

Tristram Sutte, *A Scholastique Catechisme, Wherein ye Mysteries of Christianity are unfolded by way of Dialogue*

Paper. Watermark on fol. 83^r. Fols: i-ii + 133. Overall 160mm x 100mm. Written irregularly in single columns of approx. 150mm x 65mm, frequently with notes, references and additions in the margins. Recto pages used for the main body of the text with verso pages containing additions and notes (except fols 2^{r-v}, 11^{r-v}, 14^{r-v}, 20^{r-v}, 25-29^r and 114^{r-v})

CONTENTS

Fol. 1^r: “A Scholastique Catechisme, Wherein ye Mysteries of Christianity are unfolded by way of Dialogue”, with the description “De Religione Patriarchacus consule Jacobus Boulducius, de Ecclesia ante legem” [Jacques Boulduc’s *De Ecclesia Ante Legem* of 1626]. Additionally, “Qui bene latuit, bene vixit/Qui bene tacuit, benis dixit”.

Fols 1^v-2: A rewriting of fols 3-4^f.

Fols 3-6^f: First chapter. “Of Religion. C’ap: 1”, discussing the nature of religion and superstition; linking reason to the law of nature, and establishing these laws to be from God; and then examining the religion of the Patriarchs and their laws.

Fols 6-9^f: Untitled chapter containing questions about sovereignty under the Patriarchs, and tracing the regal authority through the patriarchal line of first-born sons.

Fols 9-19^f: Untitled chapter discussing theoretical questions about the origins of power and kingship, including how “ye Regall power [became] separate from ye Paternall” (fol. 11^r), and questions of tyranny and resistance.

Fols 19-38^f: The subject matter of questions changes to other aspects of theology, notably the Sabbath; the importance of and difference between natural and positive laws; and the Law of Moses, including to what extent it is still in force for Christians. This is not marked as a separate chapter, but would probably have been so if the MS had been printed.

Fols 38^v-82: blank.

Fols 83-84^f: The beginnings of a treatise, based on the content of the catechism, entitled “Symbolus Equitis Britannici: or The Cavaliers Religion.”

Fols 84^v-112^v: blank.

Fols 113-114^v: The beginnings of a treatise, based on the content of the catechism, entitled “A Treatise of Principallitie: Declaring The Originall, Descent, Translation, Authoritie, & Obligation of kingly power”, including the beginning of “C’ap: 1, The Originall of Principallitie”.

Fols 129-132^v: blank.

Fol. 133^f: An addition in the dialogue format, probably for the catechism, asking “what was ye Pagan Religion” and “what is Christian religion?”.

TEXTUAL PRESENTATION AND DECORATION Written in black ink throughout in what appears to be one hand. Two title pages (fols 1^r and 113^f) are laid out separately. Chapter marks vary, either written “C’ap” as on fols 3^r and 114^f, or

indicated by the mark “C” in the margins as on fols 6^r and 9^r. Footnotes are marked by either an ‘X’, circle and dot, drawing of a hand, four dots in a diamond shape, or written indication of the footnote’s location.

BINDING Brown spine and corners with blue fabric. Almost certainly rebound after writing due to the closeness of script to the spine, which sometimes renders it illegible.

PROVENANCE The catechism is not signed, but is by Tristram Sugge (b. 1610) of Wadham College, Oxford. Sugge was catechist of Wadham in 1633, 1643, 1644 and 1647 (R. Gardiner (ed.), *The Registers of Wadham College, Oxford, From 1613 to 1719* (London, 1889), p. 89). He was expelled by the Parliamentarians in 1648 and returned in 1660. He died in 1661, and probably bequeathed this and his other manuscript notebooks to Richard Allestree, Regius Professor of Divinity from 1663 (N. Tyacke, ‘Religious Controversy’ in N. Tyacke (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford – Volume IV, Seventeenth-Century Oxford* (Oxford, 1997), p. 593). His works now reside in the Allestree Library at Christ Church (shelf-marks M.3.1, M.3.6, M.3.7, M.3.8, M.3.10, M.3.11, M.3.12, M.3.13, M.3.15 and M.3.21). They are recorded as Sugge’s in the manuscript catalogue with M. Purcell, “‘Useful Weapons for the Defense of That Cause’: Richard Allestree, John Fell and the Foundation of the Allestree Library”, *The Library*, 6th series, 21 (1999), cited as the source. However, Purcell (p. 140) attributes the identification of authorship to Nicholas Tyacke, who writes that he “identified Sugge’s notebooks during the summer of 1986, and must thank Mr H. J. R. Wing and Mrs J. Wells for all their help in this connection” (N. Tyacke, ‘Religious Controversy’, p. 593).

The catechism is undated, meaning only an estimate of its date of composition may be made. The latest work to be referenced in the MS is Robert Weldon’s 1648 *The doctrine of the Scriptures concerning the originall of dominion* (fol. 18^r), and the first pages include a reference to the 1647 edition of Hobbes’s *De Cive* (fol. 2^r). Thus, it is likely that the MS was written over a short period of time in c.1648, although the possibility that these references were added later means we cannot be sure of this. However, Sugge writes of John Selden (died Nov. 1654) as if he were still alive, commenting that “Selden was once of this opinion; nor doe I know that he hath retracted it” (fol. 12^r), offering an approximate upper bound for the date of composition. It could also be suggested that Sugge finished the catechism before the Regicide of Charles I in 1649 because, although including questions relevant to contemporary debates, such as “may wee not resist ye Officers of a Tyrant, nor punish their evill Counsellors?” (fol. 18^r), Sugge does not mention the possibility or occurrence of regicide, which was not widely sought after before the Regicide itself (S. Kelsey, ‘The Trial of Charles I’, *The English Historical Review*, 118 (2003), p. 585). Regarding the beginnings of treatises appended to the MS, which are based on the content of the catechism (fols 83-84^r and 113-114^v), these may well have been added some time after the catechism was written, perhaps during Sugge’s years of expulsion from the University.

Tyacke has identified Sir Robert Filmer as a significant influence on Sugge’s political thought, and Sugge reveals in MS M.3.6 that he had access to a manuscript copy of Filmer’s *Patriarcha* (N. Tyacke, ‘Religious Controversy’, p. 595). Sugge’s discussion of patriarchal kingship, for instance his reasoning against power being originally in

the people (fols 9-11^r), is particularly reminiscent of Filmer's work, although he is not referenced at all in the MS. Sugge develops Filmer's ideas by including elements of priestly authority (fol 11^r) and natural rights (fol. 9^v and 17^v) in his patriarchal theories. The title page (fol 1^r) also refers to a book entitled *De Ecclesia ante legem* ("The Church Before the Law"), published in 1626 and written by 'Jacobus Boulducius' (Jacques Boulduc), a French Capuchin friar. Sugge states that he has consulted this book, although the number of references to Boulduc are minimal (e.g. see fol 25^v).

That the catechism was rebound is apparent from the proximity of script to the spine on many pages, which sometimes makes words illegible – it would have been impossible to write it as such in its current binding. The date of rebinding is unclear, although Purcell notes that William Jacobson, Regius Professor of Divinity from 1848-65, was particularly interested in the Allestree Library, investing in bookplates as well as rearranging the shelves (Purcell, Mark, "Useful Weapons for the Defense of That Cause": Richard Allestree, John Fell and the Foundation of the Allestree Library', p. 146), so it may have been rebound in this period.

Description by John Hawke

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