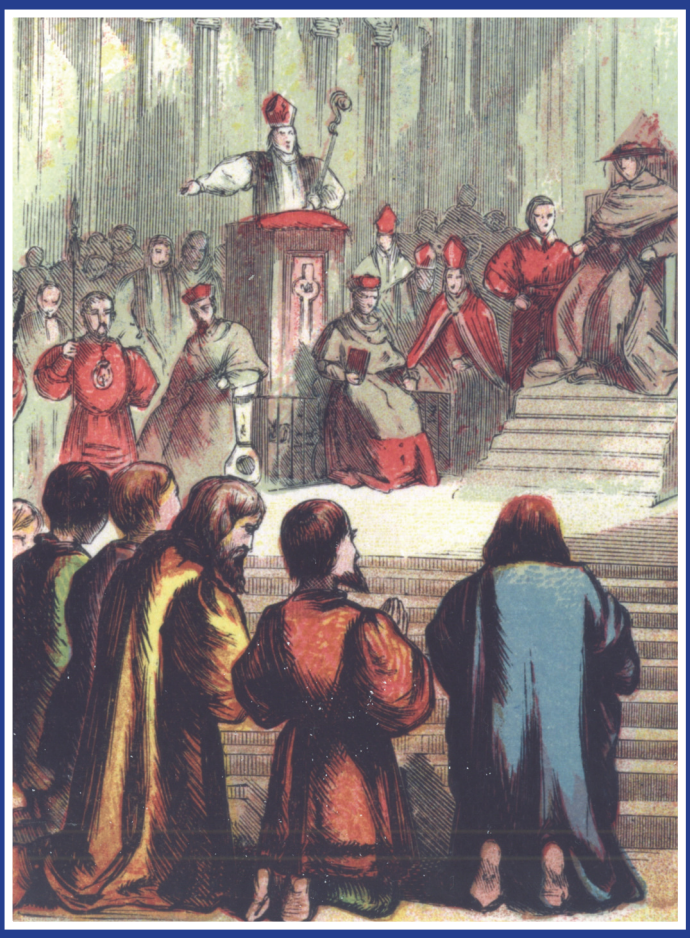
The Reformation and Robert Barnes



HISTORY, THEOLOGY AND POLEMIC IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Korey D. Maas

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THE REFORMATION AND ROBERT BARNES: HISTORY, THEOLOGY AND POLEMIC IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

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For Kate

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SHORT TITLES

Aarsberetninger	*Aarsberetninger fra det Kongelige Geheimearchiv*, 7 vols, ed. C.F. Wegener Copenhagen, 1852–83)
AE	*Luther's Works, American Edition*, 56 vols, ed. J. Pelikan and H. Lehmann (Philadelphia and St Louis, 1955–86)
A&M	John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (London, 1563 and 1583 editions; 1583 edition cited unless otherwise noted)
A&M (Pratt)	*The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, 7 vols, ed. J. Pratt (London, 1877)
BL	British Library, London
Correspondance Politique	*Correspondance Politique de MM. de Castillon et de Marillac, Ambassadeurs de France en Engleterre*, ed. Jean Kaulek (Paris, 1885)
CR	*Corpus Reformatorum, Philippi Melanthonis Opera*, 28 vols, ed. C.G. Bretschneider (Halle, 1836)
CSPS	*Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*, 15 vols, ed. P. de Gayangos et al. (London, 1862–1954)
CWM	*The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, 15 vols, ed. C.H. Miller et al. (New Haven, 1963–97)
DER	*Documents of the English Reformation*, ed. G. Bray (Cambridge, 1994)
English Austin Friars	Francis Roth, *The English Austin Friars, 1249–1538*, serialised in *Augustiniana*, vols 8–17
Lisle Letters	*The Lisle Letters*, 6 vols, ed. Marie St Clare Byrne (London, 1981)
LP	*Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, 23 vols, ed. J.S. Brewer et al. (London, 1862–1932)
Original Letters	*Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, 2 vols, ed. H. Robinson (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1846–7)
PRO	[The National Archives] Public Record Office, London
Sentenciae	Antonius Anglus [i.e., Robert Barnes], *Sentenciae ex doctoribus collectae* (Wittenberg, 1530)
STC	A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave, *A Short-title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640*, 3 vols, 2nd edition (London, 1976–91)

Supplicatyon (1531)	Robert Barnes, *A supplicatyon made by Robert Barnes* (Antwerp, 1531)
Supplicacion (1534)	Robert Barnes, *A supplicacion unto the most gracious prynce kynge Henry the .viii.* (London, 1534)
Vitae	Robert Barnes, *Vitae romanorum pontificum* (Wittenberg, 1536)
WA	*D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Schriften*, 62 vols (Weimar, 1883–1986)
WABr	*D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Briefwechsel*, 10 vols (Weimar, 1930–47)
Wing	D.G. Wing, *A Short-title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and British America, and of English Books Printed in Other Countries, 1641–1700*, 4 vols, 2nd edition (New York, 1982–98)

INTRODUCTION

The life, thought, and influence of the Henrician reformer Robert Barnes have not received overabundant attention from historians of the sixteenth-century reformations. Though he never attained the prominence or exerted the influence of some of his closest contemporaries and associates – influential figures such as Thomas Cranmer, Thomas Cromwell, and Martin Luther – his place in the early English evangelical movement was by no means insignificant. To the contrary, Barnes has been recognised as 'one of the most important, and among the most controversial, of the early reformers'.[1] As a Doctor of Theology, prior of the Cambridge Augustinian friary, and one of the 'most important of the group' associated with the White Horse Inn, Barnes figures prominently in treatments of Cambridge University and its early role in the promotion of Luther's idea in England.[2] It is in this context that Barnes's Christmas Eve sermon of 1525, preached in the Cambridge church of St Edward's, has been identified by some as the first 'public manifesto' of the Cambridge evangelicals.[3] One recent work goes even so far as to suggest that the subsequent conservative reaction to this sermon was 'the most important event of the period between 1526 and 1529'.[4]

The conservative response to Barnes's sermon, resulting in his trial, imprisonment, and eventual escape to the continent, also proved to be the most immediate cause of yet another unique contribution to the early English reformation. Attempting to justify his fugitive status by sharply critiquing the treatment he had received at the hands of his judges, Barnes, from the safety of Germany, penned a 'supplication' to Henry VIII. Appended to this defence of his preaching and later flight was a series of theological commonplaces which comprised 'the nearest thing to a work of systematic theology that the Henrician reformers produced'.[5]

1 Susan Wabuda, ' "Fruitful Preaching" in the Diocese of Worcester: Bishop Hugh Latimer and his Influence, 1535–1539', in *Religion and the English People, 1500–1640: New Voices, New Perspectives*, ed. Eric Joseph Carlson (Kirksville, MO, 1998), 61.

2 H.C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1958), 46. For Barnes's importance in the early Cambridge reformation, see also E.G. Rupp, *Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition* (Cambridge, 1966), 31–46, and Richard Rex, 'The Early Impact of Reformation Theology at Cambridge University, 1521–1547', *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 2 (1999), 38–71.

3 Allen G. Chester, *Hugh Latimer: Apostle to the English* (Philadelphia, 1954), 212.

4 Douglas H. Parker (ed.), *A Critical Edition of Robert Barnes's* A Supplication Unto the Most Gracyous Prince Kynge Henry The .VIIJ. *1534*. (Toronto, 2008), 12–13.

5 C. Trueman, *Luther's Legacy: Salvation and English Reformers, 1525–1556* (Oxford, 1994), 3.

The distinctively Lutheran emphases evident in this treatise, combined with the significant fact of Barnes's exile having led him to Wittenberg and into a friendly association with its leading reformers, would also further draw Barnes into the centre of ecclesiastical events not only in England but also abroad.

The esteem in which he was held by the Wittenberg Lutherans, and by his later English patrons, Cranmer and Cromwell, made him especially suited to the role of messenger, ambassador, and negotiator between the English and German churches. From 1531, when he was first engaged by the Crown to seek out Luther's opinion on Henry's divorce, up until his death in 1540, Barnes was integrally involved in each stage of the negotiations to bring England into an alliance with the Lutheran Schmalkaldic League. Similarly in the service of the Crown, as a commissioner for the examination of Anabaptists in England he would also play a prominent role in attempting to establish the boundaries of Henrician orthodoxy. Appointments such as these both reflected and strengthened the perception – held by evangelicals and conservatives alike – that, by the late 1530s, 'Barnes was English evangelicalism's leading theologian and one of its most prominent spokesmen.'[6]

Even his untimely death in 1540 contributed significantly to Barnes's reformation significance. Not only was he 'one of the very few major magisterial Reformers to be executed anywhere in the European Reformation';[7] but his status as an evangelical martyr quickly became capital for the influential Protestant propaganda produced throughout the sixteenth century. Such was the significance of his death that even fifteen years later it would continue to be the most memorable landmark by which Londoners dated past events.[8] It is this prominent and often central role in the early unfolding of England's reformation which accounts for the recent assertion that, 'With the possible exception of Tyndale, Barnes is probably the most important reformer of the 1520s and 1530s in England.'[9]

Yet this mention of William Tyndale also partially reveals the probable cause of the infrequent attention given Barnes by modern scholars. Unlike Tyndale, or even Barnes's own Cambridge student Miles Coverdale, Barnes would leave to posterity no influential translation of Scripture, or even commentary upon it. Unlike his patron Thomas Cranmer, he produced no liturgical works which would leave an indelible mark on the English church. Nor, in contrast to close associates such as Hugh Latimer or Edward Foxe, would his service to the Crown ever be rewarded with elevation to the episcopate. Indeed, it has recently been suggested

6 Michael Riordan and Alec Ryrie, 'Stephen Gardiner and the Making of a Protestant Villain', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 34 (2003), 1048.
7 Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'Putting the English Reformation on the Map', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 15 (2005), 81.
8 Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989), 322.
9 Parker, *A Critical Edition*, 13.

that, at the time of his death in 1540, he was best known in his native country as a preacher.[10] Since, however, he was only sporadically in his own country during the height of his reforming activities, and even then rarely in one place for long, his preaching was by its very nature itinerant. Unlike other notable preachers, therefore, he exercised no formative influence in a particular parish, diocese, or university. Nor were his sermons ever collected or published, by which means they might have made an impact on evangelical communities even after his death.

Barnes did publish, however. During the final decade of his life he wrote and saw into print four treatises touching on the faith and history of the church. Those few researchers who have turned their attention to Barnes have therefore quite naturally focused much of their energy on these treatises. The same focus will remain evident in the present work; Barnes's writings, however, will here be approached from a decidedly different angle than that of previous scholarship. Earlier generations of scholars, both theologians and historians, were especially intent on dissecting the doctrinal content of Barnes's works in an attempt to define his own theological leanings. The thesis most often set forth – and which is undoubtedly correct – is that Barnes is best labelled a proponent of Lutheranism, at least to the extent that this term can be used in any narrowly confessional sense in the early years of the reformation.

In this context it is not insignificant that a fair number of the modern authors who have made this thesis the foundation of their research were themselves Lutheran; and it must be noted that much of the twentieth-century writing on Barnes is infused with an unmistakably hagiographical air.[11] This must be noted because the fact has affected the interpretation of Barnes's significance in at least two important ways.

Notably, most investigations of Barnes have concluded with his death. This is, quite obviously, a reasonable point of conclusion for a biographer. But in the case of Barnes, a further, though implicit, logic seems also to lay behind this decision. Beginning from the premise that Barnes was a rare English Lutheran, many have assumed that his active promotion of the Lutheran faith in England – as a preacher, polemicist, and diplomat – constitutes his primary if not his sole significance for the reformation. The further conclusion is then reached that his public execution in 1540 (and that of his patron and protector Thomas Cromwell two

[10] Alec Ryrie, ' "A saynt in the devyls name": Heroes and Villains in the Martyrdom of Robert Barnes', in *Martyrs and Martyrdom in England, c. 1400–1700*, ed. Thomas S. Freeman and Thomas F. Mayer (Woodbridge, 2007), 146–7.

[11] Notable examples include William Dallmann, *Robert Barnes: English Lutheran Martyr* (St Louis, n.d.; repr. Decatur, IL, 1997), and an abbreviated version titled 'Dr. Robert Barnes: The English Lutheran Martyr', *Theological Quarterly* 9 (1905), 22–32; R.G. Eaves, 'The Reformation Thought of Dr. Robert Barnes, Lutheran Chaplain and Ambassador for Henry VIII', *The Lutheran Quarterly* 28 (1976), 156–65; M.L. Loane, *Pioneers of the Reformation in England* (London, 1964), 49–89; James McGoldrick, *Luther's English Connection* (Milwaukee, 1979); and N.S. Tjernagel, *Lutheran Martyr* (Milwaukee, 1982).

days earlier) signalled in a very dramatic manner the end of any hopes for England entering the Lutheran fold. That is, Barnes's programme died with him. Since that time, more than one attempt to resurrect Barnes seems to have had the implicit (and sometimes explicit) agenda of resurrecting his assumed programme.

A confessional or hagiographical treatment of Barnes is by no means new. It was precisely this approach to his life and death which was taken already in the sixteenth century by influential martyrologists such as John Foxe; and it is Foxe's work which has done much to influence a second prominent emphasis evident in much previous scholarship. His *Actes and Monuments* was of course extremely influential in early modern Britain; and the fact that it remains even today an important source of information about Barnes has given rise to the thesis that Barnes's primary significance for the reformation was the simple fact of his death. In this context, it has been recognised that Barnes did indeed have a continuing significance after 1540 – no longer on account of his peculiar theological leanings, but for the propaganda purposes to which his death was later put. Modern publications guided by this thesis have therefore turned attention from what Barnes himself wrote to what contemporaries and successors wrote about him.

The present examination has been guided by two fundamental and, one hopes, uncontroversial assumptions. First, the important question is not 'What significance, if any, does Barnes have for today?', but 'What significance, if any, did Barnes have in his own era?' Second, any attempt to answer this question must take into account both Barnes's own writings and those which later comment upon his life, death, and work. Therefore, after preliminary surveys of his life and thought (chapters 1 and 2), his own works will be examined in some detail (chapters 3 and 4). On this basis a tentative thesis will be set forth (chapter 5) suggesting that Barnes's conscious programme entailed not only the promotion of a particular theology, but also a particular methodology – what today might variously be called 'confessional historiography' or 'historical theology': that is, the employment of historical sources and methods for specifically confessional or theological ends. (The irony of Barnes's own methodology being the cause of many less-than-objective modern evaluations of his significance is duly noted.) This tentative thesis will then be tested in two final chapters, in which the reception, evaluation, and use of Barnes's works by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Protestants is examined (chapters 6 and 7).

In concluding that it was indeed as an historical-theological polemicist that Barnes was most often remembered, praised, and recommended in the century after his death, I make no claim to having discredited or overturned previous interpretations. But the view expounded here will, it is hoped, serve to complement received interpretations of Barnes's significance. This is especially the case in two respects. Whereas Barnes has traditionally been studied almost solely within the context of the English reformation, the evidence here presented begins

to reveal the extent to which Barnes also played an influential role in the development of historical-theological polemic even on the continent. A related corrective is also offered. Having studied Barnes with the assumption that his significance is to be found primarily in the context of England's reformation, an earlier generation of scholars gave most of their attention to those works which Barnes produced in the English language. A relative neglect of Barnes's Latin works – his most popular, as will be seen – has hitherto partially prevented the interpretation here put forward. The acceptance of these small correctives will, it is hoped, suggest new avenues of research pertaining to Robert Barnes and his reformation significance.

* * *

While much of what follows will be self-explanatory, a few brief notes of guidance might be appreciated by readers. Where they exist, every effort has been made to cite printed sources. In those cases where documents, whether in print or in manuscript, have been abstracted in *Letters and Papers*, references to this resource are also included in brackets for ease of reference. Multi-volume works are cited according to the following format: volume, full stop, page number(s). Some exceptions to this rule occur in the citation of correspondence, where document numbers rather than page numbers are provided. Unless otherwise indicated, therefore, the following works will be cited by volume and document number: *Aarsberetninger fra det Kongelige Geheimearchiv*; Luther's *Briefwechsel*; *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*; *Corpus Reformatorum*; *Correspondance Politique*; *Letters and Papers*; *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*; *Lisle Letters*; *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*; and *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*. Also deserving an explanation are the citations of Francis Roth's *The English Augustinian Friars, 1249–1538*, which was originally published serially in several editions of the journal *Augustiniana*. Citations will note volume and page numbers; page numbers followed by asterisks denote primary sources appended to Roth's text.

All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own; again for ease of reference, translated quotations are provided in their original language in the footnotes. I have in most cases taken no liberties with the transcription of quotations; but some exceptions do occur. The letters i, j, u, and v are consistently rendered in accordance with modern convention, except in Latin quotations where the letter i has been allowed to stand. In English quotations the common contractions y^e and y^t have also been expanded. The only other liberty I have allowed myself in transcription is the replacement of ß with ss in Latin quotations. Finally, in keeping with modern convention, all dates are rendered 'new style', accepting 1 January as the beginning of the new year.

PART I

THE LIFE AND THEOLOGY OF ROBERT BARNES

1

THE LIFE OF ROBERT BARNES

Robert Barnes stepped on to the stage of the reformation drama on Christmas Eve 1525; though never one of the most famous players in that drama, he would for the next fifteen years remain very close to the centre of the reformation, both in England and abroad. His patrons at home included the architects of English reform, Thomas Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell, as well as Henry VIII himself, who would for a brief period name Barnes his chaplain and occasional diplomat. His associates on the continent were no less eminent, including not only the Wittenberg theologians Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon, but also princely protectors of early Lutheranism such as Johann Friedrich of Saxony, Philip of Hesse, and Christian III of Denmark.

As his personal association with such individuals intimates, Barnes travelled frequently – not only as a diplomat, however, but also at times as an exile. This fact, combined with the perennial problems posed by an incomplete documentary record, has resulted in confusing and often conflicting accounts of his life. Indeed, despite his recognised importance, no authoritative biography of Barnes yet exists. Rather shockingly, the most reliable account to date remains that of James Lusardi, which exists only as a brief appendix in the collected works of Barnes's early nemesis Thomas More.[1] Several other substantial biographical surveys were produced earlier in the twentieth century;[2] and while far more objective than the hagiographical accounts noted above in the introduction, these too remain less than authoritative: primarily because they exist only as unpublished theses and therefore remain relatively inaccessible, but also partly for methodological reasons. Most notably, each relied overwhelmingly upon the abstracted versions of primary sources found, for example, in the *Letters and Papers, Foreign and*

1 J.P. Lusardi, 'The Career of Robert Barnes', in *CWM*, 8.1365–1415. Also reliable, though older and much more brief, is the biographical sketch found in E.G. Rupp, *Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition* (Cambridge, 1966), 31–46.

2 N.H. Fisher, 'The Contribution of Robert Barnes to the English Reformation' (unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1950); Charles Anderson, 'The Person and Position of Dr. Robert Barnes, 1495–1540: A Study in the Relationship between the English and German Reformations' (unpublished Th.D. Thesis, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1962).

Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII. Furthermore, the theses forwarded in these dissertations make it evident that none is intended primarily to be a critical biography of Barnes. Charles Anderson, for instance, 'deals with the general problem of the relationship between the German and early English Reformation'.[3] The same is true of Neelak Tjernagel's *Henry VIII and the Lutherans*, the revised and expanded version of his own doctoral thesis.[4] Its subtitle, 'A Study in Anglo-Lutheran Relations from 1521 to 1547', advertises a trajectory very similar to Anderson's. For each author, Barnes's life and thought serve largely to illustrate in distilled form the perceived nature of theological relations between England and Germany in the reign of Henry VIII.[5] Far more influential than these works, however, is William Clebsch's *England's Earliest Protestants*.[6] While Barnes figures as only one of a half-dozen reformers surveyed in some detail by Clebsch, the unique and ostensibly authoritative nature of his work has long ensured that any investigation of Barnes must give it due attention. Indeed, though his brief biographical summary is reliable in its details, the interpretation built upon it has arguably obscured the understanding of Barnes more than any other single volume. Like Anderson and Tjernagel, Clebsch sees in Barnes a distillation of larger and more complex phenomena. Rejecting the received opinion that he was most significantly a conduit for German theology in England, however, he instead (and somewhat anachronistically) sees in Barnes a reformer who 'stamped English-speaking Christianity with … a concern for morality as the clue to theology and the core of religion'.[7] A number of Clebsch's questionable assertions have been effectively challenged in the last generation – and will receive further attention in the following pages – yet no critical or comprehensive treatment of Barnes's life and thought has since been published. Although the present volume is not primarily biographical, and though this introductory chapter cannot pretend to provide an exhaustive account of Barnes's life, any attempt to evaluate Barnes and his significance for the reformations of the sixteenth century does first make necessary the more mundane task of locating him in the chronology and geography of those reformations.

Early years to exile

Born in King's Lynn, Norfolk, in the year 1495, Robert Barnes was sent to Cambridge only a decade later, where he entered the house of the Augustinian

3 Anderson, 'The Person and Position', 2.
4 N.S. Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans: A Study in Anglo-Lutheran Relations from 1521 to 1547* (St Louis, 1965); cf. N.S. Tjernagel, 'Dr. Robert Barnes and Anglo-Lutheran Relations, 1521–1540 (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Iowa, 1955).
5 Cf. Anderson, 'The Person and Position', 303–4, and Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans*, 250.
6 W.A. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants: 1520–1535* (New Haven, 1964).
7 Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 3.

friars.[8] The fact that his native King's Lynn did not lack its own prominent Augustinian friary – among others – would indicate that it was the presence of the university, and the friary's close ties to it,[9] which prompted his early move. And Barnes's aptitude for learning, suggested by this early move, was later confirmed by those who knew him in Cambridge; even his early associate and later episcopal foe Stephen Gardiner begrudgingly confessed that he had 'some savour of lernynge',[10] while the Carmelite friar John Bale would admit that Barnes 'greatly surpassed' him in learning.[11] Such judgements were evidently shared by his Augustinian superiors, for sometime after 1514 he was sent to Leuven for further study.[12]

It has often been noted that Barnes's time in Leuven coincided with that of the much celebrated Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus. Though no evidence exists to associate these two personally,[13] there is good reason to believe that Barnes was influenced by the Leuven humanism of this period, during which the famous *collegium trilinguae* was founded by Erasmus himself. Soon after his return to the Cambridge friary, for instance, it is recorded that Barnes consciously took pains to replace the scholastic study of Duns Scotus and Nicholas de Orbellis with a more immediate study of the text of Scripture itself. John Foxe also notes that this religious return *ad fontes* was preceded by, and took place in conjunction with, an emphasis on the reading of classical Latin authors such as Terence, Plautus, and Cicero.[14] The significance of this classical emphasis is easy to overestimate, however, and was certainly not unique to Barnes; nor is it necessarily indicative of a humanism inconsistent with theological orthodoxy. Already in 1495, for instance, Terence had entered the university curriculum, replacing an earlier statute's more general mention of 'libros humanitatis'.[15] In 1523, the unquestionably

8 The location of Barnes's birth is given in the brief biography found in John Bale, *Scriptorum Illustrium maioris Brytanniae ... Catalogus* (Basle, 1557), 666–7, from which the date is also inferred. The year in which he entered the Cambridge friary is assumed to be 1505: Bale describes him as 'impubes'; and Barnes himself says that, before he left Cambridge in early 1526, he had remained there 'continually .xx. yearis'. *Supplicatyon* (1531), fo. 21r.

9 *English Austin Friars*, 8.40.

10 Stephen Gardiner, *The Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, ed. J.A. Muller (Cambridge, 1933), 166.

11 Bale, *Catalogus*, 667: 'multis praecurrit'.

12 Foxe makes note of his time in Leuven in *A&M*, 2.1021 and 2.1192. No date is recorded by Foxe, but Bale, *Catalogus*, 666–7, mentions that they were students together at Cambridge in 1514. It is possible that Barnes's arrival occurred as late as 1520, the year in which the Prior General of the Augustinians notes in his register that Barnes is 'to stay at the college of Louvain'. *English Austin Friars*, 10.414*–15*. It is not until the next year, on 24 May, that 'D. Robertus Beeren, Anglus in Theologia, Noorwicensis dyoces', is listed among those matriculating. *Matricule de L'Université de Louvain*, 10 vols, ed. A. Schillings et al. (Brussels, 1903–80), 3.648.

13 Indeed, Barnes's matriculation date allows only for a five-month overlap with Erasmus at the university itself, as the latter departed at the end of October 1521. Emiel Lamberts et al. (eds), *Leuven University, 1425–1985* (Leuven, 1990), 23.

14 *A&M*, 2.1192.

15 Christopher Brooke et al. (eds), *A History of the University of Cambridge*, 4 vols (Cambridge, 1988–2004), 1.249.

orthodox Stephen Gardiner was one of those drafting statutes relative to the university lectures on Terence.[16] By 1522, the probable date of Barnes's return from Leuven, Plautus had also become a university standard.[17]

It must also be pointed out that, despite Leuven's humanist bent during Barnes's stay, the university itself remained unquestionably orthodox. Its faculty would, for example, quickly and vigorously condemn Martin Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses* of 1517, which themselves had more in common with contemporary humanist critiques of ecclesiastical practice than they did with later Protestant critiques of medieval doctrine. This is not to suggest, however, that Barnes would have remained ignorant of the nascent Luther affair while on the continent. To the contrary, Leuven's early pronouncement on the German's theology would certainly have brought it to the attention of the university's students. Similarly, though there is no independent evidence to support the suggestion that Barnes and Luther had met at the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518,[18] Luther's increasingly public protest could hardly have remained a secret in continental Augustinian circles. Indeed, though the suggestion must remain tentative, it is entirely possible that it was Leuven's unyielding stance in the Luther controversy which prompted Barnes's return to England only a year after his matriculation.[19]

It is upon his return from Leuven to Cambridge in the early 1520s that slightly more information concerning Barnes's activity, and his increasingly evangelical sympathies, becomes available. Having been approved by the Augustinian Prior General for promotion to the doctorate in June of 1523,[20] Barnes was incorporated at Cambridge as a Bachelor, and simultaneously made Doctor of Theology.[21] In the same year he was elected to the position of prior in his Cambridge house and began to institute the changes to the syllabus above noted. Foxe also associates Barnes with the informal meetings then taking place at the White Horse Inn. Despite the amount of attention the White Horse has received by subsequent scholars, little is in fact known about either the make-up of the group which met there or the nature of the meetings themselves. Some authors have attempted to downplay any explicitly evangelical bent, preferring instead to

16 J.A. Muller, *Stephen Gardiner and the Tudor Reaction* (London, 1926), 9.
17 Brooke, *A History of the University of Cambridge*, 1.317.
18 Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 43.
19 Based upon Barnes's 1531 statement that he had neither been in Amsterdam 'nor yet in the contrye thys ten yearys', his return to Cambridge can be dated c.1521–22. See his *Supplicatyon* (1531), fo. 33v, and Lusardi, 'The Career of Robert Barnes', 1369. The oddity of Barnes's return to England so soon after his matriculation is compounded by the Leuven regulation which normally required students progressing from bachelor to licentiate status to remain in Leuven for their doctorates. See Lamberts, *Leuven University,* 93.
20 *English Austin Friars*, 10.425*.
21 *English Austin Friars*, 10.435*. See also *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, 10 vols, ed. J. Venn and J.A. Venn (Cambridge, 1922–54), 1.93, and C.H. Cooper and T. Cooper, *Athenae Cantabrigienses*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1858–61), 1.74.

interpret the gatherings as an opportunity to discuss more broadly academic questions. As Foxe remains the only source of information regarding the White Horse meetings, however, some weight must certainly be given to his statement that the inn soon came to be known as the Cambridge 'Germany', undoubtedly referring to a common belief that the Luther affair was a prominent topic of conversation.[22] Perhaps even more illuminating, however, is Richard Rex's observation that from 1523, when Barnes became prior, the previously commonplace bequests to the friary for the singing of *Scala Coeli* Masses seem to have ceased.[23] The coincidence of these two events suggests that, by 1523, signs of Barnes's discomfort with some traditional piety were becoming evident, at least within his own friary.

Some small evidence of growing reformist leanings can also be found in Barnes's activities outside Cambridge during this time. Upon his return to England Barnes did not break contact with the friends and scholars he had met at Leuven. In addition to bringing back with him the young scholar Thomas Parnell, he also maintained a close relationship with the former Leuven student Edmund Rougham, a Benedictine of the abbey of Bury St Edmunds, to whom Barnes made frequent visits in the early 1520s.[24] It was during one of these visits, in the company of London brickmakers and known Lollards Lawrence Maxwell and John Stacy, that Barnes also met the abbey chamberlain Richard Bayfield, with whom he left a Latin New Testament, presumably the recent edition of Erasmus. Exactly what prompted a confrontation is unknown, but after studying this work for 'two yeares space' Bayfield fell afoul of his superiors and was imprisoned in the house.[25] What seems likely is that he was reading and discussing this new translation with interpretations which were also new, presumably the very interpretations previously discussed in his presence by Barnes and his associates. Later events in the lives of all involved would support such a reading, as does the fact that it was Barnes himself who eventually interceded on Bayfield's behalf, both securing his release and bringing him back to Cambridge.[26]

In spite of the above, however, there are notable indications that Barnes had

22 *A&M*, 2.1192.

23 Richard Rex, 'The Early Impact of Reformation Theology at Cambridge University, 1521–1547', *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 2 (1999), 49 n. 41.

24 Rougham, like Barnes a Norfolk man, had matriculated at Leuven the year before Barnes on 2 October 1520. *Matricule de L'Université de Louvain*, 3.638.

25 For this paragraph see *A&M*, 2.1021. The initial meeting of Barnes and Bayfield cannot be dated with precision. Foxe records that Bayfield travelled to London when Barnes was 'in the Fleete', i.e., sometime between February and August of 1526. He had previously spent 'a good while' in Cambridge after his release from an imprisonment that had lasted '.iii. quarters of a yeare'. Two years had passed between his arrest and his first meeting with Barnes. If 'a good while' encompasses even the space of a year – and it must have lasted more than a few months, as Barnes could only have secured his release before his own troubles of late 1525 – the dating of this first meeting can safely be placed in 1522.

26 For the story of Bayfield, see *A&M*, 2.1021–4; for Rougham's evangelical activities, see *A&M* (Pratt) 4, Appendix, 767–8.

yet to be wholly or outspokenly converted to opinions that could be called explicitly evangelical. He had fallen under no suspicion from the university authorities, who at the beginning of 1524 even gave him early release from typical requirements of regency.[27] Likewise, in Foxe's brief mention of George Stafford's 1524 Bachelor of Divinity disputation, a picture is painted of Stafford confounding 'the great blynde Doctors' who examined him, but who could not refute his evangelical opinions.[28] Barnes himself was one of these doctors, the individual in fact appointed to act as moderator in the disputation. In this light it is perhaps not surprising that Foxe says it was only under the later influence of Thomas Bilney that Barnes was truly 'converted', though also worthy of note is John Bale's emphasis on Luther's works having been the primary factor in Barnes's conversion.[29]

Whatever the immediate cause of Barnes's evangelical leanings, over the next year Bilney certainly did have a growing influence on the young Augustinian, to the extent that it was Bilney who in 1525 persuaded a not altogether willing Barnes to preach before an audience beyond the safe walls of his friary. Arrangements were made in which Barnes, on 24 December, would preach in the Cambridge church of St Edward's while Hugh Latimer, the scheduled preacher, would occupy Barnes's pulpit in the house of the Austin friars. Why this exchange of pulpits should have been arranged is rather puzzling, since it was surely not precipitated, as John Foxe claims, by Latimer having been prohibited from preaching in St Edward's.[30] The most probable explanation is that the exchange was conceived not to oblige Latimer at all, but to accommodate Barnes. On more than one occasion Latimer would liberally praise his preaching, and Bilney is described in this episode as eagerly encouraging Barnes to enter the pulpit.[31] What seems most likely, therefore, is that Bilney and his fellows saw in Barnes a convincing preacher and desired to place him before a public audience where his persuasiveness might serve the slowly growing evangelical cause. If this was indeed their hope, they disastrously misjudged both their situation and their preacher.

Shortly after the sermon Barnes was censured, and only six weeks later committed indefinitely to the Fleet. The rush of events leading to his imprisonment took Barnes quite by surprise; he was convinced that the content of his sermon was entirely within the bounds of orthodox proclamation. Indeed, examining the twenty-five articles eventually brought against him, one is led to believe

27 See *A&M* (Pratt) 7, Appendix, 772.
28 *A&M*, 2.1192; and cf. *A&M* (1563), 477.
29 *A&M*, 2.1192, and cf. Bale, *Catalogus*, 667.
30 Chester, *Hugh Latimer*, 22–4.
31 *A&M* (1563), 477. For Latimer's praise of Barnes's preaching, see, e.g., Hugh Latimer, *Sermons and Remains of Hugh Latimer*, ed. G.E. Corrie (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1845), 378 (*LP*, 12/2.258) and 389 (*LP*, 12/2.1259).