

W. Bradford Littlejohn / Scott N. Kindred-Barnes (eds.)

Richard Hooker and Reformed Orthodoxy

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in Co-operation with
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W. Bradford Littlejohn and Scott N. Kindred-Barnes

Abbreviations and Note on Citations

- CO *Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*. Edited by Johann Wilhelm Baum, August Edward Cunitz, and Eduard Reuss. In *Corpus Reformatorum*. Edited by C.B. Bretschneider and H.E. Bindseil. Brunswick: C.A. Schwetschke, 1864–1900.
- FLE 1 Hill, W. Speed, and Georges Edelen, eds. *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker, vol. 1: The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Pref., Books I to IV*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977.
- FLE 2 Hill, W. Speed, ed. *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker, vol. 2: The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Book V*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977.
- FLE 3 Hill, W. Speed, and P.G. Stanwood, eds. *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker, vol. 3: The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Books VI, VII, VIII*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981.
- FLE 4 Hill, W. Speed, and John E. Booty, eds. *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker, vol. 4: Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie: Attack and Response*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1982.
- FLE 5 Hill, W. Speed, and Laetitia Yeandle, ed. *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker, vol. 5: Tractates and Sermons*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990.
- FLE 6 Hill, W. Speed, ed. *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker, vol. 6: Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie, Books I–VIII: Introductions and Commentary*. Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1993.
- LEP Hooker, Richard. *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie. Eyght Bookes*. London: John Windet, 1593, 1597; Richard Bishop, 1648; J. Best, 1662.

- LW Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works: American Edition*. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, and Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1955–1970.
- ST Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae*. Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. At New Advent, www.newadvent.org.
- WA *D. Martin Luther's Werke: kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimarer Ausgabe). 120 vols. Weimar: H. Böhlau Nachfolger, 1883–2009.

** All quotations or citations of Richard Hooker are from the *Folger Library Edition* unless otherwise specified. Citations are given first by Folger volume with page and generally line numbers, then by title of work (with the *Laws of Ecclesiasticall Politie* abbreviated LEP) with book, chapter, section number. So, for instance, the citation “*FLE* 1:343.23–344.9; *LEP* IV.14.7” denotes that the quotation is taken from Book IV, ch. 14, par. 7 of the *Laws*, which can be found in vol. 1, beginning on p. 343, line 23, and ending on p. 344, line 9 of the *Folger Library Edition*.

Foreword

Thanks to the endeavors of the Richard Hooker Society, the study of the life and work of Richard Hooker has received new and increasing attention. Thus far, Hooker has been known mainly in Anglican circles but this has recently changed enormously, as this volume demonstrates. Brad Littlejohn and Scott Kindred-Barnes have managed to bring a great team of experts together and each one of them presents the latest in Hooker research. The editors themselves start off with a very clear introduction to the state of this research and their overview not only makes clear how vivid the academic discussion and thus the research on Hooker is, but also how necessary it is to review Hooker's place in the Protestant tradition.

This review can only take place by reading Hooker himself, but also by taking notice of his historical and theological context. In this respect, Hooker studies enjoys the 'ad fontes' movement that has engulfed research on early modern intellectual history in general and that of 16th and 17th century reformed Protestantism in particular. After the Second World War, an awareness arose that not only the works of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin should be available and accessible in scholarly editions, but also those of the unjustly so-called 'minor reformers'. Editions of the works of, for example, Martin Bucer and Heinrich Bullinger were started and soon followed by the editions of many other Protestant thinkers as well as of ecclesiastical and political *acta*, a process still going on today. These editions resulted in a rich harvest of dissertations, conferences and translations, but also of research centers and societies dealing with these reformers, their life, works and influence.

Slowly but surely the circle of these reformers has widened also chronologically to those Protestants of the second part of the sixteenth century. More and more, the conviction has grown that reformed Protestantism contained a wide varied of people and positions and yet was a theological unity, even if this 'variety in unity' was reflected in different confessional standpoints and documents. 'Calvinism', according to some scholars, should be seen as synonymous with 'reformed Protestantism', since a reappraisal of Calvin's theology and that of his

contemporaries and students made clear that ‘Calvinism’ is far broader than the theology of Calvin also since Calvin himself took up leading ideas of the first reformers. In this reappraisal, studies on Richard Hooker also blossomed and brought those new insights that form the basis as well as much of the content of this volume.

The concept ‘label’ can be called the red thread through this book but even more through the aforementioned research. The availability of new editions, the access to digital sources and the growing interdisciplinary, international and interconfessional academic cooperation have left most of the early modern labels void. Whether Lutheran, Calvinist, Anglican, Puritan or Baptist, all of these labels have lost much of their value—if they ever had such value—as a result of close reading of the sources, and Hooker studies is one of those that profit richly from it. Labels shut people out and lock others in, which seems to give a clear picture where each has a place. However, reading the persons who have these labels forces one to either conclude that they sometimes were inconsistent, as they do not always act or speak according to their label, or to conclude that labels need sub-labels or simply need to be done away with. The papers of this rich volume prove that for a real appraisal of the work and person of Richard Hooker, the last-mentioned approach is best.

The whole scale of Hooker’s life and work is dealt with in the chapters here presented, and this makes this book into a Hooker handbook that hopefully will be a useful tool as well as a welcome stimulus for research on this fascinating figure. For speaking of the harvest of new editions and newer research does not mean that we are almost done. Quite the opposite is true. Harvest means also to make place for new fruits and these are sure to come. This volume once again makes clear that it is highly fruitful and refreshing to skip labels and prejudices and return to the sources and to do so with combined forces.

I am happy and somewhat proud that this volume appears in the series Refo500 Academic Studies, first of all because of the quality of the papers but also since Richard Hooker deserves a prominent place on the stage of Reformation studies. Therefore I wish this wonderful book into the hands of many colleagues and students.

Herman Selderhuis

W. Bradford Littlejohn / Scott N. Kindred-Barnes

Introduction

I. The State of Hooker Scholarship

For all the homage we pay them, we allow few great historical thinkers the dignity of resting in peace. Rather, no sooner are their bodies laid in the grave before they are disinterred, so to speak, and made to play various parts that have been written for them, and participate in every quarrel that their descendants can think up. They become the victims of an endless tug-of-war, pulled first this way and then that by the warring intellectual factions of each successive age. They are variously eulogized, canonized, criticized, and only occasionally humanized. Indeed, we might wonder whether the number of factions a thinker inspires, and the longevity of their disagreements, is not the surest mark of intellectual greatness: consider the warring legions of Platonists, Aristotelians, Thomists, and Calvinists that have filled many a library through the centuries, and continue to do so today.

By this measure alone, Richard Hooker perhaps merits recognition as an intellectual giant of lasting historical significance. Since his death in 1600, his thought – and especially his monumental *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* – has been conscripted as a bulwark of many different self-understandings of that protean tradition called “Anglicanism,” with the odd Puritan or Catholic daring to claim Hooker’s mantle as their own.¹

The progressive liberation of historical scholarship from the straitjacket of confessional identity over the past century might have promised to at last end such tug-of-wars and bring some clarity to the discussion over how best to understand this great Elizabethan. And to be sure, Hooker scholarship has witnessed a vibrant renaissance in the past half-century, beginning with the Folger Library Edition project in the early 1970s and continuing to steadily gather steam since then. The past twenty years have seen the publication of three new essay

1 For a full survey of the complex reception of Hooker’s work in the seventeenth century, see Michael Brydon, *The Evolving Reputation of Richard Hooker: An Examination of Responses, 1600–1714* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

collections on Hooker, with this present volume marking the fourth.² During that period, a new monograph dedicated to Hooker has appeared nearly every year, with further discussion taking place in journal articles and conferences, both academic and occasionally popular.³ An outside observer, however, might be forgiven for thinking that this renaissance had succeeded in generating more heat than light, with profound disagreements persisting about Hooker's basic theological identity and polemical agenda, as well as his views on a host of key theological and political topics, and little sign of resolution.

In particular, since roughly 1988 two influential revisionist schools of Hooker interpretation have emerged, both of them sharply opposed to an older consensus view of Hooker as the quintessential representative of a moderate Anglican *via media*, but also sharply opposed to one another. One school is associated with the great historian of early modern England Peter Lake, who in 1988 published his groundbreaking assessment of Hooker in *Anglicans and Puritans?*, and the other with the prominent Reformation historical theologian Torrance Kirby, who that same year defended his Oxford dissertation, soon afterward published as *Richard Hooker's Doctrine of the Royal Supremacy*.⁴ Before surveying these two schools, we should perhaps first pause to review the more traditional *via media* interpretation both were opposing.

This view, which is well-represented in such mid twentieth-century works as John F.H. New's *Anglican and Puritan*, F.J. Shirley's *Richard Hooker and Contemporary Political Ideas*, and John S. Marshall's *Hooker and the Anglican Tradition*,⁵ rested heavily on a certain self-understanding of Anglicanism as

2 A.S. McGrade, ed., *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community* (Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies); W.J. Torrance Kirby, ed., *Richard Hooker and the English Reformation* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2003); Kirby, ed., *A Companion to Richard Hooker* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

3 Just the past few years have witnessed the publication of A.J. Joyce, *Richard Hooker and Anglican Moral Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Charles Miller, *Richard Hooker and the Vision of God* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2013); Dan Graves and Scott N. Kindred-Barnes, eds., *Richard Hooker: His Life, Work, and Legacy* (Toronto: St. Osmund Press, 2013); W. Bradford Littlejohn, *Richard Hooker: A Companion to His Life and Work* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015); Daniel Eppley, *Reading the Bible with Richard Hooker* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016); W. Bradford Littlejohn, *The Peril and Promise of Christian Liberty: Richard Hooker, the Puritans, and Protestant Political Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, forthcoming 2017).

4 Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought From Whitgift to Hooker* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988); W.J. Torrance Kirby, *Richard Hooker's Doctrine of the Royal Supremacy* (Leiden: Brill, 1990).

5 John F. H. New, *Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition, 1558–1640* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964); F. J. Shirley, *Richard Hooker and Contemporary Political Ideas* (London: Published for the Church Historical Society by S.P.C.K., 1949); John S. Marshall, *Hooker and the Anglican Tradition: an Historical and Theological Study of Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity* (Sewanee, TN: University Press at the University of the South, 1956).

having, from its inception, charted something of a middle course between Rome and Geneva. This self-understanding was for many Anglicans somewhat transparently self-congratulatory, claiming as the special charism of that tradition its ability to achieve moderation in the face of dogmatism and sweet reasonableness in the face of conflict. Richard Hooker, with his beautifully-balanced, carefully-qualified prose, and his commitment to search out the rational foundations of every dispute, was taken to be paradigmatic of this theological method. Not only that, but Hooker's thought was often read as paradigmatic of such a "golden mediocrity" in its content as well, charting a course that steered the English church well away from the jagged rocks of Calvinist predestinarianism and Lutheran solfidianism, but without getting lost in the treacherous sea of post-Tridentine Catholicism. Hooker's theology was Thomist above all, hearkening back to the best features of the scholastic synthesis before the late medieval corruptions and the Reformation tumults.

Such a *via media* reading of Hooker was certainly not ubiquitous prior to the modern renaissance of Hooker studies, but it was undoubtedly the general consensus, at least since the Oxford Movement. The Tractarians, to be sure, were not responsible for manufacturing the *via media* idea of their church, or of Hooker himself, out of whole cloth, as is sometimes claimed, although they certainly did try to accentuate its distance from magisterial Protestantism. Nor is this understanding a thing of the past. It is still easily the dominant understanding of Anglicanism, and indeed of Hooker, among the Anglican rank-and-file, and those of other denominations who ever pause to think about Hooker. Several recent scholars have also continued to espouse something like this older interpretation. Lee Gibbs, for instance, stalwartly maintained it right through the revisionist wave of the 1990s and 2000s, and A.J. Joyce and Charles Miller have also presented a somewhat chastened and qualified version of the theory, mixed with elements of Lake's revisionist reading.⁶

However, most scholars now writing on Hooker are keenly aware of the theory's limitations. Chief among them is the recognition that there was no such thing as "Anglicanism" during the sixteenth century. There was a Church of England, to be sure, built on an Elizabethan settlement that did prize a certain "golden mediocrity," or moderation. But as David Neelands shows in an essay in this volume, and as Ethan Shagan has relentlessly argued in his recent book *The Rule of Moderation*,⁷ these terms were neither unique to the English context, nor did they convey some determinate theological flavor that mediated between

6 See Lee W. Gibbs, "Richard Hooker's Via Media Doctrine of Scripture and Tradition," *Harvard Theological Review* 95, no. 2 (2002): 227–35; "Richard Hooker: Prophet of Anglicanism or English Magisterial Reformer?" *Anglican Theological Review* 84 (2002): 943–60.

7 *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion, and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Protestant and Catholic churchmanship or dogma. On the contrary, there was little or nothing about the fundamental theology of Elizabeth's church to set it at odds with its continental sister churches, particularly the Swiss and German Reformed. Calvin's distinctive brand of the Reformed faith was, to be sure, in some disrepute, but this owed more to the taint of political radicalism that John Knox had left on Geneva than to any specifically theological issues. The liturgy and government of the Elizabethan church, on the other hand, certainly did stand out in rather sharp relief from most continental Reformed churches (though not nearly so much from the Lutheran, it should be noted) and seemed to some critics at the time as midway between popery and Protestantism. But this was certainly not how its defenders saw it; on the contrary, they contended, such outward variations in no way implied a theological departure from the Reformed faith or a sympathy with Catholicism. If there was a *via media* Anglicanism during this time, then, it was certainly not one that anyone was consciously identifying with or advocating. So whatever else Hooker might have been doing, he could hardly have been giving eloquent voice and systematic structure to such an English self-understanding. Indeed, for him to do so would have been rash and counter-cultural in the extreme. The theological consensus of the Elizabethan church was Calvinist, at least in a general sense, and the theology presented in the *Laws* could hardly be expected to diverge radically from that consensus.⁸

Upon this much, both Kirby and Lake are agreed. But at this point, hermeneutical and methodological considerations lead them to quite different conclusions. Lake, although more an intellectual than a social historian, seeks to be meticulously attentive to the immediate ecclesiastical and polemical context in which Hooker wrote. Applying the most up-to-date historical and literary methodology to read between the lines of Hooker's prose, he seeks to discern Hooker's subtle departures from and critiques of the dominant Calvinist theology, which, thinks Lake, are rarely stated explicitly given Hooker's delicate position.⁹ Kirby, on the other hand, approaches Hooker's work with more systematic-theological concerns in mind. Having identified, with some measure of oversimplification but also a good deal of genuine insight, the core theological convictions that most or all of the magisterial reformers shared, Kirby looks for evidence of this theological framework (rooted in Luther's "two realms" theology) in Hooker, and

8 For a summary of scholarship on the "Calvinist consensus" reading of this period that has become dominant since Nicholas Tyacke and Peter Lake's work in the 1970s and 1980s, see Lake, "Introduction: Puritanism, Arminianism, and Nicholas Tyacke," in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke*, ed. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2006), 1–15.

9 This basic mode of argument appears throughout his lengthy chapter on Hooker in *Anglicans and Puritans*, but see especially pp. 160, 170, 186–87, 196–97.

finds it there in sharp relief, so much so that Kirby does not hesitate to portray Hooker's theology as not merely consistent with magisterial Protestantism and the Reformed tradition, but as paradigmatic of it. Kirby takes Hooker's writing largely at face value, including his claims to seek reconciliation in the shared truth of Protestant orthodoxy with his Puritan opponents, while Lake discerns a fiercely polemic and at times downright duplicitous work. Lake is much more interested in analyzing Hooker's rhetorical positioning vis-à-vis the Puritans than in evaluating his theological relationship to Protestant orthodoxy, even if he is frequently led, despite his own professed methodological agnosticism, to draw conclusions about the latter.

Lake's basic conclusion, in the much-quoted words of *Anglicans and Puritans*, is that although Hooker cannot be said to have epitomized Anglicanism, since it did not yet exist, he could perhaps be said to have "invented" it.¹⁰ Bradford Littlejohn has called this revisionist reading the "via mediator" position,¹¹ claiming as it does that Hooker was in fact the first to forge the sort of middle way that was later to characterize Anglican theology, piety, and self-understanding. Although certainly revisionist in its starting assumptions, it should be noted that the overall portrait of Hooker's theology that emerges from Lake's reading is not all that different from the old *via media* picture in certain respects; indeed, Kirby rarely bothers to distinguish the two in much of his writing. Lake contends that Hooker's theology departs from Calvinism in an Arminian, high church, and sacramentalist direction, that his high view of human reason and reliance on scholastic authorities puts him at odds with Protestant biblicism, and that his robust emphasis on the outward means of salvation and sanctification sets him on a trajectory away from the Reformation's commitment to *sola fide*.¹² Each of these emphases could be found without much difficulty (albeit generally in cruder form) in older *via media* scholarship.

Although Lake's work, both on Hooker and more broadly on Puritanism and Anglicanism in the Elizabethan and Jacobean church, has attained virtually the status of a new dogma among many historians of the period, it has not gained a similar following among Anglican historical theologians or self-identified Hooker scholars. Most of these have tended to gravitate toward Kirby's Reformed revisionism (or as Littlejohn has called it for convenience, "reformism"), albeit most of them in a more qualified and less dogmatic form than Kirby's own formulations. Leading Hooker scholars such as Paul Avis and David Neelands

10 Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans*, 227.

11 W. Bradford Littlejohn, "The Search for a Reformed Hooker: Some Modest Proposals," *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 16, no. 1 (April 2014): 69.

12 On reason and Scripture, see *Anglicans and Puritans*, 151–54; on sacramentalism supplanting Reformed understandings of justification, pp. 173–82; on the subversion of Calvinist orthodoxy, pp. 182–96.

have consistently argued for a Hooker who, although very much his own man, stood firmly in the broad and varied stream of magisterial Protestantism as it was developing in the latter sixteenth century.¹³ They have also tended to hold, over against Lake, that Hooker's writing is forthright enough to be interpreted accurately enough without resorting to hermeneutics of suspicion and polemical deconstructions. Most Hooker scholars to come on the scene since the year 2000, such as Dan Eppley, John Stafford, Ranall Ingalls, Dan Graves, and many of the contributors to this volume (and indeed, in the interests of full disclosure, its editors) have been deeply influenced by and broadly sympathetic to Kirby's work. Of course, there are some notable exceptions, such as A.J. Joyce already mentioned and of course Nigel Voak, who with his 2003 *Richard Hooker and Reformed Theology* and several subsequent essays, has offered by far the most sophisticated and nuanced articulation of Lake's general approach to Hooker.¹⁴

Hooker scholarship is of course far from the only subfield dogged by intractable disagreements, and indeed, robust disagreement is generally a mark of health when it comes to historical scholarship. In the present case, however, the stubborn persistence and even entrenchment of the rival schools of interpretation with little progress on key disputed points suggests that something is amiss. Without resolution – or at least sustained attention to – three sets of interpretive questions, our progress in understanding Hooker's theological identity is sure to be slow. These three are (1) hermeneutics and the meaning of "irenicism"; (2) the scope of Reformed theology; (3) the character of Reformed theology. Let us touch on each of these briefly in turn.

II. Hermeneutics and "Irenicism"

One of the persistent challenges to understanding Hooker rightly, as noted above, is the difficulty of discerning authorial intent. Of course, this is always going to be the case with any writer, historical or contemporary, but for some reason, the problem has loomed rather larger in Hooker scholarship than generally in Luther or Calvin scholarship, for instance. Perhaps Hooker's rather

13 See for instance Paul D.L. Avis, *In Search of Authority: Anglican Theological Method from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 93–129; David Neelands, "Predestination" and "Christology and Sacraments," in *A Companion to Richard Hooker*, 185–220, 369–402.

14 Nigel Voak, *Richard Hooker and Reformed Theology: A Study of Reason, Will, and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); "Richard Hooker and the Principle of Sola Scriptura," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 59, no. 1 (2008): 96–139; "English Molinism in the Late 1590s: Richard Hooker on Free Will, Predestination, and Divine Foreknowledge," *Journal of Theological Studies* 60, no. 1 (2009): 130–77.

more reserved disposition has something to do with it. Calvin and particularly Luther were fearless and occasionally intemperate combatants in the disputational arena, unafraid to speak their minds plainly and confident that they could prevail. Hooker, on the other hand, while clearly entering the arena against Puritan adversaries, is much more careful and circumspect, oblique in his attacks and intentionally understated at key points. This, together with his circumlocutory and ironical prose style, has left plenty of room for scholars to debate just how we should understand his intentions and meaning, both at the level of his work as a whole and at the level of individual phrases and sentences.

Thanks to Kirby's work, those inclined to read Hooker more-or-less at face value now tend to generally accept his Reformed identity, at least broadly construed. This certainly would not have been the case a few decades ago, when for many, the *prima facie* reading of Hooker was as a quintessential *via media* Anglican, patiently constructing the famed "Anglican tripod." However, thanks in part to a fuller grasp of Hooker's broader theological context, and to a more attentive reading of key passages, such as those on the sufficiency of Scripture, justification, the invisible church, the sacraments, and even the episcopacy, Hooker's relative proximity to the mainstream of Reformed Protestantism has become much clearer.

Many recent scholars, however, are not at all convinced. After all, the disputational arena of late Elizabethan England was marked by bewilderingly complex rhetorical posturing and jockeying for position vis-à-vis both theological and political authorities.¹⁵ If any theologian did dare to depart substantially from the Reformed consensus of the Elizabeth church, as writers like Lake have noted, he risked being immediately blacklisted. Accordingly, we should only expect that if Hooker too was setting himself against that consensus, he would have done so shrewdly, underhandedly, and elusively. The contemporary scholar, in determining the true shape of his theology, must be ready to read between the lines, uncovering the subtext beneath the text and refusing to take his protestations of Reformed orthodoxy at face value.¹⁶

While certainly plausible, this approach runs two rather serious dangers. First, it is somewhat circular, and can easily become viciously circular. If Hooker was opposing the Reformed consensus, we should expect him to mask the fact. But of course this is precisely the question at issue: was he? If we assume in advance that he is, we will have no difficulty accounting for the many times when he appears not to be – after all, such respectful nods to orthodoxy are precisely what we

15 See for instance Lake, "Antipuritanism: The Structure of a Prejudice," in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England*, 80–97.

16 Thus Lake's famous remark that "Hooker's whole project had represented a sort of sleight of hand whereby what amounted to a full-scale attack on Calvinist piety was passed off as a simple exercise in anti-presbyterianism" (*Anglicans and Puritans*, 239).

should expect from a shrewd subverter of the tradition. Such a reading can find itself in a position where it is armored in advance against contrary evidence: if, for instance, it is protested that Hooker offers a robustly Reformed formulation of the nature of the invisible church in Book III, ch. 1, we will be told that of course he would say something like that, and it cannot be taken seriously; instead we must focus our attention only on those places where his formulations seem more idiosyncratic. Second, this approach, at least if adopted as a universal hermeneutic, becomes self-refuting. If we are to assume that whenever we are reading a writer who is polemically-engaged, we must look for subtexts and double meanings, and refuse to take protestations at face value, then presumably the same rule applies to reading the contemporary historian who is making such claims in his or her journal article or monograph. And indeed it has been unsettling to note how often advocates of this hermeneutic have been quick to accuse their colleagues of readings motivated by theological partisanship (they read Hooker as Reformed because *they* are Reformed, or evangelical because *they* are evangelical, etc.) rather than historical fidelity.

It is to avoid such self-refuting suspicion that most contributors to the present volume have insisted on exegeting Hooker's text on its own terms, assuming that its affirmations should be taken literally unless there is good contextual reason to suppose otherwise, and when apparent internal contradictions arise, erring on the side of charity and assuming a self-consistent solution is possible. Nonetheless, it is clearly the case that given the complex theo-politics of the Elizabethan era, and the rhetorical sophistication of Hooker's polemics, we must equally beware of naïve and oversimplistic readings that risk ironing out theological nuances and papering over polemical jabs.

It is clear from recent writings such as A.J. Joyce's *Richard Hooker and Anglican Moral Theology* that critics of Kirby's revisionism see his reading doing just that. This complaint, however, which seems to be at the root of much of the intractability in recent debates over Hooker's theology, appears to rest on a misunderstanding of the relationship between the terms "polemical" and "irenical." Kirby famously characterized Hooker's *Laws* as an "irenical appeal to the hearts and minds of the disciplinarian-Puritan opponents of the Elizabeth Settlement,"¹⁷ a characterization which Joyce sharply contests in chapter three of her book.¹⁸ Quite the contrary, argues Joyce, Hooker is vigorously opposed to many Puritan proposals, and pulls out all the weapons in his formidable rhetorical armory to resist and undermine them. The failure to recognize the fundamentally polemical character of the *Laws*, argues Joyce, results in a complete

17 Kirby, *Richard Hooker, Reformer and Platonist* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), x, cf. 20; see also Kirby, *Richard Hooker's Doctrine of the Royal Supremacy* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 20.

18 See especially Joyce, *Richard Hooker and Anglican Moral Theology*, 52ff.

misunderstanding of Hooker's work, since it makes him out to be an ally, rather than an adversary, of Reformed theology and practice. She concludes, "In short, it is difficult to see how the kind of account that Kirby and Atkinson have attempted to give of the fundamental nature and purpose of the *Lawes* as demonstrating Hooker's commitment to Reformed theology can possibly be sustained."¹⁹

However, as Bradford Littlejohn has argued in his essay "The Search for a Reformed Hooker,"²⁰ Joyce's contention here rests on a conflation of irenicism of *purpose* (which Kirby does mean to attribute to Hooker) with irenicism of *method*, conceived of in opposition to polemics (which Kirby clearly does not mean to attribute to Hooker). No sensible reader would today deny that the *Lawes* constitutes a sustained argument against positions which Hooker takes not merely to be erroneous but in fact dangerous; indeed, the opening paragraphs of the *Lawes* should leave no room for doubt on that score. The key questions concern the scope of that disagreement and the intended outcome of the argument. Kirby's claim is simply that the disagreement, profound and consequential though it is, takes place against the background of a shared commitment to certain received norms of Protestant orthodoxy, and accordingly, that the intended outcome, for Hooker, is successful persuasion and reconciliation, rather than the overthrow of his opponents by fair means, whether fair or foul. The chief task facing Hooker scholars today is not to determine whether or not the *Lawes* is a polemical text – clearly it is – but to determine what purpose the polemics are meant to serve and at precisely what points of disagreement they are aimed. Only by such careful discrimination can we begin to discern the extent to which Hooker does and does not accept theological common ground with his Puritan and disciplinarian opponents.

III. The Scope of Reformed Theology

This point leads directly to consideration of our second main interpretive question, concerning the scope of the Reformed tradition. The attentive reader may have noticed a curious leap in the quotation from Joyce given above. She begins by contesting Kirby's claim that Hooker shares common ground with his "disciplinarian-Puritan opponents" and concludes that, in the absence of such common ground, his "commitment to Reformed theology can[not] possibly be sustained." The implication here is that the disciplinarian Puritan faction was, if not exclusively, at least authoritatively representative of Reformed theology. To

19 Joyce, *Richard Hooker and Anglican Moral Theology*, 63.

20 "Search for a Reformed Hooker," 74–78.

be sure, Joyce's argument ranges a bit wider than that; her key contention is that Hooker sets himself firmly against John Calvin, and since (presumably) Calvin must be treated as a measuring-stick for Reformed orthodoxy, Hooker cannot possibly be himself committed to the Reformed tradition. It is certainly questionable whether Hooker was so pervasively hostile to Calvin as Joyce suggests,²¹ but even supposing he were, that would hardly resolve the question at hand concerning his "commitment to Reformed theology." Implicit in this conclusion are two claims, both of which remain very widespread in much scholarship on Hooker and Elizabethan England in general: (1) Calvin's most enthusiastic followers in England, the disciplinarian Puritans, could fairly claim close continuity with Calvin himself on all significant matters of doctrine and church polity; (2) Calvin's own views on all significant matters of doctrine and church polity could claim to be representative and indeed authoritative for the Reformed tradition at large. Neither of these claims, however, remains tenable in light of the past several decades of scholarship in Reformed historical theology.

We now know, for instance, that Calvin did not teach anything like strict *jure divino* Presbyterianism,²² or define the church over against the state;²³ nor did he embrace a narrow biblicism that rejected natural law and looked askance at philosophy and jurisprudence.²⁴ Every new stride in contemporary Calvin scholarship seems to corroborate the judgments of Paul Avis and Torrance Kirby that there exists a fairly wide gulf between Calvin and his most zealous English followers such as Thomas Cartwright and Walter Travers. The latter two, we now realize, made significant adjustments in the area of ecclesiology – Hooker's main

21 See David Neelands, "The Use and Abuse of John Calvin in Richard Hooker's Defence of the English Church," *Perichoresis* 10, no. 1 (2012): 3–22.

22 See for instance Avis, *Church in the Theology of the Reformers* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 114–15; Gillian Lewis, "Calvinism in Geneva in the Time of Calvin and Beza (1541–1605)," in *International Calvinism, 1541–1715*, ed. Menna Prestwich (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 39–69. William Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 223: "The details of ecclesiastical polity and cult can therefore vary according to local custom and need." For the development of a stronger *jure divino* Presbyterianism in Calvin's successor Beza, see Tadataka Maruyama, *The Ecclesiology of Theodore Beza: The Reform of the True Church* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1978).

23 On the contrary, says Lewis, the two were "to complement one another, to dovetail perfectly in a common enterprise of edification, instruction, and discipline of the greater glory of God" ("Calvinism in Geneva," 45). See more fully Harro Höpfl, *The Christian Polity of John Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 190–97, and Matthew J. Tuininga, *Calvin's Political Theology and the Public Engagement of the Church: Christ's Two Kingdoms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2017).

24 For Calvin's doctrine of natural law, see for instance William Klempa, "John Calvin on Natural Law," in *John Calvin and the Church: A Prism of Reform*, ed. Timothy George (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 72–95; see Kirby, "Richard Hooker's Theory of Natural Law in the context of Reformation theology," *The Sixteenth century journal* (1999): 681–703 for an application of this to issues of Hooker scholarship.

concern in the *Lawes* – as well as shifting away from Calvin’s emphasis on matters such as predestination and the doctrine of Scripture.²⁵ This recognition has yet to be taken fully on board among Hooker scholars, who are still apt to suggest that Hooker’s obviously sharp disagreements with many disciplinarian Puritans are evidence of his general discomfort with Reformed theology.

This is not, of course, to endorse the “Calvin vs. the Calvinists” paradigm that dominated Reformed historical theology thirty or forty years ago. The point, rather, is to note that Reformed theology was always broader than Calvin – in contradiction to the second claim noted above. Indeed, the past few decades have seen an increasing trend to abandon the term ‘Calvinist’ in favor of ‘Reformed,’ in order to properly recognize the pluriformity of the tradition from the beginning. Figures such as Martin Bucer (1491–1551), Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575), Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562), Wolfgang Musculus (1497–1563), Theodore Beza (1519–1605), Zacharias Ursinus (1534–83), and Girolamo Zanchi (1516–90), and many more, have all emerged as significant original theologians in their own right, sharing a great deal of theological common ground, but with notable differences in approach and emphasis. Any attempt to triangulate Hooker’s relation to ‘Reformed theology’ simply cannot get off the ground unless it is willing to consider this broader context of diversity among the leadership of magisterial Reform on the continent.²⁶

The relevance of such thinkers to Hooker, it should be noted, is hardly merely theoretical. A wave of recent scholarship has demonstrated the profound importance of Bullinger and Vermigli, surpassing that of Calvin, in setting the early theological tone for the English Protestant Church,²⁷ and we know that Vermigli’s influence in particular was likely mediated to Hooker through his teachers and

25 On ecclesiology, see Avis’s important treatment in *Church in the Theology of the Reformers*, chs. 3–4, as well as Stephen Brachlow, *The Communion of Saints: Puritan and Radical Separatist Ecclesiology, 1570–1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) esp. ch. 3, On predestination, R.T. Kendall’s *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) certainly overstated the discontinuities, but is successful nonetheless in discerning a distinctive “experimental predestinarianism” that arose among the Puritans in the late sixteenth century. On the differences between Puritans and Calvin on the understanding of Scripture, law, and *adiaphora*, see Brachlow, ch. 1.

26 As an example of the remarkable neglect of this wider context, consider Nigel Voak’s *Richard Hooker and Reformed Theology*. While insisting that his study aimed at being “thoroughly comparative in nature,” (p. 21) in fact, the comparison is almost exclusively with Calvin, with only two mentions of Bullinger’s name, one of Vermigli’s, and none at all of Zanchi’s. In fairness to Voak, though, the Calvino-centrism is evident as well in much of Kirby’s early work, although he has subsequently incorporated at least much more extensive consideration of Vermigli in relation to Hooker.

27 Carrie Euler, *Couriers of the Gospel: England and Zurich, 1531–1558* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2006); Kirby, *The Zurich Connection and Tudor Political Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

mentors John Hooker, John Jewel, Lawrence Humphrey, and John Rainolds, the first three of whom were loyal students of Vermigli and the last of whom was a leading advocate of Vermigli's legacy.²⁸ Wolfgang Musculus was a favorite theologian of Hooker's great predecessor in controversy against the Puritans, John Whitgift, and Zanchi was quoted by Hooker at several key points in his work, most notably in defense of his controversial claim that the Church of Rome was still in some sense a true church.²⁹

Moreover, the Reformed tradition was a complex, living, and growing entity during Hooker's own lifetime and beyond, not an ossified formula built upon the bones of certain original formulators. Perhaps the best way to discern Hooker's claim to conformity with this broader tradition would be to compare him not so much to Calvin or even Vermigli, but to his own contemporaries, the most creative and influential shapers of the Reformed tradition in the last decades of the sixteenth century and first decades of the seventeenth. Obviously many studies have compared him, and rightly so, to his English contemporaries, but given the international character of Reformed Protestantism in this era, there is the need to cast our nets wider, particularly to the neighboring Netherlands. There we might find interesting parallels with elements of Hooker's theology in the thought not merely of Jacob Arminius (1560–1609), as some have suggested, but also in less controversial authorities such as Franciscus Junius (1545–1602) and David Pareus (1548–1622).

To be sure, many would dispute that such continental comparisons are really germane to understanding Hooker's theological identity, which must be judged first and foremost within its *English* context. And certainly it must be conceded that Hooker scholarship ought always to attend chiefly to this narrower context, whatever additional light might be shed by broadening the lens. Even in this volume, the majority of essays do in fact focus chiefly on Hooker's English predecessors, contemporaries, and followers. Given, however, the almost complete lack of attention to Hooker's continental contemporaries to date, surely it is time for some Hooker scholars to at least pursue these new avenues of inquiry, and see what new insights they might generate for understanding Hooker's place in the Reformed tradition. The relative insularity of Hooker scholarship to date is explained in part by the difficulty of accessing many of these early Reformed texts, but with the explosion of digital archives and the rapid appearance of new translations, there is little excuse for failing to undertake these much-needed

28 See Gary Jenkins, "Peter Martyr and the Church of England after 1558," *Studies in the History of Christian Traditions* 115 (2004): 63.

29 See Hooker, *A Learned Discourse of Justification, Workes, and How the Foundation of Faith is Overthrowne*, II.27 (FLE 5:148.10–21), quoting Jerome Zanchi, *De Religione Christiana Fides — Confession of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols, ed. Luca Baschera and Christian Moser (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

comparative studies. It is a singular virtue of the essays in this volume to finally begin bringing Hooker into conversation with a much wider range of representatives of Reformed orthodoxy, sometimes with the result of highlighting discontinuities, and sometimes with the result of uncovering surprising convergences.

IV. The Nature of Reformed Theology

While the fruits of this re-contextualization of Hooker are for the most part yet to be gleaned, there are at least two points where attention to newer scholarship on Reformed orthodoxy seems certain to compel a reconsideration of Hooker's relation to the tradition. The first of these concerns the matter of "Thomism" and "scholasticism," terms with which Hooker has long been identified and which have often been used to drive a wedge between him and the magisterial reformers.³⁰ If there has been one overwhelming verdict of the revolution in Reformed historical theology associated with the work of Richard Muller and Willem van Asselt in the past three decades, it has been that the Reformed tradition was pervasively scholastic and often Thomistic virtually from its outset.³¹ Not, to be sure, unanimously so; there was always enormous variation both in the use of scholastic methodology and terminology and also in the degree to which the content of medieval scholastic theology was endorsed. However, consideration of figures such as Vermigli, Zanchi, and Junius shows Hooker to be well within the mainstream in terms both of his occasionally scholastic method and his broad acceptance of a Thomistic natural law framework.³² Indeed, his rejection of "nominalism" and "voluntarism," far from setting him at odds with mainstream Protestantism, could more plausibly be taken as badges of his membership within it. Paul Dominiak's essay in this present volume is perhaps the finest contribution to date to the task of re-assessing this key aspect of

30 Joyce makes such suggestions in *Anglican Moral Theology*; see also Rosenthal, *Crown Under Law: Richard Hooker, John Locke, and the Ascent of Modern Constitutionalism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 61–72.

31 For the most forceful statement of this re-reading, see Muller's essays in his *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

32 For Vermigli, see Pietro Martire Vermigli, *A Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. and trans. Emidio Campi and Joseph C. McClelland, The Peter Martyr Library 9 (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2006) and John Patrick Donnelly, S.J., *Calvinism and Scholasticism in Vermigli's Doctrine of Man and Grace* (Leiden: Brill, 1976). For Zanchi, see Girolamo Zanchi, "Of the Law in General," trans. Jeffrey J. Veenstra in *Journal of Markets and Morality* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 305–398, and John Patrick Donnelly, S.J. "Calvinist Thomism," *Viator* 7 (1976): 441–55.