

Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



The “Public” of Richard Hooker’s Book 7 of the Laws: Stitching Together the Unjoined

Rudolph P. Almasy

Volume 41, numéro 1, hiver 2018

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1086031ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v41i1.29523>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)

2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Almasy, R. (2018). The “Public” of Richard Hooker’s Book 7 of the Laws: Stitching Together the Unjoined. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 41(1), 131–161. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v41i1.29523>

Résumé de l'article

Cet article se penche sur l'idée qu'un texte peut créer et influencer un « public », c'est-à-dire, un groupe d'individus ayant en commun des valeurs et des aspirations. On explore cette hypothèse plus particulièrement à travers l'oeuvre de Richard Hooker intitulée *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594–1662), et plus spécifiquement, en montrant comment le livre 7, qui défend la prélature, rassemble dirigeants civils et ecclésiastiques de la communauté afin de les dissuader d'adopter l'ecclésiologie presbytérienne ou de débarrasser l'Angleterre de ses évêques. Pour ce faire, le texte de Hooker, écrit avec ce public en tête, rapproche par la nature et par leur rôle le civil et l'ecclésiastique en avançant que les deux relèvent de Dieu, en fournissant à son public les connaissances intellectuelles nécessaires à la compréhension de sa défense des évêques, et en se concentrant sur l'autorité, la sagesse, et le bien commun publics que les magistrats doivent protéger. Le but visé par Hooker est d'encourager les diverses instances à comprendre la menace que constitue pour leur pouvoir l'appel presbytérien au changement. Il espère ainsi que toute la magistrature, qui dirige le pays et inclut les évêques, prendra en considération l'ensemble de la communauté et les mérites du statu quo avant de rejoindre les Presbytériens dans le mouvement pour le changement.

The “Public” of Richard Hooker’s Book 7 of the *Laws*: Stitching Together the Unjoined¹

RUDOLPH P. ALMASY
West Virginia University

This article begins with the notion that a text can create and influence a “public,” that is, a group of individuals with common values and aspirations. Richard Hooker’s Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (1594–1662) is the focus here; specifically, this article shows how book 7, which defends the prelacy, stitches together civil and ecclesiastical governors throughout the commonwealth in order to persuade this public not to embrace a Presbyterian ecclesiology and rid England of its bishops. Accordingly, Hooker’s text, composed with this public in mind, links together the nature and role of the civil and ecclesiastical by arguing that both are “of God,” by giving his public the intellectual skills to understand his defense of bishops, and by concentrating on public authority, public wisdom, and the public good which the magistrates must protect. Hooker’s goal is to encourage various estates to understand the threat to their power by the Presbyterian call for change. The hope is that the magisterial community, which runs the country and includes bishops, will consider the whole of the commonwealth and the value of the status quo before joining with the Presbyterians for change.

Cet article se penche sur l’idée qu’un texte peut créer et influencer un « public », c’est-à-dire, un groupe d’individus ayant en commun des valeurs et des aspirations. On explore cette hypothèse plus particulièrement à travers l’œuvre de Richard Hooker intitulée Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (1594–1662), et plus spécifiquement, en montrant comment le livre 7, qui défend la prélature, rassemble dirigeants civils et ecclésiastiques de la communauté afin de les dissuader d’adopter l’ecclésiologie presbytérienne ou de débarrasser l’Angleterre de ses évêques. Pour ce faire, le texte de Hooker, écrit avec ce public en tête, rapproche par la nature et par leur rôle le civil et l’ecclésiastique en avançant que les deux relèvent de Dieu, en fournissant à son public les connaissances intellectuelles nécessaires à la compréhension de sa défense des évêques, et en se concentrant sur l’autorité, la sagesse, et le bien commun publics que les magistrats doivent protéger. Le but visé par Hooker est d’encourager les diverses instances à comprendre la menace que constitue pour leur pouvoir l’appel presbytérien au changement. Il espère ainsi que toute la

1. I borrow the word “stitch” from Paul Yachnin’s Afterword in *Forms of Association: Making Publics in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Paul Yachnin and Marlene Eberhart (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015). Moreover, the group of essays encouraged me to think about Hooker’s book 7 in light of the notion of a text “making publics.” Yachnin’s image seemed applicable: the “interpretive openness of texts can stitch people together across great physical and social distances” (300).

magistrature, qui dirige le pays et inclut les évêques, prendra en considération l'ensemble de la communauté et les mérites du statu quo avant de rejoindre les Presbytériens dans le mouvement pour le changement.

Introduction: the public sphere and Hooker's *Laws*

As Peter Lake and Steven Pincus have observed in their introductory chapter of *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*,² the public sphere became the arena for religious controversy in the sixteenth century. It is no surprise, then, that questions about audience and purpose, indeed about the nature of religious controversy, in Richard Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594–1662), can be addressed by approaching Hooker's work in terms of a public sphere—where the *Laws* operates in an environment characterized by persuasion and motivation. That Hooker is intent on persuading—better yet, mobilizing public opinion by means of a well-designed text—is obvious from the first pages of book 7. What also becomes obvious as one proceeds through this book—which answers the Presbyterian assertion that “there ought not to be in the Church, Bishops endued with such Authority and Honour as ours are”³—is that, as Lake and Pincus indicate, the public sphere (exploited by a polemicist like Hooker) is composed of various interest groups or ranks having connections or political associations with people around them, whether close or far away, familiar or strange. Here, I identify them as members of the magisterial class, broadly recognized. Out of the public sphere, then, a specific public, as colleagues of the polemicist so to speak, is formed by the text—which has the power, as Bronwen Wilson and Paul Yachnin remark, to reorient an array of individuals to each other.⁴ Polemicist and public are in the controversy together. In identifying public persons, his public, Hooker acknowledges “different degrees of Magistrates, even Ecclesiastical as well as Civil” (3:35). In

2. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, “Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England,” in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, ed. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 1–30.

3. Hooker uses this assertion as the title for book 7. Except for my comments on Hooker's Dublin Fragments, all references to Hooker's *Laws* are taken from Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, ed. Arthur Stephen McGrade, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Volume and page numbers are cited in parentheses.

4. See their introduction to *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge*, ed. Bronwen Wilson and Paul Yachnin (New York: Routledge, 2010), 1–21.

the face of political innovation encouraged by the puritans, Hooker calls all these magistrates “the heavier and more experienced sort” (3:72) of citizens. They are the ones, according to Norman Jones, “who ran Elizabeth’s England,” and Hooker must have sensed this and assumed, despite their differences and conflicts, that they could work together for the good of the commonwealth.⁵

Especially in the last three books of the *Laws*, Hooker is calling for a public discussion—or at least a discussion between and among citizen-leaders or magistrates rather than an imagined general audience—concerning the warnings to the commonwealth implicit in these books. As Jesse Lander has suggested, polemical writing such as Hooker’s does in some way, because it is polemic, encourage public debate.⁶ Thus, in participating at some level in public debate, these books are a political and public communication that gathers certain people together in order, in Hooker’s mind, literally to save the English commonwealth and church through education and a sense of obligation. Whether Hooker was acting on behalf of Elizabeth’s government or merely as a voice within the established church, his communication was meant to support and strengthen the ecclesiastical status quo.

W. Speed Hill, the general editor of the last complete edition of Hooker’s works, comments in a 1971 essay, “The Problem of the ‘Three Last Books,’” on Hooker’s shift in tone and purpose from the earlier books to the last three. Perhaps exaggerating the shift, Hill sees Hooker moving from scholar, or to use Hill’s phrase “a disinterested seeker of truth,”⁷ in the earlier books to alarmist in the latter as he grew worried about the safety of the church and responded

5. Norman Jones, *Governing by Virtue: Lord Burghley and the Management of Elizabethan England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 27. Jones’s opening two chapters on “Managing Elizabethan England” and “Managing Virtuously” provide an excellent discussion on the role of these magistrates as they worked for the good of the commonweal as well as for their own self-interest. Hooker’s goal is to appeal to their sense of duty and purpose in supporting the ecclesiastical status quo which also meant showing their loyalty to a sovereign whom providence had protected for over thirty years.

6. Jesse M. Lander, *Inventing Polemic: Religion, Print, and Literary Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6.

7. W. Speed Hill, “Hooker’s Polity: The Problem of the ‘Three Last Books,’” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 34.4 (1971): 320. Hooker may never have completely been “a disinterested seeker of truth”; the earlier books of the *Laws*—especially in the preface and book 5’s dedication to Archbishop Whitgilt—condemn Presbyterian motives, expose the confusion in and intellectual weakness of the Presbyterian mind, and worry about the political dangers of a Calvinist polity that promised power to lay elders.

to the “political exigencies of the day.”⁸ Especially in the last books, Hooker attempts to influence a particular public by sharing his anxieties, which he hopes his readership also shares. The topics of the earlier books of the *Laws* could be said to be scholarly; they are intellectual propositions that are accepted or rejected on the basis of evidence and argument, or perhaps on the basis of belief. For example, in book 2, “Scripture is the only rule of all things which in this life may be done by men”; or book 3, “in Scripture there must be of necessity contained a form of Church-polity the laws whereof may in nowise be altered.” These are not propositions open to legislative action. However, the puritan assertions in the latter books could be achieved through legislation, thus Hooker’s anxiety. The Book of Common Prayer (the topic of book 5) could be altered or abandoned; the lay eldership instituted on the parish level (book 6); episcopacy modified or eliminated (book 7); and the royal supremacy adjusted to subject the supreme regent to the church’s discipline (book 8). After all, Thomas Cartwright, Hooker’s and Archbishop Whitgift’s main Presbyterian opponent but no separatist himself, had argued that the English Protestant church could become through legislation and reform a national English Presbyterian church.⁹ No wonder Hooker insists that the last three books are the “weightiest” (3:3). They are—and this is Hooker’s word—about power, variously conceived.¹⁰ Should the reformed platform succeed, citizens of all estates would witness a significant shift in power within the local community and within the commonwealth. Surely Hooker wants his readers to consider such consequences: who has access to power now, and who seeks this power for themselves?

8. Hill, 335. Peter Lake continues this general theme in his essay “‘The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I’ (and the Fall of Archbishop Grindal) Revisited,” by suggesting that anti-puritan writings (and Hooker’s would be included) are the “bearer of political meanings and messages of the first significance.” See *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essays in Response to Patrick Collinson*, ed. John F. McDermid (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 139.

9. See chapter 7, “The Last Decade, 1593 to 1603,” in A. F. Scott Pearson, *Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism 1535–1603* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1966).

10. The end of Hooker’s preface lists “What things are handled in the Books following,” announcing that book 6 is “of the power of jurisdiction, which the reformed platform claims to lay-elders, with others”; book 7, “of the power of jurisdiction, and the honour which is annexed thereto in Bishops”; and book 8, “of the power of ecclesiastical dominion or supreme authority which with us the highest governor or Prince has.” As Hooker sees the controversy, in part, about power, his is a significant advance over Whitgift’s approach to answering Cartwright.

Searching for an audience or audiences in a text such as book 7 is problematic since, as Hill remarks, each of the last books “presents a distinct case.”¹¹ For one thing, although seemingly close to being a completed text, which Hooker wrote most definitely to be published, book 7 remained unfinished, published only in 1662. Furthermore, the book is unusual in that the final chapter addresses a specific audience, in this case the bishops themselves. Unusual, too, is Hooker’s decision to treat only two fundamental topics, unrelated to each other in the texts Hooker used from John Whitgift and Thomas Cartwright: the superiority of bishops over lesser pastors and the honours due bishops.¹² Understanding Hooker’s various audiences, principally magisterial, in book 7 as a discrete “public” may help in answering why the book is organized as it is, why Hooker is less polemical and more declarative in this book, why certain language is used, and why “Public Authority,” however defined, is Hooker’s interest more so in this book than in any of the others.¹³

Although Hooker’s public is a varied readership, it is doubtful by the time he turned his attention to writing book 5 (his defense of the Book of Common Prayer published in 1597) that he truly wanted to gather into his public the Presbyterian opponents. In fact, Hooker’s strategy marginalizes, even excludes, them. It is true that in the final books of the *Laws* Hooker

11. Hill, 330.

12. Hooker’s entire *Laws* reflects the topics in the debate for further reform of the national church between Presbyterians and state and church officials. The challenge began with the 1572 *Admonition to the Parliament* which John Whitgift, later archbishop, responded to in his *Answer to the Admonition*. Thomas Cartwright, the leading Presbyterian of the time, responded to Whitgift’s *Answer* in his *Reply to an Answer made of M. Doctor Whitgifte* which in turn prompted Whitgift’s *Defense of the Answer*. Not to be outdone, Cartwright produced in 1575 his *Second replie*, which went unanswered until Hooker composed the *Laws*. See Rudolph P. Almas, “The Purpose of Richard Hooker’s Polemic,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 39.2 (1978): 251–70.

13. The most useful introduction to book 7 remains Arthur Stephen McGrade’s “Introduction,” in volume 6, part 1, pp. 309–36, of the Folger edition of Hooker’s works. W. Speed Hill (gen. ed.), *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, 7 volumes (vols. 1–5: Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977–90; vol. 6: Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1993; vol. 7: Tempe, AR: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998), as well as McGrade’s chapter on “Episcopacy” in *A Companion to Richard Hooker*, ed. Torrance Kirby (Leiden: Brill, 2008). See also McGrade’s 2002 essay, which contextualizes Hooker’s comments on the bishops in the face of continuing puritan criticism in the late Elizabethan period. A. S. McGrade, “Richard Hooker on Episcopacy and Bishops, Good and Bad,” *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 2.2 (2002): 28–46.

does continue to gesture toward Presbyterians with an unrealistic hope that if they would carefully examine argument and evidence their judgment would improve and they would understand the church's position and stop making trouble and seeking change. But Hooker's discourse in the last books reflects a different hope borne out of his alarmist sensibility and the strategy (which he has used throughout the *Laws*) of "othering" the opposition through harsh and uncompromising language.¹⁴ These "others" are "fervent reproachers of things established by public authority" (2:1). Hooker warns that "a spark" (2:3) of Presbyterian error will ignite a conflagration that would wrestle the "key of spiritual authority out of the hands of [...] governors." As book 6 warns, lay Presbyterian power will become the "new fancied Sceptre" (3:4) replacing Elizabeth's. Hooker, like Whitgift before him, urges his community of readers to understand that Presbyterian power is an immediate threat to the Supreme Regent, and so to the entire commonwealth. With this attitude toward his opponents, Hooker had no realistic hope that they would listen, understand, and obey. But he does want others (perhaps even those who showed little enthusiasm for conformity) to hear that the sceptre of "lay presbyterial power" is not the result of longstanding "public wisdom" that judges what is "expedient for the common good" (3:5). In fact, public wisdom, he will suggest, is what has established his public in their social status.

Creating a public to heal the nation

In terms of creating a public, Hooker continues to play on the fears that the Presbyterian movement remained strong and widespread into the 1590s when he was writing.¹⁵ Indeed, the spark is very much still smouldering from those

14. The word "othering" appears in Anne Lake Prescott's chapter in *Forms of Association* and suggests that othering can help create a community or at least bring readers together; this latter goal is surely one of Hooker's, as well as the aim of all propagandists for the state church, beginning with Whitgift. Anne Lake Prescott, "Perverse Delights: Cross Channel Trash Talk and Identity Publics," in Yachnin and Eberhart, eds., 87.

15. John Guy, reflecting the position of many Elizabethan historians, writes that ten years after Whitgift came to power, the Elizabethan puritan movement was "dead, the collapse in 1586–7 of a final presbyterian attempt to abolish bishops and replace the Prayer Book with a Genevan-style *Book of Discipline* epitomizing the defeat." John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 307. As the opening of book 6 reveals, Hooker did not think that the conflict was "dead" but rather suspended during a "time of silence which both parts have willingly taken to breathe," which encouraged

enemies who will ignite "the people first" as "pretended necessary actors" in the drama, first articulated in his preface to the *Laws*, to seize power in the church (3:4). The second danger noted, indeed from the beginning of his defense of the national church, is the troubled and clouded understanding in the opponent as well as in certain influential lay persons. Hooker continues an inflammatory language in describing the opponents' errors of mind or troubled understanding in book 8 as "the womb of monsters" (3:222) that begets those easily agitated and easily seduced necessary actors. If this anxiety is not enough, Hooker warns that it might be too late to avoid the conflagration. Hooker reminds his archbishop in the dedication to book 5 that "domestic evils [...] are often permitted to run on forward till it be too late to recall them" (2:2). In the opening, cautionary first chapter of book 7, Hooker cites the Lamentations of the prophet Jeremiah to underscore the seriousness of England's situation. Hooker, like Jeremiah, cries out "Thy breach" nation "is great like the Sea, who can heal thee?" This scriptural intertext (Lamentations 2:13–14) reminds all that remedy for national troubles is God—precisely, as we shall see, Hooker's basis for the prelacy. Hooker's intertexts are always worth examining carefully, and we must never under-estimate how familiar his readership would have been with Old Testament prophecy. The prophet's warnings here about Zion's sins and God's eventual vengeance were used by the puritans to explain the punishments visited on England because of the nation's return to Rome under Queen Mary. Fifty years later, Hooker uses the same scripture as a Jeremiah able to envision a realm that has abandoned episcopacy—the "breach"—and to emphasize the transgressions of this new Zion. He can thus invoke the images of a desolate Jerusalem and ruined tabernacle, acknowledging that God is ready to withdraw his right hand from a realm he has protected (so far) as evidenced by Elizabeth's long and successful reign. And Hooker, as another Jeremiah, asks the question of book 7: "who can heal thee," O England?

Hooker's answer to his question is the public of civil governors he is creating, for only these officials through their own work on the local, regional, and national levels can heal the deteriorating "public condition." Hooker's assumption is that these governors do support the establishment or, if they are

Hooker to write in the early- to mid-1590s about jurisdiction, dignity, and dominion ecclesiastical, but with the warning "that the parties which herein labored mightily for change and (as they say:) for reformation, had somewhat more than this mark only [that is the elimination of a few ceremonies], whereto aim" (3:3).

lukewarm, they can be persuaded to increase their support and embrace an effective civil and religious establishment. Bradford Littlejohn, in a recent study of Hooker, the puritans, and Protestant political theology, has demonstrated how Hooker sees the unity of the civil and religious in Elizabethan England. Although there may have been tensions between the two—that is, tensions between bishops and lay magistrates over prestige and influence—Hooker ignores any such tension to argue that a public religion, such as that in England, requires all with any power and authority to care for the state religion. As Littlejohn writes, all magistrates, whether civil or ecclesiastical, “hold their authority derivatively from God through Christ, and thus are accountable to Christ for the outward protection of his kingdom.”¹⁶ Nevertheless, in terms of protecting Christ’s kingdom, Hooker writes emphatically that some estates of the realm may have become or are becoming “bewitched.”¹⁷ After all, Jeremiah condemns false prophets (and Hooker would have seen the Presbyterians as such) who “flattered” the estates “in their sinnes.” Hooker’s discourse is meant to ensure that the civil and ecclesiastical governors and those immediately below them in the chain of power do not become like the elders in Lamentations who “sit upon the ground and keep silence.” Here we begin to see that Hooker knows who can heal the nation. The purpose of the latter books, especially book 7, is to create a public on the national and the local levels of those who exercise authority, and to incite them to action since England could very well be subject “to dissolution by divers means.” The body politic—Hooker’s public—must watch for “diseases bred within” which overthrow the status quo (2:2). In labelling the Presbyterians as “rebellious spirits,” Hooker lists three other rebellious spirits intent on overthrow from within, which his readership would easily recognize and condemn: the Anabaptist, the Barrowist, and the Martinist (3:91).¹⁸

16. W. Bradford Littlejohn, *The Peril and Promise of Christian Liberty: Richard Hooker, the Puritans, and Protestant Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2017), 227.

17. Hooker worries that more is involved than “error of mind,” for “some wicked thing hath undoubtedly bewitched us, if we forsake that Government, the use whereof universal experience has for so many years approved, and betake ourselves to a Regiment, neither appointed of God himself [...] nor till yesterday ever heard of among men” (2:73).

18. Whitney R. D. Jones points out that all conformist writers of the Elizabethan period used the potential anarchy of Anabaptism as a warning about the dangers of further church reformation along

With such inflammatory language, Hooker addresses the “nation” or more precisely laments over the “nation” by opening chapter 1 of book 7 with a fable of a kingdom determined to chop off one of the three limbs that constitute the “public Estate” (3:71)—the prelacy.¹⁹ This particular public estate is much like England where public authority resides variously in a kingdom composed of all sorts of men, of different estates, with some within the kingdom agitating for reform. “A principal actor”—surely Thomas Cartwright, Whitgift’s aggressive adversary—“restless through desire of innovation” (3:71–72) by means of a sermon (the reference to Cartwright and the ironic mention of a sermon would have surprised no one) preaches what needs to be done to eliminate disorder in church and state. The tree of state has three limbs: nobles, lawyers, and prelates. In order to establish Christ’s discipline, the state must cut off all three of these limbs from the body of the kingdom, apparently leaving only the people. With not so subtle sarcasm, Hooker speculates how things will proceed in England; not all three limbs will be cut off immediately, only the weakest first—that is, the prelacy. The chopping of the one limb will proceed apparently with some support from the other limbs: those nobles and lawyers hostile to the bishops. But Hooker in this opening warns those nobles and lawyers—the aristocracy, even the gentry, various professions, and many servants of the state with overlapping political interests whom Hooker wants on his side—that they too will become victims of “foul practices” when the Presbyterian ecclesiology is established.²⁰

As this first chapter ends, Hooker cries out “O Nation utterly without knowledge, without sense” (3:73). It is the only time in book 7 that Hooker uses the noun “nation,” reflecting his hope that his readership will become

Presbyterian lines, in Jones, *The Tree of Commonwealth 1450–1793* (Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000), 96.

19. Barbara J. Shapiro indicates that Hooker’s fable, a popular Tudor genre, served Hooker’s political end in warning magistrates of the dangers of a religiously divided society. If book 7 is political communication, then Shapiro asks what “political knowledge” is Hooker providing to his readers. Beyond warnings of chaos to come, it may be that Hooker is especially educating about the interrelatedness, rather than separation, of the ecclesiastical and the civil, as magistrates and bishops work together to run the country. Barbara J. Shapiro, *Political Communication and Political Culture in England, 1559–1688* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 266.

20. Hooker writes, “The foul practices which have been used for the overthrow of Bishops, may perhaps wax bold in process of time to give the like assault even there, from whence at this present they are most seconded” (3:72).

that “nation” once they are educated and their judgment improved. It is for this “nation,” this special and powerful community, that book 7 proceeds in a specific way in order to stitch together those “divers States of the Realme as well spirituall as temporal,” especially since “discord and dissention” between these states can easily be engendered by preaching.²¹ In answer to the Presbyterian notion that ecclesiastical folks “muste not exercise authoritie as civill magistrates doe, or may do, nor be one above another,”²² Hooker insists throughout on linking together for his readers the civil and ecclesiastical and seeing them as one; certainly they were not separate, as he deemed secular and sacred to be. Accordingly, he does not want the reader to think of one without thinking of the other, as both, he assumes, can cooperate. As he writes, “for sundry operations public” “different degrees of Magistrates or public persons, even Ecclesiastical as well as Civil” have developed over the years (3:76).²³ This development has, naturally (that is, through the Law of Nature), produced inequality—both among the clergy and, importantly, among Hooker’s magisterial readership and the citizens served. Such inequality, however, based on a social hierarchy created and maintained by God, does not hamper but rather enhances the workings—or management—of society, on the national, regional, and local levels. According to Norman Jones, these magistrates up and down the social hierarchy were motivated by duty and honour, by loyalty as well as by self-interest. Hooker certainly appeals to these humanist virtues as he tries to argue that the “higher good of the community” is served by the “good” of the prelacy which is, after all, “of God,” as he keeps repeating.²⁴

21. The phrase “divers States of the Realme as well spirituall as temporal” and the worry about discord are found in notes Hooker made as he prepared to further respond to his opponents. These notes are gathered and published as “Hooker’s Autograph Notes from Trinity College, Dublin, MS 364,” in the Folger edition of Hooker’s works, 3:462–538.

22. “A Second Admonition to the Parliament,” printed in *Puritan Manifestoes: A Study of the Origin of the Puritan Revolt*, ed. W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas (New York: Lenox Hill Pub., 1972), 107.

23. For Hooker’s unity of commonwealth and church, as not unusual in the English Reformation, see chapter 3, “The Dormant Years,” in Jones, *The Tree of Commonwealth*. Jones argues that especially in the last decade of Elizabeth’s rule there was increased discussion about the head of the body politic and about the possibility of separating commonwealth and church, a notion Hooker would not have supported.

24. As Charles Miller has written, Hooker “sidesteps the non-conformist ‘of God’/not ‘of God’ opposition” by using the phrase “of God” to indicate actions and decisions that are “loyal to both reason and revelation.” As the church is both a natural society and an instrument of grace, when its

“Divers States of the Realm”

The phrase “divers States of the Realm” is found in Hooker’s Autograph Notes (Trinity College, Dublin, MS 364); and although the notes contain no reference to book 7, they are useful in imagining Hooker’s public. For example, the word “power” appears in them repeatedly, and it is often a power to constrain or coerce. In one section of the notes, Hooker’s concern is that the “magistrate or judge” have discernment and knowledge, indeed “great ripeness of judgment and care,” as circumspect and trustworthy men “who have skill in the law.”²⁵ These notes (written probably in the mid-1590s²⁶) suggest that Hooker had been thinking of this public with its power to coerce, of various estates both ecclesiastical and civil stitched together, as the imagined nation. The Presbyterians are not included; Hooker saw them as usurpers of power, and his notes show his worry about the judgment of public officials. One way of seeing these public officials, especially in book 7, is to see them as Hooker does: that is, as “parts within [the] politique body,”²⁷ “parts” that practise mutual support based on degree, distinction, and social hierarchy, from prince (the power of supreme authority) to magistrate to community. Richard Cust, in his essay “The ‘Public Man’ in Late Tudor and Early Stuart England,” cites Francis Bacon’s sense of an organic commonwealth able to function only if its various parts act in a spirit of mutuality and cooperation for the public good.²⁸ And both “public” and “good” are held before the reader throughout book 7, as the book encourages mutuality and cooperation in a common cause. Cust comments on this “public” and this “good” as informed by the presence and importance of humanist thought in Elizabethan society, especially Cicero’s notion of common welfare. Hooker’s assumption is that it is possible to create

determinations follow “the dictates of legitimate theological method, rational method and due authority” those determinations are “of God.” Charles Miller, *Richard Hooker and the Vision of God: Exploring the Origins of “Anglicanism”* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2013), 227–28. The same holds true for the commonwealth understood as a natural body and an instrument of grace.

25. Folger edition of Hooker’s works, 3:469.

26. See P. G. Stanwood’s “Textual Introduction: The Three Last Books,” in the Folger edition of Hooker’s works, 3:xiii–lxxv.

27. Folger edition of Hooker’s works, 3:505.

28. Richard Cust, “The ‘Public Man’ in Late Tudor and Early Stuart England,” in Lake and Pincus, eds., 121.

through his discourse a public that puts the public before the personal and that understands its duty in the magisterial arena to exercise (perhaps we should say “rule with”) honesty, integrity, and virtue.²⁹ Hooker repeatedly reminds these magistrates that they are rational; they can balance self-interest (their own and their local community’s) with the goals of social order and obedience. One of the points Norman Jones makes in his study is that magistrates, lawyers, gentry, and minor local officials throughout the commonwealth (Hooker’s public) would have known enough to understand the importance of the notion of the common good and public interest.

Hooker’s understanding of Tudor society is typical: a top and a bottom with everything in between, a power arrangement of longstanding public wisdom where order “consists in distinction of degree, so that one differs from his fellow in power and the lesser obeys the greater, otherwise society cannot hold together. And so it is a divine law [...] for the lowest things to be *led back* to the highest by those that are intermediate.”³⁰ These sentences from the Autograph Notes suggest how Hooker understood the workings of local government. Note that power resides in every level (except for the lowest) with different “fellows” having an appropriate share of power as befitting their responsibilities in Elizabethan society. There is nothing unusual in Hooker’s seeing the “politique body” as divinely arranged, nor in his belief that various estates (such as those Hooker imagines reading book 7) have a divine obligation in the political landscape to lead back to God-given norms those who are lower or even equal, or who are challenging the normal through “domestical evils” and dissension. Obedience to one’s superiors, regardless of who and where, guarantees that the status quo will serve one’s needs for security, order, and unity. Surely one purpose in book 7, as

29. Cust writes of the magistrate who was encouraged to be Cicero’s *vir honestus* and whose honesty “implied virtue, integrity and above all courage and constancy in standing up for the ‘public’ interest” (122). However, Cust also discusses the tempering of such Ciceronian optimism by the 1590s. If Hooker sensed any such skepticism, book 7 may reflect his doubling of efforts to urge magistrates not to abandon the common good but rather to govern virtuously and honestly. It is important, therefore, to point out that a further observation Cust makes is that a different “public” was being created, as Hooker’s opposition continued to make inroads with the “middling sort who were cast in the role of active citizens” or public men “with their own duties and obligations.” This group was not particularly supportive of the ecclesiastical establishment (especially of the prelacy) and felt a Calvinist motivation to exercise faith and obedience in their work for the public good. Perhaps these are the people Hooker labels as bewitched.

30. Folger edition of Hooker’s works, 3:494 (emphasis mine).

we shall see, is to urge the bishops (who have been under attack for years) to join in harmony with other estates to do this civil leading.

Hooker’s strategy to persuade in book 7

Although a bit repetitious, book 7 is a well-enough organized analysis of prelatial authority and honour as Hooker follows the advice of Elizabethan rhetorician Thomas Wilson to use different arguments and reasons but to concentrate on “the ultimate end” of the book’s entire substance, namely that episcopacy is “of God.”³¹ The frequent references to episcopacy as “of God” or divinely inspired reflect a discursive strategy Hooker has used from the beginnings of his project. Rather than cover all the topics, arguments, and citations in Cartwright’s unanswered *Second replie*, Hooker focuses on what he sees as the fundamental topics separating conformist from nonconformist. Thus, by means of a few fundamental topics, Hooker hopes to speak to as many diverse readers as possible and bring these enlightened readers together. For example, as book 7 is organized around the divine authority of episcopacy, book 1 establishes the foundation of law, variously defined, for the state’s response to its critics. Book 8 concentrates on power; books 3 and 4 on reading scripture. In this way, Hooker plots to have the last (polemical) word on these subjects, but a very different final word than most imagined. And in each instance, while showing the differences between the established church and its challengers on episcopacy, on law, on reason, on reading and understanding Scripture, and on the nature of worship, Hooker can marginalize the Presbyterians and their way of proceeding as they attacked the state church.

As book 7 proceeds, Hooker imposes order on the material of the disputation, and explains the history and value of episcopacy for the public’s “better understanding” with opening chapters (save chapter 1, the *exordium*) that are general and emphatic, as in the other books of the *Laws*. Hooker emphasizes the historical witness of episcopacy—“Of [which] there was not in the Christian World of old any doubt or controversy made, it was a thing universally everywhere agreed upon” (3:144).³² Later, Hooker becomes more

31. See Peter E. Medine’s introduction to Thomas Wilson, *The Art of Rhetoric* (1560), ed. Peter E. Medine (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1994), 16.

32. We find, for example, a lengthy historical narrative on the Roman imperial organization as God’s preparation for episcopal “implantation of his Church” which many of his readers might remember

reactive and specifically polemical, engaging the opponent's material in the form of paraphrases of Cartwright's positions.³³ Hooker continues, as he has done previously, to isolate a few broad issues and citations that Whitgift would not or could not treat extensively. More so than in the other books, Hooker extracts the essential points in the controversy, avoiding the repetitious citations and arguments from Whitgift's tract 1 ("Whether Christ forbiddeth rule and superiority unto the Ministers") and his lengthy tract 8 ("Of Archbishops, Metropolitans, Bishops, Archdeacons, etc."), as well as Cartwright's two responses.

Even in the earliest pages of book 7, Hooker has established a strategy for persuasion before turning to the specific issues in the controversy over episcopacy. Hooker would have understood that the various "States of the Realm" needed an efficient review of the essentials concerning prelatical superiority and episcopacy's bulwark against corruption and schism. And since among those "States" were financial resources, those holding power and privilege needed to be reminded of the honour to be accorded bishops who were, after all, like them, part of the political establishment; of the responsibility of all, as the whole commonwealth we might say, to hold off the chaos that would come from Presbyterian success.

Hooker makes sure, then, that his readership is both various and one, as he attempts to speak to citizen leaders assumed to have common goals and common enemies. And because he has a broad readership (which does not include the Presbyterians³⁴), Hooker proceeds argumentatively in a manner different to a degree from the earlier books. Just as one needs to note the variety of language used to incorporate different citizen leaders into the text, so too are different words used to imagine where those leaders lead: commonwealth, kingdom, realm, public weal, public estate, land, country, state. And with such variety, Hooker's hope is that some single word or name would speak directly to

from their Latin education. Furthermore, as an aid to his public, Hooker supplies definitions of basic arrangements such as a see and a diocese.

33. In book 7's final form, Hooker may have supplied direct quotations rather than paraphrases of Cartwright, as he had done in the earlier books.

34. In fact, Hooker suggests in the opening chapter of book 7, through a citation he does not identify from the Book of Job, that these pretended reformers may not even be part of the public estate—for these people are children, indeed children of fools, the offspring of slaves, base creatures, no part of a harmonious whole, marginal and irrelevant, yet dangerous (3:72). See Job 30.

a particular reader. The same is true for Hooker's appeal to various authorities to prove the truth of episcopacy. Hooker exploits law and nature, history and reason (which he reminds his readership that they possess), as well as Scripture and church fathers in order to appeal broadly to his readers. Providential history is another authority Hooker exploits to argue God's approval of this longstanding church organization, and surely Hooker's public would have felt providential history working in and through their monarch and their commonwealth, a message heard repeatedly from Elizabeth's government post-Armada. The variety of Hooker's language is also meant to lead readers to think of episcopacy as divinely instituted. Here, Hooker is countering Presbyterian biblicalism with the equally powerful insistence (throughout the book) that episcopacy is authorized by God. What follows is some of Hooker's language on episcopacy: the special providence of God, the ordinance of God—a divine appointment, authorized from heaven, of divine instinct, of divine instigation, instituted by the special notion or direction of the Holy Ghost. The expectation again is that one phrase will catch a reader's attention and so provide assurance of episcopacy, in some fundamental way, as divine ordinance.

Regardless of the specific reader, Hooker's alarmist tone continues, and he may have thought that in sounding his alarm, especially to the commonwealth at what he thought was a particularly critical time, he would have a better chance of readers actually reviewing yet another piece of controversialist writing defending the national church; there had been so many, and most were unreadable for the magisterial community. It may be, too, that Hooker, writing the latter books between 1593 and 1599, is reflecting the anxieties of Elizabeth's final decade with its turn to authoritarianism, to seeing nonconformity as truly subversive, and to obsessing about social revolt, all evident in Hooker's book 7.³⁵ His warnings are serious about the possible destruction of a God-given, God-protected, and grace-filled political and religious arrangement. There is no question that the Presbyterians are the enemies of this divine arrangement. Indeed, they have been seduced by Satan's fraud and subtlety. In fact, Hooker, through a familiar scriptural image, links the Presbyterians to the beast in the Book of Revelation, for on the forehead of these people with no conscience is "the mark of that new devised stamp" (3:119)—Presbyterianism. Surely, they

35. See John Guy's "Introduction: The 1590s: The Second Reign of Elizabeth I?" in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1–19.

are Christ's adversaries. Recall the title of the first chapter of book 7: "The state of Bishops although sometime oppugned [...] yet by his providence upheld hitherto, whose glory it is to maintain that whereof himself is the Author." Citing Cyprian, Hooker adds that it is Christ "that does appoint and protect Bishops." And here in this opening, Hooker announces (as he will do many times during the book) that the government by prelates was "ordained of God" (3:72–73). Regardless of how episcopacy emerged, Hooker concludes "it had either Divine appointment beforehand, or Divine approbation afterwards, and is in that respect to be acknowledged the Ordinance of God" (3:82). Perhaps he thought that if he said it enough, his public would be persuaded. And he often sounds a familiar warning for that public, first articulated in the preface, about the potential social disruption by the common people who, in Hooker's scheme, seem to have little to do with helping run the commonwealth, much less preserving it. They are, however, as Hooker portrays them, necessary for the Presbyterians—as Hooker warns in the opening chapter of book 6—for Hooker's claim is that the opponents are offering the "people" their own power of ecclesiastical jurisdiction.³⁶

Those in positions throughout England who can help to preserve the commonwealth, Hooker calls "civil governors"; his goals are to supply these governors with knowledge and to improve their judgment so that in both the political and religious arenas they can accept the extraordinary responsibility to "lead back" those who are wandering, even if they themselves are among those wandering a bit. That is, Hooker's appeal to civil governors suggests a lean not toward late Tudor absolutism but rather to the promise of an earlier humanist-oriented monarchical republic where local leaders assume responsibility for getting things done. Those local leaders (if they are lukewarm conformists) may not be the "wiser sort of men" (surely another group of citizens Hooker writes for), but Hooker singles out these less skilful and potentially "troubled" citizens and writes "at the least for their sake" since they may not be able "to unwind themselves where the snares of glozing speech do lie to entangle them" (2:19). Hooker refers here to the superficial and ingratiating language

36. Hooker exposes how the Presbyterians plan to manipulate the people: "Having therefore drawn out a complete form as they suppose of public service to be done to God, and set down their plot [...] they very well knew, how little their labours so far forth bestowed, would avail them in the end, without a claim of Jurisdiction to uphold the fabric which they have erected, and this neither likely to be obtained but by the strong arm of the people" (3:3–4).

of the Presbyterians. Book 7 proceeds in organization and content so as to “unwind” his readers from any Presbyterian “snares.” And one of those snares that could very well have inspired Hooker to write as he did was Cartwright’s extravagant statements in his *Second replie* to Whitgift. Although Presbyterians saw episcopacy as an invention of man, Cartwright’s extreme statement went further as he responded to Whitgift’s *Defence* which reiterated that episcopacy controlled corruption. Cartwright adds the following condemnation to the arguments he repeated from his first *Replie*: “that even from the first day wherin this devise was established the corruption in the church was not diminished but grew and got strength by little until the whole face of the earth was covered and the power off darcknes in the fulnes off Antichristes kingdom wholly settled.”³⁷

Episcopacy as “of God”

What Hooker does in three chapters of material “alleged against the ancient Authority of Bishops” is clarify what ancient writers were saying about power and jurisdiction, and argue that church fathers thought episcopal regiment “a thing received from the blessed Apostles themselves, and authorized even from heaven” (3:82). Furthermore, Hooker provides context for various sentences used by the opposition, supports his observations and explanations with plenty of Scripture (as if to outdo the opponent), and answers different interpretations of events and biblical citations. Hooker also presents a commonsensical explanation of the institution of episcopacy so that “reasonable men” (3:91) can understand the issues, confront some of the “proofs” from both sides in the controversy, and make up their own minds. And how Hooker proceeds encourages those who want to read these chapters to consider the evidence, which is something almost impossible for “reasonable” lay people to do in perusing Cartwright’s massive *Second replie*. Hooker does here in a few short chapters what Cartwright did in over two hundred pages in the 1575 printing of his *Second*. Cartwright’s “replie to the D. 8. Tract. Off Archbishops and Bishops” is, as the title of this section indicates, his response to Whitgift’s massive tract 8 in the *Defence*. Hooker’s choice of what to include, from among

37. Thomas Cartwright, *The second replie of Thomas Cartwright* (London: 1575), 569. Surely Hooker would have taken special interest in these particular sentences since they appear amid Cartwright’s comments on the use of Cyprian and Jerome in the debate, citations Hooker addresses in chapters 5, 6, and 7 of book 7.

the vast material on how episcopacy can be considered “of God,” is strategic. One illustration, below, should suffice to demonstrate how Hooker writes for his public.

Although Jerome (a favourite of the Presbyterians) is cited multiple times in Cartwright’s reply to Whitgift’s tract 8, Hooker singles out in his chapter 5 a quotation from Jerome that suggests that episcopacy may be merely a matter of custom. And if merely custom, his readers would want assurance of its divine approbation. First, Hooker assures his readers that he is giving “the true construction and sense of St. Jerome’s whole discourse” in the cited epistle to Evagrius.³⁸ Second, he announces, having already insisted that episcopacy is “of God” (there are nine references in chapter 5 to such divine activity), that it may be the case, as Jerome and others imply, that episcopacy was a matter of custom and “not by determination of the Apostels,” as Cartwright insisted.³⁹ More importantly for the Church of England, however, these fathers acknowledged the superiority of bishops over presbyters. Hooker’s readers are bombarded in chapter 6, for example, with at least twelve references to prelatical superiority. Furthermore, Hooker intends to “clear the sense of” Jerome’s words that prelatical superiority may be “custom, rather than the truth of any Ordinance of the Lord’s” (3:86) by giving power and authority to the universal church, wherever manifested, such as in England, and referring to the notion of positive law which Hooker has explained in book 1. Thus, Hooker concludes for the benefit of his “reasonable” readership that “it seems that St. Jerome ascribes that continuance of such positive laws, though instituted by God himself, to the judgement of the Church” (3:86).⁴⁰ But there is another reason to duplicate the words of Jerome. Hooker can use them to warn the bishops he will address

38. Hooker explains that he has “endeavored the more at large to explain” Jerome’s meaning “because no one thing is less effectual or more usual to be alleged against the ancient Authority of Bishops” (3:85).

39. Cartwright, *Second replie*, 570.

40. Hooker seems to want it both ways, for he continues “The regiment [...] whereof Jerome speaks being positive, and consequently, not absolutely necessary, but of a changeable nature, because there is no Divine voice which in express words forbids it to be changed, he might imagine both that it came to the Apostles by very Divine appointment at the first, and notwithstanding be after a sort, said to stand in force, rather by the custom of the Church, choosing to continue in it, than by the necessary constraint of any Commandment from the Word” (3:86–87). In explaining Jerome’s position and emphasizing that episcopacy is “of God,” Hooker may be trying to satisfy voices that supported episcopacy as a positive, human institution as well as those voices that supported the *jure divinio* argument that was gaining adherents as Hooker wrote.

in the final chapter that whether their “ruling superiority [...] over many Presbyters [...] is an order descended from Christ to the Apostles” or merely custom or positive law which can be taken away by the church’s power, they must engage in no “proud, tyrannical, and unreformable dealings.” For the church can “touch their states” if “Bishops forget themselves, as if none on earth had Authority” over them. Hooker is blunt about it: bishops need to “behave themselves” (3:87).

But he also bluntly tells his governors not to be fooled by Presbyterian assertions. This may be the reason why he devotes an entire chapter (chapter 9: “In what respects Episcopal regiment has been gainsaid of old by Aerius”) to an Aerius citation even though the Aerius material is not extensive in either Whitgift or Cartwright.⁴¹ Including Aerius allows Hooker to link Aerius’s pride with that of the puritans. Since Aerius and his followers, according to Augustine and Epiphanius (material covered extensively in Whitgift and Cartwright), were the first to bend themselves against the superiority of bishops, Hooker focuses on Aerius’s ambition in his plot to become a bishop. When he was not successful, the angry Aerius argued, based on his reading of Scripture, for ecclesiastical equality among priests. Hooker implies (not so subtly) that the Presbyterians are just like Aerius:

An error repugnant to the truth of the Word of God is held by them whosoever they be, that stand in defence of any conclusion drawn erroneously out of Scripture, and untruly thereon fathered. The opinion of Aerius therefore being falsely collected out of Scripture, must needs be acknowledged an error repugnant to the truth of the word of God. (3:109)

This has all along been Hooker’s position on the Presbyterian error of finding their ecclesiastical system in Scripture. As Aerius “deceived many” so too do the Presbyterians, but Hooker’s readers (he calls them here men of wit) should “evidently see that all this is mere foolishness” (3:110). It is Hooker’s task to make his public “see” better. Furthermore, Hooker uses the story of Aerius to help the reader transition to and understand the points argued by “the Enemies of Government by Bishops,” enemies “of the self-same mind” as

41. Although Aerius is mentioned in Whitgift’s *Answer*, it is Cartwright who expands on Aerius’s support for ministerial equality in both his first and second replies.

Aerius (3:111). Again to help his reader, Hooker lists in chapter 10 those points the Presbyterians are making, which he then answers in the polemical chapters that follow.

Polemics and politics

It is not unusual for Hooker to announce the controversial points he will address by using the opponent to identify specific topics to which he will respond. In the earlier books, this is usually achieved through tables of contents that list chapter headings. Hooker condensed material from the Whitgift/Cartwright exchange, and carefully selected the general topics for response in book 7, to present an efficient (and he hopes effective) way of covering what was needed for the benefit of his readers. This strategy is especially evident in chapters 11 through 16, and is another indication that Hooker is being particularly attentive to what the public he is addressing needed to know and to consider. For example, chapter 11 summarizes six points the Presbyterians make in arguing that inequality among pastors is not scriptural. All these points can be found in one place or another in Cartwright's two replies, although Hooker provides very few citations to Cartwright. In six numbered paragraphs (surely an aid for the reader), Hooker answers the opponent succinctly with comments prepared for in the opening chapters of book 7. We might add that the prose is straightforward, and Hooker's sentences somewhat easy to understand. With his public rather than his opponents in mind, Hooker includes plenty of Scripture to support his generalizations.

But it is especially for the public he is hoping to stitch together that he suggests what he believes to be the obvious in this debate on inequality. Inequality is good; it is a matter of control in society; it is what magistrates deal with every day in their work of governing. They should then easily see, from their political perspective at the local level, that this propaganda for equality is "strange," "absurd," "a dream newly brought forth" (3:114–15). Hooker continues to press the one point that episcopacy is "of God," following Wilson's advice to stand "upon some one point" in composing an argument.⁴² And here in chapter 11, Hooker, using the term "Commonweal" for the first time, speaks directly to the community of magistrates in reminding them that

42. Wilson, 122.

their own mode of selection and the nature of their office, although not found in Scripture, is, as everyone would acknowledge, “of God.” We also find here something remarkable. For the benefit of the reader, I would argue, Hooker admits that he thought at one time the Presbyterian system “probable.” But not so now that he has studied Scripture, history, and the writings of church men. The position on equality is now problematic for him; and admitting he has changed his mind, he invites others to do the same since he also admits that there are “now so many Defenders” of the Presbyterian position (3:111). If he can admit his misjudgment, surely his public can too.

The remaining chapters in this section of book 7 cover familiar material and arguments, emphasizing throughout that episcopacy is “by the special providence of God” (3:121) and condemning the thinking and inconsistency of the opponent. In using Scripture throughout, Hooker announces that “any man of sound judgement” would have to agree with the points he is making about the necessity of bishops and their powers. Those powers are similar to the powers of governors in that they have been authorized by orderly means. And so, Hooker increasingly emphasizes the link between the ecclesiastical and the civil, and invites his readers to join with him in a humanist search for the good first mentioned in chapter 14: determining what is good for the commonwealth, as both state and church are politic societies or bodies. Hooker’s readership—that public—needs to think of the “whole,” a whole that “may provide for the good of all parts therein” (3:123).

In suggesting what is good for the commonwealth, Hooker emphasizes the Presbyterian insistence that the “people” (Hooker repeatedly uses this loaded word in chapter 14) be given voice and power in calling ministers to their parishes. Hooker wants the local “patron”—part of that public he is gathering—to see the dangers in the Presbyterians’ alleged love of the people, whether as the multitude or as the lay-eldership, both of which for the local patron and other governors in power could prove troublesome, if not dangerous.

Hooker is especially political in chapter 15, “Concerning the civil power and authority which our Bishops have.” He invokes the same authority that upholds local magistrates to justify the bishops’ power; that is, the law and the authority of the prince. Reminding his reader that bishops compose one of the “estates in this land,” Hooker provides six illustrations “wherein it cannot but clearly appear to reasonable men, that Civil and Ecclesiastical Functions may be lawfully united in one and the same person” (3:131). Quoting St.

Augustine, he appeals to the virtue of duty, emphasizing that the law of the land (as Hooker has maintained throughout the *Laws*) allows that which is good, convenient, and meet while responding to the “exigence of the present time” (3:138). Political and social disruption (on the local and the national levels) comes from those furious murmurers of whom magistrates are leery: “malapert and proud spirits, whose wits not conceiving the reason of Laws that are established, they adore their own private fancy, as the supreme Law of all” (3:139). Such “malapert and proud spirits” Hooker links to the Presbyterians in chapter 16, which exposes Cartwright’s erroneous use of both Scripture and the church fathers in condemning the ruling superiority of one minister over another. Responding to Cartwright’s use of words from Jesus, Cyprian, and the synod of Carthage, Hooker provides context that would be easy for a lay reader to understand, especially in his consistent reiteration that the prelatical arrangement has “divine allowance.” If that lay reader were a local magistrate, he would understand Hooker’s warning about the pride of those citizens, like his opponents (and like the Anabaptists mentioned in the chapter’s opening), who cannot “brook it to have Superiors” (3:144).⁴³ The local magistrate knows the importance of duty that Hooker harps on in chapter 17, “which duty of every man towards all, does vary according to the several degrees whereby they are more or less beneficial” (3:145). The “honour due to Kings and Governors,” as well as to bishops, is God’s doing. Hooker’s illustration? The Lord Mayor of London (3:146).

Honours due bishops

Once the authority of bishops is validated, Hooker turns to the second broad topic, the kinds of honours due bishops, in chapters 17 through 23. This arrangement of material is typical in that Hooker, as usual, has moved from topics familiar in the controversy (the superiority of bishops over other clergy) to a new topic or at least a topic hardly covered by Whitgift—the honours due

43. The Presbyterians do have superiors, however; that is, they are “ruled” by “willful prejudice” and “obstinate affection.” Hooker keeps this notion of ruling and being ruled before his public, urging magistrates in their duty to rule over such misguided people. See especially the first paragraph of chapter 17.

bishops.⁴⁴ Those honours are due because of the public “good” that grows from the prelacy.⁴⁵ And in explaining the good, Hooker again extracts and condenses certain issues, orders the discussion, and generalizes on a level higher than Whitgift could or did. In fact, concerning the value of episcopacy, Hooker is directly responding to the unanswered Cartwright who chastised Whitgift for not proving episcopacy “honorable to the Prince.”⁴⁶ This discussion of the public benefit of prelacy and the honours due bishops is appropriate, indeed necessary, for Hooker’s public, but we see in some places a shift in focus from a broad magisterial public to those who control resources; who could, through power and influence, support the prelacy materially or, Hooker hopes naively, increase this support.⁴⁷

To prove that “true religion” in the realm will continue if the prelacy continues, Hooker, well-organized as always, examines six allegations out of the Whitgift/Cartwright exchange and then declares what has been public policy and what should remain policy toward the prelacy. Although some of this discussion is for the “vulgar sort” (so says Hooker), he speaks particularly to the nobility in the long chapter 18 of prelacy’s “courteous bridle” that curbs excess, perhaps the excesses of the people. It is a matter of social and political control, then, as prelacy “leads back” those out of line, those who might question the nobility, and those who elevate “every man’s pleasure” (3:155) rather than the good of the whole.

The turn here to the nobility is another indication that Hooker, more so than in other books, is careful about a specific audience and seeks to speak to certain elements in the “public” he is identifying and nurturing. Or as book

44. Hooker specifically mentions title, place, ornament, attendance, privilege, endowments, and rents. Although the first *Admonition* criticizes titles, livings, and offices as remnants of papalism, neither Whitgift nor Cartwright has much to say about such honours, focusing instead on names and offices of New Testament, apostolic, and early church pastors concerning ecclesiastical inequality.

45. McGrade, in “Richard Hooker on Episcopacy,” writes that these honours “are partly symbolic (such as title, place, and ornament), partly material (endowment with lands and livings), but all are understood as visible acknowledgements by society that episcopacy benefits it” (37).

46. Cartwright, *Second*, 651.

47. Hooker’s concern for adequate support of the church and his worry about repine are also discussed in chapter 79 of book 5. The emphasis there, however, is on honouring not bishops but God (and thus maintaining the clergy) by means of “oblations, foundations, endowments [and] tithes.” The warning in books 5 and 7 is the same: without support and honours, the future of religion (and thus happiness and prosperity) in the commonwealth will be compromised.

5 has it, to correct former “defects of counsel” among those with resources who need to support the church. Furthermore, he continues to contextualize the debate about prelacy for the reader with another reference to how the English commonwealth is composed of estates, in this instance “a threefold Cable” (monarch, “Peers and Nobles,” and “the people”). The founders of the commonwealth knew that such an arrangement would strengthen “the whole Body Politic” (3:153). One of the keys to approaching book 7 is Hooker’s insistence that “the second wreath” of the cable does “consist as well as Lords Spiritual as Temporal.” After all, the prelacy is “the glue [...] of the Public weal, the ligament which [...] connects the limbs of this Body Politic each to other” (3:154). In this way, “Nobility and Prelacy [are] twined together.” And so, Hooker returns to the opening observation of book 7: to tear away one cable weakens the others and “by consequent impair[s] greatly the good of all” (3:153). The stress on lords both spiritual and temporal helps prepare the way for the unusual chapter 24 and its concern with unworthy bishops who need to behave as if they were the glue, that “second wreath.”

As if to arouse his public, an alarmist Hooker anguishes (perhaps with a bit of irony) over the fact that the political moment is critical, since some would not mind episcopal “Livings gloriously divided among the Righteous” (3:159). And here in chapter 21 we find another example of Hooker’s defining an audience, identifying an element of his public. In this case it is those in the nation with power and influence “who being as yet unjoined unto this Conspiracy”—that is, not totally bewitched—might be stayed (3:159). These “unjoined” are part of the public Hooker has been interested in from the beginning since they, unlike the Presbyterians, “carry [...] honest and indifferent minds” and should welcome Hooker’s analysis, despite Hooker’s exclamation of a nation “utterly without knowledge, without sense.”⁴⁸ Perhaps he really defines “nation” as those

48. Hooker’s anxiety over the “unjoined” may indicate that the book 7 we have is a product of the early 1590s when genuine fear of Presbyterian power and popularity was at its height. In this regard, the extent of the “unjoined” is suggested in Patrick Collinson’s *The Religion of Protestants* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), especially chapter 2, “Episcopal Roles and Reputations,” and chapter 4, “Magistracy and Ministry,” which discuss how many of the gentry were sympathetic to fundamental puritan virtues and did not see their Presbyterian friends as the revolutionaries Hooker portrays them to be. In reinforcing humanist values concerning the good of the commonwealth, civil duty, and virtuous behaviour, Hooker may be attempting in book 7 to re-invigorate what may have been perceived as lay-clergy cooperation of the past.

with power, influence, and resources. Certainly, Hooker finds a genuine space into which to invite not only the godly, the virtuous, and the wealthy, but also those he hopes will be curious about his message.⁴⁹ In front of these “unjoined,” vulnerable bishops are urged to behave themselves or lose the support they have.

In these chapters on honours, Hooker pursues a strategy that is political as he spends pages linking bishops to the “Civil Governors” (3:147). Hoping to catch someone’s attention, he labels readers as higher governors, or lay governors, or higher powers. Regardless of what Hooker calls them, they are “twined together”; both require “Public Marks and Tokens” (3:154), and both guarantee the public good because both guarantee order and social quietness. As Patrick Collinson has observed, “‘Ministry’ and ‘magistracy’ were but separate arms of the same Christian government, and conflict between them was abhorrent.”⁵⁰ Hooker writes, of course, as if there is no conflict. As for the two working together for social quietness, Hooker warns, “this one thing not understood by the vulgar sort, causes all contempt to be offered to higher Powers, not only Ecclesiastical, but Civil” (3:149). The good that prelates and “higher Governors” do often goes unnoticed. Both, in their separate but equal ways, have been given authority within the commonweal to impose order, ensure that the law is kept, control wicked people, and encourage citizens to do their duty. Good government (and Hooker’s assumption is that England’s is a good government) grows “principally from them who are principal therein,” whether it be ecclesiastical or civil (3:153). And it is clear in chapter 18 that Hooker is educating “lay Governors” who are “without knowledge,” who may not always know what prelates do in the local and regional arenas. Hooker reiterates for those governors—and there are many throughout the land—that what is said about the value and work of the prelacy holds true for civil officials and the nobility. Although there may be individuals in Hooker’s public who have private opinions against those in power, Hooker’s focus is “public judgment”—public opinion, which must hold sway in the current situation concerning honours “had of public Estates and Callings in the Church, or commonwealth” (3:155). Hooker is quite deliberate in labelling bishops as “Church Governors” (3:154).

49. Lander’s point, as he discusses *Marpreflate*, is that polemic can construct a field not only for the godly and ungodly but also for the curious reader (91), another reader Hooker was surely interested in.

50. Patrick Collinson, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), 185.

Even when Hooker discusses specific material honours, he continues to link the ecclesiastical and the civil, for both civil laws and ecclesiastical canons have made special provisions for “pre-eminence” (3:156) of place and privilege. For example, as the judge wears a distinguishing garment, so too does the bishop. The “light of sound reason” teaches such obvious things, says Hooker to his readers (3:158). What should also be obvious is that those masquerading as righteous—Hooker calls them miscreants, thieves, robbers—are a danger to all governors. Be careful, Hooker warns his public, not “to run on with them”—that is, join them in their conspiracy.⁵¹ And again, Hooker insists that his readers carry “true, honest and indifferent minds” (3:159). In understanding that all belongs to God, these readers may, in fact, have good hearts where “unfeigned Religion” dwells (3:161), and they probably know the imperative Hooker cites from Proverb 3:9 to “Honour God with thy riches.” As Hooker explains and defends material resources given to bishops, he clarifies the issues for his readers, educates those readers about early church practices, and answers the puritan use of Scripture with more of the same by demonstrating Scripture’s generosity in the maintenance of each degree of clergy. In typical fashion, Hooker takes another opportunity to warn all governors what they (and church officials) have heard before about those they deal with: that is, the common sort and even the lowest of the clergy who envy and murmur, who repine and grudge, who are full of contempt, and who “think that they which are over them always have too much” (3:169).

The address to the bishops and nobility

We can now turn to what might seem the unusual chapter 24, the last and longest in book 7 on the “unworthiness” of some bishops. However, the title of the chapter indicates Hooker’s continuing interest in exposing those who masquerade as righteous but who plot to seize church goods: “That for their unworthiness, to deprive both them and their successors of such goods, and to convey the same to men of secular calling were extreme sacrilegious injustice.” Hooker’s task, in part, is to expose eight “sores” of the “reverenced Lords” which if not cured “may procure at length that which God of his infinite mercy avert”

51. In book 5, chapter 79, Hooker worries that Satan can bewitch “men of power” who are thus seduced “to sweep all and to leave the church as bare as in the days it was first born” (2:310).

(3:172): that is, overthrow of the status quo that Hooker is defending in the last books of the *Laws*.

But apropos of the purpose of book 7, the “sores” Hooker exposes in bishops do not necessarily refer to their behaviour as pastors (although this is the last sore Hooker lists⁵²) but more significantly as governmental officials who simply are not doing their jobs. Bishops need to be aware of the “public account” (3:181) which will be made of their negligence. They are, after all, public officials and an estate of the realm: members in the House of Lords, possibly landlords and tax collectors, surely involved in local government administration as magistrates themselves, officers of the state with their own clerks and agents, as well as royal commissioners. Collinson believes that “bishops contributed to the stabilization of the commonwealth in a variety of ways which cannot be readily quantified.”⁵³ Kenneth Fincham, who uses the phrase “custodian of order” for a bishop, sees them as the “top of local society” in consultation with magistrates, as Hooker remarks, with “great learning in the *Laws* both Civil and of the church” (3:174).⁵⁴ Along with politicians, they can influence public policy, especially about dissenters. But their reputations can so easily decay, Hooker worries, since perception, especially among the people and the gentry, is vital to the future of the state church. Hooker’s point is straightforward: prelates need to act as a powerful, indispensable, and well-behaved “public” estate of the realm helping to run the country. The last chapter of book 7 is a warning: when superiors of whatever kind act less than perfect, “perpetual discontentment” is bred (3:180). The possibility of “overthrow” (a word Hooker uses strategically) is real.

However, as book 7 closes, the bishops are not Hooker’s only audience, nor I would suggest his most important in his search for a public, as he deliberately and artfully shifts from this audience to another estate of the realm so that criticism of the prelacy is over-shadowed by the political anxieties and

52. Hooker has almost nothing to say about the pastoral work of the bishops, the subject of the study by Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), except advice to exhibit a “fathering affection” to the clergy under them. Nor, because of his political purpose and his magisterial readership, is Hooker interested in contributing to the ideal bishop tradition with its emphasis on preaching. See Collinson, *Godly People*, chapter 6: “Episcopacy and Reform in England in the Later Sixteenth Century.”

53. Collinson, *Religion of Protestants*, 55.

54. Fincham, 3 and 288.

potential social disruptions he has kept before his public from the beginning. In fact, Hooker asks whether the faults mentioned are indeed in the bishops or merely falsely advertised “by such as gape after spoil” (3:185). For example, one of the reasons he urges correction of prelatical faults is because the simple multitude—those “necessary actors” agitated by the Presbyterians—can be so easily seduced, led even to violence. Finally, however, Hooker addresses again the “noblest, wisest, and chiefest Personages of State” (3:178), and he keeps before this readership the notion of “rights” (a good commonwealth word)—the church’s and potentially their own. Hooker’s language is forceful. These are political leaders whose minds are “seldom conversant in heavenly things” and so need bishops to counsel them and help frame their hearts for good as both work mutually together (3:178). These are official who may think naively that the Presbyterians “covet nothing but only the just extinguishment of unreformable persons” (3:172). But they should know better. This estate and, indeed, the broader public (sought by Hooker) are asked to consider the future, not merely the church’s but their own and that of their posterity. Hooker asks this nation, his public, the readership with power and resources, to “consider” how biblical history reveals that those whom God has blessed with abundance honoured God and his church with their substance.⁵⁵ Surely, the “noblest, wisest, and chiefest Personages of State” have been blessed with abundance, their station in life the result of providence.

What is said to the bishops also applies to the magistrates: everywhere there are “perverse men,” so heed the biblical warning to “have a vigilant eye to thyself” (3:179). Hooker insists that “peace, quietness, order and stability” are guaranteed for the state only through the work of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. And he returns to the book’s beginning to remind his public how interconnected church and state are in a nation built on law, rights, and justice. Despite criticism of the prelacy, there are “honestly disposed men” who know the “public good” the church and commonwealth do (3:181).⁵⁶ As he concludes book 7, he pushes

55. This is a particularly effective section of chapter 24 which reads as a litany for those who could support the church as their Bible indicates: “the Kings of this realm and others, whom God had blessed, considered devoutly with themselves, as David [...] had done. [...] They considered how the care which Jehoshaphat had. [...] They considered what promise our Lord and Saviour made to them. [...] They considered how earnest the Apostle is. [...] They considered how needful it is” (3:183).

56. Hooker uses here yet another term in helping his public understand who they can be: men of “common honesty” (3:185).

this relationship as a political warning to all who have resources with a reference to Justinian: “Interest reipublicae ut re sua QUISQUE bene utatur” (3:185).⁵⁷ If there are “grievous abuses,” Hooker warns “all states” that their livings and lands, like those of the prelacy, could be taken from them “whosoever they be” (3:185). The voice that scolds the bishops for their misbehaviour is hardly heard amid Hooker’s final political worries and warnings to that “Nation utterly without knowledge, without sense.” In these final pages of the book, as Hooker continues to educate his readers, he pleads for understanding and sympathy for a church whose treasury is now “reasonably well-emptied,” a church “now fallen to so low an ebb,” a church losing (so Hooker or someone has calculated) “the value of one hundred twenty-six thousand pounds yearly.” But “insatiable minds” thirst for more (3:186). And thus the concluding scriptural prayer from “the prince of Prophets” Moses (Hooker had called him earlier the “principal Civil Governor” of the Jews [3:148]) to Levi (and to all with priestly functions): “Bless O Lord his substance, accept thou the work of his hands, smite [...] them that rise up against him, and of them which hate him, that they rise no more” (3:187). Perhaps a prayer that the Lord “smite” the Presbyterians.

Stitching together a public

Following Brian Vickers, Stephen McGrade sees Hooker’s readers as a varied and diffuse group. According to McGrade, Hooker wrote for the puritans first but also for the recusants and conformists. Indeed, he wrote for the whole world—and even for himself.⁵⁸ I believe the notion of a writer (or a text) forming specific publics gives us another way of approaching Hooker’s search for an audience, his language, and his rhetorical strategy—as we study his work

57. The editor, McGrade, has expanded Hooker’s original “Interest reip. ut re sua QUISQUE bene utatur” and provided a translation for his readers: “It is in the interest of the commonwealth that EVERYONE use well what is his.” Note Hooker’s emphasis by capitalizing “QUISQUE.”

58. Hooker does open his preface with the following sentence: “Though for no other cause, yet for this, that posterity may know we have not loosely through silence permitted things to pass away as in a dream, there shall be for men’s information extant thus much concerning the present state of the Church of God established among us, and their careful endeavor which would have upheld the same” (1:3). McGrade, ed., “Introduction,” *Of the Laws*, xxiv–xxviii. See also Brian Vickers, “Public and Private Rhetoric in Hooker’s *Laws*,” in *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community*, ed. Arthur Stephen McGrade (Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1997), 95–145.

and method. We might call this search the politics of the text, something to observe in other religious polemical writings of the time. The sense of a public is especially useful in opening a text like book 7, which only one time uses the noun “nation” for its readers; which joins so intimately the civil and the ecclesiastical; and which does something unusual for the *Laws* in speaking directly, but only momentarily, to the bishops in the last chapter. The power of that word “nation” can be felt in Hooker’s urgent (yet typical) call for this group of people, civil as well as ecclesiastical public figures, to defend itself against not merely a theological threat but an equally serious political threat, both of which Hooker now guarantees they understand. Hooker’s message is a public message, or as Peter Lake and Michael Questier write, a “case making [...] legitimated either explicitly or implicitly in terms of some general public interest” defined socially or religiously or politically.⁵⁹

In creating his public of civil governors (Norman Jones uses the phrase “magisterial community”⁶⁰), which for the sake of book 7’s exhortations he labels “nation,”⁶¹ Hooker is deliberate in stitching together various interest groups of different social ranks and vocations who share core values, common interests, opinions, and responsibilities. Or at least he hopes they so share. They are told repeatedly that they are part of the public wisdom which has gotten the commonwealth to where it is. To make them into a special group of healers, Hooker persuades them that they have true, honest, and indifferent minds. They are able to determine the truth, and they are able to act. After all, he repeatedly reminds them, they possess the light of sound reason; for Brad Littlejohn, reason is “always a corporate enterprise.”⁶² Although they are individuals, they share a duty to the larger whole, the common good; theirs is a duty to preserve the state which has given them power and position in

59. Peter Lake and Michael Questier, “Puritans, Papists, and the ‘Public Sphere’ in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context,” *The Journal of Modern History* 72.3 (2000): 590.

60. Norman Jones, 30.

61. Although the word “nation” most often in the sixteenth century indicates country, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (“Nation,” I.1.a, *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed 20 December 2016, <http://www.oed.com/>) suggests that it can be invoked to mean a particular group as well as the whole commonwealth. What is intriguing in book 7 is that Hooker uses the word only once, and in that phrase “O Nation without knowledge, without sense,” as if to draw attention to what his particular readers might have understood by the word or by being the word.

62. Littlejohn, 190.

the first place. In terms of helping to preserve the state as it now is, Hooker’s text motivates them to think more about the power and responsibility they have and the common threat that faces all when the unworthy and uneducated seek power or are promised power. They can lean on others like themselves for mutual support in the face of common enemies (Presbyterians and the people) Hooker exposes throughout book 7, especially with words such as “crime” and “overthrow.” They also need to embrace the truth that as episcopacy is “of God,” so too their position, their resources, their duty is “of God.” Thus, their role is to “lead back” those who seek change. To heal divisions. To guarantee the future.

Furthermore, in creating his public, Hooker is deliberate in his composing. He is selective in what he covers and is careful not to burden his readers with the details of the debate on the prelacy, ongoing now for over twenty-five years. He works hard at making his arguments straightforward, and often appeals to the common sense of his citizen readers. So much of what is said is supported by extensive use of Scripture to indicate for his public that his norms (at least many of them) are scriptural. He describes the commonwealth they are all a part of in different ways so as to use language to catch the attention of different readers. He describes in different ways how the commonwealth is composed, and he uses different words to identify civil governors. He also has a variety of ways of complimenting the intellectual skill of his various readers, giving the impression that reasonable disputation can have an impact.⁶³ Furthermore, he wants his public to think in terms of estates—to see which estate is theirs, and which other estate consists of like-minded citizens, and how each works together and is part of a larger whole that produces, as polemic itself can, a collective identity among those various governors.⁶⁴ His appeal is often to the experiences of his readers as magistrates in a system that is built on inequality, law, and justice as it celebrates good order. His goal is a public, a nation, especially from among those “unjoined,” who can be—for England—Jeremiah’s healers.

63. What Joshua Rodda writes is applicable to Richard Hooker: “Religious controversy was an obligation to God and the beginnings of persuasion. It was not, indeed, controversy to those who believed, but a presentation of truth, to help prepare the intellect of a reader, listener, or adversary, and move the will to conversion.” Joshua Rodda, *Public Religious Disputation in England, 1558–1626* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 27.

64. Lander, 11.