

PASTORS AND PILGRIMS: AUGUSTINIAN REFORM IN THE  
LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLISH CHURCH

by

JONATHAN FOGGIN

(Under the Direction of Cynthia Turner Camp )

ABSTRACT

This study examines currents of reform in the late medieval English church. One of its primary arguments is that “reform” is a concept fundamental to the Christian faith, and the notion of a single, monolithic “Reformation” obscures and distorts other movements of renewal in the history of the church. A related assertion is that “the Reformation” exhibits characteristics more closely connected to revolution than reform.

In the early-fifteenth century, the most successful attempts at reform arose out of the renewed appreciation of Augustine that took place in the previous century. While the culturally Protestant English academy has traditionally understood Augustinianism to be synonymous with the doctrine of predestination, in the later Middle Ages there were numerous other strands of Augustinian thought. Of equal, if not more importance, than the predestinarian strain of Augustinianism, was a theological approach that emphasized the *cura animarum* and the pilgrimage of life. This “pastoral Augustinianism” eschews the revolutionary tendencies that animate predestinarian modes of thought, such as Wycliffism and much of early modern Protestantism, and instead sees religious renewal as something patient of (in the Christian sense of the word) terrestrial imperfection. It is this emphasis

on measured, incremental advancement through the fallen world that is characteristic of true reform.

These reformist tendencies can be seen in the writings of William Langland and the faith and practice of the Austin Canons, one of whom, an Oxford theologian named Philip Repingdon, came to exercise great influence within the English church. Despite his early flirtation with Wycliffism, Repingdon went on to become Bishop of Lincoln, and in that office pursued a program of reform that focused on sound preaching, instruction in the vernacular, and improved pastoral care. Though marginalized in Protestant historiography, such efforts had a lasting impact on the *ecclesia Anglicana*. One might even argue that this English (i.e. vernacular) “reformation,” of the fifteenth century, can in some ways account for the very different course taken by the “English Reformation” a century later, particularly when compared to associated movements on the Continent.

INDEX WORDS: Augustinianism, Decalogue, *Devotio Moderna*, England, Langland, Lollardy, pastoral care, pilgrimage of life, reform, Repingdon, revolution, Wycliffism

PASTORS AND PILGRIMS: AUGUSTINIAN REFORM IN THE  
LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLISH CHURCH

by

JONATHAN FOGGIN

A.B., University of Georgia, 1993

M. Litt., University of St. Andrews, Scotland, 1996

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2016

© 2016

Jonathan Foggin

All Rights Reserved

PASTORS AND PILGRIMS: AUGUSTINIAN REFORM IN THE  
LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLISH CHURCH

by

JONATHAN FOGGIN

Major Professor: Cynthia Turner Camp  
Committee: Benjamin Ehlers  
William Kretzschmar

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour  
Dean of the Graduate School  
The University of Georgia  
August 2016

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation was a long time coming, and like so many projects of this sort, I could not have done it without the support of colleagues, friends, and family. I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to my dissertation supervisor, Cynthia Turner Camp, not only for providing advice, encouragement, and scholarly insight, but also for helping me get the project back on track after unforeseen circumstances forced me to set it aside. The same can be said of my other two committee members, Ben Ehlers and Bill Kretzschmar. I am deeply grateful to them all.

I would also like to thank a number of others who helped me along the way: Coburn Freer and the late Bill Provost for guiding me through my early days in the English Department; Judy Shaw, Christy Albright, Kalpen Trivedi, and Jamie McClung, for allowing me to work and study on the UGA at Oxford program; Ian Archer, Ralph Hanna, and Vincent Gillespie for sharing their expertise and their summers with an American graduate student; and Robert Rhudy of the UGA Library for assistance with my research. Special thanks go to Andrew Cole, who inspired me to become a medievalist, helped me draw up the framework for this project, and first introduced me to Philip Repingdon.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Mark Haverland, who has supported this endeavor in every way, and whose example as both scholar and a priest, is an inspiration. I am profoundly grateful to my father and mother, Jim and Carol Foggin, who brought me up in the university environment and instilled in me a love of books and of learning. They,

along with my sister, Claire, provided encouragement and assistance in more ways than I can enumerate here.

Finally, and most importantly, I could not have begun, continued, or ended this project without the support of my wife, Clayton, who did everything from proofreading to shouldering household duties while I was holed up to write. She, along with my children, Will, Charlotte, and Henry, exhibited tremendous patience on the long road to this dissertation's completion. I would like to dedicate this thesis to the four of them, in gratitude not only for their support throughout this process, but all of the ways they enrich my life.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
CHAPTER	
INTRODUCTION .....	1
1 REVISIONISM AND THE ROAD TO REFORM .....	21
Revising the Reformation .....	22
Revising Reform .....	28
Refining Reform .....	38
A Premature Revolution .....	46
Lollardy and Reform.....	54
2 AUGUSTINE AND THE IDEA OF REFORM .....	60
Pelagianism, Past and Present.....	61
Footnotes to Augustine .....	66
Pastoral Augustinianism .....	73
Austin Spirituality and the <i>Cura Animarum</i> .....	78
Pastors and Reformers .....	86
A Spiritual Kinship .....	94
3 LESSONS FROM THE LANGLAND BIOGRAPHY.....	99
Writing the Langland Biography .....	100
Writing the Rokele Biography .....	109

	Minding the Gaps.....	116
	Bohuns and Beyond .....	123
4	PASTORAL LANGLAND AND LANGLANDIAN PASTORS .....	136
	An Alternate Augustinianism .....	137
	The Trupe of Troianus .....	139
	<i>Fuit Agricola</i> .....	145
	<i>Ecclesia Permixta</i> .....	155
	The Pilgrimage of Life.....	159
	English Austins and the Pastoral <i>Piers Plowman</i> .....	165
5	THE ENGLISH CHURCH AND REPINGDON'S REFORM .....	173
	A Most Catholic Doctor.....	174
	<i>Humillimus et Benignus</i> .....	180
	Comments on the Commandments .....	189
	Pilgrems and Straungers .....	193
	The Two Ways.....	200
	CONCLUSION.....	208
	REFERENCES .....	214
	APPENDIX.....	248

## INTRODUCTION

Reform is not a word commonly associated with the late medieval church, particularly in the English religious context. In fact, a hundred years ago, the notion that religious reform could have occurred in fifteenth-century England would in some quarters have been dismissed as utter nonsense. One such skeptic would no doubt have been J.C. Ryle, the first Bishop of Liverpool and one of the founders of Oxford's evangelical house of study, Wycliffe Hall. Ryle harbored a deep suspicion of all things Roman and had little patience with fellow churchmen who were inclined towards a more sympathetic view of medieval Christianity. For Ryle, England in the later Middle Ages was a land sunk in spiritual darkness, and its church an old and decayed edifice that had to be taken down completely and rebuilt from the ground up.<sup>1</sup> An excerpt from his writings conveys something of the flavor of evangelical perspectives on the nation's religious past:

Let us gratefully remember that Wyclif was one of the first Englishmen who attacked and denounced the errors of the Church of Rome. The sacrifice of the Mass and Transubstantiation, the ignorance and immorality of the priesthood, the tyranny of the See of Rome, the uselessness of trusting to other mediators than Christ, the dangerous tendency of the confessional—all these and other kindred doctrines will be found unsparingly exposed in his writings. On these he was a thorough Protestant Reformer, a century and a half before the Reformation.<sup>2</sup>

In a few short sentences, Ryle makes two things very clear. One is that the medieval English church had few, if any, redeeming qualities; and two, that the name of Wyclif could be used to extend the reach of Protestantism into the age of Chaucer. While Ryle's bombast

---

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Ryle's collection of lectures on the lives of Hugh Latimer, Richard Baxter, and George Whitfield: *The Priest, the Puritan, and the Preacher* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1856).

<sup>2</sup> J.C. Ryle, *Light From Old Times; or, Protestant Facts and Men* (London: Chas. J. Thynne, 1902), 5.

is a thing of the past, the basic assumptions of his argument have had a remarkably long life—the vision of the medieval church as a decadent institution; the notion of a single, momentous act of reform; the idea that precursors to this reform could be found in the historical record. These assumptions have exerted tremendous influence on our understanding of what is called “the Reformation,” yet in one way or another, all have their roots in Protestant polemic of the early modern era. What I propose to do in this study is evaluate the process of religious change at the beginning of this pivotal epoch from a perspective of confessional neutrality. I will do so by employing a definition of “reform” that is neither “Protestant” nor “Catholic,” but fundamental to both.

Ryle’s vision of Wyclif as a harbinger of Protestantism is, of course, not new. With the publication of John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* in 1563, Wyclif, was cast as “morning star of the reformation,” and he, along with those who have been known historically as “the Lollards,” came about as close to canonization as any Protestant could.<sup>3</sup> This is, in many ways, unsurprising. Wyclif and his followers faced persecution from what was viewed as an ungodly establishment, making it easy for Foxe to liken them to the first Christian martyrs. Perhaps more importantly, at least in terms of apologetics, they also provided a ready answer to the question, “where was your church before Luther?” Accordingly, *Actes and Monuments* not only portrays Wyclif as an outspoken critic against the corruptions of his age, but also as a link in a chain of “faythfull witnesses” that stretched back to the days of the apostolic church. This continuity meant that men like Wyclif could serve as a useful

---

<sup>3</sup> For a key discussion on the term “Lollard” see Andrew Cole, *Literature and Heresy in the Age of Chaucer* (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 2008), 72-74. Cole argues that the term “Lollard” should not be seen as being synonymous with “Wycliffite.” Cole’s thesis will be discussed at greater length in Chapter One. Throughout this paper, though, I intend to follow Cole’s lead in making a distinction between “Lollardy” and “Wycliffism.”

counter to the traditional concept of the apostolic succession. By claiming for themselves historical figures whose theology seems to have anticipated their own, men like Foxe were able to shape the narrative of England's ecclesiastical history and give Protestantism as venerable a pedigree as what it sought to replace.

Given England's struggles with Continental powers still loyal to Rome, it is not surprising that this alternate ecclesiology took on a distinctly nationalistic tone. As the sixteenth century wore on, "the hotter sort of Protestants" began increasingly to see themselves as a people set apart for their faith by God. Their king, Edward VI, had been cast as a new Josiah, and his restructuring of the church was portrayed as a contemporary version of Deuteronomic reform.<sup>4</sup> Their English Bibles told them of faithful Judah's struggle against Assyria and Babylon, and they saw therein a foreshadowing of their own conflict with the Catholic powers of France and Spain. The Armada, and later the Gunpowder Plot and a glorious revolution to depose a Roman Catholic king, only strengthened these perceptions, so that by the end of the seventeenth century, Protestantism had not only become synonymous with reform; it was also seen as an inseparable part of English national identity.

By the mid-nineteenth century, however, certain perceptions were beginning to change. The level of antipathy towards Rome was tempered, both by the changing face of European politics, and through the desire of men such as Edward Pusey and John Henry Newman to emphasize the English church's connection with a more "catholic" past. Still, evangelicals such as Ryle resisted any weakening of the connection between English national identity and their version of the Protestant faith. Thus Ryle continued play up

---

<sup>4</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 62.

Wyclif's anti-papalism, calling him both "the first beginner of the Protestant Reformation," and a national hero who should "be gratefully remembered by...every English patriot."<sup>5</sup> It is not surprising, then, to find in an era of intense nationalism, that a narrative combining Protestant self-imaging with national greatness was not limited to a particular segment of the late Victorian church. It was present in the academy as well.

At around the same time that Ryle was casting Wyclif as Protestant before Protestantism, a young scholar at Trinity College, Oxford, was thinking along similar lines. His name was George Macaulay Trevelyan, and his *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, first published in 1899, is a highly readable and wide ranging work which was tremendously influential in its day.<sup>6</sup> It is in many ways the epitome of what is commonly known as "Whig History," a school of thought that exercised significant influence within the English academy beginning in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Whig historians were not only strongly nationalist in outlook; they also subscribed to an evolutionary view of institutional development, casting the whole of English history as a grand march of progress towards limited constitutional monarchy and social reform. The Protestant faith was seen as a key component in this process, largely because of the role it played in the seventeenth-century struggles between Parliament and Crown. Since the Whig narrative placed the origins of parliamentary liberties in the medieval past, it seemed only natural to them that some form of Protestantism would be found there as well. Thus historians such as Trevelyan came to

---

<sup>5</sup> Ryle, *Light From Old Times*, 7.

<sup>6</sup> G.M. Trevelyan, *England in the age of Wycliffe, 1368-1520* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963). Trevelyan would later be named Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge.

<sup>7</sup> The term "Whig history" was first coined by Herbert Butterfield in *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1931). Later historians have called *England in the Age of Wycliffe* "Whig history at its best, viewed through a self-confident Liberal faith." See Joseph Herson, "The Last Whig Historian and Consensus History" in *American Historical Review*, Vol. 81, Issue 4. (Feb. 1976), 71.

see Wyclif and his followers as proto-Protestant reformers arrayed against a corrupt and reactionary Catholic church.

This trend could be seen also in the budding field of Middle English literature, where men like Frederick James Furnivall founded associations like the Early English Text Society to study and promote the great literature of their nation's past. And while the stated goal of the EETS was to print "all that is most valuable of the yet unprinted MSS. in English...which from their scarcity or price are not within the reach of the student of moderate means," it was Furnivall's hope that in so doing they would "expose all of the nonsense, as well as the expressions of pure, simple faith, that through life and death our men of old held to."<sup>8</sup> Given Furnivall's influence within the discipline of English literature during this formative period, it is not surprising that the Whig perspective found its way into the study of what he viewed as the masterpiece of Middle English prose—Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.<sup>9</sup>

Furnivall was not, however, the first to see Chaucer as "a protestant spirit, well worthy of his posthumous reputation."<sup>10</sup> The origins of the rather odd relationship between English Protestant nationalism and the works of a medieval Catholic poet lie in the sixteenth century, where Chaucer's perceived anticlericalism provided fodder for

---

<sup>8</sup> The first quotation is from the Report of the Committee in *Of the Orthographie and Congruitie of the Britan Tongue*, by Alexander Hume, Henry B. Wheatley, ed. (London, Trübner & Co., 1865), 2; the second is from Furnivall's preface to *Hymns to the Virgin & Christ, The Parliament of Devils, and other Religious Poems*, Frederick J. Furnivall, ed. (London, Kegan Paul, Trench, & Trübner & Co., 1867), vi. Both are early publications of the EETS.

<sup>9</sup> Furnivall was instrumental in founding the Chaucer Society, the need for which he outlined in his six-text edition of the *Canterbury Tales*. Furnivall is in many ways responsible for that high Victorian view of Chaucer as a "genial, bright soul, whose humor and wit, whose grace and tenderness, whose power and beauty, are the chief glory of [England's] Early Literature." See Frederick J. Furnivall, *A Temporary Preface to the Six-text Edition of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, Part I (London, N. Trübner & Co., 1868), 2.

<sup>10</sup> Such is Felix Swart's assessment of Furnivall's rejection of the notion that Chaucer was a friar. See "Chaucer and the English Reformation," *Neophilologus*, Volume 62, Issue 4 (October 1978), 616-619.

Protestant critics and polemicists who used his work to construct a politically useful caricature of the late medieval church.<sup>11</sup> It was none other than John Foxe himself who credited Chaucer with sniffing out things like “the absurdities of popery,” or “knaverie” among the priests, and so provided for subsequent generations “an enabling pre-history for the Reformation in his portrait of the clergy.”<sup>12</sup> But even as sectarian squabbles gave way to the “age of enlightenment,” the notion of Chaucerian antipathy towards the Catholic church exhibited remarkable staying power. This is not surprising, given the fact that throughout much of the eighteenth century the authentic canon was still taking shape, but even with the rise of modern criticism in the century following, there was not much in the way of change.<sup>13</sup>

While Thomas Lounsbury, George Lyman Kittredge, and John Livingston Lowes may have abandoned Foxe’s aggressively combative style, Chaucer was for them no less of a visionary when it came to identifying the failings of the late medieval church. If Chaucer saw through the institution that perpetuated so many irrational myths, it was because he was, like them, “a disinterested but sympathetic observer, alert to the failings

---

<sup>11</sup> Skepticism about the link between anticlericalism and Protestant reform is best exemplified in the work of Christopher Haigh, who has gone so far as to suggest that anticlericalism is a “convenient fiction.” See his “Anticlericalism and the English Reformation” in *The English Reformation Revised*, Christopher Haigh, ed. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), 56-74. Haigh has since modified his position somewhat, but still maintains that anticlericalism was not a major cause of Protestant reform. Christopher Haigh, “The Clergy and Parish Discipline in England, 1570-1640” in *The Impact of the European Reformation*, Bridget Heal and Ole Grell, eds. (Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 125-142. For a carefully argued approach to the subject of anticlericalism in late medieval England see Wendy Scase’s *Piers Plowman and the New Anticlericalism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> Linda Georgianna, “Anticlericalism in Boccaccio and Chaucer: The Bark and the Bite,” in *The Decameron and the Canterbury Tales: New Essays on an Old Question* (Cranbury, Associated University Presses, 2000), 148.

<sup>13</sup> Some of the more “Catholic” seeming elements of his work, such as the Retraction, remained unpublished until 1721. Likewise, things like the vehemently anti-fraternal *Plowman’s Tale* were recognized as spurious until 1775, when Thomas Tyrwhitt published his research into the history of *Canterbury Tales*. Kathleen Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha: A Counterfeit Canon* (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2001), 88-93.

of his time.”<sup>14</sup> This is Chaucer the Whig—skeptical, humane, and deeply suspicious of Catholic credulity and its enabler, the late medieval church. And though Chaucer studies in the twentieth century have been shaped by successive waves of Robertsonianism, New Criticism, and New Historicism, elements of this earlier perspective linger on.<sup>15</sup>

The manner in which this older perspective continues to shape debate is evident in the scholarly response to Linda Georgianna’s 1990 essay, “The Protestant Chaucer.”<sup>16</sup> In this essay Georgiana argues that “the assumption of a Protestant Chaucer persists, and perhaps even dominates, appraisals of Chaucer’s religious tales in the twentieth century...many of which simply assume Chaucer’s attitude toward prevailing religious values is most basically one of protest against a controlling inquisitorial church or against a credulous sensual piety.”<sup>17</sup> This assessment generated a vigorous response, particularly among scholars whose theoretical orientation is essentially Marxist.<sup>18</sup> David Aers has been the most vocal, devoting an entire chapter of his *Faith, Ethics, and Church* to refuting Georgianna’s claims.<sup>19</sup> Aers is convincing on a number of fronts, particularly in his assertion that Georgianna fails to contextualize the relationship between medieval

---

<sup>14</sup> Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding in Medieval Literature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 14. Patterson’s chapter, “Historical Criticism and the Development of Chaucer Studies” contains an important discussion of the influence of Whig history on medieval studies and literature.

<sup>15</sup> For a helpful summary of recent trends, in Chaucer studies, see David Matthews, “Recent Chaucer Criticism: New Historicism, New Discontents” in *Modern Philology*, Volume 106, Issue 1 (August, 2008), 117-127.

<sup>16</sup> This term was coined by Linda Georgianna in an article entitled “The Protestant Chaucer,” in *Chaucer’s Religious Tales*, C. David Benson and Elizabeth Robertson, eds. (Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-56.

<sup>18</sup> The somewhat heated exchanges between Chaucerians are perhaps best characterized by Lawrence Besserman. “The dispute [between parties] is between different emphases in the interpretation of late medieval religion and its literary reflexes, and not simply a case of “correct,” historicized readings of Chaucer’s religion (by Aers, Lee Patterson, Lynn Staley, David Wallace) against a group of “incorrect,” ahistorical, and essentialized readings (by C. David Benson, Linda Georgianna, Jill Mann, Barbara Nolan, Elizabeth Robertson).” See in his review, “Faith, Ethics, and Church: Writing in England, 1360-1409. David Aers,” in *Speculum*, Volume 77, Number 33 (July 2002), 861-863.

<sup>19</sup> See *Faith, Ethics, and Church: Writing in England, 1360-1409* (Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 2000), 3 -33.

Christians and their faith, but he never really addresses her central point: that is, the relationship between Protestantism and theoretical perspectives that embrace the notion of historical progress.

This is a significant omission when it comes to evaluating Georgianna's case, since both Marxist and Whig history are inherently teleological.<sup>20</sup> Conrad Russell observed as much in 1973, when he stated that both Whigs and Marxists shared a perspective based upon "inevitable historical progress;" both were "products of the middle of the nineteenth century, when the notion of 'progress' was at its most fashionable;" and both "grew out of that intellectual climate of which Darwin was both a consequence and a cause, in which history was seen moving, by a series of inevitable stages, from the worse to the better...."<sup>21</sup> So while Georgianna's use of the word "Protestant" to describe the perspective of academic Marxists may have struck a nerve, there is a common thread linking the two, particularly if one replaces the idea of "Protestantism" with that of "Progress." In fact, it might be more accurate to expand the franchise beyond "Marxist" or "Protestant" and call the perspective "neo-Whig." Nor is this broadly teleological understanding confined to the field of Chaucer studies. It surfaces in other areas as well, such as the study of English vernacular theology. One of the best examples of this "neo-Whiggism" is Nicholas Watson's 1995 article, "Censorship and Cultural Change in Late Medieval England."<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Kevin Sharpe makes precisely this point in his study of culture and seventeenth century politics in England. "At one level, Marxist may appear as distant from Whig historiography as Marx himself from Macaulay. Yet Marx's vision of history was, like the Whigs, teleological, and as for Macaulay, for Marx politics was a historical process, just as history was that noble science of politics.... Though their political ends were quite distinct, even antagonistic, Marx and Macaulay could find common ground in an interpretation of seventeenth century England—an alliance that helped sustain as the dominant historical interpretation what had been polemically constructed to defeat the threats of Jacobitism." See *Remapping Early Modern England: The Culture of Seventeenth-Century Politics* (Cambridge, The Cambridge University Press, 2000), 6.

<sup>21</sup> Conrad Russell, ed., *The Origins of the English Civil War* (London: Macmillan, 1973), 4-5.

<sup>22</sup> Nicholas Watson, "Censorship and Cultural Change in Late Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409" in *Speculum*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (Oct. 1995).

While “Censorship and Cultural Change” is very carefully argued, and makes important contributions to the study of English religious writing after Chaucer, its portrayal of the church and its role in the fifteenth century is less nuanced than one might expect from a scholar of Watson’s stature. The overarching theme of the article can be summarized in his oft cited characterization of Thomas Arundel’s *Constitutions* of 1409, a piece of legislation designed to regulate the copying of religious texts in the vernacular. This statute, Watson writes, constitutes “one of the most draconian pieces of censorship in English history, going far beyond the ostensible aims of destroying the Lollard heresy and effectively attempting to curtail all sorts of theological thinking and writing in the vernacular.”<sup>23</sup> Here Watson appears to be channeling the medieval church of Whig historiography, though this time the threatened virtue is not so much Protestantism as it is the free speech of the modern democratic state. Despite its flirtation with historical anachronism, Watson’s characterization of Arundel’s legislation was so forceful, and was repeated so often, that the image of the Lancastrian church as an oppressive hieratic regime for a time became commonplace in the field.<sup>24</sup>

Though there was a response to Watson’s thesis, much of it, as James Simpson has pointed out, came in the form of “opposition to [the article’s] central claim about the

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 826.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Watson’s “The Middle English Mystics” in David Wallace, ed., *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also David Lawton, “Englishing the Bible” and Stephen Justice “Lollardy” in the same volume. One who clearly is not buying Watson’s line is Barry Windeatt, who speaks to the matter in an acerbic, but refreshing review of the pop-history book, *Who Murdered Chaucer*. “This book — by reducing it to an absurdity — exposes just how much of a diversion has been the recent fad of seeing later medieval England as a repressive society supposedly in the grip of censorship and heretic-hunting. It is only to the weak stomachs of professors in the modern English-speaking world that the regulatory measures taken in later medieval England could seem like a diet of repression and tyranny (they should get out more), despite the manifold evidence of a continued flourishing of spiritual individuality and diversity in writing as in life, to which Kempe incidentally witnesses.” See Barry Windeatt, “Review of Who Murdered Chaucer,” in *Medium Aevum*, Vol. 76, No. 1 (2007), 132.

derivativeness of the fifteenth-century successor to vernacular theology.”<sup>25</sup> Until quite recently, the question of whether the English church may have thought of itself as something other than a universal censor seemed destined to go untouched. This is curious since both Arundel, and the king he served, would be gone within five years of the legislation’s passage, and a new regime, with much broader political and ecclesiastical horizons, would be working not only to distance itself from the struggles of the past, but also to establish its own vision of what it meant to be an English Christian in a universal church.

This question was addressed, however, in 2011, when Brepols published a collection of important articles under the title of *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England*. This wide ranging compilation was the result of a conference held at St. John’s College, Oxford, to mark the six-hundredth anniversary of the promulgations of Arundel’s Constitutions, and it represents the most comprehensive response to Watson’s thesis to date. The volume’s editors, Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh, summarize it in the following fashion:

Although stopping short of the Catholic positivism of Eamon Duffy’s 1992 *The Stripping of the Altars* (itself a valuable corrective to the Protestant Reformation historiography of A.G. Dickens and others), the conference probably heard more about the vitality and confidence of English religious life (and the texts that supported it) in the fifteenth century than has been altogether fashionable in some strands of scholarly thought since Watson’s article.... Some speakers felt that the new vectors of change in English religious life were international (such as the Conciliar Movement), or antedated Arundel altogether (such as the reforms at Salisbury in the 1380s). Others identified the movement of orthodox reform as an idiomatically English response to a pan European crisis manifesting itself most eloquently in the Great Schism.... What emerges is a portrait of late-medieval

---

<sup>25</sup> James Simpson, “Confessing Literature” in *English Language Notes*, Vol. 44 (Spring 2006), 122. A notable exception is Fiona Somerset’s chapter, “Professionalizing Translation at the Turn of the Fifteenth Century: Ullerston’s *Determinacio* and Arundel’s *Constitutions*” in *The Vulgar Tongue: Medieval and Postmedieval Vernacularity*, Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson eds. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 145-157. Therein she discusses the question of institutional self-censorship, and in the process suggests that the restrictions within the *Constitutions* were directed at those within the church more so than at the laity.

English religious theory and praxis that complicates any attempt to present the period as either quivering in post-traumatic stress, or basking in the autumn sunshine of an uncritical and self-satisfied hierarchy's failure to engage with undoubted European and domestic crisis in ecclesiology, pastoral theology, anti-clericalism, and lay spiritual emancipation.<sup>26</sup>

The St. John's conference marks an important shift in perceptions among those who study the literature, culture, and theology of late medieval England. Here we see a turn from the inherent teleology of Whig or Marxist history, and the adoption of a perspective that is decidedly deconstructive, as notions of progress and periodization yield to "vectors of change." One detects the influence of the revisionist school of historians, particularly Christopher Haigh and his idea of multiple phases of reform within the English church. One could just as easily apply Haigh's characterization of his own 1993 publication, *English Reformations*, to the general theme of *After Arundel*: "it examines *some* English Reformations, some of the campaigns to change the character of the national Church and the beliefs of its people; it asks how they happened, what they achieved, and why they were unable to do more."<sup>27</sup> The only real difference between the two in this regard is that Haigh is speaking of reformations that occurred after the Tudor era, while Gillespie, Ghosh, and company are interested in examining ones that took place before.

This idea of a fifteenth-century reformation surfaces in a number of essays, particularly in those that use the term "orthodox reform." The term seems to have originated with Jeremy Catto, who used it in a 2009 essay on Thomas Arundel, but in the context of the St. John's conference, it appears to mean the modes of religious change

---

<sup>26</sup> Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh, eds., *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth Century England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), xii. Nicholas Watson is himself a contributor to this volume and provides a useful summary and analysis at its end.

<sup>27</sup> Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society Under The Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 12.

advocated and implemented by those remaining within the church establishment.<sup>28</sup> In this separation of “reform” from “the Reformation” one can discern an affinity with recent scholarship which sees “Catholic reform” as a phenomenon arising in the fifteenth century and something quite independent from the event we call “the Protestant Reformation.”<sup>29</sup> While this does not mean that Protestant critiques had nothing to do with the growth and development of Catholic doctrine in the sixteenth century, there is growing evidence to suggest that many of the reforms of that era had deeper roots, and may have occurred, albeit not in the same way, whether Protestantism had happened or not. What this theory suggests, then, is that “reform” is not the property of a particular confession or sect, but rather part of the fabric of the Christian faith. Such is the contention of Gerhart Ladner in his seminal work, *The Idea of Reform*. There he argues that Christian reform is “related to the core evangelical and Pauline doctrine of the human person [experiencing] newness in Christ.”<sup>30</sup> While this concept is present in the entire New Testament, Ladner sees it as particularly evident in Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians.<sup>31</sup> These last

---

<sup>28</sup> See Jeremy Catto, “Shaping the Mixed Life: Thomas Arundel’s Reformation,” in *Image Text and Church: Essays for Margaret Aston*, Linda Clark, Maureen Jurkowski, and Colin Richmond, eds. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2009), 94-108.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Christopher F. Black, “Confraternities and the Parish in the Context of Italian Catholic Reform,” in *Confraternities and Catholic Reform in Italy, France, and Spain*, John Patrick Donnelly and Michael Maher, eds. (Kirkville: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999), 1-26. Therein he argues that the “reform and expansion of lay confraternities from the later fifteenth century were central to Catholic reform.” For a broader view, see the first chapter in Michael Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation* (London: Routledge, 1999), 1-28.

<sup>30</sup> Gerhart Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 53. Relevant passages are as follows: “be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2); “put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24); “lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all” (Colossians 3:9-11); “but we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even

two Epistles in particular make the idea of reform concrete in that they link it to man's creation in the likeness and image of God.

This notion of reformation *ad imaginem Dei* was taken up by Augustine, who in linking it to the concept of mimesis, or more specifically, the *imitatio Christi*, gave the Christian West a model for individual reform.<sup>32</sup> Yet this process of *imitatio* was not to be self-directed. Those who desired to become like Christ needed not just an image, but a pastor who reflected that image for them and could guide them in the process of shaping it in themselves. This understanding of reform as something that flows from a combination of mimesis and *ministerium* was taken up in the twelfth century by the Augustinian (or Austin) Canons, and is exemplified in their vocation "to teach [the faith] through word and deed" (*docere verbo et exemplo*).<sup>33</sup> If, in the work of the Austin Canons, we see some indication of how Augustine's notion of individual reform could be applied to the larger Christian community, it is also apparent in his great apologia for the Christian faith, *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos*.<sup>34</sup> There Augustine draws on Paul's understanding of the church as a body made of many members to illustrate the relationship between individual and institutional reform.<sup>35</sup> While, from the perspective of eternity, the church is the Body of Christ and therefore has no need for reform, insofar as it exists on earth, it is made up of

---

as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:18). Unless otherwise noted, all Biblical quotations in this study are taken from the *Authorized Version*.

<sup>32</sup> Ladner sees Augustine's mimetic theology as being heavily influenced by the sacrifice on the cross. See *The Idea of Reform*, 154-157.

<sup>33</sup> This element of Augustinian spirituality was explored by Carolyn Walker Bynum in her monograph *Docere verbo et exemplo: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979).

<sup>34</sup> Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, R.W. Dyson, ed. & trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>35</sup> "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ; for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:12-13); "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12:4-5).

individuals who are engaged in the very process of reformation that is described above. To describe how this process plays out on the corporate level, Augustine introduces the idea of the *ecclesia peregrinans*, or the church on pilgrimage through space and time.<sup>36</sup> Because pilgrimage involves progress toward a goal, the institution itself can be seen as being subject to a process of reform. So while it may be true that for Augustine, “church reform is personal reform” different imagery is used depending on which end of the equation is being emphasized.<sup>37</sup>

Though this Augustinian understanding of reform would later be eclipsed by approaches that were more structural and canonical, I believe it remained relevant.<sup>38</sup> This is particularly true in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the turmoil surrounding the office of the papacy rendered efforts at reform in the upper echelons of the church largely ineffective.<sup>39</sup> Yet as Christopher Bellitto has pointed out:

The late medieval period demonstrates that reform does not always require an impetus and direction from above in order to survive. Institutional malaise did not translate into popular malaise: despite incredible confusion in the church's head, Christians in the church's body did not give evidence that they despaired.... While the Avignon papacy, the Schism, and the papal-conciliar battles roared above...Christians on the parish level looked to their own individual reforms. Their everyday spirituality focused itself on personal reform, representing a return to reform's roots. Late medieval spirituality was not so much original as a continuation of high medieval spirituality and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance that was grounded in the fathers. Late medieval religious practice is distinguished by several characteristics tied to personal reform: interior piety, self-knowledge in solitude [and] a personal identification with the suffering Christ....<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> I would suggest that this individual/corporate connection can be seen even more clearly in the related concept of the *Civitas Dei*. While it is true that the church can be conceived as a body with many members, this cannot be reflected linguistically. In other words, there is no form of *ecclesia* that is able to express the relationship that exists between *cives* and *civitas*.

<sup>37</sup> Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, 281.

<sup>38</sup> Ladner saw the Gregorian Reform of the eleventh century as the first time that structural reform took precedence over personal or individual reform. See Christopher M. Bellitto, *Renewing Christianity: A History of Church Reform from Day One to Vatican II* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 48-50, 94.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 108-112.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-113.

I believe this is an accurate representation of the situation in England, where on the parish and personal level the ideology of Augustinian reform seems to have thrived. We see this in the spirituality of the English Austin Canons, who retained the pastoral vocation of their founding, but gave it new life through their commitment to religious instruction in the vernacular. It is present also in the writing of William Langland, who, through the themes of *imitatio Christi* and the *ecclesia peregrinans*, gave his readers a model of reform that could be passionately critical of the fact that there was corruption within the church, yet at the same time resist the revolutionary temptation to fix it by tearing the whole edifice down. And it is found in the life Philip Repingdon, whose career in the church involved an interesting combination of “all of the above.” What I hope to do in this dissertation, then, is investigate the manner in which these examples reveal the presence of Augustinian reform in the late medieval English church.

To do this, I will begin in Chapter One by examining the historiography of what is generally termed “the English Reformation,” focusing on how competing agendas have resulted in a truncated understanding of the concept of reform. I will argue that the idea of “reformation” is not unique to Protestantism, and that when the term is freed from the limitations of confessional identity, one can trace a history of “reformations” that stretches back to the earliest days of the church. I will support this thesis through an appeal to three key works on the subject: Ladner’s *Idea of Reform*, Yves Congar’s, *Vrai et fausse réforme dans l’Église*, and James Simpson’s *Reform and Cultural Revolution: 1350-1547*.<sup>41</sup> Following Ladner and Congar, I will argue that “reform” is not only an essential element

---

<sup>41</sup> See Yves Congar, *Vrai et fausse réforme dans l’église* (Paris: Edition du Cerf, 1969), and James Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution: 1350-1547*, *The Oxford English Literary History*, Volume 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

of the Christian faith, but that it can be distinguished from “revolution” in a number of ways; the most important having to do with the fact that while reform is pastoral, and focuses on elements of continuity with the past, revolution tends towards the apocalyptic, and involves an historic rupture in order to enact change. Next using Simpson’s observations on the essentially reformist nature of medieval Christianity, I will examine the ways in which Wycliffism, like much of early-modern Protestantism, was revolutionary in character. I will conclude by arguing that reformist ideology did exist in late medieval England, and that it sought to address many of the same problems that fired the Wycliffite mind. This reformist perspective is clearly and specifically articulated by William Langland in his final revision of *Piers Plowman*. There he uses the term “Lollard” to advance a reformist alternative to revolutionary Wycliffism. Like Wyclif, Langland draws on the tradition of Augustinian theology, but the antecedents he uses are what lead him in the direction of reform.

In Chapter Two I will explore the Augustinian tradition that gave rise to these two very different visions of religious renewal. I will begin by discussing one of the legacies bequeathed to Whig historiography by the Protestant Reformers; that is, the idea that the late medieval church had lost its respect for Augustine, and in its adherence to “Nominalist” theology, had succumbed to a new form of Pelagianism. Through a review of recent scholarship in theology and history, I will demonstrate that this is an oversimplification, stemming largely from the polemical emphases of the Magisterial Reformers. After outlining briefly some of the varied strains of late medieval Augustinianism, I will apply Heiko Oberman’s observation about the existence of “pastoral” and “confessional” approaches to the Christian faith, in order to make a case for the presence of a “pastoral

Augustinianism” in the later Middle Ages.<sup>42</sup> This particular outgrowth of Augustine’s thought can be seen in the spirituality of one of the religious orders bearing his name—the Augustinian, or Austin, Canons. Though this order incorporated elements of a monastic lifestyle, their ethos was not one of detachment or withdrawal from the world. Rather they saw providing sound pastoral care as a key element of their mission. Building on Congar’s idea of pastoral care as an essential element of reform, I will explore the manner in which the Austin Canons became agents of reform, not just in their eleventh-century heyday, but throughout the later Middle Ages. One of the ways this order encouraged reform was through the cultivation of the *imitatio Christi*. The importance of this practice can be seen in the spirituality of the *Devotio Moderna*, a movement that arose out of the Low Countries in the 1380s, and in the vision of Lollardy put forward by William Langland.

In Chapter Three I will investigate Langland’s background to see what it might tell us about his commitment to reform. I will begin with an assessment of the Langland biography, as constructed by Walter Skeat, and consider the controversies surrounding his methodology, which was to detect the authorial voice and excerpt elements that seemed applicable as biographical details. I will then review the reasons why George Kane, the most notable critic of what has been called “the autobiographical fallacy,” changed his perspective, and suggested that William Langland and William de la Rokele, a priest in Essex, are likely to be one and the same. Kane’s reversal has led scholars to look at new evidence, derived from historical research, to see how this might cause us to rewrite the Langland biography. One of the most impressive studies dealing with the poet in his context is *Langland and the Rokele Family: The Gentry Background to Piers Plowman* by

---

<sup>42</sup> Heiko Oberman, ed., *Forerunners of the Reformation; the Shape of Late Medieval Thought*, Paul Nyhus, trans., (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966), 127-129.

Robert Adams.<sup>43</sup> After reviewing Adams's summary of Langland's life, which includes time spent as a parish priest, I will supplement his conclusions with a few of my own, one of which involves a possible connection with aristocratic bibliophile, Humphrey de Bohun, as well as members of his affinity and his heirs. These assumptions are based both on a reassessment of Adams's evidence, and the implications of an additional record he appears not to have seen. I will propose that the pastoral concerns present in *Piers Plowman* derive in part from Langland's experience as a parish priest.

In Chapter Four I will investigate the manner in which Langland employs Augustinian notions of reform. I will begin by arguing against the conventional perspective, one which sees Langland's theology as "semi-Pelagian." I will do so by offering an alternative reading of the episode in the poem most often employed to support the notion of Langland's semi-Pelagianism, that of Gregory and Trajan. I see this not as evidence of heterodoxy, but instead as a commentary on the Augustinian understanding of grace coming through the mediation of the Christian community, particularly as it relates to the pastoral office. I will then discuss the manner in which Langland uses the character of Piers Plowman to illustrate the impact of individual reform. While I agree that Langland's portrayal of Piers is mostly positive, I believe he is a more complex character typologically than is generally recognized. Standing in the background of Piers is the figure of Cain, a negative antecedent that serves to remind his readers of the damage that was done at the Fall. The means of man's transformation involves the imitation of Christ, while living as a part of the *ecclesia permixta*, a process that Langland portrays in terms of the pilgrimage of life. In doing so he links the reform of the individual to the reform of the

---

<sup>43</sup> Robert Adams, *Langland and the Rokele Family: The Gentry Background to Piers Plowman* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013).

church, by evoking Augustine's image of the *ecclesia peregrinans*. The chapter will conclude with evidence on the manner in which Langland's poem was positively received in the community of Austin Canons, in large part because it resonated with their order's pastoral concerns.

In Chapter Five I will turn to the life of Philip Repingdon, an early associate of Wyclif, who, after recanting his heretical opinions, went on to become Abbot of Leicester, Chancellor of Oxford, confessor to Henry IV, and Bishop of Lincoln. I will begin with an examination of his Wycliffite affinities. While these are certainly present, I believe that they have been overstated, and that there is little evidence for Repingdon's long-term adherence to revolutionary politics or heterodox views. Instead his actions in the Wycliffite controversy make more sense if they are viewed in light of personal relationships and defending the rights and privileges of his university. I will then review Repingdon's post-Wycliffite career and examine the manner in which he sought to improve pastoral care for those in his charge. One piece of evidence that I will examine in some detail is a Decalogue commentary that he edited, probably during his time as Abbot of Leicester.<sup>44</sup> After examining its relationship to other versions of the Ten Commandments, I will investigate how Repingdon's prologue promotes the Augustinian concepts of life-as-pilgrimage and conformity to the example of Christ. I will then compare the imagery of Repingdon's prologue to another reformist work that deals with the Decalogue, John Clanvowe's *The Two Ways*. I will conclude by arguing that Repingdon should be evaluated not so much in the context of Wycliffism as of Augustinian reform.

---

<sup>44</sup> Repingdon's commentary is preserved in three manuscripts: British Library MS Cotton Vespasian A.Xxiii; British Library MS Harley 2250, and imperfectly in Cambridge University Library Kk 1.3. A partial transcription of the Cotton manuscript is included in the Appendix to this dissertation.

In the Conclusion I will summarize my findings and offer some suggestion of their broader application. I will suggest that the reforms of Chichele's church met with greater success because the ground had been prepared through the advocacy (as seen in Langland) and practice (as evidenced by Repingdon) of Augustinian reform. In fact, the subsequent history of "The English Reformation" suggests that these fifteenth-century reforms had lasting influence. While the English church in the sixteenth century underwent a process of religious change, its character was moderate and much was retained. It may very well have been spared the revolutionary turmoil one sees on the Continent because it had already taken steps towards reform.

## CHAPTER ONE

### REVISIONISM AND THE ROAD TO REFORM

The English Reformation has cast a long shadow over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This is, to a great extent, due to the influence of Whig historiography. Though in the fields of literature and history this influence has been countered by the rise of revisionism, the question of what “reform” might mean has gone largely untouched. For an answer, one can look to the scholarship of Gerhart Ladner, who identifies reform as a fundamental Christian concept, not able to be associated with a particular confession or creed. If we set Ladner’s definition alongside James Simpson’s related categories of revolution and reform, interesting parallels between Wycliffism and early modern Protestantism begin to appear. Though there is insufficient evidence to posit a direct connection between the two movements, they do share a similar character. Like early modern Protestantism, there was little patience in Wycliffism for the slow process of renewal that Ladner associates with reform. Instead, it was revolutionary in both character and outlook. There was, however, another approach to religious renewal in late medieval England that did exhibit the character of reform. In *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, William Langland pushes back against both revolutionary Wycliffism, and the attempts of the establishment to define it, to create a reformist ideology that can be termed “Langlandian Lollardy.”

## Revising the Reformation

In his highly insightful study of English religious culture and change during the sixteenth century, Norman Jones begins with a bedtime-story version of reformation historiography.

Once upon a time the people of England were happy medieval Catholics, visiting their holy wells, attending frequent masses and deeply respectful of Purgatory and afraid of hell. Then lustful King Henry forced them to abandon their religion. England was never merry again. Alternatively, once upon a time the people of England were oppressed by corrupt churchmen. They yearned for the liberty of the Gospel. Then, Good King Harry gave them the Protestant nation for which they longed.<sup>1</sup>

Though Jones is quite clearly engaging in a bit of occupational self-parody, the essence of his characterization has a familiar ring. The great historians of the post-war era believed that the English Reformation was in large part successful because of a deep-seated dissatisfaction with the late medieval church. In what was, until quite recently, the standard textbook on the English Reformation, A.G. Dickens imagined a church wherein “scholastic religion...had ended in disharmony, irrelevance, and discredit; beliefs of marginal authenticity...had been suffered...to occupy central places in the Christian life; and the popular cult...seemed to the sophisticated both childish and unduly directed to the raising of money.”<sup>2</sup> Likewise, in his magisterial *England Under the Tudors*, Sir Geoffrey Elton portrayed the late medieval church as a participant in an unholy alliance between pope and crown, an institution whose reformation was only held in check until the sixteenth century, when “the King’s great matter” made it expedient for him to unleash “those passions which for years only the government’s frown had been able to stem.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the only real debate

---

<sup>1</sup> Norman Jones, *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaption* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 1.

<sup>2</sup> A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (State College, PA: Penn State Press, 1989), 381.

<sup>3</sup> G.R. Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (New York, Routledge, 1991), 114. Nor is Elton’s belief in a general dissatisfaction with late medieval Catholicism limited to England. For his views on the state of

in the field seemed to be whether one agreed with Elton in thinking that English reformation had been a rapid one from above, or Dickens, who viewed religious change as being similarly rapid, but coming from below.

This narrative of a weak and unpopular medieval church was challenged in the mid-nineteen eighties, when so-called “revisionist” historians such as J.J. Scarisbrick and Christopher Haigh proposed a radically different model. In *The Reformation and the English People*, published in 1984, Scarisbrick argued that on the eve of the Reformation, “there was little sign of lay disenchantment with the ecclesiastical *ancien régime*, no angry alienation, no seething discontent, little expectation that the old order would not, could not, and should not endure to the end of time.”<sup>4</sup> Shortly thereafter Christopher Haigh published the *English Reformation Revised*, a collection of articles whose title alone directly challenged Dickens and the traditional historiography of the period. Haigh and his fellow travelers concluded that “the late-medieval church was not a corrupt and repressive institution whose abuses demanded radical reform,” and that “widespread attachment to Catholic beliefs and rituals survived both state repression and Protestant evangelism, and popular conservatism remained strong well into the reign of Elizabeth I.”<sup>5</sup> This “revisionist” perspective was reinforced in two impressive works of scholarship published in the early 1990s: Haigh’s follow up volume, *English Reformations*, which argued that religious change was a long, disparate, and reversible process, and *The Stripping of the*

---

the church at large, see his *Reformation Europe*. Therein he suggests that “Luther’s revolt” met with sympathy “pretty well everywhere” due to the “corruption, worldliness, spiritual lassitude, immorality and uselessness of the clergy.” G.R. Elton, *Reformation Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999), 69.

<sup>4</sup> J.J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1984), 60. Scarisbrick, was, in fact, a pupil of Elton and one can see an Eltonian influence in his research and his method. The book itself is made up of material presented by Scarisbrick in the Ford Lectures delivered in Oxford in 1982, only a decade after Professor Elton had presented his views in the very same forum.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Haigh, *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), 209.

*Altars*, Eamon Duffy’s massive and erudite study of late medieval religious practice.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the arguments of Scarisbrick, Duffy, and Haigh were so forceful that by the end of the decade revisionism had become the new orthodoxy. Still, its rise did not go unchallenged.

Starting in the late-nineteen nineties, Patrick Collinson, Diarmaid MacCulloch, and Andrew Pettegree all published major studies that made strong cases for the appeal of Protestantism and argued that the revisionists had overstated their case.<sup>7</sup> As Collinson wrote in *The Tablet* in 2002, he believed revisionism “made the mistake of adopting too narrow and exclusive a definition of what constitutes a Protestant. It confused Protestantism...with the prodigious form of Protestantism often called Puritanism.”<sup>8</sup> Added to this criticism was the charge, leveled particularly at Duffy, that revisionism was presenting too rosy a view of late medieval Catholicism by emphasizing cultural homogeneity and marginalizing movements of dissent.<sup>9</sup> In fact, Nicholas Tyacke went so far as to claim that revisionism was little more than an updated version of a Catholic

---

<sup>6</sup> Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society Under The Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion on England 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). While both works can be considered to fall under the rubric of “revisionism,” Duffy and Haigh’s views on the impact of the reformation differed radically. While Haigh seems to view the reformation as an incremental process wherein much remained the same, Duffy suggests that the religious change of the sixteenth century represented an historic rupture with the past.

<sup>7</sup> For full length studies see Patrick Collinson, *From Cranmer to Sancroft* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006). Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (London: Penguin, 2000) and Andrew Pettegree, *Marian Protestantism. Six Studies* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> Collinson’s essay, coupled with one by Christopher Haigh, was published in the lead up to the funeral of A.G. Dickens. Patrick Collinson, “The World Did Move,” *The Tablet*, 27 April, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the criticism noted in reviews by Margaret Aston, *English Historical Review*, Volume 109 (February 1994), 111-114 and Richard Kieckhefer, *The Journal of Religion*, Volume 74, Number 2 (April, 1994), 240-249. Duffy responds to charges of marginalizing groups such as the “Lollards” in his preface to the second edition, published in 2005. Duffy writes, “Much modern writing about the period, it seemed to me, had distorted the place of Christianity in late medieval and early modern society by focusing on the *outré*, the dissent and the dysfunctional. Thus studies of magic, witchcraft or Lollardy abounded, but studies of orthodox—that is mainstream—fifteenth-century religious practice were rarely undertaken. *The Stripping of the Altars*...did not argue for the *insignificance* of magic, or of witchcraft, or of Lollardy. Quite simply they were not its subject matter, and in omitting them I assumed that my book would be read alongside, not instead of, the many works which did treat of those things.” Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, xix.

defense of the late medieval church “propagated at the beginning of the twentieth century by Cardinal Aidan Gasquet and his protégé H.N. Birt.”<sup>10</sup> This assertion is revealing insofar as it shows the extent to which revisionism has been thought of as a Roman Catholic phenomenon, and indeed, the lines of the debate could be seen to resolve along a Protestant/Catholic divide. Eamon Duffy discusses this perspective in a 2006 article published in *Renaissance Quarterly*. While acknowledging that many revisionists are at least culturally Catholic, he dismisses the idea that revisionism is merely the “grinding of papistical axes,” suggesting instead that good history is being written all round, but that it is shaped by a strong cultural component on either side.<sup>11</sup>

Duffy’s analysis is revealing in that it shows how the advent of Protestantism in the sixteenth century continues to be a polarizing influence within English historical studies, even when the underlying sectarian agendas are no longer there. Yet despite the continued influence of what might still be termed a confessional divide, revisionism did serve as a useful corrective to the Whig-derived grand narrative of a corrupt and tottering medieval church. This change in perspective has proven to be a boon to those who see the fifteenth century as something other than a time when important trends of the Tudor era can be found in embryonic form.<sup>12</sup> As revisionism began to correct some of the distortions brought about

---

<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism c.1530-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 38. This is a telling critique given the fact that Gasquet’s reputation as an historian took a savage beating at the hands of his Whiggish rival, George Gordon Coulton. This controversy and some of the early-twentieth century historiography is discussed in Eamon Duffy’s article, “A.G. Dickens and the Late Medieval Church,” *Historical Research*, Volume 77, Issue 195 (February 2004), 98-110.

<sup>11</sup> Duffy argues that revisionism may stem “less from denominational gladiatorial concerns...than with the appearance, to anyone formed in a Catholic religious ethos, of the religion of the late middle ages as both more coherent and less repellent than may be the case for historians formed in a different religious tradition.” He goes on to say that “in this sense, ‘Catholic Revisionism,’ insofar as it exists, may represent the absence of a Protestant historiographical agenda at least as much as the presence of a Catholic one.” Eamon Duffy, “The English Reformation After Revisionism,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, Volume 59, Number 3 (Fall 2006), 723.

<sup>12</sup> For an early example of this shift, and a very good overview of the fifteenth-century church, see Christopher Harper-Bill, *The Pre-Reformation Church in England, 1400-1530* (London and New York: Longman, 1989).

by viewing the fifteenth-century church through the lens of the Reformation, medievalists were busy constructing a clearer picture of the institution itself. This was done largely through the adoption of a more localized approach, one that focused on smaller organizational units, such as the diocese, the religious orders, and the individual parish.<sup>13</sup> One of the earliest and most successful of these regional studies is Andrew Brown's 1995 monograph on the Diocese of Salisbury, *Popular Piety in Late Medieval England*.<sup>14</sup>

Though clearly sympathetic to the revisionist cause, Brown retains a cautious balance in an attempt to chronicle elements of both continuity and change. On the whole, his assessment of the fifteenth-century church is a positive one, particularly when it comes to the issue of lay evangelization and education. Brown believes that successive initiatives to catechize the laity, such as those promoted by Bishops Grosseteste of Lincoln, Pecham of Canterbury, and Thoresby of York, were, by the fifteenth century, largely successful. In looking forward to the changes of the sixteenth century he turns the old Whig narrative on its head, suggesting that "if a new 'pious' creature was emerging, the church hierarchy had been partly responsible for its creation."<sup>15</sup> Brown's views are backed up by Katherine French in her 2001 study of parish life in the diocese of Bath and Wells.<sup>16</sup> In addition to the catechetical initiatives promoted by the episcopacy, French emphasizes the roles that

---

<sup>13</sup> A solid example of work on the diocesan level is Tim Cooper's study of parish clergy in Coventry and Lichfield. See *The Last Generation of English Catholic Clergy: Parish Priests in the Diocese of Coventry and Lichfield in the Early Sixteenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999). For a collection of articles whose subject is the vigor of the monastic orders in the later Middle Ages, see James G. Clark, ed., *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2002). A very thorough study of the parish through an examination of churchwardens' accounts can be found in Beat Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community: The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish, c. 1400-1560* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Brown, *Popular Piety in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 250.

<sup>16</sup> Katherine French, *The People of the Parish: Community Life in a Late-Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

preaching, religious festivals, and the liturgy itself played in the edification of the laity. Her treatment of these issues, as well as those of parish governance and financing, depict the late medieval parish as a “dynamic and creative” institution, a center of community identity, and a place where life could be both “confining and onerous,” but also “spiritually and socially comforting and affirming.”<sup>17</sup> Because the sixteenth century is not their primary focus, studies such as these proved to be valuable additions to the revisionist debate in that they were able to assess the strength of Catholicism in late medieval England, while at the same time largely avoiding the religious fault lines prevalent in so many earlier studies.

As a result of these recent trends within the field, the fifteenth-century church appears to be coming out from under the shadow of the old historiography.<sup>18</sup> This is particularly true in that the late medieval church is less likely to be seen as a corrupt and backwards-looking institution, or even as a prelude to something else. That said, I would argue that the positive aspects of this shift in perspective have not yet been fully explored. If revisionism succeeded in changing our view of “the Reformation,” it did very little in terms of investigating what that term implies. In other words, what does one mean by the terms “reformation” and “reform?” Whereas Whig historiography may have viewed “Protestantism” and “reform” as essentially the same thing, such a correlation is by no means universal. And if it turns out that Protestantism and reform cannot be equated as they so often have in the past, what do we make of something like Wycliffism, a fifteenth-

---

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 208.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, the trend towards focusing more on the process of religious change than causes and effects in Norman Jones’s *The English Reformation* (cited above) and Ethan Shagan’s, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Eamon Duffy discusses these works, along with his own post-revisionist contribution, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) in “The English Reformation After Revisionism.”

century phenomenon which has been famously characterized as “a Premature Reformation?”<sup>19</sup> To understand how this might, and probably should, change our perspective, it would help to review briefly the history of the term “reform,” paying particular attention to how it has been claimed or rejected by various parties or schools of thought in the Christian west. Knowing this, we can construct a non-sectarian definition of the word, which can then be applied the fifteenth-century English church.

### Revising Reform

The idea of reform is central to the Christian faith and has been so since its earliest days. As Gerhart Ladner so aptly puts it:

The New Testament is *one* great message of newness. In its various aspects, the Christian kerygma, and the theology and law that grew out of it, include redemption, resurrection, conversion, baptismal regeneration, penance, and an eschatological new world. St. Paul added still another innovative concept, that of the reform or renovation of man according to that image likeness between man and God...<sup>20</sup>

Drawing on such passages as Colossians 3:9-11, theologians of the patristic period developed the Pauline concept of putting on the “new man” through life in Christ in different ways.<sup>21</sup> In the East, reform was generally taken to mean a return to an Edenic state, taking as its inspiration the idea that man was made κατ’ εικόνα Θεοῦ—according to the image of God. This idea, whose earliest manifestations can be found in the works of Origen and Clement of Alexandria, suggests that man’s original goodness, which was once

---

<sup>19</sup> This is the title of Anne Hudson’s justifiably famous work on Wycliffism. See *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1988).

<sup>20</sup> Gerhart Ladner, *Images and Ideas in the Middle Ages: Selected Studies in History and Art*, Storia e letteratura; 155 (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1983), 534.

<sup>21</sup> “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” Colossians 3:9-11.

marred by the fall, can be restored. Perhaps the best known proponent of this concept among the Eastern Fathers is Gregory of Nyssa who calls it an *αποκατάστασης εις το αρχαίον* —a “return to our earliest state.”<sup>22</sup> In the West, however, a rather different understanding arose. Tertullian, and later Augustine, developed the concept of *reformatio in melius*, or “reform to the better,” wherein man is not merely returned to the state of the Old Adam, but takes on the divine nature of the New.<sup>23</sup> In Western theology, then, the fall came to be seen as the *felix culpa*, the most significant instance of God permitting evil to occur in order to draw forth a greater good.<sup>24</sup> This recasting of man’s expulsion from Eden proved to be essential to the development of reform ideology in the West, for if Adam, having fallen from his original righteousness, could be restored to an even more glorious state, so could the church. In fact, it was through this analogous relationship between “personal-spiritual” and “sociative-institutional” reform that allowed Western theologians to deal with the issue of corruption in the earthly institution that was at the same time understood to be the body of Christ.<sup>25</sup>

Although “reform” in the patristic period tended to be associated with the individual, as the church grew and developed a more complex corporate theology, the

---

<sup>22</sup> “We...who in our first ancestor were thus ejected, are allowed to return to our earliest state of blessedness by the very same stages by which we lost Paradise.” Gregory of Nyssa, *De Virginitate*, in *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Series, Vol. 5, Gregory of Nyssa: Dogmatic Treatises, Philip Schaff, and Henry Wace, eds. (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1893), 358. One should not confuse this idea of a “restoration to the old” with the universalist idea of *αποκατάστασης πάντων*, “restoration of all,” though the two can be related. Hans Urs von Balthasar believes that Gregory of Nyssa adhered to the understanding of *apokatastasis* that was in a sense universalist, but in an orthodox manner. See *Presence and Thought: An Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa*, Marc Sebanc, trans., (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 85-88.

<sup>23</sup> Ladner, *Images and Ideas*, 535-537.

<sup>24</sup> This concept is enshrined in the liturgy in the *Exultet Jam Angelica*, a hymn of praise sung by the deacon of the mass during the Great Easter Vigil. Thomas Aquinas deals with the theological implications of the *felix culpa* in his *Summa Theologiae*, 3a.1.3, ad 3. See *Summa Theologiae*, Volume 48 (3a.1-6), R. J. Hennessey, O.P., ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 20-21.

<sup>25</sup> Ladner, *Images and Ideas*, 600-602.

concept began to be applied to the institution as well. Though there was no developed language of institutional reform in Late Antiquity, historians such as Robert Markus have argued that as the church moved from being a persecuted minority to an established majority, it experienced a crisis of identity that resulted in an impulse toward reform. This impulse found expression in the various ascetic movements that took hold in the decaying Roman Empire of the early-fifth century, but it was in the Germanic kingdoms of the Middle Ages that institutional reform came into its own.<sup>26</sup> One of the earliest and the best known examples of this trend is the Cluniac reform of the tenth century, wherein Abbot Odo and his successors sought to free their monasteries from secular control and return to what they believed was the proper interpretation of the Benedictine Rule.<sup>27</sup> Further evidence of reformist ideology can be seen in the following century, when Pope Gregory VII and his followers used the language of reform in an attempt to curb simony and enforce canon law.<sup>28</sup> But perhaps the best known manifestation of the impulse to reform came in the thirteenth century with the mendicant orders and their belief in rejuvenating the church through a return to apostolic poverty and sound preaching.<sup>29</sup> These examples should give some indication of how important the idea of reform was in Western Christianity from the fifth to the fifteenth century, yet despite the fact that all of the examples cited above took

---

<sup>26</sup> One would include therein both orthodox monasticism of John Cassian, but also heterodox movements such as Pelagianism. Robert Markus, "Reform and Society in Late Antiquity," in *Reforming the Church Before Modernity*, Christopher Bellitto and Louis Hamilton, eds. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 10-12.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Raffaello Morghen's essay "Monastic Reform and Cluniac Spirituality" in *Cluniac Monasticism in the Central Middle Ages*, Noreen Hunt, ed. (London: Macmillan, 1971), 11-28.

<sup>28</sup> This movement is most commonly referred to as the "Gregorian Reform." This campaign to curb abuse resulted in the centralization of ecclesial authority on the papacy and curia in Rome. See Gerd Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 185-252.

<sup>29</sup> The idea of apostolic poverty continued to be closely linked to the idea of reform, particularly within the Franciscan and Dominican orders. See Michael Bailey, "Religious Poverty, Mendicancy, and Reform in the Late Middle Ages" in *Church History*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (2003), 457-483.

place in what can only be described as a “Catholic” context, for much of the modern era the term “reform” has been associated almost exclusively with the Protestant faith. This is in large part due to the fact that for much of its history, Protestantism has been successful in claiming the term as its own.

Perhaps the first Protestants to adopt the label of “reform” were the followers of John Calvin, who in the 1530s began to refer to themselves as members of the “reformed churches” (*églises réformées*), but by the end of the sixteenth century, the Lutherans had followed suit.<sup>30</sup> This association of Protestantism with reform was strengthened in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, as Lutheran historians melded the idea of “renaissance,” and the associated periodization of history that it entailed, with the doctrine of justification by faith.<sup>31</sup> The resulting synthesis enabled Protestant apologists to portray the newly defined *medium aevum* in terms of decrepitude and decay, and suggest that it was only through a “re-nascence” and “re-formation” that such a society and such a faith could be redeemed. Concurrent with this process of self-definition was a related effort at casting the opposing actions of the Roman Catholic establishment in a negative light. Perhaps the most significant contribution in this area came from the Lutheran historian, Johann Stephen Pütter, who in his 1776 introduction to the Augsburg Confession, coined the term “Counter Reformation” (*Gegenreformation*). By this he meant “anti-reformation,” both in the sense that it was the response of the Roman church to the spread

---

<sup>30</sup> John O’ Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 18. O’Malley’s work is an invaluable resource for the history of the terms “reform” and “Reformation.”

<sup>31</sup> The tripartite division of history into ancient, medieval, and modern eras was popularized by the German pedagogue, Christoph Keller, or Cellarius, who combined the humanist view of a dark age for learning and the arts with the Protestant perspective on religion. According to Cellarius, modernity began when the forces of intellectual renewal and the reformed faith combined, that is, in the sixteenth century. Before this were the twelve or so centuries of the “Middle Age.” See Wallace K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Interpretation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), 74-77.

of Protestantism in Germany, that is “The Reformation,” but also as an effort by reactionaries to halt the process of “reform.”<sup>32</sup> Pütter’s skillful turn of phrase left Roman Catholics little room for maneuver. If “Reformation/reform” was seen as good for the health of the church, it follows that “Counter-Reformation/anti-reform” involves works of iniquity.

Though the idea of a *Gegenreformation* gained some currency in Germany in the years after Pütter’s work, it was not until the 1830s, when Leopold von Ranke published *Die Römischen Päpste*, that the idea of Counter Reformation began to take hold as a popular concept.<sup>33</sup> Though Ranke was a much more skillful and objective historian than Pütter, his uncritical appropriation of the term effectively preserved the prejudices contained therein. The concept of Counter Reformation gained favor in nineteenth-century Germany in that it not only appealed to Lutherans, who viewed Protestantism as the only type of reform compatible with the basic tenets of the Christian faith, but also because it meant that early modern history could be cast in the form of a dialectic, with thesis (reformation), antithesis (counter-reformation), and synthesis (the modern state) thus providing a convincing theoretical basis for the coming together of the secular, but Lutheran dominated, *Deutsches Reich*.<sup>34</sup> Nor were German Protestants alone in finding the idea of Counter Reformation appealing. Thomas Babington Macaulay, perhaps the most influential and well known English historian of the nineteenth century, praised the

---

<sup>32</sup> O’ Malley, *Trent and All That*, 20.

<sup>33</sup> For an English translation, see Leopold von Ranke, *History of the Popes: Their Church and State*, Vol. 1-3, E. Fowler, trans. (New York: Colonial Press, 1901). Discussion of the Counter Reformation can be found in Volume 2, 132-190.

<sup>34</sup> Wolfgang Reinhard, “Reformation, Counter Reformation, and the Early Modern State: A Reassessment,” in *The Catholic Historical Review* Vol. LXXV, No.3, (1989), 383-404.

*History of the Popes* as being possessed of “an admirable spirit...tolerant and impartial.”<sup>35</sup> In typical Whiggish fashion he then used Ranke’s conclusions to posit that “the North owes its great civilization and prosperity chiefly to the moral effect of the Protestant Reformation,” but that “the decay of the Southern Countries of Europe is to be mainly ascribed to the great Catholic revival.”<sup>36</sup> Bolstered by the reputation of German scholarship and influenced by such pronouncements as Macaulay’s, the standard historical narrative in much of Europe and North America came to associate Protestantism with reform and Roman Catholicism with a desire to return to a pre-modern *status quo*.

Interestingly enough, for much of the time that these ideas were being advanced in the Protestant world, Roman Catholics seemed content to allow this appropriation of terms. Despite the long tradition of reformist ideology and action, traceable from Abbot Odo to Francis of Assisi and beyond, the idea that the term “reform” could be applied to the church had, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, become anathema in the Roman Catholic historical and theological world view.<sup>37</sup> Although Trent was seen as a reforming council in its day, one that even went so far as to issue a decree on reform (*decretum de reformatione*) along with each of its doctrinal pronouncements, such associations had for many years been played down in favor of a rigid and unrealistic perfectionism in describing the terrestrial, or “militant” church. In his 1832 encyclical, *Mirari Vos*, Pope Gregory XVI asserted that it was “injurious to propose a certain restoration and regeneration for [the church] as though necessary for her safety and growth, as if she could be considered subject

---

<sup>35</sup> See Thomas Babington Macaulay, “Ranke’s History of the Popes,” in *The Complete Writings of Lord Macaulay*, Vol. 15 (New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1900), 1.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 38.

<sup>37</sup> These decrees on reform were issued at each of the council’s sessions from 1546 on. See Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella, eds., *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 118-119.

to defect or other misfortune.”<sup>38</sup> Similarly Roman Catholic historians of the late-nineteenth century, such as Johannes Janssen and Johann Joseph Dollinger, went on the offensive, eschewing all talk of reform, and instead coming up with a different term to describe the rise of Protestantism in the early modern era. Drawing on the negative imagery of the French Revolution as a wild and lawless episode in the history of civilization, Janssen and Dollinger labeled what Lutherans knew as the “Protestant Reformation,” the “Protestant Revolution.”<sup>39</sup> In this they attempted to emphasize what they viewed as reckless destruction of the Catholic faith. Despite Janssen and Dollinger’s high reputation among other historians, this alternative coinage never really caught on. In fact, for most of the nineteenth century, the Roman Catholic establishment seemed little interested in any attempt to re-appropriate the term “reform” for their church.

All this changed in the early-twentieth century when an Austrian historian named Ludwig von Pastor began writing about a “Catholic Reformation” in the early modern era.<sup>40</sup> According to Pastor’s line of reasoning, the Catholic Reformation was not a “Counter Reformation,” in the sense of it being a reaction to Protestantism, but a distinct movement of its own, with roots extending back at least a hundred years before Luther.<sup>41</sup> In the years after World War II, this idea of “Catholic Reform” was taken up and developed

---

<sup>38</sup> Gregory XVI, *Mirari Vos*, in *The Papal Encyclicals 1740-1878*, Claudia Carlen, ed. (Raleigh: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), 237.

<sup>39</sup> O’ Malley, *Trent and All That*, 21-22.

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, his use of the term in a discussion of Gregory XIII’s predecessors. “The Catholic Reformation of the XVIth century must be specially connected with three great names; it was Ignatius Loyola who traced the fundamental ideas...in connexion with him...Charles Borromeo became the legislator of the new ecclesiastical discipline, and in union with Borromeo, Pius V reformed Rome and the Papal Court.” Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Ralph Francis Kerr, ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1930), 383.

<sup>41</sup> While Pastor, who was a student of Janssen, held Ranke in high regard, he consciously set out to write “a Catholic history” in response to Ranke. For a discussion of Pastor, see Owen Chadwick, *Catholicism and History: The Opening of the Vatican Archives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) 116-136.

further by a German priest and historian named Hubert Jedin. Jedin spent most of the 1940s in Rome, where under the protection of Pius XII, he had access to the Vatican Archives. It was there that he did much of the research that would result in his monumental *History of the Council of Trent*. One of the offshoots of this project, however, was a long essay published in 1946 entitled *Catholic Reformation or Counter Reformation?*<sup>42</sup> This work was one of the first by any scholar, Roman Catholic or Protestant, which attempted to define early modern reform in a non-polemical sense. In it, Jedin discussed both the history and the descriptive value of the terms “Catholic” and “Counter” as they apply to the concept of reform, and in the end decided that both could be useful when employed in an historically neutral fashion. In fact, Jedin saw them as two sides of the same coin: “Catholic Reform was the church’s reorientation toward Catholic ideals of living through an internal process of renewal, while Counter Reformation was the self-assertion of the church in the struggle against Protestantism.”<sup>43</sup> By the early-nineteen sixties, Jedin’s thesis of interrelated movements of Catholic reform had won widespread acceptance, and with this change in perspective, it became much easier to look at the subject of Christian renewal without hewing to one side or another.<sup>44</sup> Once scholars were able to put Protestant and Catholic reform side by side, new ways of looking at early modern Christianity began to arise.

---

<sup>42</sup> Hubert Jedin, *Katholische Reformation Oder Gegenreformation? Ein Versuch zur Klärung der Begriffe nebst einer Jubiläumsbetrachtung über das Trienter Konzil* (Lucerne: Joseph Stocker, 1946). An excerpt in English translation can be found in David M. Luebke, ed., *The Counter Reformation: Essential Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 19-46.

<sup>43</sup> Jedin, as quoted in Luebke, *The Counter Reformation*, 46.

<sup>44</sup> This had much to do with a change in the culture of the academy, as religious concerns became much less important in the post-war scholarship. However, Jedin’s impressive scholarship and irenic spirit contributed to the process of reconciliation within the field of religious history. He was able to bridge the gap not only between Catholics and Protestants, but also scholars of a secular orientation, such as the Italian *laici*, who were traditionally hostile to Roman Catholic historiography. See O’Malley, *Trent and All That*, 78-88

One of the early manifestations of this new perspective came in the form of the Birkbeck Lectures of 1951, which were delivered by H. Outram Evennett, a church historian and fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. In these lectures, which were published in 1968, Evennett argued against the term “Counter Reformation,” believing it to be highly misleading. Instead, he suggested that just as there was a Protestant Reformation, so was there a Catholic one, and both could “reasonably be regarded as two different outcomes of the same general aspiration toward religious regeneration.”<sup>45</sup> In Evennett’s view, both movements were shaped by the forces of modernity and represented a sometimes subtle, yet still significant break with the medieval past. This understanding was expanded upon and more sharply defined by Ernst Zeeden in 1958 through the development of a concept he called confession building (*konfessionsbildung*).<sup>46</sup> By this Zeeden meant a process by which church and state participated in a reshaping of society through the exercise of social discipline. Part of this process involved the formulation of written standards of belief, or confessions. This concept has been developed and expanded extensively in recent years by Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling. Calling the process confessionalization (*konfessionalisierung*), Reinhard and Schilling emphasize what can be termed “functional similarities.” As Ute Lotz-Heumann notes:

Instead of differences in doctrine and ritual, the concept of confessionalization focuses on the comparative aspects between the confessional churches: the aim of confessional homogenization...the connection between confession building and state formation; the confessional churches’ contribution to the process of social disciplining; the development of cultural and political—often national—identities in which the confessional factor played a key role.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> H. Outram Evennett, *The Spirit of the Counter Reformation: The Birkbeck lectures in Ecclesiastical History Given in the University of Cambridge in May 1951*, John Bossy, ed. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968), 9.

<sup>46</sup> For a brief overview of Zeeden’s thought, see O’Malley, *Trent and All That*, 108-117.

<sup>47</sup> Ute Lotz-Heumann, “Confessionalization” in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research*, David M. Whitford, ed. (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008) 138-139.

Accordingly, what Reinhard and Schilling see emerging in the early modern era are three confessional cultures: Tridentine Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist, all of which differ significantly from medieval Catholicism.

With confessionalization we are a long way from the world of Professor Trevelyan and Bishop Ryle. We have even moved somewhat past Norman Jones's vignette of the two Henrys, with which we began this chapter. If, after the work of Jedin, it became difficult to view "The Reformation" as an exclusively Protestant phenomenon, confessionalization makes it impossible. In fact, what confessionalization does is reveal how much of sixteenth-century "reform" was really a process of standardization. As Schilling argued in 2008, the difference between "the theologically, institutionally, and as regards religious personnel, more open medieval church, [and] the modern confessional systems [is] an unambiguous definition of their principals of dogma, formulated by an explicit confession."<sup>48</sup> If Schilling is correct, then documents such as the *The Book of Concord* and the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* can be seen in much the same light. Such comparisons are important because they force us to think of reform in a very basic manner; to go back, to borrow a term employed on both sides of the confessional divide, *ad fontes*. When we do, we are able to clear aside competing confessional claims and reintroduce "reform" as a functional descriptive term, free from exclusively Protestant or Roman Catholic connotations. This is exactly what two eminent scholars of the last century, one an art historian and the other a priest in the Roman Catholic Church, have done.

---

<sup>48</sup> Heinz Schilling, *Early Modern European Civilization and its Political and Cultural Dynamism* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2008), 19.

## Refining Reform

The years immediately after the Second World War were an important time in terms of our developing understanding of Christian reform. Not only were the various historical “reformations” (Protestant, Catholic, and Counter) reframed by Hubert Jedin, but the term “reform” itself was clarified and refined. In 1950, the French theologian, Yves Congar, published what was to become one of the century’s most influential books on religion: *Vrai et fausse reforme dans l’église*.<sup>49</sup> In it Congar argued that reform was compatible with Roman Catholic theology, and offered a template for discerning between what he considered to be its “true” and “false” strains. True reform, according to Congar, is rooted in tradition and cannot be considered apart from the *sensus Ecclesiae*, or constant belief of the church. Reform is not only possible, but necessary because of the discrepancy that exists between the church as the body of Christ, and the church as it exists in the world. In terms of practical application, reform can be reduced to four principles: the primacy of charity and pastoral care; a commitment to remaining in communion; true patience and the necessity of respecting delay; and a return to the principle of tradition.<sup>50</sup> Though Congar’s work was censored by the Holy Office shortly after its publication, it was still widely read. In fact, *Vrai* proved to be a significant influence on the thinking of Cardinal Angelo Roncalli, who as Pope John XXIII, would later include Congar as a theological advisor to the Second Vatican Council.<sup>51</sup> Unsurprisingly, the documents of the council reflect a significant change in the Roman Catholic Church’s position on reform. This new

---

<sup>49</sup> Though translation was forbidden by the Holy Office in 1951, an English edition has been authorized. See *True and False Reform in the Church*, Paul Philibert, trans. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001).

<sup>50</sup> Gabriel Flynn, *Yves Congar’s Vision of the Church in a World of Unbelief* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004), 152.

<sup>51</sup> “Friar Yves, Cardinal Congar, Dominican: Itinerary of a Theologian,” Étienne Fouilloux and Christian Yves Dupont, *U.S. Catholic Historian*, Vol. 17, No.2 French Connections (Spring 1999) 76-79.

understanding is nowhere better articulated than in the council's decree on ecumenism, which speaks of "Christ [summoning] the church, as she goes her pilgrim way, to that continual reformation of which she has always had need..."<sup>52</sup> This linkage of pilgrimage with reform represents an effort to return to an understanding of the term that predates the Protestant movement, and is an association we will explore more fully in later chapters.<sup>53</sup>

While Congar was influencing the practical application of reform within the Roman Catholic Church, an art historian named Gerhart Ladner was working a similar vein in secular academia. Ladner was a Roman Catholic convert from Judaism who was forced to flee his native Austria when it was taken over by the Nazis in 1938. After serving during the war as an intelligence officer in the Canadian Army, he immigrated to the United States, where he held teaching posts at Notre Dame and UCLA.<sup>54</sup> Ladner was interested in the concept of *Geistesgeschichte*, or the history of spiritual and intellectual ideas, and through his work on reform, he invented a new branch of intellectual history.<sup>55</sup> His *Idea of Reform*, first published in 1959, was a meticulous study of the language and theories of reform in the early church. In it he developed a vocabulary for discussing the subject by delineating four main categories of renewal in Western thought: cosmological renewal, vitalistic renewal, millenarian renewal, and true reform. Though all four categories share a common emphasis on the relationship in time between the old and the new, they can be differentiated from each other both by the type of renewal they describe, and in the case of the first three,

---

<sup>52</sup> *Unitatis Redintegratio* 6, as translated in *The Companion to the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002), 338.

<sup>53</sup> This association of the pilgrim church with reform goes back to Augustine of Hippo. See Peter Iver Kaufman, *Augustinian Piety and Catholic Reform: Augustine, Colet and Erasmus* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1982), 26.

<sup>54</sup> For Ladner's biography see John Van-Engen, "Images and Ideas: The Achievements of Gerhart Burian Ladner, with a Bibliography of his Published Works," *Viator* 20 (1989), 85-115.

<sup>55</sup> Bellitto, *Renewing Christianity*, 4.

through their relationship to Christian ideas of reassertion and augmentation of value, which are the hallmarks of true reform. In order to grasp Ladner's argument, it would be helpful to review briefly his terms, looking at what reform is not.

Ladner's first category is that of cosmological renewal; the idea of "the perpetual cyclical recurrence of identical or similar situations or events." Though present in the philosophers of antiquity, this idea of eternal recurrence is essentially a non-Christian concept. It can be distinguished from true reform primarily through its essential determinism and denial of human freedom.<sup>56</sup> Ladner's second category, that of vitalistic renewal, consists of ideas "founded upon analogies with the reproduction and growth of human life and of life in general."<sup>57</sup> This aspect of renewal includes the concepts of revivification and renaissance, both of which can be found within the Christian faith. Vitalistic ideas of renewal, however, are essentially vegetative or regenerative, and thus lack the elements of intention and direction that are characteristic of true reform.<sup>58</sup> Ladner's third category, that of millenarian renewal, involves radical transformation and centers upon "ideas of absolute or total perfection."<sup>59</sup> A common characteristic of this strain of renewal ideology, which was found in both Jewish messianism and early Christian millenarianism, is its tendency to divide terrestrial history into characteristic ages, which are then related to the coming of a savior. Millenarian renewal, then, is similar to reform in that both emphasize the idea of progress, but there is also a key difference. Whereas millenarian renewal tends to focus on apocalyptic transcendence, reform is more moderate in its scope. Based on the distinctions laid out above, Ladner was able to define reform as

---

<sup>56</sup> Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, 10.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 27.

“the idea of free, intentional and ever perfectible, multiple, prolonged and ever repeated efforts by man to reassert and augment values pre-existent in the spiritual-material compound of the world,” and that it is “essentially Christian in origin and development.”<sup>60</sup> This is a rather cumbersome definition, a fact which Ladner recognized, but it did allow him to make a crucial distinction which has bearing upon any study of the transition from late medieval to early modern forms of Christianity. That is, it differentiates revolution from reform.

Ladner viewed “revolution” as a subcategory of millenarian renewal. He saw its defining characteristic as “the inherent belief in the possibility of violent, total, and definitive improvement of human destiny.” This, for Ladner, stood in stark contrast to the idea of reform, which is based upon a recognition of “ineradicable terrestrial imperfection,” that at the same time posits a “relative perfectibility, the extent of which is unforeseeable.”<sup>61</sup> Thus reform, at least in relation to terrestrial improvement, is much more modest in its goals. Additionally, Ladner noted that “the concept of revolution was not applied to social and historical change until the period of transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance.”<sup>62</sup> Thus he identifies revolution as a cultural construct whose origins are concurrent with the rise of Protestant theology. In fact, Ladner draws an implicit connection between revolution and the ideology of renewal that was intrinsic to early modern Protestant thought in saying that “primitive Protestantism had on the whole, not much use for a religiously founded idea of repeated reforms; the Reformation seemed to

---

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 35.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 30, 31.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 30.

be a unique and final collective conversion.”<sup>63</sup> In making such an assessment, Ladner seems to be echoing the nomenclature of Janssen and Pastor. Janssen, as we saw earlier, argued that Protestantism was a revolutionary, rather than a reforming movement, while Pastor made it his business to claim for Catholicism the idea of reform. But because Ladner’s purpose is more descriptive than polemical, his updating of their nomenclature provides contemporary scholarship with a useful set of terms with which to discuss movements of religious renewal. In fact, it is precisely this terminology that James Simpson employs in his recent contribution to the Oxford English Literary History, *Reform and Cultural Revolution, 1350-1547*.

Despite the series title, Simpson has written much more than a new “literary” history. In typical New Historicist fashion, *Reform and Cultural Revolution* ranges across chronological and disciplinary boundaries in an effort to rewrite the cultural history of the age as well.<sup>64</sup> In fact, with *Reform and Cultural Revolution* we have come full circle and are now back at the point where revisionism leaves off. As David Aers and Sarah Beckwith observe in their introduction to a cluster of reviews published in the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, Simpson’s work has a “profound sympathy with Eamon Duffy and other “revisionist” historians of sixteenth-century English Protestantism.”<sup>65</sup> However,

---

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 34. As Ladner points out, it was not until the seventeenth century that Protestant reformers would look to “reforming the Reformation itself.” See Milton’s *Areopogitica* in *Areopogitica and Of Eductation*, George H. Sabine, ed. (Wheelan, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1951), 44.

<sup>64</sup> Simpson links literature and culture in his opening sentence, wherein he contends that “the institutional simplifications and centralizations of the sixteenth century provoked correlative simplifications and narrowing in literature.” In advancing this argument, Simpson is very clearly pushing back against the traditional view that dates the “narrowing” of English literary culture to the early-fifteenth century. This is not to say that he does so without qualifications (he does, for example, see Arundel’s *Constitutions* as having a dampening effect on certain genres such as fiction), but by and large, Simpson sees the written culture of the fifteenth century in terms of continuity with the past rather than change. See, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 1.

<sup>65</sup> David Aers & Sarah Beckwith, “Reform and Cultural Revolution: Introduction” in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 35:1 (Winter 2005), 6. This volume contains penetrating essays by Derek Pearsall, David Wallace, and Bruce Holsinger, as well as a response from Simpson himself.

unlike most revisionists, Simpson avoids unconsciously importing traditional preconceptions on sixteenth-century religious change by clearly defining what he means by “reform.” While he does not use Ladner’s criteria (and interestingly, does not cite Ladner in his bibliography) he comes close by turning the conventional view of “medieval” versus “early modern” on its head. In Simpson’s schema, the early modern era was a time of revolution, wherein a “newly centralized power demands both repudiation of the old order and a vigorous affirmation of novelty.”<sup>66</sup> Conversely, the later Middle Ages are seen as broadly reformist in nature, being characterized by “a diverse and highly segmented set of jurisdictions,” which by their very nature, “speak to, check, and reform others.”<sup>67</sup> Accordingly, the reformist culture of the later Middle Ages can be differentiated from its revolutionary successor in terms of its “unresolved generic juxtaposition versus attempted generic coherence; complicated accretion versus cleanness of line; development and accretion versus conversion; a recognition of historical totality versus a return to originary purity that involves a rejection of large slices of intervening history; [and] consensus versus the intelligence of central command.”<sup>68</sup> In short, cultural revolution differs from reform in that it is neither patient of perceived imperfection nor ameliorative in its remedies for the same. Instead, it is predicated upon a “sudden historical break,” accompanied “concentrations of cultural and political power,” and an “ideological demolition of the ‘old’ order.”<sup>69</sup>

Though Simpson’s thesis is intended to describe cultural trends at large, he clearly believes that his paradigm of reformist continuity versus revolutionary change is applicable

---

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 559.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

within the religious sphere. This is evident in his characterization of sixteenth-century Protestantism as a movement which “despite its superficially demotic tone and its laudable promotion of the vernacular...demolishes institutional and historical stabilities.”<sup>70</sup> Later he underscores the difference between his definition of reform and idea of “the Reformation” in his use of the term “Protestant revolution” to describe the religious change of the sixteenth century.<sup>71</sup> Interestingly enough, he employs similar language to describe what he calls “Lollardy,” and in so doing reopens the debate about the relationship between early-English Protestantism and a perceived Wycliffite past.<sup>72</sup> This is a rather bold move, since nowadays the historical connection between the two movements is thought to be slight.<sup>73</sup> Recent research suggests that the leaders of English Protestantism “emerged in disproportionate numbers from settings which had been bastions of anti-Lollardy at the beginning of the sixteenth century...and they frequently confessed to personal backgrounds which were conventionally pious and orthodox.”<sup>74</sup> That said, one does not have to posit an evolutionary connection between the two movements to argue that they share a similar outlook.<sup>75</sup> As Simpson rightly points out, the Wycliffite practice of dividing “Christians living in the present into the saved and the damned prefigures later Protestant

---

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 561.

<sup>73</sup> Older scholarship tends to be more sympathetic to a connection between the two. Margaret Aston makes cautious connections between “Lollardy” and Protestantism in *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion*, (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), 219-243, while Richard Rex argues that there is hardly any connection at all in *The Lollards* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 115-143. The majority opinion, though, seems to be reflected by Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, who suggest that “Lollardy was a tributary stream of English Protestant development, but hardly its main headwater.” See their introductory essay in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9.

<sup>74</sup> Peter Marshall, *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 6.

<sup>75</sup> Such is the contention of Anne Hudson in *The Premature Reformation*, 279-280. Hudson divides her discussion of Wycliffite ideology into three overlapping groups: the first is theological dealing with views on the Eucharist, sacraments, images, pilgrimage, purgatory, etc.; the second is ecclesiastical, focusing on the nature of the church, its hierarchy, and the duty of the clergy; and the third is political, focusing on the relation of the secular ruler to the church and the question of dominion.

representations of the true and false church.”<sup>76</sup> This shared perspective on what constitutes “the church” is key to understanding Wycliffism’s revolutionary nature.

Much of what might be termed “Wycliffite ecclesiology” can be traced to three writings from the 1370s—*De civili dominio* (1375), *De Ecclesia* (1378), and *De potestae papae* (1379).<sup>77</sup> In these works, Wyclif uses a narrow interpretation of Augustine’s teaching on predestination, which divided mankind into the *congregatio predestinorum*, or those who were ordained to be saved, and the *congregatio prescitorum*, or those who were foreknown to be damned, to argue that the visible institution here on earth could not be considered a true church, since not all within it would persevere.<sup>78</sup> We see this notion of “true versus false” in the strange case of Sir Lewis Clifford, an associate of Chaucer and one of the so-called “Lollard knights” investigated by K.B. McFarlane.<sup>79</sup> In a deposition before Archbishop Arundel in 1402, Clifford renounced the belief that the institutional church was “nothing other than the synagogue of Satan.”<sup>80</sup> Such a perspective is telling. If the old order is “false,” rather than merely fallen or corrupt, it is incapable of being reformed. It must be either abandoned or destroyed. But *pace* Simpson, it is not only in

---

<sup>76</sup> Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 374. For examples of Protestants employing the true/false dichotomy see the example of Robert Barnes, one of the Henrician martyrs, cited on page 359. Similar ideas can be found also in John Foxe. See Viggo Norskov Olsen, *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 111-115.

<sup>77</sup> A discussion of these texts and their influence can be found in Takashi Shogimen, “Wyclif’s Ecclesiology and Political Thought,” in Ian Christopher Levy, ed., *A Companion to John Wyclif* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 199-240.

<sup>78</sup> The Latin terms and their implications are discussed in *The Premature Reformation*, 314-327.

<sup>79</sup> In addition to being a soldier and trusted servant of both the Black Prince and Richard II, Clifford was apparently a cultured man, an associate of such *literati* as Chaucer, Froissart, and Deschamps. It is unclear what specifically might have brought him to the attention of Archbishop Arundel, but he had been associated with “lollards” all his life. It is interesting also to note that the notorious John Oldcastle was one of the executors of his will. See K.B. McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 148-196, 212.

<sup>80</sup> See the third conclusion as recorded in Johannes de Trokelowe and Henrici de Blandeforde, *Chronica et Annales, regnantibus Henrico Tertio, Edwardo Primo, Edwardo Secundo, Ricardo Secundo, et Henrico Quarto*, Henry Riley, ed., (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866), 347: *quod ecclesia nihil est aliud quam synagoga Sathanae*.

looking forward to early modern Protestantism that such revolutionary tendencies can be discerned. From the perspective of the fourteenth century, there was already a well-known movement that used the true/false dichotomy to discredit the institutional church. It too had had little patience with the idea of “ineradicable terrestrial imperfection,” that is characteristic of reform. The fact that this movement was considered a dangerous heresy was not lost on the ecclesiastical establishment as we can see from the action it took.

### A Premature Revolution

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1382 a 5.7 magnitude earthquake shook the city of London.<sup>81</sup> In addition to damaging buildings and disrupting business, it also caused a temporary halt to the proceedings of the Blackfriars Council, a convocation of bishops and theologians whose task it was to assess the orthodoxy of twenty-four conclusions drawn from Wyclif’s works. Called by the newly instituted Archbishop of Canterbury, William Courtenay, the Council represented the most focused effort to date in the nearly five-year long campaign to bring the recalcitrant don (and his university) to heel.<sup>82</sup> In 1377 and again in 1378, Wyclif had escaped the worst effects of clerical censure through the patronage of John of Gaunt, who, in defiance of papal bulls, was able to intimidate the clerics arrayed against him. Though the London earthquake threatened to derail proceedings once again, as the assembled doctors wondered whether it might represent God’s judgement against them, Courtenay deftly flipped the script, comparing the heresies “buried in the hearts of the reprobate,” which it was their job to eradicate, with the “the air and spirit of infection”

---

<sup>81</sup> Jelle Zeilinga de Boer and Donald Theodore Sanders, *Earthquakes in Human History: The Far-reaching Effects of Seismic Disruptions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 67-69.

<sup>82</sup> For a thorough account of the proceedings leading up to Blackfriars, see Andrew Larsen, *Academic Condemnation at the University of Oxford, 1277-1409* (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 133-163.

which had just escaped the bowels of the earth.<sup>83</sup> Courtenay proved more adept in assuaging their fears, and two days later, the archbishop had his way. Every one of the conclusions were pronounced either erroneous or heretical, including the notion that “a bishop or priest...existing in mortal sin...neither ordains, nor confects [the sacrament], nor baptizes.”<sup>84</sup> The implications of this statement, purportedly derived from *de Eucharistia*, are unmistakable to anyone familiar with the history of the church, much less those charged with the task of stamping out heresy in their midst. In positing such a connection between clerical purity and sacramental validity, Wyclif appeared to be affecting a revival of the fourth-century heresy known as Donatism.

The Donatists were a sect of Christian rigorists who flourished in Roman North Africa in the fourth and fifth centuries.<sup>85</sup> They differed from Catholic Christians (including Augustine who was one of their most vocal opponents) in holding the belief that anyone who has shown weakness during times of persecution, either by handing over (hence the appellation *traditores*) sacred objects or sacrificing to the Emperor to avoid martyrdom, were guilty of apostasy and could no longer be thought of as a follower of Christ. In short, Catholic Christians were members of a false church. The fact that many of the *traditores* were themselves members of the clergy led to a theological crisis. Because they could no longer be considered Christians, much less clerics, the Donatists argued, the *traditores* could no longer function as channels of grace. Any sacrament they might confect would

---

<sup>83</sup> As quoted in Stephen Lahey, *John Wyclif* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 26.

<sup>84</sup> Item iv—*quod si episcopus vel sacerdos existat in peccato mortali: non ordinat, conficit, nec baptizat*. See also item viii—*quod si papa sit praescitus, et malus homo, ac per consequens membrum diaboli, non habet potestatem supra fideles Christi ab aliquo sibi datam, nisi forte a Caesare*. See W.W. Shirley, ed, *Fasciculi Zizaniorum: Magistri Johannis Wyclif cum Tritico*,. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858), 278.

<sup>85</sup> For a brief yet useful overview of the Donatist controversy see Francois Decret, *Early Christianity in North Africa*, Edward Smither, trans. (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2011), 101-143.

therefore be invalid. This position is generally known by the Latin tag, *ex opere operantis* (from the work of the doer). The orthodox counter argument, articulated powerfully by Augustine, was that the personal holiness of the minister had no bearing on the sacrament in terms of its effects. Instead, sacramental validity came from God and was dependent only on the work worked (*ex opere operato*). Though Wyclif himself attempted to finesse the issue, upholding the orthodox position while at the same time intimating that clerical sanctity had a part to play, the question of how well some of his followers understood the distinction is difficult to say.<sup>86</sup> As one fifteenth-century glossator wrote in a commentary on Matthew's Gospel, "þe preirers of cursed prestes in þe masse ben cursed of God and his angelis, and certis a prest may be so cursed and in heresie þat he makip not þe sacrament."<sup>87</sup> Such assertions certainly look like Donatism, as the Carmelite, Thomas Netter, would argue forcefully in his three volume anti-Wycliffite opus, the *Doctrinale*.<sup>88</sup> That said, the Donatist elements in Wycliffism were not the most serious threat to the established church. This is because, in the end, Wycliffite theology took the idea of a "true and false church" and gave it a more radical turn.

Unlike the fourth-century heresy, Wycliffism did not ask the individual believer to discern between valid and invalid sacraments. Had it done so, the logical outcome would be the creation of a parallel church on earth, similar in structure to what came before, but

---

<sup>86</sup> Wyclif's Donatism (or lack thereof) is a major theme of Alastair Minnis's *Fallible Authors: Chaucer's Pardoner and Wife of Bath* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 217-233. Ian Christopher Levy probably answers the question best in saying "perhaps scholars will have to be content to say that there were times when Wyclif had been orthodox, times when a Donatist, and other times still when he had walked a perilous path between." See *John Wyclif: Scriptural Logic, Real Presence, and the Parameters of Orthodoxy* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2003), 153.

<sup>87</sup> From Cambridge University Library MS Additional 5338 as quoted in Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 317.

<sup>88</sup> The full name of Netter's work is the *Doctrinale antiquitatum fidei ecclesiae catholicae*. Ann Hudson cites a number of examples from the *Doctrinale* in *The Premature Reformation*, 316-317.

with a more rigorous standard of clerical purity. This is what happened in Donatist North Africa and what the English Protestants hoped to do in the 1520s.<sup>89</sup> But a “new and better church” with sacraments of certain validity is not what Wycliffism had on offer. Instead it presented the individual believer with a much simpler option by rendering the sacraments largely unnecessary. It was able to do so by employing a tactic not available to the Donatists; this was the placement of predestination as a central tenet of its theology.<sup>90</sup> We see the importance of this belief in an episode from the mid-1440s, when William Ayscough, Bishop of Salisbury, found himself contending with a group of men who maintained that “holichirch catholike is congregacioun of trewe men which only shulbe saved.”<sup>91</sup> When considered alongside the purpose of the sacraments, that is, as channels of grace, the implications of what might be called a “predestinarian Donatism,” quickly become clear. If the church is only the elect, and the elect are predestined from all eternity to salvation, then it is a short step to seeing the sacraments as metaphorical or merely commemorative. As Richard Rex perceptively observes, the importance Wyclif “attached to predestination as the sole condition of church membership meant that the role of the sacraments in his theology was greatly reduced;” as such they went from “being in themselves the means of delivering grace and salvation to the faithful” to being “mere signs

---

<sup>89</sup> Patrick Collinson makes an interesting ecclesiological comparison along these lines. “The Lollards,” he says, “had very little interest in conjuring into existence a visible, true church, with the visibly false Roman Church. Their ecclesiology was much more radical than that. But that was precisely the mentality and programme of the first generation or two of English Protestants. See “Night Schools, Conventicles and Churches: Continuities and Discontinuities in Early Protestant Ecclesiology” in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, 225.

<sup>90</sup> It is true that Augustine seems to have derived some of his understanding of predestination from the Donatist theologian, Tyconius. Tyconius’s interpretation of the doctrine, however, differed from Augustine’s in that it applied only to a portion of humanity. In other words, some were predestined for salvation because of their nature; they could not do other than the good. Others (probably the majority) were free to choose evil. See Tyconius, *Book of Rules*, William Babcock, ed. & trans., (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 45-47.

<sup>91</sup> The quotation, taken from the Register of Bishop Ayscough, is cited in Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, 14.

of that grace.”<sup>92</sup> And while Wyclif never went so far himself, it seems it was not beyond his followers to refer to them as “invalid” and “dead signs.”<sup>93</sup>

Nor did the Wycliffite assault on the “false church” end with the sacraments; it targeted those who administered them as well. John Purvey, one of Wyclif’s most noted disciples, argued that all good Christians, being predestined, are themselves priests, though not in the traditional sense.<sup>94</sup> Rather than being ministers of the sacraments, the *praedestinati* are called to be ministers of the word. From the orthodox perspective, redefining priesthood in this fashion both broadens and diminishes the sacerdotal role.<sup>95</sup> If all good Christians belong to a “priesthood of believers,” there is no real need for a priestly caste. Or, as the Wycliffite John Jurden maintained, “the sacrament of ordre ordeyned for ministers to be in church is vayne, voyde, superflewe, and not necessarie.”<sup>96</sup> In short, it is the fraudulent creation of a false church. Gordon Leff is correct in seeing Wycliffism’s rejection of the ecclesiastical hierarchy as not only “an attack not only upon the pope,

---

<sup>92</sup> Richard Rex, *The Lollards* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 45. Rex’s book was not received particularly well by scholars who work on Lollardy. Reformation historians, of whom Rex is one, were more positive. On this subject, however, there is common ground. Stephen Penn, a medievalist who specializes in Wycliffite theology, notes that Wyclif and his followers were “keen to divest the sacraments of their theological glory.” See Wyclif and the Sacraments,” in Ian Christop Levy, *A Companion to John Wyclif*, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 242.

<sup>93</sup> These terms can be found in Lewis Clifford’s statement to Archbishop Arundel. It should be noted that Arundel’s list is a hostile source, and Clifford may have been forced to abjure statements he did not specifically hold. In other words, he may not have described the sacraments as “dead signs,” but his definition was characterized as such by his opponents. Paul Strohm alerts us to such possibilities in his account of William Sautre. See *England’s Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399-1422* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 50-52. Alistair Minnis, however, addresses this concern by pointing out that “all the Clifford conclusions may be paralleled (in some shape or form) in other records of Lollard belief (and indeed traced back, however circuitously, to the thought of the arch-heresiarch himself). Clifford’s conclusions may seem wild, but they may be deemed as being, in large measure, representative of certain strands of Wycliffite thought...” See *Fallible Authors*, 29.

<sup>94</sup> *De sacramento, ordinis dicit, quod omnes boni christiani sunt praedestinati, veri sacerdotes ordinati...* See the account of Purvey’s examination by Archbishop Arundel in *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 278.

<sup>95</sup> It also exploits a weakness in the sacramental system, that is, the fact that things like transubstantiation and baptismal regeneration are not physically verifiable processes. Preaching is different in that it can be heard and recorded; in other words, “proven.”

<sup>96</sup> See Thomas Scott Holmes, ed., *The Register of John Stafford, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1425-1443, Vol. 2* (London: Somerset Records Society, 1916), 266-267.

cardinals, and bishops in the name of God's word, but the very existence of the church in this world; as both a corporation and a congregation it lost its *raison d'être*, being entitled to neither its possessions and privileges, nor to its claims to be mediator between God and men."<sup>97</sup> Such an attack on the church's foundations is precisely what Simpson means by an "ideological demolition" of the old order. It is revolution in its purest form.

Interestingly enough, this ideological demolition was to be accompanied by a physical one as well, as articulated by Wyclif himself. In order to carry out his program of dismantling the institutional church, Wyclif sought to harness the power of the state, a peculiar foreshadowing of things to come. Yet as Michael Wilks demonstrates, dissolution and disendowment were key elements in Wyclif's plan for religious renewal.

In the fashion of a Waldensian or Spiritual writer, [Wyclif] stipulates against the existence of an actually existing present Church of wrong willing beings, an *Ecclesia malignitantium*, the true reality of an *Ecclesia* of the just, the community of right willing selves which was present with, or rather, in God—the *res publica* of the righteous... It was this conception of society as a heavenly *congregatio*...given a visible embodiment in the king, which allowed Wyclif with devastating logic, to demand the dissolution of the religious orders in England by the monarchy.<sup>98</sup>

That such an agenda was meant for practical application can be seen in the action taken by Wyclif's followers shortly after his death. *The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards*, which was nailed to the door of St. Paul's during the 1395 session of Parliament, calls mendicants and chantry priests, "puple...mayntenid in ydelness," and suggests that if the number of almshouses were limited by the state, great profit would accrue to the realm.<sup>99</sup> Even more forthright were the proposals contained in the so-called "Lollard

---

<sup>97</sup> Gordon Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Dissent, c. 1250-c. 1450* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), 531.

<sup>98</sup> Michael Wilks, "Wyclif and Hus as Leaders of Religious Protest Movements," *Studies In Church History*, Vol. 9, (1972), 118-119.

<sup>99</sup> See *The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards* as printed in Ann Hudson, *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 26.

Disendowment Bill.”<sup>100</sup> This petition is thought to have been presented to Parliament, probably in 1410, and it called for the king to confiscate the temporalities of all the bishops of the English church, along with a great number of the abbeys and religious houses.<sup>101</sup> It shows considerable sophistication in that it was designed to appeal to a wide range of beneficiaries, and through an extensive cataloging of church property and rents, it summarizes fairly accurately what its remunerative effect might be.<sup>102</sup> Had such a policy been implemented, it would have changed the face of England by destroying the church as an institution, while at the same time enacting a massive centralization of power on the person of the king. This is exactly the sort of violent break with the past and demolition of the old order, lack of patience with terrestrial imperfection, and insensitivity to pastoral concerns that are characteristic of revolution for Simpson, Ladner, and Congar. In its object and goals, Wycliffism was not so much a “premature reformation,” as it was a precursor to the cultural and religious revolutions of the early modern era.

With this repositioning of Wycliffism, a number of important questions begin to arise. The most obvious of which is, if Wycliffism is actually a revolutionary movement, might we have been looking for reform in the wrong place? Could not a reformist ideology have existed in late medieval England, especially given the many efforts at reform in the

---

<sup>100</sup> Wendy Scase classifies this bill as a type of “clamour text,” a type of reform literature that appropriates and adapts for wide circulation forms of political and judicial complaint. See *Literature and Complaint in England: 1272-1553* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 83-110.

<sup>101</sup> These provisions are discussed at length in Margaret Aston, “Caim’s Castles: Poverty, Politics, and Disendowment,” in Barrie Dobson, ed., *The Church, Politics, and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984), 49-57.

<sup>102</sup> The rationale given was so that the “Kyng may have euery yeer in clere to his tresour for defence of his rewme xx m<sup>l</sup> *libri* and more,” but there were provisions also for the foundation of “c houses of almesse...with londe to feden...alle the nedefull pore men,” and “xv unyuersitees.” See *The Lollard Disendowment Bill* in Hudson, *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, 135-137.

history of the Western church?<sup>103</sup> The answer, I believe, is yes, but to understand the form it took, we must ask the question, “what’s in a name?” Throughout the course of this chapter, I have used the term “Wycliffism” to describe a movement that arose in the 1380s and sought a radical restructuring of both society and church. This is not common practice. As Andrew Cole has observed, “one of the clichés of Wycliffite studies is to say, typically in a footnote, that the terms ‘Wycliffite’ and ‘lollard’ will be used synonymously.”<sup>104</sup> Cole argues against this practice, and I believe rightly so, on the grounds that it is an ahistorical elision of terms. The term “Lollard,” he maintains, was an epithet used “to hereticate the views of those at Oxford in the early 1380s and of others thereafter, reducing their ideas to a series of discrete and consumable formulae with the lurid appeal of a soundbite.”<sup>105</sup> Because it was quickly “reappropriated [and made] an ideal,” it had by the 1390s, “very little contact with the doctrinal items, we, much less medieval contemporaries, would typically recognize as Wycliffite heresy.”<sup>106</sup> So what is a Lollard?<sup>107</sup> We will deal with this more fully in the section below, but we can begin by saying what Lollardy is not. Lollardy is not Wycliffism, and therefore does not as a matter of necessity share its revolutionary nature. In fact, there is ample cause to see Lollardy as a manifestation of

---

<sup>103</sup> Christopher Bellitto gives an excellent summary of these in *Renewing Christianity*. See in particular his chapters on the Carolingian Renaissance (23-45) and the High Middle Ages (47-94).

<sup>104</sup> Cole, *Literature and Heresy*, 72.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Such is the title of a new book on the subject by J. Patrick Hornbeck. In it, he argues that Lollardy is best understood in terms of Wittgenstein’s theory of family resemblances. Though he discusses this theory at length, he offers a simple definition in saying, “in a set of four individuals, one might possess the predicates ABC, another BCD, another ABD, and the last ACD, such that there is no predicate common to every member though each member shares some of its predicates with the others.” See J. Patrick Hornbeck, *What is a Lollard? Dissent and Belief in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 12.

reform. This is particularly true of the manner in which it is articulated by the poet and contemporary of Wyclif, William Langland.<sup>108</sup>

### Lollardy and Reform

For much of *Piers Plowman's* early reception history, Langland was seen as a Wycliffite and proto-Protestant. In his print edition of 1550, Robert Crowley likened the author to Wyclif in that he “moste christianlye enstructe[d] the weake, and sharply rebuke[d] the obstynate blynde.”<sup>109</sup> A little over a century later, the Commonwealth-era historian, Thomas Fuller, would write that “Robert Langelande” was “one of the first followers of John Wickliffe,” and judged that he might, “by prolepsis, be termed a Protestant.”<sup>110</sup> Such assessments could be extended to Langland’s relationship with “Lollardy” because of the easy elision of terms discussed above.<sup>111</sup> Although the poem’s nineteenth-century editors were somewhat more cautious in their handling of the relationship, the presumed linkage between Langland and “the Lollards” continued to shape assumptions within the field.<sup>112</sup> It was not until 1981 that David Lawton turned this aspect of the poem’s history on its head by observing “whether Langland had Lollard sympathies is not the issue...the issue is

---

<sup>108</sup> Ann Hudson includes a discussion of Langland in an exploration of the differences between what she terms “conservative Lollardy” and “radical orthodoxy.” See *The Premature Reformation*, 390-445.

<sup>109</sup> See the preface to the reader in *The Vision of Pierce Plowman Now Fyrste Imprynted*, (London: Robert Crowley, 1550). Crowley’s work is discussed in John King, “Robert Crowley’s Editions of *Piers Plowman*: A Tudor Apocalypse,” *Modern Philology*, Vol. 73, No. 4, (May, 1976), 342-352.

<sup>110</sup> Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England*, Volume III, P. Austin Nuttall, ed. (London: Thomas Tegg, 1840), 64.

<sup>111</sup> As Anne Hudson noted in her 2003 contribution to the *Yearbook of Langland Studies*, “at least from the writing of the poem that we know as *Pierce the Plowman’s Crede*, claims, implicit or explicit have been advanced that Langland’s poem, at least in one of its forms, was open to an understanding compatible with Lollardy.” See “Langland and Lollardy?,” *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 17 (2003), 93.

<sup>112</sup> “The approach to Langland taken by the Reformers has proved lastingly influential,” with readers even into the twentieth century continuing “to seek similarities between Langlandian and Wycliffite writing. See Christina von Nolcken, “Langland and Lollardy,” *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 2 (1988), 75.

really that Lollards had Langlandian sympathies.”<sup>113</sup> Since that time, scholars have tended to agree with Lawton’s memorable formulation, but as Cole has demonstrated, it is in need of semantic revision. The issue, phrased more accurately, is whether Langland might have had Wycliffite sympathies and vice versa. Cole maintains that he did, though not in the manner of a like-minded fellow traveler. Rather, Cole sees Langland’s first priority as pushing back against the idea that “a large body of work and interestingly persuasive set of ideas could be damned and dismissed in just a single word.”<sup>114</sup> In this sense, Langland “goes to bat for the Wycliffites by neutralizing the most widely circulated bit of polemic against them.”<sup>115</sup> In another sense, though, Langland has very little sympathy with Wycliffism and its revolutionary goals. This is evident in the manner in which he takes the term “Lollard” and repurposes it, giving it a shade of meaning that is entirely consonant with the idea of reform.

To understand Langland’s use of the word, we have to return to Cole’s point about reappropriation. He notes that by the mid-1390s Wycliffite authors had begun to push back against the establishment’s slur against them by embracing the word “Lollard” and wearing it as a badge of honor. They did so “by situating it within biblical history and drawing from scriptural verses a set of principles for a moderate “lollard” life available to the laity.”<sup>116</sup> Works such as the *Epistola Sathanae ad Cleros* asserted that “Petur and Poule and oþer disciples of Crist” were “lewd Lollers,” the sort of person who would make God’s law “to be knowne and to increase to moche to þe comon pepill.”<sup>117</sup> Despite the rest of the

---

<sup>113</sup> David Lawton, “Lollardy and the Piers Plowman Tradition,” *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 76, No. 4 (Oct., 1981), 792-793.

<sup>114</sup> Cole, *Literature and Heresy*, 46.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-49.

<sup>117</sup> This is an anti-fraternal tract, dating to about 1393. See Anne Hudson, ed., *Selections from English Wycliffite Writing*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1978), 93.

text's strident Wycliffism, it uses the term Lollardy, not to invoke particular points of doctrine, but rather discipleship and a life focused on the example of Christ. Somewhat counterintuitively, it was not just Wycliffites who were engaged in this process; we see it in orthodox writers as well. In the *Fyve Wyttes*, a devotional treatise from around the year 1400, the author enjoins his readers to distinguish between good Lollards and bad, and makes it a point to praise the qualities of moderation, humility, and a desire to follow the apostolic life.<sup>118</sup> But as Cole convincingly demonstrates, the earliest example of this type of reappropriation (c. 1387) comes in the C-text of *Piers Plowman*, where Langland rewrites significant sections to address the issue of "Lollardy." The early date and extensive readership of *Piers Plowman* puts Langland at the center of what Cole terms "the reinvention of Lollardy." This reinvention takes place mostly in Passus IX, where Langland posits the existence of two types of "lollares:" wasters and shirkers of work, whom he associates with the friars, and peripatetic disciples of Christ.<sup>119</sup> Thus "Lollardy" for Langland "is a term of differentiation between good and bad disciples, and between forms of moderated piety, some praiseworthy, others condemnable."<sup>120</sup>

The idea that "Lollardy" might be something other than revolutionary Wycliffism seems to be supported by recent scholarship. To see why, one has only to look at the most thorough study of the subject to date, J. Patrick Hornbeck's *What is a Lollard*. Though Hornbeck lists a number of attributes that he believes serve as markers of Lollard affiliation, the biggest takeaway is that Lollardy is "a theologically and socially diverse

---

<sup>118</sup> Cole, *Literature and Heresy*, 53. For the text itself, see Rolf Bremmer, ed., *The Fyve wyttes: A Late Middle English Devotional Treatise* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987).

<sup>119</sup> These are the so called "lunatyk lollares," whom Langland likens to the apostles in being sent forth "seluerles in somur garnement, without bagge and bred." See Cole, *Literature and Heresy*, 41-43; 60-63.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

family of phenomena” in an “already highly complex religious landscape.”<sup>121</sup> Or, as Ralph Werrell has suggested, a division “into ‘Lollard’ and ‘Wycliffite’ is probably the nearest we can come to the true theological variations between different groups in the movement, [with] those closest to Wyclif (the Wycliffites) [being] the most heterodox.”<sup>122</sup> The idea that a reformist strain of “Langlandian Lollardy” might exist in such an environment makes a great deal of sense. Additional support for the idea comes in the form of general agreement about Langland’s status as a reforming poet. As James Simpson has noted, while both Langland and the Wycliffites sharply criticized the contemporary church for its flaws, the satire in *Piers Plowman* is subject “to the discipline of patience” through a “sensitivity to the generosity of divine patience;” it is therefore “reformative rather than damnatory: if God is prepared to ‘suffer’ this sinfulness of humans, in hope of their reformation, then so too should the satirist temper his own judgment.”<sup>123</sup> Such an emphasis on patience and process, or to use Ladner’s terms, “relative perfectibility” in the face of “ineradicable terrestrial imperfection,” is wholly at odds with the revolutionary outlook of contemporary Wycliffism.

The fact remains, however, that Langlandian Lollardy and Wycliffism are closely intertwined. Early modern conflation aside, Langland’s exploration of his “new forms of

---

<sup>121</sup> *What is a Lollard*, 19. The main categories Hornbeck deals with are predestination, transubstantiation, marriage and celibacy, the priesthood, and the papacy.

<sup>122</sup> Ralph S. Werrell, *The Roots of William Tyndale's Theology* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2013), 31.

<sup>123</sup> According to Simpson, Wycliffite satire “is, by contrast, unequivocal and damnatory” a reflection of “their theological conviction about membership of the true church...their God has already made up his mind and so have they.” See *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 371. For an early assessment that sounds very like Simpson’s, see Jean Jules Jusserand’s *Piers Plowman: A Contribution to the History of English Mysticism*, Marion & Elise Richards, trans. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1894), 127. “Langland scoffs not at divine things, but at the human element that mingles with them. In religious, as in civil matters, he attacks abuses, not institutions... Here, again, the harshness of his words give rise to many erroneous opinions; some have seen him a destroyer, like Wyclif; others have even made him a Wycliffite. He only agrees with his famous contemporary in censuring excesses and abuses; but differs from him inasmuch as he desires to alter neither the dogmas nor the hierarchy of the church.”

religiosity” is only made possible by “the emergent fund of ideas, forms, and rhetorics” Wycliffism brings to the fore.<sup>124</sup> This leads to an interesting question regarding origins. If both of these perspectives arose out of the same religious milieu, what was the source of inspiration? For Wycliffism one name comes readily to mind—Augustine. As Gordon Leff reminds us, “Wyclif’s outlook can be regarded as one in a long series of reinterpretations of the Augustinian tradition. That it leads to something very different from traditional Augustinianism should not blind us to his Augustinian inspiration. It informed every aspect of his thought.”<sup>125</sup> But if Wyclif’s debt to Augustine has been duly noted, Langland’s has not.<sup>126</sup> This is in some ways unsurprising given the efforts made to free Langland from the proto-Protestant (and by extension, Augustinian) context of his early modern admirers. However, my contention is that Wycliffism and Langlandian Lollardy are two sides of the same coin. Each is derived from late medieval Augustinianism; they are simply the revolutionary and reformist strains. The problem in such an assertion is defining what late medieval Augustinianism really is. This is in part because its existence is occluded by Reformation-era polemic that cast the whole of late medieval theology as little more than a Pelagian revival. A further complication involves Augustine’s tremendous influence over Western theology. There are so many strains of Augustinianism, a great deal of precision is required in isolating just one. The next chapter

---

<sup>124</sup> Cole sees Wycliffism as “central to our sense of English literary history because it was on the inside, not outside, of the literary and interpretive communities of late medieval England. Accordingly, Wycliffism is less a context of the background of affairs than part of the processes of cultural negotiation itself.” See *Literature and Heresy*, 186.

<sup>125</sup> Gordon Leff, “Wyclif and the Augustinian Tradition with Special Reference to His *De Trinitate*,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* N.S. 1 (1970), 29.

<sup>126</sup> A notable exception is David Aers. See *Salvation and Sin. Augustine, Langland, and the Fourteenth Century* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009).

will address these issues, showing how the pastoral strain of Augustinian theology leads to ideas of reform.

## CHAPTER TWO

### AUGUSTINE AND THE IDEA OF REFORM

Augustinianism has long been associated with Protestant theories of predestination and irresistible grace. As such it has been seen as having a deterministic character, which can be contrasted to Pelagianism, which is seen as allowing greater scope for the exercise of free will. However, Augustine's legacy to the church is much broader and more complicated than that. If we look at the history of the later Middle Ages, we see a number of theological perspectives that could be defined as "Augustinian." One of these strains of doctrinal Augustinianism is pastoral in its outlook and can be associated with the Austin Canons, an order of regular clergy, whose mission was focused on the cure of souls. Their pastoral theology was based on the imitation of Christ, a concept they inherited from the writings of Augustine, and in this sense, their outlook can be understood as one of Augustinian reform. This is particularly true of the Victorine Canons in the twelfth century and the Windesheim Canons after their founding in the 1380s. The spirituality of the Windeshiem Canons, along with that of the associated lay movement known as the Brothers and Sisters of the Common Life, is generally termed the *Devotio Moderna*. Its pastoral and reformist character is in many ways similar to the theological perspective found in the *Vision of Piers Plowman*. Though Langland's theology has been characterized as "semi-Pelagian," this connection suggests otherwise. Langland's Augustinian commitments will be explored more fully in Chapter Four.

## Pelagianism, Past and Present

In the year 429, Germanus of Auxerre, took a trip across the English Channel to investigate reports of trouble brewing in the British church. His biographer, Constantius of Lyon, records a number of miracles that Germanus performed while there, including an amazing victory over the pagan Picts, attributable to the rousing shouts of “alleluia” with which the outnumbered British troops took the field. Impressive as this may have been, Constantius believed that the crowning achievement of Germanus’s visitation was the conversion of a significant number of Britons from the errors of Pelagianism.<sup>1</sup> For nearly forty years Pelagius’s views on the sufficiency of man’s will to resist sin had been causing controversy within the Western church, and despite their condemnation both in the writings of Augustine, and at the Council of Carthage in 418, the British monk’s teachings seem to have taken deep root in his native land. Indeed Germanus’s success appears to have been short lived, since David of Wales was forced to convene a synod at Brefy in order to combat a resurgence of Pelagianism in 519.<sup>2</sup> Whether these early examples are instances of true Pelagianism or not is difficult to ascertain, since records are slight, but the fact of the matter is that the history of Christianity in the British Isles has been marked by periodic appearances of what has been characterized as “Pelagian” belief.<sup>3</sup> A brief survey of British churchmen accused of “Pelagianism” would include figures as diverse as John Duns Scotus

---

<sup>1</sup> Germanus’s trip is recorded in *The Life of Germanus* by Constantius of Lyon. The text is available in René Borius, ed., *Vie De Saint Germain D’Auxerre*. Sources Chrétiennes 112, (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1965). See also E.A. Thompson, *St. Germanus of Auxerre and the End of Roman Britain* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1984). Constantius was most likely the source for Bede’s account of Germanus’s visit in the *Ecclesiastical History*.

<sup>2</sup> See the account known as Ryhgyfarch’s *Life of St. David*, in J. Wyn Evans and Jonathan M. Wooding, eds., *St. David of Wales: Cult, Church, and Nation* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007) 142-149.

<sup>3</sup> Most of what we know about Pelagius’s thought comes from the writings of his opponents, but there are a few genuine works, including some letters and a commentary on Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. See B. R. Rees, *The Letters of Pelagius and his Followers* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1991), and Theodore de Bruyn, *Pelagius’s Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

and William Laud, but most of these instances would have little to do with Pelagianism as it was understood in Late Antiquity.<sup>4</sup> Instead, one sees the term most often being used as a catchphrase to describe the theology of those who appear to their critics to emphasize elements of free will and the value of works more so than predestination and the priority of grace. In the later Middle Ages, this so-called “Pelagianism” came in an approach to theology once known as “Nominalism,” but now more accurately termed the *via moderna*, or “modern way.”<sup>5</sup>

The origins of the *via moderna* can be traced to English universities in the 1320s, where scholars such as Adam Wodeham, William of Ockham, and Robert Holcot were developing a new theological method that was based on analytical logic and natural philosophy.<sup>6</sup> Unlike the Thomist and Scotist schools that had dominated academic theology in the century before, this *theologia anglicana* was characterized by an anti-realistic approach to theories of knowledge and worked from a position of general skepticism about man’s ability to know, through logic, that which was beyond human experience. As it developed and spread this “new English theology” was given the title of *via moderna* to reflect both its international character and to distinguish it from the *via antiqua* of the previous century. And when it came to the question of justification, many

---

<sup>4</sup> For Pelagianism and Scotus, see Alister McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 175-178; for information on Arminians such as Laud, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture, since 1700*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 37. Of interest also are Peter Lake’s references to a “popular Pelagianism” in “Calvinism and the English Church, 1570-1635,” *Past and Present*, 114 (1987), 32-76. The Swiss theologian, Karl Barth, once went so far as to quip that Christianity in Britain was “incurably Pelagian” in its makeup. Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth. His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, John Bowden, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 204, 297.

<sup>5</sup> An overview of the scholarship can be found in Alister McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 1988), 70-78.

<sup>6</sup> For the development of the *theologia anglicana* see William Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 250-306.

of the *moderni*, as they came to be called, did tend to emphasize man's ability and moral obligation to do good.<sup>7</sup> In fact, their views could be encapsulated in a simple maxim—*facienti in se est Deus non denegat gratiam*—God will not deny grace to those who do what lies within them.<sup>8</sup>

Though this maxim, unglossed, may give the impression that individuals possess the ability to merit salvation unaided by grace, the idea is rather more complicated than that. To begin with, it rests upon the idea of *pactum*, or a covenant between God and man, and as is the case with all Biblical covenants, the power and the initiative reside with God alone. Under the terms of this covenant, the *moderni* would argue, God has graciously and mercifully determined to ascribe to human moral acts a value they would not otherwise have. So while it may be true that man's unaided moral efforts, which are inevitably marred by selfish intent, can never be sufficiently worthy (*de condigno*) to merit salvation, they do have congruent (*de congruo*) value, and as such, are treated by God as if they were truly meritorious. This idea of congruent and condign merit under divine *pactum* was often illustrated by drawing on *exempla* from medieval economic theory. For example, William of Ockham suggested that just as a king might ascribe a value to a small leaden coin substantially greater than its actual worth, so too would God with human attempts at righteousness.<sup>9</sup> His follower, Robert Holcot, made a similar argument, comparing the relative value of a penny to the loaf of bread that it bought.<sup>10</sup> In both instances, the

---

<sup>7</sup> The reasons for this optimism are manifold, but they appear to stem from an emphasis on the human side of the equation. As Gordon Leff has argued, what started out in a sense of philosophical "neutrality toward God and the supernatural, seemed inevitably to lead to partisanship for men and the natural." See Gordon Leff, *Bradwardine and the Pelagians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 127.

<sup>8</sup> McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, 75.

<sup>9</sup> *Sicut si rex ordinavit quod quicumque acciperet denarium plumbeum haberet certum donum, et tunc denarius plumbeus esset sine qua non respect illius doni.* As cited in McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 114.

<sup>10</sup> See Robert Holcot in *Forerunners of the Reformation; the Shape of Late Medieval Thought*, Heiko Oberman, ed., Paul Nyhus, trans., (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966), 143.

assumption was that God, who is far more just and righteous than any earthly king, could not fail to honor the terms of such a covenant, not because he is bound by any debt to mankind, but because to do so would go against the divine nature. Though theologians such as Holcot clearly believed that their theories were perfectly orthodox, because everything started and ended with God, the idea that man might possess some agency in the process of justification was seen by some of their contemporaries as a revival of Pelagian thought.<sup>11</sup> As such, the idea of divine *pactum* generated significant controversy, and in some quarters, outright condemnation. In England, the most outspoken opponent of the *moderni* was one of the great intellects of the fourteenth century, the Oxford don, and for a brief time, Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Bradwardine.<sup>12</sup>

Born sometime around 1290, Bradwardine first gained fame as a mathematician through his association with the group of logicians centered on Merton College known as the Oxford Calculators. In the 1330s, however, he left the University and entered into royal service, where he served for a time as chaplain to Edward III. With connections in both the university and the ecclesiastical establishment, he was in a unique position to evaluate and comment upon current theological developments, and what he saw in the thought of the *moderni* was an understanding of merit that was sufficiently tilted toward the capabilities of mankind that it impinged upon the omniscience and omnipotence of God.

---

<sup>11</sup> Whether Ockham and his colleagues were truly “Pelagian” or not is a matter of continued debate. For an argument in favor of Ockham’s orthodoxy, see Rega Wood’s “Ockham’s Repudiation of Pelagianism,” in Paul Vincent Spade, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 350-374. For an opposing view, which characterizes Ockham as semi-Pelagian, see Marilyn McCord Adams, *William of Ockham*, Vol. 2 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 1295.

<sup>12</sup> Bradwardine was elevated to the See of Canterbury in 1347 and consecrated in 1348; he died of the plague at Lambeth Palace in 1349. See “Bradwardine, Thomas,” Gordon Leff in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, May 2006, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/3213> (accessed July 4, 2016).

This trend towards “Pelagianism” alarmed him greatly and led to his writing of a massive piece of polemic called *De Causa Dei contra Pelagiam*. In this work Bradwardine adopts the posture of a modern day Athanasius, fighting *contra mundum* for truth within the church.<sup>13</sup> Given the siege mentality on display in his preface (*totus etenim paene mundus post Pelagium abiit in errorem*) it is no surprise that he chose to emphasize over and over the absolute and irresistible power of grace, to the extent that he appears to be arguing that no action is independent and no will is free.<sup>14</sup> The resulting view is one of the whole world as being “nothing more than the extension of God’s will, with no part of it acting but by His immutable decree.”<sup>15</sup>

Despite its relative novelty, this theistic determinism was presented as being consistent with apostolic and patristic teachings on the role of grace, particularly those of Augustine.<sup>16</sup> Though there were inevitable differences in outlook, Bradwardine’s mantle was taken up in the next generation by John Wyclif, and then again by the magisterial reformers of the sixteenth century, most significantly, Martin Luther.<sup>17</sup> In the preface of his second *Disputation Against the Antinomians*, Luther painted his scholastic predecessors with a broad brush, arguing that “in the name of the Church and of Christ, the medieval theologians themselves became Pelagians, not to mention Occam and his school, who

---

<sup>13</sup> “*Quot, Domine, hodie cum Pelagia, pro Libero Arbitrio, contra gravitatem gratiam tuam, pugnant, et contra Paulum pugilem gratiae spiritualem?*” Thomas Bradwardine, *De causa Dei adversus Pelagium* (Frankfort: M. Minerva, 1964), *Præfatio, i*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid. ii*.

<sup>15</sup> Leff, *Bradwardine and the Pelagians*, 15.

<sup>16</sup> Heiko Oberman has characterized *De Causa Dei* as “a large scale attempt to offer an outline of theology disguised as a commentary on Augustine.” See his *Masters of the Reformation—the Emergence of a New Intellectual Climate in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 66.

<sup>17</sup> For an overview of Bradwardine and his influence on Wyclif, see J.A. Robson, *Wyclif and the Oxford Schools*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 36-39, 196-202. For a more recent, and in depth treatment, see Ian Christopher Levy, “Grace and Freedom in the Soteriology of John Wyclif,” *Traditio* 60 (2005), 279-337. Robson sees both Bradwardine and Wyclif as largely deterministic, while Levy presents Wyclif as more sympathetic to human freedom.

shortly afterwards, became even worse.”<sup>18</sup> At the same time, he also narrowed perceptions of Augustine, as Erik Saak succinctly puts it:

Precisely when the scholarly apparatus was available to facilitate research on the entire corpus of Augustine’s works as never before, Luther and Karlstadt made the antipelagian Augustine the standard, thereby distancing themselves from the historical church father. If the symphony of late-medieval Augustinianism crescendoed to a climax in the Wittenberg theology and its *via Gregorii*, it came to a close in unison on the dominant note of Augustine’s antipelagianism.<sup>19</sup>

Luther’s perspective became that of mainstream Protestantism, which over the course of the next four centuries, helped shape the world view of those within the academy in Germany, England, and America. Well into the twentieth century, scholars in these countries tended to view late medieval theology in terms of a few “Augustinian lights in a Pelagian night.”<sup>20</sup> This, as the next section will illustrate, was simply not the case. Augustinianism was alive and well in the later Middle Ages, a point that has significant implications for those interested in relationship between late medieval theology and subsequent efforts at reform in the English church. Furthermore, it will demonstrate that the “Pelagianism” of the *moderni* is not the only alternative to the “Augustinianism” of Wyclif or Bradwardine. A close examination will reveal that Augustine bequeathed a diverse and complex legacy to the late medieval church.

#### Footnotes to Augustine

In the mid-1350s an Augustinian Friar from Germany named Johannes Klenkok was busy making enemies among the English at Oxford. In addition to criticizing the

---

<sup>18</sup> As quoted in Heiko Oberman, *The Dawn of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986), 109.

<sup>19</sup> See Erik Saak, “The Reception of Augustine in the Later Middle Ages,” in Irena Backus, ed., *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West from the Carolingians to the Maurists*, Vol. 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 368.

<sup>20</sup> Oberman was one of the first and most prominent Protestant scholars to argue against this perspective. See *Forerunners of Reformation*, 131.

Archbishop of Armagh, Richard Fitzralph, for his anti-mendicant stance, Klenkok also issued a devastating critique of the Benedictine theologian, Uthred of Boldon, and his understanding of the necessity (or lack thereof) of grace in the process of salvation.<sup>21</sup> According to Uthred, it might be possible for those who did not know the gospel of Christ to be saved through their response to the *clara visio*, a “clear vision,” granted to them by God at the moment of death. In seeing themselves as they truly are, individuals would then be given one final chance to repent and seek God’s mercy. The fact that Uthred would extend this franchise even to pagans led him to be charged with “Pelagianism,” and one may detect Klenkok’s influence behind the eventual censure of the *clara visio* hypothesis by Archbishop Stephen Langham in 1369.<sup>22</sup> As a strong advocate of man’s need for grace, Klenkok would appear to fit perfectly within the old historiographical division of “Pelagians” versus “Augustinians” if not for one thing—during his time at Oxford Klenkok was also highly critical of Thomas Bradwardine, whom he singled out as upholding a new and unhealthy form of theistic determinism. According to Klenkok, Bradwardine’s particular error was his advocacy of double predestination, the idea that God actively wills reprobation for those who are damned, rather than passively allowing it to occur.<sup>23</sup> This he saw as being very much at odds with the Augustinian tradition.

Klenkok was not the only member of his order to attack Bradwardine for misusing Augustine. His teacher and fellow friar, Gregory of Rimini, was criticizing Bradwardine

---

<sup>21</sup> Christopher Ocker, “Johannes Klenkok: A Friar’s Life, c. 1310-1374” in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 83, No. 5 (1993), 37.

<sup>22</sup> For Uthred’s censure see David Knowles, “The Censured Opinions of Uthred of Boldon,” *The Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. 37 (1951), 305-342. Knowles refers primarily to the debate between Uthred and William Jordan, O.P., but since this dispute took place in the 1360s, it seems likely that Dominicans would at least have known also of Klenkok and his earlier critique.

<sup>23</sup> *Unde male dicit Bradwardine, quod positive volendo Deus reprobat et indurat et obdurat*. As cited by James Halverson in *Peter Aureole on Predestination: A Challenge to Late-Medieval Thought*, (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 160.

as well. Gregory, who was generally recognized as one of the foremost authorities on Augustine, agreed with Bradwardine on the issue of God's active will as a cause of reprobation. His concern was that Bradwardine's entire cosmology appeared to be based on a flawed premise—that is, the idea that man needs grace, not because he is a sinner, but because he is a creature. This, according to Gregory, underestimates the importance of the Fall in Augustine's understanding of the world, and as such, indicates a theological orientation that is more Aristotelian than Augustinian in nature.<sup>24</sup> By not making strong a distinction between pre- and post-lapsarian humanity, Bradwardine appears to ignore the fact that man was created in the likeness and image of God. This is a point that was never far from Augustine's own mind, and as we shall see, was central to his idea of reform. What Bradwardine might have thought about Gregory's critique is not known, but the fact that it could even be made serves as a reminder of just how careful one has to be in tracing Augustine's influence in the later Middle Ages. As David Steinmetz has pointedly observed, "it all depends on what you mean by Augustinian."<sup>25</sup>

One of the first modern scholars to understand this was Damasus Trapp. Up until the early-twentieth century, it was thought that one could attribute to the Augustinian Friars a uniform theology of grace, which when developed more fully by Luther and his followers, led directly to the Protestant Reformation. However, in a groundbreaking article published in 1956, Trapp argued that two distinct schools could be discerned within the order; one, centered around the teaching of Giles of Rome; and the other inspired by

---

<sup>24</sup> McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 203-204.

<sup>25</sup> David Steinmetz, *Luther and Staupitz. An Essay in the Intellectual Origins of the Protestant Reformation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1980), 15.

Gregory of Rimini, who was mentioned above.<sup>26</sup> Though both of these schools may be termed “Augustinian” by virtue of their theological debt to Augustine and their origins within the order that bears his name, they were different in character. In the years after Trapp’s work, they came to be called the *schola Aegidiana* and the *schola Augustiniana moderna*.<sup>27</sup> While theologians of the *schola Aegidiana* subscribed to a scholastic methodology and Thomistic view of grace, preferring not to delve too deep into the specifics of predestination, the *schola Augustiniana moderna* represented something rather different. Not only were its methods those of the *via moderna*, it also tended toward strongly deterministic views on the subject of predestination.<sup>28</sup> Trapp’s vision of Augustinian plurality was further refined in the 1980s by William Courtenay, who urged scholars to draw a distinction between doctrinal Augustinianism, which, he suggests, is generally marked by “a strong, anti-Pelagian position on the issue of justification,” and strains of theology developed by Augustinian Friars.<sup>29</sup> Courtenay’s distinction is important, but needs further refining since it only posits one type of doctrinal Augustinianism. There were, in fact, “Augustinians” (that is, followers of Augustine), who were not necessarily “Augustinian” (anti-Pelagian on justification). We see this in Eric L. Saak’s recent study of Alphonsus Vargas.

Born in Toledo around the year 1300, Vargas (sometimes called Toletanus) left Spain to study at the University of Paris, where he came under the influence of Thomas of

---

<sup>26</sup> Damasus Trapp, “Augustinian Theology of the Fourteenth Century: Notes on Editions, Marginalia, Opinions, and Book Lore,” *Augustiniana* 6 (1956): 146-274.

<sup>27</sup> Alister McGrath, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1985), 66-67.

<sup>28</sup> In fact, it is this “Gregorian Augustinianism” that is likely to have inspired Luther and his followers in the early-sixteenth century. See McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 213-214.

<sup>29</sup> Doctrinal Augustinianism could also include “a more precise, source-critical approach to the writings of Augustine,” and a political position on *dominium* which held that only those “in a state of grace had the right to exercise authority over persons and property.” Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars*, 307-311.

Strasbourg, a scholastic theologian of the Aegidian school, who would later go on to become Prior General of the Order. By 1348, Vargas was serving as regent master at the University, a post he held until he was elected Bishop of Seville in 1353, where he served until his death in 1366. Sometime during the 1350s he wrote a commentary on Lombard's *Sententiae* which enjoyed a wide readership among academic theologians in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Close analysis of this commentary reveals Vargas's knowledge of Augustine's writings to be extensive, rivaling, in fact, the level of mastery that one sees in Gregory of Rimini. As such, one might suppose that doctrinally he would lean toward anti-Pelagianism, but this is not the case. Though Vargas does deal with Augustine's teachings on the issues of justification and grace, he gives them minimal treatment and displays little interest in turning them against the *pelagiani moderni*. Instead he devotes much of his time and energy to discussions of Augustine's teaching on cognition, and how the soul, through the senses, apprehends the outside world and by extension, God. His example, as Saak points out, serves to remind us that "neither the antipelagian Augustine, nor the neoplatonic Augustine was the only authentic Augustine of the late medieval scholars who effected a revival of the Church Father."<sup>30</sup> Saak's point is well taken, but even here we have not achieved full clarity since he only addresses the issue of doctrine. Equally important in the process of definition is noting the fact that there were not one, but two major religious orders that went by the name of "Augustinian" in the later Middle Ages: the *Ordo Eremitarum Sancti Augustini*, or Augustinian Friars, and the *Canonici Regulares Ordinis Sancti Augustini Congregationis*, or Augustinian Canons.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Saak, "The Reception of Augustine," 399.

<sup>31</sup> Abbreviated as O.E.S.A. (or simply O.S.A in the twentieth century) and C.R.S.A respectively.

The Augustinian Friars are well known, and have been the subject of considerable study.<sup>32</sup> This branch of mendicants was founded in the thirteenth century when Pope Alexander IV combined several pre-existing eremitical groups into a unified order under the direction of a Prior General. The Augustinian Canons, whose origins can be traced to the Gregorian reforms of the twelfth century, are less well known to students of English church history; this despite the fact that they were the most numerous religious order in late medieval England.<sup>33</sup> Both the Canons and the Friars tended to have a proprietary view of Augustine and his relation to their orders, as is revealed in a dispute over how the saint should be portrayed on the roof of the cathedral in Milan.<sup>34</sup> When, in 1474, it became known that the corporation responsible for finishing the cathedral intended to erect a statue of Augustine that would be outfitted in the habit of an Augustinian Friar, rather than the tunic of an Augustinian Canon, it generated a controversy of monumental proportions. Each side claimed Augustine as one of its own, accused the other of dissimulation, and called in heavy hitters in the realm of theology and canon law to argue the merits of their respective claims. The case eventually went before two popes, neither of whom was able to settle the dispute, and ended up wishing the whole matter would just go away. The Friars eventually got their way, primarily because the builders got tired of waiting and simply put up the statue that they already had. Aside from being an interesting aside into

---

<sup>32</sup> A good general introduction can be found in Frances Andrewes, *The Other Friars, The Carmelite, Augustinian, Sack and Pied Friars in Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 69-164. The most complete treatment, both in English and of the order in England, is Francis Roth, *The English Austin Friars, 1249-1538*, Vol. i: *History* (New York: Augustinian Historical Institute, 1966).

<sup>33</sup> Karen Stöber, *Late Medieval Monasteries and their Patrons: England and Wales, c.1300-1540* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 44. The order at its height possessed over two hundred houses across England and Wales.

<sup>34</sup> See Kaspar Elm's account of the *causa augustiniana* in "Augustinus Canonicus—Augustinus Eremita" in Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, eds. *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 83-107.

the realm of church politics, the *causa augustiniana* highlights once again the importance of defining terms. Whether it be the mixed life of the Canons, or the active life of the Friars, Augustine could be seen as the father of both.

In surveying the historical landscape of the later Middle Ages, what we find are two religious orders, along with a cluster of theological and philosophical concepts, all of which can in some sense be termed “Augustinian.” As such, it is impossible to move forward with any discussion on the subject of “Augustinianism” without establishing some guidelines about usage. First, when speaking of the religious orders, it is important to specify which one is under discussion: the O.E.S.A should be called the Augustinian Friars, while the C.R.S.A. should be identified as the Augustinian Canons or Canons Regular.<sup>35</sup> In fact, using the traditional English term “Austin” rather than “Augustinian” is worth considering, since it lends itself to making a distinction between the orders themselves and theological systems inspired by the thought of Augustine. Second, the practice of using the term “Augustinian” as a synonym for “anti-Pelagian” should be avoided. This is a relic of age old confessional disputes, and only serves to shroud a complex series of interactions. Third, the relationship between the *via antiqua* and the *via moderna* should not be couched in terms of fidelity to Augustine, as the *scholae* of the Friars so clearly illustrate. Though there are certainly areas of overlap, the difference between the *schola Aegidiana* and the *schola Augustiniana moderna* is primarily one of methodology, with the former being largely “scholastic” in its orientation, and the latter

---

<sup>35</sup> The Augustinian Canons were also known in England as the Black Canons, due to the color of their habit. The term “Canons Regular” is not specific to the Augustinians and can be applied to such orders as the Gilbertines and Premonstratensians (both of which were active in England of the fifteenth century) since all live under a *regula*—rule.

showing the influence of what used to be termed “nominalism.”<sup>36</sup> And finally, it is important to acknowledge the existence of different strains of doctrinal Augustinianism. In addition to the anti-Pelagian tendencies of Thomas Bradwardine, scholars such as Saak have identified a philosophical Augustinianism, attributable to Bonaventura and Henry of Ghent; a political Augustinianism, as seen in Augustine of Ancona and Richard Fitz Ralph, and a historic-critical Augustinianism, as exemplified in Bartholomew of Urbino.<sup>37</sup> If, as Jaroslav Pelikan famously quipped, all of Western theology is a “series of footnotes to Augustine,” there will certainly be more.<sup>38</sup> One of these, that deserves perhaps to be seen as something more than a footnote, is the pastoral strain of Augustinian thought.

#### Pastoral Augustinianism

In 1966 Heiko Oberman published a commentary on the writings of several late medieval theologians called *Forerunners of the Reformation: The Shape of Late Medieval Thought*. Therein almost offhandedly he opens up a new avenue for understanding Augustine. In his preface to an excerpt from Roger Holcot, Oberman draws a distinction between Pelagian and Augustinian thought in the following way. On the one hand, Pelagius, and those who emphasize the importance of works, represent a concern that “faith validates itself in works of perfection, love for God and neighbor, and thus practically implements or at least approximates the high moral standards of the Sermon on the Mount;” on the other, Augustine, and those who emphasize the importance of grace, are concerned

---

<sup>36</sup> “In the late-fourteenth century, a polarisation between the methods and presuppositions of the *via antiqua* and *via moderna* took place within the Augustinian order itself. While the *antiqui* were primarily concerned with accurately establishing the opinion of writers such as Augustine on the basis of historic-critical studies, the *moderni* employed the logico-critical device of the dialectic between the two powers of God to ‘correct’ such opinions.” Mcgrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 206.

<sup>37</sup> Saak, “The Reception of Augustine,” 373-374.

<sup>38</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition: 100-600* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 330.

with showing “that man, impaired by the impact of the fall of Adam, acknowledges his complete poverty in both ‘resources of the soul’ and ‘intention of the heart,’ and expects from God alone that he be called and sustained by grace.”<sup>39</sup> Oberman defines these two perspectives as characteristic of a “pastoral” approach to theology in the case of Pelagius, versus a “confessional” one in the case of Augustine.<sup>40</sup> He then asks a key question—how does a confessional theology, which assumes the perspective of the mature believer and looks backwards in thanksgiving, speak to those who are at the beginning stages of their spiritual journey; how does it comfort and inspire those who are still engaged in the struggle? His conclusion is that it cannot, or at least not do so as well as a perspective informed by the pastoral ideal, and in this he may be right. But what Oberman never really addresses is the question of whether confessional and pastoral approaches can coexist within the same theologian or theological system. If he had, he would surely have acknowledged the strong sense of pastoral awareness in Augustine’s own thought. As William Harmless has argued, Augustine’s theological writings stemmed not from academic research or a spirit of general inquiry, but instead were informed and inspired largely by pastoral concerns.<sup>41</sup>

The fact that this is not always understood today is due largely to the emphasis within early modern Protestantism on Augustine the anti-Pelagian and great champion of grace, yet prior to the sixteenth century this pastoral side of Augustine was highly esteemed, as one can see in the proliferation of works such as the Pseudo-Augustinian

---

<sup>39</sup> Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation*, 127.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 128-129.

<sup>41</sup> William Harmless, S.J., *Augustine in His Own Words* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 78.

*Soliloquies*.<sup>42</sup> This series of meditations was attributed to Augustine precisely because of its introspective and self-searching tone. Intended for devotional use, these *Soliloquies* were often translated into the vernacular and distributed to the literate as part of a program of pastoral care.<sup>43</sup> Worth considering also is the treatment Augustine receives at the hands of John Capgrave, himself an Austin Friar, in his Middle English *Life*. This account, written at the behest of “a gentill woman” who was “browt forth in-to þis world [on Augustine’s] solempne feste,” dates to the second quarter of the fifteenth century and is based largely on earlier works in Latin.<sup>44</sup> Unlike his sources, however, Capgrave pays tribute not only to Augustine’s holiness and learning, but to his humanity, particularly his care and compassion for others. Though he wants to retreat from the world to spend time in prayer and with his books, Augustine never eschews his duty as a shepherd of souls. He would visit “faderles childryn and widowes whane þei were in ony tribulacion” and pray for “certyn men which were vexed with wikkid spiritis.”<sup>45</sup> In short, he is presented as an *exemplum* of the mixed life, one that combined elements of service alongside study and prayer. In Karen Winstead’s assessment, “what distinguishes Capgrave’s Augustine is that he realizes scholarship...is not the only service a learned man owes to his community.”

---

<sup>42</sup> Erasmus, for example, was less than enthusiastic about Augustine’s theology, but had great praise for his abilities as a pastor and bishop. He commends Augustine above all the church fathers for his “piety, charity, [and] clemency,” and compares him “to an evangelical hen, careful and concerned to protect and cherish her chicks under her wings.” Arnoud Visser, *Reading Augustine in the Reformation: The Flexibility of Intellectual Authority in Europe* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), 36-38.

<sup>43</sup> A version in Middle English is preserved in two manuscripts, Harvard University’s MS Richardson 22 and the British Library’s MS Cotton C.xix, the first of which is available online. A modern English translation can be found in Robert Sturges, “The Middle English Pseudo-Augustinian *Soliloquies* and Its Anti-Wycliffite Commentaries” in Anna Clark Bartlett and Thomas Bestull, eds., *Cultures of Piety: Middle English Devotional Literature in Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 41-63.

<sup>44</sup> In addition to Augustine’s own writing, two key Latin sources were Jacobus de Voragine’s *Acta s. Augustini* and Jordan von Quedlinburg’ *Vita*. John Capgrave, *The Life of Saint Augustine*, Cyril Lawrence Smetana, ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2001), 10-16.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 64.

Instead he “is willing and able to undertake further kinds of service, acting as pastor, teacher, administrator, governor, and mediator.”<sup>46</sup>

We see with a similar understanding in the thought of Capgrave’s contemporary and fraternal brother, Osbern Bokenham. In recent years, Bokenham has been known primarily as the author of the *Legends of Holy Women*, a work whose genesis can be traced to requests by East Anglian worthies for devotional material.<sup>47</sup> This collection of thirteen saints’ lives has been studied at length by Sheila Delaney, who concludes that Bokenham’s theology and background enabled him to portray the female body and female piety in a more positive fashion than many of his contemporaries.<sup>48</sup> This in itself may reflect a certain level of pastoral concern, but further evidence for Bokenham’s emphasis on the care of souls can be seen in his Middle English translation of Jacobus de Voragine’s *Legenda Aurea*.<sup>49</sup> In this more extensive collection of *vitae*, Bokenham emphasizes restrained piety

---

<sup>46</sup> Karen Winstead, *John Capgrave’s Fifteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 31.

<sup>47</sup> See Osbern Bokenham, *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, EETS Original Series, 206, Mary Serjeantson, ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1938). A useful introduction can be found in *A Legend of Holy Women, A Translation of Osbern Bokenham’s Legend of Holy Women*, Sheila Delaney, trans. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), i- xxxv.

<sup>48</sup> “It is a precarious equilibrium that Bokenham seeks in his legendary, as it intends both to undercut a lyric-erotic exaltation of the body and to condemn a purely sadistic demystification of it. On one hand, the body must be depreciated, but not so far as to slander a creation of God. On the other hand, the body must be appreciated as God’s work, but not so far as to elevate it beyond the reach of traditional doctrinal restrictions. The proper balance is that the body must be respected, its appropriate claims met, and its appropriate subordination understood. This is the position maintained in the Augustinian intellectual tradition and its rule....” Sheila Delaney, *Impolitic Bodies: Poetry, Saints and Society in Fifteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 118. At this point it would be worth noting the contributions feminist scholars have made to the study of “Augustinian” piety in the later Middle Ages. This is in part because members of the Augustinian orders are responsible for a number of the more significant writings in Middle English on or to women. Other important studies include Carolyn Walker Bynum’s chapter on the spirituality of the regular canons in the twelfth century in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 22-58; and Bella Millet, “The Origins of Ancrene Wisse: New Answers, New Questions,” *Medium Aevum*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (1992), 206-228. Millet admittedly questions the Augustinian provenance of *Ancrene Wisse*, and while I am not swayed by her argument on this, her insight is useful.

<sup>49</sup> This collection, though alluded to by Bokenham in a translation of Ranulph Higden’s *Polychronicon*, was thought to be lost until discovered in the library of Sir Walter Scott in 2004. Simon Horobin, “A Manuscript Found in Abbotsford House and the Lost Legendary of Osbern Bokenham,” *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700*, Volume 14 (2007), 132-64.

and common moral virtue rather than heroic asceticism and self-sacrifice, advancing the concept of the “mixed life” as a means for both women and men to do their proper service to God.<sup>50</sup> In this fashion, Bokenham is channeling a form of pastoral Augustinianism that had risen to prominence a generation before, particularly through the writings of an Austin Canon named Walter Hilton. Hilton was a member of the house at Thurgarton in Nottinghamshire, and while he is rightly famous for his *Scale of Perfection*, sometime in the 1390s he also wrote a spiritual guide for a pious layman called *The Epistle on Mixed Life*.<sup>51</sup> In this work Hilton advised his charge to avoid the temptation of extremes, charting a middle course between the active and contemplative life. He argues that such an approach is not only advisable for the purposes of bodily and spiritual well-being, but also so that those in positions of authority might use their possessions to more plenteously “fulfille þe deedes of merci” to their fellow Christians.<sup>52</sup> In so doing, Hilton is advocating a way of life that is in itself pastoral, and is in some ways a reflection of the aspirations of his own order. What these examples suggest to us is that pastoral Augustinianism was alive and well as an intellectual concept in the later Middle Ages. And though the aforementioned examples suggest that it was appreciated by both orders, I believe its manifestation in the spirituality of the Canons can be related specifically to the idea of reform.

---

<sup>50</sup> “The overall effect of [Bokenham’s] editorial procedure is the construction of a collection of saints who model the mixed life, combining acts of public charity with intense private piety, designed to appeal primarily to an audience of noble laymen and women.... Yet we must not see Bokenham’s readership as limited exclusively to this socially and geographically defined group.... [His] works were known beyond East Anglia, while the dedication of his life of St. Agatha to Agatha Flegge, the wife of a minor Essex landowner who held various administrative posts under the duke of York, indicates a wider social spectrum.” Simon Horobin, “Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the Work of Osbern Bokenham,” *Speculum*, Vol. 82 Issue 4 (October, 2007), 932-949.

<sup>51</sup> Hilton’s writings can be found in *English Mystics of the Middle Ages*, Barry Windeatt, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>52</sup> An overview of Hilton and ideas on the mixed life can be found in Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries, Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge: Suffolk, Boydell and Brewer, 1988), 251-269.

### Austin Spirituality and the *Cura Animarum*

Inspired by the Gregorian reforms of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Austin Canons were intended to combine the vocations of monk and secular priest. As such, they lived in abbeys or priories, and like their monastic brethren, their common life was governed by a specific rule, in this case, the *Regula Sancti Augustini*.<sup>53</sup> But because their mission was to bring the church into greater contact with the world, their foundations were often in or near towns, and in the early days of the order, large numbers of private chapels and parish churches were turned over to the Canons by ecclesiastical and lay patrons. This is in part because unlike the older orders, whose *raison d'être* was separation from the world and the act of contemplative prayer, the Austin Canons were expected to exercise some sort of pastoral ministry. This is clear from early controversies surrounding the proper role of monk, canon, and secular priest, in which the Canons had to stake out a middle ground, defending both their practice of the common life, and their worthiness to be entrusted with the cure of souls. In the late-eleventh century, Ivo of Chartres, prior of the abbey at *Saint-Quentin de Beauvais*, wrote convincingly, and often, in defense of his order and the fact that its members were actively engaged in providing pastoral care. “We firmly maintain,” Ivo writes, “that those are not worthy of a hearing who maintain that clerks *regulariter viventes* ought to be repelled from the care of souls because they have renounced the world; but rather are they more suited to assume it since they have spurned the pomps and vanities of the world.” Furthermore he maintains that the Christian virtues embodied by the Canons are more fittingly taught by them, precisely because they “fulfill

---

<sup>53</sup> The Rule and a discussion of its textual history can be found in the appendices of J. C. Dickinson, *The Origins of the Austin Canons and Their Introduction into England* (London: SPCK, 1950).

by action those things which they preach.”<sup>54</sup> At the Council of Nîmes in 1096, Pope Urban II lent his support to the Canons and their cause by stating that “those who lived the apostolic life were better qualified for pastoral care than secular priests and could preach, baptize, administer communion, hear confessions, and give absolution.”<sup>55</sup> Four years later at the Council of Poitiers these rights were enshrined in canon law, though admittedly with the safeguard that none were to engage in such activity without their bishop’s consent, so that by the end of the twelfth century, the rights of the Canons to engage in pastoral activity was uncontested.

The question of how scrupulously the Canons adhered to this ideal is a matter of some debate, particularly with regard to their situation in the English church. J.C. Dickinson, the only scholar in over sixty years to have produced a major monograph on the order in England, is frustratingly difficult to pin down. While he provides a host of documentary evidence on how the regular and secular clergy were to interact in the parochial setting, and cites no less than thirty-seven instances of parishes where canons are known to have provided pastoral care, he concludes that the extent to which the Austins served their churches will “probably never be even approximately ascertained.”<sup>56</sup> A survey of later studies leaves one with a similar sense of ambiguity. Some are more sanguine about the order and its pastoral role. Christopher Brook seems to view the Canons as a foreshadowing of the friars, an order, “nearer to the city centre, to the ordinary lives of the

---

<sup>54</sup> As quoted in Dickinson, *Origins*, 216-217. Ivo, who was himself Bishop of Chartres from c. 1090 to 1115, is primarily known for his expertise in canon law. He was an active controversialist and defender of his order. A brief biography can be found in Christopher Rolker, *Canon Law and the Letters of Ivo of Chartres* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-47.

<sup>55</sup> Dickinson, *Origins*, 220-221.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 237-240.

community, to pastoral care.”<sup>57</sup> Janet Burton sees them as parochial reinforcements, citing the example of Archbishop Thurstan of York, who urged local barons to found new houses of Austin Canons, precisely for the purpose serving “a pastoral function in the diocese.”<sup>58</sup> Others are more circumspect. Allison Frizzard notes in her study of a well-to-do priory in Devon that while the Canons did, from time to time, serve in parishes within their advowson, lack of evidence regarding lay expectations on the subject of pastoral care should “lead one to be extremely cautious about assuming large-scale involvement on the part of the canons in the cure of souls...”<sup>59</sup> Still others have characterized the Canons as little more than “monks by another name,” the implication being that their emphasis on the *cura animarum* was no different from that of the Benedictines or Cistercians of the day.<sup>60</sup> Clearly this is a subject that would benefit from additional study, but in relation to this paper and its objectives, it is important to keep the following in mind.

First, the absence of direct involvement in a parish does not necessarily equal a lack of commitment to pastoral care. The support of a stipendiary vicar is in itself an act with pastoral ramifications, and the available evidence suggests that Austin Canons were more heavily involved in this practice than any other order. David Robinson’s study of ordinations in fourteenth-century Yorkshire reveals that regular canons accounted for

---

<sup>57</sup> See Christopher Brooke, *Church and Churchman in Medieval Europe* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1999), 227. This is an updated and revised version of an article originally published as “Monk and Canon: Some Patterns of the Religious Life in the Twelfth Century,” *Studies in Church History*, Volume 22 (1985) 109-129.

<sup>58</sup> Janet Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 47-49.

<sup>59</sup> Frizzard’s highly detailed study focuses on a single priory, that of Saints Peter and Paul in Plympton, Devon. Allison Frizzard, *Plympton Priory: A House of the Augustinian Canons in South-Western England in the Late Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 186.

<sup>60</sup> Terrie Colk, “Twelfth-Century East Anglian Canons: A Monastic Life?” in *Medieval East Anglia*, Christopher Harper-Bill, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), 211.

seventy percent of beneficed clergy sponsored by religious houses.<sup>61</sup> Whether this was because working in parishes within their advowson brought the Canons into contact with likely prospects for the ministry, or because management of such parishes helped them identify areas of need, either would indicate a pastoral awareness not present in the older monastic tradition.<sup>62</sup> Nor were the men supplied for parishes necessarily ill-educated and underpaid, as the example of William Shoreham illustrates. Shoreham was the vicar of Chart-Sutton in Kent, a parish within the advowson of the Priory of St. Mary and St. Nicholas, Leeds. He seems to have begun his tenure in 1320, but we have no firm date for his relinquishment of the benefice or his death.<sup>63</sup> The benefice was not a poor one, as Shoreham was to have, in addition to a house and his living, a salary from the priory of forty shillings a year. This was in an age when a skilled laborer could be hired for a shilling a week.<sup>64</sup> His relatively comfortable state allowed him the time to compose a series of vernacular poems, instructional in nature and focused on the syllabus of basic Christian knowledge promulgated by Archbishop John Pecham in 1281. Pecham's manual, known as *Ignorantia Sacerdotum*, was intended to provide a basic catechetical material for priests to use in educating the laity. The fact that Shoreham's poems follow very closely the

---

<sup>61</sup> David Robinson, *Beneficed Clergy in the Cleveland and the East Riding, 1306-1340* (York: St. Anthony's Press, 1969) 7-11.

<sup>62</sup> "What is new and distinctive about the canons...is simply the quality of their awareness, their sense of responsibility for the edification of their fellow men. In this we find a note not heard in the older traditions to which twelfth-century monks clung." Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 56-57.

<sup>63</sup> The poems and a brief biography can be found in William Shoreham, *The poems of William of Shoreham: ab. 1320 vicar of Chart-Sutton*, Matthias Konrath, ed. EETS Extra Series, Vol. 86 (London: Keegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Limited, 1902).

<sup>64</sup> *In toto* Shoreham was to be given "all oblations and obits according to the altar of the church, which the rectors of it used of old to receive, together with the tithes of wool, lambs, calves, hogs, hay, flax, hemp, mills, pears, apples, milk, milk-meats, sheep, and of whatever was planted and sowed in gardens.... [Additionally] the prior and convent should... [provide] a convenient house for him...and pay to him and his successors, as an augmentation of his living, forty shillings sterling yearly." Edward Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 5* (Canterbury: W. Bristow, 1797), 361-362. For the price comparison, see Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England, c. 1200-1520*, Revised Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), xv.



Augustinian School of St. Victor was a leading light in the realms of theology and the liberal arts. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, the Canons were seen as being rather mundane, and this is reflected in the paucity of scholarship on the order for that period. However, those who have looked at the activity of the Canons in the later Middle Ages tend to see greater evidence for their engagement in pastoral activity. For example, in 1318 John de Halton, Bishop of Carlisle, allowed the appropriation of a parish church to the Austin Canons “so they may be better able to sustain their works of charity,” the implication being that the Canons are already engaged in the *cura animarum*.<sup>67</sup> Despite her skepticism about their levels of pastoral activity in the early era of her study, Allison Frizzard notes that in the fifteenth century “several canons of Plympton, including one of the priors, sought and received papal dispensations to hold benefices.”<sup>68</sup> Examples such as these give credence to Peter Heath’s assertion that on the eve of the reformation, pastoral care was the Austins’ *raison de etre*.<sup>69</sup>

Such assessments tend to be bolstered when we look at contributions of the Canons to the world of vernacular *pastoralia*.<sup>70</sup> One of the best known and earliest examples is, of course, the *Ancrene Wisse*.<sup>71</sup> Though written in the first half of the thirteenth century, this

---

<sup>67</sup> As cited in Greg Peters, “Religious Orders and Pastoral Care,” in *A Companion to Pastoral Care in the Later Middle Ages, 1200-1500*, Ronald J. Stansbury, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 263-284.

<sup>68</sup> Frizzard, *Plympton Priory*, 185.

<sup>69</sup> Peter Heath, *The English Parish Clergy on the Eve of the Reformation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 175. Even Dickenson admits that canons were more likely to have cure of souls in the decades following the Black Death. See, *Origins*, 226-227.

<sup>70</sup> Ralph Hanna, “Augustinian Canons and Middle English Literature,” in *The English Medieval Book, Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, A.S.G. Edwards, Vincent Gillespie, and Ralph Hanna, eds. (London: The British Library, 2000), 27-42. While short, this article, like most of Hanna’s writing, is very dense, with an abundance of useful information in the footnotes.

<sup>71</sup> E. J. Dobson, *The Origins of Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 1-54. As mentioned above, Bella Millet has argued against Augustinian origins for the *Ancrene Wisse*, largely on the strength of passages speaking favorably of the friars and perceived parallels with Premonstratensian legislation. From this she deduced that the work’s origins lie with the Dominicans (whose Constitutions were modeled on that of the Premonstratensians). However, the date of the manuscript that mentions the friars (MS Corpus Christi College, Cambridge 402) is now being questioned. Malcolm Parks believes it may have been copied c. 1270,

guide for anchoresses continued to be copied and read well into the fifteenth, and as Catherine Innes Parker has shown, was adapted for a much wider readership than the original three sisters intent on pursuing the contemplative life.<sup>72</sup> Likewise the works of the aforementioned Walter Hilton, whose *Scale of Perfection* survives in sixty-five manuscripts, five early modern printings, and a Latin translation that was distributed across Europe, were among the most popular manuals of pious instruction in the fifteenth century.<sup>73</sup> Despite the widespread popularity of these works, it is important to remember that pastoral instruction is not solely a one on one exercise. Preaching has its place too, and turning from works composed for the individual reader to those intended for public reception, we find the Austin Canons similarly engaged. Take, for example, the *Northern Homily Cycle*, a rhymed exposition of the Sunday Gospels compiled at the end of the thirteenth century and intended for the instruction of laymen. Thomas Heffernan describes it as “the most extensive preaching codex in the English language since Aelfric's *Catholic Homilies*” and “a work of literary genius.”<sup>74</sup> The fact that its popularity waned at the beginning of the fifteenth century may be in part because it was replaced by the sermon cycle of another Austin Canon, John Mirk, whose *Festial* was widely disseminated as an

---

which brings up the prospect of the friars reworking an earlier composition. See note 15 in Cate Gunn, *Ancrene Wisse: From Pastoral Literature to Vernacular Spirituality* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), 13-14. This, along with the strength of Dobson's argument suggest that an Augustinian origin is still the best theory.

<sup>72</sup> Catherine Innes Parker, “The Legacy of Ancrene Wisse,” in *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse*, Yoko Wada, ed. (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 145-174.

<sup>73</sup> Thomas More even recommended it as “spiritual reading for the common people, who would, in his view, be more edified by such works than by polemics like his against William Tyndale, the Lutheran Bible translator, or by Tyndale's own English writings.” See Michael Sargent, “Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection in Continental Europe in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” *Textus*, Vol. 24 Issue 3 (2011), 465.

<sup>74</sup> Thomas Heffernan makes a strong case of Augustinian authorship in “The Authorship of the ‘Northern Homily Cycle’: The Liturgical Affiliation of the Gospel Pericopes as a Test,” in *Traditio*, Volume 41 (1985), 289-309.

aid to non-Latinate priests and as a means of countering the influence of Wycliffism.<sup>75</sup> Mirk's *oeuvre* also contained a work from a third category of vernacular *pastoralia*, the parson's handbook. Written in rhyming couplets for easy memorization, Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests* is intended to show the unlettered cleric "how thow schalt thy paresche preche, and what þe nedeth hem to teche, and whyche þou moste þy-self be."<sup>76</sup> This final injunction points to the necessity of a pastor not just instructing, but modeling the Christian life, an act that is impossible outside of the sort of direct, personal contact one experiences in a parish. We see this particularly in the example of the Canons, whose model of the mixed-life kept them in contact, in both a physical and cultural sense, with the people they were called to serve. So while R. W. Southern might state that the Austin Canons, "as a whole, lacked every mark of greatness," being neither "very rich, nor very learned, nor very religious, nor very influential," the number of religious works in the vernacular that they produced suggests their contribution to the religious life of the English people was far from insignificant.<sup>77</sup> As Ralph Hanna has reminded us:

One might well argue that English literature gained through the very absence of Augustinian Latinate intellectual work. However backward, when compared to the sophisticated involvement of the other orders, the black canons seem scarcely to have been idle. And their influence on English spiritual life—in the case of Mirk and Hilton, one which extended well into the sixteenth century through print—should be recognized for its breadth and extent.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Judy Ann Ford, *John Mirk's Festial: Orthodoxy, Lollardy, and the Common People in Fourteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), 8-9.

<sup>76</sup> Lines 17-19 of John Mirk, *Instructions for Parish Priests*, Gilles Kristensson, ed. (Lund: Gleerup, 1974), 68.

<sup>77</sup> R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971), 248. Even the more positive assessments have the nature of a backhanded compliment. A more recent history of the church in the Middle Ages describes them as "successful journeymen in the monastic movement," but concedes that they had "nothing glamorous or faintly flashy about them." In short, "they said their prayers and led lives of practical Christianity." F. Donald Logan, *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 137.

<sup>78</sup> Hanna, "Augustinian Canons and Middle English Literature," 37.

A great deal of the Canons' influence came in the form of their commitment to pastoral care, as this section has shown. It is time now to show how this attention to the *cura animarum* relates to the idea of reform.

### Pastors and Reformers

In *Vrai et fausse reforme dans l'église*, Yves Congar notes that in the West, most movements of religious renewal “are inspired by an Augustinian spirit.”<sup>79</sup> He sees this as a natural outgrowth of Augustine's distinction between “something in its present condition, and this same thing according to the way God wants it to be from his eternal perspective.”<sup>80</sup> As such, “the end surpasses all means.”<sup>81</sup> Such a perspective might seem naturally to lend itself to revolution, and in some cases it does, yet in others it leads in the direction of reform. So what, Congar asks, is the difference? The answer, he believes, is related to the emphasis placed on charity and pastoral concerns. Because the would-be reformer is one who has a tendency to think in terms of the absolute, he may have difficulty reconciling the ideal to the reality he wishes to reform. This, Congar argues, is why reformers whose orientation is primarily intellectual and theological are quickly radicalized; apart from the apostolic calling, the impulse to reform can easily take on a revolutionary character. Thus reform must be anchored within the living church, not as “a rational object constructed by the intelligence,” but as something that exists concretely in the communion of its members.<sup>82</sup> Because “apostolic and pastoral concerns put us at the heart of the concrete church, making thinking and planning fruitful in terms of practical measures,” one can

---

<sup>79</sup> Congar, *True and False Reform*, 192.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

avoid “the excesses, or the unilateralism of personal enthusiasms, as well as...a fixation on one single aspect or one single case.”<sup>83</sup> He then goes on to contrast Origen, the intellectual, and St. Irenaeus, the bishop; Tertullian, the apologist, and St. Cyprian, the martyr, arguing that what makes such a marked difference in their writings, and indeed their lives, is a commitment to pastoral care. In short, the experience of providing pastoral care tends to instill a sense of patience in its practitioners through their constant encounters with the frailty of man.

This pastoral perspective, Congar notes, is present in Augustine, who despite his efforts as an apologist, was, as Bishop of Hippo, responsible first and foremost for the cure of souls.<sup>84</sup> In fact, Congar elsewhere argues that it was Augustine who passed on to the Western church the notion that ecclesiastical authority is based not on *dominium* or *potestas*, but *ministerium*, the root of which is Christ’s coming in the form of a servant.<sup>85</sup> This understanding of the messianic role is derived in part from passages such as Philippians 2:7, wherein Paul speaks of Christ, who being equal with God, nonetheless took upon himself the form of a servant by consenting to be made man. It comes also from accounts in the Gospel where Christ modeled the ideal of service and commanded his disciples to “go and do thou likewise.”<sup>86</sup> In fact, for the individual Christian, imitating the

---

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>84</sup> He notes that “Augustine speaks differently in his speculative treatises, especially on polemical issues, than in his sermons. In the sermons he no longer has the same edge that we find in his speculative statements. Unbeknown to himself, his audience influences him and puts him on a more balanced path. Don’t we say with a bit of humor that in theology we should be Predestinarians and in pastoral care Pelagians?” *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>85</sup> For a summary of Congar’s thought on this, see Jan Jacobs Dick Akerboom, and Marcel Gielis, “The leading role of ecclesiastical ministry: exercise of power or willingness to serve” in Bert Roebben, L. van der Tuin, eds. *Practical Theology and the Interpretation of Crossing Boundaries: Essays in honor of Professor M.P.J. van Knippenberg* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 44.

<sup>86</sup> One of the better known examples of “Christ as servant” is the washing of the disciples’ feet in John 13:4-17. This episode is powerfully reenacted in the liturgy of the Maundy (a name taken from the *mandatum novum* of John 13:34), wherein a cleric of high degree washes the feet of those in attendance at mass, usually on the Thursday of Holy Week. Augustine is one of our earliest witnesses to this practice. See Ernest Graf,

example of Christ stands behind everything from baptism to carrying one's cross. This principle is a reminder of the mimetic nature of the faith, with the incarnate Son of God serving as the prototype for human redemption. The fact that this mimetic ideal is a part of Augustine's own pastoral program can be seen in a sermon given before Count Boniface, a Roman general who would later be made governor of Africa.<sup>87</sup>

Lest ye should think it too high a thing to imitate Christ, hear the Apostle saying, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ has forgiven you. Be therefore imitators of God. They are the Apostle's words, not mine. Is it indeed a proud thing to imitate God? Hear the Apostle, Be imitators of God as dearly beloved children. You are called a child: if you refuse to imitate Him, why do you seek His inheritance?<sup>88</sup>

The emphasis here is practical and draws on injunctions on behavior laid out by Paul, but elsewhere Augustine gives the idea a more philosophical turn.

Let us copy the example of this divine image, the Son, and not draw away from God. For we too are the image of God, though not the equal one, like him; we are made by the Father through the Son not born of the Father like that image; we are image because we are illumined with light; that one is so because it is the light that illuminates, and therefore provides a model for us without having a model itself.<sup>89</sup>

Here man's existence is cast in neo-Platonic terms, but it is not without a scriptural base.<sup>90</sup>

Genesis 1:26-27 states that man and woman were created in the "likeness and image" of God. Augustine's understanding of these terms, which is laid out in his *Questions on the Heptateuch*, is that "where there is an image there is also similitude [i.e. likeness], but not vice versa."<sup>91</sup> This is because an image "must originate from that which it resembles; the

---

O.S.B., "The Washing of Feet on Maundy Thursday," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* (February, 1945), 347-351.

<sup>87</sup> For an account of the relationship between Augustine and Boniface, see William A. Sumruld, *Augustine and the Arians: The Bishop of Hippo's Encounters with Ulfilan Arianism* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1994) 24-27, 85-100.

<sup>88</sup> See sermon LXIV in Philip Schaff, ed, *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers. First Series*. Volume VI (Buffalo: Christian Literature Company, 1888), 453.

<sup>89</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate*, VII.5. See *The Trinity*, Edmund Hill, ed. (New York: Hyde City Press, 1991), 225.

<sup>90</sup> Karl Morrison, "From Form into Form: Mimesis and Personality in Augustine's Historical Thought," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 124, No. 4 (Aug. 1980), 293.

<sup>91</sup> Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, 186.

image relationship requires that the image is somehow produced or begotten by that which is reproduced in it—as the reflection in a mirror by the object which is reflected.”<sup>92</sup> As we saw in the passage above, this idea of existential participation describes the relationship between the Father and the Son, (the Son being the co-eternal image of the Father), but it also applies to the relationship between God and man. While the divine image in man may be deformed through sin, it could never be completely lost.<sup>93</sup> Here we see the true difference between the reformist ideology of Augustine and that of a revolutionary like John Calvin. Calvin (who saw likeness and image as being largely the same) believed that the fall had destroyed them both.<sup>94</sup> Yet if an image is destroyed, how can it be reformed? The answer is it cannot—it can only be created again. This is wholly antithetical both to Augustine’s anthropology and his Christology, and it leads down a completely different soteriological path. For Augustine, the image of God in man was to be reformed rather than remade, and though the process was to be initiated by God through grace, man’s part was to imitate the exemplar given him in Christ.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Augustine, in his *Retractiones* writes, “When I was explaining the words, *and creation itself as well shall be freed from slavery to destruction* (Rom. 8:21) I said, “*And creation itself*—that is, man himself, when after the mark of the image was lost because of sin, creation alone remained.” This should not be understood as though man lost in his entirety the image of God that he possessed. For if it had not lost anything at all, the condition would not have existed on account of which it was said, “*be reformed in the newness of your mind*” (Rom. 12:2), and *we are being transformed into the same image* (2 Cor. 3:18). But if, on the other hand, all of it were lost, nothing would have remained so that it could be said, *although man walks in an image, yet he is disturbed in vain* (Ps. 39:6).” See Augustine, *Revisions*, Boniface Ramsay, trans. (Hyde Park: New City Press, 2010) 106-107.

<sup>94</sup> The following excerpt from Calvin’s commentary on Genesis is representative of his thought. “But now, although some obscure lineaments of [God’s] image are found remaining in us, yet are they so vitiated and maimed, that they may truly be said to be destroyed. For besides the deformity which everywhere appears to be unsightly, this evil is also added, that no part is free from the infection of sin.” John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses, Called Genesis*, Vol.1, John King, ed. & trans. (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1847), 95.

<sup>95</sup> As Karl Morrison puts it, “by imitating the Word-made-flesh, man passed from physical and rational analogies to the spiritual, moving toward that point where analogies would no more be needed, where man would no longer see through mediatory analogies, ‘a mirror in an enigma,’ but immediately face-to-face. See *The Mimetic Tradition of Reform in the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 94.

These twin concepts of mimesis and *ministerium* are essential to understanding Augustine's approach to reform. Such an ideology is both aspirational and limited, looking forward to the fulfilment of God's work on the human soul, yet patient of the ineradicable imperfection inherent in the terrestrial world. And while there is a gap of over five hundred years between Augustine's death and the founding of the first order of Canons Regular, the preservation of the Augustinian Rule enabled this unique understanding of reform to be passed on to the Middle Ages.<sup>96</sup> We see this in the writings of Hugh of St. Victor, an Augustinian Canon and perhaps the greatest theologian of his order. In *De Institutione Novitiorum*, Hugh urges his brethren "to imitate the life and conversation of holy men...for in them the likeness of God is imprinted; and thus, when we are imprinted with them through imitation, we are also formed according to the image of that same likeness."<sup>97</sup> While Hugh is clearly drawing on Augustine's understanding of identification with Christ, he is also extending the franchise to other holy men, expanding the idea into the corporate or institutional sphere. Or in other words, while mimetic practice would have enabled the reforming cleric to identify with the *exemplum* of Christ, his exercise of *ministerium*, or the pastoral office, would allow him to serve as *exemplum* himself.<sup>98</sup> As such, reform for

---

<sup>96</sup> In fact, Ladner sees Augustinian Rule as the vehicle by which the "idea of reform" was transmitted from the patristic age to the medieval church. Since the Rule is the key element in this continuity, discerning influence does not necessitate a direct, chronological connection from Augustine to the later Augustinians. *The Idea of Reform*, 350-365, 378-385.

<sup>97</sup> As translated by Sigbjørn Olsen Sønnesyn in "Only through time time is conquered: Liturgy, History, and the Timeless Aspirations of the Temporal" in *Of Chronicles and Kings: National Saints and the Emergence of Nation States in the High Middle Ages*, John Bergsagel, Thomas Riis, and David Hiley, eds. (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press 2015), 33.

<sup>98</sup> Carolyn Walker Bynum states that "both the explicit content and implicit assumptions of twelfth-century spiritual literature suggests that monks and regular canons had different conceptions of Christian responsibility: regular canons saw themselves as teachers of their neighbors and brethren '*verbo et exemplo*'; monks adhered to a conception of themselves as learners and seekers of God that was little different from the basic monastic self-conception of the tenth century." See *Docere verbo et exemplo*, 12. Elsewhere she argues that the canons saw themselves as models for those around them. "In their own terms, they taught by example. If being a regular canon or friar meant conforming oneself to the life of Christ, one became more

Hugh becomes “a gradual, ordered process...whereby, through the reception of certain structures and patterns, both the human person and the human community are reformed in the image of God.”<sup>99</sup> Hugh’s development of this idea was significant, since Augustine’s own understanding of reform was individual rather than corporate, but the mimetic ideal, or in the terminology of the medieval West, the *imitatio Christi*, remained at its core.

This Augustinian understanding of reform emerges in a slightly different fashion in the fourteenth century with the founding of a new order of canons known as the Windesheim Congregation. Though the origins of Windesheim are a subject of some debate, they are closely tied to the *Devotio Moderna*, a form of spirituality developed by the son of a wealthy cloth merchant named Geert Grote. Despite the fact that he had studied theology at Cologne, Prague, and Paris, Grote departed the promising career path that was laid out for him, and instead took orders as a simple deacon in the Diocese of Utrecht. There, he became renowned for his preaching, much of which emphasized the quest for internal sanctity and the slow, patient conversion of the soul. By the early 1380s, Grote had attracted a number of followers, who, desiring to put his vision into practice, came together in informal religious communities, mostly through occupying houses donated to them in the towns.<sup>100</sup> Though these Brothers and Sisters of the Common Life, as they came to be called, followed a daily routine similar to that of the regular clergy, they were required to take no vows, and they continued to function under the authority of the local parish

---

available as an instrument of reform for others as one became a better canon or friar.” See *Jesus as Mother*, 103-104.

<sup>99</sup> Boyd Taylor Coolman, *The Theology of Hugh of St. Victor: An Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 28.

<sup>100</sup> Grote established the first of these in his own house, giving it over to a community for women in 1374. See John Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life: The Devotio Moderna and the World of the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 61-65.

priest.<sup>101</sup> In fact, their willingness to work within established systems and structures is likely what enabled the Brethren to avoid the official condemnations that were made earlier in the century against the “beghards” and “beguines.”<sup>102</sup> Still they did not escape suspicion entirely, and while not strictly persecuted, they were subject to occasional harassment, both by local governments and the occasional heresy hunter among the Dominicans. It is, in fact, likely that the protections that would be afforded by a religious profession were part of what lay behind Grote’s decision to form a congregation of regular canons, and he saw the Augustinian rule as most suitable for his followers’ way of life.<sup>103</sup> However, his untimely death from the plague in 1384 left that task to his disciple and friend, Florens Radewijns.

Radewijns, as it turns out, was an excellent administrator who used the connections he had formed as a cathedral canon and administrator to see Grote’s vision to its fruition. In 1387 he secured from the Bishop of Utrecht the right to found a house of regular canons at a spot called Windesheim, near the town of Zwolle.<sup>104</sup> To prepare the community for incorporation, Radewijns dispatched two of the Brethren to Paris to learn what they could from the Augustinians of St. Victor, while six more were sent to Eemstein, a monastery

---

<sup>101</sup> John Van Engen, *Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings* (The Paulist Press: Mahwah, NJ, 1988), 12-18.

<sup>102</sup> Beghards and beguines were men and women who attempted to live a religious life outside of the mendicant and monastic orders. They were fairly common in the Low Countries where they supported themselves through involvement with the textile industry. Because their communities were often seen as “breeding grounds for the Cathar and Waldensian heresies” they often came under scrutiny from secular and ecclesiastical authorities. They were condemned as being an “abominable sect of malignant men...and faithless women” by Pope John XXII in 1318. Walter Simmons, “The Lives of the Beghards,” in *Medieval Christianity in Practice*, Miri Rubin, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 238-245.

<sup>103</sup> For an investigation of Grote’s motivations for founding an order of canons see, John Van Engen’s “A Brabantine Perspective on the Origins of the Modern Devotion,” in *Serta devota: in memoriam Guillelmi Lourdaux*, Volume 1, Werner Verbeke *et al*, eds. (Leuven: University Press, 1992), 36-39.

<sup>104</sup> Francis Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 101-103.

with connections to a Brabantine foundation called Groenendaal.<sup>105</sup> This hermitage, near Brussels, was led by the famous mystic, Jan van Ruusbroec, and though it had originated as a secular foundation, Ruusbroec and his brethren had adopted the Augustinian rule with great success. Such careful planning paid off, and the Windesheim Canons, once established, helped found a number of new houses in the area. One of these was the monastery of St. Agnietenberg, where Thomas à Kempis is thought to have written *The Imitation of Christ*.<sup>106</sup> Composed sometime between 1424 and 1427, and edited continuously until 1441, *The Imitation* was one of the most popular devotional texts of the later Middle Ages, translated into the vernacular of several different countries and surviving in some seven hundred manuscript copies.<sup>107</sup> In it, the reader is encouraged to engage inwardly and adopt a spiritual identification with Christ as a program of personal reform. Its importance to the Windesheim Congregation and their plan for institutional reform can be seen in the fact that copies of *The Imitation* would be sent out to other monasteries, regardless of affiliation, and its message of spiritual progress and renewal encouraged. This process was repeated again and again throughout Lower Germany, so that by the early-sixteenth century, the Windesheim Congregation had helped to reform over three hundred extant foundations.<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Eemstein later became a transfer point for manuscripts travelling between Groenendaal and Windesheim, further strengthening the connection. Geert Warnar, *Ruusbroec: Literature and Mysticism in the Fourteenth Century*, Diane Webb, trans. (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 316-318.

<sup>106</sup> The question of whether Thomas à Kempis actually wrote *The Imitation of Christ* or merely copied it has been a matter of some debate. A summary of argument can be found in R.R. Post, *The Modern Devotion: Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 521-533. With varying degrees of reservation, most scholars today accept Kempis as the author. See William C. Creasy, *The Imitation of Christ: A New Reading of the 1441 Latin Autograph Manuscript*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2007), xix-xxi.

<sup>107</sup> *The Imitation of Christ* in Latin arrived in England no later than the 1430s, and by the 1470s it had been translated into Middle English by the Carthusians at Sheen. Creasy, *The Imitation of Christ*, xxi-xxii.

<sup>108</sup> Maximilian Von Habsburg, *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the Imitatio Christi, 1425-1650: From Late Medieval Classic to Early Modern Bestseller* (Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 55.

### A Spiritual Kinship

In assessing the relationship between Augustinianism and reform, the previous material highlights a few key points. First, Augustine was a theologian committed to reform. In fact, it would be difficult to overestimate his importance to the understanding of reform in the West. Whether it was his notion of reform being something more than a simple restoration (*reformatio ad melius*), or his combination of mimesis and *ministerium* as a practical path to that goal, Augustine's ideas on the subject were studied and internalized by generations of churchmen throughout the Middle Ages. Second, Augustine's intellectual legacy was both complicated and diverse. Not only were there multiple strains of doctrinal Augustinianism in the late medieval West, there were two religious orders bearing his name. Any or all could be accurately described as "Augustinian." Third, the predestinarian strain of doctrinal Augustinianism was simply one among many, but because of its presence within the universities, its importance has likely been exaggerated. In fact, it could be argued that the pastoral strain was equally important, if not more so because of its direct relation to the laity. This manifestation of Augustinian thought was as widespread as the religious houses bearing the name, and as developed and practiced by the Augustinian Canons of St. Victor, was seen as a means of both individual and institutional reform. Fourth, as the existence of Windesheim Congregation demonstrates, this reforming strain of Augustinianism did not die out after its twelfth-century heyday, but continued in a vigorous and proselytizing form into the early modern era. It was only eclipsed by the Magisterial Reformation and the subsequent narrowing of what "Augustinianism" is taken to mean.

With the example of Windesheim in mind, it is now worth turning again to the situation in England. One of the great successes of the *Devotio Moderna* was its use of the vernacular to instruct and inspire. This reminds us that the language of the *lewed and unlered* was not always associated with revolutionary theology. This has bearing on the question of religious change in late medieval England, where scholarship has tended to associate Augustinianism and the vernacular with revolutionary Wycliffism. Such emphasis needs broadening and revising. If we are interested in true reform, as understood by Augustine and developed by his intellectual heirs, we must look to a different branch of the Augustinian family tree. What we would be looking for is someone along the lines of an English Geert Grote. Interestingly enough, in a recent article entitled “Langland and the *Devotio Moderna*,” Robert Adams has done just that. Therein he suggests that Langland and Grote share a “spiritual kinship” and lists six general attributes common to both: “(1) a marked anti-intellectualism wedded to a demand for broad Scriptural literacy; (2) a moderately semi-pelagian asceticism...; (3) Christocentrism; (4) a subjective view of sacramental efficacy; (5) an emphasis on the spiritual value of personal poverty...; (6) and a streak of pessimistic apocalypticism.”<sup>109</sup> While I agree with Adams on the whole, there is one major flaw in his thesis; that is his identification of the *Devotio Moderna* as “semi-pelagian.” While the notion of a semi-Pelagian Langland may have become commonplace in the field of *Piers Plowman* studies (largely through Adams’s influence), those familiar

---

<sup>109</sup> Robert Adams, “Langland and the *Devotio Moderna*: a spiritual kinship,” in *Medieval Alliterative Poetry: Essays in Honour of Thorlac Turville-Petre*, John Burrow and Hoyt Duggan, eds. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 24-25

with the *Devotio Moderna* might be surprised to hear the same said about men like Geert Grote.<sup>110</sup>

Grote, after all, wished that his movement be associated with the Augustinian Canons over any other order. He was a friend of Marsilius of Inghen, a noted philosopher of the *via moderna*, yet one who agreed with Gregory of Rimini in teaching the hard predestinarian doctrine of double particular election.<sup>111</sup> And when asked to provide a list of theological influences, Grote responded with eleven names, including Augustine (whom he venerated as a special patron) and the two great theologians of St. Victor, Richard and Hugh.<sup>112</sup> An Augustinian affinity can be discerned in the later *Devotio Moderna* as well. In the mid-fifteenth century, Wessel Gansfort and Johann Pupper van Goch attacked Occamist theories of justification and “insisted that all good human acts came from the direct action of divine grace.”<sup>113</sup> It has even been proposed that the *Devotio Moderna* exercised influence upon the theological formation of John Calvin through his time at the Collège de Montaigu at the University of Paris.<sup>114</sup> In fact, theologians have long seen the *Devotio Moderna* as part of the Augustinian milieu, and with the very late and somewhat

---

<sup>110</sup> Emblematic of this view is D. Vance Smith, who writes, “as Adams has demonstrated, Langland’s theology is essentially semi-Pelagian, stressing the efficacy of human works.” See *The Book of the Incipit: Beginnings in the Fourteenth Century* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 183.

<sup>111</sup> Grote’s association with Marsilius is documented in M.J.F.M Hoenen, *Marsilius of Inghen: Divine Knowledge in Late Medieval Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 8. For Marsilius’s views on double particular election (double predestination), see James Halverson, *Peter Aureol on Predestination*, 158-166.

<sup>112</sup> The others were equally orthodox: Ambrose of Milan, Gregory the Great, Jerome, John Chrysostom, Dionysius, Bernard of Clairvaux, Bede, and Isidore. Notably absent are Ockham or any of the so-called “Nominalists” of the fourteenth century. See Nikolaus Staubach, “*Memores pristinae perfectionis*. The Importance of the Church Father for the *Devotio Moderna*” in Irena Dorota Backus, ed. “*The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*,” Vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 411-415.

<sup>113</sup> Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation*, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 91-94.

<sup>114</sup> Calvin was a student at Montaigu from 1523 to 1526. Its former master, Jan Standonk, was an adherent of the *Devotio Moderna*, and though he was dead by the time Calvin arrived, the program he instituted was still in place. For a review of this and other points of influence, see Dennis E. Tamburello, *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St. Bernard* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 14-20.

peripheral exception of Gabriel Biel, it has very few associations with what would be considered semi-Pelagian thought.<sup>115</sup> However, pointing all this out does not nullify Adams's argument; it merely shows that it needs to be amended. The spiritual kinship between Langland and the *Devotio Moderna* is not semi-Pelagian; it is Augustinian.

We will investigate Langland's Augustinianism and how it relates to reform in Chapter Four, but before doing so, it would help to know a little more about his life. Though as an historical figure Langland has long been viewed as unknowable, recent trends in research suggest that this perception is changing. For example, Lawrence Warner has made fruitful inquiries about Langland's possible authorship of the alliterative romance, *William of Palerne*.<sup>116</sup> Because *William of Palerne* was commissioned by a noble patron, this may assist us in placing Langland in historical context. Archival discoveries are helping as well. Michael Bennett has found a possible reference to Langland in a 1385 record of the murder of Ralph Stafford by Sir John Holland, half-brother of Richard II.<sup>117</sup> If this is Langland, it gives us further avenues of inquiry to pursue. But the work that has

---

<sup>115</sup> These would range from the Anglican priest and hymnologist, John Mason Neale, who, in the nineteenth century saw Grote and his followers as great champions of "the Augustinian Doctrine of Grace," to the Jesuit, Donald Gelpi, who writes (with more than a hint of sarcasm), "Augustinian pessimism seems to have situated the religious temper of theologians from the Low Countries, whose dense fog and swirling mists had produced the dour spirituality called the *devotio moderna*." See John Mason Neale, *A History of the so-called Jansenist Church of Holland* (Oxford: John Henry and James Parker, 1858), 8, 75-102; and Donald Gelpi, *The Gracing of Human Experience: Rethinking the Relationship Between Nature and Grace* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001), 101. Biel, whose association with the *Devotio Moderna* did not begin until he was in his early forties, is considered by some modern theologians to have been semi-Pelagian. Even this is subject to modification. Alister McGrath considers him to have been wholly orthodox when judged by the standards of his day. He argues that it is only in subjecting Biel's soteriology to modern (i.e. post-Tridentine) standards that it can be construed as semi-Pelagian. See *Iustitia Dei*, 99-102.

<sup>116</sup> See Lawrence Warner, "Langland and the Problem of *William of Palerne*," *Viator* 37 (2006): 397-415; and more recently *The Myth of "Piers Plowman": Constructing a Medieval Literary Archive*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 22-36

<sup>117</sup> Bennett has found a reference to a "Willelmus vocatus Longwyll" as having been a witness, and possibly an accessory to the murder. The incident took place in the context of Richard's II's 1385 campaign against the Scots. On the journey north, just outside of York, members of the two noblemen's retinues quarreled, and in the resulting skirmish, Holland, who had the reputation of being a hothead, struck Stafford down. See Michael Bennett, "William Called Long Will," *The Yearbook of Langland Studies*, Vol. 26 (2012), 1-25.

done the most to encourage us to see Langland's life in context is Robert Adams's 2013 monograph, *Langland and the Rokele Family: The Gentry Background to Piers Plowman*.<sup>118</sup> In it Adams rewrites the Langland biography, not so much on the basis of what we can glean from the poem, but by using historical records. In the next chapter, we will consider Langland's life in context, in part as a means of knowing our poet, but also to see what his biography may tell us about his relationship to reform.

---

<sup>118</sup> See the Introduction, note 43.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LESSONS FROM THE LANGLAND BIOGRAPHY

Since the mid-twentieth century William Langland has been seen as largely unknowable. Outside of the meager and uncertain bits of biographical information that could be gleaned from the poem, there was a general sense of agnosticism about the historical Langland. This was in part a reaction against the fanciful biographical reconstructions of the Victorian era, and in part because potentially useful evidence was being ignored. This is changing and recent scholarship is beginning to investigate ways of fitting Langland into his historical context. One of the most important findings to date has to do with his paternal surname, de (la) Rokele. The presence of a William de Rokele in various records and charters of the mid-fourteenth century allows us to explore connections to such families as Beauchamp and Bohun (the Earls of Warwick and Essex, respectively), as well as to lesser known figures such as John de Rokele, a Serjeant-at-Law, Lionel de Bradenham, an Essex knight who launched a bizarre assault on the city of Colchester, and Katherine Sutton, the Abbess of Barking and possibly the earliest documented English female playwright. Langland's extensive connections with the nobility and gentry suggest that his reformist writing was not considered extreme or dangerous, and may indicate, in the instance of patrons, that his views were shared. Most importantly for this study, the records suggest that Langland was for many years a parish priest, experience that would have given him insight into pastoral need and pastoral care. This experience overseeing the cure of souls seems likely to have shaped both Langland's poem and his understanding of reform.

## Writing the Langland Biography

In his 1548 catalog of writers from the British Isles, the antiquarian and bibliophile John Bale lists a certain *Petrum Agricolam* as one of Wyclif's many works.<sup>1</sup> Two years later this assertion was challenged, when in the first print version of the poem, Robert Crowley stated that the author was actually "Roberte Langelande, a Shropshire man born in Cleybirie, aboute viii myles from Malverne Hilles."<sup>2</sup> Whether this information came from Bale or another source "exercised in the studie of antiquities," Crowley's publication marks the beginning of the long association of "Piers Plowman" with the Langland surname.<sup>3</sup> The story of the poet's given name, however, has taken a rather different course. Though for the better part of three hundred years, "Robert Langland" was generally credited with having authored *Piers Plowman*, that all changed in 1867 when, in his publication of what he termed "the A-text," Walter Skeat made a convincing case for the poet's name being "William."<sup>4</sup> Skeat's argument was based in part on internal evidence,

---

<sup>1</sup> John Bale, *Illustrium Maioris Britannie scriptorium, hoc est anglie, cambrie, ac scotiae, summarium*, (Ipswich, 1548), fol. 157, r.

<sup>2</sup> See "The Printer to the Reader" in Robert Crowley, ed., *The Vision of Pierce Plowman, 3 editions* (London, 1550).

<sup>3</sup> Bale, who was likely the source of Crowley's information, modified his position in a "second edition" ten years later, in which he added further information. "*Robertus Langelande, sacerdos...fuisse ex primis Ioannis Wiclevi discipulis unum, atque in spiritus fervore, contra apertas Papistarum blasphemias adversus Deum & eius Christum, sub amoenis coloribus & typis edidisse in sermone Anglico pium opus, ac bonorum virorum lectione dignus, quod vocabit Visionem Petri Aratoris.*" See John Bale, *Scriptorum illustri[m] maioris Brytannie quam nunc Angliam & Scotiam uocant catalogus* (Basileae: Apud Ioannem Oporinum, 1557-1559), 474. For a discussion of Bale and Crowley in context, see Sarah Kelen, *Langland's Early Modern Identities* (Palgrave: New York, 2007), 22-42.

<sup>4</sup> Skeat was the first to suggest that there were three versions of the poem, an early "A-text," a mature "B-text" and an extended (yet showing signs of decline) "C-text." For a full account of Skeat's work, see Charlotte Brewer, *Editing Piers Plowman—the Evolution of the Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 91-159. There was at least one early modern reader who thought that the poet might be named William. A sixteenth-century notation on one of the manuscripts Bale consulted states that "Robert or William Langland made Pers Ploughman." The idea that the poet's name might have been "Robert" is probably derived from a scribal error in the B-text, wherein the line "Thus, Y, robed in russet" was misconstrued as "Y, Robert, in russet." For more information on this reading, see Ralph Hanna's excellent summary of evidence for Langland and his works, *William Langland* (Aldershot, Hants. and Brookfield, Vt.: Variorum, 1993), 4.

namely the famous “I haue lyued in londe, quod I, my name is Longe Wille” of the B-text, but also on a memorandum in a manuscript from Trinity College, Dublin.<sup>5</sup> This brief note, brought to Skeat’s attention by the noted paleographer, Sir Frederic Madden, stated that “*Willielmus fecit librum qui vocatur Perys Ploughman.*”<sup>6</sup> Skeat’s conclusions about the author’s name were generally accepted, as was his construction of what might be called the “standard Langland biography,” which he supplied in his publication of the B-text in 1869.<sup>7</sup>

[Langland was] born about A.D. 1332 probably at Cleobury Mortimer. His father and his friends put him to school (possibly in the monastery at Great Malverne), made a clerk or scholar of him, and taught him what Holy Writ meant.... In 1362, at the age of about 30, he wrote the A-text of the poem, without any thought of continuing or enlarging it.... It was probably not long after this that he went to reside in London, with which he already had some acquaintance; there he lived in Cornhill, with his wife Kitte and daughter Calote.... In 1377 he began to expand his poem into the B-text, wherein he alludes to the accession of Richard II.... In the C-text, written sometime after 1378, the poet represents himself as still in London, and in the commencement of *passus* five, gives us several particulars concerning himself. He wore the clerical tonsure, probably as having taken minor orders, and earned precarious living by singing the *placebo*, *dirige*, and ‘seven psalms’ for the good men's souls... The supposition that he was married (as he says he was) may perhaps explain why he never rose in the church. He has many allusions to his extreme poverty [and] may not have long survived the accession of Henry IV.<sup>8</sup>

There is, however, another piece of evidence in the Dublin manuscript, which, while acknowledged by Skeat, was passed over largely without comment—that is the assertion

---

<sup>5</sup> The manuscript in question, now known as MS Trinity College Dublin 212, contains a copy of the C-text of the poem along with annals displaying an interest in the Welsh Marches. See Stella Pates, “Piers Plowman Manuscript Trinity College: Dublin 212—The Annals Revisited” in *Notes & Queries*, 56, issue 3 (September, 2009): 336-340.

<sup>6</sup> The memorandum, as recorded by Skeat, reads as follows: *Memorandum quod Stacy de Rokayle pater Willielmi de Langlond qui Stacius fuit generosus & morabatur in Schiptoun vnder Whicwode tenens domini le Spenser in comitatu Oxoniensi qui predictus Willielmus fecit librum qui vocatur Perys Ploughman.* See Walter Skeat, ed., *The vision of William concerning Piers Plowman, together with Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest* (N. Trübner & Company: London, 1867), xxxv.

<sup>7</sup> Despite the lack of documentary evidence, Skeat felt able to provide a biography because he saw the work itself as providing all the information he needed. “Scanty, indeed, are these notes of his life; but the loss of information about him is, after all, of no moment. His poem is a true *autobiography* in the highest sense of the word.” *Ibid.* xxxviii.

<sup>8</sup> Excerpted from Walter Skeat, *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1869), xiv-xvi. Aside from some slight adjustments to the dates (the most notable being his survival into the reign of Henry IV) this rough outline is recognizable the basis for the Langland biography through much of the twentieth century.

that “*Stacy de Rokayle [fuit] pater Williemi de Langlond.*”<sup>9</sup> Though a twenty-first century reader might see this discrepancy in surnames as a complication in the process of establishing authorial identity, with a few notable exceptions, scholars seemed content to follow Skeat’s lead, leaving the question of “Langland or Rokayle” as little more than an interesting footnote.<sup>10</sup>

The lack of curiosity on the Rokele surname might have changed in 1935 when Oscar Cargill, a professor of English at New York University, attempted to deconstruct what he terms “the Langland myth.”<sup>11</sup> In an article of the same name, Cargill argued that the memorandum in the Dublin Annals was an accurate and reliable source for the poet’s name due to its near contemporaneous date and probable connection with an early reader; and that the attribution of the poem to William “Langland” rather than “de Rokayle” was due to the poet’s desire to disguise his identity, a ruse which deceived early modern readers attempting to deduce a biography from elements present in the poem. Based on these two premises, he concluded that while “there is not one iota of evidence to show that the poet of *Piers Plowman* was William Langland...there are enough facts connected with the name

---

<sup>9</sup> One of the people who did comment on the significance of the Rokayle surname was Allan Bright, man perhaps better described as an antiquarian rather than a scholar. Despite his reputation as an imaginative enthusiast, his book, *New Light on Piers Plowman*, was published by the Oxford University Press, complete with a preface by noted medievalist, R.W. Chambers. For more on Bright, along with most of the other major players in early Piers Plowman criticism, see C. David Benson, *Public Piers Plowman: Modern Scholarship and Late Medieval English Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 2-42

<sup>10</sup> This is perhaps because for much of the early-twentieth century, the all-consuming question in *Piers Plowman* studies was whether the poem was written by one person (presumably William Langland) or by many. The controversy was started by John Matthews Manly, who in 1906 published an article in *Modern Philology* positing that the poem had as many as five authors. Manly’s thesis was attacked first by Jean Jules Jusserand, and then others, prompting an often heated debate that lasted well into the 1930s. For a summary of the principals and their positions, see Morton Bloomfield’s, “Present State of Piers Plowman Studies,” in *Speculum* 14, no.2 (April, 1939): 215-232.

<sup>11</sup> Oscar Cargill, “The Langland Myth,” *Proceedings of the Modern Language Institute*, 50 No. 1 (March, 1935): 36-56.

of William de la Rokele to lead to speculation.”<sup>12</sup> He then listed forty-three separate records related to the Rokayle (or a related form) family, some of which suggested connections with figures already known within the Langland milieu. One, given special attention by Cargill was a papal letter from 1353 giving the Bishop of Norwich permission to reserve to a certain “William de la Rokele,” pastor of the “church of Estorp,” a benefice in his diocese.<sup>13</sup> In addition to establishing the existence of a man with the hypothesized name of the poet, Cargill noted two additional pieces of evidence related to this record that seemed to warrant further investigation: first that there was a long connection between the Rokele and But families in Norfolk and that this might somehow relate to the “John But coda” in *Piers Plowman A*; and second, that a particular manuscript (in this case a B-text) of East Anglican provenance could be connected with the family of “Butte” through a notation in the margins.<sup>14</sup> Despite the suggestive nature of this and other findings, Cargill’s research was largely ignored.

In the absence of external evidence, the next influential biography of Langland, included by E. Talbot Donaldson in his 1949 version of the C-text, basically followed Skeat, both in downplaying the Rokayle angle and emphasizing the autobiographical elements of the poem.<sup>15</sup> Donaldson’s willingness to engage in such an enterprise is curious, given his long and fruitful working relationship with George Kane, a man who argued,

---

<sup>12</sup> Cargill’s argument against “William Langland” can be broken down into two parts. The first, and stronger element focuses on the fact that the majority of external attributions to a Langland as author of the poem are from the early modern period. The second, which leads him to discount the mention of *Willielmi de Langlond* in the *Annals*, rests on an elaborate theory involving a vendetta against the poet on the part of Walter de Brugge and is ultimately unconvincing. *Ibid.*, 36-36.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 52. The church is St. Mary the Virgin in Easthorpe, Essex.

<sup>14</sup> The manuscript in question is MS Rawlinson Poetry 38, a description of which can be found in C. David Benson and Lynn S. Blanchfield, eds. *The Manuscripts of Piers Plowman: the B Version* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 93-98.

<sup>15</sup> E. Talbot Donaldson, *Piers Plowman: The C-text and Its Poet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), 199-226.

often quite forcefully, that a biography of Langland simply could not be done.<sup>16</sup> In a 1965 paper entitled “The Autobiographical Fallacy in Chaucer and Langland Studies,” Kane argued that when biographical information is lacking, poetry which “creates in its reader a strong sense of a distinctive, individual authorial presence” should not “take on the aspect of a source of information..., since the process of free biographical inference contains within itself no element to control its accuracy...”<sup>17</sup> He then went on to characterize *Piers Plowman* as just this sort of poetry, and while some of the Langland biographies might “seem wise, perceptive, [and] full of insight..., all are purely speculative; all are, in the present state of knowledge, unverifiable.”<sup>18</sup> Coming from a scholar of Kane’s stature, such sentiments carried great weight, and while his conclusions were not universally accepted, most subsequent studies of the poem exercised due caution on the matter of biographical detail.<sup>19</sup> Kane’s views on the “state of knowledge” changed, however, in 2004, when in a surprising turn of events, he reversed his position and suggested that William de la Rokele, parson of Easthorpe, might well be the author of *Piers Plowman* after all.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> The two men worked together for twenty years on the massive, and sometimes controversial, Athlone edition of *Piers Plowman B*. See George Kane and E. T. Donaldson, eds., *Piers Plowman: The B Version* (London: Athlone, 1975). For an overview of the work and process see Brewer, *Editing the Text*, 380-405. Critical, if highly respectful assessments can be found in Ralph Hanna, *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 218-227 and Robert Adams, “The Kane-Donaldson Edition of *Piers Plowman*: Eclecticism’s Ultima Thule,” *Text* 16 (2006): 131-141.

<sup>17</sup> Kane delivered this paper as the Chambers Memorial Lecture at the University of London. It is reprinted in George Kane, *Chaucer and Langland: Historical and Textual Approaches* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 1-14. Ironically, R.W. Chambers, who was Kane’s teacher, was an early advocate of the poem’s value in establishing the Langland biography. See Benson’s section on his role in the Manly/Jusserand debate in *Public Piers Plowman*, 20-22.

<sup>18</sup> Chambers, *Chaucer and Langland*, 5-6.

<sup>19</sup> Derek Pearsall’s handling of the “autobiographical” material in his edition of the C-text is a case in point. While noting that lines 1-108 of Passus V have the characteristics of an *apologia pro vita sua*, Pearsall nods towards Kane in saying that “the conventional nature of medieval ‘autobiography’ would encourage caution in the interpretation of the passage’s autobiographical details.” Derek Pearsall, ed. *Piers Plowman. An edition of the C-Text* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 97.

<sup>20</sup> C. David Benson offers an interesting perspective on Kane’s prior stance, relating it to his role as an editor of texts. Paraphrasing Lee Patterson, he suggests that for Kane, “the historical poet is replaced with a more sublime figure, a genius who gradually realizes his great work of art, which the editor must rescue from the ruins created by scribal vandals.” C. David Benson, “Another Fine Manuscript Mess,” in Derek Pearsall,

Kane's conversion came, in part, through the research of Lister Matheson, who had been mining extant records for evidence of the Langland and Rokele surnames since the early 1990s.<sup>21</sup> Though Matheson's findings were never fully published, in a paper given to the Modern Language Association he drew attention to the fact that the father of Eustace de Rokele was a certain Peter, who, as a retainer of Hugh Despenser the Younger, had throughout the 1320s acted, sometimes violently, on his patron's behalf.<sup>22</sup> It was also known that Eustace was a prominent man in Shipton, who served the shire in a number of capacities, including that of juror at the inquisition post-mortem for the Despenser heir in 1349.<sup>23</sup> This connection between the Despensers and Rokeles had been recognized as early as 1914, but when held up alongside another piece of evidence, more recently discovered, it appeared to corroborate the memorandum from the Dublin Annals.<sup>24</sup> This was an entry in the register of Wolstan de Bransford, Bishop of Worcester, which listed "William Rokele" as one of the young men who received his first tonsure, probably at Bredon, sometime between 1339 and 1341.<sup>25</sup> Though Matheson could not be certain that this William was Eustace's son, the location and generation fit both what is known about the

---

ed., *New Directions in Later Medieval Manuscript Studies: Essays from the 1998 Harvard Conference* (Woodbridge: Boydell and York University Press, 2000), 17.

<sup>21</sup> Matheson mentions his research, conducted along with John Alford, in his review of Hanna's *William Langland*, *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 8 (1994), 193-194.

<sup>22</sup> Matheson's paper was entitled "The Identikit Langland," as noted in the program published in *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*, Vol. 108, No. 6, (November, 1993), 1334. The most notable action of Peter de Rokele (though taken shortly after Hugh's death) was his participation in what became known as the Dunheved raid, an attempt to free Edward II from his captivity in Berkeley Castle. A brief account, along with original source material may be found in Frédéric Tanqueray, "The conspiracy of Thomas Dunheved, 1327," *The English Historical Review*, Vol. xxxi (1916). 119 to 124.

<sup>23</sup> This would have been the son of Hugh the Younger, who somewhat confusingly, is also named Hugh. The record of the inquest is found in *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and Other Analogous Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office*, Vol. IX (London: HMSO, 1916), 328-342.

<sup>24</sup> Samuel Moore noted these connections, and others, in "Studies in Piers the Plowman," *Modern Philology*, Vol. 12 (1914), 19-50. Moore used this evidence to promote the "two authors" theory, suggesting that the poem was written by "Robert or William Langland," and an unnamed son of Stacy de Rokayle.

<sup>25</sup> R. M. Haines, ed., *A Calendar of the Register of Wolstan de Bransford, Bishop of Worcester, 1339-1349* (London: HMSO, 1966), 199.

family and what can be inferred about dates from a close reading of the poem. This possible connection, alongside other evidence related to the “Longland” surname, was enough to convince Kane, and in a move not without irony, he announced as much in his entry for “William Langland” in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.<sup>26</sup> All of a sudden, the numinous author of the poem had a connection to the real world.

It is difficult to say why it took so long to attempt to put Langland in his context, or why Cargill’s article gained so little traction. Perhaps it was due to his reputation as an Americanist (though he had published a similar article on “Pearl” with Margaret Schlauch in 1928); or it could be that it looked too much like “old historicism” right about the time when New Criticism was coming into fashion; or it could be that most scholars simply agreed with Morton Bloomfield in thinking that Cargill was “too dogmatic to be convincing.”<sup>27</sup> However, given the influence of Langland’s ideas in late medieval England, attempting to uncover the history makes a great deal of sense, particularly for this project, where we are attempting to situate him in the context of Augustinian reform. If connections to Austins or religious reformers can be made, this has the potential to enhance our understanding of reformist commitments in his work. Or, there may be other elements in his life that shed light on specific episodes in *Piers Plowman*, or the manner it was used by poem’s early readers.

The implications of Kane’s connection have been explored in minute detail by Robert Adams in his recent monograph, *Langland and the Rokele Family: the Gentry*

---

<sup>26</sup> “Langland, William (c.1325–c.1390),” George Kane in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/16021> (accessed July 4, 2016). Kane had noted as early as 1965 the existence of a “Longland” family in Kinlet, a village in Shropshire about six miles northeast of Cleobury Mortimer. See *Piers Plowman: The Evidence for Authorship* (London: Athlone Press, 1965), 29.

<sup>27</sup> See Bloomfield, “Present State,” 226

*Background to Piers Plowman*. In the opening chapter, Adams advances a unique argument for his endeavor, which is ostensibly to compile “a history of Langland’s paternal family.”<sup>28</sup> Remarking on the numerous contemporary records that help establish the Chaucer biography, he notes that none actually connect the civil servant and administrator to any works of poetry.<sup>29</sup> Citing the unexceptional practice of extended families giving children of a generation the same baptismal name, he goes on to posit that in thinking about “Geoffrey Chaucer” we could be dealing with two different people: one, a “well-connected civil servant,” and the other, a “shy poet,” who relied on his cousin for “exotic narrative material, elite gossip, and introductions to...court associates.”<sup>30</sup> Adams is clearly being a bit cheeky here, but his point is well taken. If it is reasonable to assume that the Chaucer of the *Life-records* is, in fact, the author of “Chaucer’s works,” why should we not apply the same standard in studying William Langland, especially if in doing so, we are standing on stronger ground. As Adams points out, “the single scribal note...identifying [Langland] as the author of *Piers Plowman* and as the son of [Eustace de Rokele]...is, ironically exactly one more piece of direct attestation for his identity than we have for ‘Geoffrey Chaucer’ the poet.”<sup>31</sup>

Armed with this new perspective and a desire to historicize, Adams embarks on an investigation into the history of the Rokele family, which is revealed to have been both prominent and extensive. Their “clan” (as Adams terms it) flourished between 1140 and 1450, in both major and cadet branches, and their “family leaders were often prominent in

---

<sup>28</sup> Adams, *Langland and the Rokele Family*, 11.

<sup>29</sup> The massive *Life Records* project, begun by John Matthews Manly and Edith Rickert in 1927, was not completed until 1966. See Martin Crow and Clair Olson, eds. *Chaucer Life-records* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966).

<sup>30</sup> Adams, *Langland and the Rokele Family*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

their respective communities, [sometimes] positioned at the very pinnacle of the landed gentry, just below the nobility proper.”<sup>32</sup> Their holdings could be found throughout the south of England, from Wiltshire and Buckinghamshire in the west, to Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex in the east, as well as in the suburbs of London. Yet despite this broad distribution, Adams argues that the family remained connected, in part through the assumption that existed within the “network of gentry and titled families,” that one might appeal to a distant cousin for assistance or aid. This is particularly true in the case of protecting heritable property or enacting a transfer of land, where trustworthy witnesses and executors would be required, and it is in this capacity that Adams is able to link William de la Rokele to the wider world.<sup>33</sup> The parson of Easthorpe, as it turns out, was involved in a number of transactions, both business and legal, with a Colchester lawyer named John de la Rokele. This John, who was probably a close kinsman, was a figure of some note. In addition to serving from time to time as royal justice in the eastern counties, he was also a Serjeant-at-Law, who, by the mid-1340s had argued more than a hundred cases before the Common Pleas.<sup>34</sup> As such, he has a significant paper trail. If we can assume that William de la Rokele is, in fact, the author of *Piers Plowman*, his association with the Essex lawyer opens up considerable space to explore alternatives to the standard Langland biography. And while this is not the expressed purpose of Adams’s book, he devotes significant energy to doing just that.

---

<sup>32</sup> Notable members of the Rokele clan would include Richard de Rokele, Justiciar of Ireland under Henry III, Gregory de Rokele, a late-thirteenth century Mayor of London, and another Richard, who was steward to the dowager queen Isabella from 1332-1358. *Ibid.*, 29, 31-32, 37-38, 70.

<sup>33</sup> Adams gives the example of Richard de Rokele of Appleton (Norfolk) who acted as witness in a land purchase for Richard de Rokele of South Ockendon (Essex) during reign of Henry III. He notes that while it is impossible for us to tell the degree of their relation, each clearly thought of the other as trusted family member. *Ibid.*, 34-38.

<sup>34</sup> John de la Rokele became Serjeant-at-Law in 1332. *Ibid.*, 75.

### Writing the Rokele Biography

Adams begins his investigation with a reappraisal of an important piece of evidence; that is, the 1353 entry in the calendar of papal registers that connects William de la Rokele to the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in Easthorpe, Essex. In it, Bishop Bateman of Norwich is instructed to reserve to William de la Rokele a “benefice in the gift of the abbot and convent of Peterborough [provided] the church of Esttorp, in the diocese of London, be resigned.”<sup>35</sup> Though this record elicited a fair amount of speculation from Cargill, it was ultimately dismissed as “interesting, though nothing more....”<sup>36</sup> This is most likely because Cargill was unable to find any evidence to associate de la Rokele with a Peterborough benefice. Nearly eighty years later, Adams has demonstrated why. In the Essex Feet of Fines for 1356 there is a record of a property transfer wherein “William de la Rokele, parson of Esthorp,” deeds over to “John de la Rokele..., and Maud, his wife,” seven messuages and nearly four hundred acres of land in various parishes in the vicinity of Colchester.<sup>37</sup> Aside from giving lie to the vision “heart-wrenching poverty that some readers have wanted to associate with the life of ‘Long Will,’” this transaction shows that the papal provision was never carried out, and that William de la Rokele was still functioning as a priest in Essex three years after his nomination to move had been

---

<sup>35</sup> W.H. Bliss and C. Johnson, eds., *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. III* (London: HMSO, 1897), 487. William Bateman was, in many ways, a precursor to the new type of bishop who would come to prominence in the fifteenth century. Unlike Courtenay and Arundel, who were scions of great aristocratic houses, Bateman was the son of a Norwich bailiff who rose to prominence through university training and his knowledge of canon law. Employed as a diplomat by Edward III, he split his time between his diocese and the papal court at Avignon. He is famous for his quarrel with the Abbot of St. Edmunds, the implications of which, for Langland, will dealt with below. See “Bateman, William (c.1298–1355),” Roy Martin Haines in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, September 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/1672> (accessed July 4, 2016).

<sup>36</sup> Cargill, “The Langland Myth,” 54.

<sup>37</sup> R.E.G. Kirk, ed., *Feet of Fines for Essex, Volume III* (Colchester: Wiles & Son, 1949), 116.

approved.<sup>38</sup> To explain de la Rokele's continued presence, Adams draws our attention to another papal record, also dated 1353. This entry relates to a packet of petitions sent to Avignon by Bartholomew Burghersh, one of the most powerful barons of Edward III's early reign, and a frequent envoy to the papal court.<sup>39</sup> Though known to Cargill, this record was misunderstood as being a request for a portable altar, but what it is actually is a petition on behalf of de la Rokele for another benefice, this one being "in the gift of the abbot and convent of St. Edmunds."<sup>40</sup> From this it appears that de la Rokele was using a two-pronged strategy to advance from the parish of Easthorpe; one involving seeking a benefice in the gift of Peterborough Abbey, and the other a benefice in the gift St. Edmunds. And as Adams demonstrates through examining a later set of records, it was the second of these that was eventually carried out.

British Library Harley Charter 55.E.4 is a legal document drawn up by John de la Rokele in 1361.<sup>41</sup> In it he entrusts several men with oversight of his properties around

---

<sup>38</sup> Adams, *Langland and the Rokele Family*, 77.

<sup>39</sup> Burghersh first rose to power in the reign of Edward II through his association with his uncle, Bartholomew Badlesmere. Though imprisoned in association with Badlesmere's rebellion, he found favor with Edward III and was appointed constable of Dover Castle and warden of the Cinque Ports. A skilled soldier and diplomat, he spent much of his career assisting Edward III in his wars with France. From 1334 onward he was the king's key envoy to the papal court. See "Burghersh, Bartholomew, the elder, second Lord Burghersh (*d.* 1355)," Anthony Verduyn in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/4005> (accessed July 4, 2016).

<sup>40</sup> There are actually six petitions dealt with here. The first is a request by Burghersh for a portable altar for himself and two friends. The second through sixth, however, involve clergy seeking benefices. It is a testament to Burghersh's influence that five of the six are granted, the one refused being because the applicant had not yet reached the canonical age for cure of souls. W.H. Bliss, ed., *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland. Petitions to the Pope. Vol. I* (London: HMSO, 1896), 253.

<sup>41</sup> The Harley Charters have not been digitized and are not available online. The attached seal, ascribed to William de la Rokele, is described (three martlets, two and one, a chief lozengy, within a carved and pointed gothic trefoil panel, ornamented with small quatrefoils along the inner edge) in W.G. Birch, ed., *Catalogue of seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: The British Museum, 1894), 445. This is perhaps significant in relation to the poet's use of his mother's maiden name, as the martlet in heraldry represents a younger son who will not inherit his father's lands and is often destined for a career in the church. See Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, *A Complete Guide to Heraldry* (London and Edinburgh: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1929), 244-245.

Colchester, with a right to repossess the following year. Adams speculates that its purpose was to provide insurance, in light of an impending trip, for John's wife in case of his accidental death. Its importance to the matter at hand is in the fact that one of the men mentioned is "*Will(iam) de la Rokele p(er)sone de la esglise de Redgraue.*"<sup>42</sup> This appointment is corroborated in a record from 1374, wherein Blanche, Lady Wake, confers on a third party property she received years earlier from a group of four investors including "John de la Rokel" and "William de la Rokel, late parson of Reddegrave."<sup>43</sup> The fact that St. Mary's, Redgrave was within the gift of the Abbot of St. Edmunds suggests that, one way or another, the Burghersh petition worked.<sup>44</sup> For de la Rokele, it also represented a step up in the world, as the income from Redgrave would have been substantially more than what he received as rector of Easthorpe.<sup>45</sup> Built for the Abbots of St. Edmunds, who had a hunting lodge nearby, Redgrave seems to have been something of a sinecure. In fact, Adams characterizes it as a "Potemkin parish" and suggests that the future author of *Piers Plowman*, a man "committed to the spiritual and moral reform of Christendom," may have had second thoughts about what he was doing there.<sup>46</sup> Pointing to Passus XI of the B-text, wherein Will admits that for a time in his life, he was "coueitise of eizes," Adams suggests

---

<sup>42</sup> Adams, *Langland and the Rokele Family*, 88.

<sup>43</sup> H.C. Maxwell Lyte, ed., *Calendar of the Close Rolls (Edward III) 1374-1377*, Vol. 14 (London: Public Records Office, 1913), 255.

<sup>44</sup> The lapse between the Burghersh petition and de la Rokele's eventual appointment to Redgrave may have something to do with the relationship between Bishop Bateman and the Abbot of St Edmunds, William Bernham. Throughout much of his episcopate, Bateman was engaged in a dispute with Bernham about the rights and privileges of the abbey. Adams suggests that blocking "a prime parish appointment" involving the abbey may have seemed "deeply satisfying" to Bateman. His death at Avignon in 1355, however, would have cleared that particular obstacle to the appointment. Adams, *Langland and the Rokele Family*, 91.

<sup>45</sup> In 1535 the Easthorpe living was valued at £12; Redgrave is listed at than twice that amount. *Valor ecclesiasticus temp. Henr. VIII. Auctoritate regia institutus, Vols. I & III* (London: Record Commission, 1810-1834), 444, 481.

<sup>46</sup> Adams provides a plausible motive for why de la Rokele may have taken Redgrave to begin with; that is, "only by launching a 'successful' clerical career and someday attaining a bishop's crozier" could real and lasting reforms be achieved. *Langland and the Rokele Family*, 94.

the sentiments therein could be “sincerely retrospective and autobiographical,” and that after a time of wrestling and reflection, “the poet came to prefer...a truly humble station over theoretical faultless abundance.”<sup>47</sup> Though one might argue that such an appeal to the poem indulges the “autobiographical fallacy,” it does help explain why, by the time of Lady Wake’s charter, de la Rokele is no longer at Redgrave.<sup>48</sup> What it does not do, however, is reveal what happened next. Nor does it explain why a man, presumably devoted to the cure of souls, disappears entirely from papal and diocesan records. To explain this, Adams points to a tantalizing reference involving one of the great families of the realm in the Patent Rolls of Edward III.

In May of 1368, a certain Thomas Beauchamp is recorded as departing with a small party of knights, horses, and attendants “from the port of Dover to the parts beyond the seas.”<sup>49</sup> This Thomas was the oldest surviving son of the 11<sup>th</sup> Earl of Warwick, who within a year, would succeed to the earldom himself. His small company was probably sent as vanguard for his father’s upcoming campaign against the French, who at the time were surrounding Calais.<sup>50</sup> However, this was not the first trip the younger Beauchamp had made that year. Two months earlier he is recorded as receiving license from the king to

---

<sup>47</sup> Adams rightly points out the poem’s repeated message on charity, and that it “can be found among all estates and conditions.” In other words, just as material poverty is not of itself a guarantee of personal holiness, neither is wealth an insurmountable obstacle to the pursuit of righteousness. In his opinion, it just so happens that the poet came to prefer the former mode of life. *Ibid.*, 94-95.

<sup>48</sup> He was, in fact, gone by 1363, when John Trunch, a Cambridge MA, is listed in a papal petition as the incumbent. Trunch appears to have had none of the scruples Adams attributes to de la Rokele, as his request is for “a canonry at St. John’s, Chester le Street, notwithstanding that he has the church of Reddegrave, with an annexed chapel, in the diocese of Norwich.” See Bliss, *Petitions to the Pope. Vol. I*, 436.

<sup>49</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office (Edward III) 1367-1370*, Vol. 14 (London: HMSO, 1913), 134.

<sup>50</sup> This is the famous campaign of 1369 when, upon hearing that *le diable de Warwyk* was upon them, the French at Calais withdrew rather than risk an encounter with his troops. Warwick’s success, however, was short lived as he failed to take his objective, Harfleur, and later that year died of the plague. V.H. Galbraith, ed., *The Anonimale Chronicle, 1333 to 1381: From a MS. Written at St Mary's Abbey, York* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970), 61.

depart from the ports of “Suthampton, Weymouth, or Melcombe to the parts of Brittany with 2 fellows and 6 horses.”<sup>51</sup> Though the identity of one of his companions is unknown, the other is recorded as being William Rokele. Adams believes this William and the former parson of Redgrave to be one and the same, who as “a mature, sophisticated cleric, skilled in both French and Latin,” would have been exactly what Beauchamp needed in dealing with representatives of the French or papal courts.<sup>52</sup> He notes also a history of interrelation between the Beauchamps and the Rokeles, including a possible connection between Eustace and the 11<sup>th</sup> Earl’s second cousin, Sir Roger Beauchamp of Bletsoe.<sup>53</sup> Taking these associations and holding them alongside the fact that William de la Rokele disappears from the archival record right around the time the B-Text is composed, Adams posits a post-Redgrave existence for de la Rokele as a private chaplain in the household of the Earls of Warwick.<sup>54</sup> This, he suggests, would have allowed him time to write, as well as offering protection in the form of powerful patronage from ecclesiastical authorities who might object to his endeavors in vernacular theology.<sup>55</sup> In relation to what we know about the

---

<sup>51</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls (Edward III) 1367-1370*, Vol. 14, 130. The destination is suggestive of a diplomatic mission. John de Montfort, Duke of Brittany and Earl of Richmond, was raised in the household of Queen Philippa. With English support he emerged victorious in the Breton civil war and was recognized as duke by Charles V in 1365. As vassal of both the French and English kings, both sides would have been vying for his allegiance, but especially so in 1368, when it became clear that the Treaty of Brétigny was falling apart.

<sup>52</sup> Adams, *Langland and the Rokele Family*, 106-107.

<sup>53</sup> Sir Robert’s seat was at Ditchley, a little over eight miles from Shipton-under-Wychwood. *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>54</sup> Adams lends support to this notion through appeals to the poem. Noting, for example, that the so called “royal procession” in the B-text prologue is evocative of Richard II’s coronation ceremony, he suggests that the poet may either have been there through the good offices of the Earl (who was there), or heard about it from him. *Ibid.* 110.

<sup>55</sup> Adams sees this protection as coming to an end not through any action on the part of the poet, but rather as a result of a reversal in his patron’s political fortunes. The 12<sup>th</sup> Earl of Warwick was one of the Lords Appellant, a faction of nobles who seized control from Richard and executed several of his counselors on charges of treason. Though Warwick and his colleagues exercised considerable power in 1387 and 1388, his position would have been considerably weaker after Richard resumed personal control of the government in May of 1389. Given the fate of the Appellants when Richard enacted his revenge, it is not unreasonable to believe that a poet under Warwick’s protection may simply have stopped writing “because recent events had made his kind of satire seem too risky; he didn’t want to spend his final days in prison, or worse.” This

poem, both the circumstances and the timing make a great deal sense, as does one final suggestion Adams offers as a kind of coda.

Noting that the entire Easthorpe/Redgrave thesis could be undone by the poet's presumed marriage (implied by the well-known passages about his life in Cornhill with wife, Kytte, and daughter, Calote), Adams points to a record in the papal record from November of 1350, in which "William de Rokelse and Cristiana his wife, of the diocese of London," are granted the right to maintain a portable altar.<sup>56</sup> Though in most years a request of this sort might be seen as unremarkable, the date here is telling. In September of 1348 the Black Death reached London. Its citizens, having seen the speed with which victims would succumb, flooded the papal offices with requests to keep the *viaticum* close at hand.<sup>57</sup> By the time the de Rokesle request was granted, the city had lost nearly half its population. These odds alone suggest that either William or Christiana would have died.<sup>58</sup> Adams sees the fact that they do not appear together in any subsequent records as suggestive, particularly "when placed beside the sudden appearance of 'William de la Rokele' as a priest near Colchester in 1353."<sup>59</sup> From this he deduces the simple answer as to how a married clerk could become a priest; that is, his wife died, "allowing him to return to his original career path and take major orders."<sup>60</sup>

---

assumes, of course, that one accepts Anne Middleton's argument that the autobiography of Passus V in the C-text is a commentary on the 1388 Statute of Laborers, meaning Langland was still alive. *Ibid*, 120.

<sup>56</sup> Bliss, *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers, Vol. III*, 403

<sup>57</sup> The number of indulgences for portable altars increase significantly after the initial outbreak in 1348. *Ibid.*, 391-413.

<sup>58</sup> The bubonic form of the plague, which struck in September, developed into the even more virulent pneumonic strain in over the winter of 1349. That summer records suggest an average of 290 deaths per day, and though with the arrival of fall the numbers began to subside, mortality rates continued to be high into 1350. Robert S. Gottfried, *The Black Death: Natural and Human Disaster in Medieval Europe* (New York: Free Press, 1983), 63-66.

<sup>59</sup> Adams, *Langland and the Rokele Family*, 123.

<sup>60</sup> In support of this theory, Adams cites the thought-provoking possibility that Robert Grosseteste was married, and that the death of his wife in 1224 is what eventually led him back to the career that would

With this historical background in place we can piece together a new biography for the poet, *sub specie* Adams. Born about 1325, somewhere in the West Midlands, William de la Rokele was the scion of a large and well-established family. Most likely a younger son, he was intended for a career in the church and received his first tonsure from Bishop Wolstan de Bransford at the age of fourteen. He attained further education, possibly at Oxford, but an impulsive marriage derailed his ecclesiastical career. By the late 1340s he and his wife were living in London, where he eked out a living doing the sort of work available to a clerk in minor orders. Left a widower by one of the many outbreaks of the plague, he resumed his vocation and was ordained to the priesthood sometime after 1350. Through the influence of his older relative, John, he obtained the benefice of Easthorpe in 1352. Drawing on John's connections and his own family name, he sought the patronage of Bartholomew Burghersh, who advanced his name for the more desirable living at Redgrave. Though not immediately successful, the Burghersh petition worked, and he became rector at Redgrave, probably around 1357. He spent five years there before deciding to change his mode of life, and through family connections once again, obtained a post in the household of Thomas Beauchamp, 11<sup>th</sup> Earl of Warwick. From 1363 onwards, he served the earls as a clerical *attaché*, and began working on the poem that would be known as the *Vision of Piers Plowman*. Protected by his patron, and quite possibly outside the authority of any diocesan, he revised his poem in response to current events, satirizing corruption and advancing a broad call for reform. Sometime after 1388, he ceased his work and is never heard from again.

---

culminate in his being named Bishop of Lincoln. See N.M. Schulman, "Husband, father, bishop? Grosseteste in Paris," *Speculum* 72 (1997), 330-346.

Though Adams's thesis admittedly involves a certain degree of speculation, it has, on the whole been very well received.<sup>61</sup> As Derek Pearsall asserts in his dust-jacket endorsement, Adams displays an "extraordinary command of local and family history," and the book itself "gives a completely new and very rich context for thinking about Langland, some part of it necessarily true, all of it tantalizingly possible." Such statements represent a shift away from the historical agnosticism of *Piers Plowman* studies in the last century and indicate an openness to historicized readings that focus not just of the poem, but on the poet himself. In this spirit of exploring "tantalizing possibilities," the next section will offer a supplement to the "new Langland biography," by examining two additional pieces of evidence; one that Adams considered and discarded, and another that he appears to have missed. Admittedly, much of what follows is speculative. Some elements will defy conclusive proof, but I believe they are justifiable on the grounds of high probability. And so in the spirit of the converted George Kane, who characterized the Langland biography as something "where nothing seems to admit of absolute proof, [but rather depends] accordingly on assessments of likelihood and relative plausibility of argument," we can proceed in considering the possibilities.<sup>62</sup>

### Minding the Gaps

As we noted above, Robert Adams believes William de la Rokele went straight from Easthorpe to Redgrave. There are, however, two records, one from 1358 and the

---

<sup>61</sup> See, for example, positive reviews by Stephen H.A. Shephard in *The Yearbook of Langland Studies*, Vol. 28 (2014), 275-279 and Kath Stevenson in *Oenach: FMRSI Reviews* (2013). Even Lawrence Warner, who can be at times critical of Adams's approach, calls the book "one of the most important studies of the authorship and social milieu of Middle English poetry every produced." See *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 110, No. 3 (July 2015), 812-813.

<sup>62</sup> See Kane's entry on William Langland in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

other from 1360, which make mention of a “William de la Rokele” and suggest that his route from one parish to the other may not have been so direct. The first relates to a property transfer in which de la Rokele and a Essex landowner named Lionel de Bradenham, receive permission to alienate a property consisting of “two messuages, 72 acres of land, and 8 acres of meadow,” to the “abbess and convent of Berking” in settlement of a debt.<sup>63</sup> The second documents de la Rokele’s rental of a “tenement with a cellar” in Colchester proper from a merchant named John Lucas.<sup>64</sup> Adams discounts these records since he believes they refer not to the de la Rokele of Easthorpe and Redgrave, but to “an obscure young clerk by the same name.”<sup>65</sup> This may be true, but if it is, we are dealing with a real world manifestation of his “two Geoffreys” hypothesis which was dismissed at the beginning of his book. What seems more likely, through a simple application of Ockham’s razor, is that these “two Williams” are one and the same. The odds of this go higher when we realize that the only times that William, the “obscure clerk,” turns up in the extant records is in these two instances. But the probability becomes near certainty when the parties mentioned in the 1358 transaction can be linked within a single degree of separation to the man we know to be the rector of Easthorpe and Redgrave.

The first of these connections comes in the person of Lionel de Bradenham, a little-known figure outside of Colchester. Bradenham was the lord of Langenhoe, a manor south and slightly east of Colchester, bordering on the River Colne. R.H. Britnell “calls him a

---

<sup>63</sup> This record is found in the *Calendar of the Patent Rolls (Edward III) 1358-1361*, Vol. 11, 57. Royal permission was required because with the property going to the church, the transfer involved alienation in mortmain, literally giving it over to “the dead hand.” The problem, from the crown’s point of view, was that such property would never again generate revenue through inheritance taxes or attainder.

<sup>64</sup> This record is found in I.H. Jeayes, ed. & trans., *Court Rolls of the Borough of Colchester. Vol. 2, 1353-1367*, (Colchester: Town Council of the Borough of Colchester, 1938), 124. John Lucas owned a ship and dealt in imported foodstuffs. See Janet Cooper, *A History of the County of Essex. The Borough of Colchester*, Vol. 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 26-32.

<sup>65</sup> Adams, *Langland and the Rokele Family*, 106.

very minor light amongst the English landlords of the day,” largely because Langenhoe was his only manor.<sup>66</sup> Still through creative agricultural practice and savvy land deals Bradenham was able to keep himself afloat through the depression of the 1340s and 1350s.<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately his creativity extended beyond the bounds of the law, as we see in the record of a dispute with the citizens of Colchester in which he is accused of laying siege to the town with “armed men and archers,” and making “the dwellers in the suburb [give] up their houses, their goods and their sole chattels and [flee] into the town for fear of death.”<sup>68</sup> This fracas may have had something to do with Bradenham’s status as a justice of the Statute of Laborers and appears to have been part of a larger dispute between local landowners and the citizens of the town, as several other figures of note are mentioned as being enlisted in support of Bradenham’s efforts. One of these is John Gernon, holder of the advowson of Easthorpe and a friend of William’s cousin, John.<sup>69</sup> But this is not the

---

<sup>66</sup> R.H. Britnell, “Production for the Market on a Small Fourteenth-Century Estate,” *The Economic History Review, New Series*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1966): 380.

<sup>67</sup> In the 1340s Bradenham expanded the amount of land under cultivation by tilling under what was once pasture and sowing it with oats. The soil was likely very poor, otherwise he would have planted wheat, which was more profitable. Still, by balancing winter and spring crops, and expanding his arable land, he was able to increase his production significantly. *Ibid.*, 383-385

<sup>68</sup> This incident is documented in the *Calendar of the Patent Rolls (Edward III) 1364-1367*, Vol. 13, 54-55. The story of Bradenham’s raid was rediscovered in the eighteenth century by the clergyman and antiquarian, Philip Morant, who included it in *The History and Antiquities of Colchester*, first published in 1748, but reprinted often thereafter. See Philip Morant, *The History and Antiquities of the Borough of Colchester in the County of Essex* (Colchester: I. Marsden, 1810), 69. From Morant’s account it passed into popular lore, even to the point being reenacted in the annual Colchester pageant, begun in 1909. For information on this pageant as well as minor corrections to Morant’s account, see J.H. Round, “Lionel de Bradenham and Colchester,” *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society, Vol. 13* (1913): 86-91.

<sup>69</sup> Britnell states that the Colchester bailiffs were negligent in collecting fines, which were supposed to have been paid to Bradenham. This was a problem for Bradenham, not only because it hindered him in his duty, but because as a landowner he stood to benefit from the price controls that the Statute attempted to put in place. See R. H. Britnell, *Growth and Decline in Colchester, 1300-1525* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 136-137. As for Bradenham’s contacts, letters were sent to “John de Braham, knight, William Tendryng, knight, John Gernoun, knight, Thomas Bretoun, and other magnates and men of the country of his friendship and affinity.” It is unlikely that these men actively participated in the raid, though given the relations between the town and countryside, they may have given their tacit support. What is important for our purposes is that Gernon is marked out as being a man of Bradenham’s “friendship and affinity.” See the *Calendar of the Patent Rolls (Edward III) 1364-1367*, Vol. 13, 54.

only connection between Bradenham and Gernon. In the 1360s Bradenham appears to have experienced severe financial difficulties, and 1365 went so far as to sign over the rights to his manor to a group of creditors, including his more substantial neighbor, Sir John Sutton of Wivenhoe, in exchange for an infusion of cash. One of the witnesses to this transaction was John Gernon.<sup>70</sup> Bradenham appears to have been unable to right the ship because in 1368 he signed over his manor, the advowson of the church, and all his rents to a different group of creditors that this time included both Sutton and Gernon. One of the witnesses to this transaction was John de la Rokele.<sup>71</sup> Though Bradenham died in 1370 and his manor went over to the Suttons, his connections to the circle of de la Rokele, the parson, extend in other directions as well.<sup>72</sup>

Looking back to 1350, the year in which the bizarre assault on Colchester took place, we see that Bradenham is one of two men registered in the Patent Rolls as having power of attorney for the Abbess of Barking during her trip to Rome for the papal jubilee. This particular abbess was Matilda (or Maud) Montacute, sister of William Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, and Simon Montacute, Bishop of Ely.<sup>73</sup> Though it is impossible to say

---

<sup>70</sup> There are actually two records here. In the first, Bradenham signs over rights to his manor to his creditors “for their lives.” In the second, he gives rights to “all his goods and chattels in Essex, moveable and immovable,” to both the creditors and “their heirs and assigns.” See H.C. Maxwell Lyte, ed., *Calendar of the Close Rolls (Edward III) 1364-1368*, Vol. 12 (London: Public Records Office, 1910), 171.

<sup>71</sup> This transaction was enacted so Bradenham could meet a debt of £350, a staggering sum for a middling sort of landowner. The estate was signed over to the feofees and their heirs, suggesting that everyone knew Bradenham would never be able to pay the money back. In effect, it was a prelude to a purchase. *Ibid.*, 463.

<sup>72</sup> For a brief summary of Bradenham’s final years, see Britnell, “Production for the Market,” 385.

<sup>73</sup> Maud Montacute was the only nun who received royal permission to travel to Rome for the jubilee. Diana Webb compares her to Chaucer’s prioress, suggesting that a woman of such high status would have been considered an oddity on a pilgrimage route. See *Medieval European Pilgrimage c.700-c.1500* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 91-92. For information on the Earl of Salisbury and a brief account of the family, see “Montagu, William, second earl of Salisbury (1328–1397),” John L. Leland in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/19002> (accessed July 4, 2016). For information on the Bishop of Ely, see Roy M. Haines, “Simon de Montacute,” in *Fourteenth Century England I*, Nigel Saul, ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), 37-72.

why Bradenham was selected for such a responsibility, the fact that he was suggests that he was not so far down the proverbial totem pole as to be without noble connections. The same could be said of the other attorney, a burgess of Colchester named Adam Waryn, who at some point in the next decade took part in a transfer of property to Blanche, Lady Wake.<sup>74</sup> This is, of course, the transaction cited above, involving “John de la Rokel” and “William de la Rokel, late parson of Reddegrave.”<sup>75</sup> In fact, Adam Waryn appears in a number of places in association with the Rokeles, including the resignation of the Bradenham estate, for which, alongside John, he stood witness.<sup>76</sup> Even more significant, perhaps, because it includes all three men, is a 1369 record listing “John de la Rokele..., William de la Rokele, and Adam Waryn of Colchestre” as attorneys for the Norfolk knight, John de Argentein, on the occasion of a trip he was to take overseas. This record was used by Adams to establish the connection between William and John.<sup>77</sup> It seems reasonable to suggest, then, that the relationship of Waryn to Bradenham (1350), and Bradenham to de la Rokele (1358), and de la Rokele to Waryn (1369), are indicative of an affinity in which there is only one William de la Rokele, rather than two.

---

<sup>74</sup> Adam Waryn (or Warin) was a townsman from a family of some of substance. He was bailiff in 1358/59 and he granted land to the Augustinian Abbey of St. Osyth in 1380. See Cooper, *A History of the County of Essex. The Borough of Colchester*, 60. He is also recorded as paying fees for a market stall in Head Ward of Colchester. See William Gurney Benham, trans., *The Oath Book; or, Red Parchment Book of Colchester* (Colchester: Essex County Standard Office, 1907), 212.

<sup>75</sup> See Lyte, *Calendar of the Close Rolls (Edward III) 1374-1377*, 255 as noted in 43 above.

<sup>76</sup> Another significant transaction is in the Essex Fines for 1366. There it is recorded that Adam Waryn, John de la Rokele and two others sold land and messuages in Essex and Suffolk to Sir William Bouchier. See Kirk, *Feet of Fines for Essex*, Vol. III, 146. The Bouchiers were a prominent family, not just in the county, but in the realm. William’s father, Robert, was the first layman to hold the post of Chancellor of England. His son, also named William, would fight with Henry V at Agincourt and be granted the title of Comte d’Eu. For background on the family see “Bouchier, Sir William, count of Eu (c.1374–1420),” Carole Rawcliffe in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/50242> (accessed July 4, 2016).

<sup>77</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls (Edward III) 1367-1370*, Vol. 14, 216; and Adams, *Langland and the Rokele Family*, 90.

One further piece of evidence lends weight to this assertion. In 1352 Maud Montacute died and was succeeded as Abbess of Barking by her sister, Isabelle. Following Isabelle's death in 1358, the nuns went outside the Montacute family (though only for a time) and elected as abbess a certain Katherine Sutton.<sup>78</sup> This Katherine is held to be the originator of a unique piece of liturgical drama, in which the nuns of Barking reenacted Christ's harrowing of hell as a part of their Holy Saturday liturgy. In this service, the nuns, representing the Old Testament patriarchs exiting limbo, would process from a side chapel to the altar of repose, where a reserved host would be brought out and displayed in a representation of Christ's resurrection. For her part in this production Sutton has been seen as the first female English dramatist.<sup>79</sup> It is not known when she instituted this practice, but it would have to have been after her confirmation in the office in March of 1358.<sup>80</sup> This date is significant because it reveals that she, not Isabelle, was the abbess who received the transfer of property from Bradenham and de la Rokele.<sup>81</sup> This might seem insignificant but for one detail—Katherine Sutton was not, as some have suggested, related to the Suttons of Dudley, whose line would later include the ill-fated Tudor rebel, the Duke of Northumberland, and Elizabeth I's onetime suitor and favorite, the Earl of Leicester. Rather she was a Sutton of Wivenhoe. It was, in fact her brother, John, who took

---

<sup>78</sup> After Katherine's death in 1377, the nuns selected another Maud Montacute, possibly a niece of the elder abbesses. A useful source for abbey history is Winifred Sturman, "Barking abbey--A study in its external and internal administration from the conquest to dissolution" (PhD diss., University of London, 1961).

<sup>79</sup> This designation seems to have originated with Nancy Cotton in "Katherine of Sutton: The First English Woman Playwright," *Educational Theatre Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Dec., 1978), 475-481. Santha Bhattacharji, however, urges caution on this count, stating that "the evidence is not conclusive and needs careful scrutiny." See "Sutton, Katherine (d. 1376)," Santha Bhattacharji in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, see online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/53637> (accessed July 4, 2016).

<sup>80</sup> Royal assent was given to the Bishop of London on March 15, 1358. *Calendar of the Patent Rolls (Edward III) 1358-1361*, Vol. 11, 26.

<sup>81</sup> The date the transfer was recorded in the patent rolls is June 12<sup>th</sup>. See note 63 above.

possession of Bradenham's estate. But perhaps even more important in terms of connecting the William of the 1358 record to the parson of Easthorpe and Redgrave, is the fact that her other brother, Nicholas, was the fourth party in the de la Rokeles' property transfer to Lady Wake.<sup>82</sup>

What all of this seems to suggest, then, is that the William de la Rokele who appears alongside Bradenham in the Barking transaction and rented rooms in Colchester is the same William de la Rokele who served the parishes of Easthorpe and Redgrave. The chronology supports such an assertion. Our last reference to de la Rokele's presence at Easthorpe is from 1356, while our first mention of his being at Redgrave is from 1361. The fact that he is termed "clerk" rather than "rector" or "parson," in the records from these middle years says nothing about his age or the status of his orders. It is simply the proper legal designation for a cleric without benefice.<sup>83</sup> The question of why de la Rokele might have resigned his benefice is a bit of a mystery, particularly as it seems he did so without the prospect of another living, but perhaps he felt he could do better than Easthorpe in working with and/or for a man like Bradenham, who in the course of his business transactions might have need of someone with clerical skills. Or, perhaps at some point late in the decade, he had an even better offer. Perhaps he was given the chance to write poetry for his living. If

---

<sup>82</sup> Nicholas de Sutton was the rector of St. Stephen's in Great Wigborough, a village about eight miles south of Colchester. In his will, which was proved in 1371, he left twenty shillings to "sorori mei de Berkyng." Sturman, "Barking abbey," 144. Like his brother, Nicholas was also a partner in property transactions involving Lionel de Bradenham. In 1353 they were granted permission to alienate land to the prior and convent of St. Botolph, Colchester in return for an undisclosed sum. See *The Public Record Office, Lists and Indexes*, Volume XXII (New York: Kraus Reprint Corp., 1963), 467.

<sup>83</sup> Legal records tend not to distinguish between orders. Instead they use either the generic term, "clerk" or make reference to a particular benefice. This makes sense given that the secular authority does not distinguish between clerics according to sacramental powers. In other words, whether he is in major or minor orders, a "clerk" is a "clerk" in the eyes of the law. For a discussion on beneficed versus unbeneficed clerks, and the implications thereof for their reputation, see Michael Burger, *Bishops, Clerks, and Diocesan Governance in Thirteenth-Century England. Reward and Punishment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 23-39.

such an offer occurred, it would not have been to write the great wandering epic for which William Langland was known.<sup>84</sup> Rather it could have been something more along the lines of translation, specifically the adaptation of a French poem about two lovers and a werewolf for use in the English-speaking household of one of the great magnates of the land.

### Bohuns and Beyond

Sometime before his death in October of 1361, the Earl of Hereford and Essex, Humphrey de Bohun, commissioned a translation of the twelfth-century romance, *Guillaume de Palerne*, for members of his household who “knowe no Frensche.”<sup>85</sup> The resulting poem, written in the alliterative style, is known as *William of Palerne*, and it tells the story of the dispossessed prince of Sicily, his protector, a friendly werewolf, and a cunning plan that involved lovers dressing like deer and bears.<sup>86</sup> While it is impossible to say what might have motivated Earl Humphrey to select this odd tale for translation, it is sufficient for our purposes simply to note that he did.<sup>87</sup> This is because recent scholarship has been moving in the direction of accepting *William of Palerne* as one of Langland’s early works. David Lawton seems to have set the ball rolling in 1988, when in discussing *William of Palerne* and the alliterative style, he noted that “lovers of *Piers Plowman* have

---

<sup>84</sup> The traditional *terminus post quem* for the A-text is January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1362. This is based on a reference to a destructive storm in Passus V. See William Langland, *Piers Plowman: The A Version*, Míceál F. Vaughan ed., (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 10.

<sup>85</sup> Thorlac Turville-Petre gives an overview of the poem while placing it in its literary and historical context in *The Alliterative Revival* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1977) 40-42. Turville-Petre believes the poem’s dialect to be that of Gloucestershire and intended for a western audience.

<sup>86</sup> The standard edition of the poem is G.H.V. Bunt, *William of Palerne: An Alliterative Romance*. Mediaevalia Groningana 6 (Groningen: Bouma’s Boekhuis, 1985). Like the famous works of the Gawain-poet, *William of Palerne* exists in a single manuscript—Cambridge, King’s College, MS 13.

<sup>87</sup> Richard Firth Green thinks that the poem may reflect the Earl’s own personal tastes as much as it did members of his household. See “Humphrey and the Werewolf” in *Medieval Alliterative Poetry: Essays in Honour of Thorlac Turville-Petre*, John Burrow and Hoyt Duggan, eds. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 115-119.

been stupendously silent about any slight chance that [its author's] surname was Langland."<sup>88</sup> The next year George Kane responded to Lawton's assertion in opining that *William of Palerne* might have been an early apprenticeship for Langland, in part because they share the same style and meter, but also because of what he viewed as the "altogether accomplished writing" already present in the A-text.<sup>89</sup> A full investigation, however, did not occur until Lawrence Warner took up the matter, first in a 2006 article published in *Viator* and again in a chapter of his book, *The Myth of Piers Plowman*.<sup>90</sup> Warner's analysis is thematic, rather than linguistic, and he sees the poems as sharing a number ideas and interests.<sup>91</sup> While he stops short of asserting that common themes indicate common authorship, he notes that if it is "assumed for a moment," that Langland is the author of both, it does "render intelligible a number of problematic episodes of *Piers Plowman*," particularly those involving the "otherwise jarring roles of disguise in the poem's working through of penance, and the connections these passages forge between disguise and atonement, and between each other."<sup>92</sup>

Warner's caution is understandable, but his tentative conclusions may perhaps be strengthened by adding a piece of linguistic evidence to the hypothesis we are now entertaining. In an article published in 1990, the poem's modern editor, Gerrit Bunt, analyzed the language of the manuscript in light of information that was not available to

---

<sup>88</sup> David Lawton, "Alliterative Style," in *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, John Alford, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 245.

<sup>89</sup> See note 4 in Kane, *Chaucer and Langland: Historical and Textual Approaches*, 282.

<sup>90</sup> See Warner, "Langland and the Problem of *William of Palerne*," 397-415; and *The Myth of "Piers Plowman*," 22-36.

<sup>91</sup> A few of the similarities addressed by Warner include protagonists dressed as animals (the deer- and bear-skin suits of *William of Palerne* alongside Will referring to himself as being "in a shroud as y a shep were" in the Prologue of *Piers Plowman*); and theme of revelation and atonement (the opening of sealed letters which lead to life-changing truth, and an atonement of sorts in *William of Palerne* as compared to the Christ-knight defeating the devil in Piers's armor). See *The Myth of "Piers Plowman*," 28-33.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

him in 1985.<sup>93</sup> Using the information amassed in the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*, Bunt argued that the poem's dialect is not that of Gloucestershire, as was previously thought, but rather a mix of features, some deriving from the West Midlands, and others from places further east.<sup>94</sup> In fact, he detects a striking similarity between *William of Palerne* and what M.L. Samuels found in his study of *Piers Plowman*, that is, an apparent authorial dialect originating in the West Midlands, which was then modified by a scribe.<sup>95</sup> After comparing his analysis to that of Samuels, Bunt then concludes that "the manuscript of *William of Palerne* seems to belong dialectically to East Anglia, but that the original author must have used a very different dialect, possibly one belonging to southern Worcestershire or Warwickshire, not very far from the area where Langland acquired his linguistic habits."<sup>96</sup> Though the evidence is circumstantial, such a conclusion is highly suggestive of the new Langland biography. If Warwickshire native, William de la Rokele, did translate a work into Middle English from the French, and then had it copied for his East Anglian patron by a local scribe, what we have in *William of Palerne* is very much the product one would expect.

Other pieces of evidence, while circumstantial, are worth considering as well. Earl Humphrey's household at Pleshey, Essex, had a reputation for being a bookish sort of place. It was, as Lucy Freeman Sandler describes it, "a large household, or *familia*, which included not only cooks, grooms, and other domestic help, but chaplains, confessors, clerks, scribes and, over the years from c. 1360 to 1390, at least two, and then a third

---

<sup>93</sup> Gerrit H.V. Bunt, "Localizing William of Palerne," in *Historical Linguistics and Philology*, Jacek Fisiak, ed. (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1990), 73-86.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>95</sup> M. L. Samuels, "Langland's Dialect," *Medium Aevum*, Vol. 54 (1985): 232-247.

<sup>96</sup> Bunt, "Localizing William of Palerne," 82.

illuminator.”<sup>97</sup> It was there that the famous Bohun Psalters were produced under the watchful eye of John de Teye, an Augustinian Friar and master illuminator, and it was there that the widow of Humphrey’s heir commissioned Thomas Hoccleve to produce a translation of Guillaume Deguilleville’s *Le Plerinage de l’Ame*.<sup>98</sup> It would not require a great stretch of the imagination to see a young William Langland being attracted to such an environment, and if we accept that he was a clerk without benefice during the period stretching from about 1358 to 1360, it makes sense that he would have the time (and probably the financial motivation) to embark on a lengthy literary project like an alliterative translation of *Guillaume de Palerne*. It also fits neatly alongside the poem’s *terminus ante quem* of October 1361 (the time of Earl Humphrey’s death) and the earliest reference we have to William de la Rokele as parson of Redgrave, the record of the power of attorney granted him by John which comes from that same year.<sup>99</sup>

As to how the parson of Easthorpe might have come to the attention of a great magnate like Humphrey de Bohun, there are a number of possibilities. The owner of the Easthorpe advowson, John Gernon, was patron of the Augustinian priory at Little Leighs, which was situated a little under four miles from the Earl’s household at Pleshey.<sup>100</sup> If

---

<sup>97</sup> Lucy Freeman Sandler, “Rhetorical strategies in the pictorial imagery of fourteenth-century manuscripts: the case of the Bohun psalters,” in *Rhetoric Beyond Words: Delight and Persuasion in the Arts of the Middle Ages*, Mary Carruthers, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 97.

<sup>98</sup> For more on these psalters, see Sandler’s work, cited in note 96 above, 96-123, or her study of MS Egerton 3277, *Illuminators and Patrons in Fourteenth-Century England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014). Hoccleve’s commission, which we know as “The Complaint of the Virgin,” came from Joan Fitzalan Bohun, dowager countess of Hereford, Essex, and Northampton. See Jennifer Bryan, *Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and the Private Self in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press, 2008), 187-195.

<sup>99</sup> Humphrey de Bohun’s will is printed in M.M. Bigelow, “The Bohun Wills II,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 1 (1896), 631-649. For de la Rokele at Redgrave, see note 43 above.

<sup>100</sup> The Priory of Little Leighs was founded in the thirteenth century by Ralph Gernon. The advowson remained in the family until the death of John Gernon 1384. It seems to have been fairly prosperous, as it brought in rents from properties across Essex and Suffolk. See R.C. Fowler, “The Priory of Little Leighs” in *The Victoria History of the County of Essex*, William Page and J. Horace Round eds. (London: Archibald Constable and Company Limited, 1907), 155-157.

Gernon were in the neighborhood, it is not difficult to conceive of some circumstance that allow him to bring his priest-*cum*-aspiring poet to the attention of the Earl. Another avenue would be in the form of a relative. Godfrey de la Rokele was the steward of Humphrey's more warlike brother, William, the Earl of Northampton and a boon companion of Edward III. This de la Rokele later served William's son and Humphrey's heir.<sup>101</sup> It is possible that he could have brought up the name of his young relative, who was only a few miles up the road in Colchester. A third possibility would be the aforementioned Bartholomew Burghersh, who had already acted on William de la Rokele's behalf and whose family was connected to the Bohuns through marriage.<sup>102</sup> Perhaps a commission involving the Earl was offered as a substitute for the Redgrave petition, which had not yet worked out. All of this is admittedly speculative, but in light of the work that Adams has done, it seems well within the realm of possibility. And there is a further piece of evidence, which, while unrelated to the question of *William of Palerne*, dovetails interestingly with the idea of a Bohun affinity.

In the records of the borough of Colchester there is one further mention of a William de la Rokele.<sup>103</sup> This record, apparently missed by Adams, is a notation of two wills that

---

<sup>101</sup> The connection between William de Bohun and Godfrey de la Rokele is noted in W.S. Walford, "Letter Relating to the Wars of Edward III in France, and the Public Affairs in the Year 1346," *The Archaeological Journal* XII (1855), 73-75. The letter in question is one that was preserved in the muniments of Barrington Hall, Essex and is dated c. 1340. It contains news of English campaigns against the French and is addressed to a "dame Alys de la Rokele." Adams discusses this letter in *Langland and the Rokele Family*, 70-71.

<sup>102</sup> Burghersh's first cousin, Elizabeth Badlesmere, married William de Bohun in 1335. Their son, Humphrey, would inherit both his father's and his uncle's titles, becoming Earl of Hereford, Essex, and Northampton. Burghersh and his brother, the Bishop of Lincoln, clearly viewed the relationship as significant, since they included the Bohun arms in their chantry chapel in Lincoln Cathedral. This is an example of what Anne McGee Morganstern calls a "tomb of kinship," wherein *seigneurial* arms are included, both to remind the chantry priest whom to pray for and to reflect and record family relationships within the feudal system. See her chapter on the English baron's tomb in *Gothic Tombs of Kinship in France, the Low Countries, and England* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 103-116.

<sup>103</sup> This record is found in the *Red Parchment Book of Colchester*, one of two surviving registers (the other is the *Red Paper Book of Colchester*) of the borough. The *Red Paper Book* is something of a legal miscellany, containing lists of citizens and foreigners, copies of proclamations, important court cases, and government

were filed sometime in the administrative year beginning in 1368: one for “John de la Rokele” and the other for “Sir Wm. de la Rokele, rector of the Church of Neutone.”<sup>104</sup> These are very likely the same William and John we have been dealing with all along, but the record raises two key questions, the first being, why were these wills enrolled? The seemingly obvious answer—that they died—is not likely.<sup>105</sup> As Joseph Byrne has noted, medieval “people generally prepared wills before undertaking a journey or when ill—more often, perhaps, than when on their deathbed,” and while John, being older, may indeed have been nearing the end of his life, both men appear alive and ready to discharge their duties in the Argentein record of 1369.<sup>106</sup> What seems more likely, at least on William’s count, is that he filed his will in anticipation of a journey, and it is possible that this record reflects the events surrounding his travel in the retinue of Thomas Beauchamp.<sup>107</sup> Given

---

actions. It dates to about 1377. The *Red Parchment Book* is a memorandum book for the town clerks and dates to the 1380s. Records for earlier years (the list goes back to 1327) were copied in sometime in the 1390s. See R.H. Britnell, “The Oath Book of Colchester and the Borough Constitution, 1372-1404,” *Essex Archaeology and History* 14 (1982), 94-101.

<sup>104</sup> W. Gurney Benham, trans., *The Oath Book, or Red Parchment Book of Colchester* (Colchester: Essex County Standard Office, 1907), 67.

<sup>105</sup> The process of executing a will in medieval England involved three steps. After the testator had written or dictated his will, it was then “proved” in front of witnesses, an act which made it legally valid. The executors would then enroll the will with the appropriate court and pay a small fee. This would safeguard the will against mishap and provide a record which could be checked. Once a will was enrolled, it could be changed at any time, often through a codicil. After the testator’s decease, the will would be brought into court for probate, at which time its provisions would be fulfilled. See Reginald Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London, A.D. 1258-1688*, Vol.1 (London, John C. Francis 1889), ii-xlvi; and Kate Kelsey Staples, *Daughters of London: Inheriting Opportunity in the Late Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 18-21.

<sup>106</sup> See Joseph Byrne, *The Encyclopedia of the Black Death* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2012), 59-60. For the Argentein record, see note 77 above. John, however, is dead by 1372. We know this because of a curious note in the court rolls stating that John de la Rokele “when he lived, had made a *garderoba* (privy) in his tenement, by which he caused to be drawn off the water collected in the said tenement below the said tenement up to the tenement called Helle, which Matilda, widow of the said John, maintains to the nuisance of passers by.” I.H. Jeayes, ed. & trans., *Court Rolls of the Borough of Colchester. Vol. 3, 1372-1379*, (Colchester: Town Council of the Borough of Colchester, 1941), 3.

<sup>107</sup> It is difficult to say whether this will was enrolled before or after the trip to Brittany in March of 1368. Because oath book records were keyed to the burgesses’ term in office, enrollment would appear to have occurred in either the last four months of 1368, or first eight months of 1369. However, as Britnell observes, Benham’s published version “fails to adequately represent the detail of the manuscript,” leading to a certain imprecision about dates. Given the propensity of medieval travelers to file a will before making a journey,

the inherent danger of medieval travel this would be a prudent thing to do. The second, and perhaps more interesting question is, what is “the Church of Neutone?” This is a surprisingly difficult question to answer.

There is no Newton in Colchester or the surrounding hundreds of Lexden, Winstree, and Tendring. Casting the net further afield, we find that in the two English provinces there are at least forty-seven villages or towns named “Newton” graced with churches, yet despite extensive searches, de la Rokele’s name does not appear to be attached to any of them.<sup>108</sup> Given the fact that many parish registers from this era are either missing or incomplete (Easthorpe being a case in point), this is to be expected. In the absence of conclusive proof, we must rely on what is most probable. Fortunately, we do have two pieces of information that help us narrow our options down. First is the matter of proximity. While clergy sometimes did move great distances in pursuit of a living, it seems unlikely that de la Rokele would enroll his will in Colchester if his benefice were not somewhere nearby. Such an assertion is supported by the fact that the other clerics who enroll wills during this period are associated with churches within a twenty-five-mile radius of Colchester proper.<sup>109</sup> Second is what we know about the practice of town clerk. When the *Oath Book* mentions places that might be unfamiliar to a Colchester native, it tends to

---

it seems possible that record actually reflects an enrollment that took place prior to the excursion to France. See Britnell, “The Oath Book,” 99.

<sup>108</sup> This number is taken from the *Liber ecclesiasticus*, a survey of ecclesiastical income authorized by William IV. The idea behind it seems to have been to do an update of Henry VIII’s *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, but without the plunder. Though of limited value for the fourteenth century, it provides a useful overview of the English church. For the forty-seven Newtons, see *Liber ecclesiasticus. An authentic statement of the revenues of the Established Church* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1835), 145-146. In addition to the work Adams has done on the Rokele family, I have investigated the extant clergy lists for over half of these churches, including all of the ones in areas with a plausible connection to de la Rokele (i.e. East Anglia, London and its environs, and the West Midlands). William de la Rokele is not anywhere to be found.

<sup>109</sup> Two other clerics who enrolled wills during this period were Nicholas de Sutton (brother of John and Katherine de Sutton), rector of St. Stephen’s Church, Great Wigborough, and John Casp, rector of one of the churches at Creeting, Suffolk (in the fourteenth century there were four: St. Mary’s, St. Olave’s, St. Peter’s, and All Saints). See Benham, *Red Parchment Book of Colchester*, 67 and 72.

include information as an aid to identification, such as the county or a neighboring town.<sup>110</sup> Such information is absent here. What this seems to suggest is that in looking for “the Church of Neutone,” that we should look for a place nearby. Interestingly, a likely candidate can be found twelve miles north, just over the Suffolk border in the Babergh hundred.

In the fourteenth century this parish of Newton consisted of a village and farmland on the outskirts of a prosperous market town.<sup>111</sup> It had a well-established church, dedicated to All Saints, and the living, which was a rectory, was a good one.<sup>112</sup> In 1345 the rights to the manor and advowson were sold to two figures we have come across already, William de Bohun, the Earl of Northampton, and Elizabeth *née* Badlesmere, his wife.<sup>113</sup> These rights were transferred by fine in 1354 to a certain Peter Favelore.<sup>114</sup> This Peter was one of William’s “most active servants as attorney and then executor,” and as a member of the Earl’s inner circle, someone who almost certainly had contact with Godfrey de la Rokele.<sup>115</sup> He also made himself extremely wealthy through his own land deals, many of which were undertaken in partnership with Adam Fraunceys, the well-known merchant and financier

---

<sup>110</sup> This is particularly true in the 1390s when a number of individuals from outside the area migrate to the city and are enrolled as burgesses. Examples include “Thomas Exton of Newerk, co. Notyngnam,” “John Trum of Harwe, in co. Middlesex,” and “Thos. Godeston of Godeston, co. Surrey.” *Ibid.*, 84-85.

<sup>111</sup> Newton lay three miles southeast of Sudbury. Despite its small size (only about 2500 inhabitants) Sudbury was one of the fifty wealthiest towns in England, with an economy bolstered by its historic market and the East Anglian wool trade. See Mark Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk: An Economic and Social History, 1200-1500* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007) 127-130.

<sup>112</sup> The living is valued in the sixteenth century at £18, a little less than Redgrave, but more than Easthorpe. See the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, Vol. III, 451.

<sup>113</sup> W.A. Copinger, *The Manors of Suffolk: The hundreds of Babergh and Blackbourn* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1905), 170. Though inaccurate in some minor details, Copinger’s sketch of the history of Newton is a useful one.

<sup>114</sup> See Walter Rye, ed., *A Calendar of the Feet of Fines for Suffolk* (Ipswich: Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History, 1900), 214. The name appears different ways in different sources. Alternate spellings include Fauelore and Fanelore.

<sup>115</sup> George Holmes, *The Estates of the Higher Nobility in Fourteenth-century England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 70.

who served two terms as Mayor of London.<sup>116</sup> Peter Favelore held the property until his death in 1360, when the manor and advowson passed to a group of men that included a certain Gregory Favelore, who was probably his brother.<sup>117</sup> In 1363 this Gregory acquired sole rights to the manor and advowson, which he, in turn, held until his death, which occurred sometime before 1369.<sup>118</sup> The property then became the object of a great deal of legal wrangling. In 1370 a second Peter Favelore (the son of the first) asserted his rights to the manor and advowson.<sup>119</sup> He appears to have succeeded in his suit, since three years later, he signed over two thirds of the manor to a certain Thomas Beauchamp. This is almost certainly the same Thomas Beauchamp who was de la Rokele's companion on the trip to Brittany in 1368.<sup>120</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup> In fact, the acquisition of Newton was one of those deals. For more information, see "Fraunceys, Adam (c.1310–1375)," Stephen O'Connor in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, October 2006, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/52176> (accessed July 4, 2016).

<sup>117</sup> Peter Favelore died on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1360. *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and Other Analogous Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward III, Vol. X* (London: HMSO, 1921), 470.

<sup>118</sup> For Gregory Favelore's acquisition of the property, see Rye, *Feet of Fines for Suffolk*, 227. In April of 1369 the Patent Rolls note the presentation of "Thomas de Broghton to the church of Neweton, in the diocese of Norwich, in the king's gift by reason of the lands of Gregory Favelore, deceased..."

<sup>119</sup> Lyte, *Calendar of the Close Rolls (Edward III) 1374-1377*, Vol. 14, 173.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 538. The record is something of a puzzle. The querent is listed as "Thomas Beauchamp, knight of Bedfordshire." The only titled Beauchamp of Bedfordshire during this period is Sir Roger Beauchamp of Bletsoe, a cousin of the 11<sup>th</sup> Earl who served as an executor of his will. See Nicholas Harris Nicolas, ed., *Testamenta Vetusta*, Vol. 1 (London: Nichols and Son, 1826), 79-80. There are, however, two pieces of evidence which suggest that this Thomas Beauchamp is, in fact, the 12<sup>th</sup> Earl. The first is the fact that after receiving rights from Favelore, he immediately granted his interest in the property to a group of four men. One was William Halden, a merchant of London for whom he would later stand witness in a transfer of property to the king. An English translation of this transaction can be found in Samuel Bentley, *Excerpta historica or Illustrations from English History* (London: Samuel Bentley, 1831), 419. The second piece of evidence comes in the form of a 1376 record in the Patent Rolls. In it, Peter Favelore has the king's protection from litigation revoked for not having gone "to Gerseye on the king's service in the company of Thomas de Beauchamp, warden of that island..." See *Calendar of the Patent Rolls (Edward III) 1374-1377*, Vol. 16, 293. This Thomas de Beauchamp is certainly the 12<sup>th</sup> Earl, and the fact that Favelore (II) was supposed to accompany him suggests a prior relationship, one that very well could have included a transfer of property in Newton. See A.K. Gundy, *Richard II and the Rebel Earl* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 81. As for the title, "knight of Bedfordshire," it could refer to the connection of the Beauchamp family to the historic Barony of Bedford.

If we are going to speculate as to how “Sir William de la Rokele” might fit in as rector of this “Church of Neutone” we first have to establish that no one else was there. The parish records indicate the succession of incumbents for the period in question as being Thomas de Branketre, installed in 1350, Roger Raundes, installed in 1353, and Thomas de Brochtone installed in 1369.<sup>121</sup> However, an extensive survey of Suffolk parish clergy done by Claude Morley in 1935 indicates that Raundes had moved to the parish of Bures by 1360.<sup>122</sup> Thus we are dealing with a gap in the records. The living must have been filled by an unrecorded incumbent, or perhaps two, in the years between 1360 and 1369.<sup>123</sup> While we cannot say who the priest at Newton might have been in 1361 and 1362, we know that in 1363 Gregory Favelore obtained sole rights to both manor and advowson. This suggests that he may have been ready to exercise the right to nomination, something that is easier to do if one does not need to come to a consensus with other parties. If Favelore did nominate in 1363, it involves no great stretch of imagination to suppose that the parson of Redgrave, newly available, would have gotten the call, particularly if we admit the prospect of a Bohun affinity. It would explain what de la Rokele was doing in years after he left Redgrave and before he came into contact with Thomas Beauchamp. It even gives some indication of how that contact may have come about, through the

---

<sup>121</sup> This succession was confirmed through personal communication with the Parish Clerk, David Crimmin.

<sup>122</sup> Claude Morley, “Catalog of the Beneficed Clergy of Suffolk (1086-1550),” *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* 22 (1934-36), 71.

<sup>123</sup> With the death of Peter Favelore (I) in 1360 it is possible that the parish went without an incumbent until the right to nomination could be exercised. Given the status of the estate, this may not have occurred until Gregory took sole possession of the manor and advowson in 1363. During the interim, the parish may have been served by a curate or a priest nearby. One of the figures mentioned in the records is Thomas de Langham, “chaplain of the manor of Neuton.” He is not the rector, but his presence may indicate some pastoral responsibility. See Rye, *Feet of Fines for Suffolk*, 222, 227.

connection with the Favelores. And it gives him another noble household in which to disappear and begin writing poetry in 1369.<sup>124</sup>

To return to the matter of the new biography overall, it should be clear that none of these scenarios contradict the basic outline Adams has laid out. The various sojourns with Bradenham, and Bohun, and as rector of Newton merely fill in some of the gaps. But whether we are using Adams's hypotheses or mine, the act of placing Langland in this historical context opens up new avenues for reading the poem. We have seen how Lawrence Warner has used *William of Palerne* to speculate productively on *Piers Plowman*. What happens when we do something similar using elements of the "rewritten" biography? Does the fact that Langland may have known Katherine Sutton change our reading of the Harrowing of Hell in *Piers Plowman*? It seems possible now that he could actually have witnessed the nuns of Barking enacting their remarkable Easter drama. Or how does the prospect of his having done business with Lionel de Bradenham effect our understanding of the tilling of the Half Acre, or Will's inquisition about labor by Conscience and Reason? Bradenham, after all, was a justice of the Statute of Laborers and some of his troubles in the 1350s appear to have been related to his attempts to enforce that law. Or, to turn to a subject more directly related to the thesis of this paper, we might ask,

---

<sup>124</sup> The last Bohun Earl of Essex died in 1372, but his widow Joan, maintained the household at Pleshey for many years. This Joan, *née* Fitzalan, was a remarkable character. Not only was she a renowned patron of artists and books, she was also, as mother-in-law of Henry IV and grandmother of Henry V, a figure of tremendous prestige. For information on Joan as a literary patron, see Karen Jambeck, "Patterns of Women's Literary Patronage: England, 1200-ca. 1475" in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, June Hall McCash, ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 228-265. Lady Joan appears also to have been highly capable of navigating the sometimes dangerous world of magnatial interest in the Ricardian era. One of her brothers was Richard Fitzalan, the Appellant Earl of Arundel, who was executed in 1397 by Richard II. Another was Thomas Arundel, Bishop of Ely and later Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom she had a close relationship. See Jennifer Ward, *English Noblewomen in the Later Middle Ages* (New York: Longman, 1992), 102. Knowing this, it is interesting to speculate what life might have been like for William Langland, were this the noble household he served. In light of Adams's assertion that Langland needed a noble patron for protection, one could argue that Lady Joan may have served in this capacity even better than the 12<sup>th</sup> Earl of Warwick.

what in this background sheds light on Langland's relationship to reform? The answer that comes most readily to mind is his experience as a pastor.

With the "new Langland biography" we are no longer confined to a perspective that sees Langland as a poor clerk in London, doing clerical odd jobs in order to get by. Instead, what we have is the portrait of a man who, for nearly twenty years, was occupied with the cure of souls. Exercise of the pastoral office does not necessarily make one into a reformer, but as we saw in Chapter Two, there is a close relationship between the two. Furthermore, it is not difficult to imagine how the Langlandian Lollardy of Chapter One might have emerged from the need to model Christ-like behavior for people in the parishes. Here one is able to point to a distinct difference between the backgrounds of Wyclif and Langland and see how each may have developed a tendency to favor revolution versus reform. In the case of Wyclif, his orientation is primarily on the university and the court. One can see how it might be easier for him to advocate for the sweeping changes that would usher in a true and godly nation when the necessary processes are confined largely to the mind, or when one has access to a prince with the power to impose those changes from above.<sup>125</sup> With Langland, the situation is different. As a pastor in the parishes, the betterment of the church runs up against the hard reality of human weakness, and as such, he seems less

---

<sup>125</sup> Admittedly, Wyclif did serve some time as a parish priest and he wrote a short treatise on the pastoral office. He was made rector of Fillingham in 1361, but it is unlikely that he went there often, given the fact that it was in Lincolnshire and he was Master of Balliol at that time. In 1362 he was granted the benefice of Aust at Westbury-on-Trym, making him exactly the sort of pluralist he would excoriate later in his career. He received the living of Ludgershall in 1368, which was closer to Oxford, so he may have spent more time there. He became rector of Lutterworth in 1374 and retained that post until his death in 1384. It is difficult to say how much attention the parish would have received, but the fact that these were the years of his great controversies suggest that that his attention was elsewhere. For a brief summary of Wyclif's career, see Lahey, *John Wyclif*, 3-31. G.R. Evans suggests that Wyclif's brief time at Fillingham was "probably the longest time until the end of his life [that] he was actually performing the duties that went with the cure of souls." I think her inference "that Wyclif did not find parish life completely satisfying" is a fair one. See G.R. Evans, *John Wyclif: Myth & Reality* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press Academic, 2005), 93-94.

inclined to impose than to persuade. In fact, Langland's pastoral perspective appears to be very much in line with what we saw from Austin Canons in Chapter Two. If one sets aside the question of soteriology, and reads *Piers Plowman* without notions of semi-Pelagianism in mind, one can better appreciate the extent of Langland's "spiritual kinship" with the Augustinians, and see how closely they are connected on the issue of pastoral care. In the next chapter, through a reading of *Piers Plowman*, we will investigate the manner in which pastoral Augustinianism appears to have influenced Langland and his understanding of reform.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PASTORAL LANGLAND AND LANGLANDIAN PASTORS

Langland's theology has commonly been characterized as semi-Pelagian. However, an examination of the evidence indicates that this characterization is based on an oversimplified view of Augustinianism. A rereading of the episode of Trajan, one of the key pieces of evidence for Langland's semi-Pelagianism, suggests not only that his soteriology has been misunderstood, but that indications of pastoral Augustinianism have been missed as well. Turning to other areas in the poem we see evidence for an understanding of the pastor that resonates with elements of Augustinian reform. One of these involves the process of individual reform, as Piers Plowman is transformed from a flawed, natural man into the likeness of the apostles. Though this transformation has long been recognized, the depth of the change has not. Langland also seems to have valued Augustine's ecclesiology, seeing it as a way to explore the idea of church reform. He uses the idea of the *ecclesia peregrinans* as a means of emphasizing the importance of a pastor in the process of corporate reform. Though Langland's poem was well known in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England, we have no way of discerning how his work might have been received among those who embraced the pastoral perspective of Augustinian reform. We can, however, show that *Piers Plowman* was likely to have been used by an associate of the Austin Canons in the cure of souls.

### An Alternate Augustinianism

In his 1988 contribution to John Alford's *Companion to Piers Plowman*, Robert Adams states that "it seems fair to report that the most intensive and thorough recent work, covering a wider range of the poem's issues, [favors] a Langland who was roughly speaking, semi-Pelagian."<sup>1</sup> While this is largely true, a majority of those readings suffer from some of the imprecision about Augustinianism that was dealt with in Chapter Two.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly true of Adams's own contribution to the debate, "Piers's Pardon and Langland's Semi-Pelagianism," written in 1983.<sup>3</sup> In this influential and still widely cited article, Adams defines Augustinianism as consisting of "total depravity of the human will, double predestination completely uncaused, and grace that irresistibly leads the elect—and only the elect—to beatitude."<sup>4</sup> The alternate to this position is semi-Pelagianism, which he characterizes as anything that "repudiates key elements of the authentic Augustinian position" by emphasizing "the role of free will so far as to overshadow any theoretical statements he may make about the need for the divine concursus in human decisions."<sup>5</sup> Despite the historical (and Augustinian) understanding of prevenient grace, which while originating in God, makes human free will possible, Langland's theology of salvation has principally been seen in terms of these anti- and semi-Pelagian poles.<sup>6</sup> This stark binary

---

<sup>1</sup> See Robert Adams, "Langland's Theology" in *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, 96.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the more significant readings that tend toward a "Pelagian" Langland include Pamela Gradon, "Trajanus Redivivus: Another Look at Trajan in *Piers Plowman*," in Douglas Grey and E.G. Stanley, eds., *Middle English Studies Presented to Norman Davis*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 93-114; Janet Coleman, *Piers Plowman and the Moderns*, (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1981); and James Simpson, *Piers Plowman: An Introduction to the B-Text* (London: Longman, 1990). A notable exception to the trend is Britton Harwood, *Piers Plowman and the Problem of Belief* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Robert Adams, "Piers's Pardon and Langland's Semi-Pelagianism," *Traditio* 39 (1983), 367-418.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 383.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 371.

<sup>6</sup> This is largely due to the influence of Adams, whose article is well versed in the primary sources and cogently argued. That said, his definition of Augustinianism is excessively narrow, and his definition of semi-Pelagianism (as essentially everything else) is far too wide. In this respect he is not unlike the

was exposed, however, by David Aers in his 2009 monograph, *Salvation and Sin: Augustine, Langland, and Fourteenth-Century Theology*. There he argues that both sides have essentially misunderstood both Augustine and Langland's poem. He writes:

Proponents of the "Augustinian" commitments of *Piers Plowman* tended to have a version of Augustine that was restricted to his emphasis on the ravages of sin and the necessity of grace to enable man to do good. No attempt was made by these scholars to explore the rich theological contexts to which Augustine's account of sin belonged: its Christology, its Trinitarianism, and its ecclesiology. This absence was mirrored in the version of Augustine propagated by those who opposed "Augustinian" readings of Langland's work.<sup>7</sup>

Aers's observation serves to clear space for the sort of alternate forms of doctrinal Augustinianism envisioned in Chapter Two. This is true even on the subject of soteriology, where, in exploring what he calls the "rich theological contexts" of Augustine's own work, Aers demonstrates that there are "Augustinian" alternatives to the hard predestinarianism that appears in a great deal of *Piers Plowman* scholarship.

One of the most important things Aers does is give us a more nuanced understanding of Augustine. For example, Augustine is not simply a theologian of divine power and God's eternal decree. He is also one who emphasizes over and over the fact that God took upon himself "the form of a servant," and became "obedient unto death," and now seeks his people through the mediations of the church.<sup>8</sup> This is a facet of Augustine that is often absent in the writings of those who argue for a semi-Pelagian Langland. Aers further points out the extent to which Augustine sees salvation as a complex process of

---

contemporary Reformed pastor and controversialist, R.C. Sproul, who even sees Arminianism (a Reformed theology that ascribes a significant role to prevenient grace) as little more than Pelagianism, thinly disguised. In essence, Sproul leaves anyone to the left of Calvin on issues of "absolute depravity" and "double predestination" (Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, and most other non-Reformed Protestants) in the same semi-Pelagian boat. See R.C. Sproul, *What is Reformed Theology?: Understanding the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 180.

<sup>7</sup> Aers, *Salvation and Sin*, 84.

<sup>8</sup> Philippians, 2:7-8.

calling, seeking, and patient conversion of the soul. Thus, while “the initiative of divine agency” is “prevenient and pervasive,” it also “addresses human desires and elicits human agency.”<sup>9</sup> In this model of “double agency,” whereby man is both called and calls out to God, there is no question of grace being “an irresistible power, extrinsic to the human will [and] overwhelming it.”<sup>10</sup> Instead, grace is intrinsic, informing and supporting the human will as both source and guide. Furthermore, it is designed to come to us through human mediations. From this we are meant to understand that “learning from others within the Christian community is...training in humility” and it is only “the demonic pride that is learned in the earthly city [that] seeks to persuade people that...Christians do not need human mediations of the Word.”<sup>11</sup> Aers sees these horizontal workings of grace as essential to understanding the Augustinian underpinnings of the poem, a point he makes with particular clarity in his interpretation of the section of the poem most cited as evidence of Langland’s semi-Pelagianism—the episode of Trajan.

### The Truþe of Troianus

In Passus IX of the B-text, Will and Scripture are engaged in a debate about the process of salvation.<sup>12</sup> Will has just concluded, through a rather strained feudal analogy, that because he is baptized he must therefore must be saved, when the discussion is interrupted by a character who shouts, “Ye, baw for bokes,” and proclaims himself to be

---

<sup>9</sup> Aers, *Salvation and Sin*, 15.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Chronologically speaking, this is the second recension of the poem, datable to post-1377. One of the more contentious subjects in Langland studies is the order and dating of the texts. Though Skeat’s traditional A/B/C progression is still generally accepted, there are some vigorous dissenters. I am assuming here that the A-text came first, and that the traditional date of c. 1370 is correct. For a summary of the conventional division and dating of the three versions see George Kane, “The Text,” in *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, 175-200. I will be using the B-text for the purposes of discussion in this chapter.

one “broken out of helle.”<sup>13</sup> This is the Trajan, who according to the *Legenda Aurea*, was released from the pains of eternal torment when Pope Gregory the Great, contemplating stories of the Emperor’s justice and good works, was moved to pray for his soul.<sup>14</sup> The subject of Trajan was a vexed one for the theologians of the Middle Ages, as it seemed to admit salvation outside the church. Though some churchmen offered embellishments that were designed to give the account an orthodox slant, the basic storyline seemed to lead to a Pelagian end—that is, the notion that man could be saved by good deeds alone.<sup>15</sup> In turning to the poem, the words that Langland puts in Trajan’s mouth certainly seem to suggest such a conclusion:

I Troianus, a trewe knyzt, take witnessse at a pope  
How I was ded and dampned to dwellen in pyne  
For an vncristene creature; clerkes wite þe soþe  
That al þe clergie under Crist ne myzte me cracche fro helle  
But oonliche love and leautee and my lawful domes. (Passus XI.141-147)

This emphasis on the moral capacity of man appears to be confirmed by the anonymous speaker of line 154:

---

<sup>13</sup> Will argues that just as churls can’t make charters or sell chattel without leave of their lords, neither can Christians dispose of their salvation, since by virtue of baptism, they belong to God. B-text, XI.127-135; 140. All quotes from the B-text are taken from William Langland, *Piers Plowman: The B version; Will’s visions of Piers Plowman, do-well, do-better and do-best*, George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson, eds., (London: Athlone Press, 1975).

<sup>14</sup> The *Legenda Aurea* was a compilation of saints’ lives made in the mid-thirteenth century by the Dominican friar, Jacobus de Voragine. Its accounts are a lively and often fanciful, as part of its intent was to give medieval preachers the *exempla* and *curiosa* that Wycliffites so despised. For the story of Trajan, see Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, William Granger Ryan, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 178.

<sup>15</sup> Jacobus reports several of these. “Some have said Trajan was restored to life, and in this life merited grace and pardon.... There are others who have said that Trajan’s soul was not simply freed from being sentenced to eternal punishment, but that his sentence was suspended for a time, namely, until the Day of Judgment. Others have held that Trajan’s punishment was assessed to him *sub conditione* as to place and mode of torment, the condition being that sooner or later Gregory would pray that through the grace of Christ there would be some change of place or mode. Still others... [say] that Trajan’s soul was not delivered from hell and given a place in heaven, but was simply freed from the tortures of hell. Then there are others who explain that eternal punishment is twofold, consisting first in the pain of sense and the second in the pain of loss.... Thus Trajan’s punishment would have been remitted as to the first pain but retained as to the second.” *Ibid.*, 179.

Lo! Ye lordes, what leautee dide by an Emperour of Rome  
That was an vncristene creature, as clerkes fyndeþ in bokes:  
Nouȝt þoruȝ preire of a pope but for his pure truþe  
Was þat Sarsen saued, as Seint Gregorie bereþ witnessse. (Passus XI.154-157)

These passages are taken by the proponents of a semi-Pelagian Langland to be a reflection of the poet's own views, but Aers sees things in a different way. While admitting that the issue of Pelagianism is at the heart of the episode, he sees Trajan's appearance as offering a cautionary perspective. Trajan, after all, has appeared at precisely the moment where Will lapses into error on the nature of baptism. The function of this interruption, then, is not to advocate semi-Pelagian soteriology, but to call into question Will's misplaced confidence by offering an exception to the rule. If Trajan could be saved without the benefit of baptism, is the converse not possible as well? Could those who have been baptized not also end up being damned?<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Aers sees Trajan's main function as revealing "the unconfessed heart of...semi-Pelagianism" through "its lack of attention to Christology and the consequences of sin."<sup>17</sup> In other words, Trajan's "jaunty confidence" and the fact that he appears wholly unchanged by his deliverance from hell, is meant to serve as a critique of Will's misplaced trust in the mere mechanics of baptism.<sup>18</sup> Nowhere does the appearance of Trajan address the true purpose of grace, which is, through an infusion of faith, hope, and charity, to transform the sinner into the likeness of Christ. As Aers perceptively notes, this is a striking departure from the theme of penitence that runs through the poem:

---

<sup>16</sup> This is, essentially, Paul's warning to the Corinthians. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:1-6).

<sup>17</sup> Aers, *Salvation and Sin*, 85.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

Despite his sojourn in hell, and his miraculous delivery, [Trajan] has no sense of human frailty, of human neediness, of human dependencies. Above all, and most bizarrely in terms of the poem in which he appears, he has absolutely no sense of any need for forgiveness, let alone of a community embodying forgiveness. There is no indication that he could join Wille's contemplation of human suffering... Nor does he show any inkling of the grateful, joyful humility that Wille manifests after witnessing Christ's crucifixion and harrowing of hell... In fact, his speech shows a striking lack of humility, a lack of any understanding of the need for reconciliation with God.<sup>19</sup>

Aers's point about the importance of community opens up further avenues for consideration in that it reminds us that there is another moral agent in the story of Trajan. This would be Gregory, who in the *Legenda Aurea*, bears primary responsibility for the emperor's release from hell.<sup>20</sup>

While some critics have believed Langland modified his source to minimize Gregory's role, I believe the passage cited in support of this (i.e. the words of the anonymous speaker in lines 154-157) is ambiguous.<sup>21</sup> An alternative interpretation depends on the manner of reading of line 156. The phrase "for his pure truþe" could be seen as referring to the state of the Emperor's soul, and thus supportive of Trajan in his denial of Gregory's role. However, it could just as easily be applied to the qualities of charity and compassion displayed by Gregory. If this is the case, the meaning of the passage is exactly the opposite. It is not a commentary on Trajan's goodness, but on the

---

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>20</sup> In the *Legenda Aurea*, Gregory faced divine reprimand for praying for the salvation of an unbaptized heathen, thus putting God in the position of having to go outside of his self-imposed limitations and exercise his *potentia absoluta*. Medieval theologians divided God's power into two categories, his *potentia ordinaria*, by which they meant his commitment to the order, which he as creator, had established, and his *potentia absoluta*, or the range of possibilities that he, as an omniscient being, comprehended, but chose not to actualize. A useful introduction to these concepts in medieval theology can be found in chapter two of Gijssbert van den Brink, *Almighty God: A Study of the Doctrine of Divine Omnipotence*, (Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1993), 68-91.

<sup>21</sup> "Though...Trajan acknowledges Gregory's involvement and admits that what he received was grace, he sharply contrasts his mode of deliverance to the use of intercessory masses for sinful deceased Christians and still manages to emphasize that the central factor was his own living in truth. Lest there be any ambiguity, even Gregory's restricted role seems denied in the anonymous speaker's comment following Trajan's intervention." Adams, "Piers's Pardon," 390.

attributes of Gregory. It was not through the *prayer* of the pope, but through the pope's *pure truth*—that is, his pious compassion that the deed was done. In fact, the lines immediately after the passage cited above would appear to support such an interpretation:

Wel ou3t ye lordes þat lawes kepe þis lesson haue in mynde  
And on Troianus truþe to þenke, and do truþe to þe peple. (Passus XI.158-159)

Though Trajan's own "truþe" is mentioned, the emphasis here is on the need for lords to recognize this quality in their inferiors, and then show compassion, or do "truþe," to them. What this reading suggests then, is that the point of the anonymous speaker is not so much to imply that the emperor won salvation of his own accord, but to remind those in authority that they should look to Gregory's Christ-like example, and intercede on behalf of those in their charge.<sup>22</sup> In short, what we have here is an illustration of Augustine's view on grace as a gift made manifest through human mediations. In the context of soteriology, such an understanding leads away from a Pelagian emphasis on the natural and individual abilities of man, and instead points to the necessity of a community and an intercessor.<sup>23</sup> The fact that Gregory was seen as the model Christian pastor adds credence to this interpretation.

Gregory's reputation as the consummate shepherd was built on two pillars. In his own day, his care for his flock was seen as exemplary, but in terms of posterity, his *Liber Regulae Pastoralis* became the seminal work on pastoral care for the Western church. In the *Regulae Pastoralis* he stresses over and over again the need for a pastor to be an

---

<sup>22</sup> While it is possible to read the phrase, "lordes þat lawes kepe" as referring to secular powers, Gregory's presence here reminds us that clergy too are meant to be keepers of the law, in the form of God's commandments. And while proponents of a semi-Pelagian Langland have seen such emphasis as evidence of a works-based faith, to do so misses the importance of the *imitatio Christi* as a fundamental principle of Augustinian reform.

<sup>23</sup> This was Augustine's great objection to Pelagius's views of the natural man; "that nature, construed in Pelagian terms renders the cross of Christ void." Michael Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 74. Cf. also Galatians 2:19-21: "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

example for his flock. A spiritual leader, Gregory writes, “should be first in service, so that by his way of life he might show the laity how to live, and that so the flock (which follows the voice and behavior of its shepherd) may advance all the better by his example than by his words alone.”<sup>24</sup> But setting a good example was not merely sound practical advice. It was essential for the shepherd’s own salvation. As Bernard Green demonstrates, Gregory embraced the mimetic nature of Augustinian reform:

Christ is the teacher whose example is the pattern of how to return to God. Since in his humanity he is the expression of divinity, his words and actions reveal God. He delivers sinners from blindness by his teaching and example. He came as a human being in order to be seen; he wanted to be seen so he would be imitated. Everything he did was for the instruction of humanity. The likeness of God is restored through imitating Christ’s humility and justice and the imitation of Christ delivers us from sin.<sup>25</sup>

So, while on one level the pastor’s striving is for the benefit of the flock, on another, it is part of his own reform *ad imaginem Dei*. This understanding of the office of a pastor is key, not only in terms of recognizing Langland’s Augustinian commitments, but because it seems to reflect a realistic understanding of *docere verbo et exemplo*. If we are allowed to believe that William Langland was also the parson of Easthorpe, Redgrave, and Newton, this makes sense. Assuming he took his duties seriously (and if the effort he put forth on his poem is any indication of his commitment to the faith, we have every reason to suppose that he did) he would no doubt have known that, try as he might, his earthly *exemplum* would never be perfect. Rather his striving was part of a communal process, one by which both he and his flock were drawing closer to God.

---

<sup>24</sup> Pope Gregory I, *The Book of Pastoral Rule*, George Demacopoulos, trans. (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2007), 151.

<sup>25</sup> See Bernard Green, “The Theology of Gregory the Great: Christ, Salvation, and the Church” in *A Companion to Gregory the Great*, Bronwen Neil and Matthew Dal Santo, eds. (Brill: Leiden, 2013), 151.

We will explore this notion more fully later in this chapter, but first it would help to consider where this sense of pastoral humility comes out in the poem. While one could point to various passages that criticize the shortcomings of clerics, I think Langland's understanding is most fully revealed in an *exemplum*; that is Piers Plowman, the character who more than any other in the poem, embodies the role of a pastor. We see this when he is first introduced and is telling people the way to find Holy Truth, and we see it as he leaves the poem, sowing the seeds of the Gospel with the help of his evangelistic plow. While these images are largely positive, he is not meant to be seen as perfect, especially not at first. To understand why, we need to consider the episode that John Lawlor has termed "the hinge upon which the poem turns."<sup>26</sup> That is, Piers's tearing of the pardon in Passus VII.

### *Fuit Agricola*

The episode of the pardon takes place in what is known as the Second Vision (Passūs V-VII). There Will has fallen asleep and returned to the scene with which the poem opened—a field lodged in between a "tour on a toft" and a "deep dale bynepe," with "a dungeon þerinne" (Prologue 13-19). The people who inhabit this field have just heard Reason's sermon, in which they were exhorted to confess their sins and seek holy Truth. The problem is that none of them know the way. After meeting a palmer, who is no help, a plowman pops into the poem claiming that he is a servant of Truth and knows him "as

---

<sup>26</sup> John Lawlor, *Piers Plowman: An Essay in Criticism* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1962), 298. In addition to Adams's article mentioned above, influential studies of the pardon scene include Robert W. Frank, *Piers Plowman and the scheme of salvation; an interpretation of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 23-33; Elizabeth Kirk, *The Dream Thought of Piers Plowman* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1972), 80-100; James Simpson, *Piers Plowman: an Introduction to the B-text*, 71-85; and Britton Harwood, *Piers Plowman and the Problem of Belief* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

kyndely as clerke doþ hise bokes” (Passus V.537-538). This is Piers, and he tells the people that he will gladly guide them to Truth’s dwelling, but that he has a half acre that must be tilled and sown before he can show them the way. The people offer to help with the work, so Piers takes on a new role as overseer, instructing the people to engage in their respective tasks, and setting up what is obviously intended to be a model for an ideal society. Everything goes well at the start, but when some refuse to do work, the model society begins to break down. At this point, Truth hears of Piers’s endeavor, and “purchases... a pardoun a pena & a culpa for hym and for hise heires euermoore after” (Passus VII.3). The pardon arrives and its finer points are described in great detail. There is room for nearly everyone under its provisions, so long as they uphold their duty. When a priest asks to see the wording, though, Piers unfolds the pardon to reveal two lines from the Athanasian Creed—“those who have done well shall go into life eternal; while those who have done evil shall depart into eternal fire.”<sup>27</sup> The priest states that what Piers has is no pardon at all. Then in one of the most controversial events in the entire work, Piers tears the document in half and swears to cease his sowing and be not so busy about his sustenance anymore. He and the priest oppose one another on the field, and the dreaming Will finally awakes.

There is an obvious disconnect here. How can one who has been described as a servant of Truth engage in what is at best an act of vandalism, but at worst an outright rejection of the instrument sent by Truth to secure the salvation of man?<sup>28</sup> The response

---

<sup>27</sup> The Athanasian Creed, or *Quicumque Vult*, is primarily a statement of Trinitarian faith. The Creed and its history are discussed at length in J.N.D. Kelly, *The Athanasian Creed* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1964).

<sup>28</sup> Robert Adams uses the tearing of the pardon as part of his evidence for Langland’s semi-Pelagianism. He believes that Langland means the words of the pardon to be taken in the sense of *redde quod debes* and suggests that Piers’s tearing is related to the priest’s role as *detractor*. I obviously disagree with Adams in his characterization of Langland as semi-Pelagian and do not see this scene as particularly strong evidence

of many critics has been to read the scene typologically, and use Biblical parallels to cast Piers in a more positive light.<sup>29</sup> One of the more influential readings of this sort was that of Mary Carruthers (Schroeder) in 1970. In an article published in *Philological Quarterly* she makes a compelling case for seeing Piers as a “type” of Moses, who in coming down from Mount Sinai and seeing the idolatry of the Israelites, broke the stone tablets that had been inscribed with the Law.<sup>30</sup> She goes on to strengthen her case by citing “four literal parallels” that the two figures share. First, “the two principles, both lawgivers and leaders of folk are extremely angry; second their anger is occasioned by the misguided and stupid religious counsel of a trusted priest; third their anger causes them to destroy documents of supreme value; and finally the destruction of the written words in no way negates or rejects

---

for it. Rather I see the tearing as a figural reenactment of the fraction at the Eucharist, which in turn points to the Atonement. On this matter, I believe Elizabeth Kirk’s observation, made over forty years ago, to be helpful. “Paul continually reminds the Romans what brings transformation about is a psychological event within each man which corresponds to and depends on the crucifixion of Christ, in which the resentment of the righteous man Christ’s claims, superseding his whole view of human responsibility, destroys him; and this ‘death,’ the Atonement, is what releases man from bondage—just as in history God acted, man destroyed what he sent, and that the destructive act transformed man. [Similarly Langland] has Piers enact an analogous psychological sequence whereby man vents his resentment and God’s transcendence superiority on God’s imminent manifestation himself (the pardon) by destroying the manifestation, thereby releasing its energies.” See Kirk, *Dream Thought*, 94.

<sup>29</sup> A.V.C. Schmidt is helpful on the subject of typology in the poem. He suggests that Langland’s method is primarily allegorical and comes in three types. The first, simplest, and least common in the poem is the “symbol-allegory,” by which he means “an object that has a further, non-literal meaning.” Examples in the passage above would be the “tour on the toft” signifying heaven and the dungeon beneath standing for hell; the field symbolizing the world, and its inhabitants, mankind. More common is Langland’s use of “personification-allegory.” These are “abstract ideas personified as agents, mental faculties like Reason, activities like Study, ethical and religious ideas like Holy Church or Patience.” The third, and most interesting category for our purposes here, is that of the “figural allegory.” By this Schmidt means a “character or event that foreshadows or recalls another.” In this fashion figural allegory is “related to the method of Bible interpretation called ‘typology’, which discerned a reciprocal relationship of prefiguration and fulfilment between types and anti-types (whether events or persons or things) in the Old and New Testaments.” The character of Piers is probably the most complex of these figural allegories, functioning as both type and anti-type, and as we shall see below, often at the same time. Yet these figural complexities are what enable Piers’s development across the course of the poem. William Langland, *Piers Plowman: A New Translation of the B-text*, A.V.C. Schmidt, trans. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), xxxvi; and A.V.C. Schmidt, “Langland: *Piers Plowman*” in *The Cambridge History of English Poetry*, Michael O’Neill, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 68.

<sup>30</sup> “And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it” (Exodus 32:19-20).

the promises contained in them.”<sup>31</sup> This positive view of Piers is amplified in Margaret Goldsmith’s 1981 offering, *The Figure of Piers Plowman: The Image on the Coin*. Though Goldsmith clearly agrees that Piers in the pardon scene is reminiscent of Moses, she also draws a comparison between Piers and his New Testament namesake. This comes not just in the fact that “the Pardon granted to Piers invites comparison with the power of the keys,” but also in the arc of Peter’s development from the Gospels to the Acts.<sup>32</sup> Noting that “Peter’s progress in spiritual understanding and faith is more fully chronicled in the gospels than that of any other apostle,” she concludes that “Langland would not lack for a model,” and if we think of “Piers as similar to the loyal but unilluminated Peter, who initially failed to understand that he would be given a New Law,” we can explain much about his behavior with the pardon.<sup>33</sup> After all, Peter at first misunderstood the concept of a Messiah who would come in the form of a servant and offer himself as a sacrifice on the cross.<sup>34</sup> Thus one may also see Piers as a developing Christian, one who makes mistakes at times, but is still moving in generally the right direction.

I think both of these associations are essentially correct, but there is a third figure lurking in the background, one who associates Piers with weakness and sin. He is a character from the Old Testament, who like Piers, commits an act of shocking violence after an apparent rejection by God. This character is, of course, Cain. Though a Piers/Cain comparison runs contrary to the mainly positive view of Langland’s creation in the modern

---

<sup>31</sup> Mary Carruthers Schroeder, "The Tearing of the Pardon," *Philological Quarterly* XLIX (1970), 10.

<sup>32</sup> Margaret Goldsmith, *The Figure of Piers Plowman: The Image on the Coin* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981), 34.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35.

<sup>34</sup> One could draw further connections between Piers and Peter than this in an episode from the Gospels that Goldsmith does not mention; that is when Peter, in an act of violence not unlike the tearing of the pardon, cuts off the chief priest’s servant’s ear. This incident is recorded in all four of the gospels. Only John, however, names Peter as the perpetrator. “Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus” (John 18:10).

scholarly tradition, under close examination, a number of similarities appear. These begin with the shared occupation. The Vulgate says Cain *fuit...agricola*, or as the 1395 Wycliffite Bible puts it, he was an “erthe tilyere.” In fact, Cain is probably the most noted (or notorious) agriculturalist in the Bible. This is an important consideration, since the farmer and his plow were in no way universal symbols for virtue in the later Middle Ages.<sup>35</sup> The negative view is summed up by Langland’s near contemporary, the Spanish Franciscan, Alvarus Pelagius, who writes, “even as they plough and dig the earth all day long, so they become altogether earthy; they lick the earth, they eat the earth, they speak the earth; in the earth they have reposed all their hopes, nor do they care a jot for the heavenly substance that shall remain.”<sup>36</sup> For those whose primary acquaintance with medieval plowmen comes in the positive expressions of Langland and Chaucer, it might be tempting to dismiss such an assessment as a Continental aberration. However, as Jill Mann has shown in her work on medieval estates satire, the plowman in medieval England could be viewed in a similarly negative light.

Mann sees Chaucer’s plowman as an inversion of common stereotypes about the peasantry, and using this idea along with other texts in support, offers a characterization of the plowman as quarrelsome, avaricious, lazy, anti-clerical, and contemptuous of the church.<sup>37</sup> These characteristics were most pronounced in the peasant’s perceived failure to

---

<sup>35</sup> For positive portrayals of plowmen, see Stephen Barney “The Plowshare of the Tongue: The Progress of a Symbol from the Bible to Piers Plowman,” *Medieval Studies* 35 (1973): 261-93.

<sup>36</sup> Alvarus was a scholastic theologian in the tradition of Duns Scotus. During his life he held bishoprics in Portugal and Spain, but spent a good deal of time in Avignon, where he was a strident defender of papal rights. See his entry in *Medieval Iberia: An Encyclopedia*, E. Michael Gerli, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 86-87. This passage is cited by Barbara Johnson in *Reading Piers Plowman and The Pilgrim’s Progress: Reception and the Protestant Reader* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 73-74.

<sup>37</sup> The classic discussion of the role of the Plowman in estates satire is in Jill Mann, *The Literature of Estates Satire: The Literature of Social Classes and the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) 67-72.

tithe, an act of ingratitude and disrespect that was likened unto Cain's inadequate sacrifice in sermons and moral treatises.<sup>38</sup> Such a connection was reinforced in drama where Cain was regularly portrayed as a miserly and foul-mouthed plowman.<sup>39</sup> Rosemary Woolf gives an example of such behavior from the Towneley cycle, where Cain's "opening dialog with Abel consists of little more than scatological abuse," and his meagre offering of two sheaves of grain is characterized as just enough "as he myght wipe his ars with."<sup>40</sup> And while this particular portrayal may seem to be straying a bit far from incident on the half acre, there is an element that relates directly. Twice in the course of the pageant (which incidentally ends with Cain pronouncing a pardon upon himself) Cain and his servant espouse what Anna Baldwin terms "tit for tat morality:" first in saying "with the same mesure and weght / that I boro will I qwite," and again in arguing that since God "gaf me none of his / no more wil I gif hym of this."<sup>41</sup> One could argue that these passages constitute a perverted version of the words in Piers's pardon from the Athanasian Creed.

Further similarities arise when we compare the episodes themselves. Though the actual violence of the agriculturalist against something that is written on the skin of a sheep

---

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 71. Elizabeth Kirk argues along these lines as well, suggesting that image of a virtuous plowman was a novel understanding, running against the grain of contemporary portrayals of laborers, villeins, and other such rustics. See "Langland's Plowman and the Recreation of Fourteenth Century Religious Metaphor," *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 2 (1988), 1-21.

<sup>39</sup> Two mystery cycles which are roughly contemporary to *Piers Plowman*, and very likely antedate it, are the York Mystery Cycle and the Chester Mystery Cycle. See *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, David Mills, ed. (East Lansing, 1992), 40-48, and *The York Plays*, Richard Beadle, ed. (London: E. Arnold, 1982), 74-78. Accounts addressing Cain as a plowman can be found in Martin Stephens, "Illusion and Reality in Medieval Drama," *College English* 32 (1971), 448-484; and Bennett Brockman, "Cain and Abel in the Chester Creation: Narrative Tradition and Dramatic Potential," in *The Chester Mystery Cycle—A Casebook*, Kevin Harty, ed. (New York & London, 1993), 103-118.

<sup>40</sup> Rosemary Woolf, *The English Mystery Plays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 127. The Towneley (or Wakefield) cycle incorporates elements of the York cycle and may date to the first half of the fifteenth century. It was revised by the Wakefield Master sometime after 1460. See Peter Meredith, "The Towneley Cycle" in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, Richard Beadle, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 134-162.

<sup>41</sup> This observation comes in a book for undergraduates, but the insight is an important one. Anna Baldwin, *An Introduction to Medieval English Literature: 1300-1485* (London: Palgrave, 2016), 30.

is perhaps the most obvious parallel, there are others in the background. In Genesis, Cain is described as being *iratusque est...vehementer*, or “exceedingly angry” when his sacrifice is deemed unworthy, while Piers, as we have already seen, responded to the words of the pardon with a fit of “pure tene.” Though this latter expression has most often been construed as meaning something like “righteous anger,” and compared to that which was felt by Christ when he drove the money changers out of the temple, there is an alternative reading.<sup>42</sup> While “pure” can be suggestive of cleanness or righteousness, it can also be used in the emphatic sense, as a sort of intensifier.<sup>43</sup> Thus “pure tene” could also be described as unadulterated anger, an emotional state which, though very much in line with Piers’s actions on the half acre, is less flattering than “righteous indignation.” The other occurrence of the phrase in the poem would seem to support such a reading:

Now by þe peril of my soule! Quod Piers al in pure tene,  
 But ye aries þe raper and rape yow to werche  
 Shal no greyn þat here groweþ glade yow at need;  
 And þouȝ ye deye for doel þe deuel haue þat recche! (Passus VI.117-120)

Not only does Piers here swear by the peril of his soul, he also condemns to the devil the wretch who will not work. This is not exactly a model display of Christ-like patience. Nor is the fact that he allows himself to be drawn into an argument with the priest, who provides the poem with what is best described as a loose translation of the pardon. Yet this too leads to associations of Piers with Cain. The Latin reads:

---

<sup>42</sup> A representative example can be found in Michael Kuczynski, “The Psalms and Social Action in Late Medieval England” in *The Place of the Psalms in the Intellectual Culture in the Middle Ages*, Nancy van Deusen, ed., (Albany: The State University of New York Press, 1999), 210. “It is not Piers’s anger or frustration that is so notable—this, after all seems the equivalent of righteous indignation...” The background scholarship related to the pardon scene is discussed by John Alford in “The Design of the Poem” in *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, 41-44.

<sup>43</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives a number of medieval examples of this usage, including one from the near contemporary alliterative poem, *The Destruction of Troy*, lines 1815-1818: “When Pelleus persayuit þis in a proude yre, sodenly he sourdit into soure greme, and Priam reprouyt as a pure fole, with hethyng and hate as hegh words.” See George A. Panton and David Donaldson, eds., *The Gest Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy*, EETS 39 (London: N. Trübner & Co., 1874), 60.

*Et qui bona egerunt ibunt in vitam eternam;  
Qui vero mala in ignem eternum...*  
[And those who have done good shall go into life eternal;  
While those who have done evil shall depart into eternal fire...]<sup>44</sup>

Which the priest glosses as:

Do wel and haue wel and god shal haue þi soule,  
And do yuel and have yuel, and hope þow noon oþer  
That after þi deef þe deuel shal have þi soule... (B-text, VII.116-118)

As I mentioned above, this is not a particularly accurate translation of the Athanasian Creed. It does, however, correspond fairly closely to God's rebuke to Cain from Genesis 4:7.

*Nonne si bene egeris, recipies?  
Sin autem male, statim in foribus peccatum aderit?*  
[Do you not know that if you do well, you will receive (the like in return)?  
If, however, you do evil, does not sin wait at your door?]<sup>45</sup>

In both the priest's gloss and the Vulgate, the emphasis is on doing well and receiving the like in return. One final similarity between the two is the manner in which each character takes his leave of the scene. Cain's fate is to become *vagus et profugus in terra*, "a vagabond and fugitive on earth," and while Piers's departure is not so grim, he vows to leave his plow to become a wanderer in the world.

This is not the last we see of Piers, of course. He will return later, but only twice. He turns up Passus XVI, where he is attending the Tree of Charity and attempting to save its fruit from the fiend, but his appearance is brief.<sup>46</sup> It is his final appearance that makes

---

<sup>44</sup> This translation and the one of the Vulgate below are mine. For information on the *Quicumque Vult*, see note 27 above.

<sup>45</sup> Most modern versions translate the second half of line one as "be accepted." However, this is most likely the result of checking the Latin against the Hebrew or the Septuagint in the Early Modern Era. The more likely translation of *recipies* in the Middle Ages would have been a form of "to receive." This is the way the passage is translated in the Douay-Rheims: "If thou do well, shalt thou not receive? But if ill, shall not sin forthwith be present at the door?" (Genesis 4:7).

<sup>46</sup> Here he once again strikes out in "pure tene," but this time the object of his anger is the devil, and the instrument with which he delivers his blow is the Son (Passus XVI. 86-94). The context here suggests that

the lasting impression, because we see him in a very different form. When he resurfaces in Passus XIX, he has been transformed, taking on the characteristics of an apostle with the authority to bind and loose sins.<sup>47</sup> We know that this has come about through the agency of Christ, who in taking on Piers's form, has reformed him into his own image.<sup>48</sup> However, if we fail to see the figure of Cain in the background, we fall short of understanding the full scope of Piers's transformation. That is, that the Augustinian dictum—God became man, so that man might become God—applies not just to sinful man, but even to a man as sinful as Cain.<sup>49</sup> And we may also fail to recognize the fact that Langland is telling his readers that the clergy too are victims of the fall. This admission reveals to us how much his outlook differs from that of Wycliffism. Rather than adopting the perspective of the revolutionary, which tends to emphasize the ideal (the pastor should act as *exemplum*), but abandons it when reality does not meet expectations (flawed pastors

---

his “pure tene” is in fact, “righteous anger,” and if we are tracking his transformation, his state is suggestive of the baptized Christian who fights against “the world, the flesh, and the devil.”

<sup>47</sup> Thus haþ Piers power, be his pardon paied,

To byned and vnbynde boþ here and ellis

And assoille men of alle synnes saue of dette one. (Passus XIX.188-190)

<sup>48</sup> This identification first occurs in Passus XVIII, when Piers and Christ are conflated in the figure who rides out to Jerusalem to joust with the fiend. This is the well-known figure of the Christ-knight, discussed in Rosemary Woolf, “The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight in Medieval English Literature,” in *The Review of English Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 49 (Feb., 1962), 1-16. For a discussion of the Christ-knight specific to Langland, see Lawrence Warner, “Jesus the Joust: The Christ Knight and Medieval Theories of Atonement in Piers Plowman and The Round Table,” *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 10 (1996), 129-143. The second, closer identification comes after the Harrowing of Hell in Passus XIX, where Will sees a figure whom he thinks could be Piers, but expresses uncertainty, thinking it might also be Christ. Conscience clarifies, stating that “þo þise arn Piers armes, hise colours and his cote Armure...he þat comeþ so bloody is crist wiþ his cros, conqueror of cristene.” (Passus XIX.12-14). This blurring of Piers and Christ is suggestive of the Augustinian process of imitation leading to transformation. As Morton Bloomfield observed in 1962, “just as Piers begins as a plowman and ends as the Christ-man, man may become through imitation of him like God.” See *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth Century Apocalypse*, 149.

<sup>49</sup> *Factus est Deus homo, ut homo fieret Deus. Ut panem Angelorum manducaret homo, Dominus Angelorum hodie factus est homo.* Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 39. *Sermo CXXVIII, In Natali Domini*, XII. There is a sermon by Ambrose of Milan in which he suggests that God gave Cain a long life to encourage the penance that would lead to his eventual redemption. This theme is repeated in an English sermon dating to c. 1400. Bennett Brockman, “Cain and Abel in the Chester *Creation*: Narrative Tradition and Dramatic Potential,” in *The Chester Mystery Cycle—A Casebook*, Kevin Harty, ed. (New York & London, 1993), 110.

cannot function sacramentally), Langland's understanding is grounded in the reality of human weakness (the pastor is himself a creature subject to sin and undergoing the process of reform).<sup>50</sup> Such an understanding allows Langland to be critical, but stop short of revolution.<sup>51</sup>

As we saw in Chapter One, this sense of patience and the acceptance of limited terrestrial perfectibility is characteristic of reform, but Langland's commitment to these ideals goes beyond the individual and extends to the church at large. We see this in one of the poem's recurring themes—that is the search for Holy Truth. It is not just Piers or Will who are engaged in this quest, but all those who are desirous of salvation. It is in a field full of folk seeking Truth that the process begins, and it is in very much the same context that the process ends. I believe this is a direct reflection of the influence of Augustine, specifically his descriptions of the church in the world as *ecclesia permixta* (made up of both good and evil) and *ecclesia peregrinans* (on pilgrimage towards God). Such an understanding is both pastoral and reformist, in that it allows for temporal imperfection, while at the same time emphasizing both process and goal. To understand Langland's use

---

<sup>50</sup> Here we may recall the Donatist tendencies in Wycliffism that were discussed in Chapter One. This is illustrated in the case of Thomas Compworth, who in 1385 was brought before the authorities for espousing heretical beliefs, including the needlessness of auricular confession. As Maureen Jurkowski has pointed out, Compworth's stance probably arose out of Wyclif's teaching that "the intermediacy of the priest was irrelevant to obtaining God's absolution... [since] he alone knew the sinner's state of contrition," but also that "the putative efficacy of the sacrament was further diminished...by the corrupt state of the clergy who administered it." See "Lollardy in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire: The Two Thomas Compworths," in *Lollards and Their Influence in Late Medieval England*, Fiona Somerset, Jill Havens, Derrick Pitard, eds. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 75.

<sup>51</sup> An excellent example of this comes in the C-text, where Langland has just accused the English bishops and archdeacons of allowing the "caytiftee" of "bad" Lollardy to spread (C-text Passus IX.255-261). As Andrew Cole pointedly observes, were he "to bring the full complement of canon law against these purportedly remiss bishops, he would argue for their removal from office;" yet unlike Wyclif and the Wycliffites, "he does not. Instead, he writes more poetry, which, like the workings of grace described by Aers, is designed not to impose, but to entice. These are his passages on "lunatyk lollardy," (C-text Passus IX.105-138) wherein he lays out a positive vision of discipleship and a model for personal reform. See Cole, *Literature and Heresy*, 44.

of these ideas, we must first review how they are described by Augustine. The place to start is with his great *apologia* for the church, *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos*, more commonly known as the *City of God*.

### *Ecclesia Permixta*

Written in the midst of great turmoil and confusion, *City of God* was intended to provide comfort and hope to those whose faith had been shaken by Alaric's sack of Rome in 410. In the wake of this catastrophe, Christians across the empire seemed to be echoing the sentiments of Jerome, who likened the event to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.<sup>52</sup> This sense of shock is understandable, given that in the hundred years since Constantine's triumph at the Milvian Bridge, there had been a conscious effort by the Christian political elite to show the compatibility of their faith with older notions of *Romanitas*. This fusion of ideas resulted in a civic culture that dovetailed quite well with aspects of Christian theology, so long as the stability of the empire remained intact, but with the Eternal City now in the hands of barbarians, the faith was vulnerable to assertions that it had sapped the empire of its former virtue and strength.<sup>53</sup> Thus, Christians could, in a sense, be held responsible for Rome's demise. It is to this charge initially that Augustine responds.

---

<sup>52</sup> In Letter CXXVII to Principia, Jerome uses the first three verses of Psalm 79 to describe the horror he feels at the news out of the West: "O God, the heathen have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have made Jerusalem an orchard. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them." See Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Series II, Volume VI, Jerome: Letters and Select Works* (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1893), 257.

<sup>53</sup> We see this in the actions ranging from the foundation of a "New [Christian] Rome" at Constantinople, to portrayals of the emperor as a type of earthly savior. See Gerald O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999) 9-10.

In Books I-X he points out that in a fallen world, earthly calamities would always occur, and gives a long list of setbacks and disasters that occurred to Rome while under pagan rule. He then goes on to contrast temporal goods with eternal ones and argues that the city's fall would have been much worse had it not been inhabited by Christians. While such polemic "*contra Paganos*" may have been cold comfort to those who were suffering through the chaos of the post-Roman world, it lays the groundwork for Books XI-XXII, where he introduces and expands upon his principal theme. Drawing inspiration from the imagery of passages like Hebrews 13:14 and Galatians 3:23, Augustine gives his readers a vision of two cities, the *Civitas Terrena*, and the *Civitas Dei*.<sup>54</sup> Both are present on earth and in time, but only the *Civitas Dei* exists in heaven above. Those who love God and follow his commandments are members of the *Civitas Dei*. Because they are merely sojourners here on earth, their citizenship is not of this world and they are not bound to any earthly city. Through this motif of heavenly allegiance, Augustine is able to unyoke the Christian faith from the Roman civic ideal, a connection that had been encouraged since the time of Constantine. Thus while Rome was in many ways a good thing while it lasted, it was not the Christian's true home, and as such, neither its demise, nor any other terrestrial misfortune, should be cause for despair.

This concept of the two cities has a certain resonance with what Oberman defined as "confessional" theology—one is either a citizen of heaven or of earth, a Christian or a pagan, saved or damned—and it lends itself well to the sort of dualistic clarity one sees in the writings of later "confessional" Augustinians. However, Augustine himself forestalls a move in that direction by drawing on a concept first advanced in the days of the Donatist

---

<sup>54</sup> "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come," Galatians 13:14; "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all," Hebrews, 3:23. See Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, 242-243.

controversy. In his commentary on Ticonius' *De Domine Corpore Bipartitio*, Augustine speaks favorably of the term, *ecclesia permixta*, by which he means the society of Christians, both good and bad, who exist here in the world.<sup>55</sup> There is no separation into a true and false church. Elsewhere he uses examples from scripture to bolster this notion of ecclesial heterogeneity; Isaac and Ishmael coexist for a time in Abraham's household, after his wrestling match with God, the Patriarch Jacob is left with a healthy and a crippled leg; in the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares the master allows both plants to grow together until the time of the harvest. Throughout these writings Augustine continually reminds his readers that everyone who is a member of the *ecclesia* shares in the *communio sacramentorum*; it is only those who persist in wickedness who ultimately fail to receive the benefits thereof.<sup>56</sup>

Knowing this background, it is easy to see how such a concept could be laid over the top of Biblical imagery to create an allegory designed to comfort those distraught over the destruction of an earthly city. Babylon and Jerusalem become the *Civitas Terrena* and the *Civitas Dei*. The first is made up of those who love themselves to the contempt of God; the second is made up of those who lose themselves in their love of God. Though they are *permixta* here on earth, they are separated only in the moral sense. The physical sorting will not take place until the Day of Judgment. Until then, the *Civitas Dei* will remain much like the field in the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, having both evil (*mali*) and false (*ficti*) in its midst.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, no one can be certain of his true citizenship. As such, members of the church are counseled to bear the sins of their neighbor, since others have

---

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>56</sup> Joseph Carola *Augustine of Hippo: The Role of the Laity in Ecclesial Reconciliation* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2005), 45-50.

<sup>57</sup> Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, 248.

borne theirs and likely do still.<sup>58</sup> This emphasis on patience with the process of conversion reveals in Augustine a deep pastoral sensitivity. We see it with particular clarity in his exposition on Psalm 54, which would have been read on Wednesday in Holy Week. There he writes:

You must not think that bad people are in this world uselessly, or that God cannot employ them for good purposes. Every bad person is either allowed to live so that he or she may be corrected, or else allowed to live so that through him or her a good person may be put to the proof. Would that those who are a trial to us now might be converted, and then tried along with us! However, as long as they remain the sort of people who put us through our paces we must not hate them, because we never know whether any one of them will persist in his evil way to the very end. It often happens that when you think you have been hating an enemy, you have unwittingly hated a brother or a sister. It is the devil and his angels who are plainly indicated to us by holy scripture as destined for eternal fire. In their case alone may we despair of correction.<sup>59</sup>

Augustine's willingness to suffer the sinfulness of others is characteristic of Langland as well. We see this understanding articulated in Reason's rebuke to Will in Passus XI. There Will has criticized Reason for not acting to stop men and women from engaging in fleshly sin. Reason's response is to tell Will to mind his own business and focus on amending himself, but he expands the perspective to include the vision of God.

Suffraunce is a souerayn virtue, and a swift vengeaunce.  
Who suffreþ moore þan god? quod he; no gome as I leue  
He myzte amende in a Minute while al þat mysstandeþ  
Ac he suffreþ for som mannes goode, so is oure bettre (Passus XI.379-382)

---

<sup>58</sup> As Joseph Carola has recognized: "...the Bishop of Hippo argued for the present necessity of the *societas permixta* against any and all premature attempts to separate saints from sinners. The church's saintly members lived in close proximity with sinners for the sake of the latter's salvation. To expel the sinner would have been to seal his fate outside the church's salvific bonds, but to tolerate him within the community in order to correct him extended to him the constant hope of conversion and reconciliation. Mindful of his own personal history, Augustine reminded the holy faithful that they, too, were converted sinners who should never impede another's journey upon the path of mercy which they themselves had tread. Moreover, the Bishop of Hippo effectively commissioned the converted to preach the word of truth, by which they had been healed, to the unconverted, both inside and outside the *Catholica*. In sum, the *societas permixta* provided the ecclesial context wherein the holy faithful performed their ministerial function of reconciliation." See, *Augustine of Hippo*, 290.

<sup>59</sup> This is from the fourth section of the exposition of Psalm 54. See John Rotelle, ed., *Exposition of the Psalms: 51-72*, Maria Boulding, trans. (Hyde Park: New City Press, 2001), 56.

Here sufferance, or to use its synonym, patience, is shown as being a sovereign virtue, a manifestation of God's mercy that allows man time to amend. It would appear to be the reason that God lets things fall apart, such as the model society from Passus V. This emphasis on patience suggests that Langland sees man's amendment in terms of reform. As we can see in the transformation of Piers, it involves incremental re-formation rather than instantaneous change. In fact, Langland appears to emphasize this connection between patience and the process of reform when Patience personified is shown as a pilgrim in Passus XIII.<sup>60</sup> The resonance between patience and pilgrimage calls to mind Augustine's understanding of man as *viator*, a traveler in the world, but not of the world, an individual who is both journeying alone and as part of the *ecclesia peregrinans*.

### The Pilgrimage of Life

Scripture is full of what one might call the topos of strangeness: Abraham sojourning in Gerar, the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, the psalmist weeping by the waters of Babylon, or the author of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter beseeching his brethren as strangers and pilgrims.<sup>61</sup> The list could go on. There is even a sense of alienation from God, which manifests itself in the intense longing that is so characteristic of the Psalms.<sup>62</sup> It seems only natural, then, that Augustine should frame the Christian life in terms of a quest for God, or more specifically as a type of pilgrimage. In an undated sermon on Luke 10:28,

---

<sup>60</sup> When we meet Patience, he is eating the bread of do-penance (*Agite Penitentiam*) and drinking the draught of perseverance-to-the-end (*Diu perseuerans*) at a meal in Conscience's court. (Passus XIII.49-50)

<sup>61</sup> For Abraham's sojourning, see Genesis 20; the wanderings of the Israelites are chronicled in Exodus and Numbers; Psalm 137 is the complaint of an exile in Babylon, yearning for his homeland; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter is written to the "strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."

<sup>62</sup> Consider, for example, the well-known verses of Psalm 42:1-3: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, where is thy God?"

he writes that we tend toward God's city "like pilgrims, not yet dwelling in it; still on the road, not yet in our fatherland, still in desire, not yet in fruition."<sup>63</sup> This characterization makes sense, given that the imitation of Christ is itself a process, a journey *non pedibus sed moribus*. Thus the individual Christian can be thought of as *homo viator*, a wayfarer, but not a wanderer, because he moves with a purpose towards his goal. But because he has not arrived there, he cannot yet be counted among the *perfecti*. Instead, he must be thought of as *perfectus viator*, one who travels well, but has not yet reached his home.<sup>64</sup> In other words, he is reforming, but is not yet reformed. It is important to note, however, that Augustine did not envision this journey as a "spiritual pilgrimage;" that is, "an introspective and contemplative journey," the sort of imaginative pilgrimage a monk might take in his cell.<sup>65</sup> It is, rather, actual in that involves both movement through time, and the creation (through reformation) of the new man.<sup>66</sup> It can perhaps best be described as a pilgrimage of life.

Yet Augustine also envisioned this individual pilgrimage as a part of a larger process. Drawing on the Pauline understanding of the church as the body of Christ, a body which consists of many members, he expanded the concept to the corporate scale.<sup>67</sup> He expressed this idea through two related images, the *Civitas Dei peregrinans* and the

---

<sup>63</sup> Augustine, Sermon 103 as quoted in Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, 335.

<sup>64</sup> Augustine describes the *perfectus viator* as a wise traveler, and one who sticks to the right road, in a sermon on Philippians. See G.R. Evans, *Augustine on Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 156-158.

<sup>65</sup> Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering the Sacred: The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 114.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* 112.

<sup>67</sup> This idea is derived from Paul's teaching in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.... And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:12-14, 26-27)

*ecclesia peregrinans*, both of which describe the body of Christians journeying through life towards their final end.<sup>68</sup> And though Augustine never envisioned institutional reform in the sense that it was understood in later centuries (that is, in its curial or canonical forms), he does understand the church on pilgrimage to be part of the process by which the Christian community is made whole. We see this in the fact that the idea of the institution as *permixta* applies to the concept of journeying too. As Ladner has pointed out, Augustine attempts to deal with the mystery of iniquity “by showing that the same church which has both *mali* and *ficti* in her midst, is also the *Civitas Dei peregrinans*, whose citizens must again and again be corrected and reformed by the grace of God, if they are to persevere, if they are to remain a part of that church...which is holy and eternal.”<sup>69</sup> I believe that Langland embraced these intertwined notions of individual and corporate pilgrimage. We see evidence of the former in the transformation of Piers. As for the latter, the *ecclesia peregrinans* seems to stand behind both of the great plowing scenes in Passūs V-VI and XIX-XX.

In the first episode, indications of the pilgrim church are easy to see. In Passus V a sermon has been preached, sins have been confessed, and a large mass of penitent people are seeking Holy Truth. Their quest might be described as pilgrimage, but the word is not used. Rather Langland describes them as blundering “as beestes ouer baches and hilles.”<sup>70</sup> Then a curious thing happens. They meet Piers, hear his description of the way to Truth, and are immediately described as “pilgrimes,” despite the fact that they have not moved. The change in status appears to be related to the fact that they now have a leader, a pastor

---

<sup>68</sup> Augustine sometimes uses these terms interchangeably, sometimes he appears to want to differentiate. It seems to depend on the context. See Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, 270-273.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>70</sup> Passus V.514

of sorts. As the episode unfolds, and as we move to Passus VI, Piers takes on the aspect of a pilgrim, but this too is rather strange. Before he sets himself to work he declares, “I shal apparaille me...in pilgrymes wise,” but when his appearance is described, he is not decked out in palmer’s gear, but is merely wearing his regular clothes, “yclouted and hole” (Passus VI.57, 59). His pilgrimage is taking on the trappings of everyday life. And despite the fact that Piers has pledged to walk along with the pilgrims and show them the way to Truth after his work is done, his apparel seems to suggest that the work will be the pilgrimage. This turns out to be the case, as both Piers and his fellows get down to their labors. Yet they still seem to be thought of as “pilgrims,” even though they never leave the field.<sup>71</sup> However, if we recall the fact that in Passus I, Holy Church indicated to Will that the field was the world, this should come as no surprise. Piers and his companions are the *ecclesia peregrinans*.<sup>72</sup> Their desire is to meet Truth, but the means of doings so is the journey of everyday life.

When we move to Passūs XIX and XX, the concept has been introduced, and Langland shifts his emphasis to the idea of reform. By Passus XIX, Piers’s transformation into the likeness of an apostle is complete, but it seems that the scene is still the same as it was in Passus V-VII—that is, a field representing the world.<sup>73</sup> Grace presents Piers with the plow of the evangelists, the harrow of the church doctors, and the seed of the virtues. He sows and harrows his field “wiþ olde lawe and newe lawe þat loue myȝte wexe among

---

<sup>71</sup> Passus VI.105. As work begins in earnest, Langland states, “now is Perkyn and þe pilgrymes to þe plow faren.” This image is retained throughout Passus VI. It is only with the arrival of the pardon in Passus VI that they are described differently, as the mass is broken down by manner of livelihood and estate.

<sup>72</sup> Holy Church teaches Will that the tower and the dungeon are heaven and hell, indicating that the field is the world. This image connects the poem further to one of the fundamental scriptural passages on reform: the parable of the Wheat and the Tares. Just as the field’s owner instructed his servants not to root out the tares until the harvest, so too does God exercise patience until the day of judgement.

<sup>73</sup> Grace makes Piers his “Plowman on erþe” and immediately gives him the implements with which to begin his work. The context suggests that they are in the field. See Passus XIX.260.

þe foure vertues and vices destruye” (Passus XIX.310-311). He then builds a house called “vnitee, holy chirche on englissh,” in which to store his spiritual harvest, but as soon as he returns to the plow, the people are set upon by Pride and all the enemies of mankind. Conscience urges the people to take refuge in Holy Church, but things go from bad to worse. In Passus XX, Antecrist arrives and rallies hundreds to his banner, while the plague kills thousands. Holy Church is in disarray, and though we are never specifically told that he has left, Piers himself is nowhere to be found. Furthermore, the friars have been allowed in and are poisoning people’s minds with smooth words. When Conscience asks Contrition to come keep the gate, Peace states:

He lyþ adreynt and dremeþ...and so do manye ȝpers  
The frere wiþ his pyisyk þis folk haþ enchaunted  
And doþ men drynke dwale þei drede no synne. (Passus XX.376-378)

Conscience replies:

“By Crist!” quod Conscience þo, “I wole bicom a pilgrym,  
And wenden as wide as þe world renneþ,  
To seken Piers þe Plowman þat pryde myȝte destruye  
And þat freres hadde a fyndyng þat for need flateren  
And countrepledeþ me, Conscience; now Kynde me avenge,  
And sende me hap and heele, til I have Piers the Plowman!” (B-text, XX.381-386)

The imagery leading up to this point is certainly bleak, and some have seen Langland’s decision to have Conscience to strike out into the world as representative of an abandonment of the church.<sup>74</sup> However, I do not think this is the case. Conscience’s stated goal is to seek Piers so that pride might be destroyed. This suggests an intention to return, since Pride is there and the source of the church’s problems. If this is what Langland has in mind, it makes sense to read Conscience’s decision to “bicom a pilgrym,” as an

---

<sup>74</sup> James Simpson sees this rather abrupt conclusion as “a moment of terrible despair,” suggesting that Conscience’s decision to strike out into the world is an abandonment of the church that foreshadows the rise of revolutionary Protestantism. Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 345-346.

invocation of the *ecclesia peregrinans*. This should not be understood as a concession to Wycliffite notions of a true and false church (the *ecclesia peregrinans* is, after all, mixed), but rather as an indication of a commitment to reform. Langland seems to embrace the idea of reform in Conscience's statement regarding friars. Though they have undermined Holy Church, insofar as it exists in the world, the desire is not that they be expelled, but that they have funds for their need, so they may take up once again their founders' intent.<sup>75</sup> What Langland is calling for here is a renewed commitment to the idea of *ecclesia peregrinans*, but as he indicated in Passus V, a leader is required. In the poem, this leader is Piers, but if we read his function into the world, it would seem to indicate the office of a pastor. Without pastors to teach the apostolic ideal both in word and in deed, the pilgrim church will fall into disarray. If this happens, reform is hindered, although as the constant efforts to restart the process in the poem seem to indicate, it can never be stopped.

At this point we have moved far away from the simple binary of Pelagianism and Augustinianism. While some aspect of that debate may have attracted his attention, I believe that insofar as Langland espoused a type of doctrinal Augustinianism, it was pastoral, and his interests lay in the direction of reform. We see this in his use of the *ecclesia permixta* and the *ecclesia peregrinans*, and particularly in the degree of scrutiny he places on the office of a pastor. In fact, his own life experience may explain some of the interest he displays in the relationship between shepherd and flock, and their shared journey of reform. In speculating on this real-world connection between poem and poet, one wonders what appeal Langland's Augustinian ideas might have had to contemporary

---

<sup>75</sup> Conscience speaks favorably of the founders, Dominic and Francis. Though one could argue that this is evidence of his naïveté, even critics of the friars acknowledged the good intentions of the founders. See Passus XX. 251-252.

readers. Without commentary or documentary notation it is impossible to say, but we can point to the example of manuscripts and their owners. The fact that some of these happened to be Austin Canons, or their associates who were engaged in the practice of pastoral care, suggests that Langland's ideas had some resonance in that community. The fact that one of these may have used *Piers Plowman* in his preaching suggests that its pastoral message may have had practical applications.

### English Austins and the Pastoral *Piers Plowman*

In musing on the relationship between Wyclif and Langland, Michael Wilks once wrote, "I often think that life would be much simpler if one could show that Wyclif was a poet and was the unknown author of *Piers Plowman*: they clearly came out of the same stable."<sup>76</sup> While I disagree with Wilks's assessment, I sympathize with the sentiment. My attempt to situate Langland within the context of Augustinian reform would be much easier if I could prove that he was an Austin Canon, or somehow associated with one of their houses. However, aside from the possibility that Langland received his early education at Notley Abbey, an Augustinian priory in Buckinghamshire with historic connections to the Rokele family, there is very little else.<sup>77</sup> This is not the case, however, when we turn to the reception of his poem. Austins and their associates seem to have embraced *Piers Plowman* and used it in interesting ways. We see this in the case of John Cok, a canon associated with the priory and hospital of St. Bartholomew in London in the first half of the fifteenth

---

<sup>76</sup> Michael Wilks, *Wyclif: Political Ideas and Practice*, Anne Hudson, ed. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2000), 186.

<sup>77</sup> The Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire Rokeles were historic patrons of Notley Abbey, a house of Augustinian canons about thirty miles east of Shipton-under-Wychwood. See J. Gilbert Jenkins, "The Lost Cartulary of Nutley Abbey," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (1954), 379-396.

century.<sup>78</sup> In addition to keeping the priory's cartulary, Cok was a copyist of some skill. The antiquarian John Stowe records that the St. Bartholomew's library contained "the fairest Bible that [he has ever] seen, written in large vellum by a brother of that house named John Coke, at the age of sixty-eight years."<sup>79</sup> But Cok also appears to have copied out an anthology of religious works in English for John Shirley, the author, translator, and scribe who rented four shops from the priory in Duck Lane.<sup>80</sup> This manuscript, now known as Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 669/646, contains the Passion narrative from the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, several works by Richard Rolle, and an excerpt from the C-text of *Piers Plowman*.<sup>81</sup>

Langland scholars have long known about this manuscript, but it has received careful attention in a recent article by Simon Horobin for the *Yearbook of Langland Studies*. There, Horobin reveals that there are not one, but two excerpts from the poem. The first consists of a speech by *Liberum Arbitrium*, and the second, heretofore unrecognized, is a

---

<sup>78</sup> See "Cok, John (c.1393–c.1468)," Judith Etherton in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, see online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/5818> (accessed July 5, 2016). Euan Roger discusses Cok, Shirley, and some of the history of the priory in "Blakberd's Treasure: a study in fifteenth-century administration at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London," in *Exploring the Evidence: Commemoration, Administration and the Economy*, Linda Clark, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), 81-108.

<sup>79</sup> John Stowe, *A Survey of London: Contayning the Originall, Antiquity, Increase, Moderne Estate, and Description of that Citie, Written in the Year 1598*, Henry Morley, ed. (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1890), 346. In addition to being an early publisher of Chaucer's works, Stowe was an assiduous collector of manuscripts. Barrett Beer, suggests that he was "the most knowledgeable record collector" and "most productive historical writer of the sixteenth century." See "Stow, John (1524/5–1605)," Barrett L. Beer in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, see online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/26611> (accessed July 5, 2016).

<sup>80</sup> Some have seen these four shops as evidence that Shirley operated a scriptorium out of St. Bartholomew's. The author of the most extensive study of John Shirley is skeptical. See Margaret Connolly's conclusions in *John Shirley: Book Production and the Noble Household in Fifteenth-Century England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 192-195.

<sup>81</sup> The contents of the manuscript, along with names and other distinctive marks are described in Montague Rhodes James, ed., *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College*, Volume 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), 666-667.

statement by Patience, both of which are found in Passus XVI.<sup>82</sup> Horobin then presents evidence to suggest that while the manuscript may have been copied as a commission for Shirley, it reverted back to Cok after Shirley's death, at which time the Langland extracts were copied in.<sup>83</sup> This suggests on Cok's part a level of engagement with the poem more than that of a scribe simply carrying out a commission. In fact, what he seems to be doing is using Langland to comment and expand upon on passages from Rolle that are located on the same page. What is even more interesting for our purposes here, is the attribution of *Liberum Arbitrium's* speech, not to Langland, but to "augustinum & ysidorum." While it is possible that the mistaken provenance was present in the exemplar, or that this is an instance of faulty memory, Horobin argues against such notions, suggesting instead that Cok "deliberately extracted this passage from the C version, suppressing lines which referred to its original context, and supplying a heading that emphasized its origins in the writings of Augustine and Isidore."<sup>84</sup> While Cok's reasons for doing so probably had to do with a desire to give the passages greater credibility by attributing them to two doctors of the church, this only serves to emphasize the significance he placed on their content. In short, Langland's perspective was important to this Augustinian Canon—so much so that he attributed parts of *Piers* to the patron of his order.

While Cok's manuscript was probably intended for personal use, or to be passed around within the confines of the priory community, there is another manuscript of Augustinian provenance which may have served a more public function. This is Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson Poetry 137, a version of the A-text copied by Thomas Tolyte. This

---

<sup>82</sup> Simon Horobin, "John Cok and His Copy of Piers Plowman," *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 27 (2013), 48-49, 52.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-54.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

manuscript and its scribe are the subject of another study by Horobin, published in 2005.<sup>85</sup> The manuscript is of interest because it contains the only complete version of Passus XII, in which the mysterious John But makes reference to Will's "oper werkes" and notes that "deþ delt him a dent."<sup>86</sup> Horobin does not deal with this issue directly, preferring to focus instead on what the manuscript can tell us about the scribe. This is quite a lot, as Horobin's research reveals. Tolyte was a secular priest sponsored by the Austin Canons at Hardham Priory in west Sussex.<sup>87</sup> He seems to have come from the area around Chichester, but received a canonry and cursal prebend at St. David's Cathedral in 1406.<sup>88</sup> He appears to have retained ties to Chichester, though, since he was ordained to the priesthood in a ceremony near there in 1410.<sup>89</sup> Later records have him as a vicar at Chichester Cathedral in 1415, the rector of West Thorney, a village on the Sussex coast, in 1430, and finally

---

<sup>85</sup> Simon Horobin, "The Scribe of Rawlinson Poetry 137 and the copying and circulation of *Piers Plowman*," *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 19 (2005), 3-26.

<sup>86</sup> This is another point of controversy in *Piers Plowman* studies, as John But's identity and obit have the potential to impact one's interpretation of the poem. If one accepts the traditional view (first advanced by Edith Rickert), that John But was the king's messenger who died in 1387, then these lines indicate that Langland predeceased him. Thus certain elements of the C-text, which appear to reflect events that occurred in the late-1380s, present difficulties of interpretation. This is the argument Anne Middleton makes in relation to Passus V of the C-text, which appears to be influenced by the Cambridge parliament's vagrancy act of 1388. See Anne Middleton, "Acts of Vagrancy: The C Version "Autobiography" and the Statute of 1388" in *Written Work: Langland, Labor, and Authorship*, Steven Justice and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton eds., (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 208-313. My own view is that Langland was alive in 1388 and the coda, if accurate at all, was written by a different John But. Other men of this name are listed in Hanna, *William Langland*, 28-29.

<sup>87</sup> See Horobin, "The Scribe of Rawlinson Poetry," 8.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 9. The Tolytes were an established family in south Sussex. A certain John Tolite, whom Horobin suggests was Thomas's father, was a taverner from Chidham on the Chichester harbor. Though he seems to have had more than one run-in with the law, he served in at least three parliaments in the early-fifteenth century. See A.P.M. Wright, "John Dolyte (Tolite) of Chichester" in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1386-1421*, Vol. 2, John Smith Roskell, Linda Clark, Carole Rawcliffe, eds. (Stroud: Published for the History of Parliament Trust by Allan Sutton, 1993). There is, however, another record that suggests Thomas Tolyte's father was named William. A 1420 record of *de state probanda* lists Thomas Tolyte as the son of William and aged 48. This age would correspond with the dates we have for the scribe. See *Calendar of inquisitions post mortem and other analogous documents preserved in the Public Record Office: 6 to 10 Henry VI (1427-1432)*, Volume 23, Claire Noble, ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 165.

<sup>89</sup> Horobin, "The Scribe of Rawlinson Poetry," 8. Tolyte was ordained to the priesthood in a ceremony at the bishop's manor in Amberley along with two men sponsored by the College of the Holy Trinity at Arundel. See Cecil Deedes, ed., *The Episcopal register of Robert Rede, ordinis predicatorum, lord bishop of Chichester, 1397-1415*, (London: Sussex Records Society, 1910) 354.

holding the benefice of a place called Denton in 1436. Horobin is unable to identify this final destination conclusively, but he suggests that it was a parish in east Sussex, about ten miles up the coast from Brighton.<sup>90</sup>

Horobin's supposition is reasonable given Tolyte's history in Sussex and the proximity of the parish near Brighton to his living at West Thorney, but an examination of the record in question shows that this cannot be the case. It consists of an entry in the Patent Rolls authorizing the presentation of "John Reston, parson of the church of Denton, in the diocese of London, to the church of Westhornhey, in the diocese of Chichester...on an exchange of benefices with Thomas Tolyte."<sup>91</sup> This Denton cannot be the one on the Sussex coast because that would put it in the diocese of Chichester, not the diocese of London.<sup>92</sup> We must look north for Tolyte's destination. A search of parishes in the diocese of London reveals that while there is no Denton, there is a Dunton in Essex, and the register of Bishop William Grey confirms that this was, in fact, the living held by John Reston.<sup>93</sup> Why Tolyte would have left Sussex for a hamlet outside London is difficult to say, but the Hospital and Priory of St. Bartholomew held land in Dunton parish, and took an active interest in both its management and goings on in the local community.<sup>94</sup> It is possible that the prospect of an exchange with Reston came about through their good offices and their

---

<sup>90</sup> Horobin, "The Scribe of Rawlinson Poetry," 9-10.

<sup>91</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office (Henry VI) 1429-1436*, Vol. 2, 514.

<sup>92</sup> The medieval Diocese of London was much larger than its modern counterpart. Its boundaries included not only London itself, but also Middlesex, Essex, and parts of Hertfordshire. See Christopher Brooke and Gillian Keir, *London, 800-1216: The Shaping of a City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 16-17.

<sup>93</sup> The modern name of the village is Dunton Wayletts. Bishop Grey's register is not in print, but the transaction is recorded by Richard Newcourt in his massive catalog of the parishes in the diocese of London. See *Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense: An Ecclesiastical Parochial History of the Diocese of London*, Vol. 2 (London: Benjamin Motte, 1710), 230-231.

<sup>94</sup> These activities are recorded in Norman Moore, *The History of St. Bartholomew's Hospital*, 2 Vols. (London: C. Arthur Pearson Limited, 1918).

network. Whatever the case may be, it appears that Tolyte resigned the living at Dunton in 1438, and his whereabouts after that so far cannot be traced.<sup>95</sup>

At some point in his ecclesiastical career, Tolyte came into contact with two other clerics, both of whom are important to our purposes here. One was Richard Petir, a fellow prebendary at St. David's who had connections to Walter de Brugge, an early reader of *Piers Plowman*. Horobin suggests that Petir may have been the one who supplied Tolyte with the exemplar for Rawlinson 137.<sup>96</sup> The second figure of interest is Richard Rauf, a secular cleric and licensed preacher, who like Tolyte, had his ordination sponsored by the Austin Canons. We know of their association because Tolyte appears to have made for Rauf a copy of the Middle English confessional treatise, *Prick of Conscience*.<sup>97</sup> Given their status as associates of the Austin Canons, Horobin sees this as indicative of a common interest in preaching and pastoral care. Noting that "Augustinian writings were particularly

---

<sup>95</sup> Tolyte's successor was Maurice Castle. His name could be useful in tracing Tolyte further if records can be found. Castle remained at Dunton parish until his death in 1443. Newcourt, *Repertorium Ecclesiasticum*, 231.

<sup>96</sup> Horobin, "The Scribe of Rawlinson Poetry," 20-22. Information on Walter de Brugge may be found in Rees Davies, "The Life, Travels, and Library of an Early Reader of *Piers Plowman*," *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 13 (1999): 49-64. De Brugge's will is recorded in James Raine, ed., *Testamenta eboracensia; or, Wills registered at York, illustrative of the history, manners, language, statistics, &c., of the province of York, from the year 1300 downwards* (London: J.B. Nichols and Son, 1836), 207-209. It is worth noting de Brugge's connection with a family surnamed Clopton. Given that a fourteenth-century manuscript (University of London Library MS Sterling S.L.V.17) containing *Piers Plowman* was owned by a Sir William Clopton of Warwickshire, this connection seems worth pursuing. For the Clopton manuscript, see Simon Horobin, "Manuscripts and Readers of *Piers Plowman*" in *The Cambridge Companion to Piers Plowman*, 180. We might add here a few notes to the information Horobin supplies. The record of Tolyte's appointment as a prebendary at St. David's includes instructions to the archdeacon to "see that there be no simony on the part of Richard or Thomas." This suggests that there was a prior relationship between the two. See W.H. Bliss and J.W. Twemlow, eds., *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: AD 1404-1415*, Vol. 6 (London: HMSO, 1904), 85. This relationship would appear to be confirmed by Petir's will, in which he leaves items to John Tolyte of Chichester and his wife. This John, if not Thomas's father, is likely a close relation, perhaps an uncle. See J.W. Clay, ed., *North Country Wills: Being Abstracts of Wills Relating to the counties of York, Nottingham, Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmorland at Somerset House and Lambeth Palace 1385 to 1558* (Durham: Andrews & Company, 1908), 28-31.

<sup>97</sup> This is Oxford University College MS 142. A.I. Doyle has identified the hand as Tolyte's. Rauf's name in the manuscript is followed by the initials "P.L.," a designation that most likely stands for *Predicator Licentiatus*. See Horobin "The Scribe of Rawlinson Poetry," 4, 15.

focused on preaching materials, such as sermons and homilies,” or on other works that might be used for the instruction of parishioners, he then goes on to speculate on whether Tolyte’s copy of *Piers Plowman* might have served such a purpose.<sup>98</sup> Observing that the dimensions are “similar to that of a holster book, whose shape is considered a reflection of its use for public recitation,” Horobin suggests that in both “form and content...*Piers Plowman* [is an eminently suitable text for oral delivery]” and that “its alliterative phrases would have made ‘excellent didactic soundbites’ for parish priests to use in their sermons.”<sup>99</sup>

While Horobin’s hypothesis cannot be proven, it makes a great deal of sense. We know that *Piers Plowman* was well enough known to be referenced, without explanation, in John Ball’s letter to the Essex commons in the rising of 1381.<sup>100</sup> We also saw in Chapter Two how William Shoreham, a vicar of the canons from an earlier generation, used bob and wheel poetry to convey the lessons from Pecham’s *Ignorantia Sacerdotum* to his parishioners. Thus in reading *Piers Plowman* to his parishioners, Tolyte would neither be exposing them to something completely unknown, nor would he be employing a pedagogical method that was entirely unique. In fact, Tolyte’s example shows how naturally *Piers Plowman* fits into the spirituality of the Austin Canons and the practice of pastoral Augustinianism. The fact that Cok saw no inconsistency in attributing Langland’s writing to Augustine himself lends credence to this view. And while Tolyte and Cok are not especially well known, there is another, more influential Austin Canon whose outlook

---

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>100</sup> Ball’s use of *Piers* is discussed by Steven Justice in *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 102-139. There he asks “was *Piers Plowman* (at one absurd extreme) the bedtime reading of a thousand insurgents or (at the other) John Ball’s distant memory of an evening conversation?” Clearly the answer is somewhere in between, but it is unlikely that Ball would have made such a reference if it were completely unknown.

seems to have had a great deal in common with *Piers Plowman's* vision of reform. This would be Philip Repingdon, an early follower of Wyclif, who, after recanting his heresy, went on to become Abbot of Leicester in 1394, Chancellor of Oxford in 1400, and Bishop of Lincoln in 1405. In pointing this out, my intention is not to argue that Repingdon was specifically influenced by *Piers*, though it would be hard to conceive of a scenario where he would not know of Langland's work. Rather it is to highlight the fact that a cleric committed to the same principles of Augustinian reform held positions of significant influence in the English church of the early-fifteenth century. The purpose of Chapter Five will be to investigate the manner in which he propagated elements of this reformist ideology over the course of long and varied career.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE ENGLISH CHURCH AND REPINGDON'S REFORM

Philip Repingdon is generally thought to have been a keen supporter of Wycliffism. This impression is based primarily on a sermon he preached in the spring of 1382, in which he is reported to have advanced a number of Wycliffite propositions. His subsequent appearance before the Blackfriars Council to argue his case sealed his reputation. However, if we examine his actions in context, a different picture emerges. Though a relationship between Repingdon and Wyclif has long been assumed, we have no evidence of this, and his controversial sermon should be seen as part of a larger conflict between Oxford University and the ecclesiastical establishment. Furthermore, his theological background was the reformist spirituality of the Austin Canons. His career as an abbot and then bishop suggests an inclination towards reform as opposed to revolution. He displayed an interest in raising the educational standards of the clergy and is thought to have written a reformist sermon cycle. Though the sermon cycle is well known, there is another, less familiar work that illustrates Repingdon's commitment to reform—a Commentary on the Decalogue. This exposition on the commandments exhibits a remarkable similarity to *The Two Ways*, a work written by another presumed Wycliffite, the courtier, John Clanvowe. Yet neither of these works espouse heterodox views. Absent the prejudicial assumption of Wycliffism, their character as pastoral works of reform is clearly evident. Like *Piers Plowman*, they attest to a vibrant reformist spirituality that can be seen as an alternative to revolutionary Wycliffism in late medieval England.

## A Most Catholic Doctor

On June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1382, a crowd gathered before the cross at St. Frideswide's Priory in Oxford to hear the University's Corpus Christi sermon. The preacher's name was Philip Repingdon, and he had recently incepted as a doctor of theology.<sup>1</sup> Repingdon had come to the University from the Augustinian Abbey of St. Mary de la Pré, an old and prosperous foundation in the city of Leicester, but his surname suggests that he was originally from the town of Repton in Derbyshire, where the canons had a small priory and a shrine to St. Guthlac.<sup>2</sup> Since Repingdon came from no family of note, it is likely that he was identified as a young talent by the canons at Repton and sent on to Leicester to be educated at the almonry school.<sup>3</sup> The fact that he was ordained to the priesthood in 1369 suggests that he was born sometime in the 1340s, probably around 1345, and though we have no record of his matriculation, he was probably resident at Oxford throughout the 1370s.<sup>4</sup> It is during

---

<sup>1</sup> For the basic outline of Repingdon's life, see "Repyndon, Philip (c.1345–1424)," Simon Forde in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, May 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/23385> (accessed July 5, 2016). A slightly different perspective can be found in David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, Volume II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 186-189.

<sup>2</sup> Information on Repton Priory may be found in *The Victoria History of the County of Derby*, Volume 2 (London: Archibald Constable and Company Limited, 1907), 58-63. The Abbey of St. Mary de la Pré, more commonly known as Leicester Abbey, was founded in 1143 by Robert de Beaumont, second Earl of Leicester. It was enriched and enlarged by his son and grandson. In the mid-fourteenth century, right about the time Repingdon would have arrived, it received a number of unique privileges from the crown, largely through the influence of its Abbot William Clowne. It had a significant library and an almonry school for as many as twenty-five boys. A brief history of the abbey may be found in W.G. Hoskins and R.A. McKinley, eds., *The Victoria History of the County of Leicester*, Volume 2 (London: University of London Institute of Historical Research, 1954), 13-19.

<sup>3</sup> For evidence on the school at Leicester, see J.S. Bothwell, "The Five Giants: Institutional Hierarchy and Social Provision in Later Medieval Leicestershire" in *Fourteenth Century England VII*, W. Mark Ormrod, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 143.

<sup>4</sup> The normal age for ordination to the priesthood was around twenty-five. See R.N. Swanson, "Apostolic Successors: Priests and Priesthood, Bishops, and Episcopacy in Medieval Western Europe" in *A Companion to Priesthood and Holy Orders in the Middle Ages*, Greg Peters and C. Colt Anderson, eds., (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2016), 19. The time required to incept as a doctor of theology was between twelve and fourteen years. Given that Repingdon had just incepted in 1382, it is likely that he had been at Oxford since 1370 or before. See L.W.B. Brockliss, *The University of Oxford: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 86-90.

this time that he is likely to have made contact with John Wyclif and embraced at least some of his ideals. We know of his support for Wycliffism from a sermon preached in early 1382 at Brackley, in Northamptonshire, where the Abbey of St. Mary had connections and influence.<sup>5</sup> In fact, this sermon seems to have been the catalyst behind his selection as preacher on Corpus Christi, since he was only just credentialed, and an appointment to preach the University sermon on a major feast was a matter of some prestige.<sup>6</sup> Yet within the context of ecclesiastical politics at that time, his selection makes a great deal of sense.

In the spring of 1382 matters relating to Wyclif had come to a head. In 1377 and 1378 William Courtenay had made moves against Wyclif, only to be thwarted by John of Gaunt.<sup>7</sup> However, following Simon Sudbury's murder by Kentish rebels in the rising of 1381, Courtenay was elevated from London to the See of Canterbury.<sup>8</sup> Having responsibility now for the entire southern province, and eager to reassert the prerogatives of the church to govern her own, Courtenay turned his attention again to the matter of the teachings coming out of Lutterworth and Oxford.<sup>9</sup> In this he was opposed by Robert

---

<sup>5</sup> Walter Shirley, ed., *Fasciculi Zizaniorum Magistri Johannes Wyclif Cum Tritico* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858), 296. Brackley is about twenty miles north of Oxford. A hospital of the Austin Canons was founded there in the twelfth century by the Earls of Leicester and dedicated to St. James and St. John. The advowson of the church in Brackley, however, was held by the canons of Leicester Abbey. See R.M. Serjeantson and W. Ryland D. Adkins, eds., *The Victoria History of the County of Northampton*, Volume 2 (London: Archibald Constable and Company Limited, 1906), 151-153.

<sup>6</sup> Repingdon was, in fact, very junior, having incepted but not yet completed all the requirements to be considered *sacrae theologiae doctor*. This is evident from Courtenay's charges against Rygge. "*Et Philippo Repyngdone, canonico de Leycestre, qui fuit maxime suspectus de omne errore Wyclyff, assignavit, sermonen in festo Corporis Christi, etiam antequam fuit doctor; et aliis doctoribus negavit.*" See the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 306.

<sup>7</sup> Courtenay's well-known clash with Gaunt and Wyclif is described in G.R. Evans, *John Wyclif*, 161-163.

<sup>8</sup> For an overview of Courtenay's career, see "Courtenay, William (1341/2–1396)," R. N. Swanson in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, January 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/6457> (accessed July 5, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> Oxford's support of Wyclif had been a concern for Courtenay since the late-1370s. However, it appears that he proceeded deliberately and carefully, not acting until he had received the *pallium* from Rome. To add to the tension, Wyclif submitted his *Imprecationes* to parliament in early May. In it he pressed forward with a number of controversial points, including the notion that "England owed no prelate obedience unless such obedience fit with Christ's law." Larsen, *School of Heretics*, 164-166.

Rygge, the Chancellor of the University, who had been a backer of Wyclif since the controversies of the 1370s. In a show of support for the embattled don, Rygge assigned that year's Ascension Day sermon to a known Wycliffite, a fellow of Queens named Nicholas Hereford. Hereford had already preached a sermon that year in which he promoted Wycliffite ideals, and his oration on Ascension Day was a rabble rousing performance, not in Latin, as was customary, but in English.<sup>10</sup> In it he advocated disendowment of the regular clergy, and in the words of Peter Stokes, Archbishop Courtenay's man on the ground, he "incited the populace to insurrection."<sup>11</sup> The Oxford men's triumph was to be short lived, however, since only a few days after this affront, Courtenay succeeded in having twenty-four of Wyclif's teachings condemned as heretical or erroneous by the Blackfriars Council. Thus by the end of May in 1382 a showdown was on the horizon, and Repingdon's sermon was to be the center of it all.

On May 28<sup>th</sup> Courtenay sent Stokes a letter, instructing him to read the condemned propositions in public, presumably before Repingdon had the opportunity to preach. Courtenay had also written Rygge and instructed him to assist Stokes in publishing the Blackfriars decrees. Rygge appears to have been recalcitrant, and may even have mobilized the opposition against Stokes, some of which came in the form of armed men, gathering before the sermon in the churchyard at St. Frideswide's. Stokes, if he was there, kept silent, and the sermon went forward as planned. If Repingdon's object was to stoke the fires of controversy, he did not disappoint. Though we do not have his text, we are told

---

<sup>10</sup> Information on the sermon may be found in "Nicholas Hereford's Ascension Day Sermon, 1382," Simon Forde, ed. in *Medieval Studies* 51, 1989, 205-241.

<sup>11</sup> Stokes reported the following to Courtenay in a letter: "*et tandem in festo Ascensionis praedecavit multa nefanda et detestabilia publice in coemeterio S. Fredeswyde excitans populam ad insurrectionem, et excusans et defendens Wyclyff.*" See *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 296.

that he publically advanced Wycliffite views on dominion and the Eucharist, and called the controversial theologian a “*doctor maxime catholicus*.”<sup>12</sup> His message was received with approbation by Rygge and many of the secular masters, but as was the case with Hereford’s sermon, the friars were not well pleased. Neither was Courtenay, and when the Blackfriars Council reconvened on June 12<sup>th</sup>, he summoned Rygge to account for his actions. Under the scrutiny of the assembled prelates and theologians, Rygge made little defense, and quickly professed himself willing to submit to the determinations of the Council.<sup>13</sup> Courtenay ordered Rygge to return to Oxford and set his house in order. Part of his instructions included the publication of a mandate in which Wyclif, Hereford, Repingdon, and two others were condemned and suspended from preaching or teaching until they had been examined by the Council. Though Rygge protested that complying with these orders would put his own life in danger, he eventually yielded and the mandate was published in Oxford on the fifteenth of June.<sup>14</sup>

At this point, bereft of the protection of their university, Hereford and Repingdon became alarmed and sought an audience with Wyclif’s onetime protector, John of Gaunt. On June 16<sup>th</sup> they found him at his residence at Tottenham, and were received as they had hoped, but the next morning a delegation from Oxford arrived, most likely to deliver a

---

<sup>12</sup> *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 307.

<sup>13</sup> Rygge’s submission appears to have been abject. He is reported to have begged Courtenay for forgiveness *genibus flexis*. See *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 308. Rygge’s appeal was supported by William Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, and a member of the Council. Wykeham was a notorious pluralist and political operator who had fallen into disgrace after being dismissed as Royal Chancellor a decade earlier. See Virginia Davis, *William Wykeham: A Life* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), 38-42, 77-78. It is possible that his own experience, alongside his long held policy of supporting scholars and education, led him to intervene on Rygge’s behalf.

<sup>14</sup> The others condemned were John Aston and Laurence Stephen (also known as Bedeman). For more information on these men, see note 51 below. The mandate of the council was to be published in English and Latin, in the Church of St. Mary and in the schools. *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 309-312.

summons from Courtenay.<sup>15</sup> The two parties appear to have debated in the presence of the Duke, and while initially it seemed that Gaunt might continue his policy of protecting Wyclif and his followers, something changed his mind, and he berated Hereford and Repingdon for their “detestable” views on the sacrament, calling them “laymen” or “demoniacs.”<sup>16</sup> Gaunt’s decision left the scholars little choice but to present themselves before the Council, which they did the following day. There they were asked to state their opinions on the twenty-four propositions, which they consented to do, but only in writing. On June 20<sup>th</sup> they were questioned on their responses, several of which were singled out as being unsatisfactory. Rather than answering the Council’s continued probing clearly, the two offered scholarly equivocations, which was seen as resorting to “sophistry and subterfuge.”<sup>17</sup> Though it seemed likely that they would be pronounced heretics, Courtenay chose to postpone judgement until the following week, giving the scholars the opportunity to recant. Neither of them did. Hereford used his freedom to make his way to Rome, where he made an appeal directly to the pope.<sup>18</sup> Repingdon’s whereabouts were for many months unknown, but on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, he appeared at Blackfriars to recant. In November he made a full abjuration at the convocation of the southern province, which ironically was being

---

<sup>15</sup> Larsen, *School of Heretics*, 193-195.

<sup>16</sup> “*Sed utraque parte audita , iudicavit dominus dux praedictos Philippum et Nicolaum laicos, vel demoniacos: et ibi palam audivit qualis eorum opinio fuit de sacramento altaris detestabilis...*” See *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 318.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 329.

<sup>18</sup> Hereford actually made it to Rome where he put his case to Urban VI, but a consistory court condemned him as a heretic and threw him in prison. This result is not surprising given that Adam Easton, an English Benedictine and early opponent of Wyclif appears to have been involved in the judgement. Hereford managed to escape during the riots in Rome in 1385. See Margaret Harvey, *The English in Rome, 1362–1420: Portrait of an Expatriate Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 199.

held at the same place he delivered his controversial sermon to begin with, the Priory of St. Frideswide.<sup>19</sup>

Once admitted back into the communion of the church, Repingdon's subsequent career was a successful one. His academic status having been restored, he appears to have spent the next decade at Oxford, teaching in the schools and composing a series of sermons, with commentary, on the Sunday Gospels.<sup>20</sup> In 1393 he was elected abbot of St. Mary's and at that time presumably returned to his former house.<sup>21</sup> His tenure at Leicester Abbey was seen as a period of good governance, and he rose to further prominence within the order when he served as president of the meeting of the General Chapter in 1401.<sup>22</sup> In May of that year he wrote a public letter to Henry IV, warning him that "law and justice are exiles from the realm," and begging the new king to put things to right.<sup>23</sup> Frank Grady has suggested that the purpose of this epistle seems to have been to contribute "to Henry's royal

---

<sup>19</sup> Repingdon was restored to his academic status on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1382. "*Eundem Phillipum, de pravitate haeretica non convictum..., ad actus scholasticos, et ad pristinum statum, restitutum, et a dicta sententia excommunicationis absolvimus, in debita forma juris.*" On November 18<sup>th</sup>, he declared the following before convocation: "*ego, Philippus Repyngdon..., cognoscens veram, catholicam, et apostolicam fidem, anathematizo etiam abjuro omnem haeresim....*" The texts are recorded in David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae ab Anno MCCL ad Annum MDXLV*, Volume 3 (London: R. Gosling, F. Gyles, T. Woodward, and C. Davis, 1737), 169 and 172.

<sup>20</sup> These sermons are discussed at great length in Simon Forde's Ph.D. dissertation, "Writings of a Reformer: A look at Sermons Studies and bible Studies through Repyngdon's *Sermones super Evangelia Dominicalia*," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1985). Further analysis can be found in Seigfried Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collections from Later Medieval England: Orthodox Preaching in the Age of Wyclif* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 50-53 and throughout.

<sup>21</sup> Forde dates his election as abbot to May or June of 1393. Though Repingdon was certainly resident at Leicester, he did serve as Chancellor of Oxford from 1400 to 1403. The duties of this office would certainly have brought him back to the University. See "Writings," 23-24, 49.

<sup>22</sup> This meeting took place at the Abbey of St. James, near Northampton. None of the principals are listed by name, but Repingdon may be identified by his title, *Abbas de Leycestria*. The record may be found in H.E. Salter, ed., *Chapters of the Augustinian Canons* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), 79-80.

<sup>23</sup> Repingdon then goes on to list the results of this banishment: "robbery, homicide, adultery, fornication, persecution of the poor, injury, injustice, and outrages of all kinds." The entire text and translation can be found in the Adam Usk, *Chronicon Adae de Usk, A.D. 1377-1421*, E.M. Thompson, ed. & trans. (London: Henry Frowde, 1904), 136-143.

self-representation.”<sup>24</sup> If so, it suggests a prior relationship between the two men, which perhaps explains why, upon Henry Beaufort’s translation to Winchester in 1404, Repingdon was provided at the king’s request to the See of Lincoln.<sup>25</sup> Consecrated in March of 1405, he appears to have taken his diocesan duties seriously, emphasizing the importance of sound preaching and pastoral care.<sup>26</sup> He treated Margery Kempe with sensitivity and compassion and seems to have had a special regard for the poor.<sup>27</sup> Repingdon resigned his see in 1419 on the grounds of frailty, and having exchanged the bishop’s palace in Lincoln for the hospital of St. Mary in the Newarke, Leicester, he spent the remaining years of his life in quiet retirement, dying sometime in 1424.<sup>28</sup>

#### *Humillimus et Benignus*

Scholars of the early-twentieth century tended to view the apparent disparity between Repingdon’s Oxford days and his later career in one of two ways. The first was to see Repingdon as a man of very little moral fiber, someone who, in renouncing the teachings of Wyclif, betrayed a mentor and guide. Such a view is typified by Herbert Workman, whose monumental biography of Wyclif was published in 1926. Workman, who is highly sympathetic to his subject, characterizes Repingdon as “a cultured, opportunistic ecclesiastic,” and someone who “could turn his back on his past.”<sup>29</sup> He

---

<sup>24</sup> Frank Grady, “The Lancastrian Gower and the Limits of Exemplarity,” *Speculum*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (July, 1995), 554.

<sup>25</sup> Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, 187.

<sup>26</sup> Repingdon was one of the first of a cadre of early-fifteenth century bishops concerned with the *ars predicandi* and *cura animarum*. Others included Nicholas Bubwith, Bishop of Bath and Wells, and Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Hereford and then Exeter. See David Lepine, “‘A Long Way from University’: Cathedral Canons and Learning at Hereford in the Fifteenth Century” in *The Church and Learning in Later Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of R.B. Dobson*, Caroline M. Barron and Jenny Stratford, eds. (Donnington: Shaun Tyas, 2002), 180.

<sup>27</sup> A.E. Goodman, *Margery Kempe And Her World* (London: Routledge, 2002), 128.

<sup>28</sup> Forde, “Repyndon, Philip (c.1345–1424)” in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>29</sup> Herbert Workman, *John Wyclif: A Study of the English Medieval Church*, Vol. 2 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1926), 133-137.

further casts Repingdon as an instrument of both king and pope, and implies that his elevation to the episcopate may have been simoniacal.<sup>30</sup> Workman's assessment is very much in line with the Whig perspective, in that it ultimately blames Repingdon "for the destruction of religious freedom...and the triumph of the friars."<sup>31</sup> The second perspective still operates within the Whig framework, but is rather different. It sees Repingdon's renunciation of heresy as a matter of outward conformity, something that was necessary to continue an advancement of Wycliffite ideals. This is the general thrust of K.B. McFarlane, who, in his influential *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights*, suggests that Repingdon displayed a real "gentleness towards heretics in his diocese."<sup>32</sup> He points to the examples of Robert Hook and John Barton, both of whom were brought before Repingdon on charges of heresy, but suffered no real consequences other than censure. McFarlane's conclusion is that Repingdon's "lifelong revulsion against the heresies of his youth remains to be demonstrated."<sup>33</sup> In this assessment, Repingdon is seen as a sort of ecclesiastical fifth columnist, a sympathetic fellow traveler who allowed Wycliffite ideology to spread within the institutional church. While these perspectives are in some way antithetical, in that Repingdon is viewed in either a positive or negative light, they do share one key

---

<sup>30</sup> Workman dismisses Repingdon by citing Trevelyan: "their lollardy was as the seed that fell upon the stony places; it sprang up quickly in a shallow soil, and withered in a moment before the sun of authority." *Ibid.*, 334-335.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

<sup>32</sup> In doing so, McFarlane dismisses evidence of Repingdon's anti-Wycliffite activity as coming from a "doubtful source." See *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights*, 217. In saying this he is referring to Arundel's famous retort to William Thorpe that "as touchinge Filip of R[e]pintoun...whiche is now bischop of Lyncolne..., he neiþer holdiþ now, neiþer wole holde, þe loore þat he tauzt when he was no but chanoun Leycetre, for noo bischop of þis londe pursueþ now scharplier hem þat holden þat wei þan he doiþ." See Anne Hudson, ed., *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 33.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

assumption: Repingdon was fundamentally dishonest, either betraying his friends or lying about his beliefs to achieve a particular goal.

More recently, Simon Forde has taken a different approach. In both his 1985 doctoral dissertation and his article for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Forde has portrayed Repingdon as a reformer working within the church. Forde characterizes his own approach as hewing to the “middle road,” building up “a consistent line to Repyngdon’s life by seeing him as both distancing himself somewhat from Wyclif and Hereford in his own Oxford days and by distancing himself from Archbishop Arundel and the strong counter-measures against Wyclif and Lollardy in the fifteenth century.”<sup>34</sup> Forde bases his conclusions, in part, on Repingdon’s conscientious administration of his diocese, but he leans also very heavily on evidence from the sermon cycle from the 1380s.<sup>35</sup> He characterizes these writings as “essentially non-polemical,” but believes that in some instances they offer “insights into Repyngdon’s personal beliefs.”<sup>36</sup> He enumerates these as consisting of the following: “decrying prelates who become too identified with the secular power;” regarding “the primitive and apostolic church as the exemplar for subsequent

---

<sup>34</sup> Forde, “Writings,” 34.

<sup>35</sup> In a recently published article, Richard Sharpe has attempted to prove that these sermons were not written by Philip Repingdon, but by John Eyton, the Prior of St. Bartholomew’s, London from 1391 to 1404, who, in some instances went by the name “Repyngdon” as well. See “John Eyton *alias* Repyngdon and the *Sermones Super Euangelia Dominicalia* Attributed to Philip Repyngdon,” in *Medium Aevum* Vol. LXXXIII No. 2 (2014), 254-265. Sharpe’s case rests on the lack of specificity in the manuscripts about the author being “Philip,” and an early attestation connecting the sermons to a prior of St. Bartholomew’s, London described as “Repoun.” While Sharpe’s hypothesis is worth further study, it does not offer sufficient evidence to transfer authorship of the sermons from Repingdon to Eyton. It does not, for example, take into account factors such as the provenance of Oxford Lincoln College MS Lat. 85, one of the earliest exemplars. This manuscript was given to Lincoln College by Thomas Barnesley, a priest who served as Archdeacon of Leicester under one of Repingdon’s successors. Barnesley was a student at Oxford between 1410 and 1412. This was a time when Repingdon was recruiting graduates for work in his diocese, a practice which would account for Barnesley’s later presence there. According to Forde, “Barnesley was active in the Lincoln diocese, particularly in Lincolnshire and Leicestershire in the 1420s.” See “Writings,” 116. Given the circumstances of Barnesley’s career, it is not difficult to imagine how he might have acquired a sermon cycle written by a man who was Abbot of Leicester and Bishop of Lincoln. A connection to the prior of a house in the Diocese of London seems a less likely scenario.

<sup>36</sup> Forde, “Repyngdon, Philip (c.1345–1424),” in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Christians;” accepting “tithing, on condition of its assisting good standards of preaching and helping the poor;” and upholding “the orthodox position...that the sacraments do not depend for their validity on the merits of the minister,” yet at the same time seeking “a compromise with Wycliffite criticism of unsuitable or ill-living ministers by exploring the existing powers to punish such priests and exclude them from the sacraments.”<sup>37</sup> Forde characterizes these positions as those of “a reformer working within the church, albeit one sharing the concerns and priorities of Wyclif.”<sup>38</sup>

In this analysis Forde takes a more expansive view of Repingdon’s life than Workman and McFarlane. In other words, he does not privilege the events of a few highly charged weeks over what we know about Repingdon’s concern for the poor, his thoughtful interaction with Margery Kempe, and the fact that even his enemies characterized him as “humble,” “benign,” and “of good reputation.”<sup>39</sup> In this regard, Forde’s assessment makes a great deal of sense. However, it seems to be operating under a key assumption of Workman and McFarlane; that is, that Wyclif is the source of reformist thought in the late medieval English church. We see this in the manner in which he treats the beliefs extracted from Repingdon’s sermon cycle. Though there is nothing uniquely Wycliffite about the notion that the apostolic church was a model of purity, or that corrupt prelates should be criticized, Forde holds these out as evidence that “even after his recantation Repingdon occasionally sailed dangerously close to the Lollard wind.”<sup>40</sup> Yet in drawing such a conclusion, Forde appears to be privileging the influence of Wyclif and sidelining

---

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> “*Sed baccalarius existens humillimus et benignus apparuit, ita ut bonus ab omnibus fuerat reputatus.*” These are the words of Peter Stokes, describing Repingdon before his inception as a doctor, when he began preaching Wycliffite ideals. *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 296.

<sup>40</sup> Forde, “Repingdon, Philip (c.1345–1424),” in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

numerous other expressions of reformist ideology that were part of Repingdon's cultural context. True, Repingdon did defend elements of Wycliffism in 1382, but this does not necessarily mean that Wyclif was the source and inspiration behind Repingdon's outlook on religious renewal. There are other options to consider, options that make a great deal of sense if we are allowed to step outside the framework of Whig historiography and read the events of 1382 on their own terms. Such a reading will involve an adjustment of perspective.

To start out, while the Wycliffite controversy was certainly theological, there was a strong political element as well. This was recognized in Whig historiography, but it tended to be characterized as a struggle between church and state.<sup>41</sup> There is an element of truth in this assessment, but the events of 1382 were more immediately a struggle between institutions of the church, namely the episcopacy and the university. The scholars at Oxford had been pushing back against episcopal authority since the middle of the thirteenth century, when, in receiving recognition as an academic corporation directly from the pope, they were able to reduce the influence of their diocesan in university affairs.<sup>42</sup> And while not directly related to the authority of the church, the scholars had seen their autonomy expanded further in 1355, when in the aftermath of the St. Scholastica's Day riots, the crown granted the Chancellor a number of powers that had formerly been reserved

---

<sup>41</sup> In speaking of the events of 1377 Trevelyan writes: "the heresies which the Pope imputed to the reformer were not so important from their doctrinal as from their political aspect.... The heretic was standing for England against Rome, for the State against the Church..... [Wyclif] was never in his life so strong as he was in this year, when he stood as the national champion against the papacy and spoke the national feeling against the abuses of the Church at home." See *England in the Age of Wyclif*, 80-81.

<sup>42</sup> C.H. Lawrence, "The University in State and Church" in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume I: The Early Oxford Schools*, J.I. Catto and T.A.R. Evans, eds. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984), 99-104.

to the mayor and burgesses of the town.<sup>43</sup> These grants led the scholars to take a high view of their own rights and privileges, and in the late-fourteenth century, this brought them into conflict with the episcopacy over the issue of John Wyclif. Because the theologian was under the purview of the Chancellor, Courtney's condemnation of Wyclif could be seen as outside interference, and Rygge's decision to resist as an assertion of his own authority. In essence, what Rygge was doing in 1382 was telling the Primate that he had no business meddling in university affairs.<sup>44</sup> This insight should make us cautious about ascribing to Rygge any deep commitment to Wycliffite doctrine.<sup>45</sup>

To understand how Repingdon fits in to all of this, it is worth noting that his inception as a doctor of theology meant having a greater stake in the governance of the University.<sup>46</sup> Were Courtenay to be successful in limiting the rights and privileges of the institution, Repingdon's own independence would be affected. This is a key point since it gives us insight into his motives. While we have no evidence that Repingdon actually knew Wyclif, he was clearly and closely connected to Robert Rygge.<sup>47</sup> After the Corpus

---

<sup>43</sup> A charter of Edward III gave the Chancellor the right to tax food and drink, oversight of weights and measures, and responsibility for policing the streets. In essence, the he was to take over the greater part of the mayor and town council's authority. See Brockliss, *The University of Oxford*, 18.

<sup>44</sup> As Andrew Larsen has noted, "opposition to a condemnation could be couched in terms of support for the university's liberties, and those who supported condemnation could be framed as opposing those liberties." See *School of Heretics*, 281.

<sup>45</sup> Such a view finds confirmation from the facts of Rygge's subsequent career. As Jeremy Catto has observed, "if his associations with Wycliffites suggest that his sympathy with them was more than his representative role demanded, he showed no further sign of unorthodoxy, and was probably responsible for the marked absence of theological controversy in Oxford during the 1380s. See "Rygge, Robert (*d.* 1410)," Jeremy Catto in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, May 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/24409> (accessed July 4, 2016).

<sup>46</sup> While as a resident master, Repingdon would have been a full member of the corporation, becoming a doctor would have opened up opportunities for greater influence. G.R. Evans, *The University of Oxford: A New History* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 84-88.

<sup>47</sup> There is absolutely no external evidence to connect Repingdon with Wyclif. While some sort of association seems likely, given the size of late medieval Oxford and the amount of time that both men spent there, the notion that Repingdon imbibed the doctrine of "Lollardy" at the feet of Wyclif has no historical foundation. Contrast this to the example of Nicholas Hereford, whom we know rented rooms to Wyclif in 1374. Larsen, *School of Heretics*, 181.

Christi sermon we are told that he and the Chancellor met in the porch of the church, and that the two of them walked away together from St. Frideswide's, laughing.<sup>48</sup> This indicates a degree of familiarity and is suggestive of the sort of relationship that exists between a mentor and protégé. When this image is placed alongside the Chancellor's resistance to archiepiscopal control, a very different picture from the one painted by Whig historiography begins to appear. Though Repingdon clearly had some sympathy with elements of the Wycliffite program, he must also have realized that his Corpus Christi sermon was a gambit in the power struggle between the Chancellor and the Archbishop. Though it was ultimately unsuccessful, he seems to have been willing to trust in "the privileges of the University, sustained...by the authority of the duke of Lancaster, [to] protect his party from their enemies."<sup>49</sup> Thus it seems entirely possible that Repingdon's defense of Wycliffism arose more out of loyalty to his Chancellor and University than any deep commitment to the controversial don, who by the spring of 1382 had been expelled from Oxford and was cooling his heels in Lutterworth parish, fifty miles to the north.<sup>50</sup> The brevity of Repingdon's sojourn in the Wycliffite camp lends credence to such an assertion.

---

<sup>48</sup> "*Sed Philippum expectavit Cancellarius in ostio ecclesiae; qui cum eo ridens recesserunt a loco.*" See the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 300.

<sup>49</sup> Jeremy Catto, "Wyclif and Wycliffism at Oxford 1356-1430," in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume II: Late Medieval Oxford*, J.I. Catto and T.A.R. Evans, eds. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992), 215.

<sup>50</sup> Wyclif's teachings were condemned at Oxford in May of 1381 by a committee of twelve doctors organized by the then Chancellor, William Barton. Though Barton stated the condemnation was unanimous, Wyclif claimed that it was actually by a vote of seven to five and lodged an appeal with the king. His petition was unsuccessful and he was forced to leave the University. See "Wyclif, John (*d.* 1384)," Anne Hudson in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, September 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/30122> (accessed July 5, 2016).

Still, the fact remains that Repingdon did display some sympathy with Wycliffite views. Yet if we look at his life in terms of the *longue durée*, we see that his desire to enact religious renewal is more likely to have come from a different source. This is apparent when we consider Repingdon's background. Of all those who defended Wyclif in 1382, Repingdon is the only one who was a member of the religious orders.<sup>51</sup> In one regard, this seems odd, since the contours of the Wycliffite controversy were to some degree determined by one's clerical status. The seculars tended to support Wyclif and the regulars backed Courtenay.<sup>52</sup> However, in another respect it makes perfect sense, provided we take into account the order to which Repingdon belonged. Like the secular clergy, the Austin Canons were intimately involved in the practice of pastoral care, and insofar as Wycliffism could be seen as advancing that cause, it is likely to have attracted Repingdon's interest. The realization that Wyclif's prescriptions would lead to revolution rather than reform would have come later, but in the spring of 1382 it must have seemed like an extension of the Augustinian ethos. If we are willing to accept the proposition that the Repingdon's upbringing, first as a charge, and then as member of the Austin Canons, may have had more

---

<sup>51</sup> Nicholas Hereford was a secular cleric, who, after his return to orthodoxy, held livings in the dioceses of London, St. David's and Hereford. See "Hereford, Nicholas (*b. c.*1345, *d.* after 1417)," Simon Forde in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, May 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/20092> (accessed July 5, 2016). John Aston was an Oxford master of arts, but apparently never obtained a parish living. See "Aston, John (*d.* in or before 1407)," Maureen Jurkowski in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, May 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/824> (accessed July 5, 2016). Laurence Stephen (also known as Bedeman) was the rector of Stapeldon Hall (later Exeter College) in Oxford. After his recantation he held livings in the Diocese of Exeter. See R. L. Poole, "Stephen, Laurence (*d.* in or before 1423)," rev. Simon Forde, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/1925> (accessed July 5, 2016).

<sup>52</sup> Wyclif's break with the friars, and to a lesser extent, the monastic orders, can be dated to 1379, when he promulgated his controversial doctrine of the Eucharist. Wyclif had actually expected their support, but when this did not materialize, he "used all the polemic of the earlier Parisian strife between seculars and mendicants" to abuse those whom he now perceived to be his enemies. See Anne Hudson, "Wycliffism in Oxford, 1381–1411," in *Wyclif in his Times*, Anthony Kenny, ed. (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1986), 74.

influence over his thought than that of a man whom he may never have met, and whose doctrines he seems to have espoused for a period of no more than nine months, then his life makes a great deal more sense. Repingdon was a reformer, to be sure, but his brief advocacy of Wycliffism is not our best evidence for this. Rather it is the fact that he spent so much of his life in an environment that emphasized the Augustinian ideal of pastoral care as a means of reform.

Repingdon's commitment to reform can be discerned in the management of his diocese. Shortly after his consecration, he issued a series of mandates setting out specific areas he intended to reform. As Forde has noted, these "included raising the standards of preaching and stopping unlicensed preachers spreading heretical opinions, a concern that the clergy should live properly and carry out their proper function, and a concern for almsgiving and the poor."<sup>53</sup> He appears also to have "taken a personal interest in promoting pastoral handbooks for preachers within his diocese," and worked to "induce graduates from Oxford, particularly theologians, to become licensed preachers in Lincoln diocese."<sup>54</sup> And he went about his duties with conscientious efficiency. As Margaret Archer has concluded from her study of Repingdon's episcopal register, "his main interests lay in his diocese," and "his consistent aim was to strengthen religious life among both clergy and laity."<sup>55</sup> All of these are indicative of a reforming mindset, something we see also, as Forde has suggested, in his writings. And while his sermons have garnered the greatest attention, I believe it to be reflected particularly well in a work he undertook as part of his post-Oxford career, probably during his tenure as Abbot of Leicester. This is a commentary on

---

<sup>53</sup> Forde, "Writings," 25.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>55</sup> Margaret Archer, ed., *The Register of Bishop Philip Repingdon, Volume I, 1405-1411* (Hereford: Lincoln Record Society, 1963), xviii, xxxiv.

the Ten Commandments, written in English and intended to be employed in the instruction of the laity. In the next section we will examine the way it exemplifies the characteristics of Augustinian reform.

### Comments on the Commandments

If one has done extensive reading on the religious history of fourteenth-century England, and has a memory for minutia, one may recall coming across a footnote stating that in addition to writing a sermon cycle on the Sunday gospels, Philip Repingdon also composed a vernacular commentary on the Ten Commandments.<sup>56</sup> The source of this factoid appears to be a brief aside in A.I. Doyle's 1989 contribution to a collection of essays on book production in late medieval England. There he writes, that "Philip Repingdon, Austin canon and later abbot of Leicester, after abandoning Wycliffism, and becoming bishop of Lincoln, wrote an English treatise on the decalogue known in a few copies, and a Latin homily cycle in more."<sup>57</sup> A glance at the footnote reveals that tract to which Doyle refers may be found in British Library MS Cotton Vespasian A.xxiii (Ve), British Library MS Harley 2250 (Ha), and "imperfectly" in Cambridge University Library MS K.k.i.3 (Ca).<sup>58</sup> Further details are added by Jeremy Catto in a contribution to *The History of the University of Oxford* in 1993. There he relates (in a footnote) that the "vernacular

---

<sup>56</sup> One who actually does mention Repingdon's commentary in something more than a footnote is Richard Sharpe in his article on the *Sermones super Evangelia Dominicalia*. He states that "BL, Cotton MS Vespasian A. xxiii...deals only with the first four commandments, while a second copy, unascribed, in BL, Harley MS 2250...ends at the start of the fourth commandment and has been treated as part of a larger work." See Sharpe, "John Eyton *alias* Repyngdon," 255. Unfortunately, the information he supplies is incorrect. As the Appendix shows, Cotton Vespasian A.xxiii deals with all ten of the commandments. As for Harley 2250, see note 65 below.

<sup>57</sup> A.I. Doyle, "Publication by Members of the Religious Orders," in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 115.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

exposition of the Ten Commandments in BL Cotton MS Vespasian A.xxxiii... [is] attributed to *Dominum Philippum quondam abbatem de Leycestria*.”<sup>59</sup> He goes on to note that the commentary “is an orthodox composition, though the citation of Seynt Richard Armachan...recalls Nicholas Hereford’s ascension day sermon of 1382.”<sup>60</sup> It is largely on the strength of these two attestations that Repingdon is seen as the author of a commentary on the Ten Commandments. However, in the years since Doyle and Catto published their findings, a great deal of work has been done on Middle English Decalogue commentaries, and with a more expansive set of data at our disposal, their assessment requires modification.

In her 1995 Ph.D. dissertation on Middle English versions of the Ten Commandments, Judith Jefferson places all three of the manuscripts mentioned by Doyle within a larger group she terms “Discursive Version I (DI).”<sup>61</sup> Jefferson characterizes the DI pattern as follows:

The commentary has a prologue...which refers to Christ's instruction to keep the commandments (Matthew 19:17), tells us that we should obey God because he is our lord and also for love, and establishes the ten-fold and two-fold division. The epilogue recaps this two-fold division and promises...that those who keep the commandments will go to heaven. Each section of the commentary normally begins with a short Latin quotation of the commandment in question, followed by a somewhat fuller version in English. The subsequent discussion often takes the form of the exegesis of Latin biblical quotations.... The popularity of this commentary is clear from the number of extant copies and from its use in various

---

<sup>59</sup> Catto, “Wyclif and Wycliffism at Oxford,” 227. The Latin may be translated as “Dom Philip, sometime (or formerly) Abbot of Leicester.” Richard Sharpe wonders about the ascription “*quondam abbatem*.” He believes that if the work were put out after 1404, Repingdon would have been called “Bishop of Lincoln.” His supposition, then, is that “the exemplar dated from [Repingdon’s] time as abbot and that a copyist has supplied the word ‘quondam’, unaware of Philip’s later career but knowing or at least supposing he was no longer Abbot of Leicester.” See Sharpe, “John Eyton *alias* Repyngdon,” 255. This may be true, but the fact that the scribe was from Lincolnshire (see note 67 below) makes a lack of knowledge about the Bishop of Lincoln seem questionable. As a more likely scenario, I would suggest that the scribe had some connection to the Austin Canons, perhaps even the house at Leicester itself, and by referring to the “sometime” abbot, was calling attention to the order.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Judith Anne Jefferson, “An Edition of the Ten Commandments Commentary in BL Harley 2398 and the Related Version in Trinity College Dublin 245, York Minster XVI.L.12 and Harvard English 738, Together with Discussion of Related Commentaries” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Bristol, 1995), cxxxiii-cxxxiv.

sermon collections.... The majority of the DI commentaries are very closely connected and offer...a quite consistent text.<sup>62</sup>

She concludes that this version is “exemplified by the text which is to be found in the Simeon manuscript (S) as printed in the Book of Vices and Virtues,” and my own investigation of the three manuscripts in question confirms this assessment.<sup>63</sup> However, this makes the association of the commentary with Repingdon problematic. The date of the Simeon manuscript (British Library MS Additional 22283) is c. 1390-1400.<sup>64</sup> If Repingdon were the author of the DI commentary he would have to have composed it sometime prior to that range of dates. This is possible if we were to ascribe it to his time at Oxford, but if there is an earlier attestation in any of the other manuscripts, the date would have to be pushed back. A further problem is that the only manuscript that can be connected to Repingdon is Ve. If he were the author of the commentary, odds are there would be at least one other attestation in a group as large as DI. What one might deduce from all of this is that some enterprising scribe took a pre-existing commentary and attributed it to the Abbot of Leicester. This seems a reasonable supposition, but if true, there would be no good reason to connect the commentary to Repingdon. There is, however, one further piece of evidence to consider.

---

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, cxli-cxlii.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* I discovered this myself in 2008, when, after transcribing CUL MS K.k.i.3, I compared it to the Decalogue commentary in Appendix I of *The Book of Vices and Virtues* and found them to be essentially the same. *The Book of Vices and Virtues* is a Middle English version of *La Somme le Roi*, a moral compendium made by a Dominican Friar named Laurent for King Philip III of France. See Winthrop Francis, ed., *The Book of Vices and Virtues: A fourteenth century English translation of the Somme le roi of Lorens D'Orléans*, EETS Original Series 217 (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), 316-333.

<sup>64</sup> The Simeon manuscript, and its companion the Vernon manuscript (Oxford Bodleian Library MS Eng. poet.a.1) are two massive compendia of mostly Middle English verse and prose. Both are illuminated. The Simeon is incomplete, retaining only about half of its original pages. It was certainly begun after 1382 and may have taken as many as ten years to complete. The history and physical characteristics of both manuscripts are discussed in A.I. Doyle, “Codicology, Paleography, and Provenance,” in *The Making of the Vernon Manuscript The Production and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng.poet.a.1*, Wendy Scase, ed. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 3-26.

Ve and Ha differ from the other manuscripts in the group in that they possess a unique prologue.<sup>65</sup> Rather than the standard introduction, which is relatively short and begins, “alle maner of men schulden holde Godes biddynges,” the opening section of Ve and Ha is longer, and it starts out not with a directive, but with a theme: “for als mykyll as everylke man whyls he lyffys in þis world es a pyllgrim.”<sup>66</sup> The fact that the attribution coincides with this distinctive element suggests that while Repingdon may not have anything to do with the other manuscripts in the group, he does with these. Such an assertion is supported by two further observations. First, while misattribution of authorship was fairly common in the copying of manuscripts, it was most often done to enhance the prestige of a given text. We saw this in Chapter Four with Shirley’s attribution of *Piers Plowman* to Augustine. And while Repingdon may have been a person of some note in fifteenth-century England, it seems odd that one would foist an anonymous English text onto him when there were other, more interesting and important figures available such as Wyclif or Richard Rolle. Second, the provenance of the manuscript suggests that if Repingdon was responsible for the text, the scribe was the sort of person who would know. The hand can be dated to the first quarter of the fifteenth century and the dialect is that of Lincolnshire.<sup>67</sup> While we cannot say whether or not the scribe was in Lincolnshire when

---

<sup>65</sup> Jefferson, “An Edition of the Ten Commandments,” cxliiii. While it has the prologue, Ha does not contain the full DI commentary. Instead it breaks off after the third commandment and continues in a hybrid fashion with four through ten. The prologue is not present in Ca, but this does not necessarily mean it was not there. The reason Doyle lists Ca as imperfect is that it picks up in the middle of the exposition on the first commandment (and ioy or blisse in her owne confusion þat sauers erthly þings...). Obviously there are pages missing. Though it is impossible to say, Ca may very well have had the Ve prologue. Ca is ruled for 25 lines per page, and its length of line is similar to that of Ve. It takes 80 lines of Ve to reach the point where Ca begins. This material could easily fit into 75 lines, which, assuming that the commentary started at the top, amounts to three full missing pages.

<sup>66</sup> For the standard DI text see the extract from Simeon manuscript in Francis, *The Book of Vices and Virtues* 316. For Ve, see line 1 of Appendix.

<sup>67</sup> See Angus McIntosh, M.L. Samuels, Michael Benskin, Margaret Laing, and Keith Williamson, eds., *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, Vol. III (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986), 270.

he copied the text, the fact that he came from Repingdon's diocese, yet also had information from the adjacent county of Leicestershire, suggests that we are dealing with a knowledgeable source. In surveying the evidence, what we appear to have in Ve is a pre-existing Decalogue commentary that Repingdon repurposed with a new prologue. If this is the case, we can still use Ve to gain insight into Repingdon's thought, but it is the relationship between the prologue and commentary that will hold the key. With this in mind, we can start with an examination of how the Decalogue itself relates to Augustinian reform, and then move on to what Repingdon's prologue might do to modify that perspective.

#### Pilgrims and strangers

Knowledge of the Ten Commandments was considered to be a fundamental element of Christian proficiency in late medieval England, but in looking at the history of catechesis, we see that this was not always the case. Catechesis in the patristic era tended to center upon the Lord's Prayer, the Creeds, and manuals of moral instruction rather than the Decalogue, the idea behind this being that with the new dispensation, Christians were not subject to the Law of Moses.<sup>68</sup> Augustine was a notable exception to this trend, seeing the Decalogue as a necessary complement to the work of the Holy Spirit, producing "growth in holiness that leads individuals to their ultimate end—the vision of God."<sup>69</sup> Yet

---

<sup>68</sup> This would seem to be part of the general process by which Christianity separated from Judaism, a process that has its roots in the New Testament (c.f. Peter's dream from Acts 10:1-11:18 and Paul's arguments against circumcision in Galatians 6:12-15), but continued throughout the patristic era. In this vein, Dominic Farrell points out the importance to the early Christian community of worshipping on the Lord's Day rather than the Sabbath. See *The Ends of the Moral Virtues and the First Principles of Practical Reason in Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2012), 64-65.

<sup>69</sup> Philip Turner, "The Ten Commandments in the Church in the Postmodern World," in *I Am the Lord Your God: Christian Reflections on the Ten Commandments*, Carl Braaten and Christopher Seitz, eds. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 12.

despite Augustine's profound influence on the medieval West, for nearly seven centuries the Decalogue played only a minor role in Christian catechesis. This was largely due to the influence of Gregory the Great, who saw "the commandments of the decalogue [as] essentially inferior to the precepts of the Gospel," and for the purposes of ethical instruction offered instead "a patchwork of moral teaching organized into seven virtues and seven vices (or "deadly sins")."<sup>70</sup> This began to change in the middle of the twelfth century, when Hugh of St. Victor argued for the importance of the Commandments, seeing them as an expression of "the 'perfect path and narrow way' which must be travelled by Christians, and a 'rule' or 'order' for teaching *and* living."<sup>71</sup> As such, he sought to introduce them as a tool for pastoral care.<sup>72</sup> In this pastoral emphasis on teaching and living we can discern key elements of Augustinian reform.

Hugh's perspective was passed on to the larger church by his younger colleague in Paris, Peter Lombard, whose *Sententiae* turned the Decalogue into the "most popular guide for moral instruction in much of Europe," and England was no exception.<sup>73</sup> In 1281, the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Pecham, promulgated a set of canons intended to enhance the quality of pastoral care in his province. In them he commanded "that 'every priest with the care of souls shall four times each year...instruct the people using simple English'" on

---

<sup>70</sup> Robert James Bast, *Honor Your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400-1600* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 34.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>72</sup> Lesley Smith, *The Ten Commandments: Interpreting the Bible in the Medieval World* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2014), 184.

<sup>73</sup> Bast, *Honor Your Fathers*, 36. Lombard's *Sententiae in quatuor libris distinctiae* was the standard theological reference in Europe from the mid-twelfth century to the mid-sixteenth century, when it was finally supplanted by Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*. It was, as Philipp W. Rosemann describes it, "the point of departure for much of theological reflection from the time of the first universities through the Council of Trent." See *Peter Lombard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4.

the essentials of the Christian faith.<sup>74</sup> The resulting handbook, written in Latin and known as *The Ignorantia Sacerdotum*, contained extensive commentary on the Commandments, and it saw widespread use within the English church. In 1357 it was translated into the vernacular at the behest of John Thoresby, Archbishop of York. This *Lay Folks Catechism*, as it came to be known, “provided a complete vade mecum for the unlearned parish priest, covering his duties and behaviour, his hearing of confession, and examination of the laity’s knowledge of faith.”<sup>75</sup> By the time Repingdon became Abbot of Leicester in 1393, the Decalogue’s central place in the cure of souls was well established. As leader of a major house of Austin Canons, he would have had extensive pastoral responsibilities. These would extend both to the regulars under his immediate supervision, and in his role as overseer of the Abbey’s appropriated parishes, to the laity in surrounding areas. Providing a vernacular Decalogue commentary to those in his charge places Repingdon squarely within this Augustinian (as opposed to Gregorian) tradition of pastoral care. In fact, his commitment to *ministerium* seems fairly obvious. What may take some explanation, however, is how the Decalogue relates to the mimetic aspects of Augustinian reform. For this we must turn back to Augustine.

As we noted above, Augustine had a more favorable view of the Ten Commandments than many other patristic theologians. This is because he appears to have read them in light of Christ’s assertion in the Sermon on the Mount that he came not to

---

<sup>74</sup> Alastair Minnis, "1215-1349: Culture and History," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism*, Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 74.

<sup>75</sup> Gerald Harriss, *Shaping the Nation: England 1360-1461* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 362. Two versions of the Catechism, one authorized by Thoresby and the other purported to be a Wycliffite adaptation are printed in Thomas Frederick Simmons and Henry Edward Nolloth, eds., *The Lay Folks’ Catechism, or, The English and Latin Versions of Archbishop Thoresby’s Instruction for the People*, EETS Original series, 118 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1901). The section on the Decalogue runs from 31-61.

destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them.<sup>76</sup> As to the matter of explaining this fulfillment, Augustine turns to what in *De Doctrina Christiana* he calls “the law of love.”<sup>77</sup> This idea of the law is derived from another passage on the commandments found in Matthew 22. There, in response to the Pharisee’s question about the greatest commandment, Jesus responds with what is commonly known as the Summary of the Law—that is, love God with heart, soul, and mind and neighbor as one’s self.<sup>78</sup> The importance Augustine attaches to this law as a hermeneutical tool is evident elsewhere in *De Doctrina Christiana* where he asserts that “whoever...thinks that he understands the Holy Scriptures, or any part of them, but puts such an interpretation upon them as does not tend to build up [the] twofold love of God and our neighbor, does not yet understand them as he ought.”<sup>79</sup> Thus in the “the law of love” Augustine has distilled the Ten Commandments down to two, but because they are fulfilled in Christ, they are no longer mere precepts for a moral life, but a foundation for Christian mimetic practice. We see this in *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, his basic treatise on Christian instruction. There he states that the law of love, which contains the commandments, was not only “declared” by Christ

---

<sup>76</sup> “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:17-20). A major theme of the Sermon on the Mount is heightening and making spiritual the precepts of the Law. Augustine’s affirmation of the Ten Commandments is evident in his disputation against Faustus, a Manichaean teacher for whom he had great respect. See *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. IV, Philip Schaff, ed. (Buffalo: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 246-252.

<sup>77</sup> See *De Doctrina Christiana*, Book 1, Chapter 22 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. II, Philip Schaff, ed. (Buffalo: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 528.

<sup>78</sup> “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40).

<sup>79</sup> *De Doctrina Christiana*, book 1, chapter 36 in *St. Augustine’s City of God and Christian Doctrine*, 533.

“in the Gospel,” it was also “shown in his own example.”<sup>80</sup> And it is Christ’s example, of course, that his followers are meant to imitate. So while the mimetic aspect of the Decalogue may not be as obvious as the ministerial one, it too is present in the Augustinian understanding.

This is the material with which Repingdon works. It is the basis of personal reform, but with his prologue he expands that horizon and encourages his reader to see himself as part of a larger body. He does so in the opening lines by introducing the theme of the pilgrimage of life:

For als mykyll as everylke man whyls he lyffys in Dis world es a pyllgrim, ylke day of hys lyf trauelyng i day iournay toward þat place yare he sall duell ay w'outynn end after þe day of dome...<sup>81</sup>

Though the imagery here is singular, it is worth noting pilgrimage in the middle ages was seldom a solitary act. Even those who struck out on their own tended to join with a group for safety and companionship.<sup>82</sup> Shortly thereafter he reinforces this theme through a reference to the psalms:

And þat ylk man lyffing uponn erthe es a pylgrim beres wyttnes þe prophet David [in] Ps. xxxviii, where he says on þ<sup>is</sup> wysse—*sileas obsurdescas quia ad vena ego sum apud te peregrinus sicut omnes patres mei*. That es to say, O lorde forsothe I am a comlyng anentes þe and i pilgrim os all my faaders by fore me has bene.<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> “On the completion of fifty days from His resurrection [Christ] sent to them the Holy Spirit (for so He had promised), by whose agency they were to have love shed abroad in their hearts, to the end that they might be able to fulfill the law, not only without the sense of its being burdensome, but even with a joyful mind. This law was given to the Jews in the Ten Commandments, which they call the Decalogue. And these commandments, again, are reduced to two, namely that we should love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind; and that we should love our neighbor as ourselves. For that on these two precepts hang all the law and the prophets, the Lord Himself has at once declared in the Gospel and shown in His own example.” See *St. Augustine: On the Holy Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises*, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First series, Vol. III, Philip Schaff, ed. (Grand Rapids: W.R. Eerdmans, 1956), 308.

<sup>81</sup> See the Appendix, Ve, lines 1-4.

<sup>82</sup> The classic literary example is, of course, *The Canterbury Tales*. While in the early phase of medieval pilgrimage it was considered more virtuous to travel alone, by the later middle ages, travelling in groups was the norm. See Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), 340-343.

<sup>83</sup> See Ve lines 10-15.

Though the initial image of the pilgrim is once again that of an individual, Repingdon's use of the psalm shifts the perspective to the collective through its recollection of the Israelites and their wandering in the wilderness.<sup>84</sup> They too were like the pilgrim church, on a journey through unfriendly territory, seeking the Promised Land.<sup>85</sup> Having thus introduced the corporate nature of life's pilgrimage through an allusion to the Old Testament, Repingdon expands upon it with a quotation from the New:

Also sant paule wytnesse þe same (ad corinth v<sup>10</sup>) whare he says þus—*semper scientes quoniam dum sumus in corpore peregrinamur ad deum*—þat es to say, wee wate wele all way þt wee er pyllgrims & als strange fra oure lord god als wee er in body lyffng opon erth. In þis maner holy writ wytnes opynly þt ylk man lyffng in þis warld es as pyllgryme traueland toward a dwellyng whare he sal all way be with outen end after þe day of dome.<sup>86</sup>

Here the communal element of life's pilgrimage is explicitly stated. The sense of the translation is not that "I am a pilgrim and estranged from God," but that "we are pilgrims and estranged from God."<sup>87</sup> This emphasis on the corporate journey towards God is

---

<sup>84</sup> The theme of sojourning runs throughout the Torah. It is present in Genesis with the wanderings of the patriarchs. Their itinerant status prefigures the sojourn in Egypt, but more importantly it foreshadows the forty years wandering in the wilderness detailed in Exodus and Numbers, after which Israel was established in Canaan. The sojourning of the psalms looks back to all these instances for precedent. See "Journey" in the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, eds. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 462-464.

<sup>85</sup> The typological relation of Israel's wandering in the wilderness to the church can be traced back to Paul, particularly 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:1-5. There, in the course of warning the Corinthians not to see the sacraments as magical talismans, he states that the Israelites were like the church in that they were "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" and that they ate "the same spiritual meat" and drank "the same spiritual drink" that was Christ.

<sup>86</sup> See Ve lines 15-22.

<sup>87</sup> The scribe's use of "*ad deum*" here is curious, as the Vulgate reads "*a domino*." Though both forms work, the latter is closer to the Middle English paraphrase (i.e. "fra oure lord" rather than "to God"). There is, however, an explanation for this. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:8 reads, *audemus autem et bonam voluntatem habemus magis peregrinari a corpore et praesentes esse ad Deum*. The proximity of verses suggests that we have an instance of homeoteleuton, likely originating with Repingdon himself, since he would be the one referring back to a copy of the Epistle rather than the scribe. I am grateful to the Reverend Shaughn Casey and Professor James Anderson for clarifying questions on the Latin grammar. Repingdon's use of this verse is interesting in of itself, since there are passages in Paul that address the idea of life's pilgrimage more directly (Ephesians 2:19, and, given that any medieval churchman would accept the authorship, Hebrews 13:14 come to mind). In this passage from Corinthians, Paul is engaged in a larger discussion about the difference between earthly and spiritual bodies, wherein the idea of pilgrimage is only a small part. That said, the rationale seems to be that both this passage and the passage from the psalms both speak of alienation from God, thus reinforcing the idea of man's sinfulness.

suggestive of the *ecclesia peregrinans*.<sup>88</sup> Thus we might say that in prefacing this Decalogue commentary with the imagery of the pilgrimage of the church, Repingdon is pointing out the sense of balance inherent in Augustinian reform. Individual reform is church reform and vice versa, and those who are calling for reform of the institution had best look to their own lives in the course of achieving that goal.

Such an appeal would make sense given Repingdon's background and the context of his work. Explicit calls for institutional reform could very easily take on a revolutionary character, as he would have known both from his own experience in the 1380s and from observing Wycliffite activity in subsequent years. Yet as a prelate of some influence, he could advance the cause of church reform by simply advocating the balanced approach of his own order. I believe this is exactly what the *Ve* commentary aspires to do. However, Repingdon's decision to return *ad fontes* does not mean that he is shying away from the issues that were under debate, particularly those that might be associated with Wycliffism. The decision to associate himself with a Decalogue commentary could itself be seen as a sort of engagement with Wycliffism, given the interest Wycliffites tended to show in "God's Laws."<sup>89</sup> But if this is the case, Repingdon is going about it in a highly interesting way, for the concept of life's pilgrimage is not the only thing he addresses in his prologue. He also endorses the idea of "the two ways."

---

<sup>88</sup> In fact, lines 28-29 of *Ve* (ryght os a way ledes from ane cety to one other) may themselves be an allusion to *De Civitate Dei*.

<sup>89</sup> References to "God's law" or "Christ's law" are fairly common in Wycliffite writings, and though this may refer to the moral instruction contained in the Bible it also specifically references the Ten Commandments. Examples of this can be found in such works as the Wycliffite Decalogue commentaries, *The Lantern of Light*, and *A Dialog Between a Wise Man and a Fool*. See J. Patrick Hornbeck, Stephen E. Lahey and Fiona Somerset, eds., *Wycliffite Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 2013), 8-12, 201-226.

## The Two Ways

The idea of the Christian life as being a choice between “two ways” dates to the earliest days of the church.<sup>90</sup> It derives from Christ’s statement that “broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction” and “narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life.”<sup>91</sup> Instruction on the two ways was, in fact, one of the earliest forms of Christian catechesis, but by the later middle ages it had become much less common.<sup>92</sup> Yet in the prologue to *Ve*, Repingdon uses it extensively. After presenting his readers with the image of life’s pilgrimage, he introduces them immediately to the concept:

...sen þere err two dyverse places, þe tone es everlastyng payne of hell þat es ordaynyd to þe wykyd men, þe qwhyk dyes oute of þis world in dedely syn, and þe todyr es ever lastyng lyff þt es ordand to ryghtwysse men, þe qwhilk dýes oute of þis world in lufe & cherite; þherefore it es nedefull tyll ylk mann þat wyll com tyll euer lastyng lyffe þat he ken þe way þat ledes þer to.<sup>93</sup>

After his elucidation of the communal nature of life’s pilgrimage, he takes the theme up again:

And sen in þat place þe qwyk es ordaned for wrychyd men or women es so mykell paynn þt man kan tell, and in þat other þt es ordand for ryght wysse men or women were so mykyll joy þt no hart kan thynkk, it is es nedefull tyll ylk mann & woman þat couetis to be sauyd þat he ken quylk way ledes to þe tone & qwilk toþe toþher. Qwhare fore yhe shall understand ryght os a way ledes from ane cety to one other, ryght in þe same maner tryspas & brekyng of goddys commaundmentes ledes to þe way of everlastyng paynn... qwho so kepes godes cummaundment gays þe way þt ledes to everlastyng blyss of hevynn.<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> The most famous of these is the *Didache* a first-century treatise that was likely used to prepare catechumens for baptism. It was, however, unknown in the medieval West and was not made available to modern scholars until 1883. For a discussion of its use of the “two ways” motif see, Clayton N. Jefford, *The Apostolic Fathers: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005) 120-124.

<sup>91</sup> “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

<sup>92</sup> By the sixth century the concept of the *duae viae* seems to have mostly disappeared in the West. It can be found in the Rule of St. Benedict and may have been used by the Waldensians, but aside from these instances, there is little evidence for its use. See Willy Rordorf, “An Aspect of the Judeo-Christian Ethic: the Two Ways,” in *The Didache in Modern Research: 1996*, Jonathan A. Draper, ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 163-164.

<sup>93</sup> See *Ve* lines 4-10.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, lines 22-30; 41-42.

Repingdon goes on to explain that the allotment of everlasting bliss or pain is endorsed by Christ himself, and that the means of determining this is related to the keeping of his commandments.<sup>95</sup> He then moves his readers off into the DI commentary, but not before reiterating one last time the theme of the two ways.

perfore I thynk wt þe grace of almyghty god to teche 3ow þe x commaundmentes  
so þat in pylgrimage here opon erth yhe may forsake þe perlyous ways þat ledes to  
þe payne and walke in þe heght þt tendes to þe blys þe commamentes.<sup>96</sup>

Repingdon clearly views this idea as important. So did another writer of the Ricardian era who was tarred with the brush of “Lollardy.”<sup>97</sup> That was Sir John Clanvowe, a knight of the king’s chamber under Richard II and a member of Chaucer’s coterie.<sup>98</sup> In addition to writing a piece of poetry long thought to be the work of Geoffrey Chaucer, he is also credited with having authored a Middle English devotional treatise known as *The Two Ways*, which, interestingly enough, contained a commentary on the Ten Commandments.<sup>99</sup> If we consider this shared interest in light of the old historiography we might take it as evidence of Repingdon’s continuing Wycliffism. However, to do so not only privileges Repingdon’s brief advocacy of Wycliffism at the expense of his more extensive

---

<sup>95</sup> In support of this endorsement, Repingdon cites the following: “depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41); “if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17).

<sup>96</sup> See Ve lines 52-56.

<sup>97</sup> It is difficult to say why the idea resurfaces in England in the 1390s. In the case of Repingdon, it may be a familiarity with the Rule of St. Benedict (see note 92 above), but that seems less likely with Clanvowe. It is possible that Wyclif was the source, though I have not been able to find any references to it in his works. The anonymous tract, *Wycklyffes Wycket* does begin with a mention of the “straight and narowe...waye that ledeth to lyfe” and the “large & brode...waye that leadeth to dampnacioun,” and though it purports to have been written in the reign of Richard II, it exists only in early print versions, making it impossible to date. See *Wycklyffes Wycket: Wych He Made in Kyng Rychards Days the Second*, Thomas Pantin, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1828), 4. Anne Hudson notes that a date in the 1470s has been suggested, but that anything between 1390 and 1500 is within the realm of possibility. See *The Premature Reformation*, 451-452.

<sup>98</sup> For a basic outline of Clanvowe’s life, see Nigel Saul, “Clanvow, Sir John (c.1341–1391),” Henry Summerson in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eed ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/37286> (accessed July 5, 2016).

<sup>99</sup> *The Two Ways* may be found in *The Works of Sir John Clanvowe*, V. J. Scattergood, ed. (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1975), 57-80.

Augustinian commitments, it also leaves the Wycliffite affinities of Clanvowe unexamined. These have a less solid basis than one might think. The notion of Clanvowe's commitment to Wycliffism rests largely on assertions made by K.B. McFarlane in *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights*.<sup>100</sup> There McFarlane pronounces Clanvowe and his friend Sir William Neville, "the Castor and Pollux of the Lollard movement," and characterizes Clanvowe "as a moralist of the most sanctimonious type."<sup>101</sup> As such statements imply, McFarlane's work is lively and engaging, not to mention well researched, but his characterization of Clanvowe can be questioned in two key areas. The first is in his use of contemporary chronicles.

Clanvowe's initial association with Wycliffism arises out of the *Chronica Maiora* by Thomas Walsingham, a monk of the Benedictine Abbey of St. Albans. There Clanvowe is mentioned, along with five other knights as being one of the "principal followers and supporters of [the] Lollards."<sup>102</sup> McFarlane takes this at face value, despite the fact that there are internal and external concerns in doing so. In terms of the chronicle itself, it must be noted that Walsingham's entry is not primarily about "Lollard knights." Rather its main

---

<sup>100</sup> While essays by Jeremy Catto "Religion and the English Nobility in the Later Fourteenth Century," in *History & Imagination: Essays in Honor of H. R. Trevor-Roper*, Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Valerie Pearl, and Blair Worden eds. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982), 43–55; J.A.F. Thomson, "Orthodox Religion and the Origins of Lollardy," *History*, Vol. 74 (February 1989), 39–55; and Jill Havens, "A Curious Erasure in Walsingham's Short Chronicle and the Politics of Heresy," in *Fourteenth Century England*, Vol. 2, Chris Given-Wilson, ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), 95–106 have served to as a corrective to McFarlane's position, the deep-seated notion of Clanvowe's Wycliffism remains. In a recent book review Karen Winstead referred to Clanvowe's "overtly heterodox treatise, *The Two Ways*." See the "Review of Chaucer and the Culture of Dissent: The Lollard Context and Subtext of the 'Parson's Tale' by Frances McCormack" in *The Review of English Studies New Series*, Vol. 59 (Sept., 2008), 607–608.

<sup>101</sup> McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights*, 197, 204.

<sup>102</sup> Walsingham's chronicle, covers the years between 1376 and 1420 and provides a vivid look at events not just in England, but in Ireland and on the Continent as well. The entry mentioning Clanvowe is for 1387, probably between September and December. The knights mentioned are Sir William Neville, Sir Lewis Clifford, Sir John Clanvow, Sir Richard Stury, Sir Thomas Latimer, and Sir John Montagu. See *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham 1376–1422*, David Preest, trans. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), 250.

purpose is to convey the details of a debate on the subject of confession.<sup>103</sup> Clanvowe and his associates are mentioned only in passing, and the specifics of their adherence to Wycliffite doctrine are never discussed. And while Walsingham does discuss the issue of Wycliffism at great length elsewhere, Clanvowe is never mentioned in that context. In fact, the only other time he appears is in the discussion of a diplomatic mission of 1388 seeking peace with France.<sup>104</sup> What this seems to suggest is that Walsingham did not have much substantive information on Clanvowe. While this does not mean that the information he did have was false, it is unlikely to have given much insight into the nuances of Clanvowe's faith. In terms of external evidence, there is another near-contemporary list of "Lollard knights," that of the chronicler of Leicester Abbey, Henry Knighton. Though some of the names on Knighton's list overlap with Walsingham, that of John Clanvowe is noticeably absent.<sup>105</sup> This too should cause us to exercise caution, as it is possible that on this subject at least, Knighton is drawing on a more reliable source.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> The entry describes an argument between a Wycliffite priest being sheltered by Sir John Montagu and Nicholas Hereford, who by that time had returned to England after breaking from his prison in Rome. Nearing the point of death, the Wycliffite priest appears to have faltered in his convictions and expressed a desire to make his confession. Upon hearing of this request, Hereford is reported to have intervened, calling the sick priest a fool and urging him to "make [his] confession to God, who has greater power of binding and loosing than lay priests." The priest responded that his desire was to die a Catholic, and though his wish to be shriven was apparently not granted, Walsingham opined that his attempt may have helped him in heaven. This Sir John Montagu was nephew of William Montacute (Montagu), the Earl of Salisbury mentioned in Chapter Four. He would succeed to the earldom on his uncle's death in 1397. Walsingham accuses him of being "a greater fool" for Wycliffism than all the rest. *Ibid.* However, as Anthony Goodman points out, Walsingham is his "sole contemporary accuser," and the assertions are somewhat difficult to square with the care Montagu took in advance of a journey "to secure papal indulgences...to choose his own confessor, have a portable altar, and have mass celebrated before daybreak." "Montagu, John, third earl of Salisbury (c.1350–1400)," Anthony Goodman in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, May 2005, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/18995> (accessed July 5, 2016).

<sup>104</sup> *Chronica Maiora*, 266, 268.

<sup>105</sup> *Knighton's Chronicle, 1337-1396*, G.H. Martin, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). McFarlane did not think much of Knighton's work, largely dismissing him as a reliable witness. See *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights*, 148-149.

<sup>106</sup> This would be none other than his abbot, Philip Repingdon, who provided Knighton with information on the early phase of Wycliffism.

The second area in which McFarlane's characterization of Clanvowe can be questioned has to do, ironically, with one of his study's greatest strengths. That is the breadth of its historical investigations. The problem is that McFarlane pushes his evidence too far. For example, he sets great stock in the fact that the names of these knights "occur together in scores of private instruments, as witnesses, feoffees, mainpernors, and executors," which he takes to indicate that "ties of friendship and mutual trust existed between them."<sup>107</sup> This is a reasonable assumption, but he takes it a step further in seeing bonds of friendship as indicative of shared systems of belief. In arguing for Clanvowe's Wycliffism he states that one is "innocent until proved guilty in law, [but] I propose, quite frankly, to apply the principle of guilt by association where it appears to be justified."<sup>108</sup> McFarlane derives this justification in part from his study of the wills of three of the knights, Richard Latimer, Lewis Clifford, and John Cheyne. In these he discerns what he believes to be elements indicative of Wycliffite belief: "extravagant emphasis on the testator's own unworthiness, strongly contemptuous language towards the body, and strict injunctions against funeral pomp."<sup>109</sup> These, he proposes, "fit with notable ease the sentiments" of *The Two Ways*, and if Clanvowe had made a will (he died intestate outside of Constantinople), those of Latimer, Clifford, and Cheyne would be "very much to his taste."<sup>110</sup> This may be true, but they were also very much to the taste of Thomas Arundel, whose will exhibits the same three characteristics. McFarlane admits as much, saying that Arundel's "motives are inexplicable."<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights*, 160.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

This admission, I think, points to the solution, and that is not to try to explain everything that seems Wycliffite (at least as it has been traditionally understood) in terms of Wycliffism. If we read *The Two Ways* with an unbiased eye, it is difficult not to agree with its modern editor, J.V. Scattergood, in saying:

*The Two Ways* is not so much a Lollard tract as a treatise which shows some sympathy with Lollard positions. It is not doctrinally polemical; it attacks neither the tenets nor the organization of the medieval Church. It has nothing to say about papal and priestly authority, the necessity for Church endowment, the validity of confession or the use of pilgrimages, indulgences or images. The controversial doctrine of the real presence is never mentioned. Perhaps the most significant fact about the treatise is that the Church and its teachings are ignored. The treatise seeks simply to show Christians how to avoid the ‘broade way’ that leads to hell and how to enter the ‘nargh way’ that leads to heaven.<sup>112</sup>

The *Ve Decalogue* commentary could be described in much the same way. While it touches on elements of Christianity that were of interest to Wycliffites, such an interest is not exclusive to Wycliffism. And while it is not clear why a knight, courtier, and man of letters like Clanvowe, would have written his brief manual of moral instruction, as abbot and then bishop, Repingdon’s main duty would have been the cure of souls.<sup>113</sup> The fact that he may have gone about this using language or motifs thought to be Wycliffite should come as little surprise; not because Repingdon was a covert Wycliffite, but because of the impact Wycliffism had on the culture of late medieval England. As Andrew Cole has pointed out, Wycliffism is “part of the process of cultural negotiation itself, an emergent fund of ideas, forms and rhetorics that helped various medieval authors think anew about the past and the present, about traditions and conventions, aesthetics and politics—about,

---

<sup>112</sup> Scattergood, *The Works of Sir John Clanvowe*, 19-20.

<sup>113</sup> Perhaps Clanvowe intended it for members of his household or his heirs. Thomas Clanvowe, who may have been a nephew or a son, appears to have had some interest in Wycliffism, as evidenced from books in the will of his wife, Lady Perrin. See J.A.F Thomson, “Knightly Piety and the Margins of Lollardy,” in *Lollardy and the Gentry in the Late Middle Ages*, Margaret Aston and Colin Richmond, eds. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 105.

fundamentally, what it means to write.”<sup>114</sup> Thus we can see Langland and Chaucer employing the motif of “Lollardy,” without having to ascribe to them Wycliffite ideals.<sup>115</sup>

I believe we should see Repingdon in much the same light. As an Austin Canon, he came out of a tradition that emphasized the importance of pastoral care. Though this tradition focused fundamentally on the reform of individual, its vision could be extended to the church as a whole. The fact that he flirted with Wycliffism in 1382, or used tools and ideas that could be associated with Wycliffism in the years thereafter, does not mean that he was a Wycliffite. Rather it suggests that he saw in Wycliffism the same impulse towards religious renewal that was present in the ethos of his order. This is not surprising given that both Wycliffism and Austin reform arise out of the same wellspring of Augustinian thought, and this spiritual kinship may have allowed him to relate to the Wycliffite perspective, even after he had left it behind. His production of the *Ve* commentary suggests a willingness to engage with Wycliffite concerns, but in framing it within the spirituality of his order, Repingdon remained within the boundaries of reform. We may even discern in Repingdon something of the outlook of William Langland, whose relationship to Wycliffism also resists easy categorization. While it is impossible to determine whether Langland was an influence on Repingdon, what the two do share is an understanding of reform as something that is addressed through pastoral care and can be described in terms of life’s pilgrimage. In this they demonstrate the existence of a non-

---

<sup>114</sup> Cole, *Literature and Heresy*, 186.

<sup>115</sup> Frances McCormack, for example, has noted Chaucer’s affinity with the “Lollard knights,” and in a fashion similar to McFarlane, uses this to advance the theory that Chaucer may have been a Lollard himself. In support of this she suggests that “a great deal of evidence supports a Lollard reading of [the Parson’s] Tale.” Though she ultimately concludes that “an investigation into the Lollard ideology contained in the *Parsons Tale*...cannot be expected to yield conclusive proof that Chaucer endorsed the doctrine of the heretics,” it is in part because “the margins between orthodox and heterodox were not clearly defined.” See *Chaucer and the Culture of Dissent: The Lollard Context and Subtext of the “Parson’s Tale”* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 1, 25-38, 184-185.

revolutionary ideology of religious renewal in late medieval England whose scope and influence has not been fully recognized.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this dissertation has been to investigate religious renewal in late medieval England. In doing so I have tried to avoid the assumptions of confessional perspective and to expose them when they appear. Some might suggest that I have fallen short of complete impartiality, since much of this paper has involved attempting to deconstruct key elements of the Protestant world view. However, given the deep and persistent influence of cultural Protestantism in Anglo-American literary and historical scholarship in general, and on the subject of “the Reformation” in particular, this seemed necessary. Yet in my defense I would argue that to the extent possible, I have avoided characterizations of “orthodoxy” versus “heresy,” and instead couched the discussion in the theologically neutral terms of “revolution” and “reform.” Both of these are present in the Christian kerygma, though as Ladner has argued (and I agree), the latter is fundamental.<sup>1</sup> In this regard, my thesis is critical of Protestantism, particularly in its early modern form, in that despite an often stated allegiance to the concept of reform, its adherents have exhibited a tendency to favor revolution. *Sola scriptura* has proven to be a difficult thing to reconcile with the *sensus Ecclesiae*. Turning more specifically to the subject of this study, while it is difficult to say what the historic and theological relationship between early English Protestantism and Wycliffism might be, they share a revolutionary outlook.

In speaking of religious renewal, I have tried to demonstrate how true reform arises more typically out of a response to pastoral need. This is important since movements of religious renewal that are primarily intellectual seem often to develop in a revolutionary fashion. This is,

---

<sup>1</sup> Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, 27-31.

as Congar has pointed out, because “it is easy for the mind to grasp a straightforward truth,” but that “life, at least here below, presupposes delays which cannot be sidetracked or avoided.”<sup>2</sup> Thus a primarily intellectual approach to reform is susceptible to the temptation of short cuts, and the desire to seek cleaner solutions, unencumbered by the mundane complications of life. However, the pastoral office forces the would-be reformer not only to confront imperfection, but to embrace it as part of the process that will restore things to an even better state, the *reformatio ad melius*. While I have argued that this understanding is present in the spirituality of the Austin Canons and the *Devotio Moderna*, I believe that it is largely absent from the theological program of Wyclif and his followers.<sup>3</sup> This absence led them to embrace what Congar calls “a religion of purity,” as opposed to “a religion of life in its fullness.”<sup>4</sup> Such a perspective tends to focus on the end at the expense of the journey and lead in the direction of revolution more so than reform.

I do believe that late-medieval England had its movements of reform, and that these existed both prior to and alongside revolutionary Wycliffism. We have evidence for this in the poetry of William Langland, which displays an Augustinian pastoral outlook in its appreciation of the need for patience with the process of religious renewal, and an understanding of both the individual and corporate elements of the pilgrimage of life. Though Langland certainly engaged with Wycliffite ideas, he did not embrace them, and the fact that he was writing reformist poetry well before 1377, when Wycliffism became an issue for the English church, lends credence to the assertion of

---

<sup>2</sup> Congar, *True and False Reform*, 267.

<sup>3</sup> This is not to discount the conclusions of Fiona Somerset’s *Feeling Like Saints*, a wide ranging and sensitive treatment of what she terms “Lollard” pastoral writings. While Somerset’s work is helpful in expanding the range of “Lollard” texts, I would point out that much of the material she presents is not, by my definition, “Wycliffite.” Furthermore, many of the texts she does use lead to revolutionary ends. She characterizes “Lollard” commentaries on the Ten Commandments as starting from the mainstream, but developing “a distinctive understanding of the community as governed by God’s law” that separates “unfaithful from true Christians and [asserts] that only the second constitute the true church of those who shall be saved.” See *Feeling Like Saints: Lollard Writings after Wyclif* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 72.

<sup>4</sup> Congar, *True and False Reform*, 266.

alternate approaches to reform. And while it is difficult to say what impact Langland's model might have had on English spirituality, the fact that his poem was widely known, yet never condemned, suggests that it was not without influence. To extend this idea further, we can now point to Langland's probable connections with influential members of the gentry and nobility. While the influence of older historiographical perspectives might lead us to conclude that having "friends in high places" offered Langland protection from ecclesiastical censure, I would argue that the lack of action against him could just as well indicate a degree of agreement with his positions.<sup>5</sup> The fact that some of these parties, such as Thomas Beauchamp and Joan Fitzalan Bohun, were bound by ties of politics, kinship, and affection to figures of "unimpeachable orthodoxy," such as William Courtenay and Thomas Arundel, is suggestive of such a proposition.

In terms of figures whose reforming influence is more clearly demonstrable, at least in relation to the institutional church, we have the example of Philip Repingdon. While any assessment of his life would be incomplete without acknowledging his early espousal of Wycliffism, to use that as the lens through which everything is viewed is surely a mistake. It makes more sense to place his life in the broader context of the pastoral and reforming ethos of his order, the Austin Canons. When we do, we can better appreciate his work in the church, not as a cynical careerist or covert Wycliffite, but as an advocate of real reform. His efforts to elevate the level of learning among the clergy in his diocese have been noted. So have his contributions to the practice of sound preaching, through the production of the *Sermones super Evangelia*, but these efforts at pastoral care are still one step removed from the people of the parish. However, Repingdon's refashioning of the standard Decalogue commentary reveals a real appreciation of

---

<sup>5</sup> While one might object that I have just rejected this sort of juxtapositional argument *vis-à-vis* the Lollard knights and Clanvowe in Chapter Five, I would respond by saying that the relationship between artist and patron is different from that which exists between peers. While social equals will often associate freely, despite differences of opinion, such a relationship seems far less likely when there is a difference in status.

the laity's spiritual needs. While his decision to work in English reminds us that religious instruction in the vernacular was not solely an endeavor of the Wycliffites, his framing of that instruction within the context of "the two ways" suggests an imaginative engagement with that most basic Christian question, "sirs, what must I do to be saved?"<sup>6</sup> These examples suggest that Repingdon's vision of reform was similar to that of Augustine: not something to be dictated from the top, but to be infused from every side.

It seems likely, then, that Repingdon's contribution to what others have termed "orthodox reform" has not been fully appreciated. The Diocese of Lincoln was geographically the largest in England, and it contained the University of Oxford, the training ground of many who would wield influence elsewhere in the church, either on the parish level as pastors, or in the hierarchy above. The full impact of Repingdon's decision to recruit and promote reform-minded university graduates cannot be known, but given the length of his tenure as bishop (1405-1420) and the sheer breadth of the territory subject to his oversight, it cannot have been small.<sup>7</sup> Other prelates such as Henry Chichele (Archbishop of Canterbury from 1414 to 1443) and Robert Hallum (Bishop of Salisbury and leader of the English delegation at Constance) are credited with having created a church that was "a very different animal from Thomas Arundel's: certainly more European, perhaps more confident, more flamboyantly liturgical, [and] passionately interested in orthodox reform."<sup>8</sup> I believe this is true, but I would also suggest that the reform of "Chichele's church" may not have been quite so successful without Repingdon's less glamorous efforts. And given

---

<sup>6</sup> Acts 16:30.

<sup>7</sup> One such graduate was Richard Fleming, a member of the English delegation at the Council of Constance and Repingdon's eventual successor at Lincoln. Fleming's reputation as a reformer is investigated by Chris Lee Nighman in his doctoral dissertation "Reform and Humanism in the Sermons of Richard Fleming at the Council of Constance (1417)" (PhD diss. University of Toronto, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> Vincent Gillespie, "Chichele's Church: Vernacular Theology in England after Thomas Arundel," in *After Arundel*, 42. I am grateful to Professor Gillespie for sharing an early draft of this article with me. It was in many ways the genesis of this project.

that the majority of the surviving *Piers Plowman* manuscripts date to the first half of the fifteenth century, it would be a mistake to discount the influence of William Langland as well.

To return to an idea laid out in the beginning of this study, it is clear that there were “English reformations” not only after, but also before Tudor the era. If we may apply the insights of revisionism to these fourteenth- and fifteenth-century reformations, it seems likely that they not only helped solidify the popularity of “traditional religion” in the later Middle Ages, but that they also softened the impact of Protestantism when it did arrive.<sup>9</sup> In England “the Reformation” was accomplished with much less violence than on the Continent, and when all was said and done, much of the traditional order (such as the threefold ministry of deacon, priest, and Bishop) was retained. And despite the fervent anti-Romanism of men like J.C. Ryle, an enduring element of the Anglican ethos has been the continued catholicity of the English church. In defending the Anglican position against both Puritan and Roman Catholic criticism, the seventeenth-century Archbishop of Armagh wrote, “I make not the least doubt in the world, but that the Church of England before the Reformation and the Church of England after the Reformation are as much the same Church as a garden before it is weeded and after it is weeded is the same garden.”<sup>10</sup> Such a perspective is neither Papalist nor Protestant; rather it is emblematic of a Catholic mindset that embraces the idea of reform.

This brings us to an interesting point. When we consider the Church of England in light of the three Continental confessions (Calvinist, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic) that arose in the early modern era, a striking difference is revealed— Anglicanism is not really a confession. The

---

<sup>9</sup> In the mid-1980s J.J. Scarisbrick postulated that rather than “preparing the ground for the ready reception of Protestantism in England,” Wycliffism may, in fact, “have had the reverse effect,” through the subsequent strengthening of traditional religion. Professor Scarisbrick advanced this theory in a series of lectures he gave at the University of Warwick in 1987. His statements are recorded by Nighman in “Reform and Humanism in the Sermons of Richard Fleming, 6-8.

<sup>10</sup> See John Bramhall, *The Works of the Most Reverend Father in God, John Bramhall, D.D., Sometime Lord Archbishop of Armagh, Primate and Metropolitan of All Ireland*, Volume 1 (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1842), 113.

Thirty-Nine Articles notwithstanding, Anglicanism has nothing that compares to the Lutheran *Book of Concord* (1580) or the Roman Catholic *Catechism of the Council of Trent* (1566).<sup>11</sup> Its central unifying principle is not so much a statement of belief as it is an expression of belief—that is the liturgy laid out in the Book of Common Prayer. Absent a confession or catechism, *lex orandi, lex credendi*.<sup>12</sup> When one considers the vision of church history embraced by the Whigs and their heirs, the great irony is that in this regard, Anglicanism can be said to resemble not so much any of the three confessions as it does the medieval Catholic Church.

---

<sup>11</sup> Unlike the *Book of Concord* and *Roman Catechism*, which are massive volumes, the Thirty-Nine Articles take up nine pages in the Book of Common Prayer. They were never intended as a comprehensive confessional statement. Rather they were a compromise achieved as part of the Elizabethan Settlement which allowed for a broad range of interpretation. John Henry Newman considered them “patient” of catholic interpretation. While his conclusions generated a great deal of resistance in his day, the subsequent history of Anglo-Catholicism seems to have borne his understanding out. See Frank Miller Turner, *John Henry Newman: The Challenge to Evangelical Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 363

<sup>12</sup> The Latin is generally translated as “the law of prayer is the law of belief.”

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Manuscript Sources

British Library MS Cotton Vespasian A.xxiii

British Library MS Harley 2250

Cambridge University Library MS K.k.i.3

### Primary Sources

*The Anonimale Chronicle, 1333 to 1381: From a Manuscript written at St. Mary's Abbey, York*, edited by Vivian H. Galbraith. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970.

Adam of Usk. *Chronicon Adae de Usk, A.D. 1377-1421*, Second Edition. Edited with a translation and notes by Sir Edward Maunde Thompson. London: H. Frowde, 1904.

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae*: Volume 48 (3a. 1-6), edited by R. J. Hennessey, O.P. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Augustine. *The City of God Against the Pagans*, edited and translated by R.W. Dyson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

— *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, translated by R. Stothert. In Vol. 4 of *A Select Library of the Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, edited by Philip Schaff. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887.

— *De Doctrina Christiana*, translated by J.F. Shaw. In Vol. 2 of *A Select Library of the Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, edited by Philip Schaff. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887.

— *De Trinitate*, translated by Arthur West Haddan. In Vol. 3 of *A Select Library of the Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, edited by Philip Schaff. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887.

— *Expositions of the Psalms, 51-72*, translation and notes by Maria Boulding; edited by John E. Rotelle. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2001.

- *Revisions*. Translation, notes and introduction by Boniface Ramsey; edited by Roland Teske. Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2010.
- *Sermo LXIV*, translated by R.G. MacMullen. In Vol. 6 of *A Select Library of the Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, edited by Philip Schaff. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1888.
- *Sermo CXXVIII, In Natali Domini, XII. Patrologia Latina cursus completus*, 39, edited by J.P. Minge. Paris: Apud Garnier, 1865.
- *The Trinity*, translated and edited by Edmund Hill. New York: Hyde City Press, 1991.
- Bale, John. *Illustrium Maioris Britannie scriptorium, hoc est anglie, cambrie, ac scotiae, summarium*. Ipswich, 1548.
- *Scriptorium illustriu[m] maioris Brytannie quam nunc Angliam & Scotiam uocant catalogus*. Basileae: Apud Ioannem Oporinum, 1557-1559.
- Bokenham, Osbern. *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, edited by Mary Serjeantson. Early English Text Society Original Series, 206. London: Oxford University Press, 1938.
- *A Legend of Holy Women*, translated, with an introduction and notes, by Sheila Delaney. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992.
- The Book of Vices and Virtues*, edited by W. Nelson Francis. Early English Text Society Original Series, 217. London: Oxford University Press, 1942.
- Bradwardine, Thomas. *De causa Dei adversus Pelagium*. Frankfort: M. Minerva, 1964.
- Bramhall, John. *The Works of the Most Reverend Father in God, John Bramhall, D.D., Sometime Lord Archbishop of Armagh, Primate and Metropolitan of All Ireland*, Vol. 1. Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1842.
- Calendar of the Close rolls: Edward III, 1364-1368*, Vol. XII, edited by H. C. Maxwell Lyte, London: Public Records Office, 1910.
- Calendar of the Close rolls: Edward III, 1374-1377*, Vol. XIV, edited by H. C. Maxwell Lyte, London: Public Records Office, 1913.
- Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: AD 1342-1362*, Vol. III, edited by W.H. Bliss and C. Johnson. London: HMSO, 1897.
- Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: AD 1404-1415*, Vol. VI, edited by W.H. Bliss and J.A. Twemlow. London: HMSO, 1904.

- Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland. Petitions to the Pope: AD 1342-1419*, Vol. I, edited by W.H. Bliss. London: HMSO, 1896.
- Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and Other Analogous Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office: 6 to 10 Henry VI (1427-1432)*, Vol. 23, edited by Claire Noble. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2004.
- Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and Other Analogous Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office: Edward III*, Volume IX. London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1916.
- Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and Other Analogous Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office: Edward III*, Volume X. London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1921.
- A Calendar of the Feet of Fines for Suffolk*, edited by Walter Rye. Ipswich: Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History, 1900.
- Calendar of the Patent Rolls (Edward III) 1358-1361*, Vol. 11, edited by H.C. Maxwell Lyte. London: Public Records Office, 1911.
- Calendar of the Patent Rolls (Edward III) 1364-1367*, Vol. 13, edited by H.C. Maxwell Lyte. London: Public Records Office, 1912.
- Calendar of the Patent Rolls (Edward III) 1367-1370*, Vol. 14, edited by H.C. Maxwell Lyte. London: Public Records Office, 1913.
- Calendar of the Patent Rolls (Edward III) 1374-1377*, Vol. 16, edited by H.C. Maxwell Lyte. London: Public Records Office, 1916.
- Calendar of the Patent Rolls (Henry VI) 1429-1436*, Vol. 2, edited by H.C. Maxwell Lyte. London: Public Records Office, 1907.
- A Calendar of the Register of Wolstan de Bransford, Bishop of Worcester, 1339-1349*, edited by R. M. Haines. London: HMSO, 1966.
- Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London, A.D. 1258 - A.D. 1688*, Vol. I & II, edited by Reginald Sharpe. London: J. C. Francis, 1889-90.
- Calvin, John. *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses, Called Genesis*, Vol.1, edited and translated by John King. Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1847.
- Capgrave, John. *Life of Saint Augustine*, edited from the British Library Additional MS 36704; together with, Jordanus of Saxony's *Vita s. Augustine* from Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal MS 251 by Cyril Lawrence Smetana. Toronto, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2001.

- A Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, Vol. 3, edited by Walter de Gray Birch. London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1887-1900.
- Chapters of the Augustinian Canons*, edited by H. E. Salter. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1922.
- Chaucer life-records*, Martin Crow and Clair Olson. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1966.
- The Chester Mystery Cycle*, edited by David Mills. East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1992.
- Clanvowe, John. *The Works of Sir John Clanvowe*, edited by V. J. Scattergood. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1975.
- Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, ab Anno MCCL ad Annum MDXLV*, Vol. III, edited by David Wilkins. London: R. Gosling, F. Gyles, T. Woodward, and C. Davis, 1737.
- Constantius of Lyon. *Vie De Saint Germain D'Auxerre*, edited and translated by René Borius. Sources Chrétiennes 112. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1965.
- Court Rolls of the Borough of Colchester*, Vol. 2, 1353-1367, edited and translated by I.H. Jeayes and W. Gurney Benham. Colchester: Town Council of the Borough of Colchester, 1938.
- Court Rolls of the Borough of Colchester*. Vol. 3, 1372-1379, edited and translated by I. H. Jeayes. Colchester: Town Council of the Borough of Colchester, 1941.
- Crowley, Robert. "The Printer to the Reader." In *The Vision of Pierce Plowman, 3 editions* London, 1550.
- A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts In the Library of Gonville And Caius College*, Vol. II, edited by Montague Rhodes James. Cambridge: University Press, 1907-08.
- Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings*, edited and translated by John Van Engen. Mahwah, NJ: The Paulist Press, 1988.
- English Mystics of the Middle Ages*, edited by Barry Windeatt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- The Episcopal Register of Robert Rede, Ordinis Predicatorum, Lord Bishop of Chichester, 1397-1415*, edited by Cecil Deedes. London: Sussex Records Society, 1910.
- Fasciculi Zizaniorum: Magistri Johannis Wyclif cum Tritico. Ascribed to Thomas Netter of Walden*, edited by W. W Shirley. London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858.
- Feet of fines for Essex*, Vol III, edited by R.E.G. Kirk. Colchester: Wiles & Son, 1949.

- The Fyve Wyttes: A Late Middle English Devotional Treatise*, edited by Rolf Bremmer. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987.
- The Gest Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy*, edited by George A. Panton and David Donaldson. Early English Text Society 39 (London: N. Trübner & Co., 1874).
- Gregory I, Pope. *The Book of Pastoral Rule*, translated by George Demacopoulos. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007.
- Gregory XVI, Pope. "Mirari Vos." In *The Papal Encyclicals 1740-1878*, edited by Claudia Carlen. Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981.
- Gregory of Nyssa. *De Virginitate*, translated by William Moore and Henry Austin Wilson. In Vol. 5 of *A Select Library of the Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1893.
- Hereford, Nicholas. "Nicholas Hereford's Ascension Day Sermon, 1382," edited by Simon Forde. *Medieval Studies* 51 (1989): 205-241.
- Holcot, Robert. "Lectures on the wisdom of Solomon". In *Forerunners of the Reformation; the Shape of Late Medieval Thought*, edited by Heiko Augustinus Oberman and translated by Paul Nyhus. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966.
- Hymns to the Virgin & Christ, The Parliament of Devils, and other Religious Poems*, edited by Frederick J. Furnivall. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, & Trübner & Co., 1867.
- Jacobus de Voragine. *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, translated by William Granger Ryan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- Jerome. *Ad Principiam* (CXXVII), translated by W.H. Fremantle, G. Lewis, and W.G. Martley. In Vol. 6 of *A Select Library of the Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1893.
- Knighton, Henry. *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396*, edited and translated by G.H. Martin. Oxford: The Clarendon Press: 1995.
- Langland, William. *Piers Plowman: The A version*, edited by Mícheál F. Vaughan. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.
- *Piers Plowman: The B Version: Will's Visions of Piers Plowman, Do-well, Do-better and Do-best*, edited by George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson. London: Athlone Press, University of London, 1975.

- *Piers Plowman: A New Translation of the B-text*, translated by A.V.C. Schmidt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- *Piers Plowman. A corrected edition of the C-Text*, edited by Derek Pearsall. Exeter, Devon: University of Exeter Press, 1994.
- *The vision of William concerning Piers Plowman, together with Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest, secundum Wit et Resoun*, edited from numerous manuscripts, with prefaces, notes, and a glossary, by the Rev. Walter W. Skeat. London: N. Trübner & Co., 1867.
- Liber ecclesiasticus. An authentic statement of the revenues of the Established Church, compiled from the report of the Commissioners.* London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1835.
- Milton, John. “Areopogitica.” In *Areopogitica and Of Educatation*, edited by George H. Sabine. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1951.
- Mirk, John. *Instructions for Parish Priests*, edited by Gilles Kristensson. Lund, Sweden: Gleerup, 1974.
- Newcourt, Richard. *Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense: an ecclesiastical parochial history of the diocese of London*, Vol. I & II. London: Benjamin Motte, 1710.
- North country wills; being abstracts of wills relating to the counties of York, Nottingham, Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmorland, at Somerset House and Lambeth Palace, 1385 to 1558*, edited by John William Clay. Durham: Andrews & Co., 1908.
- The Oath Book: Or, Red Parchment Book of Colchester*, translated and transcribed by W. Gurney Benham. Colchester: Essex County Standard Office, 1907.
- Paul VI, Pope. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, as translated in *The Companion to the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002.
- Pelagius. *Pelagius's Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, edited and translated by Theodore De Bruyn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Public Record Office Lists and Indexes. Volume XXII.* New Printing: New York, Kraus Reprint Corp., 1963.
- The Register of Bishop Philip Repingdon, 1405-1419*, Vol. 1, edited by Margaret Archer. Hereford: Lincoln Record Society, 1963.
- The Register of John Stafford, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1425-1443*, Vol 2, edited by Thomas Scott Holmes. London: Somerset Records Society, 1916.
- Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, edited by Anne Hudson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

- Stowe, John. *A Survey of London: Contayning the Originall, Antiquity, Increase, Moderne Estate, and Description of that Citie, Written in the Year 1598*, edited by Henry Morley. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1890.
- Shoreham, William. *The poems of William of Shoreham*, edited by Matthias Konrath. Early English Text Society Extra Series, Vol. 86. London: Keegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Limited, 1902.
- Testamenta eboracensia; or, wills registered at York, illustrative of the history, manners, language, statistics, &c., of the province of York, from the year 1300 downwards*, edited by James Raine. Vol. I. London: J. B. Nichols & Son, 1836.
- Testamenta vetusta: being illustrations from wills, of manners, customs, &c. as well as of the descents and possessions of many distinguished families from the reign of Henry the Second to the accession of Queen Elizabeth*. Vol. 1, edited by Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas. London, Nichols & Son, 1826.
- Thoresby, John. *The lay folks' catechism; or, The English and Latin versions of Archbishop Thoresby's Instruction for the people*, edited by T.F. Simmons and H.E. Nolloth. Early English Text Society Original Series, 118. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1901.
- Ticonius. *Tyconius: the book of rules*, edited and translated, by William S. Babcock. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989.
- Trokelow, John de. *Johannis de Trokelowe, et monachorum S. Albani, necnon quorundam anonymorum Chronica et annales, regnantibus Henrico Tertio, Edwardo Primo, Edwardo Secundo, Ricardo Secundo, et Henrico Quarto*, edited by Henry Thomas Riley. London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866.
- Valor ecclesiasticus temp. Henr. VIII. Auctoritate regia institutus*, Vol. I & III, edited by John Caley, with introduction and indexes by Joseph Hunter. London: Record Commission, 1810-1834.
- Walsingham, Thomas. *The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376-1422*, translated by David Preest, with notes by James G. Clark. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2005.
- William of Palerne: An Alliterative Romance*, edited by G.H.V. Bunt. Groningen, The Netherlands: Bouma's Boekhuis, 1985.
- Wycliffite spirituality*, edited and translated by J. Patrick Hornbeck II, Stephen E. Lahey and Fiona Somerset. New York: Paulist Press, 2013.
- Wycklyffes wycket: whyche he made in Kyng Rycards daye the second in the yere of our lorde God MCCCCV*, edited by Thomas Pantin. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1828.
- The York Plays*, edited by Richard Beadle. London: E. Arnold, 1982.

## Secondary Sources

- Adams, Marilyn McCord. *William of Ockam*, Vol. 2. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987.
- Adams, Robert. "The Kane-Donaldson Edition of Piers Plowman: Eclecticism's Ultima Thule." *Text* 16 (2006): 131-141.
- "Langland and the Devotio Moderna: a spiritual kinship." In *Medieval Alliterative Poetry: Essays in Honour of Thorlac Turville-Petre*, edited by John Burrow and Hoyt Duggan, 23-40. Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2010.
- *Langland and the Rokele Family: The Gentry Background to Piers Plowman*. Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2013.
- "Langland's Theology." In *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, edited by John Alford, 87-116. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988.
- "Piers's Pardon and Langland's Semi-Pelagianism." *Traditio* 39 (1983): 367-418.
- Aers, David. *Faith, Ethics, and Church: Writing in England, 1360-1409*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000.
- *Salvation and Sin: Augustine, Langland, and the Fourteenth Century*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009.
- Aers, David and Sarah Beckwith. "Reform and Cultural Revolution: Introduction." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 35 (Winter 2005): 3-12.
- Alford, John. "The Design of the Poem." In *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, edited by John Alford. 29-66. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988.
- Andrewes, Frances. *The Other Friars, The Carmelite, Augustinian, Sack and Pied Friars in Middle Ages*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2006.
- Aston, Margaret. "Caim's Castles: Poverty, Politics, and Disendowment." In *The Church, Politics, and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century*, edited by Barrie Dobson, 49-57. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984.
- *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion*. London: The Hambledon Press, 1984.
- "Review of *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*, by Eamon Duffy." *English Historical Review* 109 (February 1994): 111-114.

- Bailey, Mark. *Medieval Suffolk: An Economic and Social History, 1200-1500*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2007.
- Bailey, Michael. "Religious Poverty, Mendicancy, and Reform in the Late Middle Ages." *Church History* 72, No. 3 (2003): 457-483.
- Baldwin, Anna. *An Introduction to Medieval English Literature: 1300-1485*. London: Palgrave, 2016.
- Balthasar, Hans Urs von. *Presence and Thought: An Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa*, translated by Marc Sebanc. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1985.
- Barney, Stephen. "The Plowshare of the Tongue: The Progress of a Symbol from the Bible to Piers Plowman." *Mediæval Studies* 35 (1973): 261-93.
- Bast, Robert James. *Honor Your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400-1600*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 1997.
- Beer, Barrett L. "Stow, John (1524/5–1605)." Barrett L. Beer In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., edited by David Cannadine. Oxford: OUP, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/26611> (accessed July 5, 2016).
- Bellitto, Christopher. *Renewing Christianity: A History of Church Reform from Day One to Vatican II*. New York: Paulist Press, 2001.
- Benson, C. David. "Another Fine Manuscript Mess." In *New Directions in Later Medieval Manuscript Studies: Essays from the 1998 Harvard Conference*, edited by Derek Pearsall, 15-28. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and York University Press, 2000.
- *Public Piers Plowman: Modern Scholarship and Late Medieval English Culture*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.
- Benson, C. David and Lynne S. Blanchfield. *The Manuscripts of Piers Plowman: The B-version*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 1997.
- Bentley, Samuel. *Excerpta historica or Illustrations from English History*. London: Samuel Bentley, 1831.
- Besserman, Lawrence. "Review of *Faith, Ethics and Church: Writing in England, 1360–1409*, by David Aers." *Speculum* 77, No 33 (July 2002): 861-863.
- Bhattacharji, Santha. "Sutton, Katherine (d. 1376)." Santha Bhattacharji In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., edited by David Cannadine. Oxford: OUP, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/53637> (accessed July 4, 2016).

- Bigelow, M. M. "The Bohun Wills II," *American Historical Review*, 1 (1896): 631-649.
- Bitton-Ashkelony, Brouria. *Encountering the Sacred: The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005.
- Black, Christopher F. "Confraternities and the Parish in the Context of Italian Catholic Reform." In *Confraternities and Catholic Reform in Italy, France, and Spain*, edited by John Patrick Donnelly and Michael Maher, 1-26. Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999.
- Bloomfield, Morton W. *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth Century Apocalypse*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1962.
- "Present State of Piers Plowman Studies." *Speculum* 14, No. 2 (April, 1939): 215-232.
- Bothwell, J. S. "The Five Giants: Institutional Hierarchy and Social Provision in Later Medieval Leicestershire." In *Fourteenth Century England VII*, edited by W. Mark Ormrod, 131-152. Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2012.
- Brewer, Charlotte. *Editing Piers Plowman—the Evolution of the Text*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Bright, Allan Heywood. *New Light On Piers Plowman*. London: Oxford University Press, 1928.
- Brink, Gijbert van den. *Almighty God: a study of the doctrine of divine omnipotence*. Kampen, the Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993.
- Britnell, R. H. *Growth and Decline in Colchester, 1300-1525*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- "The Oath Book of Colchester and the Borough Constitution, 1372-1404." *Essex Archaeology and History* 14 (1982): 94-101.
- "Production for the Market on a Small Fourteenth-Century Estate." *The Economic History Review, New Series*, 19, No. 2 (1966): 380-387.
- Brockliss, L. W. B. *The University of Oxford: A History*. Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Brockman, Bennett. "Cain and Abel in the Chester Creation: Narrative Tradition and Dramatic Potential." In *The Chester Mystery Cycle—A Casebook*, edited by Kevin Harty, 103-118. New York & London, 1993.
- Brooke, Christopher. *Church and Churchman in Medieval Europe*. London: The Hambledon Press, 1999.

- “Monk and Canon: Some Patterns of the Religious Life in the Twelfth Century.” *Studies in Church History*, 22 (1985): 109-129.
- Brooke, Christopher and Gillian Keir. *London, 800-1216: The Shaping of a City*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1975.
- Bryan, Jennifer. *Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and the Private Self in Late Medieval England*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
- Bunt, Gerrit H. V. "Localizing William of Palerne." In *Historical Linguistics and Philology*, edited by Jacek Fisiak, 73-86. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1990.
- Burger, Michael. *Bishops, Clerks, and Diocesan Governance in Thirteenth-Century England: Reward and Punishment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Burton, Janet. *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Busch, Eberhard. *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, translated by John Bowden. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1976.
- Butterfield, Herbert. *The Whig Interpretation of History*. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1931.
- Bynum, Carolyn Walker. *Docere verbo et exemplo: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality*. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979.
- *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984.
- Byrne, Joseph P. *The Encyclopedia of the Black Death*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2012.
- Cameron, Euan. *The European Reformation*, Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Cargill, Oscar. “The Langland Myth.” *Proceedings of the Modern Language Institute*, 50, No. 1 (March, 1935): 36-56.
- Carola, Joseph. *Augustine of Hippo: The Role of the Laity in Ecclesial Reconciliation*. Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2005.
- Catto, Jeremy. Religion and the English Nobility in the Later Fourteenth Century.” In *History & Imagination: Essays in Honor of H. R. Trevor-Roper*, edited by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Valerie Pearl, and Blair Worden, 43-55. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982.

- “Rygge, Robert (d. 1410).” Jeremy Catto In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, May 2008. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/24409> (accessed July 4, 2016).
- “Shaping the Mixed Life: Thomas Arundel’s Reformation.” In *Image Text and Church: Essays for Margaret Aston*, edited by Linda Clark, Maureen Jurkowski, and Colin Richmond, 94-108. Toronto, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2009.
- “Wyclif and Wycliffism at Oxford 1356-1430.” In *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume II: Late Medieval Oxford*, edited by J. I. Catto and T. A. R. Evans. 175-261. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Chadwick, Owen. *Catholicism and History: The Opening of the Vatican Archives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.
- Clark, James C., ed. *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England*. Woodbridge Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2002.
- Cole, Andrew. *Literature and Heresy in the Age of Chaucer*. Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Coleman, Janet. *Piers Plowman and the Moderni*. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1981.
- Colk, Terrie. “Twelfth-Century East Anglian Canons: A Monastic Life?” In *Medieval East Anglia*, edited by Christopher Harper-Bill, 209-224. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2005.
- Collinson, Patrick. *From Cranmer to Sancroft*. London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006.
- “Night Schools, Conventicles and Churches: Continuities and Discontinuities in Early Protestant Ecclesiology.” In *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, edited by Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, 209-235. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- “The World Did Move.” *The Tablet*, April 27, 2002, 11-12.
- Congar, Yves. *Vrai et fausse reforme dans l’église*. Paris: Edition du Cerf, 1969.
- *True and False Reform in the Church*, translated by Paul Philibert. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001.
- Connolly, Margaret. *John Shirley: Book Production and the Noble Household in Fifteenth-Century England*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 1998.
- Coolman, Boyd Taylor. *The Theology of Hugh of St. Victor: An Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

- Cooper, Tim. *The Last Generation of English Catholic Clergy: Parish Priests in the Diocese of Coventry and Lichfield in the Early Sixteenth Century*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1999.
- Copinger, W. A. *The Manors of Suffolk: The Hundreds of Babergh and Blackbourn*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1905.
- Cotton, Nancy. "Katherine of Sutton: The First English Woman Playwright." *Educational Theatre Journal* 30, No. 4 (December 1978): 475-481.
- Courtenay, William. *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth Century England*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Creasy, William C. *The Imitation of Christ: A New Reading of the 1441 Latin Autograph Manuscript*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2007.
- Davies, Rees. "The Life, Travels, and Library of an Early Reader of Piers Plowman." *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 13 (1999): 49-64.
- Davis, Virginia. *William Wykeham: A Life*. London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007.
- Decret, Francois. *Early Christianity in North Africa*, translated by Edward Smither. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2011.
- Delaney, Sheila. *Impolitic Bodies: Poetry, Saints and Society in Fifteenth-Century England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Dickens, A. G. *The English Reformation*. Second Edition. State College, PA: Penn State Press, 1989.
- Dickinson, J. C. *The Origins of the Austin Canons and Their Introduction into England*. London: S.P.C.K., 1950.
- Dobson, E. J. *The Origins of Ancrene Wisse*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1979.
- Donaldson, E. Talbot. *Piers Plowman: The C-text and Its Poet*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1949.
- Doyle, A. I. "Codicology, Paleography, and Provenance." In *The Making of the Vernon Manuscript: The Production and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng.poet.a.1.*, edited by Wendy Scase. 3-26. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2013.
- "Publication by Members of the Religious Orders." In *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, edited by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, 109-123. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

- Duffy, Eamon. "A.G. Dickens and the Late Medieval Church." *Historical Research* 77, Issue 195 (February 2004): 98-110.
- "The English Reformation After Revisionism." *Renaissance Quarterly*, 59, No. 3 (Fall 2006): 723.
- *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion on England 1400-1580*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992.
- *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Dyer, Christopher. *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England, c. 1200-1520*, Revised Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Elm, Kaspar. "Augustinus Canonicus—Augustinus Eremita." In *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, edited by Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, 83-107. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990.
- Elton, G. R. *England Under the Tudors*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- *Reformation Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999.
- Etherton, Judith. "Cok, John (c.1393–c.1468)." Judith Etherton In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., edited by David Cannadine. Oxford: OUP, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/5818> (accessed July 5, 2016).
- Evans, Gillian Rosemary. *Augustine on evil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- *John Wyclif: Myth & Reality*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press Academic, 2005. *The*
- *University of Oxford: A New History*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.
- Evans, J.W., and Jonathan M. Wooding. *St David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2007.
- Evennett, H. Outram. *The spirit of the Counter-Reformation: The Birkbeck lectures in Ecclesiastical History Given in the University of Cambridge in May 1951*, edited by John Bossy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.
- Farrell, Dominic. *The ends of the moral virtues and the first principles of practical reason in Thomas Aquinas*. Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2012.
- Ferguson, Wallace K. *The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Interpretation*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948.

- Flynn, Gabriel. *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church in a World of Unbelief*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004.
- Ford, Judy Ann. *John Mirk's Festial: Orthodoxy, Lollardy, and the Common People in Fourteenth-Century England*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006.
- Forde, Simon. "Hereford, Nicholas (b. c.1345, d. after 1417)." Simon Forde In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, May 2008. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/20092> (accessed July 5, 2016).
- "Repyndon, Philip (c.1345–1424)." Simon Forde In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, May 2008. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/23385> (accessed July 5, 2016).
- "Writings of a Reformer: A look at Sermons Studies and bible Studies through Repyngdon's *Sermones super Evangelia Dominicalia*," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1985.
- Forni, Kathleen. *The Chaucerian Apocrypha: A Counterfeit Canon*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2001.
- Fouilloux, Étienne and Christian Yves Dupont. "Friar Yves, Cardinal Congar, Dominican: Itinerary of a Theologian." *U.S. Catholic Historian*, 17, No. 2, French Connections (Spring 1999): 76-79.
- Fowler, R.C. "The Priory of Little Leighs." In *The Victoria History of the County of Essex*, edited by William Page and J. Horace Round. 155-157. London: Archibald Constable and Company Limited, 1907.
- Fox-Davies, Arthur Charles. *A Complete Guide to Heraldry*. London and Edinburgh: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1929.
- Frank, Robert W. *Piers Plowman and the Scheme of Salvation; an Interpretation of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.
- Frizzard, Allison. *Plympton Priory: A House of the Augustinian Canons in South-Western England in the Late Middle Ages*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2008.
- Fuller, Thomas. *The History of the Worthies of England*, edited by P. Austin Nuttall. Vol. I-III. London: Thomas Tegg, 1840.
- Furnivall, Frederick J. *A Temporary Preface to the Six-text Edition of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, Part I. London, N. Trübner & Co., 1868.

- Gelpi, Donald L. *The Gracing of Human Experience: Rethinking the Relationship Between Nature and Grace*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001.
- Georgianna, Linda. "Anticlericalism in Boccaccio and Chaucer: The Bark and the Bite," in *The Decameron and the Canterbury Tales: New Essays on and Old Question*, edited by Leonard Michal Koff and Brenda Deen Schildgen, 148-173. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2000.
- "The Protestant Chaucer," in *Chaucer's Religious Tales*, edited by C. David Benson and Elizabeth Robertson, 55-70. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1990.
- Gerli, E. Michael. "Alvarus." In *Medieval Iberia: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Michael E. Gerli, Samuel G. Armistead, Robert I. Burns, *et al.*, 86-87. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Gillespie, Vincent. "Chichele's Church: Vernacular Theology in England after Thomas Arundel." In *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth Century England*, edited by Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh, 3-42. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011.
- Gillespie, Vincent and Kantik Ghosh, eds. *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth Century England*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011.
- Gottfried, Robert S. *The Black Death: Natural and Human Disaster in Medieval Europe*. New York: Free Press, 1983.
- Goldsmith, Margaret. *The Figure of Piers Plowman: The Image on the Coin*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981.
- Goodman, A. E. *Margery Kempe and Her World*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- "Montagu, John, third earl of Salisbury (c.1350–1400)." Anthony Goodman In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, May 2005. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/18995> (accessed July 5, 2016).
- Gradon, Pamela. "Trajanus Redivivus: Another Look at Trajan in Piers Plowman." In *Middle English Studies Presented to Norman Davis*, edited by Douglas Grey and E. G. Stanley, 93-114. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1993.
- Grady, Frank. "The Lancastrian Gower and the Limits of Exemplarity." *Speculum* 70, No. 3 (July 1995): 552-575.
- Graf, Ernest. "The Washing of Feet on Maundy Thursday." *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* (February, 1945): 347-351.

- Green, Bernard. "The Theology of Gregory the Great: Christ, Salvation, and the Church." In *A Companion to Gregory the Great*, edited by Bronwen Neil and Matthew Dal Santo, 135-156. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2013.
- Green, Richard Firth. "Humphrey and the Werewolf" in *Medieval Alliterative Poetry: Essays in Honour of Thorlac Turville-Petre*, edited by John Burrow and Hoyt Duggan, 107-124. Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2010.
- Gundy, A. K. *Richard II and the Rebel Earl*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Gunn, Cate. *Ancrene Wisse: From Pastoral Literature to Vernacular Spirituality*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008.
- Haigh, Christopher. "Anticlericalism and the English Reformation" in *The English Reformation Revised*, edited by Christopher Haigh, 56-74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- "The Clergy and Parish Discipline in England, 1570-1640" in *The Impact of the European Reformation*, edited by Bridget Heal and Ole Grell, 125-142. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2008.
- *The English Reformation Revised*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society Under The Tudors*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.
- Haines, Roy Martin. "Bateman, William (c.1298–1355)." Roy Martin Haines In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, September 2010. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/1672> (accessed July 4, 2016).
- "Simon de Montacute." In *Fourteenth Century England*, Vol. I, edited by Nigel Saul. 37-72. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 2000.
- Halverson, James. *Peter Aureole on Predestination: A Challenge to Late-Medieval Thought*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 1998.
- Hanby, Michael. *Augustine and Modernity*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Hanna, Ralph. "Augustinian Canons and Middle English Literature." In *The English Medieval Book, Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, edited by A.S.G. Edwards, Vincent Gillespie, and Ralph Hanna, 27-42. London: The British Library, 2000.
- *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and Their Texts*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996.

- *William Langland*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Variorum, 1993.
- “Will’s Work.” In *Written Work: Langland, Labor, and Authorship*, edited by Steven Justice and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, 23-66. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.
- Harmless, William, S. J. *Augustine in His Own Words*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010.
- Harper-Bill, Christopher. *The Pre-Reformation Church in England, 1400-1530*. London and New York: Longman, 1989.
- Harriss, Gerald. *Shaping the Nation: England 1360-1461*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.
- Harvey, Margaret. *The English in Rome, 1362–1420: Portrait of an Expatriate Community*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Harwood, Britton. *Piers Plowman and the Problem of Belief*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- Hasted, Edward. *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Vol. V*. Canterbury: W. Bristow, 1797.
- Havens, Jill. “A Curious Erasure in Walsingham’s Short Chronicle and the Politics of Heresy.” In *Fourteenth Century England*, Vol. 2, edited by Chris Given-Wilson, 95-106. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 2002.
- Heath, Peter. *The English Parish Clergy on the Eve of the Reformation*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1969.
- Heffernan, Thomas. “The Authorship of the ‘Northern Homily Cycle’: The Liturgical Affiliation of the Gospel Pericopes as a Test.” *Traditio* 41 (1985): 289-309.
- Hernon, Joseph. “The Last Whig Historian and Consensus History.” *American Historical Review* 81, Issue 4 (Feb. 1976): 66-97.
- Hoenen, M.J.F.M. *Marsilius of Inghen: Divine Knowledge in Late Medieval Thought*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 1993.
- Holmes, George. *The Estates of the Higher Nobility in Fourteenth-century England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957.
- Hornbeck, J. Patrick. *What is a Lollard? Dissent and Belief in Late Medieval England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Horobin, Simon. “John Cok and His Copy of Piers Plowman.” *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 27 (2013): 45-59.

- “A Manuscript Found in Abbotsford House and the Lost Legendary of Osbern Bokenham,” *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700*. Volume 14 (2007): 132-64.
- “Manuscripts and Readers of *Piers Plowman*.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Piers Plowman*, edited by Andrew Cole and Andrew Galloway, 179-197. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- “Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the Work of Osbern Bokenham.” *Speculum* 82, Issue 4 (October, 2007): 932-949.
- “The scribe of Rawlinson Poetry 137 and the copying and circulation of *Piers Plowman*.” *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 19 (2005): 3-26.
- Hudson, Anne. “Langland and Lollardy?” *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 17 (2003): 93-105.
- *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1988.
- “‘Wycliffism’ in Oxford, 1381–1411.” In *Wyclif in his Times*, edited by Anthony Kenny, 67-84. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1986.
- Hudson, Anne and Anthony Kenny. “Wyclif, John (d. 1384).” Anne Hudson In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, September 2010. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/30122> (accessed July 5, 2016).
- Hughes, Jonathan. *Pastors and Visionaries, Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1988.
- Hume, Alexander. “Report of the Committee.” In *Of the Orthographie and Congruitie of the Britan Tongue*, edited by Henry B. Wheatley, 3-7. London: Trübner & Co., 1865.
- Izbicki, Thomas. “Sin and Pastoral Care.” In *The Routledge History of Medieval Christianity: 1050-1500*, edited by R. N. Swanson, 147-158. London and New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Jacobs, Jan, Dick Akerboom, and Marcel Gielis, “The leading role of ecclesiastical ministry: exercise of power or willingness to serve.” In *Practical Theology and the Interpretation of Crossing Boundaries: Essays in honor of Professor M.P.J. van Knippenberg*, edited by Bert Roebben and L. van der Tuin, 39-62. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003.
- Jambeck, Karen. “Patterns of Women’s Literary Patronage: England, 1200-ca. 1475.” In *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, edited by June Hall McCash, 228-265. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996.

- Jedin, Hubert. *Katholische Reformation Oder Gegenreformation? Ein Versuch zur Klärung der Begriffe nebst einer Jubiläumsbetrachtung über das Trienter Konzil*. Lucerne: Joseph Stocker, 1946.
- Jefferson, Judith Anne. "An Edition of the Ten Commandments Commentary in BL Harley 2398 and the Related Version in Trinity College Dublin 245, York Minster XVI.L.12 and Harvard English 738, Together with Discussion of Related Commentaries." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Bristol, 1995.
- Jefford, Clayton N. *The Apostolic Fathers: An Essential Guide*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005.
- Jenkins, J. Gilbert. "The Lost Cartulary of Nutley Abbey." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 17, No. 4 (1954): 379-396.
- Johnson, Barbara. *Reading Piers Plowman and The Pilgrim's Progress: Reception and the Protestant Reader*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press: 1992.
- Jones, Norman. *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaption*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002.
- Jurkowski, Maureen. "Aston, John (d. in or before 1407)." Maureen Jurkowski In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, May 2008. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/824> (accessed July 5, 2016).
- "Lollardy in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire: The Two Thomas Compworths." In *Lollards and Their Influence in Late Medieval England*, edited by Fiona Somerset, Jill Havens, and Derrick Pitard. 73-95. Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2003.
- Jusserand, Jean Jules. *Piers Plowman: A Contribution to the History of English Mysticism*, translated by Marion & Elise Richards. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1894.
- Justice, Stephen. "Lollardy." In *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, edited by David Wallace, 662-689. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994.
- Kane, George. *Chaucer and Langland: Historical and Textual Approaches*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1989.
- "Langland, William (c.1325–c.1390)." George Kane In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., edited by David Cannadine. Oxford: OUP, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/16021> (accessed July 4, 2016).

- *Piers Plowman: The Evidence for Authorship*. London: Athlone Press, 1965.
- “The Text.” In *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, edited by John Alford. 175-200. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988.
- Kaufman, Peter Iver. *Augustinian Piety and Catholic Reform: Augustine, Colet and Erasmus*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.
- Kelen, Sarah. *Langland's Early Modern Identities*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Kelly, J. N. D. *The Athanasian Creed*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1964.
- Kieckhefer, Richard. “A Church Reformed though not Deformed,” Review of Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*. *The Journal of Religion* 74, No. 2 (April 1994): 240-249.
- King, John. “Robert Crowley's Editions of Piers Plowman: A Tudor Apocalypse.” *Modern Philology* 73, No. 4 (May 1976): 342-352.
- Kirk, Elizabeth. *The Dream Thought of Piers Plowman*. New Haven, RI: Yale University Press, 1972.
- “Langland's Plowman and the Recreation of Fourteenth Century Religious Metaphor.” *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 2 (1988): 1-21.
- Knowles, David. “The Censured Opinions of Uthred of Boldon.” In *The Proceedings of the British Academy* 37 (1951): 305-342.
- *The Religious Orders in England*, Vol. II. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955.
- Kumin, Beat. *The Shaping of a Community: The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish, c. 1400-1560*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Scolar Press, 1996.
- Kuczynski, Michael. “The Psalms and Social Action in Late Medieval England.” In *The Place of the Psalms in the Intellectual Culture in the Middle Ages*, edited by Nancy van Deusen, 191-214. Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 1999.
- Ladner, Gehard. *The Idea of Reform; Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959.
- *Images and Ideas in the Middle Ages: Selected Studies in History and Art*. Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1983.
- Lahey, Stephen. *John Wyclif*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

- Lake, Peter. "Calvinism and the English Church, 1570-1635." *Past and Present: A Journal of Historical Studies* 114 (1987): 32-76.
- Larsen, Andrew E. *The School of Heretics: Academic Condemnation at the University of Oxford, 1277-1409*. Leiden, the Netherlands, Boston, USA: Brill, 2011
- Lawlor, John. *Piers Plowman: An Essay in Criticism*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1962.
- Lawrence, C. H. "The University in State and Church." In *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume I: The Early Oxford Schools*, edited by J. I. Catto and T.A.R. Evans, 97-150. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Lawton, David A. "Alliterative Style." In *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, edited by John Alford, 223-249. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988.
- "Englising the Bible." In *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, edited by David Wallace, 454-482. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- "Lollardy and the Piers Plowman Tradition." *The Modern Language Review* 76, No. 4 (October 1981): 792-793.
- "On Tearing- And Not Tearing - the Pardon." *Philological Quarterly* 60 (1981): 414-422.
- Leff, Gordon. *Bradwardine and the Pelagians*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957.
- "Bradwardine, Thomas (c.1300–1349)." Gordon Leff In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, May 2006. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/3213> (accessed July 4, 2016).
- *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Dissent, c. 1250-c. 1450*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967.
- "Wyclif and the Augustinian Tradition with Special Reference to His *De Trinitate*." *Medievalia et Humanistica*. New Series 1 (1970): 29-39.
- Leland, John L. "Montagu, William, second earl of Salisbury (1328–1397)." John L. Leland In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, January 2008. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/19002> (accessed July 4, 2016).
- Lepine, David. "'A Long Way from University': Cathedral Canons and Learning at Hereford in the Fifteenth Century." In *The Church and Learning in Later Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of R. B. Dobson*, edited by Caroline M. Barron and Jenny Stratford. 178-195. Donnington, Lincolnshire: Shaun Tyas, 2002.

- Levy, Ian Christopher. "Grace and Freedom in the Soteriology of John Wyclif." *Traditio* 60 (2005): 279-337.
- *John Wyclif: Scriptural Logic, Real Presence, and the Parameters of Orthodoxy*. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2003.
- Logan, F. Donald. *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Lotz-Heumann, Ute. "Confessionalization" in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research*, edited by David M. Whitford, 138-139. Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008.
- Luebke, David M. *The Counter Reformation: Essential Readings*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.
- Macaulay, Thomas Babington. "Ranke's History of the Popes," in *The Complete Writings of Lord Macaulay*, Vol. 15. New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1900.
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002.
- *The Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation*. London: Penguin, 2000.
- Mann, Jill. *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The Literature of Social Classes and the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.
- Markus, Robert. "Reform and Society in Late Antiquity." In *Reforming the Church Before Modernity*, edited by Christopher Bellitto and Louis Hamilton, 3-19. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2005.
- Marshall, Peter. *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2006.
- Marshall, Peter and Alec Ryrie. Introduction *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, edited by Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, 1-14. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Matheson, L. M. "Review of *William Langland*, by Ralph Hanna." *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 8 (1994): 192-194.
- Matthews, David. "Recent Chaucer Criticism: New Historicism, New Discontents." *Modern Philology* 106, Issue 1 (August, 2008): 117-127.
- McCormack, Frances. *Chaucer and the Culture of Dissent: The Lollard Context and Subtext of the "Parson's Tale."* Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2007.

- McFarlane, K. B. *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- McGrath, Alister. *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- *Luther's Theology of the Cross*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1985.
- *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 1988.
- McIntosh, Angus, M. L. Samuels, and others. *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, Vol. 1-4. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986.
- Meredith, Peter. "The Towneley Cycle." In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, edited by Richard Beadle, 134-162. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Middleton, Anne. "Acts of Vagrancy: The C Version "Autobiography" and the Statute of 1388." In *Written Work: Langland, Labor, and Authorship*, edited by Steven Justice and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, 208-313. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.
- Millet, Bella. "The Origins of Ancrene Wisse: New Answers, New Questions," *Medium Aevum* 61, No. 2 (1992): 206-228.
- Minnis, Alastair. "1215-1349: Culture and History." In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism*, edited by Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie, 69-90. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- *Fallible Authors: Chaucer's Pardoner and Wife of Bath*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
- Moore, Norman. *The History of St. Bartholomew's Hospital*. 2 Volumes. London: C. Arthur Pearson Limited, 1918.
- Moore, Samuel. "Studies in Piers the Plowman." *Modern Philology* 12 (1914), 19-50.
- Morant, Philip. *The History and Antiquities of the Borough of Colchester in the County of Essex*. Colchester: I. Marsden, 1810.
- Morganstern, Anne McGee. *Gothic Tombs of Kinship in France, the Low Countries, and England*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000.
- Morghen, Raffaello. "Monastic Reform and Cluniac Spirituality." In *Cluniac Monasticism in the Central Middle Ages*, edited by Noreen Hunt, 11-28. London: Macmillan, 1971.

- Morley, Claude. "Catalog of the Beneficed Clergy of Suffolk (1086-1550)." *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* 22 (1934-36): 29-85.
- Morrison, Karl. "From Form into Form: Mimesis and Personality in Augustine's Historical Thought." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 124, No. 4 (August, 1980): 276-294.
- *The Mimetic Tradition of Reform in the West*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.
- Mullett, Michael. *The Catholic Reformation*. London: Routledge, 1999).
- Neale, John Mason. *A History of the so-called Jansenist Church of Holland: with a sketch of its earlier annals, and some account of the Brothers of the Common Life*. Oxford: John Henry and James Parker, 1858.
- Nighman, Chris Lee. "Reform and Humanism in the Sermons of Richard Fleming at the Council of Constance (1417)." PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1996.
- Nolcken, Christina von. "Langland and Lollardy." *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 2 (1988): 71-102.
- Oakley, Francis. *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Oberman, Heiko Augustinus. *The Dawn of the Reformation*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986.
- *Masters of the Reformation—the Emergence of a New Intellectual Climate in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Ocker, Christopher. "Johannes Klenkok: A Friar's Life, c. 1310-1374." In *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 83, no. 5 (1993): 37.
- O'Connor, Stephen. "Fraunceys, Adam (c.1310–1375)." Stephen O'Connor In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, October 2006. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/52176> (accessed July 4, 2016).
- O'Daly, Gerald. *Augustine's City of God*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.
- Olsen, Viggo Norskov. *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.
- O'Malley, John. *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

- Parker, Catherine Innes. "The Legacy of Ancrene Wisse." In *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse*, edited by Yoko Wada, 145-174. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003.
- Pastor, Ludwig von. *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, edited by Ralph Francis Kerr. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1930.
- Pates, Stella. "Piers Plowman Manuscript Trinity College: Dublin 212—The Annals Revisited." *Notes & Queries* 56, No. 3 (September, 2009): 336-340.
- Patterson, Lee. *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding in Medieval Literature*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture, since 1700*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition: 100-600*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.
- Penn, Stephen. "Wycliffe and the Sacraments." In *A companion to John Wyclif: late medieval theologian*, edited by Ian Christopher Levy, 241-291. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2006.
- Peters, Greg. "Religious Orders and Pastoral Care." In *A Companion to Pastoral Care in the Later Middle Ages, 1200-1500*, edited by Ronald J. Stansbury, 263-284. Leiden, the Netherlands; Boston: Brill, 2010.
- Pettegree, Andrew. *Marian Protestantism. Six Studies*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Scolar Press, 1996.
- Poole, R. L. "Stephen, Laurence (d. in or before 1423)." Rev. Simon Forde. In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/1925> (accessed July 5, 2016).
- Post, Regnerus Richardus. *The Modern Devotion: Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism*. Leiden, the Netherlands, E. J. Brill, 1968.
- Ranke, Leopold von. *History of the Popes: Their Church and State*. Vol. 1-3. Translated by E. Fowler. New York: Colonial Press, 1901.
- Rawcliffe, Carole. "Bourchier, Sir William, count of Eu (c.1374–1420)." Carole Rawcliffe In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, January 2008. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/50242> (accessed July 4, 2016).

- Rees, B. R. *The Letters of Pelagius and his Followers*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1991.
- Reinhard, Wolfgang. "Reformation, Counter Reformation, and the Early Modern State: A Reassessment." *The Catholic Historical Review* LXXV, No.3 (1989): 383-404.
- Rex, Richard. *The Lollards*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.
- Robinson, David. *Beneficed Clergy in the Cleveland and the East Riding, 1306-1340*. York: St. Anthony's Press, 1969.
- Robson, J. A. *Wyclif and the Oxford Schools*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961.
- Roger, Euan C. "Blakberd's Treasure: a study in fifteenth-century administration at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London." In *Exploring the Evidence: Commemoration, Administration and the Economy*, edited by Linda Clark. 81-108. Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2014.
- Rolker, Christopher. *Canon Law and the Letters of Ivo of Chartres*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Rordorf, Willy. "An Aspect of the Judeo-Christian Ethic: the Two Ways." In *The Didache in Modern Research: 1996*, edited by Jonathan A. Draper, 148-164. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996.
- Rosemann, Philipp W. *Peter Lombard*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Roth, Francis. *The English Austin Friars, 1249-1538*, Vol. 1: History. New York: Augustinian Historical Institute, 1966.
- Round, J. H. "Lionel de Bradenham and Colchester," *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society* 13 (1913): 86-91.
- Russell, Conrad. Introduction to *The Origins of the English Civil War*, edited by Conrad Russell. London: Macmillan, 1973.
- Ryken, Leland, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, eds. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1998.
- Ryle, J. C. *Light From Old Times; or, Protestant Facts and Men*. London: Charles J. Thynne, 1902.
- *The Priest, the Puritan, and the Preacher*. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1856.
- Saak, Erik. "The Reception of Augustine in the Later Middle Ages." In *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West from the Carolingians to the Maurists*, Vol. 1, edited by Irena Dorota Backus, 367-404. Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1997.

- Samuels, M. L. "Langland's Dialect." *Medium Aevum* 54 (1985): 232-247.
- Sandler, Lucy Freeman. *Illuminators and Patrons in Fourteenth-Century England*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2014.
- "Rhetorical strategies in the pictorial imagery of fourteenth-century manuscripts: the case of the Bohun psalters." In *Rhetoric Beyond Words: Delight and Persuasion in the Arts of the Middle Ages*, edited by Mary Carruthers, 96-123. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Sargent, Michael. "Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection in Continental Europe in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries." *Textus* 24, Issue 3 (2011): 463-476.
- Saul, Nigel. "Clanvow, Sir John (c.1341–1391)." Henry Summerson In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/37286> (accessed July 5, 2016).
- Scarbrick, J. J. *The Reformation and the English People*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1984.
- Scase, Wendy. *Literature and Complaint in England: 1272-1553*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Schilling, Heinz. *Early Modern European Civilization and its Political and Cultural Dynamism*. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2008.
- Schmidt, A. V. C. "Langland: *Piers Plowman*." In *The Cambridge History of English Poetry*, edited by Michael O'Neill, 63-80. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Schroeder, Mary Carruthers. "The Tearing of the Pardon." *Philological Quarterly* XLIX (1970): 8-18.
- Schulman, N. M. "Husband, father, bishop? Grosseteste in Paris." *Speculum* 72 (1997): 330-346.
- Shagan, Ethan. *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Sharpe, Kevin. *Remapping Early Modern England: The Culture of Seventeenth-Century Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Sharpe, Richard. "John Eyton alias Repyngdon and the *Sermones Super Euangelia Dominicalia* Attributed to Philip Repyngdon." *Medium Aevum* LXXXIII, No. 2 (2014): 254-265.
- Shephard, Stephen H. A. "Review of *Langland The Rokele Family: The Gentry Background to Piers Plowman*, by Robert Adams." *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 28 (2014): 275-279.

- Shogimen, Takashi. "Wyclif's Ecclesiology and Political Thought." In *A Companion to John Wyclif*, edited by Ian Christopher Levy. 199-240. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2006.
- Simmons, Walter. "The Lives of the Beghards." In *Medieval Christianity in Practice*, edited by Miri Rubin, 238-245. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Simpson, James. "Confessing Literature." *English Language Notes*, 44 (Spring 2006): 121-126.  
— *Piers Plowman: An Introduction to the B-Text*. London: Longman, 1990.
- *Reform and Cultural Revolution.* *The Oxford English Literary History*, Volume 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- "Religious Forms and Institutions in *Piers Plowman*." In *The Cambridge Companion to Piers Plowman*, edited by Andrew Cole and Andrew Galloway, 97-114. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Smith, D. Vance. *The Book of the Incipit: Beginnings in the Fourteenth Century*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- Smith, Lesley. *The Ten Commandments: Interpreting the Bible in the Medieval World*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2014.
- Somerset, Fiona. *Feeling Like Saints: Lollard Writings after Wyclif*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014.
- "Professionalizing Translation at the Turn of the Fifteenth Century: Ullerston's *Determinacio* and Arundel's *Constitutions*." In *The Vulgar Tongue: Medieval and Postmedieval Vernacularity*, edited by Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson, 145-157. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003.
- Sønnesyn, Sigbjørn Olsen. "Only through time time is conquered: Liturgy, History, and the Timeless Aspirations of the Temporal." In *Of Chronicles and Kings: National Saints and the Emergence of Nation States in the High Middle Ages*, edited by John Bergsagel, Thomas Riis, and David Hiley, 23-50. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2015.
- Southern, R. W. *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971.
- Sproul, R. C. *What is Reformed Theology? Understanding the Basics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997.
- Staples, Kate Kelsey. *Daughters of London: Inheriting Opportunity in the Late Middle Ages*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2011.

- Staubach, Nikolaus. “*Memores pristinae perfectionis*. The importance of the Church Fathers for *Devotio Moderna*.” In *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: from the Carolingians to the Maurists*, Vol. 1, edited by Irena Dorota Backus, 405-472. Leiden, the Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1997.
- Steinmetz, David. *Luther and Staupitz: An Essay in the Intellectual Origins of the Protestant Reformation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1980.
- Stephens, Martin. “Illusion and Reality in Medieval Drama.” *College English* 32 (1971): 448-484.
- Stevenson, Kath. “Review of *Langland and the Rokele Family: The Gentry Background to Piers Plowman*, by Robert Adams.” *Óenach: FMRSI Reviews* (2013).
- Stöber, Karen. *Late Medieval Monasteries and their Patrons: England and Wales, c.1300-1540*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2007.
- Strohm, Paul. *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399-1422*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Sturges, Robert. “The Middle English Pseudo-Augustinian Soliloquies and Its Anti-Wycliffite Commentaries.” In *Cultures of Piety: Middle English Devotional Literature in Translation*, edited by Anna Clark Bartlett and Thomas Bestull, 41-63. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Sturman, Winifred. “Barking abbey--A study in its external and internal administration from the conquest to dissolution.” PhD Dissertation, University of London, 1961.
- Sumption, Jonathan. *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*. London: Faber & Faber, 1975.
- Sumruld, William A. *Augustine and the Arians: The Bishop of Hippo's Encounters with Ulfilan Arianism*. London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1994.
- Swanson, R. N. “Apostolic Successors: Priests and Priesthood, Bishops, and Episcopacy in Medieval Western Europe.” In *A Companion to Priesthood and Holy Orders in the Middle Ages*, edited by Greg Peters and C. Colt Anderson, 4-42. Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2016.
- “Courtenay, William (1341/2–1396).” R. N. Swanson In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by David Cannadine, January 2011. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/6457> (accessed July 5, 2016).
- *Religion and Devotion in Europe: c. 1215 - c.1515*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

- Swart, Felix, "Chaucer and the English Reformation." *Neophilologus* 62, Issue 4 (October 1978): 616-619.
- Tamburello, Dennis E. *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St. Bernard*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994.
- Tanquerey, Frédéric. "The conspiracy of Thomas Dunheved, 1327." *The English Historical Review*, xxxi (1916):119-124.
- Tellenbach, Gerd. *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Teske, Roland. "The Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:29-37) in Augustine's Exegesis." In *Augustine: Biblical Exegete*, edited by Frederick Van Fleteren and Joseph Schnaubelt, 347-367. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.
- Thompson, E. A. *St. Germanus of Auxerre and the End of Roman Britain*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1984.
- Thomson, J.A.F. "Knightly Piety and the Margins of Lollardy." In *Lollardy and the Gentry in the Late Middle Ages*, edited by Margaret Aston and Colin Richmond. 95-111. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- "Orthodox Religion and the Origins of Lollardy." *History*, 74 (February 1989): 39-55.
- Trapp, Damasus, O.S.A. "Augustinian Theology of the Fourteenth Century: notes on editions, marginalia, opinions, and book lore." *Augustiniana* 6 (1956): 146-274.
- Trevelyan, G. M. *England in the age of Wycliffe, 1368-1520*. New York: Harper and Row, 1963.
- Turner, Frank Miller. *John Henry Newman: The Challenge to Evangelical Religion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Turner, Philip. "The Ten Commandments in the Church in the Postmodern World." In *I Am the Lord Your God: Christian Reflections on the Ten Commandments*, edited by Carl Braaten and Christopher Seitz, 3-17. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005.
- Turville-Petre, Thorlac. *The Alliterative Revival*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1977.
- Tyacke, Nicholas. *Aspects of English Protestantism c.1530-1700*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001.
- Van Engen, John H. "A Brabantine Perspective on the Origins of the Modern Devotion." In *Serta devota: in memoriam Guillelmi Lourdaux*, Volume 1, edited by Werner Verbeke *et al.* 36-39., Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1992.

- “Images and Ideas: The Achievements of Gerhart Burian Ladner, with a Bibliography of his Published Works.” *Viator* 20 (1989): 85-115.
- *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life: The Devotio Moderna and the World of the Later Middle Ages*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
- Verduyn, Anthony. “Burghersh, Bartholomew, the elder, second Lord Burghersh (d. 1355).” Anthony Verduyn In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., edited by David Cannadine. Oxford: OUP, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/4005> (accessed July 4, 2016).
- The Victoria History of the County of Derby*, Volume 2, edited by William Page. London: Archibald Constable and Company Limited, 1907.
- The Victoria History of the County of Essex*, edited by Janet Cooper, Vol. 9. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- The Victoria History of the County of Leicester*, Volume 2, edited by W.G. Hoskins and R.A. McKinley. London: University of London Institute of Historical Research, 1954.
- The Victoria History of the County of Northampton*, Volume 2, edited by R. M. Serjeantson and W. Ryland Adkins. London: Archibald Constable and Company Limited, 1906.
- Visser, Arnoud. *Reading Augustine in the Reformation: The Flexibility of Intellectual Authority in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Von Habsburg, Maximilian. *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the Imitatio Christi: From Late Medieval Classic to Early Modern Bestseller*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2011.
- Walford, W. S. “Letter Relating to the Wars of Edward III in France, and the Public Affairs in the Year 1346.” *The Archaeological Journal* XII (1855): 73-75.
- Ward, Jennifer. *English Noblewomen in the Later Middle Ages*. New York: Longman, 1992.
- Warnar, Geert. *Ruusbroec: Literature and Mysticism in the Fourteenth Century*. Translated by Diane Webb. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2007.
- Warner, Lawrence. “Jesus the Jousting: The Christ Knight and Medieval Theories of Atonement in Piers Plowman and The Round Table.” *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 10 (1996): 129-143.
- “Langland and the Problem of William of Palerne.” *Viator* 37 (2006): 397-415.
- *The myth of Piers Plowman: constructing a medieval literary archive*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

- “Review of *Langland and the Rokele Family: The Gentry Background to Piers Plowman*, by Robert Adams.” *The Modern Language Review* 110, No. 3 (July 2015): 812-813..
- Watson, Nicholas. “Censorship and Cultural Change in Late Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel’s Constitutions of 1409.” *Speculum* 70, No. 4 (Oct. 1995): 822-864.
- “The Middle English Mystics.” In *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, edited by David Wallace, 539-565. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Webb, Diana. *Medieval European Pilgrimage c.700-c.1500*. New York: Palgrave 2002.
- Wenzel, Seigfried. *Latin Sermon Collections from Later Medieval England: Orthodox Preaching in the Age of Wyclif*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Werrell, Ralph S. *The Roots of William Tyndale's Theology*. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2013.
- Wilks, Michael. “*Reformatio Regni*: Wyclif and Hus as Leaders of Religious Protest Movements.” *Studies in Church History* 9 (1972): 109-130.
- “Wyclif and Hus as Leaders of Religious Protest Movements.” *Studies in Church History* 9 (1972): 109-130.
- *Wyclif: Political Ideas and Practice*. Papers by Michael Wilks; selected and introduced by Anne Hudson. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2000.
- Windeatt, Barry. “Review of *Who Murdered Chaucer?* by Terry Jones.” *Medium Aevum* 76, No. 1 (2007): 130-132.
- Winstead, Karen. *John Capgrave’s Fifteenth Century*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.
- “Review of *Chaucer and the Culture of Dissent: The Lollard Context and Subtext of the ‘Parson’s Tale’* by Frances McCormack.” *The Review of English Studies*. New Series. Vol. 59 (Sept., 2008): 607-608.
- Wood, Rega. “Ockham’s Repudiation of Pelagianism.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, edited by Paul Vincent Spade, 350-374. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Woolf, Rosemary. *The English Mystery Plays*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972.
- “The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight in Medieval English Literature.” *The Review of English Studies* 13, No. 49 (Feb., 1962): 1-16.

Workman, Herbert. *John Wyclif: A Study of the English Medieval Church*. Vol. 2. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1926.

Wright, A. P. M. "John Dolyte (Tolite) of Chichester." In *The House of Commons 1386-1421*. Vol. 2, edited by John Smith Roskell, Linda Clark, Carole Rawcliffe. Stroud, Gloucestershire: Published for the History of Parliament Trust by Allan Sutton Publishing, 1993.

Zeilinga de Boer, Jelle and Donald Theodore Sanders. *Earthquakes in Human History: The Far-reaching Effects of Seismic Disruptions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

## APPENDIX

British Library MS Cotton Vespasian A.xxiii is a vellum quarto containing two works only. The first, written in a bold textura, is an incomplete copy of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. The second, copied in a clear, readable Bastard Anglicana and datable to the first quarter of the fifteenth century, is a short commentary in English on the Ten Commandments. These two works are unrelated in provenance and most likely came to be bound together out of convenience, probably by Sir Robert Cotton.

Jeremy Catto attributes the Decalogue Commentary to Philip Repingdon, Abbot of Leicester, confessor to Henry IV, and eventually Bishop of Lincoln.<sup>1</sup> This attribution is based on the Latin rubric at the end folio 115 v. that reads *expliciunt mandata expositio magistrum philippum quondam abbatem de leycistria*. Though this Commentary is unpublished, I transcribed it in the summer of 2008, along with two related versions in the British Library and at Cambridge.<sup>2</sup> After further research I discovered that in most respects the Cotton Commentary is identical to the one found introducing the *Book of Vices and Virtues* in the Simeon Manuscript (BL MS Add. 22283). There is, however, one significant difference between the two versions. Whereas the Commentary in the Simeon manuscript has a prologue that begins "Alle maner of men schulden holde Godes biddyns..." and then goes on to speak about the two tables of the Law, the prologue in Cotton Commentary is quite different. It begins by likening man's life to a pilgrimage and continues that theme until the beginning of the Commentary proper.

---

<sup>1</sup> Catto, "Wyclif and Wycliffism at Oxford," 227.

<sup>2</sup> BL MS Harley 2250 and CUL Kk 1.3

To the extent possible, the transcription preserves the language and formatting of the manuscript. Abbreviations have been expanded and marked with a line beneath. The curious use of the numeral “1” in place of the indefinite article (see, for example, line 14) is preserved. The Latin of the manuscript has been checked against the Vulgate, but in cases where it differs, it has not been changed.

Deo gratias. Amen. Extractus decem mandatorum sequitur in hac form.

For als mykyll as everylke man whyls he lyffys in þis  
 warld es a pylgrim ylke day of hys lyf trauelyng 1  
 day iournay toward þat place yare he sall duell ay w<sup>t</sup>outynn end  
 after þe day of dome · And sen þere err two dyverse places [ut p<sup>3</sup>  
Mathi · xxv<sup>to</sup>] þe tone es everlastyng payne of hell þat es ordaynyd 5  
 to þe wykyd men þe qwhyk dyes oute of þ<sup>is</sup> world in dedely syn  
 and þe todyr es ever lastyng lyff þ<sup>t</sup> es ordand to ryghtwysse  
 men · þe qwhilk dyes oute of þis world in lufe & cherite  
 þherefore it es nedefull tyll ylk mann þat wyll com tyll euer  
 lastyng lyffe · þat he ken þe way þat ledes þer to · And þat ylk 10  
 man lyffyng uponn erthe es a pylgrim beres wyttnes þe prophet  
 David · ps xxxviii · where he says on þ<sup>is</sup> wysse [*sileas obsurdescas quia ad*  
*vena ego sum apud te peregrinus sicut omnes patres mei*] þat es to  
 say · O lorde forsothe I am a comlyng anentes þe and 1 pilgrim  
 os all my faaders by fore me has bene. Also sant paule wyt 15  
 nesse þe same ad [corinth v<sup>to</sup> whare he says þus · [*semper sci*  
*entes quoniam dum sumus in corpore peregrinari ad deum*] þat es to say wee wate  
 wele all way · þ<sup>t</sup> wee er pylgrims & als strange fra oure lord godd  
 als wee er in body lyffng opon erth · In þis maner holy writ  
 wytnes opynly þ<sup>t</sup> ylk man lyffyng in þ<sup>is</sup> warld es as pyl 20  
 gryme · traueland toward a dwellyng whare he sal all way be  
 with outen end · after þe day of dome · And sen in þat place

Fol 107 v

þe qwyk es ordaned for wrychyd men · or women · es so mykell  
 paynn þ<sup>t</sup> man kan tell · And in þat other þ<sup>t</sup> es ordand for ryght  
 wysse men · or women · were so mykyll joy þ<sup>t</sup> no hart kan thynkk 25  
 it is es nedefull tyll ylk mann & woman þat couetis to be sauyd  
 þat he ken quylk way ledes to þe tone & qwilk toþe toþher ·  
 Qwhare fore · yhe shall understand · ryght os a way ledes from ane

cety · to one other · Ryght in þe same maner · tryspas & brekyng  
of goddys commaundmentes ledes to þe way of everlastyng paynn 30  
wittnes þe prophette [du p cim] [*maledicti qui recedunt a mandatis  
tuis*] þ<sup>t</sup> es to say · O Lorde · cursyd and weryid er al þaisse þat  
bowe a way and brekes þ<sup>i</sup> commaundmentis · And þet all we  
reid wyghtes at þe day o dome sal go in to ever lastyng fyre  
wyttnes þe gospell · [Mathi xxv<sup>10</sup> · viic [*ite a me maledicti in ignem  
ethernum*]] þeise wordes sall cryst speyk to þame þat sall be 35  
dampned and er þus mykyl to say · Go 3e weryid wegths  
in to euerlastyng fyre þat es ordaneid to þe feynd and hys  
seruauntes · Thus haly write wytntnes þat twas in brekyng  
o þe commaundmentes of godd es þe way to everlastyng paynn 40  
þefore · qwho so kepes godes cummaundment gays þe way  
þ<sup>t</sup> ledes to everlastyng blyss of hevynn · þ<sup>is</sup> wyttnes Christ hym  
selfe in þe gospell [mathi xix [*vis ad vitam ingredi suam man  
data*]] þat es to say · iffe þ<sup>u</sup> wylle enter into everlastyng lyffe  
keep þ<sup>i</sup> cummaundments · for as sent mark tels in þe x cha 45  
piter of hys gospell þare þe knelyng of one mann be fore cris  
and he says þus hym · no other way how he sall comm  
to blys bot þus · [*si vis ad vitam* etc.] þ<sup>t</sup> es to say if you will  
come to everlastyng lyff kepe þe commaundmentes of godd  
therefore sem it es so þ<sup>t</sup> kepyng and fulfylling of godes 50  
commamentes es þe hyghe way to þe blysse of hevynn · And  
na man may kepe þe way bot so be þat he kenn it · þerfore  
I thynk w<sup>t</sup> þe grace of almyghty god to teche 3ow þe x co  
mmaundmentes · so þat in pylgrimage here opon erth yhe  
may forsake þe perlyous ways þat ledes to þe payne and 55  
walke in þe heght þ<sup>t</sup> tendes to þe blys þe commamentes

Fol 108 r

er wryton and bydden of god hym selphe exod xx<sup>110</sup> and þ<sup>is</sup> es þe  
fyrst capitul primum

The text continues from here in the same fashion as the standard DI commentary.