Picturing the Invisible: Religious Printed Images in Elizabethan England

Submitted by David Jonathan Davis to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in HISTORY

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the culture of printed images during the Elizabethan period, particularly those images of a religious nature. Focusing on images which depict invisible beings (i.e. angels, God, demons etc.), the thesis addresses the assumption that Protestant England all but completely eradicated religious visual imagery from society. Examining images that were first created and printed in Elizabethan England as well as older images which had been recycled from earlier texts and others imported from Europe, the research offers an analysis of Protestant printed imagery between 1558 and 1603. Questions of how images were read, altered, augmented, copied and transmitted across time and space have been posed. What was depicted and how? How were religious images used? What was their understood role in early modern print culture? How did Protestants distinguish between church images to be destroyed and printed images to be read? In this, the images have been historically contextualised within both the theological and cultural milieu of Calvinist theology, the growing international marketplace of print and early modern English society. Attention has been paid to how images were received by readers and how they may have been seen. Emphasis is placed upon the role of the printed image as both a representation and an agent of culture, as well as an integral aspect of the printing industry. Ultimately, this thesis seeks to explain how printed images were employed and utilised by both printer and reader in the context of an iconoclastic English Reformation.
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Abbreviations

BBTI—The British Book Trade Index: http://www.btti.bham.ac.uk/


CSPD—Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, and James I, 1547-[1625], vol. 10: Elizabeth (London: Public Record Office, 1867)


EHR—The English Historical Review


P&P—Past & Present: A Journal of Historical Studies


SCJ—The Sixteenth Century Journal: The Journal of Early Modern Studies


TL—The Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society

Notes on the Text

When referencing early modern editions, spelling and punctuation has been kept as it appears in the original texts, with the exception of i/j and u/v, which have been distinguished in accordance with modern usage. All Biblical references have been taken from the New International Version, unless otherwise stated. Because of their importance to this study, the names of the printers have been inserted into the footnotes for works published pre-1700 (though footnotes for secondary works still conform to the MHRA style guide).
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