revered them more highly. *Ibid.*, 176 n.30.

³⁰*Apologie*, 38.

³¹See, for example, Thomas Bayly, *Certamen religiosum* (1651), 106.

torically based and theologically sound. The Society of Friends founder George Fox cited *AM* as evidence that Wyclif (among others) believed oaths to be unlawful, as well as Quaker defender Francis Howgill.³² Several Friends quoted William Thorpe's belief that it was wrong to swear on a book because it is made of creatures; James Jackson even referred to Thorpe as 'a great Master in Divinity'.³³ Jackson's text is indicative of the way Quakers used *AM*; it is clear he sought historical proof for his position, and he cited examples from the early church and the Middle Ages.³⁴

But by far the most common example was Walter Brute, the most radical lollard Foxe included in his text, and whom some Quakers called 'Teacher among the people of God'; his testimony disavowed oaths entirely, and received no censorship or explanation from Foxe.³⁵ In fact, it is clear that these Quakers considered Foxe's endorsement as a sign that these theological positions were valid. William Penn noted that the anonymous author of *The Plowman's Complaint*, who opposed swearing, was 'remembred and recorded by John Fox, as not unworthy to keep Company with Protestant Martyrs'.³⁶ The radical ideas found in Foxe and implicitly supported by him, proved to be powerful polemical tools for the nonconformists of the seventeenth century.

The *Ex Officio* Oath

Among the lollard narratives in *AM*, Foxe included the statute passed under Henry IV, *De heretico comburendo*. This gave extraordinary licence to examine defendants and broader powers to imprison, and Foxe made clear his distaste for it.³⁷ While

³²George Fox, *The arraignment of popery* (1667), 61; Francis Howgill, *The dawning of the gospel-day* (1676), 695-696; James Jackson, *The friendly enquirer's doubts* (1698), 91.

³³See, for instance, George Whitehead, *The case of the Quakers concerning oaths* (1674), 38.

³⁴Jackson, *The friendly enquirer's doubts*, 90-91.

³⁵See, for instance, George Fox, *The arraignment of popery*, 61; Hookes, *The Spirit of Christ*, 9; Francis Howgill, *The glory of the true church, discovered* (1661), 118; and Ambrose Rigge, *The good old way and truth* (1669), 15. See also *AM*, 524.

³⁶William Penn, *A treatise of oaths* (1675), 121.

³⁷Charles M. Gray, 'Self-Incrimination and Interjurisdictional Law: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,' in *The Privilege Against Self-Incrimination: Its Origins and Development*, ed. R. H. Helmholz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 76.

Roman canon law had maintained that a judge might proceed *ex officio mero* (by virtue of his office), the trial had to be initiated on ‘public fame’;³⁸ since the *De heretico comburendo* widened the scope of what would ‘publicly violate...accepted norms of Christian behavior’ (and those issues were allowed to be investigated in the name of the court itself), it enhanced the position of ordinaries and other ecclesiastical inquisitors to proceed against suspected heretics.³⁹ Foxe’s abhorrence for this statute was reflected by his direct comparison of it to the state-sponsored persecution of Christians by Diocletian and Maximinus (conveniently cross-referenced in the text). His reference to the earliest Christians exposes the way Foxe thought of these historical moments of persecution: Foxe considered the work of Satan evident in all ages. He explained:

By this bloody statute so seuerely and sharpely enacted agaynst these simple men, here hast thou (gentle reader) a litle to stay with thy selfe: and to consider the nature and condition of this present world, how it hath be set and bent euer from the beginnyng, by all might, counsaile, and wayes possible, to striue agaynst the wayes of God, and to ouerthrowe that whiche he will haue set vp. And although the world may see by infinite stories & examples, that it is but in vayne to striue against him: yet such is *the* nature of this world (all set in malignitie) that it will not cease still to be lyke it selfe.⁴⁰

Foxe took away from the *De heretico comburendo* that the world would, in every age, be forced to contend with Satan’s presence.

Lollard influence on the understanding of the *ex officio* oath, which forced those accused of nonconformist religious beliefs to swear to answer questions before they were formally charged of a crime, is likely due directly to Foxe’s influence, though, this could be a misunderstanding. Although the oath had been around far longer

³⁸R. H. Helmholz, *Roman Canon Law in Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 119.

³⁹James E. Hampson, ‘Richard Cosin and the Rehabilitation of the Clerical Estate in Late Elizabethan England’ (PhD Diss., University of St. Andrews, 1997).

⁴⁰*AM*, 646.

than *De heretico comburendo*, in *AM*, the section explaining the law was given the title of ‘The Ex Officio Statute’. After Foxe (when the *ex officio* oath came into prominence again when it was administered to nonconformists), it seems that the *ex officio* oath was conflated with *De heretico comburendo*. James Morice (d. 1597), a puritan lawyer, impugned the *ex officio* oath in his *A Briefe Treatise of Oathes* (1590), offers one example of this conflation. Morice compared this oath to the oath given by Bishop Longland to the lollards.⁴¹ He considered it a cruel, ‘barbarous abuse of an oath, that godlie man of worthe memorie Maister Iohn Foxe justlie complaineth’.⁴² Another example came from an anonymous seventeenth-century defense of the oath’s use by the bishops and archbishops. The author claimed that ‘Its thought to have it originall from the Statute 2 Hen. 4 ca. 15, procured by the Prelates against true Gospellers’.⁴³ Though he did not cite Foxe for this reference (and, considering that he sought to defend it, this is unsurprising), the fact that he had to explain that people found it ‘abloude [sic] Law’ points toward Foxe, whose marginal comment reads ‘A bloody law of K. Henry the 4’.⁴⁴ Thomas Bedford repeated Foxe’s reference to it as a statute, not merely an oath, ‘the sequell whereof cost many a man his life’.⁴⁵

Foxe’s lesson that the world would always revert to its evil ways was not lost on those who sought further reformation, and identified their plight with that of the lollards.⁴⁶ Thomas Cartwright cited Foxe’s comparison of the makers of the

⁴¹James Morice, *A briefe treatise of oathes* (Middelburg, 1590), 11.

⁴²The tracts of Morice and another ecclesiastical historian, Robert Beale, warranted a response from Richard Cosin, whose defense of the *ex officio* oath became the standard text used for this purpose. It does not mention Foxe. See Richard Cosin, *An apologie for svndrie proceedings by iurisdiction ecclesiasticall* (1593). ‘Richard Cosin,’ Martin Ingram in *ODNB*.

⁴³Anonymous, *A very lively portrayture, of the most reverend arch-bishops* (1640), 50.

⁴⁴*AM*, 645.

⁴⁵Bedford, *Luthers predecessours*, 18.

⁴⁶As was the case with the lollards of *AM* generally, they were used not just for those who desired further reformation, but by those who sought to defend the one they had against the Catholics. Samuel Blackerby used the *ex officio* oath as an example of ‘the papists most barbarous usuage [sic] of the Protestants here in England under a colour of law’. Blackerby, *An historical account of making the penal laws by the papists against the Protestants*, 16; quote in title.

ex officio oath with Diocletian and Maximinus, and referenced ten places across Foxe's lollard narratives where Foxe had condemned the way bishops used oaths in heresy interrogations.⁴⁷ David Calderwood, a Scottish presbyterian opposed to episcopacy, also employed Foxe's words on this oath in his treatise against the power of ecclesiastical commissioners, while in exile.⁴⁸ Tying the lollard example to the oppression of his own day, he argued that the 'prelates' of the Church of England continued to use the *ex officio* oath to 'suppresse a due reformation'.⁴⁹ Like Morice and Calderwood, Henry Care, whose polemical works defended dissenters, used *AM* to illustrate the cruelty of the *ex officio* oath in its seventeenth-century use. A proponent of religious tolerance, Care urged his readers to 'compare the Times and Actings of Men in past and more modern Times', by writing out the oath verbatim, complete with its railings against conventicles.⁵⁰ Similarly, the semi-separatist Robert Parker wrote that 'the othe *ex officio* is against the lawe of this Lande: it grewe first by the Statute of 2 *Henry* the fourth, cap. 15. made for the punishment of Lollards, that is to say, of true christians. which Maister Foxe in his booke of Martyrs, in regarde of that proceeding *ex officio*, calleth a cruell lawe, a bloody lawe, a lawe of *Maximus*.'⁵¹ Parker used the *ex officio* oath to directly juxtapose this manner of proceeding, characterized by a bishop of his own accord applying pressure to individuals, with that of 'the practize of auncient tymes'. In these times, the church adhered to the order mandated by God and Paul, 'to which the Presbyterie ought of duetie to submitt them selves, in iudiciall proceeding against Elders and Ministers'.⁵² For Calderwood the presbyterian and Parker the congregationalist, the *ex officio* oath would have been a very real threat: while Care was writing on behalf of the nonconformists and living after the oath was abolished in 1640, Calderwood and Parker could very likely have been victims themselves.

⁴⁷Thomas Cartwright, 'A Treatise on the Oath *Ex Officio*,' in *Cartwrightiana*, ed. Albert Peel and Leland H. Carlson (London: Allen and Unwin, 1951), 40-44.

⁴⁸ 'David Calderwood,' Vaughan T. Wells in *ODNB*.

⁴⁹Calderwood, *The alter of Damascus*, 25-6.

⁵⁰Care, *The history of popery*, 83.

⁵¹Parker, *A scholasticall discourse against symbolizing with Antichrist in ceremonies*, 107.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 104.

All three authors, though, identified the lollards' persecution under this oath as historical evidence of the same phenomenon they were experiencing. Since all three authors cited the lollard sufferings through Foxe, it would seem they found Foxe's opinion of the *ex officio* oath to be a useful way to implore their readers to compare the oppressive authorities of their own day with those who persecuted their lollard forebears.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that, like tithing, Foxe made little systematic effort to corral potentially radical sentiments into one mainstream idea. The reluctance that early evangelicals articulated is reflected in the text of *AM*, where lollards expressed a range of views regarding the legitimacy of swearing oaths. Moreover, when radical ideas did appear, Foxe did not downplay them; in fact, he expressed his own displeasure with oaths in the case of the *ex officio* oath in particular.

The variety of lollards opinions concerning oaths was reflected in the diversity of their appropriation by later writers. As the issue of oaths came to prominence in the seventeenth century (the *ex officio* oath, the oath of allegiance, the et cetera oath, and others) after a brief respite since the regime of Henry VIII, those for whom it was a matter of conscience turned to the historical record to defend their positions. In *AM*, they found justification for not swearing at all, and Foxe's seeming endorsement sealed their belief.

The issue of the *ex officio* oath, often conflated with the statute *De heretico comburendo*, added another dimension. Oaths themselves came to be seen by some as evidence of cruelty. In *AM* readers would find the *ex officio* oath employed in a host of individual cases, beginning with the lollards, employed under Henry, and especially used against the Marian martyrs. That not just Quakers, but other nonconformists and conformists, could picture themselves within that lineage speaks to the diverse and longstanding legacy of the lollards. That Foxe portrayed their ordeal in such a way only added to its gravity and truth, as they made sure to emphasize.

Section V

Conclusions

This thesis has explored the role of the lollards, as shaped by Foxe's *AM*, in the course of the long English Reformation. It argues that these medieval witnesses were crucial in helping evangelicals establish the Church of England in the sixteenth century, but that they also played a theological role in its breakdown in the seventeenth. Few scholars have considered the theological legacy of the lollards in the seventeenth century, aside from making connections between radical beliefs the lollards held and those of seventeenth-century nonconformists. This thesis argues that those connections are there precisely because of the *AM*—but that the lollards also established precedents claimed by those who wished for further reform of the church as well as those who did not.

In order to discover the place of these late medieval dissenters in the course of the Reformation, I have demonstrated Foxe's notion of progressive perfection, which led later nonconformists to look at the Reformation as a process instead of an event. Viewing history in this way meant that Wyclif and his followers looked to be on the right track but their work remained incomplete, which had added significance given that Foxe left radical ideas intact.

This thesis has explored the process of appropriation from its origins with the early evangelicals such as Tyndale and Bale, explaining their chief motivation: to redress the long-established lollard reputation for sedition and schismatic and heretical teachings. It has explained that while the lollard association with treason presented evangelicals with challenges, it also gave them opportunities. It allowed them to con-

demn medieval clerics, align themselves more closely with Christ, and even critique the role of the monarch. Chapter five showed that while scholars have recognized the role of the lollard establishing a martyrological precedent, few have commented on the disconnect between their well-known dissimulation, abjurations, and penchant for implicating their co-religionists on the one hand, and the ideal martyrs that Foxe was able to make of those that suffered under Mary, on the other. It then showed how Foxe built on the martyrological efforts of earlier evangelicals to create a lineage of suffering that stretched to his own day.

While most studies of lollardy in the Reformation have stopped there, this study has moved through the sixteenth century to chronicle the very early appropriation of lollard precedents into the puritan and separatist canons, and has documented the resulting clash with conformists in the early 1590s. This clash resulted in the questioning of Foxe's own legacy by conformists much earlier than the 1630s, when the martyrologist's reputation has been thought to be at an all-time low. The 1596 edition of *AM*, in fact, attempted to gather wandering religious groups; its preface warned, 'because God hath so placed vs Englishmen here in one common wealth, also in one Church, as in one shippe together: let vs not mangle or diuide the shippe, which being deuided perisheth'.¹ This attempt by the established church to gather its flock used the same text that separatists had employed to break from it. After showing how the lollards of *AM* were part of the breakdown of the established church, this thesis has demonstrated that the divergent interpretive communities created by *AM* were further entrenched after the Restoration. Significantly, lollards were not just useful to Quakers and other radical sects. Their appropriation by Quakers, Fifth Monarchists, Baptists, was not taken lightly by puritans such as Gilbert Rule (192) and conformists like Bancroft (194) and Laudians like Peter Heylyn (278), who recognized their importance for their own historical legitimacy, and who also understood how closely the lollards were tied to Foxe's own credibility and authority.

¹Foxe, *AM* (1596), sig. A4v.

This assessment of the legacy of the lollards in the *longue durée* has hinged upon a defining moment in this legacy: the lollards' inclusion in the *AM*. Counted as members of the true church, Foxe made their stories more prominent than ever before. But the way he handled their narratives has vexed scholars, who have given special attention to his editorial process, highlighting, scrutinizing, and parsing archival material that he omitted from *AM*. The main reason that scholars have missed the seventeenth-century appropriation of lollards is the consensus that Foxe moulded these lollards into emblems of the Church of England, eradicating beliefs that did not fit within this religious framework.

Perhaps because scholars have proven that Foxe whitewashed the radicalism of the Marian martyrs, they assume he did the same with the lollards; however, these were two different groups of people and Foxe treated them as such. *AM* is grounded on a sometimes frustrating dichotomy: all of the people it includes are examples of the true church, inspired by the Holy Spirit. This is precisely why history matters: as explained in chapter three, because of the lollards' historical place, they were not expected to be as perfected as Foxe's contemporaries, who had a greater degree of 'light'. One reason Foxe conceived of history this way was what the medieval records showed him: people who challenged the greatest excesses and fraudulent Catholic practices (clerical greed and transubstantiation), but whose theologies lacked nuance and sophistication. This in turn made them sympathetic figures: that they were simple people and still treated so cruelly reinforced Foxe's conception of them as lambs that Christ had appointed to be led to the slaughter. The martyrdom they suffered tied the lollards to the true church, like the Marian martyrs. Since historical chronology and place matter greatly, however, scholars should not treat all of Foxe's martyrs in the same way. Foxe attributed to them different degrees of theological knowledge, and while that did not invalidate their sanctity, it did impact the degree to which he counted them as proper theological models.² Because

²For this reason, it is untenable to look at the martyrs of *AM* as a cohesive group to determine Foxe's intentions for them. For instance, it would not be appropriate to look at how Foxe treated women martyrs: the virgin martyrs of the early church, the female lollards, and Marian women were held to differing degrees of holiness.

of this historical perspective, Foxe had little reason to excise radical material from the lollard narratives, and this thesis has shown that he made no comprehensive attempt to do so. The scholarly emphasis on what omissions he did make, however, has been at the expense of what material Foxe *included*. This material spanned the theological spectrum, offering readers a variety of historical precedents on which to make their truth claims.

That Foxe chose to incorporate so many ideas—many of them radical—begs questions about Foxe’s own theological outlook. This issue has been surprisingly neglected, and deserves more attention. In the introductory chapter, I claimed that Foxe had idiosyncratic theological tendencies that make him look more radical, or at least tolerant of radical ideas, than scholars have previously recognized. That Foxe, who had greater freedom to include radical material in the narratives of earlier witnesses (unlike his Marian contemporaries), divulged non-mainstream views on episcopacy, baptism, preaching, conventicles, tithes, and oaths, suggests that Foxe was further away from Elizabethan orthodoxy than previously recognized—or, at the very least, that he was more accepting of those who were.

In making this argument, I am not painting Foxe as a wholesale radical. There were definite limitations to what he would include in the text. For instance, he consistently downplayed the extent to which lollard women might have a more significant role in the church, as shown in Walter Brute’s belief that women could validly administer sacraments (pp. 223-24). The same tendency appears in material that suggested women could publicly preach (p. 241). While lollard specialists like Shannon McSheffrey and Patrick Hornbeck have argued that lollardy did not provide an avenue for women’s agency in religious affairs, it appears that Foxe was concerned that it would.³

Additionally, Foxe was sensitive to lollard material that challenged the sovereignty of the state in secular affairs. He totally eradicated the appeals against state execution found in the Norwich lollard records (pp. 127-29) and altered the meaning of Brute’s condemnation of warfare. Significantly, he maintained that Brute meant

³McSheffrey, *Gender and Heresy*; Patrick J. Hornbeck II, ‘Theologies of Sexuality in English “Lollardy,”’ *JEH* 60 (2009): 1-26.

that war was wrong in private cases, while asserting that the state had every right to go to war (pp. 124-25). Additionally, he played down the overt call for a community of goods, found in Ralph Mungyn's testimony (p. 121). Each of these examples shows how high a priority it was for the lollards to seem as loyal subjects, aware of the sovereignty of the state; any radicalism that suggested otherwise was minimized.

Foxe muted those radical beliefs that seemed subversive to authority, such as women preaching publicly or administering sacraments, and challenges to state sovereignty; beyond that, it is not clear that he systematically eradicated other material. Since his historical framework allowed for ongoing revelation, he had little motivation to heavily edit the lollard narratives. What this thesis has shown is that Foxe's nuanced understanding of the lollards and their historical place did not matter when it came to later readers. By incorporating them in *AM*, Foxe canonized them, just as he did the Marian martyrs. Even if Foxe included them chiefly for their witness against transubstantiation and their willingness to suffer for it, later radical reformers eagerly cited the lollard example to defend their own practices, even referencing Foxe's approval as evidence that compounded their worth.

My examination of the lollard legacy in the long English Reformation has sought to answer the question of how significant the lollards were to the establishment of evangelical and Protestant identity. In answering these questions, new ones have risen, and addressing those would go a long way in further discovering the importance of the lollards in the long Reformation. For instance, exploring the relationship between the Waldensians and the lollards in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century historical works would clarify ideas about heretical succession. While Anthony Milton has delved into this problem, he restricts his study to conformist authors; knowing how dissenters conceived of this heritage would offer a fuller understanding of the way religious writers thought of the medieval past. Another potential avenue to explore is the influence that the lollard idea of a church as a congregation of the predestined had in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; related to this, it could be helpful to see if John Wyclif, William Swinburn, and others had a role in the seventeenth-century debates about excommunication. Perhaps most fruitful would be a closer look at how ideas about history shaped individual religious groups.

Whereas this thesis has made inroads by looking at how religious groups understood one part of the past (lollardy) as told through one book (*AM*), it has not sought to elucidate the way individual communities like the Baptists (say) used history to navigate intra-sect disputes or solidify identity. All of these subjects would add to our understanding of the historical consciousness of nonconformists and conformists.

The themes and texts this thesis *has* explored have revealed how available, malleable, and durable the lollards proved to be in early modern England. Their widespread incorporation into so much controversial literature (though not as widespread as early church or Marian martyr examples) signifies the importance of medieval history to writers right across the religious spectrum; moreover, it indicates the importance of Foxe's *AM* in transmitting that history. For dissenters in particular, this is an important point, because the scholarly emphasis on primitivism in their writings, though very important, has nevertheless served to minimize the degree to which medieval history was a part of the historical consciousness of nonconformists and radicals. This thesis has shown that the lollards formed an important part of radicals' doctrinal arguments and the case for separation from the established church.

The lollards were able to be used in those ways precisely because Foxe chose to include a wide variety of theological and ecclesiological positions into *AM*. Despite scholars' portrayal of Foxe as intolerant of radical views, this thesis has demonstrated that they were present in the text. Views that ran contrary to Elizabethan orthodoxy appeared in lollard testimony concerning the clergy, sacraments, preaching, conventicles, tithes, and oaths; unorthodox views that Foxe excised in one place were likely to be found in another, as shown throughout the thesis.

How these radical ideas were understood by later readers corresponded to the various interpretive communities the text had created. Patrick Collinson has suggested that readers likely agreed on how to interpret *AM*, and while his conclusions in his case study of national sentiment are convincing, the evidence about the way the lollards were understood indicates that the idea of a (single) Foxean textual community is not so clear-cut. Instead, the cases of Dennis Hollister, who impugned a former anti-tithe preacher for enforcing payments by appealing to the

lollard martyrs (pp. 145-47), Peter Fairlambe, who used the lollards against his former Brownist brethren (pp. 174-75), and Francis Bugg, who did the same against his former Quaker co-religionists (pp. 250-52), show that several textual communities coalesced around the text according to one's religious views. That Hollister, Fairlambe and Bugg used the lollards of *AM* to rebuke their former nonconformist brethren suggests that the lollards were significant historical examples prized by these communities. Back into the Church of England fold, they read the lollards of *AM* a different way. Buttressing those examples is the figure of William Prynne, who accepted the radical lollards as historical proof that episcopacy was wrong, at a point in his life when he felt that way (p. 171). But later, he denied that the lollards who rejected the tithes that maintained that same episcopal hierarchy were right in their knowledge (p. 247). Prynne's case, along with those of Fairlambe and Bugg, show that the lollards contributed to entirely different readings of *AM*, and that those readings could change when religious views did.

Examining interpretive communities is one key to understanding religious change across the *longue durée*. Looking at how religious groups used the lollards of the *AM* to buttress their own truth claims has elucidated an important aspect of the long Reformation in England: the role of John Foxe. Foxe's success in establishing the lollards as true martyrs meant that post-Reformation Protestants rarely questioned their martyrological value, but this meant that in the fractured religious climate of seventeenth-century England, competing religious groups mutually claimed the lollards as spiritual forebears. This thesis shows that the legacy of the lollards, and of the *AM*, is perhaps best seen not in the mid-1500s, though scholars tend to place it there, but in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the evangelical church that Foxe had worked so hard to shore up began to fragment and even break away. While Foxe made huge efforts to incorporate as many witnesses to the true church as he could into his martyrology, he included medieval radicals, which spoke to a wide audience—some of whom were deeply troubled that the reformation of the church lay incomplete. Foxe's inclusion of these lollard narratives, with most of their radical notions intact, underscores the extent to which the *AM* served to gather—rather than refine—the godly community in early modern England.

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