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End of Fellowship Report

I want to begin by expressing my deep gratitude for the opportunity to spend this rich research time in Durham. The enduring presence of so much of the Benedictine Priory library, now held by the Cathedral, University, and Ushaw College is truly remarkable. It was a great privilege to study the marginalia of Thomas Swalwell OSB (d. 1539) in his historic setting while living in vibrant University College. With the Priory digitisation project focusing attention on local holdings, it was an exciting time to be in this very hospitable community of scholars and librarians actively discussing books, marginalia, libraries, and monasteries.

I have been studying Swalwell since 2010 and am in the process of writing a monograph entitled, *Thomas Swalwell: A Monastic Life in Books*. Swalwell was a member of the Durham Priory from 1483-1539. He was a member of the class of educated monks who were embedded in the educational, economic, cultural and spiritual life of England in the later Middle Ages and whose lives are often hidden behind a set of prescriptive expectations. The course of his monastic life is well documented in the Priory Archives, but there are no extant theological treatises, sermons, or prayers composed by him. Yet he left marginal annotations in over fifty books, most of which are still in libraries in Durham revealing his interests, practices, and learning in service to his community. They enable us to see his mind at work. Swalwell comes across as an earnest and diligent monk, the kind of reliable person who gets things done in the life of an institution.

I spend most of my time in Durham examining examples of his copious marginalia. For instance, Swalwell owned a seven-volume Bible with commentary by Hugh of St. Cher which is now housed at Ushaw College. The volumes of the Psalms and the Gospels are the most significantly annotated, not surprising considering their prominent role in the worship and study of the monastic community. In the gospel volume, Swalwell's notes often follow the course of a particular pericope in some detail, as if he is preparing to preach or lecture on it. On the Psalms, his notes tend to be more scattered, as if he is focusing on a particular phrase or idea for further rumination.

Another of Swalwell's books on which I spent considerable time was Alfonso de Spina's *Fortalicium fidei*, also at Ushaw. This is a polemical work asserting the truth of Christian faith in the face of challenges by heretics, Jews, Muslims, and demonic forces. Swalwell's marginalia indicate his interest in comparative theology as well as his commitment to traditional Christian understandings. Alfonso's comparison of the articles of the Apostles' Creed with Muslim understandings of these topics is especially heavily annotated.

This led directly to the public lecture I gave in November, "A Durham Monk Engages Others: Thomas Swalwell's Marginalia on Jews, Muslims, and Lutherans." Swalwell lived in a time of significant religious upheaval. His marginalia reveal that he used comparisons between religious traditions as tools of thought, helping him to make sense of his changing world. Indeed, the Priory was dissolved by Henry VIII very soon after Swalwell's death in 1539. A discernable hierarchy of anxiety is found in the tone of Swalwell's annotations on these three groups of "others." His interest in the Jews is the most detached. Christian tradition had worked out ways of understanding and controlling Jewish existence, working them into their providential view of history. They remained a part of the Christian imagination, even when not physically present.

Muslims evoked greater anxiety. Christian theologizing about Islam had been urgent in the central Middle Ages, and the Turks were making threatening news in Swalwell's day. Swalwell writes that Muhammad's claims to revelation are lies, but also is careful to note that on many theological topics there is partial agreement between Christians and Muslims. It was Luther, with his polemical rejection of the monastic life who posed the most significant threat among these "others." Swalwell wrote vociferously blunt marginalia in Johann Dietenberger's *Contra temerarium Martini Luteri de votis monasticis iudicium*, itself a highly polemic book, now in the Cathedral Library. That monastic vows can be discarded elicits the comment, "this is Luther's lie." In throwing off the yoke of Christ, Luther is doing Satan's work. Hence Swalwell writes that "Luther is against Christ" and "Luther is to be detested."¹ Further evidence of Swalwell's engagement with the theological questions posed by the Reformation emerges as Swalwell returned to works he had annotated earlier in his life, including those featuring arguments against Jews and Muslims, adding new comments on topics such as justification, purgatory, and the mode of Christ's presence in the eucharist.

The dating of such notes to the last five years of his life is possible because of a change in Swalwell's handwriting in 1534-35. In the volume of Almoner's rentals kept by Swalwell covering the years 1532 -1537, the change in his hand can be seen. The document has a pre-written underlying structure that was later filled in with details. Much of the structure is in Swalwell's earlier hand, while specific details were added in both his earlier and later hands. His earlier hand was certainly in play through 1533; his old hand is at work by late 1535. I thank Andrew Gray for guiding me through this and other archival sources pertaining to Swalwell.

In addition to primary sources in Durham, I was able to examine books annotated by Swalwell held at the York Minister Library and the British Library. I also made significant use of the secondary sources available in Durham to support the interpretation of these primary sources. Sheila Hingley's ongoing work on the Priory books and their bindings led to many insightful conversations. I am now in a very good position to complete my project. This will be greatly facilitated by the ongoing medieval Priory digitisation project and the photographs I was able to take of key pages for further consultation.

Along with research opportunities, I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to be a part of the lively and rich Institute for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, Castle, and wider university communities. I extend special thanks to Stephen Taylor, Judy Burg, Jonathan Bush, Michael Stansfield, Richard Higgins, Richard Gameson, Margaret Harvey, and Andrew Tremlett for their support and encouragement. I was a regular participant in the IMEMS Work in Progress lunches; at one of these, I presented on instances of direct address in Swalwell's annotations and received very helpful input. I also attended the History of Christianity Seminar convened by the Theology and History Departments, performances such as Henry V in the Cathedral and Souls of the North in Castle, History of the Book and Ushaw lectures, concerts by the Cathedral choir for Remembrance Day and Christmas, and so on. Thank you to Richard Lawrie, Ric Whaite and the University College team for making my stay in Castle so delightful! Formal dinners in Castle and worship in the Tunstall and Norman chapels are treasured memories.

I look forward to returning to Durham in September to participate in the Ushaw Residential Research Library Inaugural Conference: Libraries, Learning and Religious Identities.

¹ Johann Dietenberger, *Contra temerarium Martini Luteri* (Cologne: Eucharius Cervicornus, 1524), ChapterLib B.V.58, ff. S3r, h8v, i1r