

## Sixteenth-century ownership of the Bohun Apocalypse, New College MS 65

A previously undeciphered signature adds a missing link to our knowledge of the sixteenth-century provenance of one of New College's most impressive medieval manuscripts, MS 65, known as the New College or Bohun Apocalypse.<sup>1</sup> This late thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman manuscript book, exquisitely and originally illuminated, is an excellent quality small-format example of the relatively brief 'book craze' of that period for devotional vernacular and pictorial books of Revelation. It appears to have been made for a noblewoman of the Sussex Bohun family, whose name is also written within its pages: '(L)iber iste constat domine Joanne de Boun'.<sup>2</sup> This name, and the book's style, relates it to the circle of female book-patrons and their illuminated books posited around Eleanor de Quincy, Countess of Winchester.<sup>3</sup> The manuscript came into college ownership as part of the important 1588 donation made by Dr Thomas Martin, civil lawyer and fellow of New College from 1540-1553.<sup>4</sup> In his golden years as Bishop Gardiner's protégé under the Catholic Queen Mary Tudor, Martin played an important role as an enforcer of the Marian Reformation, as a diplomat and finally as the prosecutor of Thomas Cranmer.<sup>5</sup> His

---

<sup>1</sup> Catalogued in Lucy Freeman Sandler, *Gothic MSS 1285-1385*, Survey of MSS illuminated in the British Isles 5 (London: Harvey Miller; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), no. 7, ills. 15-16, and II, pp. 19, 64; Suzanne Lewis and Richard K. Emmerson, 'Census and Bibliography of Medieval Manuscripts containing Apocalypse Illustrations 800-1500 II', *Traditio* 41 (1985), 403, no. 102. For versions of the French prose gloss of the commentary and MS 65's incipit see L. Delisle and P. Meyer, *L'Apocalypse en français au XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1901), pp. 266-7 and 'Appendix'. For a detailed analysis of the Apocalypse and the circumstances of its production, and for further bibliography, see Nigel Morgan, 'The Bohun Apocalypse' in Smith, Kathryn A. and Carol H. Krinsky, eds., *Tributes to Lucy Freeman Sandler: Studies in Illuminated Manuscripts* (London: Harvey Miller, 2007), pp. 91-110.

<sup>2</sup> New College MS 65, fol. 44r.

<sup>3</sup> The textual and visual cousinship of the New College Apocalypse to what is called the Lambeth Paris Corpus Cycle of English French Prose apocalypses (with the prologue of Gilbert de la Poree) and the relationship of nearly all the possible owners to Eleanor de Quincy suggest the artist drew on a knowledge of Lambeth, MS 75, which she owned, or that our Joanna de Bohun took the inspiration to commission a picture-book apocalypse from knowledge of that of Eleanor. MS 65 is a humble but slightly exotic cousin to this book, of a smaller format and single-column text with differences to the content and style of its miniatures which suggest the influence of an earlier English tradition, of which the Trinity Apocalypse is the greatest elaborated surviving example. See Morgan, 'The Bohun Apocalypse', p. 96.

<sup>4</sup> As William Poole details. See 'The 1588 Donations of Thomas Martin' in this issue, and below.

<sup>5</sup> For the biography of Thomas Martin see S. T. Bindoff, ed., *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1509-1558*, 3 vols. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1982), II, pp. 578-80; Steve Hindle, 'Martin, Thomas' in *ODNB*; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 573-81; William Wizeman, *The Theology and Spirituality of Mary Tudor's Church* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 40; Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor* (New Haven, Conn; London: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 48-9, 72-3, 89;

lifelong religious conservatism, and the evidence of his association and interests—as partly proven by evidence taken from the evidence of the provenance and donation alone, including the new signature—also indicate he was a spiritual and intellectual compatriot of the celebrated ‘Louvain exiles’ of the college. The newly decrypted autograph, and hence that of a if not the previous owner, is that of Thomas Hervey. Son to a favoured Henrician courtier, Hervey’s career at court also comes to its apex under Mary Tudor, but unlike Martin his Catholicism sends him into exile on the continent at Elizabeth’s accession where he acts as an agent of Spanish powers before the Protestant disturbances in the Netherlands result in his arrest and, presumably, death.<sup>6</sup> This establishes an extended provenance of the New College Apocalypse through the hands of sixteenth-century English Catholics. By Martin and Hervey’s mutual connections to Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon, it also corroborates the connections which have been made between Thomas Martin’s books and this peer.<sup>7</sup> This may certainly indicate a Catholic-tinged web of book exchange and collection amongst figures whose interests have both a scholarly and a political aspect. However it also raises larger questions—especially in the context of the entire donation—concerning sixteenth-century medievalism and apocalypticism.

In its medieval function, the text, commentary and image of our New College Apocalypse worked together as a form of lay devotional re-enactment of John the Revelator’s divinely-sent vision of eschatological crisis and resolution.<sup>8</sup> As I shall suggest, this devotional purpose is an aspect of the manuscript’s reading which is maintained with its sixteenth-century ownership. It has been demonstrated that contemporary thirteenth- and fourteenth-century illuminated apocalypses can have a very ‘bespoke’ character which moves towards a historicisation of the prophetic narrative, or perhaps the allegorisation of their patronesses lives and histories, as the use of heraldic devices and other identifiers associate contemporary figures and events with elements of the narrative. This gives an intriguing meditative context for the New College version which, whilst it is certainly aristocratic in the gilded delicacy

---

although Duffy mistakenly states Martin was imprisoned after Elizabeth’s accession, an error he has willingly confessed by email to myself.

<sup>6</sup> For the biography of Thomas Harvey or Hervey see S. T. Bindoff, ed., *The History of Parliament*, II, pp. 311-12 and further bibliography in notes 12 and 13 below.

<sup>7</sup> See William Poole, ‘The 1588 Donations of Thomas Martin’, in this issue.

<sup>8</sup> On illuminated apocalypses and their readership more generally, see Suzanne Lewis, *Reading Images: Narrative discourse and reception in the thirteenth-century illuminated apocalypse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), and Ralph Hanna, *London Literature 1300-1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 171-84.

of its illustration, appears in its medieval conception to be a more eternally and mystically presented depiction.<sup>9</sup> However our manuscript itself has not been immune to more historicising readings, especially those relating to the interest in apocalyptic significance of the arrival of the mendicant orders.<sup>10</sup> This historical dimension of engagement with apocalypticism, in a much stronger form, is a dominant feature of the Reformation period. As we shall see, the context of this donation within Thomas Martin's 1588 benefaction suggests the association of our New College Apocalypse with just such an interest. The Catholic ownership and aspect of the owners' lives and associations renders this all the more fascinating, as interest in apocalypticism is much more familiar, indeed almost exclusively treated, as a phenomenon of Protestant historiography.

Thomas Hervey was born the son and heir of one of Henry VIII's most favoured courtiers, Sir Nicholas Hervey.<sup>11</sup> The Suffolk Herveys held a uniquely longstanding and well-favoured position at court during the sixteenth-century. Of an age to the king, Sir Nicholas was by his death in 1532 a gentleman of the Privy Chamber, acted as court ambassador to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, and towards the end of his life elevated his good standing still further by his advocacy of the King's 'great matter' and support of the cause of Anne Boleyn. His son Thomas subsequent to his father's death became a royal ward, and when in 1535 a tutor was selected by Anne for Mary Boleyn's ten year-old son and her own ward, Henry Carey, Thomas and another favoured courtier's son, Henry Norris, joined this little 'school'.<sup>12</sup> The extraordinary education and sequence of events which they then

---

<sup>9</sup> In the work of Suzanne Lewis. See 'The Apocalypse of Isabella of France: Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS Fr 13096', *The Art Bulletin* 72 (1990), pp. 224-60, and 'The Apocalypse of Margaret of York' in Thomas Kren, ed., *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the visions of Tondal* (Malibu, California: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992), pp. 77-88.

<sup>10</sup> The rather slim case for 'Joachite' readings of English apocalypses, including ours, was made by the Marxist art historian F. D. Klingender, 'St Francis and the birds of the Apocalypse', *Journal of Warburg & Courtauld Institute* 16 (1953), pp. 18 n.2, 19 pl. 5a. It is given and dismissed by R. Freyhan, 'Joachism and the English Apocalypse', *Journal of Warburg & Courtauld Institute* 18 (1955), p. 1, n.1. It does not seem impossible that some iconographic depictions of the Two Witnesses and of the Angel in the Sun are influenced by apocalyptic associations appropriated by the Franciscan tradition, after the prophecy of Joachim di Fiore, to Francis and his friars. This so particularly given the monastic origins of the Anglo-Norman apocalypses. However if so our Apocalypse bears very little trace of such an influence.

<sup>11</sup> On the Hervey family see W. J. Tighe, 'The Herveys: Three Generations of Tudor Courtiers' in *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History* 36 (1988), pp. 8-11.

<sup>12</sup> For the details of Hervey's education see Alison Weir's biography of Henry Carew's mother, *Mary Boleyn: 'that great and infamous whore'* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2011) pp. 207-8, 214; and on his second tutor, James Prestwich, Susan Brigden and Nigel Wilson, 'New Learning and Old Friendship' *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 112, 446 (1997), 396-411.

experienced would have had perhaps the most impact on Thomas, for he was at least six years older than the other two boys.<sup>13</sup> Their first tutor was no ordinary schoolmaster, but Nicholas Bourbon—a French neo-Latin poet who would count amongst his friends Heinrich Bullinger, Joseph Justus Scaliger, Thomas Cranmer and Hans Holbein.<sup>14</sup> Whilst there is no reason to think he did not remain a Catholic, Bourbon's views were of a markedly evangelical cast, enough so to have caused his incarceration in his home country for his writings on French church reform. His cause had been taken up by the French Ambassador and he had been rescued and brought to England. From the Boleyn family perspective—which espoused reforming principles and of course all the more so as they played to their political favour—he appeared an ideal candidate to instil correct principles in the royal ward. Bourbon will later lament 'as a father his absent sons' these three pupils who were in each degree 'learned, pious, studious, manly'. Whilst of course we cannot read these *formulae* as literal truth there is every reason to think Thomas Hervey really did thrive under the educative influence of an able humanist. Elsewhere, interestingly for our purposes, he is particularly singled out by Bourbon for praise at his capacity for languages both ancient and modern.<sup>15</sup> The school's two successive monastic locations give two initial possibilities for the manuscript's acquisition. It was perhaps first established at the Bridgettine fifteenth-century foundation of Syon Abbey where Henry Carey had been living. The *registrum* or catalogue does not survive except for the library of the brothers who existed to serve mass to and minister for the sisters, but the convent was a manuscript book-owning and producing house on a vast scale, with what would have been a particular focus on vernacular and visionary works, usually associated more with female religious.<sup>16</sup>

Through the fortunes of this little school Thomas Hervey would have felt the pull of the current of events with a particular intensity. In 1536 Anne Boleyn was

---

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Hervey's date of birth has been estimated as 'by 1512', allegedly based on the first reference to him. However if this first reference is to his royal post as 'sewer extraordinary' in 1533 this seems a strange conclusion. A usual age to advance to this state, essentially that of a page, would be as an adolescent: Thomas Wyatt, for example, is made sewer extraordinary at 13. Before 1519—the death of his mother—is probably a better estimate of Thomas' birthdate. This would make more sense of his selection as co-pupil to two ten year-olds, as at the formation of the school he would have been between 16 and 23 years of age, rather than over 23.

<sup>14</sup> See Nicholas Bourbon, *Nugarum Libri Octo* (Lyon: Sebastian Gryphius, 1538) which concludes with a portrait of its poet probably drawn from the Hans Holbein sketch.

<sup>15</sup> *History of Parliament*, p. 311.

<sup>16</sup> See E.A. Jones and Alexandra Walsham, eds., *Syon Abbey and its Books: Reading, writing and religion, c. 1400-1700* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010).

executed and Nicholas Bourbon, as her dependent, returned to France. His co-pupil Henry Norris' father, John Norris, was accused of adultery with the Queen and executed in the same year. The boys were now all royal wards, and figures whose dubious parentage, with the exception of Hervey, meant their correct and controlled education was of importance. Rather than breaking their schoolroom up, their new patron Frances Bryan, had the boys transferred to Woburn Abbey and put under a new tutor, James Prestwich. Prestwich may well have been selected for his tempering conservatism, for he appears to have been strictly Catholic. Their relative tranquillity was dramatically interrupted when the abbey was dissolved in 1538, and the abbot and sub-prior accused of sedition and papistry.<sup>17</sup> At this point the Abbot, Robert Hobbes, in the cause of frankly confessing his own misgivings about Reformation changes, reports that

Mr James, schoolmaster to the young gentlemen, Mr. Norice, Mr. Carye, and Mr. Hervye, when they were commensals in the house, declared he could never assent to the New Learning and fell out with Mr. Lacells, Mr. Brian's servant, about it. Has always stiffly maintained the bp. of Rome's part, and begs pardon.<sup>18</sup>

Despite these words on his behalf, Prestwich appears made no attempt to apologise for himself and face the commissioners. He fled North, where he was apprehended, tried, convicted and presumably executed for having 'promulged the name of that venomous serpent, the Bishop of Rome'.<sup>19</sup> Back at Woburn, the Abbey was broken up, its property probably distributed, and the sick and elderly Abbot, the sub-prior and one of the monks were hung—or so tradition declares—from an ancient tree at the entrance to the Abbey buildings. It is before these dramatic and potentially quite scarring events that we might find, in the medieval library of Woburn Abbey the second opportunity for Hervey to have found himself in possession of a medieval illuminated book.

Some combination of Prestwich's teaching, his exposure to what most accounts appear to find to be some true holiness at both Syon and Woburn—where the Abbot's first response to news of the Dissolution was to add a sequence of penitential psalms to his cure's daily office—and the evidence before his eyes of the

---

<sup>17</sup> *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, 21, vols, 13.1 (for 1538), pp. 350; 356-63; 561.

<sup>18</sup> *Letters and Papers*, p. 561

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Susan Brigden and Nigel Wilson, p. 407.

bloody and politically-motivated reality of these early stages of the English Reformation, left Thomas Hervey a lifelong Catholic. Between the ages of 19 and 26 by this stage, he would serve for something over a decade in Henry and Edward VI's court as Gentleman pensioner, dependent upon the sponsorship of his relative Sir William Fitzwilliam, Earl of Southampton, and Treasurer. However Hervey's greatest promotion is achieved under Mary Tudor, by which point his patron is Anthony Browne, Viscount Montagu, whose recusancy had begun under Edward VI and who remained a strong Catholic, urging his fellow Lords at Elizabeth's accession 'not with the prince to bury your faith'.<sup>20</sup> In this sympathetic regime Hervey makes further advances under Montagu's patronage, leading troops under the latter's lieutenant-generalship during English involvement in the conflict between the Hapsburg and French dynasties at St Quentin. Very late in Mary's reign, he is given the high royal office of Knight Marshal, responsible for the monarch's most immediate troops. This, his highest appointment, appears to have been the occasion of the portrait painted of him, dressed in black velvet and sable, his coat of arms to his left and the handle of a rapier to hand beneath his left arm, of which an 18<sup>th</sup> century copy can be seen in Ickworth House, Suffolk.<sup>21</sup>

Hervey appears to have been a strong partisan of Edward Courtenay, Earl of Bedford, who many in court wished to marry to the Queen—thus securing the future of a purely English Catholic dynasty. After Mary's marriage to Philip of Spain, we find Hervey showing the degree of his attachment as he makes efforts to advance himself with the Earl, whose service he begs to enter in 1555. I suggest this is perhaps on the instruction of Montagu, between whom and Courtenay pass exactly contemporary letters of friendship, although it is also probably Montagu who dissuades him from leaving the country with Courtenay.<sup>22</sup> Thomas Hervey was by October 29<sup>th</sup> 1555 close enough to the Earl to write, a fortnight before Courtenay sets out from Brussels, desiring to be amongst the 'small number of servants' he took with him to Padua, Mantua and finally to Venice, where he would die.

---

<sup>20</sup> J.G. Elzinga, in *ODNB*.

<sup>21</sup> This, National Trust Inventory Number 851793.1, can be viewed in the Rotunda at Ickworth House, Suffolk, family home of the Herveys. Its original appears to be that described as being amongst the Catholic relics at Walter Scott's home, Abbotsford House in 1925. See Walter Leonard Bell, 'Notes on a Portrait at Abbotsford' in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries in Scotland* 59 (1925), pp. 224-9 (fig. 1, 225).

<sup>22</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic* (1547-1580), pp. 69, 71.

After Elizabeth's accession Thomas Hervey loses all his former positions of favour and leaves for the more sympathetic air to be found on the continent. From there he does attempt—probably for reasons of self-preservation—to assert his continued loyalty to sovereignty, claiming insolvency alone drives him abroad; however from 1560-1577 he is acting as Philip II's agent in the Low Countries, as well as for a number of other Catholic nobles. Nicholas Throckmorton asserts later that Hervey told him he was indeed abroad for reasons of conscience.<sup>23</sup> Hervey is in and out of Louvain—the Duchess of Feria thanks him in one letter for 'his Louvain gloves'—and has contact with other English Catholics in exile.<sup>24</sup> Hervey dies in obscure circumstances, arrested during the revolts against Catholic rule in the Netherlands sometime after 1577. Whilst he appears to have had a Dutch wife and two daughters who were his coheireses, it seems likely that any manuscript he might have had in his possession would have been transferred prior to this point.<sup>25</sup>

It is here that the Courtenay connection becomes significant. At precisely the moment that Thomas Hervey is first recorded in Courtenay's service we find our known donator of the manuscript, Thomas Martin, in correspondence with the Earl, interceding on his behalf with Gardiner and exchanging news domestic and international. A series of letters which pass between him and Courtenay whilst Martin in Calais where he is accompanying Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester as his Chancellor suggest a familiar intercourse.<sup>26</sup> His intercession on the Earl's behalf is what secures Courtenay permission to proceed on the Italian voyage which proves his last—he dies of the plague, in Venice, on 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1556. Martin was also instrumental in making key introductions between Courtenay, Alderman John White and Anthony Hussey. There was also a strong association between Martin and Hervey's main patrons; Montagu was Gardiner's chief mourner and executor on his death in November 1555.<sup>27</sup>

Three of the books in Thomas Martin's 1588 donation to New College contain the signature 'E. Courtenay', and William Poole has convincingly proposed that they formerly belonged to the Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon of whom we have been

---

<sup>23</sup> *History of Parliament*, p. 311.

<sup>24</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic* (1579-1581), 478.

<sup>25</sup> J. J. Howard, ed., *The Visitation of Suffolke* (Lowestoft; London: S. Timms, Whitaker and Co, 1866-71), pp. 139, 182.

<sup>26</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic* (1547-1580), p. 65-8.

<sup>27</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic* (1547-1580), 72.

speaking.<sup>28</sup> The possible channels of exchange, given Courtenay's patronage of Hervey and Montagu's friendship with Gardiner, open up enticingly.

There is also one further possibility for Hervey's acquisition of the New College Apocalypse, given its likely production for one of the Midhurst Bohuns. Viscount Montagu, who was lord of Midhurst, ensured Hervey's election to this Sussex seat in 1554 and 1558.<sup>29</sup> Whilst this would not have by any means necessarily have meant residence in the ward, if it was not acquired through Hervey's time in monastic houses, it is perhaps a manuscript that might have fallen into either himself or Montagu's hands through their Sussex connections, assuming it had not left that area.

### **Sixteenth-Century Manuscript ownership**

Why might a sixteenth-century courtier, soldier and diplomat-exile, and a civil lawyer, administrator and crypto-Catholic own and read a thirteenth-century illuminated apocalypse? Antiquarianism is a pursuit which remains relatively rare to the early part of the century, and a medieval manuscript was still an unusual possession.<sup>30</sup> Whilst we should not swallow whole Anthony à Wood's report, a hundred years later, that in the early Reformation visitations of Oxford 'many manuscripts, guilty of no other superstition than red letters in their fronts or titles' — in the heat of the moment taken for magical diagrams— 'were either condemned to the fire or jakes', there was certainly no sixteenth-century version of the instinctive preservation we would now take for granted.<sup>31</sup> By the 1590s, however, Shakespeare can play upon the idea that rubrication might be enough to condemn a book, and its owner, in a way which associates the notion with the crudest of thinking—indeed with medieval thought—when Jack Cade's rustic and illiterate rebels come upon the Clerk of Chatham

Cade: Here's a villain!

Smith: Has a book in his pocket with red letters in't.

---

<sup>28</sup> William Poole, 'The 1588 Donations of Thomas Martin'

<sup>29</sup> *History of Parliament*, p. 312.

<sup>30</sup> See N. R. Ker in T.H. Aston, ed., *History of the University of Oxford*, 8 vols., vol. 3, p. 476.

<sup>31</sup> Cited in G.R. Evans, *The University of Oxford: A New History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 148-9 from Annals II.

Cade: Nay, then, he is a conjurer.

*Henry VI, Part 2 Act I, Sc. II, lines 2392-4.*

The gibbering clerk is then hung with ‘pen and inkhorn round his neck’ for the crime of scribal literacy. This perhaps indicates that such attitudes, to Elizabethan and Jacobean *literati*, were a commonplace idea about the prejudice of the blunt force of the ignorant masses. At the same time the historian of the book, Nigel Ker, reports that the medieval manuscript was indeed seen as ‘useless, irrelevant, possibly papist, of the dark ages and to be discarded’ by many in the sixteenth century.<sup>32</sup> In the upheaval of the Reformation libraries did suffer: the monastic libraries at the Dissolution, evidently, but also College libraries in the Henrician Reformation. We have eyewitness testimony of the destruction of what may well have included some of New College’s medieval holdings in 1535, when the order to destroy scholastic theological works left ‘all the gret quadrant Court full of the leiffs of Duncce [Duns Scotus], the wynde blowyng them into evere corner’ whilst a solitary rural figure gathered them up to make a ‘blawnsher’ or a kind of hanging scarecrow used to keep the deer within the bounds of the woods in hunting season.<sup>33</sup> In May and June 1549 so many ‘superstitious’ books were burnt that a hundred years later it could be claimed that their depredations to the Bodleian left ‘not one book in it of all those goodly Manuscripts’. Evidently this too must be a vast exaggeration, but it is unlikely to be based on thin air.<sup>34</sup> A great many liturgical books would have been destroyed following the 1550 Act against Superstitious Books and Images.

On the one hand we can see that one evident reason a staunch Marian and Catholic might own a medieval manuscript of a devotional book would be precisely for its status as a record and relic of a beleaguered, suddenly historical, faith. The images, including single figures of Christ and of Saint Paul, of such a manuscript might be particularly precious in a newly iconoclastic regime where even the crucifix was expelled from worship. The greatest antiquary of his age, Lord Lumley, was

---

<sup>32</sup> Ker, in *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 3, pp. 445-6.

<sup>33</sup> Letter from Richard Layton to Thomas Cromwell, Sir Henry Ellis, *Original Letters, illustrative of English History* (London: Harding, Triphook and Lepard, 1827) ser. 2, vol. 2, pp. 60-2 from MS Cotton Faustina. C. vii., fol 205. A deficiency later made up for by a series of sixteenth-century donations which include significant volumes of the scholastic theologian, by John Luid 1557 and John Holloway 1587, perhaps solicited?

<sup>34</sup> See Gerard Langbaine, Preface to J. Cheke, *The True Subject to the Rebel* (Oxford: Leonard Lichfield, 1641).

certainly a ‘medievalist’ in both the aesthetic and the scholarly sense, as his architectural and funerary monuments indicate.<sup>35</sup>

Despite—or perhaps in a sense because of—their ‘papist’ associations, it should not be presumed that sixteenth-century medievalism and manuscript collection was immediately attractive only to nostalgic conservatives in religion. John Foxe, and John Bale were early antiquarians and book collectors who found much to retain from the libraries of the dissolved monasteries. Their great historical project, to recount the history of the ‘hidden’ true church also meant re-examining the recent medieval past for Protestant historiographers. The medieval libraries of monasteries held an esoteric interest, for here the ‘secrets’ and the repressed thinkers, texts and ideas, perhaps condemned as heresy, might be revealed. Hence the fate of figures like William Langland or John Wyclif, reclaimed as ‘proto-reformers’ by the new Protestant historians.

The nature of this manuscript as a vernacular commented text of the Book of Revelations and the company it keeps in Martin’s benefaction do however point to an interest which goes beyond, although it may encompass, an instinct for devotional continuity and a nascent antiquarianism. The counter-project to Bale and Foxe’s revision of ecclesiastical history had been that of Catholic thinkers and historians at home and abroad to establish the reality of doctrinal and historical continuity of the Church in England. Even more significantly in this case, the Book of Revelations—initially grouped with the ‘suspect’ canonical books of prophetic and hence superstitious content—had become increasingly key to the Protestant historiographical project and theological self-understanding.<sup>36</sup> The confirmation of the particularity of this moment of renewal and reform, its place in the divine providential plan, was sought in the Book of Daniel and in other prophetic texts but perhaps above all here: in the only work of New Testament prophecy. In England John Bale and John Foxe had followed this tendency, expressed most fully in the Protestant history of the Church written by the Magdeburg Centuriators. John Bale’s *The Image of bothe churches*, which in its longer title continues *after the most wonderful and heavenly Revelation of saint Iohn* (1547) is a guide to the characters of the Church of Christ

---

<sup>35</sup> Kathryn Baron ‘Lumley, John, first Baron Lumley (c. 1533-1609)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>36</sup> On apocalyptic Protestant historiography, see Katherine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation England, 1530-1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), and C.A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich, eds. *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, antecedents and repercussions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

and the Church of Antichrist, naturally to be identified with the revealed true church of the Protestants and the oppressive material church of the Catholics, written as a commentary and exposition on the Book of Revelations. It has a significant narrative and visual aspect: drawing on the powerful historical patterns and dichotomies of Revelations to found a Protestant apocalyptic symbolism of the Catholic Church as the Whore of Babylon and the Protestant Church as the woman in the wilderness, depicted in similarly sized woodcuts to our apocalypse illuminations. This symbolic rhetoric would go on to have a significant impact on English thought and on English literature as a whole: Una, heroine of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* can be read as the allegorical expression of the woman in the wilderness, seeking to save her kingdom whilst lost in the wandering wood. The sorceress Duessa, who we at one point find bearing the cup and rides the beast of the Whore, are the poet's exploration of it.<sup>37</sup> John Donne's Sonnet XVI, 'Show me, deare Christ, thy Spouse, so bright and cleare' compresses a century of ecclesiastical anxiety. Frustrated by, but adopting, the apocalyptic dichotomy he speaks of the Catholic and Protestant churches in terms resonant with the characteristics of those women, the one 'richly painted' 'on the other Shore', the other 'rob'd and tore/ Laments and mournes in Germany and here'. Demanding in effect a new vision, a re-revelation he refuses their diametric opposition as his concluding couplet embraces a Donnean paradox of adulterous and marital espousal, appearing to collapse the false duality of virgin mother and whore:

Betray kind husband thy Spouse to our Sights,  
 And let myne amorous Soule court thy mild Dove,  
 Who is most trew, and pleasing to thee, then  
 When She's embrac'd and open to most Men.<sup>38</sup>

As this article will go on to delineate, the New College historians with whom we may especially associate Thomas Martin were not immune to or uninterested in the apocalypticism of the new historians. The presence of the illuminated apocalypse in his benefaction forms a part of the interest he shows in history as a whole, given new value in the sixteenth-century as a source of revelation, and it may also indicate

---

<sup>37</sup> Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by A.C. Hamilton (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007), Book I, Canto VIII, st. 6, p. 104.

<sup>38</sup> Gary A. Stringer, eds., *The Variorum edition of the poems of John Donne*, 8 vols (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 2005), 7.1, p. 19, lines 11-14.

his own exploration of the apocalyptic understanding of history. In the case of our new owner, Thomas Hervey, without such a context we have only the testimony of the manuscript itself. This does however provide some flavour, both in the autograph itself and in certain annotations.

The evidence is of a dual interest, at once devotional and humanistic. In what appears to be the same or a very similar sixteenth-century hand to the autograph of Thomas Hervey, a series of brief marginal annotations which collate the Anglo-Norman text with the chapters of the Book of Revelations to which it corresponds. This hand goes so far as to make a correction on the recto of folio 55 where the text mistakenly speaks of angels belted at the feet ‘lespiez’ with ‘la poyteryne’—which appears to be an authorial translation from Revelations 15:6 of an English or Latin Bible, as it does not correspond to any vernacular French Bible.

The autograph is written in a large, clear upright sixteenth-century secretary hand, its clarity almost giving the aspect of a handwriting manual. Its long descenders and ascenders are probably indicative of a date later in the century, since they suggest the influence of the humanist italic style. Following the square-set ‘Thomas’ and the now near-indecipherable Hervy or Harvy lies a third element: the stem and incipient lobe of a ‘b’ or ‘k’ and a final ‘stedfast’ whose aspect move into a cursive, writing hand.<sup>39</sup> A reasonable surmise is that this is either a self-exhortation to ‘keep steadfast’, or perhaps an even more direct quotation of Paul’s exhortation to the Christian soul of the Epistle to the Corinthians ‘be ye stedfast, vnmouable’.<sup>40</sup> This latter hypothesis would render it a distinctly eschatological quotation, taken as it is from a chapter of the apostle at his most revelatory and prophetic. ‘Beholde, I shewe you a misterie’ Paul says as he assures of the resurrection promise of material salvation and famous cry ‘O death where is thy styng? O hell where is thy

---

<sup>39</sup> The spelling of his last name, as was typical in the period, varies. Hervey appears to be the most common spelling but Hervey’s tutor Nicholas Bourbon latinises to Th. Harvæos. The decrypted signature *appears* to have an ‘e’ rather than an ‘a’. In the drawing of a knight wearing the family arms which appears in British Library, Harley MS. 4025 (III) of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century where the name is spelt as written in our Manuscript: ‘Hervy’—perhaps a frenchified spelling in the heraldic context.

<sup>40</sup> ‘But thankes be vnto God, whiche hath geue vs victorie through our Lord Iesus Christe. Therefore my beloued brethren, be ye stedfast, vnmouable, alwayes riche in the worke of the Lorde, forasmuch as ye knowe that your labour is not in vayne in the Lorde.’ 1 Cor. 15:58, Bishop’s Bible (1568). The translation is identical in all sixteenth-century English Bibles—with the exception of the Douay-Rheims version (‘be stable’)—from Wycliffe’s 1382 translation through Tyndale to the King James Authorized Version of 1611.

victorie?’<sup>41</sup> The ‘steadfastness’ is that of a Christian patience—not necessarily that of inactive, world-refusing *stasis*, but engaged in what Paul assures us is that ‘labour [that] is not vayne in the Lorde’. Such steadfastness and fixity of faith is both that which a Catholic made exile from his nation and its faith—whether he remained within or without its borders—might turn to. Such hope, of resolution necessarily prologued and imbued by crisis, where earthly horror and heavenly glory presented as enmeshed and cross-penetrating in a single apocalyptic narrative, is precisely what Book of Revelations could provide at this time of ecclesiastical crisis.

On folio 44 of the manuscript, three hundred years earlier, Johanna de Bohun’s name is also written into the text. The hand which has scribed it, presumably on her behalf, is at least intended to be seamless with the gothic *textura formata* of the biblical and commentary text, although the yet-to-be illuminated first initial perhaps suggests a later insertion. Her self-inscription fits with other medieval inclusions of the self and of individual identity within devotional books. In the Marciana Psalter, which we can link to the Bohun family through the heraldic shields which surround the Jesse-tree image, this insinuation into the holy family’s own genealogy is continued in the depiction of a Bohun mother and daughter in the pose associated with Anne and the Virgin. Johanna’s name is painstakingly written not far from a reference to the *livere de vie*, within a book frequently associated by metonymy precisely with that volume of divine foreknowledge. In a sense, then, her possession and use of the book are closely tied to this idea of being written into the book of life, and the *ex libris* becomes a metaphorical inscription of our gentrywoman among the saints. Such inscription of the self is a phenomenon of the devotional intimacy historians have associated with the later Middle Ages, but it was perhaps less ‘personal’ than we might now understand it. There are at least three Midhurst Joannas the text might have belonged to, and one reasonable suggestion is that it was in fact an heirloom, passed perhaps from godmother to namesake through the generations.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, this is a page whose facing leaf depicts the passing of authority from

---

<sup>41</sup> 1 Cor 15: 51; 55, Bishop’s Bible.

<sup>42</sup> Joanna de Bohun (nee Plonknett, de Kilpeck, d.1327) is the niece-in-law of the traditionally identified patron, Joanna de Bohun (nee Quincy, d. 1283): she is her husband’s nephew’s wife. The latter’s aunt is Eleanor de Quincy, Countess of Winchester (nee Ferrers, d. 1274) who owns the Lambeth Apocalypse and an illuminated bestiary. Eleanor is also the aunt by marriage of a Sussex Joanna de Bohun (nee de la Chapelle d.1327/8, see Suzanne Lewis ‘The Apocalypse of Isabella of France: Paris Bibl. Nat. MS fr. 13096’ in *Art Bulletin* 72 (1990), p. 252), whose daughter-in-law adds yet another Joanna de Bohun (nee Brewes, d. 1321/4) to the range of possibilities. See Morgan, pp. 96, 103.

the Satanic dragon to the beast from the sea. The two toothy chimerical animals, hovering between horror and heraldry, play something of the role of a bookplate curse: a warning to the thief or the curious. Nor is the reader herself exempt from the warning, for the commentary is hortatory: ‘Ceo signifie ke li diables prent cumpanie des princes del monde’.<sup>43</sup> In the centre of the horror, in the dreadful turmoil of the continuous attack of the traditional ‘corporate’ Antichrist of all heretics and hypocrites, is where this orthodox medieval commentary, largely a figurative reading of the Book of Revelations, situates the present moment. It is here *in media res*, in *medium aevum* that our noblewoman chooses for her own name to be scribed. Henry Hervey’s abraded autograph, with its emotive exhortation to active forbearance, is as devotional as Johanna’s—and shares with hers an implicit identification of the apocalyptic struggle as her struggle *sub specie aeternitatis*. There is something emblematic, however, in its colophon position on the final folio of the manuscript. In the sixteenth-century apocalypticism, certainly not for the first time but for the first time at the heart of the most politically and religiously influential thought, had brought an apocalyptic imminence and an urgency to the historical present and the immediate future. Protestant thinkers were writing of *now* as the historically decisive moment, relating it to the coming of Antichrist and increasingly over the course of the 17<sup>th</sup> century moving towards hope of material apotheosis and utopia. As we shall begin to see, Catholic thinkers, in inverted manner, were not immune to this new mode of thinking, though they shied from its extremes. We have a glimpse in Hervey’s eschatological devotions of his placing himself at *the end* in the *eschata* if not the *eschaton*.

### **Thomas Martin and the ‘Louvain Exiles’**

When Hervey was in Louvain during Elizabeth’s reign, he would probably have encountered some of the impressive assembly of English Catholics there foregathered. A significant majority of these men were ‘Wiccamites’, contemporaries of Thomas Martin’s at New College, and men with whom he had worked closely during their brief honeymoon of English Counter-Reformation. Martin’s continued religious sympathies, despite his careful avoidance of such controversy following the

---

<sup>43</sup> New College MS 65, folio 44r.

accession of Elizabeth, suggest he would have remained emotionally affiliated to this group of New College exiles who continued to fight the polemic war from abroad. His pride in his status as a *socius novi collegi*, as demonstrated by his donation, is likely to have still indicated a pride in what his contemporary Thomas Harding calls ‘my Catholicke Colledge’. Despite the changed character of ‘the new colledge’ as his will calls it by the late Elizabethan period, he may have even still have been capable of envisaging a future in which the times were changed once again. When Thomas Harding, the main antagonist in the Jewel-Harding controversy, a key battle of the ‘war with pen and prayer’ of Protestant against Catholic history, died in 1572 he included amongst his bequests to the English Church in exile one to the future of the English Church at home: £10, about £2,000 in today’s money, to New College ‘in the event of a Catholic restoration’.<sup>44</sup> This final sign of loyalty to his college is also a token of belief in a Catholic future. Thomas Martin leaves a book collection. I argue that his 1588 donation, including the New College Apocalypse, is no arbitrary assortment from his library but a deliberate, and politic selection. The 27 books and 4 manuscripts, taken together, furnish the library with key necessary materials which relate especially to the study of world history understood as a divine science. This is the emergent field which Protestant historians, but also the Catholic historiographers of his New College generation who are writing ‘in diaspora’ from exile and prison, are actively engaged. The donation also has more than one element which points towards an apocalyptic sensibility, and possible real judgmental expectation in a more imminent sense.

In the years of Martin’s education at Winchester and New College, beginning with his admission in 1538, the men who are and who are to be his comrades and co-fellows include precisely those who were soon to form ‘a roll call of the stars of Elizabethan recusancy’ as émigrés together at Louvain.<sup>45</sup> These were the men who pitted themselves and their pens against John Bale and John Foxe’s emerging accounts of the Reformation and of English Church History throughout the period. When, in 1571, the visitations undertaken on the behalf of the Archbishop of York include a specific injunction to look for heretical books, every condemned author is a New College man:

---

<sup>44</sup> L. E. C. Wooding, ‘Harding, Thomas (1516–1572)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>45</sup> Duffy, p. 201.

Whether there be anye person or persons, ecclesiasticall or temporall within your Parish, or else where, within this Dioces, that of late have retayned, or kept in theyr custodie, or that read, sell, utter, disperse, cary, or deliver to others anye Englishe bookes, set forth of late yeares at Louain, or in any other place beyonde the seas, by Harding, Dorman, Allen, Saunders, Stapleton, Marshall, or any of them, or by any other Englishe Papist [...]<sup>46</sup>

Unmentioned, as their contributions were more monumental and circulated more abroad than domestically, are the Harpsfield brothers, whose refusal to take the Oath of Supremacy would see them imprisoned for 19 years in the Fleet Prison, only released to die. In 1538, when Martin comes to Oxford, John Harpsfield would have just embarked on the theological studies which would lead him to be made first Regius Professor of Greek in 1541. His brother Nicholas, arguably the foremost respondent to John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* as the author of the Catholic martyrology the *Dialogi Sex*, as well as the seminal *Historia Anglicana Ecclesiastica*, is only three years Martin's senior and like him a scholar of Civil Law.<sup>47</sup> Thomas Harding, that 'shameful paramour of Antichrist' as Lady Jane Grey terms him, was then working on his Hebrew and possibly toying with evangelical opinions, whilst his future and perhaps present opponent, John Jewel, was doing similarly at Merton. Thomas Martin would have been their co-fellow for an entire decade, during which further members were added to the forming cast: Nicholas Sander, who would eventually die in Ireland attempting to recapture England for the Catholic faith, matriculated at New College in the year Martin was made perpetual fellow. There he presumably laid the foundations which would lead to his uniquely uncompromising papal monarchist views, to be expressed in his Louvain volumes *De visibili monarchia* and *De origine et progressu schismatis Anglicani*. Thomas Stapleton, John Rastell and John Martiall—all future Louvain exiles and Jewel-Harding controversialists—also enter the college around this time as young scholars from Winchester.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Christopher Highley, *Catholics writing the Nation in early-modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 37.

<sup>47</sup> On later New College interest in this text see William Poole, 'Two Copies of a Clandestine Manuscript in Late Seventeenth-century New College', *New College Notes* 1.

<sup>48</sup> For the biographies of all these figures see their several articles in the *ODNB*. For accounts of their work see Highley, *ibid.*, and Thomas S. Freeman, *Martyrs and Martyrdom in England, c. 1400-1700*

In the mid 1540s, when Martin was a young fellow and pursuing his legal studies at Oxford in the Faculty of Civil Law, the presence of these future controversialists rendered New decisively a ‘Catholicke Colledge’.<sup>49</sup> That such an identification made sense meant, of course, that the forebreezes of the wind of reform had already been stirring: Henrician and Edwardian visitations had removed the now effectively redundant Faculty of Canon Law and endowed new lecturers in Latin and Greek, humanist moves which would not have in themselves been repulsive. The Visitors had however at the same time taken somewhat draconian steps to prevent scholastic study—it was two years before Martin came from Winchester when the leaves of Duns Scotus had been sent flying. Speedily reforming Britain under Edward VI, and more especially the particular attention given to turning Oxford into a Protestant academy, would have escalated matters. These years saw the appointment of the reformist Peter Martyr Vermigli as Regius Professor of Divinity, burnings of scholastic and modern Catholic authors, and an open debate on the Eucharist in the University Church.<sup>50</sup> Vermigli’s following, as well as his close friendship with John Jewel, created a powerful reformist presence in the University. By 1550 this appears to have made the situation untenable for the Harpsfield brothers—in that year Nicholas becomes the first Louvain exile, fleeing the Edwardian regime, and John leaves Oxford soon afterwards to take up a position under a sympathetic Bishop in the Diocese of Chichester.<sup>51</sup> Thomas Martin appears to have left in the same year, and it is hard to image it was not as part of the same impulse, or on consultation with the Harpsfields. We find Nicholas and Thomas associates on their return, their names inscribed one after the other in the ‘black boke’ of membership of Doctors Commons on the same day in 1554.<sup>52</sup> In Martin’s case it may also have been a more natural step for a young aspiring advocate, having just concluded his preliminary studies, to gain further education abroad. He returns from travels in Bourges and Paris with a degree

---

(Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2007) on Harpsfield’s *Dialogi Sex* as a ‘seminal anti-martyrology’.

<sup>49</sup> By the report of Thomas Harding, Regius Professor in Hebrew 1542-1547, defending his own religious position in 1566—which appears to have wavered somewhat during his time at Oxford—against John Jewel’s accusations. Harding claims he became a private chaplain rather than move to Christ Church, home of the ‘freshest gospellers’ where Peter Martyr Vermigli is made Regius Professor of Divinity in 1547. Whilst this claim is probably insincere, the reference point of New College’s Catholicity as decisive is intriguing.

<sup>50</sup> Evans. *The University of Oxford: A New History*, pp. 148-9.

<sup>51</sup> See the *ODNB* articles on the Harpsfield Brothers.

<sup>52</sup> G. D. Squibb, *Doctors Commons: a history of the College of Advocates and Doctors of Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 151.

as Doctor of Civil Law from the university of the former, which was a centre of humanist jurisprudence.<sup>53</sup> For this latter period we have intriguing ‘information’ concerning Martin’s activities in France, consisting of largely scurrilous and but presumably stock accusations of ‘bawdy behaviour and lecherous life’. Bale devotes a whole section of his *Declaration of Bonner’s Articles* to a ‘testimony’ from another civil lawyer, one Francis Baldwin. The contents present Martin’s opinions as in every way antithetical to his actual behaviour—in private, so it is claimed, he denounces clerical celibacy, renounces the Bishop of Rome and calls his patron Gardiner an atheist. As has not been hitherto noted, in the course of accusing Martin of the corruption of other young men in his care, Bale mentions one specific witness, ‘the nephew of Thomas More’. One conjecture might be that this refers obliquely to some association with Thomas’ sister Elizabeth and the printer John Rastall’s son, William Rastall, who was like Martyn a lawyer, an Oxford graduate, and a fellow Edwardian exile from 1550—eventually to Louvain but perhaps by way of other places on the continent.<sup>54</sup> In another detail more intriguing than the contents itself, the document alleges that Martin was involved in buying and relaying ‘false and detestable’ books to John White, headmaster of Winchester College in the final year of Martin’s time there, and who, by 1551, is espousing conservative enough opinions to be excommunicated.<sup>55</sup> The hints are, behind the propaganda, of early book-collection and transmission, and, by his associations and actions, of a convinced religiosity. Martin’s rapid rise in the Marian administration upon his return attests to an unblemished reputation for Catholic thinking, while of course his friendships with Harpsfield and to White may have ensured that he, like them, received swift preferment, assuming an essential administrative role in the new regime. He is eventually elevated to the position of chancellor to Bishop Stephen Gardiner at the same moment, and his pursuit of the reinstatement of the Catholic faith—the ‘discreet severity [for] universal unity’ as his fellow protégé John Storey describes that very dark period—which culminates in his key role in the eventual prosecution of

---

<sup>53</sup> Francois Douaren and Hughes Doneau, celebrated expositors of the legal side of French humanism and of careful application of philological and historical method to examine the corpus of Roman Law, were both teaching at Bourges in 1550. See William Poole ‘The 1588 Donation of Thomas Martin’ for the possibility that it was at this point he obtained some of the books listed in the New College bequest.

<sup>54</sup> J. H. Baker, ‘Rastall, William (1508-1565)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>55</sup> John Bale, *A declaration of Edmonde Bonners articles concerning the cleargye of Lo[n]don dyocese whereby that excerable [sic] Antychriste, is in his righte colours reueled the yeare of our Lord a. 1554.* (London: John Tysdall, 1561), pp. 42-5.

Archbishop Cranmer. His performance and oratory on this occasion has been praised by historians on both sides of the somewhat polarised field of Reformation historiography—it was probably key at least to the sense of real defeat of this giant of the Reformation.

In all his assistance in the reimplementation of the Catholic Church Martin would have been continuously in contact with his elder colleague Nicholas Harpsfield, Archdeacon of Canterbury and Vicar-General of London, who presided over hundreds of convictions for heresy in the brief period given to the regime. Needless to say, he was there to witness Cranmer's Oxford trial and death in 1556, as is attested by his authorship of *Cranmer's Recantacyons*—his account of those events, which remained in manuscript during the period. Despite this crucial part played in the tragedy of the Reformation martyrdoms, Martin, by contrast to almost every name amongst the New College Catholics heretofore mentioned, managed to effect a political semi-reconciliation with the Elizabethan Settlement. Unlike his fellows Nicholas Harpsfield, Thomas Stapleton and Nicholas Sanders, his visible part in their continuing battle of pen and ink from prison and exile also ends where it began, with a pamphlet of 1554 in favour of clerical celibacy, which was in any case probably only authored by him in name. When, in 1566, John Ponet finally authors a reply to the early tract published under his name against clerical marriage, he does not deign to reply.<sup>56</sup> Martin was always perhaps a less dogmatic figure than his compatriots; perhaps his time spent as a travelling scholar of legal humanism in Bourges would have shown him the possibility of coexistence of an enlightened humanist scholarship across religious confessions. In the event he certainly found a niche in Elizabeth's England. Upon Elizabeth's accession Martin loses some of his offices, and over the course of her reign, retiring quietly to Cambridge and maintaining legal and parliamentary work, he must at times have feared that he might lose much more. His fellow-proctor John Story, following his refusal of the Oath of Supremacy, has a black legend of his career written by Foxe, and is finally hung, drawn and quartered at Tyburn in 1572, the act perhaps a 'partial act of exorcism of the past'. Martin's own conformity may have meant he was one of the many Catholics who remained loyal to the monarch and the Queen. That said, whilst never in fact accused of recusancy—technically a term that can only be applied to those who refuse

---

<sup>56</sup> See John Ponet, *An apologie fully ansvveringe by scriptures and aunceant doctors, a blasphemose book...against the godly mariadge of priests* (Strasbourg: Heirs of W. Köpfel, 1555).

to attend the services of the Church of England—an examination of his will leaves the reader in no doubt that his conservative sympathies and in all probability his Catholic faith survived until the end.

Against the domestic background of the bulk of the bequests of Martin's will is written the story of Martin's personal political allegiances and religious hopes.<sup>57</sup> Besides family portraits, the one picture described in the will is that hanging in the Great Chamber of his Steeple Morden home in southwest Cambridgeshire. It is a portrait, not of the current monarch as its pride of place might suggest, but 'Queen Marye's picture'. It is evident that Martin, who as Stephen Gardiner's secretary saw the height of his career and fortune under that queen, remained a thorough Marian to the end of his life. This portrait is bequeathed to his second wife, Margery, with whom and with whose progeny hope for the continuation of his religious orthodoxy appears to lie. She was a widow who had married Martin by 1565, and it is worth noting that her former husband's will (administered by Martin) reveals a preface whose references to the Virgin and the saints suggest his continued Catholicism.<sup>58</sup> It is to Francis, their daughter, that he gives a collection of devotional objects and semi-relics of the Catholic regime just past. Whilst Thomas' daughter by his first marriage, Elizabeth, receives a portrait of her mother and a pair of virginals, bequests to Francis include an 'Ivory cheste with locke and key and Inges of silver sometime Quene Maryes that hath the storie of the Newe Testament engraven upon it'. This possession perhaps fits well with the particular favour shown to him by Mary Tudor in her personal consultation of him following Cranmer's attempted appeal. Amongst musical instruments and jewels further implication of Catholic practice is to be found in his bequest to Francis of 'my great crosset with mine table diamond in it'—a perhaps marginally legal portable cross or crucifix whose 'table diamond' means a large, flat-topped stone. Devotions made to the physical cross had become a particularly potent symbol of continued adherence to Catholicism, as, despite Elizabeth's own celebrated erection of a silver crucifix in her own chapel, it was seen by many reformers as a focus of idol worship and false superstitious devotion—most especially if it was a crucifix rather than a cross, or at all elaborate. Martin's fellow

---

<sup>57</sup> National Archives PROB 11/82/229. The distribution of bedroom furniture and linen and appropriate bequests of the monogrammed tapestry work from the trousseaux of his two wives to children and stepchildren perhaps demonstrate an attempt to pre-empt what may have been a tense family situation following his death—his property is subject to a dispute when his son Thomas from his first marriage sues Margery and Francis for administration of the estate.

<sup>58</sup> National Archives, PROB 11/48/239.

Wykehamist, the Louvain apologist John Martiall, had published a treatise on this subject, addressed as a direct appeal to his monarch, as part of the systematic and organized Louvain response to Bishop John Jewel's 'challenge' sermon of 1556.<sup>59</sup> Thomas Martin's associate and friend, Nicholas Harpsfield, included when his *Dialogi Sex* was printed by the learned editor-publisher John Fowler, only one image, in the central pages: a double-page facsimile of the image of a miraculous cross which had appeared in a lightning-struck tree on a Glamorganshire estate—pictures of which were dangerous contraband in Elizabethan England.<sup>60</sup> As well as this devotional outfit, Martin wills Francis the gifts assigned by her godmothers: 'the good Ladye countesse of Shrewsburye' and 'my Ladye Compton'. In these names Martin gives those of two women with considerable political power but also with intriguing Catholic connections. Elizabeth Talbot, better known as Bess of Hardwick, was Countess of Shrewsbury by marriage to the fourth in her string of powerful husbands, George Talbot, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Shrewsbury from 1559 until his death in 1590.<sup>61</sup> Mary, Queen of Scots was placed in the care of the Earl and Countess from 1569 to 1584. Bess was at the time of the composition of Martin's will fostering her granddaughter Arbella Stuart, niece to Mary as the daughter of her brother Charles Stuart, Earl of Lennox. Arbella was then, after Mary's death, a not unlikely successor to Elizabeth. This claim was seen by some as a means by which the Catholic faith might be restored in England, or at least a means by which tolerance might be restored, perhaps by her marriage to James VI.<sup>62</sup> Bess of Hardwick was a redoubtable force in Elizabethan England, and of course held a high position in court circles: it was a powerful choice. The second godmother is probably Anne Spencer, Lady Compton, who despite her husband Henry, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Compton's death in 1589 would have been referred to as such until her remarriage in 1604 or at least until the next Baron Compton's marriage around 1599. She was also a cousin by marriage of Bess's. As Edmund Spenser's cousin she is 'bountiful Charillis' in his 'Colin Clout's Come Home Again' and dedicatee of 'Mother Hubberd's Tale', but she was also a woman

---

<sup>59</sup> Thomas Harding, *A treatyse of the cross gathred out of the scriptures, councelles and auncient fathers of the primitive church* (1564).

<sup>60</sup> Thomas S. Freeman, *Martyrs and Martyrdom*, p. 43.

<sup>61</sup> In which case the 'countesse of shrewsburye' would have been Bess of Hardwick's daughter and stepdaughter-in-law Mary Talbot, née Cavendish, who had conveniently married her husband's eldest son, Gilbert Talbot. These two and herself also had much to do with Arbella's upbringing. See the relevant articles in the *ODNB*.

<sup>62</sup> For Arbella's biography see Sarah Gristwood, *Arbella: England's Lost Queen* (London; New York: Bantam, 2003) and Rosalind K. Marshall's article in the *ODNB*.

of known recusant association.<sup>63</sup> There are hints here, despite Martin's continuing to occupy a contented role amongst the doctors of civil law, of a certain investment in and hope for a future where orthodoxy and religious conservatism might yet win the day—although of course he is also engaged more simply in selecting wealthy and potentially influential godmothers for his youngest daughter, who was under thirty and unmarried at the time of writing. So Martin remains, despite his outward conformity and comfortable employ, a likely crypto-Catholic or church-papist. In 1590 the atmosphere for English Catholics was becoming increasingly adverse. The political climate, already hardened significantly by the Northern Rising, the papal excommunication of Elizabeth I in *Regnans Excelsis* in 1570 (despite its later repeal), the Ridolfi, Throckmorton and Babington Plots and of course Martin's fellow Wykehamist Nicholas Sanders' attempted invasion, had become dire, reaching its crisis in the decision to execute Mary, Queen of Scots in 1587. These last years of the century are also those after which the hopes which had remained flickeringly alive for a marriage-alliance with either the French or the Spanish Catholic powers could be seen, given Elizabeth's age, to have ended. The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 would have been a final straw. At the same time, the strong sense by the 1590s that Elizabeth's reign was drawing to a close meant that the possibility of regime change was inevitably in the air. Overall, despite the desperate state of affairs for English Catholics by 1590, what we can glean from Martin's will suggests he remains materially hopeful of better days to come.

### **Annus mirabilis, annus horibilis?**

This latter year, of 1588, is recorded as that of Thomas Martin's New College donation. We cannot know whether it was before or after the 8<sup>th</sup> August, when the Spanish were summarily defeated, that Martin settled his benefaction of thirty-one printed books and four manuscript books on the college. However, perhaps regardless, this is a particularly symbolic year to be making such a gift. It had long been prophesied as the *annus mirabilis* or *annus horribilis* whose advent, from calculations of the coincidence of planets made by the German astrologer Johannes

---

<sup>63</sup> Daughter of Sir John Spencer of Wormleighton in Warwickshire and Althorp in Northamptonshire and of Katherine Kitson of Hengrave in Suffolk, a 'notable recusant family'. For her Catholic associations see Peter Marshall and Geoffrey Scott, eds. *Catholic Gentry in English Society: The Throckmortons of Coughton from Reformation to Emancipation* (Ashgate, 2009), pp. 116-119.

Muller, or Regiomontanus, was associated with portentuous events that might even be world-ending.

If then the world do not go under  
They'll else be great events and wonder

ran one of the many verse prophecies circulating concerning this year.<sup>64</sup> Such prognostications of cataclysmic event were only confirmed by the report that the Armada was being prepared in Spain, news which could of course conversely encourage Catholic hopes for a divine intercession and deliverance from the yoke of Protestant monarchy. As Keith Thomas' research has long shown, interest, if not belief and faith, in all kinds of prophecy was current in respectable intellectual, as well as popular, circles in the late sixteenth-century. Diverse prophecies circulated well into Elizabeth's reign demonstrating popular Catholic expectation of apocastatic return on some 'Golden' or 'good day'. Such beliefs could also be taken seriously at the highest and most actively militant level, fuelling rebellions on both sides of the confessional divide. In 1572 at the trial of the Duke of Norfolk it was alleged that a prophecy about two lions and a lioness beginning 'in exaltatione Lune, Leo succumbat' which he had interpreted as referring to himself and Mary, Queen of Scots' overthrow of Elizabeth, had driven him to his involvement in the Ridolfi Plot.<sup>65</sup>

The execution of Mary, Queen of Scots in 1587 and the hardening of legislation against recusancy in the wake of the Ridolfi Plot rendered this point in the 1580s perhaps the peak of persecution of Roman Catholics in England. From the 1570 bull *Regnans in Excelsis* declaring Elizabeth's excommunication—despite its official withdrawal two years later—the position of Catholic loyalist became more difficult to maintain. Religious dissidence had become less and less tolerated, as a series of Catholic plots put the Elizabethan regime on edge. It was becoming increasingly difficult to be a church papist, and there is no particular surprise in the uncontroversial nature of Martin's donation: discovery of Catholic propaganda could lead to imprisonment and death. There must surely have been a sense of desperation, but at the same time, in the work of the Jesuit missionaries and the hardening of militant

---

<sup>64</sup> Howard Dobin, *Merlin's Disciples: Prophecy, Poetry and Power in Renaissance England* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 107-10.

<sup>65</sup> Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1971), pp. 404-6.

purpose indicated by Nicholas Sanders' attempted invasion in Ireland, and the involvement of Douai College's William Allen in the events of the Armada, a determination to hold firm in the faith and expectation of some form of liberating advent.

Indeed, before the summer, the year of our benefaction must have been a moment of *hope* for English Catholics who desired regime change—a potential *annus mirabilis*. A strong Catholic belief, probably fostered by the many popular prophecies about the year, that God's hand was engaged in the sending of the Armada is suggested by the efforts of Lord Lumley's nephew Philip Howard, then imprisoned in the tower, who reputedly gathered a band of other imprisoned Catholics to stage a 24-hour pray-in on the day of the Armada.<sup>66</sup> However it soon revealed itself as an *annus horribilis* from a Catholic perspective. Even then, those applying 'apocalyptic' patterns could continue to find hope in the depth of despair: the paradox of the apocalyptic template being that the height of suffering, the gathering of evil and the victory of the Antichristic are all the signs indicative of final climax and release.

### **A historical and apocalyptic benefaction**

This donation of Thomas Martin's is an important one at a time when the expansion and indeed content of the college library was determined by private gifts of this sort.<sup>67</sup> This was not the sum of what was clearly an extensive library held by this 'amateur' humanist; Martin wills his vernacular books to his elder son Thomas, perhaps his less scholarly or non-lawyer son, and to the other, Henry, 'all my Bookes of divinitye Lawe philosophye and humanitye' with provision made for intentional gifts to New College and to 'any colledge in cambridge'—what it is now established was probably Caius College, Cambridge.<sup>68</sup> This specificity suggests clear intentions for and classifications within his library. Martin's donation as a whole, as William Poole has

---

<sup>66</sup> Patrick Macey, *Bonfire Songs: Savonarola's Musical Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 283.

<sup>67</sup> See Ker, p. 456.

<sup>68</sup> Now established as comprising six books at Caius College Library, Cambridge, which bear marks of provenance connecting them to Martin. This was a college with markedly conservative religious sympathies under the masters Martin might have known—John Caius and Thomas Legge, the latter of whom had a career like Martin as a civil lawyer. One book also contains John Caius' name, suggesting it was an early personal gift from one man to the other before it was given to the college. Alongside works of 'humanity' including the 'rhapsody' or prose version of the *Aeneid* by Antoni Sabelli and the classically-framed poetry of Angelo Ambrogini (Poliziano) there are histories of Rome, the papacy and the Church which advance the argument presented here.

detailed, points to a sophisticated scholarly interest in ancient, ecclesial and contemporary history, geography, astronomy, chronology and ancient and modern languages, alongside a certain medieavalism and what I would argue constitutes a pronounced interest in the Book of Revelations. What I seek to argue is that these topics are taken as pendant to the kind of historical project his co-Wykehamists were attempting. The donation takes on the aspect of a testimony to the complex nature of the historical discipline at the close of the sixteenth century: strongly theologically inflected and open to areas of thought we might now consider ‘esoteric’. We can see that ‘history’ is not a discipline Martin includes within his donation. It was still an emergent discipline, not yet distinct: Meredith Hanmer can preface his early translation of Eusebius with a definition of the ecclesiastical history as ‘bookes of divinitie to edifie the soule and instructe the inwarde man’.<sup>69</sup>

Martin’s, as I have argued, is a name to be associated with the New College fellows who comprise the speaking majority of what has been termed the ‘Louvain School of Apologetics’—an ensemble of religiously conservative Englishmen in exile in the Low Countries who waged an intellectual campaign from the continent for the future of the nation and its Church. The label is perhaps slightly misleading, as two of important contributors to this project—John and Nicholas Harpsfield—were in fact confined to the Fleet Prison. This did not stop them from making a significant print contribution to the efforts. Their manuscripts, smuggled out of the country, were, like those of their compatriots, published at Louvain and at Antwerp. It would have been dangerous, and surprising, for Thomas Martin to abandon any manuscripts he might have had in his possession in a benefaction made before the not entirely sympathetic fellowship of the then college, but it is not impossible that he owned, or had seen, some of the texts they were producing.<sup>70</sup>

The list begins with a French edition of Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian Wars*—a model of historical writing from the writer known as the father of scientific history, in a vernacular edition which hence made it accessible and current. That this and the next volume, Aristotle’s *Politics*, in French, point of course to Martin’s interest in French language and affairs, instilled by his early travels and

---

<sup>69</sup> Rosamund Oates, ‘Elizabethan Histories of English Christian Origins’ in Katherine Van Liere, Simon Ditchfield, Howard Louthan eds., *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian past in the Renaissance world* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 181.

<sup>70</sup> For an example of the response to a discovery of an illicit holding of Catholic books, including Stapleton’s translation of Bede, see Janet Wilson, ‘A Catalogue of the ‘unlawful’ books found in John Stow’s Study on 21 February 1568/9’, *Recusant History* 20 (1990), 100-120.

partly continental education. This attention to Greek history suggests its important classical model of the emergent historical discipline. At the same time it reminds us of the mythical dimensions of historical study, in the national legend of Britain's Greek origins with Brutus, son of Aeneas—and indeed the myth of literal *translatio studii* which has Oxford itself trace its origins as a school established by the Athenian philosophers in exile at Cricklade, known as 'Greeklade' then 'Bellosite', identified with Beaumont and hence Oxford itself.<sup>71</sup> European vernacular translations of classical texts could also serve as models and patterns for similar efforts in the English tongue, to be perfected to a new standard. Aristotle's consideration of the ideal arrangement of the *polis* also stands against Thucydides as a reminder of the transcendent aims which lie behind the pursuit of history. Next follow Livy's *Decades*, the history of Rome from its foundations to the first century, in French again and also in another European vernacular—Spanish.<sup>72</sup> A significant presence of volumes on Roman history, including ancient history and politics, has an evident place within the context of the historical debate which engaged questions about the providential destiny of Rome as the seat of the papacy.<sup>73</sup> These also include Florus' near-contemporary triumphal Roman history, the *editio princeps* of the fragmentary first-century history of Marcus Velleius Paterculus, Andreas Dominicus Floccus' (Fenestella) fifteenth-century work on Ancient Rome, and Pope Pius II's (Piccolomini) condensing of Flavius Biondi's classic work of the same period on the history of the city, as well as Florus' history and Cassius Dio's roman biographies, books not listed in the 1588 donation but present in New College library. Alunno da Ferrara's *Fabrica del Mondo*, or 'Workshop of the World', fifth on the list, is a collection of poetic and prose accounts of the divine creation—setting the scene for an understanding of historical narrative as revelation of divine purpose and mind, and also implying a sophisticated renaissance understanding of the place of poetry in the study of divinity, interesting when we come to the presence of a medieval poet later in the list of donations. The next interest is in French history, something we can

---

<sup>71</sup> Anthony à Wood, *History and Antiquities of the Colleges and Halls of the University of Oxford*, pp. 8-20.

<sup>72</sup> New College also holds two further volumes of the *Decades* with indications of Martin's donation, in Latin and Spanish.

<sup>73</sup> Florus, *De gestis Romanorum libri IIII* (Paris: Thomas Richard, 1551); *Scriptores historiae Augustae* (Paris: Robert Stephanus, 1544); Pius II, *Pii Pont. Max. Decadum Blondi epitome* (Basel: Joannes Bebelius, 1533); Lucius Fenestella, *De Romanorum magistralibus*; Velleius Paterculus, *Historiae Romanae duo volumina* (Basel: Joannes Froben, 1520); Livy, *Le Deche di T. Liuio Padouano delle historie romane* (Venice: the heirs of Luc' Antonio Giunti, 1547).

understand both biographically—Martin spent formative years of study in that country and almost became ambassador to France under Mary—and in terms of contemporary history. The lengthy historical identification of the French monarchy with possible candidates for the apocalyptic idea of the ‘Last World Emperor’ was strong in sixteenth-century and into seventeenth-century apocalyptic thought.<sup>74</sup> Paulus Aemilius’ *De rebus gestis Francorum* and Jean Tillet’s *Chronicon de gestis Francorum* are given in a single edition of two sixteenth-century histories of the kings of France, an annal of Belgian history. *Batavia* is the latest book bought of the donations listed in the New College Benefactors book, since this historical and antiquarian survey of Holland was published on behalf of its author posthumously in 1587. A further important book in New College from Martin’s library, not listed in the Benefactors Book, contains the ten books of the sixth-century Saint Gregory, Bishop of Tours’ *Historiae Francorum* and the 9<sup>th</sup> century Bishop Ado of Vienna’s *Sex aetatem mundi*. This latter is a true universal history and chronicle, from Adam to the author’s own times, and Gregory’s has a similar frame. The understanding presented here of history as the narrative and revelation of divine purpose in the world of course remained the primary one. Ado’s periodization of ‘six ages’ in world history is the traditional one of St Augustine (Adam to Noah; Noah to Abraham; Abraham to David; David to Babylonian Captivity; Captivity to Christ; All that comes after the coming of Christ) which was long understood as the natural pattern for world history, following that of the six days of creation, with the seventh being that of heavenly rest. It is that adopted by Isidore of Seville (who calls the now ‘the sixth is that which takes place nowadays and will be finished together with the world’) and by Bede (who also talks about ‘the seventh and the eighth in which the heavenly life emerges’). This produces of course the apocalyptic ‘orthodoxy’ that the current is the last age. The ordering and patterning of temporal history had a certain urgency and importance because it could then be placed against those pieces of revelation which seemed to provide templates for history and understood prophetically. Other world chronicles in this donation include the *Catalogus annorum* (1540) by Anselm Ryd, which syncretizes classical and biblical histories. Martin’s edition has a running ‘family tree’ of woodcuts of the various fathers of the races, including Hercules and the Pleiades, Biblical and Roman history as we understand it, and illustrated king and pope lists.

---

<sup>74</sup> Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 375-394 passim.

Naclerus' *Memorabilium omnis aetatis et omnium gentium chronici commentarii* (1516) is along similar lines—a work with a preface by Erasmus himself, and humanist in its use of multiple sources, it nonetheless remains a work of ‘complete’, theologically-situated, history. It is in the context of the importance of sequence and order to the collation of human experience against the revealed truth of scripture, and particularly prophetic texts like those found in the Book of Daniel, that we might understand the presence of a series of works on chronology. The ‘Lucidii Emendatio temporum’ as the Benefactors Book describes it, is a collection of five chronological tracts first published in 1537 in response to the Fifth Lateran Council’s having ended with no conclusion about calendar reform. It was written under the name of Joannes Lucidus Samotheus, a probably fictional Frenchman behind whom lay the Dominican monk Giovanni Maria Tolosani.<sup>75</sup> Calendar reform was controversial in a way we perhaps cannot now imagine. The gradual loss of alignment with the seasons caused by the Julian calendar also meant a gradual loss of the correct calculation of Easter: by the sixteenth century the seasonal equinoxes fell on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March and 11<sup>th</sup> September and the shortest days were the 11<sup>th</sup> December and the 11<sup>th</sup> of June instead of the 21<sup>st</sup> in each case. It is easy to see how this must have seemed like a kind of decay away from the liturgical calendar’s basis in the life of Christ and the early church’s celebration of these feast days, as the year literally fell behind. To lose a sense of how far distant these events were was possibly to lose the insight human knowledge can have into divine purpose. The degree of error had been known since the thirteenth century, so the controversy was around how to correct it. The papal promulgation of our current calendar had to await for the energy and decisiveness of Pope Gregory XIII, but since his Bull was issued in 1582 Protestant nations took a great deal of time to conform—England did not align itself until 1752/3.<sup>76</sup> Knowledge of ‘real time’ was of course essential for making chronological calculations of a kind necessary for the apocalyptic historiography being undertaken. The *Ephemeridum reliquiae* of the priest, mathematician, instrument maker, astronomer and astrologer Johannes Stoeffler is an astronomical table extended for use up until 1556. Stoeffler was the first to show that the Julian calendar could be brought into harmony with astronomical events. An editor of Regiomontanus’ *Ephemerides*, he was himself

---

<sup>75</sup> See Edward Rosen, *Copernicus and his Successors* (London: Hambledon Press, 1995), pp. 149-161.

<sup>76</sup> On the history of calendar change see Alexander Philip, *The Calendar: its history, structure and improvement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921).

given to apocalyptic predication, predicting a great world-engulfing flood from planetary conjunctions to occur in 1524. The work is also an introduction to astronomy and the study of the heavens, positions and revolutions of planets, with tables of the height of the sun in the day, and of the position of the stars by night. This interest is supported by further volumes from Martin on astronomy and astronomical instruments: the *Sphaera mundi* of the eleventh-century Jewish mathematician astronomer Abraham bar Hiyya Ha-Nasi, a 1580 reprint of a 1542 edition of the *De Perspectiva* of John Peckham, the thirteenth-century Franciscan Archbishop of Canterbury, theologian, and Baconian student of optics and astronomy, is conveniently combined in one volume with Juan de Rojas' widely disseminated work on the astrolabe and its use, which contains his unveiling of the new (to be called the Rojas) astrolabe created by orthographic projection. The increasingly advanced and technical study of the motions and relations of the bodies of the universe had not disassociated it as of yet from science in its deepest sense as an attempt to understand the mind of God. Interests we might now consider 'esoteric'—the casting of horoscopes, for example, or the apocalyptic projection of disaster and the study of portents—coexisted with technical advancement and 'enlightened' study. This was equally true of geographical advances and exploration into the New World. Martin makes a very significant donation of atlases and geographical texts. Like a good humanist, he includes the classical text of the Roman geographer Pomponius Mela, *De Situ Orbis* (1493), and alongside this the most current world atlas in what is a very recent purchase, perhaps deliberately made for this benefaction: Abraham Ortelius' world atlas in 53 maps, the *Theatrum Mundi* and its accompanying glossary of geographical terms, both in their 1584 editions. Not less than three books touching on the voyages to the New World suggest the historically-providential interest of geography. Finally, Richard Hakluyt's *The Principall Nauigations, voiages and discoveries of the English nation*, confirmed by William Poole as a later donation of Martin's given its publication date of 1589,<sup>77</sup> is a collection of voyages made by the sixteenth-century fellow of Christ Church and covering a period from the fourth century to those of Drake and Raleigh. Hakluyt writes within of his own vocational epiphany as that of the theological nature of global discovery. Told by his lawyer cousin to do so, Hakluyt reads Psalm 107, where

---

<sup>77</sup> In this issue.

I read, that they which go downe to the sea in ships, and occupy by the great waters, they see the works of the Lord, and his woonders in the deepe, &c. Which words of the Prophet together with my cousins discourse (things of high and rare delight to my yong nature) tooke in me so deepe an impression, that I constantly resolved, if ever I were preferred to the University ... I would by Gods assistance prosecute that knowledge and kinde of literature.<sup>78</sup>

Several books of the Martin benefaction contain material on the conquest and exploration of the New World. Christopher Columbus' first voyage to the New World was something he himself viewed in providential and apocalyptic terms, following from the Catholic apocalyptic reading which associated the rise of Spain's Empire with eschatological expectation and a possible 'Last World Empire' as suggested by Tomasso Campanella.<sup>79</sup> This not least because, following Augustine, one of the conditions generally considered to be the final prelude to the second coming was universal conversion. It is with this that we might associate the collection of source texts concerned with the Christian conversion or conquest of heathen peoples, also among Martin's books in the college library, with Martin's donation label but not among the listed benefactions, and which includes: a twelfth-century chronicle of the Crusades by Robert of Rheims or Robert the Monk; a fifteenth-century prose drama on the conquest of Granada by Carlos Verardi, the *Historia Baetica*; a Latin version of Christopher Columbus's first letter (usually known as the *De Insulis Inventis*); a letter from the King in the east of Ethiopia, Lebna Dengel, asking for protection against the invasions of the Ottoman Empire along the coast; and the King of Portugal's reply asking about the customs of the people 'then thought to be troglodytes' (and whose aid which was to save the orthodox Ethiopian faith in 1543); and finally two fifteenth-century texts on the Mahommedan faiths, being Baptista Egnatius's *De Origine Turcarum Libellus* and Pomponius Laetus' *De exortu Maomethis*.<sup>80</sup> Martin also includes the first historical account of the Spanish

---

<sup>78</sup> See Marjorie Reeves, pp. 359-60, 387 and Ralph Williamson, *Apocalypse Then: Prophecy and the Making of the Modern World* (Westport, Conn.; London: 2008) pp. 102-10.

<sup>80</sup> This has not heretofore been noted as Martin's donation, comprising: 1. Robert of Rheims, *Bellum Christianorum Principum, praecipue Gallorum, contra Saracenos, Anno Salutis M.LXXXVIII, pro terra sancta gestum*; 2. *De expugnatione regni Granatae quae contigit ab hinc quadragesimo secundo anno, per Catholicu[m] regem Ferdinandum Hispaniarum*; 3. *Cristophorus Colom De prima*

discoveries, Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's *De Orbe Novo* (On the New World) published in Basel in 1533 by Johan Bebel. This contains the Spanish historian's first three 'decades' or reports, and part of his fourth, treating the first two voyages of Columbus and of the Nino and Pinzon brothers who accompanied him and sailed the *Nina* and *Pinta*, and, in the fourth, the explorations of Hernandez de Cordoba, Drijalva, and Cortes. This emphasis on New World exploration and conversion, then, maintains the eschatological cast through the geographical content of the donation.

The project unfinished at the time Martin writes was precisely that of assembling a 'generall ecclesiasticall history of the Church of England' as Richard Verstegan described it to Robert Parsons in 1593.<sup>81</sup> It was to be a composite work, including several pieces already completed by our Louvain exiles: Thomas Stapleton's translation of Bede, complete by 1565, Nicholas Harpsfield's *Historia Anglicana Ecclesiastica* and Nicholas Sander's *De origine ... schismatis Anglicani*. It is notable that in Martin's benefaction he appears to provide elements of what we might view as the 'workshop' materials for just such a project, or at least some of the most important texts shaping the debate and its responses. We have a standard edition of Bede's *Ecclesiastica Historia*, which Felicity Heal argues was 'the centrepiece of their [Catholic historians] historical claims about the church'. Thomas Stapleton had published his translation as part of the Louvain scholars' historical project in 1565—a text whose preface made it just the kind of suspect book to condemn a crypto-Catholic; we should not be surprised that this benefaction to a now conforming college contains no explicitly Catholic volumes. Bede is bound with the fifth-century text of Eusebius' history of the church, the model of all later ecclesiastical historians, including John Foxe, but also an account which placed great emphasis on the continuity of the Catholic Church through its hierarchy.<sup>82</sup> A manuscript book from Martin, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historiae Regum Britanniae*, represents another crux of the contested space of reformation historians: although Catholic historians could rubbish it when convenient, it contained the mythic narratives of the story of the English nation, which both sides attempted to turn to their purpose. Its somewhat

---

*insularum, in mari Indico sitarum, lustratione, quae sub rege Ferdinando Hispaniarum facta est. 4. Delegatione regis Aethiopiae ad Clementem pontificem VII, ac Rege[m] Portugalliae item de regno, hominibus, atq[ue] moribus eiusdem populi, qui Trogloditae hodie esse putantur. 5. Ioan. Baptista Egnatius De origine Turcarum. 6. Pomponius Laetus De exortu Maomethis.*

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Christopher Highley, '“A Pestilent and Seditious Book”: Nicholas Sander's *Schismatis Anglicani* and Catholic Histories of the Reformation', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68 (2005), 151.

<sup>82</sup> Rosamund Oates, p. 179.

murky account of Augustine of Canterbury's mission from Rome, which includes a massacre of 'native' Irish monks, was thoroughly milked by Protestant historians attempting to disprove a papal beginning for the Church in England.<sup>83</sup> We also have William Chaloner's *De republica Anglorum instauranda*, a lengthy neo-Latin allegorical epic poem by the then Spanish ambassador and translator of Erasmus, a kind of contemporary moralized chronicle. Its editor William Malim—who gave the book to Martin—appears to have been conservative in religion.<sup>84</sup> It at least mirrors the attempt represented by the unfinished metrical history of the English Church begun by John Harpsfield.<sup>85</sup>

Martin's book benefaction is rounded out by three works of reference, firstly what is considered to be the first bibliography proper, Johannes Trithemius' *De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis*, an index by the fifteenth-century abbot of 7,000 or more works by 950 authors, in all cases writers of divinity; and secondly the *Bibliotheca* of the Swiss scholar Conrad Gesner, a comprehensive alphabetical bibliography of all the Latin, Greek and Hebrew books published in the first century of the printing press, appearing in four volumes from 1545-1549 and including 1800 authors. Lastly we have, in a European vernacular, Spanish, Polydore Vergil's *De inventoribus rerum*—a fifteenth-century 'encyclopedia' of sorts, detailing its accounts of the historical advent of human institutions and activities from marriage to the gods to ploughing. All three books might also be considered as 'histories' of a kind: Vergil's we could have placed also with the 'world chronicles'; and Gesner and Trithemius' are histories of ancient and recent scholarship.

The one book of what we might call pure 'divinity' included in Martin's donation (still commonly identified, as in the benefaction list, as 'Ambrosii expositio Apocalypsim') is in fact a twelfth-century commentary of Berengaudus on the Apocalypse, mistakenly attributed to the early Church Father Ambrose, as John Foxe had pointed out in the Preface to his own commentary on Revelations. Its presence here is a distinct complement to that of the Apocalypse manuscript, to the French Prose gloss of which it provides an alternative commentary. Here again what must be emphasized is the increasingly important role of this book of the Bible in sixteenth-century historiography. Its many annotations suggest once again a scholarly attention

---

<sup>83</sup> Felicity Heal, p.18.

<sup>84</sup> See *ODNB* and William Poole in this issue.

<sup>85</sup> In his commonplace book. See British Library, MS Royal 8 B XX.

to the correct manner of reading the Book of Revelations, and this orthodox commentary, then still by some thought to be patristic, may have been chosen as a curative to historicising Protestant readings.

One interpretation of what can be gleaned from the inscription mounted within this volume ‘to my lord byshope of bathe and wells ...of duresme’ suggests that it came at some stage directly from the editor of the text, Cuthbert Tunstall, the Bishop of Durham from 1530 to 1552, when he was deprived and imprisoned, to be reinstated under Mary and restored to the see from 1554-1558. On this conjecture what has been read as perhaps ‘sone’ of duresme would be some abbreviation of his name, and the book was a gift of Mary’s reign to Gilbert Bourne, staunch Catholic Bishop of Bath and Wells from 1554 until his refusal to swear the Oath of Supremacy, and who died in 1569. This of course fits with the general trend in identifiable provinces of Martin’s books that they be in some sense ‘relics’ of the Marian regime.

The further two manuscripts of the benefaction are not unrelated, as they represent sixteenth-century interest in the narrative of the hidden ‘True Church’ and identification of its presence in what would later be thought of as proto-Protestant medieval figures and movements. Like Geoffrey of Monmouth, they form part of the historical ‘battlefield’ within which the two currents were fighting for territory. Firstly we have a fourteenth-century manuscript of John Wycliffe’s translation of the New Testament. John Foxe, seeing clearly in his own age and his own nation the patterns, and perhaps the final significance of Revelations, wrote that the persecution of John Wycliffe—‘that godly learned man’—and the time of the Wycliffites, here meaning the Lollards, marked with precision the close of the thousand-year binding of Satan in his new periodization of world history, as with this the true spiritual Church would be increasingly persecuted.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, myths of very early English translation of the Bible directly linked the latinate scriptures to the reign of Antichrist, as we find in *Actes and Monuments*:

the boke of Gods worde obscured in a darke tonge, which boke before king Ethelstane caused to be translated from Ebrue into English. Anno. 930. then shepherdes and watchmen became wicked Wolues, Christes frendes

---

<sup>86</sup> John Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or *TAMO* (1583 edition) (HRI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011). Available from: <http://www.johnfoxe.org> [Accessed: 01.03.11], pp. 55, 108-9, 124.

chaunged into ennemies. To be shorte here came in the time, that the reuelation speaketh of, whan Sathanas, the old serpent, beyng tied vp for a thousand yere, was losed for a certaine space.<sup>87</sup>

These legendary accounts would have meant that not just Wycliff's translation, but really any early vernacular versions then become of interest, including our Anglo-Norman Apocalypse manuscript.

The New College Apocalypse might hold a double fascination as evidence of medieval interest in the book of the Bible now being read as a key to understanding the continuous existence of the pure, spiritual, undefiled Church which had been driven into obscurity and metaphorical 'exile'. It is perhaps intriguing that this particular manuscript book contains a particularly strong visual affirmation, unique to the illustrative sequence of this sometimes unorthodox illuminated apocalypse, of the identification of the 'woman clothed with the sun' as the True Church. Lying prone, she is contained within an ecclesiastical structure and literally 'bearing' upon her breast the image of a blazing orb, emphasizing the association of this sun with the Son of Man, the *lux orbis*. At one and the same time the image conveys traditional medieval typology of *Ecclesia* and of the Mother of God.<sup>88</sup> Suzanne Lewis suggests the depiction is a literal realization of the Anglo-Norman text, but it is at least intriguing that image is in iconographic parallel to those of the Virgin *parens*, or in childbed where the structure around the Virgin is often similarly glorified by architectural detailing from stable to something more like tabernacle.<sup>89</sup>

The final manuscript, of Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (c. 1390), might seem to open out into a more general interest in the English medieval past. However here, too, there is explicit evidence of an interest based around questions of prophecy and history. The *Confessio*, Gower's 'bok for Engelondes sake' with its moral tales set within the frame of a lover's confession has a deeply apocalyptic prologue, a meditation on former happiness and the contemporary decline of all things. This is scripturally justified through a version of Daniel's prophetic interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar: he sees a statue with head of gold, arms of silver, thighs of

---

<sup>87</sup> *Acts and Monuments* (1563), 1, p. 26.

<sup>88</sup> New College MS 65, fol. 39.

<sup>89</sup> Suzanne Lewis, 'The Apocalypse of Isabella of France' 252 and fig. 42. See examples at St Botolph's, Hardham, Sussex and St Mary's, Wissington, Suffolk. Both can be viewed by using the online almanac at <http://www.painted-church.org>.

bronze and feet of iron and clay. Gower takes on himself the role of prophet to decree that the present time is the divided kingdom of iron and clay, representing the remnant of *romanitas*, and hence the only next step is the stone of destruction which represents the coming of the divine kingdom.<sup>90</sup> Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, mentioning this prologue as corroboration of his apocalyptic chronology, counts Gower amongst the 'faythful witnesses' for his satire, mentioned alongside that author's account of Chaucer as an anti-papist writer.<sup>91</sup> Whilst in the New College edition Gower's stock anticlericalism and mention of the see of Peter is marked with a *nota*, the apocalypticism in this poem is entirely conservative. It treats Wycliffite heresy 'this new secte of Lollardie' as a strong indication of final rupture, but as part of the growth of heresy and the antichristic:

It were betre dike and delve  
And stonde upon the ryhte feith,  
Than knowe al that the Bible seith<sup>92</sup>

This is a clear place to look for a quite different account of late fourteenth-century apocalyptic change, and its presence in this collection suggests the alternative interest the recent medieval past and its self-understanding might hold for a Catholic.

It is not hard to imagine why a positive apocalyptic understanding of coming cataclysmic event might have been of interest to Martin, negotiating as he was Catholic hopes from within an increasingly staunchly Protestant country. The evidence of his benefaction suggests that his interest in apocalypticism was not necessarily an espousal a more otherworldly focus—rejecting temporal for spiritual comfort—but rather an interest which engaged with the more historicised apocalypticism which was becoming an intellectual and cultural standard. His actions, donation and will of 1588 to 1590 appear to relate a degree of material engagement and expectation. Whilst the investment in the future generations of scholarship in an Oxford college may not suggest anticipation of a literal end-time, the scholarly

---

<sup>90</sup> For John Gower's appropriation of the figure of the Biblical prophet and visionary and use of apocalyptic imagery, see Emerson, Richard K. 'Apocalypse and Medieval Culture' in *The Apocalypse and the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 302.

<sup>91</sup> *Acts and Monuments* (1570), 7, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, Prol. 352-4 in G.C. Macaulay, ed. *The English works of John Gower*, 2 vols, EETS o.s. 81-2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1900), I, p.11.

interests covered by his donation embrace the utopic hopes concurrently invested in the Hapsburg and Spanish empires, as well as in New World exploration. They may also relate to the desire of historians both Protestant and Catholic to elucidate the place of the English Church within this dawning moment. One set of Catholic hopes may have been dashed by the failure of the Armada, but apocalyptic thinking does not simplistically allow such judgement: the signs of disaster are signs also of complete deliverance drawing near. By the 1590s when Martin's will does appear to bequeath his religious orthodoxy to the next generation, 'there was a strong feeling that Elizabeth I's reign had come to an end' and as the later 1590s brought renewed expectations and the prospect of regime change. The light of actual political hope in continental rescue through invasion or perhaps conversion expanded this, and the Catholic historiographers could draw the sixteenth-century plight up into the divine plan without necessarily having a resonance to actual *parousia*. The Jesuit Robert Parsons can be hopeful enough about the ambiguity of James VI of Scotland's religiosity to make an appeal to him as the coming Constantine.<sup>93</sup>

### **The Louvain Apologists and Apocalyptic Historiography**

Diarmaid MacCulloch has gone so far as to suggest the Reformation derived its main impulse from an atmosphere of apocalyptic expectation. Whilst the Protestant form this eventually took dominates our modern understanding, a sense of imminent change and transformation associated with divine purpose was in the air long before the Reformation took on its clear Protestant character. Fourteenth-century climactic crisis, schism and epidemic built up towards the year 1500, the chronological milestone of a millennium and a half from the birth of Christ.<sup>94</sup> Apocalyptic thinking was a justificatory tool for those at the forefront of radical political and religious transformation, and a resort or refuge for those experiencing its ravages, depredations and persecutions. More literal apocalypticism, after Savonarola and the Spiritual Franciscan revival in the 1490s, was severely treated by the Catholic magisterium, leading to a Lateran Council edict against preaching on such apocalyptic themes and reform in 1513. However, furore over futurity was alive well into the early 1500s in

---

<sup>93</sup> Heal, p. 122.

<sup>94</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided* (London: Penguin Books, 2003); *History of Christianity* (London: Penguin Books, 2009).

popular and intellectual spheres in Italy and Spain. From initial Lutheran, Zwinglian and Calvinist scepticism of prophecy and prophetic books, there was a turn in mood by which Protestant theologians, concerned to establish the historical importance of this reformation moment, began to identify historical prophecies particular to the Reformation in scriptural and apocryphal material.<sup>95</sup> It was of course above all essential that this new apocalyptic account of recent and earlier church history find its justification in scripture, freshly re-emphasized as the fundamental and unique fountain of truth. From this comes the resurgence of a literal approach to the main visionary book of the Bible, read more historically and less figuratively and ethically than had been the case. As Euan Cameron explains it, this produced

a historical literature more driven by doctrine, more theologically focused in its sense of chronology, more concerned to integrate the apocalypse and the ultimate destiny of human events into the cosmic drama of God, the created order, and the end of history.<sup>96</sup>

In England, in response to the efforts of the German reformer Philip Melancthon and the polemical historians known as the Magdeburg Centuriators, an apocalyptic reading of national and church history emerges too. John Bale's *Image of bothe Churches* (1545) placed the dualisms which structure the Book of Revelation at the centre of English Protestant historiography, giving a powerful narrative and visual account of the struggle between the true and false churches figured as the biblical Whore of Babylon and the 'woman clothed with the sun'. John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, published in four editions from 1561 to 1583, developed what can be and was read as an eschatologically imminent narrative of the True Church's emergence from the yoke of the False in which what he at least took to be an iteration or analogue of the pattern of the last times. Foxe gives an account of the gradual degradation of the ordinary purity of the English Church, a degradation which has its origins in the 597 'second' arrival of the Christian faith from Rome, as opposed to the direct mission from the apostles in the legendary landing of Joseph of Arimathea in AD 63. Now is a 'brasen age', that of the spiritually waning and materially waxing

---

<sup>95</sup> See Katherine Firth, pp. 1-31.

<sup>96</sup> Euan Cameron, 'Primitivism, Patristics and Polemic in Protestant Visions of Early Christianity' in Katherine Van Liere, Simon Ditchfield, Howard Louthan eds., *Sacred History: uses of the Christian past in the Renaissance world* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 31.

Church after the 1000-year binding of Satan in Revelations 20: 1-6, latterly associated by Foxe with the cessation of persecution in the reign of Constantine. By Foxe's 1583 edition, this is interpreted as having come to a close in the approximately contemporary moment, during the fourteenth century, since when the Antichrist has been quite literally at large. This period is identified in scripture as but a 'little season'—a projected brevity which suggests the imminence of the Second Coming itself. The identification of the Pope and Roman Church with the unbinding of Antichrist, a theme drawn at some remove from John Wycliffe, became an increasingly standard element.

What remains less examined than this Protestant apocalyptic historiography is the Catholic response, and indeed the possibility of a parallel Catholic account of Reformation events in the light of the Book of Revelations. Catholic writing of the nation, from exile and prison, is dialectically engaged with the Protestant account in a number of ways. The 'doubling' account of the coexistence of true church and false church is crucial to this, and it is possible to see how the dualities of the Book of Revelation became a kind of epistemological battleground for opposed sides in the 'war of pen and ink.' For Protestant historians the necessity of apocalyptic patterns arose from the need to tell the story of the pre-Lutheran mystical church. If theirs was the true religion and the institutional church a false Babylon, where, when and how had had it been battling against Antichrist for the past five centuries? Particularly following Bishop Jewel's 1559 'Challenge Sermon' which flung down the gauntlet for the 'war of pen and prayer', challenging Catholics to produce proof of anything approaching Roman practise in the 600 years of Foxe's first 'golden age' of the Church, this need redoubled back on the conservative historians. A counter-history became increasingly needed as the Protestant narrative gained ground. Although political disturbance and radicalism within the Roman Catholic fold, including that of the celebrated Dominican preacher Savonarola, led to the papal foreclosure of any further apocalyptic speculation by decree in 1513, we should not think eschatologically-tinged Catholic hope thenceforth ceased. Our New College Louvain apologists were engaged in the response to, inversion of, to a degree resistance of, but nevertheless also participation in, the increasingly apocalyptic vein of these histories.

The dichotomy of the true and the false church, particularly in England through the commentary of Bale, had become thoroughly associated with the dualities of the church of Christ and that of Antichrist, as found in the Book of Revelations.

This paradigm of competing truths and embodiments can also probably trace its ultimate origins to the reworking of Augustine's idea of the two Cities in *De Civitate Dei*. These two cities, of God and of man, or piety and impiety, are never for Augustine purely earthly metropolises, but rather the eschatological realities given a certain material realisation, in the Church as it will be on the one hand and on the other in all that which, in this world and the next, lies outside it. Processed perhaps through the material of the Antichrist legend as derived from Revelations with its depiction of a 'Church' and 'Kingdom' of Antichrist in a literal sense, and channelled through the twelfth-century work of Otto of Freising, it is the Augustinian notion of secular 'mixture' and of value placed on the visible church that lay the seeds for the idea of two rival powers or churches, Jerusalem and Babylon, coexistent in the world.<sup>97</sup> Where Augustine *does* depict the two 'powers' in such actively combative and instantiated terms, it is only in the final books of his work: that is to say, when he is turning his attention to the revelation and swelling of the powers of darkness that will occur in the last days.<sup>98</sup> In the twelfth-century development of Otto of Freising where more emphasis is placed on the revelatory capacity of history and its patterning, there is also a kind of resurrection of the submerged Manichaeism of Augustine's image. The *real* schism of the Church in the fourteenth century must have contributed to this understanding of two opposed churches, apocalyptically revealed, battling it out here and now.

This 'drawing of the veil' on the reality of the presence of both churches, then, is in itself an apocalyptic mode of writing history. It both implies and furthers the revelation of the two sides of the eternally conflicted nature of the *saeculum*. By adopting the dichotomy of True Church and False Church, Catholic historians engage in this new apocalyptic historiography. We find this as a rhetorical strategy in the historical writing of Nicholas Harpsfield and Nicholas Sander, in texts which form part of the Catholic counterblast, the project of the 'ecclesiasticall historie' as it stood in 1588.

These texts, written in Latin, may have been intended primarily for and have had more influence on the continent than in England. What it is important to understand is that both sides were capable of seeing these events 'apocalyptically,'

---

<sup>97</sup> Otto of Freising, *The Two Cities: A Chronicle of Universal History to the Year 1146 AD*, ed. by Austin P. Evans and Charles Knapp (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

<sup>98</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, ed. by R.W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1044-178.

whether the Catholics or the protestants were in the current ascendant. The apocalyptic gaze pierces through to the eternal significance of history as in some sense transparent to God's divinely ordained plan, revealed through vision and prophecy, and particularly in that vision and prophecy which formed part of canonical scripture. This need not necessarily mean assuming that the end-times are literally imminent, although it may include such thought, or certainly expectation of moments of grand reversal, catastrophe or deliverance.

Nicholas Harpsfield takes and inverts the pattern of John Bale's *Image of bothe Churches*, structuring his *Historia Ecclesia Anglicana*, into a two-part history of continuity on the one hand—telling the history of the True Church through accounts of the English dioceses—and of division on the other hand—reworking old sources into a new rendition of the history of English heresy.<sup>99</sup> Prior to this, Harpsfield's *Dialogi Sex*, a massive tome, was conceived as a response to the Magdeburg Centuriators who had sought to demonstrate that the papacy as a whole is the Kingdom of Antichrist. Harpsfield also recognizes the importance of English Protestant voices, as one of his six dialogues is devoted to a rebuttal of John Foxe, most particularly Foxe's Martyr's Calendar, which had substituted remembrance of figures of the true church, and especially apostles, in place of the cult of the saints.<sup>100</sup> The parallel accounts – 'true witnesses' to 'false witnesses' – leave both sides working with the same dualistic and apocalyptic paradigm, drawing on Revelations and the sayings of Christ, especially in Matthew 24, concerning *pseudoprophetae*.<sup>101</sup>

A counter-chronology using Augustinian terms also appears in Nicholas Sanders' *De Visibili Monarchia*, although of course the heft of his argument is more truly Augustinian in its belief in the verity of the revealed material vessel of Christ on earth, which has been and remains the Church. Double columns chart the history of the *civitas dei* against the *civitas diaboli* from the Old Testament to the present day. As in Harpsfield's work this to some degree has the function of countering the Protestant narrative of some ultimate significance to the reformation event; it is, in this presentation, now just another heresy in the familiar history of continuous apostasy. The attempt, here and in Book VIII (a treatise on Antichrist), is certainly in

---

<sup>99</sup> Nicholas Harpsfield, *Historia Anglicana ecclesiastica* (Douai: Mark Wyon, 1622). Read only in manuscript in Harpsfield's lifetime. See Thomas S. Freeman, 'Harpsfield, Nicholas (1519-1575)', *ODNB*

<sup>100</sup> Nicholas Harpsfield, *Dialogi Sex contra summi pontificatus* (Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1566).

<sup>101</sup> Matt 24:24, 1 John 4:1-3, 2 Peter 2:1-3.

part to align the Protestants with all other heretics and sectarians pretty much indiscriminately, and to deny them their special providential place. On the other hand, there are elements of this counter-current which point to an alternative, Catholic-triumphalist, understanding of the current onslaught of the Antichrist. Alongside the column recounting the progression of the *civitas diaboli* is a third column in which the wisdom of fathers and doctors of the church is attested against the heretics. This is a broad column of black typeface which gradually, as the pages turn towards the present day, grows and grows, visually ‘inching out’ the record of the heretics. As the sixteenth century advances, it visually drowns out the increasingly pinched box allotted to the *haeretici*. Sanders’ sense of the inevitable final triumph of the ever more visible monarchy is complete. When Henry Bullinger declares in his preface to his Hundred Sermons on the Apocalypse that there is no Antichrist but that which now presents itself in the Roman Episcopacy, the event is recorded under 1570 amongst the sayings of the ‘Pseudo-Propheta’. On the same page the then Pope, Pius V, is praised extremely highly—presented really as nearer to Angelic Pope, ‘de Ecclesia Dei praeclare meritus’.<sup>102</sup>

The eighth and final book of *De Visibili Monarchia* is entirely devoted to a critique of Protestant association of the papacy with Antichrist. This first involves a the refutation of the idea that the final Antichrist of Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians can refer to a ‘seat’ or a ‘succession’, affirming the traditional Catholic teaching that there will be one Great Antichrist at the end of time—a time that has not yet come. So far, so orthodox. Much of the book then consists of a point-by-point refutation of all the senses in which the Pope is held to be either that Antichrist or part of the corporate antichrist, or the forerunners of Antichrist, the body of those who turn against Christ. This latter medieval concept is accepted by Sanders, who goes on to associate Protestants with ‘Antichristos multos, hoc est, magni illius & novissimi Antichristi me[m]bra’ in I John 2.<sup>103</sup> Luther is at least their current leader and fullest expression of their apostasy: although Sanders just about withholds speculation that he is the actual Antichrist, he is ‘Dux haereticorum nostri temporis’ and ‘instar Antichristi’. Luther’s pride, that foremost characteristic of Antichrist, is also described—and here Sander makes a properly historical claim—as having reached a superlative point, a point of heretofore unrivalled extent. As in the legends of Antichrist, he has erected

---

<sup>102</sup> Nicholas Sander, *De visibili monarchia ecclesiae libri octo* (Louvain: John Fowler, 1571), p. 735.

<sup>103</sup> Sander, p. 808.

‘Cathedram schismaticam’ against ‘D[ivini] Petri Cathedram’: a false church. Luther may not be the Great Antichrist, but he is the closest the world has seen, in other words; and certainly he and his followers are ‘praecursores’ whose work actively brings in the, thus brought tantalisingly close, reign of evil.<sup>104</sup>

In his fifty-ninth chapter, Sander’s response takes an interesting turn. The chapter is entitled ‘On the swift destruction of the Protestants, which by reason of their divisions daily coming upon them, declares them, to be members of Antichrist’. and utilizes a mathematical-chronological speculation from the prophecies of Daniel, employing actual calculations to associate the brevity of the reign—often interpreted as that of the Last Antichrist—described there with the swift division amongst Protestant thinkers. Using his own explicitly delineated chronology, which hence becomes a key by which the scriptures can be historically decrypted, he argues that Luther’s heresy springs up in 1519 and lasts only for the ‘time, times and half a time’ of Daniel 12:7, up until 1522 when differences between Zwingli and Luther arise for the first time. Such readings do not perhaps indicate that he associates this period with the actual end-times, rather than a repeated pattern within history, but it does suggest a historical reading of the prophetic books of the Bible we might not otherwise associate with Catholic thought of the period. The distinction may even be somewhat irrelevant to Sander’s triumphalist theology: Antichrist, for him, is always transitory, Christ the eternal verity:

Perit autem Antichristus cum suis membris; Sponsa verò Christi cum Sponso suo regnat in aeternum.<sup>105</sup>

For those who resisted the Lutheran and Calvinist reform, destructive agency would be viewed as having brought drastic change rather than true regeneration. Traditional variance in eschatological chronology in readings of Revelations could permit a simple inversion of the Protestant account. That is to say, it was possible for the tyranny of Antichrist to be understood as instantiated in the material reign of these heretics. Catholics could view Protestant upheaval and their own persecution as a part of the tribulation and trial which God's people are to face, and which, taken to a

---

<sup>104</sup> ‘the prince of heretics of our times’ ‘in the likeness of Antichrist’ who has extended his borders ‘nec quemqua[m] seipso maiore[m] agnosceret’, ‘nor has anyone ever claimed for themselves a larger [territory]’. Sander, pp. 819, 821.

<sup>105</sup> Sander, p. 821.

certain pitch, may be read apocalyptically as a sign of the proximity of God's judgment in some form, and perhaps the final one. Thus—for Catholics as for Protestants—even great tribulation could be the source of hope, and the avenger and regenerator, in temporal and eschatological form, might still be expected. The main Catholic difference remains the idea that, despite rupture, the heavenly Jerusalem would be in the shape of the earthly, and conversely that this is a matter of such gift that it cannot be grasped and formed by human hands.

In the only major remnant we have of Thomas Martin's voice, the record of his prosecution of Thomas Cranmer, he himself subtly engages with the complexity of the relationship of this destruction to Christic sacrificial closure, employing the antithetical and apocalyptic rhetoric of this period. He describes Cranmer as the exact antitype of Christ: tempted in the desert of reformation thought with the 'mitte te deorsum'—'cast thyself downward'. Where Christ refuses the self-glorifying leap, knowing it not to be the true fruitful self offering, Cranmer, then head of the earthly body, plunged straight into the abyss—responding with terrifying iconoclastic zeal which brought all down with him:

down with the sacramentes, downe with the Masse, downe with the Aultars,  
downe with the Armes of Chryste, and vp with a Lyon and a Dog, downe with  
Abbeyes, down with Chauntreys, downe with Hospitalles and Colledges,  
downe with fasting, and Prayer, yea downe with all that good and godly is.<sup>106</sup>

Here Martin displays a subtle understanding of the paradoxical difficulty of identifying how the Protestant iconoclastic and destructive institutional ascesis is other than the theologically ordained perfect self-offering. He associates it with the Devil's dangling of the false promise of divine rescue, in which perhaps he finds an analogy for the Protestant eschatologically-driven, grace-emphasising theology of the time. The Body of Christ, Martin implies, has been thrown down in and by Cranmer, not in the spirit of loving self-sacrifice but in the spirit of dreadful self-elevation. Behind this lurks an argument about the nature of Cranmer's martyrdom itself as he, the head of that body as Archbishop, prepares to die in what can only be a prideful 'pseudomartyrdom'. The vital rhetoric of type and antitype which drove both halves

---

<sup>106</sup> *Acts and Monuments* (1583), p. 1876.

of the Reformation argument forward is here at work, and Martin is truly engaged in naming Cranmer as antichristic, if not Antichrist. The analogy of course carries implicit questions about what true Christic transformation in sacrifice might look like.

For the Catholic adoption of an apocalyptic paradigm, emphasis was laid on the continuity of ecclesiastical history and doctrine from the time of the early church to the present day. The ‘thousand years’ of evil’s captivity, in orthodox interpretation, referred to all that which stands outside sin following the redemptive act of Christ. The Protestant Reformation itself, alongside other heretical periods throughout history could nonetheless be seen as a new height of the eternal period of suffering and persecution, not unrelated to the ‘little season’ of Satan’s unleashing prior to the second Coming. The logical conclusion of the most literal Catholic apocalypticism would also be that the Reformation must be about to lead to its own overturn, with hope remaining for a second reversal and new triumphant restoration of the True Church. Hence Catholic apocalypticism resists the Joachite-derived idea of a ‘new’ age of spiritual perfection in human terms, and rather embraces a pattern of castigation and renewal.

### **Catholic Apocalypticism within England**

Elsewhere, in homiletic and in music, we find that hope for the restitution of the Catholic Church in England is characteristically expressed in terms which relate it to divine Advent. At the moment the Jesuit Edmund Campion was captured in 1581 he had just concluded a sermon on Luke 19: 41-6, in the course of which his congregation had been urged to imagine the English Catholic Church in persecution and exile as like the biblical city of Jerusalem, over which Christ weeps as he enters it, prophesying its destruction.<sup>107</sup> This is a circumstance usually supposed to have been fulfilled with the Roman sack of the city in AD 70, and it occurs within a passage where Christ appears to speak as an apocalyptic prophet. What Campion’s sermon intends to convey is a divine foreknowledge of even this present destruction of a nation which loyal Englishmen must still in some sense see as their promised city—whilst at the same time they were faced with the clash of late Renaissance

---

<sup>107</sup> T. G. Bishop ‘Elizabethan Music as a cultural mode’ in Jonathan Crewe, ed., *Reconfiguring the Renaissance: essays in critical materialism* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1992), p. 65.

providential theories of nationhood with the desecration of their national Church. William Allen expresses this tension when he describes Douai College in 1575 as ‘the place of true worship for those who have left the Samaria of the Schismatics and who have the faces of those going to Jerusalem’. Here England occupies the place of *both* Samaria and Jerusalem: Allen’s priests are being prepared to return, for mission or for martyrdom. The Samaritan is a perfect analogue for the Protestant condition, as Samaritans asserted a more ancient and truer form of Judaism against the Israelites, but were at the same time a people ‘in exile’ from their own truth as part of the ancient Semitic race, due for reunion. However Campion’s choice of an identification with the post-Resurrection suffering of God’s people, as opposed to that with the Old Testament periods of Egyptian and Babylonian captivity, is particularly interesting. Scriptural writings on the Israelite exile and on the first Old Testament destruction of Jerusalem, read typologically to the state of the Church after Christ’s death, also form part of the repertoire on which recusant voices draw for expression of their plight. However this New Testament choice implies a more explicitly imminent sense of apocalypse or apotheosis. The passage concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem is one of the few examples of Christ speaking as apocalyptic prophet. In its scriptural context this is also a prelude to his discourse on the events which have been read as his account of the Second Coming, and which partly form the basis for its imminent expectation in the first-century Church. In this way too the Elizabethan writer Thomas Nashe’s *Christes Teares over Jerusalem* (1593) might be seen as a deeply rhetorically apocalyptic text, which uses this absolutising frame to view the corruption of the city of London as not just a ‘type’ of eternally evident apostasy of God’s people but explicitly that of the *eschaton*, the last of the last. Campion is giving his English Catholic congregation a providential, and apocalyptic, understanding of their own suffering—the holy city must undergo this purgation and destruction that the true Jerusalem may be established. In the case of neither Jesuit is such figuration likely to refer to purely spiritualized eschatological restoration. In Allen’s case, we have clear evidence of his involvement in militant campaigns for regime change, whilst in Campion’s we can know he desired transformation by mission and conversion. The sense was of alignment with and participation in the divine providential moment.

The motets of the English Catholic musician William Byrd, despite his religious allegiance, organist for the Chapel Royal and England’s most popular composer in the 1580s, offer another source of insight into recusant and religiously

orthodox eschatological mentalities. Thomas Martin and his daughters must have played Byrd's immensely popular compositions, widely-circulated despite their often barely cloaked Catholicism, on the pairs of virginals he bequeaths them—probably double manual harpsichords on their own stands. That Francis Martin's is bequeathed to her in the same breath as his 'great crossett' might even begin to suggest that private performance of semi-liturgical music like Byrd's 'pastiche motets' may have been, as it was for many, a great source of devotional sustenance.<sup>108</sup>

Byrd writes a series of motets in his *Cantiones Sacrae* which appear to make oblique reference to the plight of English Catholics. As Joseph Kerman has suggested, there is within his oeuvre a distinct 'group' which are voiced collectively, in the persona of a congregation, people or assembly, and in context appear to be particularly composed for the faithful remnant who represent the true church in its English exile.<sup>109</sup> They frequently draw on biblical texts taken from Old Testament exile narratives such as that of the Babylonian captivity, offering accounts general tribulation and persecution of God's people over the course of history. The thematic of worship in exile is evidently historically appropriate, and of course has the kind of eternal spiritual significance which causes the music to still be sung today, as such exile is read as a type for existence on earth, awaiting the heavenly kingdom—a state that is always to 'sing the Lord's song in a strange land'. Byrd also frequently sets New Testament texts which explicitly deal with divine Advent, and even a meditation of Savonarola—showing he was reading the texts of this fifteenth-century apocalyptic preacher.<sup>110</sup> We also find him writing music from eschatological texts in the light of political and religious hope of material restitution, whether it be through mission or invasion. One of the most celebrated of these, his 'Circumspice Jerusalem', appears to have been written as a welcome the Jesuit missionaries Robert Southwell and Henry Garnet. The text is taken from a passage of Baruch on the Old Testament *first* destruction of Jerusalem, where the 'sons from the east' are prophesied, whose return is the sign of continued divine providential intent for the desolate city. The prophecy is also an antecedent of the Revelations prophecy of the return of the two witnesses, by tradition identified with Enoch and Elias, at the end of time, who will be martyred

---

<sup>108</sup> Richard Taruskin, ed. *Oxford History of Western Music*, I, p. 679.

<sup>109</sup> Joseph Kerman, *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd* (London: Faber, 1981), pp. 39-45

<sup>110</sup> Macey, p. 166.

and then resurrected.<sup>111</sup> As Craig Monson's skilful analysis has shown, the emphasis musically is placed on Southwell and Garnet specifically as a pair: two coupled voices enter the music in a portentous minor key. The motet, by its historical application of scriptural text, draw the sixteenth-century plight up into the divine plan. The apocalyptic resonance without necessarily having a resonance to actual *parousia*.<sup>112</sup> Byrd also sets a very significant number of other motets around the theme of the desolate city, for example 'Civitas tui', the second part of a two-part motet where, using his earlier typology, we can associate the invocation of Christ's return to his *civitas electa* should be associated with Catholic restitution for the English nation.<sup>113</sup> The point is here that texts associated with eschatological hope for the coming of Christ are here employed in contexts which relate this to hope for a temporal, historical restitution.

## Conclusion

Both of the men who owned the Bohun Apocalypse were, during their times of exile and their relationship to a potentially persecutory state, in a position to welcome the relief which apocalyptic thought can provide, reading through disaster and persecution to their significance as signs of hope and divine purpose. Both were also, by their time spent on the continent, evidently fluent in French, and thus readers for whom this pristine Anglo-Norman manuscript, its small format suited to the hand or desk, could also have been a text of spiritual succour. For the medieval reader the illuminated Apocalypse was a text for meditation and devotion, for attentivity and vision of the final things visible even through earthly suffering: on judgment, present and final, on the possibility of deliverance and eternal bliss. Its picture of final deliverance and coming kingdom: 'nouvel terre, nouvel cieux,' a narrative of horrific and violent change on a global scale which depicts it as finally giving way to Second Coming. The reawakening of apocalyptic interest in the thought of Protestant historiographers has been seen in too isolated a manner, Catholic historians being understood to simply foreclose any apocalyptic speculation of anything but the most spiritually and eschatologically framed kind. The biographies detailed here when

---

<sup>111</sup> Rev. 11: 3-14

<sup>112</sup> Craig Monson, 'Byrd, the Catholics and the Motet: The Hearing Reopened' in Dolores Pesce, ed. *Hearing the Motet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 358.

<sup>113</sup> For example Mark 12:35-7: 'Vigilate, nescitis' and various other pieces, often of course for Advent, with apocalyptic sentiment 'Domine, praestolamur'; 'Laetentur coeli', and the 'Vide, Domine, afflictionem nostram', and 'Ne irascaris Domine'.

juxtaposed with the full context of Martin's benefaction suggest, I have argued, that an apocalyptic outlook may have permitted, for Catholics as much as Protestants, an understanding of the violent political and religious reversals of the Reformation as legible in terms of what had been revealed, in scripture and prophecy, of God's divine plan. As humanistically-educated scholarly gentlemen interested in the history and significance of their times, as well as men facing actual religious persecution in all the turmoil of temporal reality and, looking for comfort amidst it, this indicates that our New College Apocalypse would have retained a devotional immediacy as well as being caught up into the new intellectual debate.

Neither Hervey nor Martin are principals within the overall drama of their age, although both played essential bit-parts. They each remain, as Hervey's flyleaf exhortation suggests, steadfast in the labour of the Lord, following St Paul's exhortation to the worth of good action in the *saeculum*, despite the adversity of the times. This final note of expectation and anticipation, hope and comfort given by eschatological hope balanced against qualified engagement with and in the historical moment seems appropriate. It is an attitude compatible with the most mystical and the most material understandings of the apocalyptic message, which acknowledges the fundamental unknowability of the future, an unknowability which nonetheless lies behind, and does not confound, speculation. Martin's 1588 benefaction is the workshop rather than the published results of labour in the lord, and it is certainly also a statement of conviction in the future of New College as a seat of learning. It is a Catholic legacy in the most broad-minded sense, which by its very nature inscribes hope in the temporal, the worldly institutions and the traditions which enable the continuation of the love of learning and the pursuit of truth.

ARABELLA MILBANK

Emmanuel College, Cambridge