

Preface to the Updated Edition

The publication of *Enlightenment Prelate: Benjamin Hoadly 1676-1761* in 2004 was marked by largely positive responses in reviews. Nigel Yates, writing in the *Journal of Religious History* (2006), captured the sense of both the book and the prevailing opinion in his review:

William Gibson's study of Hoadly is to be greatly welcomed. It is a major piece of reassessment. Simply getting people to think differently about someone who has been almost consistently painted as one of the blackguards of ecclesiastical history means that an alternative picture has little option but to be painted in equally strong colours. Gibson's book presents us with detailed evidence for a more balanced view of Hoadly both as a controversialist and as a diocesan bishop. Gibson's powerful reassessment of Hoadly relates to his work as a diocesan bishop. Gibson has shown that such views cannot be so easily or so unfairly dismissed as they have been in the past and that men like Hoadly, and those who agreed with him, had something positive to offer to their contemporaries and were as loyal to the interests of the Church of England as the high churchmen who so greatly disparaged them.¹

Hoadly's central place in theological controversies, as well as his reputation as a Latitudinarian, meant that reviewers recognised that the previous neglect of his life and work was remarkable. The focus of Victorian scholars on personal attacks had largely obscured his role as a theologian and bishop. Only the absence of a cache of papers prevented previous generations of scholars from attempting a biographical study. A number of reviewers expressed surprise that this book is the first full-length study of Hoadly.

The book quickly found its way into the mainstream of scholarly understanding of the controversies in which Hoadly participated, and has

1. *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 30, no 1 (2006).

been widely cited by scholars.² In 2020, Dafydd Mills Daniel, extensively citing *Enlightenment Prelate, Benjamin Hoadly 1676-1761*, wrote:

Recent scholarship highlights a tension in the way Hoadly has been represented. Modern commentators help give us an image of Hoadly as a serious political and theological figure. John Gascoigne, Andrew Starkie, and William Gibson have drawn attention to how Hoadly's Bangorian writings spread, like a 'fever', throughout Great Britain, Ireland, and America, as he became a seminal figure for dissenters and political reformers into the nineteenth-century.³

Moreover, that Hoadly's reputation has been wrested from the hands of Victorian attacks can be seen in the 2020 publication in *Student Publication* of an essay entitled 'Bangor Revisited: Bishop Benjamin Hoadly and Enlightenment Ecclesiology' by C.T. Lough, which commented:

An effort undertaken over the past two decades to rescue Hoadly from his associations with liberalism and from more outrageous accusations of deism has sought to call these judgments into question. Susan L. Rutherford, Guglielmo Sanna, and especially William Gibson, Hoadly's first modern biographer, have laid most of the groundwork in this project.⁴

2. Among others, Bob Tennant, *Conscience, Consciousness and Ethics in Joseph Butler's Philosophy and Ministry* (Boydell Press, 2011); Bryan D. Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reason: Worship and Sacraments in England and Scotland, 1662-c.1800* (Ashgate, 2016); D. Mills Daniel, *Ethical Rationalism and Secularisation in the British Enlightenment, Conscience and the Age of Reason* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). More focused examination has been in chapters and journal articles, such as J.C.D. Clark, 'Secularization and Modernization: the Failure of a 'Grand Narrative'', in *The Historical Journal*, 55/1, (2012); T. Stanton, 'John Locke and the fable of Liberalism' in *The Historical Journal*, 61/3, (2018); G. M. Ditchfield, 'Joseph Priestley and the Complexities of Latitudinarianism in the 1770s' in I. Rivers and D. Wykes, (eds.) *Joseph Priestley, Scientist, Philosopher, and Theologian* (Oxford University Press, 2008); Y. Deschamps, 'Daniel Defoe's Contribution to the Dispute over Occasional Conformity: An Insight into Dissent and "Moderation" in the Early Eighteenth Century' in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 46/3 (2013); A. Marshall, 'Recontextualizing Richard Steele: Bishop Hoadly and Reformist Whiggery' in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 82/3, (2019); N. Aston, 'The Tories and Dissenters in the Reign of George I' in N. Aston and B. Bankhurst (eds) *Negotiating Toleration: Dissent and the Hanoverian Succession*, (Oxford University Press, 2019).
3. D. Mills Daniel, 'Benjamin Hoadly, Samuel Clarke, and the Ethics of the Bangorian Controversy: Church, State, and the Moral Law' in *Religions*, vol 11, (2020).
4. <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1912&>

Since 2004, leading scholars have made important contributions to our understanding of Hoadly. Foremost among these is Guglielmo Sanna, Professor of History at the University of Sassari, Sardinia. In 2005, Sanna wrote an article entitled ‘How Heterodox was Hoadly?’ that sought to challenge the idea that Hoadly’s principles placed him beyond the boundaries of Anglican orthodoxy.⁵ Sanna pointed out that Hoadly’s detractors often focused just on his Bangorian publications and ignored his wider theological works: his defence of episcopal ordination, four extensive treatises on conformity, eighteen discourses concerning the terms of acceptance with God and numerous other sermons, three charges to his diocesan clergy, two early works relating to prophecies and miracles, and his attack on freethinkers. From a close reading of these wider theological works, Sanna concluded that Hoadly’s political controversies have tended to obscure the degree to which he was an orthodox Trinitarian Anglican who was far from heresy and heterodoxy.⁶

Sanna followed this in 2012 with a major book-length study, *Religione e vita pubblica nell’Inghilterra del ‘700*.⁷ In it, Sanna argued that Hoadly’s Trinitarian outlook was influenced by a personal dislike of theological speculation and by a strong inclination to ‘practical divinity’ (which he defined as ‘doing rightly’, which he regarded as more important than ‘thinking rightly’). Sanna claimed that Hoadly believed any endeavour to settle the Trinitarian question in absolute terms was an offence both to God and humanity: an offence to God in that it exceeded what he had made knowable to human reason or directly told by revelation; and an offence to humanity because it troubled human consciences to no purpose. What God had thought fit not to reveal – or to render intelligible – to human understanding, people were better to leave undetermined, as the more the theologian entered the territory of darkness, the more the

context=student scholarship (accessed July 2021). Though it must be admitted that from time to time pieces redolent of older scholarship, not conversant with revisionist ideas about patronage and performance arise, one such that misunderstands Hoadly’s use of patronage is J. Dearnley, ‘Patronage, Sinecure and Bishop Hoadly at Winchester (1734-61) in *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club* (2010). The best recent treatment of ideas of patronage can be found in D. Reed, ‘Patronage Performance and Reputation in the Eighteenth Century Church’ Oxford Brookes University PhD thesis, 2019.

5. G. Sanna, ‘How Heterodox was Hoadly?’ in W. Gibson and R. G. Ingram (eds), *Religious Identities in Britain 1660-1832* (Ashgate, 2005).
6. Sanna’s work is a useful corrective to Andrew Starkie’s study of the Bangorian Controversy, whose interpretive perspective is revealed by the frontispiece which depicts Andrew Snape. Unfortunately it is not a book which treats Hoadly or the controversy in an even-handed fashion.
7. Published in Milan by FrancoAngeli.

faithful was confused, particularly people whose intellectual capacities were limited. Sanna argued that Hoadly distinguished between the liberties of the laity and the responsibilities of the clergy. In the former, Hoadly regretted that Christians made salvation depend on such tests of loyalty, much more restrictive than Christ and the apostles had done. If eternal life was accessible to all, how then could the unlearned escape the damnatory clause of the Athanasian Creed, since they could not assent because they did not understand it, and if they assented without understanding, they would not acquire any merit either. As to the clergy, while admiring the Early Church, Hoadly pointed out that ministers could not avoid subscribing to the Athanasian Creed since they had the intellectual capability to know it was agreeable to the word of God. Sanna therefore argued that Hoadly's subscription to the Athanasian Creed did not rest on mental equivocation (he said this to John Jackson in private conversation), let alone cynical careerism. Hoadly was not a supporter of the anti-subscription movement – as some scholars have implied – although many of his supporters in the Bangorian controversy (such as Thomas Herne, John Jackson, and Arthur Ashley Sykes) clearly were.

Sanna was impressed by the way Hoadly's varied his approach to Dissent according to the context (rather than the period). When addressing High Churchmen he put the emphasis on levelling the barriers between Anglicans and Dissenters; when addressing Dissenters, he put the emphasis on renouncing some of their claims. In discussing conformity with Dissenters, Hoadly again distinguished between the liberties of the laity and the responsibilities of the ministers. The laity were not scholars of the Bible, and therefore should be the object of charity rather than reproach; the clergy were responsible for the spiritual welfare of the unlearned, and should not encourage divisions (he advised Calamy to leave the ministry rather than sow seed of discord among the followers of Christ). Of course, these different approaches do not imply inconsistency or insincerity: in a time of political turmoil Hoadly's priority was the unity of English Protestants, which – he thought – could not be achieved at the expense of just one party.

Sanna took the view that Hoadly's political philosophy was shaped to a remarkable extent by a set of constitutional beliefs that were pre-Lockean in their attitude towards contract between ruler and ruled. In fact, notwithstanding impressive similarities, Hoadly was at variance with Locke's *Treatises of Government* on two key points. Firstly, Hoadly believed in the veracity and historicity of the state of nature: he thought the first five books of the Old Testament (and especially the story of Cain), if rightly understood, was evidence that men were born free, not under

government, which must therefore be a human creation. In contrast, Locke accepted Filmer's argument of the uninterrupted continuity of government from Adam through the kings of Israel down to modern monarchies. That this could be countered fully only by advancing that the state of nature was a rational construct needing no empirical demonstration. Secondly, Sanna argued that Hoadly conceived the transition from a state of nature to a political society as irreversible, so that, when government was ended by tyranny, the right of resistance, was vested in the parliament. Consequently for Hoadly, the 'executive power of the law of nature' belonged to the community as a whole (whereas Locke conceived the transition from state of nature to political society as reversible, so that, when political society was ended by tyranny, the right of punishment is recovered by the individual – for Locke the 'executive power of the law of nature' belonged to anybody). Hoadly understood Locke sufficiently to be able to retain the principles reconcilable with the Christian teachings, while rejecting its rationalist underpinning and individualistic implications.

In 2016, Sanna published an article on 'Latitudinarian Politics and the Shadow of Locke', which argued for caution in assuming that Locke's influence on Hoadly was as strong as some writers have claimed. In doing so, Sanna argued that Hoadly was not Lockean in the sense that it drew him away from doctrinal adherence to the Church. Sanna argued that 'in theology, Hoadly stood less apart from the Christian canon and was less alien to the Anglican tradition than is normally conceded.'⁸ Sanna concluded his article by claiming that Hoadly's writings suggest:

that he was neither a Socinian, nor a republican, let alone a liberal. Hoadly walked a fine path between different political traditions. To depict him as a traitor, is to represent the Hanoverian church as a monolith rather than a mosaic: an isolated fortress that remained impervious to the dramatic changes brought about elsewhere in English society by the turmoil of the early modern world.

In 2018, Sanna published, an important essay entitled "Uprightness of Heart": The Doctrine of Religious Sincerity in Eighteenth Century Anglican Thought.⁹ In it, he challenged the view that Hoadly held that mere 'moral rectitude' might be a substitute for strict adherence to

8. G. Sanna, 'Latitudinarian Politics and the Shadow of Locke' in *Anglican and Episcopal History*, vol. 85, no. 2 (June 2016). Though this is view contested by Jeffrey R. Collins in *In the Shadow of Leviathan, John Locke and the Politics of Conscience*, (Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 364.

9. In *The Journal of Religious History, Literature and Culture*, vol. 4, no 1, (2018).

doctrinal norms and liturgical practices as prescribed by the Church of England. Sanna asked whether Hoadly meant that all religions were equally valid so that everybody could choose among many without fear of incurring the least of God's displeasure. He also explored Hoadly's doctrine of religious sincerity, outlined in his *Preservative upon the Principles and Practices of the Nonjurors* (1716), to suggest that both Hoadly and his supporters expressed more conventional Protestant beliefs than it is normally understood. Sanna dismissed Starkie's contention that Hoadly denied any limits to rational enquiry, and banished mystery from religion, or repudiated the notion of the divine origin of the Church. He also rejected the idea that Hoadly's position was the same as the deists such as Anthony Collins, John Toland or Matthew Tindal.

Taken together, Sanna's body of work on Hoadly represents the most significant and impressive engagement with Latitudinarian ideas and it is a pity that, as his book has not been translated into English, it has had limited impact on the debates in the Anglophone world. More recently, scholars' work on themes such as prayer in the period have acknowledged the way in which Hoadly's recommendation of 'rational' prayer could 'awaken the affections' and deepen religious experience.¹⁰

Hoadly's influence on the literary scene in the first decades of the eighteenth century has also been examined, by Ashley Marshall in 2019. Marshall, making extensive use of this book, argued that Richard Steele should not be read in isolation from authors such as Hoadly.¹¹ Marshall argued that radical Whig influences, including those of Tindal and Toland, but most powerfully Hoadly, established the religious context in which Steele's Whig principles developed. Steele and Hoadly were friends and correspondents and in the *Tatler*, Steele defended Hoadly during his controversy over the nature of the power of the state in 1705-9. The central issue was, of course, the legitimacy of resistance to tyrants and the limited nature of passive obedience to the civil magistrate. It was the principle of resistance that brought Hoadly and Steele together in viewing ecclesiastical and political tyranny as equally to be defied. Both regarded the duty to resist 'Protestant Popery' and the weapons lay in the form of the right of private judgement. In this way, Hoadly

10.C. Stokes, *Romantic Prayer, Reinventing the Poetics of Devotion, 1773-1832*, (Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 21-2.

11.A. Marshall, 'Recontextualizing Richard Steele: Bishop Hoadly and Reformist Whiggery' in the *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 82, no. 3, 2019. The reintegration of Hoadly into literary scholarship also features in P. Connell, *Secular Chains: Poetry and the Politics of Religion from Milton to Pope*, (Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 141, 184, 189, 234.

exercised a powerful influence on Steele and the literary culture of the early eighteenth century.

The role of Hoadly in inspiring the American Revolution has also been taken up by scholars. Paul Babie and Neville Rochow's study *Freedom of Religion Under the Bill of Rights*, demonstrates the way in which this book has influenced awareness of the debt owed to the American Revolution to Locke and Hoadly.¹² Even Hoadly's involvement in political activities in the 1720s has been subject to some revision.¹³

An unexpected field in which Hoadly made a mark is that of British foreign policy. Jeremy Black's superb trilogy of books on British foreign policy under George I and George II include evidence that Hoadly contributed to this issue in the 1720s.¹⁴ Moreover there seems to have been evidence of popular awareness that he was associated with government policy. In 1721-2 Hoadly was one of those figures whose health was drunk at Dover on the declaration of war, which was recorded in the pro-government *Whitehall Evening Post*. It was claimed that there has been similar toasts elsewhere in the kingdom.¹⁵ This coincided with Hoadly's involvement with Walpole's government outlined in Chapter Six.

Black also noted that in 1727 Hoadly's *An Enquiry into the Reasons of the Conduct of Great Britain, with relation to the Present State of Affairs in Europe*, which defended ministerial policy, was distributed free to MPs for which over 4,000 copies were printed. Sinzendorf, the Austrian Chancellor, even read the work in translation.¹⁶ Hoadly continued to write in defence of Walpole's foreign policy into the late 1720s. Robert Wodrow, a Scottish Presbyterian minister, noted for January 1727 in his miscellaneous commonplace collection:

the King's Speech, which is a compend [summary] of the book published by Mr Walpole's direction, as is believed, and written

12. Paul Babie & Neville Rochow, (eds) *Freedom of Religion Under the Bill of Rights* (University of Adelaide Press, 2021), pp. 32-3. D. H. Robinson, *The Idea of Europe and the Origins of the American Revolution*, (Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 50, 77. M. D. Briedenbach, *Our Dear-Bought Liberty: Catholics and Religious Toleration in Early America*, (Harvard University Press, 2021), p. 294.

13. D. Onnekink & G. Rommelse (eds), *Ideology and Foreign Policy in Early Modern Europe, 1650-1750* (Routledge, 2011), p. 114.

14. J. Black, *Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of George I, 1714-1727*, (Routledge, 2014); *British Politics and Foreign Policy, 1727-44* (Routledge, 2014); and *British Politics and Foreign Policy, 1744-57* (Routledge, 2015); *Mid-Century Crisis* (2015).

15. Black, *Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of George I*, p. 113.

16. *Ibid*, chapter 3.

by the Bishop of Bangor [Benjamin Hoadly], now of Salisbury, a Vindication of the Conduct of the Ministry. And indeed it is a very alarming speech, though our Jacobites pretend all is Mr Walpole's doing to lay on new taxes, and they pretend a tax is to be laid upon meal, and other vile stories, to sour the country more and more against the King.¹⁷

Hoadly's *Vindication of the Conduct of the Ministry* was sent to British envoys in Europe to pass on to foreign ministers.¹⁸

After the publication of *Enlightenment Prelate*, I published some further work on Hoadly that was either not appropriate to include in the book, or was based on research that I undertook subsequently. The most significant of these was a new edition of Benjamin Hoadly's *The Original and Institution of Civil Government, Discuss'd*, published by AMS Press in New York in 2007, with an introduction discussing the work. *The Original and Institution of Civil Government, Discuss'd* was the book that in many ways set the scene for the Bangorian controversy. The work was a Lockean project, suggesting that in the first societies people joined together for purposes of safety and economic advantage and granted authority to the civil magistrate; consequently they could take back that authority. It followed that it advanced a strong defence of the principles that underpinned the Revolution of 1688. It was published in 1710 when the Whigs were under increasing pressure and when resurgent Toryism and Non-Jury seemed to threaten the Revolution settlement. It laid the intellectual groundwork for Hoadly to publish his *Preservative against the Principle and Practice of the Non-jurors both in Church and State* in 1716, which was the prelude to his Bangorian sermon.

Some of my subsequent work was more biographical, such as 'The Tomb of Bishop Benjamin Hoadly' in *Ecclesiology Today, The Journal of the Ecclesiological Society*, (Issue 34, January 2005) and 'The Significance of the Iconography of Bishop Benjamin Hoadly (1676-1761) in *British Art Journal* (vol VII, no 2, 2006). The purpose of the latter article was to suggest that popular interest in Hoadly's portraits and images were inextricably linked to his involvement in important political and theological controversies. Since the publication of that article, two portraits have been discovered that show the ways in which eighteenth century engravers

17.R. Wodrow, *Analecta Or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences Mostly Relating to Scotch Ministers and Christians*, (Edinburgh, 1843-3), III, 372.

18.Black, *Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of George I*; p. 52.

‘repurposed’ portraits.¹⁹ They demonstrate that the engraver, in this case George Vertue, reused an original portrait of Hoadly as rector of St Peter Poor, a post that Hoadly held from 1704 onwards, and reissued it when he was made Bishop of Bangor in 1716. The interest of the public and the desire of the engraver to exploit Hoadly’s controversial ‘celebrity’ meant that a portrait could be revised and republished for sale.



Image 1 (left), George Vertue’s engraving of Hoadly as Bishop of Bangor c. 1717, a repurposed version of Image 2 (right) Vertue’s original engraving of Hoadly as Rector of St Peter Poor, c. 1710-15. Both from the author’s collection.

More theological in content, was ‘Brother of the more famous Benjamin: the Theology of John Hoadly’, published in *Anglican and Episcopal History*, (vol LXXV, no 3, 2006). This argued that, based on his work as chaplain to Bishop Burnet and as a canon of Salisbury, John Hoadly was as ecclesiologically radical, if not more so, than his brother Benjamin. As is made clear in chapter four, John Hoadly’s sermon at

19. This phenomenon has been identified by Richard Sharpe in his ‘Engraved Clerical Portraiture in England, c. 1660–1850: An Introductory Survey’ in G. Hammond and W. Gibson (eds) *Religion in Britain, 1660–1900: Essays in Honour of Peter B. Nockles, A Special Issue of the Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 97/1, (Spring, 2021). John Ingamells describes this as portraits of which a ‘later state’ is altered to show Hoadly as a bishop, J. Ingamells, *The English Episcopal Portrait 1550-1835* (Paul Mellon Centre for British Art, 1981), p. 222.

Benjamin's consecration in 1716 was a clarion cry for Whig Low Churchmanship.

In 2016, I ventured into book history with an article in the journal *Quaerendo* on the early owners of Hoadly's son's three volume *Life and Works of Benjamin Hoadly*, published in 1773.²⁰ The *Life and Works* was an elite and luxurious item, published by W. Bowyer and J. Nichols; in 2016 values it cost the equivalent of £500. Three hundred standard paper copies were printed and twelve large paper copies – the latter printed on thicker paper from a leading Dutch paper maker. The article traces about twenty percent of the first owners of the copies and argues that most purchases were a distinctive 'bibliophilic act' by collectors who recognised the place that Hoadly occupied in religious and political controversies.

The measure of the reorientation of the historiography of the Church, and religion more generally, in the eighteenth century is that scholars now treat Hoadly as an important part of the eighteenth century intellectual and religious scene, and do not lather their assessments in the sort of invective that used to accompany mention of him in works published in the century before the 1960s. In the second volume of the new *Oxford History of Anglicanism: Establishment and Empire, 1662-1829*, the contributors, including Grant Tapsell, Robert Ingram, Jonathan Clark, Tony Claydon and Brian Young, recognize that Hoadly occupies a significant place in the Church that cannot be dismissed lightly or contemptuously.²¹ In addition, scholars like Brent Sirota, Pasi Ihalainen, Grayson Ditchfield, Nigel Aston and Howard Weinbrot have explored Hoadly's thought in a way that would not have occurred before this book.²²

Finally, the quest for Hoadly manuscripts and archives, discussed in the Acknowledgements, goes on. There have been a few discoveries. Hoadly's accounts while Bishop of Salisbury have been found in the Swindon and Wiltshire Record Office, and I used them for an article on the finances of the eighteenth century episcopate in 2020.²³ A letter

20.W. Gibson, "Large and Handsome Volumes": Early Owners of Benjamin Hoadly's Works' in *Quaerendo*, 46/4, (2016).

21.J. Gregory (ed), *Oxford History of Anglicanism*, vol 2: *Establishment and Empire, 1662-1829*, (Oxford University Press, 2017).

22.The late Howard Weinbrot's *Literature, Religion and the Evolution of Culture, 1660-1780*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), is a good example of the way in which scholars of literature have also accommodated a more sensible view of Hoadly.

23.W. Gibson, 'Finances of the Anglican Episcopate in the Eighteenth Century' in J. Eales and Beverly Tjerngren (ed) *The Social Life of the Early Modern Protestant*

from Edmund Gibson to Robert Walpole in 1734 declining the offer of translation to Winchester has been found in the Gibson manuscripts at St Andrews University.²⁴ Gibson's reasons for doing so were that he feared Hoadly would replace him in London diocese. So Hoadly went to Winchester instead. Daniel Reed has found passing references to Hoadly's appointment to Winchester and his hopes of receiving Durham in the Borthwick Institute and the Cornwall Record Office.²⁵ A letter, discovered in the Bridwell Library at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, from Hoadly dated 16 January 1743, discussed a legal case in which Hoadly was embroiled. However the matter is opaque and all that can be deduced from it is that Hoadly was clearly active in his diocese in legal as well as ecclesiastical affairs. The search for a substantial cache of Hoadly manuscripts goes on. This book makes a small contribution to the revision of historical understanding of the Church of England in the 'long eighteenth century', which, it seems, still needs to be restated.²⁶

William Gibson, September 2021.

Clergy, (University of Wales Press, 2021)

24. St Andrews University Library, Special Collections, Gibson Ms 2, Ms 5296. I owe this to Robert Ingram.

25. Borthwick Institute for Archives. CC Ab. 9, correspondence and papers, A-S, [Letter from Jaques Sterne, to, Thomas Hayter, 23 October 1730]; Cornwall Record Office. G/1968, Letter Book from Lewis Stephen to Francis Gregor, c. 1710-1747, 17 September 1743.

26. W. Gibson, 'Old Whiggery and New Neglect: Being Anachronistic About the Eighteenth Century' in *The Journal of Religious History, Literature and Culture*, vol 7, no 1, (2021).