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Creating the Enemy

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‘The deformed imp of the devil’: John Foxe and the Protestant fashioning of the Catholic enemy

Isabelle Fernandes

1 From the 16th century onwards, anti-Catholicism has been an important characteristic of the religious and political thought in some strata and geographical areas of English society — the term anti-Catholicism refers to the polemical statement that the Roman Catholic Church is a doctrinally false and politically dangerous anti-Church (Streete 2017: 4). In the early modern period, one of the most striking features of 17th century England is “the strength and persistence at all levels and among all classes of society of anti-Catholicism. [...] Despite the growing strength of the intellectual case for toleration there is very little sign that popular hatred of popery diminished in the second half of the century.” (Coward 2017: 353) The paradox is that this hatred turned into paranoia – as testified by the Titus Oates plot and the ensuing Exclusion Crisis in 1678 – though there actually were very few Catholics in Auteur0000-00-00T00:00:00AEngland. The papist threat was a “minority challenge” indeed (Cottret 2013: 99), but “what people perceived to be the case was at least as important (and even more so) than historical reality” (Coward 2017: 323). This irrational attitude can be accounted for by real current or past events, both in England and Europe, such as the Sun King’s expansion and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in October 1685 that led to the equation between Catholicism and arbitrariness, the 1666 Great Fire in London, the 1641 Irish Rebellion, the 1605 Gunpowder Plot, the 1588 Armada, or the 1572 Bartholomew Day’s massacres. At a domestic level the Marian persecutions of Protestants for heresy from February 1555 to November 1558 proved to be a watershed for Protestantism.

2 These persecutions found a remarkable echo chamber in John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments of these latter and perilous days* (*AM*), one of the most popular books in England in the 16th and 17th centuries. After its first appearance in Elizabethan London in English in 1563,[1] it went through three extended and corrected editions during

Foxe's lifetime (1570, 1576, 1583), and significantly revised editions were printed posthumously (Kastan 2017).[2] The women, men and teenagers burnt at the stake during Mary I's reign (1553-1558) were transformed in the crucible of the Foxeian narratives into heroes who became the real victors against all odds in the ongoing fight against Antichrist. On the other hand, Antichrist's supporters, the Catholics, were identified as the enemies within, both traitors to the nation and to the True Church built by Christ and his apostles. One of Foxe's purposes in this war for God was to create an enduring image of the arch enemy so as to fuel hatred to keep the fight going, or at least to remain wary. The martyrologist's works were actually often re-issued in times of domestic crisis, as in 1570 when the pope Pius V issued the bull *Regnans in excelsis* to excommunicate Queen Elizabeth, in 1641 before the Civil Wars, or in 1684 on the eve of the accession of the Catholic James, Duke of York. Even if the linking between nationalism and Protestantism was "largely fortuitous" (Hastings 1997: 55), Protestantism had coincided with a growing feeling of national consciousness in England since the reign of Mary I (Greenfeld 1992). John Foxe may not have been writing yet for the nation (Collinson 2017: 23), he was nevertheless moulding a recognizable and easily-hated Catholic enemy, thereby playing a seminal role in the fashioning of a Protestant identity that was to blossom in "this happy breed of men, [...] this realm, this England" (Shakespeare, *Richard II*, 2.1.45, 50).

3 This paper aims to analyse Foxe's strategies to fashion a recognizable Catholic enemy, starting with what the author controlled and contained, namely traditional and universal tropes taken from the Bible: his fashioning of a hostile picture of Catholics and Catholicism was not only rooted in biblical typography but in the blossoming European martyrological or eschatological production — sources that enabled Bible-saturated Foxe to re-create an image of both churches. In a second part, the theatre of God, we will see how Foxe recycled the *theatrum mundi* trope to deconstruct both Catholic rituals and Catholic men, shifting his narrative from a providential history into a farcical entertainment in which Catholics were deprived of pith, life and humanity. The author's dehumanizing intention was brought to its logical consequence when he turned satanic enemies into brute beasts whose senseless violence had to be held in check. Finally, we will engage in the Girardian conception of sacred violence applied to Foxe's discursive strategies. According to René Girard, the Other, the indispensable scapegoat, was and is, in fact, closer to the sacrificing agencies than meets the eye: the abhorred enemy may actually be a monstrous double.

An image of both Churches

Biblical typography

4 Early modern Europe was awash in martyrological literature: multiple editions of sources preserving the memory and celebrating the witness of Protestant, Catholic and Anabaptist victims were frequently published (Gregory 2001: 2-5). What was at stake with John Foxe, as with all European narratives of the early modern period (e. g., Jean Crespin and Adriaen Van Haemestede for the Protestants), was the creation of a potent enemy image to survive to, and justify, the persecutions that were taking such a toll on their co-religionists. The discourses naturally aimed at catechizing and proselytizing as much as possible, but Foxe's primary intention was to write the history of the Christian Church from the primitive times, thereby creating a wider historical context for the

English Church, "lay[ing] the whole vista of the battle between the true and false churches" before his readership (Ryrie 1999: 52) to prove that the battle was not only national and international, but first and foremost spiritual (Christ versus Antichrist).[3] With the fashioning of a "society of martyrs", Foxe constructed a "communit[y] of faith" (Gregory 2001: 7) whose mission was to weather the storms of violence and persecutions, and to uphold the values of what he presented as the True Church.

5 The construction of this community of faith was achieved thanks to a combination of self-definition and opposition. Self-definition followed a well-trodden path as martyrs were neither "isolated mavericks" nor "adventurous novelty-seekers. Martyrdom was not a journey into the unknown. It meant conformity to an ancient course of action, grounded in scripture and epitomized in the crucifixion of Christ himself" (Gregory 2001: 119). "To write a martyr narrative was [also] to make an apocalyptic statement" (Ryrie 1999: 52). For this reason, the martyrs spontaneously identified themselves with Christ or with any biblical or historical character who had offered a precious role model of godly suffering. Apart from *imitatio Christi* elements, Marian martyrs John Hooper and Laurence Saunders, who lost their lives in February 1555, consciously acted their roles, harking back to the proto-martyr Stephen who was stoned to death, or to Saint Laurence and Polycarp the bishop of Smyrna who was burned alive (*AM* 1570: 1726, 1710, 1725). This construction (by the martyrs themselves or by those who recorded their testimony) legitimized the Protestant movement thanks to the genealogical continuity between the Marian martyrs and the victims of the primitive Church. It came as an attempt to provide an answer to the question asked, among others, by Dr. Weston when examining John Bradford in 1555, "Where was your church forty yeares agoe? Or where is it nowe? Except in a corner of Germany" (*AM* 1570: 1841). The Catholic representatives and propagandists persistently sought to undermine the legitimacy of Protestantism by opposing its recent innovation against the ancient status of Roman Catholicism. John Foxe's response, as many other martyrologists, was to turn this accusation of novelty on its head: it was not the Protestants who had forged doctrines and practices in the wake of Luther and Calvin. Relying on their overriding source of authority, the Bible, Protestant apologists demonstrated that, for centuries, "many fabulous narrations [...], impudent and abhominable fictions of this romishe generation" had contributed to forging unbiblical tenets and rituals (*AM* 1570: 212). The reference to Satan, the father of lies, was unmistakable: "Ye are of your father the devil [...]. For he is a liar, and the father of it" (Jn 8: 44).

6 The construction of a Protestant identity also partook in the pseudo-martyr debate: if both Catholics and Protestants agreed on the definition and meaning of martyrdom, they disagreed on what they understood as true faith, and therefore on what some people chose to die for. In principle, Augustine's dictum ("it is not the suffering but its cause that makes the martyr") provided the necessary distinction between true martyrs and false, between "martyrs of God" and "martyrs of the devil" (Meylan 1959). Protestants died for the restoration of the purity of the Gospel, therefore for Christ and his Church. Conversely, those who were eager to shed blood operated under devilish influence.

> For those [the Martyrs of our time] did but water the truth with their bloud, that was nowe springinge vppe. And these by their deathes did restore it againe, when it was sore decayed and fallen downe. Those standing in the foreward of the battell, did receiue the first encountre and violence of their enemies, and taught vs by that

> meanes to ouercome such tiranny. But these as spedely, lyke olde beaten soldiours did winne the field in the rereward of the battaile. Those did, like famous husband men of the world, sow the fieldes of the church, that first lay vnmanured and waste. And these with the fatnes of their bloude did cause it to battell and fructifie (*AM* 1563: 16).

7 Foxe's strategy to create and sustain the enemy image implied the analogical association between Protestants, and apostolic and primitive figures on the one hand, and between Catholics and evil forces through the commonplace recycling of biblical imagery that instantly evoked reminiscences of violence and cruelty, on the other. The examiners of the Marian martyrs were presented as Herod-, Pontius Pilate- or Judas-like characters, or cast in the roles of Annas and Caiaphas, high priests during Jesus's trial (*AM* 1570: 1828, 2239, 2279). Following Christ's example, persecutions were a sure sign of the True Church as from the primitive times its proponents had endured open hostility and ruthless punishments. Foxe made sure to remind the reader of the persecutors' misdeeds when he addressed them to attack their blind violence:

> Beholde your own handy woorke, consider the nomber almost out of nomber of so many, silly & symple lambes of Christ, whose bloud you haue sought and suckt, whose lyues you haue vexed, whose bodies you haue slayne, racked and tormented, some also you haue cast on dunghils, to be deuoured of Foules and Dogges, wythout mercy, without measure, without al sense of humanity (*AM* 1563: 12).

8 The recycling of traditional common analogical associations helped to authenticate, legitimize, admire and condemn at one stroke, but also to blend the human contingencies (place, time, individuals, transiency) in a rhetorical device that allowed a unified, coherent and meaningful vision of current persecutions to emerge. Page after page, Foxe unrelentingly recorded verbal and physical manifestations of Catholic ferocity ("You haue nothing but violence", AM 1570: 2033).[4] Should the message be lost on illiterate believers, lurid engravings added a visual dimension to the crimes of the "fals prophets of antechrist", spawns of Satan (*AM* 1570: 1984). The looming presence of Satan, etymologically the adversary (Kelly 2006: 16), was a clear harbinger that the end of times was near. According to apocalyptic reckonings, Antichrist was bound to make a last-ditch effort to replace the light of the Gospel with a perpetual nocturnal terror (Fernandes 2012: 263-274). The Marian years were thus construed with hindsight as the possible prelude to an appalling predicament, had Antichrist and his Catholic henchmen ever carried the day:

> At these most perillous dayes, wherein by the sufferaunce of God, the Prince of darkenes [wa]s broken lose, and rageth in hys members agaynst the electe of God wyth all crueltie, to set vp agayne the kingdome of Antichrist (*AM* 1583: 1723)

9 Once Protestant Elizabeth came to power the papist threat indeed receded, but faithful believers were invited to remain wary.

The enemy within

10 Foxe's, and other reformed apologists', discourse helped Protestant define and sustain images of "self" and "other", which in turn endorsed the schema of binary opposites (good versus evil) and division between the Church Militant and the Church Belligerent, thereby providing, to use the title of John Bale's tract, a global *Image of Both Churches* (c. 1545). The tropes deployed by Foxe were not specific to him alone, as he drew his inspiration from — while refashioning —, among others, his English friend Bale's fiery pamphlets and plays or the *Magdeburg Chronicles* published in Basel where

Foxe worked as a proofreader for Oporinus (Jones 1981; King 2006; Greengrass and Phillpott 2010). Just like Foxe, Protestant historians across Europe wanted to unveil the truth buried by centuries of Catholic fabrications, thus becoming, in turn, figurative martyrs (that is, witnesses) of the True Church they defended with the printed testimonies of those who had lost their lives. Roman Catholics stood out as the enemies to the True Church of the elect but also as the enemies within. There was the crux of English anti-Catholicism: how could an enemy operating from within be clearly defined? Until Mary's accession and despite the Henrician schism, England continued to preserve Catholic traditions and rituals, therefore "the process of discriminating between a 'true' Englishman and another who was not an easy task, and the fear of a faceless adversary grew among broad sectors of the public" (Alvarez-Recio 2011: 4; also see Woolf 1994; Ryrie 1999). Mary I's policy of reuniting the Church of England to Rome after Henry VIII's royal supremacy, as well as her will to marry Philip of Spain in 1554, provided useful examples to give recognizable traits to the enemy from within England.

11 When the Spanish marriage negotiation became official, a number of aristocrats decided to take up arms in January 1554 to prevent what they deemed a baleful match. The wording of the proclamation of the rising reveals the connection established between Catholicism and foreign threat: Thomas Wyatt and his followers refused "the Queen's determinate pleasure to marry w[ith] a stranger: we therefore write unto you, because you be our neighbours, because you be our friends, and because you be Englishmen, that you will join with us, as we will with you unto death in this behalf" (qtd Lee 2007: 132). In another attempt at overthrowing both queen and Catholicism, Thomas Stafford, in his 1557 proclamation to urge the English to free themselves from Spanish influence, portrayed Catholic Queen Mary as

> naturallye borne haulfe Spanyshe and haulfe Englyshe, [...] showing herselfe a whole Spanyarde, and no Englyshe woman, in lovinge Spanyardes, and hatinge Inglyshemen, inrichinge Spanyardes and robbinge Inglyshemen (Strype 1822: 516)

12 In Mary's lifetime, the last onslaughts were carried in 1558 by John Knox in *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, and Christopher Goodman in *How Superior Powers ought to be Obeyed by their Subjects*. In their anti-Catholic and misogynistic pamphlets, both authors recycled the customary polarized imagery and merged stereotypes to associate Catholicism with foreignness. Equating the figure of the invisible Catholic with that of the Spaniard allowed the definition of a concrete enemy against which the English could and had to be united. To the generic figure of the Catholic (a dissembling and cruel tonsured creature sold to the interests of Rome) was added the Spanish type (cruel, hungry for domination and hypocritical), both eager to suppress the light of the Gospel. But John Foxe was first and foremost an ecclesiastical historian for whom the True Church of Christ was international and mystical, uniting the elect wherever they were to be found. He thus included in the *Acts and Monuments* much material not directly related to martyrs or to England, adding episodes that connected Mary to the Inquisition in Spain, such as Nicholas Burton's burning memorialized with a woodcut (*AM* 1570: 2297-99). But Foxe did no multiply such specific references as he was intent on lashing at papist cruelty in general.

The theatre of God

Of masks and men

13 Theologians had a theophanic view of nature and time as they saw in God an absolute lord who governed in its minutest details the course of events and history. The *theatrum mundi* metaphor that was to be laicized by Shakespeare in *As You like it* was thus much in favour during the early modern period (Robinson 2017). Melanchthon wrote about God's "wonderful theatre" that the whole world represented, while Luther argued that God worked through human creatures who were turned into masks behind which He concealed himself (Helm 2001: 55; Torvend 2018: 54). Foxe had tried his hand at play writing two Latin comedies, *Titus and Gesippus* and *Christus Triumphans*, and he too adopted the metaphor of the world as a stage, not only in his plays but in the *Acts and Monuments* (Smith 1973: 303). The examinations of suspected heretics were set in places that became the "common stage of these tragedies" (*AM* 1570: 1809). The acting skills of the suspect were studied, as when John Hooper was examined by bishops who "began to make such outcries, and laughed, and vsed such gesture as was vncomely for the place, & for such a matter", or when the Catholic audience hissed at Hugh Latimer (*AM* 1570: 1717, 1656).

14 Foxe's highly dramatized conception is obvious in the narrative of John Philpot's examinations. The *agon* of each meeting with his examiners is rendered in scenes rhythmed like drama: "This is the beginning of this tragedy", "Thus for the third Fyt", "Thus endeth the fourth parte of this tragedy", "Thus endeth the fifth parte of this tragedy" (*AM* 1563: 1459, 1462, 1464, 1474). "Acts" is a plurivalent term covering different realities: with the title of his work, John Foxe conjoined drama, justice and martyrdom (echoing the Acts of the Apostles) to detail the theatre of God, the Protestants' heart-wrenching tragedy and the Catholics' disgraceful farce. Pathos was one of the ingredients used to make the reader admire, sympathize and identify with the flesh and blood victims whereas their opponents were caricatured: against individualized witnesses stood faceless replications of the Antichrist. The martyrs' bloody and poignant doom alternates with, and is pitted against, the Catholics' farcical buffoonery that intersperses some comic relief within the escalating tragic tension. Despite the Catholics' will to control action and outcome, Nicholas Ridley undermined this strategy when he reduced his adversaries to mere "stage players in Interludes" (*AM* 1570: 1670). The metaphor of the world as the stage proved useful to turn the Catholics into empty puppets deprived of humanity and sense, and to liken them to characters in ancient comedies ("these Catholicke phormiones", "Thrasonical ostentation", *AM* 1570: 8; 1583: 1487). These poor players who fretted and strutted their hour upon the stage could be laughed to scorn as they had the capacity to be blind to their own blasphemy: the Bishop of London, Edmund Bonner, declared to John Philpot that "God by his omnipotency may make himselfe to be this carpet if he wyl" (*AM* 1570: 2015). Foxe took care to use the martyrs' own words to avoid being suspected of manipulating the narrative:

> Now, lest peraduenture the disordered misrule of these Christmas Lordes, will not be credited vppon the simple narration of the story, ye shall heare the whole discourse of this proces registred by the hand of the Martyr himselfe, who as he could tell best what was done (*AM* 1570: 2202)

15 The overarching metaphor of *theatrum mundi* that embraced both the blessed and the cursed introduced the hidden *telos* of the grand design of God whose severe chastisements awaited "the persecutours of his people [...], with such also as haue bene blasphemers, contemners, and mockers of his Religion" (*AM* 1576: 2017). The closing pages of *AM* editions are devoted to these punishments, and this position is both a reminder and a warning to the readers, the wrongdoers and the martyrs' family and descendants that divine justice is final, inevitable and irrevocable.

The Catholic scopic impulse or mass scrutinized

16 The major contentious sacrament between Catholics and Protestants was the Eucharist, as the former believed in transubstantiation and in the repeated sacrificial dimension of the ritual of mass, while the latter rejected any notion of real presence or any value to the repetition of sacrifice. To justify the reformers' attacks on this disputed sacrament, Foxe started Book 10 in the 1583 edition with a compilation of various sources to provide "by the way of Preface, some declaration collected out of dyuers writers and Authors, whereby to set foorth to the Reader the great absurditie, wicked abuse, and perillous idolatry of the popish Masse" (*AM* 1583: 1421). The intention of this section that opens up Mary I's reign was to clarify why martyrs lost their lives and to unquestionably demonstrate that mass had no biblical existence. Foxe, determined as he was to unmask the Catholics' deception, provided an alternative reading of the "dirty" ceremony (*AM* 1570: 2118) that led Protestants to the stake for heresy. Thanks to parody and irony, in the narrative or in the marginalia, Foxe likened the Catholic ritual to bad drama, deconstructing and reducing it to a sheer mechanic succession of gestures, to a senseless spectacle with no connection to God whatsoever, thereby proving Catholics were fraudulently wielding authority they were deprived of:

> our Masse men make it a matter not of taking, but of gazing, peeping, pixing, boxing, carying, recarying, worshipping, stouping, kneeling, knocking, with stoupe downe before, hold vp higher, I thanke God I see my maker to day, &c. (*AM* 1583: 1522)

17 With his sardonic comments in the marginalia,[5] Foxe turned mass into a "massing Mummery" (*AM* 1570: 1738), an empty ridiculous ritual, shifting the boundaries of the sacred, reducing the host to a sham, achieving with his words what iconoclasts had with their blows.

18 The depriving of the Catholics' pith, life and humanity was brought to its logical consequence with images taken from the bestiary. Catholics morphed into carnivorous animal-like creatures ruled by voracious predatory instincts: "rauenyng wolfe", "helhoundes" and "barking beagles" hunted down martyrs, led by "Bloody Bonner" [6]and "Wily Winchester" (*AM* 1583: 1866, 1638, 1866, 1159). The use of alliteration and assonance made these nicknames and phrases easy to remember while the imagery presented numerous advantages: it characterized victims and victimisers at one stroke, harked back to the parables of the good shepherd (Jn 10: 1-21) and of the false prophet (Mt 7: 15), as well as to the messianic image of the lamb of God appointed to the slaughter for the testimony of the truth (Ac 8: 32; Is 53: 7). Bonner, "the butcher", "this cannibal" (*AM* 1570: 1239; 1563: 1770),[7] one of Foxe's arch villains along with Gardiner,[8] is an interesting case study as he undergoes a visual degradation in the engraving

entitled "The right picture and true counterfeit of Boner, and his crueltie [...]" (*AM* 1570: 2282, see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Woodcut depicting Edmund Bonner, bishop of London

Source: John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 1570: 2282

19 Bonner was wont to flog heretics so as to make them recant but what the woodcut chose to portray is the bishop scourging a bare-buttocked man in his own orchard at Fulham. His undone garments, bulging paunch and protruding codpiece epitomize the earthly appetites that Protestant polemicists associated with the members of the Roman Catholic Church. The compressing of the grotesque "dirty, sweaty, and licentious" unbishoply bishop, the "cartoonlike phallicism" (King 2017: 8) and sado-homoerotic desire (Truman 2003) was bound to strike the readers' imagination and to discredit an enemy neither human nor godly who could violate both body and soul.[9]

As the shadow unto the body

20 "Identity is achieved at the intersection of an absolute authority and a demonic Other" (Greenblatt 1980: 76). The enemy, the Hebrew Satan, is this Other against whom the fight was inevitable so as to survive and define oneself: in the early modern period, "in order to exist the rival Churches had to put in the background their very numerous common points — they all originated in the same Western Christianity — to highlight their respective differences in endless controversies" (Wanegffelen 1998: 64, my translation). From the identical nature of the rival protagonists in God's theatre emerged the mimetic crisis — and the scapegoating process — that ended up in blood when the twin brothers became enemies: did not Abel slay Cain (Girard 1979)? Just as Protestants and Catholics were the sons of the same "vniuersall mother holy church"

(*AM* 1570: 647), Nicholas Ridley called his arch adversary's mother "my mother Bonner [...] as though he had bene borne of her owne body." In his commentary, Foxe conjoins enemy and brother figures, "For whoe afterwarde was more enemye to Ridley then Bonner, and hys? whoe more went about to seke his destruction then he, recompensyng his gentlenesse wyth extreme cruelty [...]?" (*AM* 1563: 1353). What was familiar had become alien, other, external and frightening... The Catholic other is portrayed like the photo negative, the monstrous double of the pure and avenging Protestant who was ready to give up his life to impose the truth, restore order and prevent the ever-growing expanse of darkness from eating up the Church of the elect. The rival Other, member of the "Sinagoge of satan", was the *locus classicus* of chaos as made sufficiently clear by adverbs and adjectives such as "confusedly", "disorderly", "misordered", and their polyptotons (*AM* 1583: 1671; 1570: 1170, 1670, 2018, 2019). "Misorder," just as misrule, is but the other side of order, not its opposite (Laroque 1979: 164); by including the Catholic chaos as it was in the carnival of God, Foxe acknowledged and contained it within his restricting narrative frame.

21 The theme of the *Doppelgänger*, the creature who became other after being the same, shows in Foxe's martyrology. Jane Grey grieved over the metamorphosis of her father's chaplain's,

> which semedst sometyme to be þe liuely mēber of Christ, but now the deformed impe of the deuill, some tyme the beutifull temple of God, but now the stinking and filthy kenell of Sathan, sometyme the vnspotted spouse of Christ, but now the vnshamefast paramour of Antichrist, sometyme my faithfull brother, but now a straunger and Apostata (*AM* 1570: 1620).

22 Catholics too resorted to this theme, as for instance when Nicholas Ridley was exhorted to turn:

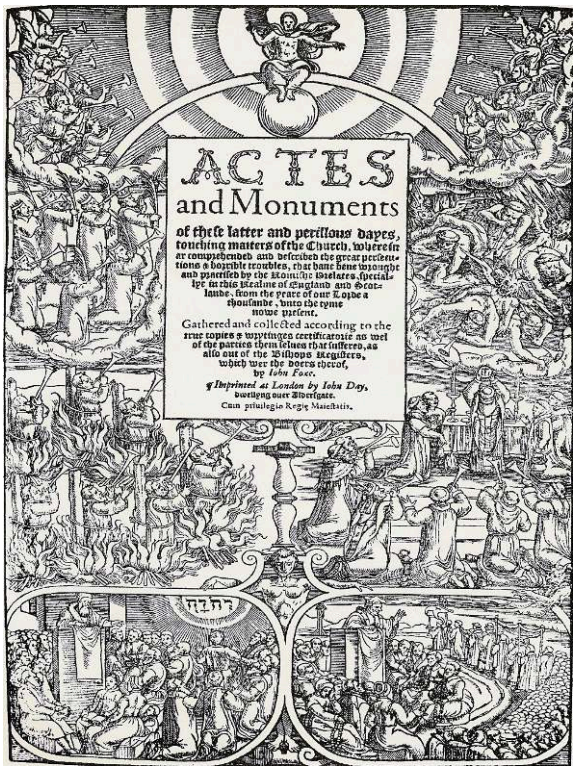
> Remēber M. Ridley it is no straunge countrey whether I exhort you to return. You wer once one of vs: you haue takē degrees in þt schole. You were made priest and became a precher, setting forth the same doctrine, which we doe nowe. You were made Bishop accordynge to our lawes: and to bee shorte, it is not so long agone sithe you separated youre self from vs, and in the tyme of Heresye became a setter forth of that deuillishe and seditious Doctryne whyche in these latter dayes was preached amongest vs [...] wherby it appereth þt it is no strange thing nor vnknowen place, wherunto I exhort you. I wish you to returne thither from whēe you came: that is, together with vs (*AM* 1563: 1427-28).

23 The Paulinian observation — "there must also heresies [among you]" (1 Co 11: 18-19) — was a reminder that despite the intense desire for religious unity, there has been and must be religious Others to threaten the stability of the Church. Heresy seems to be the dark lining of orthodoxy, the two linked inextricably: "is there any Article which hath not his heresy annexed unto him, as the shadow vnto a body" (*AM* 1563: 186). It is because of this very inextricability that rhetorical strokes needed to steer clear from nuance to be bolder and effective.

24 Foxe acknowledged the intimate proximity between victims and victimisers as "the true Church, and the false church, [are] euer ioyned together" (*AM* 1576: 1737). In the frontispiece to the 1563 edition, the page is divided into four horizontal parts that mirror each other (Figure 2). On God's right-hand side is "the image of the persecuted church" and opposite is "the image of the persecuting church", a clear reference to Bale's *Image of both Churches*. The bottom part of the woodcut represents how the message of God is conveyed; the part above it depicts how each Church shows its faith;

the third part what afterlife looks like for each of them while the top of the woodcut is occupied by God sitting in majesty surrounded by his trumpeting angels.

Figure 2. Frontispiece of the 1563 edition of John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*.



25 The opening of *AM* encapsulates visually what the book is about: the opposition between the true Church of Christ and the synagogue of Satan as demonstrated by the grimacing devils and the disorder that await the worshippers of the host. Symmetry is more or less respected at the bottom of the woodcut: the same pulpit (with men and women gathered around or men standing in a circle and blowing their trumpets) takes half of the visual space. Differences are obvious (rosaries, tonsures, host, cross, procession versus Tetragrammaton, palm leaf, crowns, flames), but what is striking is that the human world, divided into three strata, has at its core a mirroring effect between martyrs and mass, between the sacrament of the altar and the sacrifice of the Protestants (Rust 2013). As seen before, the creation of the enemy was achieved, among others, by an unremitting condemnation of mass, so that this visual opposition confirms that one sacrifice is godly whereas the other is sheer idolatry. In his description of Rawlins White's martyrdom, Foxe actually juxtaposes the two rituals ("By this tyme this poore innocent came to the very altar of his sacrifice (I meane the place appoynted for his death)," *AM* 1576: 1501). In February 1557, the remains of the reformers Martin Bucer and Paul Fagius were exhumed and publicly burned after the two men were posthumously found guilty of heresy. The martyrologist's narration of the event makes explicit the resemblance between the Catholic and Protestant rituals: "Their God being led with this pompe, & pacified with great sacrificed hostes of Bucer & Phagius, at length setled hym selfe agayne in his accustomed roume" (*AM* 1570: 2192). The reference to anthropophagy cannot be missed, but because Foxe understood that, for the Catholics, burning martyrs at the stake equated renewing the bloody sacrifice of mass every Sunday, he finally bowed to the enemy's demands and turned his martyrs

into textual hosts, integrating the enemy's conception of the sacred. This acceptance may seem at cross-purposes with the desired black and white worldview of martyrologies, but despite the polemical thrust of the work, Foxe's *AM* at times hints at what bound the Protestants to the Catholics, each other's closest enemy.

26 It is open to debate whether or not John Foxe was actually consciously constructing an enemy figure through rhetorical tropes aptly deployed to make up what we understand as a real "strategy". We came across some of his contemporaries (the Magdeburg Centuriators, John Bale, Jean Crespin)[10] and pointed out that these Protestant authors shared the same collective worldview and apocalyptic *imaginaire* that transcended "national" frontiers. The circulation of books and ideas, as well as John Foxe's exile on the continent, enabled him to come into contact with tropes and traditions that unfamiliar to insular England. Foxe's interest in Church history also led him to ponder over the method of Eusebius of Caesarea and to follow in the ecclesiastical historian's footsteps (Minton 2002). The martyrologist's own methodology — his inclusion of primary material, such as the records of ecclesiastical courts, the letters of martyrs or the testimonies which came his way thanks to the clandestine Protestant networks — raises the question of Foxe's "style of authorship" (Freeman & Brietz Monta 2013) and advises us to be cautious about the possible limits of the martyrologist's *auctoritas*. Foxe's anti-Catholicism evolved according to circumstances, and so did his martyrology. As demonstrated by Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas Freeman (2011), Foxe endeavoured to avoid criticisms that might blemish the faith he defended by continuously adding, suppressing, and correcting the contents of his massive work. The four editions of *AM* he supervised during his lifetime are thus different in tone and in message.[11]

27 Creating the enemy was vital for the Protestants at a time when persecutions raged: it enabled self-definition and ensured that praiseworthy models would be replicated while abhorred attitudes would be shunned. John Foxe's stated intentions of fashioning a despicable foe functioned, especially thanks to the use of long-established tropes; but because the two rival Churches had to put in the background their common points, the ghostly presence of the return of the repressed looms in the pages of the *AM*. Despite his sustained censuring of the Catholic rituals, Foxe was criticized for his tendency to openly embrace derided habits and beliefs, such as the use of a calendar to include the Protestant martyrs in red lettering or the belief in post-mortem miracles. The truth may be that beyond the doctrinal divide and polemics, Foxe realized that the enemy was not that distant. However, in troubled times nuances were unpalatable. The disparagements partly explain why Foxe kept on working on and correcting his martyrology until his death in 1587. The debasing rhetorical devices and images against Catholics began to take shape in the Marian years and flourished in the 1580s in the wake of the Spanish Armada, providing a source of cohesion and identity for Protestant England. If in the 16th century, anti-Catholicism was associated with Spain in the following century, it could not be dissociated from Gallophobia: the enemy had changed faces but still loomed large.

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NOTES

1. Two Latin versions were published respectively in Strasburg in August 1554 and Basel in September 1559.
2. The online variorum edition of the unabridged texts of the four editions published in John Foxe's lifetime can be browsed at https://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe.
3. See Ranson 2013; Phillpott 2018.
4. "See I saye and behold here present before your eyes, the heapes of slayne bodies, of so many men and wemen, both old, yonge, chyldren, infantes, new borne, maryed, vnmaryed, wyues, wydowes, maydes, blynde men, lame men, whole men, of all sortes, of al ages, of al degrees. Lordes, Knightes, Gentlemen, Lawyers, Merchauntes, Archbishops, Bishops, Priestes, Ministers, Deacons, Lay men, Artificers, yea whole householdes, and whole kyndredes together, Father, Mother and Daughter, Grandmother, Mother, Aunt, and Chylde. &c. whose woundes yet bleedynge before the face of God, cry vengeaunce. For whom haue you spared? What country coulde scape your handes? See therfore I say, reade, and behold your actes and factes [...], the more you may blush & detest the same" ("To the Persecutors of Gods truth, commonlye called Papistes, an other preface of the Author", *AM* 1563: 12).
5. See Foxe's challenging questions and remarks in the margins, for instance "Why not on the left hand aswell? Or any such kissing at all?", "And why then be ye angry with vs?", "But he telleth vs not why" (*AM* 1583: 1422-4).
6. Foxe never coined the phrase "Bloody Mary", rather inveighing against her officers.
7. "Martyrs [...] were his food" (*AM* 1563: 1770). This image is not repeated in the other editions.
8. Edmund Bonner was Bishop of London, Stephen Gardiner Bishop of Winchester and Mary I's Lord Chancellor.
9. For more on this engraving, see Burks 2017.
10. Foxe collaborated a lot with continental reformers, see Freeman and Scott Gehring 2018.
11. This is the reason why only the 1570 edition was adopted for the present analysis.

ABSTRACTS

John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (first English edition 1563) played a seminal role in the fashioning of a Protestant national identity. The nearly 300 victims who were burnt at the stake during the Marian Catholic years (1553-1558) were transformed in the crucible of the Foxeian narratives into heroes. Thanks to a reversal strategy the martyrs became victors in the ongoing fight against Antichrist and his supporters, the Catholics. Foxe's purpose in this war for God was to create an enduring image of the enemy so as to fuel hatred to keep the fight going. The martyrologist left a long-lasting imprint in the English collective psyche as testified by the Catholic hysteria that raged during the post-Civil Wars era. The construction of an English Protestant identity was achieved thanks to a combination of self-definition and opposition. This

construction partook in the pseudo-martyr debate: if both groups agreed on the definition and meaning of martyrdom, they disagreed on what they understood as true faith. Part of Foxe's strategy to create the enemy image implied the analogical association between Protestants and apostolic and primitive figures, on the one hand, and between Catholics and evil forces through the commonplace recycling of biblical imagery that instantly evoked reminiscences of violence and barbarity, on the other. The martyrologist also resorted to the metaphor of the world as a stage to turn Catholics into puppets. The depriving of the opponents' pith and life was brought to its logical consequence with the trope of animal-like creatures, eating the lambs of God. As expected in such a context of religious strife Foxe turned Catholics into cannibals. What was at stake with Foxe, as with all Protestant European narratives of the early modern period (Crespin, Van Haemstede), was the creation of an enemy image to survive to the persecutions that had taken such a toll, and was continuing to do so, onto their co-religionists. The discourses also naturally aimed at proselytizing as much as possible with familiar victims. With the fashioning of a "society of martyrs" Foxe constructed an "imagined community" (B. Anderson) whose mission was to weather the storms of violence and persecutions to uphold Christian values (the true Church) and national values (fighting against the Pope, the Spaniards and Mary, the semi-English Queen). Because the two sides of the religious divide shared the same roots uncanny resemblances can nevertheless be spotted, as with the frontispiece to Foxe's work which creates a mirroring image between victims and victimizers. The erstwhile brothers had become 'deformed imps of the devil'; what was familiar had become alien, other, external and frightening.

Les *Acts and Monuments* de John Foxe (première édition anglaise 1563) jouèrent un rôle crucial dans la construction d'une identité protestante nationale. Les quelque 300 victimes qui périrent dans les flammes durant le règne de la catholique Marie I (1553-1558) furent changées en héros dans le creuset narratif foxite. Grâce à la stratégie de l'inversion, les martyrs remportaient la victoire lors du combat permanent qui les opposait à l'Antéchrist et à ses suppôts catholiques. L'intention de Foxe, au cœur de cette guerre pour Dieu, était de façonner une image de l'ennemi suffisamment puissante pour susciter la haine nécessaire pour continuer à mener le combat. Le martyrologiste laissa en effet une empreinte profonde dans la psyché collective anglaise, comme l'atteste l'hystérie catholique qui se déchaîna durant la période qui suivit les guerres civiles. La construction d'une identité protestante anglaise passait par la définition de l'identité protestante par opposition à l'identité catholique. Cette construction faisait partie du débat concernant les pseudo-martyrs : si catholiques et protestants s'accordaient sur la définition et le sens du martyre, ils divergeaient sur ce qui pour eux était la véritable foi. Foxe parvint à créer l'image de l'ennemi grâce à l'association analogique entre protestants et martyrs des premiers temps, d'une part, et catholiques et forces du mal, association qui se nourrissait du recyclage de lieux communs bibliques qui évoquaient instantanément la violence et la barbarie, de l'autre. Foxe eut aussi recours à la métaphore du monde comme théâtre avec le dessein de transformer les catholiques en marionnettes. Cet évidement de substance, de vie et d'humanité trouve sa conséquence logique dans les tropes tirés du bestiaire, qui prêtent aux catholiques les traits de créatures bestiales dévorant les agneaux de Dieu. Sans surprise, dans pareil contexte vient s'ajouter le thème du cannibalisme. Les enjeux, pour Foxe comme pour les autres martyrologistes protestants européens de l'époque (comme Crespin ou van Haemstede), étaient doubles, car il s'agissait de trouver un sens pour survivre aux persécutions qui avaient conduit, et conduisaient encore, tant de coreligionnaires au bûcher, tout en faisant œuvre de prosélytisme efficace grâce aux récits centrés sur des victimes familières. En constituant une « société de martyrs », Foxe posait les jalons d'une « communauté imaginée » (B. Anderson) dont la mission était de survivre à l'orage de la persécution et de la violence afin de défendre des valeurs chrétiennes (celles de la véritable Église), mais aussi nationales (par le combat contre le pape, les Espagnols ou Marie, la

reine à moitié anglaise). Les deux religions apparemment si opposées partagent toutefois les mêmes les racines et l'inquiétante étrangeté surgit parfois, comme dans le frontispice de l'œuvre de Foxe où un effet de miroir met en regard victimes et bourreaux. Le frère d'hier est devenu « le rejeton difforme du diable » ; ce qui jadis était familier est aujourd'hui étranger, autre, extérieur et effrayant.

INDEX

Keywords: England, early modern period, Foxe John, Acts and Monuments, Mary I, anti-Catholicism, persecutions, Protestant martyrs, enemy, martyrology, history, Reformation
Mots-clés: Angleterre, première modernité, Foxe John, Acts and Monuments, Marie I, anti-catholicisme, persécutions, martyrs protestants, ennemi, martyrologe, histoire, Réforme

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