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# "Closed and kept most surely in religion": Piety and Politics in Richard Whitford's *The Pye, or Tonne, of the Lyfe of Perfection*

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Article abstract

Depuis sa fondation, la communauté de Sainte-Brigitte à l'abbaye de Syon a exercé son ministère et répondu aux besoins spirituels des pieux qui cherchaient une pratique dévotionnelle plus complète pour leur usage privé. Un des frères les plus prolifiques de l'abbaye, Richard Whitford a écrit de nombreux textes visant à renouveler la vie religieuse et à l'adapter aux laïcs. Cet article décrit l'engagement monastique de Whitford face à la pression exercée par l'État Tudor pour obtenir l'obéissance aux Actes de Succession et Suprématie et place l'émergence de l'humanisme de Whitford dans le contexte culturel de l'abbaye de Syon des années 1530. Cet article examine également la contribution que fait le *Pye or Tonne of the Life of Perfection* de Whitford à son programme général de réforme, qui promeut le retour à la stricte observance de régimes dévotionnels complexes. Pour Whitford, le monachisme fonctionnait non seulement comme un modèle de réforme s'adressant essentiellement à l'individu, mais aussi comme un modèle d'importante nationale plus large, ayant le potentiel de revitaliser le catholicisme anglais et de faire face directement au mouvement protestant.

“Closed and kept most surely in religion”:  
Piety and Politics in Richard Whitford’s *The Pype,  
or Tonne, of the Lyfe of Perfection*

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*Depuis sa fondation, la communauté de Sainte-Brigitte à l'abbaye de Syon a exercé son ministère et répondu aux besoins spirituels des pieux qui cherchaient une pratique dévotionnelle plus complète pour leur usage privé. Un des frères les plus prolifiques de l'abbaye, Richard Whitford a écrit de nombreux textes visant à renouveler la vie religieuse et à l'adapter aux laïcs. Cet article décrit l'engagement monastique de Whitford face à la pression exercée par l'État Tudor pour obtenir l'obéissance aux Actes de Succession et Suprématie et place l'émergence de l'humanisme de Whitford dans le contexte culturel de l'abbaye de Syon des années 1530. Cet article examine également la contribution que fait le Pype or Tonne of the Life of Perfection de Whitford à son programme général de réforme, qui promet le retour à la stricte observance de régimes dévotionnels complexes. Pour Whitford, le monachisme fonctionnait non seulement comme un modèle de réforme s'adressant essentiellement à l'individu, mais aussi comme un modèle d'importante nationale plus large, ayant le potentiel de revitaliser le catholicisme anglais et de faire face directement au mouvement protestant.*

As reformers sought to undermine the spiritual authority of cloistered life in the 1530s,<sup>1</sup> demand among laypeople for more extensive para-monastic devotions for private use had not diminished. Catering to the spiritual needs of such individuals, the Bridgettine community at Syon Abbey had for decades been exporting this culture to lay audiences through its diverse literary output.<sup>2</sup> Exceptional among the abbey's small group of brothers was Richard Whitford, a former fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, graduate of the University of Paris, and close friend of Erasmus and Thomas More.

While Whitford has left us with few biographical details, we do know that the brother remained committed to improving the quality of religious life for those within the monastery and spent much of his energies upholding the ideals of the cloister as they came under increasing criticism from without. Employing his pen to accomplish these tasks, Whitford flourished as an author and translator from the 1520s to the abbey's expulsion in 1539,<sup>3</sup> and his works enjoyed considerable popularity among other religious houses, as well as among the laity.<sup>4</sup>

In 1532, Whitford published *The Pype, or Tonne, of the Lyfe of Perfection* as a guide to religious living that also defended the institution of monasticism against attacks from reformers, whom he labels "Lutherans."<sup>5</sup> Aimed primarily at religious audiences, *The Pype* contributes to Whitford's larger program of orthodox reform by championing a return to thorough observance of a complex devotional regimen among religious. This work reveals that, for Whitford, the value of monastic culture lay in its capacity to furnish comprehensive models of piety that upheld the traditional spiritual order. Yet, while monasticism functions in this text as a principle of reform aimed primarily at the individual, Whitford also represents this principle as having a broader, national impact, and he therefore draws on the extensive pattern of monastic living not only to revitalize the faith but also to engage directly with reformers.

Both Whitford's personal attachment to religious living and Syon Abbey's unique literary culture and spirituality play a significant role in determining the brother's approach to monastic discipline in the *Pype*. Taking these factors as my point of departure, I will explore the significance with which Whitford invests monastic discipline by focusing on the text's seemingly unusual governing metaphor of religious life as a pipe or barrel. Such imagery situates the brother's spirituality firmly within a Bridgettine tradition, and it is also within this tradition that we may locate the brother's emphasis on a return to more stringent observance of traditional customs, such as the practice of *lectio divina*, as a means not only of reforming the individual, and thus halting the decay of religious life, but also of fashioning ideal communities, especially in the New World. When Whitford turns his attention back to Europe's current spiritual crisis, he applies, I argue, the concept of monastic obedience to a broader secular context in order to create an alternative paradigm for balancing clerical and regal authority that responds directly to Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man* and its potential for influencing royal policy. This discussion will therefore touch

on the individual, social, and political ramifications of the brother's notion of monasticism. In doing so, I will argue that although Whitford was not alone in his efforts to renew religious life or adapt it for a devout laity, his writing is distinguished by an innovative synthesis of traditional elements of monastic discipline and devotional culture that offers comprehensive models of piety as an alternative to the popular appeal of doctrines emerging from a variety of dissenting groups which would drive the English Reformation forward.

Shortly before entering the religious community at Syon Abbey, Richard Whitford, who likely served as the chaplain to Richard Fox, bishop of Winchester,<sup>6</sup> enjoyed a position within the clerical hierarchy that brought him near to the heart of ecclesiastical as well as regal authority. However, an account passed down from William Roper's *Lyfe of Moore*, and subsequently embellished by Nicholas Harpsfield, suggests that Whitford was fully cognizant of political realities at the Tudor court.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the episode, which centres on a young Thomas More when he was still only a burgess of the Parliament, conveys Whitford's perceptiveness quite well. More had fallen out of favour with Henry VII on account of his opposition to the king's plan to raise money to pay for Lady Margaret's marriage to James IV of Scotland,<sup>8</sup> and More sought advice from Fox, who belonged to the king's Privy Council. Roper tells us that, when the two met, Fox attempted to entrap More:

...pretendinge greate favour towardes [More], [Fox] promised him that, if he wold be ruled by him, he wold not faile into the kings favour againe to restore him; meaning (as it was after coniectured) to cause him thereby to confesse his offence against the kinge, whereby his highnes might with the better coler haue occasion to revenge his displeasure against him. But when he came from the Bysshoppe, he fell in comunicacion with one master Whitford, his familiar friend, then Chapleine to that bishoppe, and after a Father of Syon, and shewed him what the bishop had saide vnto him, desiringe to haue his advise therein; who for the passion of god, pryed him in no wise to followe his Councel: "For my lord, my master," quoth he, "to serve the kings torne, will not sticke to agree to his owne fathers death." So Sir Thomas Moore returned to the Bishoppe no more.<sup>9</sup>

This encounter suggests a great deal of mistrust towards clerical as well as regal power on the part of Whitford and perhaps even foreshadows his retreat from

the court to the monastery. Counselling More to avoid submitting himself to Fox, Whitford himself increasingly withdrew from the affairs of state until finally entering Syon Abbey. In this way, Whitford's and More's lives follow an inverse trajectory: whereas More emerged from a possible religious vocation to become one of the most renowned humanists of his day, Whitford emerged from an academic background to enter the cloister and dedicate himself to the preservation and transmission of monastic ideals.

Despite his associations with prominent humanists and ecclesiastics, Whitford turned away from the high-profile literary and clerical circles to which he belonged in order to become one of the brothers at the monastery of Saint Saviour and Saint Birgitta of Syon. However, information is equally scarce concerning Whitford's entrance into Syon and his subsequent life there. James Hogg, following David Knowles, dates the year of his profession near 1507<sup>10</sup> while Jan Rhodes suggests a date of 1511 on account of a will he had drawn up in the same year.<sup>11</sup> The next recorded account of Whitford dates from the period of Thomas Bedyll and Roland Lee's visitations to the abbey in 1534 to secure the brothers' submission to the Acts of Succession and Supremacy. Although there is no reason to believe that the community escaped swearing to the oath,<sup>12</sup> Bedyll's letters foreground on various occasions Whitford's resistance to royal supremacy as well as his willingness to speak his mind. For example, on 21 July 1534, Bedyll wrote that Whitford "shuld be brought to the greate shame of the world for his irreligious life, and for using bawdy wordes to diverse ladys at the tymes of their confession"; Bedyll went on to threaten the abolition of this sacrament, and, while we are not told the brother's response, Bedyll commented that Whitford "hath a braysyn forhead, whiche shameth at nothing."<sup>13</sup> Though we may be inclined to question the motives behind Bedyll's accusations of shamelessness or misconduct on Whitford's part, these lines may point towards the brother's commitment to maintaining the traditional sacraments. And Whitford's obstinacy continued even after Richard Reynolds, the spiritual father of the community known as the "Angel of Syon," was executed at Tyburn.<sup>14</sup> Three months after Reynolds's death, Bedyll wrote once more to Cromwell about the state of the community at Syon, and his comments concerning Whitford's intransigence toward royal policy are revealing:

Whitford, one of the most wilful of that house, preched and wolde speke no worde of the Kinges Grace said title; and this man hath but small lernyng,

but is a greate rayler... if any such remedie shal be put in execution, as towching the attachment, or putting in prison, of any of thaim, it shuld best be bestowed, in myne opinion, upon Frire Whitford and upon Lache, which bee the vaunperlers, and heddes of thair faction.<sup>15</sup>

In the end, Lache, along with other pockets of resistance within the community, conceded to the pressure applied by Cromwell’s agents.<sup>16</sup> Whitford, however, remained firm, and, as the accounts we have suggest, continued as an obstinate opponent to Henry’s reform of the English Church until Syon’s expulsion in 1539.

Despite the small amount of information we possess, it is clear that Whitford’s decision to enter Syon stands paramount among the events of his life—especially since his entire corpus centres in some way on the restoration or adaptation of the monastic life. The rigorous intellectual climate at Syon leaves little doubt as to why this academic chose to enter that particular community. Yet Whitford must have been equally drawn to the Bridgettines’ commitment to strict religious observance. Such dedication to upholding the doctrines and disciplinary structure of Catholicism, which is evident in all the records that describe his resistance to the Acts of Succession and Supremacy, is even more clearly expressed in the *Pype*, which seeks to reinforce an adherence to the tenets of the faith by promoting a greater devotional zeal.

Yet Whitford, along with his fellow priest-brothers at the Bridgettine abbey, was equally concerned about the piety and spiritual wellbeing of the laity. Founded by Henry V in 1415, Syon had formed a major part of the king’s plan to restore religious life in England through both encouraging a return to more austere discipline within established communities<sup>17</sup> and creating new foundations that would supply “orthodox guidance for the personal religion of the laity.”<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Syon was easily able to fulfill the better part of this mandate because of the particular emphasis that Bridgettine spirituality had placed on reaching out to the laity. The *Regula Salvatoris*,<sup>19</sup> along with the later *Additions*, foregrounds the role of the brothers as spiritual instructors. For example, the *Regula* stipulates that the brothers are to “entende oonly to dyuyne office and studie 7 prayer [... and] to expoune iche sunday the gospel of the same day in the same messe to all herers in ther modir tonge.”<sup>20</sup> In addition to their duties to preach to the nuns, the brothers were also obliged to preach to the laity on important feast days.<sup>21</sup> The pastoral responsibilities of the brothers thus extended

beyond the enclosure to include pious laypeople who travelled to Syon to hear the gospels preached in the vernacular, confess their sins, and receive spiritual guidance.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, this commitment to caring for the spiritual needs of the lay community who lived in the abbey's precincts, as well as those of the pilgrims who visited Syon from afar, is even discernible in the design of the enclosure itself, which sought to accommodate large crowds of visitors on feast days.<sup>23</sup> The expectation of the Syon brothers, notes Vincent Gillespie, "to have a decisive and effective pastoral programme and to offer spiritual guidance and leadership"<sup>24</sup> made them appealing not only to pious laypeople but also to monarchs eager to promote a traditional and uniform faith in the wake of the suppression of the Lollards early in the fifteenth century.

The success of the Syon brothers as spiritual advisors for diverse groups of laypeople was aided in particular by their literary endeavours and their openness to the press. In addition to the abbey's library, which attracted elites from across England, Syon gained influence as a centre for the publication of religious literature.<sup>25</sup> In the course of evaluating the texts associated with the abbey, Jan Rhodes notes that Syon's influence derived from its position not simply as one of the most frequently visited abbeys in England in the early sixteenth century, but also as a centre for the production of religious literature.<sup>26</sup> The influence of Syon's devotional culture throughout England was significant.<sup>27</sup> The willingness of the Bridgettines to accept the utility of the press, which was shared most notably by certain Benedictine houses,<sup>28</sup> facilitated a wider distribution of texts associated with the abbey and thus elevated its prestige.<sup>29</sup> Targeting a broader lay audience through print, the Syon brothers, as C. Annette Grisé notes, were able to "enhance their roles as fathers, teachers, and preachers."<sup>30</sup> While the extent to which the community actively organized a comprehensive catalogue of works—designed to provide basic pastoral instruction as well as to export the devotional culture of the monastery—can never be known for certain,<sup>31</sup> speculations regarding a coordinated program of publication may also be applied to Whitford himself. Shorter texts such as *A Werke for Housholders* and the *Daily Excercyse* were printed individually in multiple editions, but they were also brought together in larger collections: indeed, Whitford, notes Rhodes, ensured that these texts would be printed in an identical format in order to be bound together at the least possible expense.<sup>32</sup> By bringing books into the vernacular and by printing them in order to ensure the widest circulation, Whitford challenged reformers not only by engaging with them directly

on doctrinal issues but by attempting to reach larger audiences who may have had access to spiritual literature that straddled the line between orthodox and heterodox.<sup>33</sup>

The role that the brothers played as spiritual advisors would have no doubt compelled them to defend traditional institutions that were coming under increasingly vigorous attacks. Noting the defiance of many of the brothers, Alexandra da Costa demonstrates that Syon was “trenchantly opposed to [Henry’s] divorce and supremacy throughout the early 1530s” and further suggests that brothers, such as Whitford, exploited genres of devotional writing to advance more subtle criticisms against the reformers and those within the Tudor establishment who sought to supplant the established ecclesiastical order.<sup>34</sup> However, whereas such politicized readings of Whitford’s *Pype* by Ann M. Hutchison and Alexandra da Costa foreground the brother’s opposition to the attacks of opponents whom he groups together under the name of “Lutherans,” I wish to focus in particular on his defense of monastic life and his promotion of it as a curative for the spiritual and political ailments that were afflicting the English commonwealth.

Written originally for the sisters of Syon Abbey, the *Pype, or Tonne, of the Lyfe of Perfection*,<sup>35</sup> which was later printed in 1532 by Robert Redman,<sup>36</sup> is both the fullest exploration of the value of religious life made by the author and also his most explicit attempt at political intervention.<sup>37</sup> Whitford brings these two elements together by championing the value of religious vocation to the individual and society, arguing that it is essential to living out the ideal Christian life. This claim is made explicit when, at the end of his treatise, Whitford argues that monasticism provides a pattern of living “moste apte and moste conueniant”<sup>38</sup> for the “lyfe euangelyke that... Christe caunsayled and also that he commanded.”<sup>39</sup> That the brother is referring to religious life in general may explain why, despite the fact that the text is targeted at the female members of the Bridgettine community, gender issues rarely arise in its discussion of monasticism. When Whitford does acknowledge differences between male and female religious, he addresses disparities in education.<sup>40</sup> But, when he advocates reading and study as a deterrent against disciplinary laxity, Whitford applies the same advice to both communities. In fact, even at the points at which he refers to the nuns specifically, it is to include rather than exclude them from a particular exercise, asserting that he is of “the same mynde of al religious women / as theyr lernyng



doth extende.<sup>41</sup> By not insisting on gender divisions, Whitford refers back to an older tradition of monasticism that sees the religious profession as equal. Such a tendency is not, however, unique to the brother since the double house at Syon seems itself to gesture towards this equality.<sup>42</sup>

Following in the tradition of Bridgettine spirituality, Whitford believed that, in order to achieve this aim of living out the optimal Christian life, a religious vocation, whether belonging to a man or a woman, had to embrace fully the ideals of monastic discipline. This fact is at once made evident by the title of the treatise: the *Pype, or Tonne, of the Lyfe of Perfection*. Whitford's preface offers its readers a remarkably detailed portrait of monastic discipline that emphasizes its role in shaping the individual's behaviour. The notion of enclosure entailed by this vocation is underlined as Whitford carefully elucidates how each of the different pieces of the pipe or barrel stand in for the various elements of religious life:

lyfe... is moche lyke vnto a pleasaunt / precious / and holsome wyne / containd / preserued / and kept in a pype or tonne. Whiche vessell ben comunely made of planed bordes. And those bordes compassed about / and bounde fast with hopes. And yet those hopes: bounde and made fast with small wykers. So that if the wykers (by any chaunce) be losed or broken: the hopes forthwith / done flye or starte of. The bordes than done lose and ben divided or departed in sondre. And so dothe the wyne flowe out and perissh. In lyke maner is it of the lyfe of perfection: whiche is closed and kept most surely in religion. And religyon is made and standeth principally / in the iii essenciall vowes / obedience / wilfull pouertie / and chastitie. For these thre (as in maner the bordes of the sayd vessell) ben the substanciall partes of religyon. Which vowes... ben compassed and bounde to gether (as the sayd vessell with the hopes) with the preceptes and counsell of the holy rules: ... and yet those rules ben knytte and made fast to gether (as the sayd hopes with the wykers) with the holy sermonies of religion: whiche ben containd in the statutes / and constitucions / addicions / iniuncions.<sup>43</sup>

Immediately striking about this passage is Whitford's seemingly unusual choice of metaphors for depicting religious life. From the twelfth century onwards, architectural imagery had often been used to articulate the shifting attitudes

towards cloistered life as emphasis moved away from bodily self-denial towards a more constructive “affirmation of one’s spiritual powers.”<sup>44</sup> As a result, metaphors for monastic life took on spatial dimensions as the interior life of the religious was represented as a castle, a garden, and even the water which fish inhabit: all of these images, argues Ellen Caldwell, emphasize a desire to focus on the positive elements of cultivating one’s “interior, psychological space.”<sup>45</sup> However, Whitford deliberately rejects these more familiar and majestic spatial metaphors that draw attention to the expansive interior world which religious life makes available. By likening monastic life to a barrel, he employs an image that is arguably more democratic: whereas aristocratic castles and enclosed gardens were elite spaces to which few people would have had access, barrels were regularly used and wine, even if not consumed regularly by everyone, was familiar and accessible, at least sometimes, at Mass. Thus, while the quotidian image of the pipe or barrel emphasizes the necessity of monastic discipline for containing the individual’s thoughts and behaviour within acceptable and orthodox limits, the wine suggests that perfection is available to everyone.<sup>46</sup> Possibly on account of his desire to reach out to a wider segment of the middle class who “purpose or intende to entre religion,”<sup>47</sup> Whitford relies on a metaphor that benefits from being familiar and immediately understandable. Of course, this imagery is entirely appropriate within the context of Bridgettine spirituality. Following the prologue of the *Regula Salvatoris*, Birgitta tells how Christ informed her of his decision to “plante [...] a newe vynezerde”<sup>48</sup> because the “enmye” had sown seed that choked the vines to such a degree that “the braunches myzt bere no wyne but with grete difficulte.”<sup>49</sup> Alluding obliquely to the laxity that has crept into older monastic vineyards, Christ’s injunction to create a new order, or vineyard, equates religious life with wine, and thus renders Whitford’s metaphor entirely at home within a Bridgettine context.

Equally striking is the way that Whitford’s metaphor seems to encourage a reversal of value judgments. Traditionally, a pipe or barrel is valuable for what it contains. Often this is some form of nourishment or even precious documents, as in the case of the Pipe Rolls which held the records of the Exchequer. In his treatise, however, Whitford gives the container a weight equal to, if not greater than, that of its contents, the “precious / and holsome wyne” that stands in for this “lyfe or maner of lyuing.”<sup>50</sup> In fact, Whitford takes great pains to describe a highly realized object to contain this valuable, but immaterial, substance. Thus, while the text acknowledges the priority of the barrel’s contents,

the barrel itself is just as important since it is the container that gives its valuable contents integrity and allows them to be “preserved.” In other words, without the container of monastic living, the contents “flowe out and perisshē” in a form that is of no use.

Moreover, unlike the more common spatial metaphors that authors employed to emphasize the brother’s or sister’s freedom within an open interior life, Whitford’s barrel image draws attention to how the rigours of monastic custom and discipline control and contain the life of those in religion. Whitford goes even further to eliminate any ambiguity about his opinion of the benefits of this restrictive culture by further drawing out the implications of his choice of metaphor: “For as in the sayd pype: whanne small wykers ben broken or losed: all the residue doth folowe fayle and decaye / vnto the distruction of the wyne. So in lyke maner / whan the holy cerimonies of religion ben neglected... [t]han done the rules decaye: and the vowes losed.”<sup>51</sup> Drawing on the familiarity of this image, Whitford comments on the role of ceremony, which he then defines as a rite, a custom, or a practice<sup>52</sup> that includes the monastic habit, periods of silence, and the division of the day between various activities in upholding the rule. But he also stresses the interdependence of ceremonies, vows, and rules to a healthy vocation. All are necessary, according to the brother, and, if one is lacking, religious life is quickly corrupted. Thus, for Whitford, it is not just one’s interior state of being but rather the outward forms of the discipline and the customs of claustral life that define monastic identity. The function of these forms is to reinforce the central tenets of the rule.

Whitford’s discussion of religious ceremony certainly reflects the emphasis within the Bridgettine tradition that is placed on bringing exterior discipline into conformity with interior restraint. For example, the initial chapters of the *Additions* for the sisters set out in precise detail not just the activities that the sisters ought not to engage in but also the demeanour in which they should fulfill their obligations.<sup>53</sup> Responding to the reformers’ claims that monastic rules lead one away from Christ, the *Pype* asserts that careful observation of religious ceremonies, as well as obedience to the rules and ordinances of one’s order, helps the individual “more perfectly and more very christianly kepe the lawes of the gossell and the commaundements and counsayles of Christ.”<sup>54</sup> Thus to Whitford as well, ceremony is essential to the individual’s moral formation. By devoutly observing such ceremonies, the brother declares, the male or female religious consciously constructs a pattern of living that makes him or

her more receptive to the “grace” that will aid him or her to follow more closely the “lawe of the gospel.”<sup>55</sup> Whitford makes this connection between exterior and interior life even more explicit when he claims that “certeynly the beste and moste perfecte educacion or bryngynge up of youthe unto vertue and good maners is in religion.”<sup>56</sup> The importance of these customs as tools for determining one’s exterior behaviour as well as interior devotions is further underscored when Whitford, citing Hugh of St. Victor, admonishes religious to observe the discipline of their order even in private. Once again, such advice was certainly consonant with Brigittine spirituality. Just as the first several chapters of the *Additions* for the sisters detailed, in precise terms, the behaviour and demeanour demanded of the nuns, the *Additions* for the brothers offered an equally thorough catalogue of conduct and attitudes the priests must avoid.<sup>57</sup> Within this tradition, these practices were seen to ensure that one honours God continually “in soule / herte / or mynde” despite the fact that such interior devotions, by the author’s own admission, “nedeth no ceremonies.”<sup>58</sup> Whether public or private, frequent performance of regular, ritualized actions is thus viewed as a crucial element in the formation of the religious since, as Whitford’s language indicates, such regulation of outward behaviour shapes one’s private habits of thought.

In addition to the importance of ceremony to religious life, Whitford places a significant amount of stress, at various points throughout the *Pype*, on the role of reading. Whitford affirms, as P. G. Caraman notes, that superiors should give the brothers and sisters under their care every opportunity for reading since books contain “the food and clothing of the soul.”<sup>59</sup> But, more specifically, the reading he prescribes is explicitly indicated as the contemplative reading of the cloister rather than the philologico-critical reading he practised in his youth while still closely associated with Erasmus’s circle of humanists. The benefits of meditative reading are especially apparent near the end of his discussion on monastic poverty. To conclude this segment, Whitford leaves off advising what not to do and instead offers his reader a positive strategy for uprooting a desire for property. The strategy he counsels is strongly reminiscent of the traditional spiritual exercise of *lectio divina*:

I do sende you unto vitas Patrum . . . . Be nat I praye you therefore lothe to tourne the boke. I have shewed you the place it is but very short and yet (as they say) very swete and profytable. Rede it ones ouer and if ye

haue a loue and a desyre unto this holy vertue wyfull pouerte: and ful determinate mynde to auoyd, fle, abhore, and utterly to fle the contrarie vice poysoned propriete: ye shall (I dare say) rede it ouer agayne with good wyll undesired. Our lorde moue and styrrer your mynde to folowe it or at the leest to inforce and to attempte: to attayne unto the toppe of the hyll the moste hyghe pynt of this perfection.<sup>60</sup>

As with most authors in the latter Middle Ages who invoke the process of meditative reading known as *lectio divina*, Whitford does not name it specifically.<sup>61</sup> Yet, the progression he describes, which moves from initial reading to a more reflective rereading “with good wyll” designed to raise one’s thoughts to the heights of perfection, is highly reminiscent of the sacred reading practised within the cloister and certainly recalls the programmatic reading scheme encouraged in the well-known Bridgettine text, the *Myroure of Oure Ladye*,<sup>62</sup> which counsels moving from understanding as a first step to a more “deuoute redyng” that will “sturre vp the affeccyons of the soule”<sup>63</sup> Indeed, the spatial metaphor of a vertical movement in stages that Whitford employs recalls the more familiar language of sacred reading as an upward ascent on the rungs of a ladder.<sup>64</sup>

Whitford also clearly intends such frequent recourse to traditional forms of meditative reading to serve the additional role of preventing one’s thoughts from straying beyond certain limits. As well as being generative—a catalyst for devout contemplation—monastic *lectio* assists the reader to develop control over his or her thoughts, and this purpose is evident in the brother’s encouragement of the “study of holy scripture” to habituate one to “drive away / and destroye” vain fantasies.<sup>65</sup> Whitford’s concern over actively managing the thoughts of religious is also present when he compares a person’s mind to “a rote / or a whele in a wynde: that neuer doth rest / but alway tourneth and doth renewe cogitacions and thoughtes.”<sup>66</sup> While his choice of imagery neatly conveys the uncontrollability of cognitive activity, Whitford asserts that the “batayle / bytwene the persone / and his thoughtes” begins the moment he or she reflects on how the “mynd is occupied.”<sup>67</sup> Certainly, this martial register underscores the gravity with which the brother viewed the individual’s effort to master his or her thoughts. Such attitudes towards reading, which viewed the specific texts as being capable of inciting certain thoughts, were fostered among the Bridgettines and may once again be found in the *Myroure*. Within

the short treatise on reading, the *Myroure* specifies different texts required to manage certain behaviours and encourage others, and it concludes by recalling a tale from the *Lives of the Fathers* in which a group of "fendes," who had long tempted a holy man, gave up simply because the saint was able to summon thoughts that would counter the temptations with which the devils sought to destroy him.<sup>68</sup>

But it is in Whitford's use of even more violent imagery that we can see his concern about the ways in which uncontrolled thoughts might harm not just the individual religious, but also the institution of monasticism as a whole. The brother's admonition to maintain a firm control over arbitrary thoughts is graphically conveyed in his application of imagery drawn from the psalms: "Blessed be that persone that doth holde and restrain his children / or babes / that is to say / his fyrste mocions: and that doth thruste and crushe theyr hed vnto the stone / that is vnto Christ."<sup>69</sup> Adapting the imagery from Psalm 137 and, most likely, his interpretation of the children as "fyrste mocions," or lustful thoughts, from Augustine,<sup>70</sup> Whitford transforms the psalmist's petition for the destruction of his enemies' children into a violent exhortation to keep careful guard over any thought that could threaten one's spiritual well-being. Such language is further indicative of the severity with which the brother wishes to inculcate a habit of auto-evaluation through meditative reading in his audience. But I would argue that Whitford's approach may also be suggestive of an anxiety on his part about the uncertain control that can be maintained over one's private thoughts. Indeed, the introspection that such practices promoted could result in a greater sense of spiritual entitlement on the part of the laity and even dissent from clerical authorities.<sup>71</sup>

Individual piety, however, cannot flourish in secular society, in Whitford's view, without the support of religion: this fact is made explicit in the brother's tale, set in the New World, which emphasizes the essential role religious communities play in creating an ideal Christian commonwealth. As part of Whitford's broader defence of religious life in general, this tale underscores the value of monasticism as a vehicle for promoting devout and disciplined living. Although his narrative concerns the Observant Franciscans, the brother is reticent about drawing sharp distinctions between the various communities, whether enclosed or not, that obey a rule. This blurring of boundaries between monk and friar, Carthusian and Franciscan, is especially evident in Whitford's later response to hypothetical objections against religious life: "I can nat deny

but that monasticall religion is sore dekeyde... Shewe vs (saye they) one monasterie where the promise of theyr profession is perfourmed. I can shewe diuerse of the reuerend fathers of the obseruauntes / the charterhouses / with other.”<sup>72</sup> Here, Whitford’s comments shed a great deal of light on how exactly he imagines “monastic religion” as well as the ideas of enclosure and confinement that are so forcefully conveyed in his metaphor of religious life as a pipe or barrel. By slotting Observant Franciscans next to Carthusians at the end of his statement, Whitford’s definition seems less concerned with physical enclosure than with the discipline inherent in religious life,<sup>73</sup> a term that is virtually synonymous with monasticism in the text. Indeed, despite Syon’s reputation for observing strict physical enclosure,<sup>74</sup> Whitford emphasizes instead a more symbolic form of enclosure that secures, as Christopher Cannon notes, “the body’s imaginative boundaries.”<sup>75</sup> Sarah Beckwith argues that such “disciplinary practice” as Whitford seems to have in mind plays an integral and highly successful role in producing “religious subjects.”<sup>76</sup> Yet, while Beckwith’s discussion of religious discipline focuses attention solely on the subject who imposes this rigid discipline upon him- or herself, Whitford viewed such regulation not only as essential to the individual for living out the most ideal form of Christian life but also as generative since its performance extended outward beyond the individual to shape the beliefs of others.

A vivid example of the benefits to the wider community that result from a careful observation of religious discipline and a tacit response to attacks on monasticism, Whitford’s brief conversion narrative set in the New World serves a spiritual and political aim. In his account of the quasi-utopian society that the Observant Franciscans are helping to construct in New Spain, Whitford comments that

...in the newe founde lande that is called newe spayne / ben many and divers miracles done by religious persones. ...eueryche of [the friars] done take vnto theyr cure and laboure chyldren to teache and specially the chyldren of the great states and rulers whiche children (whan they haue learned the feythe of Christe) done (with merueylous feruour) preache i maner and shewe vnto the people the same feythe as they lerned of theyr teachers / the sayd freres minores.<sup>77</sup>

Just as Thomas More located his ideal commonwealth in the New World, Whitford constructs his own vision of an idealized community—removed from the reach of most Europeans—in the Americas out of second-hand reports. In his brief account of the friars’ mission, Whitford, like Hythloday, depicts what would have appeared to European readers as a similarly topsy-turvy world, where children preach, instruct, and convert parents in the precepts of the faith. But the sanctity of this ideal society is underwritten by many miraculous occurrences. For example, owing to the holiness and devotion of the people, who are “inspired / inflamed / and kindled with the spirite of god,”<sup>78</sup> the Christ Child appears in a white garment and instructs the people for “many days,”<sup>79</sup> while the Virgin materializes before two recently converted women struggling to learn the Paternoster and teaches them not just this fundamental Christian prayer but “all maner of thynges that were necessary unto Christes feyth.”<sup>80</sup> No doubt intended to provide a sharp contrast to the disordered society of Europe, the image of New Spain that Whitford paints, where the sacred and divine converge with the everyday, also serves as a criticism of Europeans’ attack on the value of the religious orders.

Whitford’s deliberate placement of this narrative in the middle of his vindication of religious life adds significant weight to his rebuttal against the assaults of reformers—since his depiction of a utopian society stresses the integral role that the friars, faithful to the discipline of their rule, play in constructing an ideal Christian commonwealth. Whitford champions the vital part played by the Observants in the New World when he emphatically states that it was on account of the faith and discipline of the *friars* that such apparitions occurred in the first place: “These miracles coulde nat haue ben done by those riligious fathers excepte they had kepte theyr rules and pleased god.”<sup>81</sup> Of course, it is likely no coincidence that Whitford chose to relate a tale praising the Observants, whose austerity and discipline were well-known in England; indeed, the Observants, Carthusians, and Bridgettines were each held up as models that the Benedictines should strive to emulate when, in 1520, the rigour of the Black Monks’ claustral life occupied Wolsey’s attention,<sup>82</sup> and it was these same orders that Reginald Pole praised in his *Pro ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione*—the cardinal’s response to Henry’s claim to supremacy over the English church.<sup>83</sup> The “decay” of the religious orders in Europe,<sup>84</sup> frequently noted by Whitford, eliminates the possibility for such miracles at home; yet, Whitford’s tale from America, like More’s *Utopia*, points to the potential that a disciplined



life can have in transforming the community and its individual members. Writing almost fifteen years after *Utopia*'s publication,<sup>85</sup> there is no reason why Whitford would not have already known that text firsthand.

While Whitford's defence of monastic life extols its value to the individual and the community, the brother's discussion of obedience, which fills almost 200 pages and far exceeds the segments on either poverty or chastity, departs radically from the apologetic tone that pervades the rest of the work: indeed, Whitford's explicit engagement with Tyndale's *Obedience* and implicit critique of Tudor policy form a bold attempt at political intervention. We know that his intended audience extended outward beyond the cloister since, from the outset, Whitford states that his topic is not limited to religious readers alone but should "appertyne vnto all christianes generally."<sup>86</sup> Seeking to reach out to as many readers as possible, Whitford expresses his concern that every Christian should remain obedient to the "ordinaunce of god *and of his churche catholike*."<sup>87</sup> Such a statement would have been quite polemical given that by the time of the work's publication on 23 March 1532, Henry was moving ever closer to proclaiming himself supreme head of the Church in England and forcing the submission of the clergy to the Crown.<sup>88</sup> When we consider Syon's reputation as a mainstay of orthodoxy throughout the fifteenth century, the abbey's resistance to Henry's break with Rome—which would culminate in the Acts of Succession and Supremacy in 1534—is hardly surprising. Writing on Syon's opposition to the divorce and supremacy, Alexandra da Costa notes several instances of what "can only be described as passive resistance": beyond offering its initial support to Elizabeth Barton, the Holy Maid of Kent, who prophesied against the king's wish to have his marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled, the Bridgettine community refused to admit Anne Boleyn into the enclosure or accept the English prayer books she offered to the nuns.<sup>89</sup> A similarly "passive" form of resistance was shown by John Fewterer, the abbey's Confessor-General, who, despite his public support for the king, refused both to censure the brothers who expressed their reservations about the marriage while preaching and to comply with Henry's wish that he persuade the Carthusians to accept the Act of Supremacy.<sup>90</sup> Whitford's attack on the reformers, then, is not unique and may be seen as part of a larger culture of Bridgettine resistance to the reformers and the threat of a break from Rome.

Whitford's attack against Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man* may likewise be more than just an attack against reformers: it may also have sought

to sway Tudor policy. Opposition to the monarchy could, of course, never be direct; any explicit criticism, especially in print, would have constituted an act of treason.<sup>91</sup> As a result, those who chose to resist were forced to adopt alternative strategies of intervention, which, for many, entailed drawing attention to the dangers inherent in the reformers’ message.<sup>92</sup> This alternate course of action is exactly the one Whitford takes in the *Pype*, whose discussion of obedience furnishes the author with an opportunity to launch a sustained attack on the usurpation of papal authority by a sovereign that is counselled in Tyndale’s *Obedience*. Whitford’s attempt to undermine Tyndale’s arguments—which, notes Richard Rex, were widely considered “the classic presentation of the Reformation theology of obedience in English”<sup>93</sup>—was certainly driven by theological and political concerns. Both Ann M. Hutchison and Alexandra da Costa have noted the polemical force of the *Pype* and its role in opposing the movement of state policy towards a complete separation from the Roman Church. However, Whitford may have also feared that Tyndale’s theology would, in addition to appealing to the king’s desire to master the clergy, also open the door to a proliferation of dissenting voices within England. However, what especially distinguishes the brother as innovative, I argue, is the way in which he draws on monastic tradition in particular to counter the political and theological doctrines of the reformers.

Placing himself at the centre of the increasingly heated religious debate that was taking shape in England in the 1530s, Whitford takes on Tyndale’s doctrine—which invalidated papal and ecclesiastical authority by transferring the subject’s loyalty entirely to the sovereign—and offers an alternative model. Recognizing the consequences Tyndale’s tract could have on Henrician political policy, Whitford considers not only the submission owed by the common Christian to the clergy but also the obedience owed by the “secular princes and souereynes.”<sup>94</sup> The Protestants, Whitford argues, not only are dangerous to the Roman Church; they also threaten to destabilize the established political order. Drawing attention to the fact that “[a]ll maner of christiane prynces... receiue the auctorite of theyr power of the spirituall parte of Christes church / and done make solempne othe of theyr obedience thereunto,”<sup>95</sup> the submission of the secular authorities to the spiritual is essential, the brother asserts, to the “wel ordred” community.<sup>96</sup> Whitford then invokes familiar corporeal language to describe the commonwealth and underscores the propriety of this political arrangement by asserting that it is God’s will for “the body to be obedient vnto

the soule and nat contrarie.”<sup>97</sup> While the body is clearly representative of the secular order, the soul represents the Church or, more accurately, the clergy who hold authority within the Church. However, instability arises, he continues, as reformers “done flater the secular prynces and exalte theyr power: by-cause they shulde defende them and theyr heresy.”<sup>98</sup> As a result of the reformers’ “flattery,” the balance of power within the commonwealth is destabilized as the monarch becomes the sole locus of power. Whitford makes this point explicitly when he claims that their doctrines “make [monarchs] tyrannes” and further incite them to perform acts of “moste cruell tyranny.”<sup>99</sup> Whitford’s language, his use of corporeal metaphors as well as his labelling such sovereigns tyrants, upholds the status quo as normative and lays the groundwork for his response to Tyndale’s “Englysshe boke of obedience”<sup>100</sup>—printed in 1528 only four years earlier than the *Pype*—which he identifies as the source of this politically disruptive ideology.

Whitford’s cognizance that Tudor policy towards the papacy could be determined or at least influenced by Tyndale’s doctrine of obedience demonstrates a keen awareness on his part of contemporary theological developments. While it is difficult to identify for certain the different forces that shaped Henrician obedience doctrine,<sup>101</sup> Stephan Haas focuses on the role of this particular text in influencing Tudor policy. Offering a glimpse into Henry’s thinking on papal authority almost two years before the Act of Supremacy, the king’s own *A Glasse of the Truthe*, argues Haas, lends support to earlier speculations by scholars such as J. J. Scarisbrick that Tyndale’s *Obedience* influenced Henry “to reconsider his concept of royal sovereignty.”<sup>102</sup> Haas provides a succinct explanation for why this text was so attractive to the king:

Henry sorely needed a polemical ship upon which he could sail into combat against the papal flotilla of arguments opposing his divorce from Catherine of Aragon. Tyndale’s Lutheran description of a restored Christian monarchy whose king was “the vicar of God,” enforced God’s law on laymen and priest alike, and deserved total obedience from all Christian Englishmen, well suited Henry.<sup>103</sup>

The point that Haas so forcefully makes, regarding Tyndale’s potential to supply monarchs with arguments for laying claim to papal authority, is the very concern that Whitford is voicing in his 1532 edition of the *Pype*.<sup>104</sup> What is most

striking, then, about Whitford's engagement with Tyndale's tract is his insight into the possible ends to which it could be applied. Indeed, such perspicacity contrasts sharply with the popular perception of the late medieval religious cut off from current theological developments who advocates traditional forms of piety simply because he or she knows of no others. Rather, Whitford's return to monastic obedience as an answer to the threat he perceived in royal supremacy constitutes an innovative response to contemporary political issues that applies religious discipline beyond the scope of piety.

Responding to the current debate over obedience and the potential for the Tudor regime to exploit Tyndale's doctrine, Whitford redefines this virtue within the framework of monastic discipline. It is on account of this that the two definitions he offers—one aimed at "al christians" and the other at "religious persones"<sup>105</sup>—mirror each other so closely. The principal definition he gives reads "Obedience generall: is an applicacion or graunt of hearte / minde / and wyll / vnto the due and lawfull precepts / or commaundementes of the right and ordinarie superiours / accordynge vnto the ordinaunce of god and of his churche catholike."<sup>106</sup> Immediately apparent in this definition is Whitford's foregrounding of ecclesiastical power. Obedience must be rendered to secular authority provided that the Church's supremacy is recognized and that it is primary to one's loyalty to the king's command: "for the lawe of god and the decrees of the churche: must nedely be kepte / rather than the contrarie commaundement of any souereyne."<sup>107</sup> Whitford's definition of monastic obedience simply places these claims of submission within the context of the enclosure: "Obedience is a wyful and vtter abnegacion and forsaking of proper wyll / and an obligacion or bounde vnto the wyl of the souereyne / in all thynges that ben lawfull and reasonable / accordynge vnto the rules / constitucions / and ordinaunces / of that order or that religion."<sup>108</sup> Aside from the additional requirement of the brothers or sisters to bind themselves to the "rules / constitucions / and ordinaunces" of their order, which replaces the obedience owed to secular authorities, these two definitions are indistinguishable. Moreover, the placement of and similarity between "general" and "religious" obedience<sup>109</sup> within the text is indicative of Whitford's understanding of this notion as a distinctly monastic virtue which has value for others. That the brother understands obedience as primarily a monastic vow but is eager to have it apply universally to all Christians is further suggested in his general discussion, in which he draws on numerous exempla from lay society to illustrate an argument. In his chapter

on the diversities of obedience,<sup>110</sup> Whitford positions religious obedience as the most meritorious, since the brother's more rigorous vow is willingly entered into and is therefore done "for his owne pleasure"<sup>111</sup> against the obedience owed by "any Christian,"<sup>112</sup> who must obey God's ordinances on account of his or her baptism. Thus, although frequently referencing the more general notion of obedience, Whitford's inclusive language only re-inscribes the priority of the monastic vow as the standard by which one may articulate its more general application. Whitford's monastically inflected notion of obedience is noteworthy, however, since it provides him with an orthodox response to Tyndale's authoritarian and patriarchal notion of obedience as the submission of children to parents, wives to husbands, servants to masters, and subjects to kings, princes, and rulers.<sup>113</sup>

What emerges from Whitford's discussion of obedience is an orthodox alternative to Tyndale's tract with important theological and political ramifications. For Whitford, obedience is, at first glance paradoxically, equated with freedom—since submission to ecclesiastical authorities entails the security of a society governed by rules that are "due and lawfull / and also lawfull and reasonable."<sup>114</sup> One need not fear, according to Whitford's model, disobeying the sovereign's will if it is unethical, since another authority exists beside it to which one can theoretically appeal. This vision of the commonwealth is neatly summed up in his frequently employed tag, the "wel ordered people of god," and directly opposes Tyndale's vision, in which, according to Whitford, apparent freedom from the pope or the clergy results in tyranny, since authority resides solely in the sovereign. For Whitford, the theology promoted by certain dissenters, a part of which is embodied in the *Obedience of a Christian Man*, poses a serious threat to the stability and harmony of the state: this anxiety seems, within the brother's imagination, to link the attacks of reformers closely to Tyndale's work and its possible influence. In place of Tyndale's model, Whitford offers a system of checks and balances in which clerical and princely authority offset one another.

This vision of an alternative hierarchy is further elaborated when Whitford explicitly addresses the issue of where obedience is due. Like Tyndale, Whitford reproduces the traditional patriarchal model whereby "children bene bounde... vnto the fathers and mothers" and "the subiectes of euery realme: vnto thyr kynges and prynces."<sup>115</sup> Yet, to this hierarchy of secular power Whitford appends clerical authority by insisting from the beginning that "al christianes"

owe obedience to “the Pope / the bysshopes / curates / and suche other.”<sup>116</sup> Whitford is equally forthright in proclaiming that the model offered by the reformers amounts to nothing more than “moste cruell tyranny”<sup>117</sup> in which “the spirituale as well as the temporalte: muste in euery realme be obedient vnto the laws of the same... kyng or prynce.”<sup>118</sup> With no other political entity to restrain the secular authorities, they are, Whitford underscores, free to “byd and commaunde prohibitte or forbed without ryme or reason.”<sup>119</sup> Over the course of Whitford’s discussion of monastic obedience in the *Pype*, readers are led to see how this virtue, one of the three “essencially vowes” of religious life,<sup>120</sup> may provide an alternative model of Christian obedience to the one advanced by Tyndale. Such an adaptation of an ideal of religious discipline to a national context is unusual, although later controversialists would follow in Whitford’s footsteps.<sup>121</sup>

Whitford’s application of monastic discipline to a range of new contexts, such as his defense of the value of religious life against attacks from reformers as well as his account of a utopian Christian society in the Americas newly converted by devout friars, distinguishes him as a significant late-monastic author. While the brother’s openness to the vernacular and the press appears striking at first glance,<sup>122</sup> neither Whitford nor the Syon brothers were alone in using the press as a vehicle for promoting orthodox piety or responding to the reformers. James Clark has noted the willingness among Benedictines to use the new technology to minister to the spiritual needs of the public and to oppose the reformers.<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, the vitality of religious life at Syon may be seen in the increase in literary production that occurred at Syon in the early sixteenth century, which includes the work of Thomas Betson, William Bonde, and John Fewterer, whose texts testify to the vigour of their community and their commitment to offering spiritual guidance to a broad lay audience. In the *Pype*, Whitford circumvents any direct confrontation with Tudor policy by engaging with the attacks of the reformers on traditional religion and with the theology they seek to promote. Again, such tactics are not unique to Whitford. What distinguishes the brother, however, is the innovative way in which he adapts the rigour of Bridgettine spirituality to defend and promote orthodox forms of piety in a period of increasing dissent.

## Notes

1. In *De votis monasticis*, Martin Luther draws on earlier attacks against the institution of monasticism, particularly those raised by Wyclif, which claimed that religious persons go against the ideals of Christian living by sequestering themselves away from the world and adhering to a rigid set of practices outlined in a rule that is dissociated from the Gospel. On Luther's criticisms of the principles of monasticism, see David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948–59), vol. 3, pp. 165–66.
2. For a discussion of Syon's sixteenth-century religious publications, see J. T. Rhodes, "Syon Abbey and its Religious Publications in the Sixteenth Century," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44 (1993), pp. 11–25. On Syon's reading culture, see Vincent Gillespie, "The Book and the Brotherhood: Reflections on the Lost Library of Syon Abbey," in *The English Medieval Book: Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards, Vincent Gillespie, and Ralph Hanna (London: British Library, 2000), pp. 185–208 and Vincent Gillespie, *Syon Abbey*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues 9 (London: The British Library, 2001). More recent discussions of Syon's books can be found in *Syon Abbey and its Books: Reading, Writing and Religion, c.1400–1700*, ed. E. A. Jones and Alexandra Walsham (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010).
3. Included among Whitford's translations are the following texts: *St. Augustine's Rule* (accompanied by Hugh of St. Victor's commentary); the *Golden Epistle*; the Syon version of the Sarum martyrology; short works attributed to Bernard, Bonaventure, Chrysostom, and Isidore; and, perhaps most famously, the *Folowyng of Chryste*—the most popular sixteenth-century translation of Thomas à Kempis's *Imitatio Christi*. The attribution of this translation of the *Imitatio* to Whitford has been challenged in recent years. While Edward J. Klein, who edited *The Imitation of Christ From the First Edition of an English Translation Made c. 1530 by Richard Whitford* (New York: Harper, 1941), argues convincingly for a Whitford attribution, critics such as Rogar Lovatt and Glanmore Williams have more recently challenged this claim. Among the arguments Williams cites are Whitford's uncharacteristic failure to append his name to the translation, as well as those derived from internal, stylistic evidence; see Glanmore Williams, "Two Neglected London Welsh Clerics, Richard Whitford and Richard Gwent," *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodion* 1 (1961), pp. 23–44, especially p. 30. One piece of evidence that supports a case for Whitford is the author's statement, at the end

of *The Pype*, that he is now translating a work by “mayster Johan Gerson,” who was believed to have been the author of the *Imitatio* during the Middle Ages; see Richard Whitford, *The Pype, or Tonne, of the Lyfe of Perfection*, 1532 (STC 25421), f.cccxxvii<sup>v</sup>.

4. Martha W. Driver, in “Pictures in Print: Late Fifteenth- and Early Sixteenth-Century English Religious Books for Lay Readers,” in *De Cella in Seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, ed. Michael G. Sargent (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1989), pp. 229–44, argues for a very broad circulation of Whitford’s texts, labelling them “bestsellers in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries”; she goes on to note that “Whytford’s works were republished by a number of contemporary printers, among them Robert Redman, Robert Wyer, Thomas Gadfray, Robert Copeland, and Wynkyn de Worde. Several of Whytford’s handbooks, most notably *The Golden Pystle* and *A Werke for Housholders*, went into simultaneous editions, printings issued the same year, often by two or more printers. This implies that there was a great clamour for Whytford’s works, which probably went beyond the religious market” (p. 233).
5. At this early point in the English reformation, there were no terms universally agreed on to describe the different groups participating in this cultural movement. As Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie note, this fluidity in terminology serves as an important reminder that “a permanent fissure in English Christianity was not yet institutionalised or accepted.” Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, “Introduction: Protestantisms and their Beginnings,” in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1–14, 5.
6. The only evidence, however, of Whitford’s position in Fox’s household comes from Roper’s, and later Harpsfield’s, accounts of More’s run-in with the bishop which was quoted earlier. Whitford’s name does not appear in the records of the bishopric of Winchester or in Fox’s correspondences.
7. The little information we have about Whitford’s life prior to entering Syon Abbey is from Roper’s *Lyfe of Moore* and pertains to a chance encounter More had with him in ca. 1504; see William Roper, *The Lyfe of Sir Thomas Moore, knyghte*, ed. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock EETS OS 197 (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 8.
8. Harpsfield records that while Henry VII could not by law retaliate against More directly, since such an act would “infringe and breake the ancient libertie of the Parliament house for free speaking touching the publique affaires,” the king devised a “causelesse quarell” against More’s father and had him placed in the Tower



- until a £100 fine could be paid. See Nicholas Harpsfield, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More*, ed. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock EETS OS 186 (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 15–16.
9. Roper, p. 8.
  10. James Hogg argues that Whitford likely entered Syon in 1507, but notes that he certainly joined the community before 1513 in “Richard Whytford: A Forgotten Spiritual Guide,” *Studies in Spirituality* 15 (2005), pp. 129–42, pp. 131. Knowles, vol. 3, p. 214.
  11. “Whitford, Richard (d. 1543?),” J. T. Rhodes in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online, ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press), accessed 13 July 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.queensu.ca/view/article/29308>.
  12. About this visitation, David Knowles notes that while “[t]here is no certificate of any oaths received, ...it is equally difficult to suppose that Syon was allowed to remain unsworn”; see Knowles, vol. 3, p. 216.
  13. Thomas Wright, *Three Chapters of Letters Relating to the Suppression of the Monasteries*, Camden Society 26 (1843; repr., London: AMS, 1968), p. 49.
  14. On Reynolds’s role at Syon, see Adam Hamilton, *The Angel of Syon: The Life and Martyrdom of Blessed Richard Reynolds, Martyred at Tyburn, May 4, 1535* (Edinburgh: Sands, 1905) and F. R. Johnston, *Blessed Richard Reynolds, the Angel of Syon* (London: Office of the Vice-Postulation, 1961).
  15. *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, 1090 (Bedyll to Cromwell, 28 August). Knowles notes that this letter, printed in *Letters and Papers*, is erroneously printed under the year 1534 rather than 1535. See Knowles, vol. 3, p. 218, note 2.
  16. Richard Lache was eventually persuaded to side with the king, and soon after his conversion wrote to the brothers at the London Charterhouse urging them to submit to the Acts. John Copynger, who was chosen by Thomas Cromwell—in contravention of the *Regula Salvatoris*—for Confessor-General, met personally with Cromwell and was likewise persuaded to join the king’s camp. For a fuller account of the capitulation of these Syon Brothers, see Knowles, vol. 3, pp. 218–20.
  17. Criticism of the Benedictines’ laxity had been ongoing for some time when, in 1421, Henry V decided to intervene personally to reform the order. The outcome of the king’s efforts was thirteen proposals for the improvement of monastic life. However, it remains unknown what exactly prompted the king to act. One contemporary monk speculated that Robert Layton, the Carthusian Prior of Mount

Grace and former Benedictine, inspired Henry to launch his program of reform. See Knowles, vol. 2, p. 182.

18. Jeremy Catto, “The Burden of Conscience of Government in the Fifteenth Century,” *Transactions of the RHS* 17 (2007), pp. 83–99, 97.
19. On account of papal efforts to curtail the proliferation of orders in the late Middle Ages, the Bridgettine Order was forced to adhere, albeit nominally, to the Rule of Saint Augustine.
20. James Hogg, ed., *The Rewyll of Seynt Sauioure* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1978), vol. 2, p. 38.
21. On the importance of the preaching office at Syon, see Susan Powell, “Preaching at Syon Abbey,” *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 31 (2000), pp. 229–67, and Alexandra da Costa and Ann M. Hutchison, “The Brethren of Syon Abbey and Pastoral Care,” in *A Companion to Pastoral Care in the Late Middle Ages (1200–1500)*, ed. Ronald J. Stansbury (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 235–60.
22. Da Costa and Hutchison include a brief catalogue of many of the distinguished laypeople who either visited or resided at the abbey, including Margaret, duchess of Clarence, Margaret Pole, countess of Salisbury, and Joan Marler, widow of the mayor of Coventry, Richard Pace, and Thomas More. Da Costa and Hutchison, “The Brethren of Syon Abbey,” pp. 240–41.
23. Tophér Martyn, “The History of Syon Abbey,” in *Saint Birgitta, Syon and Vadstena: Papers from a Symposium in Stockholm 4–6 October 2007*, ed. Claes Gejrot, Sara Risberg, and Mia Åkestam (Stockholm: The Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, 2010), pp. 9–26, 17–18.
24. Gillespie, “The Book and the Brotherhood,” p. 187.
25. Scholars investigating the reading culture at Syon note that while the *Regula Salvatoris* restricts the number of service books to “as many as be necessary to doo dyvnye office and moo in no wyse,” provisions are made for a limitless supply of books for study. Hogg, *The Rewyll of Seynt Sauioure*, vol. 2, pp. 49–50. Moreover, the vernacular *Additions* to the Rule also include warnings against mistreatment of books and demands for silence in the abbey library; see Hogg, *The Rewyll of Seynt Sauioure*, vol. 4, p. 72. (A useful discussion of the books may be found in Mary Erler, “Syon Abbey’s Care for Books: Its Sacristan’s Account Rolls 1506/7–1535/6,” *Scriptorium* 39 (1985), pp. 293–307). Such prohibitions point to a strong reading culture that existed among the male and female inmates at Syon at the time of the publication of the *Additions* in the first half of the fifteenth century. Although we know that the sisters at Syon had their own library as well as their own librarian,

no inventory of the library's contents survives. For a discussion of the nuns' reading habits based on surviving evidence, see Hutchison, "What the Nuns Read: Literary Evidence from the English Bridgettine House, Syon Abbey," *Medieval Studies* 57 (1995), pp. 205–22. However, in tracing the development of the brothers' library at Syon, Vincent Gillespie notes that at the end of the fifteenth century and at the beginning of the sixteenth, the abbey's collection of books increased dramatically; see Gillespie, "The Book and the Brotherhood," p. 195. Gillespie also notes here that, contrary to general assumptions about the library dating to Syon's founding, it "seems to have come into prominence only slowly," and it is only after the *Martiloge* begins recording benefactions in 1471 that the growth of the library begins to accelerate. In addition to the increase in its holdings, the character of the library, when Whitford entered Syon, had also begun to change quite dramatically, as the brothers sought to remain at the forefront of recent literary developments. Much of this change is owing, as Gillespie notes, to the acquisition of humanist editions and commentaries and their replacement of earlier medieval authorities; the replacement of the library's grammar manuals as well as biblical commentaries to accommodate the New Learning—the methodological tools of grammatical-historical exegesis—is especially indicative. See Gillespie's exhaustive list in "The Book and the Brotherhood," pp. 199–202. Especially noteworthy is the eagerness of the graduate members of the community to embrace the diffusion of humanist reading from the continent. Whitford was clearly a part of this group of scholar monks, which included other Cambridge alumni such as Richard Reynolds, Stephen Sawndre, and John Steyke.

26. Rhodes, "Syon Abbey," p. 12. A crucial element of Syon's book culture that is relevant to Whitford's own literary project is the community's atypical attitude toward publication. In her discussion of Syon's religious publications in the sixteenth century, Rhodes highlights two features in particular: the predominance of vernacular texts as well as the comprehensiveness of their scope. In addition to translations of St. Augustine's Rule, the Bridgettine Office, and Mass readings, the brothers were responsible for bringing numerous works on the religious life into the vernacular, most notably in *The Myroure of Oure Ladye*, *The Orchard of Syon*, and the *Myrroure or Glasse of Christes Passion*. As well as translating such devotional texts, the Syon brothers, notes Rhodes, published material that was exceedingly diverse: not only were they concerned with "elementary works of basic catechesis, instructions about virtuous living, the religious life, and prayer," but the brothers also published "treatises on specific topics such as death, ...comprehensive works

- on the religious life... together with the recorded revelations of contemplatives.” Rhodes, “Syon Abbey,” p. 17.
27. C. Annette Gris  argues that much of Syon’s influence stems from its proximity to London and the access this provided to printers and wealthy patrons and clients; see C. Annette Gris , “Moche profitable unto religious persones, gathered by a brother of Syon’: Syon Abbey and English Books,” in *Syon Abbey and Its Books: Reading, Writing and Religion, c.1400–1700*, ed. E. A. Jones and Alexandra Walsham (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), pp. 129–54, 130.
  28. For two excellent discussions of the openness to the press on the part of the Black Monks, see James G. Clark, “Print and Pre-Reformation Religion: The Benedictines and the Press, c.1470–c.1550,” in *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300–1700*, ed. Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 71–92 and “Reformation and Reaction at St Albans Abbey, 1530–1558,” *The English Historical Review* 115, no. 461 (2000), pp. 297–328.
  29. This influence was also increased by the important connection the abbey enjoyed with Wynkyn de Worde’s press. See especially George Keiser, “The Mystics and Early English Printers: The Economics of Devotionalism,” in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England*, ed. Marion Glasscoe (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987), pp. 9–26.
  30. Gris , p. 130.
  31. By out-producing every other house or order in England, the sheer number and range of Syon’s printed texts led Rhodes to speculate whether there may have been a “coordinated programme of publication”; see Rhodes, “Syon Abbey,” p. 17. For a more recent discussion of texts produced at Syon, see Gris , pp. 129–54.
  32. Rhodes, “Syon Abbey,” p. 36. Whitford’s sensitivity to the exigencies of printing is clearly apparent in his *Dayly Exercyse and Experyence of Deth* when he writes, “I wyll sende you vnto the lytle werke that I deuysed vnto youre communyon, or howselynge [*A Dialogue... for a due preparacion vnto howselynge*]. For to wryte and set forth all that here agayne, shuld be superfluous. Specyally syth this werke is so lytle that you may (with small coste) ioyne or bynde it with that werke.” Richard Whitford, *A Werke for Housholders and A Dayly Exercyse and Experyence of Deth*, ed. James Hogg, Salzburg Studies in English Literature: Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies 089 (Salzburg: Institut f r Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1979), vol. 5, p. 99.
  33. Glanmor Williams cites Whitford’s ability as a translator as his principal achievement; see Williams, p. 32. David Knowles, however, credits Whitford’s “melodious

and finely cadenced English style” for placing him above the other brethren at Syon, which included six fellows from Cambridge colleges, in Knowles, vol. 3, p. 212. More recent scholarship on Whitford has followed in the footsteps of P. G. Caraman in viewing him primarily as a monastic reformer; see Caraman, “An English Monastic Reformer of the Sixteenth Century,” *The Clergy Review* 28 (1947), pp. 1–17. Helen White has perhaps gone furthest in lauding Whitford’s literary achievements by focusing on his farsighted acceptance of new means and technologies of communication. Commenting as well on his abilities as a translator, White claims, “Whytford was ahead of his time, because he wanted everyone to understand what he read or heard”; see White, *The Tudor Books of Private Devotion* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1951), p. 185. Aware of the fact that many of the nuns at Syon could not read Latin, he translated standard texts in order to enrich the devotional lives of those religious capable of reading in the vernacular alone. Although this was hardly an unprecedented undertaking on Whitford’s part, White further argues that Whitford also demonstrates his foresight in his readiness to take advantage of new technology for disseminating knowledge: i.e., the printing press.

34. Alexandra da Costa, “The King’s Great Matter: Writing under Censure at Syon Abbey 1532–1534,” *The Review of English Studies*, n.s., 62, no. 253 (2010), pp. 15–29, 20.
35. As the prologue immediately informs us, the *Pype* was written “yeres ago” (Whitford, *The Pype*, f.i<sup>r</sup>) originally as a guide for the nuns of Syon on the monastic vocation. First completed in manuscript in 1525, the text was, as P. G. Caraman notes, “a treatise on monastic perfection, and was intended as a ‘book of the three essential vows’ to be a complementary volume to the exposition of the Rule” (p. 4). See Whitford, *The Pype*, f.ii<sup>v</sup>. However, when the *Pype* was printed on 23 March 1532 by Robert Redman, it had become something more. Having added a little over a hundred pages to serve as a defence against Lutheran attacks on monasticism, Whitford ensured that the text now served two ends as both a manual for monastic reform (in its capacity as a handbook for the community at Syon) and a defence of religion (as a response to Luther). Much of this hybridization is accomplished in the first segment of the *Pype*. As Whitford writes in his preface, by furnishing people with responses to Luther’s attacks on monasticism (f.iii–iii<sup>v</sup>), he assists his reader to understand better his or her own vocation. However, although the printed edition was intended to serve two ends, the *Pype* remains, as James Hogg notes, “more a practical handbook on the religious life than a confutation

- of Luther” (p. 102), especially since such material comprises only about one third of the text. Nevertheless, Whitford’s defence of monasticism against Lutheran attacks is significant because it allows the brother to set out in specific terms the importance of monasticism within religious culture and late-medieval English society as a whole. See Whitford, *The Pype*, f.li<sup>v</sup>.
36. In his preface to the 1532 edition of the *Pype*, which is addressed to “the deuoute readers,” Whitford outlines his rationale for publishing the work: “this worke was written yeres ago. And nowe thought necessarye to be sende forth: bycause of these newe fangle persones / whiche in dede ben heretykes” (f.l<sup>v</sup>).
  37. P. G. Caraman’s 1947 article remains the only study to laud the brother as one of the most progressive monastic reformers of the latter Middle Ages, and discuss efforts to amend religious life and to engineer (at least in part) a “monastic renaissance” (Caraman, p. 15). Caraman singles out three of the brother’s works that pertain directly to religious life: *Saint Augustine’s Rule in English Alone*, the *Commentary on Saint Augustine’s Rule*, and the *Pype*. And of this “trilogy,” the latter stands as “the most important” since it constitutes the author’s fullest and most original exploration of religious life (p. 4). In his capacity as a reformer, Whitford distinguishes himself in his pedagogical approach to monastic renewal. Fundamental to Whitford’s plan for reform is his advocacy of higher standards of education within the cloister. More recent discussions of Whitford’s texts touch on this element of the brother’s writing but also consider certain works as attempts at political intervention; see Ann M. Hutchison, “Richard Whitford’s *the Pype*, or *Tonne*, of *the Lyfe of Perfection*: Pastoral Care, or Political Manifesto?” in *Saint Birgitta, Syon and Vadstena: Papers from a Symposium in Stockholm 4–6 October 2007*, ed. Claes Gejrot, Sara Risberg, and Mia Åkestam (Stokholm: The Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, 2010), pp. 89–103, and Alexandra da Costa, “The King’s Great Matter,” pp. 15–29.
  38. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.ccxxxv.
  39. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.ccxxxii<sup>v</sup>.
  40. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.ccix.
  41. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.ccix.
  42. Indeed, in her discussion of women’s reading and devotional study among the Bridgettines, Rebecca Krug notes that the sisters’ imitation of their founder through the performance of the liturgy and the reading of her words as well as others’, enabled them to fashion their lives more closely along the model of Birgitta in a manner that was “not necessarily gendered.” Rebecca Krug, *Reading Families:*

- Women's Literate Practice in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 162. While the ideal of Bridgettine life may not have been influenced by preconceived ideas regarding female piety, the implementation of this life, as Krug goes on to note, entailed a great deal of struggle and the eventual dismissal of the Syon's first abbess, Matilda Newton, who refused to accept legislation written by clerical authorities, in this case Peter Olafson, that would intrude on Birgitta's own Rule; see Krug, pp. 163–66.
43. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.ii–ii<sup>v</sup>.
  44. Ellen M. Caldwell, "An Architecture of the Self: New Metaphors for Monastic Enclosure," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 8 (1991), p. 15.
  45. Caldwell, p. 19.
  46. Although not singled out in the Bridgettine Rule, the *Additions* indicate that wine was served with the mixtum, or light meal, as the principal source of nourishment to keep the sisters in good health. See the fifty-first chapter, "Of takyng of myxtom and sayng graces"; see also Hogg, *The Rewyll of Seynt Sauioure*, vol. 4, pp. 157–64.
  47. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.iii.
  48. Hogg, *Rewyll of Seynt Sauioure*, vol. 2, p. 4.
  49. Hogg, *Rewyll of Seynt Sauioure*, vol. 2, p. 3.
  50. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.ii.
  51. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.ii<sup>v</sup>–iii.
  52. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.xliii.
  53. The behaviour noted in chapter two which would incur a "defaute" paints an especially vivid picture of what was expected of the nuns: "If any be neglygente in dyuynne seruyse, or be light of lokynge aboute, or be any vnreligious demenyng of hede, eygh, hande, or fote, schew ther any lyghtnes of cher, or sluggeschly slepe, or be slomry in any conuentual acte" (Hogg, *Rewyll of Seynt Sauioure*, vol. 4, p. 1).
  54. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.xv.
  55. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxi.
  56. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.xxxix. That Whitford is referring to monasticism and not religion in its more general sense of adherence to one particular faith is made evident by the context of the passage, which concerns individuals who are pressured into entering the cloister by their family and friends.
  57. See Hogg, *Rewyll of Seynt Sauioure*, vol. 3, pp. 18–32 and vol. 4, pp. 1–18.
  58. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.xliii<sup>v</sup>.
  59. Quoted in Caraman, p. 6. Caraman foregrounds the importance of reading to Whitford's commitment to education as a means to improving the quality of

religious life. Curiously, however, Caraman traces Whitford’s dedication to literature’s ameliorative benefits for the professed individual to his association with More’s humanist circle; he neglects entirely the Bridgettine tradition to which the brother belonged.

60. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.cci–ccii<sup>v</sup>.
61. As Ivan Illich notes, the term *lectio divina* appears less frequently in abbey records and other manuscript sources after the thirteenth century; see Ivan Illich, *In the Vineyard of the Text: A Commentary to Hugh’s Didascalicon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 64.
62. *The Myroure of Oure Ladye*, ed. John Henry Blunt EETS ES 19 (London: Trubner and Co., 1873), pp. 65–71.
63. *The Myroure of Oure Ladye*, pp. 67 and 69.
64. The classic example of this metaphor is found in Guigo II’s *The Ladder of Monks, a Letter on the Contemplative Life, and Twelve Meditations*, trans. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1981).
65. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.cctx.
66. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.cctxi.
67. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.cctxi.
68. *The Myroure of Oure Ladye*, pp. 68–70.
69. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.cctxii<sup>v</sup>.
70. Paul borrows this image from Psalm 137 when, in 1 Corinthians 10:4, he states that “that Rock was Christ.” In the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Augustine, reading this episode as referring to the necessity of stamping out lustful thoughts so that evil does not take root in the individual, writes “when lust is born, before evil habit gives it strength against you, when lust is little, by no means let it gain the strength of evil habit; when it is little, dash it. But you fear, lest though dashed it die not; Dash it against the Rock; and that Rock is Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4)”; see Augustine of Hippo, *Expositions on the Psalms*, trans. J. E. Tweed, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1<sup>st</sup> ser., ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1888), p. 137.
71. Although the rising popularity of private devotion need not be viewed as a movement away from more outward and corporate forms of orthodox piety, the rise of Lollard sympathies among the gentry is suggestive. Andrew Brown discusses this phenomenon in *Popular Piety in Late Medieval England: The Diocese of Salisbury 1250–1550* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), esp. pp. 202–22. Concern over what one reads in private on the part of ecclesiastical authorities is made clear in



the printing history of the *Ymage of Love*. Printed in 1525 by Wynkyn de Worde, this text circulated widely among the community of nuns at Syon. However, in the same year de Worde was ordered by the Bishop of London to retrieve every copy since the book was thought to “contain heresey” (Krug, p. 203); see also A. W. Reed, “The Regulation of the Book Trade Before the Proclamation of 1538,” *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 15 (1918), p. 163. Moreover, shortly before Whitford would write this treatise, Thomas More expressed similar apprehensions over private reading and the concern over believers who, upon reading the wrong material in private, would take up heterodox doctrines. In his *Confutation of Tyndale’s Answer*, More laments that anyone should have to read such tracts, both Catholic and Protestant, and insists that the devout would be better served by occupying themselves “in prayour, good medytacyon, and redynge of suche englysshe books as moste may norysshe and increase deuotion,” such as pseudo-Bonaventure’s *Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, the *Imitatio Christi*, and Hilton’s *Scale of Perfection* which he names explicitly in the following lines. Thomas More, *The Confutation of Tyndale’s Answer* in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, ed. Louis Schuster, Richard Marius, James Luscardi, and Richard Schoeck, vol. 8 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 37.

72. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.xxiii.
73. That Whitford’s definition is primarily focused on regulation and discipline is made evident when he turns, near the end of the treatise, to defining the term *religious* and states, “There haue ben ever among all maner of nacions (as we sayd before) some maner of persones: that more precisely and more reuerently / and with more deuote cerimonies dyd honoure unto theyr god or goddes: than dyd the comune sorte of the people / and those were called religious persons. So ye as wel among the infidels as among the people of god were ever some persones after this maner of religion” (Whitford, *The Pype*, f.ccxxxiii).
74. See Knowles, vol. 3, pp. 212–13.
75. Although discussing anchoritic life, Cannon’s comments are equally applicable to Whitford’s symbolic enclosure based on regulation. Especially apt is Cannon’s observation that this enclosed life is often described as a fortress, as it is in the *Ancrene Wisse*, in earlier medieval texts as a way for the individual to understand his or her life in relation to the world; see Christopher Cannon, “Enclosure,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women’s Writing*, ed. Caroline Dinshaw and David Wallace (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 113.

76. Sarah Beckwith, “Passionate Regulation: Enclosure, Ascesis, and the Feminist Imaginary,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 93 (1994), p. 809. Beckwith goes on to note that such regulation, as well as the more literal form of physical enclosure demanded by such texts as the *Ancrene Wisse*, “establishes the psychic construction of a subject, its social formation, and it does so through the regulatory religious practices that orient the subject in space and time” (p. 809).
77. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.xv<sup>v</sup>.
78. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.xv<sup>v</sup>.
79. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.xv<sup>v</sup>.
80. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.xvi.
81. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.xvi.
82. See Knowles, vol. 3, p. 159 and Martyn, pp. 9–26, 18.
83. This fact is observed in Knowles, vol. 3, p. 159, and in Martyn, p. 23.
84. From the outset, and throughout the treatise, Whitford acknowledges the “decaye of religion in this present tyme” (*The Pype*, f.iii), which admits the validity of certain criticism made by Lutherans, but he always locates the source of this decay in the neglect of religious ceremonies by the monks themselves. For example, Whitford writes that “surely the great cause / and occasion therof : is the centempt / and negligence of the wykers : the small ceremonies” (*The Pype*, f.iii).
85. Given that More began *Utopia* in 1515, four years after Whitford probably entered Syon, Whitford is unlikely to have encountered *Utopia* through his personal association with More.
86. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxiiii.
87. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxiii<sup>v</sup>–lxiiii, my italics.
88. Richard Rex provides a succinct overview of these statutes and the events that led to their creation in *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2006), pp. 1–28.
89. Alexandra da Costa, “The King’s Great Matter,” pp. 15–29, 18.
90. Knowles recounts Fewterer’s compliance in the wake of Richard Reynold’s execution (vol. 3, p. 218). See also George James Aungier, *The History and Antiquities of Syon Monastery* (London: J. B. Nichols and Son, 1840), p. 433, and da Costa, “The King’s Great Matter,” pp. 18–19.
91. See Dorothy Auchter, *Dictionary of Literary and Dramatic Censorship in Tudor and Stuart England* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), p. xiv and David Loades, “Illicit Presses and Clandestine Printing in England, 1520–90,” in *Politics, Censorship, and the English Reformation* (London: Pinter, 1991), pp. 109–21.

92. Da Costa, who makes this same point in “The King’s Great Matter,” p. 21, cites Greg Walker who notes that writers who attempted to resist Tudor policy sought “to influence the direction of policy, to persuade the King and his ministers to avoid what they saw as the dangerous implications of what he was doing, and steer policy towards more positive outcomes.” See Greg Walker, *Writing under Tyranny: English Literature and the Henrician Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 15 and *Persuasive Fictions: Faction, Faith and Political Culture in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Brookfield: Aldershot, 1996); see also Christopher Warner, *Henry VIII’s Divorce: Literature and the Politics of the Printing Press* (Rochester: Boydell, 1998).
93. Richard Rex, “The Crisis of Obedience: God’s Word and Henry’s Reformation,” *The Historical Journal* 39 (1996), p. 865.
94. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxxv.
95. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxxii<sup>v</sup>.
96. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxxii<sup>v</sup>.
97. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxxiii.
98. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxxi.
99. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxxi<sup>v</sup>.
100. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxxii<sup>v</sup>.
101. For example, Stephan Haas argues that Tyndale’s writings played a significant role in shaping Tudor notions of royal supremacy, and that Henry obtained a copy of Tyndale’s *Obedience* from Anne Boleyn as early as 1528 or 1529; see Steven Haas, “Henry VIII’s *Glasse of Truthe*,” *History* 64 (1979), pp. 358–62. Responding directly to Haas’s argument, Richard Rex notes that the *Obedience* was on the list of forbidden works in 1530, and that Tyndale played “no causative role in determining Henry’s policy.” Instead, Rex argues that Henry and his ministers simply made use of Tyndale’s writings when they suited their purposes (Rex, p. 872).
102. J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p. 353. For Scarisbrick’s discussion of Tyndale’s influence on the Tudor monarch, see his *Henry VIII* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 247–50, 280, 289–90, and 296.
103. Haas, pp. 353–54.
104. Haas bases his claim regarding Henry’s *Glasse* following Tyndale’s *Obedience* on the fact that the law of God, as presented in both texts, is completely pro-monarchical. In both texts, Haas demonstrates, “God’s law demand[s] that a loyal subject accept royal policy without question” (p. 358). Attitudes evinced in the *Glasse* diverge

completely from Henry’s *Determination of the Universities*, a vernacular rendering of academic, patristic, and scriptural proofs on the divorce compiled by the king shortly between 1530 and 1531; see further Haas, pp. 355–56.

105. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxiii<sup>v</sup>.
106. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxiii<sup>v</sup>–lxiii.
107. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxiii.
108. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxiii.
109. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxiii<sup>v</sup>–lxiii. These are the terms that Whitford uses to distinguish the obedience owed by “religious persones” from that owed by a secular Christian (f.lxiii<sup>v</sup>).
110. Whitford isolates four types of obedience based on whether one submits to authority out of pleasure, profit, need, or dread.
111. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxiii<sup>v</sup>.
112. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxv.
113. This chain of familial and political obedience is set out by Tyndale in the segment entitled “The obedience of all degrees” in *The Obedience of a Christian Man*. Within this segment, Tyndale discusses the different forms of obedience under the following rubrics: “The obedience of wives unto their husbands,” “The obedience of servants unto their masters,” and lastly, “The obedience of subjects unto kings, princes and rulers,” in William Tyndale, *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, ed. David Daniell (New York: Penguin, 2000), pp. 34–49. Tyndale swiftly turns to effacing the spiritual authority claimed by the papacy in the following chapter, “Against the Pope’s false power” (pp. 49–59). Eager to eclipse other notions of obedience in *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale occasionally alludes to monastic obedience as a way to further set off his definition as different. For example, in the first page of the prologue, Tyndale’s own marginal comment attaches the following gloss to the “obedience that is of God”: “The obedience of monks and friars is not here. For they are not of God but of their own feigning” (p. 26). Other instances in which Tyndale uses monastic obedience as a foil for an obedience “that is of God” occur on pages 33, 37, 41, 147, and 155.
114. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxiii.
115. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxx–lxx<sup>v</sup>.
116. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxx.
117. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxxi<sup>v</sup>.
118. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxxiii.
119. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.lxxiii<sup>v</sup>.

120. Whitford, *The Pype*, f.ii'.
121. In his discussion of the evolution of Henry VIII's political theology of obedience, Richard Rex points out that the "relocation" of obedience within a monastic context was a tactic adopted by conservatives, and cites Stephen Gardiner's *De vera obedientia* (1535) as the classic example of this conservative strategy of advancing a doctrine more in line with its own theological agenda ("Crisis of Obedience," p. 863). Although, Rex notes, Gardiner had renounced his allegiance to the pope, he was concerned that royal supremacy "might become the first step towards Protestantism" (p. 886). Gardiner's agenda thus focused mainly on salvaging England's Catholic tradition. Published one year after the Act of Supremacy in 1534 and three years after Whitford's *Pype* in 1532, Gardiner's text and its adaptation of monastic obedience is nevertheless taken as seminal by critics. This is not only the case in Rex's "Crisis of Obedience" but also in Glyn Redworth's *In Defence of the Church Catholic: The Life of Stephen Gardiner* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990). However, scholars overlook the possibility that Whitford's discussion of obedience could have exercised any direct influence over the younger Gardiner. Although clearly diverging from the *Pype* in its support for royal authority, Gardiner's account of obedience integrates, as Redworth and Rex note, "the Lutheran account of obedience with the monastic tradition of obedience" (Rex, p. 886; see also Redworth, pp. 65–66).
122. Helen White, who singled out the brother as being especially "alert to the world," emphasizes his recognition of the "need of putting into the vernacular various devotional treatises" and his willingness "to take advantage of the new tool of printing" as his greatest achievements (White, pp. 182 and 212). J. T. Rhodes, in "Syon Abbey," similarly examines his work in relation to broader literary trends at Syon that aimed to bring a large body of orthodox religious texts into English. However, these facets of his writing are not, in themselves, remarkable.
123. Clark, "Reformation and Reaction at St Albans Abbey," pp. 297–328 and "Print and Pre-Reformation Religion," pp. 71–94.