Thomas's Divided Consciousness: Thomas Becket, Thomas Wolsey, and Thomas More in Church, State, and Memory

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation with Honors in History

Southwestern University
2020

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Displayed on the coats of arms of two sixteenth-century rough contemporaries are three small crow-like birds with red feet and bills.[1] They seem, upon first glance, to match the three cornish choughs on an earlier, twelfth-century coat of arms. This iconography binds together the histories of three men who shared a great deal, including a first name, and whose similarities and differences can reveal a great deal more about medieval and early modern history, but are rarely discussed as a group: Thomas Wolsey, Thomas More, and Thomas à Becket. While scholars debate the symbolic meaning of the earliest set of choughs— historian Cecil Humphrey-Smith claims that they were Becket's choice, while art historians Peter Sumners and Anothy Grifith suggest that the symbol represents death and was assigned posthumously— by the time the birds graced Wolsey and More's coat of arms over three-hundred years later, the symbols undoubtedly were a reference to Becket.[2] This pictorial connection seems even more plausible, and more telling, as all three Thomases served their respective Roman Catholic popes and kings of England simultaneously, though in different times and in different capacities. In possessing similar secular and spiritual power, they dealt with common struggles and consequences, particularly in managing the balance of royal and ecclesiastical duties.

With the benefit of scholarly hindsight, perhaps More would be expected to make such a visual reference to Becket, but not Wolsey. After all, More and Becket shared both martyrdom and canonization, and are often twinned in popular memory as posthumous Catholic saints who died at the hands of their kings. However, upon closer inspection, the dissimilar bills on Wolsey and More's black crow-like birds become evident; they are not the same as Becket's choughs and for significant reasons. While Wolsey's displays arching bills like Becket's, More's have a

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[1] Anthony Wagner, *Historic Heraldry of Britain: An Illustrated Series of British Historical Arms, with Notes, Glossary and an Introduction to Heraldry* (London, England: Oxford University Press, 1939), 66-68.
[2] Cecil Humphery-Smith, "Heraldry Associated with the Martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas Becket," The Heraldry Society 7, no. 2 (1971), 3; Peter Summers and Anthony Griffiths, *How to Read a Coat of Arms* (New York: Harmony Books, 1987), 34.

flat bill, indicating that they are moorcocks rather than cornish choughs.[3] More's coat of arms was created and passed down from his father, the well-regarded lawyer and judge John More, with the moorcocks likely representing a pun on the family name.[4] Wolsey, however, was born into a lower social milieu and thus consciously drafted his coat of arms after entering royal service, personally declaring the association he wanted to create with his predecessor Becket. The coats of arms beg the broader question that this thesis seeks to answer: what other unexplored connections and substantial dialogue exists between the three Thomases? By placing the three men together in one study, this paper reunites figures who understood themselves as related to one another, accounts for the complexities and multitudes of each man, and discovers new insights into the individual by way of comparison with others.

Introduction

Over the last decade or so, modern scholars have slowly started to recognize how both Wolsey and More may have considered Becket's legacy as one to mimic, as demonstrated by Nancy Lenz Harvey's comment that Becket served as "Wolsey's saint," and John Guy's observation that More's final letter from prison includes a prayer begging to die "on the eve of St Thomas' death."[5] While Wolsey and More's appreciation of Becket presumably stemmed from the visible similarities they recognized in their twelfth-century predecessor—such as a concurrent presence in ecclesiastical and secular affairs, a top-tier education, and desire for international pacification— I argue that the most profound bond between the three men was intellectual. Each man possessed a similarly divided consciousness, an internal struggle centered on how to best pursue the betterment of society and whether to do so via service to the

[3] Wagner, *Historic Heraldry of Britain*, 66-68.
[4] Nicholas Harpsfield, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1540), xii.
[5] Nancy Lenz Harvey, *Thomas Cardinal Wolsey* (New York, New York: Macmillan Press, 1980), 12; John Guy, *Thomas More: A Very Brief History* (London, England: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Publishing, 2018), 35.

church or state. As explained by historian John Guy, while one side of the divided consciousnesses sought to "retreat to a life of prayer and contemplation in the cloister," the other side desired to "confront life's challenges as an active citizen of the Christian commonwealth."[6] Though each man dealt with their divided consciousness uniquely, both More and Wolsey were able to learn from the lessons of Becket, whose infamous death served as a precedent and warning for what might happen when a councilor aligned with the church over the crown. This thesis employs the divided consciousness as its chief organizational framework: I begin by conveying how this inner challenge arose for each man, then demonstrate how the mentality guided their personal and professional pursuits in life as well as death, and finally, show how over five-hundred years later, their struggle continues to influence how they are remembered in popular culture. From the comparison emerges not only unexplored insights about their collective struggles and similar identities, but also new understandings of each individual man, the time period during which they lived, and their historical and historiographical (mis)treatment.

This study deals primarily with the contemporary worlds in which the Thomases operated, analyzing their young lives, later careers, and unique trajectories; yet, I also find their respective afterlives important to consider. The three men not only shared lifetimes marked by public and private trials, but have also been equally subjected to a certain generalized posthumous image as either spiritual saint or secular villain. I aim to show how the saint-villain dichotomy emerged as a result of their divided consciousnesses, as Becket and More's decision to pursue societal betterment through the church solidified their lifelong perception as martyrs, while Wolsey's dedication to the state constructed the image of an immoral and corrupt man. By acknowledging the Thomases' divided consciousnesses, this study also considers how these

[6] Guy, *Thomas More,* 23.

iconic tropes have functioned to obscure, rather than illuminate, their historical complexities. Over time, these essentialized statuses have come to dominate public understandings, crystallize certain one-sided narratives, and shape scholarly inquiry. Thus, the chronological scope of this paper will span their lives—beginning in 1118, with the birth of Becket and concluding in 1535 with the death of More—while also addressing the later early modern and modern perceptions of these figures, explaining how their legacies have influenced and been influenced by historiographical trends, historical contexts, and works of fiction.

This thesis finds that only by putting all three men in conversation can scholars truly reckon with and account for the intricacies of each man and his respective legacy. At the core of this comparison of divided consciousnesses exists two major interrelated sets of arguments: first, the individual and interpersonal lessons gleaned by discussing the men together; and second, the underlying narrative of a changing and evolving European world from the twelfth to sixteenth-century. In all the major political and religious affairs that occurred throughout their lifetimes--including the twelfth-century civil war, and sixteenth-century Renaissance and Reformation--Becket, Wolsey, and More played key roles via what they did, said, and wrote; yet, to fully understand their positionality in these events, their divided consciousnesses must be recognized. Moreover, the Thomases' inner conflict between church and state, and their eventual related deaths, emerged as a consequence of their historical contexts. Each man's divided consciousness was a product of his time, only evident in retrospect because of the broader political circumstances that forced their inner conundrum to be publically recognized and confronted. When the Thomases' first entered public service, the ecclesiastical and secular realms were not only harmonious, but often worked in collaboration. Their divided consciousnesses did not become a dilemma until Henry II and Henry VIII respectively dissented

from church jurisdiction, making the two realms mutually exclusive, and forcing the three men to align with one side over the other. This thesis, then, demonstrates in sections one through three how each man and his divided consciousness was a product of his time; then in sections four and five elucidates how their modern dichotomous image as either a spiritual saint or secular villain fails to acknowledge the historical circumstances that defined their lives.

Literature Review

Although a plethora of scholarship has been published concerning Becket, Wolsey, and More, the three have never been examined together in a single account, possibly as a result of the three-hundred-year temporal gap between the former and the latter two. When studying these men together, the predicament for the historian is not an absence of evidence, but rather the magnitude of varying interpretations. Only one scholar, historian John Guy, has examined each man, though in individual accounts. Moreover, his work— beginning in the early 1980s and continuing most recently to 2019 — displays an evident shift in tone and certainty overtime. In his 1988 chapter "Wolsey and the Parliament of 1523," Guy comments on Wolsey's complexities as a politician, calling him "both good and bad"; while in the 2019 *Thomas More: A Very Brief History*, the scholar decisively remarks that Wolsey was a man "blinded by pride and ambition, [who] put his own interests ahead of those of peace and the commonwealth."[7] Similarly, he wrote in 1980 that the brilliant and ambitious More was "too complex for [Wolsey]," while claiming forty years later that the two were "equal in wits and potential."[8] Guy's rhetorical trajectory begins to hint at how the historical treatment of each man has become more multifaceted and contradictory over time.

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[7] Guy, John, "Wolsey and the Parliament of 1523," in *Law and Government Under the Tudors*, pages 2-17. Edited by Claire Cross, David Loades, and J.J. Scarisbrick (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 17; Guy, *Thomas More*, 26.

[8] Guy, *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1980) 18; Guy, *Thomas More*, 25.

Working chronologically, scholarship on Becket's life since the twelfth -century has been broadly split between two general interpretations: those who see his murder as a result of secular circumstances, and those who examine his death from an ecclesiastical perspective. Egbert Turk's 1977 *Nugae Curialium: Le Règne d'Henri II Plantagenet* most effectively represents the former group, as his account reduces Becket to the role of a "turncoat Curialist [...] who bit the hand that fed him."[9] Turk's analysis pays scant attention to Becket's archiepiscopal career, and blames his murder on the archbishop's refusal to compromise with the state.[10] Similarly, Wilferd Warren's 1973 *Henry II* claims that Henry's interferences in ecclesiastical affairs were "well-meaning," and categorizes Becket's actions as gestures created to "deliberately pick a quarrel with the king."[11] Modern contributions to this literature include Nicholas Vincent's *Henry II: New Interpretations*, as well as Gesine Oppitz-Trotman's "The Emperor's Robe: Thomas Becket and Angevin Political Culture."[12] Turk, Warren, Vincent, and Oppitz-Trotman's accounts each employ a high politics approach, rather than a religious history or interdisciplinary method. However, by omitting ecclesiastical influence from the narrative of Becket's death, these scholars depict a lopsided portrayal of the Middle Ages and discount the pope's agency in Medieval affairs. The latter group of scholars, those who view his life and death through a religious lens, interpret both Becket and the Church in a far more sympathetic light, and often frame the murder as an act predestined by divine will. David Knowles' 1972 *Thomas Becket* defines this field, as he claims that no saint made a greater impact on English public life than Becket, and generally ignores Henry II's role in the archbishop's advancements

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[9] Egbert Turk, *Nugae Curialium: Le Règne d'Henri II Plantagenet* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 9.
[10] Turk, *Nugae Curialium: Le Règne d'Henri II Plantagenet*, 9.
[11] Wilford Warren, *Henry II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 18.
[12] Christopher Harper-Bill and Nicholas Vincent, *Henry II: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2007);.Gesine Oppitz-Trotman's "The Emperor's Robe: Thomas Becket and Angevin Political Culture" in Elizabeth van Houts's *Anglo-Norman Studies* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2015).

and appointments.[13] Since Knowles, many scholars have created similar accounts, including Guy's *Thomas Becket: Warrior, Priest, Rebel, Victim*, William Holden Hutton's *Thomas Becket: Archbishop of Canterbury* and William Urry's *Thomas Becket*.[14] These accounts, while written with an ecclesiastical history approach, often tend to be more biographical, focusing on Becket more than the circumstances that shaped him. However, where both the aforementioned camps of scholars apply an either totalizing secular or ecclesiastical lens to Becket's murder, this paper aims to consider Becket's life comprehensively and employ methods of both political history and religious history.

My approach will more closely resemble the scholarship of Becket's late twentieth-century biographers, who recognized the complexities of his life and equally considered the influence of church and state. This multifaceted modern understanding was popularized in Frank Barlow's 1986 *Thomas Becket*, which places Becket's roles as archiepiscopate and statesman in conversation, demonstrating how the two positions were not entirely antithetical.[15] Following suit, Charles Duggan's *The Becket Dispute and the Criminous Clerks* noted how, in addition to Becket's canonical position and defense of ecclesiastical freedom, the figure managed to "create a current never seen again in the Latin Christendom at large."[16] Duggan's account positioned the medieval era as unlike the periods which followed, significantly recognizing the unique circumstances of Henry II's court and Becket's unprecedented secular and religious power.[17] Most recently, Anne Duggan's postmodernist *Thomas Becket* examines Becket in both life and legacy, exploring how the circumstances of his violent death consequently (and perhaps, knowingly) forced modern scholars to study the figure

[13] David Knowles, *Thomas Becket* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1971), 20.
[14] Guy's *Thomas Becket*; William Holden Hutton, *Thomas Becket: Archbishop of Canterbury* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); William Urry, *Thomas Becket: His Last Days* (Stroud: Sutton, 2001), xi.
[15] Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 5.
[16] Charles Duggan, *The Becket Dispute* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic Press, 1980), 18.
[17] Duggan, *The Becket Dispute*, 124.

sympathetically.[18] While the aforementioned biographies provide useful insights regarding the archbishop's secular and ecclesiastical pursuits, my study will notably place the figure in a comparative analysis alongside Wolsey and More.

Similarly, historical scholarship on Wolsey can be divided into two, albeit very simplified, classifications: those who condemned the figure immediately following his death, and the early modern and modern scholars who responded to those initial critiques. For the first three hundred years after his passing, the majority of scholarship written on Wolsey offered a limited and deprecatory understanding of the cardinal.[19] Texts including Mandell Creighton's *Cardinal Wolsey*, John Galt's *The Life and Administration of Cardinal Wolsey*, and George Howard's *Wolsey: The Cardinal and his Times* depict the man as a rag-to-riches social climber, unfairly focusing on his extravagant displays of wealth and labeling his dedication to the crown as "immoral."[20] Wolsey, more so than More, was castigated in early modern scholarship for possessing, to borrow from Galt, a "backwards clerical attitude."[21] These scholars, in some ways then, understand Wolsey as a figure more akin to Becket than More, as they describe the cardinal as possessing scholastic values. This thesis operates as a response to these works, as my comparative analysis aims to equally place Wolsey and More in their accurate sixteenth-century humanist context.

The second group of scholars can be classified by Richard Fiddes 1724 *Life of Wolsey*, as the text served as the first popular history written with the sole intent of rescuing the

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[18] Anne Duggan, *Thomas Becket: Reputations* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic Press, 1980), xxi.
[19] George Cavendish, *The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey* (London: Published for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 1959), 1.
[20] Mandell Creighton, *The Life of Cardinal Wolsey* (New York: A.L. Burt Company, 1903), 3; John Galt, *The Life and Administration of Cardinal Wolsey* (London, England: Bogue Publishing, 1846), 4; George Howard, *Wolsey, the Cardinal, and His Times: Courtly, Political, and Ecclesiastical (*London, England: Forgotten Books, 2016), ii.
[21] Galt, *The Life and Administration of Cardinal Wolsey*, 18.

cardinal's legacy from disgrace.[22] Unlike his predecessors that relied on state-published primary sources, Fiddes employed a varied source base, including oral histories and material objects.[23] His expanded and diverse references allowed the narrative to discuss more intimate aspects of Wolsey's life, and inspired a considerable amount of historical inquiry in the centuries that followed, including Ernest Law's *England's First Great War Minister* and Charles Ferguson's *Naked to Mine Enemies: The Life of Cardinal Wolsey*.[24] Most notably, Peter Gwyn's *The King's Cardinal* added to Fiddes's earlier discourse on the cardinal's private life, and introduced an original conversation on Wolsey's representations in popular culture.[25] Law, Ferguson, and Gwyn each offer a comprehensive image of their subject, discussing Wolsey's role as both a cardinal and lord chancellor, scholastic statesman and humanist patron of the arts, and father and friend, functioning to challenge the former negative conceptions about his life. Like these texts, this thesis privileges Wolsey's narrative, and borrows from Fiddes and Gwyn's diverse range of sources to craft a more layered understanding of the man.

Of the three men, More has generated the most scholarship and complex renderings, likely as a result of his lasting legacy as both a martyr and scholar. However, because of his dramatic death during a transformative moment in English history, biographical accounts often take precedence over studies of his thought. Moreover, when scholars rarely turn to his writings, he frequently becomes a victim of his own success--or rather, a victim of *Utopia'*s, his 1516 sociopolitical satire, success--and considerations are based solely on this single text. More's other writings, especially his polemic pieces, are often considered to be unengaging, and

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[22] Richard Fiddes, *The Life of Cardinal Wolsey* (London, England: Oxford University Press, 1724), 12.
[23] Fiddes, *Cardinal Wolsey*, 4.
[24] Ernest Law, *England's First Great War Minister: How Wolsey Made a New Army and Navy and Organized the English Expedition to Artois and Flanders in 1513, and How Things Which Happened Then May Inspire and Guide Us Now in 1916* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1916), 2; Charles W. Ferguson, *Naked to Mine Enemies: The Life of Cardinal Wolsey* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1958), 3.
[25] Peter Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey* (Barrie & Jenkins LTD, 1990), iii.

dismissed on the basis of not offering much intellectual content.[26] For this reason, many historians and literary critics have resorted to creating multiple Mores, partitioning the various facets of his life to keep the respectable humanism of *Utopia* untouched by the religious zealotry of his polemic texts.[27] The first study that considered More in his full complexity was R.W. Chambers' *Thomas More*, which brought together the image of a saint, religious fanatic, and scholar to create "a vibrant protagonist fighting for individual conscience."[28] More recently, Guy has come to define More Studies through texts like *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More*, *Thomas More*, *Reputations*, and *A Daughter's Love*, which, as addressed earlier, have shifted in both tone and consideration overtime.[29] Although much of More scholarship presents him in a positive light, modern academia has indicated a renewed interest in his polemical works, which consequently has generated strong oppositional views against the martyr. Perhaps Richard Marius's *Thomas More* and Jasper Ridley's *The Statesman and the Fanatic* best represent this trend, as both accounts label his conduct towards heretics as immoral, and challenge his saintly legacy.[30] As with Becket and Wolsey, this study intends to examine More holistically, taking into account the numerous contradictions that make up his life and legacy.

Intervention

In a significant limit to the existing literature, Becket, Wolsey, and More have never been considered together in a single analysis. This gap exists as the result of numerous factors, not least the failure of historians of religion and historians of politics, as well as medievalists and early modernists to talk across their respective subfields. In bringing the three Thomases

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[26] Guy, *Thomas More*, 15.
[27] Guy, *Thomas More*, 16.
[28] R.W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (Bedford Historical Series, II. London: Jonathan Cape, 1951), 3.
[29] John Guy, *Daughter's Love: Thomas & Margaret More* (London, England: Harper Perennial, 2009); John Guy, *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1980); John Guy, *Thomas More: A Very Brief History* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2019).
[30] Richard Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 1; Jasper Ridley, *The Statesman and The Fanatic: Thomas Wolsey and Thomas More* (UK: Constable and Company Ltd, 1982).

together, this study diverges from previous historiography by bridging these conversations and demonstrating that the whole can and should be far more than the sum of its parts. As Steven Gunn has noted, late medievalists and Tudor scholars typically inhabit different scholarly worlds, privileging different sources and asking dissimilar questions of the reign.[31] He observes that in order to study the two eras, historians must address two sets of questions, two hierarchies of sources, and apply a distinctive analytical method to research where the respective questions and hierarchies cut across each other—an undoubtedly tall order.[32] This project takes up that call, in part by privileging a decisive transitional period, and recognizing how the dominant intellectual movements, political and religious norms, and cultural beliefs have shifted over time from Becket to More.

Moreover, in addition to engaging all three men comparatively as other scholars have not, this study will also uniquely privilege Wolsey by analyzing the accuracy and appropriateness of separating him from his predecessor, Becket, and successor, More. For all of Wolsey's sixteenth-century prominence as lord chancellor and papal legate, his limited primary source material has hindered the creation of balanced assessments of his career. As a result, he has become a scapegoat of Tudor history, either unjustly assigned the blame for Henry VIII's annulment, or placed as the amateurish antithesis to his fellow councilor Thomas Cromwell's genius.[33] Even Albert Pollard's 1965 *Wolsey*, one of the most favorable and well known biographies of the figure, values the cardinal as little more than the political educator of Henry VIII.[34] Thus, I find it essential to evaluate Wolsey in his own right, as a churchman, statesman, and patron of the arts, alongside Becket and More. While this study does not provide an in-

[31] Steven Gunn, "Henry VII in Context: Problems and Possibilities." *History* 92, no. 307 (2007), 303.
[32] Gunn, "Henry VII in Context: Problems and Possibilities," 303.
[33] G.R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 65.
[34] Albert Pollard, *Wolsey* (London, England: Collins, 1965), 340-49.

depth exploration of the cardinal's artistic magnificence, I aim to demonstrate how early modern and modern representations of the figure have ignored these accomplishments. In some ways, then, this paper will join the new wave of early modern scholarship that attempts to reevaluate Wolsey in a more positive and comprehensive light.

Methodology and Terms

To access Becket, Wolsey, and More's roles within church and state, I will employ a multitude of primary sources including letters, tracts, essays, and books written by the three men and those connected to them, in addition to the narratives and accounts compiled by contemporary chroniclers and later historians. These sources will be examined through an interdisciplinary lens, combining methods from intellectual history, political theory, religious and ecclesiastical history, as well as literary criticism and film studies. To more fully develop and understand the wider context of my primary sources and how each figure was a product of his time, I will also examine the dominant intellectual movements of the medieval and early modern periods. This conversation will be defined by the terms set forth in philosopher Erika Rummel's *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate*, which describes the two paradigms of scholasticism (medieval) and humanism (early modern) as diametrically opposed in both theory and practice.[35] Where scholasticism's theological and philosophical approach to learning centered on Aristotelian logic and early Christian texts, and emphasized the importance of tradition and dogma; humanism valued ancient Greek and Roman thought, and attached importance to human agency over divine matters.[36] Becket, Wolsey, and More's complexities and contradictions go to the heart of scholasticism and humanism, and allow the historian to begin grappling with how immensely influential each Thomas' education was. The Thomases'

[35] Erika Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995), 25.
[36] Rummel, *Humanist-Scholastic Debate*, 25.

respective schooling determined the opportunities and experiences available to them in both the secular and ecclesiastical realms, and thus, influenced their divided consciousnesses. Placing the Thomases in the framework of their respective movements also serves to emphasize the major thread of similarity binding the three, demonstrating that despite their contrasting beliefs on reason, education, war, peace, and religion due to their intellectual contexts**,** they all faced the identical plight of aligning themselves with either church or state.

Despite the expansive evidence on view in my project, this thesis also acknowledges the gaps that exist in the primary source material. For instance, there exists little information about Becket or Wolsey before each entered Henry VIII's service. Similarly, for Wolsey and More, letters function as the only insight into their private lives. These blanks have created problems in secondary scholarship; to address them, modern scholars have been forced to rely on the accounts of twelfth and sixteenth-century biographers, notably John of Salisbury, George Cavendish, and William Roper. Consequently, this reliance has led to the early biographers' narratives being cited blindly, even though a considerable portion of each record has been proved historically inaccurate. This phenomenon is exemplified in Neville Williams' 1975 *The Cardinal and the Secretary*, in which the author relays a story about the creation of Wolsey's "God and King" speech originally told by Cavendish.[37] However, as historian Paul Wiley noted in his 1946 study, no evidence survives indicating that Wolsey gave such a speech in Parliament.[38] In fact, Warren Wooden further observed in 1977 that the date to which Cavendish credits the speech is impossible; a letter written from Wolsey to Cromwell suggests

[37] Neville Williams, *The Cardinal and the Secretary: Thomas Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell* (New York: Macmillan, 1976), 89.
[38] Paul L. Wiley, "Renaissance Exploitation of Cavendish's Life of Wolsey." *Studies in Philology* 43, no. 2 (1946): 124.

that the former was out of the country.[39] In other words, Williams's use of Cavendish's story served as a manipulated case of evidence**,** included only to suit special purposes and advance his argument. With this in mind, my study will take a different approach, examining sources through a postmodern lens, particularly acknowledging philosopher Hayden White's notion of "emplotment" from his 1987 *Tropics of Discourse.* White argues that historians, similar to poets and novelists, communicate their ideas through narrative plot structures, which consequently construct and shape historical knowledge.[40] When analyzing sources, I will not only acknowledge how modern historians like Williams wield evidence to create an effective narrative structure, but also recognize how the Thomases themselves were adept in the art of public relations, self-fashioning, and narration, and employed their epitaphs and letters discursively to appeal to many audiences, both during their lives and after.

This comparison of Becket, Wolsey, and More's divided consciousnesses shows how influential their conflicting ecclesiastical and secular alliances were in determining the course of their lives and legacies. The first two sections demonstrate how each man dealt with his inner struggle privately, balancing his secular career with his ecclesiastical beliefs, or vice-versa. Section three marks a turning point for each man, as Henry II and Henry VIII's dissent from papal authority, though in different capacities, forced each Thomas to not only address his divided consciousness publically, but also to align himself with either the church or state. Sections four and five convey how the Thomases' final commitments to the ecclesiastical or secular realm have directly shaped the limiting early modern and modern tropes of each Thomas as either a spiritual saint or secular villain.

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[39] Warren Wooden, "The Art of Partisan Biography: George Cavendish's Life of Wolsey." *Renaissance and Reformation* 1, no. 1 (1977), 27.
[40] Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact" in *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 82.

I: Pre-Divided Consciousness

Before Becket, Wolsey, and More assumed their unique roles in the English political and ecclesiastical realms, their beliefs were shaped by a respective upbringing and education. Though the Thomases' early lives share similarities—parents who ascended socially, a privileged education, a Catholic rearing—the development of each man's divided consciousness differs significantly. Beginning my analysis at birth, I show how the three men's distinct social milieus and educations contributed to the course of their careers, and began to shape the circumstances that would later force each man to align with either the church or state.

Working chronologically, Becket was born in London to a family of Norman immigrants on 21 December, likely in 1120, on the feast of St Thomas the Apostle after whom he was named.[41] Though difficult to place socially based on independent evidence, Becket reportedly told peers that his origins were modest: his parents lived among their fellow subjects, but by no means presided among the lowest.[42] At a time when the majority of the English population was not free, Becket's family belonged to a rapidly rising merchant class with rare economic independence.[43] Still, for a boy of his background, advancement beyond the status into which he was born required intelligence, education, and significant elite patronage. This reality likely aided his later decision to enter clerical training, as the priesthood served as one of the few paths through which a man could potentially transcend the station granted to him at birth. While little evidence has survived regarding Becket's first fifteen years, his twelfth-century chroniclers have suggested that he experienced prophetic dreams of future greatness as

[41] John Salisbury, *Life and Death of Thomas Becket* (London, England: Cambridge University Press, 1171), 13.
[42] John Salisbury, *Life and Death*, 13.
[43] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 4.

a child, paralleling his youth to that of the biblical Saint Joseph's.[44] While the anecdotes in these chronicles—which border on hagiographies—are almost certainly fictional, some contain aspects of truth which are worthy of mentioning. For example, chronicler William FitzStephen describes Becket as having a special, "spiritual-like" connection to his mother, Matilda, implying that she was destined to transmit her love of charitable giving and religious devotion to her son.[45] Though FitzStephen employs hyperbolic language, both claims—Becket's fondness toward his mother and his own spiritual instinct as a child—are certainly possible to a degree. Until the age of six, Becket was under the authority of his mother, who was devoted to the cult of the Virgin Mary.[46] Similarly, in the place of Becket's unknown early education, he was suspected to have participated in the local parish at St. Paul's cathedral, which was closely located to his childhood home.[47] Though FitzStephen's depiction exaggerates two minimal religious characteristics of Becket's childhood to craft a false narrative of sainthood from birth, his mother's religious influence paired with the circumstances of his social milieu undoubtedly inspired his eventual entry into clerical training.

Just as an absence of information has allowed Becket's chroniclers to craft a saintly narrative, historians have employed Wolsey's limited early documentation to render him as a social climber. Wolsey's birth year remains unknown, however, most scholarly literature agrees that the date exists between 1471-1473.[48] Born into a family of butchers and innkeepers, Wolsey's social standing, much like Becket's, was modest.[49] His father, Robert, was the first

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[44] William FitzStephen, *The Life and Death of Thomas Becket, Chancellor of England and Archbishop of Canterbury: Based on the Account of William Fitzstephen, His Clerk, with Additions from Other Contemporary Sources* (London: Folio Society, 1175), 7.
[45] FitzStephen, *Life and Death*, 7.
[46] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 5.
[47] FitzStephen, *Life and Death*, 9.
[48] Charles Ferguson, *Naked to Mine Enemies: The Life of Cardinal Wolsey* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1958), 1; George Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 1.
[49] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 3.

generation of Suffolk Wolseys to seek a higher standard of living, moving the family from his native village of Combs to the growing town of Ipswich.[50] By the time Thomas—the first of four children— turned three, his father was already combining the roles of butcher, innkeeper, and grazier.[51] Both early modern and modern biographers exploit Robert's narrative, mainly his multiple jobs, to frame their image of Wolsey as overly ambitious and greedy cardinal. Scholars Charles Ferguson and Nancy Lenz Harvey, for instance, have inappropriately psychoanalyzed his childhood circumstances, suggesting that Robert's displeasure with his plebeian roots taught his son to continuously seek wealth and power.[52] Others, like Cavendish, have manipulated Wolsey's status as a butcher's son to garner sympathy and perhaps justify his unapologetic ambition later in life, noting how "like any young boy, [he was] certain to have been impacted by what he saw."[53] Thus, where Becket's chroniclers assumed saintly practices in his early life, Wolsey's biographers have supposed emotional trauma. Though the scholars' emotional and psychological speculations can prove useful, like in the case of FitzStephen's, this thesis argues that they distract from a different, more significant, similarity shared between the two Thomases: their families' modest social ranks. Both Becket and Wolsey's modest statuses equally contributed to their early pursuits of priesthood, as well as their later respective experiences as the archbishop of Canterbury and cardinal.

The modern perception of More's childhood, much like that of his later life, was remarkably crafted by himself and his close confidants. As this study will continue to illustrate, More in both life and legacy maintained a degree of control over his narrative that was unobtainable to Becket and Wolsey. More was born on February 6, 1478, in London, the

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[50] John Matusiak, *Wolsey: The Life of King Henry VIII's Cardinal* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: History Press, 2016), 4.
[51] Matusiak, *Wolsey*, 4.
[52] Ferguson, *Naked to Mine Enemies, 7;* Harvey*, Thomas Cardinal Wolsey*, 32.
[53] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 3.

second child and eldest son of John More and Agnes Graunger.[54] John was the eldest son of a baker's six orphans, and restored the family fortune through his London law practice; his secure finances allowed his son to begin a formal education around the age of six, a rare privilege in the fifteenth-century.[55] More's earliest biographers, his son-in-law William Roper and sixteenth-century historian Nicholas Harpsfield, both employ a letter by Erasmus of Rotterdam— More's cherished companion and leading humanist scholar— to describe their subject's character as a young child.[56] The letter, addressed to German scholar Ulrich von Hutten, describes More as an intelligent man with quick wit, who delighted in both writing farces and acting in them.[57] Considering More's later career as a statesman, theological thinker, and humanist scholar, this claim seems to anticipate his future of adopting different roles and performing for audiences.

While both Wolsey and More's fathers mandated that their sons receive a formal education at a young age, the former's family did not possess the financial means to support him in this endeavor. Wolsey's education began only after receiving a financial waiver to attend the Friars Preachers grammar school around the age of eleven, where his modern biographers suspect that he gained his love for music while singing in the school's choir.[58] His wits later granted him another scholarship, this time to study under the guidance of James Goldwell, the former Bishop of Norwich and principal secretary to Edward IV, at Oxford's College of St Mary Magdalen.[59] The academic regime awaiting him at Oxford was particularly austere, as his studies commenced in conjunction with university founder William Waynflete's notorious

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[54] John Guy, *Thomas More*, 1.
[55] Margaret Hastings, "The Ancestry of Sir Thomas More" in *Essential Articles*, 92-103 (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1977), 93; Guy, John, *Public Career*, 1.
[56] Alistar Fox, *Thomas More: History and Providence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 19; Chambers, *Thomas More*, xi.
[57] Erasmus, Letter to Ulrich von Hutten, *Opus Espistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterdami, vol 12*, edited by P.S. Allen, H. M. Allen, and H.W. Garrod, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1906-58), VII.
[58] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 3.
[59] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 3.

"purge of disorder," in which widespread discipline practices were implemented for students of all ages.[60] For Wolsey, Waynflete's requirements dictated every minute of his day, determining how long he slept, studied, ate, and prayed.[61] His schedule at this time seemingly paralleled his later overloaded agenda as Henry VIII's lord chancellor; this similarity perhaps indicating that early modern and modern biographers have inaccurately labeled his disciplined schedule as a statesman as a sign of vile ambition. Wolsey's studies at Oxford overlapped with a broader, European shift from the dominant intellectual tradition of scholasticism to a new, humanist-centered curriculum.[62] During this period of transition, public sentiment maintained that scholastic studies represented medieval error and superstition, while humanist lessons purified academic practices.[63] Though after his death, early modern protestant scholars would claim that Wolsey, unlike More, received an outdated education that prohibited him from progressing secular affairs under Henry VIII, his time at Oxford counters this belief. In fact, when Erasmus visited Magdalen in 1497, he noted how the education Wolsey received was not "of the outworn, commonplace sort," but of the "profound, accurate kind."[64] The humanist curriculum Wolsey engaged with must have been reasonably influential, as he continued to support the issues of both pacification and church reform throughout his career as lord chancellor and cardinal.

Notably, Wolsey's first experience closely witnessing the workings of the royal realm also occurred during his time at Oxford. In 1483, for instance, just after he turned fourteen, the newly crowned Richard III temporarily lodged at the school while on royal progress.[65] Already,

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[60] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 4.
[61] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 4.
[62] Matusiak, *Wolsey*, 18.
[63] Matusiak, *Wolsey*, 18.
[64] Erasmus, *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors, D.F.S. Thomson, 16 Volumes (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 19.
[65] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 6.

Wolsey was introduced to a stirring mixture of worlds: on one hand there was the weighty realm of humanist scholarship and philosophy; on the other, the sphere of pomp and politics. While the next eleven years of his life are not recorded, Oxford records from 1494 report that he gained his Master of Arts degree in divinity, rather than law.[66] Though destined to become lord chancellor, his grounding in divinity would have fitted him for a career within the highest rank of the Church. Moreover, his degree choice was likely influenced by his father, who upon his death in 1496 stipulated that if Wolsey would become a priest within a year, he would receive a sum of ten markings.[67] If Wolsey, like his father before him, had any desire to socially ascend beyond his modest rank, the priesthood offered the most reliable prospects.

Just as Wolsey's father advocated for his entry into priesthood, John More yearned for his son to be a lawyer like himself.[68] He sent More to learn the rudiments of English and Latin grammar at St. Anthony's School in Cheapside, and additionally found him a place at Lambeth Palace in the household of John Morton, who at the time served as Henry VII's trusted councilor and cardinal. Morton served as one of the most influential thinkers of the age, holding the chancellorship at Oxford University, where More would later study at the age of fourteen. Under Morton's guidance, Oxford was a centre for the Renaissance-inspired curriculum known as the New Learning and humanism, and later popularized as the liberal arts.[69] Around 1499, More was ordered back to London by his father to study at Lincoln's Inn in Holborn, where he embarked on the rigorous course of scholastic readings, lectures, and moots that would prepare him for a future legal profession.[70] During this period he connected with William Grocyn, a humanist Oxford professor famous for using the earliest, most authentic Greek sources to

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[66] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 14.
[67] Matusiak, *Wolsey*, 18.
[68] William Roper, *The Life of Sir Thomas More* (London, England: Cambridge University, 1556), 163.
[69] Guy, *Thomas More*, 18.
[70] Guy, *Thomas More*, 18.

rewrite the early history of Christianity, and John Colet, one of the first leading humanist scholars in Europe.[71] Like Wolsey's time in Oxford, More's lessons at the Lincoln Inn functioned to embed a language of divided consciousness into his education, as he was equally exposed to the ecclesiastical values of scholasticism and the new secular insights of humanism. Together, More, Grocyn, Colet, and later, Erasmus, began to collectively translate mass amounts of Greek texts into English for the local universities who were adopting humanist teachings at the time. Later reflecting on their work, Erasmus wrote to a colleague that More during this period "devote[d] himself to the study of Greek literature with so little support from his father [...], he was treated almost as if disinherited because he [was] thought to be deserting his father's profession."[72] Where Becket and Wolsey were restricted in early opportunities as a result of their families' ranks, More maintained an economic freedom and ability to explore his interests, even if at his father's expense.

In 1501, More qualified as a barrister, and earned a living by lecturing to first-year students preparing for admission to the inns of court. This was the same year he wrote to an old schoolmaster, "I am living my life just as I desire; so please God, may my desires be good."[73] Guy suggests that although most lawyers during this time took the view that English law, based on customs dating back to the Magna Carta, served the common welfare and should not be changed, More profoundly disagreed.[74] This claim denotes that More, even before assuming a position in the secular realm, found issues with the sixteenth-century principles of state affairs. As a result of his possible discontent with law, More attempted to live in West Smithfield among the Carthusian monks for a few months in 1504, where he tested his vocation for the

[71] Guy, *Thomas More*, 18.
[72] Erasmus, *Correspondence*, 33.
[73] Erasmus, *Opus Epistolarum*, vol. 1, 9.
[74] Guy, *Thomas More*, 24.

priesthood.[75] This quick stint demonstrates More's developing divided consciousness, as he explored the two options available through which he could serve the commonwealth: the church and state.

Whereas More possessed some level of agency over his early decisions, both Becket and Wolsey were subject to the greater circumstances that shaped their lives. Markedly, neither man could begin receiving a formal education until he received financial support from a school; in the case of Becket, this occurred at age ten, when he was offered a merit scholarship to both live and learn at a monastery school in the Merton borough of London.[76] While little evidence remains from his time there, Becket retained an attachment to the monastery until the end of his life, exemplified by his summoning of a spiritual adviser from Merton during his time as archbishop.[77] FitzStephen notes that at the monastery, Becket primarily advanced his knowledge of Latin, using textbooks that would have been used since the end of the Roman Empire.[78] From there, he relocated to attend one of the local schools in the city, though what he studied there remains impossible to know. Guy predicts that by the age of nineteen, Becket's education equated to that of a modern liberal arts graduate, but one who could debate in accurate Latin, possessed a great knowledge of classical texts, and maintained expert skills in the trivium (grammar, rhetoric, logic) and quadrivium (astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and music).[79] During his teenage years, Becket established a friendship with Richer de Laigle, a minor noble who often visited his house in London. It was in de Laigle's company that he acquired the skills and tastes of the landed aristocracy, including a delight in hunting with dogs

[75] Guy, *Thomas More*, 24.
[76] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 8**.**
[77] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 8**.**
[78] FitzStephen, *Life and Death*, 13.
[79] Guy, *Thomas Becket*, 8.

and birds, and developing the manners appropriate to more elevated circles.[80] This acquaintance may also have induced Becket to aspire to a higher future, for in 1138, he traveled to Paris, then one of the foremost centres of higher learning in the Latin West.[81] While in Paris, he learned to master the more elaborate Latin necessary for the pursuit of an administrative career in the service of an ecclesiastical lord.[82] Thomas of London, as he soon came to be known, only remained a couple of years in Paris due to the unexpected death of his mother, but by the time he left in late 1141, he was around twenty-one years old and well enough educated for entry into the service of a nobleman or bishop.[83]

After concluding their educations, both Becket and More experienced almost immediate appointments to high-power positions, both the result of strategic familial connections. Becket's first job was as an assistant to a relative, Osbert Huitdeniers, who worked as a moneylender.[84] Through the influence of two clerks from Boulogne—Archdeacon Baldwin and Masyer Eustace—Becket was introduced to Archbishop Theobald, the current archbishop of Canterbury in 1154.[85] Attachment to Theobald's household brought him into a new environment where he not only began to accumulate ecclesiastical benefices from patrons, but Theobald also allowed Becket to study law in Bologna for a year before appointing him archdeacon of Canterbury.[86] Moreover, Theobald encouraged Becket to represent the archbishop at the papal Curia on numerous occasions, and these experiences offered him—in his early thirties—the opportunity

[80] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 7.
[81] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 11.
[82] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 11.
[83] FitzStephen, *Life and Death*, 16.
[84] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 11.
[85] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 12.
[86] Sailsbury, *Life and Death*, 19.

to meet the men who would become very important in the protection of his cause in later years.[87]

Thus, when Theobald recommended Becket as a potential chancellor to the new King Henry II in 1154, he was already experienced in conducting business at the highest levels of the Catholic Church: he was a well-regarded clerk in the household of the archbishop of Canterbury, he had met Pope Eugenius III, and he had been educated at one of the highest legal institutions in the world.[88] However, Theobald's primary justification for suggesting Becket was to place a loyal cleric into the service, so that he would have his own representative at court who could support his views and, perhaps, moderate the king's policies in respect of the Church.[89] Becket's big break into secular affairs, then, was not a consequence of his own doing or desires. Nevertheless, Henry and Becket became quick confidants, as the king trusted his chancellor with greater powers than any such officer had ever held in the post-Conquest court, enabling Becket to become, in FitzShephen's words, "second in the realm after the king."[90] At a moment when the English government was becoming more bureaucratic and professional than ever before, the new cardinal had his feet firmly in both the secular and ecclesiastical realm.

As for More, following his leave from the monastery in 1504, he quickly received a high-profile position as a member of the House of Commons with the assistance of his father's support, where he soon negatively came to Henry VII's attention by speaking out against royal taxation.[91]After the quick negative brush with power, he concentrated on his legal practice; and according to Erasmus, "there was no one whose advice was more freely sought by litigants."[92] During this time, More began publishing his academic writings, with a speech in reply to

[87] Sailsbury, *Life and Death*, 19.
[88] Sailsbury, *Life and Death*, 19.
[89] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 12.
[90] FitzStephen, *Life and Death*, 16.
[91] Guy, *Thomas More*, 18.
[92] Erasmus, *Correspondence*, VII, 21.

Lucian's *The Tyrannicide*— a fictional story about a citizen who claims to deserve a reward for killing the city's local tyrant—serving as his first piece. In this text, More addresses a group of fictional jurymen, revealing his loathing of tyranny, but also his obedience to law and legitimate authority.[93] Two months after More's thirty-first birthday in 1509, the teenage Henry VIII succeeded as king, and as a form of homage, More presented him with an illustrated set of verses celebrating his coronation and marriage to Katherine of Aragon. In the verses, More praised his new sovereign's looks, intellect, physical prowess, respect for justice, and rule of law; making it evident that he regarded Henry's accession as a joyous turning-point.[94]

More's career took another leap when the city appointed him as an undersheriff of London, a permanent official who advised as judge in the sheriff's court. The undersheriff assumed a lucrative right to represent the City in the royal courts at Westminster; thus, he became the link between the City and the crown.[95] Two years later, in the spring of 1514, More was hired to solve a highly sensitive star chamber case concerning an impounded cargo of alum belonging to Pope Leo X; the case propelled him most conspicuously into the limelight and encouraged Wolsey, at the time Henry's first chief minister, to single him out. The case arose after the Duke of Suffolk, Henry's favorite jousting partner, seized 4,000 barrels of alum at Southampton, and Leo sought to recover and sell the alum.[96] After a deadlock lasting almost a year, he proposed an out-of-court settlement, one so reasonable that every party accepted his terms on the spot.[97] Unsurprisingly, in May 1515, More was selected to join an embassy that Henry and Wolsey were sending to Bruges to meet with the advisers of Charles of Castile, the Duke of Burgundy. While in France, More met up with Erasmus, who recommended that he

[93] Thomas More, *The Workes of Sir Thomas More Knyght, Sometyme Lorde Chauncellour* (London, England: John Cawod & Richard Tottell Press, 1557), 81.
[94] More, *Workes*, 10.
[95] Roper, *Life*, 167.
[96] Roper, *Life*, 167.
[97] Roper, *Life*, 167.

visit Antwerp and meet Peter Gillis, a civic official who performed duties similar to More's as an undersheriff.[98] Deciding to make the trip, More was invigorated by his encounters, and it was in this setting that *Utopia*, his most blatant declaration and exploration of his divided consciousness, would find its beginnings.

Wolsey, unlike Becket and More, maintained a series of somewhat low-status ecclesiastical jobs before finally securing a position of power in the secular realm. Where the latter two had familial connections that assisted in their ascent, Wolsey turned to his alma mater for help. In September of 1499, Wolsey received his first job as a senior bursar at Magdalen, where he was charged with overseeing an extensive building operation.[99] He was entrusted to expedite matters, which he duly did, albeit in a manner that lead to his prompt dismissal. Cavendish assumes that Wolsey was removed from his new post after exceeding his authority and misallocating funds to speed the tower's construction; however, it appears that he was less removed than reassigned, for at the time of his dismissal, he was offered the post of dean of divinity.[100] In 1499, he received his earliest preferment outside the college, a modest deanery in Norwich; the following year he was presented to the Somerset at the suggestion of Thomas Grey, the first Marquis of Dorset.[101] Across the next three years, he took up many ecclesiastical appointments, ranging from positions of vicar to clerk, all throughout England.

His break into secular affairs did not occur until 1501, when he was selected by Archbishop Henry Deane—who served as Lord Keeper of the Great Seal for Henry VII—to serve as one of his domestic chaplains.[102] Deane quickly recommended Wolsey to Richard Nonfan, a deputy governor of Calais, to work as his chaplain and under Nofan. Like Becket's

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[98] Guy, *Thomas More*, 19.
[99] Cavendish, *Life and Death* , 8.
[100] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 8.
[101] Williams, *Cardinal and the Secretary*, 7.
[102] Gwyn, *King's Cardinal*, 31.

time with Theobald, Wolsey's duties under Nonfan ranged beyond the chapel royal, exposing him to all sorts of secular opportunities, primarily for the household of Henry VII.[103] This brief residence in Calais widened Wolsey's horizons, for it made him properly aware of European affairs, in which he was soon to play a major role.[104] Before Nofan died in 1507, he recommended his chaplain to Henry VII as an available servant, and after being sent on several international envoys, Wolsey was appointed Dean of Lincoln.[105] However, not long after, Henry VII was succeeded by his son, Henry VIII, who did not immediately reappoint a royal chaplain. Not until after the death of Henry VII's appointed almoner in December 1509 was Wolsey granted a grace to proceed as the doctor of divinity at his old university; and that same month, he was appointed as a privy councilor for the state.[106] Similar to Becket's relationship with Henry II, Cavendish has suggested that immediately following Wolsey's appointment under Henry, he quickly came to fill a special role as an independent, confidential agent of the crown.[107]

This section has suggested the importance of each man's respective social milieu and education in shaping the development of his divided consciousness. While Becket and Wolsey came from families of lesser status, and therefore possessed little agency or options beyond pursuing priesthood, More's social standing and economic security allowed him to neglect his father's wishes and explore his humanist interests. Moreover, Wolsey's time at Oxford and More's education at Lincoln's Inn both provided each man an understanding of their divided consciousness, as they witnessed first-hand an educational transition from scholasticism's emphasis on church validity to humanism's belief in secular reasoning. I conclude section one

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[103] Gwyn, *King's Cardinal*, 31.
[104] Gwyn, *King's Cardinal*, 31.
[105] Gwyn, *King's Cardinal*, 31.
[106] Gwyn, *King's Cardinal*, 31.
[107] Harvey, *Cardinal Wolsey*, 42; Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 23.

with each Thomas having gained considerable experience in both the ecclesiastical and secular realm, gaining prominence under their respective kings.

II: Divided Consciousness, State

After a few years of service to the English state, each Thomas developed a closeness with their respective kings, a point pressed by their respective contemporary observers in both the twelfth and sixteenth centuries. Becket's relationship to Henry II comes to the fore in Archbishop Theobald's September 1160 letter to the councilor, in which he states that "common report and rumor seems to indicate that you [and the king] are so strongly of one heart and mind, that in view of such intimate friendship your desires and dislikes must coincide."[108] Similarly, in the case of Wolsey and More, sixteenth century biographer Harpsfield noted how the two men were the only subjects at court with whom Henry VIII would routinely link arms in public.[109] The following section explores the men's lives as they worked for the English state, comparing their various duties, diplomatic networks, and relationships with their individual king. I argue that the harmonious relationship between the church and state during this period of time allowed each man to privately consider his divided consciousness, and contemplate how his respective acts of statecraft would affect the broader populace. While Becket and Wolsey's international peace efforts and affluent airs seem to suggest their propensity for secular work, More's *Utopia* hints at his sustained hesitation as a statesman.

While all three men advocated for international peace to varying degrees, Becket's genuine commitment to the cause remains the least certain in his early career, yet, he and More are the two most commonly associated with pacifying their kings.[110] In 1153, England had just concluded a violent, almost two-decade-long civil war, the period Fitzshephen refers to as when

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[108] John of Salisbury, *The Letters of John of Salisbury: The Early Letters*. Vol. 1. Ed. and Trans. W.J. Millor (London, England: Oxford University Press, 1955), 245.
[109] Harpsfield, *Life and Death*, 18.
[110] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 83; Guy, *Thomas Becket*, 24.

"Christ and his angels slept."[111] As a result, Henry II implemented a "policy of recuperation," aiming to assist his dominions in recovering from war, and enact a systematic acquisition of manorial castles that had been constructed without royal license during the previous reign.[112] Together, the king and Becket traveled throughout his dominions, and still today, surviving royal charters indicate the phrase *toma cancellario*, meaning "witnessed by Thomas the Chancellor."[113] According to the charters, he was at the king's side throughout his visitations to England, Normandy, Touraine, as well as a later failed mission to subordinate Toulouse.[114] Still, while Becket assisted the king with secular affairs throughout the dominions, he similarly maintained a domestic presence fulfilling the ecclesiastical duties assigned to the chancellor, including, but not limited to: maintaining the king's chapel, appointing clergymen for vacant archbishoprics, abbacies and baronies, and beginning all the king's council meetings with a prayer.[115] Becket served one of the English state's major administrative offices at a moment when the king's government was becoming more professional, and far-reaching, than ever before. During this period of his chancellorship, Becket was able to serve the compatible twelfth-century secular and ecclesiastical realms in similar degrees.

While Becket undoubtedly sought internal and external peace later in his life, he functions as the only Thomas to have personally engaged in warfare. In 1161, he served in active military service, and according to FitzStephens, his "knights were always first, always the most daring, [and] always performed excellently."[116] Particularly in Toulouse, Becket led a contingent of over seven-hundred knights, and directed an effective and bloody rearguard action

[111] FitzStephen, *Life and Death*, 21.
[112] FitzStephen, *Life and Death*, 21.
[113] J.E.A Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship* (London, England: Black Publishing, 1970), 83.
[114] FitzStephen, *Life and Death*, 19.
[115] FitzStephen, *Life and Death*, 21
[116] FitzStephen, *Life and Death*, 21.

within the city.[117] Although clerks and knights were accomplished horsemen, the use of knightly arms required additional exercise and training, which possibly suggests Becket possessed a hidden interest in warfare.[118]As Duggan points out, "one cannot imagine his contemporary John of Salisbury taking command of a whole division of the royal army and leading it on the battlefield."[119] Thus, while Becket's twelfth-century chroniclers and modern biographers have a penchant for depicting him as a spiritual saint throughout his entire life, his experience with medieval warfare complicates this image.

Where Becket's pursuit for peace was guided by the king, Wolsey's attempt at international peace was conducted almost autonomously. However, his personal interests as the king's almoner are more difficult to discern, as Wolsey was able to win Henry's favor by encouraging him to indulge his vices, regardless of the consequences or his own judgement.[120] Cavendish states that, "as fast as the other councilors advised the king to attend to the affairs of the realm, so busily did [Wolsey] persuade him to do the contrary."[121] This claim, although possibly hyperbolized, can be confirmed through Wolsey's early foreign policy efforts, and in particular, the 1513 war with France. While assisting in the king's pursuit of war, Wolsey was simultaneously writing fellow council member Richard Foxe to express his own personal desire for peace.[122] Still, the war, especially the 1513 English siege of Tournai and its aftermath, demonstrates how Wolsey's secular and ecclesiastical roles not only coexisted peacefully, but were often mutually beneficial. After Henry annexed Tournai as part of his kingdom, the king

[117] FitzStephen, *Life and Death*, 21.
[118] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 18.
[119] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 20.
[120] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 20.
[121] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 12.
[122] Wolsey to Foxe letter, recorded in Ridley, *Statesman and Fanatic*, 55

demanded Pope Leo X grant Wolsey the bishoprics of both Tournai and Lincoln.[123] Though this act seemed to tread on papal sovereignty, after the 1514 peace treaty between France and England was officialized, and Henry and Louis XII agreed that Tournai would recognize Wolsey as Bishop, the pope agreed to issue the bull's conseration, but refused to waive his annates for Lincoln.[124] To retaliate, Henry requested that the pope appoint Wolsey as cardinal to replace the recently passed Christopher Bainbridge, who served as the archbishop of York; and after a period brief of negotiations, Leo again agreed to issue the bull for his appointment in York, but temporarily dismissed the idea of recognizing him as cardinal. However, the broader political circumstances of the time, and Leo's growing need for English support after France invaded Italyin 1515, caused Leo to officiate Wolsey as cardinal one year later. Thus, while Wolsey might have felt equal alliances to the secular and ecclesiastical realm during this period, his duplicity would not yet present an issue.

Wolsey further managed to rise to prominence across Europe by serving as the chief architect of the 1518 Treaty of London, a massive peace summit uniting twenty-five major powers of the Christendom.[125] Though the Treaty failed one year later, these negotiations display how, for Wolsey, as for More and other English humanists, England was an integral part of Europe, the *res publicae Christianae*, which should remain amicable.[126] A multitude of sixteenth-century peers recognized this major accomplishment, such as Erasmus, who wrote Wolsey in 1517 with a message of encouragement, that he "[could] see an age truly golden coming, if that mind of [Wolsey's] should persist with some number of rulers."[127] Similarly, More wrote to Wolsey in 1522, to say "I pray God send his Grace [the king] one honourable

[123] Jack Sybil, "Wolsey, Thomas: Royal Minister, Archbishop of York, and Cardinal" *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* 23, no. 1 (2004), 5.
[124] Sybil, "Wolsey, Thomas," 5.
[125]Ridley, *Statesman and Saint*, 55.
[126] Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate*, 25.
[127] Erasmus, *Correspondence of Erasmus*, VII, 54.

and profitable peace."[128] Both of the instances of correspondence suggest Wolsey's power within the secular realm, and convey how his responsibilities as lord chancellor often merged with ecclesiastical interests. Guy notes that during this time, More and Wolsey shared the most similarities, as "[More] could see that Wolsey was steering Henry into a new and uncharted role in foreign policy: less warrior-king, more arbitrator and peacemaker."[129] Strikingly, then, this comparison illuminates that Wolsey and More shared almost identical political ideals until the Reformation.

Though More wrote numerous pieces, his clearest, most substantive comments on peace, as well as his divided consciousness, may be found in his 1515 *On the Best State of a Commonwealth and on the New Island of Utopia*, later popularized under the simpler title, *Utopia*. The work, which during the drafting process was originally dedicated to Wolsey**,** opens in a factual vein with a brief account by More. While modern scholarship often dissents on why Wolsey served as the original dedicatee, I argue that enough primary evidence subsists to assume that More felt Wolsey shared with him a duality: a want for both the tradition necessitated by the church, and a desire for the progress promised by the state. The text begins by describing More's historically real mission to Bruges and excursion to meet Peter Gillis.[130] After attending mass at the cathedral of Notre Dame in Antwerp, the author explains, he met Gillis in the company of a Portugese traveller, Raphael Hythloday, and the three settle into a conversation; with this move, More slips seamlessly from fact into fiction.[131] The book describes Hythloday— whose name in Greek translates to "purveyor of nonsense"— as a ship captain who had travelled on three voyages to the New World, and proceeds to take the reader

[128] More, *The Workes of Sir Thomas More Knyght*, 150.
[129] Guy, *A Daughter's Love*, 113.hh
[130] More, Thomas, *Utopia* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6.
[131] More, *Utopia,* 12.

on a voyage of discovery into the conceptual world of moral philosophy.[132] Hythloday, who likely represents the side of More's divided consciousness that favored prayer and contemplation, narrates his experiences directly to another character, "Thomas More," who represents the side that sought active political engagement.[133] This book, then, shows More putting language to his inner struggle between church and state, and conveying his understanding that these two institutions were inherently separate paths.

Throughout the book's first part, the two characters debate a variety of political and social ills, namely princely ambition, court flattery, the perils of standing armies, unjust laws, poverty, theft, and homicide.[134] In part two, More uses Hythloday's description of the Utopians, their history, and their policies to similarly comment on war. In particular, he emphasizes that the practice is inhumane, but can be viewed as justly when acting in defense or against oppression and tyranny. While More was writing *Utopia*, he was internally debating these issues himself, as Wolsey had recently shared with him an invitation to join Henry VIII's council.[135] He wrote to Erasmus: "If I should accept [this position], I should either abandon my present position in London, or (which I should much regret) to incur some unpopularity among my fellow-citizens."[136] Still, in March 1518, More took his councilor's oath at Reading Abbey, at which Henry shared with him the advice to "first look unto God and after God, unto him."[137] This comment not only suggests that the king was aware More felt divided over his alliance to church and state, but also indicates that Henry understood the secular and ecclesiastical realm as mutually beneficial at the time. Roper later suggested that More acquiesced in March because

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[132] More, *Utopia*, 12.
[133] Guy, *Thomas More*, 15.
[134] More, *Utopia*, 30-54.
[135] Guy, *Thomas More*, 16.
[136] Erasmus, *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, VIII, 234.
[137] Thomas More, *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters*. The Yale Edition of the Works of St. Thomas More, ed. Elizabeth Frances Rogers (New Haven: Verlag, 1961) 495.

Pope Leo X issued a decree for a truce among European powers that same month, and More predicted that Wolsey, as papal legate, would help ensure this humanist vision.[138]

However, if More was expecting Wolsey to pursue exclusively humanist interests, he was misguided. As after the Treaty of London, Wolsey employed his international prestige to plan and organize a lavish and extravagant Anglo-French meeting between Henry VIII and Francis I in 1520.[139] The location outside of Calais, retrospectively known as Field of the Cloth of Gold, hosted this political conference, which also featured athletic events such as jousting, tournaments, archery contests, and wrestling.[140] Sixteenth-century scholars have accused Wolsey of devising the meeting principally as a stage for his own glory, as indicated by Polydore Vergil's comment that "[Wolsey] longed like a peacock to display his many adorned tail, to exhibit his special appearance."[141] However, Vergil's assessment of Wolsey's aims is unlikely, as the two kings were the principal actors throughout the event; as if they had not been, the entire conference would have perceived as a failure placed on the lord chancellor.[142] However, symbols of Wolsey prodigality did prevail throughout the event, particularly in the ambitious temporary lodgings created for the kings. These buildings, painted by heraldic painter and More's brother-in-law John Rastell, displayed Wolsey's coat of arms upon each wall; highlighting his cardinalate through the image of Leo's purple lions, emphasizing his secular authority with small dragons, and of course, drawing parallels between himself and Becket through the Cornish choughs.[143] With the (temporary) success of the Treaty of London and the renown received from the splendor that was the Field of the Cloth of Gold, Wolsey was at the zenith of his political power and influence in during the mid-1520s; yet, there still remained a

[138] Guy, *Thomas More*, 25.
[139] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 33.
[140] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 22.
[141] Polydor Vergil, *Anglica Historia* (London, England: Camden Society Press, 1555), 156.
[142] Williams, *The Cardinal and the Secretary*, 36.
[143] Williams, *The Cardinal and the Secretary*, 37.

higher honor that many of his contemporaries thought he was aiming for, the papacy. Among these contemporaries was the Archduchess Margaret of Austria, who Wolsey lovingly addressed as his mother; in 1521, after Leo's death, Margaret encouragingly explained how she was "looking forward to becoming the mother of the [Holy] father."[144] It's striking that Wolsey, arguably the man most situated in secular affairs at this moment in the comparison, serves as the Thomas reaching for the highest ecclesiastical office.

While Wolsey was accused by his late contemporaries for exploiting the wealth associated with his positions at the Field Cloth of Gold, Becket faced little criticism for similar actions. Just as Becket's former service for Theobald brought an accumulation of ecclesiastical benefits, his royal service garnered not only the fruits of office, but also an assortment of high-status clerical and lay appointments.[145] These positions spanned from the provostship of Beverley Minster to custody of the castles of Eye and Berkhamsted and to the Tower of London—all major military and administrative responsibilities, with significant garrisons of knights attached to them.[146] Becket was equal in both wealth and status to a major baron, and he lived up to the expectations of rank by maintaining a household with establishments parallel to the kings.[147] The Office of the Chancellor included the incomes from both secular wardships and ecclesiastical vacancies, and supported the lavish outlay that such royal hospitality required.[148] An example of his financial magnificence was the Great Embassy of 1158, when Becket was charged with negotiating a crucial marriage between the infant son of Henry II and Margaret, daughter of King Louis of France.[149] According to FitzStephens, on Becket's journey

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[144] *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library,* ed. Sara Hooper, Eighteenth Century Collections (London: Oxford University Press), no 25.
[145] Duggan, *Thomas Becket: Reputations*, 18.
[146] FitzStephen, *The Life and Death of Thomas Becket*, 17.
[147] Duggan, *Thomas Becket: Reputations*, 18.
[148] Duggan, *Thomas Becket: Reputations*, 23.
[149] FitzStephen, *The Life and Death of Thomas Becket*, 17.

to France, he took more than two-hundred horsemen with him, including knights, clerics, stewards, sergeants, and sons of nobles bearing arms in his service, and all splendidly attired.[150] Becket himself had twenty-four changes of dress, as well as silken cloths to be given away as presents to the court.[151] Yet, despite the extravagance, twelfth-century observer John of Salisbury noted that such "conspicuous display and the bestowal of valuable gifts" were essential to Medieval diplomacy.[152] However, Becket could have also received less criticism than his successor as a result of his regular public mortifications; both in London and Canterbury, Becket submitted himself to penitential whippings, usually administered by local priests.[153] Even with the tensions between his lavish displays and public piety, Henry determined that Becket would serve as archbishop in April 1161, following the death of Theobald. All seven of Becket's medieval chroniclers stressed the reluctance Becket felt in occupying the position; but apparently, his commitment to the king did not win out vis-a-vis his divided consciousness, as he eventually committed to serving in the high-powered ecclesiastical positon. [154]

Similar to Becket's hesitation, More, after a month of formally joining the court, confessed in a letter to John Fisher that he felt disillusioned, yet would try to "keep [his] place as precariously as an unaccustomed rider in [Henry's] saddle."[155] Until 1529, More only occupied a favored position in the king's council, generally holding very little influence over the affairs of the state. Though a seventeenth-century English archival disaster has placed stringent limitations on this study's ability to provide what More's duties entailed as councilor, early modern scholars have suggested varying tasks. Usefully, primary evidence does reveal

[150] FitzStephen, *The Life and Death of Thomas Becket*, 17.
[151] FitzStephen, *The Life and Death of Thomas Becket*, 17.
[152] Sailsbury, *The Life and Death of Thomas Becket*, 33.
[153] Duggan, *Thomas Becket: Reputations*, 23.
[154] Michael Staunton, *Thomas Becket and His Biographers* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2006), 19.
[155] Letter from More to John Fisher, *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters*, 18.

that of the fifty-two council sessions held in Wolsey's Star Chamber between More's return from Calais and Wolsey's fall, More attended thirteen.[156] Moreover, records suggest that More was personally involved in several of the swearing-in of sheriffs and justices of the peace, that he engaged in high policy debates with Wolsey and the duke of Norfolk regarding the king's feudal rights, and that he devised a project to contain vice and vagabondage in London.[157]

However, the duties of his secular role narrowed in June 1520, when Pope Leo published his *Exsurge Domine*, which officially excommunicated the German priest and theologian Martin Luther. Fully aware of the bull's significance, More crafted letters to humanist scholars Richard Pace, John Fisher, and Cuthbert Tunstall**,** urging them to undertake whatever means necessary to keep Lutheranism out of England.[158] The following May, More organized an official rebuttal to Luther's *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, gathering bishops, members of the king's Council, nobles, and Venetian imperial ambassadors at St. Paul's to devise a plan against the priest.[159] Guy claims that after refuting Luther, More began to alienate himself from both Wolsey and Henry, specifically by dropping "hints of disapproval" with the pair.[160] After a rigged trial against Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham—who was accused of plotting against the king and slandering Wolsey as "the king's bawd" for arranging the lying in of Henry's mistress Elizabeth Blount—the king sent More to pre-empt any popular uprisings, forcing him to threaten and arrest any protestors. So resonant was this of Richard III's tactics after he seized the throne in 1483, More found it deeply troubling, and stated so in correspondence.[161] As a result, More abandoned the gloriously vivid and dramatically

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[156] John Guy, "Wolsey's Star Chamber: A Study in Archival Reconstruction," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 5, no. 3 (1975), 169-80.
[157] Guy, "Wolsey's Star Chamber" 169-80.
[158] Guy, *A Daughter's Love*, 118.
[159] Guy, *A Daughter's Love*, 119.
[160] Guy, *Thomas More*, 27.
[161] Roper, *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, 23.

unfinished manuscript "History of King Richard III," which would later serve as the backbone of William Shakespeare's play.[162] Already, it seems, More was finding himself having to recast those sections of Part I of *Utopia* in which his namesake and Hythloday debate whether an honest man could both enter a king's service and keep his head on his shoulders.[163] Yet, for the next six years, More continued to serve Henry VIII; and in 1524, he was given the lucrative post of the under-treasurer of the exchequer, where soon conflict would arise when the Henry would request an annulment from Katherine, an unprecedented measure.[164]

As demonstrated above, in the early careers of Becket, Wolsey, and More, each man was able to similarly rise to prominence in the muddled realms of church and state. Specifically, for Becket and Wolsey, their kings' grant of unprecedented power allowed them to occupy an exceptional position of secular agency, respectively bypassing bureaucratic channels, disregarding annual financial accounts, and forging royal letters and signatures.[165] Still, while each man maintained a level of prominence in state affairs, Becket's hesitation to serve as cardinal, Wolsey's upcoming reach for the papacy, and More's admissions via *Utopia* all indicate the private divided consciousness in each man, soon to come to the fore.

III: Divided Consciousness, Church

English church and state relations frequently operated in harmony during both the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, as further demonstrated later in this section by Pope Alexander III's dependence on Henry's II support for his safety, and Henry VIII's efforts as Pope Leo X's "Defender of the Faith."[166] However, two major clashes of secular and ecclesiastical power—the twelfth century quarrel concerning church and state jurisdiction and the sixteenth century

[162] Guy, *A Daughter's Love*, 123.
[163] More, *Utopia,* 42.
[164] Guy, *Thomas More*, 27.
[165] FitzStephen, *The Life and Death of Thomas Becket*, 21; Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 23.
[166] Guy, *Thomas Becket*, 59; Guy, *Thomas More*, 42.

disagreement centered on the king's desire for an annulment of his marriage—forced all three Thomases to recognize that the church and state occupied separate spheres and align themselves with one over the other. After decades of living with their divided consciousnesses, these ecclesiastical roles unexpectedly provided unavoidable trials that would determine both the final years of their lives and legacies. The following section begins by exploring the Thomases various roles—formally held, or, in the case of Wolsey, simply aspirational—in the ecclesiastical realm during the last years of their lives: Becket as archbishop of Canterbury, Wolsey's two attempted reaches for the papacy, and More's limited time as lord chancellor. By comparing these crucial biographical moments, I reveal Becket and More's shared conscious resolutions to pursue the betterment of society through ecclesiastical means and, equally, Wolsey's resolve to serve the state.

The tone of Becket's final years as archbishop of Canterbury was determined by his unexpected and unprecedented appointment. Though his life ended in defense of the rights and privileges of the church, Becket—unlike almost all former occupiers of this position—never confirmed his dedication to the church as either a monk or canon regular.[167] Among the only exceptions to this tradition was Becket's predecessor, Theobald of Bec, who was instead a highly spiritual Norman ex-abbot.[168] Moreover, these precursors never held the role of chancellor nor had extensive experience in the secular realm.[169] Thus, the elevation of Thomas of London, whose highest position in the clerical hierarchy was the diaconate, and whose very public official life had been characterized by extravagant displays and unwavering devotions to royal interests, was considered a scandal among his ecclesiastical contemporaries.[170] To justify

[167] Barlow, *Thomas Becket*, 76.
[168] Barlow, *Thomas Becket,* 77.
[169] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 25.
[170] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 25.

his appointment as archbishop, some twelfth-century chroniclers like John of Salisbury suspected that a marvelous religious transformation overcame him, noting that "as soon as he was consecrated, he became a new man," however, this change was not as swift as indicated.[171] Becket initially maintained his role in the Chancery, and the daily routine of the chancellor did not mirror that of the archbishop. In fact, chronicler Edward Grim shares that Becket did not adopt the modest black robes of a cleric until the Canterbury monks had remonstrated him on numerous occasions for entering the choir in secular dress.[172] However, despite this hesitation to conform to his new role, Becket was undoubtedly aware of the popular conceptions among the cleric community; specifically, he knew that the idea of a single, high-ranking individual simultaneously serving the church and state was unbecoming.[173] His transition into the archbishop position coincided with a period of reform within the church, in which religious leaders intentionally strived to weaken secular pull within ecclesiastical affairs.[174] His friend, John of Salisbury, had recently written and published *Policraticus*, a book of political philosophy targeting royal control and exploitation of clerical appointments.[175] The text was dedicated to Becket, and Salisbury asserted throughout that kings should only employ civil servants who are separate from those who serve the Church.[176]

Thus, when Becket resigned the chancellorship later that year, the sudden change was likely unsurprising for his episcopal colleagues, however, for members of the king's court and

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[171] John of Salisbury, *Vita et Passio*, 332.
[172] Grim, Edward, "Grim's Life" in *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*, ed. Socii Bollandiani:, 2 vols. (Brussels: Subsidia Hagiographica, 1898–1901), 42; Anon I, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket: Archbishop of Canterbury*, Edited by J. B Sheppard (Great Britain: Kraus Reprint, 1965), 21.
[173] Du Boulay, *Lordship of Canterbury: Essay on Medieval Society* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), 52-63.
[174] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 27.
[175] Staunton, *Thomas Becket and His Biographers*, 34.
[176] Staunton, *Thomas Becket and His Biographers*, 34.

the king himself, his abdication translated as a demonstration of arrogance and ingratitude.[177] Ralph of Diss, the dean of St Paul's, reported that Henry II took the action as a personal affront, and said so on multiple occasions.[178] Prior to the abdication, the king had no reason to suspect that Becket, the chancellor-archbishop, would act differently than Becket, the chancellor-archdeacon, or take initiative beyond the royal agenda. While the cause of the king's frustration has been debated, I suggest that Henry's feeling of betrayal surfaced less because of the rumored friendship between the two, but rather because of the fundamental dynamic of a master and servant that the pair's relationship relied on.[179] Though the two almost certainly possessed some sort of comradeship, Becket's cession of secular authority also implied his rejection of meeting the king's future needs and demands, a role he had maintained for almost a decade. However, as Salisbury warned in *Policraticus*, had Becket continued his role as chancellor-archbishop, the first office would almost certainly absorb the second, with the king's interests serving as the overriding priority.[180] Therefore, while Becket almost certainly did not intend for his resignation of the chancellorship to indicate a final verdict concerning his divided consciousness, or signal a total alliance with the church, those were the consequences.

Like Becket before his appointment as archbishop, Wolsey, despite aspiring to the papacy, remained surprisingly indifferent to the power struggles within the Roman curia, and focused more on the English state. The cardinal had never visited the Holy City, and the only archbishop with whom he was acquainted was Lorenzo Campeggio.[181] Back in 1520, Emperor Charles V first suggested that he would back Wolsey's candidacy, and when Pope Leo X died

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[177] Radulfus Diceto, *Radulfi De Diceto Decani Lundoniensis Opera Historica: The Historical Works of Master Ralph De Diceto, Dean of London*, Edited by William Stubb (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1965), 307.
[178] Diceto, *De Diceto Decani Lundoniensis Opera Historica*, 307.
[179] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 45; Guy, *Thomas Becket*, 18.
[180] John of Sailsbury, *The Statesman's Book of John of Salisbury* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), 1167.
[181] Williams, *The Cardinal and the Secretary*, 44

in 1521, this offer became a point of interest for the king.[182] According to Cavendish, Henry was captivated by the idea of Wolsey as pope, as they were both conscious of the fact that there has been no English-born pope since Adrian IV in the twelfth century, who occupied the position at the beginning of Becket's career.[183] In the 1521 election, Wolsey's name was vigorously canvassed, though he made clear that he entered the election only in obedience to his King, alongside Cardinal Giulio de' Medici.[184] John Clerk, an English agent in Rome, wrote back to Wolsey following the announcements of the results, reporting that "I did not greatly labor before their entry into the conclave, because your Grace at my departing showed me precisely that you would never meddle therewith."[185] Clerk's letter, while written with a subservient tone, suggests the public's general cynicism on whether the cardinal would ever occupy this position. Though Wolsey reportedly received six votes, the letter maintains that his chances were ruined in part by his "non-clerical attitude," as well as Charles V not following through on his word, for it was the Emperor's old tutor Adrian of Utrecht who won the vote.[186]

Four years later, Adrian VI's death offered Wolsey a second opportunity, and once more he appeared to be somewhat forced into the election by his sovereign. Wolsey protested privately to English diplomat Richard Pace, commenting that he would rather end his days in the king's service, remaining in England, instead of "mine old days approaching, to enter into new things."[187] Yet, as Wolsey suggests, the king was adamant, commenting that "the mind and entire desire of His Highness, above all earthly things, is that I shall attain to the said

[182] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 36.
[183] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 36.
[184] Williams, *The Cardinal and the Secretary*, 44.
[185] Letter from Clerk to Wolsey, "Henry VIII: January 1522, 11-20," in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 3, 1519-1523*, ed. J S Brewer (London, 1867), 840-848.
[186] Letter from Clerk to Wolsey, "Henry VIII: January 1522, 11-20," 840-848.
[187] Letter from Clerk to Wolsey, "Henry VIII: January 1522, 11-20," 840-848.

dignity."[188] This admission seems to convey that Wolsey was forced both by his own clerical experience, and his complete dedication to the king. In the autumn of 1523, Wolsey moved rapidly, sending his agents to Clerk to recommend the him in forceful terms and specifically praise his diplomatic ability in securing "the final rest, peace and quiet" in international affairs through the Treaty of London.[189] Though energetic campaigning was again undertaken on Wolsey's behalf, his absence from Rome still counted against him. The election spanned almost a month, and while interim reports to London seemed to indicate a chance that Wolsey would be accepted as a compromise candidate, Clerk similarly wrote to Wolsey to share the results of Giulio di Giuliano de' Medici's win, adding only that "one thing we be right sure of, if your Grace were here present, ye should be as sure of it as ye be of York."[190] After the news reached Wolsey, the cardinal wrote a warm letter to the new pope as "his singular and especial lover and friend," and rejoiced in the election, stating "I am far more joyful thereof than if it had happened upon mine own person."[191] Both Wolsey's apparent disinterestedness in the papacy and his losses suggests that he was far more interested in state affairs, and only reached for the position as means to a secular end.

Conversely, Henry employed More's theological expertise for secular purposes. In September 1525, Henry commanded More contribute to the crown's sustained campaign against Luther, the rebel German friar who famously circulated ninety-five theses from Wittenberg to challenge papal authority.[192] The councilor complied, joining a small team of editors and ghost-writers to craft the king's formal refute of Luther, entitled *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*, or *A Defense of the Seven Sacraments*. After the completion of the book, Roper reports that More

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[188] Letter from Wolsey to Pace, "Henry VIII: January 1522, 11-20," 840-848
[189] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 33.
[190] Clerk to Wolsey, "Henry VIII: January 1523, 17-29," in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 3*, 1519-1523, ed. J S Brewer (London, 1867), 1171-1181.
[191] Wolsey to Medici, "Henry VIII: January 1523, 17-29," 1171-1181.
[192] Guy, *Thomas More*, 38.

quietly took Henry aside and asked if his defense of papal power was wise; however, Henry was deaf to the warning, and sent the Vatican a special copy of the book featuring a signed frontispiece of the king kneeling before the pope for a blessing.[193] Luther published a response to the king's *Assertio*, and once again More was requested to produce a rebuttal; his *Answer to Luther* was published in two separate editions and concentrated on the issue of authority in the church. Most notably, his response argued that the "common faith of Christendom" transcended the opinions of individuals, and that "the conscience" could not be informed simply by reading scripture, but required cultivation among the church.[194] More, through the king, was addressing his divided consciousness, and effectively arguing for his own need to align himself with the church over the state.

While More's opinions in these texts were specifically framed for Henry's needs, the councilor's concern for the greater good of Christendom soon became even more visibly apparent in March 1528, when Cuthbert Tunstal, the bishop of London, licensed him to possess and read illegal heretical writings to oppose them. To focus on the prohibited texts, More withdrew to his Chelsea home for more than a year. Importantly, this diversion was only possible because William Knight, a royal chaplain, had recently assumed the majority of Henry's duties as principal secretary, a move that marked a significant degradation for Wolsey.[195] More's time away produced his famous and deeply researched *Dialogue Concerning Heresies,* which served as his first official disapproval of heretics written independent from the king. The book centered on a supposedly real-life dialogue between More and an interlocutor known as "the Messenger"; the conversation between the two relies on the Messenger setting forth the principles of Lutheran belief, to which More responds by invalidating with either

[193] Roper, *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, 44.
[194] More, *The Essential Works of Thomas More*, 162.
[195] Guy, *Thomas More*, 38

historical or biblical evidence.[196] Employing the same literary structure as *Utopia*, this text explored and represented the complexities within the ecclesiastical side of his divided consciousness. The book addresses Luther's call for the church and clergy to be remodeled according to the gospel; More refutes by stating that Catholic tradition is preserved in the collective memory of the church, not the written word. Thus, More insists that the church's authority exists independent of the written word, as the "true Gospel of Christ was revealed long before [the Bible] was compiled."[197] Furthermore, the *Dialogue* also contains another important assertion, in which More advocates for the church to authorize a more accessible translation of the Bible, noting "I would not withhold the profit that one good devout unlearned layman might take by the reading [of it], not for the harm that a hundred heretics would fall in by their own willful abusion."[198] The components of this book, as well as More's efforts against Luther, demonstrate his ecclesiastical leanings, and indicate his belief that the betterment of society should stem from the church.

While More was able to discuss religious matters through his secular role, Becket, following his resignation from the chancellorship, was seen by Henry as an enemy of the state. In early 1163, Henry openly expressed to English subjects that Becket was no longer *persona grata* during a meeting between the two at Southampton, at which "[Becket] was admitted to the kiss of peace, but not into the fullness of grace, as the king publicly demonstrated to all who were present, by the manner in which he turned his countenance away from the archbishop."[199] This moment, as recorded by dean of St. Paul's and chronicler Ralph de Diceto, symbolized Becket as a political outcast. Later that year, monk Gilbert Foliot wrote to the new archbishop

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[196] More, Thomas, "A Dialogue Concerning Heresies" in *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More, V. 6,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), xxi.
[197] More, *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, 188.
[198] More, *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, 331.
[199] Diceto, *Radulfi De Diceto Decani Lundoniensis Opera Historica*, 308.

following his accession, stating that "a man of your prudence should have ensured that the disagreements arising between the kingdom and you did not grow so serious."[200] However, uncertainty remains concerning what specific disagreement Foliot was alluding to, as the first nine months of Becket's archbishop reign were occupied by a string of confrontations with secular authorities. While these disputes spanned concerns of feudal contumacy, patronage, and the handling of legal disputes, all represented both the loss of the king's grace and challenges to the new archbishop's jurisdiction over Canterbury.[201] Yet Becket and his colleagues soon began to realize the disruptive potential of Henry's secular reach; a concern perhaps best represented in Salisbury's letter to Becket in the following year, in which he urged that "no matter what the twisted mind of wicked men contrives against your honor, you should strive to obtain and keep the king's favor for yourself, because that is best for God's Church."[202]

The two-year tension between ecclesiastical and secular authorities eventually climaxed in the *cause celebre* case, centered on a disagreement regarding clerical immunity. The first accusation of the case was launched by chaplain Symphorian, who claimed that Archdeacon Osbert of Richmond had murdered the late archbishop William of York by poisoning the chalice at mass.[203] While Becket insisted that the case be tried in ecclesiastical courts as clerics by law maintained immunity from secular trial and punishment, Henry countered that the case's unique circumstances implicated the state's jurisdiction.[204] In an attempt to offer a concession, the archbishop proposed a double process in which the accused would be tried in an ecclesiastical court and, if convicted, degraded and transferred to a secular court for sentence

[200] Becket, *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket*, i, no. 109.
[201] Herbert of Bosham, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 266.
[202] Becket, *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket*, i, no. 29.
[203] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 32.
[204] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 32.

and punishment, but the king refused the plan.[205] Initially, Becket was not alone in opposing the Henry's authority, but quickly, bishops began to concede to his request for secular jurisdiction.[206] Becket's gradual lack of support for his double-process proposal likely stems from the king's appeals to the archbishop's ecclesiastical adversaries who disapproved of his former connections to the state**,** as he suggested that they challenged his authority; similarly, Henry attempted to dismiss any bishop who supported his old chancellor, as indicated by his letter to Pope Alexander III requesting that Roger of York be made papal legate for England.[207] The pope, who was then in exile in France as a consequence of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I's invasion, was in a precarious position to handle the matter. While Alexander supposedly advocated for clerical immunity, Henry's loyalty—upon which depended the allegiance of England, Normandy, and Anjou—was crucial to the maintenance of his safety and survival.[208] Thus, the pope sent correspondence and personal emissaries to the archbishop urging him to make peace. In one letter, he counseled Becket to "remember the scriptural saying, 'The apostles went forth from the sight of council rejoicing because they were found worthy to suffer insults for the name of Jesus.'"[209]

In late January 1164, the king summoned his council of nobles and bishops to Clarendon Palace for a two-day meeting of threat and intimidation in an effort to force his men into unanimity behind him. Henry presented the group with sixteen clauses, ten of which would severely limit the jurisdiction of the church by erasing proprietary rights and limiting the scope of episcopal courts and elections.[210] Henry created a chirograph—a written memorandum that

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[205] Herbert of Bosham, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 266.
[206] Herbert of Bosham, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 270.
[207] Anon I, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 29; Bosham, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 276-7.
[208] Herbert of Bosham, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 271.
[209] Becket, *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket*, i, no. 19.
[210] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 54.

contained the sixteen customs and a preamble declaring that the clauses were acknowledged by fourteen named members of the episcopate, who would "act in good faith and without any subterfuge"—on which Becket refused to append his seal, though he eventually acquiesced to pledge an informal oath.[211] While in Clarendon, Becket received a letter from the already exiled Salisbury, who warned the archbishop to "establish a closer friendship with the abbot of Pontigny, [...] as the abbey is ready to serve you even in temporal affairs if it should be necessary."[212] In August 1164, Becket was summoned to court in Northampton on charges brought against him by nobleman John the Marshal regarding confiscated lands. Though the case began with a focus on opposing land claims, Becket was soon tried on accusations of treason, fiscal maladministration of the state, and embezzlement. On the final day of the trial, Becket reportedly arrived wearing the pallium, the defining symbol of his office as primate, and was said to have performed the special mass used on St. Stephen's Day, to honor the first Christian martyr.[213] These actions, specifically, indicate the beginning of Becket's final years in which he engaged in self-crafting his own legacy. Similarly, this act, like his resignation from the chancellorship, demonstrated Becket's allegiance to the church. While no twelfth-century source specifically states Becket's sentence, almost all of his chroniclers agree that he was condemned to life imprisonment. Arrested the following day, Becket placed Salisbury's plan into immediate effect, and escaped with three trusted attendants to Gravelines, France.

Just as Becket's resignation of the chancellorship signaled him as an enemy of the king, Wolsey's efforts during the annulment crisis contributed to his growing public perception as a villain of the state. Writing four years after the cardinal's death, Polydore Vergil notes that "it came into [Wolsey's] head to change his Queen and find a new one, whom he wished to be like

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[211] Grim, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*, 279.
[212] Becket, *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket*, i, no. 88.
[213] Anon I, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 332.

him in conduct and character."[214] Vergil's religiously biased understanding of this event was, indeed, one popular understanding of how the "King's Great Matter" emerged.[215] However, according to Cavendish, when Wolsey first heard about the king's plans of seeking an annulment from Katherine of Aragon, he knelt before Henry in his privy chamber for over an hour, trying to persuade him to reverse them.[216] Despite this dramatic scene of servitude, Henry maintained his demand that the lord chancellor secure the divorce, and in a timely manner. Though Wolsey generally lacked interest in ecclesiastical affairs, and appeared to align with the secular side of his divided consciousness, the king's annulment provided him with a unique opportunity to employ his legatine powers as cardinal and appeal to his influence with the papal curia.

In May 1527, the cardinal established a secret legatine court at York House, sitting with Archbishop Warham, who long ago harbored doubts about the sufficiency of Pope Julius's 1503 bull that allowed Henry to marry his brother's widow.[217] The two devised a plan in which Wolsey would accuse the king of living openly in sin with Arthur's widow; however, the strategy was temporarily postponed when, on May 6, Charles V's Spanish and German troops mutinied and sacked the Holy City, causing the pope to flee to San Angelo.[218] Wolsey wrote to Henry in June with assurance, claiming that "Sir, if the Pope's Holiness fortune either to be slain or taken, it shall not a little hinder your Grace's affairs, which I have now in hand; wherein such good and substantial order and process hath hitherto been made and used."[219] As a result, Wolsey would have been forced to invoke an assembly of cardinals at Avignon, but instead,

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[214] Vergil, *The Anglica Historia*, 183.
[215] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 41.
[216] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 41.
[217] Williams, *The Cardinal and the Secretary*, 44.
[218] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 44.
[219] Letter from Wolsey to Henry, "Henry VIII: 1527,Volume 4," 1109.

Henry bypassed his chancellor and made a direct appeal to Pope Clement through William Knight, instead.[220]

In late 1527, Clement escaped from San Angelo, allowing Wolsey to send him a letter in which he explained Henry's aims, and requested an automatic confirmation of the legates' judgement. He also met with co-legate Lorenzo Campeggio to discuss the annulment, to which Campeggio disclosed that "there would speedily follow the complete ruin of the Kingdom, of his Right Reverend Lordship, and of the prestige of the Church throughout the Kingdom [if the king did not secure the judgment he desired]."[221] In mid-November, after the case was delayed several times, the Duke of Suffolk reportedly remarked to Wolsey "by the mass, now I see that the old said saw is true, that never cardinal or legate did good in England."[222] Cavendish reports that Wolsey calmly responded "sir, of all men in this realm, ye have least cause to dispraise or be offended with cardinals; for if I had not been, you should have had at present no head upon your shoulders."[223] This exchange indicates both a general sentiment of anticlericalism on behalf of Suffolk, as well as Wolsey's understanding of his past secular efforts as an ecclesiastical figure.

Henry retired to Greenwich and began communicating to Wolsey only through his secretary Stephen Gardiner, indicating his disapproval of the lord chancellor.[224] On October 9, Henry officially charged Wolsey of crime, to which he replied, "most gracious and merciful Sovereign Lord, I, your poor, heavy, and wretched priest do daily pursue, cry, and call upon Your Royal Majesty for grace, mercy, remission and pardon."[225] Whereas Becket, and later More, refused to confess guilt on the accusations of their respective kings, Wolsey did so

[220] Williams, *The Cardinal and the Secretary*, 44.
[221] Quotation from John Matusiak's *Wolsey: The Life of King Henry Viii's Cardinal*, 115.
[222] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 49.
[223] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 49.
[224] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 51.
[225] Letter from Wolsey to Henry, "Henry VIII: 1527, Volume 4," 1109.

immediately, indicating his continued dedication to the secular side of his divided consciousness.

In October 1529, after Henry dismissed Wolsey for his inability to secure the annulment, More was elevated to lord chancellor and chief minister.[226] Where Wolsey's blind dedication to the king had failed, perhaps Henry anticipated More's religious expertise would prevail. The newly appointed lord chancellor was sent to work with Edward Foxe, who had already commenced ghost-writing a book intended to justify Henry's divorce to the public. More read Foxe's manuscript, but was unconvinced, yet the king requested that he "look and consider [his] great matter" for a second time.[227] Recording the event to Thomas Cromwell, More confessed that he read "as far forth as my poor wit and learning served me," but to no avail.[228] The lord chancellor explained to the king that "to do him service [he would] have been more glad than of all such worldly commodities," however, he did not feel the divorce was legally nor religiously warranted.[229] Like Becket's confrontation with Henry II upon resigning the chancellorship, More could no longer maintain the divided consciousness as he once did while writing *Utopia*. By refusing to assist in the king's divorce proceedings, More had come to fully endorse Hythloday's position, and would become marginalized in the king's council as a result. Perhaps suspecting future turbulence, he wrote to Erasmus during this time, sharing that "the more I realize that this post involves the interests of the Christendom, my dearest Erasmus, the more I hope it all turns out successfully."[230]

In May 1530, More redirected his efforts back into the fight against heretics, and successfully chivied Henry into bringing print censorship under criminal jurisdiction of the

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[226] Roper, *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, 45.
[227] More, *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters*, 106.
[228] More, *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters*, 109.
[229] More, *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters*, 110.
[230] Erasmus, *The Correspondence of Erasmus,* VIII, 249.

royal court.[231] Over one-hundred titles were placed on an index of heretical books, chief amongst them Tyndale's translation of the New Testament, which More had previously rebuked in *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*.[232] Further, More continued to widen the scope of his jurisdiction as lord chancellor in the religious sphere, most notably by capturing and burning alive any subject suspected to be a heretic. For sixteenth-century biographers Roper and Harpsfield, this period in the lord chancellor's life was most difficult to square with his later status as a martyr; for to understand More as a spiritual saint requires an erasure of these secular, polemic moments that highlight his divided consciousness. In his account, Harpsfield records More's interaction with heretic George Constantine, who illegally imported Tyndale's books into England, and as a consequence was locked into the stocks at the More gatehouse in Chelsea.[233] Similarly, he trapped and jailed Lutheran lawyer James Bainham, who was overheard calling St Thomas Becket "a damnable traitor."[234] Harpsfield, whose account was later created with the intention of being sent to the pope, concluded that by straining in More's every nerve against heretics, "[he] believed he was serving God."[235] Despite Harpsfield's attempts at providing an ecclesiastical justification to these actions, More's comment to Erasmus suggests otherwise, he said: "I find that breed of men absolutely loathsome, so much so, that unless they regain their senses, I want to be as hateful to them as anyone can possibly be."[236] This confession conveys that More treatment of heretics was less about appeasing God, and instead more about terminating those who he found inconsistent with his own beliefs.

While all three men created international social networks through their secular positions, Becket's was forced to rely on his as the newly exiled archbishop. Following his escape, he

[231] Roper, *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, 45.
[232] Roper, *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, 46.
[233] Harpsfield, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More*, 62.
[234] Harpsfield, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More*, 62.
[235] Harpsfield, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More*, 62.
[236] More, *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters*, 117.

reached the papal court in Sens, France in early November 1164, where one day prior King Louis VII had received a letter from Henry announcing the archbishop's denunciation.[237] After discussing the matters of the case with Becket, the king decided to grant "peace and security" to him.[238] Herbert of Bosham reached Becket's new sanctuary later that month, and in his chronicle compares the archbishop to the biblical Joseph, who was betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery; he notes that "upon reaching France, we found Joseph was still alive, but ruled no longer over the land of Egypt; on the contrary he was oppressed by the Egyptians and well-nigh destroyed."[239] Though this serves as the second occurrence of a twelfth-century chronicler comparing Becket to a saint before his own martyrdom, it will not be the last.

Writing in a different account over fifteen years later, Bosham describes a number of events that transpired while in Sens; one, perhaps most notably, being a secret session between Becket and his cardinals during which the archbishop declared, "I willingly confess that these distresses have befallen the English Church through my wretched fault, [...] I was forcibly intruded by secular power, [...] it was the will of man and not the will of God which induced me to do so."[240] This frank acknowledgment, regardless if it was said by Becket or later fictionalized by his chroniclers, confirms that he was thrust into Canterbury by royal power, and asserts that the church and state were once compatible. At the end of his admission, Becket reportedly resigned his position as archbishop of Canterbury, to which the cardinals objected**,** arguing that "he is fighting for all of us."[241] This account demonstrates that Becket, though unknowingly, was already beginning to build his public base for martyrdom.

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[237] Anon I, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 58.
[238] Bosham, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 332.
[239] Bosham, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 339.
[240] FitzStephen, *The Life and Death of Thomas Becket*, 76; Bosham, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 343; Alan, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 232.
[241] Bosham, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 343.

Other than the developments as recorded by Bosham, little evidence exists regarding Becket's daily life at Potigny. For the next six years, he attempted to negotiate a peaceful return to England with Henry; and in the meantime, Henry sequestered the archbishop's local estates, deprived his clerks of income, and expelled all relatives of the archbishop from England.[242] Appreciating his king's refusal to cooperate, Becket consulted widely among well-placed friends and familiars, including Empress Matilda, Rotrou of Rouen, Gilbert Foliot, and Robert of Hereford.[243] From 1166-9, Becket's tone towards the king shifted as he began to threaten Henry with ecclesiastical punishments, and eventually excommunicated a number of advisers and clerical servants. More than a general instance to return to England and normalcy, Becket's acts seem to suggest that he understood the dispute to be an opportunity to showcase the church's power. Most of 1170 was spent with both Henry and Becket appealing to the pope, without avail; until eventually, Henry virtually withdrew England from papal obedience, ignoring the expected measures and traditions as determined by the church. Later that year, the coronation of Henry's son, Henry the Young King, sparked conversation after his father declared him titular king of England. The king's decision to have Roger of York complete the anointment rather than Becket served as a flagrant breach of papal prohibition, and allowed Becket to take action through the pope, obtaining papal censures against the delinquent prelates.[244]

Henry, fearing an interdict for England, finally agreed to meet Becket at Fréteval, France, and the two reconciled peacefully; both parties carefully avoided referring to matters that had caused the rupture, with the entire meeting taking place on horseback.[245] The most

[242] Duggan, *Thomas Becket: Reputations*, 97.
[243] Duggan, *Thomas Becket: Reputations*, 102.
[244] Bosham, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 345.
[245] Bosham, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 345.

detailed account of the event comes from a letter from Becket to Alexander III, in which the former confided that "[Henry] led us apart and spoke for a long time with such familiarity that it seemed there had never been any discord between us."[246] Though the meeting was constructive in tone, there was no real discussion of substantive issues, which were quick to arise once more after Becket returned.[247] Before leaving France, he sent some clerks, headed by Herbert of Bosham, to England to make all the necessary arrangements for his return. Their report back, though only three months after the Freteval meeting, was already worrisome, stating that "you would scarcely believe how much almost all those we have spoken to love your person and desire your return; but fear forces them to dissimulate and pretend that they do not love you."[248] After receiving this letter, Becket wrote to the king concerning the restorations of his estates, ending on an eerily prophetic note: "I had intended to return to your presence, my lord, but fate is drawing me to that afflicted Church, and by your license and grant I shall return to her to prevent her destruction"; "whether we live or die, and whatever happens to us and our, may God bless you and your children; may your highness always prosper, most serene lord."[249] This final letter to Henry seems to suggest that Becket had already accepted, or at least expected, his fate in England.

Despite these bad omens, Becket's return to his cathedral city was triumphant, as crowds gathered on the streets to greet him and the cathedral decorated as for a festival.[250] With public support on his side, the archbishop maintained his refusal to lift the excommunication on York, thereby impugning the coronation of Henry the Young King, and similarly suspending all bishops who had participated in the ceremony. To retaliate, Henry commanded four barons—

[246] Becket, *Correspondence*, ii, no. 300.
[247] Becket, *Correspondence*, ii, no. 300.
[248] Becket, *Correspondence*, ii, no. 331.
[249] Becket, *Correspondence*, ii, no. 320.
[250] Guy, *Thomas Becket*, 88.

Reginald FitzUrse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Morville and Richard Brito— to arrest Becket.[251] According to Salisbury, their original aim was not to kill, but rather to seize Becket and bring him back to stand some sort of trial in Normandy.[252] Once the barons left the court at Bur-le-Roi, their plan did not remain undercover to the public. The baron's demanded military support from the garrisons of Dover, Rochester, and Blenchingly castles, and stationed men around the small walled city of Canterbury to ensure there would be no civil unrest or attempt to rescue the archbishop once they had arrested him.

When the four men arrived at Canterbury Cathedral, they found Becket at the upper altar, accompanied by his clerks and senior monks. As the king's men approached the archbishop, FitzUrse yelled "where is Thomas Beketh, traitor to king and kingdom?" to which all the clerks responsively fled except Robert the Canon, William FitzStephan, and Edward Grim, and William of Canterbury.[253] In FitzStephan's account, he claims that had Becket so wished, he could have easily fled the scene during this moment, but chose not to.[254] In all accounts, the archbishop's calm presence and refusal to retaliate imply that the event was not only expected, but welcomed. As the king's barons approached Becket with their swords drawn, he stated, "here I am, no king's traitor, but a priest; why do you seek me?"[255] Rather than responding, FitzUrse lunged towards Becket, and though the sword was momentarily deflected by Grim's intervention, the archbishop was eventually struck. Because of Becket's body position, the majority of blows went to his head, and in less than twenty minutes, the archbishop was dead.[256] While modern biographers disagree on the specific details of the death, the

[251] Bosham, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 353.
[252] John of Salisbury, *Vita et Passio*, 332.
[253] John of Salisbury, *Vita et Passio*, 332.
[254] Fitzstephen, *The Life and Death of Thomas Becket*, 92.
[255] William of Canterbury, *Vita et Passio S. Thomae Martyris,* 9.
[256] William of Canterbury, *Vita et Passio S. Thomae Martyris,* 9.

combined accounts of the present chroniclers create a clear narrative of Becket as a heroic and spiritual victim.

Unlike Becket and More, Wolsey had little control regarding the circumstances of his death. In mid-October, Norfolk and Suffolk visited Wolsey's York House to demand that the cardinal surrender the great seal of England, but Wolsey refused, insisting they provide written authority.[257] The following day, the men returned again, but now with a mandate, forcing Wolsey to sign a document acknowledging that he had "vexed the prelates and others of the realm unlawfully," incurring the full vigor of the penalties of the Act of *Praemunire*.[258] As Wolsey boarded his barge for the last time at the privy stairs of York House, he found that great numbers of Londoners had turned out on the river in small boats or crowding the banks to see him depart. Some had certainly expected the barge to be going downstream, to the Tower, rather than upstream to his temporary lodgings in Putney. Recalling this incident, Cavendish commented that "I cannot but see that it is the inclination and natural disposition of Englishmen to desire change of men in authority- most of all where such men have administered justice impartially."[259] In Parliament, charges against Wolsey were drafted by a committee—of which More led—and included forty-six criminal articles. The cardinal was accused of infringing the liberties of the church by wrongfully making appointments to benefices, pillaging monastic foundations, depriving them of free elections and holding vexatious visitations, embezzlement, making treaties with foreign powers without proper authority, and claiming equality with the sovereign.[260] The articles were signed and presented to the King on the first of December, then sent to the House of Commons.

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[257] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 169.
[258] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 170.
[259] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 170.
[260] Williams, *Cardinal and the Secretary*, 129.

With the new year, Wolsey became seriously ill, and as soon as Henry learned how critical the cardinal's condition was, he sent gifts of favor, including furnishings, plates, and his personal ring, which had been a gift from Wolsey.[261] The cardinal recovered, and soon after received full royal pardon as well as restoration to the archbishop of York. Wolsey reportedly began to enter negotiations with both the emperor and the French king, hoping to secure a papal order if Henry and Anne Boleyn should separate.[262] In October, reports from Bologna of a papal brief prohibiting Henry's remarriage *pendente lite*, and ordering him to dismiss Anne Boleyn from court, had reached Henry; and consequently Wolsey was blamed. Two months later, William Walsh, a gentleman of the privy chamber, was sent from court to arrest Wolsey and formally take him into custody at Cawood on a charge of treason. Due to his sickness, the cardinal could not be transported to the Tower immediately, but instead stopped temporarily at Leicester Abbey, where a group of monks had assembled to greet him. There, he reportedly told the resident "Father Abbott, I am come hither to leave my bones among you."[263] Early the next morning, Wolsey made confession and, according to Cavendish, uttered his famous final lament, "I see the matter against me now it is framed; but if I had served God as diligently as I have done the King, He would not have given me over in my gray hairs."[264] While Becket and More's public deaths were recorded as heroic public triumphs against a tyrannical king, Wolsey's final hours were documented only by his gentleman-usher, and appeared to possess a tone of regret. This thesis argues that the "matter" Wolsey referred to was, beyond the annulment, potentially his divided consciousness and his past allegiance to the church he had abandon long ago.

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[261] Williams, *Cardinal and the Secretary*, 129.
[262] Williams, *Cardinal and the Secretary*, 129.
[263] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 174.
[264] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 178.

Much as Becket had before him, More recognized his inability to serve in the secular realm and resigned as lord chancellor in May 1532, a few hours after the bishops in Convocation yielded unconditionally to Henry.[265] Later that month, Henry's marriage to Katherine was annulled, and Anne, though heavily pregnant, was given a magnificent coronation with festivities lasting for five days.[266] During the week of the coronation, More, seeming to predict what was to come, wrote to Erasmus, "God give us grace that these matters within a while not be confirmed with oaths."[267] In April 1533, the same month that Parliament passed the Act in Restraint of Appeals to Rome, More published his *Apology*, swiftly followed by the *Debellation of Salem and Bizance***.** Although the latter text was couched as fictional, both books were unabashedly political, and operated as More preemptively defending himself against Henry. In the *Apology*, More advises "every good Christian man and woman to stand by the old, without the contrary change of any point of our old belief for anything brought up for new;" he argues that the people should "stand to the well-known belief of the common-known Catholic Church of all Christian people, such faith as by yourself have known to be believed."[268] The following year, Cromwell pushed the Act of Succession through Parliament, which settled the inheritance of the crown on Anne's children, and denial of the act was punishable with life imprisonment if refused.[269]

Summoned before royal commissioners at Lambeth on 13 April, More carefully read both the wording of the oath and the Act for as long as an hour, and eventually refused to swear. While secular authorities warned him that refusing would place him at war with the "great council of the realm," he answered by invoking the higher authority of the General Council of

[265] Roper, *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, 49.
[266] Roper, *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, 49.
[267] Roper, *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, 57.
[268] Thomas More, "The Apology*"* in *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Vol. 9* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1533), 158.
[269] Guy, *Thomas More*, 40.

the Church, and publically aligned himself with the ecclesiastical realm.[270] More, after rejecting the oath twice more, was sent to the Tower for a little over a year. Cromwell allowed Margaret to visit her father during the first seven months of his incarceration, hoping that she might persuade him to change his mind. His daughter quickly discovered means through which to send her father books and paper, temporarily allowing him to write letters to friends and family, as well his manuscript of *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*. But because of the smuggling, Margaret's Tower visits were eventually restricted in November 1534, and her father's health deteriorated rapidly as a result. On 17 November, Parliament recognized Henry as "Supreme Head of the Church of England," and a new Treason Act made speaking against the royal family a capital offense. Henry sent Cromwell to persuade More to take the new oath to the title, yet More refused, adding that the act was "like unto a sword with two edges, for if I say that the same law were good, then it is dangerous to the soul, and if I say contrary to the said statute, then it is death to the body."[271] Eight months later, More was put on trial and there he declared that the Act of Supremacy was "directly repugnant" to God's law and the beliefs of the Catholic church.[272] Sure that the accused would not concede, the court sentenced More to death, and despite the official court transcript, which dictated a very lengthy and violent process of hanging and disembowelment, More was instead decapitated.[273] Reportedly, his final comment before execution was "I die the king's good servant but God's first."[274] Again, much like his predecessor Becket, though More's life had concluded, his legacy as a heroic spiritual figure was just beginning.

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[270] Roper, *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, 57.
[271] *National Archives*, sp 2/r, fo 20; "Letters and Papers of Henry VII", viii, no 814.
[272] Harpsfield, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More*, 78.
[273] Guy, *Thomas More*, 42.
[274] "The Paris Newsletter" in Nicholas Harpfield's *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1540-5), appendix 3, 266.

This section has examined the periods of Becket, Wolsey, and More's life during which Henry II and Henry VIII respectively dissented from ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and as a result forced each man to publically acknowledge and confront his divided consciousness. While Becket's alliance to the church appeared to be forced by twelfth-century circumstances, both Wolsey and More seem to have decidedly commited themselves to either the secular or ecclesiastical realm. Moreover, I argue that Becket and More had acquired an awareness of their upcoming fates that Wolsey did not, and as a result were able to begin self-crafting their legacies as spiritual figures before passing.

IV: Martyrdom and Canonization

While Becket, More, and Wolsey's deaths each began with an accusation of high treason from Henry II or Henry VIII, the posthumous image of each man differs significantly. For each Thomas, immediate public reaction and response, treatment of their physical body, and their respective king's actions following their death directly contributed to the formation of their legacy as either a spiritual saint or secular villain. Like two sides of the divided consciousness, the spiritual saint and secular villain representations constitute the two sides of church and state, but in essentialized and generalized terms. This section traces the early afterlife of each man, and compares how speedily Becket and More's cases for martyrdom were pursued, while Wolsey's was quickly disregarded. Through this comparative analysis, I find that for both Becket and More, the existence of a sustained group of supporters with ecclesiastical leverage was essential in securing their canonizations and posthumous representations as saints; and as a result of Wolsey's lack of campaigners, his image was left to the secular realm, where his both his name and reputation was tarnished.

Though Becket came from relatively humble origins, by the conclusion of his career, he was personally known to Pope Alexander III, King Louis of France, and smattering of influential bishops across Europe, making his murder more than the regrettable death of an English bishop, but a brutal slaying of a well-known figure in a public and sacred space. Unlike in Wolsey and More's deaths, those present at Becket's murder immediately began caring for his body, as there was a rumor that the king's supporters would attempt to steal or dismantle the corpse.[275] According to FitzStephen, after chaplain Robert of Merton began caring for the body, he discovered a hair shirt and monastic habit concealed beneath the archbishop's black robes, further proving his loyalty for the church.[276] The authorities of the cathedral summoned two monks, Walter Landor, Abbot of Boxley, and Richard FitzRoy, Prior of Dover, from France to supervise the burial and perform the necessary proceedings for a saint, such as placing the body in a bier and depositing it before the high altar.[277] Already within twenty-four hours of his death, the slain archbishop's legacy was being carefully shaped by the ecclesiastical forces around him.

According to bystander and later chronicler Grim, the bishops decided there should be no public funeral or mourning, as all the preventative measures set up by Henry's men to thwart Becket's escape still remained in place, leaving Canterbury effectively sealed off from the rest of the country.[278] Once Walter and Richard arrived, they removed Becket's bloodstained outer garments and distributed them to bystanders passing by the cathedral.[279] This act both indicated the significance of the death, and contributed to the formation of St. Becket's cult. While twelfth-century Europe obviously lacked modern, or even sixteenth-century, means of

[275] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 214.
[276] FitzStephen, *Vita S. Thomae*, 138.
[277] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 214.
[278] Grim, *Vita S. Thomae*, 34.
[279] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 219.

information diffusion, a shared common religious culture and remarkably effective network of communication linked the Latin Church with various commercial regions including Scandinavia, Germany, France, Spain, and Italy, allowing news to travel quickly across Europe.[280] The archbishop's body was buried in his archiepiscopal vestments, the same outfit he wore on the day of his consecration in 1162, and placed in a crypt located between the altars of St John the Baptist and St Augustine of Canterbury.[281] This burial process served to translate a specific and direct message to the public: Becket would be treated as a saint regardless of papal approval. Though Becket allegiance between church and state may have appeared ambiguous in life, his chroniclers and ecclesiastical peers supervised the aftermath of his murder with the intent of burying him as a martyr.

Within the first few years following his death, Becket received more literary coverage from his contemporaries than any other medieval figure.[282] This mass consideration likely occurred as a result of living during a time when historical writing in England reached an apogee in the Middle Ages, but also because of the violent conclusion to his life.[283] For both Becket and More, their lives concluded with a physical demonstration of the state permanently silencing them, and by extension, their defiant lifestyles. Medieval men and women did not differ from their sixteenth-century counterparts in their appetite for the gory details of a violent or tragic death. Luckily, there was a spectrum of participants present at the murder who were prepared to write what they had witnessed. In particular, ten contemporary biographers are primarily responsible for crafting Becket's legacy and his quick canonization; four of them completed their accounts within four years of Becket's death, and another six within the next

[280] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 225.
[281] Grim, *Vita S. Thomae*, 39.
[282] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 225.
[283] Grim, *Vita S. Thomae*, 5.

two. These authors were both secular clergy (John of Salisbury, Grim, William FitzStephen, Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence, Herbert of Bosham, and possibly Anonymous I) and Canterbury monks (William of Canterbury, Benedict of Peterborough, Alan of Tewkesbury, and Robert of Cricklade). These accounts were widely read and spread across the continent, suggesting that there existed a community eager to embrace the cause of the murdered archbishop.[284] While the king sought to reduce diplomatic fallout, Becket's household, associates, and admirers made the best of the opportunity to exploit his death and call for royal vengeance.

Just as the large representation of ecclesiastical monks and bishops present at Becket's murder played a necessary role in generating his case for canonization, the few individuals at Wolsey's death, with the exception his gentleman-usher, equally contributed to the lack of creation of a martyrdom narrative. A few weeks following Wolsey's death, Cavendish visited the English court to inform both Henry VIII and Sir William Kingston about the cardinal's final hours; and, according to his account, both men urged him "to be circumspect in sharing [his] memories."[285] Cavendish reported that Kingston admonished him not to share too many details about what had transpired in Wolsey's sickroom, stating "you shall be examined for the certain words your late master said at his departure, and if you tell them the truth of what he said, you should do yourself in."[286] While modern scholar have dissented over the root of Henry and Kingston's fears, the latter's comment indicates they feared Wolsey's final words against the king would inspire secular defiance among the public. Cavendish complied with the men's request, and told the Privy Council that his focus on Wolsey's medical needs overshadowed any final words he might have said. As a result, the gentleman-usher's silence was rewarded with

[284] Grim, *Vita S. Thomae*, 39.
[285] Cavendish, *Life and Death,* 36.
[286] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 36.

£30, six horses, and a baggage cart, allowing him to retire from court to his family's Suffolk estates.[287] Unlike Becket's death where Walter and Richard were able to determine the treatment of the corpse and the circumstances of the burial, Cavendish's lack of political authority, if his account is assumed to be true, eradicated a meaningful account of the cardinal's death from the historical record. Had more people been present at the death, or had Cavendish possessed more political security, perhaps Wolsey's final hours would be remembered differently.

The former gentleman-usher did not begin crafting his biography *Life of Wolsey* until the reign of Mary I, as her Catholic governance provided him with a safe environment to produce his work. As a result of Cavendish's delay, Wolsey's opponents lost no time in advancing critical assessments of his life and legacy. In particular, Anne Boleyn's father, the Earl of Wiltshire Thomas Boleyn, who once understood the cardinal as an obstacle to overcome, within one year of Wolsey's passing created and staged a play mocking his memory.[288] In January 1531, ambassador Eustace Chapuys reported to his superior, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, that "the earl of Wiltshire invited [me] to supper Monsieur de la Guiche, for whose amusement he caused to be acted a farce of the late Cardinal going down to Hell."[289] While no full transcript of the play has survived today, this letter suggests the high-status publicity the play likely received. However, this attempt at discrediting Wolsey did not begin only after his death, as Wiltshire— among many other protestants— had started a campaign against the cardinal in the early 1520s, only intensifying as Henry's annulment proceedings continued.[290] For

[287] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 36.
[288] Patrick Hornbeck, *Remembering Wolsey: A History of Commemorations and Representations* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 12.
[289] Bergenroth, de Gayangos, eds. *Calendar of Letters*, vols 4.2, no 615.
[290] Williams,*Cardinal and the Secretary*, 222.

protestants, Wolsey during his last years came to represent the image of a secular villain who stood in the way of a new Henrican age.

Yet, while the majority of anti-Wolsey propaganda before his death was written by protestants seeking to directly affect English policy, later representations of the cardinal aimed at different ends and were produced by authors from across England's religious spectrum. In fact, one of the most negative treatments was the third edition of *Anglica Historia*, published in 1555 by the Catholic Italian scholar and diplomat Polydore Vergil. In the early sixteenth-century, Wolsey imprisoned Vergil in the Tower of London after he reportedly wrote an indiscreet letter against the cardinal, and his later account of the cardinal employs every opportunity to slight him.[291] In this chronicle of the Tudor reign, Vergil reports that as Wolsey rose in Henry's service, he remained "hated, not only on account of his arrogance and his low reputation for integrity, but also on account of his recent origin."[292] Thus, Wolsey's lack of coverage following his death allowed his critics from various backgrounds to shape his historical legacy as a secular villain, framing him primarily as an outdated and vile statesman.

Though More's death was witnessed in public by a significant group of supporters ready to rally to his cause, broader political and religious circumstances prevented him from receiving the immediate saint-like treatment that Becket had. Within the first few weeks following his death, Henry VIII began to publicly declare that More had betrayed him, and that any person who supported him would be tried in court as an enemy of the state.[293] As proof of his foe's treachery, Henry claimed he possessed copies of More's letters from the Tower "in charcoal and chalk when ink was not to be found" that made evident how More and Fisher had both plotted

[291] Williams, *Cardinal and the Secretary*, 222.
[292] Vergil, *Anglica Historia*, 225.
[293] Guy, *Thomas More*, 79.

against the state.[294] The first tentative steps to disprove Henry's claims were taken by More's eldest daughter Margaret, before she died in 1544.[295] Together, she and More's eldest nephew, the printer William Rastell, worked together to compile a collected edition of More's writings and letters, with the intent of "allowing [his] own words to speak for themselves."[296] Margaret employed her father's former secretary, John Harris, who made copies and translations, in some cases from memory, of as many of More's letters and manuscripts as he could track down.[297] When Henry died in 1547, and was succeeded by the nine-year-old Edward, his son by third wife Jane Seymour, conditions deteriorated exceedingly for Margaret, Rastell, and Harris. After the Anglican Thomas Cranmer took control of Edward's religious policy and parliament approved his proposals for a full implementation of protestantism, More's supporters fled into exile in Leuven and Douai.[298]

Not until the staunchly Catholic Mary Tudor took the throne as Mary I and replaced Cranmer with Reginald Pole did More's supporters return to England. With the queen's new reinstatement of Catholicism, Rastell was able to safely arrange for More's *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation* to be printed; and together he and Margaret published a few hundred copies of the fictional work to test the market.[299] Rastell's champion, the man who made the publication possible, was Pole, whose spiritual vision and understanding of the Reformation framed More as an intellectual who could restore the Catholic faith.[300] Uniquely, while the public praised More during Mary's reign as a posthumous champion of Catholic faith, Wolsey remained generally disfavored in both fictional pieces and historical scholarship. In 1557, *The*

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[294] *State Papers During the Reign of Henry VIII*, 11, Vols, Record Commission (London: Record Commission, 180-52), vii, 633-6.
[295] Guy, *Daughter's Love*, 113.
[296] More, *Works*, xxi.
[297] Guy, *A Daughter's Love*, 114.
[298] Guy, *Daughter's Love*, 113.
[299] Guy, *Thomas More*, 83.
[300] Guy, *Thomas More*, 79.

Works of Sir Thomas More, Knight, Sometime Lord Chancellor of England, Written by him in the English Tongue was published, running 1,4458 densely packed pages, complete with a dedicatory epistle from Rastell to Queen Mary.[301] This first edition included most of More's early English writings against heresy and concluded with his writings from the Tower.

In retrospect, the most valuable and influential component of Rastell's first edition was one letter in particular, written in the summer of 1534 before Cromwell barred Margaret from visiting her father. Modern scholars have hypothesized that More and his daughter wrote the letter together, drawing on their combined ingenuity to publically justify why More rejected Henry's oath.[302] The letter reads as a dialogue between the two, and perhaps serves as a dramatic rendering of what their exchange would have sounded like if Margret attempted to convince her father to take the oath. Throughout the letter, "conscience" is the key word repeated over forty times.[303] More comments that "no one can be bound upon pain of God's displeasure to change his own conscience [...] or be compelled to swear on oath[,] the local law of a nation is valid standing his own conscience to the contrary."[304] Through this letter, More and Margaret were able to create a final, definitive statement regarding his divided consciousness, which both scholars and non-scholar shave drawn from. While both Becket and Wolsey were able to accomplish a degree of this sort of self-crafted legacy during their lives, only More, with the assistance of his daughter and Rastell, was able to play such a crucial role in determining his own historical future.

Becket's death, more than Wolsey or More, was largely shaped by public awareness; and as the news of his demise began to spread throughout the country and continent, stories of

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[301] More, *Works*, xxi.
[302] More, *Works*, 162.
[303] More, *Correspondence,* 514.
[304] More, *Correspondence*, 514.

miraculous cures emerged.[305] The few Canterbury subjects who had scraped up blood or acquired a strip of fabric from the dead bishop's clothing suddenly found themselves in possession of valuable relics.[306] According to FitzStephen, one of the first reported miracles came from a Canterbury laymen who had been present in the cathedral during the time of Becket's murder; the man reportedly dipped his shirt in the blood of the dead archbishop, and after three days of rubbing the blood on his paralyzed wife, she regained motion in her legs.[307] Similarly, a mute London priest who was allegedly admitted into the crypt the day after Becket died obtained a tincture of the archbishop's blood, and after one day, reported his restored power of speech.[308] However, of the fifteen cures reported during the first three days following Becket's death, almost all occurred outside of Canterbury, and ten outside of England, suggesting wide-awareness.[309] Thus, the twelfth-century public was not only aware of Becket's death, but seemed to immediately support the image of him as a spiritual saint.

Moreover, most of these reports were accompanied by a quotation from the works of John of Salisbury, Benedict of Peterborough, William of Canterbury and Alan of Tewksbury, indicating the role his biographers appeared to have played in the appropriation and promotion of his newfound cult.[310] His biographers not only framed the late archbishop as a martyr, but suggested that blame should be placed on the state. Thus, his biographers began to posthumously employ the trope of the spiritual saint and secular villain, as they framed the two as antithetical in the event of Becket's death. Herbert of Bosham created one of the first written formulations of Becket's image as a martyr, writing to the Archbishop William of Sens in February of 1771, he condemns the machinations of "that most infamous man [Henry II], not so

[305] FitzStephen, *Vita S. Thomae*, 144-9.
[306] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 225.
[307] Guy, *Thomas Becket*, 67.
[308] FitzStephen, *Vita S. Thomae*, 150.
[309] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 219.
[310] FitzStephen, *Vita S. Thomae*, 150.

much the king of the English as enemy of the angels."[311] He continues that "Thomas stands as Christ's unique champion, God's anointed, as he resisted the demands of the knights for absolution of the bishops and, through God's dispensation, freely offered himself as a peace offering to God."[312] One week later, Louis VII amplified the sentiment, as he noted in a letter to a bishop that "evil has risen up in God's sanctuary, […] Thomas is the martyr of Canterbury, whose blood cries out for vengeance, not for itself but for the whole Church."[313] The letter ends with the king questioning whether Canterbury Cathedral made the correct decision in honoring Becket as a martyr without consulting the pope, and concludes that "it is better to stand by the will of God and revere as a martyr the man whom He has already honored as a martyr."[314] These letters, dating less than five months after Becket's death, point to the general image prevailing in folk memory of the archbishop as a martyr not only in England, but across Europe.

In February 1172, Odo, the prior of Canterbury, sent a deputation of monks to Pope Alexander III with a formal petition for the canonization of "Thomas, once archbishop of Canterbury, who […] accepting the supreme penalty in defense of the Church's liberty, attained the crown of martyrdom."[315] In the stream of canonization letters issued throughout March and April 1173, there exists a multitude of evidence of Becket's miracles presented by both his legates and others such as John of Salisbury and Grim.[316] Within a year, Alexander was reportedly convinced of the veracity of miracles being performed through Becket's merit, and, without hesitation, proceeded to solemnly canonize the saint and order the annual celebration of his birthday.[317] Becket's quick association with miracles is essential to note as these acts would

[311] Anne Duggan, *Thomas Becket: A Textual History of His Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 322.
[312] Barlow, *Thomas Becket*, 189.
[313] FitzStephen, *Vita S. Thomae*, 150.
[314] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 217.
[315] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 217.
[316] Guy, *Thomas Becket,* 32.
[317] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 230.

later prove troubling during More's canonization process. In May of 1173, Alexander sent a bull to the English clergy officially canonizing Becket, declaring that "England is perfumed by the virtue of the manifestations which Almighty God is working through the merits of the holy Thomas, formerly archbishop of Canterbury; […] a saint whose laudable life shone with great renown […] and was finally crowned by the martyrdom of a glorious struggle."[318] Alexander's letter repeated verbatim the phrase "marvelous and glorious in his saints," which had been used continuously by John of Salisbury in his biography of Becket, suggesting once again the crucial role of his chroniclers in crafting this image of a spiritual saint.[319]

The news of Becket's martyrdom reached King Henry in the first week in January 1171, while he was temporarily stationed at Argentan in Normandy.[320] According to Herbert, the king grieved for forty days and fasted for a week after he learned of the archbishop's death.[321] However, in February of that same year, Henry arranged for Arnulf of Lisieux to send a defensive letter to Pope Alexander, stressing his extraordinary demonstrations of grief and innocence.[322] Essentially, the letter placed the blame for Becket's death on the archbishop himself, stating that he returned to England from exile "bearing not the joy of peace but fire and sword […] raising questions against my kingdom and my crown."[323] The king sought to avoid any association with the archbishop's death, but the widespread, if not universal, perspective that he was morally responsible for the tragedy prevailed.[324] Thus, Henry was eventually forced to recognize a degree of culpability he had initially denied, and began to seek penance publicly, an act that Henry VIII would never carry out. While few of Becket's biographers dared to

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[318] Guy, *Thomas Becket*, 32.
[319] Guy, *Thomas Becket,* 32.
[320] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 230.
[321] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 231.
[322] Guy, *Thomas Becket,* 56.
[323] Guy, *Thomas Becket,* 56.
[324] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 221

accuse the king of Becket's death during his lifetime, they covertly issued coded signals in their text that he was responsible. For example, John of Salisbury suggests that the rebellion of 1173-74 was God's punishment for "the death of a saint in Canterbury."[325] Similarly, William FitzStephen recorded that a member of the royal house confessed to a priest, Richard Halliwella, that he had "with his own hands" sealed the document ordering the archbishop's death which was sent into England.[326] These comments from biographers likely pushed the king to perform a penitential pilgrimage to the tomb, beginning in June 1174, and for the remainder of his life, visit the shrine on all his future returns to England.[327] Even if these actions were motivated purely by political calculation, they are remarkable demonstrations of the power of Becket's assumed martyrdom and sainthood within the first few years of his murder. The king's penance suggests, at least in this case, that Becket's permanent posthumous depiction as a secular saint forced Henry to equally demonstrate his dedication to the church, or else run the risk of being amounted to a secular villain.

While Becket and More's reputations increasingly became more associated with sainthood overtime, though not equally, Wolsey's legacy progressively departed from any associations of martyrdom. After the first twenty years following his death, two accounts—Edward Hall's 1548 *Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York*, more commonly known as *Hall's Chronicle,* and 1563 John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*—functioned as the main representations of the late cardinal.[328] Hall, who formally served as a lawyer in the House of Commons during the Reformation Parliament, represented Wolsey as the king's alter

[325] John of Salisbury, *Vita et Passio*, 332.
[326] FitzStephen, *Vita S. Thomae*, 144-9.
[327] Anne Duggan, "Diplomacy, Status, and Conscience," 266, 288-90.
[328] Hornbeck, *Remembering Wolsey*, 18.

ego, ruined by his uncontrollable arrogance.[329] Foxe's account, however, differs from Hall's by depicting Wolsey as the antithesis of a martyr, employing religious and hagiographic rhetoric to frame his death.[330] Though the account claims that the cardinal's existence was "not of great pertinence unto history, nor greatly requisite in these so weighty matters," ignoring both his dismal and exile from court, the text compares Wolsey's death to that of Stephen Gardiner, another episcopal villain.[331] For both men, Foxe represents their deaths as evidence of divine judgment for the poor conduct their lives, suggesting that they acted against God's will. Similarly, Foxe makes clear that his representation of Wolsey serves the overall purpose of his book, namely to contrast the churches of Christ and Antichrist, the latter which the cardinal symbolizes.

However, perhaps most useful is the author's description of Wolsey's body after death, which he details as "black as pitch, also so heavy that it could scare bears. Furthermore, it did so stink about the ground, that they were constrained to hasten the burial thereof in the night season, before it was day. At the burial, such a stench arose that all the torches went out, and so he was thrown into the tomb, and there he laid."[332] In comparison to Becket's body, which the chroniclers describe as being regarded with such specific care, Foxe's account of Wolsey's body becomes noticeably violent. Moreover, many of the details Foxe relates draw consciously on the tropes of medieval hagiography; the cardinal's "dark" and malodorous corpse constitutes the antithesis of saintly bodies like those of the virgin martyrs, which remained intact long after death. The remains of other saints, like Becket, were even said to smell of roses.[333] Thus, Foxe

[329] Hall, fol. lxiiir.
[330] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 470.
[331] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 471.
[332] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 474.
[333] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 470; FitzStephen, *Vita S. Thomae*, 149.

deploys this description of Wolsey's body to associate the figure, both in life and death, with the opposite of spiritual sanctity.

Where Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* worked to discredit Wolsey's memory, More's own *Utopia* significantly helped propel dialogue regarding the author's potential canonization. In 1551, the protestant Abraham Veale, who later collaborated with John Day and served as Foxe's printer, published a bestselling translation of *Utopia* by Ralph Robinson, which dominated the English market until the mid-1960s.[334] Robinson dedicated the first edition of his translation to Sir William Cecil, a privy councillor and later chief minister to Queen Elizabeth I, who stood at the hub of a Cambridge-trained protestant network that would come to control the political scene for the next fifty years.[335] Still, in Mary's reign, More's books like *Dialogue Concerning Heresies, Apology,* and *Debellation of Salem and Bizance* took on a fresh, immediate relevance, as Mary and Pole had revived and enforced the heresy laws which he was criticized for during his own lifetime.[336] It was in the context of Mary's reign that the campaign to secure More's recognition as a Catholic martyr began. Pole asked Nicholas Harpsfield, his right-hand man and chief heresy-hunter, to write More's official biography.[337] Since, however, Harpsfield was studying at Oxford in 1535 when More was executed, he secured assistance from William Rastell and William Roper as primary sources.[338] Rastell had already started writing a life of his uncle, although only fragments of the text have survived; Roper, widower of More's daughter Margaret, similarly began putting his testimony on record, claiming that it constituted "no more than notes to show that [his father-in-law] had been accounted a man worthy [of] perpetual

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[334] Guy, *A Daughter's Love*, 155.
[335] Guy, *A Daughter's Love*, 113.
[336] Guy, *A Daughter's Love*, 113.
[337] Harpsfield, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More*, xi.
[338] Harpsfield, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More*, xi.

famous memory."[339] Harpfield's life included not only the texts created by Rastell and Roper, but also the works of Erasmus and reports from More's trial.[340] Writing with an eye firmly fixed on the Vatican, Harpsfield concluded that More had been martyred for a cause "which touched religion and the whole faith."[341] Astonishingly for a Catholic, the account also ranked More as a worthier candidate for canonization than Becket, on the grounds that the latter had merely defended the "narrow jurisdictional claims of the papacy" while More's death possessed the universal meaning for the church.[342]

However, when Elizabeth took the throne in 1558, much of this progress was stalled as she stripped Harpfield of his posts after refusing the new queen's oath of supremacy and sent him to Fleet Prison, where he was kept in solitary confinement until a year before his death.[343] Elizabeth's reign brought with it a protestant religious settlement that significantly departed from her Catholic sisters, and featured a plethora of new texts that discredited More. Most notable among them was Foxe's *Whole Works*, which labeled the former lord chancellor as a "liar," "lying papist," and "maliciously blind writer who blasphemeth God."[344] Thus, whereas Becket's early legacy benefited from, and Wolsey's transcended, the political circumstances of the twelfth and sixteenth-centuries, More's historical reputation was deeply embedded in the contemporary religious sentiment. In the end, More's own religious texts positioned him as, to borrow from Reformation historian Peter Marshall's term, an "ideological football;" as

[339] Harpsfield, *Life and Death* , xii.
[340] Harpsfield, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More*, xii.
[341] Harpsfield, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More*, 32.
[342] Harpsfield, *Life and Death*, 37.
[343] Harpsfield, *Life and Death*, xii.
[344] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 19-45.

Catholics would depict and yield More's image as a means to buttressed their own preconceived cause.[345]

Despite the formal return of protestantism, the effort to promote More's cause was reignited in the 1580s, when Thomas Stapleton, a Catholic exile and priest, began his own biography of the figure. The biography evolved primarily from one of his past sermons, and the piece served as the concluding section of a trilogy entitled *Tres Thomae*, or *Three Thomases*, which covered the lives of St Thomas the Apostle, Becket, and now More.[346] Stapleton argued that while More was unquestionably a hero of conscience, he was also, like Thomas the Apostle and Becket, a "victim of unjust law."[347] Moreover, he argued that More never condemned Henry's oath nor the Act of Supremacy, but rather "merely kept silence for conscience sake."[348] In 1684, Gilbert Burnet, bishop of Salisbury, published a new translation of *Utopia* that rehabilitated More's reputation in Protestant circles, notably by reimagining Hythloday's account of Utopian religion.[349] Burnet's translation reinterpreted More as a Protestant "avant la lettre," who called for radical reform of the Church and clergy ahead of Henry's break with Rome.[350] He noted that while More possessed "popery habits," he was nonetheless "the best man of the popish side in that age."[351] While Burnet's translation failed to oust Robinson's from the top market position, the text assimilated More to mainstream Anglicanism, and reinvigorated his reputation. More's canonization cause was largely forgotten until after Catholic Emancipation in 1829, when Pope Pius IX restored the Catholic Church's hierarchy,

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[345] Peter Marshall, "Lollards and Protestants Revisited," in Wycliffite Controversies, ed. Mishtooni Bose and J. Patrick Hornbeck II (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 315.
[346] Stapleton, *Life and Illustrious Martyrdom,* 44.
[347] Stapleton, *Tres Thomae*, xi.
[348] Stapleton, *Tres Thomae*, 71.
[349] More, *Utopia*, xx.
[350] More, *Utopia*, xx.
[351] More, *Utopia*, 5 and 18.

and Cardinals Wiseman and Manning resumed the cause.[352] Eventually, on 29 December 1886, the anniversary of Becket's murder, Pope Leo XIII beatified More, along with fifty-two other Englishmen, adding them to the list of those whom the Catholic Church counts as "Blessed."[353]

In 1926, a group of Catholic bishops attempted to persuade Pope Pius to canonize More, chiefly arguing that his canonization would be a great boost of Catholic morale.[354] Bishop Peter Amigo of Southwark took the lead, visiting Rome to canvass for support, after which a none-too-subtle campaign of leafleting and letter-writing by the two men was undertaken. Yet by 1929, the only significant gains the bishops achieved was a public exhibition of books, relics, portraits and copies of historical documents relating to More at the Congregation of Adoration Reparatice in Chelsea. From the outset of their mission, a serious obstacle to advancing More's cause was the need to prove that he had worked miracles and this challenge was represented at the exhibit, as a leaflet written by Amigo declared: "I have great faith and hope that the English can provide good miracles so that we can soon have the joy of seeing these glorious martyr elevated."[355] Though no miracles were ever recorded, the Congregation of Rites in Rome gave the approval for More's cause to proceed in June 1930; and eventually, four years later, a breakthrough came when Pope Pius personally intervened.[356] He requested that transcripts of the English State Papers be sent to Rome, and after a few months of investigation, More's case was reported with a favorable verdict.[357] On February 1, 1934, the pope ruled in favor of the canonization, and a candlelit ceremony followed at St Peter's one year later. Interestingly, however, the canonization was hardly welcomed with open arms by the British populace, and to ensure a sufficient presence of notables other than clergy, the Vatican had invited the Speaker of

[352] Guy, *Thomas More*, 91.
[353] Guy, *Thomas More*, 91.
[354] Guy, *Thomas More*, 92.
[355] Quote found in Guy's *Thomas More*, 92.
[356] Guy, *Thomas More*, 83.
[357] Guy, *Thomas More*, 94.

the House of Commons, the chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge, and the chancellor of the exchequer, yet all refused to attend.[358] Unlike Becket's quick canonization supported by the populace, ecclesiastical biographers, and eventually the king, More's almost four-hundred year-long process was dictated by overarching political circumstances and supported almost exclusively by Catholic elites.

If, however, during the Middle Ages, the image of Becket was sanitized to become a miracle-working saint, stripped of any secular association, the Henrician Reformation in England, and the period's formal rejection of papal authority, monasticism, and the cult of saints progressively stripped away many of the elements that had comprised the construction of Becket's sainthood. Under these new circumstances, his appeal to Pope Alexander III became treason, his defense of clerical immunity was viewed as unlawful protection of criminals, his monastic affiliations confirmed his attachment to foreign and hostile powers, and his status as a martyr and saint were manifestations of his un-Englishness.[359] The attack on Becket's legacy was mounted by the royal administration, serving as part of a policy that aimed to isolate the English Church from the power structures of Catholic Europe, specifically the papacy.[360] Henry VIII's strategy, the wholesale destruction of monasticism— formerly known as "reform" by the state— constituted a significant stage in the transfer of power and resources to the crown, as well as the destruction of saints' shrines.[361] Consequently, no English shrine in the sixteenth-century was more potent in political symbolism that Becket's, as indicated by 1538 royal proclamation from Westminster which re-drew Becket's image in brutal and uncompromising

[358] Guy, *Thomas More*, 94.
[359] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 239.
[360] Robert E Scully, "The Unmaking of a Saint: Thomas Becket and the English Reformation," *The Catholic Historical Review* 86, no. 4 (2000), 596.
[361] Guy, *Thomas Becket*, 199.

fashion.[362] Instead of the steadfast defender of the Church, the decree labeled Becket as a rebel who fled to France to "procure the abrogation of wholesome laws [and] should no longer be named a saint."[363] Not only did the proclamation un-canonize him, but also declared that his pictures throughout the realm were to be removed, his name erased from all prayer books, and an immediate removal of his feast day from calendars.[364] Like both More and Wolsey, the state framed Becket as a symbol of all traces of Catholicism that was rejected in Henrican England, as suggested in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* that "[Becket] did not die a martyr, but a stubborn man against his King."[365]

Still, despite the government's campaign against the cult and iconography of Becket, devotion to the saint continued in various parts of England. Especially for English Catholics, Becket became an icon for the cause of an authentic continuation of the ancient English Church; this dedication is indicated by the 1579 founding of the English College in Rome, which declared Becket as the chief patron of the school and dedicated the chapel in his name.[366] While his sainthood was later reinstated during the 1778 Catholic Emancipation, the defense of Becket's reputation became, and has remained to some degree, a matter of religious identity.[367] While Catholics understood him as a heroic icon, to protestants, he represented a Roman Catholic figure that symbolized the papal and clerical power defeated during Tudor reign. Still, for both groups, the secular side of Becket's divided consciousness was omitted from the narrative, couching the once lord chancellor as an entirely spiritual figure.

This section has demonstrated how in the immediate afterlife of Becket, Wolsey, and More, each man's legacy became associated with only one side of his divided consciousness,

[362] Guy, *Thomas Becket*, 199.
[363] Guy, *Thomas Becket*, 200.
[364] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 239.
[365] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 111.
[366] Scully, "The Unmaking of a Saint," 597.
[367] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 243.

solidifying his remembrance as either a spiritual saint and secular villain. While both Becket and More's supporters were able to secure the figure's canonizations, the timeline and circumstances differed significantly. Where the former benefited from the twelfth-century historical context in which he died, the latter was forced to overcome the changing political and religious tide of the sixteenth-century. Wolsey's memory, conversely, was ill-fated from the beginning as a result of his lack of supporters and natural— rather than violent— death. Just as this section indicated the importance of literary coverage in forming each man's legacy, the following will explore the significance of popular culture in furthering the spiritual saint-secular villain dichotomy.

Section V: Memory

Over the past few centuries, each of the Thomas's dramatic and untimely public deaths have assisted in retaining their name in common memory. The mens' recent references in political speeches and major media publications suggest the duration of the two generalized tropes as introduced in the previous section: the spiritual saint and secular villain.[368] While Becket and More's virtuous legacies have fostered their representation in *The Times* as "ageless English figure[s] worthy of memorial," Wolsey's secular reputation has prompted politicians to evoke his name as a warning against arrogance and greed.[369] While Becket, Wolsey, and More's martyrdoms and canonizations, or lack thereof, assisted in the construction of these generalized legacies, their extraordinary cultural significance has been inspired less by history than modern fiction. The invention of motion pictures in the early twentieth century, followed by television broadcasting, created entirely new methods for the public to engage with the Thomases. The present section will explore how a Nobel Prize-winning play, Academy Award-winning film,

[368] Duggan, *Thomas Becket,* 8; Schwartz-Leeper, *Princes to Pages,* 13; Guy, *Thomas More*, 24.
[369] Duggan, *Thomas Becket:*, Guy, *Thomas More*, 24; Schwartz-Leeper, *Princes to Pages,* 3.

Booker Prize-winning historical novel, and Emmy award-winning television series have employed intentional plot devices and exaggerated characterizations that have served to further exacerbate the spiritual saint and secular villain tropes, as well as erase each man's divided consciousness from his legacy.

Notably, this section explores six specific pieces of popular culture created in the twentieth and twenty-first century, rather than providing an exhaustive list of all renderings since Becket, Wolsey, and More's death. Though the immediate portrayals created in the wake of their passing often appear less associated with the figure or lacked critical acclaim, they are worth mentioning briefly. For Becket, Geoffrey Chaucer's classic fifteenth-century text *The Canterbury Tales* significantly assisted in crystallizing his spiritual saintly image, as the piece centers on a group of pilgrims traveling to Canterbury Cathedral to visit the shrine of St. Becket.[370] Conversely, poet John Milton's seventeenth-century fictional pamphlet *Canterburies Dreame* depicts Wolsey as a ghost, and observes the villainous character as he narrates his previous life in court as a cautionary tale.[371] More representation in sixteenth-century playwright Ellis Heywood's *Il Moro* presents him as both an intellectual and saint, with the play centering More and his humanist peers engaged in a conversation on morality.[372] Noteworthy, as well, John Fletcher and William Shakespeare's seventeenth century *Henry VIII, or, All is True* served as the first major fictional representation to place Wolsey and More both together and morally juxtaposed.[373] These early portrayals helped to popularize the spiritual saint and secular villain images, and introduced the theatrical plot structures, setting devices, and clichéd character traits that still prevail in the Thomases' popular representations today.

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[370] Geoffery Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* (New York: Modern Library, 2008), 1-224.
[371] John Milton, *Canterburies Dreame: In Which the Apparition of Cardinall Wolsey Did Present Himselfe Unto Him on the Fourtenth of May Last Past* (London: Oxford University, 1641), 1-82.
[372] Ellis Heywood, "Il Moro." Edited by Roger Lee Deakins. *Sixteenth Century Journal* 7, no. 1 (1976): 115–15.
[373] William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *King Henry VIII* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1-214.

The respective historical contexts of Becket, Wolsey, and More, so involved and complex, cannot easily be transformed into dramatic representations without selectively retaining some facts, while neglecting or altering others. Still, as Becket's representation in T.S. Eliot's 1935 *Murder in the Cathedral* demonstrates, modern fictional depictions of the Thomases have gone so far as to entirely omit each man's association with either the church or state. Eliot's play serves as the most widespread and critically acclaimed representation of the saint, and has significantly solidified his modern image as a spiritual saint by erasing his history as lord chancellor.

Murder in the Cathedral was initially written for the Canterbury Arts Festival, a three-day event funded and hosted by the Church of England.[374] However, after the play's immediate success at the festival, the project expanded to include an American and European tour in 1936-37, and later a decade-long run on Broadway.[375] As historian Martin Browne has noted, while the play's first showcase in Canterbury reached an audience likely aware of Becket's life, the later manifestations exposed the late archbishop's story to a population potentially unfamiliar with this history.[376] Also, this story of heroic defiance likely appealed to an audience experiencing a decade of global political crises, particularly the emergence of authoritarian regimes across Europe and South American, such as Adolf Hitler's rise to power in 1933.[377] When questioned about the target audience, Eliot claimed that the play was "produced for a rather special kind of audience, an audience of those serious people who go to [theater and arts] festivals, and [...] those who go to plays to satisfy themselves with the feeling that they have

[374] James Matthew Wilson, "The Formal and Moral Challenges of TS Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 19, no. 1 (2016): 169.
[375] Wilson, "Formal and Moral Challenges," 2016, 169.
[376] Martin Browne, *The Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 35.
[377] Browne, *Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays*, 52.

done something meritorious."[378] Perhaps, as indicated by the play's tripartite structure, the piece was also targeted towards a Catholic audience, despite being sponsored by the Church of England. Divided into three parts— part one depicting Becket grappling with his temptations, part two containing a sermon, and part three presenting his martyrdom—these divisions recreate the form of Catholic mass, beginning with the Liturgy of the Word in part one, and concluding with the Liturgy of the Eucharist in part three.[379] This religious arrangement suggests the broader, pro-Catholic sentiment that persists throughout the play.

Through the play's dialogue, Eliot implies that both the public and Becket foresee the archbishop's death before the occurrence manifests. The opening scene begins with a chorus of local women nervously awaiting Becket's return from his seven-year exile in France, their conversation primarily concerning his public disagreement with the king. Within the first page, the women foreshadow his upcoming death, commenting that "destiny waits in the hand of God, not in the hands of statesmen."[380] Eliot's chorus does not serve the same purpose as a classical Greek elite-style chorus, but rather occupies a more accessible, universal voice. The group comments in act three: "we acknowledge ourselves as the common man [...] for all the people of the world who must endure kings, barons, and even archbishops."[381] The chorus's use of "endure" suggests that the individuals who occupy these high power positions and the masses are at perpetual odds, with the latter subject to the former's whims. The group both begins and concludes each act, communicating primarily through gossip or side-comments, and seem to serve as a gauge of public opinion for not only Canterbury, but the broader twelfth-century world. Consistently throughout the play, the chorus claims that Becket's death is not only

[378] T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 146.
[379] T.S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), xx.
[380] Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, 16.
[381] Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, 87.

inevitable, but necessary, commenting "oh Thomas, save us, save us, save yourself that we may be saved."[382] By allowing the characters to prophesize his death, Eliot renders the murder as an act beyond the state's control or agenda. Instead, by implying that the murder was an act of divine will, the play both villainizes the state and removes its agency from the narrative.

The remainder of the first act functions as a conversation between Becket and four personified temptations: physical safety, secular power, ecclesiastical power, and eternal glory.[383] The archbishop conveys to the audience that only by refusing his tempters, will his "path [of death] be secured."[384] Thus, through his refusal of the temptations, Becket actively works towards securing his imminent death; and this act, like the prophesying of the chorus, similarly strips historical agency from the king. Eliot's conscious choice of degrading the king— and by extension, the state— serves to display Becket's story in completely religious terms, and allows his main character to fully depict the role of a spiritual saint. After Becket rejects his four temptations, neither Henry nor the state are mentioned again, as the script focuses instead on the archbishop accepting death.

Part two and three of the tripartite structure are narrated by three priests, who collectively trace Becket's gradual acceptance of his imminent, inevitable death. The priests likely represent the real Becket's chroniclers—John of Salisbury, Edward Grim, and William FitzStephen—as the characters protect the fictional archbishop when he is attacked, just as his chroniclers did in reality. The final scenes take place in the Archbishop's Hall of the Cathedral, where Becket spends his final moments in prayer and contemplation. Thinking to himself, he comments that "we both rejoice and mourn in the death of martyrs [...]. We mourn, for the sins of the world that has martyred them; we rejoice, that another soul is numbered among the Saints

[382] Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, 44.
[383] Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, 26-41.
[384] Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, 44.

in Heaven, for the glory of God and for the salvation of men."[385] Rather than portraying Becket's hesitation towards death as an issue of divided consciousness between church and state, or even suggesting that he ever aligned himself with the king, Eliot portrays the archbishop's primary concern as pursuing martyrdom for selfish reasons. By excluding the majority of Becket's secular history, *Murder in the Cathedral* presents the archbishop as an entirely religious figure, effectively characterizing him as an embodiment of the church. This claim is further demonstrated in part three, as Henry's barons come to kill Becket, and he states "It is not I, Becket from Cheapside, that he strives to kill- but the Law of Christ's Church, the judgement of Rome."[386] Rather than the dispute occurring between Becket and Henry, Eliot frames the argument as an issue between the king and the church. Similarly, after the murder occurs, the three priests claim that the archbishop's heroic act will "clear the air, clean the sky, [and] wash the wind!"[387] In other words, they argue that Becket's blood will cleanse the world, a task that has been historically associated as a function of the church.[388] *Murder in the Cathedral* depicts the final days of the ideal saint; he battles and successfully refuses his temptations, he maintains obedience to God, and he knowingly accepts death on behalf of the church.

More's depiction in the 1960 play *A Man for All Seasons* reproduces a saintly image almost identical to Becket's in *Murder in the Cathedral*, one seemingly detached from the realities of his history as statesmen. Upon playwright Robert Bolt's first performance of the production, the portrayal was an instant triumph and received mass critical acclaim. As John Guy has observed, the script usefully appealed to a wide-range of mid-twentieth century

[385] Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, 48.
[386] Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, 65.
[387] Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, 77.
[388] Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, 77.

audience members, as the 1960s served as "the perfect moment for a story of the kind Bolt wanted to tell."[389] In the era of the Cold War and Cuban Missile Crisis, memories of McCarthyism were still fresh, and the issue of the power of the state was a primary concern for communities around the world. Bolt tapped into this societal fault-line with considerable acumen, turning More into a lone voice standing up for the rights of the individual. The author wrote in the play's preface that "More became for me a man with an adamant sense of his own self, [...] he knew where he began and left off, and [....] [he was] a hero of selfhood."[390]

While Bolt's play makes for thrilling drama, the work thoroughly misrepresents the way that historical More understood the role of conscience. Furthermore, not only does Bolt romanticize More's heroic efforts to Catholicism, but he also depicts More as a hero to selfhood. The author paints the Henrician era as one of conformity; no character in *A Man For All Seasons* questions nor criticizes the policies of the Reformation, except for Thomas More. In Act One, Henry VIII claims, "[More] is honest […] he's known for being honest. There are those like Master Cromwell who follow me because they are jackals with sharp teeth and I am their lion, and there is a mass that follow me because they follow anything that moves- and then there is [More]."[391] The climax of the play occurs when More comments to the Duke of Norfolk, who has questioned the doctrine of the apostolic succession of the pope: "what matters to me is not whether its true or not, but that I believe it to be true, or rather not that I *believe* it, but that *I* believe it."[392] Historically, this definition of an autonomous conscience does not belong to More, but Martin Luther.[393] More, as he points out in his *Response to Luther*, insisted that scripture had to be interpreted by the whole Church; teasing out biblical meaning was not a

[389] Guy, *Thomas More*, 82.
[390] Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons: A Play in Two Acts* (New York: Random House, 1962), xii.
[391] Bolt, *Man for All Seasons*, 23.
[392] Bolt, *Man for All Seasons*, 79.
[393] Thomas More, "Responsio Ad Lutherum" in *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More, V. 5* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1969), 23.

matter for individuals, but for the "consensus of Christendom."[394] Thus, for many, entangled in More's legacy as a spiritual saint is misrepresentation of his understanding of religious autonomy. As Richard Marius comments in his 1989 biography, "people already [know] what we [are] supposed to find when we stud[y] More, we [are] supposed to find Bolt's More."[395]

A Man for All Seasons places More and Wolsey in opposition; however, Bolt's script emphasizes the councilor's advanced education over the cardinal and entire Tudor court. In the final act, sitting in jail after being convicted at his trial, More cries out passionately, "These plain, simple, men," separating and elevating himself from the rest of his sixteenth-century contemporaries.[396] While Wolsey appears situated in the court as an entirely secular figure, More employs his religious and humanist education to rise above earthly circumstances, and employ his unique perspective. Furthermore, his legal background is highlighted throughout the play, as More, more than once, explains the intricacies of the Act of Succession to Cromwell. Another example of this can be found within the second act, when More explains to Cromwell, that "this isn't a 'Reformation'; this is a war against the church […] our King has declared war on the Pope, because the Pope will not declare that our Queen is not his wife."[397] While the term is never mentioned explicitly, Bolt clearly understands More as a humanist and theological scholar in a secular space, rather than a statesman with religious sensibilities.

Where *Murder in the Cathedral* and *A Man for All Seasons* opted to neglect historical fact, filmmaker and director Peter Glenville conversely chose to distort Becket's past in his 1964 *Becket*. The film, which was adapted from the 1959 French play *The Honour of God*, centers on the intimate and fatal friendship between Becket and Henry. Both manifestations of

[394] More, "Responsio Ad Lutherum," 23.
[395] Marius, *Thomas More*, 3.
[396] Bolt, *Man for All Seasons*, 79.
[397] Bolt, *Man for All Seasons*, 17.

the story garnered considerable critical acclaim, respectively receiving twelve Academy Award nominations and four Tony wins. This story of a saintly Becket undoubtedly engaged an expansive American and European audience experiencing the conclusion of the 1950-60 Religious Revival, as communities affected by the events of World War II, the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, and Vietnam War turned to church, and thus sparked a major spike in attendance.

However, to dramatize the history and characters, Glenville applies flawed ethnic stereotypes to the Normans (represented by Henry) and Saxons (characterized by Becket), with the former portrayed as wealthy and slow-witted noblemen, and the latter displayed as meek but intelligent peasants. The only exception to this uncompromising ethnic division exists in the relationship between the Norman king and Saxon chancellor, as their mutual love enables them to see beyond the strained history of their cultures and collaborate in pursuing war; that is, until Henry promotes Becket as the Archbishop of Canterbury, and their opposing opinions concerning the role of the Catholic Church prove insurmountable. Glenville's depiction of Becket as a Saxon with poor origins, however, is extremely inaccurate. The real Becket was born in London to a family of Norman immigrants, and belonged to a rising merchant class.[398] By portraying the archbishop as a Saxon, Glenville victimizes the character and insinuates that he was subject to the unjust power dynamics and ethnic tensions of medieval England for the majority of his early life. For instance, in the film, Becket exclusively speaks English, and even admits to not understanding French when stationed with Henry in Metz; this language barrier obstructs him from carrying conversations with foreign ambassadors, and forces him to rely on the king's knowledge and thoughtfulness to translate for him.[399] Contrastingly, the real Becket—like the majority of Norman immigrants in the twelfth century—spoke French, and

[398] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 10.
[399] *Becket*, directed by Peter Glenville (Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 1964), 0:43:01.

regularly employed the language when writing correspondence to friends and family.[400] By creating this ethnic dynamic, Glenville emphasizes the archbiship's dependence on the king, and highlights the vulnerability and risk entangled in his later separation from the state.

Where *Murder in the Cathedral* largely neglects to mention Henry and the state, the king remains a central character throughout *Becket*. Henry's role as an irrational and aggressive ruler throws Becket's self-possessed and peaceful nature into relief. For instance, while the archbishop calmly proposes a royal tax plan, the king begins to yell, insisting how the suggested method could instead be used for revenue to support war with France.[401] Once the Archbishop opens his mouth, Henry roars that, "we must come to understanding about who rules this kingdom, the church or me?"[402] As implied by Henry, Glenville's depiction of England places the church and state in total opposition; while the church seeks harmony throughout the Christendom, the state continuously pursues conflict and conquest. In response, the Archbishop informs the king that the violent days of war have concluded, stating "it is peacetime now."[403] While the two men continue debating, the Archbishop's calm and diligent presence is juxtaposed to Henry's demeanor, as the king maintains a loud volume and paces frantically around the room.

Like Eliot's Becket, this fictionalized archbishop acts as an embodiment of the church, always aligning with pope over the king. However, in reality, much of Becket's pursuit of peace was conducted under the auspices of the state, specifically when he traveled across England with Henry to negotiate with local leaders.[404] While the film consistently highlights the drastic differences between Henry and Becket, the two remain close companions. Not until the final

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[400] Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, 12.
[401] Glenville, *Becket*, 0:13:51.
[402] Glenville, *Becket*, 0:13:55.
[403] Glenville, *Becket*, 0:17:40.
[404] FitzStephen, *Life and Death*, 33.

scenes, when the archbishop refuses to pardon one of Henry's men, does Becket prove his ultimate dedication to the Church.[405] Then, after the king accuses Becket of embezzlement in an attempt to discredit his appointment, the new archbishop maintains his allegiance to the church by stating in full ecclesiastic grab that "[he] will be judged by the Pope alone, and places [himself] under the church's jurisdiction."[406] By turning Becket into an embodiment of the church, Eliot and Glenville offer an accessible image of a tyrannical, overreaching state attacking a courageous singular archbishop. While these representations usefully communicate a form of history to wider audience who would likely not engage with the archbishop otherwise, the two pieces ignore Becket's secular contributions, consequently presenting a one-dimensional portrayal of twelfth century English state and church relations.

While Wolsey occasionally appeared in pieces of popular history throughout the first half of the twentieth-century like Becket and More, not until the midpoint of the century did his fictional representations begin to gain broad cultural currency with modern audiences.[407] Released in 1966, Fred Zinnemann's *A Man for All Seasons* functions as a critically acclaimed biographical drama centered on the public career of Thomas More; yet, even as the minor antagonist, Wolsey's fictional representation as a greedy, immoral lord chancellor and secular villian in this film is easily the most well-known depiction of the cardinal. Adapted from Bolt's 1960 play, Zinnemann's *A Man for All Seasons* received six Academy Awards, including Best Picture of the Year, and three Golden Globes. While Wolsey appears only in two brief scenes, his cynicism and seemingly medieval clerical tactics are positioned as a complete contrast to More's humanist idealism. In Bolt's character descriptions for the play, the author describes the

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[405] Glenville, *Becket*, 1:55:40.

[406] Glenville, *Becket*, 1:38:41.

[407] Patrick Hornbeck, *Remembering Wolsey: A History of Commemorations and Representations* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 22.

cardinal as "old [...] a big decayed body in scarlet. An almost megalomaniac ambition unhappily matched by an excelling intellect, he now inhabits a lonely den of self-indulgence and contempt."[408] However, as twentieth century biographer Peter Gwyn observed, the cardinal, played by the late Orson Welles, appears far more jaundice, resembling more of an "overdressed and overweight spider," sitting at the middle of a political web through which he seeks to capture the king's annulment.[409] Every aspect of the character suggests his self-assumed opulence and affluence; even his chamber, which More must track through various passages and rooms to reach, points to Wolsey's privilege. Whereas More tips servers with financial compensation and greets those below him, the cardinal refuses to stand up from behind his desk for anyone besides the king, keeping his eyes cast almost exclusively on the work before him.[410] Beyond his cardinal cloak and hat, any ecclesiastical association or sense of meekness are seized from the character.

For Zinnemann's Wolsey, securing the king's interests—particularly, securing a male heir—serves as his only objective. During his two scenes, the hassles More over his secular tasks, ensuring that he understands the consequences of not fulfilling the king's demands. He mocks the councillor, asking "Do you think two Tudors is sufficient?" and "Do you remember the Yorkist Wars?," to which More responds with "We shall have my prayers to fall back on."[411] Wolsey states, "pray, pray by all means, but in addition to prayer there is effort."[412] Though the two characters are in conversation, they occupy the two different realms; whereas Wolsey cannot comprehend his life beyond securing the king's annulment, More ponders every decision in relation to life's overall spectrum of propriety. In Bolt's description of the

[408] Bolt, *Man for All Seasons*, 635.
[409] Gwyn, *King's Cardinal, 7.*
[410] *A Man for All Seasons,* directed by Fred Zinneman (Los Angeles: Columbia TriStar, 1998), 0:10: 25.
[411] Zinnemann, *Man for All Seasons,* 0:11:15.
[412] Zinnemann, *Man for All Seasons,* 0:12:39.

aforementioned scene, the script adds in the stage direction that "the cardinal looks back at [More], hard-faced, harsh; and for the first time we see [Wolsey] is a carnivore."[413] Thus, for Zinnemann's fictional cardinal, he understands ecclesiastical matters as not only of lesser importance, but also obstructive to his secular goals and thus in need of mitigation. Similarly, he comments to More that his "moral squint" inhibits him from possessing the "common sense [required to make] a statesman."[414] To Zinnemann's Wolsey, like Eliot and Glenville's Becket, church and state are antithetical forces, and unable to operate in conjunction or harmony. Moreover, because the film shows Wolsey in only the final years of his life, his early work for the church—spanning from his low ecclesiastical roles in early life to his later attempts at the papacy— are all excluded from the narrative.

Like *A Man for All Seasons*, Wolsey's second major representation, Showtime's 2007 *The Tudors*, was created as a production of extreme dramatization and theatrics. With four seasons broadcasted between 2007 and in 2010, English screenwriter Michael Hirst's series functions as the longest spanning filmic event ever to cover the Tudor dynasty, amounting to over thirty-five hours of screen time.[415] After the first season aired, the show received significant negative feedback from Tudor historians, many who are featured in this project, including David Starkey and John Guy. However, responding to their disapproval, Hirst responded that "Showtime commissioned me to write an entertainment, a soap opera, and not history [...] and we wanted people to watch [the show]."[416] Moreover, the show was likely intended to feel accessible to an ever-increasing worldwide audience, as the late 2000s were marked by an increase of globalization, in which markets, governments, people, and most

[413] Zinnemann, *Man for All Seasons,* 0:10:30.
[414] Zinnemann, *Man for All Seasons,* 0:10:30.
[415] Ramona Wray, "The Network King: Re-Creating Henry VIII for a Global Television Audience," in *Filming and Performing Renaissance History*, ed. Mark Thornton Burnett and Adrian Street (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 16–32.
[416] Quoted in Anita Gates, "The Royal Life (Some Facts Altered)," *New York Times*, March 23, 2008.

importantly, ideas, seemed more integrated and accessible than ever before. Perhaps the intended audience explains why both Wolsey and More's depictions are more complex and multifacted than their former representations in *A Man for All Seasons*.

Beyond the obvious major inaccuracies of the series— like Henry's sole sister marrying a historically incorrect foreign monarch, the show's equation of the Treaty of London with the Field of the Cloth of Gold, its preemptive introduction of Thomas Cromwell into the Tudor Court—Wolsey's image, though still of the secular villian, offers more insight into the historical figure. The cardinal in *The Tudors* maintains his ambition and ruthless character traits from former depictions, yet he also displays a personal interest in peace, justice, and the welfare of his young king. This complexity likely stems from Hirst's use of Cavendish's *Life*, and in certain instances, the show even employs the text directly. For instance, in Episode One when Wolsey steps into the royal chambers, his ushers use Cavendish's exact salutation to clear the path, stating "on my lordes and maysters, make way for my lord's grace."[417] Similarly, in episode three, when Thomas Boleyn plots the cardinal's downfall, he uses a phrase directly from Cavendish: "when the wheel of Fortune reaches its zenith, there is only one way for it to go."[418] This use of Cavendish provides a more layered and complex portrayal of the figure's disposition.

However, in a manner that parallels Zinnemann's *A Man for All Seasons*, the series contrasts Wolsey's secular realpolitik perspective with the religiously informed idealism of Thomas More. While season one of *The Tudors* places Wolsey and More in eight extended conversations, in almost all instances the latter's dialogue serves as a foil to the former's pragmatic agenda. For instance, when More expresses surprise regarding Charles V betrayal

[417] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 18.
[418] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 14-16.

that cost Wolsey the papacy, the cardinal responds, "you think too highly of me, perhaps you think too highly of the whole human race."[419] Similarly, when Henry's impatience with his annulment intensifies, More expresses disappointment in the king, to which Wolsey responds, "If you are not with me now, you are against me [...] You may not seek to dirty your hands, but you have no choice."[420] Like Zinnemann's Wolsey, this depiction offers a cardinal who increasingly works to preserve the king's friendship and favor; and, as tensions rise, the length to which he is willing to go increases: he grants Henry the prized estate, Hampton Court Palace; he inflicts violence on Campeggio's servant as a means to ensure the annulment; and he publicly insults the pope when the divorce proceedings end[421] Therefore, while this representation of Wolsey depicts more sides of his character, he still remains an almost entirely secular figure defined by his dependence on the king.

The Tudors's treatment of Wolsey's arrest and death departs most widely from the historical record, yet draws on historical sources to craft an alternative representation of the cardinal's final hours. After Cromwell abandons Wolsey by informing the king that the cardinal, in exile in Yorkshire, is plotting against him, his arrest takes place.[422] Imprisoned in an unidentified location, Hirst's Wolsey offers a prayer—his character's only religious act—then slits his throat with a knife.[423] The words of his prayer, which do not appear in any earlier historical source, are worth quoting at length:

> Lord, we have not spoken as long or as often as we should. I've often been about other business. If I wanted forgiveness I should ask for it, but for all that I have done, and for all I am yet to do, there can be no forgiveness. And yet I think I'm not an evil man. Evil

[419] *The Tudors*, directed by Michael Hirst (Showtime Entertainment, 2008) S1, Ep 2, 50:35.
[420] The Tudors, S1, Ep 5, 22:06.
[421] The Tudors, S1, Ep 6, 7, and 9.
[422] The Tudors, S1, Ep 10, 33:33.
[423] The Tudors, S1, Ep 10, 35:52.

> men pray louder and seek penance and think themselves closer to heaven than I am [...] and I know myself for what I am.[424]

Moreover, Wolsey's suicide scene is interwoven or interspersed with clips of a court masque celebrating the cardinal's descent into hell, which serves to heighten the contrast between his personal repentance and the intentional malice of those who sought his downfall. In depicting the suicide sympathetically, *The Tudors*' secular cardinal has a clear sense of self-awareness, knowledgeable of how the contemporary fifteenth century public, and twenty and twenty-first public, render him within a villainous troupe. While earlier portrayals generally maintained his historical image of the ruthless and corrupt statesman, more recent characterizations have offered more complex and sympathetic understandings of the figure. Still, while his image in popular history has sifted, some nuances—particularly, his divided consciousness—remain unexplored.

Just as *The Tudors* multifaceted depiction of Wolsey functioned to complicate his essentialized representation, Hilary Mantel's fictional novel *Wolf Hall* did the same for More; yet, as John Guy notes, sent "More's stock plunging to an all-time low."[425] The piece serves as a fictionalized biography of Cromwell, chronicling his rise to power at the court of Henry VIII. Though More functions as martyred protagonist and saint-in-the-making of *A Man for All Seasons*, in *Wolf Hall* he is portrayed as a vile and despicable heretics-hunter, overly assured agent of God, and failed priest. Rather than a champion of individual freedom, Mantel's More is a narcissistic captive to ecclesiastical tradition and authority. Whereas earlier representations of More depict his steadfast protection of values as a stand of individual freedom, this characterization frames his staunchness as a sign of over-confidence and almost deluding indoctrination of Catholic ideology. After More refuses to take Henry's oath, Audley

[424] The Tudors, S1, Ep 10, 42:07.
[425] Guy, *Thomas More*, 85.

reprimands him for effectively surrendering his life, stating: "The undivided church would like nothing better than to persecute its own members [for standing] by their own conscience. You call history to your aid, but what is history to you? It is a mirror that flatters Thomas More. But I have another mirror, I hold it up and it shows a vain and dangerous man [...] who will only have suffering, and not your martyr's gratification."[426] While this representation of More is undoubtedly less favorable, the image is considerably more attuned to the nuances of the Catholic view of conscience than Bolt. For instance, after being sent to the Tower of London, More tells Cromwell, "I will not treat my God to the King's puppet show. You say you have the majority. I say I have it. You say Parliament is behind you, and I say all the angels and saints are behind me." This sentiment that the church, both in past and present, align with him is an almost identical statement to what he expressed during his lifetime.

Unique and perhaps most damaging to Mantel's More is his full embrace of hunting heretics, which significantly diverges from Bolt popular depiction of a peaceful saint. In *Wolf Hall*, he is described as not only seeking heretics, but doing so unjustly Cromwell comments that "More says it does not matter if you lie to heretics, or trick them into a confession. They have no right to silence, even if they know speech will incriminate them; if they will not speak, then break their fingers, burn them with irons, hang them up by their wrists. It is legitimate, and indeed More goes further; it is blessed."[427] While More did reportedly arrest suspected heretics, Mantel seems to be employing two specific cases from Foxe in creating her fictional account, both of which modern scholars claim to be untrue, in which he locked up suspected heretics at his personal estate until they confessed. In the text, More tells Audley that he has lived an innocent life, to which the latter responds, "What about Bainham [the heretic]? You forfeited his goods,

[426] Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall* (London: Fourth Estate, 2009), 463.
[427] Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 295.

committed his wife to prison, saw him racked with your own eyes, locked him in your cellar, saw him beaten and abused for a week, and still [...] you sent him back to the Tower and had him racked again."[428] While this fictional More's violence seems extreme as a form of dramatization, similar accusations have appeared in historical scholarship. For instance, in Jasper Ridley's 1982 *Thomas Wolsey and Thomas More: The Statesman and the Fanatic*, the author suggests that had More lived in the twentieth century, he would have justified the "liquidation of millions of human beings as a regrettable but necessary measure," or else approved "the extermination of three-quaters of the world's population by nuclear weapons."[429] While both these claims offer a new dimension to More's legacy, they still depict the figure as committing these acts as means to an ecclesiastical end, and neglect his other contributions to the state. For More, then, representations in popular culture over time have amounted to a zero-sum game; the counselor's image is either Bolt's humanist idealist, champion of individual autonomy and defender of the church, or Mantel's delusional, pretentious, heretic-obsessed failed priest. If the former depiction most mirrors the image presented by Roper and Harpsfield, then the latter must emerges from of the pages of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, paralleling his description of a self-flagellating Catholic zealot. Still, like the two Thomases before him, any trace of More's dual alliance to the church and state have yet to be represented in popular culture.

In all of Becket, Wolsey, and More's popular representations, historical accuracy is not the primary issue, as these are fictional pieces; what carries weight, as the scholar Stephen Greenblatt has remarked, "is the illusion of reality."[430] Though these representations do not claim to be complete, wholly truthful representations of the three Thomases, they have

[428] Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 554.
[429] Ridley, *Statesman and the Fanatic*, 292-3.
[430] Stephen Greenblatt as quoted in Guy, *Thomas More*, 86.

functioned to solidify certain tropes, stereotypes, and images, which in turn affect how audiences remember them and, by extension, the time period in which they inhabited**.** For each man, a significant portion of their life—Becket and More's work with the state, and Wolsey's contributions to the church—have been excluded from modern pop culture, and, by extension, from their historical legacies.

Conclusion

By placing Thomas Becket, Thomas Wolsey, and Thomas More, three figures from different centuries who all faced the shared problem of a consciousness divided between church and state, in conversation with one another, this project has confronted previous assumptions and conceptions about these men, especially their similarities or differences, while simultaneously shedding new light on their individual characters, contexts, and posthumous treatment in popular culture. The divided consciousness framework has not only illuminated the intricacies of each man, but also acknowledged the ability of each Thomas to play a plethora of varied roles throughout his lifetime, many of which operated in opposition. Becket, though martyred fighting against state jurisdiction, spent the majority of his professional career advancing royal powers as lord chancellor. Wolsey was a propagandist for the Tudor regime and mudslinging critic of his opponents, yet made significant strides to achieve international pacification on behalf of the church. And More, perhaps the most contrary of the three, stood on the world stage as an unfettered scholar capable of imagining new worlds in *Utopia*, all while uncompromisingly defending the traditions of an ancient and long-established institution, the church. There is perhaps no way to resolve all the contradictions that characterized Becket, Wolsey and More, for they reflect both their own complexities and those of their historical contexts; however, by placing the three men in conversation, scholars can begin to account for the paradoxical nature of each Thomas and his legacy.

Similarly, this side-by-side analysis of Becket, Wolsey, and More has prompted the major questions facing and flummoxing previous scholars of each man to come to the fore: Was each man motivated by social advancement or a genuine commitment to his king, whether Henry II or Henry VIII? Were his ecclesiastical and state powers debilitating or mutually reinforcing? What were his intentions when reaching for the various positions, from archbishop, cardinal, pope, privy councilor or lord chancellor? By beginning my account when each Thomas privately possessed a divided consciousness, and concluding with the three men respectively aligned with either the church or state, I have allowed the narrative of Becket, Wolsey, and More to indicate each man's true motivations and contextualize his decisions. When discussed together, the three men effectively create a spectrum of divided consciousness, offering a scale on which to weigh each Thomas's historical actions, beliefs, and legacies. This comparison also has provided a sort of timeline of divided consciousness, showing how with Becket in the twelfth century, the idea of occupying both the ecclesiastical and secular realms was not as controversial; whereas in the sixteenth-century, Wolsey and More seemed to be aware that their dual alliances to church and state were not sustainable.

This comparison has not only provided a history of the Thomases, but also offered insight into the period each man lived, and elucidated a story of a changing broader European world. Specifically, this study forced the similarities between Henry II and Henry VIII, Pope Alexander III and Pope Leo X to become evident, as well as the major events that defined the Thomases lifetimes, such as the twelfth-century civil war, and sixteenth-century Reformation and Renaissance. The political and religious circumstances of the age—in particular, Henry II and Henry VIII's dissent from the papal control—provided the circumstantial tension that forced each man to publically address and confront his divided consciousness, and set in motion

the events that led to each man's death. Similarly, the dominant intellectual movements of their time defined how the Thomases understood themselves and their respective divided consciousness. Thus, just as much as this is a narrative of Becket, Wolsey, and More, this thesis also a narrative of the twelfth and sixteenth-century world in which the three men respectively occupied.

This approach has proven particularly useful for Wolsey. By putting his historical record in conversation with those of Becket and More, two men with similar roles but immensely different historical legacies, Wolsey's decisions can be better understood, and visa-versa. Similarly, though Wolsey and More have been previously compared in historical scholarship, adding Becket to the conversation provides new insights. In a comparison between the sixteenth-century contemporaries, the two are at odds with Wolsey's secular efforts appearing almost one-dimensional juxtaposed next to More's vast literary explorations of both religion and statecraft. However, with the inclusion of Becket, it becomes clear that the two were more than contemporaries, but collaborators. Indeed, much of More's early career was defined in some way by Wolsey: as exemplified in 1515, when More was selected to join the king's ambassadorial mission to Flanders at the recommendation of Wolsey; or from 1515-18, when More served as a member of the Council of the Star Chamber under Wolsey. This comparison between the three also coveys how significant the absence of information in Wolsey's narrative has allowed past and modern chroniclers, hagiographers, and biographers to manipulate gaps in the source material to present a particular image. In other words, discussing Wolsey's life and legacy alongside those of Becket and More allows the historian to dissect and challenge "the matter against [him] how it is framed."[431]

[431] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, 174.

The Thomases' divided consciousnesses, in part, accounts for why the three men have yet to be compared in a single analysis. Becket, Wolsey, and More's association with either church or state—and rarely both— has created the dichotomy of the posthumous spiritual saint and secular villain images. Nevertheless, much more remains to be glimpsed not only about the three Thomases, but also about the ways in which they have been remembered in scholarly literature and represented in popular culture. Reassessing these men presents an extraordinary challenge, as none of them are not, nor will ever be, wholly historical figures. The literary framing that has been applied in each account of a Thomas serves an equal, if not more influential role, in how the modern public perceives him. When researching each man and interacting with the twelfth-century chronicles and sixteenth-century biographers, scholars must acknowledge the limitations of the texts. Not only were Becket, Wolsey, and More's primary sources created with the agenda of displaying the figure as a spiritual saint or secular villain, but the men themselves, particularly Becket and More, engaged in legacy-crafting of their own. Finally, historians studying these men must be sure to realize that they are not engaging with Becket and More's modern images as the "heroic victim" and the "man for all seasons," or conversely, Wolsey's reputation as a "ruthless statesman," but instead acknowledge the divided consciousness they possessed in life.

In the twenty-first century, where historians are increasingly called to convey the public utility and relevance of their work, this thesis argues that worthwhile and unexplored insights still prevail in the medieval and early modern period. By researching the past worlds respectively occupied by Becket, Wolsey, and More, we learn more about our modern secular institutions, ecclesiastical systems, and intellectual traditions. Behind the guise of the great man theory, future studies centered on the Thomases' muddled church and state efforts, artistic

pursuits, and literary contributions can uncover more comprehensive understandings of each man, his legacy, and the world he lived in.

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I have acted with honesty and integrity in the production of this work and am unaware of anyone who has not. /s/ Olivia Stankus