

ABSTRACT

Contested Communities: Flight and Identity in the Reformation

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This dissertation explores the ways in which the decision of whether or not to flee from persecution in the Protestant Reformation both affected and was affected by communal identity. It uses the personal correspondence of five individuals from the Reformation to explore how they navigated the complex relationship between their religious, national, social and familial identities as they went about making this decision. Oftentimes, the process of deciding whether or not to flee hinged upon whether or not an individual was willing to give up one aspect of their identity in order to protect another. If they were willing to do so, they abandoned their national or religious identity and either fled to protect what they believed or reconverted to preserve their civic belonging. If the individual could not do so, then they remained and suffered the consequences of openly affirming both their religious and national affiliations when authorities declared the two to be incompatible. Regardless, this dissertation demonstrates the process of identity formation in early-modern Europe as new religious identities vied with emerging national identities to create complex ideological landscapes which early reformers were forced to navigate, both physically and metaphorically.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SCJ	<i>The Sixteenth Century Journal</i>
LW	<i>Luther's Works</i>
WA	<i>D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe</i>
WABr	<i>D. Martin Luthers Werke: Briefwechsel</i>
WADB	<i>D. Martin Luthers Werke: Deutsches Bibel</i>
WATr	<i>D. Martin Luthers Werke: Tischreden</i>
CR	<i>Corpus Reformatorum</i>
LCC	<i>Library of Christian Classics</i>
CHRC	<i>Church History and Religious Culture</i>
JEH	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
CH	<i>Church History</i>
R&RR	<i>Reformation and Renaissance Review</i>
RQ	<i>Renaissance Quarterly</i>

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me to apologize for how many times I used the word “community” in the pages that follow. Dr. Pitts, your generosity and wisdom is unparalleled. Your role in shaping scholars is a constant reminder that what we do extends well beyond the classroom, and I hope I can demonstrate even a fraction of kindness as my career continues. Special thanks also to Dr. Brian Brewer for his constant attention to detail and willingness to devote his time to guaranteeing the development of this dissertation. Finally, to Dr. Jonathan Tran, Dr. Christine Ruane, Dr. Beth Barr, Dr. Chris Rios, Dr. James Bruce, Dr. Robert Moore, Dr. Preston Jones, Dr. Christen Oertel, and so many others—thank you isn’t enough.

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And to Leslie—you'll never read it, but this is for you

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The study of religious exiles and refugees in early modern Europe has recently begun to receive significant attention from scholars interested in the religious and social implications of displacement over the course of the Protestant Reformation.¹ Although there has existed some sense of the significance of exile as a social and religious force in the shaping of early modern Europe, the formalized study of this force is relatively recent in origin. There are a number of works that deal with flight in the early modern era, yet most of these focus on the lived experience of exile as seen in the lives of those that fled their homes for religious reasons. Indeed, almost all previous works on the subject of flight in the early modern period share a common focus on those who left, where they went, and what they lived through. In short, the lived experience of exile. However very little attention has been directed at other aspects of the exile experience; such as how these individuals understood their identities to be threatened as they wrestled with the dilemma of flight, how their relationships with the communities they left behind altered, and how the communities themselves responded to the flight of prominent individuals.

¹ Nicholas Terpstra, *Religious Refugees in the Early Modern World: An Alternative History of the Reformation* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Jesse Spohnholz and Gary K. Waite, eds., *Exile and Religious Identity, 1500-1800* (London: Pickering & Chatto Ltd, 2014), Peter Burke, “At the Crossroads: Histories of Exile, Histories of Knowledge” (Comparative Social and Cultural History Seminar: Exile, University of Cambridge, October 13, 2015); Philip Benedict, Hugues Daussy, and Pierre-Olivier Lécho, *l’identité huguenote: faire mémoire et écrire l’histoire (XVIe-XXIe siècle)*, 2014, and Alice Tacaille, “Faire Chanter l’assemblée Au Temps des Premiers Exils: la Musique et la Nécessité (Genève, Londres, Édimbourg, 1535-1564),” *Bulletin de la Société de l’histoire du Protestantisme Français* 158:2 (2012): 405–32.

What is more, as the field has developed there has been a surprising lack of theoretical development on the subject of flight and identity formation in the early-modern era.

Thus, this dissertation examines the dilemma of flight encountered in the face of persecution through the lens of identity. Identity in this dissertation will be used primarily as a concept by which early-modern individuals would recognize themselves. While no single theoretical work on identity has guided this dissertation, the theory of intersectionality has proven influential and useful to the author and it is therefore assumed that each of the individuals approached in this study understood themselves to be participants in multiple identities shared by broader groups.² These shared identities marked the beginning of the construction of communities, which, in this study, is a term developed from theories of nationalism.³ Finally, Confessionalization, which is a theory regarding how confessional identities were created in the early-modern era through strict social-disciplining and the necessity for purity within the church, will be used as a starting point for understanding how religious and civic identities interacted over the

² Intersectionality became a prominent theory with two works: Angela Y. Davis', *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983) and Kimberle Williams Crenshaw's, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity, Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43:6 (1991): 1241-1249. It began primarily as a means of addressing oppression and intolerance as rooted in intersecting identities. Thus, if an African American woman experienced intolerance it was not merely an act of either racism or sexism but rather stemmed from the intersection of both identities. It has since become a prominent theory in discussions of both LGBTQ and disability history. For two excellent overviews of the development of intersectionality of theory in a broad range of fields, see: Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, Eds., *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement* (New York: New Press, 1995) and Patrica Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016).

³ It must be noted that my use of the word "national" here may be controversial. While the development of national identities is often recognized as a distinctly modern phenomenon, there is some evidence that nascent nationalistic tendencies were commonplace in the sixteenth century; see: Anthony W Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006). Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Malden: Blackwell, 2006). However, here I am using the term as a representative of particular cultural, civic, social, linguistic, and economic customs which may exist independently of the modern concept of nationalism

course of the Reformation.⁴ Because of the aforementioned absence of theoretical works specific to this subject in the early-modern era, these theories will provide a rough framework for this dissertation. However, as previously stated, these theoretical frameworks will not be rigorously developed but rather will be allowed to influence the background of how identity and community are understood and their appropriation has been partial rather than complete depending on their usefulness in better understanding how these early modern individuals best understood themselves.⁵

Five individuals will be examined in this study: Jan Hus, Martin Luther, Conrad Grebel, Reginald Pole, and John Calvin. The primary goal of this project is to better understand how individuals understood themselves in relation to broader communities in the early-modern period and how the decision of whether or not to flee persecution affected this sense of communal belonging. However, this project is also concerned with better understanding flight and identity construction, generally understood, in the early-modern world. How these phenomena operated independently and, more importantly, what occurred when they overlapped. This overlap occurred most frequently during the

⁴ Confessionalization is usually cited as process beginning after the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 and lasting up into the seventeenth century. While Confessionalization as a formal process did not likely begin as early as this dissertation discusses the intersection of confessional and civic identities, it provides a framework for understanding how these two identities coalesced in the formation of a communal identity and has therefore proved useful. Beyond this, the dating of Confessionalization to 1555 serves as an interesting starting for understanding how confessional and national identities came to be stabilized in the latter-half of the sixteenth century and this had a significant impact on the nature of flight, as will be seen in chapters six and seven. For more, see: R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550-1750* (London: Routledge, 1991).

⁵ In this dissertation, community will be used as a theoretical term relating primarily to intersectionality. To this end, community can best be understood as the mutual participation in a shared identity or identities. Individuals who both self-identify as English or Catholic would both participate in English and Catholic communities respectively. Community becomes more complicated as these identities began to merge together and hybridize, meaning it was necessary to be both English and Catholic to participate in the English community and, therefore, impossible to be both English and Protestant. This terminology will continue to be developed and elaborated upon over the course of this dissertation, but for more, see: Michael J. Halvorson and Karen Spierling, Eds., *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

onset of persecution, when authorities attempted to impose a standard religious identity on a developed national or civic community. Practical responses to this persecution were varied. Persecution sometimes resulted in Nicodemism, occasionally martyrdom, and sometimes toleration or accommodation.⁶ However, while practical results were varied, this process always led to a necessary redefinition of identity-based boundaries in regard to who was or was not included within religious, civic, and national communities. The decisions surrounding the process of exile and the reception of refugees was one necessarily tied to the construction of identities. That the necessity for purity, or the allowance of disparate religious movements in the form of toleration, and even geography are intricately tied to how individuals and communities view themselves. And yet, identity is not always singular nor is it stationary. Allegiances and loyalties compete with each other, both internally and externally, and they shift as circumstances demand. In this regard, refugees, particularly in relation to the Reformation, represent one of the best possible avenues of research for the study of identity because their internal allegiances are often externally visible through the process of their flight. This is not to say that there is a one-to-one correlation between flight and ideology. Reconstructing identity will always be a complex and somewhat imprecise historical practice, but if windows do exist by which to view the internal loyalties of individuals in retrospect, then flight is a large one.

⁶ Nicodemism is a term coined by John Calvin which denotes the decision of an individual or group to publicly recant their faith and live according to the necessitated confessional paradigms of the established civic authorities while secretly dissembling and discretely practicing their “real” religion in private. The precise definition of Nicodemism and Calvin’s thought on the matter is still under discussion. Kenneth J. Woo, “The House of God in Exile,” *Church History and Religious Culture* 95, no. 2–3 (2015): 222–44.

The early-modern era is the best possible field in which to pursue the subject of flight and identity. The number of religious exiles and refugees created in the early modern period was unprecedented until our own modern era.⁷ Many of these individuals lived out the remainder of their lives in a state of exile—such as John Calvin. But others initially went into exile only to opt to return, such as Jan Hus. Some faced bitter short term exile and suffered for it, vowing never to do so again, as in the case of Martin Luther. In every instance, persecution necessarily engendered among the persecuted a crisis of loyalty. The decision of whether or not to flee often hinged upon the effect that flight would have upon the community that the persecuted would leave behind and how the individual's relationship to the community would be affected by the decision to flee.

The following chapters will examine early modern individuals who experienced the dilemma of flight over the course of the first half of the sixteenth century. It will focus on those factors—such as their community, their family status, and their possible locations to which to flee—that most contributed to an individual's decision to remain and face the possibility of death or to flee; as well as what prompted some to return home after experiencing exile. As previously stated, while the outcome of these decisions varied it is clear that the process of wrestling with the dilemma of flight undoubtedly affected religious self-understanding and commitments at the individual level, but also on a larger scale—perhaps even to the degree of helping to shape broad early-modern religious and national identities. Thus, this dissertation undertakes a cross-confessional

⁷ The scope of migration and upheaval in this period means that arriving at even an approximate number of refugees and exiles created in the early modern period is almost impossible. Most works on the subject settle with emphasizing the enormity of the change without quoting specific numbers. See: Timothy G. Fehler et al., eds., *Religious Diaspora in Early Modern Europe*, Religious Cultures in the Early Modern World 12 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), 5.

examination of the ways in which remaining in the face of persecution affected early modern religious figures and helped shape religious commitment over the course of the Reformation.

Historiography

The inauguration of exilic studies of the early modern era can, in many ways, be traced back to Heiko Oberman's attestation that the next phase of Reformation studies must be the study of "Reformation of the refugees."⁸ While Oberman's attempt to situate this "Reformation of the refugees" at a particular period within the chronology of the broader Reformation has mostly been rejected, his recognition of the significance of this particular group of individuals has begun to be more fully explored by a number of scholars. This increased interest in the importance of exiles, which has seen significant growth particularly over the past four years, has been focused almost entirely on the lived experiences of exiles as they navigated their position among new host communities.

Prior to the recent explosion of interest in the subject of exile, the most consulted work on the subject was Jonathan Wright's 2001 article, "Marian Exiles and the Legitimacy of Flight from Persecution."⁹ Wright's article is often cited as a starting point for discussing the reality of the difficult decisions exiles and refugees in the early modern era faced and the significance of both theological and social factors in the navigation of these decisions. Wright's work marks one of the few attempts actually to understand the dilemma of exiles prior to their flight. The only recent article to address the dilemma of

⁸ Oberman, Heiko Augustinus, Trans. by Donald Weinstein. *The Two Reformations: The Journey from the Last Days to the New World*. (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2003, 145.

⁹ Jonathan Wright, "Marian Exiles and the Legitimacy of Flight from Persecution," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 52, no. 2 (2001): 220–43.

flight is Kenneth Woo's article in *Church History and Religious Culture* about how Calvin used the idea of Nicodemism to provide a theological justification of exile to actually encourage flight and thus bolster his position in Geneva.¹⁰

Jesse Spohnholz's monograph, *The Tactics of Toleration*, in 2011 marks the beginning of the current upsurge in interest on the subject of refugees and the lived experience of exile.¹¹ Spohnholz's work explores the ways in which exiles and their host communities worked out the difficulties of developing some degree of confessional conviviality in quotidian social life. Since the publication of his work, Spohnholz has continued to explore the significance of exiles and refugees for the Reformation and the development of early modern religious identities. He and Gary K. Waite recently put together an edited volume, *Exile and Religious Identity*, on the subject. Another edited work, *Religious Diasporas in Early Modern Europe: Strategies of Exile*, focuses on the same themes.

Both works assert that exile is necessarily a difficult process as it represents a conflict of identities. Religious exiles fled their homes because their religious identities came into conflict with the dominant confessional paradigm, be it numerically or merely because of its association with the authoritative class. In their new host communities, exiles found a confessional paradigm that was either the same as theirs or at least accepting of their variance. However, they soon found that their national identity came into conflict with their host community and thereby created a whole new realm of

¹⁰ Woo, "The House of God in Exile."

¹¹ Jesse Spohnholz, *The Tactics of Toleration: A Refugee Community in the Age of Religious Wars* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011).

problems and difficulties that had to be navigated. This means that exiles and refugees in the early modern era underwent, to some extent, a unifying experience regardless of national and confessional boundaries because of their decision to flee and their experiences of flight.

The reality of this lived experience of exile is the subject of the most recent works in the field of early modern exilic studies. David van der Linden's book, *Experiencing Exile*, is the first full length monograph since Spohnholz's to continue on this subject through an examination of French Huguenot refugees in the Netherlands and their experiences of exile.¹² Nicholas Terpstra's recently released book, *Religious Refugees in the Early Modern World*, is the first monograph to explore the reality of exile and its significance for early modern religious identities across a transnational and cross-confessional spectrum.¹³ Terpstra's book is groundbreaking in its broad approach and utilization of a wide range of exile and refugee groups and begins to offer suggestions of a theoretical framework by which to understand how early-modern individuals and communities constructed their identities, but it ultimately shies away from these themes in an attempt to offer up a work that is more accessible to a less specialized audience.

What all these works have in common is a shared interest in the ways in which the lived experience of exile shaped religious and confessional commitments over the course of the sixteenth century. But what almost none of them address is the very decision by which an individual became an exile and what alternatives existed to those exiles and

¹² See David van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile: Huguenot Refugees in the Dutch Republic 1680–1700* (Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015).

¹³ Terpstra, *Religious Refugees in the Early Modern World*.

refugees. Even the works that deal with the decision of whether or not to flee, such as those of Wright and Woo, approach the subject from only a theological perspective. But in order to discuss the ways in which the process of flight may have shaped religious commitment, or even to understand the development of theological arguments regarding whether or not to flee, it is first necessary to understand if there were other options available to those that fled and how those alternatives may have affected the lives of early modern individuals.

Methodology

In order to better understand how identity was constructed through the dilemma of flight, this dissertation focuses on transnational and cross-confessional correspondence written by major figures active during the Reformation in the first half of the sixteenth century. The official concluding date for this project is 1564 at the death of John Calvin, the last major figure who participated in the dilemma of flight. This termination point allows this dissertation to consider those figures that were active during the formative years of the Reformation and to explore the influence of events such as the Schmalkaldic War, the beginning of the Council of Trent, the Peace of Augsburg, and the ascension and death of Mary I of England. It was also around the 1560's that most scholars agree that the initial momentum of the Reformation was spent and the boundaries of belief were not drastically altered until the early seventeenth century.¹⁴ Because flight is the major theme

¹⁴ The creation of fixed religious identities and the formalization of religious adherence is still very much a topic of discussion but there does exist at least some degree of agreement that 1570 marks a breaking point between the early years of the Reformation and a more stable, if somewhat less innovative, period of reform which would not be overturned until the outbreak of the Thirty Years War in 1618. For more see: Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation* (New York: Viking, 2004), xxiv.

of this work the geographic boundaries must, necessarily, remain relatively broad. Thus figures with whom this dissertation interacts originated and found refuge in the Holy Roman Empire, Switzerland, France, the Low Countries, and England.

The primary focus for this project is on the personal correspondence of individuals who struggled with the dilemma of flight within the aforementioned parameters and will construct vignettes from their writings to better understand the dilemma of flight. The reason for emphasizing correspondence is twofold. First, letters provide an excellent entree into the lived experience of individuals as they wrestled with the dilemma of flight. They often reveal the visceral reaction of individuals to the dangers, complexities, and triumphs of the dilemma of flight in a way that sources more distant from the issue simply cannot. Letters are a reminder that the individuals of this period were flesh and blood human beings who ate, slept, grieved, lusted, and suffered—often as a direct result of their confrontation with the dilemma of flight. Second, while not perfect, personal letters are the best possible source for an individual’s thought in the moment as they are frequently composed quickly, intemperately, and the author often possesses a direct and personal relationship with the recipient. In short, correspondence represents a viable medium by which to best understand the dilemma of flight in its immediate context.¹⁵ Other sources, such as memoirs and publications, will also be consulted to assess the long-term and ideological influence of the decision to remain with

¹⁵ It was for these exact reasons that Bruce Gordon in his exemplary biography on John Calvin constructed his work primarily on Calvin’s correspondence. To quote Gordon, “The letters, our best source for what Calvin thought of the people and events of his day, often reveal him at his most intemperate and thin-skinned as he fulminated against the failing of others, including his closest friends.” Bruce Gordon, *Calvin* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2009), x.

the aim of interpreting them in light of the experiences of the individuals as revealed through their correspondence.

Because of the lack of theoretical works on the subject of flight in the early modern world, several of the terms being utilized are of my own invention and will be explained here. First, remaining is the decision of an individual or group, prompted by the threat or enacting of persecution, to publicly represent their religious beliefs and practices in such a way as to faithfully adhere to the confessional precepts with which they associated and their broader ideological community and also a willingness to face the repercussions of doing so. There are other terms which may encompass its significance: standing, staying, bearing witness, etc., but it is a mindset which rejects both flight and recantation. Remaining is also a way to explore persecution and martyrdom in a way that shifts focus away from the act of dying to the choices that led to death. Martyrs are fascinating subjects but their study has been for too long focused only on their act of dying. Almost none of the approximately 5,000 men and women executed for religious reasons in the sixteenth century chose to die, but they almost all chose to remain.¹⁶

Second, the process by which individuals wrestled with the decision of whether or not to go into exile was the dilemma of flight. This dilemma is well articulated, if not defined, by Jonathan Wright and was a constant point of debate among potential exiles in the early-modern period. The dilemma revolved around the issue of preserving an individual's life in relation to the preservation of the true faith. If authorities made it

¹⁶ Discussions of martyrdom in the early modern period have recently been dominated by: Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*, Harvard Historical Studies (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). Gregory's work is a thorough analysis of religious martyrs and will be used as a backdrop to the consequences of remaining when taken to their absolute end.

illegal to practice a particular confessional strand of Christianity within a region then it made sense for individuals, at least those who were unwilling to surrender their belief, who held to that confessional identity to flee the region in order to be able to safely worship without fear for their life. However, if they did so, they were consigning the entire region to a false religion as there would be no champions of the true faith remaining after they fled. This led to a number of early-modern works that address this very issue, some of which will be dealt with in this dissertation, but the heart of the dilemma of flight was the question of whether it was better to preserve the faith of an individual through flight or to fight for the broader identity of a community through the decision to remain.

Finally, I must say a few words about identity. As stated earlier, identity is a loaded term and I do not seek to lay out a complete and formalized theory for how it is constructed and maintained. Intersectionality, nationalism, and Confessionalization will be utilized as theoretical frameworks to rely on over the course of this dissertation; but the underlying assumption is that every individual possesses a sense of identities that can then be projected to include other individuals based on whether or not the constituent parts of their identities intersect. That is to say, that if a person believes herself to be English then others who she believes also fall within the category of English are included in her broader conceptual parameters of the English nation. They share an identity based on that intersection that makes them part of a functioning community. The individual therefore exists within a number of communities that may or may not overlap, but which, in the early-modern world, more frequently overlapped than not. This dissertation approaches flight as a challenge to the compatibility of these communal identities and

points to a crisis of identity taking place within the early-modern world as new confessional identities challenged established civic and national identities as they fragmented populations that had previously existed in relative synchronization of their religious and civic identities.

Structure of Study

Chapter two looks at the fifteenth century figure Jan Hus and use his decision to attend the Council of Constance as a template for the decision to remain. Hus serves as proto-reform figure and his dilemma regarding the decision to flee his native Bohemia or attend the Council of Constance, which would almost certainly result in his death, represents the beginning of a new way of understanding religious persecution in relation to secular and religious authority and thereby the dilemma of flight. Hus demonstrates the power of an individual to claim that two or more of their identities, in Hus' case his civic identity as a Bohemian and his religious devotion to the reform of the church, were able to be internally justified despite external pressure to claim their incompatibility. Hus' eventual martyrdom is also a testament to the cost of this assertion; while Bohemia's embrace of him as a national and religious hero after his death demonstrates the ideological significance of remaining. Thus, both chronologically and methodologically he is an excellent figure with whom to begin.

Chapter three explores Martin Luther's exile in the Wartburg Castle after the Diet of Worms and, consequently, his decision to return to Wittenberg and to remain there until his death. The influence of this period of time on Luther's thinking, particularly his stance on clerical and monastic celibacy as well as the solace he found in the translation of Scripture, will be demonstrated and the consequences of the trauma of his exile will be

explored in regards to the decision to remain and the long-term theological implications of his transformed theology. Luther's experience in the Wartburg demonstrates how geographical location often affected how an individual understood their identity. In Luther's case, his seclusion in the Wartburg and separation from Wittenberg caused a crisis of identity which, while traumatic in its experience, allowed him to reconsider several crucial aspects of his identity as a reformer.

Chapter four looks at the Anabaptist Conrad Grebel and will be used to examine how communal identity was constructed, or reconstructed, in the early phase of the Reformation. In particular, what occurred when a community's identity was challenged by two differing concepts regarding the path reform ought to take. This chapter will also be used to explore the reality of the lived experience of remaining and the cost of the decision not to flee persecution. Because of Grebel's unique position as an Anabaptist, his decision will also be used to explore the societal and communal influences on the dilemma of flight and how the prospect of a safe haven, or absence thereof, may have affected the decision to remain. His conflict with Huldrych Zwingli will also be used to demonstrate the non-static nature of even group identities in the early-modern era and how civic and religious identities related to each other through the sacrament of baptism.

Chapter five focuses on the life of Catholic Cardinal Reginald Pole and the politics of exile and remaining. Pole will be used to explore the connection between persecution and secular authority and how the experience of exile influenced official policy in regards to persecution. Pole's early life as an exile on the continent will be examined and then used as a lens through which to look at his later involvement with the return of Catholicism in England under Mary I and the enacting of general persecution

against Protestants. Uniquely, Pole serves as a figure who never attempted to return and remain under the Protestant regime of Henry VIII and Edward VI, but had surrendered to the reality of an exile life. With the Ascension of Mary Tudor to the throne, Pole's return to England was complicated by an interesting challenge to his Catholic identity in the form of papal resistance to Mary's husband. Finally, Pole's involvement in the re-Catholization of England aided in the creation of an environment that forced thousands to confront the dilemma of flight as Pole had done at the onset of the English Reformation; thus demonstrating the cyclical nature of persecution in the sixteenth century and the complexity of both individual and group loyalty in the early-modern era.

Chapter six looks at John Calvin's experience as an exile and how his flight from France came to serve as the central feature of his religious identity. This is accomplished through an exploration of Calvin's conversion narratives in comparison to the narrative he provides of his first arrival in the city of Geneva. This experience became a template that Calvin projected upon the Reformed church as it began to coalesce with Geneva at its center. The correspondence between John Calvin, who chose to flee to Geneva, and other Protestants who attempted to remain in their home countries will be used to explore this tension of the dilemma of flight in greater detail and the myriad consequences and motivations connected to the decision of whether or not to flee. Ultimately, Calvin's experience of exile transformed flight in the minds of early-modern individuals as he developed a coherent ideology surrounding the notion of exile and transformed the dilemma of flight into a theological concept and not just a lived experience. This concept for Calvin proved to be crucial in the development and expansion of the Reformed church which also came to share in Calvin's exile-based identity.

Chapter seven will provide a brief conclusion to the dissertation. It will lay out the developing concept of flight and identity over the course of the early-modern era and how that concept of was formalized in the latter-half of the sixteenth century by Calvin. Finally, it will offer several concluding remarks regarding the concept of identity in the early modern era and how future scholarship should approach the subject with particular attention to the transforming ideological landscape of early-modern Europe and the interconnectedness of most major civic, religious, and national identities. The end goal of this chapter will be the encouragement of future scholarship on the subject of identity construction in the early-modern era and the development of a theoretical framework by which to accomplish this study.

CHAPTER TWO

Jan Hus

The story of Jan Hus has been used in many circumstances. It has been a tool in national and religious polemics wielded by priests and dictators alike. Hus' martyrdom has served many purposes and many masters, but the whole arc of his life has often been overlooked in favor of his final weeks spent at the Council of Constance. Yet, there exists a long story before these final moments. Through this story, this chapter will provide an introduction to the world of persecution and flight in which late-medieval and early modern individuals lived. It is also an introduction into the terms and ideas (specifically the purpose of persecution) that will be encountered over the course of this dissertation.

This chapter will also provide a more complete definition of remaining through persecution as seen in the fifteenth-century figure of Jan Hus. It may seem strange to approach this subject through Hus when the primary focus of this work is the way that remaining functioned over the course of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. However, Hus' decision to remain serves as a prelude to Reformation and his decision to attend the Council of Constance created a template for remaining that would be imitated over the course of the Reformation by many, including Martin Luther.¹ The response of the Roman Catholic Church to Hus' dissent at the Council of Constance and the nationalistic fervor which Hus' martyrdom engendered among the Bohemian people also

¹ The comparisons between Martin Luther and Jan Hus are often commented upon by early modern religious historians and, while often overdone, there are significant reasons to connect these two figures on the issue of remaining. These connections will be more fully fleshed out in chapter three.

marks a shift in the way in which civic and national communities interacted with religious authority at the popular level.

26 July 2015 marked the six hundredth anniversary of the burning of Jan Hus at the Council of Constance. Yet there seems to be surprisingly little new interest in Hus and his movement. Part of this is due to the fact that historical studies of Czech history are far less common in modern academia simply due to the linguistic difficulties of accessing the available sources. However, much of this also undoubtedly has to do with the fact that Hus falls at a rather unique intersection of historical interest. Studies of the Council of Constance are often forced to present Hus as little more than footnote in their explorations of the broader societal and religious issues plaguing fifteenth century Europe. The date of the Council and Hus' death also falls between late medieval and early modern history. This historiographic "no-man's-land" often leaves Hus as a closing figure in the twilight of the medieval church or as a prelude to the Reformation. Indeed, one of the primary problems with the field of Hussite studies is that, barring a surprisingly slim number of recent works, Hus and his movement have remained mired in confessional history.² For, at least, the past hundred years Hus has served as propagandistic figure being appropriated for a variety of confessional and ideologically-

² There are a number of biographical works available on Hus. Older but mostly reliable works include: Eustace J. Kitts, *Pope John the Twenty-Third and Master John Hus of Bohemia* (New York: AMS Press, 1978), E. H. Gillett, *The Life and Times of John Huss: Or, The Bohemian Reformation of the Fifteenth Century* (New York: AMS Press, 1978), and Francis Lützow, *The Life & Times of Master John Hus* (New York: AMS Press, 1978). The best modern treatment of Hus is a three-part work, the first of which is: Thomas A. Fudge, *Jan Hus: Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia*, International Library of Historical Studies 73 (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010). In regard to terminology surrounding Hus and Bohemia, Fudge notes that "The Term 'Bohemian' came to signify ecclesiastical disobedience and heretical depravity from the time of Hus on the term 'Bohemus' more specifically signified 'hereticus' in European public opinion. And the term 'Hussitae' remained equally pejorative. Six-hundred years later it need not carry the same connotation." Fudge, *Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia*, 148.

biased histories.³ Most notably, the infamous Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, wrote a monograph on Hus as Mussolini saw him as a paragon of free thought in opposition to the Roman Catholic Church.⁴ Indeed, the relationship of Hus' life to the Reformation, and religion more broadly speaking, while significant, may actually have negatively influenced the amount of scholarship on him. It also certainly seems as if the upcoming five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation has eclipsed the anniversary of Hus' death. While both the five hundredth and five hundred and fiftieth anniversaries of his death elicited a surge of scholarly interest on Hus' life and death, no such swell of interest was forthcoming after this, apparently, inauspicious anniversary. There have been attempts to draw greater attention to the figure of Hus, but these have not generated the same interest that previous anniversaries have.

However, there have been a few recent attempts to reconsider the figure of Jan Hus and, as part of this movement, this chapter endeavors through an examination of Hus' decision to remain and to face death to call attention to the significance of Hus as an important figure for modern historical study while simultaneously elucidating how Hus' religious, national, and civic communities, and his duties and obligations to those

³ To see a comparison of how Hus is still treated through a confessional spectrum see: C. Colt Anderson, *The Great Catholic Reformers: From Gregory the Great to Dorothy Day* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007) and Michael Frassetto, *The Great Medieval Heretics: Five Centuries of Religious Dissent* (New York: BlueBridge, 2008). As the titles of these two works, published only a year apart, imply, Hus' status as "reformer" or "heretic" is still debated. His classification as such is indicative of the ways in which scholarship is still grappling with who Jan Hus was but, perhaps inadequately, is doing so through ideologically and confessionally laden terms.

⁴ For an English version of the original 1913 publication see: Benito Mussolini, *John Huss* (New York: A. & C. Boni, 1929). Mussolini eventually went on to attempt to suppress his own work after his Concordat with the Roman Catholic Church in 1918. For more information see: Pavel Helan, "Mussolini Looks at Jan Hus and the Bohemian Reformation," *Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice* January (2002): 309–316.

communities, influenced his decision to remain. As previously stated, remaining is the decision of an individual or group, prompted by the threat or enacting of persecution, to publicly represent their religious beliefs and practices in such a way as to faithfully adhere to the confessional precepts with which they associated and their broader ideological community and also a willingness to face the repercussions of doing so. Hus' decision to attend the Council of Constance as a representative of his city and his nation is the embodiment of choosing to remain.

When faced with excommunication and an interdict by the pope, Hus fled to the countryside surrounding Prague. However, when it became clear that his flight was threatening his relationship with his congregation in the city, as well as the authority of the Bohemian crown, Hus chose to return to the city and to symbolically remain with his community by standing before the pope in defense of his ideas, his congregation, and his nation. Hus' remaining was a statement that his religious ideals were compatible with the community with which he identified. His beliefs did not make him an outcast from his city because they were incompatible with those of his congregation and the Bohemian people, but because the pope, an outside force, was attempting to impose a theological system upon Prague that served to further the homogeneity of the Roman Catholic Church rather than one that actually represented the beliefs of the Bohemian people.⁵ Thus, Hus' greatest theological statement was delivered not with his death but with his decision to remain and declare himself a representative of his congregation and city and

⁵ It is perhaps ironic to refer to homogeneity in the Roman Catholic Church during the Papal Schism, but it was precisely because of the conflict over who held the papal office that the insistence upon imposition of theological homogeneity was necessary. For more, see: Edwin B. Mullins, *The Popes of Avignon: A Century in Exile* (New York: BlueBridge, 2008).

thereby affirm his membership in his community despite the claims of the papacy to the contrary.

In this way, Hus is also illustrative of the need to shift some of the emphasis in the study of persecution away from martyrdom. Martyrs are fascinating subjects but their study has been for too long on their act of dying.⁶ Almost none of the approximately 5,000 men and women executed for religious reasons in the sixteenth century chose to die, but they almost all chose to remain.⁷ This also challenges the common type in exilic studies that seeks to frame exile as a form of martyrdom.⁸ Exile is a fundamentally different decision and our study of it should reflect that. Hus chose to remain. His decision to do so cost him his life, but it came from a place of exceptional complexity and it warns that there are no simple categories that can define exiles or martyrs. But it also reminds us that each story is worth telling and that while we cannot hope in the near-

⁶ Part of the reason for this success has to be the fascination with martyrs that has existed throughout the ages because of the ideologically power in their act of dying for their beliefs. More recently, in academic literature, this focus may be due to the success of Brad S. Gregory's, *Salvation at Stake*. Gregory's work is a monumental undertaking that examines why early modern individuals died and killed for their beliefs. The book's success and its cross-confessional and transnational emphasis have made it the first reference point for most scholars exploring responses to persecution in the early modern period. The desire to shift away from martyrs is not meant to disparage what *Salvation at Stake* has done but to acknowledge its thoroughness in treating of martyrdom while saying almost nothing of remaining and exile.

⁷ Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 6.

⁸ It must be noted that the tendency to equate exile and martyrdom was actually quite common among early modern exiles. This correlation is also noted as early as the 8th century in the Irish text the *Cambrai Homily*, which discusses different kinds of martyrdom including traditional (red) martyrdom in which the individuals dies for their beliefs but also an ascetic internal (white) martyrdom in which the individual finds martyrdom in a renunciation and separation from worldly pleasures, company, and desires. The emphasis found in this work on distinguishing martyrdom and exile is not an attempt to ignore the historical reality of the correlation between these two occurrences, but rather stems from the need to have a distinct methodological approach to the subject of exile and remaining that is not overly dependent upon already established methodologies regarding martyrs and martyrdom. The development of a distinct category of 'remaining' will help distinguish these fields even further. What is more, these categories can be seen even in the understanding of sixteenth century religious figures—as one mid-century Huguenot song put it, "Either flee, maintain, or die / That's what Christ teaches you, Christians." Taken from Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 156.

future to piece together a comprehensive picture of transience in the early-modern period we are beginning to understand the pieces that will ultimately be used to construct this narrative.

Thus, it is my argument that Jan Hus knew with some certainty that he would die at the Council of Constance and deliberately chose remaining over continued flight as he saw this as the decision that was best for his congregation, his city, and his nation. Through this, I will also illustrate the decision to remain and the significance of community in that decision. Hus shows that, while remaining may actually be a returning or a going, the term represents an internal narrative of belonging more than any particular geographic fact. Finally, the deliberate choice Hus made to remain created a template for this decision and its implications which would carry over into the sixteenth century and serve as harbinger of a new age of religious persecution with the advent of the Reformation.

Who was Jan Hus?

Not much is known of Hus' early life, but by twenty-four he had earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Prague, he earned a Master's degree at twenty-seven, and was ordained a priest before his thirty-first birthday. At some point during his studies, Hus was introduced to the English writings of John Wycliffe and admired the Englishman's calls for reform in the church, particularly insofar as it regarded the life of the clergy. Hus preached frequently against the practice of simony, the abuse of clerical authority to gain secular power, and the clergy's private ownership of wealth.⁹ Later in

⁹ Hus' criticisms of clerical wealth and their involvement in secular governance were based on those put forward by Wycliffe. For a detailed study of how Hus understood the church and the role of the

life he often signed his letters as: “an unprofitable priest of Christ.”¹⁰ Perhaps most significantly, Hus was also a Bohemian Czech. This is a crucial point in understanding Hus’ decision to remain. Hus was, from the very beginning, part of a movement that extended beyond his own religious reforms. His message was generated in a nationalistic context, propagated by authorities interested in nationalistic reform, and received by individuals and communities steeped in nationalistic sentiment. His appeals to the Bohemian Crown were more than a just a desperate attempt to secure the protection of local authority, but a declaration of shared national identity. His death would spark a nearly twenty-year conflict that had both religious and national interests at its heart. Hus’ own story is wrapped up in the story of a nation and often his role has been used only as a part of that larger narrative. However, it is equally as possible that the story of the Bohemian nation can be used to better understand Hus.

After his ordination and appointment to the city of Prague and its university, Hus’ preaching for the reform of the church became increasingly popular in the city and throughout Bohemia. His ceaseless criticism of the papacy seemed to find a receptive audience among those who were most dissatisfied with the continued schism of the office following the Avignon Papacy. Among those happy to hear Hus’ message were Wenceslaus, King of the Romans, Sigismund, King of Hungary and heir to the Holy Roman Empire, and even the Archbishop of Prague who named Hus the official preacher

clergy within it see: Matthew Spinka, *John Hus’ Concept of the Church* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966). Spinka also demonstrates how Hus appropriated, and occasionally deviated from, Wycliffe.

¹⁰ For several examples see: Jan Hus, *The Letters of John Hus* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), 74 and 117. Unless otherwise noted, all citations of Hus’ letters come from this translation. In order to provide the most information on each letter the citation will contain the date and recipient of the letter as well as the page location.

to the clergy.¹¹ However, as Hus' popularity spread so too did word of his message and both Pope Innocent VII and Gregory XII, both Roman claimants, took steps to silence Hus—mostly directly through the condemnation of Wycliffe. While Hus followed the lead of King Wenceslaus and agreed to surrender the writings of Wycliffe and publicly condemn him, his preaching remained offensive enough that he was also officially condemned by Gregory's rival, Alexander V, after the Council of Pisa.¹²

Even as Hus was facing criticism from the papacy, he remained in favor throughout Prague and with King Wenceslaus and was named Rector of the University of Prague the same year, 1402, as his condemnation from Alexander. Even at this stage, Hus' career was part of a larger national movement taking place within the city of Prague and across the nation of Bohemia. Hus' nomination to the position was part of an attempt by Wenceslaus to make the University of Prague a national institution of Bohemia by granting Bohemian inhabitants rights not given to the Germans and Poles who attended and worked at the University.¹³ The Decree of Kutná Hora was the pinnacle of this movement. The Decree gave the Bohemian party of the university, led by Hus, three votes and left the other national parties with only one apiece. This unsurprisingly angered almost all of the non-Bohemian scholars, particularly the Germans, and led to their

¹¹ Josef Válka, "Tolerance or Co-Existence? Relations between Religious Groups from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries," *Between Lipany and White Mountain: Essays in Late Medieval and Early Modern Bohemian History in Modern Czech Scholarship* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 166-181.

¹² The biographical information on Hus was assembled utilizing the above mentioned biographies of Hus. In the case of any discrepancies, Fudge's work was given priority.

¹³ Fudge, *Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia*, 14.

departure. Hus, in all likelihood, spearheaded the movement that supported the Decree and it may have been Hus himself who took the idea to the King.¹⁴

It is important to note that the Decree of Kutná Hora was not an attempt to gain power merely for the sake of power but was part of a larger conflict specifically designed to increase the power of Czech nationals in the city of Prague. The city had, over the past twenty years, become increasingly nationalized as demonstrated by its attempts to oust the “other” from within its midst. In 1389, over 3,000 Jews were massacred within the city and, following that, the conflict between the German Old Town and the Czech New Town within the city reached such a volatile point that a moat was constructed between the two.¹⁵ It also was not an accident that Hus was at the head of the Czech party that led the University to do its part in exiling non-Czechs from the city. Hus had, prior to his appointment as rector, undertaken a significant revision of the Czech language through a standardization of spelling and begun a translation of the Bible into the Czech language. Hus’ appointment as Rector was part of a larger nationalistic conflict taking place within the city of Prague and Hus demonstrated his Czech loyalties with his translation project and confirmed them with the enactment of Kutná Hora.¹⁶

¹⁴ Fudge, *Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia*, 99.

¹⁵ Fudge, *Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia*, 21-25

¹⁶ The use of the term “national” here must, admittedly, be called into question. Civic identities often exerted themselves as much more powerful influences in the late medieval and early modern eras. However, given the reaction of the Bohemian nation, not merely the city of Prague, after the death of Hus at the Council of Constance, it seems probable that this was, indeed, an instance of nationalistic sentiment expressing itself in the conflict with Germans within the city. This is supported by František Šmahel in “The National Idea, Secular Power and Social Issues in the Political Theology of Jan Hus.” *A Companion to Jan Hus*. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 214-253. Šmahel clearly sees a nationalistic influence at work in Hus’ early life though he does question the degree to which these remained an influence as Hus drew closer to Constance. As will be demonstrated, it seems Hus retained a very strong ideological connection to his fellow Czechs and to the Bohemian Crown and his attendance at the Council was not a submission of his nationalistic interests to his religious ones, as Šmahel suggests, but that the two worked cooperatively in Hus’ actions.

This exodus of non-Bohemians from the University increased both religious and national pressures against Hus as many of those who fled bore a personal grudge against Hus and carried it with them to the ear of Pope Alexander. These academic exiles bore fresh news of Hus' sympathy for Wycliffe to the pope who in turn issued a Papal Bull against Wycliffe in Prague and ordered again the surrender of his writings.¹⁷ This time, Hus refused. In his refusal, Hus made the decision to remain and declared his commitment to his religious teachings but also his allegiance to the Bohemian Crown and its program of nationalistic interest at the University.

With the backing of the king, Hus officially appealed to Alexander and, when it became clear that Hus would not submit, Alexander ordered Hus to appear before his court. Fearing for his life, Hus refused the summons and remained in Prague as the preacher at the Bethlehem Chapel. In response, Alexander excommunicated Hus and his followers and placed the city of Prague under interdict. The Interdict did not completely stop services in Prague as Hus and those who supported him continued to administer the sacraments. However, there were enough priests who opposed Hus that a significant portion of the city was successfully denied the sacraments. The legitimacy of the sacraments administered by those priests also seemed to be a concern among the nobility.

Herein lies the heart of Hus' decision to remain and his navigation of the dilemma of flight. To spare Prague the dangers of the Interdict, Hus fled to the countryside in 1412. Hus was not truly in hiding in the countryside but rather stayed in the manors and castles of a number of Bohemian nobles who were friendly to his cause. Though

¹⁷ Although it was Alexander that would officially excommunicate Hus, this declamation of Wycliffe's writings in Bohemia was issued by Gregory XII.

threatened, Hus was not in immediate danger as there was no significant military force in the area able to enact his arrest, particularly as he still enjoyed the support of most of the Bohemian nobility. Rather, his flight was designed wholly to lift the Interdict from the city of Prague. But the choice to do so clearly shook his confidence and called into question the nature of his duty as a priest while simultaneously placing the Bohemian crown in a difficult position. For Hus, as for religious exiles throughout the early modern period, the choice to flee came with a significant sense of guilt. However, before discussing Hus' attitude during his temporary exile it is necessary to understand the motivations which brought Hus to his decision.

Choosing to Flee

Before his flight into the countryside, Hus wrote a letter to the cardinals of the church, in which he attempted to explain to them his situation and seemed desirous to garner favor among them, probably in an attempt to have support when and if he should face charges before the pope. In this letter, Hus boldly stated, "The lord Jesus is my witness that I am innocent of those charges of which my adversaries accuse me. Nevertheless, I am ever ready before the University of Prague, all the prelates and all the people who have heard me and to whom I appeal, to render full account of my faith which I hold in my heart and confess by word and in writing, even if fire were lighted during the hearing."¹⁸ This quote illustrates two themes that were present in Hus' letters as early as 1410. The first is that Hus was utterly and entirely convinced that his teachings and beliefs were orthodox. Hus can only be described as stubborn and self-

¹⁸ 1 September 1411- Letter to the Cardinals, 58.

assured. But, to some extent, he had good reason. His preaching against the corruption of the church was only exacerbated by the questionable position of the papal office in the early fifteenth century. Beginning in 1409, three popes contended for the tiara.¹⁹ The slew of accusations and excommunications that followed are difficult to fully order and understand. Two of three popes formally condemned Hus and one had, approximately ten years earlier, attempted to depose his rightful sovereigns, declaring, “Boniface with his cardinals solemnly determined that Wenceslas, King of Bohemia, is not the King of the Romans; nor is Sigismund King of the Hungarians.”²⁰

Thus, not only did Hus convey the rightness of his position, he seemed to have good reason to be so. He considered the situation regarding the papacy not merely as theologically offensive but also as a threat to his city and kingdom. For Hus to refuse to admit his error was not only a defense of himself but a defense of those for whom he felt, in many ways, responsible. Hus wrote in a letter to Pope John XXIII, the successor of Alexander V, “For the enemies of the truth, unmindful of their honor and salvation, maliciously suggested to the Apostolic See that errors and heresies have sprouted in the Kingdom of Bohemia, in the city of Prague, and in the Margravate of Moravia, and that the hearts of many have been infected with such errors it became necessary to apply a remedy for their correction.”²¹ In this letter, Hus desired to convey to John XXIII that he

¹⁹ For more on the Western or Papal Schism, following the Avignon Papacy, see: Marzieh Gail, *The Three Popes: An Account of the Great Schism- When Rival Popes in Rome, Avignon and Pisa Vied for the Rule of Christendom*, 1st edition (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969).

²⁰ Prior to 25 April 1413, 97- To Master Christian of Prachatice. Hus is referring to an event in 1400 when Pope Benedict XIII deposed Wenceslaus from the imperial throne and opposed Sigismund as the King of Hungary. This seemed to be due to the brothers’ support of the rival pope.

²¹ 1 September 1411-Pope John XXIII, 55. Whether or not Hus was as certain of his position as he seemed to be here, this is the image he desired to broadcast to the claimant in Avignon.

was absolutely certain of his orthodoxy not merely out of a sense of personal pride, but also because he represented, and indeed cared for, his people. Both those of his church and, it seems, those of his nation.²²

Secondly, even at this point, Hus knew his death was a very real possibility. While Wycliffe had successfully avoided execution during his lifetime thanks to the protection of John of Gaunt, Hus seemed aware that in 1411 a trip to Rome would probably cost him his life. In the same letter to John XXIII he wrote, “When, then, personally cited to the Roman Curia, I desired humbly to appear there. But because my life was plotted against both within and without the kingdom, particularly by the Germans; relying, therefore, on the counsel of many friends, I judged that it would be tempting God to expose my life to death when the welfare of the Church did not demand it.”²³ Thus Hus again confirms that his conflict is not merely religious but part of a larger political and nationalistic contest taking place within Bohemia. He wrote, several months later to the Carthusian monks at Delany regarding this same decision, “for I would lose my life for nothing. I would thus neglect the people of God in the word of God and would expose my life in vain.”²⁴ Combining his two letters it becomes apparent that Hus claimed he was willing to die for his beliefs (and his nation), but not needlessly.

²² Debate about the origins of nationalism are long standing and rarely reach as far back as the late-medieval period. However, Hus does serve as representative of the way in which a nascent sense of national identity can be detected well before most theories of nationalism choose to formally recognize the sentiment as such. For more on the possibility of being able to speak of an identifiable nationalism in the medieval period see: Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton.: Princeton University Press, 2003) and Joseph R. Strayer, Charles Tilly, and William Chester Jordan, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State*, 2nd edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

²³ 1 September 1411-Pope John XXIII, 55.

²⁴ May 1412-Carthusian Monks of Dolany, 72.

Hus' decision to leave Prague for the countryside was not one he made lightly. His absence in the city lifted the interdict and after several months Hus' was even allowed to return to the city without the Interdict being officially reintroduced. However, when it was announced that Hus would preach again the threat was reissued, and he was forced away from the pulpit by both the city and religious officials.²⁵ This led Hus to pen a letter to the Preachers and Brethren of his own Bethlehem Chapel in which he lamented, "Therefore, although I have a diligent desire to preach the gospel, I am full of distress, because I do not know what to do."²⁶ Laying out his case, Hus cited both John 10:11-12 and Matthew 10:23.²⁷ He then stated with some obvious frustration, "This then is the precept or permission of Christ: which of the two opposites to choose I know not."²⁸ Finally, in attempt to find an answer in the Church Fathers, Hus cited Augustine's Epistle 228, addressed to Honoratus, in which, Augustine said that flight is permissible if it does not deprive the church of a necessary preacher.²⁹ Unable in the end to decide if his decision was justified, Hus said to his colleagues,

²⁵ There seems to be some debate as to whether or not this was actually the case. Fudge, however, supports the story and sees it as a crucial step in Hus' creation of a martyr complex. For more on this, see the second work in Fudge's three-part biography: Thomas A. Fudge, *The Memory and Motivation of Jan Hus, Medieval Priest and Martyr* (Brepols Publishers, 2013).

²⁶ Autumn 1412-Preachers and Brethren in Bethlehem, 75.

²⁷ John 10:11-12 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*." Matthew 10:23 "But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish *going through* the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes." Both translations are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*.

²⁸ Autumn 1412-Preachers and Brethren in Bethlehem, 75.

²⁹ "There are some who think that bishops and clergy may, by not fleeing but remaining in such dangers, cause the people to be misled, because, when they see those who are set over them remaining, this makes them not flee from danger." Augustine *Epistle CCXXVIII*, 13. "Whoever, therefore, flees from danger in circumstances in which the Church is not deprived through his flight of necessary service, is doing that which the Lord has commanded or permitted. But the minister who flees when the consequences

Let me know, therefore, if you can acquiesce in Augustine's advice. For my conscience urges me not to cause offence by my absence, even though the necessary food of God's word is not wanting the sheep. On the other hand, I fear less my presence—because of the damnedly acquired interdict—would afford occasion for the withholding of that food, i.e., the communion of the venerable sacrament and other means to salvation.³⁰

Although Hus remained in a state of exile for roughly two years, the situation never did sit well with him. During the initial stages of his flight, three lower-class citizens were beheaded in Bohemia after they incited a riot against an indulgence seller using Hus' teachings.³¹ Over the course of the next year it seemed as if Hus was attempting to justify his flight to his people. He wrote to the Faithful in Prague, "Similarly I say to you, dearly beloved, although not bound in prison, that I would choose to die with Christ and be with him; yet I yearn to labor with you for your salvation. 'But what to choose I know not,' awaiting the mercy of God."³² He also wrote a defense of his reason to flee to the Lords of Bohemia³³ and then again, to the people of Prague, he wrote,

No wonder, therefore, that I followed [Paul's] example and fled, and that the priests and others like them inquire and discourse as to my whereabouts. Besides, dearly beloved, be assured that I fled in accordance with Christ's teaching, that I

of his flight is the withdrawal from Christ's flock of that nourishment by which its spiritual life is sustained, is an "hireling who seeth the wolf coming, and fleeth because he careth not for the sheep." Augustine *Epistle CCXXVIII*, 14. Translation taken from the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 1.

³⁰ Autumn 1412-Preachers and Brethren in Bethlehem, 76.

³¹ It is difficult to find much information on this incident. Fudge cites the event briefly but says nothing more on it. These three anonymous are often cited as the first martyrs of the Bohemian Church and there is a strong hagiographical tradition surrounding their deaths.

³² Autumn 1412-Faithful in Prague, 85.

³³ "I did not appear at the papal court because I had my procurators there whom they threw into prison without cause. They were willing to challenge—even to trial by fire—anyone who would accuse me of error. Furthermore, I myself did not appear because my enemies had laid snares for me everywhere so that I would not return to Bohemia." Late 1412-Lords gathered at the supreme court of the Kingdom of Bohemia, 91.

would not be an occasion of eternal damnation for the wicked and to cause the suffering and trouble for the good; also, that the demented would not stop the divine service. However, as concerns the fleeing from the truth, I trust the Lord that he will grant me to die in that truth.³⁴

Yet after this letter, Hus wrote only two short letters to the people of Prague for almost a year.³⁵ During this period Hus penned a considerable number of works including his *De Ecclesia* and his *Postil*, but his correspondence with his own church diminished. Perhaps the work distracted Hus or perhaps it was a distraction from the separation Hus felt from his duties as a priest. Regardless, Hus obviously knew his relationship to the Bethlehem Chapel had been damaged as he wrote to them on Christmas Day 1413, “Albeit I am now separated from you so far that it perhaps is not fitting that I preach much to you, nevertheless, the love that I have for you urges me that I say at least a few brief words to your love.”³⁶ Whatever Hus felt about his temporary exile, he made the decision to remain the very next year. After receiving a summons to the Council of Constance, Hus accepted.

Choosing to Remain

It seems quite clear that at this point Hus was almost certain of his death. Much is made of the fact that, before his departure, Hus was promised a decree of safe-conduct by the soon-to-be-crowned Holy Roman Emperor, Sigismund. While this promise was given, and Hus was encouraged by the emperor’s messenger who assured him that the

³⁴ December 1412-Praguers, 93.

³⁵ It is possible that Hus was able to visit Prague during this period of time as he had done during 1412, but this seems unlikely given the opening of his 1413 Christmas letter. The content of his two letters also makes it quite clear that he was away from the city.

³⁶ 25 December 1413-Praguers, 111.

emperor hoped to see this affair brought to a “laudable end,” Hus had no firm proof of the safe conduct before he departed.³⁷ He wrote to his parishioners on the occasion of his departure for Constance, “I have begun the journey without a safe-conduct, amid great and numerous enemies—among whom the worst are my countrymen, as you will perceive from the testimonies and will learn after the conclusion of the Council.”³⁸ This marks a very important shift for Hus. Where before his foes had been the Roman Catholic Church and the Germans, now he believed that his position had turned even his own countrymen against him. This is yet further proof that it was the feeling that his exile was negatively affecting his relationship with his religious and national communities that ultimately led him to the decision to remain. What is more, Hus also seemed to believe that death was preferable to the ultimate severing of his communal ties and affiliations.

He said to parishioner with some trepidation, “Therefore, dear brothers and dear sisters, pray earnestly that He may be pleased to grant me perseverance and to preserve me undefiled. And if my death be to His praise and to our advantage, may it please Him that I meet the suffering without excessive fear.”³⁹ Finally, in what seems firm proof that Hus anticipated it was far more likely that he would die than return home, he concluded his letter saying, “You may perhaps not see me in Prague before I die; if, however, the Almighty God should be pleased to bring me back to you, we shall meet each other joyfully. [Ultimately], we shall, of course, meet one another in heavenly joy.”⁴⁰ It is true

³⁷ 1 September 1414-King Sigismund, 120.

³⁸ 19 October 1414-His Parishioners upon his departure for Constance, 122.

³⁹ 19 October 1414-His Parishioners upon his departure for Constance, 123.

⁴⁰ 19 October 1414-His Parishioners upon his departure for Constance, 123.

that Hus was hopeful that he might survive, but he seemed clearly aware of the reality of his situation. Hope may defy certitude but it cannot negate it.

It seems certain that what prompted Hus to cease his flight and choose to remain was his failing relationship with his parish and his nation. Hus stated in the same letter to his congregation, “You know that for a long time I have faithfully labored among you, preaching to you the Word of God, without heresy and errors, as you are aware, and that your salvation was, is now, and shall remain my desire until my death.”⁴¹ It seemed, via Augustine, that Hus had become convinced that his parish again needed their preacher. Hus also wrote to King Wenceslas, “In order that your royal grace should not on my account incur dishonor and the Bohemian land defamation; I sent and posted my letters, offering to come to the court of the archbishop, being willing to stand first of all inquiry into my truth.”⁴² Hus had seen the damage done to his Bohemia through the accusations hurled at him. And here, finally, is the last point; Hus still completely believed that he was right. He wrote, finally, to King Sigismund and declared clearly that he would no longer hide, “I humbly beg your majesty, supplicating you in the Lord, that for the honor of God, the welfare of the holy church, and the honor of the Kingdom of Bohemia...that I may be able to profess publicly to the faith I hold.”⁴³ Hus was adamant that he be allowed to speak and be heard; for regardless of the verdict leveled at the end of his trial he felt that his words, for the betterment of his church, his city, and the benefit of Bohemia, would remain testament enough to his orthodoxy.

⁴¹ 19 October 1414-His Parishioners upon his departure for Constance, 122.

⁴² 26 August 1414-King Wenceslas, Queen Sophia, and their Court, 117.

⁴³ 1 September 1414-King Sigismund, 119.

The Council of Constance and a Place to Belong

Much of the existing scholarship on Hus focuses on his arrival, trial, and subsequent execution at the Council of Constance.⁴⁴ This makes sense given the monumental significance of the council both for Western Christendom and as the concluding chapter in Hus' life. However, the decision to remain preceded Hus' actions and ultimate death at Constance. What is significant though for Hus' decision to remain in relation to the Council of Constance is the question of national or civic identity and the nature of belonging.⁴⁵

The events surrounding Hus' decision to remain are dictated in large part by nationalistic forces, both within and outside of Bohemia. The Decree of Kutná Hora and the restructuring of the University of Prague to favor Bohemian nationals played a significant part in bringing Hus' Wycliffite sympathies before the papacy. Similarly, the Council of Constance was steeped in nationalistic interests. Significant scholarly work has gone into demonstrating how Constance was a nationalistic event. Louise Loomis' article, "Nationality at the Council of Constance," clearly demonstrates that the interests

⁴⁴ The best of these works available in English is undoubtedly Thomas A. Fudge, *The Trial of Jan Hus: Medieval Heresy and Criminal Procedure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). This is the culminating work in Fudge's three-part biography of Hus and focuses not merely on Hus but on how Hus experiences at Constance were very much in line with medieval practices concerning heresy trials. According to Fudge, Hus could probably have survived the council if he had not been quite so obstinate in his interactions with church officials. Fudge is exceedingly generous in his assessment. See also: Petr z Mladenovic, *John Hus at the Council of Constance*, *Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies*, no. 73 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965) and James Hamilton Wylie, *The Council of Constance to the Death of John Hus*, *Ford Lectures 1900* (New York: Longmans & Green, 1900).

⁴⁵ For a general overview of the Council of Constance and its significance in reforming the Western Church beyond the person of Hus, see: Phillip H. Stump, *The Reforms of the Council of Constance (1414-1418)*. (New York: E.J. Brill, 1994). It would also be interesting to note if the English responded in similar fashion as the Czechs to the treatment of Wycliffe's memory at the council. For more information on this see: Henry Ansgar Kelly, "Trial Procedures against Wyclif and Wycliffites in England and at the Council of Constance," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (January 1998): 1

of the council were not only religious but were predicated on the very same nationalistic interests which had served to keep the papacy from reuniting and stemmed all the way back to the disgruntlement over its decision to relocate to Avignon.⁴⁶ Loomis has also shown that even the physical positioning of clerics at the council was decided by nationality.⁴⁷ In relation to Hus, Loomis even notes that “a further difficulty aggravated by the incipient nationalism of the conciliar epoch was the struggle between the Slavs and Germans.”⁴⁸

Not only was the conflict between German and Slav nationalists evident during the council, but the responses to the treatment of Hus at the council, particularly his death, were distinctly nationalistic. Hus’ execution would ultimately lead to the Hussite Wars and no fewer than four crusades were called against the followers of Hus in the century following his death. Hus’ followers’ enthusiasm for his sacrifice as a representation of their community is demonstrated in a *passio* on Hus’ death released soon after the event in which the author calls upon Bohemia to make amends for Hus’ death and notes that, even at his execution, Hus’ executioners feared what might happen

⁴⁶ For older, yet mostly reliable, sources on this see: Louise Ropes Loomis, “Nationality at the Council of Constance,” *American Historical Review* 44 (April 1939): 508–27 and Louise Ropes Loomis, *The Council of Constance*. Translated by Matthew Spinka. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965). Loomis recognizes the division of the council into national groups in order to decentralize the church and offset the numerical majority of the Italian clerics, Loomis, *Council of Constance*, 21. Loomis’ division of the council into French, German, Spanish, Italian, and English voting blocs is supported by Hus own letters, see: 26 June 1415-To All Faithful Czechs, 191.

⁴⁷ Louise Ropes Loomis, “The Organization by Nations at Constance,” *Church History*, December 1, 1932.

⁴⁸ Loomis, *The Council of Constance*, 25. For a fuller treatment on the nationalistic conflicts occurring at Constance and the consequential Hussite Wars see: Frank Welsh, *The Battle for Christendom: The Council of Constance, The East-West Conflict, and the Dawn of Modern Europe*. (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 2008). Welsh’s treatment, while far newer than Loomis’, tends to be anecdotal and is indicative of the surprising lack of scholarship on the council itself. Thus, Loomis work, while old, remains one of the best treatments on nationalism and even the Council of Constance broadly considered.

if his remains were to fall into the hands of his Bohemian brethren.⁴⁹ In this text, Hus is a religious hero, but he is also a national hero.⁵⁰ The significance of this for Hus and the question of remaining is that he clearly had a place of belonging. There existed a particular city, Prague, and a community that shared the same ideological opinions as Hus. His decision to remain included not only his own interests but theirs as well and gave depth through community as a response to the question of why and what he was remaining for.

Remaining, Fleeing, and Dying

Moving forward, it is necessary to distinguish between terms that will be used in relation to the dilemma of flight and that this conversation must rest heavily upon the current field of exilic studies in early modern Europe. The necessity of this is two-fold. First, though exilic history in the early modern period is still in its nascent stages it is more developed than a nearly non-existent history of remaining during the same period. Second, remaining is one of the ultimate conclusions of exile. Frank Ames observes how the process of exile distances exiles from resources and materials that had served as the foundation upon which they constructed their own identities. The removal of these identity-laden materials, much like Hus' separation from his parish, ultimately lead to a crisis of identity. As Ames says, "The cascading effects of exile that begin with

⁴⁹ Thomas A. Fudge, "Jan Hus at Calvary: The Text of an Early Fifteenth-Century Passio," *Journal of Moravian History*, September 1, 2011.

⁵⁰ This question of Hus' nationalistic significance for the Czech Republic is still exceptionally important as noted in: František Šmahel, "Jan Hus—heretic or Patriot?," *Cover Story* 40 (April 1990): 27–33.

diminished resources lead to new identities.”⁵¹ Thus, the decision to remain grows out of the crisis of exile, whether real as in the case of Hus, or imagined as a future possibility. Remaining is the decision to maintain or reclaim an identity which would ultimately be threatened by the process of exile—an identity that is always dependent upon a larger community.

This naturally leads to the question of how exile, in the long-term, affects the identity of those who undergo it. If remaining is the maintaining of identity, then exile must necessarily be its reshaping. This reshaping manifested itself primarily in a greater sense of self-awareness of their own confessional identities. How this sense of confessional self-awareness affected exiles and their religious identities is the question which has come to dominate studies in this field.⁵² Yet, a well-conceived definition of religious exile in the early modern world has yet to be put forward.⁵³ There is a need to clarify the specific type of flight to which this chapter refers. Flight from plagues or other natural dangers are entirely different than exile. The lack of such a definition raises

⁵¹ Frank Ritchel Ames, “The Cascading Effects of Exile: From Diminished Resources to New Identities,” in *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts* (Boston: Brill, 2012), 183.

⁵² For a fantastic survey of this question in a variety of geographic locations across the early modern period see: Jesse Spohnholz and Gary K. Waite, *Exile and Religious*. The question first and foremost among the works in this volume is whether or not greater confessional self-awareness necessarily translated into radicalization. There are instances where the experience of exile radicalized an individual for the cause of their confessional identity. See: Andrew Pettegree, *Emden and the Dutch Revolt: Exile and the Development of Reformed Protestantism*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). However, in other instances, the experience of exile actually generated a greater sense of toleration. See: Mirjam van Veen, “Dirck Volckertz Coornhert: Exile and Religious Coexistence.” *Exile and Religious Identity, 1500-1800*. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), 67-80.

⁵³ While terminology remains mostly undefined, for a recent work which lays out a possible theory behind the process of exile and expulsion see: Terpstra, *Religious Refugees in the Early Modern World*. Terpstra’s work focuses on the concept of the “body politic” and the desire among early modern individuals to maintain the purity of that body. The work relies heavily upon bodily and medical metaphors and puts forward a fascinating theory that, while not utilized in this work, deserves further attention.

concerns about the ability of the field to maintain a cohesive identity, otherwise the breadth to which the term “exile” might be applied may lessen its utility. A greater degree of terminological specificity would go a long way in maintaining this careful balance. For example, should “exiles” and “refugees” both be understood as undergoing synonymous experiences of displacement? I will briefly address this question below. For, distinguishing between categories such as these would still encourage exilic studies to cover diverse subjects while maintaining clear thematic boundaries. More accurate terminological definitions for types of flight, namely for exiles and refugees, will help elucidate what is meant by remaining.

This work proposes that a refugee be defined more by where they settled whereas an exile continues to be defined by where they fled from. A refugee is *looking* for a home while an exile is *longing* for home.⁵⁴ In terms of intersectionality, a refugee replaces their civic or national identity with wherever they settle. However, an exile continues to identify themselves by their place of departure. In short, a refugee abandons the possibility of a return home while an exile continues to hope that such a return is possible. This of course naturally raises the question of whether or not these categories are mutually exclusive, to which the answer is almost certainly no. The complexity of human motivation and intent is absolutely beyond such simplifications. Therefore, it is necessary to admit that these categories must be limited to a historical usage and, of

⁵⁴ Both of these definitions ought to be taken in the context of religious persecution being the impetus for travel away from home. Persecution is a crucial element in this equation to avoid merely a religious migration. There is a very concrete division between migrants, and refugees and Exiles. “Forced migration is not emigration in the modal since, since the former is conditioned upon a rigid, compulsory rejection; the latter upon a loose, voluntary rejection.” Reinhold, Frances L. “Exiles and Refugees in American History.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 203 (May 1, 1939): 63. For a more complete definition and examination of migration and its influence on modern global politics, see: Fiona Reid and Katherine Holden, *Women on the Move: Refugees, Migration and Exile* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010).

necessity, be applied with a degree of anachronistic understanding. In much the same way that periodization can only be formalized after-the-fact, so too we may only understand if an individual or group ought to be understood as exile(s) or refugee(s) through a historical lens that is able to encompass the whole trajectory of the individual or group's lifespan. There is also a fluidity in the terminology used in this study. An individual or group may very easily shift between exile and refugee status throughout the course of their historical lifespan. It is because of this fluidity that I believe these terms can be concretely defined without compromising or calling into question past and developing historiography on this subject. Therefore, Heiko Oberman's famous attestation, that the next phase of Reformation Studies must be the study of "Reformation of the refugees," still stands and may even be considered to include exiles.⁵⁵ Ole Peter Grell summarizes this shift from exile to refugee in saying, "By the early seventeenth century the persecution and emigration which had shaped the lives of three generations of Reformed exiles had come to an end and as a result they began to set roots within their host communities."⁵⁶

How do these categories interact with remaining? An exile may choose to remain whereas a refugee cannot. An exile has a place to which they desire to return, a place which can be designated as a "home." Refugees are no longer defined by origination and thus may choose a new location to establish themselves but this an entirely different

⁵⁵ Oberman, Heiko Augustinus, Trans. by Donald Weinstein. *The Two Reformations: The Journey from the Last Days to the New World*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 145. According to Oberman, "The Third Reformation began after the defeat of the Protestant princes in 1548 and 1549, when the cities that had opened their gates to the Reformation were violently re-Catholicized and Protestant citizens had to either adapt or flee," Oberman, 145.

⁵⁶ Ole Peter Grell, *Brethren in Christ: A Calvinist Network in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 300.

process. Remaining necessitates a previous place of belonging, as demonstrated with the nationalistic interests of Hus and Bohemia.

These distinctions help illustrate, to some extent, what remaining is not and therefore aid in the creation of a narrow and functioning definition for what it is. Namely, remaining is not flight in any of its many forms. As stated above, however, remaining can include movement. Hus' decision to remain was, in many ways, a returning. But this decision was possible because he had retained a strong ideological and civic connection with Bohemia, Prague, and his congregation at Bethlehem Chapel. Had Hus ever lapsed beyond this connection and become ideologically dislocated from his home (become a refugee by the above definition) then he could never have made the decision to remain. However, because he did still consider Prague to be his home, his return and journey to Constance can actually be interpreted as a delayed decision to remain. This is made more clear by a comparison between remaining and Nicodemism.

Exile is most frequently contrasted with Nicodemism. Nicodemism, a term first coined by Calvin, was the process of hiding one's "true" religious beliefs by publicly adhering to the popular religious norms while privately holding to an alternate set of beliefs. For example, had Hus acquiesced to the demands of the Church and ceased his preaching against the corruption of the clergy he would have been guilty of Nicodemism. This is because it is obvious from his writings that Hus was fully convinced that the clergy *was* corrupt and his failure to address that corruption as a priest of the church would have been, for him, a form of dissembling. When Hus made his decision to go to Constance he clearly did so with no intention of hiding his true beliefs, but insisted that

he be allowed to publicly declare and preach what he believed. This is crucial to the decision to remain.

The precise role of Nicodemism in the early modern period is still under debate.⁵⁷ Yet a clear understanding of what remaining entailed will help to further elucidate the boundaries of what can properly be called Nicodemism. This boundary between Nicodemism and remaining is difficult to recognize, particularly as one scholar has noted, “Faced with brutal persecution, many religious minorities chose to accommodate, whenever possible, the confessional prejudices of the local majority by refraining from public displays of their faith.”⁵⁸ An individual did not necessarily need to confrontationally promote their own dissenting ideology to avoid Nicodemism as Hus did, but the distinction between dissembling and cautiously holding to an alternate confessional framework, such as Hus did when he first refused to answer the pope’s summons, is significant and ought to be recognized as remaining rather than Nicodemism.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ For a significant piece in this discussion see: Carlos M. N. Eire, “Calvin and Nicodemism: A Reappraisal,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 10, no. 1 (April 1, 1979): 45–69. More recent debates about Nicodemism, particularly in relation to John Calvin and the subject of exile, are becoming increasingly common. For example: Kenneth Woo, “Beyond the Nicodemite: The Twofold Audience of John Calvin’s *Quatre Sermons* (1552)” (presented at the Sixteenth Century Conference, New Orleans, 2014).

⁵⁸ Michael Wolfe, *The Conversion of Henri IV: Politics, Power, and Religious Belief in Early Modern France*, vol. 112, Harvard Historical Studies ; (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 13.

⁵⁹ The most extended treatment of remaining thus far, though he does not use the term, has come from Gregory in his discussion of anti-Nicodemism. Gregory notes that anti-Nicodemite literature was commonplace in the Reformation but states, “Often historians have identified with the majoritarian, lay Protestant reaction and have judged anti-Nicodemite demands to be unrealistic. When viewed in relation to martyrdom, however, a different picture emerges. Although many shrank from the uncompromising log of anti-Nicodemite arguments, the martyrs did not,” Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 154. Gregory’s statement is correct, but it should also be noted that those who chose to remain, such as those featured in this work, also resisted the tendency to slip into Nicodemism and the unnecessary dichotomy that martyrdom or exile were the only legitimate responses remains unnecessary and inaccurate.

Jonathan Wright in his oft-cited work “Marian Exiles and the Legitimacy of Flight from Persecution” notes that “perhaps exile was not as glamorous or as edifying as martyrdom but, some suggested, it was a good deal better than staying at home and lapsing into Nicodemism.”⁶⁰ While this is true, this quote represents the necessity of having a terminological category of remaining. Because of the significance of Wright’s article, the choices facing potential exiles are often stated only as exile, Nicodemism, and martyrdom. Yet, and this the final point of distinction in defining remaining, the choice to remain is entirely distinct from the decision to die.

Remaining is not a decision to die, though it is a willingness to do so. Brad Gregory’s noteworthy book, *Salvation at Stake*, clearly lays out the motivations and mindsets of those some five-thousand individuals who did die for their religious beliefs over the course of the sixteenth century. Gregory notes, “The resistance to conversion finds its limits in martyrdom.”⁶¹ Alongside martyrdom stands exile as a means to resist compelled conversion. If these are radical poles or limits to which an individual might go to resist conversion, then remaining finds itself somewhere in-between them. However, unlike Nicodemism, remaining still falls along this spectrum of resistance to conversion in the public sphere. While martyrdom was a grand spectacle and still holds incredible ideological power, remaining reflects a similar gravitas. Martin Luther’s famous phrase, “here I stand,” is emblematic not of martyrdom, but of remaining. Thus, Gregory’s statement, “If religious belief explains the martyrs’ willingness to die, it might also explain much more within early modern Christianity than recent historiographic trends in

⁶⁰ Wright, “Marian Exiles and the Legitimacy of Flight from Persecution,” 228.

⁶¹ Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 66.

the field would suggest,” represents the need to demonstrate other ways in which religious belief impacted the early modern world—and remaining seems a very significant, and probably far more prevalent in comparison to martyrdom, lens through which to do so.⁶²

Hus serves as the ideal representation of this. His decision to attend the Council of Constance was a decision that cost him his life and he made it knowing that death was a very real possibility. However, martyrdom was not goal of his decision. Hus attended the Council because he decided to remain in order to affirm his position as a member of his religious, civic, and national communities. His final letters from the Council constantly affirmed his affiliation with Prague and with the Czech people. He did this by frequently addressing his letters to “Czechs” and to the “Praguers.”⁶³ In these letters, he also made note of how the Cardinals of other nationalities worked against him, even though they could not read his works to disagree with them because they did not speak Czech. In what he thought was his final letter back to the Czech people, he wrote that “Italians, French, English, Spanish, Germans, and other languages in that Council,” opposed him, deliberately highlighting the national tensions at the council and his alignment with the Czech nation.⁶⁴

Hus’ decision to attend the Council was a decision to remain. He rejected flight and Nicodemism, even though both presented themselves as viable options of continued survival. His death which did ultimately occur at Constance because of this decision was

⁶² Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 79.

⁶³ 16 November 1414-To the Praguers, 134. Hus also frequently addresses his letters to his “Friends in Bohemia,” 24 June 1415, 189.

⁶⁴ 26 June 1415-To all the Faithful Czechs, 192.

an act of martyrdom, but martyrdom was not what motivated Hus to make the decision to attend the Council. Rather, it was the desire to affirm his loyalty to his church, his city, and his nation and to end his exile in the countryside. Nearly a hundred years after Hus, Martin Luther would make the same decision, though his choice would not cost him his life. But the template, cast by Hus, to reject flight out of the desire to maintain the bonds of community that affected the very nature of how these individuals viewed themselves, was set regardless of the outcome. Thus, Hus remained; and though he died, he died a Bohemian.

CHAPTER THREE

Martin Luther

Jan Hus' decision to attend the Council of Constance and to figuratively remain with his community ultimately cost him his life. This same decision was echoed by Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms over a hundred-years later. However, unlike Hus, Luther survived his trial and went on to spend a life marked by the decision to remain and to stand for his religious beliefs with his community at Wittenberg. Prior to his return to his city though Luther faced an intense period of exile in the Wartburg fortress that left indelible marks on his theology and, indeed, his understanding of his own place in his religious, civic, and familial communities. This period of exile can be seen a counterpoint to the decision to the remain and this chapter will explore how the decision to go into hiding affected Luther and his understanding of his identity within the broader context of his community until he ultimately decided to return to Wittenberg. Ultimately, while in the Wartburg Luther experienced the consequences of the dilemma of flight and found the cost of safety too great in comparison to the loneliness it engendered.

In April 1521, Martin Luther stood before the recently elected Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the city of Worms and firmly stated that he would not recant his writings unless he could be convinced of their falseness by scripture or sound reason. His famous speech clearly demonstrated to both secular and religious authorities that Luther was willing to die in support of his beliefs; and there is good reason to believe that Luther

expected he would die for his refusal to recant.¹ The burning of Jan Hus at the Council of Constance clearly set an example of which Luther was aware and, in all likelihood, expected to follow.² Yet, after announcing his intention to continue preaching and writing and refusing to amend his position, Luther and his entourage simply walked out of Worms. On the wagon ride back to Wittenberg, Luther and his companions were beset by horsemen who bound Luther, threw him onto a horse, and rode off. There is every reason to believe that Luther expected these individuals were taking him to his death. When they dismounted a short distance away, unbound Luther, gave him a horse, and announced their intentions, Luther's reaction is uncertain. Whether he initially welcomed Frederick the Wise's protection or immediately began to feel a sense of restlessness in the Wartburg is unknown.³ However, in a matter of weeks, Luther became convinced that martyrdom would have been preferable to the fate that awaited him at the Wartburg.

In the secluded forests of Thuringia, Luther suffered an exile of both body and spirit. While scholars of Luther have long acknowledged the role that Luther's *Anfechtungen* played on the development of his theology of justification, surprisingly little attention has been given to how Luther's intense physical and spiritual suffering at

¹ For a reasonably straightforward work on the trial at Worms see: James Atkinson, *The Trial of Luther* (New York, 1971); Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985); Scott H. Hendrix, *Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); and Andrew Pettegree, *Brand Luther: How an Unheralded Monk Turned his Small Town into a Center of Publishing, Made Himself the Most Famous Man in Europe—and Started the Protestant Reformation* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015).

² For an excellent comparison of Luther and Hus see: Roland Herbert Bainton, *Here I Stand; a Life of Martin Luther* (London, 1951), 102-120.

³ "I certainly thought I should expose my neck to the public fury; but [my friends] were of another opinion. Upon their suggestion, armed horsemen captured me along the way in a fake attack and placed me in a safe spot where I am now treated in the kindest way" Luther to Nicholas Gerbel (1 Nov. 1521) LW 48:319; WA Br 2:397.

the Wartburg influenced the development of his theology.⁴ Yet, while exiled in the Wartburg Luther experienced a crisis of identity that left him bereft of friends, family, and purpose. My attestation in this chapter is that this exilic crisis quickly moved Luther to a radical reassessment of clerical and monastic celibacy, thus laying the groundwork for his own marriage three years later, and also created the perfect conditions in which Luther was able to accomplish the astounding feat of translating the New Testament into German in the course of only eleven weeks. Finally, through an examination of Luther's time in exile we gain a better understanding of what the decision to go into exile cost early modern individuals and how the decision to return and remain continued to exert an influence through the looming specter of absent community and the lack of actual belonging.

In the Wartburg: Questions of Identity

Luther claimed to have been excommunicated three times in his life.⁵ The first was in 1518 when Staupitz released Luther from the Augustinian Order so that his mentor

⁴ This chapter will not take the time to explore the precise degree to which Luther's time in the Wartburg may have influenced his later recollections of his *Anfechtungen*, or his periods of intense psychological angst as a young monk. However, it is possible that much of what Luther would later write concerning these periods of stress was filtered through his remembrances of the Wartburg and a comparative study of the language Luther uses in his letters from his exile and the language with which he speaks of his *Anfechtungen* may well prove a valuable avenue of research.

⁵ "Three times I have been excommunicated. The first time was by Dr. Staupitz, who absolved me from the observance and rule of the Augustinian Order so that, if the Pope pressed him to imprison me or command me to be silent, he could excuse himself on the ground that I was not under his obedience. The second time was by the pope and the third time was by the emperor. Consequently I cannot be accused of laying aside my habit, and am now silent by divine authority alone." Proceedings at Augsburg LW 31:257. While the phrase "Three times I have been excommunicated" appears in *Luther's Works*, the same phrase does not appear in *D. Martin Luther's Werke: Tischreden*. However, Luther uses *excommunicavit* twice in reference to his excommunication by the Pope and also referring to his outlawing by Charles V. However, when referring to his removal from the monastery by Staupitz, Luther uses the phrase "*absolvit me*." Luther does seem to be making the argument that he has been cast out by three different institutions, but the phrase from which "excommunicated three times" seems to be drawn is actually "*et sic tertio absolutus sum*." Despite this, the meaning of the Luther's message remains the same and it seems remarkable that Luther would refer to his outlawing as "*excommunicavit*," WA 2:8.

would not have to act against him. The second time was by the pope after Luther's debate with Cajetan at the Diet of Augsburg. The third and final time was by the emperor after the Diet of Worms. Yet what made this third time different was that Luther was not merely excommunicated but completely shorn from his community and even from his own professional identity as a professor and a monastic.⁶ After his first two excommunications, the first of which was done out of affection, Luther continued to enjoy the support of his friends and colleagues. But when Luther left Worms, he did so believing that this excommunication would be final and would, almost certainly, cost him his life. He was prepared to sever the ties that bound his earthly body to those he loved through a glorious martyrdom. But the severing that actually occurred was, for Luther, far worse.

The emperor's decree against Luther made it clear that it was not safe for him to be caught abroad.⁷ Thus it was of the utmost importance that his location be kept absolutely secret. To this end, Luther was smuggled into the castle wearing the cloak of a knight and was kept in a knight's quarters. Luther notes at this point, "Here I was stripped of my own clothes and dressed in a knight's cloak. I am letting my hair and beard grow, so that you would hardly know me, I cannot even recognize myself any longer."⁸

⁶ Although Staupitz formally released Luther, he continued to live in the Augustinian house in Wittenberg, wear the cowl, and keep monastic hours.

⁷ "We enjoin you all: not to take the aforesaid Martin Luther into your houses, not to receive him at court, to give him neither food nor drink, nor to hide him, to afford him no help, following, support, or encouragement, either clandestinely or publicly, through words or works. Where you can get him, seize him and overpower him, you should capture him and send him to us under tightest security." Holy Roman Empire, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, and Historische Kommission. *Deutsche Reichstagsakten: Jeungere Reihe*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962, 2.645. Translation by Heiko Oberman in *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*, trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New Haven, 2006).

⁸Luther to George Spalatin (14 May 1521) LW 48:228; WA Br 2:338.

Luther's inability to recognize himself had to do with far more than his outward appearance. This external anonymity soon came to be reflected in Luther's inner life as well. In the first few weeks of his exile Luther rarely signed his letters out of fear that they would be intercepted, and when he did, he signed them under a false name.⁹ When he interacted with others in the castle he also gave a fake name—the most famous of which was Jünker Jorg, or George the knight. Even Luther's diet was different.¹⁰ Everything about his first few months in the Wartburg was traumatic to his sense of self. In a sense, therefore, the man whom Martin Luther had been before he left for Worms did die and an analysis of his letters from the Warburg will demonstrate this fact.

The secrecy of Luther's exile undoubtedly brought on a crisis of identity. Both of these points are of immense importance—that Luther experienced an exile and that this exile was a major contributor to, if not the source of, a shift in his identity. The study of religious exiles and refugees in the early modern period has increased in recent years and at the core of this increased study has been the recognition that exile is necessarily transformational. Exile can simply be said to be a flight from home brought about by the threat of persecution.¹¹ However, the implications of that flight extend far beyond the

⁹ Early in his stay Luther did not sign his letters (see LW 48:253) or he signed them under a false name such as Henry Nesicus (see LW 48:255).

¹⁰ For an overview of how diet has influenced identity in the Western world see: Peter Scholliers, Ed., *Food, Drink and Identity Cooking, eating and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹¹ "Home" here is a loaded term and one which is open to a multitude of interpretations. I have used it to connote the location where an individual has established his identity (thus, Wittenberg for Luther) and where he would prefer to be geographically located (again, for Luther, Wittenberg).

geographic into the economic, cultural, religious, familial, political, and social realms.¹² Luther was removed from his friends and his profession, made to dress differently, and even go by a different name. Because of an ideological disagreement with the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor, Luther was cast out of his community and forced into hiding. His remaining in the Wartburg was clearly an act of self-preservation and the religious reasons for this period of exile cemented his ideological separation from the powers that be. What is more, the dangers of his returning to Wittenberg are obvious in both his letters and the action of his caretakers. Thus, it seems quite clear that Luther's time in the Wartburg can be accurately described as a period of exile and, therefore, most surely a period of transformation.

Indeed, so certain was the possibility of danger that Luther may well have received written reports about his own death. Albrecht Durer received such an account and, believing it to be valid, wrote, "If we lose this man, who has written more clearly than any other in centuries, may God grant his spirit to another. His books should be held in great honor, and not burned as the emperor commands, but rather the books of his enemies. O God, if Luther is dead, who will henceforth explain to us the gospel? What might he not have written for us in the next ten or twenty years?"¹³ It did not help that for the first ten days or so of his exile Luther was unable to write letters to his friends letting them know he still lived. When he was able, Luther wrote to one friend, "I recently wrote

¹² For examples see: J. Tyler's "Refugees and reform: banishment and exile in early modern Augsburg" eds. Robert James Bast, Andrew Colin Gow, and Heiko Augustinus Oberman, *Continuity and Change: The Harvest of Late Medieval and Reformation History* (Boston, 2000) and Lorna Jane Abray's "Joyful in exile? French-speaking Protestants in Sixteenth-Century Strasbourg," eds. Miriam Usher Chrisman, Phillip N. Bebb, and Sherrin Marshall, *The Process of Change in Early Modern Europe* (Athens, 1988).

¹³ Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 192.

all of you, my Amsdorf, but I listened to better advice and tore up everything, since it was not yet safe to send out any letters.”¹⁴ And again, to Spalatin, “I have purposely not written to you previously so that the recent rumor of my capture would not cause anyone to intercept the mail. Various stories about me are told in this area. The opinion becomes stronger, however, that I was captured by friends who were sent from Franconia.”¹⁵ At one point of his exile, a rumor leaked out that Luther was actually staying in the Wartburg, and so to combat the rumor Luther intentionally dispensed false information concerning his location in a letter which George Spalatin was to “lose.”¹⁶ Luther had to perpetuate the appearance of his vanishing and to do this had to operate in anonymity, and this seemed to weigh heavily on him. It was with some degree of resignation that Luther told Amsdorf, “it is not necessary that other people know anything else than that I am still alive.”¹⁷ Yet mere existence was not enough to settle Luther’s doubts and, as will be shown, he wrote again and again that he would rather be burned alive than continue life in its present state. Survival meant far less to Luther than purpose.

Scholarly treatments of Luther’s time in the Wartburg are surprisingly few, at least insofar as an in-depth consideration of this period of Luther’s life is concerned. In his biography of Luther, Heiko Oberman says little about Luther’s time in the Wartburg

¹⁴ Luther to Nicholas von Amsdorf (12 May 1521) LW 48:218; WA Br 2:334.

¹⁵ Luther to George Spalatin (14 May 1521) LW 48:222-223; WA Br 2:336.

¹⁶ The letter contained false information indicating that Luther was in Bohemia and was written in a very smug tone in order to antagonize authorities into shifting their attention away from Wartburg, Luther to George Spalatin (May 1521) LW 48:272; WA Br 2:365. Interestingly, in the letter before the false one, he also wrote the wrong date. This could merely have been an accident, but it might have been another attempt to throw off authorities in case the letter was discovered. See Luther to George Spalatin (July 1521) LW 48:271; WA Br 2:366.

¹⁷ Luther to Philip Melanchthon (8 May 1521) LW 48:212-213; WA Br 2:331.

but only notes that “[h]e himself experienced the dramatic years between 1518 and 1521 (not heroically choosing to be the champion of a new cause as many understand it today); he had not turned away; he had been turned away.”¹⁸ While Oberman says little on this matter, he at least acknowledges the trauma that Luther experienced during this tumultuous period of his life. Indeed, in the “Chronological Outline” of Luther’s life that Oberman offers, nearly every year is given exceptional attention except for 1521/1522 which is merely labeled as “Wittenberg Troubles” and thus bypassing the Wartburg all together.¹⁹ Other scholars, such as Martin Brecht, do not fully consider the serious crisis that Luther experienced within the walls of the Wartburg. He writes that, though Luther was somewhat depressed during this time, “Yet [he] never saw himself as a beaten man or a loser while at the Wartburg.”²⁰ However, even Brecht who tends to downplay Luther’s suffering, notes that Luther did experience times of trial in the Wartburg. He writes that the “‘idleness’ about which Luther frequently complained consisted mostly of brief periods of loneliness and time for catching his breath and had to do chiefly with a feeling that he was cut off from his accustomed public activity.”²¹ While this is a somewhat softened version of the experiences that Luther underwent while in the Wartburg, it hints at the very painful truth of Luther’s exile.²²

¹⁸ Oberman, *Luther*, 186.

¹⁹ Oberman, *Luther*, 358.

²⁰ Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation 1483-1521* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), 2.

²¹ Brecht, *Martin Luther*, 6.

²² The habit of underplaying the suffering of exiles in order to highlight their significant achievements and laud their well-recognized courage is a longstanding one. However, some scholars have begun to reassess the challenges which early modern exiles faced, and this often comes with a recognition that, while many of these figures are portrayed as heroes, their experiences felt far from heroic. For an excellent example of this see: Salman Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity: Turmoil, Treatment, and*

The best treatment of Luther's experience in the Wartburg is offered by Roland Bainton in *Here I Stand*. Yet even Bainton, who acknowledges some of the trauma of Luther's time in the Wartburg, moves quickly from this period into the broader events of the Reformation in the 1520s.²³ Ultimately, these sources not only do not give sufficient attention to Luther's time in the Wartburg, but they also do not recognize that this time in the Wartburg was crucial to the development of Luther's views on monasticism, celibacy, and the gift and importance of biblical translation. Furthermore, by not recognizing Luther's time in the Wartburg as a particular sort of exile, they cannot fully account for just how formative this period was in the creation of Luther's identity as a reformer.

Even the two most famous works on Luther's psyche, Erik Erikson's *Young Man Luther* and Richard Marius's *Martin Luther: The Christian Between God and Death*, fail properly to address Luther's experiences in the Wartburg. Erikson treats Luther's time in the Wartburg merely as a continuation of his previous sufferings and sees nothing new in the intense loneliness that he experienced in the castle. For Erikson, Luther's time in exile marks the conclusion of his work and, because of this, is passed over with perfunctory attention and in a manner that, at least to Erikson, is merely further proof of earlier conclusions.²⁴

Transformation (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1999), Katy Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles in Late Sixteenth-Century Paris*. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), and Thomas Weller and P. Henning, Jürgens, eds. *Religion und Mobilität: Zum Verhältnis von raumbezogener Mobilität und religiöser Identitätsbildung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).

²³ Bainton, *Here I Stand*. The significance of the events occurring in Wittenberg and elsewhere during Luther's time in the Wartburg may, to some extent, offer an explanation for why Luther's exile receives relatively little attention in comparison with his struggles as a young man.

²⁴ Erik H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1962).

Marius' work on Luther is a bit more extensive, though it, too, fails to recognize the crucial aspects of Luther's discomfort in the Wartburg. Marius emphasizes Luther's discussion with Latomus throughout his chapter on "Exile on Patmos." While this is an important theological debate for Luther, it does not represent the same radical shift in thinking during this period that can be witnessed concerning Luther's understanding of celibacy, marriage, and monastic vows, issues to which Marius gives only cursory attention. Also, rather than relying upon Luther's letters written during this period of his life, Marius instead draws primarily from Luther's later recollections of his time in the Wartburg. These recollections emphasize spiritual attacks, appearances of Satan, and other supernatural occurrences. While these are very interesting passages, and served to further Marius' more sensationalist points in his biography, it is wiser to avoid them due to the risk that they may not reflect Luther's true experience, given the length of time between the event and its recollection. Although, even these letters are proof of the intense distress with which Luther would later recall his time in the Wartburg. However, Luther's direct accounts of the Wartburg should be examined in order to have a more accurate understanding of Luther's experience of exile.²⁵

Luther's letters offer painful insights into the effects that this experience had upon the man in relation to how he perceived his own identity. At Worms he expected to die. At the Wartburg, though, he was, in his mind, worse than dead—he was alive with what he felt to be no purpose and a sudden crisis of identity. He wrote of his continued existence with obvious annoyance, "I would have preferred of course that the Hog of Dresden (Duke George) had been considered worthy of killing me while I preached in

²⁵ Richard Marius, *Martin Luther: The Christian between God and Death* (Cambridge, 1999).

public, had it pleased God I should suffer for his Word.”²⁶ In his initial letters at the Wartburg, Luther began to realize what his disappearance meant for his reputation and for the church in Wittenberg. In his third letter from the Wartburg to Melanchthon, not even weeks after the beginning of his exile, Luther wrote that he worried that people will think he has fled from the battle against the Antichrist of Rome. He worried that the church would flounder thinking that he had abandoned it and that all of their work would amount to nothing because he was not able to be martyred for the cause and instead appeared to have fled from death.²⁷

Luther was very eager to assure those who feared he might have fled that he did so not out of self-interest or cowardice, but because of the advice of his friends. He wrote to Nicholas Gerbel, “I have withdrawn from the public and thus obeyed the advice of friends. *I have done this against my will*, and am uncertain whether with this action I have done something which is pleasing to God. I certainly thought I should expose my neck to the public fury; but [my friends] were of another opinion.”²⁸ Luther felt, to some extent, that because of his abduction he was in hiding against his own wishes. He had not chosen to flee to the Wartburg but was forced to do so. This is an important aspect for understanding not only Luther’s mindset during his exile, but also the very fact that he was an exile. This style of self-defense is exceptionally common among exiles who wish

²⁶ Luther to Philip Melanchthon (26 May 1521) LW 48:228; WA Br 2:346.

²⁷ “I am quite eager to know your reaction [to my disappearance]. I was afraid it would look as if I had deserted the battle array; and yet there was no way to resist those who wanted and advised this. I desire nothing more than to meet the fury of my enemies head on,” Luther to Melanchthon (12 May 1521) LW 48:215.

²⁸ Luther to Nicholas Gerbel (1 November 1521) LW 48:319; WA Br 2:397. Italics mine.

to justify their flight from persecution.²⁹ Thus, one can see in Luther's letters, what is, in all likelihood, the first example of a Protestant formulating justifications for fleeing from danger rather than staying to face martyrdom. While he does not promulgate an official opinion on this matter, Luther's struggle is certainly reflected in later Protestants wrestling with the decision to face exile or death and he did it by arguing that if he had been given the opportunity remain he would have done so—whether that meant martyrdom or a return to Wittenberg.³⁰

On the same day of this letter to Melancthon, Luther also wrote to Nicholas von Amsdorf and to a former student, John Agricola. In these letters Luther discussed the state of his captivity. He wrote to Amsdorf that he was now a “man of leisure” and that he felt like a “free man among captives.”³¹ But from his letter to Agricola it becomes apparent that this leisure did not entirely suit him. For though he was a willing captive, he was also entirely unwilling in the matter, as he would have much preferred to stand up in public for the Word of God—as he said in his own words, “I am a strange prisoner since I sit here both willingly and unwillingly: willingly, since I know the Lord wants it this way; unwilling, since I would want to stand up in public for the word of God, but I have not yet been worthy of this.”³² Luther's signature on these letters also reveals something of his ambivalent attitude towards his captivity. He signed two of them “from the land of

²⁹ Jonathan Wright, “Marian Exiles and the Legitimacy of Flight from Persecution, 221.

³⁰ This experience may well also have influenced Luther's later consolations to Protestant exiles. For an excellent example of this see: Hans B. Leaman, “‘Count Every Step in My Flight:’ Rhegius's and Luther's Consolations for Evangelical Exiles, 1531-3,” in *Experiencing Exile*, 9-24.

³¹ Luther to Nicholas von Amsdorf (12 May 1521) LW 48:219; WA Br 2:334.

³² Luther to John Agricola (12 May 1421) LW 48:221; WA Br 2:335.

the birds” and one of them “in the land of open skies.” It is easy to understand why Luther chose these phrases if one stands atop the Wartburg and surveys the countryside surrounding it. The experience is an isolating one even in the twenty-first century. Luther’s only companionship during much of his time in the castle may well have been just the birds and the sky. Interestingly, these are also the first letters to which Luther signs his name. This could be because the content of the letters made it clear who was writing them, but this could also be seen as an attempt on Luther’s part to assert his identity and to remind his friends, and himself, that he still lived.

Suffering in Solitude

In the following weeks, Luther’s condition drastically deteriorated. He wrote to Melancthon, “As far as I am concerned, all is well, except that the troubles of my soul have not yet ceased, and the former weakness of my spirit and faith persists. My life in seclusion means nothing...I would rather burn among glowing coals than rot here half alive.”³³ Luther’s anxiety concerning his separation from the church was made worse by his discovery that others were suffering for him. Two days after writing to Melancthon and the others, Luther wrote to George Spalatin about the mistreatment of one Master John Draco who had been dragged from his church and forced to resign his Canon because of his support for Luther.³⁴ In response to this feeling of helplessness Luther turned to two comforts—the reading of scripture and the work of translation and theological writing. Luther stated that he had been reading the Bible in both Greek and Hebrew and

³³ Luther to Melancthon (26 May 1521) LW 48:232; WA Br 2:347. Luther here uses the Latin word “*Ardere*” for “burn.”

³⁴ Luther to George Spalatin (14 May 1521) LW 48:224; WA Br 2:337

that he intended to begin work on a number of German *Postils*.³⁵ Both of these things helped assuage his guilt that others were suffering because of him, but he still concluded his letter by expressing how much he wished he had been found worthy of martyrdom.

Exacerbating his foul mood was his increasingly painful constipation, possibly caused by his change in diet and the stress he was under, which plagued him throughout the course of the next several months.³⁶ The full extent to which Luther's constipation and the pain it caused him affected his psychological condition cannot be overstated. He wrote at one point, "My constipation seems to be permanent, so far as I can see, and must always be relieved with medication. Only every fourth, sometimes fifth day, I have elimination. What a terrific stomach!"³⁷ While Luther wrote sarcastically here, in other places he considered his sufferings to be an affliction that God had placed upon him.³⁸ He seemed to fluctuate on whether or not his health problems were a punishment or a gift. He complained constantly in his letters, saying, "Today, on the sixth day, I had an elimination with such difficulty that I almost passed out. Now I sit aching as if in labor confinement, wounded and sore, and shall have no—or little, rest this night."³⁹ Yet at times, he also saw

³⁵ "I am sitting here all day, drunk with leisure. I am reading the Bible in Greek and Hebrew. I shall write a German tract on freedom of auricular confession. I shall also continue working on the Psalms and the *Postil* as soon as I have received the necessary things from Wittenberg," Luther to George Spalatin (14 May 1521) LW 48:225; WA Br 2:337.

³⁶ Luther's constipation seems to have begun almost immediately upon his arrival and did not relent until October, an almost seven month ordeal.

³⁷ Luther to George Spalatin (6 August 1521) LW 48:291; WA Br 2:378

³⁸ "Concerning my health, I have easier elimination now, due to the strong and powerful medications, but the way my digestion functions has not changed at all. The soreness continues, and I am afraid it may develop into a worse evil with which the Lord afflicts me, according to his wisdom," Luther to George Spalatin (31 July 1521) LW 48:276; WA Br 2:369.

³⁹ Luther to George Spalatin (9 September 1521) LW 48:307; WA Br 2:388

his constipation as a reminder that Christ had also suffered. So he was able to say, in the midst of his pain, “I am more constipated than ever in my life, and despair of remedy. The Lord thus afflicts me, that I may not be without a relic of the cross.”⁴⁰ When Luther’s constipation finally relented in October, he wrote with tangible relief and joy, “At last my behind and my bowels have reconciled themselves to me. Therefore I need no further medication, and am again completely healthy as before. Thanks be to God!”⁴¹ Regardless, constipation over this length of time would have seriously diminished Luther’s quality of life during his exile in the Wartburg. The discomfort he experienced from his bowels would have been exacerbated by hemorrhoids and anal fissures. Medical research has even noted that individuals suffering from chronic constipation rank among those with the lowest quality of life among patients with non-fatal disorders.⁴² While this is a rather extensive amount of information on Luther’s intestinal complications, it is important to realize the full extent to which Luther was plagued by his constipation and the way that pain almost certainly exacerbated his other concerns.

On top of his physical pain, Luther also felt increasingly distanced from his friends and from current affairs during his period of exile. After roughly two months in the Wartburg, he began to write in earnest on matters of doctrine and did his best to remain busy, but for all he did he still felt worthless. The hours of boredom began to lead him into sexual temptation, and he felt, more than ever, the insignificance of his life. He wrote to Melanchthon,

⁴⁰ Luther to George Spalatin (10 June 1521) LW 48:255; WA Br 2:355

⁴¹ Luther to George Spalatin (7 October 1521) LW 48:316; WA Br 2:394

⁴² Sailer et al., “Quality of Life in Patients with Benign Anorectal Disorders,” *British Journal of Surgery* 85, no. 12 (1998), 1716–19.

Your high opinion of me shames and tortures me since—unfortunately—I sit here like a fool and hardened in leisure, pray little, do not sigh for the church of God, yet burn in a big fire of my untamed body. In short I should be ardent in spirit, but I am ardent in the flesh, in lust, laziness, leisure, and sleepiness. I do not know whether God has turned away from me since you all do not pray for me. You are already replacing me; because of the gifts you have from God, you have attained greater authority and popularity than I had.⁴³

In this instance Luther use the Latin word “*uror*,” from *uredo*, to describe the burning of his flesh. Whenever Luther used *uredo* it carried a very particular connotation of sexual temptation. This is most likely a reference to 1 Corinthians 7:9 which reads in English as, “For it is better to marry than burn with passion,” but in the Vulgate uses “*uri*” for “burn.” Thus, whenever Luther used the word *uredo* it seems clear that he was referring to a form of sexual torment but also that he was referencing a verse that directly connects sexual temptation to the decision to marry.⁴⁴ Luther’s last statement regarding Melanchthon’s popularity may also have been true, for while Luther was in the Wartburg, Melanchthon’s *Loci Communes* released to widespread success and the Wittenberg Church was strengthened. Thus, perhaps worse for Luther than the Church failing, it was succeeding without him while he wallowed in sexual temptation.

Throughout his exile, Luther expressed his longing for his friends, but also some degree of jealousy for their freedom and accomplishments. He wrote in a postscript to John Agricola concerning the birth of his son that he would have a gift for both the mother and child if he were able to return, “for were I present, I would of course be godfather.”⁴⁵ It is difficult not to detect some degree of bitterness in this sentiment,

⁴³ Luther to Melanchthon (13 July 1521) LW 48:257; WA Br 2:356.

⁴⁴ From the *New International Version*

⁴⁵ Luther to John Agricola (12 May 1521) LW 48:222; WA Br 2:336

particularly given that Luther opened his letter to Agricola saying, “To you, my John (unless with my disappearance fellowship among friends has likewise disappeared, which God prevent).”⁴⁶ He also wrote briefly to Nicholas Gerbel, “But you may believe me, in this leisurely solitude I am exposed to a thousand devils. It is so much easier to fight the devil incarnate—that is, people—than the spirits of iniquity in heavenly places. Often I fall, but the right hand of the Most High raises me again. Therefore I yearn again and again for companionship.”⁴⁷

Luther’s loneliness during his stay in the Wartburg was a profound reality that made him yearn for his friends, but it also made him occasionally jealous of their freedom and achievements. Notably, he wrote on numerous occasions about the marriages of his friends and acquaintances. During his ten months in the Wartburg, Melancthon and Karlstadt both married and Luther’s former colleague and friend Nicholas Gerbel also wed.⁴⁸ Luther wrote to Gerbel in November, nearly seven months into his exile, “Please greet your wife; may she love you and in turn be loved by you. You lucky man, that you have by an honorable marriage conquered that unclean celibacy which is reprehensible because it causes either a constant burning or unclean pollutions.”⁴⁹ There are two important points in this letters and those like them. The first

⁴⁶ Luther to John Agricola (12 May 1521) LW 48:221; WA Br 2:335

⁴⁷ Luther to Nicholas Gerbel (1 November 1521) LW 48:319; WA Br 2:397

⁴⁸ On the marriages of Karlstadt and Melancthon Luther wrote, “Karlstadt’s wedding make me very happy. I know the girl. May the Lord strengthen him as a good example to fight and to lessen the papistic unchastity. Amen. I shall deliver my small present in due time, after Easter,” Luther to Nicholas von Amsdorf (13 January 1522) LW 48:363; WA Br 2:423. “Be sure to write everything that happens at your place and how everything is. Farewell to you and your wife,” Luther to Melancthon (12 May 1521) LW 48:217; WA Br. 2:333.

⁴⁹ Luther to Nicholas Gerbel (1 November 1521) LW 48:321; WA 2:397. Luther here again uses the word “*uredine*” to describe this burning and this time also directly references marriage; thus cementing the connection between the two ideas for Luther whenever he uses this particular word.

is that Luther again acknowledged strong sexual temptation that he felt while he was in the Wartburg. The “constant burning” to which Luther earlier referred continued to plague him as he felt tempted by sexual thoughts during his long hours of boredom. One of Luther’s most frequent confessions to his friends in letters became that he struggled with temptation constantly and felt as if Satan were relentlessly attacking him on this matter. Second, it is very possible that as Luther saw his friends marrying with such rapidity that he began to reassess the purpose and function of the institution of marriage—as well as the possibility of his participation in it.

Reaching out in Exile

Luther’s sexual temptation during his stay in the Wartburg is in some ways astounding and in other ways not at all surprising. The fact that Luther suffered from his sexual temptations is undoubtable. He wrote on numerous occasions about his sins, “You will hear about other things from the people of Wittenberg. Physically I am healthy and well cared for, but I am also thoroughly buffeted by sins and temptations. Pray for me, and farewell;” and, “I ask you all to pray for me, since in this seclusion I am drowning in sins.”⁵⁰ Part of Luther’s problems stemmed from his changed setting. Luther was pretending to be a knight. He had been smuggled into the castle as a knight and was staying in a knight’s quarters. Also, for the first time in his life, Luther was regularly in the company of women. This combination may well have proved exceptionally dangerous for the inexperienced Luther. It is highly possible that he was, for the first

⁵⁰ Luther to John Lang (18 December 1521) LW 48:357; WA Br. 2:413 and Luther to Melancthon (13 July 1521) LW 48:263; WA Br 2:359

time, intermingling with women who did not think of him as a monk but as a knight and, hence, a legitimate and legal sexual partner. It is unknown whether or not Luther experienced sexual advances during his time in exile, but it is not difficult to imagine that even the slightest provocation may well have sent Luther spiraling into one of his “burnings.” These sexual thoughts greatly distressed Luther not only because they were intrinsically opposed to his pre-exile monastic identity, but also because they distracted him from the duties he felt he ought to be performing. He wrote to Melanchthon, “Already eight days have passed in which I have written nothing, in which I have not prayed or studied; this is partly because of temptations of the flesh, partly because I am tortured by other burdens.”⁵¹ It is not surprising then that Luther would respond as he did when the question of celibacy among monks was posed to him.

Luther seemed to struggle throughout his exile with his own sense of self-identity insofar as his calling as a monk was concerned. Luther obviously came to despise at times the celibacy that had come with his monastic vows. However, he also seemed to have decided that he would, in some sense, remain a monk. He wrote to Wenceslas Link, the head of the Augustinian Order in Wittenberg, concerning those monks who had left the monastery in order to marry, “No one should be delayed or forced to remain in a monastery against his will. Meanwhile you, like Jeremiah, should remain in the service of Babylon, for I, too, shall remain in this cowl and manner of life, if the world does not change.”⁵² The fact that Luther said to Link that his monasticism kept him in service to Babylon is a strong indicator that by this point Luther considered monasticism to be

⁵¹ Luther to Melanchthon (13 July 1521) LW 48:260; WA Br 2:357

⁵² Luther to Wenceslas Link (18 December 1521) LW 48:359; WA Br 2: 415

oppressive even to those who willingly submitted to its rigors. Thus, monastic service would almost always weigh heavily upon those who undertook it, but some were called to do so and were able to bear up under the weight of monastic celibacy. Luther himself seemed to hope that he would be able to do as Link, and he wrote at the conclusion of his introduction to *On Monastic Vows*, “Shall I belong to the cowl, or shall not the cowl rather belong to me? My conscience has been freed, and that is the most complete liberation. Therefore I am still a monk and yet not a monk. I am a new creature, not of the pope but of Christ.”⁵³

In August of 1521, Luther was contacted by both Melancthon and Spalatin concerning the number of monks in Wittenberg who were leaving their order so that they might marry.⁵⁴ Luther seemed to ignore the matter for some time until, at last in November, at the peak of his torment, Luther wrote, “For I have decided to attack monastic vows and free the young people from that hell of celibacy, totally unclean and condemned as it is through its burning and pollutions. I am writing partly because of my own experience and partly because I am indignant.”⁵⁵ It seems possible that Luther would have still ultimately come to the same opinion on the matter of celibacy had he not been in exile in the Wartburg. But the trauma of his exile and the loneliness it engendered made him embrace the rejection of celibacy and the dissolution of monastic vows with

⁵³ Martin Luther to Hans Luther (21 November 1521) LW 48:335; WA 8:576. Luther, at this point, had let his hair grow out to hide his cowl. This may offer some explanation for why, later in life, it would take Luther so long to surrender the cowl as it would have been a tangible reminder of his tormented time in the Wartburg.

⁵⁴ Luther to George Spalatin (6 August 1521) LW 48:290; WA Br 2:377

⁵⁵ Luther to George Spalatin (11 November 1521) LW 48:328; WA Br 2:403. Again, Luther uses “*uredine*” here.

virulent anger. The proof that it was his separation from his loved ones that moved Luther so quickly to this position is driven home by his introductory letter to his work on the matter, *On Monastic Vows*, the writing of which occurred while Luther was in the Wartburg, thus offering further proof of his increasingly anti-monastic sentiments during his exile. This letter served as the forward to the book, but it was also a personal and heartfelt message to Luther's father. Hans Luther had originally opposed young Martin's taking of the monastic oath and this letter serves, to some extent, as an apology (in both senses of the word) to his father. Alone in the Wartburg, separated from his family and friends, in many ways because of his choice to enter the monastery, Luther wrote with a note of heartbreak, "What do you think now? Will you take me out of the monastery? You are still my father and I am still your son and all the vows are worthless."⁵⁶

The issue of clerical and monastic celibacy was being radically reassessed in the early 1520s. According to Marjorie Plummer, it was a period of "rapid reevaluation of spiritual, social, and political boundaries that were to impact marriage, gender, and social expectations."⁵⁷ Monastic marriage in particular prompted this reevaluation as "[m]arried monks and nuns forced all levels of society to consider a radically new definition of marriage, religious practice, and institutional organization."⁵⁸ In his *On Monastic Vows*, Luther never fully rejected or accepted the idea of monastic marriage, but his ambivalence is itself representative of an incredible shift in how people were coming to view vows of celibacy. What is more, while the impetus for Luther to write *On Monastic*

⁵⁶ Martin Luther to Hans Luther (21 November 1521) LW 48:333; WA 8:575

⁵⁷ Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer, *From Priest's Whore to Pastor's Wife: Clerical Marriage and the Process of Reform in the Early German Reformation* (Farnham, 2012), 2.

⁵⁸ Plummer, *From Priest's Whore to Pastor's Wife*, 133.

Vows was external to the Wartburg, the importance of his context in its penning should not be ignored. David M. Whitford has demonstrated that Luther's views on sexual morality were strongly contextual and not based on a systematic approach to the subject.⁵⁹ Thus, his own sexual temptations and his loneliness surely played a part in his measured response to the issue of monastic celibacy and his undoubted acceptance of clerical marriage.

Luther's comment to Gerbel then is far less surprising given his particular context than it would have been in its original historical setting, "That most miserable celibacy of young men and women daily presents such great horrors to me that even now nothing sounds worse to my ears than the words 'nun,' 'monk,' and 'priest.' I consider marriage to be a paradise, even if it has to endure greatest poverty."⁶⁰ On the same day he wrote to Gerbel Luther also wrote to Spalatin, "At the moment I have nothing else to write. So it is up to you, who are out in the world, to write to me—since I am now finally and really a monk. Yet I am not actually a monk, because I have many evil and astute demons with me; they 'amuse' me, as one says, but in a disturbing way."⁶¹ Luther interpreted his exile in the Wartburg as a form of monasticism, and as he came to hate his isolation more and more so too grew his anger against the monastic oaths and all they entailed. As he wasted away in the Wartburg the thought of a family and constant companionship truly did seem

⁵⁹ Here Whitford writes, "He was not guided by theological principle. Rather, Luther's advice on bigamy embodies that most common of human frailties, in which one condemns one's enemies and forgives one's friends," David M. Whitford, "'It Is Not Forbidden That a Man May Have More Than One Wife:' Luther's Pastoral Advice on Bigamy and Marriage," in *Mixed Matches: Transgressive Unions in Germany from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (New York: Berghahn, 2014), 26.

⁶⁰ Luther to Nicholas Gerbel (1 November 1521) LW 48:322; WA Br 2:398

⁶¹ Luther to George Spalatin (1 November 1521) LW 48:323; WA Br 2:399

to him “paradise.” Thus, even as he attempted to remain under the vows that he had taken, the seeds for his later marriage had been planted and would bear fruit not even three years after his return to Wittenberg.

There are more hints in Luther’s letters from his exile that he had already begun to reconsider the institution of marriage. When the issue of monastic celibacy was first raised with Luther during his exile, he wrote Spalatin saying, “Good Lord! Will our people at Wittenberg give wives even to the monks? They will not push a wife on me!”⁶² Yet the isolation of the Wartburg made Luther painfully aware of his loneliness and continued to harass him with sexual temptation until, as has been shown, his approval of these marriages became all the more adamant over the course of mere months. Thus, as he struggled with the concept of his own monastic identity he also, naturally, began to entertain the idea of marriage. Indeed, it oftentimes seems as if Luther is protesting too much when he spoke of himself entering into marriage during his time in the Wartburg, such as in the above quotation and once when writing to Melanchthon, “What now? Am I myself free and no longer a monk? Do you think that you should be a Demas for me, and finally fix up this Micio with a Sostrata, in order to get even with me for having given you a wife, as they say? But I shall be quite careful with you, that you don’t succeed!”⁶³ Even though Luther was outwardly saying he would fight against a marriage, this proves that, during his exile, he at least came to consider the idea, even if only in jest, as a possibility.

⁶² Luther to George Spalatin (6 August 1521) LW 48:290; WA Br 2:377

⁶³ Luther to Melanchthon (9 September 1521) LW 48:303; WA Br 2:385. Micio and Sostrata are characters from a popular Classical play entitled *Adelphi* who are brought together by Demas after a long period of sparring with their families.

Belonging in Absence: Translation

As I have mentioned previously, as Luther's exile drew on, his condition deteriorated. Luther felt as if he were gradually betraying himself by his laziness, and yet he could not bring himself to action. It does not matter whether Luther was actually lazy (although it is worth nothing that he did produce a number of impressive works during his early stay in the Wartburg), but again and again he complained to his friends during his time there until he at last lashed out at Spalatin, "Now is the time to pray against Satan with all our strength, he is threatening Germany with some fatal tragedy. And in spite of my fear that the Lord will allow him to bring it about, until now I have been sleepy and lazy, both in praying and resisting [Satan], so that I am angry at myself, and am a burden to myself. Perhaps it is because I am alone and you are not helping me."⁶⁴ At one point, Luther even spoke affectionately of his constipation and the excessive pain that it caused him because it had grown bad enough that he might have to leave the Wartburg to see the doctors at the city of Erfurt.⁶⁵

Luther also began to sign his letters with greater consistency, most often concluding with the phrase, "in my wilderness," and twice, "Written on my Patmos." It seems telling that the two times Luther signed letters from "Patmos" he either did not sign the letter or gave a fake name, even though he often signed most letters with his real name. These letters equate Luther with the Apostle John during his exile on the island of

⁶⁴ Luther to George Spalatin (9 September 1521) LW 48:307-308; WA Br 2:388

⁶⁵ "It is impossible that I endure this evil any longer; it is easier to endure ten big wounds than this small sign of a lesion. Maybe the Lord burdens me so in order to push me out of this hermitage into public," Luther to Melanchthon (13 July 1521) LW 48:257; WA Br 2:356. "If this thing does not improve, I shall go directly to Erfurt and not incognito. There you will see me, or I you, for I shall consult doctors and surgeons" Luther to Melanchthon (13 July 1521) LW 48:260; WA Br 2:357.

Patmos and the Jews in their flight from Egypt.⁶⁶ They also allude to Christ's time in the wilderness—a period of intense temptation and, perhaps most importantly, isolation. This seems indicative of the extent to which Luther understood himself to be an exile within the Wartburg. Separated from those external forces that often serve to reinforce individual identity (family, friends, profession, dress, even diet), Luther began to associate himself more and more with figures who had endured persecution and temptation such as John on Patmos, the Jews in their wandering in the wilderness, and even Christ. Somehow, amidst this period of temptation and isolation, Luther sensed or had been informed of Melanchthon's growing concern for his wellbeing and wrote to him, "I don't want you all concerned about my health; should I find out that you are worried, I shall confess nothing further with regard to it. Who knows whether this should be the end of my ministry? Have I not stirred up enough disturbance singlehandedly?"⁶⁷ Still, it seems the strain of exile and the loneliness it engendered had become too much for Luther and thus, in early December, he was granted leave to take a secret trip back to Wittenberg. Luther's return home, though brief, marked a shift in his attitude towards his exile.

Luther wrote one letter to Spalatin during his brief stay in Wittenberg. The letter is overflowing with happiness, and Luther seems entirely renewed by his brief time with his friends, which could have been no more than a week.⁶⁸ He happily signed this one

⁶⁶ While modern scholarship disagrees on the authorship of Revelation, Luther believed the author of the book to be John the Apostle.

⁶⁷ Luther to Melanchthon (3 August 1521) LW 48:288; WA Br 2:375

⁶⁸ "I came to Wittenberg and amid all the delight of being with my friends again I found this drop of bitterness, namely, none of them has ever heard of seen of my little books and letters," Luther to George Spalatin (5 December 1521) LW 48:351; WA Br 2:409.

letter, “Farewell, from Wittenberg, in Amsdorf’s house, in the company of my Phillip, Martin Luther.”⁶⁹ However, not only did Luther’s time with his friends reinvigorate him and bring him joy, but he seems to have been a reminder of his original intent to “stand up...for the Word of God.”⁷⁰ To this end, Luther, possibly in conjunction with Melancthon, decided that he would translate the whole of the New Testament into German. He undoubtedly made this decision while in Wittenberg, as he immediately began requesting materials from Spalatin in the postscript of his letter from there.⁷¹ Possibly a week after his return to the Wartburg, Luther wrote in a very positive letter to a John Lang, a friar in Erfurt, “I shall be hiding here until Easter. In the meantime I shall finish the *Postil* and translate the New Testament into German, an undertaking our friends request. I hear you are also working on this. Continue as you have begun. I wish every town would have its interpreter, and that this book alone, in all languages, would live in the hands, eyes, ears, and heart of all people.”⁷²

After Luther decided to translate the Bible we hear nothing of laziness and leisure in his correspondence, indeed, we hear almost nothing at all! Over the course of the next several months, Luther sent only seven letters and the majority of them were very short and concerned his translation project, whereas before his project he had sent nearly seven every month. Luther intended to be working on the project for some time. In the letter

⁶⁹ Luther to George Spalatin (5 December 1521) LW 48:352; WA Br 2:410

⁷⁰ Luther to Jon Agricola (12 May 1521) LW 48:221; WA Br 2:397

⁷¹ “Phillip will provide you with a Latin Bible which you should send me; please assume [this task] and handle it with your [usual] trustworthiness,” Luther to George Spalatin (5 December 1521) LW 48:352; WA Br 2:410.

⁷² Luther to John Lang (18 Decmeber 1521) LW 48:356; WA Br 2:413

just quoted, he noted that he planned to return to Wittenberg in April of 1522; and in a letter to Melanchthon shortly thereafter, Luther asked that Melanchthon prepare a room for him so that on his return he could continue to translate.⁷³ This project, much like his writing of *On Monastic Vows*, was a product of external prompting but was produced in the context of the Wartburg and bears the marks of Luther's exile.

Over the course of his translating of scripture, Luther came to think incredibly highly of the task of translation. He had commented very early in his exile that he found comfort in the scriptures, and he wished that he were capable of producing words like those of St. Paul. He wrote in an open letter to the people of Wittenberg, which served as his introduction to his Exposition of Psalm 37, "Since I am not a man like St. Paul, who could write and comfort out of the riches of his own spirit, I have taken up the Scripture, which is full of Comfort, as St. Paul says in Romans 15[:4]. [I have decided] to translate Psalm [37] into German and send it to you, together with short notes."⁷⁴ The content of Psalm 37, a Psalm which questions the suffering of God's elect but still ends in triumphant acclamation of their ultimate deliverance, also makes it abundantly clear that Luther was searching in scripture for comfort in his exile and for vindication.⁷⁵

⁷³ "Please prepare a lodging for me, since the translation will compel me to return to Wittenberg. Pray the Lord this may be done in agreement with his will. I wish, however, to stay hidden as much as possible; meanwhile proceed with what I have begun," Luther to Melanchthon (13 January 1522) LW 48:372; WA Br 2:428.

⁷⁴ Luther to the People of Wittenberg (June 1521) LW 48:251; WA Br 2:354

⁷⁵ Psalm 37 concludes:

"The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; he is their refuge in the time of trouble. The Lord helps them and rescues them; he rescues them from the wicked, and saves them, because they take refuge in him." -Psalm 37:39-40 taken from the *New Revised Standard Version*.

When Luther began to translate on his own, he was quickly overwhelmed with the magnitude of what he had undertaken. He wrote to Amsdorf, “In the meantime I shall translate the Bible, although I have shouldered a burden beyond my power...Now I realize what it means to translate, and why no one has previously undertaken it who would disclose his name.”⁷⁶ Yet, as evinced by the swiftness with which Luther managed to complete his first translation, he took quickly to the task. Despite his worries that he had taken on a task too large, Luther concludes his letter to Amsdorf with a note of triumph, saying, “For I hope we shall give a better translation to our Germany than the Latins have. It is a great and worthy undertaking on which we all should work, since it is a public matter and should be dedicated to the common good.”⁷⁷ Indeed, it even seems as if Luther may have willingly extended his period of isolation away from his friends and their families in order to finish his translation. For, in the same letter to Amsdorf, he said, “I do not aim to hide myself all the time, since this is impossible, [but I wish it] to be known that I prefer to hide and not have people think I wish to show up in public.”⁷⁸ This is a drastic shift in how Luther talks about his exile and seems entirely due to his undertaking of his translation project. Thus, even after his planned return to Wittenberg after Easter, Luther may have remained in seclusion in order to translate more efficiently.

Ultimately though, Luther would not need that long to complete the first edition of his New Testament. Although he had intended to stay at the Wartburg into April, Luther left in early March, citing the disturbances in Wittenberg as his primary reason for

⁷⁶ Luther to Nicholas von Amsdorf (13 January 1522) LW 48:363; WA Br 2:423

⁷⁷ Luther to Nicholas von Amsdorf (13 January 1522) LW 48:363; WA Br 2:423

⁷⁸ Luther to Melancthon (13 January 1522) LW 48:364; WA Br 2:423

departure. Luther went to great lengths to assure Frederick that he was going, not out of a selfish desire to be free of his exile, but to see to the wellbeing of Wittenberg.⁷⁹ This certainly seems feasible, but it also cannot be coincidental that Luther left nearly as soon as he had finished his translation. Perhaps he would have left earlier because of the disturbances had he not been so absorbed in his project or, just maybe, after finishing his translation of the New Testament he felt again the impending isolation and dissociation from which his work had bought him respite, and he could not face that trauma again.⁸⁰

Regardless, it is clear that Luther's astoundingly fast translation of the New Testament was not merely an accomplishment of excess time. Having the time itself was not enough. Luther wasted plenty of time that he could have spent productively in the Wartburg before he decided to translate the New Testament. No, what he needed was purpose. It was not merely the eleven weeks that allowed Luther to translate the New Testament, but in the void in his life created by his own dissociation and his separation from his loved ones. Luther's act of translating became for him the ultimate solace from isolation, and it seems eight years later he turned again to that comfort when, not coincidentally, it was during his stay in another castle that he also called "his wilderness," awaiting the verdict from the Diet of Augsburg, that he wrote his letter, *On Translating*.⁸¹

⁷⁹ "I feared that your electoral Grace would suffer great inconvenience from it. Moreover, I myself was so overwhelmed by the calamity that had I not been certain that we have the pure gospel, I would have despaired of [our] cause. Whatever I have suffered hitherto for this cause has been nothing compared with this. I should have willingly have averted the trouble at the cost of my life if that had been possible," Luther to Frederick the Wise (5 march 1522) LW 48:389-390; WA Br 2:454.

⁸⁰ "I do not come to Wittenberg, nor do I change my quarters, because of the "Zwickau Prophets," For they don't disturb me," Luther to George Spalatin (17 January 1522) LW 48:380; WA Br 2:443. "The lord willing, I shall definitely return in a short time; if I don't stay in Wittenberg I shall certainly stay somewhere else, or wander around. The cause itself demands it," Luther to George Spalatin (17 January 1522) LW 48:380-381; WA Br 2:444.

⁸¹ *On Translating* LW 35:183; WA 30:636

Luther took immense pride in his translation of the New Testament. He wrote, years after his exile, in his introduction to *On Translating*, “I neither ask anybody to read it nor praise anyone who does so. It is my Testament and my translation, and it shall continue to be mine.”⁸² Luther’s affection for his translation was due not only to the effort that he put into it, but also for the relief that it purchased him. Surely the pathos that Luther felt isolated in the Wartburg is reflected in the passages he translated and the greatness of his translation owes much to the circumstances of its creation.⁸³ What is more, the creation of Luther’s biblical translation may, in many ways, owe itself to the transformation that Luther underwent during his exile. A transformation which allowed Luther to identify more than ever before in his life with those biblical figures who experienced the pangs of exile as he sought out a community in which to belong during his separation from Wittenberg. On his Patmos, Luther identified most clearly with the biblical figures of exile and found in the transmission of their stories a comfort which had long eluded him in his isolation.

When Luther finally did return to Wittenberg after the end of his translation project in March of 1522 he did so because of the threat to his community brought about by the iconoclastic teachings of the Zwickau Prophets. For the rest of his life, Wittenberg

⁸² *On Translating* LW 35:183; WA 30:636

⁸³ Luther’s translation is undoubtedly one of the most important works in both biblical and German history. As David Whitford has said, “Luther’s translation must be regarded as one of the greatest contributions not only to biblical translations but also to the wider German language. He adopted a style that was both literary and understandable. Its effect on German culture is similar to the effect of the King James Bible in English,” David M. Whitford, *Luther: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London, 2011), 45-46. For more information on Luther’s translation of the New Testament see: Heinz Bluhm, “Martin Luther and the Pre-Lutheran Low German Bibles,” *The Modern Language Review* 62, no. 4 (1967): 642–53 and Eric W. Gritsch, “Luther as Bible Translator,” ed. Donald K. McKim, *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* (Cambridge, 2003), 62–72; though neither of these works give much attention to Luther’s time in the Wartburg.

would be Luther's home. He would live another forty-four years in the city, marry his wife there, and raise their children in the city. While Luther did travel at times, he never again submitted to the experience of exile and consistently made the decision to remain with his church, his city, and his family for the remainder of his life. In the Wartburg, Luther had experienced the consequences of choosing flight and found the cost of safety too great in comparison to the loneliness it engendered. But Luther was fortunate, and lived out the remainder of his life safely in Wittenberg until his death by natural causes. However, many others in the Reformation were not so lucky and their decision to remain cost them far more than even Luther's decision to flee.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conrad Grebel

In the previous two chapters I have explored the ways in which individuals wrestled with the decision of whether to flee or to remain in the face of persecution and how that decision affected the ways in which they saw themselves, both as individuals and as members of a broader community. For Hus, the decision to remain and attend the Council of Constance affirmed his participation in the Bohemian civic community which, in turn, affirmed his representation of their religious and civic identities after his death. Luther, on the other hand, struggled with an increasingly powerful sense of isolation as he remained hidden in the Wartburg and the Reformation seemed to move on without him. This isolation left permanent marks on his theology, particularly as it concerned monastic celibacy and the translation of scripture, which remained with him even after he rejoined the reforming community in Wittenberg. Both of these individuals negotiated the process of flight and remaining in relationship to a community which, in turn, was affected by their presence or absence based on their decisions. However, the question remains how identity was constructed in relation to the decision to flee or remain not at the conscious individual level, but in regard to the deliberate construction of broader communal identities. While Hus and Luther both struggled to understand who they were in the midst of their dilemma of flight, early-modern Zurich faced an entirely different challenge as two of its citizens competed to impose their own identity upon its civic and religious landscape.

Having looked at how individuals and communities were affected by the decision to both flee and to remain, this chapter will explore the ways in which individuals competed over broader civic and religious communal identity and the effect these power struggles had on the individuals who attempted to steer broader group identities.¹ To do this, I will examine the life of the early Swiss nationalist and Anabaptist, Conrad Grebel (1498-1526). Grebel's life is a fascinating example of the ways in which communal loyalties shifted to either include or exclude individuals based on a set of variable ideological boundaries—occasionally even excluding those who were attempting to direct the development of these identities. In Grebel's case, his participation in the civic community of Zurich and the broader national Swiss community was affirmed in his early life after a series of disastrous trips abroad and a failed marriage, by the power of his family name and his cooperation with Huldrych Zwingli in the early attempts to reform the City of Zurich. However, as Zwingli and Grebel came to increasingly different understandings of the path religious reform ought to take, their disagreements spilled over into the City of Zurich, dividing the community along religious lines and raising the questions of who had the power to establish identity for a civic or religious group and how that power is enforced. Zwingli's eventual victory forced Grebel to wrestle with the dilemma of flight from the very community which he himself helped shape.

¹ For an excellent full-length examination of this question, see Jill Fehleison, *Boundaries of Faith: Catholics and Protestants in the Diocese of Geneva* (Kirksville, Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2010). Fehleison's work explores this question in relation to the re-Catholization of Geneva, but it addresses many of the conflicts between religious and civic identities that will be laid out in this chapter.

Grebel's Early Life and Education

Conrad Grebel was born in 1498 to Jacob and Dorothea Grebel, a member of the landed nobility, in the canton of Zurich. The Grebel family had strong connections to Zurich, with many of the Grebel men sitting as guildmasters for the guildhouse “zur Meise” and several more on Zurich’s Great Council. Several family members served as governors for cities within the other cantons and Conrad’s father, Jacob, often worked as an emissary on the behalf of Zurich. The Grebel family’s service also extended into the religious realm with several female relatives serving as nuns in local convents and several of the men working as priests and, later, pastors.²

Because of this elevated position within Swiss society, Conrad was able to pursue a vigorous education as a young man. Grebel’s first exposure to university studies was at the University of Vienna where he worked under Joachim Vadian, who was himself Swiss, born in the nearby city of St. Gallen.³ Vadian saw great potential in the young Conrad and even penned a public letter to him which he placed at the front of his many works. In this letter Vadian praised Grebel’s potential as a student while directing him in the way in which his studies ought to develop.⁴ Through Vadian, Grebel was also put in

² This chapter is heavily indebted to the work of Harold Bender on the study of Conrad Grebel. Bender’s biography and impressive number of articles provide the best available background from which to approach the study of Grebel. Much of the biographical information for this chapter has been drawn from Bender’s biography, see Harold S. Bender, *Conrad Grebel, C. 1498-1526, The Founder of the Swiss Brethren Sometimes Called Anabaptists* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1971).

³ Grebel’s early exposure to Humanism during his initial period of study left a life-long impression on the young man that undoubtedly contributed to his later involvement in the Zurich Reformation, which manifested itself first in his study of Hebrew and Greek with Huldrych Zwingli. For more on the role which Humanism played in Grebel’s life, see Harold Bender, “The Humanism of Conrad Grebel.” *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 10:3 (1936), 151-60.

⁴ I also owe a great deal of debt to the tireless work of Leland Harder who published all available extant letters by Conrad Grebel in an edited collection. Letters will be cited in a format that presents the author, recipient, location, date, and (if applicable) page number in the edited volume. Vadian to Grebel,

touch with Zurich's rising star, Huldrych Zwingli. His relationship with both Vadian and Zwingli revolved around the desire to find common ground with both of these men he immensely respected. For Zwingli, this took the form of praise for his work in the city of Zurich and the nation of Switzerland.⁵ With Vadian, Grebel took a more personal approach by encouraging the Swiss scholar in Vienna to return to Switzerland and to marry his sister.⁶ Whether because of his opinion of Grebel, the dowry of Grebel's wealthy father, or the opportunity to return to his home, Vadian eventually accepted this offer and wed Martha Grebel after completing his doctorate in medicine.

However, while Grebel greatly admired and appreciated both Zwingli and Vadian, his youth generated in him the desire to travel abroad and to experience more of life outside of familiar circles. To this end, he began to beg his father to send him to Paris to study under Heinrich Loriti, who went by the name Glarean, a Swiss humanist scholar of increasing prominence. Eventually Jacob secured a fellowship for Grebel in late 1518 from the King of France which allowed him to move to Paris and continue his education under Loriti. Paris proved to be an unhappy place for young Grebel—though not for lack of revelry according to his letters from the time. Grebel consorted with many individuals of ill-repute in Paris and his activities frequently got him in trouble with his teacher. On one occasion, after consuming a prodigious amount of wine in the company of a number of soldiers who encouraged him to keep imbibing, Grebel wrote in a letter to Vadian,

Vienna, 28 February 1517 in Leland Harder ed., *The Sources of Swiss Anabaptism: The Grebel Letters and Related Documents* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1985).

⁵ In the first letter Grebel ever sent to Zwingli he concluded it saying, "Farewell and love those who revere you as you deserve. Once again farewell, illustrious glory of Switzerland," Grebel to Zwingli, Vienna, 8 September 1517, 57.

⁶ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, July 23, 1518

“Apparently, I swore in jest by the wounds of God in the presence of Glarean and behaved like a bacchanalian. I was taken away on the orders of Glarean. Thrown down on the bed (and this let me say with all due respect for your refinement) I disgorged the wine I had intemperately imbibed.”⁷

This marked a turning point in Grebel’s relationship with his teacher, for after this incident, Glarean seemed unwilling to forgive Conrad. In the same letter to Vadian he wrote, “He appeared unwilling to deem me worthy of pardon, but when one of his students committed the same sin he got far kinder treatment, and he did not correct me as a teacher should.”⁸ Grebel’s health also began to decline from an ailment that seemed to plague him for the remainder of his life. He wrote to Vadian,

You advised me in your last letter to take the greatest care of my body. I would if I could or knew how, since my feet are in no better condition than they were when I was still in Vienna. The cause, I think, is that they were abused by too much winter cold and of course they give me pain, and deservedly so, because I have often consorted with prostitutes. It was not easy for me to confess that, but the face of a letter does not blush.⁹

Interestingly, Grebel accredited his life-long limb pain to a sexually transmitted disease that he contracted either in Vienna or Paris because of his sinful lifestyle there.¹⁰ Finally, Grebel was distressed by the outbreak of war between the French Crown and several Swiss cities that had broken away from the Holy Roman Empire. He praised the ability of

⁷ Grebel to Vadian, Paris, 29 January 1519, 78.

⁸ Grebel to Vadian, Paris, 29 January 1519, 78.

⁹ Grebel to Vadian, Paris, 29 January 1519, 79.

¹⁰ Grebel also believed that his father’s limb pain was a result of something similar. He wrote to Vadian later in life, “Father is troubled by [limb-troubling gout]; it troubles him, moreover, because it is the daughter of [limb-losing Bacchus and limb-losing Aphrodite]. There is neither time nor space for what troubles me, which I am prevented from reciting for some other reasons also. I shall deal with it more at length another time. I have been foolish, to my own harm perhaps, because I, miserable thrush, have shit on myself,” Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 25 December 1522, 193.

the Swiss to defend themselves because of the presence of many “valiant men to defend the republic,” though he added, “she also has men who are cowardly, who alas are intent on their private affairs;” possibly as an attack on Vadian.¹¹

Writing these things in early 1519, Grebel seemed intent on remaining in Paris despite the pain in his feet. However, as tension between France and Switzerland escalated, Grebel was eventually involved in a tavern brawl in June 1519 that led to the death of two French soldiers. Glarean wrote of the incident, “One student killed two Frenchmen on the first day of May, relying on I know not whose influence. The affair is extremely perilous indeed to all others.”¹² Grebel’s opinion of this city he had longed to visit was also very much soured because of these incidents. He wrote to a friend, “From Paris, the sewer of thieves and filth, a most hapless place for me.”¹³

Over the course of the remaining year, Grebel’s opinion of Paris only grew worse as his desire to return home to Zurich increased. He had learned that Vadian was soon to wed his sister and thought his old teacher might eventually reside as a citizen in Zurich. He attempted to write to Vadian asking him just this question and lamented in the letter that, because of his health and the linguistic confusion of residing in Paris, “I was going to come speaking one language, if the gods had willed; but now nearly dead I send you bilingual even trilingual letters and the corpse of Calliope.”¹⁴ Grebel’s education had also begun to actively cause problems for his family, particularly his father. Because he had

¹¹ Grebel to Vadian, Paris, 29 January 1519, 81.

¹² Glaren to Myconius, Paris, 7 June 1519, 86.

¹³ Grebel to Myconius, Paris, 9 June 1519, 86.

¹⁴ Grebel to Vadian, Melun, 6 October 1519, 91. Grebel cleverly implies that he has murdered the chief muse, Calliope, with the poor quality of his writing to his old teacher.

received a scholarship from the King of France and because France was now at war with several Swiss cities, Grebel's father had come under suspicion of treason. Grebel wrote to Vadian, "I would not fear that whenever fathers of the fatherlands inveigh against traitors they mean to include my father among them, for they scarcely let me think otherwise, and that because the son receives a royal pension they believe his father too is growing rich."¹⁵ Yet, even as he defended his father, Grebel believed his father was partially to blame for his poor living-situation in Paris as his personal debts increased. In the same letter as above, he wrote to Vadian, "If only he had taught me to live on little and on what had been earned, as a father should."¹⁶

At last, Grebel began to work to return home to Zurich. This planned return was, in part, because of the reasons listed above, but also because his declining health led him to fear for his life. While he claimed that he did not fear death, Grebel did fear dying alone in Paris away from all of those whom he loved. He wrote to Vadian, "What would happen to me if I never returned to Switzerland, what if I would die, what would become of me if I did?"¹⁷ And then to Myconius, "I pray not to avert death; I pray only to avert an untimely one."¹⁸ Finally, in the summer of 1520, Grebel left Paris having never received his degree, and returned home to Zurich.

¹⁵ Grebel to Vadian, Paris, 14 January 1520, 98.

¹⁶ Grebel to Vadian, Paris, 14 January 1520, 98.

¹⁷ Grebel to Vadian, Paris, 14 January 1520, 99.

¹⁸ Grebel to Myconius, Paris, 7 March 1520, 101.

Finding a Place to Belong

Grebel's return to Zurich and to the house of his parents was not what he had hoped it would be. He wrote to Vadian in July, soon after his return, "I came to my own home, which is not my own, to friends not my friends, to my appeased parents, both of whom received me in a human way, the one with a father's scorn, the other with a mother's tears. I imitated the two of them in turn. As did the parents, so did the son."¹⁹ Grebel's relationship with his father, which had shown signs of strain in Paris, was not mended by their close proximity. Neither, in reality, were any of Grebel's other problems resolved by his decision to return. He still worried about the conflict between the French Crown and Swiss cities, still struggled with his health, and began to feel an increasing sense of boredom and worthlessness.²⁰ He wrote to Vadian, "While I am stuck here, fit for nothing, disgracefully wasting my time under the pretense of literary study which I have not pretended since your departure, while, I say, I am stuck here fixed to these walls, fixed to others also, the desire to go to Basel and live there has grown on me."²¹ Grebel's desire to go to Basel is an interesting one and there are several possibilities for why he hoped to travel there.

First, prior to the above letter, Grebel had spoken about traveling to Italy to continue his studies there—possibly even being offered a stipend to do so by papal authorities. But, in August of 1520 Grebel, for the first time, mentions that he had come

¹⁹ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 13 July 1520, 109.

²⁰ Grebel conveyed his concerns regarding the French-Swiss conflict to Vadian in a letter penned on 11 September 1520. He also commented on his health in a letter to Vadian on 1 February 1521. He called it his "most perverse disease which has afflicted me so long," 136.

²¹ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 1 February 1521, 136.

into contact with the teachings of Luther's Reformation and had been reading both Erasmus and Luther on the proceedings in Wittenberg.²² The desire to study in Basel, which had become a center of reforming activity, may indicate that even in 1520 Grebel was sympathetic to the reformed faith. This would be unsurprising given his friendliness with Zwingli and Vadian, but it precedes the date at which most scholars place his conversion by almost two years.²³ While it is safe to say that Grebel was not, at this point, a zealous reformer, his desire to travel to Basel rather than to Italy could indicate that he already knew his religious beliefs no longer aligned with those of the Roman Catholic Church.

Second, Grebel's last educational foray into a foreign country had ended in disaster—both personally and for his family. When discussing his desire to go to Basel rather than Italy with Vadian, Grebel wrote, "I wish I could tell you personally how it happened that the aversion for Italy came over me, how I came to know it. How bad is the reputation of father and son because of my stipend, my uncles impress upon me daily."²⁴ The accusations of treason that had come about because of Conrad's scholarship from the French Crown were present in both his and his family's mind as he decided where to study next. While he wanted to continue his education, he would not do so if it were at the cost of his family's honor or the safety of Switzerland, for he wrote, "Then I indicated my unwillingness for father to hold or accept any royal gift, if he is forced by this to

²² Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 3 August 1520.

²³ Every major biography of Grebel locates his conversion in 1522. However, it is clear that Grebel was interested in religion and reform earlier than this. At least one other scholar agrees with me on this point, see: J. Denny Weaver. "Conrad Grebel's Developing Sense of a Deity." *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 52, no. 3 (1978): 199-213.

²⁴ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 1 February 1521, 136.

serve France and fetter his loyalty by betraying the republic and the liberty of Switzerland. What need to say more?"²⁵ Staying in Switzerland rather than traveling abroad again seemed by far the safer option for Grebel and his family.

Finally, Grebel also preferred to travel to Basel rather than to Italy because he had recently fallen in love. He wrote to Vadian in July 1521 regarding his newfound romance, "Ah for the ocean of enjoyments and blessed happiness from out of the silliest and maddest, I nearly said something else by inserting a few letters. There you have it, you know what I want."²⁶ The problem with this romance was that Grebel, in all probability, had fallen in love with a nun.²⁷ This was undoubtedly discouraged behavior and was not well received by Grebel's family (as will be seen), but in Basel, a city increasingly leaning towards the Reformation, Conrad could possibly be with his beloved without facing legal repercussions. He eventually sent his beloved ahead of him to Basel and wrote to Vadian, "She on whom my whole welfare depends left for Basel at my expense; and unless I follow her immediately, I will perish miserably. We love ardently, indeed we perish together. To be separated is hard, miserable, and calamitous."²⁸ Grebel's infatuation with his new paramour is self-evident in his letters, but such was his

²⁵ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 1 February 1521, 136.

²⁶ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 14 July 1521, 145. His play on words is that the letter change may alter silly to "ravish."

²⁷ The best argument for the identity of Grebel's wife is put forward in Harold S bender, "Grebel's Study in Paris." *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 10:2 (1936), 91-137. While nothing can be claimed with certainty, the scandal surrounding Grebel's marriage almost certainly points to the fact that his beloved was a nun.

²⁸ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 22 July 1521, 148.

attachment that he even grew to hate Zurich in her absence.²⁹ At last, in mid-August 1521, Grebel was able to flee to Basel and there he wrote, “For once the poor heart of Grebel is in ecstasy; therefore, if you love me, rejoice.”³⁰

Grebel’s ecstasy was short lived. He wrote, in a rather long-winded rant against his parents’ possible perception of his flight,

Here is what I think will reach the ears of my parents forthwith. They will say: He stays under the same roof with a harlot, he stays day and night, he lives with her, he is not to be torn from her because he is dying of love, he neglects the company of learned men since he neglects his studies, he dissipates himself and disgraces himself in love for a harlot, he will consummate it and brand ignominy on the Grebel family, he is enfeebling himself by idleness; let us be angry, let us not help him either by money or deeds, let us not heed a son who is not a son, who when living like this is unworthy of any kindness, even from an enemy. So will they speak, I think. But I shall deserve it; so I shall bear it cheerfully, believe me, if any of this happens.³¹

In the above letter, Grebel’s ranting seems to be directed not only as his parents but also at himself—even while blaming them. He discusses how he is neglecting his studies and disgracing the Grebel name in order to stay with his “harlot.” Grebel’s affair with this woman had served to distract him from the boredom he felt after his return to Zurich, but having actually gotten what he desired, he seemed to have succumbed again to “neglect.” Thus it is somewhat unsurprising that by the end of October 1521 Grebel had already returned home to Zurich.³²

²⁹ “This I have decided within myself about this matter: Let my parents detain me, let other things detain me; I prefer to be an exile voluntarily than a citizen of Zurich,” Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 4 August 1521, 149.

³⁰ Grebel to Vadian, Basel, 21 August 1521, 150.

³¹ Grebel to Vadian, Basel, 2 September 1521, 152.

³² Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, End of October 1521, 154.

Grebel initially claimed that his return home was to attend to his health in the local baths because of his perpetual affliction. However, he also announced to Vadian soon after that he was done traveling. He wrote, “I have said a final farewell to roaming about. I prefer to be in my native land, whether well or rather miserable.”³³ He articulated this again to Myconius, “You will have a more convenient opportunity than ever before, because I will not be going away again (unless father exiles me from my homeland), having been admonished so often by the disastrous outcomes of unsuccessful sojourns that I shudder at the very mention of going away.”³⁴ As part of his return, Grebel also began to secretly plan his marriage, in secret, to Barbara.

Interestingly, Grebel’s language regarding his beloved “harlot” cooled considerably after his return to Zurich. How he talked about her to Vadian changed significantly in his first letter to his former-mentor since his return, “I have found a girl of moderate beauty who loves me (if this can be believed of a woman). She charms me, to her I will cling, I will support her alone as long as she will be content with me, be true to me, will love me in return.”³⁵ Regardless of his possibly altered affections, Grebel secretly married Barbara in early 1522 when his father was away on business. The response in the Grebel household was less than joyous. Conrad wrote to Vadian, “Mother sheds tears constantly. She is intemperate toward me, no doubt the most unfortunate of all men. If father continues to treat me in the same way and she to behave as she does, you will have seen the last of Conrad in these parts.”³⁶

³³ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 2 November 1521, 155.

³⁴ Grebel to Myconius, Zurich, 4 November 1521, 157.

³⁵ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 2 November 1521, 156.

³⁶ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 6 February 1522, 165.

Despite Grebel's earlier attestation that he would never again depart from Zurich, no matter the state of his happiness, he began to wish for banishment if only to escape the anger of his parents. He vacillated on whether the decision to leave would be his or if his parents would make it for him. In the same letter as above to Vadian he says, "Therefore in these circumstances my two prayers are these: that my parents will consider me extremely unworthy, [and] that they will cease to be parents and banish me to wherever they may want. I will not be happy under any other conditions if these things do not come to pass;" but then he adds, "Come, my solace, my Vadian, to aid your Conrad by your solace, lest I punish myself either by exile or by emasculation."³⁷

It becomes clear from Grebel's letters that, up to 1522, he had lived a mostly unhappy (if revelrous) life. His studies abroad, save perhaps in Vienna, had been marked by catastrophe. His love-life, which had begun with such passion, soon burned down to a rather more "moderate" degree of affection. His relationship with his parents remained strained and his health also showed no signs of recovery.³⁸ However, by mid-1522, he had discovered a purpose that would motivate him until his death—the Reformation.

³⁷ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 6 February 1522, (165). The threat of emasculation that Grebel makes, while probably hyperbolic, was quite literal. He wrote *mentulae excisione*, which is best translated as penis amputation.

³⁸ "There is neither time nor space for what troubles me, which I am prevented from reciting for some other reasons also. I shall deal with it more at length another time. I have been foolish, to my own harm perhaps, because I, miserable thrush, have shit on myself," Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 25 December 1522, 193.

Joining the Reformation

Surprisingly, Grebel wrote very little about his early involvement in the Reformation in Zurich, but it is apparent that he was involved by July of 1522.³⁹ He was one of several young men who were accused of disrupting church services by interrupting and arguing with some of the local monks as they preached.⁴⁰ When Grebel and others were brought before the council to answer for what they had done, the young Conrad began to verbally assault the councilors as well. In a 7 July 1522 account from the *Zurich Verbotbuch*, Grebel is recorded as saying to the council, “The devil is not only sitting the chambers but also among Milords, for someone is sitting among Milords who said the gospel might as well be preached in a cow’s ass. And if Milords do not allow the gospel to go forth, they will be destroyed.”⁴¹ As part of this newfound loyalty to the Reformation, Grebel began to work more closely with Huldrych Zwingli.

Zwingli had been operating in Zurich since at least 1517 and had, since the beginning of his time in the city, been working towards the reform of the Zurich church. That Grebel had reached out to Zwingli in 1517 demonstrates that, even at such an early stage, Conrad had great respect for Zwingli. Sometime after his return to Zurich in 1521,

³⁹ It is important to note at this point the uncertainty regarding the direction that the Reformation in Zurich would take. Conrad, like almost every other figure involved, was free to envision a reform as he wished it to be. This freedom undoubtedly contributed to the differences and Zwingli later encountered when the reality of the reform efforts met the envisioned ideals of a reformed church. This has led at least one scholar to dub Grebel’s life “provisional;” in that it was regularly being redefined or awaiting definition, see Hans Jurgen Goertz, “Conrad Grebel--a Provisional Life.” *The Conrad Grebel Review* 17:3 (1999), 6-17. Such a reading, while interesting, seems misplaced given the fervency with which Grebel stood by his support of believer’s baptism and his later inability to alter his plans in the face of opposition from the Zurich Council.

⁴⁰ *The Wyss Chronicle of Preaching Disturbances*, Zurich, July 1522, 175.

⁴¹ Zurich 7 July 1522 from the *Zurich Verbotbuch*, 177. The comment about the cow’s ass was in relation to an accusation that one of the councilors had heard Zwingli preaching and muttered that it would be of better effect if he spoke into a cow’s ass.

Grebel had also begun studying Greek, Latin, and Hebrew with Zwingli and a group of other like-minded individuals. Zwingli's desire to reform the church was clear almost at his arrival, but his decisive declaration for the Reformation is often dated to the Affair of the Sausages in May 1522.⁴² It was most likely this event, along with the ensuing response from Zwingli, which brought Grebel into the public spectrum advocating for the Reformation.

Initially, Grebel and Zwingli worked side by side to accomplish their common goal, which broadly conceived seemed to be the reform of the church in Zurich through the abolishment of the Mass and the removal of all images from the churches.⁴³ However, more broadly, Grebel and Zwingli were looking to fundamentally reshape the civic and religious identities of Zurich by abolishing the Catholic faith, which was officially accomplished in 1522. Zwingli's reform efforts thus received the backing of the city Council which would see its authority increase as its authority over civil matters soon came to extend, implicitly, over religious matters as well since they would serve as arbiters in every major religious Disputation held in the city. However, Catholic authorities did not allow the Reformation to take its course unchallenged and the bishop of Constance wrote a scathing letter to Zurich and Zwingli denouncing the reform efforts and attempting to retain the Catholic identity of the city.

⁴² The Affair of the Sausages occurred when Zwingli approved, at least by his presence, of the consumption of sausages for a printer and his charges as they labored over the press during Lent. Such a clear break with traditional Lenten fasting became a catalyst for further reforms, including the abolishment of clerical celibacy, in the city of Zurich.

⁴³ Harold S. Bender, "Conrad Grebel as Zwinglian, 1522-1523." *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 15:2 (1941), 67-82 and Carlos M.N. Eire, *War against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 73-85.

In August, Zwingli published a public response to the bishop of Constance's admonition to Zwingli for his reforming activities. Grebel worked with Zwingli on the creation of the letter and at its end Zwingli pinned a poem written by Grebel, which praised Zwingli "in gratitude for the gospel restored."⁴⁴ Zwingli also praised Grebel openly in a letter to Myconius that same month.⁴⁵ Such was Grebel's increasing notoriety that Macrinus included in a letter to Zwingli the desire that he greet Conrad Grebel, who I hear has developed into an exceptional advocate of the gospel."⁴⁶ Over the course of the next few months Grebel became Zwingli's greatest ally and the two began to direct the reforming of Zurich and the reshaping of the communal identity of the Canton.

However, much like his initial bliss after having fled to Basel, Grebel's harmonious relationship with Zwingli and the broader Zurich Reformation soon soured. Even by the end of 1522 Grebel had signed a letter to Vadian, "Zurich, from my purgatory."⁴⁷ For much of the early months of 1523 Grebel was forced to retreat from the public sphere because of a sharp decline in his health.⁴⁸ Because of this, he was not actively involved in the First Zurich Disputation. This First Disputation touched on a number of theological issues which Zwingli had named as areas of necessary reform in the Zurich church. These included tithes and the Mass, but more important in this

⁴⁴ The Zwingli-Grebel Reply to the Bishop's Admonition, Zurich, 22-23 August 1522, 186.

⁴⁵ Zwingli to Myconius, Zurich, 26 August 1522, 186.

⁴⁶ Macrinus to Zwingli, Solothurn, 15 October 1522, 188.

⁴⁷ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 25 December 1522, 194.

⁴⁸ The first hint of Grebel's declining health seemed to come in his 15 January 1522 letter to Grebel, but it persisted through September 1523. During this time, Grebel thought he might be close to death. He wrote to Vadian, "I am scarcely able to write about all this, my Vadian, because of the feebleness of my body, which I feel may occasion the prelude to my death," Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 28 July 1523, 224.

Disputation was Zwingli's relationship with the city councilors and judges who presided over it. Zwingli stated near the end of the proceedings,

In worldly affairs and in quarrels, I know well that one should go before the judges with the disputes, and I also would choose to have Milords of Zurich as judges, since they stand for reasonableness. But in those matters which pertain to divine wisdom and truth, I will accept no one as judge and witness except the Scriptures, the Spirit of God speaking from the Scriptures.⁴⁹

In this statement, Zwingli made clear two points. The first was that he desired to work toward the reformation of the Zurich church in conjunction with the civic authorities. The second though was that the authority to decide whether or not these reforms were the theologically correct approach to the practice of religious lay not with the councilors, but in the Christian scriptures. The councilors' decision largely favored Zwingli and allowed him to continue preaching while requiring that all other preachers should include in their messages only that which was derived from the scriptures.⁵⁰

The decision of the councilors after the First Disputation was incomplete and did not settle any serious theological disagreements or alter church practice. Zwingli, though, seemed content to continue on the path of steady reform. Grebel saw things differently. In the midst of his sickness he wrote to Vadian regarding the Zurich civic authorities, "The people of our world of Zurich are doing everything tyrannical and like the Turk in this matter of the tithes. I said the people of the world, the tyrants of our homeland whom they call the senate fathers, but they should more aptly call them the decimating fathers."⁵¹

Whereas Zwingli seemed content to work with the civic authorities as much as possible,

⁴⁹ First Zurich Disputation, 29 January 1523, 203.

⁵⁰ First Zurich Disputation, 29 January 1523, 203.

⁵¹ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 15 July 1523, 220.

Grebel, in contrast, became increasingly eager to accomplish the reform of the church as quickly as possible and by whatever means necessary. This difference between Zwingli and Grebel became all the more apparent at the Second Zurich Disputation.

By the end of October 1523, Grebel was well enough to re-enter the public debate regarding the reformation of the Zurich church. The Second Zurich Disputation was held to address those issues that had not been decided at the First Disputation and Zwingli again took the lead position in arguing for the necessary reforms. However, rather than merely facing those who opposed his reforms in favor of the “Old Faith,” he also drew the ire of those who were dissatisfied with the slow pace of the reformation—foremost among them, Conrad Grebel.

At the Second Disputation, Grebel and Zwingli bickered extensively over several minor points of church practice. Grebel argued that the bread used in the Lord’s Supper ought to be regular leavened bread rather than unleavened bread. Zwingli responded that he did not care. Grebel then pressed the point and added that regular shaped loaves should be provided rather than round wafers. Zwingli conceded that he would be fine with regular leavened bread but that he could see no purpose in enforcing a particular shape to the bread. Grebel next insisted that no water be added to the wine and Zwingli agreed with this. However, Grebel then immediately said that every individual ought to take the bread themselves rather than having a priest place it onto their tongue. Zwingli again countered that he did not care how the bread was taken, but another individual added that it would be impossible for lame individuals to take the bread for themselves and Grebel let the point proceed uncontested. Finally, Grebel enthusiastically rejected the idea that any priest ought to serve himself the sacrament, but Zwingli, not necessarily

disagreeing, added that Christ had served himself.⁵² This monotonous exchange between Grebel and Zwingli was not necessarily antagonistic, but it was indicative of the fact that the two men were beginning to take very different approaches to how the reformation of the Zurich church should take place. Zwingli was content with allowing some autonomy in how a congregation should implement the reforms (primarily to appease the Council and those hesitant to fully embrace the Reformation), whereas Grebel wanted to control the process in order to assure that it rigorously followed the mandate he saw within the scriptures.

However, the greatest indicator of the shifting relationship between Grebel and Zwingli was in the increasing difference of their attitudes toward the city's civic authorities. At the outset of the discussion on the Mass, Zwingli said, "Milords will discern how the mass should henceforth be properly observed."⁵³ This immediately drew the anger of one of Grebel's close allies, Simon Strumpf, who countered, "Master Huldrych! You have no authority to place the decision in Milords' hands, for the decision is already made: the Spirit of God decides. If therefore Milords were to discern and decide anything contrary to God's decision, I will ask Christ for his Spirit and will teach and act against it."⁵⁴ Zwingli then amended his previous statement by claiming something of a middle-ground, but the divide was clear.⁵⁵ From this point forward, Zwingli and

⁵² The Second Zurich Disputation, 26-28 October 1523, 247-250.

⁵³ The Second Zurich Disputation, 26-28 October 1523, 242.

⁵⁴ The Second Zurich Disputation, 26-28 October 1523, 242.

⁵⁵ Zwingli claimed, "This is right. I shall also preach and act against it if they decide otherwise. I do not give the decision into their hands...This convocation is not being held so that they might decide about that, but to ascertain and learn from Scripture whether or not the mass is a sacrifice. Then they will counsel together as to the most appropriate way for this to be done without an uproar." The Second Zurich Disputation, 26-28 October 1523, 242.

Grebel would take different paths regarding who had the authority to oversee the reform of the Zurich church and, consequently, where the authority to decide who was and was not a member of their religious communities resided. For Zwingli, the construction of a new religious identity for the Zurich church had to come from the top down—making Zurich’s religious and civic identities coterminous. For Grebel, the true church would exist based on the authority of scripture, an authority that he felt best suited to interpret.

Grebel vs. Zwingli

After the Second Zurich Disputation, one of the next signs of an increasing distance between Grebel and Zwingli was their response to the banishment of one of Zurich’s dissenters, Lorenz Hochrütiner.⁵⁶ Because of his continued preaching against the decision of the magistrates, Hochrütiner was banished from Zurich. In order to soften the punishment, both Zwingli and Grebel wrote to their mutual friend, Vadian, to persuade him to take Hochrütiner in at St. Gallen. However, their attitude toward the punishment, particularly in relation to the authority of the magistrates, in their letters to Vadian was drastically different. Zwingli wrote, “For the sake of these I think that Lorenz Hochrütiner has been treated a little too firmly, not to say harshly, a good man by Hercules, but punished very severely because he has been far too free with his mouth.”⁵⁷ Grebel though fully defended Hochrütiner because, in his opinion, “he has committed nothing against divine law, nothing against the laws and decrees of the state, nothing

⁵⁶ Banishment was a common practice in the early-modern world and one which carried serious repercussions. The severance from one’s social and financial networks could often lead to destitution. Finding viable employment was crucial to continued survival, see J. Jeffery Tyler, "Refugees and Reform: Banishment and Exile in Early Modern Augsburg." In *Continuity and Change: The Harvest of Late Medieval and Reformation History* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 77-97.

⁵⁷ Zwingli to Vadian, Zurich, 11 November 1523, 255.

against his neighbor. Moreover, if he had impartial judges, he is worthy because he has done what he did out of faith, and not that kind that is rash.”⁵⁸ Zwingli, though he seems to disagree with the decision of the magistrates, understood the necessity of banishing Hochrütiner, but Grebel had already reached the decision that faith trumped all else and that the punishment was issued not because of pre-established legal conditions but because of the religious bias of the judges.

By the end of 1523, Grebel and Zwingli had definitively broken over how the reformation in Zurich ought to proceed. Zwingli wrote of Grebel, “But here we find a great number of false Christians who claim to be founded in God and free, but have no humility within them, but are trying thereby to become great, affluent, or important.”⁵⁹ Grebel responded by declaring in a letter to Vadian, “They [Zwingli and the council] have disregarded the divine will on not celebrating the mass, and have prescribed a middle ground with diabolical (I know) prudence....Whoever thinks, believes, or declares that Zwingli acts according to the duty of a shepherd thinks, believes, and declares wickedly.”⁶⁰ It is important to note that this original break between Grebel and Zwingli was not based on a particular theological issue, but rather originated because of their disagreement regarding the role of the magistrates in the reforming of the church. Zwingli and Grebel both desired to see the abolishment of the mass, but Grebel’s belief that the religious identity of the Zurich community could completely bypass the secular authorities was not held by Zwingli. In essence, Zwingli believed he was an arbiter of

⁵⁸ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 12 November 1523, 256.

⁵⁹ Zwingli’s “Introduction” to the Disputation Findings, Zurich, 17 November 1523, 261.

⁶⁰ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 18 December 1523, 276.

Zurich's religious and communal identity working with both the religious and secular authorities. Grebel believed himself and those who followed what he believed to be the clear teachings of scripture to be the final judges on the matter. Their disagreement and break was not merely theological but rooted in the fundamental question of who has the power to determine identity within a community—particularly if that result of that decision excluded individuals who had previously participated within that community.

The implications for these differences were far-reaching. Over the course of 1524, Zwingli continued to work within the legal parameters for the reform of Zurich's church. Grebel, on the other hand, increasingly worked outside of the official power structure. In September Grebel wrote to Vadian that he intended to reach out to other reformers who also had rejected the authority of the magistrates in the matter of deciding religious identity. These included Luther's former ally Andreas Karlstadt and the radical Anabaptist Thomas Müntzer.⁶¹ Grebel's letter to Müntzer revealed that he had not only rejected the authority of secular authorities but believed that their tools were entirely incompatible with the religious identity of true Christians. He wrote, "Moreover, the gospel and its adherents are not to be protected by the sword, nor [should] they [protect] themselves, which as we have heard through our brother is what you believe and maintain."⁶² Because Grebel understood that he did not have the favor of the magistrates and had rejected both their authority and the use of force, he knew persecution against him was imminent. In a second letter to Müntzer he wrote, "[The magistrates] only

⁶¹ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 3 September 1524, 283.

⁶² Grebel to Müntzer, Zurich, 5 September 1524, 290.

believe humans—Zwingli, Leo, and others who are regarded elsewhere as learned...in time we too will see persecution come upon us through them.”⁶³

Throughout 1524, Grebel remained almost anxiously convinced that persecution against those who disagreed with Zwingli and the magistrates would soon be enacted. This was yet further proof that he saw an increasing distance between his civic and religious identities. He wrote in December of that year to Vadian, “They will be known by their fruits, by their expelling and consigning people to the sword. I do not think that persecution will fail to come. God be merciful. I hope to God that he will grant the medicine of patience. Amen, if it cannot be otherwise.”⁶⁴ However, unexpectedly, his dissent had other consequences he had not intended. Grebel’s relationship with almost everyone outside of his religious circle began to crumble. His relationship with his wife grew increasingly tense and even Vadian, his most trusted friend and mentor, began to distance himself from Grebel.⁶⁵ In Vadian’s last extant letter to Grebel, he clearly aligned himself with Zwingli, saying,

My wish concerning you would be and always has been that you conduct yourself with humble propriety towards Zwingli and Leo and not be so demanding or contentious, in the awareness that they are the ones who are engaged to promote the Word of truth and yet who are not totally able to throw out and abruptly abolish everything that came into misuse through so many years.⁶⁶

⁶³ Grebel to Müntzer, Zurich, 5 September 1524, 293.

⁶⁴ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 15 December 1524, 302.

⁶⁵ Grebel had complained about his wife in September to Vadian and his relationship with her would only deteriorate as his reforming efforts continued, Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 3 September 1524, 284.

⁶⁶ Vadian to Grebel, St. Gallen, 28 December 1524, 322.

Vadian's attempt to persuade Grebel to abandon his antagonistic course of action was met with no apparent success as was demonstrated by the First Public Disputation on Baptism, which took place in January 1525.

It is difficult to track the development of Grebel's changing views on baptism, but it was clear by 1525 that he was opposed to paedobaptism.⁶⁷ It is very possible that his changing views on the matter of baptism were intimately connected with his opinion of the magistrates and civic authority. Infant baptism served as a ritual of induction into not just the religious but also the civic communities of early modern Europe.⁶⁸ Once Grebel had rejected the civil magistrates' authority over religious identity and declared Christianity and civil service incompatible, infant baptism became an increasingly unattractive theological position as it gave his opponents, the political authorities of Zurich, the power to determine religious identity. Believers baptism allowed Grebel and the Anabaptists recreate a religious community through a new process of initiation which they controlled and, perhaps most importantly, was not necessarily coterminous with Zurich's civic community.

For Grebel in 1525, this was also not merely a theoretical question. He wrote to Vadian in January, "My wife gave birth Friday, a week ago yesterday, the child is a daughter named Rachel. She has not yet been baptized and swamped in the Romish water bath."⁶⁹ Thus, the question of baptism at the Disputation was imminently important to

⁶⁷ Harold S. Bender, "The Theology of Conrad Grebel II." *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 12:2 (1938), 114-34.

⁶⁸ Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 22-28.

⁶⁹ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 14 January 1525, 332.

Grebel as its decision would decide not only the fate of his daughter, but also clearly lay out how the civic and religious communities of Zurich would be perpetuated in days to come. The Disputation was theological in nature but was centered on the question of who had the authority to belong to any particular community. The outcome of the Disputation threatened to be the breaking point between not only Grebel and Zwingli, but also between Grebel and the religious and civic communities of Zurich in which he had been raised and to which he had returned time and time again.

The Disputation on Baptism went decidedly against Grebel and the other Anabaptists. The day after the Disputation the council released its decision:

All children shall be baptized as soon as they are born. And all those who have hitherto left their children unbaptized shall have them baptized within the next eight days. Anyone who refuse to do this shall, with wife and child and possessions, leave our Lords' city, jurisdiction, and domain, and never return, or await what happens to him.⁷⁰

This statement clearly put Grebel in a dangerous position because of the recent birth of his daughter. His options were clear, he could abandon the cause of believer's baptism and thereby concede to the broader religious identity of Zurich or he could flee and leave the civic community he had once promised to never leave again. Grebel chose to remain.

Although there is no concrete proof he did not have his daughter baptized, he was reprimanded by the Council only three days after the decision of the Disputation for continuing to preach believer's baptism.⁷¹ Grebel also went one step further and, after it was clear that he would not persuade Zwingli and the Council, he performed the first adult baptism in Zurich on 21 January 1525 and received baptism himself in a house that

⁷⁰ Council Mandate for Infant Baptism, Zurich, 18 January 1525, 336.

⁷¹ Council Decree against Anabaptists, Zurich, 21 January 1525, 338.

was still within sight of where the Council had made its decision. His refusal to flee from Zurich after the decree of the Council and his complete rejection of paedobaptism clearly demonstrated Grebel's opinion that those two identities that he held to be most true about himself—namely a citizen of Zurich and an Anabaptist—were compatible regardless what the Council decided. His decision to remain was both an ideological and physical statement about identity and belonging; just as the council's decision to exclude the Anabaptists from both the civic and religious communities of Zurich was also. The result was a contest for the communal identity of Zurich and the surrounding areas.

Contesting Community

Grebel's response after the Council's rejection of Anabaptists and his own baptism was a frenzy of activity. He began to preach regularly, if carefully, in Zurich and to attract a significant number of followers. Zwingli wrote to Vadian in March of 1525 about Grebel's proselytizing, "Grebel is among us everywhere drawing to his faction whomever he can, and so reproaching and slandering our ministry that, even if we were at all the sort that he declares, still it was least fitting for him to be so ungrateful to one who deserves better."⁷² It becomes clear from Zwingli's letter that Grebel's goal was not only to draw affirmation for his own faction but to spread negative opinions about Zwingli's. Grebel also began to preach in the area surrounding Zurich. Through his efforts and those of Lorenz Hochrütiner, who he had written to Vadian about over a year ago, Anabaptist congregations were established in Zollikon and St. Gallen.⁷³ The

⁷² Zwingli to Vadian, Zurich, 31 March 1525, 356.

⁷³ Hochrütiner had actually been active preaching Anabaptism in the St. Gallen area since 1524 after Vadian had, apparently moved by Zwingli and Grebel's endorsement, accepted him into their community, *Anabaptist Beginnings in St. Gallen*, St. Gallen, 1524, 298.

response in Zollikon to Grebel's work was, if anything, harsher than it had been in Zurich. Authorities in Zollikon demanded that all children who had not been baptized were to receive the sacrament, by force if necessary. Parents were not given the option to flee the town with their children as they were in Zurich.⁷⁴

Eventually Zurich authorities also could no longer abide Grebel's work and it became too dangerous for him to continue to operate in the city. In April 1525, he attempted to escape Zurich in order to carry on his ministry in the surrounding towns. However, this attempt was frustrated by several obstacles, one of whom was his wife. He wrote to Andreas Castelberg, an Anabaptist ally, that he and Felix Mantz, who had been his partner in his ministry, had been foiled in their escape attempt from Zurich,

I was going along with Felix Mantz, preparing to leave by night on Sunday. Then my wife (how Satan never rests) said she would betray Felix, who on the previous night had left my house again and gone to his own to await me there. I disregarded the great insolence of Eve and went out. She went through another door to father's house, where she stirred up no small tragedy over my departure.⁷⁵

Even after he had escaped from his family, Grebel still could not escape from the city, "In the meanwhile I come to the gate nearest me, which was locked. I go up to the neighboring one, with fear of being recognized. I wanted to be cautious. I knocked to have it opened. Then Lady Meis calls to me from her house saying that no one was being let out through that gate."⁷⁶ Finally, Grebel's own perpetual illness hindered his attempts to flee, "By then I barely hobbled along because the sores on my feet hindered me. For the third time the closing of a gate held me back. So I have returned and wait something

⁷⁴ The oldest Anabaptist Congregation: Zollikon, St. Gallen, 1525, 344.

⁷⁵ Grebel to Castelberg, Zurich, 25 April 1525, 357.

⁷⁶ Grebel to Castelberg, Zurich, 25 April 1525, 357.

else from the Lord.”⁷⁷ It is clear from this letter that Grebel increasingly felt a distance between himself, his family, and his city. In place of that distance he began to identify with his Anabaptist brethren. Indeed, his primary concern in regard to either his or Mantz’s capture was not for their safety but for what it would do to their ability to continue to minister to the Anabaptist congregation in Zollikon. He wrote in the same letter, “It occurred to me at once on the way back to my house that if I should later be banished or Felix betrayed by my wife, the possibility for the brothers from Zollikon to come secretly might be cut off through the placing of guards.”⁷⁸

Eventually Grebel was able to escape from Zurich and became something of an itinerant preacher in the area surrounding Zurich. During this time Zwingli worked hard to suppress Grebel’s teachings, writing letters to a number of local authorities notifying them of Grebel’s seditious activities and publishing a *Treatise on Baptism, Rebaptism, and Infant Baptism*, in which he vigorously defended paedobaptism. Zwingli also wrote a letter to Vadian in which he clearly stated that the separation between himself and Grebel was not merely over the theology surrounding baptism but also in how they regarded civic authority. He wrote, “It is sedition, a faction, a sect, not baptism. For at the same time, they teach that Christian man cannot perform the role of magistrate and they snarl their scandalous and false teachings to everyone: We must obey God more than men.”⁷⁹ Grebel also competed to swing Vadian’s opinion in his favor. He wrote to Vadian about

⁷⁷ Grebel to Castelberg, Zurich, 25 April 1525, 357.

⁷⁸ Grebel to Castelberg, Zurich, 25 April 1525, 357.

⁷⁹ Zwingli to Vadian, Zurich, 28 May 1525, 375. It is important to note regarding the physical origin of this letter that, although Grebel had fled from Zurich, he still occasionally returned to the city in secret.

the Anabaptist community in St. Gallen, “If you do not want to stand with the brethren, at least do not resist them, so that you may be less blameworthy and an example of persecution is not given to other (city) states.”⁸⁰ This would be Grebel’s final letter to his old mentor and brother-in-law. He concluded by clearly stating how firmly he stood behind the Anabaptist cause, “For I shall give testimony to the truth with the plundering of my goods, even of my house, which is all I have. I shall give testimony with imprisonments, exiles, death, and the writing of a booklet, unless God should forbid.”⁸¹

Grebel had been aware of the potential for persecution against him and his followers because of his religious dissent from Zwingli since at least 1524. In June 1525 these possibilities began to become realities. Although he had been effectively banished from Zurich, no official legal action had been taken. But in June, officials from St. Gallen investigating the Anabaptist movement decreed that they would “confiscate Grebel’s letter, which is improper and deserving of corporal punishment; otherwise with best intentions toward him to forbid them once more to hold the table of the Lord or to baptize, by word or deed, in nor near the city, or he will be arrested and banished from the city with wife and children.”⁸² In response to this decree, Zurich called an official hearing at which they demanded Grebel’s presence. Grebel responded by requesting a letter of safe passage for himself and another colleague, Markus Bosshart. When the

⁸⁰ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 30 May 1525, 379. Grebel’s apparent desire for toleration was very uncommon in the early modern period, though not unheard of, particularly among individuals facing the threat of persecution such as the Anabaptists. For more, see Benjamin J. Kaplan *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007) and David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁸¹ Grebel to Vadian, Zurich, 30 May 1525, 379.

⁸² Court Proceedings in St. Gallen, 5 and 6 June 1525, 385.

Council declined to provide such a letter Grebel refused to attend. When Bosshart still went to Zurich, he was promptly arrested.⁸³

After this, local authorities began to actively hunt for Grebel. A bailiff from Grüningen wrote to the Zurich authorities that Grebel was rumored to be nearby and encouraged them to provide the bailiff the resources to finally capture the fugitive.⁸⁴ Grebel remained protected though by the local communities and evaded capture. However, knowing that his status as a wanted man provided him an opportunity to present his beliefs in a public forum, he attempted to leverage the authorities' desire to see him captured into an opportunity for him to publicly proclaim the gospel. He offered the Zurich authorities a bargain, "Conrad said that if he were permitted to publish his writings, he would dispute with Zwingli unto [death by] fire. And if Zwingli defeated him, they should burn Conrad Grebel, and if Conrad Grebel defeated him, they should not burn Zwingli."⁸⁵ Such an opportunity for Grebel to gain yet more followers and possibly become a martyr did not interest Zwingli or the Council. Rather, they increased the hunt for Grebel and on 8 October 1525 they finally captured him.⁸⁶

Zwingli wrote to Vadian, "Conrad Grebel together with Jörg, that man of fickle mind, has been arrested at Grüningen and thrown into prison. Inclined towards evil by signs of nature, he has always sought some tragedy. Now he has found it."⁸⁷ Grebel and

⁸³ Grebel and Bosshart to the Zurich Council, Winterthur or Zollikon, 6 July 1525, 416.

⁸⁴ Bailiff's Report of Anabaptists in Grüningen, Grüningen, 12 July 1525.

⁸⁵ Investigation of Grebel's Activities, Zurich, 12 July 1525, 421.

⁸⁶ The Arrest of Grebel and Blaurock, Grüningen, 8 October 1525, 430.

⁸⁷ Zwingli to Vadian, Zurich, 11 October 1525, 431.

the other Anabaptists captured with him were given the opportunity to recant before facing an official trial at a Third Zurich Disputation on Baptism but, when they refused, they were officially put on trial. The trial lasted for a week in November and during the course of questioning Grebel unequivocally denied that he had been a proponent of civil rebellion and countered the claim that he had been in favor of abolishing the government.⁸⁸ However, he and the others persisted in their refusal to stop preaching believer's baptism and so the Council handed down the following punishment:

Inasmuch as Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, and Jörg of the House of Jacob were imprisoned by Milords because of their rebaptism and improper conduct, etc., it is declared that all three are put together into the New Tower and fed on bread, mush, and water. No one is to visit or depart from them except the proscribed attendants, as long as God pleases and it seems good to Milords.⁸⁹

For five months Grebel and his fellow Anabaptists were locked away in the tower.

In March 1536, Grebel was given yet another chance to recant his views and escape his prison. His decision to remain had, it seems, in no way been shaken by his suffering and the record states,

Conrad Grebel answers and persists in his belief that infant baptism is wrong and the baptism he accepted is right. He will stay by that and let God rule. He would otherwise be obedience to Milords in all secular matters. He also hopes to show that Zwingli errs in these and other things, and also asks Milords to permit him to write like Zwingli. Then he can prove it. If he fails to do so, he is willing to suffer whatever God wills.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ The Trial of Grebel, Mantz, and Blaurock, Zurich, 9-18 November 1525, 439.

⁸⁹ The Trial of Grebel, Mantz, and Blaurock, Zurich, 9-18 November 1525, 442.

⁹⁰ The Tenth Disputation with the Anabaptists: Their retrial and sentencing, Zurich, 5-7 March 1526, 444.

The Council's response was harsh. They decreed that anyone who rebaptized another in the Canton of Zurich would be drowned.⁹¹ They also confirmed their previous ruling regarding Grebel and the others and declared that this would be a lifelong imprisonment, "Thus let them die in the Tower unless anyone desists from his acts and error and intends to be obedient...No one shall have the authority to alter their confinement, behind the backs of Milords, whether they are sick or well."⁹²

Grebel would have died, and was willing to do so, in this prison if not for a set of strange circumstances. In March 1526, all the Anabaptists being held in the New Tower managed to escape. How this was accomplished is still uncertain. According to the testimony of two of the prisoners who were recaptured, a window was left slightly ajar and they were able to pry it open and then lower themselves down using some wire one of the prisoners possessed. They then managed to break open the lock at the gatehouse and flee into the city. Interestingly, when the loose window was first noticed, several of the prisoners, including Grebel, "did not want to take advantage of it, but die in the Tower."⁹³ However, they were eventually persuaded by such a clear course to freedom that they followed the lead of the others.

Knowing his life was forfeit if he remained in Zurich, Grebel fled to Maienfeld, probably to put significant distance between himself and both Zurich and St. Gallen. His freedom though was short lived. Sometime before August 1526 he was killed by the

⁹¹ The Tenth Disputation with the Anabaptists: Their retrial and sentencing, Zurich, 5-7 March 1526, 444.

⁹² The Tenth Disputation with the Anabaptists: Their retrial and sentencing, Zurich, 5-7 March 1526, 447.

⁹³ Prison Escape of the Anabaptists, Zurich, 21 March 1526, 450.

plague as it swept through the town.⁹⁴ Even had Grebel survived the plague he almost certainly would have faced death at the hands of the Swiss authorities as Felix Mantz did in January 1527. Lacking Conrad to face punishment, Zwingli instead oversaw the trial and conviction of Jacob Grebel for the receiving of funds from a foreign enemy—namely, the scholarship that Conrad had received to continue his studies in Paris from the French Crown.⁹⁵ Jacob was executed soon after the death of his son on 30 October 1526.

Conclusions

Grebel struggled in the early stages of his life to find a place to flourish. His initial forays into education abroad led to disaster and confirmed for him that he belonged in Zurich. However, it was not until he began to work with Zwingli to actively reform the Zurich church that Grebel truly seemed comfortable with where he was. In attempting to redefine the identity of the Zurich religious and civic communities, Grebel had finally found a place in which he believed he belonged. When Zwingli began to rely on the authority of the Zurich Council to accomplish the reform of the church, he and Grebel reached a breaking point in their relationship over the question of identity. For Grebel, the true identity of the church in Zurich would be defined by each individual's decision to participate in the Christian community via believer's baptism whereas Zwingli continued to believe that the communal boundaries of the Zurich religious and civic communities ought to remain coterminous.

⁹⁴ The Death of Grebel, Maienfeld, August 1526, 456.

⁹⁵ Leo Schelbert, "Jacob Grebel's Trial Revisited." *Archive for Reformation History* 60:1 (1969), 32-64 and Emidio Campi, *Shifting Pattern of Reformed Tradition* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 45.

This difference between Zwingli and Grebel eventually forced the latter to decide between his religious and civic identities through the dilemma of flight. However, Grebel's decision to remain rather than to flee or slip into Nicodemism attested to his belief that it was still possible for him to be both an Anabaptist and a member of the Zurich community. He held on to this belief until it became apparent that to remain in Zurich was surely to die during his imprisonment, which he still would have done if not for the encouragement of his friends. Ultimately, his rejection of the authority of the Council over religious matters did not manifest itself in rejection of their civil authority as he and his followers refused to resort to violence to further their cause and he was willing to submit to their authority up to the point of death. Thus Grebel was willing to participate in a civic community that did not share his religious identity, but the refusal of Zwingli to do the same led to Grebel's imprisonment and eventual death. Ultimately, Grebel would accept only the authority of scripture and the willing adherence of individuals as a standard by which to judge inclusion in broad communal identities; whereas Zwingli's embrace of the Council's authority meant that he was able to enforce the communal boundaries he envisioned for Zurich's civil and religious identities through imprisonment and violence.

CHAPTER FIVE

Reginald Pole

Reginald Pole's life occurred at a fascinating intersection in the sixteenth century. Over the course of his career in service to the English Crown and the papacy, Pole corresponded with figures such as Desiderius Erasmus about the writings of Martin Luther, Ignatius Loyola about his fledgling order of Jesuits, and Thomas Cromwell about the reform of the English church. He also interacted with major political entities such as Charles V, Henry VIII, Henry II, Mary I, Philip II, and four successive popes, Clement VII, Paul III, Julius III, and Paul IV.¹ At various points in his life, Pole was also considered a serious contender for both the English Crown and the papacy. Pole was sentenced to death by Henry VIII and spent many years dodging English assassins on the continent, was nearly subjected to inquisitorial investigation by Paul IV, and revived England's heresy laws which led to the execution of nearly three-hundred Protestants under the reign of Mary. Pole's death came only twelve hours after that of Mary and, as time would show, marked the end of the last hope to recatholicize the Church of England.

The manner of Pole's work at the intersection of the lives of these individuals and the events in which they found themselves caught up created a fascinating tapestry of familial, religious, and national loyalties within Pole himself.² An exploration of the conflicts of these loyalties within Pole helps illuminate a life that was both fascinating

¹ Omitting Marcellus II who reigned for only twenty-two days.

² For an excellent overview of Pole's somewhat hidden identity and the absence of significant historical attention framing him as a "protagonist," see Jean Bowes Gwatkin, "The Reluctant Protagonist: The Dichotomy of Cardinal Pole." *New Blackfriars* 48:564 (1967) 432-438.

and quite tragic. Pole attempted to navigate the shifting diplomatic and religious tides of sixteenth century Europe while maintaining a relatively unchanging identity as an English Catholic in favor of ecclesiastical reform. This rather provocative position earned Pole both enmity and praise. However, more than this, Pole's positions were not held in isolation and he both suffered and benefitted from the actions of those who shared aspects of his identity. For example, Pole benefitted from the power of the papacy when his status as a legate allowed him access to the court of Charles II, even while England requested his expedition back to the country in order to carry out his execution. Alternatively, those that shared aspects of Pole's identity also suffered and benefitted on his behalf; such as the fact that Pole's mother and brother were both executed in large part because of Pole's affiliation with the Catholic Church and his work on its behalf against the English crown.

Thus, an exploration of Pole's life, largely through his extensive correspondence, will provide a better understanding of how these varying identities and interwoven social, religious, national, and familial loyalties competed and compromised with each other in the life of sixteenth century individuals. Pole's allegiances remained relatively steadfast over the course of his career, however the political and religious landscape in which he operated did not. In the midst of the early stages of the English Reformation, Pole remained ardently Catholic. Surrounded by the papal court and working among some of the most powerful Italian political figures of his era, Pole remained definitively English. Finally, while the church across Europe underwent a broad spectrum of reformations, Pole remained in favor of reform that abolished clerical abuses and reexamined the theology of justification but which broke from neither the established Catholic Church

nor the historical Catholic tradition as Pole saw it. Each of these positions at times gained Pole favor and kept him alive while another position simultaneously earned him animosity and put his life in danger.

Pole represents then a different form of remaining than Hus and Luther or even Grebel. Pole chose to remain at the intersection of the identities and loyalties discussed above. This led him to a life of exile. However, his time in exile did surprisingly little to change how he identified with his broader religious and national communities. His geographic circumstances changed with the altering of religious and national loyalties on the continent and in England, but Pole persistently chose to remain loyal to England and the Catholic Church no matter where he found himself. It must be noted that Pole did frequently choose to reside where he had the greatest hope of survival, but he never chose to compromise his national and theological identities in order to guarantee his safety. This chapter will examine how Pole chose to remain a reforming English Catholic and how that decision affected and was affected by the conflicting loyalties that it engendered.

Born to England

Not much is known of Pole's early life, but he was born the third son to a noble family in 1500. Pole's familial ties played a significant role in his life. He was the great-nephew of kings Edward IV and Richard III and the cousin of Henry VIII. This connection to Henry proved beneficial as it was the young king who helped fund Pole's education and in 1518 granted him his first deanery. In 1521 Pole went to study at the University of Padua where he became acquainted with ideas supporting the reform of the Roman Catholic Church. Here Pole's interests began to coincide quite usefully with those

of Henry's. For though Pole was supported primarily through a number of ecclesiastical positions (all of which were provided by Henry), including serving as Prebendary of Salisbury, he was not an ordained priest. Pole's interests were not pastoral but rather theological—particularly theology in service of the crown. To this end, in 1529 Pole was sent by Henry to Paris in order to convince the theologians of the Sorbonne to support Henry's annulment of his and Catharine of Aragon's marriage.³

Pole felt a great deal of debt to Henry for his support of Pole's education, and it seems that Pole initially worked enthusiastically to persuade the theologians to support Henry's position. However, at some point during this endeavor Pole began to feel unease about the divorce and privately began to discuss his opposition to it. However, Pole continued to work for almost a year on Henry's behalf even writing to Henry on 7 July 1530 that he would be happy to return home after his "fervent desire [the approval of Henry's divorce] was fulfilled with favorable opinion."⁴ But by June of 1531 it was clear to Pole that he could not garner the necessary support for Henry's divorce and wrote to Cranmer that it would be best to let the pope arbitrate the matter of the divorce. On a personal note, Pole added that he could not condemn the marriage himself. This was not for any theological qualm, though he may have possessed many, but because it was

³ Thomas F. Mayer, "A Fate Worse than Death: Reginald Pole and the Parisian Theologians." *The English Historical Review* 103:409 (1988) 870-891.

⁴ 7 July 1530 to Henry VIII, Paris (*Correspondence of Reginald Pole* 1:67). Citations of Pole's letters will contain all the available information regarding when they were written, to whom, and from where followed by their referenced location. It is also necessary to clarify that much of Pole's Latin was frequently written in surprisingly clipped language. This makes its translation difficult. Where possible I have relied on Mayer's translations. However, where the translation has proven unclear I have clarified through the original language. However, unless otherwise noted, the English translations are Mayer's.

impossible to claim that his prince had participated in something “so shameful, so abominable, so bestial and against nature.”⁵

Shortly after this, Pole decided that after a very brief return to England he would go into a period of self-imposed exile in Padua, despite the king’s desire that he remain in the country. During this time, Pole returned to his theological studies, most likely those concerning justification, until he was contacted again in 1535 by Thomas Starkey requesting a clear answer on the matter of Henry’s divorce. Pole’s responses to a series of letters between himself and Starkey seemed to indicate that he clearly disagreed with Henry’s divorce and had some qualms with the English crown’s execution of a group of Carthusians who continued to affirm the pope’s authority over the English church. Regardless, Pole claimed to remain in service to the crown, and Starkey acknowledged this. He wrote, “Your letters of 3 June declare your willingness to serve Henry. Your silence made me fear you did not like the assignment, but you now say you were waiting for further instruction from Cromwell.”⁶ There seems some hesitancy on Starkey’s part to believe the claim, but he did not refute it. Pole also wrote to Cromwell near the end of 1535, “Tell the king I am ready to serve him. Anything I do is his payment for my education.”⁷

Herein lies one of the greatest difficulties of studying Pole’s young life. Until 1536, when Pole sent Henry a full version of *De Unitate*, it is very difficult to know

⁵ By 13 June 1531 (*CRP* 1:70)

⁶ July 1535 Starkey (*CRP* 1:83)

⁷ 28 October 1535 to Cromwell, Padua (*CRP*, 86). For more on Starkey and Pole’s relationship, see A.R. Buck, “Rhetoric and Real Property in Tudor England: Thomas Starkey’s ‘Dialogue between Pole and Lupset.’” *Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature* 4:1 (1992) 27-43.

precisely where he stood on each of the points that would define most of his professional career.⁸ For this reason, Pole has been called by at least one scholar “a born Nicodemite, taciturn by nature.”⁹ Perhaps this could be a fair assessment of Pole up until 1536, but even then this seems unfair given that Pole was willing to state his opinion privately, if in a rather demure fashion, to Cromwell and others. Indeed, Pole’s decision to reside in Padua rather than to return to England seems a testament and, at least in retrospect, a rather clear indication of where he stood on Henry’s divorce and his headship of the English Church. Thomas J. Mayer has argued that Pole was undecided on matters of religion until after his flight to Padua in 1532, though this also seems unlikely given his refusal to write fully in support of Henry’s divorce to Cranmer in 1531.¹⁰ According to Mayer, Pole most likely underwent some sort of religious conversion in Padua and that it was this that secured his dissent from Henry’s reforms.¹¹ While this is possible, a conversion at this point again seems unlikely given that Pole chose to leave England,

⁸ *De Unitate* is a fascinating work that is only made more interesting by how Pole treated the manuscript. Pole never sought to have it published but rather actively avoided publication while freely sharing it with those who might be interested. It outlined his arguments against both Henry’s divorce and headship of the church while also putting forward strong arguments for justification by faith. For more on Pole’s relationship with *De Unitate*, see Thomas F. Mayer, “A Reluctant Author: Cardinal Pole and his Manuscripts.” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 89:4 (1999) 1-115.

⁹ Manfred Welte, *Breve storia della riforma italiana* (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1985) trans. Armido Rizzi, pg. 34

¹⁰ “[I could] agree that Pole supported the headship, and factor in his behavior in Paris, we must conclude that Pole neither came out against Henry’s designs nor rejected them in his own mind before he left England in January 1532. And why flee then? The conservatives appeared to have a strong position prior to parliament reopening, which would not come until two weeks after Chapuys reported Pole’s resolution to leave. Pole would have more than borne out the high opinion of his political aptitude had he proved more prescient than the proverbially wily Gardiner and correctly predicted the Submission of the Clergy.” (Mayer 61).

¹¹ “During this time Pole underwent a religious conversion, but one which should if anything have brought him closer to Henry. As in the case of John Calvin, we know few details about this momentous event, aside from Starkley’s news to an Avignonese friend in June 1534 that Pole was completely absorbed ‘in sacred letters.’” (Mayer 61) This seems the only evidence that Mayer offers of a radical conversion for Pole during his study in Padua.

against Henry's wishes, in 1532. Rather, it seems more likely that Pole's decision to flee indicates that his position on Henry's divorce and headship of the English church was already well established in 1532. What Pole did not have experience doing was navigating the conflict of internal allegiances that would mark the remainder of his life.

On 27 May 1536, Pole sent a copy of his work rejecting Henry's divorce and headship of the church, *De Unitate*, to Henry through his agent, Michael Throckmorton.¹² Pole instructed Throckmorton to tell the king upon the delivery of his treatise, "God saved David by sending him a prophet, and he has done the same for you."¹³ This marked a clear break with Henry, which Pole himself recognized. He wrote to Throckmorton in the same letter, "If [Henry] considers only the vehemency of the book, he will take me for an enemy, but God knows what I intend."¹⁴ However, Pole's decision to break with Henry through such a public reprimand was not a break with England as he continued serve his country over the next twenty years in the way that he thought best. Thus Pole's flight to Padua was not an act of forswearing his country for the Catholic Church, but rather was the act of a man who was uncertain how to navigate the very difficult situation in which he found himself. Pole could have merely forgotten about England and become a powerful figure in the Catholic Church, choosing to reside permanently in Italy, which

¹² Throckmorton is a fascinating figure who dutifully served Pole but who failed to come under suspicion of English authorities for many years. It was largely Throckmorton's role as an agent of Pole's in England that he was able to maintain such accurate information on the proceedings of Henry's government and policies, Anne Overell, "Cardinal Pole's Special Agent: Michael Throckmorton, c. 1503-1558." *History* 94:3 (2009) 265-278.

¹³ 27 May 1536 Instruction to Throckmorton with *De Unitate* (CRP 1: 97)

¹⁴ 27 May 1536 Instruction to Throckmorton with *De Unitate* (CRP 1:97)

he would do for a while.¹⁵ But, throughout his service in Italy, he also remained firmly committed to the wellbeing of England—in short, he remained not merely a Catholic but an English Catholic.

Even before the final break with Henry through *De Unitate*, Pole knew that he could no longer serve Henry in good faith. He wrote to the Charles V on 17 June 1535, “Sorrow also to see a king so misled,” in regards to Henry.¹⁶ It is worth noting that the earliest notes of a break with Henry were written to Charles as this marks the beginning of Pole’s strategy to bring England back to the true faith. Pole believed that the reason England was being misled was primarily due to interpersonal political relationships. He wrote on 24 March 1536 to Ludovico Priuli, “If the emperor’s aunt had died, the king would have been excommunicated. Is the Church thus to hang on the ‘little soul of one woman?’”¹⁷ The Holy Roman Emperor represented for Pole a means of reclaiming England for the Catholic Church. Yet Pole seemed to confuse his own mixed loyalties, both church and state, for those of the monarchs of Europe. He wrote in the same letter to Priuli, “Want Contarini to show the emperor what rewards come from defense of the church. Better to keep England than to conquer new provinces.”¹⁸ The Emperor did not at the moment “keep” England, nor had it ever been his to protect. Rather, Pole was

¹⁵ Mayer states that Pole later claimed to have done exactly this. “Pole later claimed that he had fled to Venice, intent on ignoring England. Perhaps he did” (Mayer 61). He cites Angelo Maria Querini’s collection of Pole’s letters, *Epistolarum Reginaldi Poli* vol. 1 pg. 69. However, a survey of the source does not reveal the information to which Mayer alludes, though it may be present in another volume.

¹⁶ 17 June 1535 to Charles V, Venice (*CRP* 1:82-83)

¹⁷ 24 March 1536 to Priuli, Venice (*CRP* 1:93). It is also worth noting how Pole approaches gender. This will reappear later but cannot be given full consideration in this work, even though it bears further investigation.

¹⁸ 24 March 1536 to Priuli, Venice (*CRP* 1:93).

assuming that Charles possessed the same loyalties to the church that he himself did and that the return of England to the Catholic fold would in some way be a political victory akin to the claiming of new provinces.

However, Pole quickly became aware that Charles' and his loyalties regarding the church did not extend to a similar concern regarding the nation of England. In another letter to Priuli barely two weeks later he wrote, "England's evils are those of the whole Church. No greater hope than in the meeting of princes. Otherwise, the evil will take over the whole Church. Use whatever authority you have to induce them to act as soon as possible. The emperor replied favorably to the English ambassador about the renewal of the alliance with England. Do something!"¹⁹ At this point, Pole's relationship with England became increasingly complicated, though he never ceased claiming that all he desired to do was serve his country. In one of his final letters to Henry he wrote, "Your letters, even more Cromwell's, but most of all the bearers make clear to me how urgent my return is. [I] Never wanted anything more than to obey... You have put such an obstacle before me that I would rashly risk my life to return. The problem is the new law which only your kingdom observes, which arose from your love for the woman who never loved you."²⁰ Pole attempted to pardon Henry to some extent by blaming Anne Boleyn. This may have been merely a rhetorical tool but he also wrote at the end of the letter, "I do not despair, since God has got rid of all your mistakes. Cutting off her head has removed the chance for further offense, and God has given you a good new wife."²¹

¹⁹ 3 April 1536 to Priuli, Venice (*CRP I*:94)

²⁰ 15 July 1536 to Henry VIII, Venice (101) Again, not Pole's understanding of the gender dynamics between Henry and Anne Boleyn. Anne is little more than a scapegoat for Henry's errors.

²¹ 15 July 1536 to Henry VIII, Venice (*CRP I*:102)

Divided Allegiances and Family Ties

From this point forward, Pole's continued allegiance to the papacy marked him an enemy of the English monarchy, even as Pole continued to consider himself a defender of England. Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of Durham, wrote to Pole, "'Remember your country, which you now oppose. The king brought you up. Your support of papal monarchy will discomfort your family and all your friends. Keep searching and you shall find the truth. If you do, the king will have you back.'"²² For Henry and his supporters, Pole simply had to abandon his allegiance to the papacy and support Henry's headship of the church and he would be welcome home. For Pole, this was inconceivable. He was not merely an Englishman or a Catholic, but a Catholic Englishman. This was reinforced when, the very same month he sent Henry *De Unitate*, a council was announced by the pope at which the fate of Henry would be decided. Pole most likely heard of this council after he had already sent *De Unitate* in a letter from Contarini, but it would have reinforced his identity as an English Catholic, especially as Pole was summoned as the representative *pro natione Anglica*.²³

Yet Pole would face one more significant hurdle before he could commit fully to his role as the Catholic reformer of the English church—his family. The decision to break from Henry seemed a natural one for Pole and, while he expressed regret over the

²² 13 July 1536 from Tunstall, London (*CRP I*:101)

²³ Contarini's letter was written 16 July 1536. It stated, "Had a long talk with the pope about you. Cortese's letters announced your recall to England. The pope wanted to know if you would go, and I replied 'no,' too dangerous and going would harm the Church...the pope has summoned many learned men, Italians, Spanish, and French, this winter to consult about a council. You are included, even if unwilling. You can tell the pope what to do about Henry," (*CRP I*:103). The official summons was penned by the Pope only three days later.

necessity of the action, he never agonized over it. Rather, Pole's greatest commiseration was that Henry could not see the truth and that his actions were affecting the rest of the English people. Pole was quite clearly set in 1536 that Henry was the cause of all England's misfortunes. He turned against Henry with surprising alacrity, "[Henry] works hard to corrupt the common people, but God protected them, and they forced their *rectores* back to the old religion. Evil flows into the body from the head; still, there is hope for recovery."²⁴

While Pole was prepared to continue to deal with threats and challenges from Henry's advisors, the source of the next attack came as a shock and wounded Pole deeply. Lord Montagu, Pole's brother Henry, wrote to him,

[Henry] recited much of your book to me, which grieved me as if I had lost my 'mother, wife, and children.' You are unnatural to your prince, to whom you owe all after God. He set up your down-trodden family...Cannot believe you are so superstitious as to 'offend God, lose all benefits of so noble a prince, your native country, and whole family.'²⁵

After this, Pole also received a letter from his mother, the Countess of Salisbury, "The king has sent me a terrible message by your brother, arising from your error. The king has always been good to me as a woman, and I expected my children's service to fulfil my duty. Have never been so upset as at the king's anger with you, not by your father's death nor any of my child's. Do your duty, or you will be my undoing."²⁶ While Pole could shake the accusations of his countrymen that he had abandoned England, he was comforted by the fact that he still believed he represented the people of England in their

²⁴ 31 August 1536 to Contarini, Venice (*CRP I*:115)

²⁵ 13 September 1536 from Montagu (*CRP I*:118)

²⁶ 1536 from Countess of Salisbury (*CRP I*:119)

religious desires. He could not, however, so easily find comfort from the accusations of his family. He wrote to Contarini near the end of 1536, “I received a third batch of letters, ‘which moved me very much,’ and were from my mother and brother. They were ‘so miserably written,’ that I almost succumbed.”²⁷ Here was a challenge that Pole had not met before. He could justify working against Henry because of his allegiance to England and to Catholicism, but after the letters from his family members Pole had reached a point at where he could no longer equivocate regarding his allegiances to his family and to the community of English Catholics. Pole himself recognized this, writing, “[I] could not see how to execute my plan of going to Rome without shredding the fabric of close relationship.”²⁸ And so Pole had, at last, to choose. He went to Rome.

The fallout of Pole’s decision to continue on his path had extremely negative consequences for Pole’s family in England. Lord Montagu, his brother, and the Countess of Salisbury, his mother, were arrested in 1538, and Henry Pole was executed early in 1539. Pole had almost no recorded response to the execution of his brother. Mayer notes, “Pole does not seem to have been too deeply disturbed.”²⁹ He attributes this lack of grief to Pole’s increasing interest in monastic discipline and his work in becoming “*tutto spiritual*.”³⁰ While this is a possibility, another option is that Pole did not expressively grieve for the death of his brother because he had, in 1536, sacrificed his allegiance to his family in order to affirm his identity as an English Catholic. Thus, when his brother died,

²⁷ 10 October 1536 to Contarini, Siena (*CRP I*:119). Translation mine.

²⁸ 10 October 1536 to Contarini, Siena (*CRP I*:119)

²⁹ Mayer, *Prince and Prophet*, 78

³⁰ Mayer, *Prince and Prohpet*, 78

he had only a passing connection to him as his old familiar loyalties had been overtaken by his new role as a papal legate and a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church. However, Pole's distance from his family might not be as significant as scholars such as Mayer have attested as will be demonstrated later.

Pole's election as a cardinal cemented the rift between Henry and himself. While *De Unitate* clearly laid out Pole's position and was the breaking point for Pole, the cardinalship was the breaking point for Henry and his court. Starkey wrote to Pole in early January 1537, before confirmation of his election had reached England, "Many rumors that you have become a cardinal.... We would be glad of your refusal which would express the love for the king that you allege in your letters. If not, you will be his 'open enemy.'"³¹ This was indeed the goal of Pole's election. Paul III wrote to Pole shortly after he was named a cardinal and tasked him, as a "famous Englishman," "to heal the ills of Christendom" by bringing England back to the catholic fold.³²

Against King and for Country

Pole accepted the election to the College of Cardinals and launched, almost immediately, into his duties as legate to Charles V and Francis I to win England back for the papacy. Perhaps taking Starkey's warning as a suggestion, he became Henry's most dangerous open enemy. Pole wrote to Paul almost immediately after his election, "Give me instruction about what England used to 'communicate' to Rome, so the king will

³¹ 16 January 1537 from Starkey (*CRP I*:127-128)

³² 14 February 1537 from Paul III (*CRP I*:133). Pole would implement a number of strategies for the reconversion of England to Catholicism, but none would prove more dominant than the theme of his suffering at the hands of Henry as a faithful Catholic and the weight of testimony that this suffering gave to his arguments. For more on how Pole constructed this suffering identity, see Thomas F. Mayer, "Reginald Pole in Paolo Giovio's *Descriptio*: A Strategy for Reconversion." *TSCJ* 16:4 (1985) 431-450.

know how to do penance.”³³ He also began to correspond with the Holy Roman Emperor and the king of France in order to convince them to work together to either force Henry to submit to the papacy or depose him from the throne. Pole though preferred that Henry be brought around by peaceful means and did not wish to see England invaded by foreign powers. He wrote, “The disease flows from the head into the body. There are two remedies, surgery and diet. The first is for old diseases, as rebellions have demonstrated, but I have taken the softer line of diet.”³⁴ He hoped that a trade embargo by France and diplomatic pressure from Charles would be enough.³⁵ The pope was less convinced. Paul wrote to Pole,

The king may have to be returned to the faith by arms. Better that he and his supporters die, than for them to take others to hell. We leave it to you including the use of arms if it cannot be done otherwise. We pray that those whom arms are proper will protect the Christian faithful. We grant a jubilee or crusading indulgence to any who fight.³⁶

This was a drastic step and one that Pole did not directly endorse. This is possibly because Paul’s desire that England return to the church was not merely out of religious concern, but Italy was under increasing threat from the Turks and Paul desperately wanted a religiously united Europe to stand against them.

While Pole knew the threat the Turks represented, he consistently worked to draw attention away from the threat of Islamic invasion and back to England. Pole wrote to

³³ Bef. 7 February 1537 to Paul III, Rome (*CRP I*:132)

³⁴ 28 April 1537 to Pio, Cambrai (*CRP I*:155)

³⁵ The pope also approved of the trade embargo but encouraged Pole to act in concert with the military powers of France, the Holy Roman Empire, and Scotland to force Henry back to the church or off the throne. See: Instructions for Pole’s legation, 1538/1539 (*CRP I*:204).

³⁶ 31 March 1537 from Paul III (*CRP I*:149)

Paul III, “Christians safer under Turks than in England. Use peace as a means to go after that tyrant,” and to Charles V, “The king of England as bad an enemy in the West as the Turk is in the East.”³⁷ Part of this undoubtedly stemmed from the personal threat Pole felt from Henry and his council.³⁸ Soon after departing for his legation into France, he wrote, “Cannot avoid worrying here because of all the soldiers, and also concerned about English spies and assassins, as in recent days. Help.”³⁹ He even vocalized his anger to Cromwell, “No Christian king has ever attacked a legate as he has me. I had no idea he so much wanted to get me into his hands that he would violate divine and human law. I am ashamed by his orders to betray the legate to his ambassador.”⁴⁰ To a significant degree, Pole’s anger was justified in regards to the threatening of his life. On two separate occasions Pole apprehended an assassin in his household and the presence of French and Imperial troops, among whom were English mercenaries that Pole found very suspect, forced Pole back to Italy before he could complete the object of his legation.⁴¹

Oddly, this persecution at once frustrated and comforted Pole. He felt as if the violence that Henry intended to use against him was proof of the rightness of his actions. He stated, “Took pleasure from this news and told my household that never felt myself a cardinal until now when persecuted like the heads of the Church which the cardinals

³⁷ 23 August 1538 to Paul III, Treville (*CRP I*:196) and 16 March 1539 to Charles V (*CRP I*:209-210)

³⁸ Thomas F. Mayer, “A Diet for Henry VIII: The Failure of Reginald Pole’s 1537 Legation.” *Journal of British Studies* 26:3 (1987) 305-331.

³⁹ 27 April 1537 to Erard de la Marck, Cambrai (*CRP I*:154)

⁴⁰ Cromwell, 2 May 1537 to Cromwell, Cambrai (*CRP I*:156)

⁴¹ At one point Pole caught an assassin who quickly escaped or else he would have faced prosecution. 10 June 1537 to Contarini, Liege (*CRP I*:168). It was most likely this scare that hurried him back to Italy.

‘represent.’”⁴² Pole dramatized his return to Italy by claiming, “When I had no place to lay my head (which has never happened to a legate in France); when I was surrounded by ambushes, deprived of all human help; I testify to the consolation I felt which prevented me from becoming dejected...until I was safe in Italy, like Elijah.”⁴³ This allusion to the prophets became commonplace in Pole’s writings and, despite the end of his legation, he never ceased to proclaim his desire to return England to the Roman Catholic Church. Particularly the desire to persuade Henry to return to the church rather than overthrow of him through military conquest. Pole styled this continual devotion as a prophetic calling and credited it to God, “After all the king’s plots against me, no one on earth who had been similarly treated could still wish him honor. But my love has supernatural help.”⁴⁴

However, Pole’s love did find a limit of sorts. In late 1558 to early 1559 Pole’s mother was arrested and his brother, Lord Montagu, was executed. As discussed earlier, there is nothing extant that directly reveals Pole’s feelings in regards to the death of his brother. There is ample evidence from Pole’s writings during this time that he was deeply affected by the death and by the arrest of his mother. Pole wrote to Contarini in regards to the present situation of England with an uncharacteristically nihilistic note, “Prayer the only remedy. All other remedies ‘vain...most vain.’”⁴⁵ It was during this same period of

⁴² Cromwell, 2 May 1537 Cromwell, Cambrai (*CRP I*:156)

⁴³ 14 January 1538 to Camillo Orsini, Rome (*CRP I*:186)

⁴⁴ 19 May 1537 (*CRP I*:167). Mayer argues that the central role that Pole took on during his time in Italy was that of prophet. This seems accurate and a good lens through which to view much of Pole’s activity while he campaigned for the return of Henry and England to the Catholic Church, but does not necessarily help in understanding the ways in which Pole navigated the very complex tapestry of loyalties that Pole adhered to.

⁴⁵ 25 March 1539 to Contarini, Carpentras (*CRP I*:217)

time that Pole began to argue more forcefully with Charles V and Francis I regarding England. He told his agent to the French court, “If [Francis] objects that the Turks and Lutherans are more important, argue the opposite.”⁴⁶ He also began, for the first time, to encourage the use of force to reconvert England. He told Charles, “Arms needed because Henry using arms of persuasion and force,” and added in a personal taunt that Henry “uses religion as cover for his libido.”⁴⁷ Perhaps in response to this increased pressure on Pole’s behalf, on 19 May 1539 Pole was, at last, officially attained by Henry.

This increased pressure on Europe’s monarchs to topple Henry from the throne was not a break from Pole’s established allegiances as he had already declared his loyalty to England rather than to Henry, but it does help demonstrate the way that his familial loyalties, while perhaps secondary in the way in which Pole viewed himself, did shape and augment how he went about accomplishing the tasks of his main duties as an English Catholic reformer. The persistence with which Pole continued to call for the reform and return of England to the Catholic Church, even to the extent that it put his life in danger, is evidence of how deeply he still identified with the nation. However, Pole may have been aware that he was acting more acerbically than he had in the past and may even have recognized the cause was the danger to himself and to his family. He wrote, with a note of defensiveness,

Less it appear that I am too excited because of the sufferings of my relatives, I tell you that if my father had done what this tyrant has, I would have taken less care than I did in Henry’s case. If my relatives were to become rulers of the island through my assistance to him, I would be their enemy as much as I now am

⁴⁶ Late 1538/Early 1539 Instructions to Pole’s Legation (*CRP I:204*)

⁴⁷ 16 March 1539 to Charles V (*CRP I:211*)

Henry's. Have risked my own life and ruined my family, but have nonetheless done my duty according to my conscience.⁴⁸

However, the stress of assassins and the circumstances of his family did eventually wear Pole down and he eventually requested a brief respite in his role as legate. He wrote to Contarini that he was "sick in body and soul. I Want solitude as never before. I Want to be alone so I can seek 'a remedy for sorrow.' I have not written about my sorrow because I do not want you to think that have given up hope for my poor country."⁴⁹ To this end, Pole requested a bishopric in which he could take time to rest, and "any bishopric would be like a place for a wounded soldier to recover."⁵⁰ Instead, he was given time in a monastery in the town of Carpentras where he had been residing.

The Price of Dissent and Reform

Pole intended to take several months to recover. When Paul III requested he return to Rome, Pole asked that his return be delayed until December as "that would be safer. So much would be for my safety, if not my consolation. It would console my relatives, if I have any left, were I not to die."⁵¹ Yet, even after his return to Rome, Pole spent less time in duties as a legate and focused more on his studies and on serving as a patron to other scholars.⁵² He rarely wrote to any of his English agents though he still kept abreast of the situation in England as he wrote on 6 September 1540 to Contarini

⁴⁸ 11 April 1539 to Granvelle, Carpentras (*CRP I:221-222*)

⁴⁹ 15 and 16 August 1539 to Contarini, Carpentras (*CRP I:239*)

⁵⁰ 15 and 16 August 1539 Contarini, Carpentras (240)

⁵¹ 22 September 1539 to Contarini, Carpentras (*CRP I:243*)

⁵² Pole achieved mixed success as a patron according to Thomas F. Mayer, "When Maecenas Was Broke: Cardinal Pole's "Spiritual" Patronage." *TSCJ* 27:2 (1996) 419-435.

about the death of Cromwell, “No news, except that Cromwell behaved like the thief at his end and begged God’s mercy and made a long speech to the people justifying his condemnation. Oh the infinite mercy that would make such an example.”⁵³ Most of his time was occupied with the governance of Viterbo, which had been given to him by Paul III.⁵⁴ Pole’s increasing melancholy was amplified by the news that on 27 May 1541 his mother, the Countess of Salisbury, had been executed by Henry.

Pole’s reaction to the execution of his mother was much more obviously sorrowful than to that of his brother’s execution. The Countess’ execution was, by all accounts, horribly botched. The executioner, a young boy, missed his first several swings, striking the Countess in her shoulders and back before finally killing her. Despite this horrendous death, Pole wrote, “God gave me consolation that nature could not. The manner of her death could seem shameful, but not to Christ, the apostles, martyrs, and virgins. I think it an honor to be ‘the son of a martyr,’ which is ‘consolation for such a serious wound of nature.’”⁵⁵ More than once Pole claimed to find consolation in his mother’s death, “My mother’s blood was shed for the unity of the church. She lives in Him who destroys death. Her better life consoles me.”⁵⁶ Yet Pole also had moments where he seemed to feel guilt over his role in his mother’s and, perhaps belatedly, his

⁵³ 6 September 1540 Contarini, Viterbo (254)

⁵⁴ Pole’s time at Viterbo was marked by his increasing involvement in both Italian political and intellectual life. He became a major figure of European learning among English exiles searching for an education on the continent along with Edmund Harvell, Rober Barrington, “Two Houses both alike in Dignity: Reginald Pole and Edmund Harvell,” *The Historical Journal* 39:4 (1996) 895-913.

⁵⁵ 1 August 1541 to Cardinal Burgensis, Capranica (*CRP* 1:273)

⁵⁶ N.D. to de Selve, Rome (*CRP* 1:275)

brother's death by acknowledging their martyrdoms but not his own, "If shedding my blood will convert [Henry], I wish he would do it."⁵⁷

Along with being more clearly grieved at his mother's death, Pole's attitude towards Henry and, to some extent, his understanding of governance took a surprising turn. Near the end of the year of his mother's death, Pole wrote to Cotarini in regards to a dispute that occurred under his jurisdiction in Viterbo, "Do not want to use violence with anyone, so have remitted everything to auditor's judgement."⁵⁸ Pole consistently began to avoid the use of violence whenever he found it possible—even when that violence could serve as a means of revenge against Henry. On 25 July 1542 Pole wrote to Rome that he had apprehended an individual who was most likely an assassin in his household. A man by the name of Alessandro da Bologna had come to Pole claiming to be from Wales along with two servants. Suspicious, Pole swiftly took the man and his two servants into custody and, under questioning, they revealed that they were from England and had connections to Henry. Pole then sent them Rome but they were quickly released. Alessandro was later located again in Venice where he claimed to be a servant of Henry and would eventually return to England.⁵⁹ Pole's decision not to execute this assassin is ultimately indecipherable. Perhaps Pole did not wish to anger Henry and risk the lives of more of Pole's relatives or perhaps the death of his mother had convinced Pole that executions accomplished little other than grief. Regardless of the reason, this would mark a trend in Pole's later life of pardoning those whom he had a legal right to execute.

⁵⁷ N.D. to Antonio Pucci, Capranica (*CRP 1:274*)

⁵⁸ 23 December 1541 to Contarini, Viterbo (*CRP 1:281*)

⁵⁹ 25 July 1542 (*CRP 1:294-295*)

Pole continued his work in Viterbo until he was called to attend the Council of Trent. Pole was named one of three papal legates to the Council in 1542 but, because of the Plague and disagreements with Charles V, the Council did not begin in Trent until 1546. Pole's role in the proceedings of the Council was brief but significant. Here, for the first time, Pole began to fall out of favor with the papacy because of his allegiance to the idea of reforming the Catholic Church. On 7 March 1546 Pole and the other legates wrote to Paul III claiming that his desired bull, *de reformatione*, was not suited for the opening of the council. Rather, the legates argued, Paul should have focused on ending clerical abuses. Around this time, Pole also began to argue that the Council ought to consider revising Catholic theology to give a fairer account of justification by faith.⁶⁰ It is possible that it was this that led Pole to depart from Trent, but it was more likely that issues of health caused his early departure by July 1546. Pole spent the next six months seeking a remedy for his malady that caused him pain and created numbness in one of his arms.⁶¹ Pole finally recovered at latest in February 1547 because he responded with enthusiastic energy when he discovered that Henry had died.

Continued Devotion to England

Pole wrote to Paul III as soon as he had received word of Henry's death, "Henry's death offers an opportunity for restoring the Church and bringing immortal glory to you. Your prudent judgement of the event gives me greater hope. But a good part of this is up

⁶⁰ Erwin Iserloh, "Luther and the Council of Trent." *The Catholic Historical Review* 69:4 (1983) 563-576 and Paul V. Murphy, "Between "Spirituali" and "Intransigenti": Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga and Patrician Reform in Sixteenth-Century Italy." *The Catholic Historical Review* 88:3 (2002) 446-469.

⁶¹ 1 July 1546 to Del Monte and Cervini, Treville (*CRP* 1:350)

to the emperor, and someone welcome ought to be sent.”⁶² He seemed anxious about the possibility of receiving both papal and imperial approval to approach the new boy king as he wrote again to the pope the very next day with a degree of reproach and desperation, “Perhaps the failure to reach an agreement between you and the emperor has harmed ‘the common salvation,’ but I neither affirm nor deny this. Certain that the disagreement must be overcome. Use my services.”⁶³ Pole’s immediate reaction upon the death of Henry was proof of his continued devotion to England. He himself wrote to Somerset and Edward’s council, “Did not delay given grave danger once I knew new regime confirmed. Will forget my private injury from Henry because I cannot forget my love for country and cannot stand what you are doing in council.”⁶⁴ Thus Pole affirmed his continued loyalty to England while also remaining steadfastly set in his desire to see the Roman Catholic faith returned to his home. He thought this was the ideal moment at which to reunite England and Rome and saw himself as the ideal candidate to accomplish the reunification, “Must have mediator of colloquy whom both sides will accept. Who better or more just than I?”⁶⁵

Pole’s machinations for the recatholization of England were short lived. It quickly became clear that the boy-king Edward, under the guidance of Somerset and Cranmer, intended to enact more reforms rather than to return the English Church to the care of Rome. Pole quickly tired of dealing with Somerset and the council, realizing that his calls

⁶² Between 18-25 February 1547 to Paul III (*CRP* 2:10)

⁶³ Between 19-26 February 1547 (*CRP* 2:10)

⁶⁴ 6 May 1549 to Protector and Council, Civitella San Paolo (*CRP* 2:25)

⁶⁵ 6 May 1549 to Protector and Council, Civitella San Paolo (*CRP* 2:25-26)

for reconciliation were falling on antagonistic ears. He wrote for the last time in October 1549 to Somerset. He said that England was in grave danger since it was being led by a boy king, at war with two different kingdoms, the people still wanted the return of Catholicism, and Edward had been born to a heretic and schismatic.⁶⁶ Pole offered his services one last time before his attention was captured by yet another death—that of Paul III on 10 November 1549.

The papal conclave after the death of Paul III is one of the most fascinating events of Pole's life, but it was also one upon which he himself did not comment. The conclave, which met at the end of 1549, was marked by nationalistic interests and the cardinals were split into three factions—Imperial, French, and Italian. The Imperial faction held an early majority of cardinals as it took time for the French cardinals to arrive in Rome and the conclave had already begun when they first began to trickle into the city.⁶⁷ During the time prior to their arrival, Pole was very nearly elected pope. Backed by Charles V, both for his work with the emperor during his time as legate and his support of Catharine of Aragon, and friendly with many of the Italian cardinals, Pole fell only two votes short of securing the papacy.⁶⁸ Upon hearing this, the French cardinals rushed to the city and, fearing a pope so friendly with the Holy Roman Emperor, argued that the election of such a pro-Hapsburg cardinal would lead to another schism with the French church. After this, Pole had very little chance of election and the vote eventually went to the Italian,

⁶⁶ 12 October 1549 to Somerset and Council, Rome (*CRP* 2:61-67)

⁶⁷ Frederic J. Baumgartner, "Henry II and the Papal Conclave of 1549". *TSCJ* 16:3 (1985) 301-314.

⁶⁸ M Firpo, "Politica imperiale e vita religiosa in Italia nell'età di Carlo V." *Studi Storici* 42:2 (2001) 245-261.

Giovanni Maria Ciocchi del Monte, who became Julius III.⁶⁹ Pole said very little about his failed election, speaking of it in only one extant letter, “Why was I happy when they proposed to elect another? Because continued contention had endangered ‘the Christian people,’ and God had revealed His will. Did I seek the honor for myself? If I had, I would have been unworthy of that ‘glorious burden.’”⁷⁰ Yet a letter from Francisco de Navarre made it clear that nationality played a large role in Pole’s failure to be elected, “Greatly hoped you would be elected in conclave. God would not have cared about the person or nationality if the proper forms of election had been observed.”⁷¹ This is further proof that Pole remained, not only in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of those around him, both Catholic and distinctly English. Even as he vied for the highest office of the Roman Catholic Church, Pole remained clearly devoted to those allegiances that had guided his career up to that point and while devotion to the church gained him favor among some, his nationalistic and reforming interests continued to earn him animosity from others.

Several years after the election, Pole returned briefly to conversation with Edward. Yet, in the letter he sent to the boy king, Pole did very little to attempt to persuade Edward to return to the Catholic fold. Rather, Pole’s letter was one of the only times he explicitly attempted to justify his flight from England,

Decided that I could avoid [an even more dangerous storm] only through distance and thus with the king’s permission I went to Venice *tanquam in portum* etc. Had hardly reached it when tempest broke. Cried when I saw the king’s letter with his orders to write in a matter about which I knew little. If so many noble men

⁶⁹ Thomas F. Mayer, ““Il fallimento di una candidatura: il partito della riforma, Reginald Pole e il conclave di Giulio III.” *Annali dell’Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 21 (1995) 41-67

⁷⁰ 17 June 1550 to Navarre, Bagnoregio (CRP 2:88)

⁷¹ 3 March 1550 from Francisco de Navarre (CRP 2:72)

testified to truth with blood, how could I refuse danger of giving similar testimony?⁷²

He told Edward that he had been promised the Archbishopric of York if he supported Henry's divorce, but he had persisted in his position.⁷³ Finally, when Pole found it time at last to actively argue against Henry, he did so only to his greatest sadness, "The king just got worse, as if he were the only person on earth who would be safe no matter what. So I had to write *De unitate* as I did. I Cried the whole time."⁷⁴

This last letter to Edward is perplexing. Pole did very little other than to justify his action and seemed, to some extent, to be making his peace with the king and his country. Shortly after this, Pole began to speak of Italy in ways that he never had before. He wrote the new Doge of Venice, "Congratulations on your election. Happier because I had my education in this republic as in my mother's womb, and I enjoyed Venice as much as my own *patria*."⁷⁵ After twenty years of exile, Pole seemed at last to be coming to terms with the fact that he might never return to England. His correspondence networks during this period of time centered almost entirely in Italy and he grew increasingly lax in his exchanges with English sources. Had Edward survived into adulthood and had a son, it is possible that Pole might have eventually shed his allegiance to England and focused solely on the reforming of the Catholic Church. That exile was having an effect on how Pole perceived himself is also evident in the way that he reacted to Edward's death. After the death of Henry, Pole aggressively moved to get the papacy's support of his attempts

⁷² Late 1552/Early 1553 to Edward VI (*CRP* 2:105-106)

⁷³ Late 1552/Early 1553 to Edward VI (*CRP* 2:109)

⁷⁴ Late 1552/Early 1553 to Edward VI (*CRP* 2:112)

⁷⁵ Venice, 5 July 1553 to Doge of Venice, Maguzzano (*CRP* 2:126)

to reconcile Edward to the Catholic Church. But, when Edward died, the pope had to reach out to Pole.

Renegotiating Allegiances and Reencountering England

Julius wrote to Pole on 2 August 1553, “We immediately thought that God might be giving us an opportunity. Have consulted the cardinals extensively. Ask advice about England. We urge you to send it. If you think it best to go yourself, we would gladly send you. It would help to send you as legate to the emperor and king of France.”⁷⁶ Then again, on 5 August 1553, “God has given the crown to Mary, who has never deviated from the Catholic faith. Do not doubt that later a Catholic prince will be born and the realm easily restored to the communion of the Church,” and concluded his letter, “We place our hope in you and Mary.”⁷⁷ On the same day, Julius also named Pole legate to England and gave him significant powers to return England to Catholicism.⁷⁸ Yet Pole’s response to all of this was mild in comparison to that of Edward’s ascension, “Have confirmation of Mary’s ascension. A big victory for God’s goodness, even through a woman.”⁷⁹

Pole’s reserved response is understandable. He may not have wished to get his hopes up and he also may not have desired to reopen wounds that were finally healing.

⁷⁶ 2 August 1553 from Julius III, Rome (*CRP* 2:127)

⁷⁷ 5 August 1553 from Julius III, Rome (*CRP* 2:129)

⁷⁸ “You may punish any who resist, and invoke the secular arm.” 5 August 1553 from Julius III, Rome (*CRP* 2:131)

⁷⁹ 7 August 1553 to Julius III, Maguzzano (*CRP* 2:137). This once again raises the issue of Pole’s understanding Gender. While not discussing Pole, Judith M. Richard’s, “Mary Tudor as ‘Sole Quene?: Gendering Tudor Monarchy.” *The Historical Journal* 40:4 (1997) 895-924 deals with the issue of gender in Mary’s reign, particularly in contrast to that of Elizabeth.

Merely days after hearing the news of Mary's ascension, Pole wrote to Girolamo Muzzarelli indicating that he felt a distance with England that he had not in the past, "I had always made friends on the basis of *divina providential & religionis stadium*, since I lost my relatives and my country."⁸⁰ In the same letter, he asked in an apparent moment of frustration, "Did God not give me the chance to prove my obedience, just one step short of martyrdom?"⁸¹ After all he had been through, Pole at last seemed to question his continued loyalty to England—a loyalty that had cost him his safety, his family, and possibly even the papacy.

Yet Pole had been named legate to England and his loyalty to the Catholic Church held steadfast. He reached out tentatively to Mary and warned her about continuing on the path of her father, "You must think about the root of all these troubles, the divorce, first from your mother, and much worse from the Church. The devil was behind your father's divorce, which injured everyone. Anne Boleyn gave birth to all evils."⁸² Pole's correspondence with the new queen was hesitant and he held back in the fervency that had marked his efforts with Henry and Edward until he was certain that Mary would reunite England with the Catholic Church. Mary, dealing with a belligerent Parliament and uncertain political circumstances, could offer no such assurances early in her correspondence with Pole.

Mary's uncertainty was also exacerbated by the geopolitical situation of her ascension to the throne unwed. Soon after Mary took the throne, Pole received a letter

⁸⁰ 9 Aug 15553 to Girolamo Muzzarelli, Maguzzano (*CRP* 2:155)

⁸¹ 9 Aug 15553 to Girolamo Muzzarelli, Maguzzano (*CRP* 2:156)

⁸² 13 August 1553 to Mary, Maguzzano (*CRP* 2:163)

from Alessandro Farnese, an agent of Pole's in the French court, that Pole's nephew, Edward Courtenay would almost certainly marry Mary and that the French crown would support her rule.⁸³ However, Pole was quickly disabused of both of these notions when he received a letter from another cardinal on 27 August 1553 that the French would not support Mary's claim to the throne, in large part because she had begun to court an alliance through marriage with the Holy Roman Empire.⁸⁴ This idea proved favorable to the papacy and Pole was instructed to do everything possible to court Henry V's favor for Mary while placating France.⁸⁵ To this end, Pole was given unprecedented power to act on Mary and the pope's behalf, "All obstacles are now removed, and therefore you are sent. You are to act alone, without the emperor, Henry II, or the legates sent to them. God has saved you for this. The pope will not listen to anyone but you."⁸⁶

During this time, Pole began to receive his first letters from Mary and her agents. These letters began to convince Pole that Mary intended to return England to the Catholic fold but, while the language regarding Pole was glowing, Mary's actions remained reticent. Henry Pynning wrote to Pole on Mary's behalf, "The queen very pleased by your letters, and would give half her kingdom to have you here. Said you would be happy to come. She replied that she feared the heretics, and had to move slowly."⁸⁷ Mary's attitude

⁸³ 12 August 1553 from Farnese (*CRP* 2:161)

⁸⁴ 27 August 1553 from Dandino (*CRP* 2:171)

⁸⁵ "You need to wait for the emperor in everything, but at least deal secretly with the queen and keep the emperor happy on the surface. The pope thinks someone should go to France, especially to tell them Mary is not completely in the imperial camp." 2 September 1553 from Vincenzo Parpaglia (*CRP* 2:182)

⁸⁶ 14 September 1553 Parpaglia's report (*CRP* 2:189)

⁸⁷ 19 September 1553 from Henry Pynning, London (*CRP* 2:193)

toward Pole may not have been an exaggeration. Pole's martyred mother, the Countess of Salisbury, had been Mary's Governess and had served her faithfully, even against the wishes of Henry VIII.⁸⁸ Mary was thus able to trust Pole and, even in this early stage of her career, she began to rely on him. The sincerity of Mary's faith also began to show itself to Pole, who was requested to absolve Mary of the fact her coronation came before England could be formally reconciled to Rome. Mary claimed this was out of necessity of being crowned before parliament could meet and object.⁸⁹ Mary at last wrote to Pole herself on 15 October 1553 to assure him of her intentions to make England Catholic again, "I have always preferred the 'old religion,' and so I cannot accept the title against my conscience and my sex, so I asked for its suspension. If they refuse, I do not know what to do. I need your 'very prudent counsel.'"⁹⁰

This seemed enough for Pole, who had begun to feel about Mary that "since whole thing a woman's fault, fitting that *una vergine* should remedy."⁹¹ Pole's letters began to take on the fervency that marked his interactions with Henry and Edward. He wrote to Mary and her council, "It is not enough for her to be sure of her faith; she must compel her subjects to similar belief, and punish the disobedient. She must use force if reason does not work. Speed essential."⁹² He also began to reiterate the rhetoric he had used with Edward to convince Mary of his loyalty to the English crown, "And this afore

⁸⁸ John Edwards, *Mary I: England's Catholic Queen* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 6, 56-58.

⁸⁹ 19 September 1553 from Henry Pynning, London (*CRP* 2:194)

⁹⁰ 28 October 1553 from Mary (*CRP* 2:223)

⁹¹ 2 October 1553 to Marquess of Exeter, Trent (*CRP* 2:210)

⁹² Circa 18 November 1553 to Mary, Dillingen (*CRP* 2:232)

God I say again, after such monstrous injuries as [Henry] did, especially in killing my mother, yet I never saw the time but I would have been content to have lost my life corporal to have saved his soul.”⁹³ Yet even as Pole’s English identity began to reassert itself, it also began to cause him issues in his duties as legate. Pole reported back to the pope in regards to a conversation he had held with one of Charles V’s agents, “I refused to be drawn about whom the queen should marry. Mendoza later left no doubt when speaking to one of mine that Charles wished her to marry his son. This told me the whole reason for the emperor’s refusal to let me proceed: he fears that I do not wish my country to come under a foreigner’s control,” for Mary had begun to seek the hand of Charles’ son and heir, Philip II of Spain.⁹⁴

Pole seemed to care little that Mary was not marrying an Englishman and was simply happy that she had chosen to wed a Catholic. However, the animosity between England and Spain meant that Charles and Philip were both suspicious of Pole’s motives. This suspicion was exacerbated by Pole’s family ties. Where once Pole’s actions had placed his family under suspicion, now the works of his cousin and nephew delayed Pole’s triumphant return to England. Pole’s cousin, Edward Courtenay, who had been the presumptive spouse of Mary at one point, was implicated in Wyatt’s Rebellion and fell quickly out of favor. Pole’s nephew, Thomas Stafford, found him while he worked as legate in France, “Second day after my arrival, one of my nephews appeared unexpectedly. He had fled England on bad advice simply because he disliked the marriage. He had the effrontery to seek me out, but I threw him out as soon as I knew

⁹³ 1 or 2 December 1553 to Mary, Dillingen (*CRP* 2:236-237)

⁹⁴ N.D. Report to pope on conference between Pole and Juan de Mendoza (*CRP* 2:221).

why he had come.”⁹⁵ However, his nephew continued to cause him problems. Pole wrote to Julius on 24 April 1554, “Said was more than glad to be back [in Brussels with the Emperor], since my staying in France might have harmed England, especially because of exiles in France, including my nephew.”⁹⁶ He was again forced to defend himself from his family in May of that year “To those who say my silence encouraged my nephew, I reply that exactly the opposite happened when he was in Dillingen. He said a few things in the presence of others disapproving the marriage, and I ‘rebuffed [him] acerbically’ and by no means approved his going to England.”⁹⁷

However, Pole’s reunion with his family was not entirely negative. Sometime before 21 June 1554 Pole was contacted by his niece, the daughter of his executed brother, Henry. His response was palpably emotional,

Have two of yours since came here. First was the first from any member of my family in many years. Glad your marriage turned out well and that you have become a good wife and mother. Could not read it all at once because it made me sad to think of what I had lost, but comforted myself by thinking of their service to God.⁹⁸

Mary also began to work to restore Pole’s fortune and lands that had been stripped from him and his family when he had been attainted.⁹⁹ This created an interesting dilemma for Pole. While he was both a legate and a cardinal, if his attainder was reversed then he could legally enter England again, even if it had not formally recommitted to

⁹⁵ 4 April 1554 to del Monte, Fontainebleau (*CRP* 2:284)

⁹⁶ 24 April 1554 to Julius III, Brussels (*CRP* 2:290)

⁹⁷ 25 May 1554 to Morone, Dilighem (*CRP* 2:295)

⁹⁸ 21 June 1554 to Katherine Countess of Huntingdon, Brussels (*CRP* 2:318)

⁹⁹ 13 December 1553 from Julius III (*CRP* 2:240)

Catholicism. Julius III actually recommended this path, “You may go to England as a private person, and then resume both legations.”¹⁰⁰ Pole even received word in June 1554, “Queen thinks layman should be sent, and that Pole would be welcome, but not as from Rome.”¹⁰¹ This meant Pole would be welcome to return home, both at the behest of the Pope and Mary. That Pole decided not to accept this opportunity and remained as a legate on the continent is interesting. In the same letter stating that Mary would prefer Pole come to England as a layman, the author, Priuli, made it clear that Pole was going to send someone else.¹⁰²

Pole’s actions on the continent help clarify why he did not enter England as soon as he had the chance. Until he could enter England as both a legate and an Englishman, Pole would remain where he was. Throughout Pole’s career he had stood firm in three things—his devotion to England, the Roman Catholic Church, and reform. His loyalty to England had begun to fade when it seemed as if the country would never again embrace Catholicism. But Mary ascended the throne and Pole became convinced that she intended to bring England back to the Catholic fold, he reembraced his English identity with vigor. In March of 1554, July instructed Pole to “stop being exaggeratedly scrupulous” and to “decide the status of clerical orders, depending upon whether the priest was ordained validly, validly but irregularly, or not at all.”¹⁰³ This he began to do. At first he absolved only seven procurators on the basis that the “Church never refuses penitents, especially

¹⁰⁰ 13 December 1553 from Julius III (*CRP* 2:240)

¹⁰¹ 3 June 1554 from Alvise Priuli to Morone (*CRP* 2:305)

¹⁰² “Pole has not decided whom to send.” 3 June 1554 from Alvise Priuli to Morone (*CRP* 2:305)

¹⁰³ 8 March 1554 from Julius III (*CRP* 2:270)

when distinguished by integrity and learning, not to mention Mary's evidence."¹⁰⁴

However, Pole soon began to absolve virtually any case that was presented to him by Mary and became noticeably anxious to return to England.

Mary and Philip married in July 1554. Pole immediately began lobbying for his return even though certain issues remained unsolved in regards to England's return to Catholicism—namely the issue of what should be done with ecclesiastical property seized and distributed by Henry. Pole, surprisingly, brushed the matter aside in an uncharacteristic disregard of both royal and papal reputation, "I am sure slander can be avoided to Church and God, at same time as possessioners satisfied. It is up to you when I come. Delay will only cause trouble. Now that you are married there should be no further delay."¹⁰⁵ He also wrote to Philip, "Have been waiting a year. Do I not deserve to return?"¹⁰⁶ And then to Charles, "Other embassies let in, but papal legate kept waiting for more than a year. Let me in! Cannot delay," while also relocating to Brussels in order to be able to leave for England at a moment's notice.¹⁰⁷

At last, near the end of October 1554 Pole learned that he was being summoned as a papal legate to enter England by Philip and Mary. Pole immediately wrote to the pope, "Queen will secure the consent of most of parliament. I replied that should give thanks to God, 'greater and more praiseworthy enterprise than if one should recapture Jerusalem from the infidels,' and very happy to be involved as minister."¹⁰⁸ When Pole at last

¹⁰⁴ 17 March 1554 to 7 procurators (*CRP* 2:275).

¹⁰⁵ 11 August 1554 to Mary, Dilighem (*CRP* 2:332). Translation Mine.

¹⁰⁶ 21/22/23 September 1554 to Philip, Dilighem (*CRP* 2:338)

¹⁰⁷ 28 September 1554 to Charles V, Brussels (*CRP* 2:340)

¹⁰⁸ 25 October 1554 to Julius III, Brussels (*CRP* 2:353)

arrived in England on 20 November 1554 he was welcomed by news only days later that Mary and Philip had officially lifted his attainder. A week after arriving, Pole addressed Parliament in this regard, “I was deprived of my country, deprived of my property, and deprived of nobility, nor did I have any means of seeing my relatives again, all of which have been restored to me by your decree.”¹⁰⁹ Then, on 30 November 1554, Pole pardoned England and welcomed it back to Catholicism, saying,

It is fitting that Mary, Henry’s daughter, who always displayed constancy in religion, should have married Philip. Through their piety the realm has been returned to the fold and all aforesaid laws abrogated. Since parliament, for itself and the rest of the realm, has acknowledged its errors, and humbly asked forgiveness, we free them from heresy and schism and receive them back to the church. We absolve whole realm through our power as legate *a latere*, dispense from all irregularities, and restore everything to its pristine state.¹¹⁰

Following a number of ceremonies and formalities, Pole wrote from London to Henry II, king of France, a very short letter that seemed to encapsulate his feelings at his long-awaited return, “Now that England has returned to Church, time for peace.”¹¹¹

The “Triumphant” Return

Pole did receive, for a brief period, a form of the peace he had desired. A rumor had circulated soon after Mary and Philip had wed that she was pregnant and it appeared to be true.¹¹² After an official ceremony welcoming Mary and England back into the

¹⁰⁹ 28 November 1554 Address to Parliament (*CRP* 2:367)

¹¹⁰ 30 November 1554 to Philip and Mary, Lambeth (*CRP* 2:377)

¹¹¹ 13 December 1554 Henry II, London (385)

¹¹² After the wedding Mary did actually stop menstruating and her stomach began to bulge as if she were carrying a child. However, no child, even a stillborn, was ever birthed leading scholars to suggest that Mary may well have experienced a false pregnancy, in which the body imitates the effects of pregnancy based usually on a very strong desire in a woman that she be carrying a baby. The importance of Mary giving birth to a son was paramount given the gender dynamics of her rulership and the specter of Elizabeth’s looming succession. This argument is echoed in Anne McLaren, “Gender, Religion, and Early

Catholic fold, Pole met with Mary and Philip during a banquet at which she sat between the two men. Pole commented on this “that God had put her between the two greatest powers, emperor and Pope.”¹¹³ Pynning, who reported this story, also retold a strange story. After Pole had left the event, “Lord Montagu sent word from Mary that she had not wanted to say in public that she was pregnant, but had felt her child stir when Pole greeted her.”¹¹⁴ The imagery of this is striking but hard to misinterpret. Mary, as the Catholic queen who had returned England to Catholicism, was carrying a male heir that would prove England’s continued salvation and this child recognized the role Pole had played in the whole affair.

However, peace was not to last. Almost immediately Mary’s marriage to a Spanish prince began to cause problems. One of Philip’s Spanish officers wrote to Pole, “You have no idea how much animus English have against Spanish. Very hard for a naturally choleric Spaniard to swallow the insults. Some do it knowing they will try the king’s patience. Also very difficult for us to go in public with insignia of our offices.”¹¹⁵ Pole also was struggling to settle the matter of private individuals holding ecclesiastical property that he had brushed aside so easily in his haste to return to England. He was able to secure a dispensation from the pope pardoning all those who held ecclesiastical property on the condition that they offered to return it. Pole wrote of his plan, “My

Modern Nationalism: Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, and the Genesis of English Anti-Catholicism.” *The American Historical Review* 107: 3 (2002) 739-767, particularly 740-741.

¹¹³ 1 December 1554 from Pynning to unknown (*CRP* 2:380)

¹¹⁴ 1 December 1554 from Pynning to unknown (*CRP* 2:380)

¹¹⁵ 1 September 1554 from Carranza, London (*CRP* 2:334). For more on the difficulties Mary faced because Philip was Spanish, see: Alexander Samson, “Changing Places: The Marriage and Royal Entry of Philip, Prince of Austria, and Mary Tudor, July-August 1554.” *TSCJ* 36:3 (2005) 761-784.

faculty designed not to induce all the possessioners to return property, but to admit guilt and remit the disposition to the head of Church who would remit them.”¹¹⁶

The problem was that even Philip and Mary held property that they did not wish to lose if Pole went back on his word and he included in the same letter to them that much of the “outcome dependent on crown setting an example.”¹¹⁷ This was partially true; Pole did not intend to remit all property back to those who current possessed it, but rather only those properties that were not moveable. Pole was, ultimately, able to quell Philip and Mary’s continuing fears by remitting them their property and also by demonstrating that he would be very lax in his handling of matters with the populace in order to avoid upsetting the people too much. Although this did not stop him from reminding the people (and Philip and Mary) of the example of the Babylonian king Belshazzar whose kingdom was overrun after he used the sacred vessels of the Jewish temple in a feast. Still, Pole was able to navigate the issue of ecclesiastical property as he said he would.¹¹⁸

Part of the reason Pole was able to oversee the return or remitting of property with relative ease was that Rome was caught up in electing a new pope not once, but twice during this period. Julius III died on 23 March 1555 and the college of cardinals quickly

¹¹⁶ N.D. to Philip and Mary (*CRP* 2:390)

¹¹⁷ N.D. to Philip and Mary (*CRP* 2:390)

¹¹⁸ Pole’s role in Mary’s government has been widely discussed and so the particulars of his involvement will be assumed in favor of focusing on his allegiance to Mary and to England affected his continuing relationship with Rome. This is not to set the intricacies of Pole’s policies aside, but rather to acknowledge that they both have very little place in his personal correspondence and that they have been covered quite thoroughly by other historians. For more on Pole’s policies, see Rex H. Pogson, “Reginald Pole and the Priorities of Government in Mary Tudor’s Church.” *The Historical Journal* 18:1 (1975) 3-20 and Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), particularly 530-533.

elected Marcellus II. However, Marcellus' papacy lasted for only twenty-two days, and Rome was forced back into another election. Pole did not seem overly concerned with the whole affair and wrote to Rome, "You ask my reaction to pope's death. Intend not to return to Rome, because of peace negotiations, unless college of cardinals give me express order. Am not a candidate and trip will take too long. Philip should write cardinals asking them to elect someone who can continue to help with England."¹¹⁹ Pole had, for a brief moment, possessed the possibility of claiming the papacy, but was content to remain in England and oversee its continued return to Catholicism. In Pole's absence, Paul IV was elected.

While the cardinals in Rome worked to elect Paul, Pole went about his work in England. He issued a truly astounding number of absolutions and remissions in regards to just about every clerical or lay abuse that could have occurred under Henry and Edward. He dealt with surprisingly leniency in just about every instance with a few notable exceptions. Mary's reign has come to be known for its execution of a number of Protestant martyrs. Pole was never overly loquacious, at least not in his personal correspondence, regarding these matters. The only surviving documents regarding the deaths of most Protestants during Mary's reign are signed writs of excommunication and arrest as in the case of Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley.¹²⁰ The only individual to be executed that Pole corresponded with directly was the former archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer. Pole's letter to Cranmer contains predictable language regarding his desire to see Cranmer repent and that he was praying for his salvation. But they also

¹¹⁹ 7-8 April 1555 reply to Marques, London (*CRP* 3:85)

¹²⁰ *CRP* 3:169

contain a hint that Pole did feel some sense of retribution in Cranmers death for everything he had suffered under Henry and Edward. He wrote to Cranmer, perhaps thinking of his mother, “A Catholic princess’s true love of martyrs has gained mercy for the kingdom. You especially deserve to be left out as ‘chief doer’ of the realm’s loss. You argue from ignorance when you claim canon laws harm England. Ignorance cannot excuse you, or remove your malice, which equally as monstrous about pope as about sacrament.”¹²¹ Other than this letter, Pole had very little to say about those executed by the crown other than that most other documents reflect Pole’s lenient approach to matters of religion in the recatholization of England.¹²²

In December of 1555, Pole was confirmed by Mary and Paul IV as the next Archbishop of Canterbury. Interestingly, Pole could not just take the Archbishopric because, though he was a cardinal and a legate, he still had to be actually ordained as a priest. So, after nearly twenty years in papal service, Pole began to prepare to take his clerical vows. This made him surprisingly nervous and he wrote to Philip, “Have my bull for Canterbury, an office that scares me.”¹²³ He also was hesitant with Paul IV, “Bull for Canterbury also came. Loath to accept, but vicar of Christ’s testimony and praise won me over. Shall pray to God I may bear burden ‘not unworthily.’”¹²⁴ Though this may have

¹²¹ 6 November 1555 to Cranmer, St. James (*CRP* 3:189). Translation mine.

¹²² Pole most likely worked with Mary to send out a memo in regards to the handling of religion to other religious and secular authorities in England. It stated, “Punish heretics without ‘much cruelty’ so people will know proceedings just. Especially want no burnings in London without councilors present.” Late October 1555 A memo from Mary about her plans for religion (186). Pole also seemed to take issue with at least one public execution as, at the indication that another would be necessary, he received a letter saying, “Would have had them here and done with, but since you were offended by my last process, please let me know what to do this time.” 9 September 1556 from Bonner (*CRP* 3:297)

¹²³ 25 January 1556 to Philip, Greenwich (*CRP* 3:222)

¹²⁴ 26 January 1556 to Paul IV, London (*CRP* 3:223)

been posturing on Pole's part, he was surprisingly anxious to have Philip return to England and be present at his consecration.¹²⁵

Part of this was undoubtedly merely a desire to have his king present at the event that secured Pole's position as the chief religious authority of England. Mary also did poorly in Philip's absence and Pole often wrote to him letting him know of Mary's sadness and the need for his return, "We need you because of confusion, and queen misses you."¹²⁶ More than both of these issues though, Philip's presence on the mainland was increasingly becoming an issue in Pole's relationship to the papacy. Philip felt that his lands in Naples were being threatened nearby papal fortress and a back-and-forth of military posturing was quickly escalating into a fully armed conflict. French and Spanish (and Imperial) forces had vied for control of the region for over five years and papal lands were often caught between the opposing armies and forced to choose a side. In this instance though, Philip's clash with papal forces was not merely a problem for Spain but also, because of his marriage, an issue for England.

Divided Allegiances

Pole wrote to Philip, "Do not go to war, and maintain your obedience. I hear you have been advised to fight over Montorio. Would mean war with pope, bad thing. Pope has been good and principal means to restoration of England. No prince may fight pope, but especially not you, since you have Naples as a fief."¹²⁷ He promised Philip, "Have

¹²⁵ "Hoping to see you return soon. You badly needed. Having received my bulls, have begun to arrange for my consecration to Canterbury." 17 February 1556 to Philip, London (CRP 3:230)

¹²⁶ December 1555 to Philip (CRP 3:218)

¹²⁷ 24 June 1556 to Philip, London (CRP 3:269)

done and shall again do whatever I can with pope.”¹²⁸ Thus Pole once again found his loyalties tested. His correspondence with Philip clearly indicated his desire for peace at any cost. Mary was also in an uncomfortable position and, according to Pole, “very displeased to be caught in middle.”¹²⁹ As 1556 wore on, Philip’s and the pope’s exchanges led to open conflict between the two and Pole lamented, “Could not believe God would allow things to worsen between Paul IV and Philip. Providence of God ordains otherwise as punishment for sins. Puts me in a tough spot because of my constant involvement in both temporal and spiritual government.”¹³⁰

The strain of attempting to remain committed to both England and the pope wore heavily on Pole. The situation had grown desperate enough that Pole considered the idea of leaving England in order to track down Philip and confront him about the issue in person.¹³¹ However, before Pole could bring this plan to fruition he was contacted through his friend Giovanni Morone on behalf of the pope,

Pope happy to see your proper attitude for cardinal and Christian and your plans to approach Philip, either by letter or in person. But does not see how any Christian can stay in contact with worst example in Christendom and wants you to return to Rome to assist him, avoid communicating with enemy of Church, and be where your status says you should be.¹³²

This had to sound all too familiar to Pole who was being forced once again to choose how best to interpret his loyalties to both England and the Catholic Church. If he left for

¹²⁸ 24 June 1556 to Philip, London (*CRP* 3:269)

¹²⁹ 14 July 1556 to Morone, London (*CRP* 3:278)

¹³⁰ 14 September 1556 to Morone, Croydon (*CRP* 3:299)

¹³¹ 12 October 1556 to Morone, London (*CRP* 3:314)

¹³² 28 November 1556 from Morone, Rome (*CRP* 3:336)

Rome, he would leave Mary without her chief religious and secular advisor and may, again, have to work openly against the interests of his nation. This time, in a cruel twist of circumstances, Pole chose to remain in England and soon found the pope to be his open enemy.

The decision to remain in England was not made arbitrarily but was based on what Pole believed was best for the English Church. Despite all his efforts, Mary and her government continued to struggle to convince England to reembrace Catholicism entirely. Pole even attempted to leverage this fact to convince Paul IV to commit to peace with Philip, “The war especially bitter to me because of ties to you and Philip, and because Mary needs Philip’s help with restoration of obedience.”¹³³ However, Pole’s appeals fell on deaf ears and in December 1556 Pole was warned by Morone that Paul IV intended to excommunicate Philip.¹³⁴ Paul also began to strike out at Pole and Mary. Pole wrote to Morone, “I have report on your conversation with pope about Mary not only failing to regret war, but her financial assistance of Philip, which has not changed pope’s attitude to her. He now doubts whether he will propose appointments for bishoprics here. You may imagine how this displeased me.”¹³⁵

Despite the increasingly hostile exchanges between the pope and England, Pole remained hopeful that a peace could be reached. He believed Mary would be capable of convincing Philip to cease his hostilities and in February 1557 offered himself to Paul as a mediator between Philip and the papacy.¹³⁶ Philip returned briefly to England in April

¹³³ 1556 to Paul IV, London (*CRP* 3:341)

¹³⁴ 12 December 1556 from Morone, Rome (*CRP* 3:342)

¹³⁵ 14 December 1556 to Morone, London (*CRP* 3:344)

¹³⁶ Circa 23 February 1557 to Antonio Giberti (*CRP* 3:375)

and Pole, against orders, left London to visit him, not as legate, since Paul had forbidden it, but as a private citizen—a mark of his desperation.¹³⁷ Pole remained in Canterbury for almost a month, but he was unsuccessful in his attempts to convince Philip to negotiate for peace and was, at last, “ordered to leave Canterbury for court on pain of disgrace.”¹³⁸ Paul’s counterstroke came in May when he revoked Pole’s status as Legate for the nation of England.

Pole took the news of his loss of the legateship very hard. He wrote to Paul, “Leading councilors came to my house as soon as they heard, could find no remedy or consolation for such grave wound.”¹³⁹ The loss of this position had to have shaken Pole’s understanding of who he was down to his core. More than this though, the absence of a legate to England was a serious issue for the continued reconciliation of the nation to the Catholic Church. Pole wrote, “Legatine authority especially useful to us, since bishop’s authority insufficient to remedy many abuses of schism.”¹⁴⁰ Paul IV responded by appointing another legate for England and by recalling Pole to Rome.¹⁴¹ However, Paul did not want Pole back in Rome merely as a cardinal, but because he had recently come

¹³⁷ 8 April 1557 to Paul IV, Canterbury (*CRP* 3:405)

¹³⁸ Early May 1557 to Antonio Giberti, Lambeth (*CRP* 3:415)

¹³⁹ 25 May 1557 to Paul IV, London (*CRP* 3:434)

¹⁴⁰ 25 May 1557 to Paul IV, London (*CRP* 3:435)

¹⁴¹ “From your and Mary’s we know how hard you have taken revocation of your legation for restoration of *religionem et fidem catholicam* and how much you want it back because of imminent danger to religion. We have always loved Mary’s piety paternally, also kingdom like prodigal son. But we have acted with consent of cardinals. Wanted to recall all cardinals to Rome including you.... We thought to replace you with Gulielmo and therefore we make him cardinal and legate. Exhort you under holy obedience to hurry here.” 20 June 1557 from Paul IV, Rome (*CRP* 3:451)

under suspicion of heresy by the inquisition because of his support of justification by faith.¹⁴²

This was too much for Pole. In July he wrote to Paul and made it clear, in no uncertain terms, that he would not abandon England. Using language reminiscent of his indignation with Henry he said,

In past I have always looked for an *exemplum* to imitate before undertaking serious business. I should do that now in this serious case, but cannot see how, since no pope has ever dealt with a cardinal as you have. Nor has any pope ever suspected a cardinal of heresy and recalled him from his legation, nor appointed substitute before he was recalled. Your imprisonment of Cardinal Morone before examination or confessional equally novel and you would join it to mine, but I do not wish that.¹⁴³

Referring to the death of his mother he told Paul, “I have borne Christ’s stigmata, have been wounded fighting heretics, only to be accused of being heretic.”¹⁴⁴ Pole even accused Paul of personal jealousy at how close Pole had come to the papacy after the death of Paul III.¹⁴⁵ Finally, Pole turned again to the fate of England if he were to be tried and convicted of heresy, “I beg you not continue, or my flock will again be danger of

¹⁴² Investigation of Pole as a heretic began as early as June of that year. He was vigorously defended by Morone who told the inquisition, “As many times as they proceed against him here, I have replied that they ought to consider what he is doing in England and how he is persecuting heretics [*heretici*] if they wish to judge whether he is a heretic [*lutherano*] or not.” Before 12 June 1557 Exchange between Pole and Giberti (*CRP* 3:447). While it is not certain that Pole was being investigated because of his support of justification by faith, the fact that Morone used the term *lutherano* rather than *heretici* in regard to Pole is strong indication that this was the case.

¹⁴³ Before 1 August 1557 to Paul IV (*CRP* 3:463)

¹⁴⁴ Before 1 August 1557 to Paul IV (*CRP* 3:465)

¹⁴⁵ “What you now do, you began in conclave following Paul’s death.... I remember your last words: ‘if God grants both of us long enough life to take part in another conclave, you must understand here this old man (and you pointed to yourself) will make your cause.’ We parted, and I thought matter closed and congratulated you when elected pope, thinking it time for applause which customarily ends comedies. I thought your praise for me when made archbishop of Canterbury meant I was safe.” Before 1 August 1557 to Paul IV (*CRP* 3:467). For more, see Thomas F Mayer, “The war of the two saints: the conclave of Julius III and cardinal Pole,” in *Cardinal Pole in European Context: a via media in the Reformation*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), IV pp. 1-21

schism.”¹⁴⁶ He argued that “challenging [the] constancy of my faith best way to encourage heretics.”¹⁴⁷ Making one last pitch for the sake of England, Pole argued, “Consider this great victory and where it came from. Turks were no greater enemy to faith than this realm. Its restoration must be act of God, case of ‘simplicity of the dove against wisdom of serpents.’ God used weak woman. Marriage helped cement restoration.”¹⁴⁸ Paul was not moved.

After this, Pole’s health began to steadily decline. In August 1557, England officially entered the conflict against France and, while Philip won several early victories, the French captured Calais in January 1558. Pole briefly had a glimmer of hope as Mary believed she was pregnant again after Philip’s visit in 1557, but this proved to be another false pregnancy. Popular opinion also grew increasingly negative towards Mary and Pole’s regime, especially in regards to religion. Mary’s marriage to Philip had drawn England into the war that had cost them Calais and the persecutions of her reign had given the people many popular martyrs to rally behind. Pole finally began to write propagandistically against the memories of those like Thomas Cranmer, but his efforts were mostly ineffectual. Unable to deny the pain that these men and women had endured, he was only able to conclude his argument, “The pain doth not make the martyr, but the cause.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Before 1 August 1557 to Paul IV (*CRP* 3:464)

¹⁴⁷ Before 1 August 1557 to Paul IV (*CRP* 3:469)

¹⁴⁸ Before 1 August 1557 to Paul IV (*CRP* 3:469)

¹⁴⁹ Before 10 March 1558 Fragment touching the Sacrament of the Altar (*CRP* 3:515)

A Bitter Legacy

Pole had been loyal to his causes. He had attempted, for almost all of his professional life, to hold true to his identity as English Catholic in favor of reforming the church. At the beginning of his career he had seen himself as a victim of Henry's passions and had witnessed his family's deaths because of his unwillingness to approve of Henry's divorce and headship of the church even as his devotion to the pope kept him alive. Over twenty years later, Pole again found himself a victim of his allegiances. Paul's accusations of heresy threatened the miraculous reunification of England that had occurred under Mary's reign and Pole's guidance. Even if Paul would not be able to execute him, Pole still saw himself a martyr to his cause at Paul's hands, "I truly see your Holiness prepare to rip my life away; what else did you do, when you tried to tear away my reputation for sound faith? What would be the shepherd's life among his flock, once his reputation for sound faith had been removed?"¹⁵⁰ This time it was England that preserved his life, but it too seemed to be suffering because of his devotion.¹⁵¹

By April, England was anticipating a French invasion.¹⁵² In May, it was clear that Philip would not be returning to console Mary, who was deeply grieved at both the state of her country and the absence of a child.¹⁵³ In June, Pole was accused of failing in his

¹⁵⁰ 30 March 1558 to Paul IV, Greenwich (*CRP* 3:527)

¹⁵¹ "I say again, if this is God's will, I expect the killer's hand to be stayed by God as Abraham's was, which I hope in the cases of Morone and Priuli, too. God sending me to Isaac's fate, but also sending angels to stop you from using that *libellum* like a sword against me. I see Philip and Mary and many other pious men, 'like a legion of angels come to interpose themselves between us and the sword, in order to prevent our being killed.'" 30 March 1558 to Paul IV, Greenwich (*CRP* 3:528).

¹⁵² 4 April 1558 from Sir Henry Jerningham (*CRP* 3:530).

¹⁵³ 28 May 1558 from Philip (*CRP* 3:540)

ecclesiastical duties as he attempted to manage the government amid Mary's increasingly frail health and psyche.¹⁵⁴ Finally, by September, Pole knew that he was dying.¹⁵⁵ It was also increasingly apparent that Mary's fragile healthy would not allow her to recover and her own life would also soon end. Pole continued his duties as long as he could but in November he, like Mary, became bedridden. In one last effort to preserve what he had done for England, Pole wrote to the young heir apparent, Princess Elizabeth, three days before his death, "Although I have been so sick and should be thinking only of the world to come, I thought it best to 'leave all persons satisfied of me,' especially you, thanks to God's providence. I send you 'my ancient, faithful chaplain, the Dean of Worcester.'"¹⁵⁶

Pole died on 18 November 1558 at around seven in the evening. He was told hours before he passed, against the wishes of some, that Mary had passed that same morning.¹⁵⁷ Priuli was at his side when he died and attested to several friends in letters that Pole's passing had been peaceful and not the disquieted death of a heretic.¹⁵⁸ In his will, he requested that his body be buried in Canterbury, next to the head of Thomas Becket. It would be unsurprising if Pole felt a kinship with Becket who had also a

¹⁵⁴ 2 "They do not know how much I begged the queen for leave to attend my church, nor how many important things go on here. I know I would rather be at my church. Nothing keeps me here except the prayers of the good and the will of the second mother of this church. Thus I can best serve both the republic and my church here." 10 June 1558 to Carranza, London (*CRP* 3:544)

¹⁵⁵ "By the grace of God I am prepared for all that it will please divine providence to ordain for me and since my end approaches..." 23 September 1558 to Philip, London (*CRP* 3:557)

¹⁵⁶ 14 November 1558 to Princess Elizabeth, Lambeth (*CRP* 3:579)

¹⁵⁷ 27 November 1558 from Priuli to Brother Antonio, London (*CRP* 3:581)

¹⁵⁸ 27 November 1558 from Priuli to Brother Antonio, London (*CRP* 3:582)

difficult relationship with authority. Pole had faced an almost impossible challenge in navigating the shifting religious and political landscape of Europe during his lifetime, particularly with his unique set of allegiances, and he did so imperfectly. His failures manifested themselves most frequently in violence, both in the deaths of his family and in the bloody legacy of Mary. But he also managed to remain committed to the ideals by which he defined himself. Understanding Pole's political and religious loyalties, how they affected his life and the lives of those around him, helps illuminate the way loyalties were constructed, maintained, and abandoned in the early modern era and the lengths to which individuals were willing to go in order to remain true to those loyalties. Pole fled, hid, and was almost martyred, but he remained in his identities.

CHAPTER SIX

John Calvin and the Reformed Church

The previous two chapters explored the ways in which the communities that individuals lived and functioned in influenced how they conceived of their own identity and how those individuals affected the identities of their broader communities. In the case of Conrad Grebel, his conflict with Zwingli over how the Zurich community ought to be defined and maintained illustrated his desire to remain a member of both Zurich and his Anabaptist community, even if this ultimately led to his abandonment of the city shortly before his death and his full embrace of an Anabaptists identity that operated independently of civic authority. Reginald Pole's story varies in that he eventually began to move away from his English identity during his exile in Italy, but ultimately returned to England and actively worked to re-impose his own Catholic identity on the nation in conjunction with the authority of the crown. Both Grebel and Pole are illustrative of how identity was both surprisingly consistent while still being malleable to geographic circumstances.

The final body chapter of this dissertation will continue with the theme of how identity was both affected by and served to affect broader communal identities. The chapter will also explore how exile itself could become a facet of individual identity and how that was then projected on the community being acted upon. Both of these themes are apparent in the life of perhaps the most famous early-modern exile, John Calvin. Calvin's flight from France left an indelible impression upon both his life and his theology; both of which were significant factors in how sixteenth-century Geneva

developed its civic identity. More than this, Calvin's broad networks of correspondence helped facilitate the creation of a Reformed evangelical identity that was not geographically specific but which still came to share in a common communal identity based on his theology.¹ Through this network and the dispersal of both his letters and his theology, Calvin's own identity, which was heavily influenced by his experience of exile, was projected not just on Geneva but on the entire early Reformed movement. This is illustrative of the fact that exile, while always a force that shaped early-modern Protestant and Catholic identity, was actually an active concept that reformers, particularly beginning with Calvin, used to help shape their beliefs and identities by the midpoint of the sixteenth century.

Therefore, this chapter's purpose will be twofold. First, it will illustrate the ways in which exile affected the life of John Calvin. This is a very prominent theme in literature on Calvin and this portion of the chapter will, for its general development, rely heavily upon these sources. However, I will argue that exile was not merely a facet of Calvin's religious identity but the most fundamental aspect in regards to how he viewed his conversion to Protestantism. Next, this chapter will demonstrate how exile came to be a central tenet of Calvin's conceptual framework regarding how the true faith was

¹ The use of the word Reformed here is undoubtedly problematic. To call the earliest individuals who identified and corresponded with Calvin the Reformed church is to assign them a label that is undoubtedly anachronistic. However, use the term Calvinists is equally problematic in that the term would not apply to how they identified themselves and comes with an equally anachronistic assumption regarding what they might have believed regarding later developments in Calvin's theology. Therefore, this chapter will follow the lead of Philip Benedict and use the term Reformed to identify those individuals and groups who wedded themselves to Calvin's movement located in Geneva. To quote Benedict, "They preferred to call themselves variously the evangelical, reformed, evangelical reformed, or reformed Catholic churches, the term *reformed* emerging as the most common label amid the broader process of confessional differentiation and hardening that characterized the long Reformation era. *Reformed* is thus for several reasons a more historically accurate and less potentially misleading label than *Calvinist* to apply to these churches and to the larger tradition to which they attached themselves," Philip Benedict, *Christ Churches Purely Reformed: A Social history of Calvinism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), xvii.

promulgated and established and how the projection of that belief helped shape the developing Reformed community across Europe through Calvin's correspondence. Overall, the goal of this chapter is to demonstrate that, in the latter half of the sixteenth century, the concept of exile was ubiquitous enough to not merely be an acting force on the lives of early-modern individuals but a developed ideological concept; thus marking a distinct transition from the earliest generation of the Reformation in comparison with those who came after.

Into Exile

Calvin's flight from Paris leading to his eventual work in the city of Geneva is a well-documented event. Prior to his service in Paris, Calvin's father had prepared him for a career both as a clergyman and then as a lawyer. Calvin was, by all accounts, a brilliant student even at a young age and his teachers quickly recognized he was bound for great things. Sometime over the course of his studies, most likely while he was working in Bourges in 1529, Calvin became increasingly interested in Humanism and began to study the New Testament in its original Greek. It was some time after this, most likely in 1530, that Calvin experienced a religious conversion which led to his break with the Roman Catholic Church.² Calvin's earliest account of his conversion was written in 1539 to Cardinal Sadoletto in defense of his reform efforts in the city of Geneva. He wrote regarding the experience,

I at length perceived, as if light had broken in upon me, in what a sty of error I had wallowed, and how much pollution and impurity I had thereby contracted. Being exceedingly alarmed at the misery into which I had fallen, and much more

² Biographical information on Calvin for this chapter is taken primarily from Bruce Gordon's *Calvin* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2009), which is almost certainly the most comprehensive and approachable study of Calvin in recent years.

at that which threatened me in the view of eternal death, I, as in duty bound, made it my first business to betake myself to thy way, condemning my past life, not without groans and tears.³

Calvin later wrote much later in 1558 a second account of his conversion for a more public display in the introduction to his *Commentary on the Psalms*.

To this pursuit [the study of law] I endeavored faithfully to apply myself in obedience to the will of my father; but God, by the secret guidance of his providence, at length gave a different direction to my course. And first, since I was too obstinately devoted to the superstitions of Popery to be easily extricated from so profound an abyss of mire, God by a sudden conversion subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame, which was more hardened in such matters than might have been expected from one at my early period of life.⁴

Both accounts are surprisingly straightforward and absent of details, but with this apparently simple realization, Calvin left the Roman Catholic Church and became a reformer.

Calvin's career took him to the College Royal in Paris where one his friends, Nicholas Cop, had recently been named Rector. On 1 November 1533, Cop delivered his inaugural address which called for the reform of the university along humanistic and early Protestant lines. This greatly angered the older and more conservative faculty members who immediately moved to have Cop removed and perhaps even tried for heresy. Because Calvin was such a close friend of Cop's and a suspected sympathizer of Protestant reform efforts he was implicated in the address and both men were forced to flee Paris in order to avoid charges of heresy.

³ *Reply by John Calvin to Letter by Cardinal Sadoletto to the Senate and People of Geneva*, 1 September 1539, 66.

⁴ Calvin, *Commentary on the Psalms*, Introduction.

Calvin remained in France for about a year after the incident. He was frequently on the move but seemed very hesitant to leave the land of his birth. However, in October 1534 the Affair of the Placards forced Calvin to flee the country as violence against Protestants became widespread. Calvin joined his friend, Cop, in Basel, which had become a central hub in Protestant reform efforts. During this time he published his first theological work, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Calvin eventually found his way back to Paris for a brief time in order to settle his father's affairs after his death. He was allowed, briefly, to remain in the city under the Edict of Coucy.⁵ However, Calvin apparently realized that the edict would be short-lived and he left in August 1536 in order to head to Strasbourg, another hub of Protestant activity.

Along the way to Strasbourg, Calvin was forced to change his route due to the presence of both French and Imperial military forces. This led him to pass through the Swiss city of Geneva as he swung south before turning north into German lands. In Geneva, Calvin had a very unique interaction with Guillaume Farel, the leader of the reform movement in the city. Calvin gave an incredibly detailed account of this event in his Introduction to the *Commentary on the Psalms*; right after he discussed his conversion. He wrote that after his conversion he desired nothing more than an obscure corner of the world in which he might study quietly, yet “God so led me [Calvin] about through different turnings and changes, that He never permitted me to rest in any place.”⁶ He had worked briefly in Basel, Ferrara, and Paris, but had been forced to relocate each

⁵ The Edict of Coucy officially ended persecution against Protestants that had begun with Cop's speech. It pardoned those who had been arrested and allowed those that had fled to return. However, this was only a temporary reprieve and was intended to give Protestants time to either reconvert or settle their affairs and depart for somewhere else.

⁶ Calvin, *Commentary on the Psalms*, Introduction.

time. He had intended to merely pass through Geneva in order to reach Strasbourg and, hopefully, a place where he could at last find solitude and peace to continue his work.

Rather, Calvin wrote,

William Farel detained me at Geneva, not so much by counsel and exhortation, as by a dreadful imprecation, which I felt to be as if God had from heaven laid his mighty hand upon me to arrest me...I had resolved to pass quickly by Geneva, without staying longer than a single night in that city. A little before this, Popery had been driven from it by the exertions of the excellent person whom I have named, and Peter Viret; but matters were not yet brought to a settled state, and the city was divided into unholy and dangerous factions. Then an individual who now basely apostatized and returned to the Papists, discovered me and made me known to others. Upon this, Farel, who burned with an extraordinary zeal to advance the gospel, immediately strained every nerve to detain me. And after having learned that my heart was set upon devoting myself to private studies for which I wished to keep myself free from other pursuits, and finding that he gained nothing by entreaties, he proceeded to utter an imprecation that God would curse my retirement, and the tranquility of the studies which I sought, if I should withdraw and refuse to give assistance, when the necessity was so urgent. By this imprecation I was so stricken with terror, that I desisted from the journey which I had undertaken.⁷

This passage is significant for several reasons and I have, therefore, included it in its entirety.

First, and most practically, Calvin's decision to remain in Geneva affected the rest of his life, most of which was spent in the city. Second, it emphasizes the significance of Calvin's flight from France, which was predicated on religious beliefs. It was his desire for reform that led to his exile and the need to enact these reforms was ultimately what allowed Farel to convince Calvin to stay. In short, Calvin had chosen his religious identity as a reformer above all else. He had left France and his family to travel to Strasbourg to continue writing theological works and it was precisely this untethered geographic identity that allowed him to so quickly, if not easily, decide to reside in

⁷ Calvin, *Commentary on the Psalms*, Introduction.

Switzerland rather than Germany. Finally, the above quote provides a far more satisfying and historically informed account of Calvin's commitment to the Protestant cause than his conversion accounts and points to the centrality of exile in Calvin's later understanding of his own narrative. It can, in fact, be argued that Calvin's account of his exile into Geneva provides a far better framework for understanding his commitment to Protestantism than either of his conversion narratives.

Conversion Accounts and Calvin's Religious Identity

Calvin's own narration of his conversion experience is perhaps the most famous of such accounts from a Protestant figure in the first century of the Reformation. This is partially because Calvin is simply such an influential figure and also because of its incredible brevity. Yet, as previously discussed, both of Calvin's accounts are surprisingly brief in their description of a life-altering decision. He simply stated that God altered the course of his life and that he expressed some degree of personal angst in the process of coming to that decision. However, Calvin did at one point offer a narrative that fully expresses the pathos expected in a conversion narrative and provided an apology for the decision which came to define his identity—his narration of his final flight from France and his arrival in Geneva. This points to the possibility that Calvin relocated the center of his faith, which was historically articulated in a conversion narrative, to the process of his exile and flight. In order to justify this claim it is necessary to explore the significance of conversion narratives in the history of the Western church and then to return to Calvin's own account of his conversion and flight.

One of the most astounding literary shortcomings of the Reformation is the absence of conversion narratives appearing in print. Judith Pollmann has attempted to

address the significance of this absence by explaining it as a conscious effort on the Reformers part to minimize the degree to which they appeared to break with the established tradition.⁸ I believe Pollman's argument possess some degree of merit, but I also believe that in cases such as Calvin's there are alternate explanations. Primarily, that the process of exile came to occupy the ideologically central place historically reserved for conversion. To prove this is the case with Calvin's account, it is necessary to superimpose the typical understanding of the conversion narrative upon his exilic narratives. If this proves to be true it points to an ideological relocation of Protestant identity away from simply the decision to believe and focuses that identity on the cost and actions necessary to pursue that belief in the early-modern world.

The content of a conversion narrative is rarely, if ever, drawn from the moment of conversion itself; rather, the spiritual goal toward which the convert turns is defined by the present state of the conversion-narrative's author. The theological or ideological message presented in the conversion narrative exists only retrospectively to the author as he or she recomposes the event (or events) surrounding his or her conversion into a coherent narrative that aligns with the author's current agenda in the moment of composition.⁹ There are also almost always elements of self-justification in many conversion narratives that can "naturally result in tendentious misrepresentation, as well as in omissions and the suppression of important but uncomfortable facts."¹⁰ The culminating effect is well described by Paula Fredriksen, "The conversion account, never

⁸ Judith Pollmann, "A Different Road to God : the Protestant Experience of Conversion in the Sixteenth Century," in *Conversion to Modernities* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 47–64.

⁹ Fredriksen, "Paul and Augustine," 33.

¹⁰ Sloan, "The Transformation of Religious Conversion," 140.

disinterested, is a condensed, or disguised, prescription of the convert's *present*, which he legitimates through his retrospective creation of a past and a self."¹¹

Applicably, Hans Baden wrote, "The experience of conversion lies particularly near at hand, where either an entire epoch experiences the loss of a secure world view or the individual, in the midst of an apparently well-established age, suddenly plunges into the depths and abysses of human uncertainty."¹² The Reformation stands as a near perfect example of the sort of era to which Baden is referring. Conversion was by no means a rare occurrence in the sixteenth century. Men, women, kings, and entire kingdoms converted during this period to create one of the greatest periods of religious, social, and political upheaval in all of Western history.¹³ Yet, conversion was rarely a decision which could be made easily as "it involved difficult choices and life-changing decisions. It involved exchanging the familiar round of traditional observances for a new order which was untested and largely unknown."¹⁴ What resulted then was a battle across Europe for the religious and ideological loyalties of any man or woman who was capable of being moved intellectually or emotionally by the pathos and logic of theologians and a contest

¹¹ Fredriksen, "Paul and Augustine," 33. Fredriksen's line of reasoning leads her to assert, "What *actually* happened, what the convert actually thought or experienced at the time of his conversion, is thus not accessible to the historian" (34). While such a claim is certainly open for debate it does cast aspersion (if it does not outright discredit) the efforts of numerous historians to uncover the historical validity of numerous conversion narratives.

¹² Harran, *Luther on Conversion*, 193. Quoting Baden in *Literatur und Bekehrung*, 15.

¹³ Robert M. Kingdon, "Problems of Religious Choice for Sixteenth Century Frenchmen," *Journal of Religious History* 4, no. 2 (D 1966): 105.

¹⁴ Pettegree, *Culture of Persuasion*, 1.

for the support of political figures that saw new possibilities in the upheavals of the Reformation.¹⁵

It is precisely this conflict that this dissertation has explored: How the effects of transforming identities through conversion was outwardly expressed in the lives of individuals who attempted to reconcile their newfound identities with some aspect of religious or civic culture with whom they then found themselves at odds. Again, it is fascinating that none of the figures considered in this study put forward a traditional conversion narrative. Pollman claims that they avoided conversion narratives because “rather than as a revolutionary process, a convert may well want to think of it as evolutionary and try to underplay the radical nature of his decision. He may not, for instance, want to think of his past life and the culture in which he lived as totally bad, or he may want to claim that he really has always been what he is now and minimize the contrast between his former self and present self.”¹⁶ To reiterate, this does make sense. The Reformers, desiring to depict themselves as inheritors of the ancient tradition, avoided writing conversion narratives in order to maintain the idea that Protestantism was the product of continuity with the past.¹⁷

However, conversion was also a social act as has been thoroughly demonstrated in this dissertation. Pollman asserts that “People who broke with their families because of religion were thereby committing an act that could easily be perceived as irreligious...

¹⁵ Peter Matheson, *The Rhetoric of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 2.

¹⁶ Pollman, “A Different Road to God,” 52.

¹⁷ Pollman, “A Different Road to God,” 52.

Many tried to keep the rifts as small as possible.”¹⁸ In this aspect Pollman’s article does not offer an answer that is entirely satisfactory. The conversion narrative was itself a product of an ancient and biblical tradition. The greatest mark of continuity for the Reformation would have been an embrace of the conversion narrative, particularly as it sought to embody the Christian Tradition as distinctly separate from the Roman Catholic Church—conversion away from Papist belief towards Christianity.¹⁹ Yet, the most interesting facet of conversion in the early-modern world was the social dynamics of religious belief which have been articulated throughout this dissertation. Conversion often entailed familial, social, and political alienation that frequently manifested in the

¹⁸ Pollman, “A Different Road to God,” 57.

¹⁹ The examples of the St. Paul and Augustine of Hippo provide the prototype of the traditional conversion narrative in the Western tradition. Both were great sinners in their early lives who were redeemed in a single, dramatic moment of conversion. Paul’s conversion narrative is retold, multiple times, in the book of Acts. Augustine’s conversion was told by himself in his *Confessions* and also famously recorded by Possidius in his *Life of Augustine*. Alongside Augustine and Paul, countless other conversion narratives developed within the Western tradition concerning numerous and diverse figures—Constantine, St. Antony, Petrarch, Clovis, and others. The sheer amount of scholarly attention that has gone into the verification or refutation of the historicity of these accounts is astounding. Yet, for the purposes of this chapter, it is unnecessary. The conversion narrative is not so much a product of history as it is a piece of propaganda. The conversion narrative, at its heart, is about the shifting identity of an individual (the Latin word *conversio* literally means “to turn”) toward a “more spiritual goal or purpose in life.”¹⁹ Therefore, the significance of Paul and Augustine’s conversion narratives lay not in their historical validity but in the formula they provided for future conversion experiences. In European Christian culture they came to determine what a convert ought to experience.¹⁹ As such, the conversion experience of Paul and Augustine remained the model of Christian conversion in Western Christian culture long after conversion to Christianity was even an option for a vast majority of the population that was born and baptized into the church. The relevance of conversion remained a tool for the periodic revitalization of the institutional churches in the narratives of such figures as Francis of Assisi and Ignatius of Loyola. Conversion thus took on a multitude of meanings including “a miraculous transformation of physical property, a commitment to moral probity in everyday life, a spiritual flight from base illusion to duties that afforded membership in the community of the elect,” (Michael Wolfe, *The Conversion of Henri IV: Politics, Power, and Religious Belief in Early Modern France*, vol. 112, Harvard Historical Studies; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993, 7. This position is also echoed by Marilyn J. Harran, “The ‘converted’ in the early Middle Ages were not primarily members of voluntary lay associations, which were eventually forbidden, but members of monastic orders. In this sense, conversion substituted the entrance into the religious life.” Marilyn J. Harran, *Luther on Conversion: The Early Years*; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983, 73. Yet all conversion narratives followed a similar model, based upon Paul and Augustine’s narratives; namely, a progression from awareness in a moment of particular pathos, the identification of the divine in that moment, an understanding of the call to conversion, followed by action on the part of the convert validate to that calling.

dilemma of flight. Thus a far more satisfactory answer for why there exists a significant dearth of early Protestant conversion narratives is that these individuals shifted the center of their religious identity from the moment of conversion to a process that better fit their tenuous social position and more accurately represented nascent Protestantism—the dilemma of flight.

Turning back to Calvin it is apparent life was defined by his status as an exile. Calvin only accepted citizenship as a Genevan citizen in 1559, nearly twenty-three years after he first arrived in the city.²⁰ He was also ejected from the city in 1538 and thus became a refugee from the city in which he had found refuge. During this time, Calvin settled in Strasbourg as a pastor under the authority of Martin Bucer, which gathering places for French religious exiles.²¹ Under Bucer, Calvin learned to minister to these exiles though he himself suffered under the same affliction as they did. Calvin eventually returned to Geneva in 1541 where he would remain for the rest of his life. Calvin was once again confronted with the reality of life as an exile even as he returned to the closest place he had to a home outside of France. With the ascension of Mary to the throne of England, what had once been the safest Protestant harbor in Europe, England, suddenly streamed with refugees—many of them coming to Geneva to train under Calvin.²² French refugees also continued to find refuge in Geneva and continued to do so

²⁰ Robert Vosloo, “The Displaced Calvin: ‘Refugee Reality’ as a Lens to Re-examine Calvin’s Life, Theology and Legacy,” *Religion & Theology* 16, no. 1–2 (2009): 42.

²¹ Vosloo, “The Displaced Calvin,” 41.

²² Jonathan Wright, “Marian Exiles and the Legitimacy of Flight from Persecution,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 52, no. 2 (Apr 2001): 221.

until the end of the Thirty-Years War.²³ Geneva became such an important center for exiles that between 1550 and 1662 nearly 7,000 immigrants arrived at the city. This fact is all the more astounding considering the fact that when Calvin arrived at Geneva in 1536 the city's population numbered around 10,000.²⁴

It is readily apparent that exile played a large role in the life of Calvin. But, the centrality of exile as a form of conversion in the life of the reformer becomes even more apparent when taken in conjunction with his own narrative of his arrival in Geneva after his final flight from Paris, which is given in its entirety above. This piece of literature by Calvin is truly the closest available thing to a traditional conversion narrative. In it, Calvin followed the narrative steps often found in traditional conversion narratives: he recognized the call which was laid upon him in a moment of particular pathos, identified the divine presence of God, and received a unique understanding of what he was called to do in that moment.²⁵ Yet the next step can be taken further. Because Calvin's life was defined by his role as an exile, and if this can be seen as the central act of his own retelling of his journey to Protestantism, then to understand his exilic narrative as a form of conversion thus renders his entire ministry an extension of the dilemma of exile.

This argument regarding the way in which Calvin wrote about exile in comparison to conversion is not intended to say that any of this is accidental. Calvin, like most who reflected back upon their experiences of religion in their younger years, was

²³ Ole Peter Grell, "Exile and Tolerance," in *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (New York: Cambridge Univ Pr, 1996), 165.

²⁴ Vosloo, "The Displaced Calvin," 43.

²⁵ Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*, 6.

intentionally crafting a narrative that reflected his presented circumstances later in life. Calvin's emphasis on exile, particularly in his *Introduction to the Psalms*, came at the same time that he began to seriously encourage exile among those facing persecution elsewhere. This image of himself as finding purpose and conviction during his flight was intentionally crafted.²⁶

There are also a significant number of secondary works on Calvin that support this conclusion, although they do so in different terms. The most notable is Robert Vosloo's 2009 article "The Displaced Calvin." Vosloo clearly lays out the ways in which being a refugee affected Calvin's life in Geneva; including how the Swiss city referred to this "Frenchman" in their midst.²⁷ Vosloo's article was the first to explicitly and clearly prove that flight was the defining factor of Calvin's life through an examination of his own multiple exiles and his later interactions with Protestant refugees. Vosloo was building on a tradition that had previously assumed Calvin's life was impacted by the exile crisis of early-modern Europe, but his work forced scholarship on Calvin to seriously consider the ways in which flight affected Calvin's identity.²⁸ Yet because of Calvin's importance as a figure at the center of a Reformed identity being shaped over the course of his life, this exile identity cannot be isolated to Calvin alone.

²⁶ For more on how Calvin intentionally constructed his own identity through his writings, see: John Balsarak, *John Calvin as Sixteenth-Century Prophet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

²⁷ Vosloo, "The Displaced Calvin," 35. This is also pointed out in Diarmuid MacCulloch's, *The Reformation: A History* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 241

²⁸ These previous works include H. J. Selderhuis, *Calvijn als asielzoeker* (Apeldoorn: Geologische Universiteit, 1997).

The Extension of Calvin's Exile Identity

Calvin's life was defined not only by his own exile but also by the thousands of exiles and refugees with whom he eventually interacted on a regular basis. Many of these exiles fled from France as Calvin had and, while some found refuge in Geneva, others wound up seeking safe harbor all across Europe. Calvin's interaction with these refugees was extensive and may have proved equally formative in the construction of an early Reformed identity. Ole Peter Grell has argued as much in his book, *Brethren in Christ*. In it, Grell maintains that the defining characteristic of the early Reformed church was its disparate existence that somehow remained unified through the correspondence networks that these early followers of Calvin's teaching were able to maintain.²⁹ In essence, the early Reformed church was an exile church as it, more than any other confessional movement of the sixteenth century, save perhaps Anabaptism, was divorced from any broader national identity.

Grell's work makes it clear that the early Reformed church was actively aware of the reality of exile as a living reality experienced by many of its members, but there is also proof in the secondary literature that Calvin began to actively use exile as a developed theological concept. Exile served as a unifying force in early Protestantism and formed the backbone of the Reformed identity. Germany, England, the United Provinces, France, and the Low Countries were all united in the creation and acceptance, though in varying degrees and frequencies, of religious refugees.³⁰ Oddly enough, exile

²⁹ Grell, *Brethren in Christ*, Ole Peter Grell, *Brethren in Christ: a Calvinist Network in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5.

³⁰ Pettegree also supports the claim that the Reformed movement was relatively independent of broader national identities, saying, "This broader, more inclusive Protestant identity places less emphasis on doctrinal precision or personal theological education. It evoked a sense of common heritage that drew

was, in many circumstances, a positive choice for the reformers. If an individual converted to Protestantism in a country opposed to the Protestant cause, such as Calvin's France, then that individual had three choices: Exile, martyrdom (or, at least, persecution), or Nicodemism.³¹ While martyrdom was viewed, relatively, in a positive light when it was forced upon an individual, most Reformed authorities, including Calvin, recommended that the individual should choose exile if they were given the option. As Theodore Beza said, "Forbidding flight on the grounds of some misconstrued notion of Christian duty was like saying 'let us neither eat, nor drink, nor seek any remedy against diseases, let soldiers go unarmed to battle.'" ³² Reformed exiles were also occasionally sought out. Gustav Vasa, King of Sweden, encouraged immigration of skilled laborers from the exile populations of London and Emden.³³ For some, exile may have even strengthened their commitment to the Reformed cause. Andrew Pettegree has noted that, to some extent, the persecution in the Netherlands may have been too effective as it drove out even those only marginally committed to the Protestant cause. However, once in exile, they often gathered together with other Protestants and those that had been

together the martyrs of the ages, and fellow believers in other nations" (Pettegree, *Culture of Persuasion*, 210).

³¹ Although stated earlier, it serves as a reminder that Nicodemism was so named for the biblical figure of Nicodemus who converted to Christianity privately but publicly remained a Jewish Pharisee. The term referred to anyone who dissimulated, or hid their Protestant belief and in public conformed to Roman Catholic practice.

³² Wright, "Marian Exiles and the Legitimacy of Flight," 228, Quoting Beza.

³³ Grell, "Exile and Tolerance," 176.

only a mild threat to the Roman Catholic Church became deeply committed to Protestantism.³⁴

Exile, of course, also involved extremely negative consequences for those forced into flight and for society at large—many of which have been articulated in this dissertation. Wright articulates this, saying “an uncomfortable fact for those defending religious flight was that exiles sometimes confessed to being plagued by the guilty conscience that was more traditionally associated with the conformist, liar or temporiser.”³⁵ The journey of the exile was also often fraught with terror. Fredrick Norwood’s “The London Dutch Refugees in Search of a Home” retells the harrowing tale of the flight of a group of refugees who found asylum in London only to be forced to flee again at the ascension of Mary to the throne. Over the course of two years they were denied asylum in at least six places in their journey through northern Europe.³⁶ Given the harrowing nature of exile, it is little wonder that the memory of exile became the central facet of religious identity for individuals such as Calvin.

Articulating Exile in Geneva

There were two distinct areas where the exile identities of both Calvin and the Reformed church were most evident in the city of Geneva. The first was in the systems of poor relief that were developed in Geneva, many of which were aimed directly at

³⁴ Andrew Pettegree, *Emden and the Dutch Revolt: Exile and the Development of Reformed Protestantism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 20.

³⁵ Wright, “Marian Exiles and the Legitimacy of Flight,” 222.

³⁶ Frederick A. Norwood, “The London Dutch Refugees in Search of a Home, 1553-1554,” *The American Historical Review* 58, no. 1 (October 1, 1952): 64–72.

supporting exiles who had fled to the city. Poor relief was formally developed by policy as a facet of Geneva's identity under the guidance of Calvin. This poor relief was aimed almost exclusively at refugees who had fled to Geneva in order to escape religious persecution in France or elsewhere.³⁷ Calvin frequently bemoaned the circumstances of these exiles in his letters. He wrote of the English exiles recently ousted from their country by the ascension of Mary Tudor, "What is to become of so great a multitude of pious men, who have betaken themselves to voluntary exile in that country? There is danger, also, that we shall hear very sad news ere long, of the many native English who have already embraced Christ, if the Lord do not in his mercy send help to them from heaven."³⁸

Calvin's sympathy was not empty of material promise. He enacted several programs in Geneva to assist these exiles in finding a permanent residence within the city, even when these efforts were not popular with the broader populace. Calvin wrote in one instance, "But I can far more patiently endure to be made the butt of their personal attacks, than every now and then to see the unfortunate exiles of Christ who are living here, molested daily by new vexations; though the Lord even in this matter hath hitherto held out to us a helping hand, so that we should not be overcome."³⁹ Calvin's vision for Geneva was to be a city governed not only by the true church of God, but also to be a haven for those from other cities and nations who fled because of their commitment to that church.

³⁷ Timothy G. Fehler *Poor relief and Protestantism: the evolution of social welfare in 16th-century Emden* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).

³⁸ To Bullinger, Geneva, 7 September 1553, 427.

³⁹ To Sulver, Geneva, 7 August 1554, 54

To this end, Calvin frequently supported the decision of individuals to flee persecution.⁴⁰ Calvin's promotion of flight was possible because he had come to recognize exile as a legitimate response to persecution and saw it as a far favorable alternative to individuals either giving up their faith or surrendering to the possibility of Nicodemism. This is the second and far more significant articulation of exile as a theological category. In Calvin's letters to individuals wrestling with the dilemma of flight, he outlined exile as a positive option when compared to the possibility of lapsing back into Catholicism or Nicodemism. Calvin had, from the earliest stages of his exile, recognized the opportunities made possible as a result of his exile. As much as Calvin remained, to some extent, perpetually alienated by his status as Frenchman in a Swiss city, he nonetheless could appreciate that exile had been a favorable outcome compared to the other possibilities of his dissent. He wrote, in one of his earliest articulations of his status as an exile, "If permitted to enjoy in repose such as this—the interval, whether I am to consider it of my exile or of my retirement, I shall conclude that I have been very favorably dealt by."⁴¹ Calvin's decision to remain in France, although in hiding, at this stage is significant. His flight out of France and to Basel then eventually Geneva undoubtedly affected his perception of the exile experience. However, Calvin's decision to flee had also spared his life and had given him the opportunity to continue his work furthering the Protestant cause and, regardless of how far he eventually was forced to flee, he never seemed to forget the reality of what could have happened to him if he remained in Paris.

⁴⁰ Woo, "The House of God in Exile."

⁴¹ To Francis Daniel, 1534, 41.

This is reflected in the way he wrote both of other exiles and to individuals considering the possibility of flight. Calvin wrote to the ministers of a French church praising them for their decision to go into exile. He said, “In denouncing, as you say you did, those seducers who were making themselves busy in defiling the purity of sound doctrine, you acted with a decision worthy of the ministers of Christ. You now give a bright example of the sincerity of your faith, in preferring even exile to perfidious dissimulation.”⁴² In this letter Calvin clearly favors exile over even the possibility of Nicodemism, or dissimulation. In the same letter, Calvin acknowledges that he also understands the ministers’ suffering since he himself is an exile. However, at the same time, he argues that the greatest evil is not exile but the corruption of the church, saying,

Henceforward we may imagine what your sorrow must be, seeing that nothing presents itself to you but exile and poverty. But your greatest affliction will be caused by the misery of the Church, for whose interests you have evinced greater regard than for your own. And we indeed are equally affected—as we ought to be—by your public and private misfortunes.⁴³

Much of the language in this letter sounds similar to what has been encountered elsewhere in this dissertation. The “sorrow” and “poverty” of exile were very common themes among the other individuals I have explored who experienced the pains of flight. The more surprising aspect of this letter is how Calvin continually displays the positive aspects of exile, which makes sense if exile is understood as the center of Calvin’s religious commitment and the centerpiece of his own narrative leading towards the Reformed cause.

⁴² To the Ministers of the Church of Montbeliard, Geneva, 16 January 1549, 209.

⁴³ To the Ministers of the Church of Montbeliard, Geneva, 16 January 1549, 210.

Calvin spoke of the positive aspects of exile on more the one occasion. Perhaps the best example of Calvin's encouragement of exile was his letter "to an Italian lady" named only as Agnes. In this letter Calvin not only commends exile but he almost demands it. He wrote, "For at the present day impiety has gained such ground, and especially among you the tyranny of Antichrist rages to such an extent, that you cannot, without much peril and many struggles, offer to God an unpolluted worship."⁴⁴ He continued, "In your wisdom, you see to how wretched a slavery you are condemned in your own country, you had rather submit to a voluntary exile than remain entangled among the defilements which contaminate you."⁴⁵ Interestingly, this positive use of exile does not excise the pain and poverty of the experience for Calvin, but rather he argues that all of the negative aspects of flight were worth it. In a poignant articulation of the struggles that exile will bring Agnes Calvin writes,

Add to this, that at present, like a famished sheep, you are wandering out of Christ's fold and pastures in a barren desert. Nor does it escape me how difficult and painful a thing it is for you to emigrate from your country, to live on a foreign soil far away from your kinsfolk, at your advanced age not only to change your habitation, but forego all those little comforts, of which it were hard and cruel, even in the prime of life, to be deprived. To all this I have but one consideration to oppose, but which, I trust, you will deem amply sufficient. It is this: if we have had a due foretaste of the life which is in heaven, there is nothing upon earth of such importance as to abate our ardor in the pursuit of the heavenly blessing.⁴⁶

To this ultimate end of pursuing at all costs the "heavenly blessing," Calvin unequivocally endorsed and demanded exile, saying, "you cannot, without serious wrong, long agitate, with an irresolute purpose, first one point and then another. Resolve then

⁴⁴ To an Italian Lady, 1553, 452.

⁴⁵ To an Italian Lady, 1553, 452.

⁴⁶ To an Italian Lady, 1553, 453.

seriously that what God has enjoined is to be immediately executed, and, at the same time, without procrastinating, make ready for your journey."⁴⁷ He concluded the letter by saying, "And were it permitted us to inhabit a place where God is worshipped, and his name invoked in purity, it were far better to live in exile there, than to live at ease in our own country, from which Christ, the sovereign of heaven and earth, is banished."⁴⁸

Although Calvin's response to Agnes' possible flight is unknown, it can be assumed it would have matched how he responded to others who fled to preserve their faith. He wrote to John Laski,

In considering the undisguised defense of the truth of so much importance, that after being cruelly tossed about both by sea and land, you have not shrunk from affronting for its sake a fresh exile, you have by such steadfastness offered to God, a sweet-smelling sacrifice, as well as given to all pious men a useful example. I rejoice that the Lord has at length looked down upon you, so that you have found a tranquil haven.⁴⁹

For Calvin, remaining was simply too great a risk and exile offered an assurance of the freedom to continue practicing the true faith. It was, in his mind, clearly the best option between the two.

Calvin's vocal encouragement for individuals to go into exile and his praise for those who did was coupled with his continual support of the exile community, not just in Geneva but across the continent.⁵⁰ He wrote on separate occasions to Melancthon,

⁴⁷ To an Italian Lady, 1553, 453.

⁴⁸ To an Italian Lady, 1553, 453.

⁴⁹ To John Laski, Geneva, May 1554, 44.

⁵⁰ For a fuller exploration of Calvin's theology of charity and how he used those charitable systems he established to encourage exile, see Tuininga, Matthew J. "Good news for the poor: an analysis of Calvin's concept of poor relief and the diaconate in light of his two kingdoms paradigm." *Calvin Theological Journal* 49, no. 2 (November 2014): 221-247 and W. Nijenhuis, *Calvinus Oecumenicus: Calvijn en de eenheidkerk in het licht van zijn briefwisseling* ('S Gravenhage: Martinus, 1959), 77-91.

Bullinger, Viret, and Farel urging all them to do what they could to aid the exiles begin to stream out of several major countries, including France, England, and Italy.⁵¹ Many of these letters were brought about by the ascension of Mary to the English throne in 1553, but they articulate an interest in protecting not merely French exiles who had found refuge in England but any exile dedicated to the Reformed cause. Calvin makes a particular note of the fact that the generosity the English showed the French Reformed exiles fleeing from France requires a reciprocal generosity from those Reformed established on the continent.⁵²

An Exilic Identity

Thus far in this chapter I have argued that the best way to interpret Calvin's understanding of his own religious identity was to understand that, for Calvin, exile was conversion. It was proof of an individual's commitment to the Reformed cause. Many of the other works that have examined Calvin as an exile, including Vosloo's, have done so with the intention of demonstrating how Calvin's displacement rendered him a perpetual outsider. How his exilic status and the marked uncomfortableness it undoubtedly produced affected both his theology and his lived experience in Geneva. I do not desire to entirely dispute this. Calvin's life, as demonstrated by Vosloo and elsewhere, was undoubtedly marked by his status as an exile—a title he was never able to escape.

⁵¹ To Melancthon, 18 June 1550; To Bullinger, Geneva, January 1552; To Viret, Geneva, 20 November 1553; To Farel, Geneva, 30 December 1553. The letters all lament both the plight of the exiles, praise those who have given aid, and encourage the reader to take steps to facilitate their safe travels, usually through the giving of goods. An excerpt from Calvin's letter to Viret serves as a good example, "Add to this, that they, with a generous liberality assisted with their entire property our French brethren, who, on account of the Gospel, had crossed over to England. We must on no account, therefore, deny to these exiles at least a similar friendship," 440.

⁵² To Viret, Geneva, 20 November 1553.

However, these interpretations of Calvin's life also seem to fall short in some regard. I do not mean to swing the pendulum back in the other direction and argue that exile played a minimal role in Calvin's life and in the formation of his theology. Rather, I agree that Calvin was deeply affected by his exile but that his appropriation of exile as a theological issue and as a motif in his correspondence with the nascent Reformed church was eventually normalized for him. That Calvin remained "that Frenchman" in Geneva, but that this also became a theme he utilized rather than a reality that he lived.

There is proof that Calvin came to appreciate his status as an exile beyond what has been offered above. His earliest comments about exile were that it offered him a "repose" of sorts and he joked that exile was almost comparable to retirement.⁵³ His service in Geneva certainly cannot be called a retirement in any regard but it did provide him with a relatively safe haven in which to develop his theology and from which to help guide the broader Reform movement. There is evidence that Calvin retained this opinion well into his time of service in Geneva. He wrote to John Laski, who had at last found a long-term residence after a period of intense exile, in 1554, "I rejoice that the Lord has at length looked down upon you, so that you have found a tranquil haven, in which you may not only find rest, but also employ yourselves in profitable labor for the cause of God and of his church."⁵⁴ Calvin understood the concept of a "tranquil haven" because he himself had found one in Geneva. That is not to say that Calvin's life in Geneva could be called tranquil in the traditional sense, but rather that he could, in relative safety, affect the course of the entire Reformation through his correspondence.

⁵³ To Francis Daniel, 1534, 41.

⁵⁴ To John Laski, Geneva, May 1554, 44.

The opportunity to do so is nowhere more evident than in his interaction with the Marian exiles. Soon after the establishment of the Marian exile church in Frankfurt, John Knox arrived in the city to serve as the church's minister.⁵⁵ However, by the time Knox arrived a debate within the church had already broken out concerning the use of the 1552 edition of the *Common Book of Prayer*. Some of the refugees felt as if they could not use the book unless it could be proved to be entirely true to Scripture, while the other faction felt that to not use the *Book of Common Prayer* would demean the suffering of those who remained in England and were being imprisoned, tortured, and killed for their continuing loyalty to Protestantism and the Edwardian reforms.⁵⁶ When an easy solution could not be decided upon, the Frankfurt church sent out letters to the other English congregations on the continent requesting their opinions on what was to be done.

Many replied with such vehemence that Knox refused to allow any changes to the order of worship until a number of "Learned Men," most notably Calvin, could be consulted on the subject. Calvin's response clearly laid out his belief that exile could be a very powerful force in the life of the church. He wrote,

"This indeed grievously afflicts me and is highly absurd, that discord is springing up among brethren who are for the same faith exiles and fugitives from their country; and for a cause indeed which in your dispersion should like a sacred bond have held you closely united. For in this sad and wretched calamity, what could you do better, torn as you were from the bosom of your country, than adopt a church which received into its maternal bosom, those who were connected with you in minds and language?"⁵⁷

⁵⁵ William Whittingham, *A Briefe Discourse of the Troubles Begun at Frankeford in Germany, An. Dom. 1554* (London: G. Bishop and R. White, 1642).

⁵⁶ Whittingham, *Briefe Discourse*.

⁵⁷ To the English Church at Frankfurt, Geneva, 13 January 1555, 118.

Calvin saw the exile experience of the Marian exiles as an opportunity for them to reshape their religious identity. He went on to say this even more clearly, “You are at liberty to compose anew the form which will seem best adapted for the use and edification of that church.”⁵⁸ According to Calvin, the exile church was actually a more powerful representative of Christ’s true church than any other group. He concluded his letter to the Marian exiles saying, “For this more candid and sincere confession will compel the faithful that are still remaining in that country, to ponder deeply on the depth of the abyss into which they have fallen.”⁵⁹

Calvin’s letter was extremely effective. With Calvin’s encouragement, the congregation at Frankfurt immediately set out to establish a new order of worship not based upon the English *Book of Common Prayer*. The congregation’s leader, John Knox, and several others decided to draft a new order of worship. What is now known as *John Knox’s Genevan Service Book* would have governed the English church at Frankfurt. However, soon after Knox finished his service book, a new wave of Marian exiles arrived at Frankfurt from England in the course of only twelve days managed to have Knox banished from the city.⁶⁰

In relation to Calvin’s correspondence with the Frankfurt church, the most significant aspect of Knox’s banishment is that it was accomplished by a new group of English refugees who had not been in Frankfurt long. Those Marian exiles who had originally settled in Frankfurt and who had witnessed the advent of English refugee

⁵⁸ To the English Church at Frankfurt, Geneva, 13 January 1555, 119.

⁵⁹ To the English Church at Frankfurt, Geneva, 13 January 1555, 120.

⁶⁰ Whittingham, *Briefe Discourse*, 57 and *John Knoxs Genevan Service Book*, 1556. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1931), 6.

church there had been prepared to follow Knox's lead. They had experienced a process of idealization similar to Calvin that allowed them to imagine what the Reformed church could be. Unbound from England they were prepared to imagine what changes could be wrought in the church that would elevate it even beyond what had been in place under Edward VI. Then, receiving and hearing Calvin's letter, they had been radicalized. They were prepared to embrace reforms such as those which had been enacted in Geneva and which rejected even the slightest vestiges of Roman Catholicism. The English refugee church at Frankfurt had been poised to become a bastion of Reformed thought enabled by their separation from English politics and with the motivation of Calvin encouraging them to embrace the possibilities that exile created.

All of this points to how Calvin conceived of exile, both in his life and in the life of the Reformed Church. As an individual, Calvin abandoned his French identity, at least internally. Externally he remained "that Frenchman" for most in Geneva and he cultivated the image as it emphasized his exile, which, as has been shown, was the truest mark of an individual's commitment to the true faith. Calvin almost entirely surrendered the concept of remaining and, while he retained the title of exile, he lost much of the internal conflict that has been visible in the other figures in this dissertation who wrestled with the dilemma of flight. This allowed him to emphasize commitment to the church above all else. Rather than attempting to unify his national and religious identity and to assert that the two remained compatible, Calvin internally rejected, or at least subordinated, his national allegiance to the service of the Reformed church.

Understanding exile as the chief influence in Calvin's life, even above his conversion, serves to establish the centrality of the concept in his life and theology. As

has been previously stated, conversion stands at the heart of identity in the Western Christian Tradition. Therefore, to redefine conversion in Calvin's life is to redefine his Reformed identity. To acknowledge that Calvin's life was defined by exile, but to simultaneously assert that Calvin redefined what it meant to live the life of an exile has important implications for the exilic experience after the mid-sixteenth century. Prior to Calvin, an exile was perpetually torn between two identities that had been placed at odds with each other. With Calvin, one identity was subordinated to another and rather than being forced to navigate the difficult ideological balance of appeasing both, Calvin combined them into a single identity that emphasized commitment to the Reformation cause above all else. This was a new type of exile. Not one who was defined by both his belief and his nationality, but primarily by an absolute devotion to the church.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

The bulk of this dissertation has examined the early years of the sixteenth century, at which point the confessional boundaries of the Reformation were in the process of being established.¹ The life of John Calvin marks a transition in the early-modern era, both in relation to confessional boundaries and the concept of flight. After Calvin and the mid-sixteenth century, the confessional boundaries of Western Europe became reasonably well set in regard to their relationship with national and civic boundaries.² Military and political conflicts would continue to affect how individuals within a particular area were allowed to worship in regard to the governing authorities, but those boundaries would not experience a drastic realignment save for a few exceptions. However, the implementation of reform and the construction of identities within those political boundaries continued to be an ongoing process. What is more, confessional boundaries also continued to undergo redefining and reshaping as authorities were given greater control in the provinces in which they held reins of power.³

¹ Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 185.

² For a reminder of the role of Confessionalization in this process, see Chapter One.

³ An interesting case study for this phenomenon is the conflict of identity which occurred during the French Wars of Religion. Although Protestants were formally allowed to worship prior to the abolishment of the Edict of Nantes, control over the boundaries of the French nation, both geographically and ideologically, became increasingly significant. This authority over the religious adherence within boundaries is highlighted by a number of rites, but the most important were those rituals central to the practice of the church. As secular and religious boundaries became increasingly coterminous, religious rites gained greater national significance and vice-versa. For more, see: Barbara B. Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), particularly chapter two.

The increasing permanence of confessional adherence within a given political realm and the formal development of a concept of exile would have three effects on the dilemma of flight in the latter-years of the early-modern era. First, the possibility of returning was far less possible for those who fled. As confessional identities within political boundaries stabilized, there were significantly fewer opportunities for an individual to return safely and still openly proclaim the confessional identity which had required this original flight.⁴ This is not to say that individuals did not hope for the possibility of a return, but, as seen in Pole, continued living separated from their national or civic identity naturally eroded that identity over time and the absence of a return could eventually abolish that identity or at least render it dormant. However, it is interesting that this did not occur in most the figures examined in this dissertation. Reginald Pole began to feel some strain regarding his English identity, but he never fully abandoned it in favor of only his Catholic identity like Calvin did for his Reformed identity. This was helped significantly by Calvin's emphasis on exile as a choice of religion over national or civic identity and a desire to intentionally forego the latter identity for the former.

The second change brought about regarding flight after Calvin's lifetime was, in large part, wrought by Calvin himself. As flight became more commonplace and, to some extent, enabled by increasing systems of poverty assistance directed primarily at refugees

⁴ Huguenot communities serve as an excellent example of this. Flight became increasingly less attractive to Huguenots as they realized the opportunity to return after their flight would, most likely, never come about. For more on this, see: Jane McKee and Randolph Vigne, *The Huguenots: France, Exile and Diaspora* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013) and Eckart Birnstiel, *La Diaspora des Huguenots: les Réfugiés Protestants de France et Leur Dispersion dans le Monde, XVIe-XVIIIe Siècles* (Paris: Champion, 2001).

and exiles, it developed into a formalized concept.⁵ This concept attempted to direct the identity of individuals who fled away from the attempt to maintain conflicting identities, as seen in the earlier figures in this dissertation. Hus, Luther, and Pole all remained committed to both their national and civic identities even as those identities were declared incompatible by legal or religious authorities. After the mid-point of the sixteenth century, flight became more focused on the preservation of one identity through the deliberate sacrifice of another. Calvin, although he continued externally to be reminded of his French identity, deliberately highlighted the way in which exile allowed him and those others who underwent it to establish their religious identities apart from the constrictions and dangers of persecution and control. Thus, flight lost much of the internal tension found in the earliest reformers who faced the dilemma of exile and became, at least theologically in the Reformed tradition, the decision to place religious identity above all others.⁶

⁵ Poor relief has been discussed earlier in this dissertation regarding both Geneva and Emden. However, it became an increasingly common activity across Europe over the course of the early-modern era and there exists a significant amount of secondary literature on the subject, including: Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham, eds., *Health Care and Poor Relief in Protestant Europe* (London: Routledge Press, 1999); Carter Lindberg, "There Should Be No Beggars among Christians: Karlstadt, Luther, and the Origins of Protestant Poor Relief." *Church History* 46 (1977): 313-334; Marco H.D. Van Leeuwen, "Logic of Charity: Poor Relief in Preindustrial Europe." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24 (1994): 589-613; and Thomas Max Safely, *Children of the Laboring Poor: Expectations and Experience among the Orphans in Early Modern Augsburg* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

⁶ The Puritans serve as an interesting case-study in this regard. Those that fled from England to the Americas in particular exhibited this degree of confessional over national commitment. For more, see: Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Frances L. Reinhold, "Exiles and Refugees in American History," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 203 (1939): 63-73; and Susan Hardman Moore, *Pilgrims: New World Settlers & the Call of Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). This is at the heart of Pettegree's argument in *Emden and the Dutch Revolt* and is also supported in other cases, see: Andrew Pettegree, "The Exile Churches and the Churches 'under the Cross': Antwerp and Emden During the Dutch Revolt," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 38:2 (1987): 187-209. And this is supported as well by many of the essays in Frederick Abbott Norwood's *Strangers and Exiles: A History of Religious Refugees* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969).

Finally, flight began to operate in a much more predictable and stabilized pattern. It was even intentionally encouraged or facilitated by political figures who desired to benefit from the possibility of an influx of skilled laborers or who desired greater homogeneity within their realm but wished to accomplish it without overt violence.⁷ The recognition of the value of certain exiles and refugees by ruling monarchs or officials also points to the increasing awareness of exile in the latter-half of the sixteenth century. For example, Gustav Vasa, King of Sweden, encouraged immigration of skilled laborers from the exile populations of London and Emden.⁸ This type of attention regarding exile again points to how individuals in the secular and not just the spiritual realm considered how this increasingly common phenomena could be put to constructive use.

Those facing the dilemma of flight also began to recognize how they could benefit from their circumstances. This was most evident in the practice of *Auslaufen*. *Auslaufen* developed after the Peace of Augsburg and remained a practice well into the eighteenth century. It was the practice of traveling to a neighboring province or country when a person was not able to practice their religion in the province or country in which they lived. However, rather than fleeing permanently to the new country, they would flee only as long as required to celebrate their religious rites and then return home. For those that lived close to borders this was an act they could practice at least once a week, if not more often. Those that lived closer to the interior could only travel a couple of times a year, but they were still able to make it someplace safe often enough to practice their

⁷ Instances are addressed in R. Po-chia Hsia and Henk F. K. Van Nierop's, *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) and, A. C. Duke, Judith Pollmann, and Andrew Spicer's, *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

⁸ Grell, "Exile and Tolerance," 176.

most significant confessional rites where it was permissible to do so.⁹ This type of temporary flight lessened the impact of Calvin's understanding of flight for the sake of belief, but it allowed larger portions of the population actively to practice a dissident religion within a given region. This marked the beginning of toleration as a principle in Western Europe, although the practice of toleration would not be widespread until well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ultimately, although *Auslaufen* and similar practices would decrease the impact of flight on identity formation in early-modern Europe, toleration would significantly reduce its significance in relation to religion.¹⁰

Implications

Because of the way conceptions of flight were transformed in the latter-half of the sixteenth century, it is important to understand how flight originated in the early-modern period. How the process of wrestling with the dilemma of flight in the face of persecution affected those earliest reformers forced to undergo the agonizing decision of choosing between disputed identities and their physical safety. This experience forced them to either attempt to declare their contested identities as compatible or to choose one of them and flee and then to work through the consequences of that choice. Whereas, after Calvin, the ideological consequences of flight had been standardized. Those that fled better understood the decision they were making in comparison to those who were forced to make the same decision a generation earlier. This is not to say that flight became an

⁹ For more on *Auslaufen*, see: Benjamin J. Kaplin, *Cunegonde's Kidnapping: A Story of Religious Conflict in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 163-164; Kaplin, *Divided by Faith*, Chapter 1.

¹⁰ Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, Van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile*, Spohnholz, *Tactics of Toleration*, Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), and Stuart B. Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

easier process for those forced to wrestle with the dilemma of flight after Calvin. However, the shift in understanding the purpose of exile that occurred after the mid-sixteenth century did transform how individuals approached the decision of whether or not to flee from persecution. For them, the process had already been infused with ideological significance by those that had gone before. Because most works on the subject of exile in early-modern Europe have focused on this latter portion of the sixteenth century, as well as the centuries that followed, understanding that the dilemma of flight in the first-half of the century was a different process allows us to better understand those individuals that faced that decision before Calvin.

This understanding allows for several clarifications in the secondary literature surrounding the question of flight in early-modern Europe—especially as it concerned the earliest reformers. First, flight could be a radicalizing experience, but this was not always necessarily the case. Radicalization required several factors, but the most notable was the willingness of an individual to pit themselves against an authority for the sake of another cause while retaining some degree of loyalty to both causes. In some instances, flight may have played a role in moving an individual from a moderate to a more radical position as their forced separation hardened their commitment to the cause that had initially driven them away. This can be seen, to some extent, in Luther as he underwent his period of profound isolation, sorrow, and anger in the Wartburg. After his experience in the Wartburg, as well as his reception of *Exsurge Domine*, he held no illusions of a reunification with Rome and his return to Wittenburg was not merely done out of commitment to the Protestant cause but in deliberate defiance of Rome's authority.

Luther's commitment to the Protestant cause increased, but so too did his desire to use that cause actively to work against the Roman Catholic Church.

Alternatively, Calvin's life can be viewed as a move towards normalization in the process of flight. His flight and eventual arrival in Geneva undoubtedly increased his commitment to Protestantism and even came to occupy a central position in how he understood commitment to Christianity. For Calvin, his fervency for one identity increased at the cost of another. However, radicalization cannot be discussed solely in regard to a single identity. Increased commitment to an individual cause is not radicalization. Rather, radicalization occurs only when an individual's increasing commitment to a cause serves to further their animosity towards another entity or cause. To see an increasing commitment to a confessional cause in refugees and exiles is common and expected, but it is not radicalization. Calvin's commitment to Geneva and to the Reformed church was increased through his experience of flight, but he did not directly pit his Reformed identity against the authorities in France which had overseen his expulsion from the country.¹¹

This understanding of radicalization in regard to flight is only possible through an appreciation of the way flight externally represented internally competing identities. To believe that flight was the product of multiple impulses and conflicting identities allows us to better understand both the motivations and consequences of the dilemma of flight. This leads to a better understanding regarding flight in the secondary literature of early-modern Europe; that is, that flight was always about more than only confessional identity.

¹¹ This is not to imply that Calvin did not actively work for the conversion of the French people to the Reformed faith. However, Calvin's interest was primarily directed at this conversion for the sake of conversion and not necessarily for the political reclamation of France.

For flight to occur there had to exist two identities that became incongruent. Choosing to adhere to a confessional identity and to flee to avoid persecution was a possibility and the most frequent reason for which flight occurred. However, the regularity with which individuals sought to return from their flight, or refused to flee at all, is indicative of the fact that multiple identities were at stake and that reformers, especially the earliest reformers, were often as unwilling to relinquish their civic or national identities as they were their confessional ones.

These competing identities become increasingly lost in scholarship that focuses on periods past the mid-point of the sixteenth century—which is what almost all secondary literature on flight in the early-modern era does. It is the earliest reformers, prior to Calvin’s development of a concept of exile that was subservient to the cause of the Reformed church, that are most illustrative of the internal struggle truly connected to the dilemma of flight. This is because they did not have a developed ideology surrounding flight before they made the decision to go into exile. Calvin made it clear that fleeing meant, in some part, surrendering a civic or national identity. The earliest reformers fled, but still attempted to retain both their confessional and national or civic identities. Hus’ continued commitment to Bohemia, Luther’s unwillingness to remain hidden while the Reformation struggled on, and Pole’s inability to abandon his English identity all show how multiple identities played an almost equal part in how they conceived of themselves as individuals. They were not merely a Bohemian, or a German, or a Catholic, but they existed wholly at the intersection of all of their identities. This, in turn, affected how they navigated the political, ideological, and physical landscape of early-modern Europe. In their flight, they continued to contest the way their communities

were being controlled, and were ideologically declaring that they remained a part of those communities despite the attempts of the governing authorities to reject the compatibility of their confessional and national identities. This is why Hus attended the Council of Constance, why Luther returned to Wittenberg despite the pleas of Frederick the Wise, and why Pole abandoned his twenty-year home in Italy to return to England.

As flight became more ubiquitous, this conflict increasingly vanished. Individuals either embraced their confessional identity over their national or civic allegiance and fled or were able to practice their religion through the temporary act of flight made possible by *Auslaufen*. However, having explored the turmoil that flight caused in almost all the individuals within this dissertation, it seems interesting that the dilemma of flight should become so normalized as the early-modern era progressed. Perhaps this was indeed the case or perhaps the conflict simply shifted from the religious-national to other sources. This is not the purview of this dissertation, but the information discovered through an examination of the earliest reformers' struggles with the dilemma of flight calls at least for a future re-examination of the primary sources in this latter portion of the century.

However, as stated in the introduction, there is no clear theoretical framework in place which allows for a full consideration of the ways in which flight affects identity formation. Therefore, in the hope of facilitating the construction of a framework that will allow for the continued development of exilic studies in the early-modern era, I will endeavor to offer a few thoughts on the question of theory and identity formation in relation to flight.

Towards the Construction of an Identity-Based Theory of Flight

One of the greatest benefits of this project has been the way in which it has revealed avenues for continued research on the subject of identity in the early modern era. Flight, because it is so externally representative of internal processes, allows for a degree of insight regarding both motivation and identity that is often impossible in other areas of early-modern research. In particular, the figures in this study have demonstrably followed a geographic course that mimics either their shifting or established allegiances to various religious and national entities. Such as Grebel's desire to remain a citizen of Zurich causing him to stay in the city long after it was safe to do so, until his eventual commitment to the religious cause of Anabaptism overwhelmed his initial desire to belong and he fled. Alternatively, Pole fled England but was not able to abolish his English identity as was continually represented in his interaction with Italian papal officials and finally confirmed in his eventual return to England after the ascension of Mary. Grebel remained in Zurich because he believed he remained a citizen of that community, and Pole returned to England because he never abandoned the concept of himself as an Englishman. These figures demonstrate that flight provides an avenue for future research relating to identity and broader communal belonging beyond the traditional categories of just religious, civic, and national identities. Factional allegiances, financial concerns, and even personal relationships may, to some extent, all possibly be graphable based on the geographic relocation or remaining of individuals over the course of the early modern era. As flight became an increasingly common response to a number of stimuli, not just persecution, these phenomena, which are usually considered far less of a factor in the process of flight because they lacked the motivational power of

persecution, may have increasingly played a role in an individual's decision to flee or remain as flight became an increasingly common practice.

Ultimately, it is the process of identity formation with which this dissertation is most interested—particularly the formation and interaction of confessional and national identities. The thrust of the body of this dissertation has been directed at understanding how the conflict between competing identities in individual reformers was affected by the dilemma of flight. The results, as has been discussed, were varied. However, it is of interest that many of the individuals that have been discussed in this dissertation are considered originators, if not the solefounders, of many present-day confessional identities. The connection between flight and the formation of long-lasting confessional identities is significant and bears further investigation.

This dissertation is, however, less interested in how these individuals influenced the development of these movements than in how they envisioned themselves in relation to their broader communities. Each of these lives presents a fascinating narrative of competing loyalties. Hus attempted to affirm both his commitment to reform the church and to the city of Prague even as secular and religious authorities attempted to declare such a union impossible. Grebel endeavored to untangle civic and religious identities so he could remain a faithful citizen of Zurich even as he struggled to remain committed to the practice of believer's baptism. The dissonance between these positions led to, in the case of Hus, his death and, for Grebel, the necessity of his flight into the countryside surrounding Zurich in order to escape imprisonment. Interestingly, even as Grebel attempted to render religious and civic identities no longer coterminous, he never dismissed the possibility of a true believers participation in civic government—unlike

many other Anabaptists. Pole's desire to affirm his identity as a reforming Catholic and to remain "English" eventually led him into exile in Italy before returning home.

However, even after his return to England he almost faced charges of heresy rather than surrender either of his loyalties. Luther's commitment to reform and his unwillingness to bend to Rome or the emperor at Worms eventually led him to articulate one of the earliest known affirmations of clerical and monastic marriage in the Reformation, which became a cornerstone in the development of Protestant identity. Luther's rejection of Catholicism allowed him to embrace a new reforming identity, but his continued commitment to Wittenberg meant that to live out that identity in the city in which he felt he belonged. All of these circumstances and the positions that these reformers developed in response to them were also further complicated as they attempted to navigate familial and social duties while leaving behind both family and friends as they relocated all across Europe over the first-half of the sixteenth century.

In short, the lives of these reformers displayed an intersection of identities that they attempted to declare as compatible while external forces repeatedly proclaimed the opposite. They exhibited a surprising degree of stubbornness as they refused to surrender those aspects of their identity that they held to be most central to their constructed identities. They endured torture, execution, flight, isolation, separation, and alienation in order to maintain, in all circumstances, at least two identities. They frequently could have surrendered one of their identities and lived without a significant degree of internal dissonance; but they all, save perhaps for Calvin, refused to do so. This points to a very interesting fact: Identity, once internalized, is not easily abandoned. Even lacking the established rituals that traditionally maintain identity (particularly in the case of national

rites and rituals—such as ceremonies, festivals, language, and even diet) they ideologically remained and continued to affirm their civic, national, and religious commitments.¹²

What is more, identity seems, in some ways, to be dependent upon the possibility of rejection. This desire for the compatibility of religious and national identities was not limited to the reformers themselves, but seemed dependent upon the possibility of projecting these intersecting identities upon those around them, primarily their fellow citizens, friends, and followers. Thus, their efforts to legitimize their position, particularly the ability to proclaim their two contested identities as compatible, were not merely attempts to declare their identity publicly and safely but to guarantee the possibility of its diffusion. Such a statement seems self-evident if considered in relation to the historical goals of the religious reforms of early-modern Europe, but it is a reminder, often absent from theoretical works on identity, that individuals do not construct their identities in isolation and that a crucial aspect of identity construction is often the projection of the self's identity upon others. Therefore, any attempt to disrupt this projection is often perceived as a threat to the legitimacy of the individual itself in his entirety.

This can be seen in several cases. Grebel was not content merely to be an Anabaptist, but desired to see the entire community of Zurich converted along with him. When that had clearly failed, he attempted to untangle civic and religious identity through the abolishment of infant baptism in order to bring those portions of the city that he could—most notably his family and his newborn daughter—into complete alignment

¹² For a number of excellent essays exploring the ways in which food serves as a ritual of identity, see: Peter Scholliers, ed., *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2001).

with his own intersecting identity. As Luther saw the Reformation progressing without him, he began to lose a sense of his own identity. It seems, even by 1521, he had internalized his role as a reformer. The sudden impossibility of projecting his religious identity upon the citizens of Wittenberg caused a crisis of identity within himself. Without the possibility of projection, he was unable to maintain even his own identity.

This also helps to explain why so many early-modern individuals remained completely committed to all of their internal loyalties rather than just choosing the one which was most convenient. While the assumption of this dissertation is that an individual's identity is actually a construction at the intersection of many other identities, this is not evident to the individual himself. Therefore, a threat to any of the identities within an individual would be seen as a threat to the entire identity of the individual. While certain reformers such as Calvin seemed able to separate these identities to some extent, most could not do so. Therefore, surrendering one aspect of their identity felt like abandoning their identity in its entirety.

With these principles in mind, I would like to conclude with a few broader thoughts relating to the use of theory in the study of early-modern Europe. In recent years, the field has benefitted greatly from a number of works exploring the ways in which boundaries, both geographic and ideological, and communities functioned, developed, and interacted over the course of the long sixteenth century. There has, however, been significantly less theoretical study on individual identity in this same period and those that do exist tend to focus on a few select individuals. Part of this is undoubtedly a problem of sources, but as our pool of sources continues to broaden and our application of new methodologies deepens, works on the nature of identity

construction can and should become more commonplace. As they do, it would be most beneficial if they do not distance themselves, but rather remain in close communication with, these broader theories regarding boundaries and communities. The end result will be a fuller understanding of identity construction at every level of early-modern Europe. The figures in this dissertation demonstrate the limits of communal identity, but they also demonstrate the limits and lengths to which an individual would go to preserve that identity. In many ways, the limits of communal and individual identity are the same. The inability to project one's entire identity as seen in national, religious, and a near infinite number of other possibilities hints at the fact that important theoretical frameworks for identity construction may not have been solely top-down processes. That the study of individuals, at every level of society, may be crucial in moving forward our understanding of how identities both were and are constructed and diffused.

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