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# The Case of Catherine Dammartin: Friends, Fellows, and the Survival of Celibacy in England's Protestant Universities

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Article abstract

Catherine Dammartin began her adult life as a nun in Metz but ended it in 1553 as a wife in an Oxford college. First laid to rest in Christ Church Cathedral, her corpse was later removed as a pollutant then finally restored in a ceremony that saw her bones mixed with those of the virgin St. Frideswide. This article revisits Dammartin's story to explore what it can tell us of the affective, sexual, and gendered dimensions of England's Reformation. It argues that the Oxford Protestants who arranged her reburial did so to intervene in the debate about clerical marriage, a debate in which they were only partially successful. Dammartin was one of the first and last wives to live in college for a very long time. Her story offers a reminder that despite the shift to clerical marriage, England's universities remained—somewhat distinctively within Protestant Europe—sites where celibacy continued as the norm: sites of homosocial bonding and fellowship that served as a counterpoint to otherwise dominant codes of masculine behaviour that privileged the Protestant paterfamilias.

# The Case of Catherine Dammartin: Friends, Fellows, and the Survival of Celibacy in England's Protestant Universities

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*Catherine Dammartin began her adult life as a nun in Metz but ended it in 1553 as a wife in an Oxford college. First laid to rest in Christ Church Cathedral, her corpse was later removed as a pollutant then finally restored in a ceremony that saw her bones mixed with those of the virgin St. Frideswide. This article revisits Dammartin's story to explore what it can tell us of the affective, sexual, and gendered dimensions of England's Reformation. It argues that the Oxford Protestants who arranged her reburial did so to intervene in the debate about clerical marriage, a debate in which they were only partially successful. Dammartin was one of the first and last wives to live in college for a very long time. Her story offers a reminder that despite the shift to clerical marriage, England's universities remained—somewhat distinctively within Protestant Europe—sites where celibacy continued as the norm: sites of homosocial bonding and fellowship that served as a counterpoint to otherwise dominant codes of masculine behaviour that privileged the Protestant paterfamilias.*

*Catherine Dammartin entama sa vie adulte comme religieuse à Metz, mais elle mourut, mariée, dans un collège d'Oxford en 1553. Elle fut d'abord enterrée dans la cathédrale de Christ Church ; son corps fut par la suite exhumé parce qu'on considérait qu'il polluait l'endroit, avant d'être finalement restitué lors d'une cérémonie au cours de laquelle ses ossements furent mélangés à ceux de la vierge sainte Frideswide. Cet article revisite l'histoire de Dammartin pour déterminer ce qu'elle peut nous apprendre sur les dimensions affectives, sexuelles et liées aux problématiques de genre de la Réforme en Angleterre. Il défend que les protestants d'Oxford qui organisèrent sa seconde inhumation posèrent ce geste pour intervenir dans le débat sur le mariage des clercs, débat dans lequel ils ne parvinrent que partiellement à imposer leur point de vue. Dammartin fut l'une des premières et dernières épouses à vivre à Oxford pendant une longue période. Son histoire nous rappelle qu'en dépit du changement en faveur du mariage clérical, les universités anglaises demeurèrent des lieux où le célibat était la norme, occupant ainsi une place un peu à part au sein de l'Europe protestante. Ces lieux, caractérisés par l'homosocialité et la camaraderie, constituaient un contrepoint aux codes de comportements masculins, par ailleurs dominants, qui privilégiaient l'image du protestant en tant que paterfamilias.*

In his *Acts and Monuments*, a history of the English church first published in 1563, John Foxe describes the reformers' struggles at England's two universities. He includes a short passage detailing the cruelties offered the corpse of a woman he calls Catherine Cathie. The wife of the Continental

reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli, Catherine had accompanied her husband to England on his journey to bring Protestantism to Oxford in the late 1540s, but died and was buried with some honour in the cathedral. In Queen Mary's reign, however, Catholicism returned to the university. Upon orders from Cardinal Reginald Pole, commissioners removed Catherine's body, adamant that it no longer pollute the shrine devoted to Oxford's patron, St. Frideswide. They tossed the body on a dung hill. But it soon pleased God, Foxe relates, to give the English their Elizabeth. New commissioners went to Oxford; they removed Catherine's corpse from its "unclean and dishonest place." Foxe takes care to note that a body, being dead, ought to be paid "no great estimation," but still, the goodness of this woman and the heroic labours of her husband warranted more respect. "Solemnly in the face of the whole town," he writes, they reburied the body in a "more decent and honest monument." Nor was it just any decent and honest monument: they mixed Catherine's bones with those of St. Frideswide. The two women's remains would rest together thereafter, both to prevent the credulous from worshipping the relics of a supposed saint and to keep the papists from dishonouring Catherine's corpse again.<sup>1</sup> Anthony à Wood, Oxford's seventeenth-century historian, later reported the same tale and added that an epitaph then adorned the tomb: "Here lies religion with superstition."<sup>2</sup>

No such epitaph survives today, nor does any mention of Catherine at the grave. But Catherine has not been entirely forgotten. Given that her story appears in the writings of men such as Foxe and Wood, it has not gone unnoticed by contemporary scholars. Thomas Laqueur, Peter Marshall, and Peter Sherlock refer to it in their studies of rituals and beliefs surrounding death and the dead. Carole Levin mentions it, with a focus on St. Frideswide, in her discussion of the significance of female saints in shaping attitudes to the virgin queen, Elizabeth.<sup>3</sup> Others give it passing mention, too. This article revisits

1. John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (London, 1563), 1639–40.

2. "Hic requiescit religio cum superstitione." Anthony à Wood, *Survey of the Antiquities of the City of Oxford, Composed in 1661–6 by Anthony Wood*, 3 vols., ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1890), 2:169–70.

3. Thomas Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 104, doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvc77h3r; Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 122–23, dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198207733.001.0001; Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 169–70; Carole Levin, "St. Frideswide and St. Uncumber: Changing Images of Female Saints in Renaissance England," in *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor*

Dammartin's life and afterlife with a focus on what they can tell us about the affective, sexual, and gendered dimensions of England's Reformation. Digging around the edges of this tale reveals a story about friendship, fellowship, and family, and of the role of institutions such as universities in fostering rich relationships beyond those based on blood.<sup>4</sup> It also alerts us to the continuing attachment to celibacy—through the Reformation era and far beyond—in the “man-making” institutions that trained so many of England's intellectual and governing elite. Among multiple codes of masculine behaviour, that of the married *paterfamilias* emerged ascendant from the Reformation, but not to the exclusion of other respected ways of being a man or finding fellowship.

Catherine's story is tied up with the histories of friendship and marriage, but also with those of migration and of diverging conceptions of the sacred. That Catherine ended up in England at all is part of the story of movement that characterized Europe's Reformation, as well as the story of its dismantling (in Protestant areas) of a centuries' old hierarchy of sexual behaviour that had privileged celibacy over marriage. The sacerdotal responsibilities of the clergy responsible for performing the Mass had called for abstinence; the religious women and men who lived in monastic communities, too, embraced the asceticism and discipline of vows of celibacy in their worship of an immanent God. Evangelicals attacked these beliefs and practices as rooted in idolatry, false sacrifices, and signs of works-righteousness that denied the transcendence of

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and Stuart Britain, ed. Mary Elizabeth Burke, Jane Donawerth, Linda Dove, and Karen Nelson (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 223–37, 234–36.

4. This approach is shaped by Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), which discusses the need to examine kinds of “voluntary kinship [...] formed by promise or a ritual” (104) aside from marriage and including relationships other than the sexual. Bray also takes as his starting point a shared tomb: but in this case, it is of two men in the chapel of Christ's College, Cambridge who chose the tomb willingly to mark their personal bond. On histories of friendship in the sixteenth century, touching on the ability of such relationships to disrupt hierarchies and produce social and cultural change, see also Laura Gowing, Michael Hunter, and Miri Rubin, eds., *Love, Friendship and Faith in Europe, 1300–1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), [dx.doi.org/10.1057/9780230524330](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230524330), and Eva Österberg, *Friendship and Love, Ethics and Politics: Studies in Medieval and Early Modern History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010). Ulinka Rublack also highlights the significance of male bonding and friendships in the early history of reform, in *Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

God.<sup>5</sup> Foxe calls the woman in question Catherine Cathie; other contemporary records refer to her as Catherine Dammartin.<sup>6</sup> We know nothing of her early life, unfortunately, but while she ended her life as a wife in an Oxford college, she began adulthood as a nun, in Metz, on the border between French and imperial territories.

Metz never became fully reformed, but evangelicals had made themselves known in the city from the 1520s, with waves of Lutheran and then Calvinist influence. One of the first episodes saw would-be reformers desecrate both cemetery and church, taking bones from the dead to mutilate a statue of the Virgin Mary; the desecration of corpses became a particular feature of the Reformation in France and on its borders, but it would spread to England, too. The iconoclast at the centre of this attack, a woolcomber from Meaux called Jean LeClerc, was put to the flames in front of the cathedral until nothing but his own bones remained, after the executioner first tried to rip off his nose in an echo of his attack on the Virgin. Another sign of evangelical influence came when a group of bourgeois women began preaching publicly. Guillaume Farel passed through, preaching against the idolatry of the Mass. A priest was burned in a town nearby, “because he held to the law of Luther and was married.”<sup>7</sup> The marriage of formerly celibate priests had become a shocking sign of divergent views of the sacred, in Metz as elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

5. See especially Helen Parish, *Clerical Celibacy in the West, c. 1100–1700* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010). On the early history of clerical celibacy, required by canon law from the twelfth century, see also Anne Llewellyn Barstow, *Married Priests and the Reforming Papacy: The Eleventh Century Debates* (Toronto: E. Mellen Press, 1982) and Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (London: Routledge, 2005).

6. See also John Strype, *The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1821), 1:199, which recounts the tale and calls her “Katharine Vermilia.” Others simply refer to her as “Mrs. Martyr.”

7. Henri Tribout de Morembert, *La réforme à Metz, vol. 1: Le Lutheranism, 1519–1552* (Nancy: University of Nancy, 1969), 55; Julien Leonard, “Les violences religieuses à Metz,” *Annales de L’Est* 59 (2009): 31–49; Othan Cuvier, *Trois martyrs de la réforme, brûlés en 1525 à Vic, Metz et Nancy* (Paris, 1889), 34–43. For the classic work on religious violence in Reformation France, arguing for its grounding in opposing conceptions of the sacred, see Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Past and Present* 59 (1973): 51–91, doi.org/10.1093/past/59.1.51, and the reflections in *Past and Present* (2012), Supplement 7, on the work that has grown up since the publication of this text.

8. On clerical marriage and/or the assault on celibacy in monasticism, see Helen Parish, *Clerical Celibacy in the West* and her earlier book on England, *Clerical Marriage and the English Reformation: Precedent, Policy, and Practice* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2000); Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer, *From Priest’s Whore to Pastor’s Wife: Clerical Marriage and the Process of Reform in the Early German Reformation* (Farnham:

As reform ideas circulated, like a fair few of her vowed sisters and brothers, Dammartin decided to leave her order behind. And like many of them, she would trade a spiritual sorority for marriage, another kind of kinship “formed by ritual and promise.”<sup>9</sup> She left her convent and ran to Strasburg, a fizzing node of evangelical energies. Many women, like Catherine, became active participants in reform, but in Strasburg she would have met Katharina Schütz Zell, one of the few such women to have engaged in published polemic; Zell’s work included a tract that justified her marriage to a priest as a service to God and the Christian community.<sup>10</sup> Significantly, too, Strasburg had come under the influence of Martin Bucer; while most of the leading evangelicals endorsed marriage as a way to mark one’s new covenant with God, Bucer was especially keen. In addition to his printed works extolling marriage and his own union with another former nun, Elizabeth Silberstein, Bucer developed a reputation as a matchmaker.<sup>11</sup> And he found a match for Dammartin when this ex-sister and would-be wife showed up at his door.

The match he found for Catherine was Peter Martyr Vermigli. A former friar, Vermigli had for a time been a leading *spirituali*, part of a group of men who sought to reform the church from within. He had also shared a passionate friendship with Reginald Pole after their time together as students at the

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Ashgate, 2012); Merry Wiesner, ed. *Convents Confront the Reformation: Catholic and Protestant Nuns in Germany* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1986); Amy Leonard, *Nails in the Wall: Catholic Nuns in Reformation Germany* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005); Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

9. The phrase comes from Bray, *The Friend*. See note 4, above.

10. *Apologia of Katharina Schütz for Master Matthew Zell*, printed in *Katharina Schütz Zell*, ed. Elsie McKee, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2: 21–47; see also *Katharina Schütz Zell, Church Mother: The Writings of a Protestant Reformer in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, ed. and trans. Elsie McKee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). Dammartin would have missed meeting the formidable Marie Dentièrre, a former nun from Tournai who married while living in Strasbourg before moving on to Geneva where she published in favour of reform and helped close convents over the late 1530s. See Marie Dentièrre, *Epistle to Marguerite de Navarre and Preface to a Sermon by John Calvin*, ed. and trans. Mary B. McKinley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), [dx.doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226142753.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226142753.001.0001). More generally, on debates over clerical celibacy and women’s activism in Strasbourg, see Miriam Chrisman, “Women and the Reformation in Strasbourg, 1490–1530,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 63.2 (1972): 143–68, [dx.doi.org/10.14315/arg-1972-jg09](https://doi.org/10.14315/arg-1972-jg09).

11. Herman Selderhuis, *Marriage and Divorce in the Thought of Martin Bucer*, trans. J. Vreind and L. Bierma (Kirkville: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1994), 128.

University of Padua, back in the 1520s.<sup>12</sup> In 1542, however, Vermigli left the church and his own sworn brotherhood with another apostate, Bernardino Ochino, a loss and betrayal that marked Pole.<sup>13</sup> Vermigli would form new bonds: with Ochino; with Immanuel Tremellius, an Italian Jewish convert to Christianity who had been part of his group with Pole at Padua; with Paul Fagius from the University of Heidelberg; and above all, with Bucer. Bucer encouraged him to marry—to set aside his vows and live the life of conjugal support he believed the Lord had intended for all men. Vermigli and Dammartin married in 1545.

Two years later, twists in dynastic politics and international affairs disrupted their community with Bucer and fellow reformers in Strasburg. Charles V's victory over the Schmalkaldic League in 1547 induced fears for the fate of reform in the city; on the other hand, "young Josiah," the son of Henry VIII, became King Edward VI, firmly corralled by an evangelical entourage intent on further reform. Much had already been achieved, not least the forced dispersal of monastic communities and the "freeing" of some eleven thousand monks and nuns, whether they had wanted that freedom or not. But with Edward's accession, the evangelicals' day had come. Archbishop Thomas Cranmer invited reformers from the Continent to help him effect England's religious remaking. Cranmer was especially concerned for the universities, where reform needed to take quick but firm root to ensure the training of a new generation of clerics fit for the new age.<sup>14</sup> Cranmer asked Bucer to take charge of Cambridge, and Vermigli to do the same for Oxford. The two men arrived

12. Philip McNair, *Peter Martyr in Italy: An Anatomy of Apostasy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 284–85. On Vermigli more generally, see also John Patrick Donnelly, ed., *Life, Letters and Sermons: The Peter Martyr Library*, vol. 5 (Kirkville: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999); Torrance Kirby, Emidio Campi, and Frank James III, eds., *A Companion to Peter Martyr Vermigli* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); John Patrick Donnelly, Robert M. Kingdon, and Marvin Walter Anderson, eds., *A Bibliography of the Works of Peter Martyr Vermigli*, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies 13 (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1990).

13. Thomas Mayer, *Reginald Pole: Prince and Prophet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 172. On these connections, see also M. Anne Overell, *Italian Reform and English Reformations, c.1535–c.1585* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008).

14. On Cranmer's plans for the universities, see especially Jennifer Loach, "Reformation Controversies," *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. III: *The Collegiate University*, ed. James McConica (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 363–96, and Ceri Law, *Contested Reformations in the University of Cambridge, 1535–84* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2018), [dx.doi.org/10.1017/9781787442740](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781787442740).

late in 1547. Their wives arrived early in the new year, Catherine travelling with the wife of Bernardino Ochino. Tremellius and his wife—possibly a woman named Elizabeth who had fled Metz with Dammartin—would also join them before heading to Cambridge. (While the men's close ties are evident from the traces left in the letters they exchanged and so carefully preserved as part of the practice of friendship, the women, too, must have shared affective bonds of their own but left fewer extant material markers of those relationships.)

At Oxford, Dammartin settled in as one of the first two priests' wives to live at the university. She was not alone; Richard Cox, the evangelical appointed to be dean of Christ Church, also married and moved his wife, Jane, into college. A couple of prominent women passed through around this time: Queen Catherine Parr, widow of Henry VIII, and later Anne Seymour, the daughter and then daughter-in-law of King Edward's two regents, were both entertained at Oxford at about this time. But the wives' residence provoked real consternation—not least from Richard Smith, the first Regius professor of divinity at Oxford, the inaugural holder of a post only recently created alongside the new college of Christ Church itself, and now booted aside for Vermigli.

Smith did not go quietly. He challenged Vermigli to a public disputation, preparations for which soon grew heated. Smith was briefly arrested; upon his release, he prudently fled to the university at Louvain, deciding to forgo this instance of intellectual combat. In Oxford, the disputation went ahead with others stepping into Smith's place, and with Cox as moderator. This debate has received some attention as a set piece of the English Reformation, with its ostensible focus on the doctrine of the Eucharist. It did indeed centre on the theology of Christ's body and its presence, real or otherwise, but it was also suffused by the subject of clerical marriage and celibacy, which Smith and others saw as being intimately interwoven with communion with the divine. Of course, at one level, a debate about the Eucharist could not help but be about bodies and communion and fellowship; as the words of the service promise, "For we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."<sup>15</sup> For evangelicals, however, both clerical celibacy and traditional Eucharistic teaching were linked by being deeply idolatrous, a "raising of the creature over God" that encouraged devotion to human inventions rather than

15. On the links drawn between the Eucharist and the rhetoric and practice of friendship in other contexts, see Bray, 88.



divine commands. The Catholic Eucharist professed to make a transcendent God immanent, an error signified in being a service that only a sacerdotal caste of the ritually pure could perform.<sup>16</sup> In the estimation of some auditors, Vermigli did not acquit himself well and needed Cox's interventions to get him through. Writing about the event a century later but drawing upon local manuscripts and memories, Anthony à Wood noted that the debate did have the effect of cheapening the general tenor of discussions of the body and blood of Christ. This was, he said, when "those contemptible, irreverent words, hocus pocus" first arose, in allusion to "hoc est corpus."<sup>17</sup>

Smith may have been forced into exile, but not into silence. From the Continent, he published works that attacked Vermigli and the views he embodied: one focused on the celibacy of priests and the other on monastic vows.<sup>18</sup> As Vermigli observed in a letter to the Swiss theologian Heinrich Bullinger, Smith linked condemnations of evangelical teaching on the sacrament of the Eucharist and on clerical celibacy, which held that as God was not in the one, there was no need for the other. But this was not just high-minded theological disputation. In a report to Bucer, Vermigli noted that Smith "does not even spare my wife,

16. On the ties between clerical marriage debates and those on the sacraments, see Parish, *Clerical Marriage and the English Reformation*, 161ff. On idolatry, see especially Carlos Eire, *War against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), quote at 76, dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511528835.

17. A formulation that echoes Guillaume Farel's description of the Host as a "morceau enchanté"; see Eire, 188. On the disputation, see Wood, 94 and Nicholas Sanders, *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*, trans. David Lewis (London, 1877), 195. On Vermigli's time at Oxford, see also Philip M. J. McNair, "Peter Martyr in England," in *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Italian Reform*, ed. Joseph C. McLelland (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2006), 85–196; M. A. Overell, "Peter Martyr in England, 1547–1553: An Alternative View," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 15.1 (1984): 87–104, dx.doi.org/10.2307/2540841; and M. W. Anderson, "Rhetoric and Reality: Peter Martyr and the English Reformation," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 (1988): 451–69, dx.doi.org/10.2307/2540473.

18. *De coelibatu sacerdotum liber unus. de votis monasticis liber alter* (Louvain, 1550) and *Diatriba de hominis justificatione: aedita Oxoniae in Anglia, anno 1550 adversus Petrum Martyre Vermelinum nunc apostatum* (Louvain, 1551). For Vermigli's eventual response, see *Defensio ... ad Riccardi Smythaei ... duos libellos de coelibatu sacerdotum et votis monasticis* (Basel, 1559). Smith later published *A Bouclier of the Catholike Faythe* (London, 1554), prompting additional responses. See, too, his earlier *A Defence of the Sacrifice of the Mass* (London, 1546). On Smith, see Ellen Macek, "Richard Smith: Tudor Cleric in Defense of Traditional Belief and Practice," *Catholic Historical Review* 72 (1986): 383–402.

whom he most filthily traduces as my harlot.”<sup>19</sup> Traditionalists still in Oxford did much the same: one wrote a poem that made the obvious play on Cox’s name and criticized both Cox and Vermigli for defiling communion and community by bringing their whores into the university.<sup>20</sup>

Dammartin and her husband found married life at Oxford difficult, especially once she moved into Christ Church college with him upon his appointment as a full canon in 1550. Sticks and stones and name-calling proved common. Foes in the city and students alike broke their windows and battered their door. Some of the rebels of 1549 reportedly mentioned Martyr by name, prompting him to flee to London and to leave Catherine and their servants to hide with friends. Upon his return, their married status and then her presence within the college walls met resistance, such that they decided to move yet again to safer quarters within the cloisters.<sup>21</sup> According to one report, Cox and Vermigli not only brought their own wives into college but also

permitted the canons to marry if they pleased, or any head of college or hall, [and] suffer[ed] women and idle housewives to enter into each house [...] which act (besides their permitting of bawling children to come among them) was looked upon as such a damnable matter by the Catholics that they styled them whores, and the lodgings that entertained married women and children stews and conyburies.<sup>22</sup>

As Katharina Shütz Zell had recognized of her own marriage to a priest, Dammartin’s mere presence was a contentious act of witness. Her life at Oxford was not easy.

For Dammartin, all this came to an end in 1553, however. The sweating sickness ravaged Oxford; Peter recovered, but Catherine did not. (Vermigli

19. Hastings Robinson, ed., *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, Parker Society, vol. 53 (Cambridge, 1847), 493; G. C. Gorham, ed., *Gleanings of a Few Scattered Ears, During the Period of the Reformation* (London, 1858), 152.

20. W. Forrest, *The History of Griseld the Second*, ed. W. D. Macray (London, 1875), 68.

21. Whether they lived within the college before his appointment as a full canon in 1550 is unclear, but they certainly encountered opposition both before and after that date; see Diarmaid MacCulloch, “Peter Martyr and Thomas Cranmer,” in *Peter Martyr Vermigli: Humanism, Republicanism, Reformation*, ed. Emidio Campo (Geneva: Droz, 2002), 182.

22. Wood, 100.

wrote of his desolation at being left alone in a letter to Conrad Hubert, formerly Bucer's secretary, but in more restrained terms than the lamentations he had recorded after Bucer's own death in 1551, e.g., "I am so broken and dismayed by his death as to seem mutilated of more than half of myself, and that the better half."<sup>23</sup>) In later years, Josiah Simler, a friend and successor to Vermigli after his subsequent career in Zurich, penned a brief tribute to Catherine as part of his encomium to her husband that offered what were quickly becoming the standard praises of a good Protestant housewife, though with a few twists:

Every one who knew her paid her the tributes of praise which are due to a good and excellent lady. She was above all God-fearing, in love with her husband, prudent and hardworking in running her household, generous toward the poor, whom she helped not only with resources but also with advice and aid. In addition, she was devout, modest and sober-minded her whole life.<sup>24</sup>

She died without children, a failing to be sure, but she helped other women in childbirth and showed maternal virtue in other ways. Simler maintained that "the common people at Oxford loved her not only because she was kindly and rather motherly toward the poor; they also admired her because as if she were gifted by some divine power, by her advice and help their wives generally obtained good health in sickness and especially in childbirth."<sup>25</sup> Former students

23. Robinson, *Original Letters*, 1:490–91, quoted in S. Scott Amos, "Strangers in a Strange Land: The English Correspondence of Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr," in *Peter Martyr Vermigli and the European Reformations: Semper Reformanda*, ed. James A. Frank (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 59. The quote continues: "O wretched me! [...] alone and desolate. Hitherto I have had a faithful companion in that road in which we were both of us so unitedly walking. I am now torn asunder from a man of the same mind with myself, and who was truly after my own heart [...] I pray God, that as I was so thoroughly united to him in life, He will not long suffer me to be separated from him by death." See also, e.g., Vermigli's letter to Bucer's widow Elizabeth in *The Common Places of [...] Peter Martyr*, trans. Anthony Marten (London, 1583), 82–84: "My Bucer hath withdrawn himself into heaven [...] What shall I do therefore? Whither shall I turn myself [...] To live alone and pulled away from him I cannot." Robinson, *Original Letters*, 1:490, For his letter to Hubert upon Catherine's death, see Conrad Hubert, *Historia Vera de Vita* (Strasburg, 1562), 194d–195d.

24. Josiah Simler, *Oration on the Life and Death of that Worthie Man and Excellent Divine D. Peter Martyr Vermillius* (London, 1583), included in *Life, Letters and Sermons*, ed. Donnelly, 31.

25. Simler, 31.

and colleagues of Vermigli's also left brief references to Dammartin in their later writings. In a debate with his one-time college companion, John Jewel, Thomas Harding recalled the many "private sermons" that Vermigli gave in Italian to a mixed group of students and others in his lodgings, also attended by "Madame Catherine the Nun of Metz in Lorraine, his pretended wife."<sup>26</sup> George Abbot, later archbishop of Canterbury, offered praise for a woman who "for the love of true religion and the company of her husband, [...] left her own country to come into England."<sup>27</sup> In response to Edmund Hill, who had described this married nun in decidedly unflattering terms, Abbot wrote:

And whereas you bestow your remembrance on Peter Martyr's wife, how blessed was she living, and how happy is her soul now, that she should in such sort be exagitated for Christ his sake? She was neither flaps nor fustelugs, but a woman indeed of body reasonably corpulent, but of most matron-like modesty; for the which she was much revered by the most.<sup>28</sup>

(He added that she had quite a talent carving plumb-stones into curious faces; he had one, he said, with a woman's face on one side and a bishop's on the other.) Writing in 1604, Abbot maintained that some yet living in Oxford still remembered and commended Dammartin for her many virtues.<sup>29</sup>

In the meantime, upon Catherine's death, Vermigli, Cox, and the other evangelicals then governing the college put her body in the church that had only recently been remade as Christ Church Cathedral, centre of the newly created bishopric of Oxford. It was formerly the heart of an Augustinian friary; before that, it was the site of the convent church of the abbess Frideswide (ca. 650–727). Frideswide was one of those early Anglo-Saxon Christians venerated for her heroic refusal to marry, a Mercian princess who founded and led a double monastery of women and men. In the intervening centuries, she had become the patron saint of the town and then of the university. Her shrine

26. Thomas Harding, *A Rejoinder to M. Jewel's Replie against the Sacrifice of the Masse* (Louvain, 1567), 175.

27. George Abbot, *The Reasons Which Doctour Hill Hath Brought, For the Upholding of Papistry* (Oxford, 1604), 144.

28. Abbot, 144, responding to Edmund Thomas Hill, *A Quartrion of Reasons of Catholike Religion* (Antwerp, 1600), 18–19, 147.

29. Abbot, 144.

had been dismantled in 1538, when all the friaries and monastic houses at the universities were suppressed, but attachment to her remained strong.<sup>30</sup> Given the heated attacks on their own marriages and wives, perhaps Vermigli and Cox thought it especially fitting that Dammartin be laid to rest in this shrine to a virginal, celibate form of incarnated sanctity that they now rejected. Whether they displaced Frideswide's relics or simply buried Dammartin next to the recently deconsecrated shrine is uncertain, but it seems the former. At the very least, then, burying Dammartin there let them repudiate a form of religiosity that recognized the immanence of the sacred in such physical objects as bones and bits of bodies (let alone bread). Here, too, as with the debates between Smith and Vermigli, the relationships between clerical marriage and sacrality were made manifest.

As we know from Foxe's account, the tale of this good, matronly wife—or "loose nun" and heretical whore, depending on one's point of view—was not yet done. When King Edward died to be replaced by his Catholic sister Mary, Vermigli returned to the Continent, settling in Zurich and remarrying. Dean Richard Cox and his wife Jane followed, part of a larger exodus of evangelicals who crossed paths with yet other English exiles now going home. Richard Smith returned to his chair as Regius professor of divinity. Vermigli's old soulmate from his own student days in Padua, Reginald Pole, became archbishop of Canterbury and later chancellor of Oxford. Pole brought with him some new friends from the Continent, along with fellows from his and Vermigli's time at university—the Venetian Niccolò Ormaneto and the Spaniard Bartolomé de Carranza, among others. Together, they sought to reform England's centres of learning yet again. Mary gave to Oxford properties that tripled its annual income; she, Pole, and the rest were serious about making Oxford a nursery for the training of good clerics, and somewhat unusually, did so with both carrots and sticks.<sup>31</sup>

30. See John Blair, "Saint Frideswide Reconsidered," *Oxoniensia* 52 (1987): 71–127 and essays in John Blair, ed., *Saint Frideswide's Monastery at Oxford: Archaeological and Architectural Studies* (Gloucester: A. Sutton, 1990).

31. See Elizabeth Russell, "Marian Oxford and the Counter-Reformation," in *The Church in Pre-Reformation Society*, ed. Caroline Barron and Christopher Harper-Bill (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985), 212–27; Claire Cross, "The English Universities, 1553–58," in *The Church of Mary Tudor*, ed. Eamon Duffy and David Loades (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 57–76 (though the order of the visitations is reversed here); and James McConica, "The Catholic Experience in Tudor Oxford," in *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits*, ed. Thomas M. McCoog (Woodbridge: Boydell,

But those sticks came in the form of kindling. The burnings of bishops Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, and then of Archbishop Cranmer, were held at Oxford in October 1555 and March 1556—with Smith playing a prominent part—but the authorities only really turned their attentions to the university itself when commissioners set to work in July 1556. They reportedly tried to find evidence of Dammartin's heresy, but could not secure sufficient proof from locals who professed that they had never been able to understand what the foreign woman was saying.<sup>32</sup> Some months after their visitation, though, in November 1556, Pole sent a warrant to Richard Marshall, the new dean of Christ Church, to exhume her body and thus to purify the cathedral.<sup>33</sup> As the warrant noted of the woman it called "Catherine Cathie," she,

of detestable memory, had called herself the wife of Peter Martyr, the arch-heretic, although both he and she had before taken vows of religion; [...] she had lived with him in Oxford in abominable fornication, while he denied the truth of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ [...] and after her death was buried near the sepulchre of the Holy Virgin.<sup>34</sup>

As such, the dean should cast her carcass out from holy ground. That concubine should not lie next to the celibate saint. Marshall complied with enthusiasm; it was his decision to throw her body on the dunghill behind his stables. A few months later, commissioners would purify Cambridge with a more spectacular showing: after a visitation in early 1557, the commissioners found Bucer and his colleague Paul Fagius to have been guilty of heresy and had their bodies dug

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1996), 39–63. On the Protestant communities in exile in these years, see especially Andrew Pettegree, *Marian Protestantism: Six Studies* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996).

32. Wood, 169–70.

33. This may have been at the suggestion of Friar Bartolomé Carranza; see Andrew Hegarty, "Carranza and the English Universities," in *Reforming Catholicism in the England of Mary Tudor: The Achievement of Friar Bartolomé Carranza*, ed. Ronald Trueman and John Edwards (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 153–72, [dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781315245003-10](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315245003-10).

34. For the warrant, see London Metropolitan Archives, DL/A/A/004/MS09531/012/002, fol. 135v and in Bodleian Library, Twyne MS 24, fol. 574.

up and publicly burnt, chained to stakes in the marketplace with books used to stoke the flames.<sup>35</sup>

At the universities as elsewhere, Queen Mary's agents quickly repudiated evangelical teachings on idolatry, the Eucharist, and clerical marriage. An early proclamation banned any priest who had a wife from saying the Mass.<sup>36</sup> Hundreds of clerics lost their livings, having been told to leave the women they called wives or else to leave their posts.<sup>37</sup> In September 1554, a very public set piece played out at Paul's Cross when Dr. Rudd recanted and repented that he had ever married, acknowledging it to have violated God's law. The monk of Ely who stabbed a priest repeatedly in the Easter service at St. Margaret's in Westminster was identified as the one who "was married to a wife." Two other priests who had married were also selected for public penances to delegitimize the whole farrago: one who had tried to rid himself of his wife by selling her to the butcher and another who had not been content with one wife but had married a second were both shamed publicly for their actions.<sup>38</sup> Such public repudiations of the carnality of priests who married were meant to diminish their claims to sacred truth, to depict the schism as having been driven by lust rather than faith, and to assert once again the immanence of God in the central rites of the restored church.<sup>39</sup>

Shortly thereafter, of course, Elizabeth succeeded her sister and returned the country to Protestantism, though not quite of the same sort as had prevailed under her brother. Richard Smith's foes at Oxford gleefully removed him from his Regius professorship once more, but now on the grounds of

35. See Ceri Law, "The 1557 Visitation of the University of Cambridge," in *Catholic Renewal and Protestant Resistance in Marian England*, ed. Elizabeth Evenden and Vivienne Westbrook (London: Routledge, 2015), 65–91.

36. J. G. Nichols, ed., *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, 1550–1563* (London, 1848), 50.

37. See, for example, Hilda E. Grieve, "The Deprived Married Clergy in Essex, 1553–1561," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 22 (1940): 141–69, dx.doi.org/10.2307/3678584.

38. Nichols, 48, 69, 100; see also 265.

39. On this interpretation of the Reformation as having been driven by lust, see, for example, John Rastell, *A Brief Shew of the False Wares* (Louvain, 1567), 106b–107a, and Nicholas Harpsfield, *A Treatise on the Pretended Divorce between Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon*, ed. Nicholas Pocock, Camden Society, n.s. 21 (Westminster, 1838), 271–72, 274–75. See also Thomas A. Fudge, "Incest and Lust in Luther's Marriage: Theology and Morality in Reformation Polemics," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 34.2 (2003): 319–45, dx.doi.org/10.2307/20061412.

sexual impropriety; he might have been an ardent foe of clerical marriage, but reportedly had a more casual relationship on the side.<sup>40</sup> Smith joined a sizable exodus of Catholics who left, whether of their own accord or because deprived of their positions, and ended up at the new English Catholic university at Douai as its chancellor and a professor of theology.<sup>41</sup> Queen Mary's efforts to replant the universities as a vineyard for the faith had clearly borne abundant fruit, though fruit that would be transplanted abroad. In July 1560, Bucer and Fagius were rehabilitated and their ashes reburied at Cambridge University. Late in the following year, in 1561, the Ecclesiastical Commission ordered that something also be done about the wife of Peter Martyr Vermigli, perhaps not incidentally a man some of them were trying to lure back to help reform England's universities once more.

With some ceremony and before a "very great auditory," in January 1562 they returned what remained of Dammartin's corpse to the edifice that doubled as college chapel and cathedral. James Calphill, the Calvinist canon who organized the reburial, then published an account of the event in which he boasted of his cunning plan: it was he who decided to mix her remains with the bones said to belong to the virgin St. Frideswide herself. The saint's remains, he said, had not been discarded back when the shrine had been deconsecrated but simply left in bags in a corner of the church, which now allowed him to effect a couple of ends: should the pendulum swing back yet again, no more would the superstitious, credulous Catholics honour those idolatrous relics, and no longer would Catherine's bones be disturbed by those reprobates. His account accompanied a set of commemorative verses in Greek and Latin celebrating the virtues of this honest matron, but above all deriding the beastly cruelty of ravening papist wolves who would superstitiously worship some bones while desecrating others. As one passage asserted of the men who had sought to "defile with a dung pit" the body of a woman with a pure soul, they had thereby shown themselves to be less than human: "These beasts were like men in shape, but the habits of savage wolves were in their souls." Of flesh-eaters, only wolves

40. Hastings Robinson, ed., *Zurich Letters*, Parker Society 50 (Cambridge, 1842), 9, Jewel to Vermigli, 20 March 1559.

41. McConica, "The Catholic Experience in Tudor Oxford," 50–51, and Russell, 212–27.



ate the dead, and did so only when oppressed by hunger: “How then are these not more savage than wolves?”<sup>42</sup>

Conrad Hubert, formerly Bucer’s secretary, appended Calfhill’s work to an account of the life, death, and burial of Bucer and Fagius that he published in Strasburg later that year, ensuring it a Continental audience.<sup>43</sup> From there, an abbreviated version of the story made it into Foxe’s epic history, the tale with which we opened. Given its mention in Foxe’s work, the story has not been forgotten. But in addition to the mentions made of it in histories of death or female sainthood, we might note that each stage in the story of Dammartin and her corpse intersected with moments of wider debate over clerical celibacy and the Reformation’s remodelling of affective and sexual possibilities. The passion and depth of the friendships—and betrayed friendships—among men in the story stand out. And the story’s conclusion serves to highlight the rarely remarked upon persistence of celibacy at England’s post-Reformation universities.

One key bit of context for the reburial of Dammartin’s corpse in January 1562 must surely have been the efforts of reformers to push Queen Elizabeth into a more favourable position on clerical marriage than that to which she was initially inclined.<sup>44</sup> Such marriages resumed upon her accession, but initially without the queen’s unambiguous support. Then, in the summer of 1561, Elizabeth took exception to the “undiscreet behaviour” of local married clerics

42. James Calfhill, *De Katherinae nuper uxoris doctissimi viri D. Petri Martyris* (London, 1561), quote at sig. C2v. I am deeply grateful to Cristalle Watson for translating the Greek passages for me.

43. Conrad Hubert, *Historia vera de vita, obitu, sepultra, accusatione haereseos... Martini Bucerii & Pauli Fagii* (Strasburg, 1562). Arthur Golding translated and published parts of this work, but not the section on Dammartin: *A Briefe Treatise Concerning the Burnynge of Bucer and Phagius at Cambrydye, in the tyme of Quene Mary, with theyr restitution in the time of our moste gracious souerayne Lady that now is* (London, 1562). See also Josiah Simler’s account of the reburial, in Simler, 32.

44. For Queen Elizabeth’s position on clerical marriage, see Brett Usher, “Queen Elizabeth and Mrs Bishop,” in *The Myth of Elizabeth*, ed. Susan Doran and Thomas Freeman (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 200–20, [dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-0-230-21415-6\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-230-21415-6_9). As Usher notes, some of the more colourful anecdotes about Elizabeth’s distaste for clerical wives, or the sorts of behaviours that might have prompted the same, come from John Harington’s polemical *A Supplie or Addicion to the Catalogue of Bishops*. See also (and especially) Eric Carlson, “Clerical Marriage and the English Reformation,” *Journal of British Studies* 31.1 (1992): 1–31, [dx.doi.org/10.1086/385996](https://doi.org/10.1086/385996), and Nancy Basler Bjorklund, ““A Godly Wyfe is an Helper”: Matthew Parker and the Defense of Clerical Marriage,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 34.2 (2003): 347–65, [dx.doi.org/10.2307/20061413](https://doi.org/10.2307/20061413).

while she was on progress in East Anglia. William Cecil and Matthew Parker, her chief councillor and her archbishop of Canterbury respectively, exchanged worried letters. Cecil noted that “Her Majesty continues very evil affected to the state of matrimony in the clergy. And if [I] were not therein very stiff, Her Majesty would utterly and openly condemn and forbid it.”<sup>45</sup> The queen did issue an injunction on 9 August 1561 to decree that no member of any college or cathedral chapter would be permitted to have a wife dwelling with him within the same. Colleges had been built and enclosed “to sustain and keep societies of learned men, professing study and prayer for the edification of the church of God and so consequently to serve the common weal,” a mission now disrupted by the presence of wives and children; as such, no head or member of any college or cathedral would thereafter be able to have a wife “frequent or haunt” any lodging within the precincts upon pain of forfeiting his place.<sup>46</sup> More than just a short-tempered response to some “undiscreet” clergy and their wives in the East Anglian progress, Elizabeth’s injunction may also have been shaped by the petition she had received that summer, which argued that the marriages of masters of colleges and heads of houses of the universities had impoverished their communities and led the men to live outside of the college fellowship, to be frequently absent from their charges, “as it is unfit for women to be in so great a society of young men.” It insisted that unmarried fellows were “more learned and fit to be advanced to ecclesiastical dignities.” As such, it asked that married men no longer be permitted in these posts.<sup>47</sup>

Archbishop Parker noted that he was “in horror” to hear the queen’s frank expressions of distaste for clerical marriage and her intimations that other injunctions on the subject might follow: “I trust God shall stay her heart.”<sup>48</sup> Cox, now back in England and a bishop, protested when he received the order. In a line often repeated by Protestants he insisted that to forbid marriage “is the doctrine of devils”—a sign by which to know the Antichrist. He reserved his passion for the ban on wives in cathedral chapter precincts, however, allowing it as “reasonable that places of students should be in all quietness among them self

45. Inner Temple Library, Petyt MS 538.47, fol. 372.

46. Inner Temple Library, Petyt MS 538.47, fol. 373. For published versions, see John Bruce, ed., *Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, Parker Society 33 (Cambridge, 1853), 146, 148, 151, 156.

47. The National Archives, SP 15/11, no. 24 (fol. 30).

48. Inner Temple Library, Petyt MS 538.47, fol. 374.

and not troubled with any families of women and babes.”<sup>49</sup> Ultimately, the bar was weakened. Those men serving in cathedrals could marry. *Heads* of colleges would be allowed to marry, too. But otherwise, the prohibition continued in the universities, a bar that made its way into the revision of the universities’ statutes in the 1570s.<sup>50</sup>

It was in the midst of this set-to over celibacy at the colleges that the commissioners and Calfhill reburied Dammartin. Commissioners had already rehabilitated Bucer and Fagius back in the summer of 1560; it was only now, in the face of the dispute over marriage among heads and fellows at the universities, that the bones of Dammartin, one of the first two women to live in college as a wife, were ceremonially honoured and mixed with those of Oxford’s patron virgin saint.

Calfhill may not have been entirely pleased by the outcome of the Elizabethan debate; nor were those who wanted a wholly celibate college community. Some members of parliament early in the 1600s sought to ensure that even the heads of colleges could not be married, with bills to that effect only narrowly failing in both 1604 and 1606. The bills sought to mandate that no married man be eligible to serve as a master and that any incumbent master who married lose his office, “as if such married persons had been naturally dead.” The first of the bills made an exception to allow women into the precincts to nurse the ill, but otherwise, no woman was to lodge in a college. The text of the bills and sparse notes on the parliamentary debates betray little sign of the medieval rhetoric of a heroic struggle to overcome desire or of ritual purity for sacramental purposes but insisted on the merits of freedom from diversion and entanglement. The women themselves might have a harmful influence on the men around them, and the responsibilities of married life could divert the husband from his collegial duties. In the debates, one member observed that “manners of young men are corrupted and drawn from their studies by the ordinary sight and conversation with women.” He asked, too, “who knoweth not how covetous heads of houses are to maintain, prefer, and provide for their wives and children; who knoweth not how much women prevail with their husbands to the overthrow of learning, discipline, yea, and of the colleges.” One

49. Inner Temple Library, Petyt MS 538.47, fol. 374, 378.

50. *Documents Relating to the University and Colleges of Cambridge*, 3 vols. (London, 1852), 1:493.

urged that the wishes of the college founders be respected. The abbreviated notes of his speech assert: “Virginitie a vertue; marriage not of necessity.”<sup>51</sup>

The two bills failed; some heads of college would marry. Professors would be allowed wives, too. Fellows could marry, of course, but would then immediately forfeit their positions. The colleges thus remained for a very long time places where male celibacy was normative, respected, and supported. While the clerical marriage debates of the sixteenth century have been well studied, the continued endorsement of celibacy at England’s universities has gone little remarked. Luther, Bucer, and others had argued that cloistered virginity prevented *women* from fulfilling their God-given purpose, but for men, the tenor of the discussions differed. So long as celibacy was not tainted by an idolatrous vow, it still had its attractions for some among the reformed.<sup>52</sup> As Devon Elizabeth Van Dyne observes, “studying celibacy forces us to check not just the idea that historical actors were heterosexual, but that people in the past expressed their most fervent desires and formed their most intimate relationships on the basis of sex at all.”<sup>53</sup> And the fact remains that while a married, procreative model of masculinity became the norm in Protestant England, space survived for a respectable celibate alternative for men, one that retained an institutional support in the colleges.<sup>54</sup> They allowed forms of masculinity and male friendship that differed from those that prevailed elsewhere.

51. D. H. Willson, ed., *The Parliamentary Diary of Robert Bowyer, 1606–1607* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931), 8, 9, 55–56, 58, 59, 298; M. F. Bond, *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords*, n.s. 9, Addenda, 1514–1714 (London, 1962), 87–88; HMC, 4th Report, Appendix, 118; Victor Morgan, *A History of the University of Cambridge: Volume 2, 1546–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 170.

52. See especially Sarah Apetrei, “‘The Life of Angels’: Celibacy and Asceticism in Anglicanism, 1660–c. 1700,” *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 13.2 (2011): 247–74, [dx.doi.org/10.1558/rrr.v13i2.247](https://doi.org/10.1558/rrr.v13i2.247), and “Masculine Virgins: Celibacy and Gender in Later Stuart London,” *Religion and Women in Britain, c. 1660–1760*, ed. Sarah Apetrei and Hannah Smith (London: Routledge, 2014), 41–59.

53. Devon Elizabeth Van Dyne, “Celibacy in the British North American Colonies” (PhD Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2015), 22.

54. On the varieties of masculinities in post-Reformation England, see Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). More broadly, see also *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, ed. Scott H. Hendrix and Susan Karant-Nunn (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 2008); Derek Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), [dx.doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226569598.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226569598.001.0001); and Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia:

William Harrison, writing in the late 1500s, praised the monastic environment of the reformed universities.<sup>55</sup> Josephine Butler, writing in the 1850s, pointed to that same monastic quality and criticized Oxford as a “society of celibates with little or no leaven of family life.”<sup>56</sup> And it was only in the late 1800s, with a series of changes from ca. 1860–82, that the bar on fellows’ marriages disappeared (and yet later still, of course, that women were allowed into the university as students or faculty).<sup>57</sup> The retention of such bastions of homosocial bonding and male friendship at the core of some of the nation’s most important “man-making” institutions had, of course, far-ranging significance, as did the continued exclusion of women—even as wives and helpmeets—from the spaces where so much that counted as knowledge was produced, preserved, and taught. David Noble observed that the clerical asceticism that pervaded universities from their births in monastic foundations and cathedral chapters shaped European education for many long centuries, with particular significance in allowing the clerical culture of Western science to develop in “a

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University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003). On celibacy and masculinity in earlier years, and the active attractions of celibacy otherwise typically ignored in the scholarly literature, see especially R. N. Swanson, “Angels Incarnate: Clergy and Masculinity from Gregorian Reform to Reformation,” in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. D. M. Hadley (London: Longman, 1999), 160–77, and Pat Cullum, “‘Give Me Chastity’: Masculinity and Attitudes to Chastity and Celibacy in the Middle Ages,” *Gender and History* 25.3 (2013): 621–36, dx.doi.org/10.1111/1468-0424.12029.

55. Harrison, *Description of England* (1577), quoted from David Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: A. Arnold, 1975), 116.

56. Quoted in Vera Brittain, *The Women at Oxford: A Fragment of History* (London: Harrap, 1960), 25.

57. For the late nineteenth-century lifting of the restriction on fellows’ marriages, see Bridget Duckenfeld, *College Cloisters—Married Bachelors* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013) and Arthur Engel, “Emerging Concepts of the Academic Profession at Oxford, 1800–1854,” in *The University in Society*, ed. Lawrence Stone, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 1:305–51, dx.doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvbcd22p.9. See also Paul Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men: British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850–1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005) and Brian Harrison, *Separate Spheres: The Opposition to Women’s Suffrage in Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1978) for good discussions of same-sex institutions for middle- and upper-class men in the “age of bachelors.” Emily Rutherford has important forthcoming work on the fight to preserve single-sex institutions and forms of sociability at English universities in the United Kingdom.

The first women’s colleges opened at Oxford in 1879; women became eligible for a qualified “full membership” in the University in 1920; Christ Church college first admitted women in 1980.

world without women.”<sup>58</sup> And that world persisted even after the Reformation’s assault on clerical celibacy—distinctively so in England, compared to universities in other Protestant jurisdictions where such expectations of celibacy among the whole panoply of bachelors, fellows, and masters did not persist so strongly. Indeed, Richard Kirwan suggests that at universities in Lutheran Germany, “the complete scholar was a married one.”<sup>59</sup> Universities were not just centres of intellectual and theological debate, somehow separate from the social, cultural, and political aspects of the Reformation and its legacies. They were communities of friendship and fellowship that, in England, remained rather more resolutely masculine and monastic than elsewhere.

The story of Catherine Dammartin thus prompts us to think about the role of the universities in the sexual and affective dimensions of the Reformation, and vice versa, the role of universities, sexuality, and friendship in the Reformation. The Reformation redrew boundaries between the sacred and the secular, asserting as transcendent what had once been understood to be immanent and embodied; part of that process redrew the lines around intimate relationships and forms of voluntary kinship. In England, convents and monasteries disappeared, with marriage promoted above celibacy and the other affective relationships it sustained; but even so, the homosocial “world without women” of the universities persisted. James Calhoun compared Dammartin’s persecutors to Achilles, dragging the dead body of Hector around the walls of Troy; he presumably could not have thought of the shared burial he gave the remains of Catherine and Frideswide as akin to the famously shared grave of Achilles and Patroclus, in that case a sign of intimate friendship. But perhaps we might end with the thought of the bones of virgin and wife comingled in their joint shrine at the heart of Oxford as not just the confrontational gesture he intended, but also as a material, embodied metaphor for the peculiar sort

58. David F. Noble, *A World without Women: The Christian Clerical Culture of Western Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

59. Richard Kirwan, “From Individual to Archetype: Occasional Texts and the Performance of Scholarly Identity in Early Modern Germany,” in *Scholarly Self-Fashioning and Community in the Early Modern University*, ed. Richard Kirwan (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 79–102, quote at 93, dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781315607719-5. See also *A History of the University in Europe*, ed. Walter Rüegg, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1:125, 1:369, 2:223, on laicization and secularization of universities elsewhere. My thanks to Salvatore Cipriano for his guidance on marital politics at post-Reformation Scottish universities and for the reference to Kirwan.

of “moderation” and mixing said to have characterized England’s Reformation more generally.<sup>60</sup>

60. See Ethan Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion, and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), [dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139003711](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139003711); also, works by Alexandra Walsham on the nature of England’s Reformation, e.g., *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and, of particular relevance here, “Skeletons in the Cupboard: Relics after the English Reformation,” *Past and Present*, supplement 5 (2010): 121–43, [doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtq015](https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtq015), which discusses the overlap of traditional and reformed relic culture, though noting that the latter emphasized the “semiotic rather than sacramental function” (134) of relics, treating them as memorials or commemorative tokens rather than as embodiments of the sacred but not dismissing them altogether.