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Milton, Zanchius, and the Rhetoric of Belated Reading

JEFFREY ALAN MILLER

Near the end of *Tetrachordon* (1645), Milton offers a protracted litany of “both primitive and reformed” Christian authors demonstrating that, for generations, the “words of Christ have bin understood to grant divorce for other causes then adultery; and that the word *fornication* in marriage hath a larger sense then that commonly suppos’d.” Beginning with Justin Martyr, the list encompasses a huge array of sources, from early Church Fathers such as Tertullian, Origen, and Lactantius, through Wyclif, Luther, Melancthon, Erasmus, and ending, in effectively the present, with Grotius, “yet living” and whose *Annotationes in Libros Evangeliorum* had appeared just four years prior. At the conclusion of the litany, however, Milton nonetheless proudly declares that “God, I solemnly attest him, withheld from my knowledge the consenting judgement of these men so late, untill they could not bee my instructors, but only my unexpected witnesses to partial men” (*Tetrachordon* 82, 96; *CPW* 2: 693, 715–16).¹ In other words, Milton insists, he became aware that these sources supported his position on divorce only after he had already fully made up his own mind about the matter himself.

A strikingly similar moment occurs in the manuscript of Milton’s great, unfinished work of systematic theology, *De Doctrina Christiana*.² Indeed, the similarity between the two passages was first noted in the very first English translation of *De Doctrina*, published in 1825, just two years after the manuscript’s discovery (Sumner 420n3). In the midst of *De Doctrina*’s pivotal chapter on “On the Gospel and Christian Freedom” (1.27), Milton asserts that, “having pooled the illumination of so many texts, I was thinking that I had affirmed this truth against the view of almost all the Theologians whom I had read,” the truth in question in this case being “that the whole Mosaic law was abrogated”; however, he continues, he then “happened to find that **Zanchius**, commenting copiously on Eph. Ch. 2, shared my view” (*OCW* 8: 713).³ Here again, Milton makes a point not just of noting the agreement between himself and a distinguished predecessor but of stressing that he discovered the agreement only after it was too late to influence his own thinking on the matter one way or another.

Such moments in Milton’s texts, of which there are more than just these two,⁴ might be termed protestations of “belated reading” or of reading after the fact, and they seem almost always to have been interpreted by modern scholars rhetorically, as instances of a kind of self-presentation that Milton was fond of constructing in his works and that went to serving certain argumentative ends. In the case of *Tetrachordon*, for instance, it has been noted that Milton’s protestation not to have come upon “the consenting judgement” of the sources he cites till “late” chimes with the argument he makes, there and elsewhere, regarding the supremacy of using one’s own “reason” to arrive at a conclusion rather than seeking merely to “fetch the truth by multiplicity of

Authors” or other “authorities.” The protestation, scholars have similarly noted, likewise accords neatly with Milton’s consistent desire to present himself as doing or “beeing somthing first,” or at least, as he would put it more circumspectly in the prefatory note to *Paradise Lost*, “the first in English” (*Tetrachordon* 81–82; *CPW* 2: 692–93; *PL* 55).⁵ It could also be added that such protestations give a providential dimension to Milton’s reading: God himself is said to have “withheld” reading from Milton “untill” providing it at a later, more ideal time.

Perhaps because these protestations of belated reading align so well with those larger self-presentational and argumentative designs, however, what has tended not to be considered much at all is the extent to which Milton, in such moments, might actually be telling something like the truth about his reading practices. In his sweeping *Life Records of John Milton*, J. Milton French provides the full litany of sources cited by Milton at the close of *Tetrachordon* under the heading “Wide Reading Concerning Divorce,” and, taking (and quoting) Milton’s word that the support of these sources was “withheld from my knowledge” till after he had formulated his own opinion about divorce, French locates the reading as having occurred sometime “between the date of the first publication of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (August 1, 1643), and that of *Tetrachordon* (March 4, 1645)” (2: 93–95). Otherwise, though, the implication of most scholarly consideration of these passages has been to suggest that Milton’s protestations of belated reading, while rhetorically significant, nonetheless remain too patently dubious or disingenuous to be taken as anything but.

Unfortunately, we do not possess the manuscript or manuscripts that stand behind Milton’s *Tetrachordon*. We do, however, possess a manuscript of *De Doctrina*. And, fascinatingly, in the case of Milton’s insistence therein that he only belatedly came upon a point of agreement between himself and the renowned Italian reformer Hieronymus Zanchius (or Girolamo Zanchi, 1516–90), the manuscript of *De Doctrina* itself gives some reason to suspect that this may in fact have been what happened. Milton explicitly refers to Zanchius four times throughout the surviving manuscript of *De Doctrina*: once in Book 1, Chapter 14 (“On Man’s Restoration, and Christ as Redeemer”); twice in Book 1, Chapter 27 (“On the Gospel and Christian Freedom”); and once in Book 1, Chapter 33 (“On Complete Glorification, including Christ’s Second Coming and the Resurrection of the Dead and the Conflagration of This World”; *OCW* 8: 478, 700, 712, 870). Surveying the pages of the manuscript on which those references appear, each instance accords with the idea that Milton’s references to Zanchius in *De Doctrina* indeed came as later interventions to the text and its arguments. In the case of the lattermost reference to Zanchius in *De Doctrina* 1.33, which is by no means necessarily the last of the four references to him that Milton inserted into the text chronologically, it manifestly represents a later addition on Milton’s part, as we shall see. This aspect of Milton’s references to Zanchius appears never to have been discussed, even taking into account the seminal recent edition of *De Doctrina* prepared by John K. Hale and J. Donald Cullington in the Oxford *Complete Works*, and it does more, I want to suggest, than simply shed an interesting glimmer of light on Milton’s engagement with a major Reformed author. It challenges, or at least complicates, the way in which scholars have tended to approach the study both of Milton’s use of “rhetoric” and perhaps of Milton’s texts in general.

In beginning, it helps to review briefly the genesis of the manuscript that survives today as Milton’s *De Doctrina Christiana* (PRO, SP 9/61, cited in text as *DDC*).

Milton appears to have begun work on what would eventually become *De Doctrina* sometime in the 1640s. His nephew, Edward Phillips, who together with Phillips's brother John resided with Milton as a pupil during the decade, would later recall that Milton had employed him and John "from time to time" on Sundays in "the writing from his own dictation . . . of a Tractate which he thought fit to collect from the ablest of Divines, who had written of that Subject; *Amesius, Wollebius, &c. viz. A perfect System of Divinity*" (xviii-xix). That description fits almost exactly with what *De Doctrina* is, or at least with what it originated as being. (I say "almost" only because the implied equivalence between Milton's use of William Ames and Johannes Wolleb, and the alphabetical privileging of Ames's name over Wolleb's, can give a somewhat distorted impression of the distinctive roles played by each man's work in the composition of the treatise [see Miller 256-59].) It is hard to know quite how much Milton worked on the text over the succeeding years. A great deal, famously, came up for Milton in that time: the regicide, for one. A great deal also happened to him: he had gone completely blind by 1652, though interestingly Phillips's account of the early stages of *De Doctrina*'s composition suggests that Milton's later method of dictating the treatise may not have been entirely a product of that blindness, since he seems to have been dictating it even before blindness had descended. In or around 1658, however, Milton became involved with Jeremie Picard (or Pickard), "a professional scribe who worked occasionally for the Protectoral government" (Campbell and Corns 258), and an especially intense period of work on the manuscript of *De Doctrina* dates from this time. Milton then seems to have abandoned work on the treatise for good, and in all likelihood by necessity, around the time of the Restoration in 1660 (Campbell et al. 31-33, 157-58).

It is important to note that the manuscript of *De Doctrina* survives in a number of very different states, or what Campbell et al. call *strata* (55). Sometime seemingly early on in the process of his involvement with Milton and the manuscript of *De Doctrina*, Picard appears to have produced a full, scribally embellished copy of the entire manuscript as it existed at that date. To this day, the earliest surviving pages of the manuscript of *De Doctrina* belong to this state, which might be termed State 1 (51-55). There was at least, therefore, a State 0 of the manuscript from which Picard produced his copy, and an unknowable number of other states possible even before that, but all pages of the manuscript prior to Picard's completion of the State 1 version of the text have been lost, and were likely destroyed. After Picard's completion of this State 1 version of the text, however, Milton continued to work on the treatise—a lot.

This leads to a second important point to note about the manuscript of *De Doctrina*: Milton and his scribes worked on it in fascicules (Campbell et al. 45-47, 156). That is, each chapter of the manuscript—and there are fifty-one, counting the prefatory "Epistle," in total—existed as a separate physical object, each individually stitched and individually paginated. For a manuscript that would grow in its entirety to run to over 700 pages in length, this presumably helped the blind Milton and his scribes to find and retrieve with greater ease whichever section of the treatise Milton happened to want to work on in a given instance. (The manuscript of *Paradise Lost*, notably, seems to have been divided in much the same manner [62-64].) Perhaps more than anything else, it helps explain why the various chapters of *De Doctrina* came to be worked on so unevenly and, it would appear, so disjointedly or non-sequentially. Repeatedly taking in hand one chapter of the manuscript for revision would not have prevented even those chapters most numerically proximate to it from languishing untouched, nor would Milton have ever been reminded what he might

have said about a given subject in a preceding or succeeding chapter unless he specifically asked to be. And the evidence suggests that he often did not.

If this division of the manuscript into fascicules thus made it easier for Milton and his scribes to revise the treatise, it also made it easier for them to replace the pages of the treatise that had come to be most heavily revised. When a particular page or sequence of pages had accrued a welter of new material, Picard did not need to recopy the entire manuscript or even an entire fascicule in order to produce a new, clean copy of the heavily revised section. Rather, he would simply remove from the fascicules the individual leaves to which a substantial amount of revision had been made, produce a fresh copy of those leaves alone, and then replace them. As Campbell et al. note, this explains “the presence of leaves bearing different watermarks and leaves of different sizes within otherwise regular fascicules” (55). As will prove relevant when considering Milton’s references to Zanchius, these replacement or substitute leaves also tend to contain more lines and words a page than do their neighboring leaves, even when the replacement leaves are themselves the same size or smaller. This is because, when replacing leaves, Picard clearly worked to incorporate all the new material onto the same number of leaves as before, so as to avoid spilling over onto subsequent leaves and thereby necessitating the recopying of them, too. Hence, as a result, Picard’s replacement pages are almost invariably more densely written than the adjoining pages in a given fascicule, the result of trying to squeeze more material into essentially the same amount of space or less (55, 58).

These replacement pages, replacing in a “piecemeal” fashion heavily revised leaves within fascicules from Picard’s State 1 transcription of *De Doctrina*, might be said to constitute State 2 of the surviving manuscript. (Campbell et al. refer to it as the surviving manuscript’s “middle stratum” [55].) At some point seemingly later still, however, as the process of revision continued, Picard took to producing new, fresh copies of various fascicules in their entirety. The distinguishing feature of these new scribal copies made by Picard of whole fascicules from start to finish is that they are much less scribally embellished than are the pages of Picard’s State 1 transcription (55–59). Indeed, markedly unlike the pages of the latter, the writing across the pages of these new scribal fascicules remains fairly uniform, with only the stray word here or there, usually a name, embellished to anything approaching the extent to which many words across the surviving pages of State 1 are. These new, much less embellished scribal fascicules in Picard’s hand may be said to constitute State 3 of *De Doctrina*’s surviving manuscript.

Campbell et al. refer to the pages of this state, State 3, as the “upper stratum” of Picard’s work on the manuscript (55). It does not, however, represent the uppermost. Milton continued to revise even the fascicules belonging to State 3 of the surviving manuscript, and various pages within those fascicules—it would appear, again, the most heavily revised ones—eventually came to be excised, recopied, and replaced by Picard just as various pages from fascicules belonging to State 1 had been (58). These piecemeal replacement pages of sections belonging to State 3 of the surviving manuscript might be said to constitute the surviving manuscript’s State 4.

Finally, much later still, and perhaps even after Milton himself had died, a man named Daniel Skinner (no relation to Cyriack Skinner) recopied what amounts to around a fourth of the surviving manuscript of *De Doctrina* in the aggregate (Campbell et al. 6, 33–44). Like Picard, Skinner appears to have done so for the purposes of producing a new, clean version of pages that had come to be heavily

amended but which had not been subsequently recopied by Picard himself. The relative density of Skinner's writing, along with the one instance in which a heavily revised page in Picard's hand ultimately recopied by Skinner survives (DDC 308A), certainly seems to suggest as much. An additional motivation for Skinner to recopy the pages likely came in the form of his plan, eventually undertaken to almost disastrous effect, to submit the manuscript of *De Doctrina* for publication to the storied Elsevier press in Amsterdam, which had published two editions of Milton's *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* in 1651 (Campbell et al. 5-29; Willems 284-85). In any event, the pages in Skinner's hand (DDC 1-196, 308, and 571-74) represent the last state of the surviving manuscript of Milton's *De Doctrina*, State 5.

All four references to Zanchius in the surviving manuscript of *De Doctrina* appear on pages belonging to what I have described above as States 3, 4, and 5 of the surviving manuscript (DDC 189, 320-21, 329-30, 433). That is to say, they are all confined exclusively to pages representing the latest three states of the manuscript as it exists today. This does not necessarily mean, in itself, that all Milton's references to Zanchius must therefore have been late additions to the text. While most pages belonging to later states of the manuscript may be assumed to contain at least something within them postdating the completion of Picard's State 1 transcription of the manuscript as a whole, hence the impulse to recopy those pages in the first place, that does not mean that everything within them must represent something added to the manuscript following Picard's completion of State 1. Pages belonging to State 5 of the surviving manuscript, for example, could well contain some lines or passages that would have been found, unchanged, in the State 1 version of the text, or even further back beyond that. The absence of those references to Zanchius from the earlier surviving states of the manuscript simply makes it possible that they represent later additions to the text. Closer inspection of the references themselves, however, makes the possibility all the more likely.

Progressing through the assembled manuscript of *De Doctrina* sequentially, one finds Milton's first reference to Zanchius on p. 189, within the context of Milton's chapter "On Man's Restoration, and Christ as Redeemer" (1.14). There, Milton takes issue with the orthodox doctrine of the "hypostatic union," according to which Jesus's human and divine natures were said to subsist together in the single person of Jesus without the distinction between those two natures being collapsed into each other. This doctrine was given its most definitive expression at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE (Gorman 429), but Milton allows Zanchius to be its mouthpiece:

At present, however, an opinion has been generally accepted—has indeed long become established—by which, whereas previously three persons were declared to exist in the single person of the Trinity, now to the contrary two natures are declared so to exist in the single person of Christ that he subsists as real and perfect in one or other nature without a subsistence of his own, so that from two natures is made a single person; and this is what in the schools is called the Hypostatic Union. For Zanchius (Vol. I Part 2 bk. 2 ch. 7) explains it thus: "Properly speaking, he took upon him human nature, not man. For the Logos, when existing in the virgin's womb, took human nature for itself, itself in itself, both by forming a body from the substance of Mary and by simultaneously creating a soul. And he took that nature in and for himself in such a way that it never subsisted by itself,

independent of the Logos, but both then at first and ever since subsisted in the Logos.”

Milton goes on to quip that Zanchius, in arguing as much, acts as if he “had himself been present in Mary’s womb at this mystery” (*OCW* 8: 479).⁶

The page on which this reference to Zanchius appears, along with the entire chapter in which it appears, belongs to State 5 of the surviving manuscript. That is to say, it has been entirely recopied in the hand of Daniel Skinner. In some ways, the fact that this particular reference thus falls within the latest surviving state of the manuscript actually makes it the least useful of the four references to Zanchius in *De Doctrina* for the purposes of determining the extent to which those references might have been later additions to the text. When Skinner recopied a page, most or all of the potentially telling scribal features of the page as it would have existed in Picard’s hand—an onset squeezing of lines together, for example, or the addition of something in between two lines, both of which we will see in the case of Milton’s other references to Zanchius—tended to be effaced. That, after all, was to a large degree the point.

De Doctrina 1.14 (*DDC* 183–96), however, nonetheless remains perhaps the most distinctive chapter recopied by Skinner in total, and here it bears discussing the divergent kinds of paper that Skinner used to produce the pages that survive in his hand. In the National Archives, where the manuscript of *De Doctrina* resides today, the various fascicules that once made up the manuscript have been disassembled and reassembled, divided now into three parts, each bound separately.⁷ Part 1 contains the “Epistle” and Book 1, Chs. 1–13 (1–182). Part 2 contains the rest of Book 1, Chs. 14–33 (183–461A). Part 3 contains all of Book 2 (462–735). Every page of every fascicule within Part 1 has been recopied by Skinner continuously. That is, he seems to have begun with recopying p. 1 of the Epistle and proceeded straight through from there until he reached the end of *De Doctrina* 1.13. The paper comprising all the pages in Skinner’s hand within this part of the manuscript descends “from a single source,” and it is, noticeably, the only part of the manuscript in which chapters will occasionally begin on the verso side of a leaf (Campbell et al. 40).

Though Skinner was certainly not the person to divide the manuscript of *De Doctrina* into the three parts in which it exists today, the decision to divide *De Doctrina* 1.14 off from the preceding chapters in Skinner’s hand was not an arbitrary one, despite *De Doctrina* 1.14 being the last of the chapters in the manuscript to have been completely recopied by him. When recopying *De Doctrina* 1.14, Skinner used an entirely different stock of paper, one of inferior quality and producing pages of a smaller size (Campbell et al. 41). As Campbell et al. note, it seems reductive to assume that Skinner, a minor fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, had simply run out of the better paper that he had been using to recopy the preceding chapters of the manuscript (44). Rather, the different kind of paper seems explicable in two other ways. One, for all the drawbacks that potentially came with using the kind of paper that Skinner did to recopy *De Doctrina* 1.14 (the ink bleeding, etc.), it also came with one key benefit: when folded, it produced pages more in line with the size of those that Picard had used (41). This question of size mattered especially if one were looking not to produce an entirely new copy of the manuscript in total, but rather to produce a new copy merely of specific sections within it that could then be reinserted as seamlessly as possible back into the wider manuscript as it otherwise existed. Leaving off Skinner’s version of the Epistle and *De Doctrina* 1.1–13, all other pages recopied by Skinner in the surviving

manuscript—the whole of *De Doctrina* 1.14 (DDC 183–96), plus a page from *De Doctrina* 1.26 (308) and four pages from *De Doctrina* 2.7 (571–74)—appear to have been crafted by Skinner with such an idea in mind, that of being slotted back into the midst of pages otherwise made by Picard.

This suggests something else that may explain the different kind of paper that Picard used to recopy *De Doctrina* 1.14 than he did to recopy the preceding 182 pages of the manuscript. Campbell et al. assume that Skinner made the copy of *De Doctrina* 1.14 after he had recopied the Epistle and *De Doctrina* 1.1–13. It may be, however, that Skinner in fact did things the other way around. In other words, Skinner might actually have recopied *De Doctrina* 1.14 before he recopied the preceding 182 pages of the manuscript, and perhaps some time before. It remains something of a mystery why Skinner recopied only the first 182 pages of the manuscript in the continuous fashion that he did. Campbell et al. initially took it as a sign that Skinner had intended to recopy the manuscript in its entirety, but that he ultimately abandoned the project “when he found it to be rather too much like hard work.” Now regarding that suggestion as “untenable,” Campbell et al. have latterly proposed instead that Skinner only bothered to recopy those pages in Picard’s hand that he found most overwhelmed by accrued revisions (Campbell et al. 41–44). That would not explain, though, the sudden shift in paper size and quality that one finds between *De Doctrina* 1.13 and *De Doctrina* 1.14. Likewise, the assumption that every page of the Epistle and *De Doctrina* 1.1–13 must have been more overworked by Milton and his scribes than almost any of the succeeding pages that Skinner encountered over the course of the rest of the manuscript does not seem quite right, either. Certainly, some parts of the first 182 pages of *De Doctrina* have the feel of having been very heavily worked over indeed: Milton’s radically anti-Trinitarian behemoth “On the Son of God” (1.5) comes to mind (DDC 48–98; OCW 8: 126–228). Other parts of the same 182 pages, however, do not have the feel of having been very heavily revised at all following their initial composition: the Epistle, for one, or also the chapters on “What Christian Doctrine is” (1.1) and “On God’s Providence or general governance of Things” (1.8) (DDC 1–9, 126–37; OCW 8: 2–20, 314–40). By the same token, one still finds some rather heavily revised pages in Picard’s hand elsewhere in the manuscript (e.g., DDC 219 or 223) that Skinner nonetheless let stand.

The fact remains that we do not really know why Skinner stopped with p. 182 when he set about recopying the manuscript from the beginning. If I had to guess, I would say that Skinner probably did intend at some point to produce an entirely new, fair copy of the treatise in preparation for submitting it to the Elsevier press, but that he eventually opted for some unknown reason to make due with submitting the bulk of the manuscript more or less as he had found it, for the most part offering only the occasional intervention in his own hand to the text as deemed necessary, such as when he wrote “Deleantur” in the margin alongside a passage that had been crossed out by another scribe, just in case the printer failed to register that it was thus meant to be deleted (DDC 222, as noted in OCW 8: 556n[L]i). As with Skinner’s recopying of p. 308 and pp. 571–74, however, his recopying of *De Doctrina* 1.14 seems to have been undertaken at a different time, with different paper and a somewhat different end in mind. That is, in the case of those pages, he seems fairly clearly to have been doing something more like what Picard himself had done multiple times before, not necessarily producing a new clean copy of the manuscript as a whole but rather confining himself exclusively to recopying and replacing those pages that seemed to need it most.

The very fact, therefore, that a page from the first 182 pages of the manuscript was recopied by Skinner need not, I would argue, suggest that Skinner must have found that page heavily amended. On the other hand, the fact that he chose to recopy *De Doctrina* 1.14 (DDC 183–96) suggests that he almost certainly did find *those* pages in such a condition, as in the case of p. 308 and pp. 571–74. At the very least, then, one can say that Milton’s earliest, sequential reference to Zanchius in *De Doctrina* (189) comes within a chapter that, as a whole, had come to be heavily revised after Picard’s completion of the State 1 transcription of it sometime in or after 1658. A bit more conjecturally, one could also note that the paragraph in which this reference to Zanchius appears effectively ushers in a long digression on the subject of the hypostatic union that is both stylistically and substantively unlike the beginning and concluding parts of the chapter that surround it. Hale and Cullington observe, for example, that Milton’s language in this section of the chapter becomes markedly “heated,” and that his argument veers off into “metaphysics and logic,” in the course of which Milton cites almost nothing after Zanchius, rather than proceeding by way of a steady accumulation of scriptural citation and explication as the chapter otherwise does (OCW 8: 491n[T]xv, 492n[T]xxv). For now, however, it bears additionally noting simply that Milton there both quotes Zanchius accurately (certainly by the standards of the early modern period, at least) and cites him with specificity, using Zanchius’s *Opera Theologica*.⁸

Milton’s next two references to Zanchius in *De Doctrina*—again not necessarily in time, but proceeding sequentially through the manuscript as it exists today—appear within the chapter “On the Gospel and Christian Freedom” (1.27). At twenty-five pages in length (DDC 312–37), the chapter stands as one of the longest in the manuscript, and, as befitting a chapter whose subject has been rightly said to be “fundamental” not just to Milton’s theology but to his entire world-view, it seems to have received a considerable amount of attention on Milton’s part (CPW 6: 312n1). Not just attention, indeed, but repeated attention, for it notably bears all the traces of a chapter that Milton returned to more than once, inserting additional material here and there often in very different stylistic registers and with the result that the chapter occasionally repeats itself, contradicts itself, or doubles back to return to a discussion that the chapter had seemed to leave behind (OCW 8: 725n[T]x, xxi). On a scribal level, the chapter shows key signs of having been successively interpolated by Milton, as well; and, revealingly, one of the most prominent of these signs appears on the page in which one finds the chapter’s first reference to Zanchius.

The reference comes within the course of a long paragraph that begins with the thundering declaration, “With the introduction of the gospel through faith in Christ—the new covenant—the entire old covenant, that is, the whole Mosaic law, is abolished” (OCW 8: 699).⁹ In the midst of a long sequence of scriptural references that follows, Milton quotes Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians 2.14–15. As Milton has it, “*the barrier of the wall of partition, that is, enmities, he [i.e., Jesus] has broken down in his flesh, having made ineffectual that law of the commandments which is set in decrees*” (8: 701).¹⁰ Before continuing on to what will be the next scriptural reference to Colossians 2.14–17, however, Milton stops to add the following comment on the verses he has just quoted:

Now not only the ceremonial code but the whole positive law of Moses was [one] of commandments, and set in decrees. And not just in

the ceremonial code—as **Zanchius** on this passage claims—but in the whole Mosaic law, Jews were separated from Gentiles, who of course were “alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and outsiders as regards the promise of the covenants,” v. 12; and the promise was made for the works of the whole law, not just for ceremonies; nor were [ceremonies] alone the cause of the enmity between God and ourselves, v. 16.

(8: 701, 703)¹¹

This refers to Zanchius’s *Commentarius in Epistolam Sancti Pauli ad Ephesios*, found in volume 6 of Zanchius’s *Opera*. There, commenting on Ephesians 2.15 specifically and under a subsection headed “*De abrogatione legis*,” Zanchius writes that Paul, when speaking of the “law of the commandments which is set in decrees,” had been referring, above all, to “the part of the law concerning the observance of worship, ceremonies, and rites in religion,” in other words “the ceremonial law,” and that accordingly the passage “therefore affirms that this part of the law had been abrogated by Christ.”¹²

In the manuscript of *De Doctrina*, this particular reference to Zanchius appears at the bottom of p. 320, which is the recto of a leaf, and it carries over onto the top of the verso side of the leaf, p. 321. Both pages are entirely in the hand of Jeremie Picard, as are the preceding two pages of the chapter, pp. 318–19. The leaf bearing pp. 318–19, however, manifestly belongs to a different state of the manuscript than does the leaf bearing pp. 320–21. The former conforms to what I have described above as State 3 of the manuscript. It represents a fair but very unembellished scribal copy made by Picard, quite unlike the heavily embellished scribal copy that Picard had initially made of *De Doctrina*, pages of which survive today as State 1 of the manuscript. Indeed, as is characteristic of pages belonging to State 3 of the manuscript, the only word on p. 318 or p. 319 that appears embellished at all is the name of Paul, “**Paulus**” (*DDC* 318; *OCW* 8: 698). The following two pages of the manuscript, pp. 320–21, exist in the same unembellished style of Picard, with the only word there embellished again being a name: in this case, that of “**Zanchius**” (*DDC* 320; *OCW* 8: 700). These two pages containing the chapter’s first reference to Zanchius, however, are much more densely written than pp. 318–19 of the preceding leaf. The recto page, for example, on which Zanchius’s name appears (*DDC* 320) contains twenty-three closely spaced lines and a total of 189 words. By contrast, the facing verso page (319) contains only sixteen lines, with almost double the space between them, for a total of only 131 words.

Either the leaf bearing pp. 318–19 or the leaf bearing pp. 320–21 must, therefore, have been a replacement leaf of the kind described above, one made and substituted back into a fascicule in the place of a specific section of the manuscript that had come to receive a significant amount of revision. In this case, everything suggests that the subsequent replacement leaf must be the one bearing pp. 320–21, that is, the leaf containing the chapter’s first reference to Zanchius. For reasons discussed above, replacement pages invariably tended to be the more densely written, being made to incorporate all the revisions added to a page since it had last been recopied. (Surveying the manuscript of *De Doctrina* as it survives today reveals the striking extent to which the process of revising the treatise for Milton appears to have been one much more of addition than subtraction.) The reference to Zanchius spanning pp. 320–21 itself also stands out as distinct from its immediate surroundings, a sudden and tonally

dissimilar critique of a major Reformed author, the first non-scriptural author mentioned in the entire chapter to that point, amidst a sea of otherwise cool marshaling of scriptural quotations. Again, though, what can all but certainly be said is that pp. 320–21, the pages on which the chapter's first reference to Zanchius appears, belong not only to a different state of the manuscript than the preceding pp. 318–319, but a later state. In other words, if pp. 318–19 belong to State 3 of the manuscript, then pp. 320–21 belong to State 4. Significantly, this means that something, at a minimum, must have been added to pp. 320–21 at some later date than Picard's copying of pp. 318–19, for if nothing had been added to pp. 320–21 subsequently, then the evidence suggests that Picard would not have bothered recopying them at all, just as he declined to recopy pp. 318–19 after the completion of the State 3 version of them that still survives today.

In the same way that the paragraph referencing Zanchius in *De Doctrina* 1.14 ushers in a long digression on the subject of the hypostatic union, this paragraph referencing Zanchius in *De Doctrina* 1.27 touches off an even lengthier jeremiad protesting that indeed none of the many passages from scripture just quoted by Milton, even beyond Ephesians 2.14–15, “should be understood” to denote “the abolition of solely the ceremonial law,” as “is commonly objected” (*OCW* 8: 703).¹³ The leaf bearing pp. 320–21, where that reference to Zanchius's commentary on Ephesians appears, in fact looks to have been not an isolated replacement leaf but rather the first of a sequence of replacement leaves, encompassing pp. 320–35. Throughout that stretch of the manuscript, the increased density of Picard's writing observable in the case of pp. 320–21 continues unabated until it reaches a climax of sorts on p. 334, the recto of the last replacement leaf in the sequence. There Picard manages to squeeze in a conspicuous thirty-three lines and 305 words, over twice as many lines and words as he allowed for p. 319. After p. 334, however, the density of Picard's handwriting relaxes considerably again, so that the recto of the following leaf (336) once more contains a more moderate twenty lines of only 135 total words.

The fact that p. 334 contains what appears to be the greatest density of writing in the entire chapter does not necessarily imply that it must have been the single most heavily interpolated page in the entire chapter. In a kind of procrastination, when recopying a sequence of replacement leaves rather than just a single leaf, both Picard and Skinner evidently tended not to go to all necessary lengths in order to avoid running over onto a subsequent leaf until they reached the last leaf of the sequence that they meant to recopy, at which point it seems to have become more visibly clear to them that they were running out of room, at least if they wanted to avoid having to recopy additional leaves unnecessarily. Picard's and Skinner's writing always tends to reach its maximum density on the last leaf of a given set of replacement pages for this reason, where one can almost see the alarm start to set in as they strive to make sure that the last replacement leaf still ends “where its corresponding and cancelled” one, “no longer extant, must have finished” (Campbell et al. 58). Instead of indicating, therefore, that p. 334 itself must have been the most heavily interpolated page in the sequence of replacement leaves added by Picard, the density more probably signals the sheer volume of revision that had been made across the pages of the replacement sequence as a whole.

Notably, within this same sequence of replacement pages—pages which give every indication of having been heavily interpolated by Milton following not just Picard's composition of the State 1 version of the chapter but his composition of the State 3 version of it—Milton's other reference to Zanchius in *De Doctrina* 1.27 also

appears. In the case of this reference to Zanchius, on pp. 329–30, Milton himself famously advertises it as a late addition to the text. Having spent close to ten pages by that point beating back what he claims “is commonly objected” about the array of scriptural passages summoned by him over the course of pp. 317–21, namely that those passages signify not the abrogation of “the whole Mosaic law” but merely of “the ceremonial law,” Milton begins a new paragraph with the following declaration, partially quoted above at the start of this essay:

When, having pooled the illumination of so many texts, I was thinking that I had affirmed this truth against the view of almost all the Theologians whom I had read—[people] who deny that the whole Mosaic law was abrogated—I happened to find that **Zanchius**, commenting copiously on Eph. Ch. 2, shared my view: he adds, and indeed rightly, that “a very large part of Theology depends on the explanation of this question: and not even the scriptures can be properly understood, especially their teaching about justification and good works”—I would actually say, the whole gospel—“unless this point, about the abrogation of the law, be understood.” And he proves his case accurately enough, but is not energetic enough in using what he has proved, getting entangled indecisively in many subsequent exceptions, which leave a slightly less attentive reader rather uncertain.

(OCW 8: 713)¹⁴

As with the reference to Zanchius earlier in the chapter, Milton here, too, refers to Zanchius’s *Commentarius in Epistolam Sancti Pauli ad Ephesios*; and, as with the reference in *De Doctrina* 1.14 to another work from Zanchius’s *Opera*, Milton here again quotes Zanchius more or less accurately, though he has to rework the inflection of Zanchius’s own Latin more so in this case in order to make it fit the new grammatical context.¹⁵

In appearing within a heavily interpolated sequence of pages representing State 4 of *De Doctrina*’s surviving manuscript, this passage that Milton himself declares to have been added to the text only after he had already “affirmed this truth” about the abrogation of the whole Mosaic law—and which he claims to have been occasioned by reading done only after he had already “pooled the illumination . . . of almost all the Theologians whom [he] had read”—certainly conforms to the idea that the passage represents a revision to the text made after Picard’s composition of the pages belonging to State 3 of the surviving manuscript. The exact scribal condition of the passage, however, does even more than that. It shows signs of having been even further revised after Picard’s composition of the State 4 version of it. On pp. 329–30 of the actual manuscript of *De Doctrina* as it survives today, the passage’s opening reference to Zanchius reads something like the following:

Hanc ego veritate cùm tot locorum luce collata contra omnium ferè, quos
abrogatam
 legeram, Theologorum sententiam, qui totam Mosaicam legem \wedge negan[t]
è
 asseruisse mihi videbar, **Zanchium** fortasse in epistolam ad Ephes. cap. 2. fusè
 scribentem in eadem mecum sententiam reperi[.]

The initial omission of “abrogatam” may well have been nothing more than a case of eyeskip on Picard’s part while recopying the passage from the discarded State 3

version of the page, a mistake that Picard could easily have caught and rectified himself while going back over his work. Without the word “abrogatam,” the passage fails even to make sense. The change of “fortasse” to “fortè,” however, is another matter. As Hale and Cullington note, the adverb *fortasse* means “possibly”; the adverb *forte*, on the other hand, means “as it happens,” or, as Lewis and Short define it, “by chance” or “by accident.” With “fortasse,” as originally written, the sentence would seem to suggest that Milton was to some degree unsure or skeptical if Zanchius had actually said in his commentary on Ephesians what Milton goes on to quote him as saying (OCW 8: 712n99; Lewis and Short). The change to “fortè,” which shifts the meaning of the sentence to be that Milton had only “happened to find” that Zanchius had said what Milton goes on to quote him as saying, might seem to make more sense, but the passage as originally written with “fortasse” was certainly not nonsense.

Rather than being the correction of an obvious mistake, therefore, the change from “fortasse” to “fortè” represents a more substantive and subjective change, one that would not have necessarily cried out to be made at all, and one that, the evidence suggests, Picard would not have simply made undirected. More likely, it would seem, the line had been initially mistranscribed when added from Milton’s dictation to the State 3 version of the page. (Perhaps unsurprisingly in the case of a text this complex and with as many moving parts and hands behind it, evident mistranscriptions of Milton’s dictation surface not infrequently throughout the manuscript.) When recopying the passage for the purposes of creating the State 4 version of the page that survives today, Picard accordingly would have been more likely than not simply to retain the unobvious error of “fortasse,” and I suspect that the error thus went unchanged up until the passage was at some point read back to Milton later still, when Milton himself—and perhaps only Milton himself—would have noticed that the passage as written did not quite convey what he had meant to say.

In some ways, the manuscript would also seem to support the possibility that, between the two references to Zanchius inserted by Milton into *De Doctrina* 1.27, Milton in fact added this latter reference on pp. 329–30 to Zanchius’s commentary on Ephesians before he added the reference to the same work that now appears on pp. 320–21. Presumably having had Zanchius’s commentary read to him and noting (or having been previously alerted to the fact) that Zanchius there appeared to endorse Milton’s view that the whole Mosaic law had been abrogated, one can imagine the blind Milton directing his amanuensis to find the place in the earlier part of the chapter where Milton himself had quoted Ephesians 2.14–15 and dictating a rebuttal to one of the very kinds of “exceptions” to the abrogation of the whole Mosaic law that Milton specifically criticizes Zanchius for making on p. 330. This would also explain why, unusually for him in general and completely unlike any of the other three references to Zanchius that appear in the course of *De Doctrina*, Milton neglects on pp. 320–21 to specify exactly where Zanchius had said what Milton rebukes him there for saying. Milton acts as if he has already cited the work in question in the chapter—perhaps because, in a very real way, he already had. Once again, though, what can at least be said with confidence about the two references to Zanchius that appear in *De Doctrina* 1.27, at a minimum, is that they strongly bespeak their having been added to the text at an even later state of revision than that which prompted Picard to produce the State 3 version of the fascicule.

As for the final reference to Zanchius one encounters in *De Doctrina* when proceeding sequentially through the text as it exists today, that reference shows itself most of all to have been a later addition to the page on which it now resides. The reference comes on the second page, p. 433, of the last chapter of Book 1 (1.33), “On Complete Glorification, including Christ’s Second Coming and the Resurrection of the Dead and the Conflagration of This World.” In modern editions of *De Doctrina*, the paragraph in which the reference appears reads in full as follows:

The father alone knows the day and the hour of Christ’s coming: Matt. 24: 36; Mark 13: 32: *no one knows about that day and hour . . .*; Acts 1: 7: *it is not your business to know the times or the seasons which the father set by virtue of his own authority*; Dan. 12: 8-9: *I said, my Lord, what is to be the end of these things? And he said, Go away, Daniel, for these things are shut up and sealed up until the time determined.* Zanchius’ book *De Fine Seculi*, Volume 7, will also furnish very useful reading matter on this point.
(OCW 8: 871)¹⁶

Milton here refers to yet another work found in yet another volume of Zanchius’s *Opera*, in this case a fairly slight and unobtrusive piece by Zanchius entitled “Praellectiones aliquot de fine seculi in ea 1 Ioh. 2. verba: *παιδιά ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν, &c.*” (Some Lectures concerning the End of Time in Those Words of 1 John 2[.18]: *Little children, it is the last time, etc.*) found in the collection of “Miscellaneous” pieces assembled in volume seven of the *Opera* (Zanchius 7: 77-92; translation mine).

The page on which this reference to Zanchius appears in *De Doctrina* belongs to State 3 of the surviving manuscript. That is, the page containing the reference survives from a fair but unembellished scribal copy made by Picard of the chapter in its entirety, quite distinct from the heavily embellished scribal copies that Picard had made of whole fascicules previously and parts of which still survive as State 1 of the manuscript. As with all pages representing State 3 of the surviving manuscript, however, the page on which this final reference to Zanchius appears also differs discernibly from the “piecemeal” replacement pages made by Picard representing States 2 and 4 of the surviving manuscript. The reference to Zanchius here, in fact, appears on the verso side of the fascicule’s first leaf, the recto of which bears the chapter’s title, and each page seems to have been copied one after another from there in the order in which the pages still reside (DDC 432-61). The spacing between the lines, for example, remains both generous and uniform throughout the chapter, with none of the sudden upticks in density that one invariably finds in the case of replacement leaves. In that sense, although it appears on the latest page of the four numerically speaking, the last of *De Doctrina*’s four references to Zanchius actually seems to reside on the page made earliest by Picard chronologically speaking, in that the other three references all appear on pages representing States 4 or 5 of the surviving manuscript, as we have seen.

Because this State 3 version of p. 433 was never discarded, however, it gives the most unambiguous indication yet that the reference there made by Milton to Zanchius constitutes a later addition to the text. Preserving both the lineation of the final lines of the paragraph containing the reference to Zanchius’s *De Fine Seculi* and the lineation of the opening lines of the succeeding paragraph, the passage appears roughly as follows on the page of the actual manuscript in Picard’s hand:

[. . .] Matt. 24. 36. Marc. 13. 32; *de die illo ac hora nem[o]*

novit— Act. 1. 7; *non est vestrum nosse tempora sive*

opportunitates quas pater in sua ipsius auctoritate sta[-]

tuit. (⌘) Suprà. ^{Dan.12.8} Poterit etiam hac de re legi utilissim^s
liber Zanchij de fine seculi, tom. 7.

Erit itaque repentinus. Matt. 25. 6; *media autem*

nocte clamor ortus est dicentium, ecce, sponsus veni[t,]

exite in occursum ejus. [. . .]

The encircled Hebrew letter *aleph* (⌘) serves as a key for Picard signaling that Milton's prior quotation of Daniel 12.8–9—which appears above on the same page (hence Picard's "Suprà") and which Picard has encircled and drawn another *aleph* alongside—should ultimately be relocated to that place following Milton's quotation of Acts 1.7, though neither Picard nor any other scribe ever got around to doing so (OCW 8: 870n11). For the purposes of this essay, however, what bears noticing most is the spacing of the reference to Zanchius that follows Picard's keying to the above quotation from Daniel. As appears even more unmistakably on the page of the manuscript itself than the above transcription can convey, Picard has added the reference to Zanchius by squeezing it into the space initially left by him between the end of the paragraph and the start of the next (8: 870n13).

Little more needs to be said about this final reference to Zanchius, except perhaps to note that the fact Picard was forced to squeeze it in between two lines would seem to explain why it, alone among the references to Zanchius scribed by Picard, is the only one in which Zanchius's name does not appear embellished at all: Picard did not have room. In sum, *De Doctrina's* final reference to Zanchius shows unequivocally that it was added to the manuscript at some point following Picard's completion of the State 3 version of the page on which it now resides. That places the reference as having been added to the manuscript, at the earliest, sometime in 1658, when Picard seems to have first begun working with Milton on *De Doctrina*; and, given the amount of revision Milton would seem to have made to *De Doctrina* as a whole and the number of times Picard would seem to have already transcribed that fascicule in particular by the time the reference to Zanchius came to be added to it, we may well be looking more at a date of sometime in or after 1659.

As has been shown, the same very much appears to have been the case with regard to the other three references to Zanchius in *De Doctrina*, as well. That is, the manuscript as it survives today strongly suggests that all four references to Zanchius, two of them explicitly drawn from Zanchius's *Opera Theologica* and the other two almost unquestionably drawn from the same, were added to the text in a similarly late stage of its development, well after Picard had completed his State 1 transcription of the manuscript sometime in or after 1658. Rather than thinking that the reading of Zanchius's *Opera* that stands behind those references must nonetheless have occurred at some earlier point in Milton's life, it seems more natural to conclude that the reading which prompted Milton to make those four different references to Zanchius over what appears to have been a relatively concentrated period of time must itself

have been concentrated in the same period of time, too. In other words, the manuscript of Milton's *De Doctrina Christiana* gives good reason to suspect that Milton's reading of Zanchius might indeed have been not just as belated but perhaps even more belated than his own protestation of its belatedness might ever have led one to suppose.

What, then, is one to make of all this? Zanchius began his theological career as a member of an Augustinian monastery in Italy, where he met the illustrious Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562), who seems to have spearheaded Zanchius's conversion to Protestantism and whom Zanchius would eventually follow in exile as a lecturer at the Strasbourg Academy in 1553. Over the course of a long and storied career that saw Zanchius ultimately succeed the great Zacharias Ursinus (1534–83) at the University of Heidelberg, Zanchius established himself as one of the internationally renowned leaders of what has been called the era of early Protestant orthodoxy, the era of men such as Theodore Beza (1519–1605) and Amandus Polanus (1561–1610), both of whom Milton likewise cites by name in *De Doctrina* (Baschera and Moser 1: 1–13; Muller 1: 31; OCW 8: 374, 714). In that sense, the surprise is not that Milton should have cited Zanchius as often as he would come to do in *De Doctrina*, but that Milton's reading of Zanchius's works would appear to have been as long in coming as Milton claims and as the manuscript of *De Doctrina* itself implies.

Gordon Campbell and William Poole have suggested that the intensive course of reading undertaken by Milton following the receipt of his M.A. and departure from Cambridge in 1632 may show him, in part, pursuing a kind of private continuation of the academic course on which he would have continued had he never left Cambridge and instead begun formally pursuing his B.D. (Poole 26). Had that been the case—and there is much to recommend the idea—one would have assumed Milton to have begun engaging seriously with Zanchius's *Opera* at this point at the latest. As Jean-Louis Quantin has noted, the traditional course of study for the B.D. in Cambridge at that time involved devoting one's first two years to the study of "Scripture along with the works of major continental divines (Martyr, Chemnitz, Musculus, Calvin, and Zanchi)" (161). Yet there is nothing in any of Milton's extant writings to suggest an encounter with Zanchius's works during that crucial period of private study. Moreover, the way in which Milton seems not to have "happened" to realize that Zanchius's *Opera* contained discussion of matters of such major interest to him until so much later in life would seem to imply that if Milton had indeed engaged with Zanchius's *Opera* at all in the 1620s, '30s, or '40s, it had at least been very sparingly.

The only other occasion outside of *De Doctrina* where Milton so much as mentions Zanchius occurs, poignantly, in his *Defensio Secunda* of 1654. Responding to the contention that his newly onset blindness should be seen as divine judgment against him, Milton provides a moving catalogue of figures from antiquity to the early modern period itself "whom men treated with such respect that they preferred to blame the very gods than to impute their blindness to them as a crime," and who collectively thus serve to demonstrate that the blindness which has "befallen" him, too, "should scarcely, I think, be regarded as an evil" (CPW 4: 584, 586).¹⁷ The last name that Milton summons in this list before circling back in time to note that even Abraham's son Isaac had gone blind is Zanchius's. "Why should I add theologians of the highest repute, Hieronymus Zanchius and some others," Milton writes, "when it is established that even Isaac the patriarch himself—and no mortal was ever dearer to God—lived in blindness for many years" (4: 586)?¹⁸ Late in life, Zanchius's eyesight

had indeed begun to fail, to the point that “he became entirely dependent on the assistance of a scribe.” He would die completely blind in 1590, at the age of seventy-four (Burchill 205).¹⁹ Milton’s own turning to Zanchius later in life, in the latter years of the 1650s, may be explicable purely in terms of the fact that Milton was himself then returning to concentrated work on the subject of theology after having spent the better part of the previous decade or more focused on matters beyond it. It could well be, though, that part of what led Milton to turn or at least to turn back to Zanchius at that time was the affirmation and even inspiration that Milton seems to have taken in the *Defensio Secunda* from knowing that he was not the first major Protestant author to have been reduced to the condition in which he had come to find himself, nor would he be the first to show that such a condition could be surmounted.

Of course, one cannot know any of this for certain, but viewing Milton’s protestations of belated reading as almost exclusively rhetorical has tended to close down consideration of such possibilities from the outset. What if Milton really did fail to come upon Martin Bucer’s extremely famous *De Regno Christi* (1557), for example, not just until after he had written and published the first edition of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* in 1643, but until “*wel-nigh three months*” after he had written and published the revised and expanded second edition in 1644 (*Judgement* sig. B2v; *CPW* 2: 435)? What would that say about Milton, and about the reading and writing process that gave rise to one of his most significant works of prose? Yet of all the possibilities that the consistently rhetorical interpretation of Milton’s own protestations of belated reading has tended to close down, I would argue that the most important has been the possibility of the “unexpected,” to use a term that Milton himself insisted upon in such a context.

In this sense, the rhetorical understanding of Milton’s protestations of belated reading shares something with many studies of Milton’s use of rhetoric in general. As Daniel Shore writes in his recent book *Milton and the Art of Rhetoric*, part of understanding a work’s rhetorical “tropes” or “stratagems” involves a necessary lack of “credulity,” or what Shore describes as the need “that we eventually break faith” with the text “by understanding it in terms other than the ones it presses upon us” (7). When Milton declares in his first *Prolusion* that, looking out at his audience, he for the most part sees only “hostile glances,” Shore rightly notes that this is surely not a genuine realization being had by Milton in the moment but is rather something that Milton “has decided in advance to realize” (21). Indeed, if Milton did look out at his audience in that moment, the majority of faces that he saw were almost certainly not glowering but smiling back at him. His saying otherwise was all part of the fun, and part of what one imagines made the first *Prolusion* a rhetorically successful endeavor.

Shore concedes that not every moment in Milton’s works should be subjected to “rhetorical skepticism” (11), but deciding what should or should not be has thus tended to be arbitrarily applied by scholars, often explaining away inconvenient moments in a text as rhetoric while preserving convenient moments as the plainspoken and God’s honest truth. Identifying a moment in Milton’s works as rhetorical also tends to have the odd effect in such studies of flattening its complexity and, it might well be said, diminishing much of its force. To read Milton’s intermittent articulations of “despair” at finding a receptive audience in *The Readie and Easie Way* as a rhetorical “means” to finding that audience has the effect, intentionally or not, of denying Milton the power to have actually been experiencing the ebbs and flows of that emotion himself in that moment, and to have written through it in spite of it all (Shore 6). Something indescribably profound dwindles into being a device.

Most problematically, however, the lack of credulity on which much rhetorical interpretation of Milton's works depends can become its own kind of credulity, that of believing that Milton intended and archly designed every single bob and weave of his texts for maximum rhetorical effect. Regardless of the extent to which one believes Milton's works to have been very deliberately constructed indeed, it need not mean that he was therefore incapable of being surprised or even of surprising himself in the reading and writing process. The "intentionalist" nature of much Milton scholarship may tend to be exemplified in this way by studies of Milton's use of rhetoric—Shore, for example, declares the "breaking faith" of his rhetorical readings of Milton to be "the highest fulfillment, rather than the abrogation, of his intentions" (18)—but it remains by no means restricted to them. Scholars such as Sharon Achinstein have suggested, shrewdly, that "the release from the grip of intention-bound criticism could open Milton studies to new ideas and new resources of creativity" (10). This need not equate, though, to a call for dispensing altogether with the kind of close, historicized concern for Milton's intentions that has led to some of the signal achievements of Milton studies over the past generation. One way to free Milton studies from the grip of intention-bound criticism would be to free it simply from the conception of Milton's intentions as largely bound or set in advance within a given work, or even a given chapter.

Here *De Doctrina* and Milton's protestations of belated reading may provide a way forward. As we have seen, sometime late in the process of revising *De Doctrina* 1.27 Milton seems to have made a point of ensuring that the line "**Zanchium** fortasse in epistolam ad Ephes. cap. 2. fusè scribentem in eadem mecum sententia reperi" became changed to "**Zanchium** *fortè* in epistolam ad Ephes. cap. 2. fusè scribentem in eadem mecum sententia reperi [*italics added*]." Milton seems to have made a point, that is, of ensuring that the line declared him to have only "*happened* to find that **Zanchius**, commenting copiously on Eph. Ch. 2, shared [his] view." This, Milton insists, had been a discovery made late in the day, as if by chance or accident, of what in *Tetrachordon* he had previously referred to as an "unexpected" witness. Without denying that Milton's pointed insistence on the fact of the discovery's belatedness might indeed serve a certain rhetorical function, it is essential that this not lead us into writing as if the very idea that the discovery had been a belated one, or that it had even been a discovery properly so called in the first place, must have been rhetorical on Milton's part, for the manuscript of *De Doctrina* powerfully suggests otherwise.

Milton wrote his works not just in time but over time, and sometimes over great stretches of time, a reality to which *De Doctrina* attests perhaps more than any other of his writings. In those periods of composition, be they a fevered morning or a tumultuous sequence of decades, Milton seems to have repeatedly made discoveries in the course of the reading and writing process that he could hardly have anticipated when he began drafting a given work. And with those discoveries, what Milton had intended to say or write could change, to the point that a single chapter in *De Doctrina* could grow to contain numerous passages that Milton himself might scarcely have ever envisioned committing to it when the chapter's first sentence had been written. Studies of Milton would do well to recapture that sense of the dynamic nature of his intentions, to see in such moments as his protestations of belated reading less the indication of a grand rhetorical design and more the traces that what Milton intended to say and what he expected to find were ever in a dynamic state of flux throughout the reading and writing process. *De Doctrina Christiana* and Milton's protestations of

belated reading, that is, challenge us to remain alive to what the text and sometimes even Milton himself suggest may have been “unexpected” after all.

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NOTES

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¹ Because the Yale edition of Milton’s *Complete Prose Works (CPW)* is in the process of being superseded by the ongoing Oxford edition of Milton’s *Complete Works (OCW)*, I have cited those works not yet published in the Oxford edition by both page number in the Yale edition (*CPW*) and page number of the actual early modern edition of the work in question.

² On the attribution of *De Doctrina Christiana* to Milton, see, definitively, Campbell et al.

³ For the passage in Milton’s Latin, see *OCW* 8: 712: “Hanc ego veritatem cum tot locorum luce collata contra omnium ferè, quos legeram, Theologorum sententiam, qui totam Mosaicam legem abrogatam negan[t] asseruisse mihi videbar, **Zanchium** fortè in epistolam ad Ephes. cap. 2. fusè scribentem in eadem mecum sententia reperi.” The bolding and the bracketed emendation are the editors’ own. Here and in the text above, the bolding denotes the fact that “Zanchium” appears scribally embellished in the actual manuscript of *De Doctrina*.

⁴ See further, for example, *DDD* 36 (*CPW* 2: 329): “First therefore I will set down what is observ’d by *Grotius* upon this point, a man of general learning. Next I produce what mine own thoughts gave me, before I had seen his annotations.” Noted by Festa 61.

⁵ For discussions of this moment in *Tetrachordon* along these lines, see, for example, Festa 60–62; Lewalski, *Life of John Milton* 189; and Lewalski, “Milton’s Idea” 68–70.

⁶ In Latin, see *OCW* 8: 478: “At nunc recepta fere, immo iamdiu inveterata opinio est, qua cum antea tres personae in una Trinitatis natura stauerentur, nunc contra duae naturae in una Christi persona sic statuuntur, ut versus atque perfectus sine subsistentia sua in altera natura subsistat; ita ut ex duabus naturis una persona fiat, atque haec illa est, quam in scholis vocant unionem Hypostaticam. Sic enim **Zanchius**, tom. 1. part. 2. l. 2. c. 7 *Assumpsit humanam naturam*, inquit, *non hominem proprie loquendo. Nam λόγος in utero virginis existens, humanam naturam sibi ipse in seipso tum corpus ex substantia Mariae formando, tum animam simul creando, assumpsit. atque ita illam in seipso, et sibi assumpsit; ut illa natura nunquam per se substiterit, extra λόγον; sed et tum primum, et deinceps semper in λόγῳ tantum substiterit. . . . nec minus tamen audacter [haec arcana] sunt tradita quam in utero Mariae ipse huic mysterio interfuisset qui haec sua fide tradere audeat.”*

⁷ Skinner himself may have been the first one to disassemble the various fascicules and combine all the pages together into a kind of whole, as he was the one who would eventually number the pages of the manuscript consecutively from start to finish: see Campbell et al. 46.

⁸ Compare Milton’s quotation of Zanchius above (n6) to the following from Zanchius’s *De Tribus Elohim* in Zanchius 1: 416: “Assumpsit enim naturam humanam, non hominem, proprie loquendo . . . Verùm λόγος in vtero Virginis existens, humanam naturam sibi ipse: in se ipso, tum corpus ex substantia Mariae formando; tum animam simul creando, assumpsit. Atque ita illam in seipso, & sibi assumpsit: vt illa natura nunquam per se substiterit extra λόγον: Sed & tum primum, & deinceps semper in λόγῳ tantum substiterit.” Three different editions of Zanchius’s *Opera Theologica* were published during the early modern period, all in Geneva: one in 1605, one in 1613, and another in 1617–19. It is, to my knowledge, not possible to determine which of the three editions Milton might have been using on the basis of his references to it. For the purposes of quoting from Zanchius’s *Opera* in this essay, however, I have used the lattermost, 1617–19 edition, which was “[t]he definitive edition” and “which is the edition best known to posterity” (Baschera and Moser 1: 13). It also happens to be the edition published most recently to when Milton would have been working on *De Doctrina*.

⁹ In Latin, see *OCW* 8: 698: “Introducto evangelio per fidem in Christum, foedere novo, vetus omne, i. e. tota lex Mosaica abol[e]tur.”

¹⁰ In Latin, see *OCW* 8: 700: “Eph. 2. 14. 15. *intergerini parietis septum, i. e. inimicitias, dissolvit carne sua; lege illa praeceptorum, quae in decretis posita est, irritâ factâ.*”

¹¹ In Latin, see *OCW* 8: 700, 702: “lex autem non caeremonialis modò, sed tota Mosaica positiva, praeceptorum erat, et in decretis posita. nec caeremoniali tantum, ut hîc vult **Zanchius**; sed tota lege Mosaica dissidebant Iudaei à Gentibus; abalienatis ne[m]pe à civili statu Israelis, et extraneis quod ad pactorum promissionem, v. 12. promissio autem facta est totius legis operibus, non caeremoniis tantum; nec illae solùm causae erant inimicitiae inter nos et Deum, v. 16.”

¹² *Zanchius* 6: 68: “Haec autem erat ea potissimum pars legis, qua cultus, caeremoniae, & ritus in religione praecipiebantur, ab iis enim Gentes erant admodum diuersae . . . Nonnihil etiam oriebatur inimiciarum ex diuersitate legum politicarum: sed cumprimis ex caeremonialibus legibus. Hanc igitur partem ait fuisse abrogatam per Christum.” The passage from *Zanchius’s Opera* is noted in *CPW* 6: 527n9, but the translation above is my own.

¹³ In Latin, see *OCW* 8: 702: “Vulgò occurritur, de lege duntaxat caeremoniali abolita, intelligi haec loca omnia debere.”

¹⁴ In Latin, see *OCW* 8: 712: “Hanc ego veritatem cùm tot locorum luce collata contra omnium ferè, quos legeram, Theologorum sententiam, qui totam Mosaicam legem abrogatam negan[t] asseruisse mihi videbar, **Zanchium** fortè in epistolam ad Ephes. cap. 2. fusè scribentem in eadem mecum sententia reperi: qui addit, et rectè quidem, *in huius quaestionis explicatione, non minimam partem Theologiae consistere: nec probè intelligi posse ne scripturas quidem, praesertim doctrinam de iustificatione et bonis operibus*, totum evangelium ego quidem dixerim, *nisi articulus iste de legis abrogatione intelligatur*; rêmque satis accuratè probat; sed probatis non strenuè utitur; multis postea exceptionibus involutus ac fluctuans, quae lectorem paulò minus attentum, incertiorum dimittunt.”

¹⁵ See *Zanchius* 6: 91: “Credo, inquam, ex iis omnibus abundè liquere, *propositae quaestionis solutionem: quomodo, scil. lex abrogata sit, & non abrogata: in cuius quaestionis explicatione, non minima pars Theologiae consistit. Neque enim probe intelligi posse scripturas sentio, articulum item de iustificatione, & de bonis operibus: nisi articulus iste de legis abrogatione, aut necessitate intelligatur.*” As noted in *CPW* 6: 533n18.

¹⁶ In Latin, see *OCW* 8: 870: “Diem et horam adventûs Christi solus pater novit; Matt. 24. 36. Marc. 13. 32; *de die illo ac hora nem[o] novit—*. Act. 1. 7; *non est vestrum nosse tempora sive opportunitates quas pater in sua ipsius auctoritate statuit.* Dan 12. 8. 9. *dixi, Domine mi, quis finis futurus istorum? Et ille, Abi inquit Daniel; nam oclusae sunt et obsignatae hae res usque ad tempus determinatum. Poterit etiam hac de re legi utilissimus liber Zanchii de fine seculi, tom. 7.*”

¹⁷ In Latin, see *Defensio Secunda* 43, 45: “sive illos memorem vetustatis ultimae priscos vates, ac sapientissimos; quorum calamitatem, & Dii, ut fertur, multò potioribus donis compensârunt, & homines eo honore affecerunt, ut ipsos inculpare maluerint deos, quàm caecitatem illis crimini dare . . . quod tali igitur viro usu venit, ponendum in malis esse vix putem.”

¹⁸ In Latin, see *Defensio Secunda* 45-46: “Quid summi nominis theologos Hieronymum Zanchium, nonnullòsque alios? cùm & ipsum Isaacum Patriarcham, quo nemo unquam mortalium Deo charior fuit, annos haud paucos, caecum vixisse constet.”

¹⁹ Milton could have learned of *Zanchius’s* blindness through his *Opera Theologica*. The dedicatory epistle to *Zanchius’s Commentarius in Epistolam Sancti Pauli ad Ephesios*, signed collectively by *Zanchius’s* sons and sons-in-law, speaks of the time “*cùm acie oculorum hebetata, & senectutis incommodis accedentibus, nec lectioni nec scriptioni amplius vacare posset*” (when the vision of his eyes had dimmed and the troubles of old age had befallen him, so that he could no longer devote himself to reading or writing; *Zanchius* 6: sig. ¶¶4r). Milton need not have learned of *Zanchius’s* blindness from the *Opera*, though, despite Milton’s twice referring in *De Doctrina* to *Zanchius’s* commentary on Ephesians specifically, as we have seen. In his *The Vanitie of the Eie*, the first two editions of which appeared in 1608 (and with further editions published in 1615 and in 1633), George Hakewill treats it more or less as common knowledge that “*Jerome Zanchie an Italian, the principall reformed schoolman,*” had ended his career composing works in “blindnesse,” and of course in his own way, in the *Defensio Secunda*, Milton similarly treats it as a widely known fact (Hakewill 155).

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