Toland [Toland] had a clear and (to many contemporaries) dangerous political agenda. His public polemic on behalf of the Hanoverian succession had neatly blended a republican aspiration of establishing a government of reason with an internecine war against priestcraft and superstition. This warfare was fought on many fronts. The rules of engagement were diverse. In works like *Christianity not mysterious*, Toland articulated a public strategy of enfranchising the rights of the individual to read and understand Scripture without recourse to the interpretative guidance of the Church. His work on Moses showed (following the example of Spinoza) how it was possible to read the Old Testament in a republican and civic manner, providing a model for others to emulate. Much of Toland’s status as a public writer derived from the patronage he displayed prominently in the dedications of the printed works. Although he was controversial, his arguments were condoned through this intimacy with powerful people. Toland’s public persona was not determined simply by his confederacy with the great and the good, but also by the credibility of his arguments, and by the perceived quality of his learning. Although one of the central discourses of his polemic was to promote the sovereignty of reason, he also invoked the authority of erudition. Toland’s ambition was to deconstruct the credibility of clerical knowledge, at the very least to expose the institutional processes that made clergymen’s opinions masquerade as divine truth.

It should be recalled that Toland was as comfortable in Furlay’s library in Rotterdam, or Anthony Collin’s in Great Baddow as he was in the courts of Hanover and Berlin, or salons of London and the home counties. Although Toland broadcast his ideas through the medium of print, scribal writings or conversation, he made his ideas in dialogue with other books – spectacularly with the Bible, but also critically with the corpus of clerical learning. His forensic scrutiny of the methods, findings and pronouncements of established

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*De studio theologia*: patristic erudition and the attack on Scripture
erudition was a fundamental element of the strategy for transforming public culture. The evidence of Toland’s intellectual conduct suggests a process of renovation by subversion (what Guy Dubord called ‘détournement’) from within, rather than one of revolutionary destruction. The starting point for Toland’s cultural hostilities was the canon of orthodox literature – both sacred and critical. In order to engage in this battle with any prospect of success, he needed to be proficient in the routines and skills of orthodox learning. As we have seen from his own collection of books, most of these were such scholarly tomes, rather than subversive works.

The question of Toland’s learning has been long debated. His contemporaries at Oxford remarked that he was a man of much learning if little religion, and implored him to employ his skills to pious ends. Educated at Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leiden and Oxford, Toland had a reputation in the 1690s as a skilled linguist, although his growing impiety prompted Edmund Gibson to decline Toland’s assistance on the labours of preparing a new edition of Camden’s *Britannia*. Toland was indeed proud of having been taught by the famous Spanheim at Leiden. While he admitted having differences with his tutor, he did not reveal that the Dutchman had refused him admittance after one quarrel ‘upon which occasion he was hiss’d out of the school’.1 The fundamental skills of the early modern scholar were linguistic. Claiming to be proficient in at least ten languages, Toland produced works translated from, and composed in, Italian, a variety of Celtic languages, as well as Greek and Latin. He claimed knowledge of Arabic, Spanish and Hebrew and had a fluency in French. That Toland had a facility with a variety of learning can be seen in his different works on Celtic learning and biblical scholarship. As contemporaries like Humphrey Wanley and Edmund Lhwyd were aware, Toland’s knowledge of Irish languages (both written and oral) was broad. This skill, combined with his deep reading in the classical canon, enabled him to produce an original, if highly controversial, account of the origin and nature of ancient Celtic philosophy and religion. So for example, in *Nazarenus* (1718), Toland displayed the evidence of his wide reading in patristic studies and biblical criticism, to attempt to authenticate the spurious *Gospel of Barnabas*. As the prospectus *Cicero illustratus* (1712) indicates, his critical abilities also had classical pretensions projected in the ambition to produce a comprehensive and annotated edition of the works of Cicero.

For some contemporaries like Martin Aedler, an orientalist on the margins of the intellectual life of Cambridge, Toland’s intellectual productions were indications of his serious learning, so much so that he thought Toland would be a good person to encourage such learning in the university. Other contemporaries derided this claim to erudition. Although Toland had talents and application he had ‘for many years employ’d the best parts, and a great
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stock of reading to the worst purposes, namely to shock the Faith of Christians in the glorious person and Divinity of their redeemer, and to sap and undermine the principles and foundations of the orthodox Faith’. Another obituary commented that ‘he had read many Books, but digested few, if any’. Toland’s learning was shallow: ‘he would reject an opinion, merely because an eminent writer embraced it ... he had a smattering in many languages, was a critick in none’. Affected, stylistically ‘low, confused and disagreeable’, and a rude controversialist Toland was ‘always in the wrong’. His public notoriety was ‘owing chiefly to the animadversions of learned men upon his writings, among whom ‘twas a common trick in their disputes with one another, to charge their adversary with an agreement to, or resemblance, of Mr Toland’s Notions’. While many agreed that ‘learning, without all doubt he had’, the moral quality of that erudition was fundamentally contested. These descriptions raise some important issues about the nature and function of Toland’s erudition. He was perceived as a man of broad reading, even though he commonly used such labour for the worst purposes.

The second theme to underscore is the relationship between Toland and other ‘learned’ men: he was thought to deliberately contradict received learned opinion, and in consequence such learned men self-consciously animadverted upon his arguments, projecting their significance to a broader audience. This controversial transaction between Toland’s claims to learning, and learned rebuttal, allows insight into the communicative strategy that Toland developed during the course of his life. Toland was a master of the art of scholarly subversion.

There is little doubt amongst modern historians, as amongst Toland’s contemporaries, that he was embroiled in a project aimed at compromising clerical authority. By examining his ‘learned’ works it will be possible to indicate how he both mastered, and turned to his own purposes, standards of citation and testimony. In doing so he not only produced ‘learned’ works that prompted furious rebuttal, but attempted to expose the knowledge claims that underlay the routines of learning. Modern historical studies have tended to dismiss Toland’s learning as second rate and derivative: he ‘dwelt outside the world of the érudits’. Challenging suggestions that Toland’s own work was parasitic upon the patrimony of orthodox erudition, others have described the work on the apocrypha, in particular, as surprisingly competent. The quality of this erudition can be examined in detail by looking at the evolution of his Amyntor (1699) into a later work A catalogue of books (1726). This is an interesting text not simply because of its content, but also because of its longevity and existence as a printed and manuscript work.

The origins of the work are to be found in Toland’s editorial recovery of the republican canon of political writers in the later 1690s. One of the controversies prompted by this project was the debate over the spurious nature of the
Eikon Basilike purportedly written by the martyred Charles I, but in Toland’s view forged by his chaplain. In the course of exposing the fraud, Toland made an off-hand remark about the number of supposititious works ascribed to Christ and the apostles. Joining doubts about the authenticity of the Eikon Basilike with an assault upon the integrity of Scripture, incited furious rejoinder. Offspring Blackall, using the powerful platform of his 30 January commemorative sermon to the House of Commons, argued that when ‘the publick records and Evidence of our Christianity, are, without controul or censure, suffered to be called in question’ this was a threat to the ‘Foundation of all Revealed Religion’. Toland’s response to this was to write Amyntor (1699: two editions in April and May), a defence of Milton’s life and his account of the forgery of Eikon Basilike. Toland expanded his brief remarks about supposititious Christian works into a detailed catalogue of materials listing references to over seventy titles. In the following March, this work was condemned (along with Christianity not mysterious) by the lower House of Convocation. The ‘Catalogue’ provoked sustained and intense critical examination in print. This episode illustrates the intimacy of the political assault upon the de jure divino monarchy of Charles I with the broader cultural assault upon the status of revelation.

The ‘Catalogue’ of 1699 was not however the final form of the work. It was revised and expanded over the succeeding two decades, a final version being published in Desmaizeaux’s collection of 1726. There is evidence that this copy was in circulation in scribal form on the continent and in England between 1710 and 1720. Toland sent Eugene of Savoy a scribal work, ‘Amyntor Canonicus’, from Leiden in August 1710. Subtitled ‘Eclaircissement sur le Canon du Nouveau Testament’, the manuscript was said to contain ‘un catalogue tres-ample de livres anciennement attribués à Jesus Christ, à ses Apotres, et aux plus considerables de leurs premiers sectateurs’. This expanded catalogue does not survive in the Viennese archive, although the description of it as including ‘plusieurs remarques et questions importantes, concernant l’histoire des Ecritures Sacrées’, suggests some similarity with the 1726 version. That this text was in circulation, at the same time, can be established by Toland’s correspondence with Jacob Arminius, of Amsterdam, discussing whether he might forward that work ‘que vous m’a dit de avoir entre mains pour quelque grand Seigneur, et que vous m’a promis de le copier’. Arminius was keen to have Toland’s French translation of the English version, sheet by sheet, and confirmed that he would let no one else see it. From internal evidence in the 1726 version it is possible to advance a termination date for final amendments from the publication dates of works cited. Since books are referenced from 1700 through to 1718, Toland was probably making additions to the catalogue, as he read new material. That the text was in circulation in England between 1718 and the early months of the
1720s can be established from the surviving list of ‘Manuscripts of mine abroad’ which noted that the Whig associate of Robert Molesworth, Thomas Hewett, had a copy (and had returned it) of a text called ‘History of ye Canon’ which seems likely to be similar to the work sought out by Arminius. Again Toland had sought out pan-European audiences, public and elite, for his work.

The expansion from the fragment of 1698 to a full-blown catalogue provides clear evidence of Toland’s reading and research into the nature of patristic evidence for apocryphal material. The manifestation of this reading was a text composed almost entirely of massive annotation, reference and citation of scholarly sources. The progression from the first to the final version of the catalogue can be established with precision by collation of the two texts. The way the catalogue worked was simple: working through from Christ to the Apostles and disciples, the apocryphal works ascribed to each person were described and their authenticity evaluated. The structure of the catalogue parodied the form of more orthodox works. The first version (1699) contained seventeen general entries and discussed seventy-seven titles, while the final version (1726) had twenty general entries discussing over one hundred and ten titles. The exact nature of these expansions, inclusions and additions, illustrates some of the techniques of Toland’s working practices. Although there were completely new entries included under the heading of ‘Mark’, ‘Barnabas’ and ‘the Gospels of Valentine ... and others’, the vast majority of new material consisted of sub-entries added to already existing headings. For example, the entries for non-canonical texts ascribed to Mary grew from five to nine, for Peter from nine to fourteen and for Paul from eleven to nineteen.

Toland revised, corrected and re-ordered his first draft. The example of the improvement of the first entry, ‘of books reported to be written by Christ himself, or that particularly concern him’, is characteristic of the form this revision took. References are expanded, explanatory commentary included, plus more material added. The commentary on the correspondence between Jesus and Abgarus, King of Edessa, has identical sources. The main reference for the tradition was Eusebius, which Toland supplemented by a precise page reference to the Dominican scholar Francis Combefis’ patristic editions. The final version also expanded part of the latter reference into the more detailed assertion, ‘Nicephorus says he wrote it with his own hand. Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 7’. In the second item, ‘The epistle of Christ to Peter’, additional references are added as well as ironic authorial commentary: ‘But the forger of this piece forgot, that Paul was neither a Christian, nor an Apostle, till after the death of Christ’. Item 4, on the ‘Hymn which Christ secretly taught his disciples and apostles’, displays an interesting alteration in reference. The 1699 edition cites ‘Augustin. Epist. 253. Ad Ceretum Episcopum’ while that of 1726 has ‘Augustin. Epist. Ad Ceretium Episcopum. Edit Benedictin. 237’. Clearly Toland adjusted the testimony for this evidence from one edition of Augustine’s
letters to another. Identifying the precise sources that Toland used to furnish his footnotes and reference allows an insight into his methods. Following the clue of these altered references it is possible to examine at least two books that we know Toland used (and in one case certainly owned). In this way we can reconstruct the routines of Toland’s research practice, and his reading patterns.

The two works are Johann Grabe’s *Spicilegium SS Patrum* (Oxford, 1699, second edition 1700, third edition 1714) and Johann Albertus Fabricius *Codex Apocryphi Novi Testamenti* (Hamburg, 1703 and 1719). These volumes were works of unquestionably orthodox scholarship that aimed (for entirely pious reasons) to recover the monuments of primitive Christianity. Toland mined them for bibliographical details about the various apocryphal texts. For example, comparing sections of Grabe’s text (vol. 1, pp. 55–81) with both versions of *Amyntor* shows that Toland simply re-ordered the discursive original into a simple series of headings. Whereas Grabe discussed the various textual remnants before giving a separate series of extracts from contemporary witnesses, Toland simply identifies the name of the spurious text and indicates the location of sources. At the same time as extracting the ore from Grabe, Toland also synthesised Fabricius’ research on ‘De dictis Christo Tributas’ which identified twelve items. Item 7, a completely new addition examining a letter ‘written by Christ, and dropped down from Heaven’ was derived from the Fabricius discussion. Whereas Fabricius had deliberated about the authenticity of the ‘episcopal letter’ and directed the reader to the tradition ‘edita ex ms Ecclesiae Toletanae à Josepho Saenz de Aguirre Tom. 2. Collectionis maxime concilior. Hispaniae pag. 428 seq.’, Toland merely cited ‘Aguirr. Tom. 2. collect. max. Concilior. Hispan. pag. 428’ with a facetious remark to the effect that such forgery ought to be ignored. Item 8, ‘a great many Sayings attributed to Christ, but not recorded in the New Testament’ was lifted directly from Fabricius’ additions to the first edition of his work, ‘De dictis Christi servatoris nostri, quae in quator Evangeliis canonicis non extant’ (1719: volume 1, 321*-335*). Further evidence of Toland’s close readings of this source can be seen in the manuscript translation of the Latin passages in Fabricius that survives in his archive. That Toland borrowed his learning from these sources can be seen most obviously in some of the changes where references derived from Grabe in 1699 are substituted by citations drawn from Fabricius in 1719. Examples of such amendments and additions are manifold.

Toland devoted considerable effort to refurbishing the catalogue although the essential structure of the work remained intact. The majority of this new material took the form either of authorial comment and translation of sources, or of the inclusion of more citations of texts in support of the various apocryphal works. Not only did this make the catalogue look more scholarly but the incorporation of the culturally powerful erudition of Grabe and
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Fabricius, also compromised their reputations by association with him. Toland also invoked the authority of ‘original’ manuscripts to accrue scholarly credit to the catalogue. Even though in most cases it is unlikely that Toland had actually consulted the manuscripts, he did lay claim to original archival work in the case of an unidentified codex of ‘the book of the Infancy of Christ, pretended to have been written by Thomas’. Noting that the Orientalist scholar, Henry Sike, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge (1702–12), had printed a Latin and Arabic edition of the work ‘with learned notes’, he commented that ‘I leant him a Latin version of it on parchment, which is very old; and which had it come into his hands, might have saved him a great part of his labour’. Unusually, Toland had lost track of the manuscript, he lamented, ‘but what's become of it, since his unfortunate death, I know not: neither have I claim’d it, as having nothing to show my title’. 15

The bulk of the references in the text were to patristic sources and the various commentaries, collections and editions of the ‘documents’ of the early Christian Church. Epiphanius, Eusebius, Jerome, Origen, Augustine, Philaster, Nicephorus, Theodoret and Clement of Alexandria were the most frequently cited sources. Beyond these, almost sanctified sources, were a range of more obscure patristic authors such as Isidore of Pelusium (d. 425), Turibus, Bishop of Asturica (fl. 440), Titus Bostrens (d. 378), Eustathius of Antioch (d. 337) and Paul Orosius (fl. 400). In citing these early Christian texts Toland was suborning authoritative witnesses to his project of compromising the canonicity of received Scripture.

At another level, Toland was also playing a complex inter-textual game, not only by implicating the Church Fathers in his schemes, but perhaps more importantly, by engrossing the editorial labours of his orthodox contemporaries to his own purposes. These patristic sources did not come to Toland’s attention as unmediated texts. Surveying the list of printed books cited by Toland it is evident that he had access to the publications of many of his learned contemporaries. As well as the works of Fabricius and Grabe, Toland also cited the writings of eminent continental scholars like Jean Cotelerius, Christopher Pfaff, Henry Sike, Louis Le Nain Tillemont, Nicholas Rigaltius, Francis Combenis, as well as Englishmen of learned reputation like James Ussher, John Mill, John Gregory and David Wilkins. There were also works of a much older generation such as the enormous collections of early Christian material like Johann Jacob’s Monumenta S. Patrum Orthodoxographa (3 volumes, Basel, 1569) and individual works like William Lindanus’ Missa apostolica: seu, Divinius Sacrificium S. Apostoli Petri (Paris, 1595). It is possible to identify, with some precision, many of the exact editions of the more obscure works Toland cited, because of the detail he gave regarding page references or volumes used. Contemporary readers were expert at decoding his references. One of the intentions of Toland’s catalogue rested upon the
capacity of the reader, both to recognise, and to pursue, the citations he gave to original sources. He was exploiting then not simply the products of particular scholarly labour, but the deeper structure of epistemic practice.

Christian erudition was critical to establishing the legitimacy of primitive (and therefore true) Christianity. For both Roman Catholics and Protestants the recovery of the rituals, beliefs, and institutions of the early church was central to establishing the legitimacy of contemporary practice. As a number of modern scholars have established, these rival ambitions of reconstructing primitive Christianity from ancient sources led to many complex confessional polemics. Contested definitions of who were the ‘best’ Church Fathers was one powerful controversial issue: was the limit to authentic witnesses the third, fifth or tenth centuries? Even if some accommodation could be made amongst scholars of differing confessional identities about the core definition of legitimate patristic testimonies, there was further furious debate and controversy about the authenticity of the textual remains of these ‘Fathers’. Advancing the claims of one Father against another resulted in differing textual editions according to the confessional interests of the editor: Gallican editions of St Cyprian differed from those made by Anglican figures such as John Fell. The recovery of primitive piety was then a means of reinforcing the claims of differing and competing definitions of ‘orthodoxy’. The development of ‘critical’ methods to identify and disseminate ‘good’ editions of legitimate patristic sources was not simply an advancement of ‘scholarly’ research methods but also an investment in an epistemological strategy for making ecclesiological authority. Although there was a powerful Protestant polemic, most urgently developed by Jean Daillé in his 1632 Traité de l’emplois saints Pères (and republished in the 1650s in English and Latin), against the corrupt use of patristic ‘tradition’, English churchmen, expanding on the sixteenth-century Anglican apologist Bishop John Jewel’s notion of the authority of the quinquesecondarum, crafted a means for using certain patristic sources to establish the patriarchal independence of the Church of England. This cautious approach to patristic authority meant that, unlike the French Church, the English did not embark upon the scholarly enterprise of making a complete patrology like the Bibliotheca Patrum, but instead focused their efforts upon specific texts such as the Ignatian Epistles. This confessional pursuit of the ‘unanimem consensum patrum’ created a vast printed resource of patristic editions, a textual database that could be deployed for a variety of theological purpose independent of the intentions of the original editors.

The testimonies of the ‘Fathers’ were then a powerful persuasive in a variety of confessional debates. The authority of such patristic sources lay in two interwoven procedures; the first relied upon establishing the textual integrity of the edition, and the second on the accurate citation of this
published resource. Literary technology conspired with epistemological authority. The task of criticism was to distinguish the spurious from the authentic text; the function of print technology was to enable this critically purified text to be ‘read’ in a theologically correct manner. Clerical scholarship thus produced a cultural artefact that both reified their institutional authority and acted as a testimony of that authority. The patristic edition was both a site for making and contesting true knowledge. Caution in choosing to read only the best editions of the Fathers was a central theme of Protestant advice. Daniel Tossanus, Professor of Divinity at Heidelberg, in his influential *A Synopsis or Compendium of the Fathers* (London, 1635) in giving advice to young divines argued that, read carefully, the Fathers were a useful supplement to the Scriptures. Reading incautiously they might become ‘like one blind in the darke, and saile in a wide sea without either North Starre or Compasse’. A firm grounding in the ‘sovereign command’ of Scripture was the starting point for a critical and historical assessment of ‘what is authenticaall, what erroneous, irrepititious and inserted by monks’. There were ‘many supposititious books’ commonly forged by Jesuits, that could only be exposed by ‘certain rules’ of judgement. The determining voice was to be the injunctions of true Scripture: any patristic source that contradicted such canons was unlikely to be authentic.19

The ferocity of anti-Catholic polemic in the work of men like Tossanus had been moderated in the mainstream of Anglican scholarship after the Restoration. While there were still many Churchmen who supported the fundamental criticisms of Jean Daillé (indeed a new edition of the English translation of his work was published in 1675), there were also those who deliberately challenged ‘the most celebrated scourge of the fathers’. In 1709 the high churchman, William Reeves, prefaced his edition of Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Minutius Felix with a lengthy rebuttal of slanders against the integrity of the Fathers. Corruption originated in deviant editorial labour, rather than being fundamental to patristic texts. The writings of the Church Fathers were ‘the next best books to the Bible’ and a ‘passage for the unlearned into the knowledge of the purest times of Christianity’. The truth of Christianity was built upon the two pillars of ‘scripture and primitive Christianity’. Reeves acknowledged Daillé’s point that there might be minor discrepancies between the differing patristic accounts of the minutae of Christian practice, but in central doctrine (such as the Trinity) the testimonies of the Fathers converged into a coherent truth. Understanding the contextual witnesses of the early Fathers was ‘the most rational and safest method to understand the Holy Scripture’. He conceded that interpreting Scripture, especially in matters ‘of Polity and discipline’, was made more complex by the achievements of modern criticism. Collating scriptural statements with the ‘authenticae literae’ of holy contemporaries side-stepped both the scepticism of the critics who had ‘mended away the very
body of the Sacred text’ and the enthusiasm of those that laid claim to ‘the spirit for the interpretation of the letter’. Such patristic sources, ‘not only the most faithful guardians of the canon, but of the sense of Scripture too’, were ‘witnesses of facts only’.20

The provision of credible and critically competent editions was crucial for the formation of authentic and instrumentally persuasive cultural authority. The ‘test of antiquity’ became an increasingly effective means of reinforcing the doctrinal and disciplinary claims of the Church of England against both Roman Catholic and Low Church Protestant challenges. In order to comprehend the game Toland was playing it is necessary to underscore the cultural value placed on the Fathers. The value of authentic patristic sources was not simply defended in the works of controversial polemics, but was also promoted in the works of bibliographical advice of the period. The claim that patristic learning made a more Godly and devout ministry was the premise of the various works of advice published after the Restoration. In capturing the cultural environment appropriate to Toland’s context the works of Henry Dodwell, Thomas Barlow and Thomas Bray, composed between the 1670s and 1700s, are central: in the advice of these men it is possible to be precise about the exact books recommended to be read.

Henry Dodwell’s reputation as a man of pious erudition ensured that his letters of advice, first published in 1672 and frequently reprinted, were considered as powerful incitements to Christian virtue. Written for novices and young divines, Dodwell included a ‘Catalogue’ of genuine Christian authors ‘till the conversion of Constantine to Christianity, together with good Editions where they might find and furnish themselves with them’. Dodwell set out ‘learnedly and impartially’ to discuss the textual authority and integrity of his sources in order to discover their ‘Testimonial Authority’. The form his catalogue took worked through forty-six early Fathers and patristic works from Clemens Romanus (mid-first century) to Pamphilus Martyr (end of the third century). The work of each author was discussed and identified as ‘undoubted’ or not. Specific details of the best editions were transcribed: so for example Clemens Romanus’ two Letters to the Corinthians were available ‘by Patricius Junius at Oxford, Anno Dom. MDCXXXVIII. Or by Cotelerius, if you can get it. If not, the 2nd edition of Oxford, divided according to Cotelerius’s paragraphs is the best of those which are easily to be had and cheap. This is in the Year MDCLXXVII’.21 Referring prospective readers to editions of patristic works published in France, Germany and the Low Countries, Dodwell provided an annotated guide to the best, most accurate and easiest obtainable editions.

Dodwell included careful advice about negotiating confessional bias in editorial scholarship: writing on the works of Tertullian, he commented ‘Edit. By Rigaltius rather than any other, because of the improvement of that most ancient noble MS of Agobardus. Or, if you would have a Protestant Edition
and of an easier price, get that of Franeker, 1592, rather than many others though later’. In the supplementary counsel, Dodwell delivered thematic directions, establishing the order that the Fathers ought to be read in (Justin, Athenagoras, Tatian, Theophilus Antiochenus, Clemens of Alexandria, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Origen, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius), and recommending particular volumes for more focused issues like the study of heresy (Irenaeus, Tertullian, Epiphanius, Philastrius, Augustine and Theodoret). Dodwell also included practical directions on how to make ‘critical learning’ from the reading of these books. The reader must make marks in the margin (if the books ‘be your own’) of significant passages, ‘and when you shall meet with any thing parallel, compare them together’. For those passages of rare import, Dodwell suggested, ‘note them in paper books prepared for that purpose’. From these acts of reading and note taking, a scholar might build an armoury of citations and references to establish a particular account of the primitive Church. Reading was done, then, with ‘design and observation’ which thus avoided the dangers of ‘confusion and distraction’: the paper notebooks became the place for observing and comparing evidence, and ultimately to ‘exercise your own conjectures concerning what is singular, and worthy of special observation’. Exactly these themes were echoed in the influential writings of Thomas Barlow. From these acts of marginal annotation were built the infrastructure of cultural authority. These were scholarly procedures that Toland must have imitated in preparation of his own work.

For men like Barlow and his friends, knowledge was made by reading and reflecting upon that reading. By such constant practice and ‘with great application of mind’, the text of Scripture and the Fathers became ‘imprinted on our minds’. The examination of ‘such citations as he meets with; and see to what purpose their authority is urg’d on all sides’ was how conviction was made. Tracing citations to sources and judging their significance was how men used learning. The works of advice concerning study composed by Dodwell and Barlow were products of erudition: the *Bibliotheca parochialis* (1697) was written by Thomas Bray for the encouragement of learning amongst the poorest curates in the country. Such was Bray’s concern to propagate Christian knowledge, that his aim of establishing a modest library in each parish was reinforced by Parliamentary Statute in 1709, resulting in some eighty foundations. Bray identified a minimum ‘catalogue of books’ which every parish clergyman ought to have access. Acknowledging that other learned men had made lists of authors ‘they would recommend to our use’, Bray complained that ‘few or none seem to have adapted their catalogues to the Proper and Immediate business of a parish minister’. Since the main function of the cleric was to ‘draw forth the waters of life, both for his own and others benefit, from the Holy Scriptures’, he needed to ‘know the critical history of the original versions and various editions’ of the Old and New
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Testaments. Concordances, lexicons, glossaries, sacred geographies and zoologies were all recommended. As with scriptural texts, so with the Church Fathers: the key was to distinguish the genuine from the spurious, or in other words ‘to know the edition’. Although aimed at the clerical foot-soldier, the works identified as suitable were erudite. Learning and ‘hard study’ was a means for refurbishing the authority of the Church and converting the world to Christian truth. A lack of books created ignorance and immorality; ‘where the priests lips cannot preserve, cannot procure knowledge, how should the people seek the law at his mouth?’. Bray thus composed a *Bibliotheca Catechetica*, valued at about £5, which would satisfy the basic requirements of a learned ministry. The point to be made here is that when Toland embarked upon a public attack on the canon and on the authenticity of the Fathers, this was a form of erudition that was not simply addressed to the learned in the universities, but held implications for patristic libraries of every parish.

English patristic learning was sophisticated and comprehensive. A premise of this learned culture was ‘knowing the edition’, of distinguishing genuine from spurious witnesses. The 1680s and 1690s saw more and more scholarship being published, with increasingly sophisticated critical apparatus. Toland was to exploit all of these resources in the compilation of his catalogue. The scholarly quality of such editions encouraged and enabled readers to be confident in the integrity and authoritative status of the texts. Toland’s intention was to tarnish the distinction between spurious and authentic, and between supposititious and canonical. His subversion of this system of criticism was both covert and explicit. Initially, Toland denied that *Amyntor* had any corrosive purpose against the established canon of Scripture. He simply dealt with ‘supposittitious’ works ascribed to Christ and the Apostles, rather than true scripture. Despite the pedantry of ‘som German divines’, it was generally accepted that Christ wrote nothing, ‘there is none ascrib’d to him in the whole Bible; nor do we read there that ever he wrote anything, except once with his finger on the ground’. Jerome and Augustine confirmed that ‘the Lord himself wrote nothing’. Toland claimed his catalogue was intended ‘to convince all the world’ that he was not attacking the authority of the New Testament. Like his contemporaries, Toland insisted he followed correct scholarly protocol in citation, ‘I constantly refer to the books wherein they are quoted, that everybody may inform himself of the fact’.

Toland claimed to distinguish the genuine from the forged. Many ‘spurious pieces’ were forged by ‘more zealous than discreet Christians, to supply the brevity of the Apostolic memoirs’, others were made by Heathens and Jews ‘to impose on the credulity of many well dispos’d Persons, who greedily swallow’d any book for Divine revelation that contain’d a great many Miracles’. The ‘suppos’d writings of certain Apostolic men’ which were ‘read
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with extraordinary veneration’ formed another category. Toland denied the merits of the ‘apocrypha’ (the *Epistle of Barnabas*, writings by Hermas, Polycarp, Clemens Romanus and Ignatius), despite the commonplace assumption of their spiritual value.34 Such texts had been received by Rome and ‘most Protestants’ and indeed many scholars devoted considerable effort to making good editions of them. Toland dismissed them as inconsequential forgeries, foisted on the Church by the whims of the early Fathers who paid them the ‘highest respect’. Toland reproduced (complete with referential footnotes) the evidences of this respect: Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Irenaeus, Eusebius all cited the ‘apocrypha’ as ‘Canonical Scripture’, even though in Toland’s opinion the *Pastor of Hermas* was ‘the sillyest book in the world’.35

This posed a problem of consistency in Toland’s view. If the orthodox ‘think ‘em genuine, why do they not receive ‘em into the Canon of Scriptures, since they were the Companions and Fellow Laborers of the Apostles, as well as St Mark or St Luke?’ Raising the thorny problem of the identity of the inspired books and the evident historicity of canon formation, Toland wondered whether such works ought to be added to the received Scripture, and if not where that left the integrity of the canon. Toland worked hard to establish that the commonplace strategy of appealing to the witnesses of the Church Fathers to authenticate the canon was problematic too. Eusebius had argued against the authenticity of some of the material mentioned in *Amyntor* (specifically the ‘Acts, Gospel, Preaching and Revelation of St Peter’) because ‘no ancient or modern writer ... has quoted proofs out of them’. But he was mistaken ‘for the contrary appears by the testimonials markt in the catalogue, and which any body may compare with the originals’.36 Toland’s target was not simply the authenticity of the texts themselves, but also the practice of citing patristic sources to authorise them. If Eusebius had observed early fathers making use of such apocryphal texts then ‘he would have own’d them as the genuine productions of the Apostles, and admitted them (as we say) into the Canon’. The fact that Eusebius had not read such citations ‘he presently concluded there were none’: as Toland showed by citation of other sources there were ‘demonstrative proofs quoted out of some of ’em long before’. Not only were the ‘apocrypha’ dubious but the integrity of the early fathers was also suspect.37

The authority of the Church Fathers was contradictory. Not only did they selectively support false works, but commonly denied the authority of true scripture. Here Toland’s claim not to be speculating about the authority of *scriptura* looked distinctly weak. Books of the New Testament (such as the Epistle to the Hebrews, James, the second of Peter, 2, 3 of John, the Epistle of Jude, and Revelation) had all at some time been ‘plainly doubted by the Ancients’.38 Toland hammered the point home: as the evidence of the Council of Laodicea established, the canon was not formed by revealed authority or inspiration but fabricated by the credit of ‘testimony’. ‘The parity of reason’
therefore enjoined all testimonies to be considered impartially. The clerical privileging of particular sources and texts was condemned as a self-interested and subjective procedure. Many had condemned books in the canon. Celsus and the Manicheans advanced serious and lengthy criticisms against ‘the Genuiness of the whole New Testament’. In a lengthy extract from Faustus drawn from the reputable patristic source of Augustine, Toland reproduced as ‘testimony’ the (to orthodox contemporaries) heretical invective against the canonical gospels. The evidence of the Ebionites and Nazarenes, ‘the oldest Christians’ suggested that some early believers had different copies of Matthew’s gospel; the Marcionites certainly had a different copy of Luke.

Questions about the canon were not as straightforward as they seemed. Citing the learning of ‘Rivet, Father Simon, Du Pin, Ittigius, Dr Cave, Ernestus Grabius’ in his support, Toland proffered his catalogue (which was ‘much larger ... than was publish’d by any of these’) as a suitable authority to update received arguments. As he noted ‘I could add more not there mentioned, and other authorities for those which are there’. At some point he would write a history of the canon which would ‘lay all the matters of fact together in their natural order, without making the least remark of my own, or giving it a Color in favour of any sect or opinion’. The emphasis on empirical evidences and witnesses mirrored the remarks made by defenders of patristic sources like Reeve and Cave. Such ‘matters of fact’, for Toland, would leave ‘all the world to judge for themselves, and to build what they please with those materials I shall furnish them’. The catalogue then was designed as a resource, in the mould and style of orthodox learning, to encourage readers to ‘judge for themselves’. Toland reinforced his pretensions to pious erudition by completing his arguments with another act of citation: translating a lengthy extract from Henry Dodwell’s writings on the early history of the dissemination of Christian literature, Toland furnished his readers with yet more ‘curious disquisitions’ on the issue.

The reaction of readers of Toland’s work in the furious reception Amyntor provoked indicates that he had struck a major controversial nerve. The first substantive reply was made by the talented cleric Samuel Clarke, Chaplain to Bishop John Moore and subsequently a Boyle Lecturer. Clarke defended the received canon, while simultaneously supporting the value of the apocryphal writings of Hermas, Polycarp, Clemens Romanus. Although there were different forms of ‘authority’ for both types of book, a ‘proportional veneration’ was due to each. The variation in the strength of ‘authority’ did not ‘in the least diminish from the authority of the New Testament, or tend to make the number of the Canonical Books Uncertain or Precarious’. Citing the testimonies of patristic sources like Irenaeus and Eusebius (supplemented by Greek extracts in the margins), and the writings of men like Grabe, Cotelerius, Pearson and Wake, in favour of the apocrypha, Clarke directed the reader to further evidences that
he saw no need to ‘transcribe’. As he summarised, ‘upon these great Authorities then, though we cannot be absolutely sure that these Writings are Genuine, yet we may well conclude and believe them to be so, notwithstanding the suspitions which some have raised to the contrary’.44 Not only the ancients, but the ‘learnedst and most judicious criticks of our times, as well laicks as those of the Clergy, have received them as genuine, and recommended them as containing the true and pure Faith of Christ’.45 Both patristic and contemporary learning substantiated a just distinction between canonical and apocryphal works.

If Samuel Clarke’s intention was to save the writings of Hermas et al. from the charge of being spurious, then the more substantial works of John Richardson and Stephen Nye engaged with not only the arguments but also the critical methods used by Toland. Their vindications fixed upon his faulty, corrupt and actively devious scholarship. A sometime Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, John Richardson’s work The canon of the New Testament vindicated, circulated initially in manuscript form, was first published in print in 1700 and reprinted in 1701 and 1719.46 The burden of his argument simply arraigned testimonies from the early Fathers against Toland’s citations, showing how the opinions drawn from such evidences very rarely were sustainable by the texts. Toland’s polemic had been built upon whether, when and how, various Fathers had cited and used non-canonical material. Many ‘authoritative’ Fathers had used ‘spurious’ texts as true ‘scripture’ even using them in public services. Checking Toland’s ‘references’ showed how he had manipulated such textual authorities. Richardson’s own footnotes scrutinised Toland’s citations. Here the powerful image of the author and respondant poring over the same volumes to establish a pre-eminence of interpretative authority is illustrative of the spaces and processes of the making of cultural power.

A close examination of this war in the footnotes will enable a better appreciation of the cultural politics of citation and reading. Toland cited various early Fathers as favourably quoting the Epistles of Barnabas. Richardson identified the precise page references in specific editions: ‘I find therefore that Clement of Alexandria (Ed. Par. G. L. 1641) cites Barnabas, Stromat. l. 2. p. 373, 375, 396 – l. 5. P.571, 577, 578. – Origen cites him l.1. against Celsus p. 49. – l.3. of Principles c.2.f. 144. Edit Par. 1522. Irenaeus quotes Hermas, l.4.c.37 (not c.3. as ’tis in our Author) p. 370, …)’. Having identified the locations of these citations (presumably for the reader to follow up: certainly, scribal additions to one copy indicate that at least one reader did so, and then added further material) Richardson continued to assess ‘how fairly the sense of these places is represented’. That these sources show the fathers quoting Barnabas ‘as scripture’ was ‘not true … For in the places referr’d to, they cite it indeed, but under no such Title’. The claim that Irenaeus cited Hermas as canonical was disputed: Irenaeus indeed and Origen calls it scripture, but not
canonical, ‘That’s our Authors addition’. Toland was a ‘vain boaster’. Richardson even doubted whether Toland had read ‘those books he pretends to quote’. He damned Toland’s credit, ‘I believe, few, who shall consult the quotations produc’d above, will admire him either for an exact or faithful historian’. |

Toland made up ‘testimonies for Spurious pieces’. Richardson was forced to acknowledge that he ‘could not but smile … at the ingenuity of our Author’ when he discovered the source of Toland’s references concerning the Preaching of Paul and Peter. Toland had cited exactly the same passage from Cyprian’s Discourse concerning the Baptism of Heretics for both texts. The humour here was that he had exploited the editorial annotations of the learned Nicholas Rigaltius, who had conjectured that ‘Paul is by mistake set for Peter’. This is good evidence both of Toland’s facility with, and ludic appropriation of learned resources, and also of his readers’ assiduity in tracing, checking and examining his citations. Even Toland’s exploitation of heretical evidences like Celsus and Faustus was devious: the mischief of quoting the heretic without reproducing the ‘answer, which is to be found in the same place’ was obvious. To remedy the fault, Richardson transcribed Augustine’s rebuttal of Faustus at length thus supplying his readers with an immediate antidote to Toland’s critical misbehaviour. Toland’s standards of citation were not simply poor but positively corrupt. He had claimed the existence of a letter from Christ to Peter and Paul by citing Augustine against Faustus, Book 28 chapter 13, ‘which perhaps may make the unwary reader believe, that such an Epistle is there set down, as part of the Scripture receiv’d by, and peculiar to, the Manichees’. As Richardson pointed out there were only five chapters in the twenty-eighth book; the reference in the fourth chapter made no mention of Paul or Peter. Interestingly even though Toland acknowledged that he had read his critics’ work he made no corrections to the later versions of the catalogue even though he had opportunity and indeed did include additional references in many places. Richardson saw a remedy to Toland’s corrupt practice in producing his own collection of testimonies (drawn from Irenaeus and Tertullian) for the established canon. Persuaded by a friend to make such a catalogue, from his own reading, Richardson carefully identified the editions he used and gave exact page references and detailed commentary to assist the reader in establishing a correct conviction.

Stephen Nye’s censure of Toland’s catalogue, A defence of the canon of the new Testament (two editions, 1700), developed many of these same themes against Toland’s devious citations and unsubstantiated assertions. For Nye, the work was not only corrupt but also inconsistent. Sometimes spurious works were claimed as suitable for the canon, at other points the same works were dismissed as forgeries. While Nye paid some attention to the broader arguments Toland made against the integrity of the canon, the focus of his efforts dealt with the details of the catalogue. Toland’s claims for the compre-
hensivity of the catalogue were disputed: Nye offered further apocryphal works (a Valentinian Infancy Gospel, ‘a letter that fell from heaven, an Ethiopian liturgy of Christ). His citation practice was inadequate: ‘I observe also that, Amyntor very often confirms the books of his catalogue, by witness of Authors who never mention any such book or books’. If Toland was to complete his ‘non-such History of the Scripture Canon’, Nye hoped ‘he will oftner himself consult the authors he cites; and less trust the references of others’. Nye acknowledged that the first and second centuries after Christ was a time when the world was filled with Christian texts, many of which had not survived. The existing canon was however sufficient: the power of these orthodox books meant that many of the more marginal books ‘fell (gradually) into disuse, and were afterwards lost’. The works in Toland’s catalogue were these marginal books. Contrary to Toland’s implications, these listed works had not been suppressed or censored, but ‘time; the sufficiency of the books preserved; and that, some of them came not to general knowledge, till the evidences that they were genuine, were not so certain’. Like Richardson, Nye noted that Toland’s citation of Irenaeus, Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen was deeply flawed: ‘he refers us to places in their writings. But in some of those places, nothing at all is said by those Fathers, concerning the books of which we are inquiring; in other places, the authors are named, but nothing is quoted out of them: elsewhere are citations out of them, but not under the names of Scripture or Canonical’. Many quotations simply did not have the pertinence Toland claimed for them.

Nye systematically exposed the duplicity of Toland’s references. To the rhetorical question ‘Has Amyntor any evidence?’ Nye replied with conviction, that such ‘a deceitful management of such subjects as this obliges his Reader to distrust all he says, and more especially his quotations’. He paid close attention to Toland’s use of passages from Faustus the Manichee (a compromised source in Nye’s estimation because anti-Christian). Although Toland had ‘truly recited’ the words, he had ‘neither seen, how to rightly point them, nor truly translate them’. Even his use of an hostile and heretical source was dishonest. Nye reproduced the Latin passage from Faustus (as transcribed by Toland) and the incompetent translation, for direct comparison with an accurate transcription (correctly pointed) and translation. Toland’s version was a ‘pure piece of Jargon; it offers to prove a certain point, by a consideration quite contrary to it’. Translated authentically, Faustus’ remarks were contrary to Toland’s understanding: ‘Briefly, Faustus meant not in the least to say; the books of the canon are falsely intitled to the Apostles, and Evangelists, whose names they bear: but that the Testament of the Son has been vitiated, and disgraced, by divers other Gospels, Acts, Epistles, meaning those of the Catalogue’. Examining further passages from Faustus, Nye complained, ‘Reach me the Ferula, for they are Schoolboys Mistakes in this place, Jam is not, already; or
saepe, frequently: much less is à nobis, those of our party, which it never signifies’. As a final confutation of Toland’s work, Nye appended ‘An abstract of the foregoing dispute’ wherein point by point he established his victory over the arguments advanced against the canon. The rhetoric of this abstract, with its language of proof, testimony and authority (‘I have proved, ... I have shown ..., I have evinced’), is indicative of the controversial dimensions of scholarship. Nye’s demonstration of Toland’s scholarly worthlessness in acts of transcription, translation and hermeneutics, was authorised by his own mastery of patristic sources: ‘I have produced unquestionable Testimony’.

Toland steadfastly continued to work on the catalogue throughout his life despite the critical response, of which he took little notice. He seemed unconcerned with the damage to his reputation as a learned man. The generation of such a reception may have been precisely the point of the catalogue. To many contemporaries it did not seem that he meant to establish any firm arguments, but instead to simply question received wisdom: ‘he saith, he will determine nothing, but suspend his judgement’. The form of Toland’s catalogue compelled orthodox critics to engage in the intricacies of his footnotes and references. By posing a series of controversial attacks upon the textual and historical integrity of ‘Scripture’, supported by what looked like authentic ‘testimonies’ from a series of patristic authorities, widely available in printed editions (many of which were written by his orthodox audience) Toland ensured that his claims received attention. The threat of his ‘scholarship’ persisted long after the initial publication. The most substantial reaction was the three volume work of the young dissenting scholar, Jeremiah Jones A new and full method of settling the canonical authority of the New Testament (1726–27). This work on the canon remained a standard work well into the nineteenth century. In its form, of assessing the testimonies for the authenticity of works ascribed to Christ and the Apostles, it remained faithful to the work it attempted to destroy. Whereas Toland compressed his material into perhaps fifty pages of print, Jones’ consideration consumed hundreds of pages. The irony here is that Toland’s irreligious ambitions actually provoked a work that became the staple of orthodox scholarship. Toland’s critical erudition spawned piety as well as irreligion.

The cultural function of Toland’s learning was complex. Many contemporary readers despised his efforts: certainly those who responded in public replies were motivated not only by the need to correct his mistakes, but also by the urgent need to disable the public perception of the authority of his work. Toland probably laid claim to a broader learning than he possessed. He was expert at mining sources like Fabricius and Grabe for additional annotations and evidences. Sometimes he made real mistakes, sometimes he plagiarised references from sources he had not seen. These were however common
practices in the scholarship of the day. Surveying the corpus of patristic editions and collections from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, it is evident that much scholarship was incremental, building on the textual achievements of earlier editors. As other scholars have indicated there was a curious inertia in the reception of the exposure of fraudulent material: Toland trod heavily on very delicate grounds. At the heart of Toland’s project was an attempted subversion of scholarly procedures of citation. As has already been discussed, contemporaries were deeply unhappy with the standards of his transcriptions and referencing. It is a moot point whether his practice was simply slipshod or actively malicious. Bibliographical citation was both an epistemological and rhetorical transaction: it was both a claim to knowledge and an assertion of status within the community of scholars. The evidential, corroborative, documentary associations conjured by referencing were a powerful part of the rhetoric of persuasion in the period. Toland’s repeated acts of citation were attempts to incorporate orthodox learning within his agenda. Deploying such references was an insidious attempt to persuade the reader, or at the very least an attempt to encourage the reader to pursue a course of textual examination. In Toland’s catalogues the text is overwhelmed by the references: the words of the catalogues are a series of directions to other books. Here, Toland was doing cultural and political work with another community’s intellectual property, he was ‘living in another’s space’. As an act of intellectual appropriation, Toland was trying to suborn one set of witnesses for another purpose.

Toland was not simply a plagiarist. His use of standard editions, contemporaries’ work, and of the Church Fathers, suggests he was exploiting both the form and content of these works. By exploiting recognised routines for the display of erudition, Toland used other works, instrumentally as fodder to sanction his own remarks. Toland made Amyntor and the scribal versions of the catalogue into a subversive text not simply by the substantive arguments advanced against the canon of scripture, but by the passive subterfuge of encouraging and undermining the commonplace reading strategy. As clergymen like Barlow, Dodwell and Bray insisted, readers should check references and sources to confirm the truth of the citation. Toland led his readers to any number of volumes, ancient and modern: those expecting confirmation would have been disappointed. Erudition was collaborative as the circle around men like Grabe and Dodwell establishes: the subversive inter-textuality of Toland’s catalogue could only work when enmeshed in an infrastructure of clerical learning and publishing. This implication, subornation and appropriation of orthodox scholarship exposed the subjectivity of the citation process: by leading his readers to texts that they would discover contradicted his own purposes, he was divulging the nature of citation not simply as a ‘factual’ process, but as a rhetorical device.
Erudition made cultural authority ultimately by making persuasive facts: clergymen made divine truth in the same way. Toland’s (ab)use of this system compromised the perceived neutrality of the process. Exposing false erudition was an explicitly political act: Toland did his best to try to associate these anti-patristic attitudes with the Protestant legitimacy of the Hanoverian succession in the publication of works like *A letter against popery* (1712) by the deceased Queen of Prussia, Sophie Charlotte. Reinforcing the connection between true criticism and anti-popish superstition, Toland gave an account of Sophie Charlotte’s disputation with the Italian Jesuit, Father Vota, over the status of the Church Fathers Augustine and Jerome. Not only a beautiful face, Sophie exceeded all men in ‘the beauties of her mind’ in matters of ‘divinity and philosophy’. Widely read, even in sceptical works like Bayle’s *Dictionary*, Sophie Charlotte argued against taking the Church Fathers (even of the first three centuries) as a certain rule of faith. Such erudition was a device for creating ‘the authority (that is, the domination) of the priests’. Neglecting the pure fountains of scripture for the ‘muddy cisterns of the Fathers’ such learning made superstition. The authority of patristic writings were ‘dissonant and discordant’; ecclesiastical history was ‘nothing else but a continual catalogue of Clergyman’s vices’. It was imperative that the Church of England purge itself of the ‘old leaven’ of such popery. Condemning the ‘Brittish admirers’ of the Fathers ‘who talk of nothing but the rights and powers of convocation’, Toland opposed the ‘slavish credulity’ of such ‘false Protestants’. Importantly, the account of Sophie Charlotte’s disputation with Vota displayed the same strategy as Toland’s catalogue had done by pointing out the contradictions between different patristic texts. We have no evidence to suggest that the Queen developed such a skill because of intimacy with Toland’s work although such topics were evidently commonplace between him and her mother. Toland dismissed the ‘exact study of the fathers’ as a waste of time, because they were ‘of all books the hardest to be understood or reconcil’d, being like a heap of rubbish without any order, accuracy or judgement’. Despite this view, he devoted considerable energies to developing an expertise in patristic scholarship because he saw potent opportunities for compromising false clerical authority. Displaying the anti-patristic reputation of Sophie Charlotte in 1712 was a powerful device for exposing the potential religious corruption of the high church interest identified with Atterbury. Erudition was politics under another name.

The evidence of the ‘catalogue’ exposes Toland’s own reading habits, and is also evidence of his engagement with the world of learning. Toland was accomplished in the routines of *ars critica*: his learning was neither profound nor shallow, but instrumental. The forensic use, and examination, of the critical and cultural procedures for establishing authentic attribution, were bent to the purpose of attacking the clerical monopoly of interpretative
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authority. This was a Trojan undertaking. The virulent, and insidious quality of such apparently innocuous work was evident from its hostile reception in England between 1700 and the late 1720s. This subversive learning was also circulated amongst a variety of elite figures ranging from Sophia of Hanover, Prince Eugene of Savoy and a number of British politicians associated with the Whig administration after 1714. To acknowledge that figures who might become the sovereign, or who lay at the heart of negotiating the military alliance against Catholic France, or who were responsible for the reforming ministry of the late 1710s, were reading and enjoying such material throws a different light on the role of irreligious ideas in the mainstream of British politics in the period. Publishing such works to confuse the unlearned public was crime enough in the eyes of the clergyman. Intruding such impiety into the elite circles of politics, not only compromised the divine status of revelation, but by consequence undermined the credibility of the Church, and was therefore fundamental blasphemy.

NOTES

2 Tolandiana pp. 241, 244, 246.
3 Sullivan Toland esp. pp. 46–47.
5 See Nazarenus.
6 O. Blackall A sermon preached before the Honourable House of Commons (1699) pp. 16–17.
7 See Amyntor (1699), pp. 20–41.
8 See Cardwell Synodolia II pp. 705–706.
9 Nazarenus pp. 314–315.
10 The following passages are cited from Amyntor (1699) [abbreviated as A1699] pp. 20–21, and ‘A Catalogue’ (1726) [A1726] pp. 359–361.
11 On the non-canonical agraphe of Christ see Grabe vol. 1 p. 14 and following. ‘Dicta aliqua Jesus Christi, non in quator Evangelis, sed alibi memorata’.
12 See Nazarenus pp. 296–300.
13 Fabricius Codex 1719: volume I p. 306.
15 A1726, p. 373. Sike’s work was published at Utrecht in 1697, and then reproduced in both editions of Fabricius’ work in 1703 and 1719.
De studio theologia


23. H. Dodwell *Two letters* pp. 223, 229.


25. See Thomas Barlow *De Studio Theologiae* (1699) and especially ‘A short method for the study of Divinity’ appended to this work reproduced from a manuscript found in his study.


32. *Ibid.* pp. 17–23; the list included Dodwell’s *Two letters of advice* and Bray’s own *Bibliotheca Parochialis*.

33. *Amyntor* pp. 17–18, 19.


44. Clarke *Some reflections* pp. 11, 12, 13–14.

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46 J. Richardson The canon of the New Testament vindicated (1700). I have used the BL copy [call-mark 698.d.33] which has a number of manuscript annotations, adding in references to other patristic sources.

47 Ibid. pp. 25, 33, 43.

48 Ibid. pp. 45–46.

49 Ibid. pp. 61–63.

50 Ibid. pp. 107–118.


52 Ibid. pp. 60–61, 67–70.

53 Ibid. pp. 93–95, 96, 97–98.

54 Ibid. pp. 113–122.

55 Ibid. p. 20.


58 Ibid. pp. 6–7, 8–9, 12.