Br. Cathol. Hist. (2015), *vol.* 32(3), *pp.* 280–292
doi:10.1017/bch.2014.1
© Trustees of the Catholic Record Society 2015.
Published by Cambridge University Press

Cardinal Wolsey and Cambridge

Susan Wabuda*

Associate Professor, Department of History, Fordham University, 441 East Fordham Road Bronx, New York 10458-5159, U.S.A. Email: wabuda@fordham.edu

Cardinal Thomas Wolsey has seldom been associated with the University of Cambridge. But in a little-known episode, he was invited to follow John Fisher as chancellor of the University of Cambridge in 1514. Although Wolsey declined, his willingness to protect Cambridge's evangelicals, even after he burned Martin Luther's books in 1521, has been an overlooked phase in the history of the university and in the Reformation in England.

Key words: Cambridge, Erasmus, Evangelism, Fisher, Wolsey

Because Cardinal Thomas Wolsey's most conspicuous academic legacy is the Oxford college now known as Christ Church, he has seldom been associated with Cambridge. Yet, in episodes that deserve to be better known, in 1514 John Fisher suggested that Wolsey succeed him as chancellor of the University of Cambridge. Although Wolsey declined, until the end of his life England's second university looked to him for protection and influence. Wolsey's greatest gifts to Cambridge men were less tangible than the establishment of colleges. So large was his theatre of operations, so lofty his position in Church and state, that he was able to touch many careers. At the same time, his success, his power, his wealth, and his relentless self-promotion also bred the kind of resentment at Cambridge that until recently darkened his reputation and obscured how eagerly many members of the university sought his attention. Always overworked, always in demand, Wolsey's policies sometimes conflicted with each other. Paradoxically he was willing to protect the kind of evangelism that flourished at Cambridge, ostensibly as an expression of its humanist learning, even after he burned Martin Luther's books. Wolsey's protection of Cambridge's evangelicals has been an overlooked phase in the history of the university and in the Reformation in England.

Cambridge's Chancellor

The first important opportunity to involve Wolsey in Cambridge's affairs occurred in 1514, when Bishop John Fisher, the university's chancellor, resigned to take up diplomatic duties as one of the English ambassadors to

* The author wishes to express her thanks to the members of the staff of the British Library, the Cambridge University Library and the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. Fordham University's Faculty Fellowship, granted for the Fall 2014 semester, made the writing of this paper possible.

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2014.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the Fifth Lateran Council. Fisher had been re-elected chancellor annually from 1504, the same year he became bishop of Rochester. As chancellor, he guided Cambridge into its transformation from a university dominated by its hostels and religious houses into a true collegiate institution.[1]

Historians have established that Fisher's supreme achievement as chancellor was in making Cambridge the focus of Lady Margaret Beaufort's abundant generosity. At his encouragement, the mother of King Henry VII endowed an array of benefactions. They included her gifts to the University Church and to Jesus College, which had been founded in 1496 by Bishop John Alcock of Ely with Fisher's assistance. She re-founded Godshouse, a modest establishment originally dedicated to studies in grammar, and she transformed it into the larger and more impressive Christ's College. She endowed lectureships in theology at both universities, and a preaching chantry at Cambridge. In 1506, Lady Margaret and the king combined a visit to the university with a pilgrimage to Walsingham. Fisher persuaded Henry to complete King's College Chapel, where construction had been interrupted for more than thirty-five years. In his will, the king left £5000 for the work.[2] Finest of all Lady Margaret's gifts was the legacy that Fisher brought into being after her death in 1509: the creation of St John's, a large new college that surpassed all of its predecessors for the study of theology.[3]

Standing at Fisher's side to welcome the king and his mother to the university in 1506 was Desiderius Erasmus, who was now entering the most productive phase of his illustrious career. Fisher had asked Erasmus to Cambridge in the hope that he would stay long enough to lecture and to complete a doctorate in theology. Proudly highlighted in large letters on a single page of its Grace Book *B*, the university accorded Erasmus the extraordinary privilege of completing his degree early if he would preach two sermons in the University Church and deliver a series of lectures in the Schools on St Paul's Epistle to the

[1] Damien Riehl Leader, *A History of the University of Cambridge*, 4 vols, *The University to 1546* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1: 263–319.

[2] Maria Dowling, *Fisher of Men: A Life of John Fisher, 1469–1535* (Basingstoke: Macmillan,1999), 9–19, 26–7 49–52, 85–7; Leader,1: 272 (Fisher and Jesus College), 281–4, 292; Susan Wabuda, *Preaching During the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 22–3, 62–3, 118, 163–5 and 'Receiving the King: Henry VIII at Cambridge', in *Henry VIII and the Court: Art, Politics and Performance*, eds. Thomas Betteridge and Suzannah Lipscomb (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 163–78. Fisher's oration on the occasion of the king's visit has been printed in *The life of Dr. John Fisher, Bp. of Rochester in the reign of King Henry VIII,* ed. John Lewis, 2 vols (London, 1855), 2: 263–272. For the king's bequest: *The Will of King Henry VII* (London, 1775), 27–9.

[3] Malcolm Underwood, 'John Fisher and the Promotion of Learning', in *Humanism, Reform, and the Reformation: The Career of Bishop John Fisher*, eds. Brendan Bradshaw and Eamon Duffy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 25–46; Peter Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1990), 342–5; Leader, 1: 272–90.

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2014.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Romans.[4] Erasmus decided not to stay then, but he returned to Cambridge in 1511 at Fisher's invitation to reinvigorate the study of Greek. Quickly he attracted some of the most eminent senior scholars and promising younger men to his lectures. Among them were the mathematicians Henry Bullock and Humphrey Walkenden of Queens' and John Watson, later the master of Christ's. Erasmus counted among his numerous friends Robert Ridley, and also Robert Aldrich, the future bishop of Carlisle.[5]

Within a short time, Erasmus had successfully provided an introduction to the Greek language. Instruction in Hebrew was even more difficult to obtain, and Fisher had to send the young Yorkshire man Robert Wakefield to Louvain and Paris for further study before he returned in the 1520s to lecture in Hebrew at Cambridge.[6]

What Fisher wished to do for Cambridge was along similar (but more modest) lines as the achievements of Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, the archbishop cardinal of Toledo, grand chancellor of Castile, and confessor to Queen Isabella. From the mid-1490s, Cisneros built a new university near Madrid in the ancient city (known to the Romans as Complutum, and more latterly by its Muslim name) of Alcalá de Henares, the birthplace of Katherine of Aragon. Cisneros endowed more than forty lectureships and he gave ten colleges to the Universitas Complutensis. Among them was the College of San Ildefonso (named for the patron saint of Toledo), a collegium trilingue for the study of the three sacred languages, Greek and Hebrew as well as Latin. From the university's printing press came the achievement of a study Bible, the famous Complutensian Polyglot, which was completed just before his death in 1517.[7] Cisneros had almost infinite resources to lavish on his creation, and

[4] Cambridge University Library (hereafter CUL), University Archives (hereafter UA) Grace Book *B,* p. 238, printed in *Grace Book B Part I: Containing the Proctors' Account and Other Records of The University of Cambridge for the Years 1488–1511,* ed. Mary Bateson, Cambridge Antiquarian Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1903), 222. The requirements that Erasmus was to satisfy in order to proceed to his degree: *Grace Book Γ: Containing the Records of the University of Cambridge for the Years 1501–1542*, ed. William George Searle, Cambridge Antiquarian Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), 46. Ultimately Erasmus received his doctorate from the University of Turin.

[5] Richard Rex, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort and Her Professorship, 1502–1559', in *Lady Margaret Beaufort and Her Professorships of Divinity at Cambridge 1502 to 1649*, eds, Patrick Collinson, Richard Rex and Graham Stanton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 19-56; Leader, 1: 291–7, 311–12, 314.

[6] *Orationes Richardi Croci duae* (Paris, 1520), sig. b3v. See also Jonathan Woolfson's entry for Wakefield in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter *ODNB*); and Basil Hall, 'The Trilingual College of San Ildefonso and the Making of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible', in *The Church and Academic Learning*, *Studies in Church History* 4, ed. G. J. Cuming (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 114–146.

[7] P. S. Allen, 'Alcalá: a Spanish Collegium Trilingue' in *Erasmus: Lectures and Wayfaring Sketches*, ed, P. S Allen (Oxford: Clarendon, 1934), 180–4; Hall, 'The Trilingual College of San Ildefonso', 114–146; Erika Rummel, *Jiménez de Cisneros: On the Threshold of Spain's Golden Age*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 212 (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), 53–65. For additional information, I am grateful to Louie Dean Valencia García.

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2014.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

as a Franciscan friar, he projected an aura of deep humility. Rochester was the poorest diocese in England. What Fisher could do for Cambridge was sharply limited in comparison, but he was praised, in a well-earned rhetorical tribute, for having turned Cambridge into a second Athens.[8]

Pope Julius II had originally called for the Lateran Council to start its sessions in April 1512, and in making some hurried preparations, Fisher asked Erasmus to accompany him to Rome.[9] But then the pope postponed the opening. Towards the end of the following year, when a prolonged absence in Italy seemed unavoidable, Fisher inventoried 'all the jewels' that belonged to the university in its Chapel in the Schools so that they could be transferred to the keeping of the next chancellor.[10]

Fisher's departure put at risk the eventual expansion of the projects he was promoting. The building works at St John's had only just started. Jesus College was not yet on a firm financial footing, and it still did not have a set of governing statutes.[11] Cambridge's studies in Greek were also threatened. Erasmus was never satisfied at Cambridge even under the best of circumstances (Cisneros had not succeeded in attracting him to Alcalá), and now that Fisher was about to leave, he abandoned the university forever. Within a few months he was at Louvain where he could turn his attention even more intensely to the development of Greek studies in the creation of the Collegium Trilingue there.[12] Moreover, Henry VIII had not begun to show the same interest in Cambridge as had his forebears.

At this difficult juncture, Fisher suggested that the chancellorship should pass to Wolsey, who had just become bishop of Lincoln.[13] Born in Ipswich in the early 1470s, the young Wolsey, as the son of a successful butcher, might have been sent only fifty miles away to Cambridge, as other ambitious young men from humble Suffolk backgrounds were, including his protégé, Stephen Gardiner. Instead, Wolsey was educated first at the local school, and then he went to Oxford.

[8] See Fisher's oration, printed in Lewis, *Life of Fisher,* 2: 267, 270; Croke, *Orationes duae,* sigs. a5v-a6r.

[9] For Fisher's commission, see the entry calendared in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII* (hereafter *LP*), ed. J. S. Brewer et al., vol. 1 (London, 1862), no. 1083 (5). For Fisher's invitation for Erasmus to accompany him to Rome, see: Desiderius Erasmus, *Opvs Epistolarvm Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. P. S. Allen, 12 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906), 1: nos. 252–5. Relieved, Erasmus made his famous pilgrimage to Walsingham with Aldrich in May 1512.

[10] The inventory of 24 November 1513 appeared at the beginning of a manuscript that was ordinarily dedicated to the wills proved in the Vice Chancellor's Court. CUL, UA, VC. Probate Wills I, fol. 1r.

[11] Leader, 1: 272–5, 285.

[12] Hall, 'The Trilingual College of San Ildefonso', 116-18; Rummel, *Threshold*, 61–2.

[13] Charles Henry Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, 5 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1842),1: 296. Gwyn did not discuss in *King's Cardinal* Cambridge's approach to Wolsey in 1514, but the episode was briefly referred to by Christopher N. L. Brooke in 'The University Chancellor,' *Humanism, Reform, and the Reformation,* 47–66 at 58–9.

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2014.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

He became a fellow of Magdalen College, and he briefly served as its bursar and the master of its grammar school. For the rest of his life he remained loyal both to his birthplace as well as to his university.[14]

Although Wolsey was an Oxford man, Fisher made an astute choice in identifying him as a possible successor. Wolsey's intelligence, daring, and ambition were widely recognized, as was his service to the young king as his almoner and as a member of his Council. Without a powerful chancellor, Cambridge could not develop its opportunities. Therefore, the junior proctor was sent to London at the head of a small delegation to negotiate with the bishop of Lincoln. But on 2 June 1514 Wolsey wrote to explain his reasons for refusing the chancellorship. While he was honoured by the invitation, he pleaded that the heavy press of business on which he was now engaged made it impossible for him to take up Cambridge's offer. In the future, he promised to do the university the best services in his power.[15]

Cambridge passed through an anxious summer. And then, in an unexpected turn of events, Fisher was not named when the new embassy to the Lateran Council was appointed. The university sent a fresh letter with a larger delegation to Rochester. Fisher was elected chancellor 'pro termino vite': to an unprecedented life term.[16]

Wolsey's visit to Cambridge, 1520

Spared from the rigors of serving on embassy abroad, Fisher devoted himself in the years that immediately followed to securing Lady Margaret's endowment and to building St. Johns. He engaged Richard Croke as the new lecturer of Greek.[17] But after he dedicated the college at its official opening in 1516, Fisher came only rarely to the university that he had helped to enhance, leaving day-to-day affairs in the hands of the vice-chancellor, or with Nicholas Metcalfe, the master of St John's.[18] Wolsey's agent at Cambridge was his almoner, William Capon, who became master of Jesus College that year. The university occasionally wrote to Wolsey on matters of business, and Gardiner entered his service after he carried letters to the cardinal

[14] Gwyn, *King's Cardinal*, 1–2, 19; *Cardinal Wolsey: Church, State and Art*, eds S.J. Gunn and P.G. Lindley, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). See also Sybil M. Jack's entry for Wolsey in the *ODNB*.

[15] *Grace Book B Part II: Containing the Accounts of the Proctors of the University of Cambridge, 1511–1544*, ed. Mary Bateson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), 26, 30; Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, 1: 296.

[16] *Grace Book B II*, p. 36. See also *A Collection of Letters, Statutes, and Other Documents from the MS Library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge*, ed. John Lamb (London, 1838), 10–11.

[17] See the tributes to Fisher and Lady Margaret in Croke's *Orationes duae*, sigs., a2r-a2v, a4v-a5v, c5r, d2v-d3v.

[18] Brooke, 'University Chancellor', 58–9 and Fisher's Itinerary in the same volume, Appendix 2; also, Leader, 1: 285.

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2014.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in 1523. Within two years, Gardiner was elected master of Trinity Hall, but his almost constant attendance on Wolsey meant that he was usually absent from Cambridge.[19] In some senses, Fisher and Wolsey, like Erasmus, were distant friends of the university. They were less present than was Bishop Nicholas West of Ely, their diocesan, who was visitor of Peterhouse. Together, they joined Fisher in their sponsorship of the study of Greek at Cambridge, and Croke compared them to Maecenas, who was lauded by Virgil for his generous use of his great wealth.[20] But in practical terms, the steady absence of the chancellor meant that in the 1510s and 1520s, the university was both in need of support and yet self-regulating to a substantial degree, a state of affairs that continued until direct new pressures were brought to bear by Henry VIII's desire for a new marriage and then by the royal supremacy. After 1516, only seldom did Cambridge's friends appear at its gates.

Despite his promise that he would be glad to do the university any service in his power, Wolsey showed little interest in Cambridge until late in his career when he founded in 1528 his school in Ipswich. He was translated almost immediately in 1514 from Lincoln to the archbishopric of York. The next year Pope Leo X created him cardinal, and Henry made him lord chancellor. In 1518, at the king's insistence, Leo named Wolsey legate *a latere.* Wolsey was a pluralist on a heroic scale. He held first the bishopric of Bath and Wells *in commendam* with York, and then he exchanged it for Durham. In 1529, he exchanged Durham for Winchester, the wealthiest diocese in England. In time, his annual income exceeded that of most members of the nobility, estimated at an immense £30,000.[21] His household was enormous, and he travelled with an extensive entourage.[22] He had a genius for self-promotion and for the visual display of his authority. When, through his influence, the university received some liberties in 1525 that enhanced its privileges over the townspeople of Cambridge, the university paid to have his letter of accreditation written on vellum and emblazoned with 'my lord cardinal's arms'.[23] If the Tudor rose was one of the tokens of the dynasty, then Wolsey's arms, cardinal's

[19] *Grace Book B II*, 110, 119.
[20] Croke, *Orationes duae*, a3r-a4r, b3r.
[21] Gwyn, *King's Cardinal*, 33, 56–7, 102–4, 312–13. John Guy, 'Wolsey and the Tudor Polity', in *Cardinal Wolsey,* 54–75. In the introduction to their volume, Gunn and Lindley note that astounding though his income was, Wolsey had less than Cisneros or some of the other great archbishops on the continent, *Cardinal Wolsey* 6.
[22] For Wolsey's visit to Suffolk one year, a dozen bucks were killed, probably to feed his retinue. See the Framlingham Park Game Roll, kept by Richard Chambyr for 1515–1519, printed in John Cummings, *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), appendix 2: 260–5; Wabuda, 'Receiving the King', 168–9.
[23] *Grace Book B II,* p. 116. See also Mary Bateson's helpful comments in her introduction *Proctors' Account and Other Records*, ix–xi.

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2014.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

hat, badges, processional crosses, and the mitres of his various bishoprics were also instantly recognizable as his signatures.[24]

Cambridge was merely peripheral to Wolsey's interests until 1520, when he stopped at the university while he was on pilgrimage to the shrine of the Blessed Virgin of Walsingham in Norfolk for some refreshment following his exhausting exertions in France at the Field of Cloth of Gold.[25] The university seized the opportunity to give him a lavish reception that was unsurpassed for hospitality. Members of each college and religious house assembled outside the city's gates to greet him and the members of his retinue. A Mass was celebrated in the fields, and two scholars carried the altar outside. In preparation, considerable building work was needed, and several payments to carpenters were listed among the proctors' expenses. For the only time hitherto recorded in the university's accounts, Cambridge spent a penny on the luxury of frankincense.[26] The university held a banquet in his honour that featured two roast oxen as well as a variety of fish and other foodstuffs, including half a dozen swans. On wine, the university spent £3 6*s*. 8*d*., about as much as much as the annual salary for the theology lectureship that Lady Margaret had endowed. Probably not less than fifty gallons was served during the cardinal's visit, the largest amount ever recorded in the Grace Book.[27]

On the occasions when important visitors did come through Cambridge, usually on their way to Walsingham, the university offered them hospitality as a matter of course, but on a rather reduced scale. In spring 1516 the king's sister Mary, known after her brief marriage to Louis XII as 'the French queen', was given the modest gift of fish and wine. Katherine of Aragon also made a pilgrimage to Walsingham in late 1520 a few weeks after the cardinal, when the university spent the large sum of £8 8*s*. 10*d* for her entertainment that included a reception in the Schools when hippocras wine was served.[28] But the welcome that the university gave the queens paled in comparison to the generosity it showed to Wolsey, necessary perhaps because he travelled with a larger entourage. But it also offered less to Henry VIII when the king came to Cambridge (with little warning) two years later.[29]

[24] Hilary Wayment, 'Wolsey and Stained Glass', in *Cardinal Wolsey,* 116–30.
[25] Gwyn, *King's Cardinal*, 345–6.
[26] *Grace Book B II*, 82–3.
[27] Ibid. The university's usual supplier was Thomas Marshall, and the price of wine was around 4*d*. per quart. See Ellis H. Minns, 'A Cambridge Vintner's Accounts, c. 1511', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, 34 (1934): 50–8. For payments to the Lady Margaret Professors of Divinity (whose income was derived from property administered by Westminster Abbey), see Rex, 'Professorship', 32–4, especially n. 26.
[28] *Grace Book B II*, 53 (for the French queen in 1516–17), for Queen Katherine,76, 83, 88–89. Regular modest gifts to the bishop of Ely were also recorded.
[29] Wabuda, 'Receiving the King',163–178.

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2014.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

There can be no doubt that Cambridge was courting the cardinal in the hope of that he might give the university a benefaction in the form of a college or some other large gift. Wolsey could afford to be almost as generous as Lady Margaret or Cisneros. Wolsey's visit was also ornamented with orations that made direct appeals to his generosity. Henry Bullock of Queens' delivered an elegant address that spoke warmly of the cardinal's fame and his diplomatic career. Deftly acknowledging that his first loyalty might be to his own university, Bullock encouraged the cardinal to think of himself as a successor to Henry VII in his generosity to Cambridge.[30] Bullock was echoed by Bryan Rowe of King's, who praised the heavy labours that Wolsey shouldered for the present king and for the Church. Invoking the august order of the priesthood that Wolsey represented in succession to the Old Testament priest-king Melchisedech, Rowe also compared the cardinal to several classical figures. Like Croke, Rowe saluted Wolsey as Cambridge's Maecenas.[31]

The cardinal's visit was the most splendid event to occur at the university during the whole of the Henry VIII's reign. It was probably the finest single occasion ever observed by the university in years between the final visit of Lady Margaret and her son in July 1507 and Queen Elizabeth's appearance in 1564.

Burning Luther's Books, 1521

Bullock's address was printed at the beginning of the following year as part of the elaborate response that was made in England to counteract Martin Luther's influence. Pope Leo had demanded that Luther retract his writings before the end of 1520 or be excommunicated. In the face of Luther's defiance, the pope ordered Wolsey to burn his books.

Now Wolsey's new connections at Cambridge assumed fresh importance when he sent for the university's most senior men to come to London to examine heretical books under the direction of Archbishop William Warham of Canterbury. They were Bullock, Walkenden, Ridley, and Watson, chosen as much for their learning and experience, as for their friendship with Erasmus and for their new association with the cardinal. They reviewed an assortment of books that included manuscripts attributed to John Wycliffe, whose fourteenth-century writings (like those of Jan Hus) had come under renewed suspicion for influencing Luther.[32]

[30] Henry Bullock, *Oratio . . . ad Thomā Cardinalem . . . Archiepiscopum Eboracensem & Angliæ supremum Cancellarium* (Cambridge: Jan Siberch, February 1521), *RSTC* 4082.
[31] Rowe's address has been printed by Lamb, *Documents*, 9–10; F. J. Norton, 'The Library of Bryan Rowe, Vice-Provost of King's College (d. 1521)', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, vol. 2 (1958), 339–51. Melchisedech: Psalm 109. 4. Croke, *Orationes duae,* sig. b3r.
[32] *Grace Book B II*, 92–3.

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2014.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Their task was delicate, for now some of Erasmus's most controversial writings were in danger of being impugned by association with Luther's heresies. After leaving England in 1516, Erasmus issued his *Novem Instrumentum*, his first study of the New Testament, work that he had begun while he lectured in Greek at Cambridge. Three years later he brought to the press a revised version of the New Testament that amended discrepancies that he believed had crept into the Vulgate itself over the centuries. Many at Cambridge, including Rowe and Thomas Bilney, bought his New Testament immediately.[33] A measure of hostility greeted his *Novum Testamentum* on the continent, particularly concerning his use of Greek. By challenging the primacy of the Vulgate, Erasmus had created the possibility of editions of the Bible that could never be fully complete, comprehensive or fixed in the sense that the Vulgate had set the sacred text for its many uses in the Church. Erasmus's versions of the New Testament, and with them the Complutensian Polyglot, removed some of the stability that the Latin Church had inherited, at the same moment that Luther emerged.[34]

Until Luther appeared, the word 'evangelical' had referred merely to those who studied the Gospels, but on the continent in the 1520s the word began to assume a new meaning as a synonym for a heretical sect.[35]

In examining the assortment of books they were shown, Erasmus's Cambridge friends managed to protect his teachings and his reputation at the same time that they rose to the challenge that Luther posed to the Church.[36] Over the course of a few weeks they developed a list of 'pestiferous errors of Martin Luther' that they identified as injurious to the Christian Church. They affirmed that the pope was the successor of St Peter and that Christ had made him his Vicar over the Church throughout the entire world. Erasmus's friends had carefully avoided any references that would have impugned the kind of

[33] For Rowe, see Norton, 'The Library of Bryan Rowe', 342–51 (especially no. 2). For Bilney, see John Foxe, *The ecclesiasticall history contaynyng the actes and monuments* (London: John Daye, 1570), *RSTC* 11223 (hereafter Foxe 1570), 1142–3, and John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments,* ed. George Townsend, 8 vols (London, 1843–9) (hereafter *AM*), 4: 633–6; see also *Garrett Godfrey's Accounts 1527–1533*, eds. Elisabeth Leedham-Green, D. E. Rhodes and F. H. Stubbings, Cambridge Bibliographical Society Monograph, no. 12 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[34] Desiderius Erasmus, *Controversies: Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* and Responsio *ad Annotationes Lei*, ed. Jane E. Phillips, trans. Erika Rummel, *The Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 72 (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2006); Louis Bouyer, 'Erasmus in Relation to the Medieval Biblical Tradition', in *The Vernacular Scriptures*, *The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West From the Fathers to the Reformation*, ed. G. W. H. Lampe, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1969), 2: 492–505; Hall, 'The Trilingual College of San Ildefonso', 137. For a defense of Erasmus, see Robert Wakefield, Syntagma de hebreorum codicũ incorruptione. Item eiusdem Oratio Oxonij habita, vnacum quibusdam alijs lectu ac annotatu non indignis (London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1530?]), *RSTC* 24946, sigs. F4v, H1r.

[35] Guy Bedouelle, *Lefèvre d'Étaples et l'Intelligence des Ecritures,* Travaux d'humanisme et Renaissance series, 152 (Paris, 1976), 234–5.

[36] *Grace Book B II,* 92–3.

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2014.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

evangelism that he had done so much to develop. None of his opinions or books were denounced. Taking its ultimate authority from Pope Leo's bull, Wolsey sent their list to every bishop in England for distribution to all parishes and religious houses. Anyone who had books by Luther was ordered to surrender them within fifteen days.[37]

On 12 May 1521, in one of the most famous episodes of his career, Wolsey came in great state to Paul's Cross. The crowd that came to see and hear was vast. As with his other public appearances, Wolsey used the occasion to great dramatic effect. For two hours, Fisher preached in denunciation of Luther as his books were thrown into the flames. Wolsey held up to the audience a draft of a tract that the king had been writing: a preliminary copy of his defense of the seven sacraments that would be finished later that summer and that would win for Henry the accolade from the pope '*Fidei Defensor*'.[38]

Until the mid-1530s when the heresy laws were revised, Wolsey's mandate became the standard to counter the threat that Luther posed in England. The possession of heretical books was strictly illegal while evangelism continued to be accepted. Implicitly, Erasmus was defended when Wolsey burned Luther's books. In 1519, Croke argued that through the study of Hebrew and Greek scholars would be drawn closer to Christ, and pernicious heresies would be thwarted.[39] That Luther's opinions could be condemned while evangelism itself was protected was a paradox that ultimately defined the Erasmian character of the Reformation in England.

Mitres and Crosses

Pope, cardinal, chancellor and king spoke with one voice against Luther in 1521. Some dubious books were probably not immediately surrendered, and Luther's writings continued to reach England. The definitions supplied by Wolsey's mandate were sufficiently narrow to protect scholars who wished to explore the deep meanings of Scripture. As long as they did not openly challenge papal authority and they did not read Luther's books, they could continue without undue interference. But that fragile balance was threatened once men of position and standing at Cambridge began to denounce clerical abuses, especially after the long-anticipated gift that Bullock and others had hoped Wolsey would give was instead bestowed on his own university.

At Oxford, Wolsey began Cardinal College in 1524. It was endowed with the income of twenty suppressed monasteries. He planned it on a

[37] *Ibid.* Wolsey's mandate has been printed in David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hibernia*, 4 vols (London, 1737), 3: 690–2. See also Gwyn, *Wolsey,* 483; Leader, 1: 254, 295-6, 314, 320–1.
[38] Gwyn, *Wolsey*, 483–4.
[39] Croke, *Orations duae,* sigs. a5v-a6v.

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2014.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

scale of magnificence that had no equal in England and that was designed to exceed every academic precedent. His new college's chapel was to be even larger and more extravagant than King's. At Cambridge, the most recent foundations had been named for St John, or in praise of Christ in devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. At Oxford, Wolsey essentially named his creation after himself.[40]

A number of Cambridge men were invited to Cardinal College. Probably on Gardiner's recommendation, John Frith was sent to Oxford while he was still a Cambridge undergraduate.[41] Capon encouraged Thomas Cranmer, a fellow of Jesus, to migrate. Many were affronted when Cranmer decided not to take up the invitation, though (as Foxe suggested) as time later proved, at Cardinal College, 'man's glory was there more sought for, than God's'.[42]

Open resentment against Wolsey broke out suddenly in Cambridge at Christmas-time in 1525, when Robert Barnes delivered a sermon that turned into a denunciation of clerical abuses, and especially pluralism, which he said was contrary to the standards established for the Church by St Paul. Since Christ had given his precious blood for redemption, Barnes asked why no one saw a bishop break his mitre to give some of its gemstones to relieve a poor man. Gardiner described how Barnes began to 'rail' when he referred to Wolsey's mitres and crosses as examples of overweening abuse. When Wolsey examined Barnes in his private gallery, he noted how Barnes's criticisms 'touched him'.[43]

Barnes represented a real threat, not only because he belonged—like Luther—to an Augustinian order, but as the prior of his house, with authority over others, he had broken with the tacit understanding that Wolsey as the pope's legate and lord chancellor was above criticism. The same was true in 1528, when Hugh Latimer, who held the office of the University Chaplain in the faculty of divinity, fell under suspicion after he preached a sermon in the University Church on the true office of a bishop. Hearing some disquieting rumors about Latimer's opinions, Bishop West came from Ely to listen. Latimer probably said that a good bishop was more concerned with the spiritual welfare of his flock than he was with any earthly glory, and his target may have been Wolsey as much as his ordinary. West asked Latimer to preach against Luther, and he was incensed when Latimer refused by saying

[40] John Newman, 'Cardinal Wolsey's Collegiate Foundations', in *Cardinal Wolsey*, 103–115, and Gunn and Lindley's introduction, 12.

[41] *Grace Book Γ*, 221. Richard Cox and Matthew Parker were also invited to Oxford. Cox went. Parker, like Cranmer, remained in Cambridge. See Felicity Heal on Cox and David J. Crankshaw and Alexandra Gillespie for Parker in the *ODNB*.

[42] *Narratives of the Days of the Reformation*, ed. John Gough Nichols, Printed for the Camden Society (1859), 240; Foxe 1570, 2033; also appearing in *AM,* 8: 4–5; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 24.

[43] Robert Barnes, *A supplicacion vnto the most gracyous prynce H. the viij* ([London: John Byddell], 1534) RSTC 1471, 38, 44–46 (mitres); *The Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, ed. James Arthur Muller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), no. 81 at 165–6.

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2014.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that if Luther preached only the doctrine of God out of the Scriptures, as he had just done, then Luther needed no confutation.[44]

Capon was present when Wolsey examined Latimer at York Place, and the cardinal accused him of infecting students with Luther's doctrine. But Latimer parried by saying that he had studied both the ancient doctors of the Church as well as the scholastics, and when Capon tested him on Duns Scotus, Latimer responded promptly and accurately. The story of Latimer's examination by Wolsey was recorded for Foxe by Ralph Morice, later Cranmer's secretary, and he captured the mildness and good humor that the cardinal used in his examination. Wolsey was lenient when he examined Latimer, and he was lenient too when Barnes came before him. He asked Barnes if it was reasonable to take down some of his symbols and coin them for alms.[45] So impressed was Wolsey by Latimer's display of learning that he gave him his own preaching license, so that he could preach anywhere in England, even in West's 'beard'.[46]

Perhaps Cambridge would have received more had Wolsey survived the crisis of the Divorce that began to break over him in mid-1527. When he founded his new college at Ipswich in 1528, it was probably meant as a feeder school for Cambridge as well as Oxford. Wolsey chose Capon as its dean. Gardiner prepared its statutes. Its budget was prepared by one of the cardinal's senior legal advisors, Thomas Cromwell.[47]

The foundation was carried out rapidly in the midst of several inescapable crises that were breaking at once. A number of religious houses had to be closed to endow his school, and Gardiner, newly returned from Orvieto and his audiences with Pope Clement on the pressing business of the King's Great Matter, was sent into East Anglia to carry out the suppressions. Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio was slowly making his way towards England to hold court at Blackfriars. At the same time that Cromwell was hanging tapestries with his own hands to decorate Wolsey's school, he was receiving letters about the discovery of heretical books among the young scholars of Cardinal College. Frith was one of those accused. Held in prison over the course of the year, several died.[48]

Foxe helped to create the myth that when Barnes was examined by the cardinal, or when Frith escaped from Oxford, that these were their first steps in their long walks to the stake, and that Wolsey had some

[44] British Library (BL), Harley MS 422, fols. 84r-88r, printed in *Sermons and Remains of Hugh Latimer*, ed. George Elwes Corrie, Parker Society (Cambridge, 1845) pp. xxvii-xxxi.
[45] Barnes, *Supplicacion,* 44–46.
[46] BL, Harley MS 422, fols. 84r-88r: Latimer, *Sermons and Remains,* xxvii–xxxi.
[47] See A. F. Leach's account of the founding of Wolsey's school in *Victoria County History Suffolk*, 2: 325–38.
[48] BL, Cotton MS Titus B/1, fols. 281r–282r; *LP*, 4 (2), nos. 4778 and 4755); *Narratives of the Days of the Reformation*, 77: 32–5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2014.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

distant role in the disasters that eventually overtook them.[49] But Foxe's narratives fit uneasily with the University of Cambridge's continued affection for the cardinal, even as he tottered. Early in the summer of 1529, as Gardiner left Wolsey's service to enter the king's just before the Blackfriars court, the junior proctor was sent to Wolsey with the gift of a book from the university that had been bound in velvet by Cambridge's stationer, Garrett Godfrey.[50] When Wolsey was deprived of his honours and offices in October, his endowments for Cardinal College and his Ipswich school were confiscated. Yet Latimer persisted in preaching under Wolsey's license, even though many thought that his privilege had expired. Latimer refused to stop using it. Perhaps he thought, as many did, that Wolsey would rise up again. He might now be 'reconciled to God from his pomp and vanities', Latimer said, and he set more store by his license than he ever did when Wolsey 'was in his utmost felicity'. So complicated were Latimer's opinions of Wolsey, that Morice's reminiscence was too difficult for Foxe to fit into his account of Latimer's life for the *Actes and Monuments*. So Foxe simply ignored it, though it can still be read among his papers.[51]

The history of the University of Cambridge can be traced, in part, through its lost gifts, and the opportunities that never arrived. Fisher's library, one of the finest in Europe, never reached St. John's after his execution in 1535. Nor did Cranmer give any substantial present to Jesus College, though perhaps he intended to before he was overtaken in 1556. They, like Wolsey before them, were interrupted. In some surprising ways, Wolsey protected Cambridge's evangelism even when he was embarrassed by the very men he endorsed. Wolsey was a friend to Cambridge even though he loved Oxford more. Cambridge's desire to gain Wolsey's protection has been largely forgotten. As some of his recent biographers have noted, once Wolsey died in 1530 'it was convenient never to have been his friend'.[52]

[49] In February 1526, Fisher preached against Barnes, in Wolsey's presence see John Fisher, *A sermon had at Paulis . . . vpōn quīnquagesom sonday* (London, 1527), RSTC 10892. Barnes knelt, and books were again burned. Foxe 1570, 1364–5, AM, 5: 418–19; Dowling, *Fisher*, 101–104.

[50] *Grace Book B II*, 152.

[51] BL, Harley MS 422, fols. 84r–88r: Latimer, *Sermons and Remains,* xxvii–xxxi.

[52] Gunn and Lindley, 'Introduction', *Cardinal Wolsey*, 2; L. R. Gardiner, 'Further News of Cardinal Wolsey's End, November-December 1530', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research,* 57 (1984), 99–107.

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2014.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press