

“to know the edition”: erudition and polemic in eighteenth century clerical culture.

‘Quoting of Authors is most for matters of fact and then I cite them; as I would produce a witnesse: some time for a free expression and then give ye Author his due, and gain myself prayse by reading him’.

John Selden *TableTalk* (ed) F. Pollock (London, 1927)

Narcissus Marsh’s library was, and still is, a vast repository of clerical erudition. It was a storehouse of material authority for the defence of protestant truth and established church institutions. The dumb shelves of works were powerful intellectual weapons in the war of ideas that was waged throughout the eighteenth century. They were written and used by clergymen to defend the sacred authority of their mission and jurisdictional competence. Famously an example of this relationship between books and clergymen can be seen in the portrait of Narcissus that hangs in the main room of the library. Surrounded by dark shelves of huge folios, Marsh stands by a desk complete with piles of books, some open, some with places of textual importance marked by paper slips. The relationship between clergymen, books and the cultural practice of erudite citation is the subject of this contribution.

I

In the ‘uninhabitable tower of Turpian’ just outside Grenada, in 1588, Don Peter de Castro of Quinones. Archbishop of Grenada, oversaw the discovery of a number of ‘manuscripts and relicks’. Having summoned a number of learned ‘criticks and Antiquaries’ to examine the various manuscripts written in encoded Latin, Arabic and Spanish script, the works were identified and authenticated as including a *Prophecy of St John* with a commentary by St Cecilius, along with a *Narrative* composed by the same saint. Although some had suggested that, far from providing corroborating evidence, the Latin account of the manuscripts found at the same time written by Father Patrick established that he was ‘in truth the contriver of this whole farce’. In the face of substantial criticism of the authenticity of the works by various Dominican scholars, who pointed out most the most damning point that the works contained anachronistic passages written in modern Spanish many centuries before common usage, the Archbishop of Grenada in a ‘solemn and unanimous’ manner ‘declared’ the findings authentic, publishing the full list of ecclesiastical and civil officials who subscribed to such a public testimonial display.

As Michael Geddes, friend of Archbishop Tenison, commented in 1709, this was a ‘glorious victory bold authority here had over learning, reason, and common sense’. Lamenting that ‘so many persons of great wisdom and learning, and in such high posts, so far to have disgraced their judgements, and prostituted their consciences, as solemnly, and as in the sight of God, to pronounce writings, which are so palpably spurious, and but of yesterday, to be genuine and of fifteen hundred years standing’, Geddes condemned both the artefacts and the authentication as typical of popish fraud.¹ To render the process of authentication even more absurd, the various ‘relicks of bones and ashes’ found with the manuscripts were confirmed (on the very dubious evidence of suspiciously ‘modern’ engraved lead plates) as the remnants of St

¹ Michael Geddes *Miscellaneous Tracts* 3 vols. (London, 1709) Volume I, ‘An account of the manuscripts and relicks’ 383-422, at 420.

Mesiton and St Hescius, Christians martyred under the rule of Nero and possibly disciples of the Apostle, James.

For Geddes, sometime Chaplain to the English factory at Lisbon, the point of the account was to reinforce the irrationality and corruption of Roman Catholic theology. In the face of reasonable learning, both internal and external to the artefacts (style, historical idiom, philology and chronology) the officers of the Church had exploited their ecclesiastical authority to trounce 'learning, reason and commonsense'. The urgency of refurbishing the various doctrines of counter-Reformation Catholicism, and the national status of James of Compostella, resulted in the impious frauds. The bracketing of spurious works of Christian antiquity and the potentially miraculous relics of the early saints, reinforced the superstitious and deviant nature of Roman Catholic religion. Veneration for false gospels, revelations and commentaries, was for the Protestant Geddes, as un-supportable as reverence for old bones and ashes. Upon such fake artefacts popery built its anti-Christian *dominium*: the subornation of 'learning' to the authority of clerical power was both a manifestation and instrument of domination that compromised Protestant conceptions of the 'reasonableness' of Christianity.

The exposure of such Roman Catholic forgeries was a staple of post-Reformation polemics. The application of the canons and techniques of humanistic learning to the claims of ecclesiastically powerful texts such as the *Donation of Constantine* by men like Valla became a key trope of Protestant enlightenment. Relics, oracles, martyrology, and various elements of medieval material culture, were de-sanctified by careful scholarly labour. Generations of Protestant scholars from Scaliger to the Voss's (father and son), from Isaac Casaubon to James Ussher, devoted enormous critical labour to the collation of manuscripts, to forensic philological examination, to comparative annotation, and to the preparation of authentic 'editions' of refined religious texts, cleansed from superstitions and corrupting accretions. The imperatives of a rule of faith driven by *sola scriptura*, emphasising the relationship between textual inspiration and religious meaning, ensured that the provision of accurate, authentic and 'scholarly' editions of key religious texts were a cultural priority.² Erudition combined with the new medium of print to provide an expanding cultural resource for both making and unmaking textual authority: the material product of these processes were both social and intellectual in the form of the creation of communities of scholars and their books. As Hamilton has recently shown, scholarly debates about the authenticity of particular 'scriptural' texts such as the second book of *Esdras* became intellectual spaces for rival displays of confessional knowledge. Establishing the textual authority of such books, not only provided a secure resource for the cultivation of correct religious belief, but simultaneously forged and accrued a social authority to the scholars who effected the editions.³

Geddes' account was cited by John Toland in his 'Catalogue of Books', which delivered a comprehensive bibliography of the early Christian apocryphal texts, as evidence for the falsity of the second *Revelation* of John, as 'the silliest imposture of all'.⁴ These themes of forged revelations and fake bones, and of the social construction of the cultural authority of such religious 'texts' are pertinent to how the

² See H. de Quehen 'Politics and scholarship in the Ignation controversy' *The seventeenth century* 13 (1998) 69-84.

³ See A. Hamilton *The Apocryphal Apocalypse. The reception of the second book of Esdras (4 Ezra) from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1999).

⁴ 'A Catalogue of books' in J. Toland *A Collection* (1726) 2 vols. II 370-71.

status of clerical erudition was both made and challenged in Marsh's time. Figures like Toland claimed their own form of learning as a means for defying the cultural prestige, and consequently, the political power of churchmen. By exploring how Toland engaged with the sort of books that lined the walls of Marsh's library it will be possible to examine the intricacy of intellectual conflict in the period and to argue that this confrontation was not so much a manifestation of 'reason' against 'revelation' as the result of contested claims to scholarly integrity.

There is little doubt amongst modern historians, as amongst Toland's contemporaries, that he was embroiled in a project aimed at corroding the shibboleths of orthodox clerical authority. As the hostile reception of works like *Christianity not mysterious* (1696) indicated, Toland's claims to sincere religious reform were dismissed upon pains of both civil and ecclesiastical prosecution. Although characterised as a man advancing the untrammelled and sacrilegious claims of human reason against the mysteries of true Christian faith, many of Toland's clerical contemporaries complained of his elusiveness in debate. Toland insinuated his criticisms, in Burke's phrase, smuggling in his adulterated metaphysics, under cover of claims to reforming piety. One opponent, Offspring Blackhall, whose ecclesiastical career was made by his assault upon Toland's piety, repeatedly claimed that it was difficult to 'fix' the meaning and intentions of Toland's writings, such was the ambiguity of expression. Toland's subversion was achieved by means more subtle than straightforward confrontation, although the suggestion of David Berman, that his 'art of theological lying' was an attempt to provoke the collective unconscious into active irreligion seems unlikely. It is a commonplace understanding that the 'attack upon religion' in the late seventeenth century was articulated in the bold voice of reason. 'Freethinking' and 'deism' were advanced in the public sphere as a form of logical rationalism. Philosophical scepticism and scientific discourses are supposed to have replaced the theological and sacramental cultures of the *ancien regime* by trouncing their epistemological competence. As recent historians have indicated this model of reason triumphing over religion is an overly simplistic account not only of intellectual culture, but of the relationship between ideas and society.⁵

The contestation of authority in the period was a political and cultural process that was dialogic rather than confrontational. Recent understandings of the modes of power and the cultural construction of authority conducted by anthropologists and historians of religion like James C. Scott and Michael de Certeau converge in the suggestion that the confrontation between authority and dissidence, between superior and subordinate, and of the effect of domination upon the forms of public communication, are complex procedures of negotiated and fabricated power. A language of appropriation, of ruses and dissimulation is much more apposite, than one of rupture and fracture when describing the dissident engagement with the public transcripts of established power. As Scott neatly summarises, 'the more menacing the power, the thicker the mask'.⁶ Much of Scott's understanding has application to the practise of dissidence within local and non-literate society, concentrating upon the petty, but public, transgressions (by gestures, speech or practices) of normative behaviour that compromises the naturalisation of power. Such an understanding of the tactical nature of insubordination can also be effectively applied to textual and discursive authority. In a society like early modern

⁵ See B. Young *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth Century England* (Oxford, 1998).

⁶ J. Scott *Domination and the arts of resistance* (Harvard, 1992) 3.

England, dominated by religious forms of power and orthodoxy, themselves constructed by the transcendent 'authority' of a text (scripture and its interpretation), instrumentally effective heterodoxy and heresy was articulated by engagement with, and adaptation of, the dominant sacred discourse.⁷ This is not to argue for a Straussian model of subversion that worked by 'writing between the lines': arguing with 'authority' was a more complex manoeuvre than simply avoiding the restraints of censorship. A more appropriate metaphor would be viral.

As will be argued below, one of the significant cultural sites for making authority was scholarly discourse. 'Scholarship', in particular biblical criticism and patristic studies, fabricated powerful textual instruments for the ideological authentication of clerical institutions. As a powerful operation for the cultivation of authority, 'scholarship' was defined by a series of changing and contested procedures and disciplinary canons: these routines of discursive practice were a form of naturalising the power relations constitutive and constituted by the dominance of religious institutions. As routines of practice, just like Scott's 'public transcript', they were open to strategic and tactical subversion. Amongst the many forms of scholarly procedure – citation conventions, principles of collation, the fixation with 'original' manuscript sources, the criteria for establishing the authenticity of testimony and witnesses, the literary technology for verifying social credit, the topology of the printed page – there were manifold opportunities for capturing or disrupting the authority of the discourse by working from within. As Richard Serjeantson has recently underscored the relationship between testimony and authority was 'largely coterminous' in early modern intellectual accounts of rhetoric and dialectic.⁸ As the processes of making scholarly credit more secure (especially in printed form) this epistemological understanding of testimony became reified into a system of scholarly citation, annotation and 'referencing'. The annotation or citation was the remnant or residue of the exercise of hermeneutic prerogative. The footnote, then became a site for both proving and subverting an authority that was not only scholarly, but institutional, too.⁹

Toland was a master of the art of scholarly subversion: his aim was to turn the authority of cultural resources like Marsh's Library against its masters. By examining his own 'learned' works it will be possible to indicate how he both mastered, and turned to his own purposes, standards of citation and testimony. In doing so he not only produced 'learned' works that prompted furious rebuttal, but attempted to expose the knowledge claims that underlay the routines of learning. As one of the significant polemicists of the *saeculum rationalisticum*, it is possible to endorse Mark Pattison's suggestions that 'rationalism' was not so much an epistemological claim against the status of religion, but a form of religious thought. The 'reasonableness' of Christianity was not simply a means for making revelation agreeable and conformable to reason, but a method for assessing the credibility and evidences for the nature of Christian institutions. This 'evidential school' side-stepped questions about the metaphysical coherence of Christianity in favour of establishing the witnesses for its

⁷ Ibid 103.

⁸ R.W. Serjeantson 'Testimony and proof in early modern England' *Studies in the the history and philosophy of science* 30 (1999) 195-236. See also D. Greetham, 'Facts, true facts, Factoids: or, why are they still saying these nasty things about epistemology' *Yearbook of English Studies* 29 (1999) 1-23, and J. Chandler, A. I. Davidson, H. Harootunian (eds.) *Questions of Evidence. Proof, Practice, and Persuasion across the Disciplines* (Chicago, 1994).

⁹ See for some context A. Grafton *The Footnote. A curious history* (London, 1997).

true historical pattern.¹⁰ Toland's work, and as we will see, especially the serial palimpsestic text *Amyntor-A catalogue of books* (1699-1726), was parasitic upon the patrimony of orthodox erudition.¹¹

II

As Bruno Neveu has elegantly insisted, there was a profound connection between 'L'erudition ecclesiastique' and 'la nostalgie de l'antiquité Chretienne'.¹² For both Roman Catholics, and the full variety of those Protestants who laid claim to the title of the Church of England, the recovery of the rituals, beliefs, and institutions of the early church was critical to establishing the legitimacy of contemporary practice. As a number of modern scholars have established, these rival ambitions of reconstructing primitive Christianity from ancient sources led to many complex inter- and intra-confessional polemics. Contested definitions of who were the 'best' Church fathers was one powerful controversial issue: was the limit to authentic witnesses the third, fifth or tenth centuries? Even if some accommodation could be made amongst scholars of differing confessional identities about the core definition of legitimate patristic testimonies, there was further furious debate and controversy about the authenticity of the textual remains of these 'Fathers'. Advancing the claims of one Father against another resulted in differing textual editions according to the confessional interests of the editor: Gallican editions of St Cyprian differed from those made by Anglican figures such as John Fell. The recovery of primitive piety was then a means of reinforcing the claims of differing and competing definitions of 'orthodoxy'. The development of 'critical' methods to identify and disseminate 'good' editions of legitimate patristic sources was not simply an advancement of 'scholarly' research methods but also an investment in an epistemological strategy for making ecclesiological authority. Although there was a powerful Protestant polemic, most urgently developed by Jean Daillé in his 1632 *Traité de l'emploies saints Pères* (and republished in the 1650s in English and Latin), against the corrupt use of patristic 'Tradition', English churchmen, expanding on Jewel's notion of the authority of the *quinquesecularis* crafted a means for using certain patristic sources to establish the patriarchal independence of the Church of England. As Jean-Louis Quantin has commented, this cautious approach to patristic authority meant that, unlike the French Church, the English did not embark upon the scholarly enterprise of making a complete patrology like the *Bibliotheca Patrum*, but instead focused their efforts upon specific texts such as the *Ignatian Epistles*.¹³ As is evident in mainstream Protestant controversial theology, and even in the impious work of Toland, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant in origin, the product of this pursuit of the 'unanimem consensum patrum' was a vast printed resource of patristic editions, a textual

¹⁰ M. Pattison 'Tendencies of religious thought in England, 1688-1750' in *Essays and Reviews* (1885) volume II 42-109 at 45-8, 55, 92.

¹¹ See F. Schmidt 'John Toland, critique Deiste de la littérature Apocryphe' *Apocrypha* 1 (1990) 119-145; B.E. Schwarzbach 'The sacred genealogy of a Voltairean polemic: the development of critical hypotheses regarding the composition of the canonical gospels' *Studies in Voltaire and the eighteenth century* 245 (1986) 303-349 at 319.

¹² See B. Neveu 'L'erudition ecclesiastique de XVIIe siècle et la nostalgie de l'antiquité Chretienne' in *Religion and Humanism. Studies in Church History* 17 (1981) pp195-225. J.-L. Quantin has taken the investigation further in his magisterial, *Le Catholicisme Classique et les Pères de L'église. Un retour aux sources (1669-1713)* (Paris, 1999). See also the important collection, E. Bury, B. Meunier (eds) *Les Pères de L'église au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1993).

¹³ See J.-L. Quantin 'The Fathers in seventeenth century Anglican theology' 996-999.

database that could be deployed for a variety of theological purpose independent of the intentions of the original editors.

The testimonies of the 'Fathers' were then a powerful persuasive in a variety of confessional debates. The authority of such patristic sources lay in two interwoven procedures; the first relied upon establishing the textual integrity of the edition, and the second on the practice of citation of this published resource. Literary technology conspired with epistemological authority. The task of criticism was to distinguish the spurious from the authentic text; the function of print technology was to enable this critically purified text to be 'read' in a theologically correct manner. Clerical scholarship thus produced a cultural artefact that both reified their institutional authority and acted as a testimony of that authority. The patristic edition was both a site for making and contesting true knowledge. As fine example of these dimensions of patristic erudition can be seen in the labour of the Bodleian librarian Thomas James author of *A Treatise of the Corruption of Scripture, Councels, and Fathers* (1611).¹⁴ Here the forensic ambitions of the scholar in exposing the textual errors are displayed in their meticulous adumbration in precise detail: the topography of the page in Part I, 'the bastardie of the false Fathers' (pages 1-71), exposed both the false text, and the dishonest citations, in dense closely printed cross-referential parallel columns. To enable the reader to summarise the point of such a crowded thicket of references, James supplied convenient tables of 'the names of the authors, whose books are Censured', and of 'the use that Papist make of these bastard treatises' (pages 72-85). The 'diseases of books' were manifold. As James explained, in the fifth and concluding part of his work, 'a remedie against all manner of popish corruption' was to be found in the labour of collation. Comparing printed texts with 'the best and ancient manuscripts', and 'printed copies that are purged, with the books that are unpurged' was 'a matter of labour onlie'.¹⁵ The result of such scholarly labour would be a theologically correct bibliography of 'what bookes, and of what editions, are to be bought and to be read of Protestants'.¹⁶ The painstaking dimensions of James' commitment to this forensic collation can be seen in the marginal annotations he, and his team of clerical assistants, made into the Roman Catholic editions of Gregory, Cyprian and Ambrose. Using some fifty manuscripts and 'noting both the differences in the Margent, whether material, or immaterial; [and] what Copy each man used' James intended to provide a communal resource for removing the corrupt accretions of popery in later printed editions.¹⁷ The marginal notes of variations thus validated the process of anti-popish criticism as well as being an empirical display and residue of the erudition. Such editorial labour unpicked the 'fixity' of Catholic print, at the same time as making a platform for 'safe' Protestant volumes.¹⁸

Caution in choosing to read only the best editions of the Fathers was a central theme of Protestant advice. Daniel Tossanus, Professor of Divinity at Heidelberg, in his influential *A Synopsis or Compendium of the Fathers* (London, 1635) in giving advice to young divines argued that read carefully the fathers were an useful supplement to the Scriptures. Reading incautiously they might become 'like one blind in the darke,

¹⁴ N.R. Ker 'Thomas James's collation of Gregory, Cyprian, and Ambrose' *Bodleian Library Record* 4 (1952) 13-30.

¹⁵ James *Corruption* Part 5, pages 1-2.

¹⁶ James *Corruption* Part 4, page 104.

¹⁷ Ker 'Thomas James's collation' 16-17.

¹⁸ See for some context S.L. Greenslade 'The faculty of Theology' in *The Collegiate University. The History of Oxford University* Volume 3, (ed) J. McConica (Oxford, 1986) esp. 321-324.

and saile in a wide sea without either North Starre or Compasse'. A firm grounding in the 'sovereign command' of Scripture was the starting point for a critical and historical assessment of 'what is authentically, what erroneous, irreptitious and inserted by monks'. There were 'many supposititious books' commonly forged by Jesuits, that could only be exposed by 'certain rules' of judgement. The determining voice was to be the injunctions of true Scripture: any patristic source that contradicted such canons was unlikely to be authentic.¹⁹ The strength of the ferocity of anti-Catholic polemic in the work of men like James and Tossanus had been moderated in the mainstream of Anglican scholarship after the Restoration. While there were still many Churchmen who supported the fundamental criticisms of Jean Daillé, (indeed a new edition of the English translation of his work was published in 1675) there were also those who deliberately challenged 'the most celebrated scourge of the fathers'. In 1709 the high Churchman, William Reeves, prefaced his edition of Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Minutius Felix with a lengthy rebuttal of slanders against the integrity of the Fathers. Corruption originated in deviant editorial labour, rather than being fundamental to patristic texts. The writings of the Church fathers were 'the next best books to the Bible' and a 'passage for the unlearned into the knowledge of the purest times of Christianity'. The truth of Christianity was built upon the two pillars of 'scripture and primitive Christianity'. Reeves acknowledged Daillé's point that there might be minor discrepancies between the differing patristic accounts of the minutiae of Christian practice, but in central doctrine such as the Trinity the testimonies of the Fathers converged into a coherent truth. Understanding the contextual witnesses of the early Fathers was 'the most rational and safest method to understand the Holy Scripture. Conceding that interpreting Scripture, especially in matters 'of Polity and discipline' was made more complex by the achievements of modern criticism: collating scriptural statements with the 'authenticae literae' of holy contemporaries side-stepped both the scepticism of the critics who had 'mended away the very body of the Sacred text' and the enthusiasm of those that laid claim to 'the spirit for the interpretation of the letter'. Such patristic sources, 'not only the most faithful guardians of the canon, but of the sense of Scripture too' were 'witnesses of facts only'.²⁰

The design of criticism had originally been 'to rescue injur'd authors from the Depradations of Time and moths, or much worse vermine, to enlighten and beautify their sense, and restore 'em to their original perfection' but had now become 'the art of finding fault only'. Correction was 'an act of authority' that undermined the credit of both scripture and the fathers: every mote became a beam, by acts of 'critical magick'. The accusations of spurious works, of textual corruption and the variability of opinion were rebutted by a 'common-sense' argument against historical phyrnonism and relativism. Such 'errata and frauds' had been detected and cured 'by comparing manuscripts and other helps of the Critical Art in Learned and Honest Hands'. Patristic sources were then, not 'infallible', but 'testimonies about facts' or 'credible witnesses of Fact'. Contrary to the exaggerated assault of Daillé, since extended by all sorts of infidels, the fathers were a safe medium against the extremes of Papal infallibility and Socinian Reason. Reeves made the careful distinction between testimony and infallibility by insisting that patristic texts were only binding when 'consonant either to Scripture or Reason'.²¹ The provision of

¹⁹ Tossanus *A Synopsis* iv-v, 1, 7, 16.

²⁰ William Reeves *The Apologies of Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Minutus Felix* (London, 1709) including a 'Prefatory Dissertation about the right use of the Fathers' i, v-vi, vii, xi, xiv-xv, xxxv.

²¹ Reeves 'Prefatory Dissertation' lxi, lxiii, lxiv, lxxvi, lxxxii.

credible and critically competent editions was crucial for the formation of authentic and instrumentally persuasive cultural authority. The 'test of antiquity' became an increasingly effective means of reinforcing the doctrinal and disciplinary claims of the Church of England against both Roman Catholic and Low Church Protestant challenges. It is possible to see a powerful example of these ideological use of antiquity in William Cave's repeatedly reprinted *Primitive Christianity; or, the religion of the Ancient Christians in the First Ages of the Gospel* (1672, 6th edition 1702). Conceived in three parts, defending the religion, morality and civil conduct of the early Church, Cave insisted upon the absolute necessity of the good authority of his sources. For this reason 'the margin is charged with so many quotations' and a chronological 'index' of authors which detailed the historical context and edition cited in order 'to give some light to the Quotations, by knowing where the Author lived'.²²

That the cultural status of the fathers was closely linked to the critical quality of the editions of their works was a staple of the works of learning in the period. The assertion of the value of authentic patristic sources was not simply defended in the works of defensive and controversial polemics like Reeves and Cave, but was also advanced in the more practical works of bibliographical advice of the period. The genre of the familiar letter of advice on studies, exemplified in works like Meric Casaubon's 'Generall Learning', suggested that erudition was best built upon the foundations of historical and philological skills.²³ The knowledge of books '& how to use them' was a key part of erudition; recognising the false from the authentic was to be achieved by a 'judicious examination of proofes & allegations on both sydes, which be genuine & true; which be supposi<ti>tious & counterfeit'.²⁴ By careful reading and consideration the good Protestant could be freed from the corruption of spurious monuments like the Donation of Constantine and the fraudulent erudition of Roman Catholics like Cardinal Baronius. The powerful image painted by Casaubon of the scholar verifying citations by constant reference to his shelves of books indicates how patristic works became the spring for the creation of individual conviction and belief.²⁵ The claim that patristic learning made a more Godly and devout ministry was the premise of the various works of bibliographical advice published after the Restoration. By examining the works of Henry Dodwell, Thomas Barlow and Thomas Bray, composed between the 1670s and 1700s, it is possible to reconstruct with precision both the attitude to patristic works and the exact books recommended to be read.

Henry Dodwell's reputation as a man of pious erudition ensured that his letters of advice, first published in 1672 and frequently reprinted, were considered as powerful incitements to Christian virtue. Written for novices and young divines, Dodwell included a 'Catalogue' of genuine Christian authors 'till the conversion of Constantine to Christianity, together with good Editions where they might find and furnish themselves with them'. Dodwell set out to 'learnedly and impartially' to discuss the textual authority and integrity of his sources in order to discover their 'Testimonial Authority'. The form his catalogue took worked through forty-six various early Fathers and patristic works from Clemens Romanus (mid-first century) to Pamphilus Martyr (end of the third century). The work of each author was discussed and

²² W. Cave *Primitive Christianity* (6th edition, 1702) 'Preface' vii, x.

²³ See R. Serjeantson (ed.) *Generall Learning. A seventeenth-century treatise on the formation of the General Scholar by Meric Casaubon* (Renaissance Texts from Manuscript, No. 2, Cambridge, 1999) 8, 10-11, 18-21.

²⁴ Serjeantson *Generall Learning* 6.

²⁵ See Serjeantson 'Introduction' 32, 33-41.

identified as 'undoubted' or not. Specific details of the best editions were transcribed: so for example Clemens Romanus' two Letters to the Corinthians were available 'by Patricius Junius at Oxford, Anno Dom. MDCXXXVIII. Or by Cotelerius, if you can get it. If not, the 2nd edition of Oxford, divided according to Coterelius's paragraphs is the best of those which are easily to be had and cheap. This is in the Year MDCLXXVII'.²⁶ Referring prospective readers to editions of patristic works published in France, Germany and the Low Countries, Dodwell provided an annotated guide to the best, most accurate and easiest obtainable editions.²⁷ Dodwell included careful advice about negotiating confessional bias in editorial scholarship: writing on the works of Tertullian, he commented 'Edit. By Rigaltius rather than any other, because of the improvement of that most ancient noble MS of Agobardus. Or, if you would have a Protestant Edition and of an easier price, get that of Franeker, 1592, rather than many others though later'.²⁸ In the supplementary counsel, Dodwell delivered thematic directions, establishing the order that the fathers ought to be read in (Justin, Athenagoras, Tatian, Theophilus Antiochenus, Clemens of Alexandria, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Origen, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, ...), and recommending particular volumes for more focused issues like the study of heresy (Irenaeus, Tertullian, Epiphanius, Philastrius, Augustine and Theodoret).²⁹ Dodwell also included practical directions on how to make 'critical learning' from the reading of these books. The reader must make marks in the margin (if the books 'be your own') of significant passages, 'and when you shall meet with any thing parallel, compare them together'. For those passages of rare import, Dodwell suggested, 'note them in paper books prepared for that purpose'. From these acts of reading and note taking, a scholar might build an armoury of citations and references to establish a particular account of the primitive church. Reading was done, then, with 'design and observation' which thus avoided the dangers of 'confusion and distraction': the paper note books became the place for observing and comparing evidence, and ultimately to 'exercise your own conjectures concerning what is singular, and worthy of special observation'.³⁰ From these acts of marginal annotation were built the infrastructure of cultural authority.

Thomas Barlow (d. 1691), sometime librarian of the Bodleian, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, and ultimately Bishop of Lincoln, a man of established authority and known learning also advanced a bibliographically sophisticated work of scholarly advice which was published posthumously as *De studio Theologiae, or Directions for the choice of Books in the study of Divinity* (Oxford, 1699). The 'choice of books' was the key issue as a means to coming to knowledge of the *lumen scripturae* and *theologia revelata*: 'considering the text itself, and the true meaning of it' was the central injunction. Starting from a close reading of Scripture, collated with concordances, commentaries and lexicons, the reader ought to make a careful collation of all the sources. Recommending specific critical editions of the Old and New Testaments, replete with a full apparatus of parallel texts, interlinear notes, annotated variations, Barlow saw that 'criticism' provided the reader with important

²⁶ 'catalogue' 110.

²⁷ In the *Early English Books Online* edition of the work, the catalogue has been marked with crosses by entries, indicating presumably those which had been read or consulted; manuscript remarks on pages 123, 124, make additional bibliographical comments about editions of Cyprian and other works.

²⁸ 'catalogue' 116.

²⁹ Dodwell *Two Letters of Advice* 223, 229; it is worth noting that these heresiographers were exactly the texts Toland used to compile his catalogue.

³⁰ Dodwell *Two Letters of Advice* 232, 236-238.

material where 'we may (*uno intuito*) see what many learned Men say ... and then (by collation of them and others) judge which (or whether any) of their expositions be true'. Dividing true from false, in both scripture and patristic witnesses, was crucial. The testimonies of Nicephorus and Eusebius (in the right editions) were an important starting point to distinguishing canonical from apocryphal scripture. Caution was necessary however 'because there are (in the works of the Ancient Fathers, and Ecclesiastical writers) many apocryphal and spurious books, and tracts, which are indeed none of theirs, whose name they bear, it will necessary for a divine to know, and have some of those authors, who have writ *critica sacra* and censures of books, discovering the fraud or ignorance of those who have publish'd erroneous or heretical books'.³¹ Barlow thus supplied a bibliography that identified the principal works of controversial scholarship both Catholic and Protestant: indeed, read with the requisite care the 'honest and sober' works of some Popish scholars could be useful, but the general advice was a warning against 'popish editions'. Echoing the counsel of Dodwell the critical guard against fraud was comparison: 'you must collate editions and MS copies, and consult those Authors ... which have writ censures upon the works of Fathers and Councils'. Very often the best editions were those condemned by the Roman *indices expurgatorii*.³²

Knowledge was made, then, by reading and reflecting upon that reading. By such constant practice and 'with great application of mind', the text of Scripture and the fathers became 'imprinted on our minds'. The examination of 'such citations as he meets with; and see to what purpose their authority is urg'd on all sides' was the fundamental process for making conviction: tracing citations to sources and judging their meaning was a routine method for all those men with pretensions to learning.³³ The works of advice concerning study composed by Dodwell and Barlow were products of erudition: the *Bibliotheca parochialis* (1697, reprinted and expanded in 1707) was written by Thomas Bray (d.1730) anti-Romanist and one of the originators of the SPCK, for the encouragement of learning amongst the poorest curates in the country. Such was Bray's concern to propagate Christian knowledge, that his aim of establishing a modest library in each parish was reinforced by Parliamentary Statute in 1709 resulting in some eighty foundations. Central to Bray's purpose was the definition of minimum 'catalogue of books' which every parish clergyman ought to have access to. Acknowledging that other learned men had made lists of authors 'they would recommend to our use', Bray substantiated the claim that 'few or none seem to have adapted their catalogues to the *Proper* and *Immediate* business of a parish minister'.³⁴ Since the main function of the cleric was to 'draw forth the waters of life, both for his own and others benefit, from the Holy Scriptures', he needed to 'know the critical history of the original versions and various editions' of the Old and New Testaments. Concordances, lexicons, glossaries, sacred geographies and zoologies were all recommended.³⁵ As with scriptural texts, so with the Church fathers: the key was to distinguish the genuine from the spurious, or in other words 'to know the edition'.³⁶ Although aimed at the clerical foot-soldier, the works identified as suitable were erudite: Walton's polyglot, the writings of continental scholars like Capel, the Buxtorfs, and Richard Simon's textual criticism, were

³¹ Thomas Barlow *De Studio Theologiae* (1699) 1, 3, 5, 9, 15-17, 18-19.

³² Barlow *De Studio* 24-25, 32, 33, 66.

³³ See 'A Short Method for the study of Divinity' appended to Barlow *De Studio*, from a manuscript found in his study, 75, 77, 78-79.

³⁴ T. Bray *Bibliotheca Parochialis* (1697) 8.

³⁵ T. Bray *Bibliotheca Parochialis* (1707) Chap. VI, 76-145.

³⁶ Bray *Bibliotheca Parochialis* Chap. VII.

mentioned alongside the volumes of Selden, Ussher and Spencer.³⁷ For patristic learning the volumes of Sixtus Senensis' *Bibliotheca Sancta*, of Bellarmine, of Labbe, Du Pin and Grabe, were all noted. Specific editions of particular Fathers and ancient texts were mentioned as valuable or useful.³⁸ Patristic learning, and a detailed bibliographical understanding of the best texts, was a widely diffused knowledge. Such 'saving knowledge', as Bray termed it, was to be derived by clerics from books, and turned into effective catechetical material. Such was Bray's commitment to the dissemination of this knowledge that he proposed to create a ten volume folio 'universal bibliothèque' of 'the most necessary and useful books' to help the poor parish clergy 'the better to instruct their people'.³⁹ Learning and 'hard study' was a means for refurbishing the authority of the Church and converting the world to Christian truth. A lack of books created ignorance and immorality: 'where the priests lips cannot preserve, cannot procure knowledge, how should the people seek the law at his mouth?'.⁴⁰ Bray thus composed a *Bibliotheca Catechetica*, valued at about £5, which would satisfy the basic requirements of a learned ministry.⁴¹

English patristic learning was sophisticated and comprehensive. There were traditions and routines for the identification and citation of the Church fathers. Works like those of Casaubon, Dodwell, Barlow and even Bray, directed a readership to a corpus of books that were available in original languages, in critical editions, in translations, and in digested form in a number of compilations. A premise of this bibliographical culture was the ambition of 'knowing the edition', of distinguishing genuine from spurious witnesses. Increasingly in the 1680s and 1690s, the means for participating in this sort of erudition, was made more facile by the production of progressively more powerful literary tools for analysing and organising such patristic knowledge. Two of the most effective providers of such resources were, first the French scholar Louis Ellies Du Pin 'Doctor of the Sorbonne and Regius Professor of Philosophy in Paris, who despite his Roman Catholicism was a popular author in translation, and William Cave, sometime Chaplain to Charles II, and Dean of Windsor. Both men produced enormous folio volumes of bibliographical guidance to the early Christian writers: although very little of these volumes were 'original' erudition, they did synthesize and digest vast quantities of learning into easily accessible material. In works like *A Compleat History of the Canon and writers of the Books of the Old and New Testament* (1699), *A New History of Ecclesiastical Writers* (1692, 3 volumes) and *A Compleat Method of Studying Divinity* (1720) Du Pin, and his English translator (William Wotton) aimed to provide a comprehensive survey not only of all of the sources for early Christianity, but also of the history of learning about those sources. As the subtitle of one volume indicated, the work would provide 'An abridgement and catalogue of their works, their various editions, and censures DETERMINING the GENUINE and SPURIOUS'. Declarations of careful revision, improved notes and remarks, reassured the reader of the credit and erudition on display. The character of the Sorbonist did not intrude on that of the historian in Du Pin's case, so the 'great use of Books of this kind, is, to form an idea in the minds of those that read them, of that unaffected piety and zeal which inspired the primitive Christians'. Such volume might either 'incite' the reader to further research ('to draw from the Fountains in

³⁷ Bray *Bibliotheca Parochialis* 75-84.

³⁸ Bray *Bibliotheca Parochialis* esp. 149-161.

³⁹ T. Bray *An Essay* (1703) iv-vi.

⁴⁰ Bray *An Essay* 4, 5, 6.

⁴¹ Bray *An Essay* 17-23; interestingly, the list included Dodwell's *Two Letters of Advice* and Bray's own *Bibliotheca Parochialis*.

larger Quantities') or for those less learned 'to take what they read upon trust'.⁴² Du Pin's ambition was to provide a compact 'library' that surpassed previous collections being no mere digest but a comprehensive attempt to give an account of genuine, lost and forged works. The form of the work was to be set out as a 'catalogue', 'so that any man may see at first sight, which edition is most used, and ought to be most valued'. The method of the catalogue would deal with the history of the work, the context, the style, an abridgement of its contents and a judgement of its value, and a commentary upon the best editions. Tables were included to summarise such material: critical annotation was provided as 'illustrations and proofs of the things that I asserted in the Text'. Indeed Du Pin spent some time justifying the style and format of his annotations, which were neither marginal (for fear of distracting the reader) nor placed at the end of the volume ('because generally most men do not look so far, and so never mind them'). A system of reference by letter would 'conduct the reader, and yet not detain him long from the text'. The annotation accrued authority to the work and established the 'rules of criticism' used by the author: Du Pin encouraged those 'but indifferently skilled in these matters' to pass over his annotations, but at the same time insisted that 'those, that have a mind to examine carefully what I have written, to read them along with the Text, because I have often barely asserted several things in the Text, that are justified and proved in the notes'.⁴³ The premise of such a work was that the act of citation and annotation made authority: it 'justified and proved' assertions. The product of this learning was ultimately reified into various 'tables' that schematised the critical assessments of early writers and texts into lists of genuine and forged, apocryphal and canonical. The trajectory from the compacted discussion in the main text, substantiated by dense annotation and reference, to the clarity of the tables, indicates the procedures for making knowledge.

In *A Compleat History of the Canon and Writers of the Books of the Old and New Testament* (1699) Du Pin underlined that his work contained no new discoveries but only 'collected together what others have said, and to have set that in as clear a light as possible'. Having averted the charge of plagiarism, Du Pin worked through a careful survey of scriptural and apocryphal texts, examining the extant manuscripts, printed editions and critical reception of each work. Of particular relevance for Toland's catalogue is Chapter VI 'Of the Apocryphal Books of the new Testament' which divided the non-canonical material into two types: 'some of them are the works of orthodox writers, and have nothing of harm in them: others are writings forged by hereticks, to authorise their errors'. Surveying material from the letters of Abgarus to the Valentinian Gospel of Truth, Du Pin examined the same titles and works that Toland did in his catalogue. The dynamic of Du Pin's text is driven by the concern to distinguish spurious from genuine: Eusebius was imposed upon in his opinion of Abgarus' letters; the several letters attributed to the Virgin Mary 'are rejected by all the world, so that there is no need to prove them spurious'; the 'false gospels forg'd by hereticks' were never 'cited with any credit by the ecclesiastical writers. Their style, quite different from the Apostolical simplicity, and the doctrine contrary to that of the Apostles, is a sufficient evidence of their spuriousness'. In other places Du Pin refused to transcribe testimonies because the material was so ridiculous 'that it would be a time lost to give you the transcript of it'.⁴⁴ The point to be made here is that the

⁴² L. E. Du Pin *A new history of Ecclesiastical Writers* (London, 1692) 3 volumes, 'Advertisement concerning this translation'.

⁴³ L. E. Du Pin *A new history of Ecclesiastical Writers* 'Author's Preface' i, iii-iv, v-vii, viii.

⁴⁴ L. E. Du Pin *A Compleat History of the Canon and Writers of the Books of the Old and New Testament* (1699) 120, 121-122, 123, 125, 126, 128.

form of Toland's catalogue was not either innovative or unique, but deliberately engaged with a widespread discursive practice.

The production of critical editions of both scriptural and patristic texts which were both 'learned' and authentic, but also useful resources for the making of institutional authority in the Church. At one level this pursuit of learning could be published in the form of William Cave's *Tabulae Ecclesiasticae* (London 1674, reprinted Hamburg 1676) which simply gave a chronological list of Church writers, age by age, up to the sixteenth century, indicating their names, status and dates. As noted above, William Cave, composed one of the more important collections of writings on the history of the primitive Church, and on the history of the Apostles. He also published two massive works of historical bibliography, which unlike his more populist works, were composed in Latin. In his *Chartophylax Ecclesiasticus* (1685) he made a catalogue of ecclesiastical writers from the birth of Christ to the seventeenth century, 'scriptores dubii a certis, supposititii a genuinis, non-extantes a superstitibus distinguuntur'. Providing a system of abbreviations to indicate the status of texts and their editorial location, the work was (and is) an indispensable work of reference, useful for identifying sources and authors cited by other contemporary works of learning. A clear and comprehensive index directs the reader to short entries on an author which provide dates, titles of texts, and 'best' bibliographical details. Cave's *Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Historia Literaria* was a much more prestigious folio work published in 1687 (a pirated copy was published in Geneva, 1705). Despite its typographical grandeur, its extended prolegomena which discussed the 'regulae criticae ad discernenda genuina SS Patris opera necessariae', the work was essentially a massive bibliographical resource for making a route through the corpus of patristic learning. Such works were important for enabling some common perception of the parameters of such erudition: without works like Cave's the process of checking citations, and collating different editions, would be much more unstructured.

At the other extreme of patristic learning were the primary research and editorial endeavours of a man like Johann Grabe (d. 1711) who made dozens of volumes of manuscript collations of Scriptural and patristic texts some of which resulted in printed publications, but most of which had a closed private circulation amongst his fellow scholars and friends.⁴⁵ Grabe was a scholar of immense erudition and international connections: his correspondence indicates an intimacy with many of the leading biblical and patristic scholars of the continent.⁴⁶ In England, Grabe was associated with the circle of scholars dominated by John Mill, and then by the fellows of Christ Church, Oxford where he became Chaplain. Although he included in his circle of intimates, leading non-jurors like Dodwell, Robert Nelson and George Smalridge, he was also friendly with Whig figures like Bishop Lloyd and supporters of the Hanoverian interest. His major printed works were the *Spicilegium Patrum* and editions of Justin Martyr and Irenaeus (all between 1698 and 1702), and a critical edition of the *Codex Alexandrinus* between 1707 and 1709. Beyond the preparation of such textual editions, Grabe was concerned to research and authenticate with precision the authentic liturgical and doctrinal practise of the early Church. After his

⁴⁵ Grabe's manuscript remains are detailed in Coxe *Bodleian Quarto Catalogue* I, and Madan *Summary Catalogue of Western Mss* III nos. 9755-65. Details of Grabe's life and work can be seen in G. Every 'Dr Grabe and his manuscripts' *Journal of Theological Studies* 8 (1957) 280-292; G. Thomann 'John Ernst Grabe (1666-1711): Lutheran syncretist and Anglican patristic scholar' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 43 (1992) 414-427.

⁴⁶ See MS 23 in Coxe, which lists Grabe's exchanges with men like Montfaucon, Fabricius, Olearus and others.

death, Grabe's manuscripts became a collective resource for the non-juring affinity around George Hickes, some passing from hand to hand, others being prepared for posthumous publication. The nature of these manuscript volumes illustrates the central themes of collation and annotation that defined the nature of patristic erudition: copies of his own works (the *Spicilegium* and the editions of Irenaeus and the *codex Alexandrinus*) were 'revised, and corrected in many places, with large additions'.⁴⁷ Grabe's work set out to defend 'pure ancient Christianity' against the abuses of both Roman Catholic and Reformed abuses: scribal works against Popish idolatry, doctrinal corruption and Petrine authority, were composed side by side with arguments against Socinian anti-Trinitarianism, and liturgical impiety.

Although Grabe had clear sacramental sympathies his opinions were determined by his perception of the status and authenticity of the surviving testimonies. His hostility to the projects of William Whiston was based upon his insistence that the Clementine Constitutions had been interpolated by Arian editors. Again his controversy with Whiston was conducted on the grounds of scholarly techniques: his collation of various copies of the manuscripts of the constitutions in Oxford and Vienna showed that 'it was a piece of patchwork'. Grabe was liberal with the results of his researches, sending to many in the commonwealth of learning his notes and collations to advance their own projects.⁴⁸ Any attempt to suborn his reputation to false projects was resisted furiously, as the case of Whiston exemplifies. According to Grabe, Whiston had claimed in private and in public that Grabe was 'nearly of his mind about the Constitutions of the Apostles'. This was untrue. Having embarked upon a ten week examination of the manuscript sources, especially the 'Arabick manuscripts', Grabe exposed Whiston's faulty opinion that they were an 'ancient sacred book of our religion'. To Grabe, it seemed unlikely that Whiston had the linguistic competence to appreciate that the texts were simply translations from the Greek Clementine Constitutions. To confirm the accuracy of his opinions, Grabe reproduced, in parallel columns with annotation and cross-reference, extracts from the manuscripts establishing the various internal contradictions, lacunae and anachronisms. Grabe confirmed, with some exasperation one imagines, that he had passed his transcriptions from Vienna and the Bodleian on to Whiston, 'that by the help of them he might plainly see the error and vanity of his opinion'.⁴⁹

Grabe's diligence in collecting the testimonies of Christian antiquity, orthodox and heretical, was the foundation of his learning. Comparison and examination 'the one by the other' laid the grounds 'to form a right judgement of both'. Making a comprehensive collection of canonical and apocryphal texts similarly was thought to contribute to making a 'more exact knowledge of the scripture, and the determining the true sense of some controverted passages'. As Hickes insisted, in any area of controversy Grabe used his learning to determine his communion, 'to examine what might be said on both sides'. His 'method' was to compile 'collections of testimonies' from the Fathers and subsequent sources 'which he could meet with either printed, or in manuscript, by his diligent searching of libraries'. Grabe took nothing in matters of religion upon trust, 'or upon implicite faith, but was for bringing them all to the

⁴⁷ See George Hickes 'A Discourse, wherein some account is given of the Learned Doctor' prefaced to J. Grabe *Some instances of the Defects and Omissions in Mr Whiston's Collection of Testimonys* (London, 1712) iii-v.

⁴⁸ Hickes 'A Discourse, wherein some account is given of the Learned Doctor' xvii, xxii, xxiv-xxv.

⁴⁹ J. Grabe *An essay upon two Arabick manuscripts of the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1711) 1, 2, 3-4, 7-9, 60-62, 70.

Test, and comparing them with the originals'. This sifting, and comparison, of witnesses even determined the way he took notes upon 'loose papers' so that 'the same might be afterwards by him digested, and then transcribed': continuing the work of his father against the Socinian arguments of Christopher Sandius over the status of passages in *John*, Grabe employed this incremental method to produce a massive collection over the course of twenty years concerning the Trinity.⁵⁰ The point of Grabe's forensic research was both to provide the basis for his own conviction, but also an authoritative resource that could be safely used by others. These concerns were reflected in the format of the critical editions of Justin, Irenaeus and the Septuagint. The title page of the edition of Justin indicated the many previous editions collated, corrected, emended and annotated. The main body of the text delivered the work in parallel columns of Greek and Latin with only the minimum of footnoting: the cross-references, emendations and identification of Biblical and secular textual materials were placed at the end of the volume. The edition of Irenaeus' *Contra omnes Haereses* was a very sophisticated piece of textual scholarship reproduced in a typographically complex form. Prefaced by a lengthy prolegomena and discussion and display of the testimonies for the life and work of Irenaeus, the main text was composed of three layers of text and annotation. The parallel Greek and Latin text was underpinned by two layers of textual notes of various readings and annotation to the different versions. This dense, cross-referenced, infrastructure of scholarship established the authenticity of the main patristic text: the powerful language of antiquity and emendation ('textus Graecic partem haud exiguam restituit; Latinum versionem antiquissimam è quatuor MSS codicibus emendavit') reinforced the authority of the volume. Textual form and scholarly reputation conspired to make a powerful resource. Accurate transcription, careful emendation, and pious research established the value of the edition of the *codex Alexandrinus*: as Grabe proudly noted 'Haec ipsa est Graeca scriptura, quam S. Apostoli eorumque successores in Ecclesia legerunt'.⁵¹

III

The language of the *corpus* of scholarly works on early Christian sources, whether scriptural or patristic emphasised the authenticity of the sources. It was John Toland's objective in works like *Christianity not mysterious* (1696), *Nazarenus* (1718) and most powerfully in his scribal work on the Christian canon to corrode the cultural authority of revelation. The most effective way of examining his engagement with the status of revelation, and the cultural procedures for establishing their public authority can be achieved by a close reading of his *Amyntor* (and its subsequent editions). The origins of the work are to be found in Toland's editorial recovery of the republican canon of political writers in the later 1690s.⁵² In exposing the fraud, Toland had made an off-hand remark about the number of supposititious works ascribed to Christ and the apostles.⁵³ In response to the furious rejoinder to this assertion, Toland wrote *Amyntor* (1699) which expanded his brief remarks into an eighty page

⁵⁰ Hickes 'A Discourse, wherein some account is given of the Learned Doctor' lxi, lxxi, lxii-lxiii. Hickes claimed that Grabe passed on some of this material to John Mill.

⁵¹ J. Grabe *Septuaginta Interpretum* (Oxford, 1707) Dedication, vi.

⁵² For further discussion see, Champion 'Introduction' *John Toland. Nazarenus* (Oxford, 1999).

⁵³ O. Blackall *A sermon preached before the Honourable House of Commons at St Margaret's Westminster, January 30th 1698/9* (London, 1699) 16-17.

commentary.⁵⁴ In the following March, this work was condemned by Convocation.⁵⁵ The printed 'Catalogue' of 1699 was not however the final form of the work. It went through a series of revisions and expansions the last being published in Desmaiseaux's collection of 1726. Despite not being published, the work was in circulation in scribal form on the continent and in England between 1710 and 1720.⁵⁶

The work was a simple bibliographical catalogue of apocryphal texts. It worked through the supposed literary remains of Christ and the apostles and disciples. Between the first version in the late 1690s and the final circulation Toland clearly worked hard expanding his account and including the results of more up to date scholarship. It is possible to track the exact nature of these expansions, inclusions and additions by collation of the texts, and so to illustrate some of the techniques of Toland's working practices. The later version then was much expanded by inclusion of commentary, additional references, and citation of passages of testimony. That Toland took the opportunity to revise, correct and re-order his first attempt is also apparent from the collation. Systematic identification of the sources that Toland used to furnish his footnotes and references, shows that he used many of the staple works found in clerical libraries like Marsh's.⁵⁷ Over the course of the first two decades of the eighteenth century Toland devoted considerable energies to interpolating orthodox patristic and Biblical scholarship into his work. The dense thicket of references to orthodox erudition is testimony to his wide reading and skill at mimicking the routines of scholarly citation. The orthodox ambition of distinguishing 'ad fontes genuinos Christianae Antiquitatis discernendos a supposititiis' was a central rhetoric that Toland intended to exploit.⁵⁸ The increasing literary sophistication of orthodox editions encouraged and enabled readers to be confident in the textual integrity and consequent authoritative status of both scriptural and associated patristic works. Toland's intention was to compromise the confidence of this distinction between spurious and authentic, and between supposititious and canonical. This subversion of the system of authentication and citation was conducted simultaneously in a substantive and covert manner. Toland, of course, denied that *Amyntor* had any corrosive purpose against the established canon of Scripture. He simply intended to discuss 'supposititious' works ascribed to Christ and the Apostles and to distinguish the genuine from the forged. This entailed a careful re-consideration of the concepts of 'spurious' and 'supposititious'.

Many 'spurious pieces' were forged by 'more zealous than discreet Christians, to supply the brevity of the Apostolic memoirs', others were made by Heathens and Jews 'to impose on the credulity of many well dispos'd Persons, who greedily swallow'd any book for Divine revelation that contain'd a great many Miracles'. There

⁵⁴ See J. Toland *Amyntor* (1699), 'A catalogue of books mentioned by the Fathers and other ancient writers, as truly or falsely ascrib'd to JESUS CHRIST his Apostles, and other eminent Persons' 20-41.

⁵⁵ See E. Cardwell *Synodolia* II (Oxford, 1842) 705-706.

⁵⁶ See J. A. I Champion "'Manuscripts of mine abroad": John Toland and the circulation of ideas, c1700-1722' *Eighteenth Century Ireland* 14 (1999) 9-36. It is possible then to argue that there were at least three forms of the catalogue: Catalogueⁱ, the extract contained in *Amyntor* dated 1699; Catalogueⁱⁱ, the probably French language version sent to Eugene of Savoy and Arminius; Catalogueⁱⁱⁱ, the text in circulation between 1718-1720 and reproduced in the collected works.

⁵⁷ For examples of how he used two of these texts (by Grabe and Fabricius) see Champion *Republican Learning*.

⁵⁸ The quote is from Spanheim

was another category of 'suppos'd writings of certain Apostolic men' which were 'read with extraordinary veneration': these apocryphal works (the Epistle of Barnabas, writings by Hermas, Polycarp, Clemens Romanus and Ignatius) Toland did not think genuine, despite the commonplace assumption of their spiritual value.⁵⁹ Such texts had been received by Rome and 'most Protestants'. As Toland noted 'the Church of England have particularly signalis'd themselves in their Defence ... by publishing the correctest Impression of them'. Astutely, Toland implicated the editorial endeavours of his contemporaries like Cave and Grabe in the practice of forgery. Toland's argument was simple: the orthodox assumption that the 'apocrypha' were reckoned 'as good as any part of the New Testament' was based upon the citation of such material by the early Church Fathers who paid the 'highest respect'. Toland reproduced (complete with referential footnotes) the evidences of this respect: Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Irenaeus, Eusebius all cited the 'apocrypha' as 'Canonical Scripture', even though in Toland's opinion the *Pastor of Hermas* was 'the silliest book in the world'.⁶⁰

There was a problem of consistency. Where was the boundary between canonical and apocryphal material? How was the evidence of patristic sources, which cited all sorts of works sometimes indiscriminately, to be used to establish this boundary. Sometimes even the textual evidences of the Church Fathers were themselves compromised by defective testimony. As he clarified, 'there is not one single book in the New Testament which was not refus'd by som of the Ancients as unjustly father'd upon the Apostles, and really forg'd by their adversaries'. Books of the New Testament (such as the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, *James*, the second of Peter, 2, 3 of *John*, the *Epistle of Jude*, and *Revelation*) had all at some time been 'plainly doubted by the Ancients'.⁶¹ Following Hobbes, Toland cited the evidence of the Council of Laodicea which established that the canon was not formed by revealed authority or inspiration but by human convention.⁶² Toland insisted that many of the more obscure texts like the *Preaching of Peter* might attract as many positive testimonies as book as the so-called canonical texts. Citing heretical sources like Celsus and the Manicheans he showed that profound criticisms could be made against 'the Genuiness of the whole New Testament'.⁶³ Questions about the canon were not as straightforward as the orthodox scholars had presented them. Toland, in response to these ambiguities, would leave 'all the world to judge for themselves, and to build what they please with those materials I shall furnish them'.⁶⁴

The furious reception Toland's *Amyntor* provoked indicates that he had struck a major controversial nerve. Works by Ofspring Blackhall, Samuel Clarke, John Richardson and Stephen Nye reviled both Toland's incompetence and inaccuracy. By forensic examination of his citations and a re-reading of the sources cited these scholars exposed Toland's scholarship to revision and ridicule. Here the powerful image of the author and responder poring over the same volumes to establish a pre-eminence of interpretative authority is illustrative of the spaces and processes of the making of cultural power.⁶⁵ Toland took little notice of such criticism however telling it was. He made no corrections in subsequent versions of his work. One possible

⁵⁹ *Amyntor* 42-44.

⁶⁰ *Amyntor* 44-46.

⁶¹ *Amyntor* 57-58

⁶² *Amyntor* 57.

⁶³ *Amyntor* 60-64, 65.

⁶⁴ *Amyntor* 66-67.

⁶⁵ See Champion *Republican Learning* (forthcoming) for details of this reception.

reason for this lack of concern about the damage to his reputation as a learned man, may have been the fact that his original intention was not simply to establish an intellectual or scholarly argument, but to disclose the various cultural procedure for making authority in such matters. The point of the catalogue may lie not simply in its content (which evidently had the capacity to antagonise orthodoxy) but in its inter-textual form. Stephen Nye had noted that although Toland claimed to have the issue of canonicity at his mercy, 'he saith, he will determine nothing, but suspend his judgement'.⁶⁶ This is an important insight. The form of Toland's catalogue compelled orthodox critics to engage in the intricacies of his footnotes and references. By posing a series of controversial attacks upon the textual and historical integrity of 'scripture', supported by what looked like authentic 'testimonies' from a series of patristic authorities, widely available in printed editions (many of which were made by his members of his orthodox audience) Toland ensured that his claims received attention.

That contemporaries continued to fear the threat of this 'scholarship' can be indicated by the repeated rejoinders long after the initial publication. The most substantial reaction can be seen in the important three volume work of the young dissenting scholar, Jeremiah Jones *A new and full method of settling the canonical authority of the New Testament* (1726-27). As a number of modern critics have noted that Jones' work on the canon remained a standard work well into the nineteenth century. In its form, of assessing the testimonies for the authenticity of works ascribed to Christ and the Apostles, it remained faithful to the work it attempted to destroy: whereas Toland compressed his material into perhaps fifty pages of print, Jones delivered a consideration of the texts and associated material in hundreds of pages. In effect, as Toland had re-written the standard 'catalogues' of apocryphal material found in the pious volumes of his contemporaries, so Jones re-drafted Toland's evidences into secure work. Jones posed the key question: 'What books are to be received as the Word of God?'. Providing a sensible and true answer was critical, especially in the face of the arguments of the 'celebrated catalogue' of Toland which 'presented us with the names of above eighty [texts], which he would have us receive with the same authority, as those we now do'.⁶⁷ That the Fathers had cited the apocrypha with the same authority as the canonical texts Toland 'labours hard to persuade us'. This labour had raised the question of whether such works should be venerated, and (a related implication) whether the historical date of the settlement of the canon was certain. The consequences of not resolving these issues were 'fatal and dangerous'. The rejection of authentic works, or the mistaken veneration of spurious texts, were both unacceptable. Sadly, Jones admitted (what Toland undoubtedly believed) that most Christians were destitute of active reasons for believing what they took to be the word of God: implicit faith rather than evidential assent made the authority of the word. For Jones, only rigorous evidence could supply certain assent: the better the evidence the stronger the conviction.⁶⁸

Jones set out to provide a methodical account of the 'evidence' to establish the canon. It was his assumption that although the true canon was established before the Council of Laodicea, the historical evidence to prove this was obscure. Attempting to reconstruct the record of this historical evidence was a better epistemological

⁶⁶ Nye *Historical Defence of the Canon* 20.

⁶⁷ J. Jones *A new and full method of settling the canonical authority of the New Testament* (1726-27) 2.

⁶⁸ Jones *A new and full method* 11, 16, 18-19.

means than relying either on Papal authority or enthusiastic inspiration. The 'testimony of the ancients' was both less problematic and more convincing: it was 'a question concerning certain matters of fact, that were about 1700 years ago. Whether such and such books were written by the persons under whose names they go'. This was not a question of inspiration, but authorship. As a question of 'plain fact', it was evident that the way to settle the issue was by the 'testimony of some, who either themselves knew the certain truth of the fact, or else received it from others who did'.⁶⁹ Literary scholarship was then an instrument of making conviction, especially for those unable to assess the 'original evidences'. Reconstructing the hermeneutic skills of the critic was intended to empower the learned with the means for making religious conviction. Diligence and impartiality could cultivate a form of 'human faith'. A primary part of this technology of making authority was establishing an agreed method for defining 'spuriousness' which rehearsed the standard humanistic techniques of identifying stylistic inconsistency, idiom and dialect, errors of chronology, and philological anachronism.⁷⁰ By applying these means in the second part of his work to each of the texts Toland had studied, Jones intended to undermine the scepticism implicit in the earlier work. Using the full range of (many of the same that Toland used) scholarly editions to authenticate his opinions, Jones gave a careful consideration of the surviving testimonies, correcting Toland's blunders and unfairness along the way. Particular attention was paid to Toland's assertions about material ascribed to Christ. Repeating much of the criticism of Nye and Richardson, Jones also denounced Toland's false learning, fabricated from non-existent references, cribbed sources and faulty editions.⁷¹

IV

It is clear from some of the points made by his critics that Toland probably laid claim to a broader learning than he possessed: he was expert at mining sources like Fabricius and Grabe for additional annotations and evidences. Sometimes he made mistakes, sometimes he plagiarised references from sources he had not seen. These were however common practices in the scholarship of the day. Surveying the *corpus* of patristic editions and collections from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, it is evident that much scholarship was incremental, building on the textual achievements of earlier editors. As Grafton has indicated in his study of the criticism of texts like Hermes and the Sibylline Oracles, and Hamilton on *2 Esdras*, there was a curious inertia in the reception of the exposure of fraudulent material. One means for coming to a more distanced appreciation of the status of Toland's work in the catalogues is to compare it with the resources of contemporary scholarship. Bruce Metzger, although he commented that most of the writing on the subject in the early eighteenth century 'is now so tiresome as to be almost unreadable', suggested that Toland's approach was innovative. Whereas most contemporary work was characterised by a 'solemn parade of authorities, the meticulous care with which every sentence, almost every clause of an adversary's work is refuted', Toland's work was more modern, 'you may agree with him or not, but at least you can read him with relative ease'.⁷² This suggests, again, that the form of Toland's work was as important as its content.

⁶⁹ Jones *A new and full method* 53-57, 64, 65.

⁷⁰ Jones *A new and full method* 87-92.

⁷¹ Jones *A new and full method* 237-239, 269-270, 390; note, (at 370) that Jones pointed out that the reference Toland gave on the Gospel of the Nazarenes had been lifted from the mis-printed reference given by Grabe in his *Spicilegium* p26.

⁷² B. Metzger *The Canon of the New Testament. Its origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford, 1997) 11-13, at 13.

Comparing Toland's authorities with the most recent collection on the Apocryphal New Testament edited by J. K. Elliott, is again instructive.⁷³ Although nearly three centuries of research separate the work of Toland and Elliott there is a close identity between the testimonies cited (from patristic sources) for the apocryphal literature. Most of the 'testimonies' from (for example) Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Epiphanius and Irenaeus cited by Toland in favour of works like the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, *The Preaching of Peter*, and the *agrapha*, are also used by Elliott as credible sources. Works like the *Gospel of Eve*, which might be suspected to be fabricated by Toland are referenced in Elliott by the same citation from Epiphanius (*adv. Haer.* 26. 2-3). This is, of course, not to impugn Elliott's work in the slightest. It is unsurprising, given the vast volume of patristic learning that Toland had access too, that there are sources in common. What the continuity of citations does suggest is further evidence of Toland's skill in attempting to appropriate such a powerfully credible resource. It is also interesting to note, that the same works that were critical of Toland's project (especially Fabricius and Jones) are considered credible textual sources for many of the more obscure apocryphal traditions.⁷⁴

At the heart of Toland's project was an attempted subversion of commonplace scholarly procedures of citation that took material form in collections like Marsh's library. Contemporaries were deeply unhappy with the standards of his transcriptions and referencing. It is a moot point whether his practice was simply slipshod or actively malicious. Bibliographical citation was both an epistemological and rhetorical transaction: it was both a claim to knowledge and an assertion of status within the community of scholars. The evidential, corroborative, documentary associations conjured by referencing were a powerful part of the rhetoric of persuasion in the period. Toland's repeated acts of citation were attempts to incorporate orthodox learning within his agenda: despite the disclaimer of the format, such references were an insidious attempt to persuade the reader, or at the very least an attempt to encourage the reader to pursue a course of textual examination. The subjectivity that Toland's critics detected in his scholarship was, of course, present in their own work too.⁷⁵ Describing the political topology of the printed page as a collection of sites for the articulation of a politics of interpretation, Derrida has argued that 'it is the footnote that conveys the main message, and the footnote that has the main chance of being read'.⁷⁶ In Toland's catalogues the text is overwhelmed by the references: the words of the catalogues are a series of directions to other books. Here, Toland was doing cultural and political work with another community's intellectual property: as de Certeau has put it he was 'living in another's space'.⁷⁷ As McKenzie has stressed, the physical form of a text 'might be read as in part effecting the meanings

⁷³ J.K. Elliott (ed) *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation based on M.R. James* (Oxford, 1993).

⁷⁴ Elliott notes (100), in the discussion of the Arabic infancy Gospels that the Arabic text upon which Sike's translation (1697) was made 'has since been lost'. The fact that Toland mentions another Latin text that went missing, raises a certain suspicion about the authenticity of the text.

⁷⁵ See B. Cronin *The Citation Process*; see also P. W. Cosgrove 'Undermining the text: Edward Gibbon, Alexander Pope, and the anti-authenticating footnote' in S.A. Barney (ed) *Annotation and its texts* (Oxford, 1991) 130-152.

⁷⁶ J. Derrida 'This is not an oral footnote' in Barney *Annotation* 192-205, at 194.

⁷⁷ A. Middleton 'Life in the Margins' in Barney *Annotation* 169.

they convey': the presence of references, whether marginal, footnoted or discursive, enhanced the authority of a work by gesture to other resources.⁷⁸

A measure of Toland's subtlety in using the resources of patristic editions can be illustrated by a close examination of the references he gave for particular titles. Just as Nye, Richardson and Jones detected his mistakes (quoting the wrong books, or non-existent chapters) so it is possible to 'check' his citations today, and perhaps reconstruct the experience of reading the catalogue. The most frequently cited work was Epiphanius' *Panarion* (or *against heresy*) which was used on over forty occasions. The standard edition was made by Denis Petau in two volumes (Greek and Latin) published in Paris, 1622 (reprinted in Cologne, 1682).⁷⁹ A collation of Toland's references with Petau's, and a modern, edition shows that Toland's references were in general accurate. That is that the citations existed, or worked: they identified passages in Epiphanius that discussed the texts, or at least mentioned such works. There were a small number of references that were simply inaccurate, or non-existent. The question of the accuracy of the citations also prompts some consideration of the 'meaning' of the act of citation: Toland's contemporaries complained that he failed to understand his sources, or indeed mistranslated their content. When Toland used Epiphanius as a 'testimony' for the existence of the various apocryphal texts, he was, of course, using a polemical work designed to refute the errors of heretics. Epiphanius' work is thus a 'prejudiced' source displaying its hostility to the writings of heretics: as a consequence most of the commentaries and accounts of the apocryphal writings are accompanied by a pejorative language. The works are 'forged', 'bogus nonsense and insanity', 'fabricated' and full of 'blasphemies'. Unsurprisingly, Toland gave no hint of such condemnation in his citations, since his purpose was to provide evidence, not of the compromised doctrinal status of the works, but of their existence. A similar exercise tracing Toland's citations from Eusebius' history of the church, suggests that he used such texts shorn of pejorative language.

Distilling 'evidence' of apocryphal writings from Epiphanius or Eusebius, regardless of the role those testimonies played in the larger rhetorical structure of those writers' work was to many contemporary clerics a corrupt and devious practise, but it is a strategy of historical enquiry embodied in a modern approach to such hereseriographical works.⁸⁰ It has been suggested that Toland, lifted much of his learning from Chapter 3 of Richard Simon's *Critical History of the Text of the New Testament* (1689). Indeed Simon made great use of similar patristic sources, and it is more than likely Toland used the work since he admired Simon's scholarship.⁸¹ Examining Simon's citation of Epiphanius shows however that, unlike Toland, he used it accurately both in lexical form and illocutionary intention, reproducing the anti-heretical thrust of the Church Father. As Simon commented, 'S. Epiphanius observes judiciously, that the design of these Gnosticks in publishing so many false books under such great names was to delude the simple'.⁸² Simon had been concerned in

⁷⁸ D.F. McKenzie 'Speech-Manuscript-Print' in Oliphant *New Directions*, 87-109 at 106.

⁷⁹ For this exercise I have used the edition of Petau's work republished in the *Corporis Haeresiologici* (ed) F. Oehler (Berlin, 1859) 4 volumes, and P. Amidon *The Panarion f St Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis. Selected Passages* (Oxford, 1990).

⁸⁰ Amidon's most recent edition of Epiphanius reproduces the historical evidence without Epiphanius' apologetic criticism.

⁸¹ Passages at 20 (on Christ) and 28 (On Xavier) are clearly the basis of similar statements by Toland in *Amyntor* and the catalogue.

⁸² Simon *Critical History* 22-23.

his prefatory remarks to reassure the reader of his scholarly integrity: sources were 'authentic records' and therefore must be treated with respect. Manuscripts ('I have cited none without reading them') were reproduced verbatim. Quotations from printed sources were given in the main text in precis 'following the sense only' because lengthy extracts could be 'tiresom'. For those who wished to examine the full details 'to avoid searching them in books ... we judged it convenient to put them at large at the bottom of the page in the proper languages of the respective authors'.⁸³ The authority of Epiphanius was consequently cited to establish the existence, but not authority, of 'false gospels, false acts, false apocalypses or revelations'. Examining such counterfeited works indicated exactly how fabulous and absurd they were: 'we cannot read them without being at the same time convinced of their falsity'.⁸⁴ Toland clearly disagreed. Simon's intention was to reinforce the authority of the Church (via the assessment of evidential tradition) as the instrument of settling the canon; this was unsuitable to Toland's objectives, so even with Simon's text it is possible to see Toland, citing in a particular manner that privileged the lexical rather than authorial meaning.

The suggestion then that Toland was a plagiarist of other people's learning is an unjust accusation. As the examinations of his use of standard editions, contemporaries' work, and of the Church Fathers, has suggested, Toland certainly exploited both the form and content of other authors' work. His use however was not with the intention of passing off other learning as his own. By making use of the routines for the display of erudition, Toland used other works, instrumentally as fodder to make a platform for his own remarks. Toland made *Amyntor* and the catalogue into a subversive text not simply by the substantive arguments advanced against the canon of scripture, but by the passive subterfuge of encouraging and undermining the commonplace reading strategy. As the advice books of men like Barlow, Casaubon and Bray, insisted readers should check references and sources to confirm the truth of the citation. Toland led his readers to any number of volumes, ancient and modern, those expecting confirmation would have been disappointed. Erudition was a collaborative, community base project as the circle around men like Grabe and Dodwell establishes: the subversive inter-textuality of Toland's catalogue could only work when enmeshed in an infrastructure of clerical learning and publishing. His implication, subornation and appropriation of orthodox scholarship exposed the subjectivity of the citation process: by leading his readers to texts that they would discover contradicted his own purposes he was divulging the nature of citation not simply as a 'factual' process, but as a rhetorical matter. Erudition made cultural authority by making persuasive facts by the act of collation and citation. In the catalogues there is both a residue of Toland's own reading habits, and evidence of his engagement with the world of learning: processes of cultural absorption and manipulation are evident in the same text. Recently Marcus Walsh, in advancing an account of the development of English secular editing in the eighteenth century, has suggested that the practice grew out of the practices of Protestant biblical hermeneutics.⁸⁵ Toland's engagement with a variety of editorial and scholarly projects places him at the centre of such a development. Many of the assumptions about the dominance of authorial intention, and the accompanying paratextual apparatus of commentary, references and annotation, were already mainstream to

⁸³ Simon *Critical History* iv, vi.

⁸⁴ Simon *Critical History* 21, 26.

⁸⁵ M. Walsh *Shakespeare, Milton and eighteenth century literary editing* (Cambridge, 1997); see also idem 'Profession and authority: the interpretation of the Bible in the Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' *Literature and Theology* 9 (1995) 383-398.

the routines of patristic scholarship. Toland's skill in working within and against this practices is evident in the reception his work provoked.

Toland was then accomplished in the routines of *ars critica*: his learning was neither profound nor shallow but instrumental. His forensic use, and examination, of the critical and cultural procedures for establishing authentic attribution, was bent to the purpose of attacking the clerical monopoly of interpretative authority. The description of this undertaking as 'trojan', is apt in the sense that it underscores the insidious quality of such apparently innocuous material. The virulent quality of the work was evident from its hostile reception in England between 1700 and the late 1720s. One of the products of his assault, ironically, was a more secure and learned defence of the canon and apocrypha in the form of works like that of Jones. Evidence of the efficiency of the method can be seen specifically in the use Voltaire made of Toland's 'borrowed learning' in his *Collections d'anciens évangiles* (1769). Derived from the form developed by Toland, Voltaire compiled a study of some fifty apocryphal texts, many of them translated from Fabricius' editions. As the marginal notes in books from his library indicates, Voltaire paid forensic attention to the scholarly testimonies and evidences for these materials. It would have brought an enormous sense of irony to Toland, if he had been aware that Voltaire's work (so strongly determined by his own labours) became the standard edition of the apocrypha in France until the time of Migne.⁸⁶ Clerical learning like that captured in Marsh's, despite Toland's unwelcome intentions, remained robust throughout the eighteenth century.

⁸⁶ See B. Schwarzbach (ed) *Collections d'ancien évangiles* in *Complete works of Voltaire* 69 (Oxford, 1994) 1-247. See idem 'Sacred' 336.