

## Chapter 1. Introduction.

‘If I am able to effect anything, and my slender powers are of any benefit to the church of Christ, I confess, and by the blessing of God will confess, as long as I live, that I owe it to yourself and my masters and brethren at Zürich’.<sup>1</sup> So wrote Hooper to his Swiss mentor Bullinger at the close of 1549; a time of great uncertainty for Hooper as his patron, the Duke of Somerset, was in prison after a *coup d’état* in the Privy Council by the Earl of Warwick.

The year 1549 was a turning point for Hooper, and his comment encapsulates this. He was primarily acknowledging the recent past, as earlier that year he had returned to England from the Continent, where he had lived among reformers in Strasbourg, Basel and Zürich. But he was also looking forward, and indeed his statement was to prove prophetic, for in the immediate future he would challenge some of the very same people through his involvement in the developing church in England.

Hooper’s debt to Bullinger and to other Zürichers, and the extent to which his theological grounding in that city influenced his life and work in England, have been well documented. They have been covered in general biographies of Hooper, such as those by Hunt and Newcombe, and more specifically in writings by Deibler, Franke, Opie and Vetter, which portray him as a link between the English and Continental Reformations.<sup>2</sup> There has also been much scholarly interest over many years in Hooper’s legacy to protestantism in

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<sup>1</sup> *OL*, 73 (*ET*, 46-47), Hooper to Bullinger, London, 27 December 1549.

<sup>2</sup> Hunt, *The life and times of John Hooper (c1500-1555) Bishop of Gloucester*; Newcombe, ‘The life and theological thought of John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester, 1551-1553’; Deibler, ‘Bishop John Hooper, a link connecting the Reformation thought of Ulrich Zwingli and the Zürich tradition with the earliest English pietistic Puritanism’; Franke, ‘The religious thought of John Hooper’; Opie, ‘The anglicizing of John Hooper’; Vetter, *Johannes Hooper, Bischof von Gloucester und Worcester, und seine Beziehungen zu Bullinger und Zürich*.

England, in which he has traditionally been seen as laying the foundations for a more radical form of religion; a particular theme explored in the work of Emerson, Trueman, Underhill and West.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, Hooper's work as Bishop of Gloucester has been mapped from the rich visitation and other records of the diocese; a task undertaken initially by Baskerville, Gairdner and Price, and more recently by Newcombe.<sup>4</sup>

Yet for all the work on Hooper - as theologian, as reformer, as bishop - one piece of the picture has consistently been under-developed. As Hooper acknowledged in his 1549 letter to Bullinger, written even before he had been offered the bishopric of Gloucester, he saw his role as essentially one of change – to help change the church in England to be more like the early church of the New Testament. This aspect has been acknowledged by historians, but its challenges for historical research have not.

Hooper has most often been portrayed as a 'lone voice in the wilderness', an individual without a contemporary match, who was seemingly prepared to go to almost any lengths *on his own* to pursue his idea of fundamental religious reform. More modern scholarship on how change is achieved, including that from other disciplines such as the social sciences, and business and management studies, has revealed that while it is possible to ascribe vision, inspiration, commitment, motivation and influence to one person, too much concentration on an individual's role can inadequately address the context in which change takes place, and

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<sup>3</sup> Emerson, *English Puritanism from John Hooper to John Milton*; Trueman, *Luther's legacy: salvation and English reformers 1525-1556*; Underhill, *The first protest: or, the father of English nonconformity*; West, 'A study of John Hooper with special reference to his contact with Henry Bullinger'; West, 'John Hooper and the origins of Puritanism'.

<sup>4</sup> Baskerville, 'Elections to convocation in the diocese of Gloucester under Bishop Hooper'; Gairdner, 'Bishop Hooper's visitation of Gloucester'; Price, 'Gloucester diocese under Bishop Hooper 1551-3'; Newcombe, 'The visitation of the diocese of Gloucester and the state of the clergy, 1551'.

insufficiently explore the way in which change happens.<sup>5</sup> To uncover how and to what extent change takes place, greater attention needs to be given to, for example, the constraints on or pressures for change, the scope for individual action, and other forces for momentum or conservatism; recognising that individuals, however powerful in status, authority, wealth or personality, must necessarily work with and through other people, and in so doing can find their own plans and actions altered or compromised. It is a principle underlying this thesis.

As change happens through people, then what is needed is a framework or methodology that maps relationships between the change agent and those whom he or she is trying to change, and those who willingly or unwillingly feel the impact. The challenge is to employ an approach that not only exploits the available source material, possibly in new and different ways, but which also recognises the structures of society and the bases of relationships in the period under study. That is, the approach should take advantage of contemporary thought while being situated in the past. The framework chosen for this study is that of networks.

### **The Network Approach**

The study of networks is not new to historians, but it is an approach that appears to be gaining in currency as scholars explore societal themes such as status and authority, identity, kinship and lineage, consensus and conflict, and patronage.<sup>6</sup> Historians of the early modern period in England are identifying and researching different types of networks, and in so doing are adding to, and even challenging, current views of the period. In recent years, Stephen Alford has tracked family and political networks in the small and inter-connected worlds of

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<sup>5</sup> For the limits of individual influence on historical change, see Kershaw, 'Personality and power'.

<sup>6</sup> According to Macfarlane, the use of the term 'network' as an analytical tool in historical method was first introduced by Barnes, J.A., 'Class and committees in a Norwegian parish', *Human Relations*, VII (1954), 39-58; Macfarlane, *Reconstructing historical communities*, 18.

the household, Privy Chamber and Privy Council of Edward VI, throwing light on the complexities of power and influence around the young king; Michael Questier has shown that the recovery of catholic networks in the early seventeenth century in Sussex is indicative of the continued (even growing) vibrancy of catholicism there; and Craig Muldrew has revealed that credit networks helped to bind early modern English society together while cutting across other societal divisions of status, wealth and patriarchy.<sup>7</sup> Institutional rather than personal networks have been mapped by Tom Scott and Bob Scribner, and by Robin Pearson and David Richardson; the former identifying the linkage of cities into urban networks in early modern Germany, and the latter showing the collective nature of some business ventures in the industrial revolution in England, thereby disputing the long-held view that industrialisation was largely built on individual entrepreneurship.<sup>8</sup>

As these works of scholarship also show, a study of networks should take into account how society operated in the period, in the same way that an investigation of a process of change must be situated in its context. That is, a network approach to studying early modern England should recognise the hierarchical nature of that society, however the various divisions were (and are) defined and described. Peter Laslett's ground-breaking work of forty years ago identified a number of 'status groups' (that is, associations of economically, politically and socially privileged persons), who reinforced their power and influence through inter-marriage and ties of kinship.<sup>9</sup> This was the ruling minority, conscious of lineage and of its importance locally and nationally. Below was the largely illiterate and socially disadvantaged majority.

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<sup>7</sup> Alford, *Kingship and politics in the reign of Edward VI*, especially 65-99, 151-174; Questier, *Catholicism and community in early modern England*; Muldrew, *The economy of obligation*.

<sup>8</sup> Scott and Scribner, 'Urban networks'; Pearson and Richardson, 'Business networking in the industrial revolution'. Scott and Scribner acknowledge that there are several personal networks to explore in an urban setting; for example, those of mercantile elites.

<sup>9</sup> Laslett, *The world we have lost*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1971). The 1<sup>st</sup> edition was published in 1965.

Laslett expounded a thesis that status and its consequent authority rested on being a member of one of the relatively few influential families or clans in the minority group; a view confirmed by Wallace MacCaffrey in his work on sixteenth and seventeenth-century Exeter. MacCaffrey described a civic community dominated by ‘a small group of families, interlocked by personal and business ties, and monopolizing wealth, power and prestige’. He revealed an ‘upper class’ of 6% of the population, and a ‘middle class’ of 20%, with half of all property owned by just 3%.<sup>10</sup> A more recent and generalised study by Paul Griffiths *et al* on society in early modern England concurs with MacCaffrey that authority (defined as ‘the power or right to define and regulate the legitimate behaviour of others’) was realised through the structure and perpetuation of society’s institutions such as the Crown, church and courts, which were dominated by male members of the elite and ‘middling sort’, and who exercised their authority onto a largely stable and deferential populace.<sup>11</sup>

This is not to say that society was either static or wholly passive. Rather, all three authors signalled that there was an added dimension to the structure and workings of society which was not challenging its hierarchy, but was providing the means for a different exercise of, and response to, authority. Laslett recognised that in the larger towns, and among the gentry, were ‘centres of exchange’ which ‘must be thought of as a reticulation rather than as a participation, a web spread over the whole geography’.<sup>12</sup> MacCaffrey wrote of ‘a federation of small societies’ in Exeter, membership of which determined the status of people within the community.<sup>13</sup> Keith Wrightson, writing in Griffiths *et al* after the term ‘network’ had become common parlance, described the parish as ‘a tangled, messy skein of overlapping and

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<sup>10</sup> MacCaffrey, *Exeter, 1540-1640*, 246-9.

<sup>11</sup> Griffiths, Fox and Hindle, *The experience of authority in early modern England*.

<sup>12</sup> Laslett, *The world we have lost*, 60.

<sup>13</sup> MacCaffrey, *Exeter*, 1.

intersecting social networks, most of which extended beyond its boundaries upwards into the larger society, and many of which were networks of power'.<sup>14</sup>

This extra dimension of connectivity is why the study of networks is so relevant to a greater understanding of early modern society in England. To use a simple metaphor, networks may usefully be thought of as the 'weft', and social hierarchy as the 'warp', woven together to form the whole entity that was society. This is not to say that networks only operated horizontally across society, within status groups. They could and did do so, as this thesis shows, particularly when they were limited or defined by geographical boundaries; but (as indicated by Wrightson) they also overlapped hierarchical divisions. They were both an additional and alternative communication structure and source of influence and authority.

### **Analytical Methodologies**

With the growth of the study of networks has come a greater concentration on methodologies for the collection and use of source material to support such an approach. This has been fuelled in part by advances in statistical and analytical software which allow for the handling of substantial amounts of data, and for the discovery of relationships and trends which previously may not have been apparent. Two such techniques have been considered for this study, both of which have inputs from the disciplines of sociology and anthropology. They are prosopography and social network analysis.

There does not appear to be an agreed definition of either technique, but prosopography is essentially 'an orderly set of procedures ... to collect and analyse data relating to each

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<sup>14</sup> Wrightson, 'The politics of the parish in early modern England', 11.

individual in a selected group of people’, and social network analysis is ‘a set of methods for the analysis of social structures [to] allow an investigation of the relational aspects of these structures’.<sup>15</sup> The methodology adopted for this research project draws from both techniques.

From prosopography is drawn the concentration of that approach on the reason for the collection of source material; that is, the need to make clear the issue that is being researched, and the membership of the group under consideration.<sup>16</sup> What this particular study has not done, however, is to follow strict prosopographical procedures of collecting substantial biographical detail in order to derive hypotheses about a group over a lengthy period of time. In part this is because of the short period of time necessarily under consideration – that is, Hooper’s own lifetime, concentrating on the last ten years of his life – and partly because this study is not about forming a picture of a group *per se*, and of its changes over time, but about the relationships and connections of the group to one person.

A concentration on the roles, ties and impact of one person in a group is what is known in social network analysis as the study of an ‘egocentric’ network.<sup>17</sup> This research project can be described as such, as it focuses on Hooper’s connections and relationships at different times and in various contexts. However it cannot be considered a comprehensive example of that methodology as it does not seek to uncover all the ties between Hooper and all other members of the group, or indeed all the connections between the members themselves.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Keats-Rohan, *Prosopography approaches and applications*, 3, 5; Scott, *Social network analysis*, 39.

<sup>16</sup> For a good introduction to prosopography, see Verhoven, ‘A short manual to the art of prosopography’.

<sup>17</sup> Erickson, ‘Social networks and history’, 150; Wetherell, ‘Historical social network analysis’, 127-8.

<sup>18</sup> There is a danger of historical research being bound by the constraints of a methodology; see for example, Bearman, *Relations into rhetorics: local elite social structure in Norfolk, England, 1540-1640*, a study in which the richness of the material has been overwhelmed by the sociological background of the author. For instance, following sociological principles, people are variously described as ‘actors’ or ‘nodes’ in the networks. The work serves to illustrate that models and frameworks borrowed from other disciplines must be treated with a certain amount of caution and flexibility to be useful to historical research.

There is one exception to this; the study of the networks of civic officials in Gloucester and Worcester (Chapter Eight). As texts on prosopography and social network analysis acknowledge, particularly when the research relies on historical data, some source material is inevitably not extant or does not yield the desired information. This has been found to be the case with material on Hooper's relationships with the leading figures of those two cities, and particularly with those of Worcester. Rather, what has emerged, with its own particular merit, is more a study of the ties binding the officials. From this has been drawn some conclusions about their extensive power and influence in those cities, which would have impacted on Hooper's authority there. Some (including possibly previously unknown) material about Hooper's relationships with the civic officials has indeed been uncovered and incorporated, but a more 'egocentric' picture of those two networks was the ideal that was sought.

The amalgamation of ties between the officials in each city lends itself to another aspect of social network analysis; the portrayal or visualisation of connections in diagrammatic form.<sup>19</sup> This is an aspect which has been elaborated upon with the greater use of computer technology, but for ease of simplification, this research project uses basic sociograms which illustrate the degree of, and reason for, connectivity without making any inference about the quality of the relationship. For example, no attempt has been made to show dependency or the strength of each connection. The substance and complexity of civic relationships is revealed in the text.

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<sup>19</sup> Freeman, 'Visualizing social networks'.

## Working Definitions

Using the above parameters, a working definition has been used to clarify the focus and purpose of the research project, as follows:

‘The research is a study of the context of the life and work of John Hooper. It charts the nature of his relationships with friends, patrons, mentors, colleagues, and lay and clerical supporters and opponents in England and on the Continent, through the study of ecclesiastical, political, business and economic, intellectual, official and judicial, kinship and social networks in which he was involved. Its purpose is to reveal the complex mix of societal and confessional pressures influencing Hooper’s approach and constraining his freedom of manoeuvre, and to a large extent determining how successful he was at achieving change. It is a study into why and how thorough-going religious change was resisted and contained’.

For further clarification, a few words need to be said about the use of the term ‘network’; specifically how it relates to ‘community’. Both terms tend to be used interchangeably by historians to describe collective identity. Moreover, both descriptors can be subject to more modern overtones, with ‘community’ indicating a fellowship formed from, and adding to, a sense of belonging (especially due to geographical proximity), and ‘network’ describing a more artificial set of relationships, instigated and continued for a purpose.<sup>20</sup> These definitions are akin to the descriptors of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* in the work of Ferdinand Tönnies, in which the former is used to describe a small-scale, close-knit group,

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<sup>20</sup> The issue is given a thorough treatment in Shepard and Withington, ed., *Communities in early modern England*. See also Grosjean and Murdoch, ed., *Scottish communities abroad in the early modern period*.

and the latter a large-scale, largely impersonal civil or commercial society.<sup>21</sup> Thus Tönnies wrote of communities of language, custom and belief, and societies of business, travel and knowledge. This research project draws on these descriptors, but does so to create its own definition of the term ‘network’, incorporating the close ties of *gemeinschaft* and the mechanisms of *gesellschaft*. ‘Network’ as used in this research is defined as:

‘A group of people bound by physical, intellectual or emotional ties (for example, kinship, professionalism, confessional stance) who interact with each other by letter or face-to-face for a purpose, and have some inter-dependence which they recognise and which, through their actions and shared values or beliefs, they help to perpetuate’.

That is, ‘network’ in this definition does not necessarily imply that the group is close-knit in terms of having a shared sense of space or environment (as in *gemeinschaft*), but it does infer that the ties are actual ones and do not exist solely in the mind (as in *gesellschaft*).

Finally for the purpose of clarity, it needs to be pointed out that all of the networks in this research project are groups of people of ‘the middling sort’, the gentry and elite. In part this is because their voices are more discernible in primary source material (for example, in correspondence, wills and other official documents) but also because they were all, to a greater or lesser extent, and within their own *milieu*, in positions of authority and power, and therefore able to influence the process of religious change.

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<sup>21</sup> Harris, *Ferdinand Tönnies*.

## **The English Reformation as a Process of Change**

How religious change happened in the Reformation in England has been a subject of debate for some time. Thirty years ago, the accepted wisdom that doctrinal and ecclesiastical reform was desired and engineered by the people was challenged by Christopher Haigh's work on Tudor Lancashire, which revealed that religious change was imposed on a reluctant population which was generally satisfied with the existing church.<sup>22</sup> Since that time, the dialogue has largely been conducted against a broad model of change emphasising direction and speed; with the 'revisionist' argument being supported by further studies on popular piety, illustrating the politically-led nature of the movement, and the extent of people's continual (but necessarily sometimes undeclared) adherence to traditional religion.<sup>23</sup> Such an approach has provided a useful framework, but it has also had its limitations, most obviously in that it did not, and indeed could not, adequately surface what really happened 'on the ground' in particular situations. The debate has since moved on, with the appearance of a new wave of diocesan and parish-based studies of change, rich in context, detail and analysis.<sup>24</sup>

Geographically-based studies can be the only, or the most appropriate means, of unearthing the response of some levels of society to religious change. Information on a parish and its inhabitants has to be gleaned from parish and diocesan-based records such as churchwardens' accounts, wills and court record books. This is not to say that these studies do not add to the

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<sup>22</sup> Haigh, *Reformation and resistance in Tudor Lancashire*. For the traditional view of a reformation 'from below', see Dickens, *The English Reformation*.

<sup>23</sup> Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English people*; Haigh, *The English Reformation revised*; Duffy, *The stripping of the altars*.

<sup>24</sup> For example: Duffy, *The voices of Morebath: reformation and rebellion in an English village*; Kümin, *The shaping of a community: the rise and reformation of the English parish, c.1400-1560*; Brown, *Popular piety in late medieval England: the diocese of Salisbury, 1250-1550*; Skeeters, *Community and clergy: Bristol and the Reformation c.1530-c.1570*; McClendon, *The quiet Reformation: magistrates and the emergence of protestantism in Tudor Norwich*; Litzenberger, *The English Reformation and the laity: Gloucestershire, 1540-1580*.

overall debate on change. Beat Kümin's work on English parishes concluded that, to understand religious change, it is necessary to place it in the context of socio-economic developments such as the increased role of the Tudor state in local affairs; Diarmaid MacCulloch's work which tracked the transformation of Suffolk during the Tudor period into a 'self-contained county whose day-to-day running was in the hands of an oligarchy of Puritan-minded gentry', showed the inter-play of religious persuasion with local power and politics.<sup>25</sup>

However, a greater focus by historians on understanding why England took several decades to become 'a Protestant nation, but not a nation of Protestants', together with studies from other disciplines into how change happens, have prompted some questioning of the perceived simplicity of the revisionist model of religious change.<sup>26</sup> This has not been to challenge its validity, but to elaborate upon it.<sup>27</sup> Two present-day scholars who have done so have a shared view of the process of religious change; that if it were to succeed, then it could not be divorced from the communal and authoritarian nature of early modern society. Andrew Pettegree writes of 'the culture of persuasion' having to 'work with the grain' of a society in which it was assumed that decisions would be made collectively; whilst Ethan Shagan supports his thesis that the English Reformation happened with, not to, the people by arguing that 'all religious belief and practice necessarily depended upon *authorisation*, even if in most circumstances that dependence was unstated'.<sup>28</sup> Their work represents an alteration in historical viewpoint from focusing on the imposition of change to deepening our

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<sup>25</sup> Kümin, *The shaping of a community*, 263; MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors*, 338.

<sup>26</sup> Haigh, *English reformations*, 280.

<sup>27</sup> 'What is needed now in order to understand the Reformation are not further debates over "above versus below" or "rapid versus slow" but studies that focus on the processes of change, on accommodation and negotiation between rulers and subjects, clergy and laity, and on interactions between English and Continental Europeans': Euler, 'Religious and cultural exchange during the Reformation', 7.

<sup>28</sup> Pettegree, *Reformation and the culture of persuasion*, 8; Shagan, *Popular politics and the English Reformation*, 11.

understanding of the dynamics of the response. That is, they have set out to reveal more about the extent to which, and how, people accommodated, negotiated, resisted or co-operated with religious change. By studying John Hooper, a change agent at the heart of the Edwardian church, who had to deal with networks of people whose reaction to religious reform would be influential, this thesis seeks to add to that investigation.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis is primarily about the extent to which, and how, John Hooper worked with networks to tackle religious change. In addressing this question, it also has something to say about social network analysis as a historical method, and it looks to contribute to current thinking on the Reformation in England. In substance it combines a subject with a methodology and a context.

The thesis is essentially thematic in structure but has chronological sequencing so as to chart Hooper's progression from religious convert to influential Edwardian bishop and reformer. Thus it explores issues such as patronage, dependency, cooperation, conflict, allegiance and loyalty as they were manifest in the clerical and lay networks with which Hooper was involved, while as far as possible remaining true to the order of events in Hooper's life and work.