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**WRITING AND REWRITING EARLY MODERN HISTORY:
FIVE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH CHRONICLERS**

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In the field of early modern historical writing, sixteenth-century English chronicles have been regarded as an outdated medieval form, and they and their authors have suffered in comparison with later works influenced by Renaissance humanism. Yet in the Tudor period, chronicles, especially the smaller, abridged versions, enjoyed a substantial readership and were reprinted multiple times—very often with revisions. The nature of and motivation behind these revisions reveal much about the varying personal priorities and backgrounds of the chroniclers as well as the readership for which they were writing. This study focuses on five sixteenth-century chroniclers, Thomas Cooper, Robert Crowley, Richard Grafton, John Mychell, and John Stow. While the revisions they made to their chronicles often entailed enlargement or abridgement, the decades of religious change and controversy spanning the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth both necessitated and elicited revisions that were more ideological in nature and reflective of the changing climates through which the chroniclers lived. This study reveals how these chronicles are important for the way they shed light on each chronicler's opinions, mentality, and social status, bearing personal witness to their culture and times, and also for what they can tell us about how a popular vernacular national history was shaped and developed within a broader social context.

The paradox of sixteenth-century chronicle history is that while chroniclers are generally held in low repute, they were the most widely read historical writers of their era. This study examines the work of five sixteenth-century English chroniclers: Thomas Cooper, Robert Crowley, Richard Grafton, John Mychell, and John Stow. All of these chroniclers' writings were reprinted, revised, and abridged. This study demonstrates the importance of vernacular chronicles to contemporaries and seeks to restore their scholarly significance.

D. R. Woolf has documented the “death of the chronicle” and the emergence of better scholarship in the seventeenth century.¹ Chronicle history was unquestionably old-fashioned and little influenced by Renaissance humanism. The chroniclers used medieval models and wrote in the vernacular of the common people but were succeeded by more learned scholars in the early seventeenth century. Chronicle narratives clearly pale in comparison with the work of Camden, Bacon, and Raleigh. Chroniclers lacking a university education and drawn from the ranks of the commons were also victims of class prejudice in their own time as well as later. Most students of early modern historical scholarship have followed Bacon, who believed that members of the upper class were best suited to write history. As F. J. Levy has observed, “Anyone of a lower social status was doomed to compose chronicles.”² Moreover, the chroniclers borrowed freely from each other and produced what often appeared to be monolithic accounts.

In contrast, David Womersley has argued that chronicles had a “dominant presence in Tudor historical writing.”³ Dominance was revealed in a substantial readership that supported multiple editions, and the publication of inexpensive abridgments testifies not only to the influence of chronicles, but their contribution to popular culture. Furthermore a study of revisionist practices in sixteenth-century chronicles reveals their complexity and diversity. This study, following the advice of Womersley, concentrates on the content of chronicles rather than “form and technique.”⁴ Three chroniclers included in this essay were commoners, Grafton, and Mychell, and

1 D. R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 11-78. The neglect of chronicles may be seen in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, IV (1557-1695)*, ed. John Barnard et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

2 “Afterward,” in Paulina Kewes, *The Uses of History in Early Modern Europe* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 2006), 416-19.

3 “Against the Teleology of Technique,” in Kewes, *The Uses of History in Early Modern Europe*, 103.

4 Kewes, 103.

Stow, but the inclusion of Cooper and Crowley demonstrates that the educated elite also contributed to chronicle scholarship.⁵

Stow is an excellent example of the citizen historian with no elitist pretensions. The most prolific English chronicler of his century, he was also the author of *A Survey of London*. Mychell, easily the most obscure of the group, was a mid-century Canterbury printer. Grafton, like Stow and Mychell, lacked a university education but was closely involved in the publication of the first English Bibles and served as Royal Printer to Edward VI. As a chronicler, he is best remembered for his controversy with Stow. Cooper and Crowley, on the other hand, were Oxford graduates. Cooper distinguished himself as a theologian and Elizabethan bishop of Winchester, not as a historian. His first chronicle, published in 1549, might have been forgotten if Crowley had not produced an unauthorized revision ten years later. Although Crowley published only one chronicle, he achieved prominence as an author, printer, and clergyman.⁶

Early modern chronicles were revised when the author issued a new edition of his work and not only extended the narrative chronologically but rewrote sections of a previously published account. Grafton and Stow produced abridged works that represent another kind of revision. Abridgements required the author to eliminate portions of the narrative with a simplified story that would

5 Works on early modern historiography include F. J. Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1967), D. R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and Mary-Rose McLaren, *The London Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century* (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2002). For the history of reading and the history of the book, see Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer, eds., *Books and Readers in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) and Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

6 Biographies of each of the above appear in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Further information on Stow and Grafton, respectively, may be found in Barrett L. Beer, *Tudor England Observed: The World of John Stow* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998), Ian Gadd and Alexandra Gillespie, eds., *John Stow (1525-1605) and the Making of the English Past* (London: British Library, 2004), and Andrea Manchester, "Chronicling the English Reformation: The Historical Works of Richard Grafton," Ph.D. Dissertation, Kent State University, 2007. See also John N. King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982) and James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade 1450-1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

fit a shorter and less expensive format. The problem of revision is complicated when an historical work is an amalgam of the writings of several authors. Historical writers of the period freely incorporated the work of predecessors and contemporaries, often without attribution. The second edition of Holinshed's chronicle (1587) is the classic example of this problem; Raphael Holinshed died seven years before the chronicle was published, he is the only known writer who cannot have contributed to it.⁷ Earlier, John Mychell published multiple editions of a short chronicle at Canterbury that were revised, extended, and reissued by London printers. On the other hand, the work known as *An Epitome of Cronicles* (1559) was the work of three known authors, Thomas Lanquet, Thomas Cooper, and Robert Crowley.

Revision of chronicles involved not only enlargement, abridgement, and the input of multiple authors, but textual changes that were ideological. As Reformation history was by definition controversial, religious change during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth required historians to tune their writings to the orthodoxy of the day or conceal their true views in vagueness and obscurity. Chronicles with lives that stretched over several decades reveal how meticulously the authors strove to achieve religious correctness. Authors who became ordained clergy such as Cooper and Crowley often assigned greater importance to theological and doctrinal questions than lay writers, but no truly official reformation history was produced during the sixteenth century, except perhaps, for John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.⁸ Although Grafton remained a layman, he expressed a commitment to religious reform in all of his historical writings, often in a polemical manner akin to that of Foxe.

Ideological controversy also had a political dimension since the reputations of Tudor monarchs and ministers were affected by their role in the Reformation process. Marcia Lee Metzger has

7 Annabel Patterson, *Reading Holinshed's Chronicles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 22f.

8 See the Privy Council directive of 1570 in John N. King, *Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 112-13.

shown that the revisionism of mid-sixteenth century chroniclers had a powerful impact on the reputations of Queens Mary and Elizabeth.⁹ Working in an environment where publication needed official approval, historical writers of all persuasions needed to exercise a degree of caution unknown to later scholars.

I

Although John Mychell's biography appears in both editions of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, he has remained a rather shadowy figure.¹⁰ His chronicles are concealed in the on-line catalogue of the British Library under the heading, "John Stow," and listed under "Britain—Appendix" in the *Revised Short Title Catalogue*. Mychell (d. 1556) learned the printing trade in London and by 1533 was a resident of Canterbury where his publication of works by William Tyndale, John Frith, and other reformers led to religious charges against him. He may have returned to London during the reign of Mary.¹¹ Three editions of *A Breuiat Cronicle* were published at Canterbury between 1552 and 1554 while later editions, issued between 1554 and 1561, were the work of two London printers, John King and Thomas Marshe.¹² These short chronicles are excellent examples of the work of a commoner who successfully targeted a non-elitist readership, and the Canterbury editions suggest local demand for an inexpensive national history in the city and the county of Kent.

9 "Controversy and 'Correctness': English Chronicles and the Chroniclers, 1553-1568," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27:2 (1996): 437-451.

10 See also E. Gordon Duff, *A Century of the English Book Trade* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1948), 107-8; M. L. Zell, "An Early Press in Canterbury?" *The Library*, 5th series, 32 (1977): 155-6; Peter Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1977), 40, 42 where the name is spelled Michel; and William K. Sessions, *John Mychell: Canterbury's First Printer from 1536 and from 1549* (York: Ebor Press, 1983).

11 Duff, *The English Provincial Printers, Stationers and Bookbinders to 1557* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 117.

12 In addition to the Canterbury editions, the four London editions at the British Library were consulted for this study. The latter are: c.122.b.34 [1554] John King; c.12.b.7 [1555/6] King; c.21.a.25 [1556] Thomas Marshe; G.5896 [1561] Marshe. Metzger, 439, argues that King and Marshe stole Mychell's copy after his death but does not prove this.

Beginning with the reign of Henry VIII, the Mychell chronicles were rewritten to make history fit the needs of the day. Two versions of the king's divorce demonstrate this practice. The earliest edition--1551/2--offers the Henrician and Protestant version of these events: "This year the king was by due process of the law divorced from lady Katherine his brother's wife...."¹³ The section was rewritten for the 1554 edition to read: The "king divorced from his lawful wife Queen Katherine and because the Bishop of Rome would not consent to that unlawful divorce, both he and his authority were clear abolished this realm."¹⁴ But not all references were edited for religious orthodoxy; for example, accounts of the execution of John Fisher and Thomas More and the introduction of an authorized Bible escaped revision.¹⁵

In the earliest edition of the Mychell chronicle, a marginal note, "great pity," was placed opposite an entry stating that a collection for the poor had ceased in 1540, but it was omitted from some later editions.¹⁶ Did an editor merely tidy up the page by deleting a superfluous comment or is there a deeper meaning, perhaps evidence of declining compassion for the poor based on the principle that poor people were largely responsible for their own misfortune and therefore unworthy of pity?

Accounts of the death of Henry VIII offer further examples of revisionism. The 1554 edition states that under Henry VIII the people "lived long a joyful and a peaceable life reduced from the error of Idolatry to the true knowledge of God...."¹⁷ Later editions accepted the claim that the reign was joyful and peaceable but

13 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (Canterbury, 1551), British Library, G.5894, fo. I5.

14 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), BL, C.122.b.34, fo. L5r.

15 Cf., Metzger, 439. Mychell clearly was sympathetic to Henrician religious reforms at the accession of Edward VI; but it is difficult to determine when he became a "devout Protestant."

16 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), fo. L8v.; (London, 1561), BL, G.5896, fo. K8v.

17 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), fo. N2v.

dropped “the error of Idolatry.”¹⁸ In these editions either the editor or printer accepted the goodness of Henry VIII but could not permit a reference to the error of Catholic idolatry to stand. A somewhat garbled emendation appears in the editions of 1555/6 and 1561 which state that the people were “reduced from the error to the true knowledge of God.”¹⁹ This puzzling phrase may alternatively be explained as an awkward attempt to achieve ambiguity on a sensitive religious issue or merely a printer’s error.

The reign of Edward VI was a controversial period that offered a veritable minefield for mid-sixteenth-century historical writers, but the short Mychell chronicles--like the abridgements of Stow--avoided difficulties by failing to provide an adequate description of the significant religious changes that took place. The 1554 edition readily concedes that the marriage of priests in 1549 was “granted lawfully by parliament,”²⁰ an observation carried forward in the edition of 1561. Catholic orthodoxy, however, may well explain the statement in the 1553 and 1554 editions that Nicholas Ridley and John Ponet “usurped” their respective bishoprics of London and Winchester, but in 1561 the text was changed to read that the two “had” the bishoprics.

A missing folio in the 1554 edition describing events following the death of Edward VI and the failed plot to transfer the throne to Lady Jane Grey may be another printer’s error or a crude attempt to censor an episode embarrassing to the Marian regime.²¹ An entry for 10 July 1553 opposite the marginal note, “a rebellion made of the Duke of Northumberland,” ends abruptly with the duke taking “an army against the.” The next folio, O2r., begins 22 August with Northumberland’s execution. The missing folio is included in two other Marian editions [1553 & 1555/6 (BL,

18 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1555/6), BL, C.12.b.7, fo. N2v.; (1556), BL, C.21.a.25, fo. N2v.

19 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1555/6) BL, C.12.b.7, fo. N2v; (1561), fo. N1v.

20 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), fo. N5r. Metzger, 439, 440 gives incorrect dates for legislation legalizing the marriage of priests.

21 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), fo. O1.

C12b.7)]. Here Northumberland leads his army against “the lady Mary, right inheritor to the crown of this realm.” His efforts were doomed because his attempt “was not of God” and “could not come to no [sic] good success, for when he thought himself most strongest, part of the nobility and all the common people fell from him.”²²

The 1553/4 edition of Mychell’s chronicle is important as one of the earliest narrative sources for Wyatt’s Rebellion. It gives the following account of the defense of London from rebel attack: “Lord William Howard joined in commission with the mayor, for the surer defense of London [because of the Londoners untrustiness].” The next edition of the Mychell chronicle omitted the bracketed section but added a reference to the Queen’s oration to the mayor and citizens exhorting them to be loyal against the rebels, a speech to which “all with one voice assented.”²³ Leaders of Wyatt’s rebellion, according to the 1554 edition, were “pretending to defend the realm from Spaniards and other strangers, intending to maintain heresies” and destroy Queen Mary.²⁴ To bring the chronicle into compliance with Elizabeth’s religious policy, the 1561 edition dropped the reference to “heresies” but left the rest of the narrative intact.

The Great Persecution was understandably minimized by Marian editors of the Mychell chronicles. In the 1555 edition we learn that “divers sacramentaries and many of them not converted suffered death by fire in many places of this realm.”²⁵ Names of the victims, the heroes of John Foxe, were often passed over; for example, John Rogers was merely one “Rogers” while Robert Ferrar, Edwardian bishop of St. David’s, became “one Farrer.” The last edition—1561—witnessed a rewrite of the Marian period bringing the narrative into tune with Elizabethan religious values. The Marian edition of 1556 referred to Reginald Pole on the occasion

22 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1555), BL, C.12.b.7, fo. O1r.

23 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (Canterbury, 1553/4), fo. N7v.; (London, 1554), fo. O4r.

24 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), fo. O3r.

25 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), fo. P1r.

of his consecration as “my lord Cardinal Pole’s grace lord legate,”²⁶ the 1561 edition described the new archbishop of Canterbury as “Cardinal Pole the pope’s legate.”²⁷ The same edition stated people were “apprehended for religion,” and lamented in an entry for 1558 that “all this year ceased not the persecution for religion...”²⁸

II

An Epitome of Cronicles or *Coopers Chronicle* is considerably longer than the Mychell chronicles despite the title of the first two editions.²⁹ This work presents none of the problems of authorship characteristic of the Mychell chronicles. Three writers, Thomas Lanquet, whose early death at the age of twenty-four preceded publication, Robert Crowley, who contributed only to the unauthorized 1559 edition, and Thomas Cooper can be readily identified. At the time of his death in 1545, Lanquet had reached only 16 AD. When the first edition was published in 1549, Cooper, a married intellectual living at Oxford, had recently completed a revision of Thomas Elyot’s Latin-English dictionary. It has been said that this early work placed Cooper at risk of becoming nothing more than a “hack author;” the observation is another example of modern scholarly prejudice against chronicle scholarship.³⁰ The chronicle revealed Cooper’s reformist principles in an effusive dedication to Protector Somerset, who, Cooper wrote, was advancing “the true religion of Christ,” although the work did not extend beyond the first year of the reign of Edward VI.³¹ Cooper remained in England after the king’s death in 1553, took a degree in medicine, and practiced that profession through the reign of Mary. Following the accession of Elizabeth, Cooper was reappointed as

26 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1556), BL, C.21.a.25, p.111r.

27 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1561), fo. N8v.

28 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1561), BL, G.5896, fo. O2v.

29 The first title appears on the 1549 and 1559 editions; the second on the editions of 1560 and 1565.

30 See Margaret Bowker, “Thomas Cooper” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). For an assessment of Cooper’s dictionary scholarship see D. T. Starnes, *Renaissance Dictionaries* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1954) and Lillian Gottesman in *Bibliotheca Eliotae* (1548) (Delmar, NY: Scholars’ Facsimiles and Reprints, 1975).

31 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1549), fo. a4r.

head of Magdalen School at Oxford, a post that he had held during Edward's reign, and ordained to the priesthood.

When the second edition of his chronicle was published in 1560, Cooper offered a new dedication to the Earl of Bedford in which emphasis shifted to the benefits of historical study. But about a year earlier Robert Crowley published an edition in which he extended and slightly revised the narrative published by Cooper in 1549. The 1559 edition, printed by William Seres, retained the dedication to Somerset and added a complete account of the reigns of Edward VI and Mary, carrying the story to the accession of Elizabeth.³² It was this so-called unauthorized edition that prompted Cooper's vigorous attack the following year. "Certain persons for lukers sake," wrote Cooper, caused his chronicle to be printed without his knowledge. Finding no fewer than 500 faults of either the printer or author, he angrily denounced them as "utterly unlearned" and given to "unhonest dealing."³³

Crowley's edition and the original edition of 1549 are nearly identical until the reign of Henry VIII. The two versions were uniformly hostile to Islam and agreed that Muhammad came of "base stock" and performed "magical acts" that gave him "great honor of the foolish people."³⁴ Less understandable is Crowley's allegation that two reformers, Philip Melanchthon and "Pomerane" [Johann Bugenhagen], were "infected with the pestilent heresies of Luther."³⁵ The earlier account of Cooper saw Luther as one who opposed idolatry, questioned papal supremacy, and "uncovered the strumpet of Babylon." To him Melanchthon and Pomerane were "men of

32 Beer, "Robert Crowley and Cooper's Chronicle: The Unauthorized Edition of 1559," *Notes and Queries*, 253:2 (June 2008): 148-52.

33 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fo. a1v. Cf. Metzger, 449. Cooper was not a bishop in 1560; he became bishop of Lincoln in 1571.

34 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1549), fo. 158r.

35 In *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1559), fo. 275r., Crowley allowed that the two reformers were "men of excellent learning," but omitted the phrase about restoring the gospel and added the charge of heresy. To complicate his views on Luther further, Crowley has several favorable references to Lutherans on the Continent at a later date.

excellent learning,” who assisted Luther in “restoring the Gospel to light and opening true religion.”³⁶

Toward the end of Henry VIII’s reign, Crowley added an account of the burning of the French reformer, Peter Brulius [Brully], that Cooper had omitted. Crowley’s interest in Brulius’ martyrdom foreshadowed his extensive compilation of the Marian martyrs. “A preacher of the Gospel of Christ,” Brulius was active in Ghent as early as 1537 and later succeeded John Calvin as pastor of the French church at Strassburg. Subsequently, he returned to the Netherlands on the recommendation of Martin Bucer to preach among those who spoke French. Brulius was arrested in Tournai, imprisoned, and burned in 1545 “with a small fire to the end to make his torment the greater” when he refused to recant.³⁷ Crowley included a detailed account of the doctrines for which he perished. Brulius believed that the mass was “a mere man’s invention,” faith brings salvation, and “man’s free will is so letted by the fall of Adam, that without God’s grace it can do no good thing.”³⁸ It is not easy to explain why Crowley took an interest in a relatively minor reformer such as Brulius as there is no evidence that Crowley traveled abroad during the reign of Henry VIII or that Brulius visited England. It is possible that Crowley, returning from exile in Germany, wished to remember a man who was identified with the theologies of Bucer and Calvin.

In his new edition of 1560, Cooper described the accession of Edward VI with more restraint than Crowley, despite his earlier enthusiasm for Protector Somerset, and then turned attention to the Council of Trent. Cooper, returning to English affairs, incorporated

36 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1549), fo. 275r., 275v.

37 Hastings Eells, *Martin Bucer* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1931), 358-9. See also J. H. Merle D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in Europe* (New York, 1880) 7: 546-7; Martin Greschat, “Martin Bucer” in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1: 221-4; and D. F. Wright, ed., *Martin Bucer: Reforming Church and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 165, 173.

38 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1559), fo. Dddd2r.

most of Crowley's celebration of policies to remove religious images from churches "for avoiding idolatry" and to forbid the superstitious use of beads. It is noteworthy that neither reformer condemned the use of beads, only the "superstitious" use of them.³⁹ Cooper said that the prayer book of 1549 abolished the mass whereas Crowley merely noted that the services were in English.⁴⁰ The two accounts differ significantly on politics; for example, Crowley said very little about the execution of Thomas, Lord Seymour, brother of the protector, while Cooper offered a much fuller account in which he considered allegations against the Duchess of Somerset.⁴¹ In place of Crowley's brief account of Somerset's imprisonment in October 1552, Cooper stated categorically that Somerset was cast into the Tower "by means of Sir John Dudley, late made duke of Northumberland."⁴²

Subtle differences distinguish Cooper's revision of Crowley's account of Wyatt's rebellion. The differences suggest that Cooper scrutinized Crowley's text with the great attention to detail and emphasis. Crowley wrote that the proposed marriage between the queen and Philip of Spain was "very evil taken of the people and of many of the nobility" who conspired among themselves to make a rebellion. He added that Sir Thomas Wyatt persuaded people in Kent that marriage would bring "most miserable servitude and establish popish religion."⁴³ Cooper's revision is very similar, but he associated opposition to Catholicism with the "people" in addition to Wyatt. In his version Cooper argued that the marriage was "so grievously taken" that for this "and religion they in such sort conspired against the queen, that if the matter had not broken out before the time appointed, men thought it would have brought much trouble and danger." Wyatt said, according to Cooper, that the queen would "bring in the pope" and "bring the realm into miserable servitude and bondage." Cooper retained Crowley's "miserable

39 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fos. 335, 338.

40 *Coopers Chronicle*, fo. 242r.

41 *Coopers Chronicle*, fos. 343v.-344r.

42 *Coopers Chronicle*, fos. 351v.-352r.; the same statement appears in the 1565 edition.

43 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1559), fo. Ffff.2v.

servitude,” but dropped the reference to the popish religion in favor of what was perhaps a less inflammatory phrase.⁴⁴

Neither Crowley nor Cooper offered insight into the grassroots support for Wyatt in Kent, but both mentioned the Duke of Suffolk’s ill-fated sojourn into the Midlands. Only Cooper stated that Suffolk proclaimed his daughter, Lady Jane, queen adding that the people “did not greatly incline unto him.”⁴⁵ Although Cooper gave a slightly more detailed narrative of Wyatt’s entry into London, the differences are subtle with the exception of Cooper’s suggestion that the rebel’s defeat might have been attributed to the “great power” and “ordinance” assembled by the Earl of Pembroke. There was no disagreement that the executions of Lady Jane and her husband, Lord Guildford Dudley, were undeserved. Crowley observed that the young couple were “innocents” compared with those who sat in judgment while Cooper wrote that the two were beheaded

(as it was thought), for fear least [sic] any other should make like trouble for her title as her father had attempted to do rather then for any guilt that was judged to be in her, which ignorantly received that which other unwittingly devised and offered to the prejudice of the queen.⁴⁶

In each edition Thomas Wyatt stated at his execution that Princess Elizabeth was not involved in the rebellion.

Cooper’s 1560 edition gives less emphasis to the Marian persecution than Crowley, who listed 264 persons burned at the stake, among whom were 46 women, beginning with the execution of John Rogers 4 February 1555 and ending with four unnamed persons burned respectively at Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds in November 1557. In addition to those burned, Crowley mentioned a number of others who died in prison charged with heresy. Crowley did not write long accounts of the victims, but he listed many persons of lower social status, including “one Thomas, a blind boy,” burned at Gloucester, an

44 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fo. 362r.

45 *Coopers Chronicle*, fo. 362v.

46 *Coopers Chronicle*, fo. 363r. Cf. D. L. Loades, *Two Tudor Conspiracies* (Bangor: Headstart History, 1992), 113-27.

“old woman” burned at Exeter, and Hugh Leverocke, a lame man at Stratford.⁴⁷ When Cooper published his new edition, he gave yearly totals of those burned as a consequence of the queen’s “vehement” persecution, the sum being at least 246. Cooper’s narrative emphasized the famous clergy who suffered martyrdom, John Bradford, Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer: he may have witnessed the examination of the three bishops at Oxford.⁴⁸

Cooper, unlike Crowley, perhaps inadvertently, recorded evidence of the limited success of the Edwardian Reformation. After describing the fear of many people that the new reign would offer “alteration of religion,” Cooper wrote:

In this time the people showed themselves so ready to receive their old religion that in many places of the Realme, understanding the Queen’s pleasure, before any law was made for the same, they erected again their altars and used the mass and Latin service...⁴⁹

Both Cooper and Crowley related a curious event that never occurred, namely the burning of the corpse of Henry VIII. Dr. Hugh Weston, hated by Protestants for his role in the trials of the Oxford martyrs, fell into disfavor with Marian clergy because of immoral behavior and found himself in the Tower when the queen died. After Weston was released at the accession of Elizabeth, “it was the common opinion, if he had not so suddenly ended his life,” that he would have divulged a scheme to burn the king’s body at Windsor.⁵⁰

47 Crowley’s detailed compilation appeared before John Foxe’s *Rerum in Ecclesia gestarum*... was printed at Basel in the late summer of 1559. Foxe, a close friend of Crowley, published the first English edition of the *Acts and Monuments* in 1563. See J. F. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book* (London: SPCK, 1940), 118-24; Ramona Garcia, “‘Most Wicked Superstition and Idolatry’: John Foxe, His Predecessors and the Development of an Anti-Catholic Polemic in the Sixteenth-Century Accounts of the Reign of Mary I,” 79-87 in David Loades, ed., *John Foxe at Home and Abroad* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); and John N. King, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 72.

48 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fos. 364-77.

49 *Coopers Chronicle*, fos. 359v., 360v.

50 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1559), fo. Gggg4r.; *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), 375v. Crowley added that the bones of Edward VI were to be burned along with those of his father.

During 1558, the last year of Mary's reign, Crowley concentrated primarily on religious persecution, but mentioned briefly the fall of Calais to the French and the coronation of Ferdinand as Holy Roman Emperor at Frankfurt. Cooper's account of the fall of Calais is longer and in every respect better than Crowley's. In their descriptions of the coronation, both noted that the emperor was crowned in the afternoon without a celebration of mass because of opposition of Protestant electors. Only Cooper took an interest in the devastating epidemic that appeared in the summer of 1558. "This summer about the month of August," he wrote, "the grievous sickness and dangerous fevers that began a year or two before in such manner raged as I think never plague or pestilence in England killed a greater number."⁵¹

At the queen's death, Crowley noted that "her bishops and she burned even to the last breath." But God "to give his soldiers a breathing time, took this rod of his from them the xvii. day of November and set up in her place the second daughter of the noble King Henry...."⁵² In the 1560 edition Cooper discarded Crowley's phrasing and wrote more charitably that the absence of Phillip contributed to the queen's untimely death. According to Cooper, she "conceived great unkindness, and not long after falling dangerously sick ended her life...."⁵³ Five years later in the 1565 edition Cooper, revising his own account of the queen's death, stated that she shed "much innocent blood," lost Calais, made "strangers" privy to secret affairs of the realm, and was responsible for the "waste and spoil" of the realm's treasure.⁵⁴

At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, Cooper hoped optimistically that the restoration of the "Gospel" could be achieved without the "division of minds and judgments whereby we are

51 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), 377r. Cf. Penry Williams, *The Later Tudors: England, 1547-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 110.

52 *Epitome of Chronicles* (London, 1559), fo. Hhhh1r.

53 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fo. 377r.

54 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1565), fo. C1v.

now miserably distracted,” but the 1560 edition ended before the restoration of the Church of England had been completed.⁵⁵ For his part, Crowley, the returning exile, showed almost ecstatic enthusiasm in anticipation of bold religious reform as the new reign opened, but his chronicle also ended before the religious settlement. Five years later Thomas Cooper was more subdued. He was impressed by what he termed the restoration of royal supremacy over the “state ecclesiastical” as well as the restoration of first fruits and tenths to the crown. He further noted that “book of common prayers and administration of sacraments in our mother tongue was restored,” but he was silent on whether religious unity had been achieved or whether the Gospel had been restored effectively.⁵⁶ Whatever his thoughts about the strengths and weaknesses of the Elizabethan religious settlement, Cooper ended the chronicle on a high note praising this “happy realm of England” and beseeching Almighty God “to preserve and to continue” the queen’s “reign over us.”⁵⁷

Thomas Cooper’s chronicles place English history in a broad European context that is missing in the Crowley edition as well as in the Mychell chronicles. He devotes more space to French, German, Italian, and Ottoman affairs than most other chroniclers, always emphasizing religious issues, but he also revised his own work by adding more European details. For example, the 1560 edition has a fuller account of the meeting of the Diet at Speyer in 1544 than the 1549 edition.⁵⁸ Cooper, on the other hand, abbreviated Crowley’s impassioned account of Martin Bucer’s encounter with Catholic authorities at Augsburg in 1548 where he refused to sign the “emperor’s book” or Interim “with great danger of his life.”⁵⁹

55 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fo. 377v.

56 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1565), fo. C2r.

57 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1565), fo. D4v.

58 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fo. 321v.; *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1549), fo. 290r.

59 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1559), fo. Dddd4r.; *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), 341r. See E. G. Rupp, “The Swiss Reformers and the Sects,” *The New Cambridge Modern History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958) II, 112; Lewis Spitz, *The Protestant Reformation, 1517-1559* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 121-2.

If the period from the accession of Mary in 1553 through Wyatt's Rebellion in 1554 is examined, Cooper's 1560 edition offered entries noting the death of Maurice, Duke of Saxony, the war of the Duke of Brunswick, pestilence in Paris, and the conquest of Corsica by the French with the assistance of the Turks. Crowley included none of these. While Crowley wrote briefly that Michael Servetus was burned at Geneva "for denying the eternal deity of Christ," Cooper gave a fuller account in the 1560 edition:

About the end of October [1553] Michael Servetus was burned at Geneva, for that he had holden and taught many wicked opinions concerning the Trinity and deity of Christ and defended the same very stubbornly even at this death, declaring no token of repentance..⁶⁰

Although the academic backgrounds of Cooper and Crowley were similar, they had different views of the recent past. Both were Oxford graduates who would have been acquainted with each other, and both became ordained priests committed to the Church of England. Crowley, however, was a vigorous advocate of social reform who went into exile at Frankfurt am Main after the death of Edward VI while Cooper remained in England after 1553 and supported his family through the practice of medicine. Paradoxically, Cooper's historical writing reveals a greater knowledge of European affairs than that of Crowley who actually lived in Germany during the reign of Mary. The two chroniclers' differing interpretations of their own times reveal the gulf that separated Protestant intellectuals at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign and serve as an excellent example of how chronicles offer insight into critical contemporary issues.

III

Richard Grafton, born in 1507, unlike Cooper and Crowley, did not receive a university education but was apprenticed to the London Grocer's company in 1526. He became a committed evangelical and by the mid 1530s, was closely involved in efforts to make an English Bible available and began a career as a printer. As an early partisan for the evangelical cause, Grafton acquired powerful patrons, such

⁶⁰ *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fo. 361v.

as Thomas Cromwell and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, but also gained powerful enemies, such as Bishops Stephen Gardiner and Edmund Bonner. While his patrons secured him exclusive privileges as a printer, he was imprisoned twice during Henry VIII's reign.

Under Edward VI, he enjoyed the position of Royal Printer and entered the sphere of historical writing by printing *Hall's Chronicle* in 1548. But under Mary, Grafton promptly lost his position as Royal Printer and was again imprisoned for a time for printing the proclamation that named Lady Jane Grey as Queen. Yet he remained in England and evaded further persecution. Only during the reign of Elizabeth did he begin producing his own chronicles. His *Abridgement of the Chronicles of England* was first published in 1562, and again in 1563, 1564, 1570, and 1572. His larger work, *A Chronicle at Large*, appeared in 1568.

While he belonged to no elite either by parentage or education, Grafton did experience one of the pivotal events of his time, the English Reformation, as a direct participant with an agenda, rather than solely as an observer. It is this area in particular where his chronicles shed light on more than the historical facts of his time, providing unique insight into how one historian's beliefs and personal experiences shaped his motives and presentation of history. With his chronicles, Grafton made use of the historical works available to him, but he then revised these accounts in numerous small but polemical ways. He later revised his own chronicles to champion the ideology of the Elizabethan Church and participate in the Protestant mythmaking best exemplified in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.⁶¹

The 1570 edition of Grafton's *Abridgement* contains revealing examples of revision, made to defend two controversial figures, Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell. Grafton had taken stronger positions on both in his 1568 *Chronicle at Large* and then revised his 1570 *Abridgement* to reflect them. However, he also revised his

61 Manchester, "Chronicling Bloody Mary: Richard Grafton's Depiction of the English Reformation," *Proceedings of the Ohio Academy of History* (1999): 39-49, and "Chronicling the English Reformation: The Historical Works of Richard Grafton" (PhD diss., Kent State University, 2007).

1570 *Abridgement*, particularly its account of the rebellions of 1549, in an effort to secure his own status as the historian for the more middling ranks of Elizabethan society and to damage the reputation of his main rival in the market for short chronicles, John Stow.

Beginning with the first edition of his *Abridgement* in 1562, it was apparent that Anne Boleyn was a sensitive topic for Grafton. He took greater care with the way she was presented in his chronicles than did Cooper or Stow. For example, the 1562 *Abridgement's* account of the origins of Henry VIII's divorce from Katherine of Aragon is closely modeled on *Cooper's Chronicle* (1560) and states that Henry VIII "did cast singular favor to Lady Anne Boleyn" even in the early stages of the divorce process.⁶² However, Cooper was quite non-committal as to whether Henry's doubts about the validity of his marriage to Katherine first originated within himself, or whether they were instilled in him by Cardinal Wolsey.⁶³

Grafton, unlike Thomas Cooper, was sensitive to the implication that admitting Henry's early attraction to Anne Boleyn opened the door to Henry being accused of seeking a divorce from Katherine merely because he was smitten with a young temptress. Therefore, Grafton changed Cooper's version to state that "most men did judge" that Henry's concerns about the legality of his marriage were indeed first planted in his head by Wolsey.⁶⁴ In this way, he defended the role of Anne Boleyn in the divorce, downplaying the idea that she was the impetus behind it. Another example of Grafton's greater concern for Anne's reputation is the fact that his *Abridgement* (and *Coopers Chronicle*) refrained from mentioning that Anne Boleyn dressed in yellow, an insultingly cheerful color, at the death of Katherine of Aragon in 1536. There can be no doubt that Grafton knew about this detail, for it is in *Hall's Chronicle*.⁶⁵

62 Richard Grafton, *An Abridgement of the Chronicles of England* (London, 1562), 128-129, [STC 12 148].

63 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), 289, [STC 15 218].

64 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1562), 128-129, [STC 12 148].

65 Edward Hall, *Hall's Chronicle* (London, 1548), 227, [STC 12 721].

Stow, however, chose to pass along this piece of information about Anne Boleyn in his 1565 *Summary*.⁶⁶

With *A Chronicle at Large* (1568), Grafton made an even stronger defense of Anne Boleyn. In one case, while using nearly an entire passage from *Hall's Chronicle*, Grafton specifically omitted one sentence:

that the queen's ladies, gentlewomen and servants, largely spake and said that she so enticed the king, and brought him in such amours, that only for her sake and occasion, he would be divorced from his queen, this was the foolish communication of people contrary to the truth.⁶⁷

However, Grafton went even further in Anne Boleyn's defense in the *Chronicle at Large*, stating unequivocally that she was innocent of adultery and incest and unjustly executed.⁶⁸

One year later, Grafton published the 1570 edition of his *Abridgement* and revised its account of Anne Boleyn. In the 1570 edition, the line stating that Henry VIII, early in the divorce process, "did cast singular favor to Lady Anne Boleyn," was removed, and thus the *Abridgement* was brought more into line with the *Chronicle at Large*'s staunch defense of Anne, removing even a slight suggestion that she motivated Henry to divorce Catherine.⁶⁹ Grafton must have been distressed by Anne Boleyn's demise, as he was an active evangelical in the 1530s, and she was known to favor this cause.⁷⁰ Religion, therefore, is one reason for his efforts to portray Anne sympathetically. However, with the *Chronicle at Large* in 1568, Grafton was probably also trying to please Anne

66 Stow, *Summary* (London, 1565), 191, [STC 23 319].

67 Hall, *Hall's Chronicle* (London, 1548), 184, [STC 12 721]. Grafton, *Chronicle at Large* (London, 1569), 1182, [STC 12 147].

68 Grafton, *Chronicle at Large* (London, 1569), 1127-1128, [STC 12 147].

69 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1570), 136, [STC 12 151].

70 Retha M. Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 153; Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 260-268.

Boleyn's daughter, Queen Elizabeth, by bestowing saint-like martyr status upon her mother, and he also revised his 1570 *Abridgement* to continue this aim.

Thus, the subtle revisions that Grafton made both to Cooper's and Hall's versions of Anne Boleyn, and then later to his own as well, reveal how her role in history and reputation took on a new importance and new interpretations once her own daughter was on the throne. The revisions also suggest that Grafton took a personal interest in Anne Boleyn and, more so than Stow or Cooper, sought to defend her and to shape her story into that of a martyr-heroine of the Evangelical cause.

Another instance of Grafton performing revision involved the alteration of his 1570 *Abridgement* to perpetuate a stance taken in the *Chronicle at Large*. Again, Grafton came to the defense of another person, Thomas Cromwell. In the 1562 *Abridgement*, Grafton recounted the fall of Henry VIII's chief minister, who "was apprehended and committed to the Tower and was condemned by Act of Parliament."⁷¹ With his lengthier *Chronicle at Large* in 1568, Grafton chose to use the account of Cromwell's end given in *Hall's Chronicle* with one major difference. Hall wrote that Cromwell "was attainted by Parliament, and never came to his answer, which law many reported, he was the causer of the making thereof, but the truth thereof I know not."⁷² Grafton, in the *Chronicle at Large*, made a major revision, changing "but the truth thereof I know not" into "that is false and untrue."⁷³

According to Sir Geoffrey Elton, Grafton was correct. The use of "condemnation by attainder only without judicial trial" goes back to 1459. Cromwell was not the creator of this method, "disagreeable, legal though it was," and, under his charge it was used against only Elizabeth Barton (the Nun of Kent) and her

71 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1562), 136, [STC 12 148].

72 Hall, *Hall's Chronicle* (London, 1548), 242, [STC 12 721].

73 Grafton, *Chronicle at Large* (London, 1569), 1250, [STC 12 147].

accomplices, whose actions did not easily fit the existing treason law.⁷⁴ Once again, Grafton revised his *Abridgement* in 1570 to insist that Cromwell was not the creator of this controversial practice. The way he chose to do this, however, is very interesting. He scrapped the original passage from his *Abridgement* and instead copied, almost word for word, the account from Stow's 1565 *Summary*. Stow had written that Cromwell "was attainted by Parliament and never came to his answer: which law he was the author of, he was there attainted of heresy and high treason."⁷⁵ Grafton changed this sentence to read "he was attainted by Parliament and never came to his answer, which law many reported, he was the causer of the making thereof, but that is false and untrue. He was attainted both of heresy and treason."⁷⁶

Inasmuch as Grafton had known Cromwell and worked with him to produce an English Bible, it is not surprising that Grafton would spring to his defense. Grafton, who went to prison in 1540 for printing a pro-Cromwell ballad, must have felt loyalty towards him and was probably sensitive to criticism of Cromwell. Yet the fact that Grafton in 1570 revised his *Abridgement* to use Stow's 1565 passage almost verbatim, but then blatantly contradicted him, does suggest that provoking Stow, as much as defending Cromwell, was the motive for this revision.

Indeed, there is considerable evidence that Grafton's animosity towards his rival chronicler inspired revisions to his 1570 *Abridgement*. One significant revision that Grafton made concerned his coverage of the rebellions of 1549, both Kett's rebellion in Norfolk against enclosure of common lands and the rebellion in Cornwall and Devonshire against the new *Book of Common Prayer*.⁷⁷ For the 1570 *Abridgement*, Grafton drastically changed his previous

74 G. R. Elton, *Policy and Police: The Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 390-391.

75 Stow, *Summary* (London, 1565), 199, [STC 23 319].

76 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1570), 145, [STC 12 151].

77 Cf. Beer, *Rebellion and Riot*, 2nd ed. (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2005) and Andy Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions and the Making of Early Modern England* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

account of these rebellions, providing a new account that was far more condemnatory and harsh towards the rebels than his previous account. For example, the earlier (1564) version states:

Soon after began great sedition in England, for the common people in all parts of the realm, specially in Norfolk and Devonshire, rose against the nobles and gentlemen. Some of them, and namely in Norfolk, not mentioning religion, found themselves grieved with parks, pastures and enclosures, made by the gentlemen, and required the same to be disparked, and set among the commons. They of Devonshire did not only require that, but also their old religion and the act of six articles to be restored.⁷⁸

The 1570 edition of this part takes pains to point out that the government was trying to address the grievances caused by enclosures of common lands, but the “greedy” rebels, behaving “rashly and lewdly,” launched a “plain rebellion and insurrection.”

About the beginning of June the King’s Majesty by the advice of the Lord Protector and the rest of his council, caused a proclamation to be published, wherein was express commandment given that all such persons as had enclosed any part of the commons (that in times past had been laid out for the relief of the poor) into parks or otherwise had made the several to the hurt of any poor subject, that all such grounds so enclosed or emparked should by a day, be laid out again to the commons as before they had been, upon a pain. The commons being greedy hereof, would not tarry to see what order and justice the magistrates would do therein, but rashly and lewdly, took upon them the reformation thereof themselves, and began to spoil gentlemen’s parks, and did much other mischief, which at the last grew to a plain rebellion and insurrection.⁷⁹

In the 1570 version, Grafton related that rebels in Devon “did not only require the pulling down of all enclosures, but also required the restitution of the mass, the administration of the sacraments and all the Latin service in such manner as the same was used in the time of King Henry the Eighth.” As well, he placed more emphasis on the rebels’ criminal and destructive actions: “But Norfolk and the other shires made no mention of religion, but fell to spoiling of parks, and pulling down of hedges, and stopping up of ditches, with

⁷⁸ Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1564), 148, [STC 12 150].

⁷⁹ Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1570), 155, [STC 12 151].

many other riotous acts.”⁸⁰ Grafton, therefore, revised his account of the 1549 rebellions to be a harsher denunciation of those who rebelled against the social order and reformed religion.

This leads to the question of why Grafton did this, and the answer involves John Stow. In the market for short chronicles, Stow was Grafton’s archrival, and the two had long been using the dedications and prefaces of their chronicles to criticize each other. Grafton’s 1570 *Abridgement*, dedicated to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, referred to certain books, “Summaries of Histories,” that

Contain fond and unmeet matter, as the memories of superstitious foundations, fables and lies foolishly stowed together, written rather in maintenance and favor of lewd doings, than for the suppression of the same, which also contain matter to the defacing of Princes’ doings, and wherein the gates are rather opened for crooked subjects to enter into the field of rebellion, than the hedges or gaps of the same stopped: Therefore I thought myself by duty and necessity occasioned, once again to travail not only in the amending of such things as before escaped me in the former impression of my Abridgement of the Chronicles of England: But also in adding to the same, some good lessons and examples to train subjects to the obedience of their Prince, and thereby (as much as in me lieth) not only to stop the gaps, which other by their fond writing, have opened to the hateful spoil and wild waste of rebellion.⁸¹

In the preface of his 1567 *Summary*, Stow had referred to “unfruitful grafts” in an oblique insult of Grafton. Therefore, when Grafton referred to “lies foolishly stowed together,” it can only be a swipe at Stow. In the passage above, Grafton clearly accused someone of writing seditious books that promoted rebellion. Was it Stow? Another hint are the metaphors that Grafton chose for rebellion: “gates are rather opened...to enter into the field of rebellion, than the hedges or gaps of the same stopped,” and “to stop the gaps...opened to the hateful spoil and wild waste of rebellion.” These phrases sound like veiled references to the issue of enclosure of common lands and the rebellions of 1549.

80 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1570), 155, [STC 12 151].

81 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1570), [STC 12 151].

While E. J. Devereux argued that the dedication to Grafton's 1570 *Abridgement* accused Stow of writing books that promoted rebellion,⁸² little attention has been given to the enclosure-related language that Grafton used and its significance. An examination of Grafton's and Stow's accounts of the 1549 rebellions shows that Grafton, in his dedication, was specifically singling out the treatment of these rebellions in Stow's 1567 *Summary*. Here, Stow by no means praised the rebels, but he did not criticize them either; he merely stated that "God brought it to pass" that the King's forces were victorious against them, and regretted the loss of lives—both the soldiers and the rebels.⁸³

Clearly Grafton felt that Stow's *Summary* was not harsh enough on the rebels, laudatory enough towards the soldiers (led by John Dudley, Leicester's father), or a sufficiently strong defense of the social order. Therefore, Grafton revised his own account for the 1570 *Abridgement* and included the blatant hints in its dedication as a tactic to discredit his rival, John Stow. It was probably not a coincidence that Grafton chose to paint Stow as soft on rebellion in 1570, shortly after the Northern Rebellion against Elizabeth's rule had just been defeated—a time when his accusations would have maximum effect.

Financial considerations are an ostensible motive for Grafton and Stow's rivalry. Grafton, having enjoyed exclusive privileges as a printer, courtesy of powerful patrons, in the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI, was not accustomed to open competition with a commercial rival, and therefore sought means to eliminate him. But there is more to it than that. Grafton also saw a different purpose for history—didactic and more polemical—and sought to tell his own "personal" story and also to defend the Elizabethan church and government. For Grafton, a unified theme or idea was what

82 E. J. Devereux, "Empty Tuns and Unfruitful Grafts: Richard Grafton's Historical Publications," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 21, (1990): 52. See also D.S. Kastan, "Opening Gates and Stopping Hedges: Grafton, Stow, and the Politics of Elizabethan History Writing," in *The Project of Prose in Early Modern Europe and the New World*, ed. Elizabeth Fowler and Roland Greene (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 66-79.

83 Stow, *Summary* (London, 1567), 165, [STC 23 325.5].

mattered in history, more so than the accuracy of all the names and dates (the area where Stow aimed most of his criticisms of Grafton's *Abridgement*). Thus, an examination of Grafton's revisions with Anne Boleyn, Thomas Cromwell, and the rebellions of 1549 yields valuable insight into the many ways, big and small, that Grafton manipulated his sources and his own works to shape his own, preferred, account of the sixteenth century and then to promote it over those of other historians.

The fact that Grafton went out of his way in his *Chronicle at Large* (and then in his revisions to the 1570 *Abridgement*) to depict both Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell in the light of evangelical martyrs is particularly noteworthy because, in the *Chronicle at Large*, Grafton based his accounts (aside from revisions concerning Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell) nearly verbatim upon those of *Hall's Chronicle* (whereas he had predominantly used *Cooper's Chronicle* in his *Abridgement*), but he excluded nearly everything that *Hall's Chronicle* had to say about any other persecuted evangelicals in the reign of Henry VIII. Realizing that he retained and revised the "stories" of Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell even as he sought to downplay the persecution of all other evangelicals during the reign of Elizabeth's father implies that Grafton was especially concerned with defending them. His reasons for these revisions were variously practical (pleasing Elizabeth), personal (defending his fellow evangelicals) and polemical (putting forth his desired historical message). Yet by excluding all other persecutions of evangelicals under Henry VIII in his *Chronicle at Large*, Grafton could have been, as he had with Anne Boleyn, supplying a new account of Henry VIII that might be more pleasing to Queen Elizabeth. But it also strongly suggests that he was personally uncomfortable with Henry VIII's persecutions and wanted to present a unified story of sixteenth century England that showcased evangelical progress, with Mary's reign being the lone anomaly.⁸⁴

84 Manchester, "Chronicling the English Reformation," 107-110.

Working solely in the reign of Elizabeth, Grafton never had to revise his chronicles to adapt to different reigns or political climates. Rather, Grafton made use of revisions to shape accounts of events to reflect his own opinions, born of experience, as well as to promote his view of history and to make his chronicles serve as tools of Protestant myth making for England very much in the manner of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.

IV

Whereas Grafton, Mychell, and Crowley were originally printers and Cooper is best known as a churchman, John Stow's long life (1525-1605) was devoted to historical scholarship. He may not have been the best historian of the sixteenth century, but he wrote more than any one else and continuously revised what he wrote. Stow's first chronicle was published in 1565 while the last edition of the *Annales of England* appeared forty years later. Although Stow's chronicle scholarship has been discussed elsewhere, his revisionism included chronological extension of older works, abridgement of longer narratives, and revision of previous editions by insertion of new details, deletion, and correction of errors. Further revision of Stow's chronicles appeared posthumously as Edmund Howes produced new editions of Stow's works for seventeenth-century readers.⁸⁵

Extension was essential to keep the chronicles current over four decades and marketable in a competitive environment. As Stow concluded his first chronicle, published in 1565, he envisaged a process of extension and revision.

Thus (good reader) I have brought as thou seest, this small abrigement [sic] or Summarie of our English Chronicle to these our present days; meaning as time shall increase, so to increase the same if I be not discouraged of thee in these my simple beginnings. Wherefore I beseche thee to judge favorably, and to correct friendly, so as thy correction may rather be an Instruction then a condemning of me.⁸⁶

85 See Beer, *Tudor England Observed: The World of John Stow* (Stroud, UK: Sutton, 1998); "English History Abridged: John Stow's Shorter Chronicles and Popular History," *Albion* 36:1 (2004): 13-27; and "John Stow," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

86 *A Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles...* (London, 1565), fo. 248v.

When the edition of 1575 appeared, for example, Stow had extended the narrative substantially beginning at page 517 and ending at page 570. But he did more than extend the earlier work; he rewrote an account of Londoners walking on the frozen Thames on New Year's Eve 1564 and offered a different narrative of the plague of the same year and its effect on rich and poor citizens.⁸⁷

Stow's chronicles not only appeared over many years but also in different formats, and his writings offer excellent examples of how length affects the character of historical writing. As Stow's abridged chronicles, appearing in no fewer than nine editions from 1566 to 1604, were among his most important contributions, he regularly compressed his narrative to fit the smaller (and cheaper) format. In the abridgement of 1604, Stow gave a short, serviceable account of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, describing the attack on London, the beheading of the archbishop of Canterbury, and the confrontation between Wat Tyler and Richard II. However, the only mention of John Ball, the radical preacher, was a reference to his execution: "John Ball was brought to St. Albans and there drawn and quartered."⁸⁸ Readers fortunate enough to have access to the *Annales of England* were treated to a highly-detailed narrative of the rebellion extending over twenty pages. Whereas John Ball received merely a mention in the abridgement, the *Annales* told how Ball "went into the streets and wayes, and into the fields to preach and there wanted not of the commons that came to hear him...." Stow went on to relate Ball's religious belief that "from the beginning all were made alike by nature, and that bondage or servitude was brought in by unjust [sic] oppression of naughty men against the will of God"⁸⁹

87 *A Summarye of the Chronicles of England* (London, 1575), pp. 512-15.

88 *A Summarie of the Chronicles of England, Diligently Collected, Abridged, and Continued unto This Present Yeare of Christ, 1604*, ed., Barrett L. Beer (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2007), 132.

89 *Annales of England* (London, 1605), 468-9. Stow's sources included Henry Knighton, Thomas Walsingham, and Chaucer.

Similarly, in the *Annales of England* Stow devoted no fewer than fifteen pages to the story of the Spanish Armada of 1588. Readers of the small abridgement, however, got a severely truncated account that says very little about the fighting in the channel, nothing about sea battle off Gravelines, and nothing about the fate of the Spanish fleet. About all an avid reader learned was that the English prevailed through the power of God.⁹⁰ Here is cheap history with a vengeance. Abridgement is a form of revision that invariably produces an inferior, simplified account, and Stow's abridged chronicles were no exception to the rule.

As Stow prepared new editions of the chronicles, he regularly inserted new material into the old narrative. In the abridged chronicle of 1598, Stow noted the charitable bequests of Sir Andrew Judd, lord mayor of London, which included the founding a "one notable free school" at Tonbridge, Kent, as well as alms houses for the poor near St. Helen's church in London. Six years later in the 1604 edition, he added other benefactions of Judd including a bequest of lands valued at over sixty pounds to his own company, the Skinners, from which they were obliged to pay annual sums to the schoolmaster and usher of Tonbridge school and to poor people at St Helen's.⁹¹ The 1604 abridgement recorded a curious disturbance in 1556 when the lord mayor, Sir William Garrarde, dined at the Middle Temple. "Certain gentlemen of the younger sort" held down the mayor's sword by force as he was exiting. The incident was serious enough for two leaders of the Middle Temple to be summoned to appear before the Lord Treasurer and the Privy Council and to land fourteen of the culprits in Fleet prison, but not sufficiently significant to have been included in the earlier 1598 abridgement.⁹²

90 *A Summarie of the Chronicles Diligently Collected, Abridged and Continued...* (London, 1604), 374-6.

91 *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1604), 238.

92 *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1604), 263-4. Stow also added an entry to the 1604 edition on the voyage of Sir Francis Drake to the West Indies and Florida in 1585-1586 that culminated in the burning of St. Augustine, 357-8.

Stow occasionally deleted or abbreviated references in a later edition; for example, a hostile reference to his brother, Thomas, as a false accuser in the 1598 abridgement was removed from the 1604 edition.⁹³ The two brothers had a protracted feud related at least in part to a dispute over the inheritance of their mother's estate. In the 1604 abridgement a listing of charitable bequests of Sir Rowland Hill in 1549 was shortened.⁹⁴ A meticulous scholar, Stow corrected his errors; in the 1604 abridgement the death of the Empress Matilda, mother of Henry II, was given as 1185, but the following year the date was corrected to 1167 in the *Annales of England*.⁹⁵

Stow's report of the death of Queen Elizabeth in the last edition of the *Annales* (1605) is a good example of succinct but colorless historical writing that cried out for revision. He noted that Thursday, the day of the queen's death, had been a fatal date for Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary but offered no eulogy. Because Elizabeth had reigned for nearly forty-five years and few could remember a king, the change of sovereigns was "well pleasing" to the nobility and gentry.⁹⁶ Stow's continuator, Edmund Howes, added a long and effusive "commemoration" on Elizabeth's death to later editions. "She was," wrote Howes, "resolute and of an undaunted spirit, all of which special virtues apparently approved and publicly known to the whole world." With great confidence he concluded, "Her subjects' love daily increased upon her without ceasing or intermission during her whole reign."⁹⁷

93 *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1604); *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1598), 249.

94 *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1598) 260; *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1604), 235.

95 *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1604), 60; *Annales of England* (London, 1605), 230.

96 *Annales of England* (London, 1605), 1425-6. Stow covered the queen's death in merely five lines.

97 *Annales or General Chronicle of England* (London, 1631), 813-5. For an examination of the emergence of the Elizabethan myth, see Jason Scott-Warren, "Harington's Gossip," in *The Myth of Elizabeth*, ed. Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 221-41.

The chroniclers studied in this essay wrote in an era of religious and political upheaval, and their revised narratives reflect changing times. Stow, Grafton, and Mychell viewed the Reformation through the lens of the laity but had very different perceptions, while Cooper, the future bishop, appreciated issues that escaped non-elite lay writers. Crowley, the Oxford-educated social reformer, satirist, and Elizabethan Puritan, reveals another dimension of the English Reformation.⁹⁸ Stow's lack of sympathy for the deceased Queen Elizabeth betrayed his enthusiasm for the new male occupant of the throne, but Edmund Howes revised the section presumably to attract readers and glorify the late queen.

Sixteenth-century chroniclers were not conspicuously heroic figures, and it is noteworthy that none of the five examined here suffered imprisonment for his historical writing. The rivalry between Grafton and Stow, and Stow's attacks on his brother, reveal a few of the less praiseworthy aspects of chronicle scholarship. The chronicles reflect the individualism of their authors and the changing influences of the era in which they were written and therefore do not tell a single consistent story of the past. Revisionism makes chronicle history more important but at the same time more challenging because the narratives embody significant changes as a consequence of textual revision.

Mychell, Cooper, Crowley, Grafton, and Stow were not only chroniclers of the distant past but also eyewitnesses to an important period of early modern history. The significance of chroniclers as primary sources for the period in which they lived and wrote is often ignored. Their narratives are important for the details they contain and omit and for the individual author's historical priorities. Although chronicles are not autobiographical, they shed light on the author's mentality and social status. Differing perceptions of the recent past reveal the political and religious complexity of the sixteenth century, but each chronicler was an authentic personal witness to the age in which he lived.

⁹⁸ John N. King, "Robert Crowley" in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1:456

Published in a variety of formats, English chronicles reached a growing and diverse population of readers and helped create and popularize a vernacular national history. The popularity of chronicles is demonstrated by the large number of editions. Readers wanted a concise account of the national past with an emphasis on wars, great battles, deeds of great men, rebellions, famines, and droughts. Demand for expanded editions also indicates that sixteenth-century readers had a fixation on recent history, a cultural presentism that connects them with later generations. Buyers of the less expensive abridgements were apparently satisfied with a superficial framework that listed major events past and present. The growing importance of the English language during the century is reflected not only in the English *Bible*, the *Book of Common Prayer*, the literary works that preceded Shakespeare, but also in the creation of a national history articulated in chronicles.

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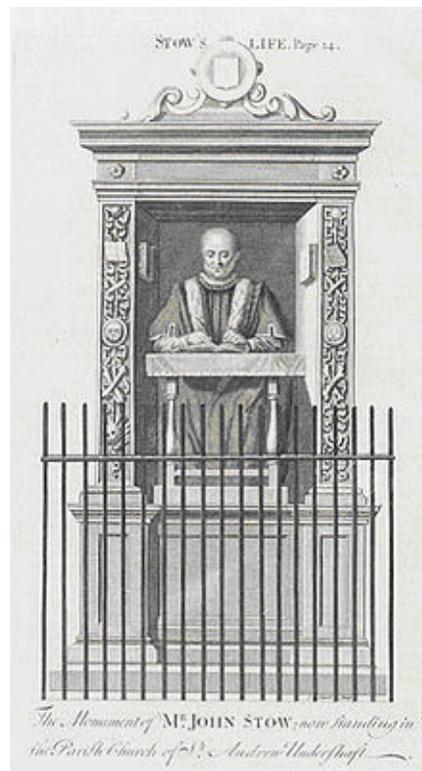
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The John Stow monument in the parish church of St. Andrew Undershaft