The Pecock Deplumed: Exploring Late Medieval English Church, Religion, and Lollardy through the Life of a Heretical Bishop

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Introduction

It was a cold winter day in late November or early December at St. Paul's Cross in London. The year was 1457. A large crowd gathered with people pressing against each other to get a decent look at a man who stood at the center of an unusual public display. The man, approaching 70 years of age, was Reginald Pecock, the bishop of Chichester. Though his diocese was located 86 kilometers to the southeast of the city, the aging Welsh clergyman was certainly no stranger to Londoners. For about twenty years, he had been the master of London's Whittington College, and he was especially close to the London mercers, whose company began taking an active part in the school's governance in 1442. If the spectators did not know him as a master scholar, they might have recognized him from a sermon he delivered on the duty of preaching just a decade before at the very place where he now appeared.

But this occasion was quite different from the one ten years ago. He was not explaining any of his bold reasoning to the masses; on the contrary, he was utterly rejecting the entire body of his theological research. On that day, the city of London witnessed a rarity in late medieval England: a *bishop*, of all people, renouncing his heresies. Pecock had just finished listing his errors, and his hands now held twenty years' worth of mental toil, his books that had faithfully served as the vessels for his strange theology, perhaps too faithfully. Before him, a fire crackled. The heat of the flames provided some relief from the chilly air, and they were about to grow even greater. Pecock announced, "To thes declaracion of myn conuersion and repentaunce, I haue openly assent that my saide bookis, werkis, writingis, for consideracion and cause aboue reherssed, be deputed to the fier and openly brent into example and terrour of all othre."[1] The Church would rather the flames consume the works than the impressionable minds of the laity

[1] From Pecock's abjuration speech translated and reproduced in Wendy Scase, "Reginald Pecock," in *Authors of the Middle Ages. English Writers of the Middle Ages*, vol. 3, no. 8, ed. M.C. Seymour (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), 134.

and their secular priests. Hopefully, the crowd got the message; they had been duly warned. No one could lawfully read or ponder Pecock's ideas from that day forward.

The preceding narrative forms one possibility for how the events of that day might have unfolded. While there is a lack of detailed sources, we can confirm that the bishop was publicly condemned on account of the pernicious ideas published in his books near the end of 1457.[2] In one sense, Pecock is extraordinary because he was a high-profile, ecclesiastical heretic. He assumed multiple prestigious positions in late medieval society and took advantage of them to produce theological works in the English vernacular. Plenty of other men could have done the same. But in another, more subtle sense, Pecock is historically significant because of *why* he wrote some of his works. Two of his texts, *The Repressor of Over-much Blaming of the Clergy* (1449) and *The Book of Faith* (1456) not only attacked the theology of the heretical Lollards but also elevated the authority of natural reason over the institution of the Roman Catholic Church, an idea that in itself was hardly orthodox. There is an irony in that the latter proposition may have been *essential* to the way Pecock framed his counterarguments against the Lollards.

In other words, in the process of fighting heretics, Pecock produced his own heresies. It may seem easy to dismiss this prominent bishop and his seemingly unusual relationship with late medieval English heresy as an anomaly. Yet a study of his works, life, and relationships raises several crucial points for achieving a deeper understanding of late medieval English Church, religion, and lollardy. First and foremost, in his own time, Pecock disrupted the dichotomy between orthodoxy[3] and heterodoxy. While believing himself to be thoroughly orthodox, he unwittingly crossed the line into heterodoxy and straddled the divide; Pecock shows how permeable the lines between traditional Catholicism and heresy were at this moment in English

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[2] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 134.

[3] For the purposes of this paper, "orthodox" and "traditional Catholicism" will be used interchangeably.

history. Second, Pecock may enlighten us about the roles that Lollards and lollardy played in 15th century England after the Oldcastle Revolt of 1414. The Lollards may have experienced the most suppression during this post-rebellion period, but mainstream medieval society (including Pecock) had not forgotten them and the subversive threats they posed. Third, Pecock, as one of the most vehement anti-Lollards of the 15th century, produced works that can help us to at least partially reconstruct lollardy in mid-15th century. Since Lollards were especially suppressed at this time, they themselves did not leave very much evidence of their beliefs and activities. Yet Pecock was in a position to publicly describe the Lollards and lollardy that he denounced, and his books operated on the assumption that heretic readers would recognize themselves in his descriptions. Fourth, Pecock seems less exceptional with regard to his engagement with heresy when considered in his original context of 15th century London. Pecock's own personal intellectual networks in the city were less than orthodox, and his books assume that the Lollards were corrupting lay people with their heresies. Fifth, not only does Pecock show the permeability of the lines between heresy and orthodoxy but his life also shows the blurred lines between political and religious authority. The bishop upset temporal authorities, including King Henry VI himself, as much as he threatened Church authorities with his heretical theological writings. Overall, a historical understanding of Bishop Pecock provides a plethora of insights that enrich our understandings of religion in late medieval English society and that will be further explored and elaborated in the rest of this paper.

In mainstream historical scholarship on England, the Lollards receive little attention because they were a marginal heretical group that allegedly failed. Their ideas were never widespread across all strata of English society, and they did not direct any lasting social, religious, or political change in mainstream culture. The Lollard movement began with an

English scholar and theologian named John Wycliffe, who led a project to translate the Latin Vulgate Bible into vernacular English in the early 1380s. Along with this new Bible translation, Wycliffe developed a theology and hermeneutical theory that caused him to question the significance and infallibility of such Catholic institutions as papal authority and monastic orders. He also denied one of the central doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church: the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Soon Wycliffe's Bible and his heretical ideas were transferred out of the academy and into the hands and minds of lower-class laypeople.[4] The followers of Wycliffe became known as "Lollards," which probably comes from the Dutch term *lollen*, meaning "to mumble,"[5] a reference to their recitation of English Bible verses. Growing in number throughout England, the heretics united under a single leader, Sir John Oldcastle, an English knight who had very powerful friends such as Henry V.[6] In January 1414, Oldcastle gathered his Lollard supporters at St. Giles' Fields in London to revolt against the monarchy. However, several of those who were involved in the rebellious plot betrayed Oldcastle and had earlier warned the king of his plans. Thus, Henry V easily crushed the Lollard rebellion.[7] After Oldcastle's subsequent capture and execution in 1417, the Lollards never again had a national leader.

Henceforth, as noted Lollard scholar John A.F. Thomson has pointed out, the heretical group typically does not show up in modern historiography as a significant historical force until the Reformation, which began around 1517, the year that Martin Luther set down his *95 Theses*

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[4] Anne Hudson and Anthony Kenny, "Wyclif, John (d. 1384)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 8, 13, 17-20.

[5] "Lollard," *Online Etymology Dictionary*, 2015, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=Lollard.

[6] C. T. Allmand, "Henry V (1386-1422)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4. Although Henry V and Sir John Oldcastle were close friends, Henry V did not share Oldcastle's Lollard opinions. In fact, as a prince, Henry had presented a petition to Parliament against Lollard beliefs and practices.

[7] John A. F. Thomson, *The Later Lollards, 1414-1520* (Glasgow: Oxford University Press, 1965), 4.

in Wittenburg.[8] During the earliest phase of the Reformation, the Lollards somewhat died out and were overshadowed by English Protestants, who shared many beliefs with the heretical group, although the existence and means of this transition from Lollardy to Protestantism is still the subject of historical debate.[9] In this paper, I will not address debates about theological or historical continuities between the Lollards and the Protestants because I would rather maintain a focus on lollardy as a heretical movement that is more than simply a precursor to the Reformation. However, I will examine Pecock's legacy among 16th century Protestants and analyze how their attempts to construct the Lollards (and Pecock) as their religious predecessors illustrates the blurring of the lines between orthodoxy and heresy.

What I am most concerned with is the "middle phase"[10] of lollardy, from the revolt of 1414 to the coming of the Protestant Reformation in 1517. This period is important to the late medieval or Lollard historian for several reasons. First of all, this phase by definition precedes the Protestant Reformation, allowing us to isolate and study the Lollards themselves without anticipating their absorption into the Protestant Reformation. As mentioned previously, too many historians conclude that the Lollards' significance lies solely in their presumed religious successors, the Protestants.[11] Secondly, it serves as an ideal time to draw attention to lollardy, the heresy itself, that was kept alive by gatherings of anonymous underground heretics. Before 1414, it is easy for the historian to get caught up in the influence of great Lollard leaders and thinkers such as Oldcastle and Wycliffe to the detriment of studying the beliefs and activities of the

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[8] Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 1.

[9] Margaret Aston, K. B. McFarlane, John A. F. Thomson, and Richard Rex all have to comment on the relationship between Lollards and the Protestants, often making their point in their conclusions. See: Margaret Aston, "Foreword," in *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), x; K. B. McFarlane, *The Origins of Religious Dissent in England* (New York City: Collier Books, 1966), 119-200; Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 251-253; Richard Rex, *The Lollards* (N.p.: Palgrave, 2002), 150.

[10] I borrow this concept from Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 1414-1520, 1.

[11] See Footnote 3.

everyday artisans and lower-class people who typically joined the group.[12] In the middle phase, no great personalities arose to define them. Finally, this period represents an historiographical gap. For most historians, the middle phase typically represents a time when Lollards were supposedly at the lowest point of their influence on English religion in particular and late medieval English society in general. After the failed revolt, the Lollards became further suppressed and marginalized by ecclesiastical and secular powers and went underground to avoid suffering the heretic's disgrace or death. This period of history is thus a useful and necessary one for exploring how lollardy functioned in late medieval English society despite the disadvantages that Lollards faced by living on the periphery.

Yet for the purposes of this paper, I have decided not to analyze the Lollards directly. Rather, for practical and methodological reasons, I examine them through the lens of their opponents. The Lollards as a heretical movement present several problems for historical research. Aside from the fact that the production of Lollard written sources declined during the middle phase, the group and its members are both difficult to define and to discover. They had no central institution to formally state their common doctrines; they were decentralized, forming their own small communities across England. Though their members held a variety of beliefs, they more or less may have read the same texts. If one characterization may be applied to them, however, it would probably be that they had a strong social identity. Lollards knew who other Lollards were because they learned to recognize members of largely hidden heretical networks.[13] It is good and well (if challenging) to try to search out and dig up the Lollards in late medieval England, but at the core of understanding their significance and how they influenced the events

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[12] For instance, K. B. McFarlane's *The Origins of Religious Dissent in England* (New York City: Collier Books, 1966) is structured largely around the biography of John Wycliffe while purporting to be a work of Lollard history.
[13] J. Patrick Hornbeck II, *What is a Lollard? Dissent and Belief in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 198-99.

of history is answering the question of what Lollards and lollardy meant to the larger orthodox society, in both secular and spiritual aspects. Even if their views of Lollards and lollardy were somewhat skewed, members of mainstream Catholic English society acted upon and thought in terms of their own perceptions of the heretics.

Thus enters Bishop Reginald Pecock. Pecock belonged to a class of people that for the sake of this study will be termed "anti-Lollards." Anti-Lollards were those who were outspoken critics of Lollard people, beliefs, and activities. Archbishop Thomas Arundel and scholar Thomas Netter of Walden were some of the most prominent opponents of the heretical group in its earliest phase.[14] After them, Pecock may be considered the leading critic of lollardy in the middle phase of the heresy's existence. What is significant about Pecock's activities is that he wrote and spoke out against the Lollards at a time when, according to some prominent historians,[15] the heretical group posed virtually no threat to society at large. Accordingly, the fact that Pecock cared enough about the existence of Lollards as late as the year 1456, deep into the middle phase, to write against them raises important questions about the lingering traces or threats of lollardy in the mid-15th century. How could such a driven prelate expect his contemporaries to read and relate to such massive anti-Lollard works as *The Repressor* and *The Book of Faith* if lollardy was not a recognizable force in late medieval society at this point in history? If the heretics and their ideas did not pose a threat during the middle phase, it would seem a huge waste for Pecock to have spent years of his life writing anti-Lollard books and equally unnecessary for the Church to have punished him so harshly for publishing heretical material. Yet a closer examination of the bishop's life and the people with whom he interacted

[14] Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 212.
[15] Rex, *The Lollards*, xiv-xv.

suggests that he was not the only traditionally Catholic person who was interested in heresy, as will be discussed later in this paper.

The timing of Pecock's anti-Lollard writings is not the only factor that makes him a prime means for understanding middle phase lollardy. The bishop claimed to have had face-to-face discussions with Lollard leaders in his community, and he seems to have engaged with Lollard tracts and their terminology.[16] Pecock's foremost biographer, Wendy Scase, actually claims that he adopted the circulation methods of heretics in order to better reach out to them with his ideas.[17] It certainly seemed unusual that Pecock was so willing to interact with the Lollard subculture and to attack them using their own methods, whereas his anti-Lollard predecessors preferred physical attacks and destruction of their persons and materials. The bishop's relatively peaceful and understanding posture toward his adversaries allows him to serve as a great mediator between a marginalized group such as the Lollards and larger late medieval English society. Before his downfall, Pecock was thoroughly entrenched in the political and religious social order as a high-ranking clergyman. He was not only in a better position than the everyday Lollard to openly discuss the boundaries between Lollard heterodoxy and orthodox religion, but he also was one of the most prominent people *willing* to do so. He thus provides us with an abundance of English vernacular text addressing debates between Lollard and orthodox ideas, and from this one can ascertain more directly the relationships between the suppressed heretical group and the orthodox culture at large.

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[16] Mishtooni Bose, "Reginald Pecock's Vernacular Voice," in *Lollards and their Influence in Late Medieval England*, edited by Fiona Somerset, Jill C. Havens, and Derrick G. Pitard (Woodbridge, Suffolk, England: The Boydell Press, 2003), 225-226, 230.
[17] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 117.

In order to make these connections, I build a microhistory around Pecock.[18] This is not solely an attempt to reconstruct the medieval bishop's life story, however fascinating and unusual it was. Rather, I will use Pecock as a lens through which to explore and reflect on the relationship between lollardy and orthodoxy among other aspects of late medieval English life. Specifically, I rely on a close reading of Pecock's two explicitly anti-Lollard texts, *The Repressor* and *The Book of Faith*. These selections are full of theological material and scholarly debate, but I consider more than the most obvious content of these passages; I analyze the way Pecock characterized Lollards, the way he employed Lollard tactics, and how the bishop made his arguments legible to his audience. These details are essential for looking beyond the text and recreating the historical world in which it was produced. These anti-Lollard texts specifically are useful because I can examine the Lollard and orthodox elements that exist in each of them and thereby analyze the interaction between these two strains of thought. Further, in consideration of the fact that the clergyman was prejudiced against the heretics, I review several key Lollard texts and sources, cross-referencing them with Pecock's works to help create a more accurate depiction of Lollards and lollardy. They also serve as useful tools for comparison to figure out the specific heretical strategies that Pecock borrowed to make his arguments. Though they are few and far between, I further rely on primary sources related to the bishop's life, with a particular focus on his heresy trial. Finally, by way of conclusion, I analyze 16th century sources that comment on

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[18] I incline towards historian Jill Lepore's definition of microhistory: "however singular a person's life may be, the value of examining it lies not in its uniqueness, but in its exemplariness, in how that individual's life serves as an allegory for broader issues affecting the culture as a whole." From Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 1 (June 2001): 133. Historians of the medieval and early modern periods of Europe have produced several notable and effective works using the microhistorical approach. Among these are Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms* (1976), which uses the life of the miller Menocchio to explore heterodoxy and general cultural trends in early modern Italy; Eamon Duffy's *The Voices of Morebath* (2001), which examines the parish records of the priest Christopher Trychay to explore religious change and continuity during the reign of the Tudors in England; and Robert Bartlett's *The Hanged Man* (2004), which uses the life of Welsh rebel William Cragh to explore medieval English-Welsh relations among other trends.

Pecock in order to reconstruct his afterlife or legacy. These source bases and strategies help me to understand the broader context of Pecock's interaction with heresy beyond his own writings. Throughout, I pursue this project with the understanding that Pecock as a single person did not have a perfect and omniscient perspective on the Lollards and/or his own society. The records of history just happen to have been successful at preserving the story of this one man whereas they have not been as successful at preserving evidence of the lives of the Lollards themselves or other prominent anti-Lollards who could have arisen. Forgiving his limited perspective, Pecock may at least help us to learn something more about the history of the elusive heretics and their place in the landscape of 15th century English religion.

As mentioned before, Lollard history is not very widely known or discussed, but there are some key figures in the historical sub-discipline of Lollard studies. The first major modern historian on this heretical group was K.B. McFarlane. In 1966, he published *The Origins of Religious Dissent in England*, a Lollard history that began with the life and works of John Wycliffe in the late 14th century and ended with the Oldcastle revolt in 1414. As can be gathered from his choice of time frame, he dedicated most of his work to discussing major Lollard figures Wycliffe and Oldcastle. Merely one chapter near the end of his book concerns the Lollards as a general group and movement, and there is only one comment on Reginald Pecock concerning his use of the English vernacular.[19] McFarlane's main argument was that the Lollard movement failed to initiate the religious reform that the Protestants later achieved because Wycliffe refused to compromise his radical views to become more politically appealing.[20] Despite his shortcomings, this medieval historian really began modern conversations about the Lollards.

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[19] McFarlane, *The Origins of Religious Dissent*, 158.
[20] McFarlane, *The Origins of Religious Dissent*, 199.

McFarlane's mentee, the previously mentioned John A. F. Thomson, decided to continue his professor's work and extend Lollard history into what he termed the "middle" phase. So in 1965, Thomson published *The Later Lollards, 1414-1520*. This study is much more of a social history than McFarlane's and provides surveys of lollardy in major regions of England and in Scotland. Thomson introduced the problem of the historiographical neglect of the Lollard middle period, though some have criticized[21] his exaggeration of the spread of lollardy that resulted from his broad definition of a Lollard as anyone with any anticlerical feelings.[22] Moreover, whereas Thomson was interested in the presence of Lollards in England, my research is primarily concerned with their influence, which is not necessarily contingent on heretic numbers. As for Pecock, Thomson did not mention him or use him much for his analysis, but he did consider the possibility of the bishop being "the acutest orthodox observer of the later Lollards."[23] Thomson made the case that Lollards were an important ecclesiastical threat in the middle period by counting up the numbers of people prosecuted for lollardy, but he did not give an in-depth analysis of why. Moreover, he offered no critical consideration of the boundaries between heresy and orthodoxy in the late medieval period of England.

The latest historical book-length monograph on the topic of Lollard history is *The Lollards* (2002) by Richard Rex. Rex examines the research done by the major Lollard historians before him, including K.B. McFarlane and John A.F. Thomson, and concludes that scholars have unfairly elevated the position of the Lollards in history. To the contrary, he argues that not only were the Lollards small in number, but they also had practically no importance for the course of

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[21] May McKisack, "Reviewed Work: *The Later Lollards, 1414-1520* by John A. F. Thomson," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 17, no. 2 (October 1966): 506-507.
[22] Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 241.
[23] Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 244.

English history, especially during the middle period after the Oldcastle Revolt.[24] Through this study, I hope in part to problematize this most recent theory, which claims that the heretical group is not worth the historian's attention.

These and several other histories reveal not only the presence of continuing, contentious historical debates about the significance of Lollards during the middle phase, but also that no one has considered using Bishop Pecock as an analytical means to understand Lollards and lollardy in the 15th century, as I plan to do.

Scholars have done extensive research on Reginald Pecock, but practically all studies of him fall under the discipline of English literature. As one of the first people to write theological works using the English vernacular,[25] the bishop has unsurprisingly captured the attention of medieval literature scholars such as Mishtooni Bose and Andrew Taylor.[26] Their primary concern is the *text* of Pecock's writings, with the broader circumstances surrounding the production and consumption of his books secondary for the literary researcher. Wendy Scase, a literary scholar, is the foremost authority on Pecock, and she has produced several versions of a biography on the bishop. While her research has a more historical character than most literary scholarship on Pecock's vernacular style and succeeds in creating a better understanding of the medieval writer himself, Scase has no interest in using him to comment on greater historical trends or contexts, as I hope to do. However, since the study of Lollard history intersects so

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[24] Rex, *The Lollards*, xiv-xv.

[25] Though he is famous for at least overseeing the translation of the Latin Vulgate Bible into English, even Wycliffe wrote his theological tracts in Latin.

[26] Kantik Ghosh is also very important for this study, but he is a medieval English scholar of John Wycliffe himself and the earliest Lollard writings. Mishtooni Bose argues that argues that Pecock's vernacular voice is only intelligible because of the work of John Wycliffe and his followers in promoting the use of the vernacular as a legitimate means of communicating academic ideas. Andrew Taylor explains that Pecock differed from the Lollards because he argued that reason was the most important element for deciding religious questions while the Lollards trusted in the spiritual condition of people to do so. Bose, "Reginald Pecock's Vernacular Voice," 226; Andrew Taylor, "Translation, Censorship, Authorship and the Lost Work of Reginald Pecock," in *The Politics of Translation in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, edited by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Luise von Flotow, and Daniel Russell, (Tempe, Arizona: University of Ottawa Press, 2001), 148.

much with that of medieval English literature, my research bears implications for both disciplines as I seek to increase our historical understanding of 15th century Lollards and build the historical background for Pecock's rich vernacular texts. Medieval literary scholars could benefit from taking a wider look at Pecock's life and how lollardy impacted others as well as Pecock; an understanding of his historical interactions with orthodoxy and heresy could enrich medieval literary scholars' study of Pecock's specific orthodox or heretical literary techniques using the English vernacular.

My study also may be of interest to those concerned with the intersections of political and cultural history in late medieval England. Typically, when one thinks of 15th century England, one of the first things one may imagine is the political and military strife wrought by the Wars of the Roses; the topic of religion in English history gets set aside until the English Reformation occurs in the next century. But the members of late medieval society probably did not see the 15th century as more political and the 16th century as more religious; these are divisions that some historians, whether intentionally or not, have encouraged. Therefore, creating more religious histories for 15th century England will help to broaden our view of society beyond simple factional politics. In fact, as will be further explored in this paper, the line between politics and religion, between secular and spiritual authority, in this period was very porous, and issues of heresy and orthodoxy almost always addressed political structure and temporal power in one form or another. Both the royal court and the Church in England felt threatened by heresy and took an active role in policing it. By implication of this fuzzy distinction, then, lollardy and orthodoxy both had political dimensions. This finding makes it all the more important to consider the role of heresy in 15th century English society.

Finally, this study is important as a model for telling the history of marginalized groups. Sometimes, the most tangible and accessible historical sources come from the greatest adversaries of suppressed peoples. With careful study and analysis, such oppositional sources may still be able to yield insights about the group causing outrage or complaint. This does not mean we accept their comments at face value, but such primary texts may be read "against the grain" to discover what a marginal group did to upset the prevailing values and beliefs of a culture at a particular historical moment in time. Provoking reactions is sometimes one of the greatest, even if unintended, ways in which to leave a mark on history. Thus, one of the greatest historical services Pecock could have performed for the Lollards was to openly display his opposition like the mesmerizing blue and green feathers of the bird that provided his surname and then to be publicly, as one medieval poet aptly put it, "deplumed."[27]

In this paper, I argue several points. The primary argument I seek to develop concerns the relationship between heterodoxy and orthodoxy. I aim to show the ways in which the binary between lollardy and traditional Catholicism in 15th century England often fell apart, not only in Pecock's writings but also within his own contemporary networks and circumstances. I find that these divisions were highly permeable in late medieval England. Further, I also hope to show some of the ways in which contemporaries viewed heterodoxy and orthodoxy within a political framework, specifically conceiving of heresy as a threat to ecclesiastical as well as temporal power. This finding thus destabilizes the sometimes rigid church-state, political-religious binary. Both of these arguments ask Lollard scholars to reconsider the importance of heresy in late medieval England and to use anti-lollardy to examine lollardy. During the 15th century, the numbers of Lollards might have dwindled, but their presence and heresy was not forgotten. Some

[27] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 116.

more orthodox people viewed them with fascination; others viewed them with suspicion. Yet no matter what the reaction was, the Lollards and their ideas affected nearly every level of society.

This paper is divided into six sections. The first section analyzes the work of John Wycliffe and the rise of the Lollard heresy. The second examines the rise of Reginald Pecock from his beginnings as an Oxford student to his appointment to the see of Chichester in southern England, providing along the way some context for the period in which Pecock was formulating his theology and writing his books. The third section is dedicated to an analysis of excerpts from *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, while the fourth examines *The Book of Faith*. These two sections focus primarily on Pecock's own interaction with heretical thoughts and methods. Section five continues the historical narrative of Pecock's life and examines the bishop's heresy trial as well as its immediate aftermath, and section six reflects on Pecock's legacy through the 16th century. Finally, following the six sections, the study closes with some concluding thoughts and reflections on directions for further research.

Section 1: John Wycliffe and the Rise of the Lollards

As briefly explained in the introduction, the Lollard movement owed its origins to the ideas of John Wycliffe (c. 1335/8-1384), an Oxford scholar and theologian. Wycliffe had lived through several major events that caused people to question existing religious and socio-political order. In 1348, the Black Death came to the British Isles and wiped out between one-third and one-half of the population, largely irrespective of social status and wealth. Many of those who perished in the plague were clerics upon whom people depended for the administration of sacraments and rites. The diocese of Bath and Wells was so devastated that the bishop decreed in 1349 that if unable to secure a priest, the dying should make confession to a fellow layman or even a laywoman if men were not available.[28] Thus in a time of crisis, laypeople might have had to temporarily assume the duties of a priest. In 1378, the Papal Schism began where multiple people simultaneously claimed to be the legitimate pope until 1417. The existence of two and later three popes ruling at the same time undermined for some the divinity and legitimacy of the papal office.[29] Such inversions and subversions of order might have contributed to a movement among English thinkers to begin to break away from the religious mediation offered by the Church hierarchy and to cultivate their own personal spirituality in study of scripture.[30]

The Oxford lecturer Wycliffe was among the first to articulate such a skeptical attitude toward traditional religion. The scholar focused on the invisible manifestations of God by arguing that appearances were unreliable in the pursuit of spiritual truths. His distrust of human observations led him to lean on divine observations as revealed in the Bible. Much of late medieval English religion relied on outward and visible displays of religiosity and Church

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[28] Miri Rubin, *The Hollow Crown* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 57-58.
[29] Rubin, *The Hollow Crown*, 140, 149.
[30] Rubin, *The Hollow Crown*, 148.

structure, yet Wycliffe was interested in an invisible, personal development of religiosity found by studying scripture.[31] Around 1377-78, he wrote *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, which explained the core of his hermeneutical approach to scriptural text. Wycliffe perceived a logic in scripture that was unified across all the different time periods, authors, and kinds of literature represented in the Bible; he deemed this scriptural logic to be superior to the kind of logic practiced and studied in universities at the time, the kind of logic that was treasured by later scholars such as Pecock. University logic was characterized by dialectical methods and rhetorical argument, and even though these methods of learning were engaging, Wycliffe found them to be too superficial and uncertain to be on the same level as his scriptural logic.[32]

Along with developing this particular hermeneutical approach, Wycliffe also produced various tracts that challenged the politics and religious practices of the Church at that time. He denounced the involvement of prelates in temporal government and the ways in which they abused their wealth; he also criticized the authority of the pope. Probably one of the most controversial ideas that he expressed in his writings concerned the Eucharist. He believed that the bread consecrated by priests remained physically bread and yet was still a spiritual sign of Christ's body perceived by faith.[33] This view was consistent with Wycliffe's thought on how visible things (the bread) had hidden invisible truths (the body of Christ). The Oxford scholar transmitted some of his controversial thoughts and beliefs to his Lollard[34] followers through the

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[31] Rubin, *The Hollow Crown*, 149.

[32] Kantik Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy: Authority and the Interpretation of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 48.

[33] Rubin, *The Hollow Crown*, 149-150.

[34] In terms of John Wycliffe's followers, I wish to distinguish the Lollards from the Wycliffites. The term "Lollard" typically refers to people who adapted Wycliffe's ideas outside the university while I use "Wycliffite" as more of an academic term for Wycliffe's disciples in the university. Wycliffites had a more sophisticated approach to Wycliffe's theology but mostly disappeared as a result of Thomas Arundel's censorship of Wycliffite writings and teachings in the *Constitutions*. Lollards were typically not university-trained, and so they were able to depart more from Wycliffe's ideas and adapt them to their own needs and beliefs. For example, Wycliffe's interpretation of the

translation of the Latin Vulgate Bible into the English vernacular around 1382. He did not translate the Bible alone but had the assistance of several loyal colleagues, who also helped to distribute English scripture to literate laypeople and transferred along with it some of Wycliffe's hermeneutical theories. Thus, his controversial and potentially subversive ideas, which the university had been slow to condemn, were now unleashed upon relatively untrained and unlearned people. Wycliffe was not threatening to traditional society so long as his work remained in Latin and within the walls of the school, but now his ideas had escaped the regulation and supervision of the university institution as it circulated among the wider outside world.[35] The lay people who followed his teachings in some form or fashion and/or who studied (often portions) of his Bible became known as the Lollards, and they grew as a movement under the leadership of those such as Sir John Oldcastle.

A little over a decade after Wycliffe's death, the Lollards presented "The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards" to Parliament and posted the document at St. Paul's Cross. Their express purpose for publishing the conclusions was "for the reformation of the Holy Church of England," which had been corrupted by "the proud prelacy."[36] At this early stage in lollardy, the writer or writers of the conclusions criticized the spiritual and temporal power that priests and other members of the clergy assumed; the practice of the Eucharist, pilgrimages, and prayers/offerings to images as idolatry; the vows of chastity taken by men and women in the Church; and the violence of war and the death penalty. Parliament reportedly had no reaction to these conclusions, but the text remains one of the earliest coherent expressions of Lollard

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Eucharist focused on the symbolic presence of Christ in the bread, but some Lollards took what was then considered a more radical stance on the Eucharist by thinking of it purely in memorial terms (See Hudson and Kenny, "Wyclif, John (d. 1384)," 20.)

[35] Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, 15.

[36] "The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards," *The Geoffrey Chaucer Page*, translation from 1907 version, http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/special/varia/lollards/lollconc.htm.

teachings and beliefs at the height of their influence.[37] The *xxxvii Conclusiones Lollardum* (also, "The Thirty Seven Conclusions of the Lollards") were written shortly thereafter, presumably by John Purvey, one of Wycliffe's students and someone with the education to write the conclusions in both Latin and Middle English.[38] For the most part, these conclusions elaborated on the original twelve conclusions, but the author more expressly granted the Christian the freedom not to believe that everything the pope, a bishop, or the general institution of the Church of Rome stated as true or legislates as holy law.[39] Yet the text also affirmed the power of secular lords and their king and encouraged both powers to correct previous wrongs done in their offices as well as to follow God's laws in their own administrations.[40] Therefore, the Lollards of the late 14th century were mainly interested in reforming ecclesiastical powers as opposed to secular ones, which naturally aggravated people established in the church hierarchy. What these two sets of conclusions tell us about early lollardy is that the heretics mostly restricted their critiques to the religious sphere, and those with purely temporal power seemed at most apathetic.

The rising popularity of lollardy and its potential to subvert the current orthodox Catholic tradition was deeply disturbing to many in the Church, chief among them Thomas Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury (1396-1414). In response, on January 14, 1408, Arundel published his Constitutions to better regulate the teachings of English preachers and school or university teachers. The sixth constitution specifically targeted Wycliffe:

> "Quia insuper nova via frequentius seducit, quam antiqua, volumus et mandamus, quod nullus libellus sive tractatus per Johannem Wycliff, aut alium quemcunque tempore suo, aut citra noviter compositus, sive inposterum componendus, amodo legatur...sive secundum ipsum doceatur, nisi per universitatem Oxonii aut Cantabrigiae...primitus

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[37] "The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards." (This information comes from contextual information provided by the Harvard *Geoffrey Chaucer* website editor about "The Twelve Conclusions.")
[38] "The Thirty-Seven Conclusions of the Lollards," *The English Historical Review* 26, no. 104 (October 1911): 739.
[39] "The Thirty-Seven Conclusions of the Lollards," 745-746.
[40] "The Thirty-Seven Conclusions of the Lollards," 743, 748.

> examinetur, et examinatus unanimiter per eosdem, deinde per nos seu successores nostros expresse approbetur...Quod siquis libellum vel tractatum huiusmodi in scholis vel alibi, ut supra, legerit, sive secundum ipsum docuerit, contra formam supradictam, ut seminator schismatis atque fautor haeresis puniatur."[41]

This particular statement was one of the first major restrictions on Wycliffite studies in the universities and resulted in the decline of university-trained theologians and clergy who adhered to the heresiarch's ideas. The primate of England probably felt that the growth of Wycliffism and lollardy particularly threatened the Church and desired to purge it of heretical influences from the top down by targeting educational institutions.

Arundel, in turn, led English clergymen in the suppression and punishment of Lollards and the university Wycliffites, but they did not receive much backing from kingdom's temporal powers until Oldcastle led a Lollard revolt against crown in 1414. Though the rebellion was a swift and miserable failure with most of the rebels taken prisoner, it remained an important symbol of the Lollards' treasonous tendencies,[42] which contrasts noticeably with their previous conclusions indicating faith in the divine rule and the righteousness of the king and his lords.[43] Historian John A.F. Thomson has pointed to this revolt as the great turning point in the persecution of the Lollards, which led many to leave the movement altogether and the remaining minority to take their heresy underground by meeting in secret.[44] Around 1431, King Henry VI expressed his outrage against several gatherings of Lollards near St. Edmundsbury. In his letter to the local abbot on June 5th, he described:

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[41] David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, A.D. 466-1718*, Volume 3 (London: R. Gosling, 1737), 317.
[42] Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 4-5.
[43] "The Thirty-Seven Conclusions of the Lollards," 743, 748.
[44] Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 5-7.

> "aswel lollardes as other robbers & pillers of oure peple, were, in grete noumbre, & in ryotous wyse, gaderying in the said Shire of Kent, to haue do the harme that they coude haue myght, and to have subũtyd al the polletique reule of this oure land."[45]

The king was even more explicit in describing exactly how he thought the Lollards would disrupt the existing social orders in England in his letter to the alderman and bailiffs of St. Edmundsbury, dated July 6th:

> "heretiques in this oure Reaume, cõmenly called lollardis, the which now late by settyng vp of cedicious billes, and oywise, treiturly exhorted, stired, and meued ye poeple of oure land...wolde destroie all politique rule and goũnaile, spũel and temporel."[46]

Henry's words show that the king viewed Lollard activities as a potent threat to both the spiritual and the secular powers of England and well after the rebellion of 1414.

Though a certainly limited sampling of a much broader history and historiography of early Lollard activities and beliefs, these sources demonstrate how this heresy evolved from primarily presenting a challenge to religious figures, who could hold both spiritual and temporal power, to provoking secular authorities. More and more of traditional Catholic society felt the implications of lollardy as the 15th century moved forward. Therefore, arguably, the heresy itself, if not the Lollard people themselves, might have grown in significance during the middle phase.

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[45] John Gage, ed., "Letters from King Henry VI to the Abbot of St. Edmundsbury, and to the Alderman and Bailiffs of the Town, for the Suppression of the Lollards," Archaeologia 23 (1831): 340.
[46] Gage, "Letters from King Henry VI," 341.

Section 2: Reginald Pecock (c.1390s-1456)

Reginald Pecock was born in the 1390s, at the latest 1396.[47] His birthplace might have been in Wales, but sources indicate that he at the least had Welsh heritage. For example, one of the bishop's greatest critics, Thomas Gascoigne, referred to him as *Reginaldus Pecock de Wallia*.[48] The question of Pecock's origins is important in the context of the late medieval period. The Welshman was born during the tail end of what the historian R. R. Davies refers to as the Edwardian phase of colonization (1282-1400). This period was characterized by an English program to colonize Wales that was supported by the English government. Foreigners had settled Wales previously, but the specifically *English* colonization during the Edwardian phase was so intense that, as Davies suggests, a racial consciousness began to emerge between the Welsh and the English.[49] The English viewed themselves as a superior race deserving the privileges of political and economic power over their Welsh counterparts, while the Welsh saw themselves as a people wrongly deprived of their lands and oppressed by the English. Indeed, perhaps no phrase captured the English contempt for Welshmen better than the common late medieval English phrase that they were *meri Wallici*, mere Welshmen.[50] In this context, Gascoigne's reference to Pecock's Welsh background carried a negative connotation.

In 1400, Owen Glyndŵr led a rebellion against the English crown that enjoyed widespread support among the oppressed Welsh people. This revolt could not have come at a worse time for the English crown. Within about a year after Henry IV usurped the throne from his cousin Richard II, Glyndŵr assumed for himself the title of Prince of Wales, which at the

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[47] She arrives at these dates based on the dates for Pecock's schooling and the average age of men for those various stages of education at that time. Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 76.
[48] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 76.
[49] R. R. Davies, "Colonial Wales," *Past & Present* no. 65 (November 1974): 3-5.
[50] Davies, "Colonial Wales," 12-13.

time belonged to Henry IV's son and heir, the future Henry V. In a time of great instability and questioning of dynastic legitimacy, a Welsh rebel attempted to usurp the position of a usurper's son. Glyndŵr skillfully played off the disloyalties of certain northern English magnates who were unhappy with the new king to distract Prince Henry from his efforts to restore order to Wales. Unsurprisingly, Parliament responded to the rebels with the passage of the Penal Laws against Wales in 1402, which restricted the freedoms of Welsh people to gather together and hold office.[51] Subsequently, those Englishmen who were loyal to the Lancastrian dynasty and the English monarchs themselves looked at the people of Wales with an air of suspicion. However, despite any disadvantages associated with his ethnicity, Pecock enjoyed a fairly successful career, as will be reviewed in the following discussion.

Pecock first appears in the historical documentary record in the year 1414, when he was elected to a fellowship at Oriel College at Oxford, presumably after earning a Bachelor of Arts.[52] This year was a significant one for Lollard history as well since John Oldcastle's failed rebellion occurred in January and February saw the death of Thomas Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury and leading opponent of Lollards and Wycliffites. While there is no evidence for how Pecock reacted to the Lollard revolt, it is likely that at this early stage in his academic career, he probably approved of the condemnation of the rebels. This opinion may be deduced from the young scholar's pro-Arundel (and thus anti-Wycliffite) activities. During Pecock's time at Oriel, the college became divided between Arundel's opponents and supporters. Henry Kayll, John Martill, and Thomas Lentwardyn were among the most notable pro-Arundel fellows, and Pecock frequently allied himself with these men. For example, during a controversial election for the Oriel provostship in 1417, Pecock voted with Kayll and Martill for Lentwardyn. Scase even

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[51] Rubin, *The Hollow Crown*, 176-179.
[52] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 76.

suggests that the disappearance of Pecock's name alongside members of his pro-Arundel circle after the summer of 1424 indicated his departure from Oriel around that time or shortly thereafter.[53] From the beginning of his academic career, Pecock situated himself as an opponent of lollardy.

As a fellow at Oriel, Pecock began holding leadership positions and developing the skills he needed in order to become a successful late medieval clergyman. In the early 1420s, he was ordained as an acolyte and subdeacon, a deacon, and a priest at the Dominican friars' church at Dunstable, the Hatfield parish church, and the convent church of Spalding respectively.[54] Before he left Oriel, Pecock earned a Master of Arts and an additional bachelor's degree in theology.[55] Pecock's own path of ordination in the Church was fairly typical for Oxford fellows,[56] but the amount of time Pecock took to earn his degrees was more unusual. On average, the English medieval scholar took four years to complete the Master of Arts and eight years to then earn the Bachelor of Theology, yet Pecock completed both in about ten years, which has led Scase to guess that he finished his master's degree two years early.[57]

Pecock's first benefice was the rectory of St. Michael's Church in Gloucester, to which he was admitted on October 25, 1424. The evidence for this stage in the clergyman's career has been only recently uncovered, and historians previously thought Pecock had secured the post thanks to the patronage of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. In actuality, the young churchman benefitted from a temporary ordinance that required religious houses such as St. Michael's to have benefices available for recent university graduates. This shift in how scholars understand

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[53] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 77-78.
[54] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 80.
[55] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 79. Historians know this because the papal bull that provided him with the benefice of St. Asaph describes him as holding both degrees, which he could only have earned at Oriel.
[56] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 80.
[57] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 79. It could be that Pecock's rapid pace is an indication of his academic talent, but this cannot be determined with certainty.

Pecock shows that the bishop was less involved (if involved at all) with the political squabbles and rivalries of noblemen by having the Duke of Gloucester as his patron. He may have actually benefited from his Welsh heritage since the bishop who oversaw his appointment, Philip Morgan, was one of the three Welsh bishops to have English sees in the 15th century. Pecock left his rectorship on September 1, 1431, because he had been selected as master of Whittington College in London.[58]

When considering the intersections between Bishop Pecock's own biography and the Lollard movement of the mid-15th century, Whittington College deserves special attention because it was here where Pecock really began his own intellectual program of producing anti-Lollard writings. The college was very young when Pecock became the master; it was founded in 1423 upon the estate of Richard Whittington, a former mercer and mayor of London, to educate priests and offer charity through an associated almshouse. The late mayor also established his college as part of the Church of St. Michael Paternoster Royal, which had existed in London since at least the early 13th century. The Mercers' Company of London, presumably due to its connection to fellow mercer Richard Whittington, was one of the main patrons for Whittington College, but the organization did not take over supervision of the college's affairs until John Carpenter, a London clerk and the man appointed to oversee the college, died in 1442. It appears that Carpenter was primarily responsible for Pecock's appointment at Whittington, although the power to offer the mastership of the college and the accompanying position of rector of the Church of St. Michael Paternoster Royal belonged to the Mercers' Company.[59] However, it was not enough for Pecock to simply win the favor of Carpenter and the Mercers' Company; the institution's charter stipulated that the college master also had to be elected by the majority of the

[58] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 80-81.
[59] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 81-82.

college's secular chaplains, possess a distinguished reputation, and hold a theology degree.[60] Evidently, Pecock satisfied these requirements. The institution of Whittington along with the people who managed it, Carpenter and the Mercers' Company of London, would play integral roles in shaping Pecock's London networks.

As master of Whittington College, Pecock lived next to the Church of St. Michael Paternoster Royal. He was charged with the administration and the discipline of the college generally and had a few particular duties. For instance, he had to eat with the priests of the college and at each meal he chose one of them to explain the meaning of a passage of Holy Scripture, a homily, or a life of a saint. The Whittington master performed these activities according to college's standards, but given the passion for religious education that exudes from his later writings, one wonders if these experiences helped Pecock to formulate theories about priestly knowledge. Perhaps the burden of obligation was not so heavy for Pecock since he gained invaluable insights into the level of religious intelligence among late medieval priests. After Carpenter died in 1442, Pecock absorbed some of his responsibilities, which included the power to appoint a tutor for the almshouse.[61] The college master thus gained even more power over religious education at the college. As such a young, early master at a new institution, Pecock had to work within the constraints of his appointed duties, yet he had unique opportunities to observe and influence the priests who studied at Whittington. He both pondered and observed clerical education in these years, and this experience serves to give more credence to Pecock's comments on priestly learning (or rather, lack of learning) in his anti-Lollard works.

Outside of his immediate duties at Whittington, Pecock experienced the city and people of London in ways that seem to have directly influenced his writings. For instance, shortly after

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[60] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 87.
[61] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 89.

Parliament confirmed the letters patent for the almshouse and the college, Pecock brought several cases to the London Possessory Assizes to sue for rents that he claimed were due to the rector of the Church of St. Michael Paternoster Royal.[62] This firsthand experience with secular legal processes might have informed the legal analogies he later used to make various theological points.[63] Pecock also engaged with the urban life of London, especially with the mercers and the craftsmen. After the death of Carpenter, Pecock and the London mercers worked together to run the college, and the master coordinated the involvement of various city organizations with Whittington charities. The knowledge Pecock displayed in the *The Reule of Crysten Religioun* about mercers testifies to his remarkable familiarity with the legal and business dealings of their London Company. Moreover, a passage from another one of Pecock's books, *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, showed a detailed understanding of the art of cutlery, which the clergyman no doubt learned from the London cutlers' guild since the craftsmen used the Church of St. Michael Paternoster Royal as their guild church.[64] The college master did not write his anti-Lollards works in isolation but incorporated his own peculiar life experiences into his books to help to strengthen his arguments.

Outside of Whittington College, Pecock also engaged with Londoners who held similar interests in general lay education. One of his associates, John Colop, created a system whereby wealthy people could charitably will some of their money to fund "common-profit" books, which were collections of religious texts that were loaned to interested lay people. Such lay readers

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[62] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 88. I believe he won this case. Scase uses it as an example of Pecock testing the legitimacy of the institution, but she doesn't really say whether he won. Yet given that she argues that one of the defendants helped to carry out the foundation of Whittington College and thus the defendants were "in" on the lawsuit, I think everyone involved would have wanted Pecock to win.

[63] Reginald Pecock, *Book of Faith: A Fifteenth Century Theological Tractate, ed. from the MS. in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge* (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1909), 228.

[64] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 89; Reginald Pecock, *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, Volume 1, edited by Churchill Babington (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), 50.

were supposed to study the common-profit books while praying for the soul of the donor. Then upon the reader's death or during periods of time when the reader had no use for the book, he or she was to loan the book to another layperson. Thus, the religious texts would have been circulated among various literate Londoners at little cost to them and for the "common profit": the education of ordinary English men and women.[65] Another of Pecock's associates, John Carpenter, the supervisor for Whittington College and the almshouse and executor of Whittington's estate, seems to have prompted the founding of the Guildhall Library in London. He must have liked the college master's taste in educational materials because he chose Pecock along with William Lichfield to decide what books would fill the new library.[66] Pecock's involvement with these London intellectual networks must have fostered the college master's commitment to lay education. Indeed, his writings emphasized the need for English people to have a better knowledge of logical reasoning and the Catholic faith.[67] Therefore, Pecock had opportunities to put his theories on education into practice by participating in these London networks.

Pecock's associations in London are significant for understanding his own engagement and wider interactions with heresy in the late medieval city. He could have used his educational networks to disseminate books and tracts that (in his opinion) encouraged traditional Catholic behaviors and beliefs. Yet the networks also served as a way for the college master to encounter heretical thought. For example, in the mid-fifteenth century, Colop's estate funded a common-profit book that had five items, including a known Wycliffite tract on lay religious education

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[65] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 90.
[66] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 90.
[67] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 9.

titled "The holi prophete Dauid seiþ."[68] Literary scholar Mary Dove even argues that Colop specifically chose to include this tract along with selections from the Wycliffite *Glossed Gospels* in his common-profit book. Moreover, several scholars agree that Pecock read at least one of these selections in order to inform one of his anti-Lollard arguments in *The Repressor*.[69] Pecock was probably one of many adherents to traditional Catholicism who came across such heretical texts interspersed with orthodox texts in the common-profit books. Two Oxford graduates who immediately succeeded Pecock as master of Whittington College, Thomas Eborall and William Ive, also shared a passion for suppressing heresy and both owned heretical texts or texts from heretical sources. Eborall possessed part of the New Testament translated into English and *The Pore Caitif*, which typically has been associated with lollardy. Ive owned Wycliffe's *De Mandatis Divinus*.[70] Thus, Pecock was perhaps not alone in his position as an adversary of heretics who nonetheless actively engaged with heretical intellectual material.

On June 14, 1444, Pecock received the honor of being appointed the bishop of St. Asaph. This event was historically important because St. Asaph was a Welsh see, and between the time of Owen Glyndŵr's rebellion and the end of the 15th century, Pecock was the only Welsh clergyman to be appointed to a bishopric in Wales. This had become a rarity because Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI now feared that the presence of Welsh bishops in Wales might fan the flames of rebellion among their parishioners. In response, the crown actively discouraged such arrangements.[71] As extraordinary as Pecock's promotion was, his execution of the new office was much less impressive. He probably did not devote much time to the see nor did he leave London

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[68] Mary Dove, *The First English Bible: The Text and Context of Wycliffite Versions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 50. This book is referred to as Cambridge University Library MS Ff.6.31, and in addition to the Wycliffite tract aforementioned, it includes "A Pistle of Discrecioun of Stirings," "A Pistle of Preier," Richard Lavenham's "A Little Treatise on the Seven Deadly Sins," and "Treatise of Discretion of Spirits."

[69] Dove, *The First English Bible*, 51; Bose, "Reginald Pecock's Vernacular Voice," 230-231.

[70] Dove, *The First English Bible*, 47-50.

[71] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 83.

to administer it in person. Now over forty years after Glyndŵr's rebellion, the Cathedral, bishop's palace, canons' houses, and bishop's houses in St. Asaph all remained in utter disrepair.[72]

Several years after Pecock achieved his extraordinary and historic appointment to St. Asaph, he stirred his first great controversy. In May 1447, he preached a sermon at St. Paul's Cross in London on the duties of a bishop.[73] Pecock complained that too often inferior clergy and lay people maligned non-resident and/or non-preaching bishops, and this criticism wrongfully hurt the latter's authority and reputation. He developed seven conclusions arguing that bishops were not obligated to preach since they had greater duties to fulfill and that various circumstances could excuse a bishop from physically living in his diocese.[74] After his sermon, Pecock distributed copies of his conclusions in English for the consideration of the (literate) population at large. Sources seem to imply that he received some negative responses to his thoughts on a bishop's role in the Church. One manuscript records a statement that Pecock made before John Stafford, Archbishop of Canterbury (1443-1452). At the beginning of this statement, Pecock claimed that there were some people who described his conclusions as heretical or sophistical. The bishop asked Stafford to issue a call for anyone who disagreed with his seven conclusions so that Pecock could defend his arguments against such a contradictor.[75] Pecock seemed so agitated by these accusations that Scase determines that this statement was part of a threat to bring a defamation suit against Pecock's opponents.[76]

So who were Pecock's contradictors at this point in his life? Who was accusing him of heresy? One might expect them to have been Lollards since they criticized the abuses of absentee

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[72] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 93.
[73] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 95.
[74] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 2, 616-617. (Comes from *Abbreviatio Reginaldi Pecok* reproduced at the end of this edition of *The Represssor*.)
[75] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 2, 615-616.
[76] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 96.

and non-preaching bishops; it was likely that Lollards would not have approved of his St. Paul's Cross sermon. Pecock himself stated generally that the laity and preaching clerics disagreed with him, but he offered no specific examples. Though his account of Pecock's life was often unreliable, Gascoigne offered the names of many of Pecock's intellectual enemies during the late 1440s, including Master Peter Hyrford, Master William Millington, Doctor Thomas Eborall, Doctor John Burbach, Doctor Hugh Damlett, Master Gilbert Worthington, and Master William Lichfield.[77] These opponents were well established in the religious-intellectual networks of London, and they did not have any explicit connections with Lollard heretics. They must have considered themselves to be proponents of orthodox Catholicism. This detail is significant because among the first people to oppose Pecock and possibly accuse him of heretical ideas were educated elites who identified as faithful Catholics. This is an example of how Lollard-ish criticisms could transcend the boundary between heterodox and orthodox society at the time.

In 1450, the clergyman was transferred to Chichester, an English see - his final major appointment and yet another notable accomplishment. With it, Pecock became one of only three Welsh bishops in the 15th century to have an English bishopric. Equally significantly, Pecock's move to Chichester - which he did administer in person at least some of the time - did not break his connections to London.[78] As evidenced by his sermons, it did not trouble Pecock to be an absentee bishop,[79] and so during his time as the Whittington College master and as a bishop over two sees, he remained in geographically close proximity to the Lollard communities in London, which were probably some of the largest ones in England.[80]

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[77] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 98-99. Interestingly enough, at least two of these men had a clear connection to Pecock. John Carpenter selected Pecock and Lichfield to choose books for the Guildhall Library, and Eborall, as previously mentioned, succeeded Pecock as master of Whittington College.
[78] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 99-100.
[79] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 95.
[80] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 92.

Section 3: *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*

Reginald Pecock wrote *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*[81] around the year 1449, but it was not published until the mid-1450s.[82] In *The Book of Faith* (1456), Reginald Pecock described this work as "not ȝitt into this present day utterly into uce delyvered."[83] However, scholars date the publication of *The Repressor* before *The Book of Faith*. Therefore, this statement probably referred to Pecock's *The Repressor* not being widely read at the time that he published *The Book of Faith*. *The Repressor* includes a prologue and five parts, which range in length from nine to twenty chapters. The work can best be described as an extensive list of syllogistic arguments, which when published by the Rolls Series filled two volumes.[84] It was a substantial piece that placed great demands on the time and mental energy of its readers.[85] In any study of Lollard history in the mid-15th century, such a theological work cannot be lightly dismissed. Moreover, *The Repressor* was the only known book for which traditional Catholic authorities crafted a response (the *Gladius Salomonis* by John Bury) during Pecock's heresy trial.[86] Moreover, this book not only captures the heart of Pecock's unique thoughts on the role of reason in theology but it also offers a great resource for observing how the bishop distinguished himself from the Lollards.

In the later *Book of Faith*, Pecock provided some context for *The Repressor* and its place in his overall project for educating the laypeople in theology. For instance, he expressed his intention that the earlier piece would join *The Book of Faith* as an antidote to the poison of

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[81] For the rest of the paper, I will refer to this work with its shortened name, *The Repressor*.
[82] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, xxii.
[83] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 119.
[84] Reginald Pecock, *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, Volumes 1 and 2, edited by Churchill Babington (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), xxii.
[85] Taylor, "Translation, Censorship, Authorship, and the Lost Work," 154.
[86] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 108.

lollardy. Specifically, *The Repressor* would target what Pecock perceived as an excessive reliance on Holy Scripture.[87] However, in *The Repressor* itself, Pecock chose to open the book by presenting the problem that certain members of the lay party had been criticizing and reproving the clergy without just cause.[88] The author identified eleven "gouernancis" (institutions or practices) that the Lollards argued against, including the presence of images in church, pilgrimages, temporal wealth of the clergy, church hierarchies, church laws, religious orders, clerical prayers, decorations in cathedrals, the Eucharist, making oaths, and the killing of people by war or execution.[89] Pecock's work addressed all of the aforesaid criticism at least to some extent, but before discussing these issues, the bishop tried to destroy the root of all the critiques of the clergy: Lollard belief in the superiority and accessibility of scripture to all, lay and clerical alike.

Probably one of the most striking passages in *The Repressor* is the one in which Pecock dismantled lay emphasis on the Bible. This section stands out because whereas most of the other parts of the book were devoted to rehearsing and then countering Lollard arguments against current Church practices, part one included Pecock's own creative response to the heretical theology and provided a new alternative to Lollard thought. Moreover, this very alternative, an emphasis on reason, was not widely accepted by orthodox academics but was unique to Pecock because it appears in his list of heresies.[90] This "doom of reason,"[91] as Pecock referred to it, is key to understanding how Pecock managed to cross the boundaries between orthodoxy and

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[87] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 114.

[88] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 1.

[89] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 4; Reginald Pecock, *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, Volume 2, edited by Churchill Babington (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), 321, 416, 452, 476, and 561-565.

[90] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 134. I found that *The Repressor* presents certain challenges for the Bible whereas there are more (potential) challenges to the Church itself in *The Book of Faith*.

[91] This particular phrase is found throughout the book.

heresy. The bishop knew that Lollards and lay people with Lollard sympathies would not listen to arguments based on the authority of the institution of the Catholic Church. Yet he did not want to go to scripture to defend his position either because Pecock did not want to encourage even more reliance on the Bible. Pecock found his solution in natural reason, which he believed was as compelling as common sense. He thought even heretics and traditional Catholics could agree on the issue of reason, but it was this very idea that got Pecock into trouble with orthodox authorities.[92]

Bishop Pecock introduces his philosophy on the relationship between reason and divine knowledge in chapter two of part one. A partial summary of this philosophy may be found in the following quotation: "It longith not to Holi Scripture, neither it is his office...neither it is his part forto grounde eny gouernance or deede or seruice of God, or eny lawe of God, or eny trouthe which mannis resoun bi nature may fynde, leerne, and knowe."[93] From this statement, it follows that the biblical scriptures may have been useful in explaining certain concepts, but they were not *necessary* for learning what laws and practices are acceptable to God. In fact, Pecock argued that the Bible was not comprehensive enough and relying solely on it for spirituality and morals left a person as malnourished as a child who eats sweets alone and forgoes nutrients s/he needs to be healthy.[94] Moreover, he declared that reason ought to govern one's understanding of Holy Scripture, rather than personal morality or what some people (namely Lollards) alleged was divine insight. Indeed, he insisted that the intellect is so powerful that even a corrupt person with adequate reasoning skills may be able to discern the true meaning of Bible passages.[95] The

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[92] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 110; Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 125-126; Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 10.
[93] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 10.
[94] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 12 and 67.
[95] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 94.

bishop's hermeneutical theories reveal an academic who was passionate about the power of reason to bring people in line with the orthodoxy of the Church.

If there was one thing that the Lollards and Pecock could have agreed upon, it would have been that people needed to become more educated. However, the Lollards were more interested in helping people to read and study the Bible for themselves, while the bishop wanted to promote a specific style of interpretation. It is interesting to note that whereas Lollard writers argued for the value of a vernacular English translation of the Bible,[96] Pecock wished "but wolde God it [logic] were leerned of al the comon peple in her modiris langage."[97] The bishop did not care so much about the accessibility of the scriptures or in what language they appeared as he did about the widespread learning of the skills of reasoning and logic. Such educational tools would have had a wide range of application, from more spiritual matters such as reading Holy Scripture or justifying Church governance to more temporal matters such as studying the "Kingis lawe of Ynglond."[98] Pecock repeatedly pointed to *reason* as the answer for supposedly uninformed and doubting complaints against the Church. One must wonder whether the bishop would have developed this heretical idea were it not for the intellectual challenge that the Lollards posed. After all, the bishop might have rightly guessed that an argument based on the authority of the Church would have been totally ineffective because, as he admitted multiple times, people like the Lollards no longer trusted such authority.[99] Therefore, he had to appeal to something different, something that the greatest clergyman had already mastered and that even the average person could learn: logical reasoning (especially syllogistic reasoning). In this way, the Lollards

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[96] Jerome Barlow and William Roye, et al., *Rede me and be nott wrothe...A Proper Dyaloge betwene a Gentillman and a Husbandman...A Compendious Olde Treatyse Showeynge how that we ought to have the Scripture in Englysshe...*, ed. Edward Arber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849), 172-184.
[97] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 9.
[98] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 9.
[99] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 7; Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 111.

may have indirectly influenced the bishop by prompting him to seek solutions to the problem of religious heterodoxy in places other than the Church or the Bible. Pecock might not have explained his philosophy so extensively in writing and gotten himself into trouble with English authorities if he had not pursued the correction of Lollards in this way.

The Repressor also provides some rich glimpses into late medieval English society in general. For example, his comments related to gender are informative about the Lollards themselves as well as medieval ideas about the meaning of male and female difference. In criticizing Lollard enthusiasm for the contents of the scriptures, Pecock mentioned that the Lollards read the Bible because it is "miche delectable and sweete" and that this motivation is "not in her intellecciouη or resouη" but "in lijk maner doon wommen, for thei reulen hem silf as it were in all her gouernauncis after her affecciouη and not aftir resouη."[100] Here, one can see the classical perspective that rationality is a characteristic of men whereas women are creatures of emotion. Given Pecock's focus on the value of reason in dispelling the lies of heresies, this statement would have been demeaning to Lollard men, who held this supposedly womanly love for Holy Scripture. In this passage, the bishop exposed some medieval ideas on the superiority of masculine reason.

Moreover, on the topic of the gender and heresy, this work demonstrates that Pecock was particularly disturbed by the involvement of women in the Lollard movement, as evidenced by the following statement:

> "Wolde God thilk men and wommen, (and namelich thilk wommen whiche maken hem silf so wise bi the Bible...and ben ful coppid of speche anentis clerkis, and avaunten and profren hem silf whanne their ben in her iolite and in her owne housis forto argue and dispute aȝens clerkis,) schulden not were couercheefis into tyme thei couthen schewe bi her Bible where it is expresseli bede."[101]

[100] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 66-67.
[101] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 123.

The parenthetical idea specifically targeted Lollard women as a special cause of Pecock's annoyance with the group. These Lollard women appear to have been outspoken and unafraid to undermine the authority of male clergy, even in their own homes. Such a bold subversion of male authority must have been particularly infuriating for the bishop who upheld the divide between superior rationality in men and inferior emotionality in women. This passages shows that women might have played an active role in learning the Bible and defending Lollards ideas even in the mid-fifteenth century.[102]

Bishop Pecock also described some late medieval religious activities in his discussion of Lollard arguments against images and pilgrimages. In particular, his depiction of a Palm Sunday procession was quite vivid. As a bare cross passes through the crowd of people, "the principal preest with the queer schal falle doun to grounde at the leest vpon alle the knees and schal singe" and praise the cross as if it were Jesus Christ.[103] While the choir members and clergy sing, "al the lay peple in the processioun knelen doun and knocken her brestis and summe fallen so doun that her brestis and mouthis touchen the grounde."[104] Thus, Pecock offered one example showing the pageantry and physical display of popular devotion. In another instance, the bishop described how men come to a cross on Good Friday "in louȝest wise creping on alle her knees," and "the

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[102] Pecock's observation is significant in light of recent scholarly debate on the role of women and gender in lollardy. Margaret Aston was one of the first scholars of Lollard studies to address this topic in her article "Lollard Women Priests?" in *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), pp. 49-70. In this piece, Aston argued that Lollard women were empowered by enjoying religious and education equality with their male counterparts and theoretically could have become Lollard priests. She even describes Pecock as noticing "in passing" the arrogance of such women in this passage of *The Repressor* (Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, 51), but I think Pecock has more than just a casual annoyance with them. Shannon McSheffrey, author of *Gender and Heresy: Women and Men in Lollard Communities, 1420-1530* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), answers Aston by arguing that Lollard communities were just as patriarchal as orthodox society and that most Lollard women took part in the heresy only because their male relatives or husbands first joined the Lollards. Interestingly, she does not cite Pecock's comments on women that suggest that at least some women in Lollard communities did enjoy agency and actively defended their religious views. Perhaps Pecock should be brought more into future scholarly discussions on lollardy and gender.

[103] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 206.

[104] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 207.

feet of thilk crosse thei in deuoutist maner kissen."[105] Again, devotion required very dramatic expressions for a person's body. This perhaps provides important contextual information for the Lollards because it would have been very visible if one did not engage in these activities. Yet for at least some Lollards, these actions were seen as immoral and irreligious because they constituted false idolatry to a manmade sculpture.[106] Interestingly, Bishop Pecock recognized the significant dilemma here: "thei (the Lollards) ben out of eese, whanne thai seen tho dedis and gouernauncis doon; and whanne thei musten nedis for drede do tho deedis and gouernauncis, as othere men hem doon."[107] These heretics felt morally compromised by participating in the cross-centered forms of worship, yet at the same time they felt compelled to join everyone else; otherwise, they might have been seen as nonconformist and come under the scrutiny of the Church, which punished heretics with humiliation, pain, and death. English Christianity at this time was of course more public than private, and this had grave consequences for heretics.

Finally, in his critique of the Lollards, Pecock gave certain insights concerning the heretical group and how they were perceived by larger society in the mid-fifteenth century. For instance, as mentioned previously, the Lollards had a great reverence for the Bible. In *The Book of Faith* Pecock's heavy referencing of early saints supposedly connected with biblical figures hinted at this esteem of the Bible,[108] but *The Repressor* was far more explicit on this topic. In this work, the author appeared to be very amused with the Lollards' insistence on the sufficiency of Holy Scripture because he argues this point *ad absurdum* in the following way: "In al Holi Scripture it is not expressid bi bidding, counseiling, or witnessing, or bi eni ensaumpling" that people "schulden bake eny fleisch or fisch in an ovyn" or "schulde make and vse clockis forto

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[105] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 207.
[106] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 202.
[107] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 207-208.
[108] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 189; Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 193.

knowe the houris of the dai and nyȝt," so people should stop doing these things based on the logic of the Lollards.[109] The Lollards did seem to have a more literal take on the contents of the Bible than the average orthodox person. Pecock also discussed how Lollards might have even favored certain parts of the scriptures over others. When he described one of their erroneous opinions, he said that they would only allow governances that are found either in the New Testament or in both the Old and New Testament (save what is revoked in the Old Testament by the New Testament).[110] The way he framed this opinion made it seem as though some Lollards adhere to the entirety of the scriptures while others only pay attention to the New Testament. Thus Bishop Pecock revealed some of the differences within Lollard communities on the subject of the Bible.

Another issue Pecock indirectly addressed was the structure of the Lollard communities at this time. In part four, the bishop explained Lollard grievances against all the many states and degrees of the Church hierarchy. If some of the Lollards were to reform the Church structure, Pecock explained, they would have all priests be of the same degree over deacons and lay people.[111] Such a major reorganization would make a certain amount of sense considering that the disconnected groups of Lollards would have had one or two informal lay preachers among each community without overarching leadership. Moreover, Lollards commonly referred to the pope as Antichrist and his subordinates as Antichrist's members, so they probably would have

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[109] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 118. No time-telling devices using "peise" and "stroke" were around in biblical times, and oven baking was usually for bread, not animal flesh.

[110] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 5. I take Pecock's description of following governances in both the Old and New Testament save what is revoked in the Old Testament by the New Testament to mean that these particular Lollards revered both the Old Testament and the New Testament, but they did not follow all the specific governances laid out in the Levitical laws of the Old Testament because certain New Testament passages released them from the obligation to obey many of said laws (e.g., for dietary laws, Mark 7:18-19 regards all foods as clean; Galatians 5:6 permits male Gentile believers to remain uncircumcised, etc.).

[111] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 417.

objected to such concentrations of power.[112] Pecock indicated that at least some of the Lollards might have had plans to empower congregations in the face of their priests. In the section on temporal endowments of the clergy, Pecock said that such Lollards conclude:

> "if eny bischop, preest, or clerk do not dewli the werkis of his office anentis his peple ouer whom he is sett and putt, the same peple mowe iustli withdrawe and aȝenholde the tithis and offringis and alle othere paymentis of rentis and dewtees."[113]

This intriguing proposition would enable parishioners to withhold tithes and other payments if they saw a priest abusing his office or if, for instance, he did not preach to or teach them enough. This idea causes one to wonder what kind of checks the Lollards placed on the power of their lay preachers.

In *The Repressor*, I found some of the critical components for Pecock's main philosophical or theological framework. The bishop's engagement with Lollard thought unveiled some of his own heretical tendencies because he had to minimize both the authority of the Bible, which the Lollards esteemed too greatly, and the authority of the Church, which the Lollards discredited. For him, the natural solution for redeeming the Lollards to orthodoxy was to appeal to them primarily on the authority of reason, and, as will be discussed below, the Church was not comfortable with this elevation of reason above all other authorities. This section also reveals various ways in which Pecock conceived of the Lollards. From gender roles to church organization to worship practices, the bishop found the Lollards to be a stubbornly aberrant group of people. The bishop's observations serve as a rich resource for how mid-15th century mainstream society might have viewed the Lollards and may in part reflect the actual beliefs and activities of Lollards at the time.

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[112] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 417.
[113] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 381.

Section 4: *The Book of Faith*

Reginald Pecock probably wrote *The Book of Faith* over a great length of time, perhaps even years, before he released the final product in the year 1456. The book contained a prologue and at least seventeen chapters divided into at least two parts; unfortunately, the best manuscript to have survived to the present day is missing its concluding sections. Nevertheless, when it came to writing against the Lollard heresy, the cleric was rarely at a loss for words, and *The Book of Faith* still contains an abundance of information regarding Pecock's historical context and Lollard communities. *The Book of Faith* is important to consider in addition to *The Repressor* because in the former, Pecock more clearly articulated his intentions and methods for writing anti-Lollard works, along with providing insights into Lollard communities and his general late medieval context.

The bishop wrote *The Book of Faith* with the intention that Lollards and those strongly influenced by their ideas would read this text. In the prologue, Pecock identified the rampant spiritual disease of heresy as being caused by "the lay peple whiche ben clepid lollardis."[114] As mentioned before, the opening of *The Book of Faith* described this book and *The Repressor* as part of the cure for the lollardy. *The Repressor*, which had already been written and published, would address an excessive reliance on scripture, while *The Book of Faith* would tackle the issue of a failure to adhere to the Church's teachings on faith.[115] The bishop's method for addressing heresy was unique because he chose to put his defenses of orthodoxy in vernacular English and, in his own words, to use "meene which the lay persoonys wole admitte and graunte."[116] Although the clergy were freely invited to pick up such a text as *The Book of Faith*, Pecock made this work

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[114] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 114.
[115] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 114.
[116] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 113.

to be specifically accessible to lay people. His purposes and his methods thus nicely aligned: his goal to stamp out heresy among lay people informed his strategies to reach out to the average English person by writing in terms they would understand.

Pecock's passion for academic argument and the rules of logic emerge in *The Book of Faith*. In this text, the author especially favors the logical tool of the syllogism. In the first chapter of part one, while attempting to build a definition for "faith," the author goes at great lengths explaining exactly how a syllogism works. From two known and intellectually accepted propositions, one may "drive out of hem the iii^e proposicioun, which is the derke trouthe to be leernyd and not erst knowe," and this "coupling togidere of suche proposiciouns in the now seid maner is an argument, which is clepid a sillogisme."[117] Pecock thought such a method of deductive reasoning was one of the greatest ways to arrive at truth. The author was confident that after establishing several points of agreement between himself and his audience, he could lead his readership to adjust their thinking to be more in line with his reason. In fighting heresy, syllogism was Pecock's weapon of choice.

Another academic form with which Pecock experimented in the English vernacular was the dialogue. In the late medieval period, dialogues were a common form of argumentation.[118] In doing rhetorical or argumentative exercises, scholars were attracted to the dialectical relationship that could be built into a dialogue; there could be two opposing speakers, and the one who won the argument skillfully both presented the reasons for his position and addressed objections. In *The Book of Faith*, Chapters 1 through 7 in Part 1 and all of Part 2 took the form of a dialogue between a father and a son. Presumably, this relationship was not biological but instead was spiritual because in the first chapter the "son" clearly identified the "father" as the author, who

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[117] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 125-126.
[118] Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, 144.

was a celibate bishop. Pecock's spiritual child was not really adversarial (as the Lollards might have been) so much as he was curious: "If therfore it be ȝoure leiser and ȝoure liking, y wolde that ȝe answerid to sume questiouns which y schal, if it plese ȝou, aske upon feith or bileeve."[119] The son politely and profusely asked permission of the father to impart his superior knowledge, so the dialogue was not among equals. Pecock was comfortable placing himself above his readers in an intellectual hierarchy. In the prologue, he may have cast himself as the "unworthiest and ȝongist and louȝest of the prelatis,"[120] yet it seems clear that Pecock thought highly of his intellectual abilities, which is not too surprising considering his previous successful academic record.

One of the author's personal passions became clear when he broke away from the dialogue format in Chapters 8 through 10. In this section of *The Book of Faith*, Pecock abandoned his questioning son and turned to speak directly to his Lollard audience with the grammatical use of the second person.[121] The imagined Lollard reader could not ask questions in the same manner as the son; instead, Pecock anticipated what his audience might have been thinking. For instance, when the author discussed how the teachings of the Lollards have failed because they have not completely converted the Church, he momentarily switched to a heretical perspective saying that "we musten nedis be excusid that we turnen not ȝou clerkis and the chirche, riȝt as ȝe holden excused that ȝe turnen not hethen men."[122] Having dived into a rambling and repetitive monologue,[123] the bishop sacrificed some of his neat academic style and

[119] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 121.
[120] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 113.
[121] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 195.
[122] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 202.
[123] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 195-233.

at the same time denied the Lollards the privilege of being represented by an entity separate from the author himself (such as the son).

From the monologue one can begin to untangle the way that Bishop Pecock saw himself in his relationship with the Lollards, which was neither extremely hostile nor totally accepting. It seems that the author lost himself in the last three chapters of Part 1 hammering in his main arguments for why Lollards and other heretical people ought to have followed the teachings of the Church, regardless of whether they err; everything before this section was a scholarly exercise in defining concepts and harmlessly exploring the relationships between certain concepts in religion. Based on this dramatic change in style and tone, it seems safe to reason that Pecock was sensitive to what he perceived as the Lollards' transgressions. They struck a chord with the bishop that inspired him to fly into the long syllogistic rants that appeared in the monologue section. On the one hand, Pecock perhaps did a disservice to the Lollards by not allowing them to have a voice, even if fictionalized, as was allowed to the orthodox-leaning son. But on the other hand, within the monologue, Pecock claimed to have had positive relationships with the heretics. He has "spoke oft tyme, and by long leiser," to current Lollard leaders, and these people "han loved me for that y wolde pacientli heere her evydencis, and her motyves, without exprobracioun."[124] Pecock knew he was different from other Church prelates. He would not denounce the Lollards outright nor turn them over to authorities to be tried as heretics in an Inquisition style. The bishop would seriously weigh their arguments and evidence. Or, at least, this was what he would have his readers think. As mentioned previously, some scholars have been cautious to take the bishop at his word as he described his encounters with the heretics.[125] Even if he was not totally truthful, there is still solid evidence that he studied their heretical

[124] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 202.
[125] See Footnote 33.

writings[126] and that there were Lollards in London at the time with whom the bishop could have come into contact.[127] In the monologue, Pecock challenged them to actually write more and to speak out more on their beliefs if they were truly so confident in their ideas. Curiously, he warned them that "if this be trewe that thou hast such so stronge and cleer evydencis as thou pretendist and knowlechist thee to have, and bringist hem not forth into open, bi word or bi writing" to convert others, then "thou art in dampnable sinne and schalt be dampned."[128] If the Lollards truly possessed the truth and did not share it with people outside their circles, then they ought to be morally and spiritually condemned. Pecock demanded: "write thei her evydencis and motyves in which thei trusten."[129] Nevertheless, the bishop said that he did not expect them to convince him or the Church, but one must wonder whether he did not consider that there might have been the slimmest possibility that Lollard teachings and beliefs held moral, spiritual, or intellectual value. In the least, Pecock seemed always up for a good battle of wits and desired his opponents to do their best.

The Book of Faith, also speaks to the general late medieval English society at this time. The clergyman appears to have been concerned most with the state of heretical thought in England, which he illustrated most clearly in the prologue. Pecock's words pointed to discontent with the Church. The Lollards were obviously not happy with the way the Church handled Christian religion, yet it seems as though non-Lollards may have also been dissatisfied, which led some to have heretical leanings. Pecock saw lollardism as pervasive: "Who that wole walke amonge the peple now lyving in Ynglond fer and neer...he schal, amonge alle tho dyversitees, heere and knowe that manye of the lay peple which cleven and attenden over unreulili to the

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[126] Bose, "Reginald Pecock's Vernacular Voice," 230.
[127] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 91-92.
[128] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 201.
[129] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 202.

Bible."[130] Not only were these Lollards causing people to pay too much attention to what the Christian scriptures said, but they were also planting seeds of doubt in the infallibility of the clergymen. The heretics dared to suggest that "the clergie is not worthi be visited bi eny special inspiracioun or revelacioun fro God more than thei hem silf been worthi" and "the clergie may faile and erre as weel as thei."[131] The Lollards were emphasizing the shared human nature of lay people and clerics. Both were liable to sin and failure, but they were also equally capable of discerning divine truth. This idea did not bode well for the clergy's monopolization on spiritual knowledge and revelation. In fact, the clerks have "ben lauȝed into scoorn of the lay personys."[132] Moreover, too many lay people believed that the clergy only cared for their own "favour and worschip, and ben not iugis indifferent, and stonding for the parti which hath the treuthe."[133] Such charges against Church authorities had to have damaged the trust between parishioner and priest. Pecock's description of heresy in society at the time is not unreasonable, considering that anticlericalism was not unheard of in the late medieval Church.[134] What is interesting is that the bishop pinned this distrust of the clergy on the Lollards, who, according to Richard Rex, were not at all prominent at the time.[135] Whether the heretics fueled anticlericalism or vice versa, it is difficult to say, but *The Book of Faith* strongly suggests that the two were definitely connected.

This book also comments on the importance of hierarchical ordering in both religious and secular spheres of society. The question of the relationship between church and the monarchy has been a major one for historians of early modern England, but both of these authoritative

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[130] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 109.
[131] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 110.
[132] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 111.
[133] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 112.
[134] Rex, *The Lollards*, 2.
[135] Rex, *The Lollards*, xiv-xv.

structures were equally important in the late medieval period. At times they clashed and at other times they collaborated, but to draw a fine line of distinction between them is difficult because of how intertwined they were.[136] Pecock liked to give examples of both kinds of authority to prove his point that hierarchical order, particularly the ordering of clergymen, was divinely sanctioned and ought to be respected. For instance, to justify the succession of authority for members of the secular clergy, he stated that "the monkis ouȝten obeie to the successoure [abbot] aboute the rewle keping, thouȝ the predecessoure [abbot] were an holier man than is his successoure" unless the monks could prove beyond a doubt that the abbot erred in his teachings.[137] Likewise, in their treatment of a king who has succeeded his father,

> "the peple now lyvyng were bounde forto obeie to him in hise comaundis aboute the lawe keping, as thei were bounde forto obeie to his fadir in his comaundis aboute the lawe keping, thouȝ the fadir of this king were moche holier man than this is"

unless the people could have shown with certainty that the new king made terrible laws.[138] Pecock applied the same principle to both situations, with one involving the regular clergy and the other concerning the monarchy. The former taught while the other made laws, but they were both expected to be "holy." An abbot or a king might have been more or less holy than others in their respective lines of succession, but generally, their authority had to be respected. Pecock accounted for instances of questioning authority, but he laid on the questioners the burden of proof, and their cases against the authorities had to be watertight. This is not to say that Pecock's ideal system existed in historical reality, but his words do show how important hierarchical structures of power were to late medieval society and how difficult it might have been to question them since they were justified by divine and holy power. And according to *The Book of*

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[136] Margaret Aston, "Lollardy and Sedition, 1381-1431," in *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), 2.
[137] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 183.
[138] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 183.

Faith, the Lollards formed one distinct group of people who challenged this arrangement of power.

Finally, the Pecock's arguments in *The Book of Faith* can offer a few hints concerning what the Lollards were like in the mid-fifteenth century. For instance, careful study of the sources that the bishop used reveals what kinds of authorities the Lollards typically trusted. As for direct quotations, the author most frequently referenced the Bible using his own English translation. This strategy is important because it suggests that Lollards would have been more willing to accept claims backed by scripture and lines up with Pecock's assertion that they leaned heavily on the Bible. In another, more subtle way, Pecock perhaps revealed another Lollard value that had been carried over from the first wave of Lollardism in the early fifteenth century. As he discussed the importance of obedience to priests and bishops, Pecock referenced the writings of two particular saints: Saint Ignatius of Antioch and Saint Dionysius, Pseudo-Areopagita. Importantly, Pecock described each as members of the primitive church before Christianity was made the state religion of the Roman Empire. The bishop was careful to describe Saint Ignatius as a "disciple of Seint Johnne evangelist"[139] and Saint Dionysius as "a disciple of Poul,"[140] thereby establishing that these men were followers of people who had prominent roles in the New Testament of the Bible that the Lollards so cherished. The fact that scholars today question the existence of Saint Dionysius and his alleged authorship of several Latinate tracts is beyond the point. Pecock played to the Lollards' sensibilities concerning the early church, which they held to be far less corrupted than the Church as it was at that time. John Wycliffe, their intellectual heresiarch, likewise pointed to the church as described in the New Testament and the earliest generations following the New Testament Christians as the most

[139] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 189.
[140] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 193.

important models for his vision of what the current church ought to be like.[141] Therefore, Pecock's use of St. Ignatius of Antioch and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite points to the survival of such emphasis on the primitive church among the Lollards of the mid-fifteenth century.

Some other characteristics of the Lollard heretics at this time in history may be gathered from Bishop Pecock's discussion of the enthusiasm of heretics for their heretical beliefs. As the author described it, "manye persoonys han suffrid deeth by greet devocioun and zele to God, and his lawe in her maner, but ȝitt in the now seid unobedience aȝens the prelatis of the chirche ...whom y couthe not excuse, and defende fro wey of dampnacioun."[142] In other words, the bishop was explaining that great sincerity in one's beliefs concerning God and his laws did not, however, excuse that person from spiritual punishment. This statement may point to the great zeal that many Lollards had for what they believed, even if those beliefs were not accepted by larger orthodox society. Nearly a century before John Foxe embarked on his Protestant and proto-Protestant martyrology, Pecock suggested that the Lollards were already creating an alternative martyrology to the one created by the Church by saying "ful manye undiscreet and unwise persoones, for unconsideracioun of the now maad skilis, holden tho sufferers of deeth to be holi martiris."[143] Here, Pecock referred to those zealous people, the "now late brenned men in Ynglond."[144] Of course, the author did not point to any person in particular who was a Lollard martyr, but it is not unreasonable to think that Lollards at the time may have engaged in remembrance of those who paid the ultimate price for their heretical beliefs.

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[141] Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy*, 185.
[142] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 190.
[143] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 191.
[144] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 192.

In some parts of his monologue, Pecock appears to have treated Lollards as individuals as opposed to treating them as a community of heretics. Scholars of Lollard history have argued that the organization of the heretics across England fractured significantly following the failed revolt of 1414, and so it was possible that the numbers of people in each Lollard regional community dwindled significantly.[145] The author argued, "thou seie that thou canst prove cleerli and undoubtabili, *to thi silf oonli and al oon*, thi parti aȝens the chirche [emphasis mine]."[146] Pecock diminished the beliefs of the Lollards because he asserted that they were particular to individuals and could not convince a great group of people. This argument could point to a number of things, including the physical loneliness of individual heretics in society or to a lack of cohesion among the beliefs of the heretics (since there was not a central institution to establish those beliefs) or perhaps a combination of both.

Like *The Repressor*, *The Book of Faith* shows some of how Pecock straddled the line between orthodoxy and heresy. The bishop admitted that he was attempting to engage with Lollards on their own terms, both in person and in writing. For instance, he did cite early Church authorities (who, nonetheless, were not technically biblical figures) because he probably rightly guessed that the Lollards would listen to them. Yet, at the same time, he employed orthodox scholastic methods such as the syllogism and dialogue to frame his arguments. In *The Book of Faith*, we also see some more of Pecock's passion regarding heresy. His rapid change in tone and style when he addressed the Lollards directly suggests that for him, the heretics were not some distant adversaries but formed a very present threat to both themselves and others. As he did in *The Repressor*, Pecock also offers some glimpses into Lollard subcultures, and he even suggested that they have been infiltrating certain circles of orthodox lay people, which further

[145] Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 6.
[146] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 200.

points to the blurring of the lines between heresy and orthodoxy. Finally, the way in which the bishop illustrated some of his points on hierarchical structures shows some of the blurring of the lines between political and religious authority as well.

Section 5: Reginald Pecock Convicted of Heresy (1456-c.1460)

The heresy trial of Bishop Reginald Pecock is surprisingly difficult to analyze as an historical event. The reason for the challenge lies in the fact that some of the fullest contemporary accounts, including those of Thomas Gascoigne, Pecock's vehement enemy, and of the Whethamstede register, contain chronologies that directly contradict one another and details that are surely exaggerated.[147] Though they may not be reliable for a realistic (as much as it can be) recounting of the events of the trial, these narratives are nonetheless important because their sensationalism shows the scandal of a bishop deprived of his see for heresy at this point in English history. In fact, Pecock was the only English bishop to be tried and convicted of heresy before the Protestant Reformation.[148] Given the large amount of popular and scholarly interest in the dramatic and divided politics of this period of English history, it may be easy to overlook such an unusual moment in ecclesiastical history, but for the people of the time, the prosecution of such an elevated spiritual leader had no precedent.

In order to recover the historical heresy trial from melodramatic descriptions of it, we must examine the documents that were most directly produced as a result of the investigation and trial. The first of these documents is a letter from the Viscount John Beaumont, dated June 24th, no year indicated (but probably 1457). The nobleman wrote to King Henry VI because he was concerned that a "grete noyse rennyth that þer shuld be diverse conclusyons labored and subtilly entended to be emprented in mennes hertis."[149] Beaumont was silent on what exactly these conclusions were, but he nonetheless expected them to be especially harmful to the faith of the

[147] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 103, 108-109.
[148] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 104.
[149] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 121.

English people because of the subtle way in which they were being transmitted.[150] Later on in the letter, the viscount revealed Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, as the originator of the spiritually pernicious conclusions,[151] so Beaumont's complaint about how secretly these ideas were spreading must refer to Pecock's publishing of English vernacular theological books. Though the way in which Pecock published his ideas was not ultimately listed among his heresies (i.e., publishing works on theology in the English vernacular),[152] it seemed to have been most troubling to Beaumont, the first person (according to documentary evidence) who raised the issue of Pecock's books being heretical. The nobleman's choice of describing the spreading of the heresies as "by pryvy, by also vnheard, meenes"[153] may speak so much to how they were being received. This wording raises a number of intriguing questions: what did it mean to study ideas in private, who knew about these books, and who was ignorant of them? Answering these questions requires several considerations. From *The Repressor* and *The Book of Faith* alone, we can know that Pecock imagined English lay people, especially those who embraced at least some aspect of lollardism, studying his works for themselves—he wrote with them as his intended audience.[154] The bishop's books were immediately more accessible because they were written in English; moreover, any person literate in the vernacular language could read passages of his books aloud and thereby transmit his ideas to the illiterate. These means of transmission would not have been possible if the books were written in Latin like most medieval theological works. Moreover, at the end of *The Repressor*, Pecock fretted over the cost of the lengthy work, seemingly because he did not want it to be too expensive for the average (literate) layperson to

[150] He even compares the spreading of these ideas to "Makamete," another term for Mohammad, the main prophet of Islam.
[151] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 121.
[152] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 133-134.
[153] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 121.
[154] Pecock, *Book of Faith,* 116; Reginald Pecock, *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, Volumes 1 and 2, edited by Churchill Babington (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), 3-4.

afford.[155] The elite of England, both noblemen and clergymen, easily had the resources and knowledge to access Pecock's books, but they were not the primary intended audience. Yet Beaumont made it seem as though, unbeknownst to the most powerful people in society, everyday subjects were reading the works on their own, in their own homes or other gathering places, without supervision. Certainly the king had to be informed of Pecock's heretical works by a lesser nobleman,[156] the archbishop had not seriously studied them prior to the heresy trial,[157] and the masters at Oxford had to request copies of the works later on in the trial because the university did not already have them, nor did they likely teach them.[158] All of this is to say that knowledge of the books traveled from the ground up in society.

Just because Pecock's ideas were disseminated through society from the bottom to the top does not necessarily mean that they were popular with the unlearned masses. In fact, a lack of popularity might have caused a delay in his prosecution as a heretic. Some of his "heretical" works had been around for several years prior to 1457. Yet in *The Book of Faith* (1456), Pecock complained that his earlier work, *The Repressor* (written 1449; published c. 1455), had not been as widely used as he had hoped,[159] while a few of his earliest works that he references quite frequently in both *The Repressor* and *The Book of Faith* he published in the earl 1440s.[160] Nevertheless, the books came to the attention of Viscount Beaumont around June of 1457.

The purpose of Beaumont's letter was not only to bring Pecock's questionable books to the attention of King Henry VI, but also to call him to action. The letter's author wanted the king

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[155] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 2, 562.
[156] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 103.
[157] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 105-106.
[158] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 108.
[159] Pecock, *Book of Faith,* 119.
[160] For instance, *The Donet* thought to be published around 1440 and *The Reule of Crysten Religioun* thought to be published around 1443.

to command "the archiebisshop and prelatis and doctours" to "examyne the ground of þis [Pecock's] werkis, and þat yt be not remissely done, ne longe drawen of lenthe of tyme, wherby the puple myght take hurt."[161] The viscount wanted all of Pecock's books (he does not single out any particular title) scrutinized quickly so that they could be found heretical and taken from the hands of the general readership of England. It was important that the king stamped out heresy with speed because, as the viscount described, heresy in the general populace had a critical effect on the rule of the monarch. Using a common strategy of princely persuasion, Beaumont asked Henry VI to consider the actions of his predecessors, "in speciall of your owne fadyr of most noble memorie, þat first began with mighti punischyng and suppressyng of enemies of the faith and Chirche, and aftir all his dayes had victoryes of his enemies and did gret thynges."[162] The viscount drew a distinct connection between King Henry V's efforts to defeat heresy and his general successes as a monarch to serve as an example for his son, Henry VI.[163] Early in his reign, Henry V successfully opposed the Lollard revolt in 1414 and captured and tried the participants, including the famed Lollard leader Sir John Oldcastle. This is likely what Beaumont referred to in saying that the king's father began the suppression of the Church's enemies. Herein lies the essential irony of Pecock's life and history: the bishop thought he was engaged in the same fight against Lollard heretics as Henry V had been, but the viscount painted Pecock as the heretic, hoping that he would receive the very same treatment at the hands of Henry VI that the Lollards had received from the monarch's father and predecessor. Moreover, Henry VI would

[161] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 121-122.
[162] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 121.
[163] For several reasons, I think Henry V is an interesting choice of example. He was the king who was friends with Oldcastle but who suppressed his Lollard rebellion. I cannot say with certainty what specific victories Beaumont is referring to, but I know that in the year after the Lollard rebellion, Henry V secured the victory of the Battle of Agincourt.

supposedly gain political and spiritual victories if he utterly suppressed the bishop and his writings.

Unfortunately, there is no record describing exactly how Henry VI responded to Viscount Beaumont's letter. Nevertheless, a good indication that the king heeded the nobleman's advice is found in the Archbishop of Canterbury's citation[164] for Pecock's adversaries to appear before him in October 1457. In the citation, Thomas Bourchier[165] explained that Pecock had already willingly given him all his works written in the English tongue to the archbishop for examination, along the lines of what Beaumont desired. Yet the call for "all and synguler persones, vicars, chaplains, curates, and non curates, clerkes & learned men" who opposed Pecock's writings to come forth before the archbishop to argue against the bishop's heresies was made under certain circumstances.[166] It seems that Henry VI did prompt the archbishop and the highest prelates and doctors in the realm to begin investigating Pecock quickly as a response to Beaumont, but during this examination, the archbishop felt compelled to respond to those who were preaching publicly against the bishop of Chichester.

Historian Wendy Scase has described how Bourchier was especially careful not to prejudge Pecock and suggested that the citation was written in part as a response to Pecock's own complaints about people were preaching against him.[167] Bourchier's care for the bishop's reputation may be seen in the citation itself. In it, the archbishop complained that while he had been examining the books to correct and reform them, many people

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[164] The only copy of this citation that exists is the one reproduced by John Foxe in *Acts and Monuments*, and despite Foxe's biases as a Protestant martyrologist, scholars seem to accept the validity of the version that appears in his work.

[165] Thomas Bourchier was the Archbishop of Canterbury (1454-1486) at this time.

[166] John Foxe, "The Copy of the Citation Sent by the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Prouinciall Ministers wher in He Doth Cite Bishop Pecock & His Aduersaries to Appeare," in *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or *TAMO* (1563 edition) (Sheffield: HRI Online Publications, 2011), 420, www.johnfoxe.org.

[167] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 106.

> "haue openly preached & taught at Paules crosse in London, and in diuerse other places of our prouince of Caunterburye, that our sayde fellowe brother the bishop hath propounded...certayne conclusions, repugnant to the true faith."[168]

This observation provides an important contrast with Beaumont's characterization of the reception of Pecock's ideas. Whereas the bishop's books had been secretly and privately received by some, others, namely clergymen, had received Pecock's ideas only to reject them openly and in public. It is interesting that this complaint comes at this time. Perhaps once people knew Pecock was under investigation, they felt they could more freely condemn him. The archbishop seemingly sympathized with Pecock on this matter of people publicly slandering the bishop before he was officially convicted of heresy. Bourchier described how because of such preaching "the state and good name and fame of the sayde Lord Reynolde the byshoppe, are greuously offended and hurte, and he and his opinion maruelously burdenid."[169] He then forbade anyone from teaching anything against Pecock while his books were being examined. If anyone violated the inhibition, they would be brought before the archbishop for just punishment.[170] It is notable how the archbishop was slow and careful to denounce Pecock as a heretic. One may wonder if Bourchier would have examined the bishop at all if temporal powers had not brought the bishop to his attention.

Yet the Archbishop did eventually take measures that led to the condemnation of Pecock's work. During the time that the bishop's books were under review, the archbishop or his close companion John Lowe, Bishop of Rochester, sent Augustinian friar John Bury a copy of Book 1 of *The Repressor* and commissioned him to write a response.[171] Bury titled his response *Gladius Salomonis*, which translates to "The Sword of Solomon"—a clear and pointed remark.

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[168] Foxe, "The Copy of the Citation," 420.
[169] Foxe, "The Copy of the Citation," 420.
[170] Foxe, "The Copy of the Citation," 420.
[171] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 108.

After quoting Pecock's conclusions in the original English and then critiquing them in Latin, Bury determined that the first book of *The Repressor* needed to be executed by the sword of Solomon, that is, the Word of God.[172] It is significant that he evaluated Book 1 of *The Repressor* because it was in this book that Pecock explained his basic philosophy on the relationship between human reason and the Bible. Here, the bishop had asserted that it was not necessary to know the scriptures to discover divine laws and morals because these were accessible through human reason; therefore, Pecock concluded, divine laws and morals were not founded in the Bible because the scriptures were not the only source for such things.[173] To the contrary, Bury argued that divine laws and morals were founded in the scriptures, and that though moral virtues might be rooted in natural reason, man's reason was fallible and thus was not as good a standard as the Bible.[174] The refutation of one of Pecock's main points is critical because the bishop used this philosophy to justify what the Lollards saw as the extra-biblical elements of Catholic religion at the time. Bury indicated that he would be willing to write more refutations of Pecock's theology if more material were sent to him. However, since he ultimately did not write anything else on Pecock, Scase assumes that by the time Bury would have written more against Pecock, the bishop's books had already been condemned. It was unnecessary for Bury to write more against books that were in the process of being censored and destroyed. Nevertheless, according to Bury, the first book of *The Repressor* justified Pecock's condemnation. Though *The Book of Faith* does not feature prominently in the documents surrounding Pecock's investigation and trial, this work also may be significant because Gascoigne, one of the bishop's principal

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[172] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 2, 573-574. (Comes from letter reproduced at the end of this edition of *The Repressor* written by John Bury to Thomas Bourchier.)
[173] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 1, 10.
[174] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 2, 576-580. (Comes from excerpts from the *Gladius Salomonis* reproduced at the end of this edition of *The Represssor*.) I gathered this from the little English summaries beside all the Latin passages.

adversaries, seems to have been the most upset by it. Even though he did not read *The Book of Faith* himself during the heresy trial, Gascoigne explained that his peers were the most upset by this work.[175]

The next document produced related to Pecock's heresy trial was the bishop's abjuration. According to Scase, once Pecock's heresies had been established, he recanted in two stages around late November and early December of 1457. First, he was brought before Thomas Bourchier and other bishops at Lambeth Palace to admit that he had taught and written things contrary to the Church's stance on the sacraments and the articles of faith for over 20 years. He officially revoked his writings and signed a statement of abjuration. Then he had to recant publicly before a large crowd at St. Paul's Cross. There, he recited the first part of his abjuration in English, but when he came to the part that listed his specific heresies, he spoke in Latin so that his errors could not enter the minds of the uneducated masses.[176] Yet in the English part of his abjuration, Pecock confessed that his biggest error was the "persumeng of myn owne natural witte and preferring the natural iugement of raison before th'Olde Testament and the Newe and th'auctorite and determinacion of oure modre Holy Chirche."[177] All of the heresies that he then described in Latin stemmed, in one way or another, from this principal error. For instance, he aired the heresy that it was not necessary for salvation to believe in the Holy Spirit. Although belief in the Holy Spirit was certainly upheld by the Church, one could easily see the authority of this tenet found in the Bible. Another of heresies that he named in Latin was that it was not necessary for salvation to believe in the Holy Catholic Church, a point less related to scripture

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[175] Pecock, *Book of Faith*, 12. (From J.L. Morison's introductory essay.)
[176] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 109.
[177] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 133.

than to a fear that it might lead to opposition to the Church's determinations.[178] Significantly, either way Pecock's main theological stances here caused him to alienate both the Lollards and their orthodox opponents. The Lollards trusted the scriptures, while the traditional Catholics trusted the institution of the Church. The bishop had inadvertently attacked both because he had given reason the highest authority in the hopes of most logically defending the Catholic Church. But what he did not anticipate was that traditional Catholics still held a regard for the Bible as a foundation for divine knowledge and revelation.

After recanting, Pecock placed copies of his works into a fire—a means of physically expressing his own condemnation of them and of offering a visually symbolic warning to everyone in his audience that his writings were dangerous and needed to be discarded for the sake of the faith.[179] Scase suggests that Pecock was so compliant and willing to endure this embarrassing public condemnation because he thought that such a complete recantation would have been enough to reinstate him as the bishop of Chichester.[180] Yet, evidently, this was in fact not enough. In a letter dated June 13, 1458, Pope Calixtus III did write a letter to Bourchier requesting that he make arrangements to absolve and restore Pecock to the see of Chichester. Then, sometime in September 1458, Thomas Lowe, Bishop of St. Asaph, and a clergyman named Robert Stillington received a letter from Henry VI explaining how Pecock had "surrepticiously" obtained bulls from the pope allowing for his restitution, which goes against the king's royal prerogative.[181] Henry VI did not see Pecock as a reformed clergyman, but rather believed that the English faith would be "polluted" by such a "corrupted and seditious" person if

[178] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 133.
[179] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 134.
[180] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 111.
[181] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 134.

he were restored to his bishopric.[182] The king had to prove himself as a defender and protector of the faith, even if it meant going against the pope's determinations. Therefore, Henry VI called upon Lowe and Stillington to assemble a team of doctors in theology and law to help him build a case against the papal bulls that were favorable to Pecock.[183]

After following Henry VI's instructions, the two men wrote back suggesting that the king appeal to the pope by emphasizing the errors produced by Pecock and his sect and by putting forth a suggestion of a notable clerk who could replace him.[184] This statement contains one of the few references to Pecock's sect,[185] but this description could have been part of an exaggeration of Pecock's spiritual harmfulness by portraying him as a heresiarch (like Wycliffe, perhaps). After all, the pope would not have wanted to place a known founder of a new heresy in as high a position as the bishop of Chichester. This tactic of persuading the pope by focusing on Pecock's errors and the power of those errors was probably preferable to directly challenging the pope on legal grounds. Pecock was eventually replaced as bishop of Chichester in early 1459 by John Arundel, the king's former physician and chaplain.[186]

Probably the last record we have of Pecock's life is contained in a letter that Bourchier sent to the abbot of Thorney Abbey in early 1459. The archbishop informed the abbot that Pecock had been sent to the abbey and described the conditions of his imprisonment. Besides living essentials, Pecock was to be provided with "a portuos, a masse book, a saulter, a legende and a bible."[187] For a period of about twenty years, the bishop had been a prolific theological

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[182] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 134.
[183] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 134-135.
[184] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 136.
[185] There is one notable record of a student of Pecock's works at Oxford University named Master John Harlowe, but other than him, there is not much information on followers of Pecock.
[186] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 111.
[187] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 139-140.

writer, yet in his confinement, Bourchier forbade him from possessing writing implements and objects to write upon.[188] Pecock died in his mid to late 60s after spending only about 1 or 2 years at Thorney Abbey, and his burial place is unknown. His life might have ended in relative obscurity, but Pecock had a vibrant and often surprising afterlife in the writings of later historians, which will be examined in the next section.

[188] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 139-140.

Section 6: Pecock's Legacy

The legacy that Bishop Reginald Pecock left in English history is in some ways just as unusual and unexpected as his own experience as a heretic writing against heretics. Pecock existed in his own category that was not fully Lollard or fully traditional Catholic; he defied the binaries that the medieval English Church had constructed around heresy and orthodoxy. Yet many misunderstandings about Pecock's philosophy emerged in part because late medieval authorities insisted on treating him like a second John Wycliffe. Perhaps if Pecock's books were more popular and his ideas more widely known, his legacy would have looked very different because later generations would have understood the bishop's differences with Wycliffe and the Lollards. Spiritual and temporal authorities were unwilling to engage with the uniqueness of Pecock's thought, and the result was that later historians and historical writers transformed Pecock into a proto-Protestant martyr.

According to John A. F. Thomson, Pecock's legacy was very insignificant; the bishop "seems to have left little mark on the history of the English Church in the years after his death."[189] It is not difficult to see how Thomson came to this conclusion. After all, following Pecock's heresy trial, nearly all of his writings were promptly confiscated and destroyed.[190] Moreover, in the historical record, Pecock only had one named disciple. In 1458 or 1459, King Henry VI wrote a letter to the chancellor and masters of Oxford University asking them to withhold a doctoral degree in theology from John Harlowe. The king had heard that Master Harlowe not only held the "supersticious, erroneous, and dampned opinions of Reynold Pecok" but also possessed several titles by the defamed bishop.[191] Since by this time Pecock had been

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[189] Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 217.
[190] Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 216-217.
[191] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 138-139.

officially condemned as a heretic and labeled as a spiritually dangerous man, Henry VI of course did not want a man like Harlowe to teach and preach Pecock after earning his theology degree. The king also used his letter against Harlowe as an opportunity to express his desire that any Oxford student possessing Pecock books should have his materials confiscated and that any student holding Pecock's opinions should be barred from earning any further degrees.[192] Within the first couple of years after the trial, and possibly even before Pecock's death (c. 1460), English authorities were quick to prevent the development of a Pecock religious sect. Even so, there is not much direct historical evidence of people besides Harlowe being swayed by the bishop's theology.

A letter sent by King Edward IV to Pope Sixtus IV on February 24, 1476, would seem to suggest that the religious and temporal authorities failed in their mission to stop the spread of Pecock's heresies. Edward IV wrote this letter to request apostolic letters that would provide the authority to prosecute those who owned Pecock's books. Commenting on the bishop's legacy, the king said that "after the death of the said Reginald, the writings and treatises composed by him multiplied in such wise that not only the laity but churchmen and scholastic graduates scarcely studied anything else."[193] Taken at face value, Edward IV's words suggested that even twenty years after the heresy trial, Pecock's books and ideas still permeated various levels of English society. However, Thomson said the claims of this letter were more than likely hyperbolic. He pointed out that, with the exception of John Harlowe and a few unnamed people, none of the heretics at the time were ever explicitly tied to Pecock's heresy.[194] Nonetheless, Thomson did think Edward IV made a significant move against the heresy by causing the destruction of even

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[192] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 139.

[193] Rawdon Brown, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 1, 1202-1509* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1864), 126-140, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/venice/vol1/pp126-140.

[194] Then again, he also says that it was common at the time not to record the specific beliefs of heretics in trials.

more of the late bishop's writings.[195] Whether most of Pecock's works were confiscated and burned in the years immediately after his trial or later on in the reign of Edward IV, there were always a few manuscripts that managed to survive. For instance, while he was the Bishop of London (1496-1501), Thomas Savage seized and examined a copy of *The Folewer to the Donet*.[196] The rarity of Pecock manuscripts today could be caused by a combination of their lack of general appeal and popularity as well as the success authorities enjoyed in destroying them and discouraging their ownership.

I suggest that this paucity in the number of followers and copies of books that Bishop Pecock left behind by the end of the 15th century is one part of the equation that explains how later Protestants counted him among their heroes. Over time, it became more difficult to know exactly what the clergyman taught and what he stood for because fewer people were reading his books and almost no one identified as his follower. People who later wrote about the heretic consequently had fewer resources for understanding his rationalist philosophy and anti-Lollardy. Another factor that contributed to misunderstandings about Pecock in later generations was a growing association between Pecock and Wycliffe. Evidence for this trend may be found in some revisions to the statutes of Queens' College and King's College at Cambridge University that occurred shortly after Pecock's heresy trial. At this time, a clause was added to the statutes requiring college members to take an oath not to favor the errors of Wycliffe and Pecock.[197] This clause was included in the statutes of both colleges until the Royal Commission of 1850 called for new statutes for Cambridge University in 1856.[198] Early on, university scholars were placing

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[195] Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 217.
[196] Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 217. *The Folewer to the Donet* is one of Pecock's works.
[197] Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 213.
[198] V. H. H. Green, *Bishop Reginald Pecock: A Study in Ecclesiastical History and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1945): 68-69.

Wycliffe and Pecock in the same category of heresiarchs without necessarily distinguishing between the theologies of the two. They were both very educated men who studied at Oxford and who were known for producing heretical writings. These similarities might have been enough for later historians to link Wycliffe and Pecock, and given that Lollard writings were better promulgated and had many more adherents, it was probably easier for those historians to assume that Pecock simply revived Wycliffe's ideas in the mid-15th century.

Several English historians of the 16th century with Protestant leanings certainly made connections between the two heretical thinkers. Evidence of this pseudo-historical practice of linking Wycliffe (and the Lollards) with Pecock is found in John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*. Foxe (1516-1587) included an entry for Pecock in his history of proto-Protestant martyrs in all four editions of *Actes and Monuments* (1563, 1570, 1576, 1583). Ironically, the martyrologist seamlessly wove a favorable account of the anti-Lollard into his Lollard histories. In the first edition of *Actes and Monuments*, Foxe directly identified Pecock as a follower of Wycliffe with this statement: "a great nūber of worthy leaned and notable clarkes, sprong of the vniuersitie, and out of the holsome doctryne of Wickliffe...in the nūber of whome was...Rainold Pecocke, bishop of S. Asse, and afterward of Chichester."[199] Not only did Foxe make Pecock part of Wycliffe's legacy, but he also specifically paid attention to the heretical bishop's social status. Foxe described him as one of most notable educated proto-Protestant heretics, and in his list of Lollard clerks, Pecock's name is the only one that appeared with a description of his position in the Church hierarchy. Pecock was appealing to Foxe because the bishop was his highest ranked heretical clergyman. Most of his material was on lowly priests and lay men and women who were persecuted or martyred as Lollards. Yet Foxe liked the idea of finding elements of

[199] John Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or *TAMO* (1563 edition) (Sheffield: HRI Online Publications, 2011), 154-155, www.johnfoxe.org. A similar statement exists in the second edition.

Elizabethan Protestant religion in various levels of English society: "So is ther no kinde of degree or order, in the which some frute, as clusters of the vineyard, doo springe and growe vp vnto the Lorde."[200] He used Pecock as his main example that even among the pre-Reformation bishops, "the Lorde...hathe his remainder," like Nicodemus and Gamaliel among the Pharisees in the New Testament.[201] For Foxe, it strengthened his cause to see people in all different stations of life being enlightened by Protestant views of Christianity because it would demonstrate a divine power transcending worldly divisions of class, profession, and gender. It was very convenient for Foxe to intentionally distort historical views of Pecock, and he did in fact edit certain aspects of Pecock's life in his account. Yet I am not entirely convinced that Foxe did not himself actually believe that Pecock was a proto-Protestant; in some ways, Foxe misunderstood Pecock, just like various other historians to be discussed below.

Foxe basically wrote two different entries for Pecock in his *Actes and Monuments*. Every edition included the texts of Thomas Bourchier's citation calling forth Pecock's adversaries and Pecock's abjuration. These two documents were likely among Foxe's main sources for his Pecock entries. However, the content of his own commentaries varied between the 1563 edition and the three later editions. In the 1563 edition of *Actes and Monuments*, Foxe revealed surprisingly little information about the heretical bishop's life. He spent most of the entry not discussing Pecock but instead went at length to explain his Protestant theology of the Eucharist. Foxe broke from his narrative of Pecock's life after mentioning that at Lambeth Palace, the bishop was tried concerning the real presence in the sacramental bread.[202] Interestingly, Foxe did not describe how Pecock reacted to the test, nor did he explain what exactly Pecock believed. However, based on

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[200] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 edition), 415.
[201] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 edition), 415.
[202] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 edition), 415-418.

the way Foxe edited and commented on Pecock's abjuration, it may be inferred that the martyrologist believed that Pecock essentially held Lollard or Protestant beliefs. In the copy of Pecock's abjuration, Foxe modified the bishop's heresies by removing the item that it is not necessary for salvation to believe in the Holy Spirit and by adding the item that it is not necessary for salvation to "affirme the body materially in the sacrament."[203] Foxe's substitution worked well with his overall theme on the Eucharist, but it seems so out of place given the historical Pecock's vehement disagreement with the Lollards over the nature of that sacrament.[204] Moreover, although Foxe may have preferred that his proto-Protestant bishop conform to Lollard teachings on the Eucharist, he may have been equally unsettled by some of Pecock's listed heresies.[205] Referring to the abjuration, the martyrologist defended his hero by saying:

> "it is not to be beleued that Pecock held these opinions howsoeuer the wordes of the recantation pretend: For it is an old pollicy & play of the bishopes, when they doo subdew or ouercome any man they...frame out his wordes for him before hand as it wer for a parate."[206]

Foxe used this idea to excuse Pecock from the non-Protestant ideas expressed in the abjuration while at the same time he imposed a Lollard/Protestant framework on the bishop. He had difficulty imagining him as anything else other than as a follower of Wycliffe.

In the 1563 edition, Foxe also subtly pointed to one of the issues explaining why he lacked sources describing what Pecock believed and taught. Besides using the bishop's story as an opportunity to talk about his theological perspective on the Eucharist, Foxe also used Pecock to discuss the unusual cruelty with which the Church treated heretics in the 15th century. He specifically detailed how the council that examined and tried Pecock refused to engage the

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[203] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 edition), 421.
[204] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 2, 563-564.
[205] Such as the heresy on the Holy Spirit that Foxe omitted?
[206] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 edition), 421.

bishop in argumentation and debate but automatically resorted to violent threats if he did not recant his views.[207] While Foxe's characterization in many respects simplified the process of the heresy trial and the actions of those involved, he was right about the silencing of Pecock. As discussed previously, church authorities (such as John Bury) might have been able to intellectually engage with Pecock, but after the bishop was condemned, no subject could legally read or own his books, and most of his works were destroyed. For Foxe, most of the documents containing Pecock's beliefs were unavailable to him due to this late medieval censorship. Foxe asserted that "If it were a false matter which Pecocke did sustain, their was no doubt but that he might easely haue ben ouercome, if any lerned man had withstande him with apte and fit arguments."[208]With this statement, one wonders whether Foxe was speaking from a purely theoretical standpoint or whether he seriously allowed for the possibility that Pecock was wrong because the martyrologist could not say with confidence what the bishop believed.

In the next three editions (1570, 1576, and 1583) of *Actes and Monuments*,[209] Foxe's entry on Pecock changed to become more focused on the life of the bishop. He removed his longwinded explanations of the Eucharist and the severity of heresy trials and focused on a narrative of the bishop's trial. The martyrologist also began to reveal more of his sources for the bishop's life, and these documents in turn show that Foxe was not the only Protestant historian to turn Pecock into a hero. In the later version of his entry for the heretical bishop, Foxe mentioned the works of three 16th century historians: Edward Hall (1497-1547), John Bale (1495-1563), and John Leland (1503-1552). Hall's *Chronicle* (1548) appeared first in Foxe's Pecock entry, and Hall's writings have revealed that he at least had Protestant sympathies. This is what Foxe said

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[207] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 edition), 418-419.
[208] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 edition), 419.
[209] Since the entries in these three editions are so similar to each other with very minor variations, I will use the 1583 edition for analysis of this entry.

about the historian's evaluation of Pecock: "an ouerthwart[210] iudgement (as [Hall] termeth it) was geuen by the Fathers of the spiritualty agaynst [Pecock]."[211] Hall said Pecock asked the wrong questions "perteyning to the sea of Rome" and explained that his prosecution as a heretic resulted from his public expressions of his opinions "in the Vniuersityes."[212] Such questioning of papal power and open argument in the intellectual arena of the university sounds eerily similar to the activities of Wycliffe and not very much like the historical Pecock.

Another historian who appeared in Foxe's account was John Bale. Foxe and Bale were very similar to each other in that they were both very passionate Protestant writers and frequently collaborated and helped each other in their research.[213] They also both shared the opinion that Pecock was a proto-Protestant martyr.[214] Foxe admitted that he did not possess Thomas Gascoigne's *Dictionarium Theologicum* but he relied on the entry for Thomas Gascoigne in John Bale's *Illustrium Majoris Britanniae Scriptorum Summarium*. Citing Bale's work, Foxe revealed Bale's almost laughable misreading of Gascoigne. For instance, Foxe noted that "first (saith [Bale interpreting Gascoigne]) Reynold Pecock, at Paules crosse preached openly, that the office of a Christian Prelate, chiefly aboue all other things is, to preach the word of God."[215] The actual Pecock did preach at Paul's Cross on the duties of a bishop, but he gave an apology for non-preaching and absentee bishops,[216] essentially contradicting what Bale said he preached. Next, Foxe used Bale to list Pecock's claims, which read off like a list of common Lollard beliefs:

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[210] This word can simply mean oppose, but I think it has a more negative connotation indicating a miscarriage of justice. See http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED32028&egs=all

[211] John Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or *TAMO* (1583 edition) (Sheffield: HRI Online Publications, 2011), 733, www.johnfoxe.org.

[212] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 edition), 733.

[213] Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of John Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 48.

[214] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book*, 46.

[215] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 edition), 734.

[216] Scase, "Reginald Pecock," 95.

> "mans reason is not to be preferred before the Scriptures of the old and new Testament...That no man is bound to beleue and obey the determination of the Churche of Rome...the riches of Bishops, by inheritage, are the goods of the poore...[Pecock] condemned the wilfull begging of the Friers, as a thing idle and needles."[217]

An examination of *The Repressor* alone would have shown that Pecock not only did not hold these opinions but also openly attacked them as the errors of lay people influenced by Lollardy.[218] Here again, Bale tried to portray Pecock as an intellectual Lollard.

John Leland was the last writer Foxe cited in his later account of Pecock. Leland, as chaplain and librarian to Henry VIII during the formative years of his break from Rome, was likely a supporter of the Henrician Reformation. However, Foxe seemed to indicate that religiously he did not fall with the more extreme Protestants. His citation of Leland read "[Pecock], not contented to folow the Catholicke sentence of the Churche in interpreting of the Scripture, did not thinke soundly (as [Leland] iudged it) of the holy Eucharist."[219] Foxe seemed to suggest that even someone who held a Catholic understanding of the Eucharist agreed that Pecock aligned with Lollards on this pivotal issue. Another less-than-enthusiastic Protestant, John Stow (c.1525-1605) portrayed the heretical bishop as a second Wycliffe with his description of Pecock as "a secular Doctor of Diuinitie, that had labored many yéeres to translate the holy Scripture into Englishe."[220] The translation of the Bible into vernacular English was one of Wycliffe's most noted accomplishments, yet the historical record never indicated that Pecock ever embarked on such a project. Foxe, Hall, Bale, Leland, and Stow, all existing in various positions on the spectrum of 16th century English Protestantism, recreated the historical Pecock

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[217] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 edition), 734.
[218] Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 2, 4, 10-12, 67; Pecock, *The Repressor* Vol. 2, 380, 385-386, 406, 476.
[219] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 edition), 734.
[220] John Stow, *The Chronicles of England from Brute vnto this Present Yeare of Christ*, (London: Ralph Newberie, 1580), 683.

as a Wycliffite, Lollard, and/or a proto-Protestant.[221] What is more, even Archdeacon Nicolas Harpsfield (1519-1575), a staunch Catholic and defender of his faith in the wake of the English Reformation, agreed with Foxe that Pecock was under the influence of Wycliffe's theology.[222]

[221] Foxe was not simply misreading his fellow historians; Charles W. Brockwell, Jr., "The Historical Career of Bishop Reginald Pecock, D.D.: The Poore Scoleris Myrrour or a Case Study in Famous Obscurity," *The Harvard Theological Review* 74, no. 2 (April 1981): 182 supports my reading of Foxe's citations.
[222] Brockwell, "The Historical Career," 182.

Conclusion

The legacy of Reginald Pecock as a Protestant hero helps us to reflect on understandings of the divide between heresy and orthodoxy in the 15th- and 16th-century England, which is one of the main goals of this paper. Pecock's case is an important one because his contemporaries and later generations had difficulty placing him. The bishop did not fit in with the category of "Lollard" because he positioned himself against them, but at the same time he assumed a heretical position by arguing that human reason above all, not Scripture nor the authority of the Church, justified the practices of traditional Catholic religion. He disrupted the binary oppositions (Lollard/Protestant vs. orthodox Catholic) through which English people liked to construct their religious lives in the 15th and 16th centuries. Some people, such as John Bury, who actually engaged with Pecock's writings probably understood the subtleties of his position and his loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church. Yet once the bishop's works were condemned, fewer and fewer people had the opportunity to truly understand his beliefs. The most that anyone knew was that the bishop somehow challenged and angered the religious and political authorities, and in the minds of many, this meant that Pecock was a Lollard or Wycliffite by default. This assumption emerged even more clearly in the writings of 16th century historians that have been examined in this section. Pecock's postmortem conversion into a proto-Protestant shows the power of simplistic divisions between heresy and orthodoxy, between a religious "us" and "them," that in late medieval and early modern England did not always take into consideration the particular beliefs of individuals. This framework is an important one to keep in mind whenever examining accusations of heresy in late medieval England.

Anxieties about the bishop's heresies also demonstrate the role that Lollards and lollardy played in 15th-century England. Pecock himself perceived the heretics as a looming threat that

had not been totally eradicated. Religious and political authorities whom Pecock provoked also felt threatened by the clergyman's heresies, even if many of them did not have a detailed understanding of his ideas. The parallels drawn between Pecock and Wycliffe in both the 15th and 16th centuries suggest that authorities might have even interpreted the bishop as a kind of second Wycliffe or a Lollard-ish heretic. In the least, this study shows that the 15th-century Lollards were still active and were still preserving and modifying the religious concepts of their Lollard predecessors. The Lollards were undeniably a small group, but their continued existence significantly influenced how the English people of the 15th century imagined the category of heresy. Thomson did extensive research counting the number of Lollard heretics and heresy trials in each major region of England during the middle phase of lollardy. However, he did not consider the power of how mainstream society conceived of the threat of heresy, which may have been more important to the culture at that time than the actual number of people who were Lollards. This same argument calls into question Rex's assessment of the importance of the Lollards. This study has shown that people in positions of power from Bishop Pecock to King Henry VI acted according to their conceptions of heresy, and these conceptions were not merely theoretical but had various practical consequences of intellectual production, punishment, and censorship.

Another one of the aims of this project is to better understand the elusive Lollards of the 15th century. Although their numbers may have decreased since the days of Wycliffe and Oldcastle, the Lollards were still active and their ideas were still powerful in Pecock's time. They shaped the prelate's philosophy and theology and inspired him to write some of his most powerful works that eventually got him convicted of heresy. In his arguments, Pecock expressed some of the Lollard beliefs that showed both continuity and change with those of earlier

generations of Lollards. The 15th-century heretics generally continued to hold pacifistic beliefs, condemned the veneration of relics and images, criticized the vast wealth of the clergy, and denied the real presence in the Eucharist. Yet Pecock's writings demonstrated how the Lollard movement during the middle phase was not merely anticlerical and antagonistic to Church practices but developed a more radical devotion to Scripture and biblical authority. Moreover, Pecock unearthed more of the role of Lollard women challenging the authority of the male clergy, which brings up crucial insights into the gendered dimensions of lollardy. All of these aforementioned sub-arguments provide much-needed insights into the activities and beliefs of the mid-15th century Lollards who have left such a spotty historical record. Moreover, the extraction of this information from the works of an anti-Lollard shows the usefulness of using adversarial sources to uncover marginalized historical groups.

Pecock's case also shows how the people of 15th century England actually navigated the lines between heterodox lollardy and orthodox traditional Catholicism. Ideally, there were sharp divisions between the two, but in actuality, the lines were often crossed. For instance, in his anti-Lollard works, Pecock tended to address all wayward lay people who criticized their clergymen, not simply the Lollards, which suggested that some traditional Catholics favored some of the opinions and teachings of Lollardy. In another example, in order to oppose Pecock's *Repressor* John Bury emphasized a defense of the authority of the Bible and even named his argument after the religious text, *The Gladius Salomonis*. The Lollards themselves might have applauded such an emphasis on the power of Scripture if they had read it. Pecock himself walked a fine line between contemporary definitions of heresy and orthodoxy by writing a defense of the traditional Church while attempting to appeal to Lollards and those influenced by their ideas.

Another one of the goals of this project was to better understand the relationship between church and state in late medieval England. An examination of Pecock's life and works indicates that sometimes they worked together and the lines dividing them blurred, and other times they did not. In his writings, Pecock often drew connections and analogies between religious and temporal authorities to support some of his theological points. As far as their impact on his life, it is interesting to note that people with temporal power, such as Henry VI and Lord Beaumont, appeared more eager and enthusiastic to protect England against Pecock's heresies than did the ecclesiastical authorities. Moreover, defeating heretics seemed to have brought the king rather than the prelates the promise of glory and riches; the job of combatting heresy fell increasingly more into the hands of temporal powers. In another intriguing twist, Henry VI indirectly challenged the pope when he decided to restore Pecock to his bishopric; the king rejected the authority of the Church when faced with the reestablishment of a prelate who was condemned as a heretic in part for allegedly rejecting the authority of the Church. Even before King Henry VIII, there was plenty of tension between church and state in England.

Such an extensive research project as this one does not come without its limitations. One significant example is the context of London. Since Pecock likely did most of his anti-Lollard writings in the city, the specific Lollards and lollardy he mentioned were probably based in London. This detail is an important one because Lollard communities across England were not unified but could vary in beliefs and practices. Therefore, Pecock's observations of London lollardy are not likely representative of all forms of lollardy in the mid-15th century. Some other major limitations are related to the microhistorical approach itself. A bias exists in my choice to focus on Pecock because he seems like an exceptional and outspoken personality who happened to have produced or caused the production of many primary sources that have survived in the

historical record to the present day. It was easier for me to craft a microhistory around Pecock rather than a more obscure anti-Lollard who could have offered different insights. Moreover, the insights and contexts of one individual can never be fully generalized to reflect all of the society or culture that he or she inhabits. Pecock cannot offer us a truly full view of late medieval English society because his experiences were so particular. Finally, since I am not fluent in medieval Latin, I primarily used the primary sources that were available in vernacular English.

This paper presents many points that could be expanded upon in further research. For example, extensive studies of anti-lollardy appear to be lacking in the field of late medieval English history, so one could study the development and evolution of anti-lollardy by examining Pecock, Arundel, Netter, and other passionate opponents of the Lollards together. Further research could also be done on the meaning of heresy in late medieval England. Lollards were the prime heretics during this time period, but arguably Pecock was a non-Lollard heretic, so other categories of heretics ought to be researched to achieve a fuller picture of late medieval religion. Finally, more research could be done regarding the relationship between secular and spiritual powers in late medieval England. Because of the nature of the Henrician Reformation, many scholars of early modern England have extensively studied the dynamics of this relationship, but such studies are lacking for late medieval England. Events such as Henry VI's defiance of the pope in order to keep Pecock from returning to his see need more in-depth research.

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Honor Pledge:

I have acted with honesty and integrity in producing this work and am unaware of anyone who has not.

/s/ Emily Grover