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Expanding the Narrative: The Reception of Ignatius of Antioch in Britain, ca. 1200–1700

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Recent studies of the letters of Ignatius of Antioch have helpfully located seventeenth-century Ignatian scholarship in its ecclesial and political context. Of particular importance, these new works have demonstrated that seventeenth-century British analysis of the genuineness of Ignatius's letters coincided with debates about British ecclesial government and the English Civil War. This essay contributes to such studies by expanding the discussion in three ways. The first two ways extend the study of Ignatian reception backward from the seventeenth century. First, the article observes that the study of the middle recension (the earliest form of Ignatius's letters) can be found in late medieval English theological writings and manuscripts. Second, it addresses how, simultaneously, four Ignatian letters which record a correspondence between Ignatius, John the Elder, and the Virgin Mary were read in Britain. These letters highlight Ignatius's piety and apostolic links. Finally, this essay widens the scholarly narrative of seventeenth-century Ignatian studies by observing that seventeenth-century interpreters drew on late medieval citations of Ignatius and that they were concerned with Ignatius's piety as well as the interpretive puzzles in his letters.

Keywords: Ignatius of Antioch; James Ussher; John Milton; John Wyclif; Robert Grosseteste

One task of the historian is to take the available historical evidence and construct a story which he or she thinks best explains what can be known. For intellectual historians, this process focuses on tracing the history of scholarship on a particular topic. In the case of the historiography of Ignatius of Antioch, intellectual historians have increasingly identified seventeenth-century Britain as a significant point. During this time, scholars were actively debating the authorship and date of Ignatius's letters and distinguishing between the middle and long recensions. The seven letters of the middle recension date to the second century and are available in Greek, Latin, Coptic, Armenian, Syriac, and Arabic, while the long recension likely originated in the fourth century and can be found today in Greek and Latin. The middle recension is the earliest form of Ignatius's letters extant and it continues to form the basis for both studies of Ignatius in the second century and ongoing debates about the authenticity of Ignatius's letters.

References to the seventeenth-century study of Ignatius have become increasingly commonplace in recent years.¹ Specifically, scholars such as Hugh de Quehen, Allen

¹For example William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 1–2; Bart D. Ehrman, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers*, Loeb Classical Library 24 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard

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Brent, Timothy D. Barnes, and Stephanie Cobb have rightly observed that the discussions in seventeenth-century Britain regarding the authorship and date of Ignatius's letters established the contours of how said discussions continued in the future.² These studies have highlighted the ways in which seventeenth-century scholarship not only translated Ignatius's letters into modern European languages but also distinguished between the middle and long recensions of Ignatius's letters with increasing clarity. In addition, David Lincicum and Clare Rothschild have used the seventeenth-century volumes housed in the Bodleian Library in their recent essays on the origin of the term Apostolic Fathers (*patres apostolici*).³

The recent increase in stories about seventeenth-century Ignatian research should remind researchers of the long track record that Ignatian studies has. A long view of the discipline has the benefit of contextualizing current Ignatian scholarship and likewise demonstrates how connections between the academy, the church, and the state have impacted the study of this small collection of second-century letters. In the seventeenth century, views on Ignatius were closely correlated with one's views on episcopacy in the Church of England and Church of Scotland. If one approved of episcopacy, they were likely to marshal arguments that the Ignatian letters are authentic. If one sided with the Puritans, the opposite was probably the case. Perhaps the clearest example of this phenomenon is to be found in the controversy between Archbishop James Ussher and John Milton that ended with Ussher's publication of the middle recension in 1644.⁴ The ways in which episcopacy, Puritan reforms in the church, and Non-Conformist challenges to monarchy are intertwined provide a complex background against which to study how Ignatius's letters were understood.⁵ This background is made all the more complicated when one notes the political links to this controversy which are most visible during the English Civil War. The state of the seventeenth-century British church, as well as the political environment in which Ussher's publication appeared, must surely factor into any full-length study of how Ignatius of Antioch has been received by later readers.⁶

University Press, 2003), 1:210–211; Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007), 171–172; and Paul Hartog, "A Multi-Faceted Jewel: English Episcopacy, Ignatian Authenticity, and the Rise of Critical Patristic Scholarship," in *Defending the Faith: John Jewel and the Elizabethan Church*, ed. Angela Ransom, Andre Gazal, and Sarah Bastow (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018), 263–283. I am grateful to Prof. Hartog for sending me an advance copy of his contribution.

²Hugh de Quehen, "Politics and Scholarship in the Ignatian Controversy," *Seventeenth Century* 13, no. 1 (1998): 69–84; Allen Brent, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Martyr Bishop and the Origins of Episcopacy* (London: T and T Clark International, 2007), 1–13; Timothy D. Barnes, "The Date of Ignatius," *Expository Times* 120, no. 3 (December 2008): 119–121; and L. Stephanie Cobb, "Neither 'Pure Evangelic Manna' nor 'Tainted Scraps': Reflections on the Study of Pseudo-Ignatius," in *The Apostolic Fathers and Paul*, ed. Todd D. Still and David E. Wilhite (London: Bloomsbury T and T Clark, 2017), 181–185.

³David Lincicum, "The Paratextual Invention of the Term 'Apostolic Fathers,'" *Journal of Theological Studies* 66, no. 1 (April 2015): 139–148; and Clare K. Rothschild, *New Essays on the Apostolic Fathers* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 7–33.

⁴James Ussher, *The Judgement of Doctor Rainoldes* (London: Downes, 1641); James Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae* (Oxford: Hall, 1644); and John Milton, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy* (London: Underhill, 1641)

⁵See especially de Quehen, "Politics and Scholarship," 69–84.

⁶For recent reception-historical studies of Ignatius, see Sergio Gerardo Americano, "Ignazio d'Antiochia nel 'Pandette della Sacra Scrittura' di Antioco di San Saba (CPG 7842–7844): Tradizione manoscritta," *Augustinianum* 57, no. 1 (June 2017): 191–208; Sergio Gerardo Americano, "Ignazio d'Antiochia nel

Ignatian scholars are quite right to highlight episcopal controversies and political tensions when recounting earlier studies of the authenticity of Ignatius's letters. In light of the similarities in the narratives about seventeenth-century Ignatian scholarship—particularly the recurring theme of episcopacy in Ignatius's letters and in seventeenth-century British ecclesiological discussions, the consistent speculation regarding the authenticity of the letters, and the enduring context of complicated political environments—one may also inquire whether there is more to this story. This essay aims to further the ongoing discussion about the Apostolic Fathers happening in seventeenth-century Britain by showing that seventeenth-century concerns were not wholly new in British theological discussion. This article explores how scholars at the time studied Ignatius's letters by expanding the categories appealed to in seventeenth-century scholarship. While seventeenth-century debates about the date and genuineness of Ignatius's letters have captured the attention of more recent scholars and will continue to play an important role in this article, I will show that a concern for doctrine and piety can also be found in seventeenth-century scholarship. In addition, I move beyond the seventeenth century to show that these concerns did not arise *de novo* after the Reformation. While there is a distinctly seventeenth-century tinge to the questions about episcopacy, the other concerns about piety, the genuineness of Ignatius's letters, and the right textual basis upon which to build arguments have British roots stretching back to at least the thirteenth century.

With this in mind, this essay first explores the citations and manuscripts of the Latin translation of what is now known as the middle recension in England during the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries. It next examines evidence for the spread of discussions centered on the correspondence between Ignatius, John the Elder, and the Virgin Mary, along with the ethical and theological issues therein. The final section investigates various studies of Ignatius in the seventeenth century to show that interpretive issues and pietistic concerns accompany those of authenticity and episcopacy.

I. The Latin Translation in Britain, ca. 1200–1500

The earliest recorded citations of the middle recension of Ignatius's letters in Britain date to the thirteenth century, particularly to the writings of Robert Grosseteste. This first section begins with an analysis of Grosseteste's commentaries, exploring how he referred to Ignatius's letters and whether he was involved in their translation into Latin. The section then addresses how citations of Ignatius's letters appear a century later in the controversies relating to John Wyclif's Eucharistic teaching—both in Wyclif's writings and in the responses of John Tissington and William Woodford. An additional key piece of evidence for how Ignatius's letters were known in late-medieval Britain raised in this section comes from manuscripts that contain Latin translations of the middle recension. Examining the place of Ignatius's letters within these manuscripts (and within their authors' thinking more broadly) enables one to see that there was a tradition in Britain of reading the Ignatian corpus in a form that is similar to the letters that are studied today.

'Pandette della Sacra Scrittura' di Antioco di San Saba (CPG 7842–7844): Testo critico e commento," *Augustinianum* 57, no. 2 (December 2017): 541–567; Paul R. Gilliam, *Ignatius of Antioch and the Arian Controversy* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); and Matthew Kuhner, "Ignatius of Antioch's Letter to the Ephesians 19.1 and the Hidden Mysteries: A Trajectory of Interpretation from Origen to Thomas Aquinas," *Journal of Theological Studies* 68, no. 1 (April 2017): 93–120.

As mentioned above, citations of Ignatius's letters in the works of Robert Grosseteste (circa 1175–1253) are the earliest evidence of attention to the middle recension in Britain.⁷ Grosseteste was involved in Franciscan education and was probably the first chancellor at University of Oxford.⁸ He was elected to the Lincoln episcopacy by the canons of Lincoln Cathedral in 1235. In addition to his scientific and theological writings, Grosseteste took an interest in the works of Aristotle and pseudo-Dionysius in Greek. He translated and commented on them while also translating the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.⁹ At least two citations of Ignatius occur in his commentaries on pseudo-Dionysius, which were likely completed while he was bishop of Lincoln.¹⁰

In his commentary on pseudo-Dionysius's *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, Grosseteste cites Ignatius in support of pseudo-Dionysius's understanding of the Eucharist. The first citation occurs at the beginning of his commentary on chapter three.¹¹ After translating the Greek text of pseudo-Dionysius into Latin, Grosseteste comments on the reason that pseudo-Dionysius discusses baptism before the Eucharist.¹² This forms an introduction to Grosseteste's commentary on chapter three. Before commenting directly on the text of pseudo-Dionysius, Grosseteste writes: "For, according to the blessed Ignatius, the Eucharist is the flesh of our savior Jesus Christ who suffered for our sins, which was raised by the benevolent Father."¹³ This citation is from Ignatius's *Smyrneans* 6.2,¹⁴ but this form is not found in the long

⁷Although any discussion of the Latin middle recension is indebted to Ussher's study, this section only reaps the results of Ussher's study to analyze how Ignatius was utilized in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. Discussion of Ussher's work will follow in section 3.

⁸Daniel A. Callus, "The Oxford Career of Robert Grosseteste," *Oxonienisia* 10 (1945): 42–72.

⁹For further biographical information, see James McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 3–48; James McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3–75; and Richard W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

¹⁰S. Harrison Thomson, *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste: Bishop of Lincoln, 1235–1253* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 55–58.

¹¹The commentary on this portion of chapter 3 is found in Candice Taylor Hogan, "Robert Grosseteste, Pseudo-Dionysius, and Hierarchy: A Medieval Trinity; Including an Edition of Grosseteste's Translation of, and Commentary on, 'De ecclesiastica hierarchia,'" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1991), 455–467.

¹²See pseudo-Dionysius, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* 2.3.6–7.

¹³Hogan, "Robert Grosseteste, Pseudo-Dionysius, and Hierarchy," 457: "Est enim eucharistia secundum beatum Ignacium caro salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi pro peccatis nostris passa quam benignitate Patre resuscitavit."

¹⁴The numbering of Ignatius's letters follows Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 254. In Ehrman's text, this section of Ignatius's letters is numbered as *Smyrneans* 7.1 (Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:302). The middle recension contains seven letters: *Ephesians*, *Magnesians*, *Trallians*, *Romans*, *Philadelphians*, *Smyrneans*, and *Polycarp*. Ehrman identifies the author of the middle recension as Ignatius and his discussions about the second-century letters revolve around the middle recension. On the authorship of Ignatius's letters, see Jonathon Lookadoo, *The High Priest and the Temple: Metaphorical Depictions of Jesus in the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 15–22. The long recension contains thirteen letters: *Mary of Cassobola to Ignatius*, *Ignatius to Mary of Cassobola*, *Trallians*, *Magnesians*, *Tarsians*, *Philippians*, *Philadelphians*, *Smyrneans*, *Polycarp*, *Antiochenes*, *Hero*, *Ephesians*, and *Romans*. Ehrman identifies the author of the long recension as pseudo-Ignatius. The text of the long recension can be found in J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers: Revised Texts with Introductions, Notes, Dissertations, and Translations*, part 2, *S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp*, 2nd ed. (London: MacMillan 1889), 3:125–273 (hereafter, citations of Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers* all refer to the 3 volumes of part 2).

recension.¹⁵ The text that Grosseteste had before him seems to have been different from the versions that are more widely attested in European manuscripts at this time.¹⁶

Grosseteste's second citation of Ignatius is found in his commentary on pseudo-Dionysius's *De divinis nominibus*. Regarding Ignatius, Grosseteste declares: "Then he ardently loved Christ because he also chose to be handed over to the evil punishments of the devil so that he may obtain him [God]."¹⁷ Grosseteste's citation corresponds to Ignatius's *Romans* 5.3. While Grosseteste's quotation is paraphrastic and the difference between the middle and long recension is negligible at this point, Grosseteste's interest in Ignatius's letters would have an impact on both fourteenth-century English theologians and Ussher in the seventeenth century.¹⁸

Before leaving Grosseteste, one further matter is worthy of discussion. It concerns Grosseteste's role in making the Ignatian epistles known. James Ussher and J. B. Lightfoot argue that Grosseteste either made his own translations of Ignatius's letters or that the translations which he employed were made by someone in his circle.¹⁹ Several pieces of evidence support this position: Grosseteste's commentaries on pseudo-Dionysius appear to be the earliest evidence for the Latin translation of Ignatius; he was interested in learning Greek; he maintained friendships with John of Basingstoke and Nicholas Graecus; he translated the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, and various pseudo-Dionysian writings; and the fact that the version of Ignatius's letters in Grosseteste's writings does not appear to have been cited outside of England until the publication of Ussher's study in 1644.²⁰ However, scholars who have reviewed this evidence, such as S. H. Thomson, have found the arguments for Grosseteste as the translator of Ignatius's letters to be circumstantial and ultimately unpersuasive.²¹ Thomson proposed instead that Grosseteste translated only the correspondence between Ignatius, John, and Mary. Fundamental to Thomson's argument is the observation

¹⁵The long recension reads: "καταμάθετε οὖν τοὺς ἑτεροδοξοῦντας, πῶς νομοθετοῦσιν ἄγνωστον εἶναι τὸν πατέρα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, πῶς ἄπιστον ἔχθραν μετ' ἀλλήλων ἔχουσιν. ἀγάπης αὐτοῖς οὐ μέλει, τῶν προσδοκωμένων ἀλογοῦσι, τὰ παρόντα ὡς ἐστῶτα λογίζονται, τὰς ἐντολάς παρορωσίν, χήραν καὶ ὄρφανὸν περιορώσιν, θλιβόμενον διαπτύουσιν, δεδεμένον γελῶσιν." The middle recension of this text is as follows: "καταμάθετε δὲ τοὺς ἑτεροδοξοῦντας εἰς τὴν χάριν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τὴν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἔλθοῦσαν, πῶς ἐναντίοι εἰσὶν τῇ γνώμῃ τοῦ θεοῦ. περὶ ἀγάπης οὐ μέλει αὐτοῖς, οὐ περὶ χήρας, οὐ περὶ ὄρφανου, οὐ περὶ θλιβομένου, οὐ περὶ δεδεμένου ἢ λελυμένου, οὐ περὶ πεινῶντος ἢ διψῶντος, εὐχαριστίας καὶ προσευχῆς ἀπέχονται, διὰ τὸ μὴ ὁμολογεῖν τὴν εὐχαριστίαν σάρκα εἶναι τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τὴν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν παθοῦσαν, ἣν τῇ χρηστότητι ὁ πατὴρ ἤγειρεν."

¹⁶On the manuscripts of the long recension, see Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:109–134.

¹⁷Grosseteste, quoted in Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae*, cxli: "Ita vehementer amavisse Christum, quod optavit etiam tradi malis punitioibus diaboli, ut ipso frueretur."

¹⁸The long recension reads: "καὶ κόλασις τοῦ διαβόλου ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἐρχέσθω, μόνον ἵνα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπιτύχω," while the middle recension contains: "κακαὶ κολάσεις τοῦ διαβόλου ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἐρχέσθωσαν, μόνον ἵνα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπιτύχω."

¹⁹For what follows, see Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae*, cxli–cxlii; and Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:76–79. See also Theodor Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochien* (Gotha: Perthes, 1873), 550–552.

²⁰On Robert Grosseteste's knowledge of Greek and interest in the church fathers, see Neil Lewis, "Robert Grosseteste and the Church Fathers," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1:197–229; and James McEvoy, "Robert Grosseteste's Greek Scholarship: A Survey of Present Knowledge," *Franciscan Studies* 56 (1998): 255–264.

²¹Thomson, *Writings of Robert Grosseteste*, 59–61. See also F. X. Funk, *Die Echtheit der ignatianischen Briefen* (Tübingen: Laupp, 1883), 143–144.

that Grosseteste is mentioned as Ignatius's translator in only one manuscript in Tours from the thirteenth century.²² Grosseteste was present in southern France for the Council of Lyons in 1245. The manuscript in question is introduced by the scribe in two lines: "Master Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, translated these letters from Greek to Latin."²³ Since the manuscript contains only four spurious letters supposedly written between Ignatius, the Apostle John, and the Virgin Mary (discussed further in section two), Thomson concluded that Grosseteste authored these letters and did not translate the middle recension.

Three things may be said in response to Thomson's reasoning. First, it is important to recall that the letters cited by Thomson are located at the end of the manuscript. It is possible that leaves are missing that may have included other Ignatian letters.²⁴ Second, placing this weighty judgement on the evidence of only one manuscript leads to an argument that is at least as inconclusive as the circumstantial arguments offered by Ussher and Lightfoot. Finally, dismissing the arguments of Ussher and Lightfoot as circumstantial does not account for the cumulative weight that these circumstantial arguments can hold when taken together. As Richard W. Southern argues: "The evidence that he also translated the genuine letters is circumstantial, but (as Ussher and Lightfoot recognized) very strong."²⁵ Although it is not certain that Grosseteste himself translated the middle recension, it appears most plausible that he or someone from his circle was involved in its translation.

Ignatius's letters also had an impact on controversies surrounding the Eucharistic teachings of John Wyclif in the fourteenth century. Based in large part on his philosophical realism, Wyclif thought that transubstantiation was an untenable way to understand the Eucharist.²⁶ He did not deny the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist but argued against transubstantiation by maintaining that the bread and wine remained bread and wine throughout the service of the Eucharist.²⁷ Whereas a common belief in the late medieval Roman Catholic Church claimed that the bread and wine were annihilated in their substance so that the substance of the Eucharist could become the transubstantiated body of Christ,²⁸ Wyclif argued that it was absurd to consider the accidents—or outward appearances—of the bread and wine to have a substance other than bread and wine.²⁹ Thus, according to Wyclif's reasoning, the bread and wine must remain as such even while Christ is present in the Eucharist. Wyclif also argued that transubstantiation is not taught in scripture, outlining his

²²Thomson says that the manuscript is located in the Bibliothèque municipale and refers to it as *Tours 247*. Thomson, *Writings of Robert Grosseteste*, 61.

²³*Tours 247*, fol. 484: "Has epistolas transtulit de Greco in latinum Magister / Robert' grossa testa lincolniensis episcopus."

²⁴Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:235.

²⁵Southern, *Robert Grosseteste*, 311n27. Similarly, Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochien*, 551.

²⁶On Wyclif's understanding of the Eucharist, see Stephen Penn, "Wyclif and the Sacraments," in *A Companion to John Wyclif*, ed. Ian C. Levy (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 249–272; and Ian C. Levy, *John Wyclif's Theology of the Eucharist in Its Medieval Context* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2014).

²⁷For a helpful distinction between real presence and transubstantiation, see Anthony Kenny, *Wyclif* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 81–82.

²⁸G. R. Evans, *John Wyclif: Myth and Reality* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2005), 186–187.

²⁹For additional philosophical arguments, see Kenny, *Wyclif*, 83–86.

position in a sermon on John 6:56.³⁰ For Wyclif, Christ was really present in the Eucharist, but his presence was symbolic rather than substantial.

Wyclif appealed to ecclesial authority and enlisted Ignatius as one of seven witnesses in support of his Eucharistic position. In his *Confession (Confessio Magistri Johannis Wycliff)*, Wyclif describes Ignatius as contemporary with the apostles and as one who received the perception (*sensus*) of the Lord from and with them.³¹ He refers to Grosseteste's citation of *Smyrneans* 6.2 and follows it by quoting Ignatius directly: "The sacrament,' he says, 'or the Eucharist, is the body of Christ.'" ³² By placing the word *sacramentum* at the beginning, Wyclif specified the referent of *eucharistia*, which in Greek could refer to both the Eucharistic celebration and the practice of thanksgiving. He also placed the word "body" (*corpus*) in his confession, whereas Grosseteste had included the word "flesh" (*caro*). Wyclif further abbreviated Grosseteste's citation in two ways. First, he altered the terms used to identify Jesus so that "our Savior Jesus Christ" was shortened to "Christ." Second, he excluded the relative clause that follows Grosseteste's citation of Ignatius. In so doing, the emphasis of Wyclif's reference to Ignatius falls squarely on how he thought Ignatius understood the Eucharist—namely, as Christ's body.

John Tissington and William Woodford both referred to Ignatius in their responses to Wyclif at the end of the fourteenth century. As a member of an Oxford committee that condemned Wyclif's understanding of the Eucharist in favor of transubstantiation, Tissington wrote his *Confession (Confessio Magistri Johannis Tyssyngton de ordine minorum)* to oppose Wyclif's.³³ In laying out what the Eucharist is, Tissington refers to earlier ecclesial witnesses that include Ignatius and pseudo-Dionysius. He highlights Ignatius's apostolic connections, and his place as a disciple of John receives special mention.³⁴ Like Grosseteste and Wyclif before him, Tissington cites from *Smyrneans* 6.2, which he specifies is the first (*prius*) letter in the collection that is available to him. However, his citation is longer than the others and includes much of *Smyrneans* 6.2–7.2:

"Consider," he says, "how the *anthropomorphi*, that is, those heretics contrary to the mind of God, withdraw from the communion and prayer of the saints because the Eucharist is not confessed to be the flesh of the Savior, which the Father raised in his benevolence. Those who speak against this gift and scrutinize it die. It is

³⁰John Wyclif, "Sermo LXI," in *Iohannis Wyclif: Sermones*, ed. Iohann Loserth (London: Wyclif Society, 1888), 2:453–463. See also Evans, *John Wyclif*, 187.

³¹John Wyclif, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Wycliff*, in *Fasciculi zizaniorum Magistri Johannis Wyclif cum Tritico*, ed. W. W. Shirley (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1858), 115–132.

³²The relevant passage runs as follows: "Primus est B. Ignatius apostolis contemporaneus, qui ab illis, et cum illis accepit a Domino sensum suum. Et recitate eum Lincolnensis super Ecclesiastica Hierarchia, Cap. 3. Sacramentum, inquit, vel eucharistia est corpus Christi." Wyclif, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Wycliff*, 126–127.

³³John Tissington, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Tyssyngton de ordine minorum*, in Shirley, *Fasciculi zizaniorum Magistri Johannis Wyclif cum Tritico*, 133–180. On the 1381 controversy between Wyclif and Tissington, see Evans, *John Wyclif*, 189–191.

³⁴Tissington, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Tyssyngton*, 136: "Inter quos illis praecipue videtur esse credendum qui fidem immediate ab ipsis Apostolis didicerunt. Unde B. Ignatius martyr, qui fuit B. Johannis apostoli discipulus, qui supra pectus Domini in coena recubit, quid sit eucharistia, in epistola qua prius, tradere nititur."

fitting,” he says, “to withdraw from such people and not to speak with them in public or in private.”³⁵

Tissington drew from *Smyrneans* 4.1 when he employed the term *anthropomorphi* to refer to his opponents.³⁶ Through its usage, he links his opponents to the belief that God has a body before concluding that no one who has a sound mind will deny that the Eucharistic bread and wine symbolize the body of Christ. Referring to Jesus’s words in the Synoptic Gospels,³⁷ he says that it is good to believe that these elements are (*esse*) Christ’s body and blood, which the *anthropomorphi* say is bread and wine by nature (*in natura*).³⁸

Tissington next articulates what the Eucharist is not, and he turns again to patristic testimony. As in the earlier citation, Ignatius and pseudo-Dionysius are the first two witnesses that Tissington calls upon. Tissington refers to the third epistle in his collection, which is *Ephesians*:³⁹ “All of you,” he says, ‘gather together to obey the bishop and presbytery, breaking one bread, which is medicine—its antidote is not to die.’”⁴⁰ The citation comes from Ignatius’s *Ephesians* 20.2, and although the difference between the middle and long recensions is slight, the presence of the infinitive “to obey” suggests Tissington had a version similar to the middle recension.⁴¹ Tissington interpreted Christ as the antidote that is brought together by Christ’s flesh, blood, and deity so that these elements “destroy and kill death itself.” He saw Ignatius saying much the same thing in *Romans* 7.3: “I do not,” he says, ‘desire physical bread, but I want God’s bread, which is from the family of David, and I desire the cup of his own blood.’”⁴²

In his articles against Wyclif, Woodford likewise links Ignatius and pseudo-Dionysius as early witnesses.⁴³ As an Oxford Franciscan, Woodford takes up Ignatius in his reasons for condemning Wyclif’s view of the Eucharist, emphasizes that he was a contemporary of the apostles, and quotes Ignatius’s *Romans* 7.3. Woodford uses the same text cited by Tissington.⁴⁴ Based on this citation, Woodford concludes, disagreeing with Wyclif, that Ignatius did not want physical bread but bread that was

³⁵Tissington, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Tyssyngton*, 136: “Considerate,” inquit, ‘qualiter anthropomorphi, i.e. illi haeretici contrarii sententiae Dei, a communione et oratione sanctorum recedunt, propter non confiteri eucharistiam carnem esse salvatoris quam Pater sua benignitate resuscavit, contradicentes huic dono, perscrutantes moriuntur. Decens est,’ inquit, ‘a talibus recedere, et nec communiter nec seorsum cum eis loqui.’”

³⁶Ignatius writes (in *Smyrneans* 4.1) that he is guarding the Smyrneans “from wild beasts who are in human form” (ἀπὸ τῶν θηρίων τῶν ἀνθρωπομόρφων; *a bestiis anthropomorphiis*).

³⁷Matt. 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; and Luke 22:15–20. See also 1 Cor. 11:23–25.

³⁸Tissington, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Tyssyngton*, 137.

³⁹Tissington, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Tyssyngton*, 151: “Unde B. Ignatius martyr, epistola sua III quam scripsit ad Ephesios.”

⁴⁰Tissington, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Tyssyngton*, 151: “Omnes,” inquit, ‘vos convenitis in obedire episcopo et presbytero unum panem fragentes, qui est pharmacum antidotum eius quod est ad non mori.’”

⁴¹The Greek and Latin middle recensions each include an infinitive at this point (εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν; *in obedire*), while the long recension contains a participle (ὑπακούοντες; *obedientes*).

⁴²Tissington, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Tyssyngton*, 152: “Non,” inquit, ‘delector pane corporali, sed panem Dei volo, eius qui est ex genere David, et potum volo sanguinem ipsius.’”

⁴³William Woodford, *De causis condemnationis XVIII articulorum damnatorum Johannis Wyclif*, in *Fasciculus rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum*, ed. E. Browne (London: Chiswell, 1690), 190–265.

⁴⁴Woodford, “De causis,” 191: “Sexta causa est, autoritas Ignatii martyris, qui fuit contemporaneus apostolorum, qui in epistola sua ad Romanos, loquens de sacramento eucharistiae, sic scribit: ‘Non,’ inquit, ‘delector pane corporali, sed panem Dei volo eius qui est ex genere David, et potum volo sanguinem ipsius.’”

“truly and identically the body of Christ.” Woodford next makes reference to pseudo-Dionysius’s *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* 3. He understands pseudo-Dionysius to be a contemporary of Ignatius and the apostles and refers to Grosseteste’s exposition of pseudo-Dionysius.⁴⁵ Woodford cites Ignatius again in opposition to Wyclif’s purported claim that the sacrament has multiple names.⁴⁶ Like Tissington, Woodford dismisses Wyclif’s claims by referring to him as an anthropomorphus, which draws on language from *Smyrneans* 4.1. Ignatius, who Woodford regards as a disciple of the apostle John, provides Woodford with resources against Wyclif: “‘Consider,’ he says, ‘how the anthropomorphi draw away from the communion and prayer of the saints because they have not confessed the Eucharist to be the flesh of the Savior.’”⁴⁷ Like Grosseteste, Wyclif, and Tissington, Woodford cites Ignatius’s *Smyrneans* 6.2 in order to stress his point about the nature of the Eucharist. By doing so, he felt he had effectively made his point that the Eucharist is the real flesh of Christ in part by—like Wyclif and Tissington before him—appealing to early Christian testimony.

The quotations of Ignatius used by these four authors demonstrate that Ignatius’s letters were read in England long before the seventeenth century. Moreover, at least in the case of Grosseteste, the letters were used by some in a shorter version than the more widely circulated long recension. The repeated citations of *Smyrneans* 6.2 in the controversy surrounding Wyclif’s view of the Eucharist further indicate Grosseteste’s importance in popularizing Ignatius’s letters.⁴⁸ The theological use to which the letters were put is also worthy of note. Although references to their opponents as “anthropomorphi” are repeated by Tissington and Woodford, it is Ignatius’s forceful statements connecting the Eucharistic elements to Jesus’s flesh and blood that provide the most material for theological reflection in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Indeed, while Ignatius’s status as a martyr is also mentioned,⁴⁹ his Eucharistic statements take precedence over his reflections on suffering, Christology, or ecclesial order. Ignatius’s significance stems from his connections to the apostles as one who lived at the same time as them. He and pseudo-Dionysius are found together not only in Grosseteste’s commentary but also in the writings of Tissington and Woodford.⁵⁰ Both figures are believed to be contemporaries with the apostles, and Ignatius is even said to be a disciple of John.⁵¹

A final piece of evidence regarding the knowledge and use of Ignatius in late medieval Britain comes in the form of manuscript evidence for the Latin translation. Two

Ex quibus pater, quod sanctus Ignatius non voluit esse in sacramento panem corporalem, sed pane illum, qui est vere et identice corpus Christi.”

⁴⁵Woodford, “De causis,” 191.

⁴⁶Woodford, “De causis,” 195. One name that Woodford mentions to illustrate Wyclif’s purported argument comes from Paul’s letters: “panis quem frangimus.” See 1 Cor. 10:16.

⁴⁷Woodford, “De causis,” 195: “‘Considerate,’ inquit, ‘qualiter anthropomorphi a comunione et oratione sanctorum recedunt, propter quod non habent confiteri eucharistiam carnem esse salvatoris.’”

⁴⁸See the references to Grosseteste’s commentary on pseudo-Dionysius’s *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* 3 in Wyclif, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Wyclyff*, 126–127; and Woodford, “De causis,” 191.

⁴⁹Tissington and Woodford both call him “*Ignatius martyr*.” Tissington, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Tyssyngton*, 136; and Woodford, “De causis,” 191.

⁵⁰The writings of pseudo-Dionysius and Ignatius are also found together in *Caiensis* 395 and *Vaticanus* 859 (Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:111) and are published together in Jacobus Faber Stapulensis, *Ignatii undecim epistolae* (Paris: Higmannum and Hypolium, 1498).

⁵¹Tissington, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Tyssyngton*, 136 (“*Ignatius martyr, qui fuit B. Johannis apostoli discipulus*”); and Woodford, “De causis,” 195 (“*Ignatius, discipulus Johannis apostoli*”).

manuscripts are of particular importance. The first, *Montacutianus*, is a parchment manuscript from the library of Bishop Richard Montague. Ussher first called attention to the manuscript in the mid-seventeenth century,⁵² but it had disappeared by the time Smith edited Ignatius's letters in 1709.⁵³ Although the interpretive glosses of *Montacutianus* are now only available in the collations of Ussher and the annotations that he published, they are particularly noteworthy. They suggest that the copy was made by someone who knew at least some Greek and who hailed from England. For example, the copyist clarifies that "made [you] wise" (*sapientes fecit*) in Ignatius's *Smyrneans* 1.1 "is one word in Greek; in Latin, *sapientificavit*."⁵⁴ That the copyist came from England is suggested by the English gloss given to "anvil" (*incus*) in Ignatius's *Polycarp* 3.1: "*Incus* is a craftsman's instrument; in English it is called *anfeld* [anvil]."⁵⁵ The order of the letters in *Montacutianus* as well as in *Caiensis* 395—the other manuscript in which the middle recension of the Latin translation is found (which will be discussed further in the next paragraph)—is as follows: *Smyrneans*, *Polycarp*, *Ephesians*, *Magnesians*, *Philadelphians*, *Trallians*, *Mary Cassabola to Ignatius*, *Ignatius to Mary Cassabola*, *Tarsians*, *Antiochenes*, *Hero*, and *Romans* (in the martyrdom narrative).⁵⁶ The placement of *Smyrneans* and *Ephesians* here matches the order in Tissington's collection.⁵⁷ Since *Montacutianus* has disappeared, it is difficult to determine its age with certainty. However, the annotations and the similar order to that of Tissington's work suggest that the manuscript could date from an early time in the transmission of the Latin middle recension in England.

The other independent attestation to this Latin translation of Ignatius's letters is *Caiensis* 395. Ussher and Lightfoot report that there is a note on the flyleaf of the manuscript indicating that it was given to Caius College by Walter Crome on the Feast of Saint Hugo in 1444.⁵⁸ The manuscript contained the letters of Ambrose and pseudo-Dionysius, the letters of Ignatius, and a final letter of Ambrose.⁵⁹ According to Lightfoot, the entire manuscript is written in Crome's handwriting, which would indicate that it dates from the fifteenth century.⁶⁰ The manuscript was copied twice. One of these copies is known as *Caiensis* 445. Lightfoot reports that the other copy was used by Ussher to collate his edition and was deposited in the library of Dublin University.⁶¹

⁵²Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae*, cxli–cxlii.

⁵³Thomas Smith, *S. Ignatii epistolae genuinae* (Oxford: E Theatro Sheldoniano, 1709), praefatio, p. 5: "I was unable to fish out anything by investigating where it might then be found" (Ubi iam reperendus sit, ne investigando quidem expiscari possum).

⁵⁴Ussher, *In Polycarpianam epistolarum Ignatiarum syllogen annotationes* (Oxford: Hall, 1644), 46: "Unum est verbum in Graeco; Latine, sapientificavit." See also Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:84. The Greek text of the middle recension reads "τόν . . . σοφισάντα."

⁵⁵Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae*, cxlii: "Incus est instrumentum fabri; dicitur Anglice anfeld." See also Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:76.

⁵⁶Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae*, cxli.

⁵⁷Tissington, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Tyssington*, 136, 151.

⁵⁸Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii et epistolae*, cxli; and Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochien*, 552. Lightfoot notes that Ussher's reference to "Magistrum Walteram Brome" is wrong. The copyist's name is Crome. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:83n2.

⁵⁹Funk, *Echtheit der ignatianischen Briefen*, 145.

⁶⁰Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:81.

⁶¹Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:82–83. On *Caiensis* 395 and the Latin translation, see Pierre-Thomas Camelot, *Ignace d'Antioche, Polycarpe de Smyrne: Lettres, Martyre de Polycarpe*, 4th ed. (Paris: Cerf, 1968), 16–17; and Richard B. Lewis, "Ignatius and the 'Lord's Day,'" *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 6, no. 1 (1968): 45–47.

From the thirteenth century, therefore, there was a tradition in Britain of reading Ignatius's letters in a form that is closely related to those studied today. In addition to the study of Greek texts by Grosseteste and others in his circle, the controversy around Wyclif's view of the Eucharist served as a key forum in which Ignatius's letters were studied. Alongside these citations, two manuscripts of the Latin translation survived until the seventeenth century, only one of which remains extant. By expanding one's search for Ignatius beyond the confines of what are today known as the middle and long recensions, however, one discovers another way in which Ignatius was read in Britain before the English Reformation.

II. The Correspondence with John and Mary

Although the Greek long recension contains thirteen letters,⁶² some Latin manuscripts of Ignatius's letters contain seventeen. The discrepancy arises from four additional letters that were likely written in Latin during the medieval period.⁶³ Two are purportedly from Ignatius to Apostle John, one from Ignatius to Mary, and the last professes to be a response from Mary to Ignatius. These four letters place Ignatius at a surprisingly early date in Christian history and enhance his authority by making him a correspondent with John and the Virgin Mary. Although no explicit indication is given as to this pseudo-Ignatius's purported location when composing the letters, they express a desire and plans to travel to Jerusalem to visit John and Mary which suggests that he was intended to be in Antioch.⁶⁴ From there, the journey would not be overly difficult. If so, although the forger and later readers would know of Ignatius's martyrdom, the letters are ostensibly written before Ignatius's arrest when he was bishop of Antioch. While it is unclear exactly where the letters originated, the fact that they are known only in Latin strongly suggests that they were composed in Western Europe. That these letters were used in Britain during the late medieval period is suggested by the presence of manuscripts of them located in British libraries.⁶⁵ The references to Ignatius as a disciple of John in the works of Tissington and Woodford may also indicate that the letters were present in Britain at this time.⁶⁶

Although Ignatius's view of the Eucharist was brought to bear on the controversy surrounding Wyclif, Eucharistic practice is not mentioned at all in pseudo-Ignatius's letters to John and Mary. Instead, these letters portray Ignatius as an eager disciple who wants to see or hear from those who knew Jesus. He writes to John that he is pained by John's delay in coming to see him. Accordingly, he urges John to hurry (in epistle 1).⁶⁷ He tells John

⁶²Twelve letters are written by Ignatius. One is written to Ignatius by Mary of Cassabola.

⁶³Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:233–237; and Alistair C. Stewart, *Ignatius of Antioch: The Letters* (Yonkers, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2013), 255.

⁶⁴The "Ignatius" who authored the Latin correspondence between Ignatius, John, and Mary is a different forger from the "Ignatius" who compiled the long recension of Ignatius's letters in Greek. "Pseudo-Ignatius" has been used to describe the authors of both collections in order to avoid lengthy attributions in the text, such as "the forger/interpolator of the long recension" or "the author of the medieval Ignatian correspondence."

⁶⁵Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 3:11–12.

⁶⁶Tissington, *Confessio Magistri Johannis Tyssington*, 136; and Woodford, "De causis," 195.

⁶⁷Ignatius's epistles are numbered in accordance with the Latin text in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 3:69–72 and the English translation in Stewart, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 255–257. Thus, epistle 1 refers to Ignatius to John 1, Epistle 2 designates Ignatius to John 2, epistle 3 is a reference to Ignatius to Mary, and epistle 4 denotes Mary to Ignatius. Hereafter, "epistle" is abbreviated "ep."

that he wants to see the other saints, especially Mary and James (expressed in epistle 2), while the women in his congregation desire to meet Mary (according to epistle 1). When writing to Mary, pseudo-Ignatius describes himself as a “neophyte and disciple of your John.”⁶⁸ He asks her about Jesus, expressing his amazement at the things he has heard about Jesus and a desire to learn more. He suggests (in epistle 3) that he is writing to her because she was so close to Jesus and thus knew his secrets. Pseudo-Ignatius’s request comes from a pious desire to hear from those who knew Jesus in the hopes of learning more about him.

While the forged letters offer descriptions of Ignatius and include requests for their supposed recipients to add a level of realism, they also provide thorough descriptions of these recipients. In addition to being Ignatius’s teacher, John is described as the holy elder in the two letters addressed to him (epistles 1 and 2). Although he is portrayed as having been delayed in coming or responding to Ignatius, the reader does not know the nature of this delay because no response from John is proffered by the forger. John knows Mary, and the women in Ignatius’s circle desire to come to John so that they can meet her (according to epistles 1 and 4). This part of pseudo-Ignatius’s letter implies knowledge of the exchange recorded in John’s Gospel between Jesus, Mary, and John while Jesus was on the cross (John 19:26–27). Nor is John the only apostle to be mentioned by name; pseudo-Ignatius also expresses a desire to see James. He has heard that James is like Jesus in his life and way of speaking. Indeed, according to epistle 3, James is said to be so much like Jesus that he has the same physical features as Jesus and seeing him is rumored to be like seeing Jesus’s twin brother from the same womb.

Yet pseudo-Ignatius and those the forger represents as being with him most want to see Mary (according to epistle 1). The forger writes that they have heard reports about Mary but do not believe all of them. Salome’s report, discussed in epistle 1, is an exception. After staying with Mary for five months, Salome states that Mary is full of grace and virtue, remains cheerful in the midst of persecution, and does not complain about poverty. According to Salome, Mary rejoices when troubled, sympathizes with those who are downtrodden, and “is the mistress of our new religion.”⁶⁹ Her description of Mary’s devotion to the humble utilizes language that is also found in the Magnificat (found in Luke 1:46–55). The Lukan Mary praises God because God “exalts the humble.”⁷⁰ Salome declares that Mary “is devoted to the humble and is humbled more devotedly than the devoted.”⁷¹ In another letter to John, pseudo-Ignatius refers to Mary as the one who bore the God of gods.⁷² Likewise, when he writes to Mary, he addresses her as the Christ-bearer.⁷³ Pseudo-Ignatius wants to visit Mary because of her proximity to Jesus and awaits her reply along with the neophytes in his congregation.

In addition to confirming that what he learned from John about Jesus was true, the response from Mary (epistle 4) produced by the forger urges Ignatius to cling to those things and to hold to his Christian profession more firmly. Although Mary addresses Ignatius as her beloved fellow disciple and speaks of herself as the humble servant of

⁶⁸Ignatius, Ep. 3: “Neophitum Johannisque tui discipulum.”

⁶⁹Ignatius, Ep. 1: “Nostrae novae religionis est magistra.”

⁷⁰Luke 1:52: “Exaltavit humiles.”

⁷¹Ignatius, Ep. 1: “Humilibus quidem est devota et devotis devotius humiliatur.” It is also worth noting that Ignatius writes that Mary “is magnified by all” (*omnibus magnificatur*), while the Magnificat opens with Mary declaring, “My soul magnifies the Lord” (*magnificat anima mea Dominum*): Ignatius, Ep. 1; and Luke 1:46.

⁷²Ignatius, Ep. 2: “Deum deorum peperit.”

⁷³Ignatius, Ep. 3: “Christifera.”

the Lord, she makes clear that Ignatius's behavior and life should match his claim.⁷⁴ This iteration of Mary thus encourages Ignatius to hold to a proper belief in Jesus and to orient his life around this confession. She also promises to come with John for a visit in order to see Ignatius and those who are with him. In the meantime, the Mary of the letter tells Ignatius that he should stand firm in the faith and not be disturbed by the persecution around him.

The four letters exchanged between Ignatius, Mary, and John have little value for the study of the historical Ignatius or for the interpretation of the middle recension.⁷⁵ Nor is it clear when or where these letters originated. However, the presence of these letters in late medieval manuscripts in England, as well as the repetition of the tradition that Ignatius was John's disciple, indicates some knowledge of these letters in Britain around roughly the same time as the evidence for the middle recension explored in section one. While the letters are forgeries, they reflect an implicit interest in dating Ignatius's letters (and through them, his life) to an early date—early enough to interact with those who knew Jesus while he was on earth. The forged epistles link Ignatius to the apostles, which corresponds to how Ignatius was used by Wyclif, Tislington, and Woodford. Yet this imagined correspondence with John and Mary shows no interest in Ignatius's understanding of the Eucharist. Rather, it shows Ignatius having a pious desire to know more about Jesus from those who knew him in the flesh. In response, the medieval incarnation of Mary instructs him to live a life that fits with his confession of Jesus. The letters also evince an interest in the lives of other saints. James the Just, John, and especially Mary are put forth as models for how Ignatius and his readers should live as Christians.

III. Seventeenth Century Debates around Episcopacy and the Authenticity of Ignatius's Letters

The controversy surrounding Ignatius's antiquity and the genuineness of his letters intensified in conjunction with English debates about the role of bishops in the church. Those who supported episcopacy in the seventeenth century tended to view the letters as authentic Ignatian compositions while those who opposed episcopacy were more likely to believe the letters were forgeries. This section will thus discuss both how Ignatius's authority was called upon when determining seventeenth-century ecclesial structure and the closely related issue of the authenticity of the letters. Before focusing on the seventeenth century, however, it is worth noting a few examples of how Ignatius was read in the sixteenth century as they serve as a precursor to the seventeenth-century debates about Ignatius's letters.

In contrast to some of their counterparts on the European continent, the long recension was tacitly accepted by the best-known sixteenth-century English writers.⁷⁶ In John Whitgift's tractate on ecclesial leadership from the 1570s, he recalls that "Ignatius, immediately after the apostles' time, calleth a bishop *principem sacerdotum*: 'the prince of priests,' or chief priest."⁷⁷ The phrase referenced by Whitgift does not appear in the

⁷⁴Like Salome's report in ep. 1, Mary's reference to herself as "the humble servant of the Lord" (*humilis ancilla Domini*) draws from language in Luke 1:48. In the Lukan passage, Mary praises God "because he looked upon the humility of his servant" (*quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae*).

⁷⁵Stewart, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 255: "It is of no historical value except as an example of learned piety within the west."

⁷⁶See also Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:237–239.

⁷⁷John Whitgift, *Tractate 8: Of Archbishops, Metropolitans, Bishops, Archdeacons, etc.*, in *The Works of John Whitgift*, ed. John Ayre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1852), 2:171.

middle recension but is found in the long recension when pseudo-Ignatius tells the Smyrneans to honor the bishop as the high priest bearing the image of God (*Smyrneans* 9.1).⁷⁸ When Whitgift cites the same passage more fully—along with references to the long recension’s (and thus, as explained in note fourteen, pseudo-Ignatius’s) *Trallians* 7.2 and *Magnesians* 4—he also states that Eusebius and Jerome mention these letters.⁷⁹ Richard Hooker makes a similar appeal to pseudo-Ignatius’s *Smyrneans* 9.1 when defining ecclesiastical order and jurisdiction in book six of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*.⁸⁰ Moving to works from the seventeenth century, Lancelot Andrewes appeals to Ignatius in his 1621 Ash Wednesday sermon, discussing how Ignatius “lived with the Apostles themselves” and alluding to the discussion of Lent in pseudo-Ignatius’s *Philippians* 13.⁸¹ These authors all emphasize Ignatius’s contemporariness with the apostles and accept Ignatius’s letters in the form that they found them. This willingness to accept the long recension of Ignatius differed from the controversy between Protestants and Catholics elsewhere in Europe.⁸² However, the use of Ignatius by Whitgift and Hooker in discussions of episcopacy mirrored other European debates and presaged the controversy over Ignatius’s letters that settled into Britain in the seventeenth century.

Because the connections between seventeenth-century controversies over episcopacy and the authenticity of Ignatius’s letters has been discussed elsewhere, the consideration of these topics here can be brief.⁸³ The strident debates about Ignatius’s letters must be viewed as part of the political environment surrounding the English Civil War and the continuing attempts to reform the church by Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Puritans. While one’s biography need not necessarily determine one’s intellectual views, the biographical details of many seventeenth-century figures who studied Ignatius indicate a correlation between their views of Ignatius, their thoughts on episcopacy, and their political and ecclesial actions. For example, John Milton wrote five treatises against episcopacy in 1641–1642 before serving as a government official during the Interregnum.⁸⁴

⁷⁸The Greek long recension reads “τίμα . . . ἐπίσκοπον δὲ ὡς ἀρχιερέα θεοῦ εἰκόνα φοροῦντα.”

⁷⁹Whitgift, “Tractate 8,” 304–305, cf. 428. For Whitgift’s allusions to Eusebius and Jerome, see Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.36; and Jerome, *De uiribus illustribus* 16.

⁸⁰Richard Hooker, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, in John Keeble, ed., *The Works of that Learned and Judicious Divine Mr. Richard Hooker* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1820), 3:4. For an account of John Jewel’s use of the long recension, see John E. Booty, *John Jewel as Apologist of the Church of England* (London: SPCK, 1963), 106–108; and Hartog, “Multi-Faceted Jewel,” 263–283.

⁸¹Lancelot Andrewes, “Sermon 6,” in *Ninety-Six Sermons*, ed. J. P. Wilson, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Parker, 1878), 1:398–399. Jean-Louis Quantin rightly observes that the value Andrewes had found in pre-Reformation elements of the Church of England also had political potential for James I: Jean-Louis Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity: The Construction of a Confessional Identity in the 17th Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 398.

⁸²For example, John Calvin notes the presence of Lenten regulations in Ignatius’s letters and concludes: “Nihil naeniis illis, quae sub Ignatii nomine editae sunt, putidius.” John Calvin, *Institutio christianae religionis* (Geneva: Estienne, 1559) 1.13.29. See also Irena Backus, “Calvin and the Greek Fathers,” in *Continuity and Change: The Harvest of Late-Medieval and Reformation History*, ed. Robert J. Bast and Andrew C. Gow (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 270.

⁸³See especially de Quehen, “Politics and Scholarship,” 69–84; and the literature cited in notes 1–3 of this essay.

⁸⁴John Milton, *Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline* (London: Underhill, 1641); Milton, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*; John Milton, *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence against Smectymnius* (London: Underhill, 1641); John Milton, *The Reason for Church Government Urg’d against Prelatry* (London: Rothwell, 1641); and John Milton, *An Apology against a Pamphlet* (London: Rothwell, 1642).

William Jameson's *The Fundamentals of the Hierarchy* interacts at length with Ignatius's letters and is addressed to "haters of Romish dross and innovations" and chiefly to "the church of Scotland."⁸⁵ Jameson rejects the episcopal practice found in English churches. On the other side, before Ussher published his landmark study of Ignatius's letters, the archbishop of Armagh argued that episcopacy can be found early in church history.⁸⁶ John Pearson joined Peter Gunning and Anthony Sparrow in 1661 to argue for episcopacy against the views of Richard Baxter. Then, in 1672 (the same year he became the bishop of Chester), he published arguably the most extensive study of Ignatius's letters to appear during the seventeenth century.⁸⁷ Even the less overtly polemical work of William Wake (a priest in the Church of England who became archbishop of Canterbury) was influenced by this tumultuous ecclesial situation.⁸⁸

These disagreements and disruptions that arose in seventeenth-century political and ecclesial discussions had an influence on and in turn were influenced by debates about Ignatius. Those in favor of episcopacy tended to have a favorable view of Ignatius. On the other hand, those who wanted to do away with bishops generally regarded Ignatius skeptically. Studies of the genuineness of Ignatius's letters have had the most enduring impact on scholarship. These discussions took place in two ways, focusing either on the authenticity of the entire corpus or, presuming that at least some of the letters attributed to Ignatius were authentic, seeking to determine whether there were six or seven genuine letters.

First, scholars attempted to determine whether any of the Ignatian letters were genuine and, if they were, how these letters might be accounted for. In a 1641 response to Ussher, Milton notes that five of Ignatius's twelve letters must be rejected as spurious because they do not agree in chronology with Ignatius.⁸⁹ Citing examples from *Tarsians*, *Philippians*, and *Antiochenes*, he asserts that they contain liturgical practices that began after Ignatius's death. He goes on to argue that the seven letters which might be genuine "are yet so interlarded with corruptions, as may justly induce us with a wholesome suspicion of the rest."⁹⁰ Milton's examples of interpolations center on statements about episcopacy and church order. He then offers two options. Either the epistles are corrupt, or Ignatius himself should be regarded as corrupt rather than as a martyr.⁹¹ Milton reasons that if God wanted his church to be instructed by Ignatius, God would have preserved the letters in a better state. As it is, Milton urges his readers to find their doctrine and discipline in scripture rather than exchanging "the pure Euangelick Manna by seasoning our mouths with the tainted scraps."⁹²

Milton's argument raises an implicit question about how one might separate the genuine epistles from the interpolation. Little did he know that even as he wrote

⁸⁵William Jameson, *The Fundamentals of the Hierarchy* (Glasgow: Sanders, 1697), i.

⁸⁶Ussher, *Judgement of Doctor Rainoldes*.

⁸⁷Johannes Pearson, *Vindiciae epistolarum S. Ignatii* (Cambridge: Hayes, 1672).

⁸⁸William Wake, *The Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers* (London: Sare, 1693). For a concise account of the renewal of patristic studies after the Restoration at Oxford, which was Wake's alma mater, see Jean-Louis Quantin, "The Fathers in Seventeenth-Century Anglican Theology," in Backus, *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, 2:997–998.

⁸⁹Milton, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, 9.

⁹⁰Milton, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, 9. Milton's sentiment aptly embodies Quantin's conclusion that "there was no continuous line of deference to the Fathers in the Church of England." Quantin, *Church of England and Christian Antiquity*, 397.

⁹¹Milton, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, 10.

⁹²Milton, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, 11.

Prelatical Episcopacy, the man to whom he was responding was already working to show how this might be done. While Ussher's 1641 treatise on Ignatius's letters argues for a date soon after Revelation, he seems to have offered only a glimpse here of what was at that point already at least thirteen years of study.⁹³ The first extant hint of Ussher's plans to publish Ignatius's letters comes in a letter to Ussher from John Prideaux in August 1628,⁹⁴ but it is in Ussher's correspondence with Samuel Ward that the most insight into his early studies can be seen. Ussher writes to Ward in March 1629 that he has written a censure of Ignatius's letters and has made plans to have a manuscript from Caius College (*Caiensis* 395) transcribed. If his plans come to naught, he asks Ward to transcribe the manuscript for him and promises to defray his costs.⁹⁵ When writing to Ward in July 1631, Ussher mentions that a transcription of the manuscript has been received by an acquaintance but that he has not yet seen it.⁹⁶ He had received the copy of the Ignatian manuscript in August of the following year, along with a portion of the beginning of *1 Clement*.⁹⁷ Ussher seems not to have spoken of this project publicly, and it is unlikely that Milton knew of Ussher's plans.⁹⁸

Ussher's studies continued throughout the 1630s, and it was not until 1644 that he published the Latin middle recension of the letters. In a dissertation he wrote to accompany the letters, Ussher uses the first two chapters to review how the Ignatian and Polycarpian epistles were preserved. He then narrates how he was prompted to discover new Latin manuscripts: "However, when I examined for myself that these three [Robert Grosseteste, John Tissington, and William Woodford] were English theologians, I began to search whether perchance other copies of Ignatius could now be found here in England, from which the defect of our codices might be supplied."⁹⁹ Although the two manuscripts that resulted from Ussher's work as a text sleuth have been discussed in section one, it is worth noting how Ussher verified his results. After comparing the citations of Ignatius's *Smyrneans* 6.2 in Theodoret's writings, the quotations used by Grosseteste, Tissington, and Woodford, the Greek and Latin long recension, and the newly discovered Latin middle recension, Ussher shows that the Latin middle recension is closer to patristic citations of Ignatius's *Ephesians* 7.2 and *Smyrneans* 3.1–3, 1.1–2, 5.2, and 4.2 than to the long recension.¹⁰⁰ Based on this close correspondence between the new Latin manuscripts and patristic citations, Ussher regards these as the witnesses to the earliest text to which one could return. He holds out hope for earlier Greek and Syriac manuscripts, hope that would in some sense be realized with Isaac Voss's publication of *Codex Mediceo Laurentianus* 57.7 two years later.¹⁰¹

⁹³Ussher, *Judgement of Doctor Rainoldes*, 6–8. See similarly James Ussher, "The Original of Bishops and Metropolitans Laid Down," in *The Whole Works of the Most Rev. James Ussher*, ed. Charles R. Elrington (Dublin: Hodges, Smith and Co., 1864), 7:48–50.

⁹⁴Ussher, "Letter CXXXIX," in Elrington, *Whole Works*, 15:419.

⁹⁵Ussher, "Letter CLXIII," in Elrington, *Whole Works*, 15:482.

⁹⁶Ussher, "Letter CLXXX," in Elrington, *Whole Works*, 15:542.

⁹⁷Ussher, "Letter CLXXXVI," in Elrington, *Whole Works*, 15:559.

⁹⁸See also Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:240n1; and Arthur Pierce Middleton, *Fathers and Anglicans: The Limits of Orthodoxy* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2001), 230–231.

⁹⁹Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae*, xv: "Cum autem mecum considerarem, Anglos fuisse tres illos theologos circumspicere coepi, num forte adhuc in Anglia reperiri passent Ignatii exemplaria aliqua, ex quibus ille nostrorum codicum defectus suppleri posset."

¹⁰⁰Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae*, xv–xxvi.

¹⁰¹Isaac Voss, *Epistolae genuinae S. Ignatii martyris* (Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1646).

The publications by Milton, Ussher, and Voss have shaped the course of all of the study of Ignatius that has come afterwards. Milton and Ussher's works illustrate a key way in which seventeenth-century British scholarship wrestled with the authenticity of Ignatius's letters—namely, by considering whether Ignatius wrote seven letters or whether his letters were forged and corrupt. This debate resulted in Ussher's publication of the middle recension of Ignatius's letters. However, disagreement over the genuineness of Ignatius's letters did not stop with debates over the middle and long recensions. When Ussher investigated how many letters Ignatius had written, he found a discrepancy in the lists produced by Eusebius and Jerome.¹⁰² This variation gave rise to a second way in which British authors considered the authenticity of Ignatius's letters during the seventeenth century. In short, their concern was the number of letters that should be included in the authentic middle recension. Or, to put the question somewhat pointedly, did Ignatius write six or seven letters?

In *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.36, Eusebius listed the seven letters still printed in today's editions of the Ignatian letters, while Jerome knew only six letters. In *De uiris illustribus* 16, he mentions a single letter addressed to the Smyrneans and Polycarp, thereby collapsing *Smyrneans* and *Polycarp*. Ussher follows Jerome in finding only six genuine Ignatian letters. He thinks that *Polycarp* was an early forgery, on analogy with the seven letters in Revelation 2–3. On Ussher's understanding, *Polycarp* indicates that the author knew the New Testament Apocalypse, something which is difficult to reckon with his assigning the genuine letters a date of composition soon after that of Revelation. To put Ussher's argument succinctly: If *Polycarp* knew Revelation, it was written later than the genuine Ignatian letters—and if it originated later, then it had to have been forged.¹⁰³

This additional question over the authenticity of Ignatius was taken up by Pearson, who considered Eusebius's testimony to be strong.¹⁰⁴ In response to the arguments of both Ussher and the French Huguenot minister Jean Daillé,¹⁰⁵ Pearson convincingly shows that Eusebius knew seven Ignatian letters.¹⁰⁶ Taking up the similar statement of Jerome, he notes that Jerome claimed that Ignatius wrote three letters after he left Smyrna: to the Philadelphians, to the Smyrneans, and particularly to Polycarp.¹⁰⁷ Pearson asks, "What could be clearer?"¹⁰⁸ In asking this question, he objects to Ussher's belief that Jerome knew only six letters and that the letter to Polycarp should thus be regarded as a forgery.¹⁰⁹

The interpretive issue between Ussher and Pearson has to do with how the Latin adverb *proprie* should be understood. Ussher understands the word to function epexegetically so that Jerome's sentence can be translated: "to the Philadelphians and to the Smyrneans, that is, also to Polycarp." Accordingly, he arrives at his count of six letters.

¹⁰²Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae*, viii; and Ussher, *Appendix ignatiana* (London: Thomas, 1647), ii.

¹⁰³Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae*, ix–xi, xiii–xiv.

¹⁰⁴Pearson, *Vindiciae epistolarum S. Ignatii*, Pars Prior, 7–10.

¹⁰⁵For an incisive synopsis of Daillé's writings, see Middleton, *Fathers and Anglicans*, 232.

¹⁰⁶Pearson, *Vindiciae epistolarum S. Ignatii*, Proemium, 21–24. While Pearson's entire book can be seen in some sense as a response to Jean Daillé, chapter 6 of the Proemium specifically summarizes and counters Daillé's arguments in *De scriptis, quae sub Dionysii Areopagitae et Ignatii Antiocheni nominibus circumferuntur* (Geneva: Antonius and De Tourmes, 1666).

¹⁰⁷Pearson, *Vindiciae epistolarum S. Ignatii*, Proemium, 24: "Ad Philadelphoeos et ad Smyrnaeos et proprie ad Polycarpum."

¹⁰⁸Pearson, *Vindiciae epistolarum S. Ignatii*, Proemium, 24: "Quid clarius?"

¹⁰⁹Ussher, *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae*, vii–viii.

Pearson, on the other hand, after making reference to a series of Latin texts, interprets the adverb in the sense of “particularly” (*peculiariter*) and notes that it corresponds to the Greek word ἰδίως (particularly) in Eusebius’s text.¹¹⁰ On Pearson’s reading, Jerome inserts this sentence parenthetically but knows the same letters as Eusebius. Thus, Pearson argues, there is no discrepancy between Eusebius’s and Jerome’s letter counts: both identify seven letters. Pearson’s interpretation of *proprie* may not have convinced all readers,¹¹¹ but Ignatius’s letter to Polycarp has typically been considered authentic and part of the middle recension.

IV. Interpreting Ignatius in the Seventeenth Century

As was established in the previous section, seventeenth-century British scholarship on Ignatius was undertaken in a challenging context in which questions about episcopacy were central to ecclesial and political life and resulted in increased scrutiny of the authenticity of the Ignatian letters. However, this context also led to increased attention on interpretive puzzles and translational difficulties in the corpus. This section will begin by exploring scholars’ interpretations of Ignatius’s letters in general before turning to an area with which Ignatius’s seventeenth-century interpreters were particularly concerned: piety and the impact that Ignatius’s letters might have upon their contemporaries in the church.

While divergent interpretations were not always noted explicitly, seventeenth-century students of Ignatius’s letters found various means by which to address interpretive issues in their analyses of the letters. For example, his seventeenth-century British interpreters attempted to clarify what Ignatius meant in *Trallians* 5.2 when he wrote that he knew about celestial matters, the angelic ranks, the order of the principalities, and things visible and invisible.¹¹² Ussher compares Ignatius’s statement to the language of Colossians 1:16.¹¹³ Pearson agrees with Ussher’s comparison of Ignatius’s letter and Colossians, offering textual arguments in favor of this reading. He further reasons that Ignatius’s claim makes sense as he was a bishop taught by the apostles.¹¹⁴ However, Jameson takes a different view, seeing Ignatius boasting “as if he had been the only muster-master to the angels.”¹¹⁵ He compares the Ignatian letters to a garden in which one must go a long way to reach very few flowers.¹¹⁶ Despite their different understandings, these interpreters all came to *Trallians* 5.2 aware of the theological implications of Ignatius’s claims about angels and with care for what it says about Ignatius’s character.

Two additional examples illustrate seventeenth-century scholars’ further concern to interpret Ignatius’s words accurately. First, Ignatius’s statement in *Ephesians* 1.1 that the

¹¹⁰Pearson, *Vindiciae epistolarum S. Ignatii*, Proemium, 24. Jerome’s “*proprie ad Polycarpum*” corresponds to Eusebius’s “ἰδίως τε τῷ ταύτης προηγουμένῳ Πολυκάρπῳ.”

¹¹¹For a contrary view, see Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:156–157.

¹¹²Ignatius, *Trallians* 5.2: “τὰ ἐπουράνια καὶ τὰς τοποθεσίας τὰς ἀγγελικὰς καὶ τὰς συστάσεις τὰς ἀρχοντικὰς ὁρατὰ τε καὶ ἀόρατὰ”; “supercaelestia et loci positiones angelicas et constitutiones principatiorum visibiliaque et invisibilia.”

¹¹³Ussher, *In Polycarpianam*, 23.

¹¹⁴Pearson, *Vindiciae epistolarum S. Ignatii*, Pars Secunda, 140.

¹¹⁵Jameson, *Fundamentals of the Hierarchy*, 119.

¹¹⁶Jameson, *Fundamentals of the Hierarchy*, 121. Conversely, neither Thomas Elborow (A *Prospect of the Primitive Christianity* [Westminster Hall: Grantham, 1668], 71) nor Wake (*Genuine Epistles*, 149) flinch at the translation or offer an explanatory note.

Ephesians obtained their name with a righteous nature (φύσει δικαίᾳ; *natura iusta*) was interpreted carefully by English Protestants who wanted to accept Ignatius after the Reformation. In *The Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers*, Wake translates these two words as “habit of righteousness” and includes a reference to Pearson’s *Vindiciae*.¹¹⁷ Pearson’s study of nature (φύσις) in Ignatius led him not only to other Ignatian letters but to quotations from the Epistle of Barnabas, Clement of Alexandria, and Gregory of Nazianzus. Based on these, Pearson interpreted φύσις with reference to a state: The Ephesians had obtained their name in a righteous state.¹¹⁸ Prior to Pearson, Thomas Elborowe offered a different translation of φύσει δικαίᾳ: “by a just title.”¹¹⁹ Despite the general approval of Ignatius, certain phrases in his letters seem to have caused discomfort for seventeenth-century British scholars and required carefully nuanced analysis.

Ignatius’s occasionally ambiguous use of relative pronouns also created difficulties for his seventeenth-century translators.¹²⁰ In *Philadelphians* inscription, Ignatius greets the Philadelphians in the blood of Jesus Christ, “which is eternal and enduring joy.”¹²¹ If one assumes that Ignatius’s relative pronouns follow the normal practice of agreeing with their antecedent in gender and number, the feminine relative pronoun in the Greek manuscript of *Philadelphians* inscription should probably take church (ἐκκλησία) as its antecedent. Elborowe’s translation reflects such an interpretive decision. According to Elborowe, Ignatius greets the Philadelphian church in Jesus’s blood, “for she is my eternal and permanent joy.”¹²² On the other hand, Wake appeals to the Latin translation. In the Latin translation, the relative pronoun *qui* can be either masculine or feminine. Since the relative pronoun follows the masculine name *Jesus Christ*, Wake interprets the relative clause with reference to Jesus rather than the church. Thus, in Wake’s edition of *Philadelphians* inscription, Ignatius greets the church “in the blood of Jesus Christ, who is our eternal and undefiled joy.”¹²³ These examples show that seventeenth-century readers and translators had a wider lens through which to view the Ignatian letters than issues of episcopacy and authenticity alone.

One interpretive lens which was particularly important for seventeenth-century scholars was piety. Seventeenth-century interpreters of Ignatius were especially attentive to the impact his letters might have on contemporary readers. This interest in Ignatius’s devotion was also evident in the medieval forged correspondence between Ignatius, John, and Mary.¹²⁴ Some seventeenth-century scholars argue that Ignatius’s letters were superfluous because they were extracanonical. Others went even further, arguing that the letters were dangerous to people in the British church because of Ignatius’s chronological proximity to other second-century errors.

Milton was one such scholar. He worried about the effect that Ignatius’s letters would have on those who read them, preferring instead to defend ecclesial leadership from his reading of scripture rather than using the writings of church fathers like

¹¹⁷Wake, *Genuine Epistles*, 106.

¹¹⁸Pearson, *Vindiciae epistolarum S. Ignatii*, Pars Secunda, 195–196.

¹¹⁹Elborowe, *Prospect*, 43.

¹²⁰See also Graydon F. Snyder, “The Text and Syntax of Ignatius ΠΡΟΣ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ 20:2c,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 22, no. 1 (April 1968): 9–10; and Lookadoo, *High Priest and the Temple*, 163–165.

¹²¹Ignatius, *Philadelphians* inscription: “ἥτις ἐστὶν χαρὰ αἰώνιος καὶ παράμωμος;” “qui est gaudium aeternum et incoinquinatum.”

¹²²Elborowe, *Prospect*, 62.

¹²³Wake, *Genuine Epistles*, 178.

¹²⁴Gilliam, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 211–217.

Ignatius.¹²⁵ In his treatises against prelacy, Milton insists that scripture is sufficient for all teaching about doctrine, and it is particularly important for his arguments against episcopacy.¹²⁶ Milton opens *Prelatical Episcopacy* with a premise: Episcopacy “is either of divine constitution or of humane.”¹²⁷ If it originated with humans, the English church is free to retain or remove episcopacy. If episcopacy came from God, scripture must set the terms. However, scripture employs the terms bishop and presbyter for the same position.¹²⁸ Milton therefore urges his contemporaries who “gadde after these traditions of the ancients” to follow the ancients’ example in finding their knowledge in scripture.¹²⁹ Turning to Ignatius’s support of episcopacy, Milton argues that these sections “must either be adulterat, or else Ignatius was not Ignatius, nor a Martyr, but most adulterate and corrupt himselfe.”¹³⁰ Milton was therefore concerned about Ignatius’s impact on episcopacy. He regarded his hermeneutic as correct, and believed that, if it was correct, the hermeneutic should be utilized throughout the English church.

After Milton’s death, Jameson’s arguments against episcopacy continued in the same vein, challenging its supporters with a principle that engaged with the right belief of “all the sincere Lovers of the Christian, truly Catholick, Protestant Principles.”¹³¹ In *The Fundamentals of the Hierarchy*, Jameson puts forward the following thesis: “That the Antiquity of the true Ignatius could not secure him from all Lapses or Escapes in Doctrine or serve to Prove that there was no Declension in his time.”¹³² Thus, Jameson argues, even if Ignatius’s letters are genuine, their antiquity alone does not necessarily result in true doctrine. Jameson goes on to list examples of mistaken beliefs from second-century authors. Among them, he cites Papias’s belief in the millennium,¹³³ Justin’s belief in the intercourse of women and demons,¹³⁴ his references to the mixing of Eucharistic wine and water,¹³⁵ Quartodecimanism,¹³⁶ and Hegesippus’s claims that James could enter the inner sanctuary of the temple.¹³⁷ Jameson claims that similar alterations from the New Testament were made regarding the attire of ecclesiastical officials. He highlights these early errors to show that Ignatius’s proximity need not correspond to right teaching: “The Antiquity even of the true Ignatius was not able to secure him from all Lapses and Mistakes.”¹³⁸ On the other hand, Jameson argues that he himself is a “true Son of the primitive Church,” that is, of the churches described in the New Testament.¹³⁹ In the eyes of Jameson’s audience, such statements not only discredited Ignatius but also demonstrated care for their own spiritual well-being.

¹²⁵ Elsewhere, Milton draws attention to the multiplicity of voices among early Christian texts in order to show that they cannot be read in universal support of a doctrine: Milton, *Animadversions*, 31.

¹²⁶ For example, Milton, *Of Reformation*, 5–6.

¹²⁷ Milton, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, 1.

¹²⁸ Milton, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, 2.

¹²⁹ Milton, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, 6. Milton employs a similar line of argument in *Animadversions* (16–17) against the liturgy that was used in the church.

¹³⁰ Milton, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, 10.

¹³¹ Jameson, *Fundamentals of the Hierarchy*, i.

¹³² Jameson, *Fundamentals of the Hierarchy*, 126. See similarly Milton, *Animadversions*, 30–32.

¹³³ Jameson, *Fundamentals of the Hierarchy*, 127, discussing Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.39.12–13.

¹³⁴ Jameson, *Fundamentals of the Hierarchy*, 127–128, discussing Justin, 2 *Apologia* 5.

¹³⁵ Jameson, *Fundamentals of the Hierarchy*, 128, discussing Justin, 1 *Apologia* 67.

¹³⁶ Jameson, *Fundamentals of the Hierarchy*, 128–131, discussing Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.23–25.

¹³⁷ Jameson, *Fundamentals of the Hierarchy*, 131–132, discussing Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.23.6.

¹³⁸ Jameson, *Fundamentals of the Hierarchy*, 133.

¹³⁹ Jameson, *Fundamentals of the Hierarchy*, 132.

It was not only Ignatius's detractors who were concerned about the spiritual effects his letters would have on those who read them. Some of his supporters also had things to say. For example, translations by Elborowe and Wake introduce Ignatius's life and letters. Both scholars present Ignatius as an individual whose life can serve as an example worth following.

Although Elborowe believed Ignatius's letters to John were pseudepigraphic,¹⁴⁰ he still regarded the tradition that Ignatius was a disciple of John to be true—a fact which is reflected most strongly in *A Prospect of the Primitive Christianity* where his subtitle for Ignatius's letters identifies Ignatius as a disciple of John the Evangelist.¹⁴¹ By affirming this relationship between Ignatius and John, Elborowe positions Ignatius comfortably within the confines of right belief and offers his letters as helpful pieces that readers of his translation can consider. When explaining why Ignatius called himself "Theophoros," Elborowe entertains the possibility that Ignatius was the child mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels whom Jesus took in his arms.¹⁴² Elborowe is not insistent on this point and offers another reason why Ignatius styled himself in this way: namely that Ignatius had God in his holy and pure heart. Yet Ignatius's possible historical link to Jesus promotes the orthodoxy of his letters and the orthopraxy of his life. Elborowe devotes attention to Ignatius's piety and expects his readers to do the same. He gives three aims which summarize the purpose of the remainder of his introduction.¹⁴³ First, he says that he wants to demonstrate "what he was," that is, what sort of character Ignatius's life had. Second, Elborowe states that he will discuss the esteemed place given to Ignatius in the church. Finally, he indicates that he will demonstrate Ignatius's place as a martyr with references to ecclesial writers such as Origen, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Theodoret.¹⁴⁴ Through these aims, Elborowe gave attention to Ignatius's right way of living and teaching while offering him as an example for his readers.

Like Elborowe, Wake was concerned not only about the authenticity of Ignatius's letters but about what kind of model Ignatius would be providing his readers as well. In his introduction to the Apostolic Fathers, Wake identifies his intended audience as "those especially who want that Ability" to go to the original Greek and Latin texts,¹⁴⁵ including those outside the academy who lack the necessary linguistic capabilities. He portrays Ignatius as someone that readers can trust and whose example they can imitate, arguing that Ignatius is worthy of consideration because of the life he lived. As an example which speaks to the respect Ignatius deserves, Wake notes that Ignatius's bones were collected and processed in the church at Antioch, and he takes this tradition seriously.¹⁴⁶ He also utilizes the translation of Ignatian relics to show that Ignatius's letters would have been handled with the same level of care. Wake

¹⁴⁰Elborowe, *Prospect*, 20.

¹⁴¹Elborowe, *Prospect*, 16: "The Life and Death of Holy Ignatius, Bishop of the Church of Antioch in Syria, Holy Martyr and Disciple of Saint John the Evangelist."

¹⁴²Elborowe, *Prospect*, 16–17. See Matt. 18:1–5; Mark 9:33–37; and Luke 9:46–48.

¹⁴³Elborowe, *Prospect*, 17.

¹⁴⁴Elborowe, *Prospect*, 18–19.

¹⁴⁵Wake, *Genuine Epistles*, 2.

¹⁴⁶Wake, *Genuine Epistles*, 49–50. John Chrysostom also spoke about Ignatius in the context of Ignatius's feast day in Antioch. The sermon has been translated into English in John Chrysostom, "On the Holy Martyr Ignatius," in *The Cult of the Saints: Select Homilies and Letters Introduced, Translated, and Annotated*, ed. Wendy Mayer and Bronwen Neil (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006), 101–117. See also Gilliam, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 189–221.

describes Ignatius as a “Holy Martyr, his [Polycarp’s] dear Friend and Fellow-Disciple.” By appealing to Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Eusebius,¹⁴⁷ Wake not only offers reasons to believe that the letters of the middle recension are authentic but also that they contain the words of a pious bishop who lived well.¹⁴⁸

In short, the narrative contained in present-day introductions of Ignatius’s letters is correct but incomplete. The letters were studied in seventeenth-century Britain in conjunction with disputes about the proper way in which ecclesial and civil governments should operate. However, telling the story this way risks obscuring the more robust study of Ignatius which took place in the seventeenth century. Scholars at the time were interested not only in which recension, if any, was genuine. They also wanted to interpret the text properly and were concerned about both Ignatius’s piety and the effect that reading his letters would have on the devotion of seventeenth-century laypeople.

IV. Conclusion

This article examined references to the political and ecclesial contexts in which Ignatius was studied in seventeenth-century Britain. The scholarly narrative derived from these references is helpful and needs to be known by those who study Ignatius. De Quehen and Brent have rightly shown that discussions of Ignatius’s letters during the seventeenth century were both politically and ecclesiastically charged.¹⁴⁹ Barnes is correct to draw an analogy between seventeenth-century studies of Ignatius’s authenticity and attempts to date Ignatius’s letters in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.¹⁵⁰ Likewise, Cobb accurately observes that studies of the middle recension in the seventeenth century have resulted in a lack of attention to the pseudepigraphic long recension.¹⁵¹

However, the repetition of this narrative about Ignatius’s seventeenth-century reception may obscure the fact that Ignatius was studied in Britain before the Reformation. Accordingly, this article has highlighted two ways in which Ignatius’s letters were known prior to the English Reformation, and it has demonstrated that seventeenth-century studies of Ignatius went beyond questions of authenticity and episcopacy alone. First, at least some British ecclesial figures knew the middle recension—now widely recognized as the earliest version of Ignatius’s letters—prior to the seventeenth century. Such knowledge is first evident in the commentaries of Robert Grosseteste on pseudo-Dionysius. Grosseteste or someone in his circle likely translated the letters into Latin. Ignatius’s comments on the Eucharist were utilized as patristic testimony in the controversy surrounding John Wyclif’s understanding of the sacrament and were cited not only by Wyclif but also by John Tissington and William Woodford. The Latin translation of Ignatius’s letters was known in two manuscripts of the middle recension in 1644. Although only one manuscript remains extant, collations of *Montacutianus* can be found in Ussher’s *Annotationes* and critical editions of the Latin text such as those by Funk and Lightfoot.¹⁵² The second way in which Ignatius was known in

¹⁴⁷Wake, *Genuine Epistles*, 50.

¹⁴⁸Wake, *Genuine Epistles*, 40–56.

¹⁴⁹De Quehen, “Politics and Scholarship,” 69–84; and Brent, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 1–2.

¹⁵⁰Barnes, “Date of Ignatius,” 119–121.

¹⁵¹Cobb, “Neither ‘Pure Evangelic Manna’ nor ‘Tainted Scraps,’” 186–187. See similarly Gilliam, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 5–7.

¹⁵²Ussher, *In Polycarpianam*; Funk, *Echtheit der ignatianischen Briefen*, 151–204; and Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 3:13–72.

Britain was via forged correspondence between Ignatius, John, and Mary. These letters demonstrate a concern for piety, Ignatius's antiquity, and the righteous lives of the saints. The late medieval readings of Ignatius mentioned so far should caution those who review the history of Ignatian scholarship from stopping too quickly at the seventeenth century. Post-Reformation interest in Ignatius did not arise in a vacuum.

The final section of this paper illustrated that Ignatian study was motivated by more than concerns about his episcopacy and the authenticity of his letters. As today, seventeenth-century scholars and translators reflected carefully on difficult interpretive issues within the letters. They were also worried about Ignatius's piety and the potential effects this might have on other readers. The links highlighted or discounted by seventeenth-century readers between Ignatius and John, Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Eusebius are analogous to connections made by Grosseteste, Tissington, and Woodford, as well as the correspondence with John and Mary. These associations suggest attempts to bring Ignatius into or exclude him from the fold of orthodox and pious teachers. They also demonstrate that ethical discussions of Ignatius's letters can be found on the part of both Ignatius's supporters and detractors.

This essay has not questioned the veracity of the narrative about Ignatian studies found in recent introductions and articles. Links between the polemics about episcopacy and the authenticity of Ignatius's letters were real and embedded in seventeenth-century political and ecclesial concerns. However, this article has contributed to the understanding of this narrative in Ignatian studies by extending the story backward to the thirteenth century and illustrating ways in which the current narrative should be expanded with regard to the seventeenth century.

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