

# n e w   w o r l d   o r d e r s

## millennialism in the western hemisphere

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### **The Revolutionary Roots of Anglo-American Millenarianism: Robert Maton's *Israel's Redemption* and *Christ's Personall Reign on Earth***

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#### **Preface**

For this conference on millennialism in general, and particularly for today's panel on the seventeenth century, my paper has two points which I would like to make. The first is simply to emphasize the connection between millennialism in the Old World and millennialism in the brave New World. My second point, and the way I want to illustrate the first, is by discussing an understudied English millenarian named Robert Maton.

Historians in the early half of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century largely ignored millenarianism in their study of the seventeenth-century. As scholars began to investigate New England millenarianism in the latter half of this century, there was a move in the opposite direction; with the idea emerging that the entire Massachusetts Bay Colony, from its inception, was a millennial enterprise. A decade ago the view again changed with the work of Theodore Bozeman, who argued that millennialism first appeared in New England in the 1640s, and rather than being inherent in the New England experience, this interest was provoked by "the great upsurge [of political events and millennial interest] in the mother country."<sup>1</sup>

Scholars today often recognize the importance of European and English influence on millenarianism in the New World. Nevertheless, the discussion of English millenarians is often limited to leading thinkers such as Thomas Brightman or later Joseph Mede. The resulting impression is that while such thinkers were important, their work was rather isolated. This discussion of Robert Maton will show that Brightman and Mede were not alone in their speculations concerning the millennium. Additionally, this paper will highlight some of the millenarian themes emerging in seventeenth-century England.

In order to provide some detail to that "great upsurge" of millennial interest noted by Bozeman, this paper will first discuss Robert Maton and his earliest published works. Next, some of the responses to Maton will be considered by looking at Thomas Killcop and Alexander Petrie. Finally, Maton's later work will be discussed before concluding.

#### **Introduction to Maton**

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 229. Bozeman's quote is "Thus even in the remote New England colonies, it was the great upsurge in the mother country that caused the millennial heresy of Brightman and Mede to climb the agenda of Puritan faith."

Robert Maton was born in Wiltshire, England in 1607 and went up to Wadham College, Oxford at age sixteen. It is not unreasonable to speculate that Maton's millenarian views were forming during this time at Oxford in the 1620s. The antiquarian Anthony Wood wrote that Maton was "always in his heart a millenary, which he never discovered in public till the rebellion broke out, and then the press being open for all opinions, he published."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, when government control of the press broke down in 1642, Maton rushed to the press with not one, but two books, which suggests that Maton had been working for sometime on his millenarian treatises.

Wood's comments remind us that Robert Maton wrote and lived during one of the most turbulent periods of British history. In the two decades between 1640 and 1660, civil war and revolution consumed England. Amidst the religious and political energy released in that tumultuous time, millenarian speculation greatly increased. Soon Maton's ideas spread into the wider public and radical millenarians like the Fifth Monarchists would see in Maton's work a validation for their millennial vision.

### Maton's Early Work

In 1642 Robert Maton published two tracts. The first was entitled *Israels Redemption or the Prophetical History of Our Saviours Kingdom on Earth*. This text was published and bound with the second work, entitled *A Discourse of Gog and Magog, The Battle of the Great Day of the Lord Almighty*.<sup>3</sup> In these works, Maton set out his view that the millennium promised in Revelation 20 had not yet occurred and that it would be a future earthly event, for the "1000 year reign is to begin at his next appearing, and not before."<sup>4</sup> An important element in Maton's millenarian chronology was the restoration of the Jews to their homeland. Once the Jews were restored, a great army would rise up against them to do battle in Armageddon. At that time Christ would return and subdue the entire world. Christ would then sit as a king in the throne of David and rule with his resurrected saints for a thousand years. This thousand years was to follow the defeat of the Beast and the False Prophet, and was to coincide with the binding of Satan. Satan would then be loosed again, and after the final struggle, there would be a second resurrection in which all would be judged. The world would then end as the son delivered it to the father.

Maton's millenarianism was rooted in the belief that numerous biblical prophecies were as of yet still unfulfilled. Employing the belief that Christ must be Prophet, Priest and King, Maton began his first tract by saying "that Christ is already come; that as a prophet he hath called us to repentance, and as a priest hath been a propitiation for our sins" this is the "faith of the Christians and the infidelity of the Jews; but that he shall come as King to reign on earth and restore again the Monarchy to Israel, [this] is the faith of the Jews and the infidelity of the Christians."<sup>5</sup> For Maton, Christ was already Priest and Prophet, but he was not yet King in the sense foretold by Scripture. For seeing that "the Jews are yet to receive a kingdom . . . on earth, . . . we may justly doubt whether our Savior hath as yet executed the office of a King."<sup>6</sup> There were a number of unfulfilled

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<sup>2</sup> Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses, an Exact History of all the Writers and Bishops who have had their education in the University of Oxford; to which are added the Fasti; or, Annals of the said University*. 3rd ed., with additions and a continuation by Philip Bliss, vol. 3 of *The Sources of Science*, no. 55 (New York, Johnson Reprint Corp., 1967), 409.

<sup>3</sup> The full title of these two works are *Israel's redemption or The prophetical history of our Saviours kingdom on earth; that is, of the church Catholicke, and triumphant. With a discourse of Gog and Magog, or The battle of the great day of God almightie. By Robert Maton minister and Mr of Arts, and sometimes commoner of Wadham Colledge in Oxford* (London, 1642).

<sup>4</sup> Maton, *Israel's Redemption*, 112.

<sup>5</sup> Maton, *Israel's Redemption*, 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> Maton, *Israel's Redemption*, 45.

prophecies which Maton discussed in great detail. For example, the Jews and the Gentiles were not yet one “sheepfold” under one shepherd; Satan had not yet been bound; the Jews had not been restored to their Promised Land; Christ did not yet sit on the earthly throne of David, etc.<sup>7</sup> Maton enumerated countless biblical prophecies which were not fulfilled in Christ’s first coming, and since the entirety of Scripture was true, such prophecies could not be false. Therefore Maton expected that all of these unfulfilled prophecies would be realized in the second coming. The result was a distinct focus on the second advent as opposed to the first.

For centuries Christian commentators had argued that the prophecies Maton expected to occur in the second coming had already been fulfilled. Such arguments depended on allegorical and metaphorical readings of the Scripture. Maton, however, maintained that there was no logical reason for such figurative renderings of Scripture. The text was plain and clear; there was no reason to complicate the prophecies with metaphorical readings. Tradition, extra-canonical texts and ancient commentaries were all nothing compared to the authority of the actual biblical text, which must be taken as literally as possible whenever possible. Maton declared that the literal earthly rule of Christ was so clearly expressed in Scripture that it was hard to conceive of other interpretations.<sup>8</sup> Maton summarized his literalist hermeneutic in an axiom, he explained “we must not forsake the literal and proper sense of the Scripture, unless an evident necessity does require it.”<sup>9</sup> This was the method of “natural” interpretation and it was perilous to stray from it.

In relation to this point, it is important to note that Maton rejected “mystical” interpretations, both in the sense of the metaphorical and the revelatory.<sup>10</sup> Whereas radical millenarians blended their apocalyptic exegesis with revelation, mystical influences were completely absent from Maton’s work. Far from being a mystic, Maton was more a scientist. His methodology relied not on personal revelation, but rather upon logic and reason. Additionally, Maton advocated his method because it worked, that is, it consistently rendered intelligible results. Significantly fewer contradictions arose when the prophecies were taken literally. Maton represents the more somber form of millenarianism that developed in the academies of England. This exacting hermeneutic, with its reverence for the text, also demonstrates the way in which religious thought was both shaping and employing new scientific thinking.<sup>11</sup>

If this interpretation was as clear as Maton insisted, why were so many opposed to it? Maton suggested a number of answers. At the foundation of his explanations was the belief that Catholic scholars had consciously corrupted the proper interpretation of Revelation. “Romanists” had concealed the fact that the papacy was the Antichrist by claiming that Antichrist was to be a Jew from the tribe of Dan. Thus by casting aspersion on the true protagonists of the millennial drama, the true antagonists had succeeded in further deceiving the world.<sup>12</sup> In fact, Maton argued that the exegetical tradition was so corrupt that it should be ignored and only the biblical texts

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<sup>7</sup> Maton, *Israel’s Redemption*, 38, 46, 56, 124.

<sup>8</sup> Maton, *Israel’s Redemption*, 3. With regard to the rejection of all tradition and other authorities, Maton was particularly disdainful towards arguments which maintained that since countless believers had attested to a certain tenet it was therefore true. He said “many thousands have conceived these words in another sense, which is as good a reason to prove that other sense to be the true sense of them, as it is to say, that Mahomet was not a false prophet, because many millions have and do erroneously conceive him to be a true prophet” (Robert Maton, *Israel’s Redemption Redeemed* (London, 1646), 120).

<sup>9</sup> Maton, *Israel’s Redemption*, 48.

<sup>10</sup> Maton, *Israel’s Redemption Redeemed*, sig. A5, 120.

<sup>11</sup> For an example of the connections between the millennial and the scientific mind in seventeenth-century England, see Matthew Goff, “The Millennial Scientist: Isaac Newton Reading Daniel 7” *The Journal of Millennial Studies* [Conference proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of the Center for Millennial Studies, Boston University, December 6-8, 1998] available from [www.mille.org](http://www.mille.org).

<sup>12</sup> Maton, *Israel’s Redemption*, 19-22, cf. Maton, *Israel’s Redemption Redeemed*, sig. A5-A6.

themselves should be examined.<sup>13</sup> This line of thought provides insight into a facet of the Anglo-American millenarian tradition. Maton's writings are representative of the idea that the sacred texts had been concealed under a dark cloud until the chains of Rome were broken in the Reformation. Thus, while these were believed to be ancient truths, they were being anxiously rediscovered. This line of thinking interjected a fierce anti-Catholic element into Protestant millenarian thought. It was no longer the Turk or the Jew that was the enemy of the true Christian, but rather the Catholic, who came to represent the Antichrist and to hold responsibility for the corruption of both the Church and Scripture.

While Maton claimed that his method did not depend on tradition, he nevertheless made occasional reference to a number of other millenarian writers, such as Alsted, Brightman and Mede; in doing so, he showed that there was already a contemporary canon which millenarians like Maton could look to for both ideas and legitimization.<sup>14</sup> While Maton had much in common with other millenarians of his time, he differed in some important aspects. For example, unlike Mede and other "premillennialists," Maton argued for a literal physical presence of Christ in his Kingdom for the entire thousand years. Maton justified this position in a number of ways and with reference to a variety of biblical texts. His argument, however, was simple: the Bible indicated an earthly reign and there was no mention of Christ returning to heaven after the start of the millennium, therefore there was no reason *not* to presume that Christ would physically rule the entire thousand years.<sup>15</sup> This was something of a unique position at the time, and may even represent a contribution to the English millenarian tradition--for in the years before the English revolution this position was seldom advanced, although it became increasingly popular once the revolution was underway.

Before moving on to discuss some of Maton's critics, one final illustrative point can be taken from Maton's 1642 *Israel's Redemption*. There is in his text a distinct philo-Semitism. In medieval commentaries, the Antichrist had often been identified as a Jew from the Tribe of Dan. We have already seen how Maton dismissed this argument as a ploy of the Catholics. Maton insisted that a Jewish Antichrist was completely incompatible with the Scripture. Instead, Maton casts the Jews in a very favorable role. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Thomas Brightman had written of a literal return of the Jews to their homeland. Maton not only looked forward to the Jews literal return and conversion, but he went further in saying that the Jews would be the rulers of the world, and the gentiles would become their tributaries.<sup>16</sup> For Maton, the Jews were the true heroes of history who would ultimately triumph in their conversion and domination of all other kingdoms. Maton repeatedly urged his readers not to hate Jews since such anti-Semitism prevented a proper understanding of the Scriptures.

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<sup>13</sup> Maton, *Israel's Redemption*, 19-22. Additionally, in *Israel's Redemption Redeemed*, Maton wrote that it "it may easily be conceived how the Prophets were expounded in those days; and that they then began to interpret the scriptures mystically, when error had taken hold, not only on the most, but the most powerful patrons in the Church also: on such who by their place and authority, could force the truth either wholly to hide it self, or to be known no otherwise then by the ignominious name of an heresy: which was not till some ages after the Apostles days" (Maton, *Israel's Redemption Redeemed*, 71).

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Brightman was a favorite and it is possible that Maton's thinking concerning Jews was highly influenced by Brightman's work (see for example Maton, *Israel's Redemption Redeemed*, 124, 151). Maton also refers to Archer, Wendelinus and Alsted (Maton, *Israel's Redemption Redeemed*, 200 (second page numbered 200, cf. 258, 268). The most important interpreter of the Apocalypse, in Maton's opinion was Joseph Mede, whom Maton refers to a number of times in his writings. Maton's invocation of Mede's name is revealing, for not only does it show some sources of influence, but it also demonstrates the way in which Mede had brought respectability to the study of the millennium. Maton's frequent mention of Mede's name is as much an effort to legitimate Maton's endeavor as it is an acknowledgment of intellectual indebtedness. While Maton does borrow from Mede's employment of "synchronisms," in a few places, he overplays his indebtedness to Mede in order to demonstrate that he is engaged in a serious academic endeavor and that he is applying a systematic hermeneutic.

<sup>15</sup> See for example Maton's *Israel's Redemption Redeemed*, 207.

<sup>16</sup> Maton, *Israel's Redemption Redeemed*, 311-12

Such philo-Semitism represents a significant shift in English thinking. If millenarians like Maton had not begun to conceptualize Jews in a positive light, then it is unlikely that the philo-Semitism which developed in seventeenth-century England would have arisen. It was not until the middle of the 1650s, prompted in part by millennial dreams, that Oliver Cromwell began open negotiations for the re-admittance of Jews into England, ending a four hundred year long ban. This interest in the Jews and their role in the end times would continue to characterize the Anglo-American millenarian tradition.<sup>17</sup>

### Responses to Maton

If we have seen some of the elements of Maton's millenarianism, let's turn briefly to look at some of the responses that his work received. Thomas Killcop, whose importance in the development of Anglo-American religion has been often overlooked, is one individual whom Maton strongly influenced. Killcop was one of the first English Baptists and he published the first Particular Baptist treatise on believer's baptism in 1642.<sup>18</sup> Killcop later published a tract entitled *Ancient and Durable Gospel*, which relies heavily upon Maton. Indeed, Killcop chose to acknowledge his indebtedness to Maton by ending his text saying, "I commend to thy further view the writings of Robert Maton."<sup>19</sup> Using Maton's millenarianism to revise contemporary ideas regarding salvation, Killcop argued that in Christ's first coming salvation was purchased through the cross, but that it was not fully realized until Christ's second coming and the inauguration of a thousand year earthly kingdom.<sup>20</sup> Killcop explained that while "the time of the purchase is past, the time of the redemption [is still] to come."<sup>21</sup>

Killcop's adaptation of Maton's work brings out an important point alluded to before, but which needs to be emphasized here. The result of this millenarianism's focus on the second coming is to radically alter the emphasis within Christian theology, for it changes the very

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<sup>17</sup> This interest can be seen in a number of ways, from the identification of the Native Americans as Jews to the interest shown by New England millenarians starting as early as John Cotton and his expositions on Revelation.

<sup>18</sup> See Mark Bell, *Apocalypse How* (Macon Georgia: Mercer University Press, forthcoming 2000).

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Killcop, *Ancient and Durable Gospel* (London, 1648), 108.

<sup>20</sup> The full title of Killcop's work provides a summary for his text: *Ancient and durable gospel. Concerning the time of the perfect and totall subduing, washing away, remitting, blotting out, and pardoning, believers sins: and believers being justified, adopted, married to Christ; and presented by Christ spotlesse. Shewing, that though these things were in purpose before the world was, in prophesie, and promise, before Christ dyed; purchased just then; and applyed by faith when we believe. Yet the said purpose is not executed; the said prophesies are not accomplit; nor promises fulfilled; the things purchased are not effected, nor by us fully enjoyed, till Christs second comming: at which time the saints that sleep shall arise: and scattered Israel shall be gathered. Written by Thomas Kilcop. In two books; the one iu [sic] an orderly sermon-method: the other by way of answer to a book intituled. Justification by Christ alone: a good title, were the book but sutable* (London, 1648). The second half of Killcop's work can be summarized by its opening passage, which reads "that justification is by Christ alone, I grant, and that he shall take away and utterly destroy the sins of his people . . . I affirm; but that he hath done this already, I deny; for they are not spotless, till Christ's appearing" (Killcop, *Ancient and Durable*, 31). Like Maton, Killcop begins his text by saying that things in the Bible should be taken as they are, he explains "It is good to understand Comparisons, Comparatively, Doctrines, Doctrinally; and Parables, Parabollically; to understand histories, historically; and Prophecies Prophetically: to understand Metaphors Metaphorically; and Proper Speeches, Properly." Also like Maton, Killcop distrusted all tradition and urged his reader not to take all that is taught for current doctrine, "but try whether it be of God, try all things, hold fast what is good" (sig. A3-A4). For Killcop's ideas concerning the thousand-year rule of the saints, see for example Killcop, *Ancient and Durable Gospel*, 25-7.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Killcop, *Ancient and Durable Gospel*, 8, sig. A5. Killcop explained that regardless of present faith, it was not until the second coming that "believers shall be cleansed not only in parts, but wholly, perfectly and completely: their sins shall be perfectly remitted, blotted out, washed away, etc. and believers shall be without fault, spotless, unblameable, without blemish, etc. not before, but when the first resurrection is, when Christ comes from heaven, and scattered Israel is gathered together, and brought to their own land." Killcop went on to state that "when the Jews even the whole house of Israel are gathered out of all countries to their own land and become one people; then and not till then, shall sin be perfectly purged and washed away: for the proof of this, mark what God saith, I will bring Israel again to his habitation . . ." (Killcop, *Ancient and Durable Gospel*, 16, 20).

conception of the first advent.<sup>22</sup> In Killcop and Maton's view, the first advent was not the crucial moment for Christian faith. The real function of the first coming was to set the last days in motion. As a result, attention was forcefully focused on the second coming. As attention turned in this direction, the atmosphere of apocalyptic expectation increased.<sup>23</sup>

Just as Maton had admirers like Killcop, he also had a number of critics. One such critic was the Scottish Presbyterian Alexander Petrie. Petrie was not a theological conservative. As an avid member of the Scottish covenanting movement, he had helped to overthrow episcopacy in Glasgow before being assigned to Rotterdam by the presbytery of Edinburgh. Like Maton, Petrie had read the canon of apocalyptic expositors. Petrie shared Maton's apocalyptic curiosity, but he rejected his millenarianism. In fact, Petrie had become concerned by the growth of millenarianism in his community. He said that when he debated members of his congregation on the issue, they often placed Maton's book into his hands as proof of the millenarian position. In an effort to offer an "antidote," Petrie published a book in 1644 entitled *Chiliasto-Mastix*, which directly refuted Maton's millenarianism.<sup>24</sup> Petrie wanted to make it clear that the millennium was not a new idea recently released from the clutches of popery. Rather, it was an ancient heresy, "an old Jewish fancy and a Cerinthian fable: old errors are like old whores, that is, the more to be abhorred."<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, while Petrie was writing to confound Maton, his practice of quoting long passages out of Maton's original work probably helped to spread Maton's ideas.

Petrie mustered a host of texts to discredit Maton's millenarianism. He maintained that various passages throughout the Bible, but especially in the writings of John, demonstrated that "Christ's kingdom is not an earthly kingdom, nor delayed for one or two 1000 years, but now is his kingdom, now he has overcome the world . . ."<sup>26</sup> Aside from the usual battle of texts typical of puritan polemic, an interesting aspect of Petrie's book is his attempt to co-opt Maton's literalist hermeneutic. Petrie argued that he was interpreting from a literal perspective, but in his terminology "literal" was synonymous with "true." Therefore, Petrie could argue that he "forsake[s] not the literal interpretation of these prophecies: for that is the literal interpretation, which is principally intended, whither it be proper or figurative . . ."<sup>27</sup> Thus, when prophecy mentions Jews, this could be *literally* interpreted for the elect Christians, since this was the *intended* meaning of such prophecies. While this argument was partially semantic, it is important in that it demonstrates the acceptance of a literal interpretation as superior. Therefore, the Biblical literalism that was to characterize later strains of Protestantism millennialism can already be seen in such discussions.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Killcop, *Ancient and Durable Gospel*, 43, cf. 106.

<sup>23</sup> And although mere human words could not describe the divine mind, men like Killcop and Maton believed that Scripture would allow them to discover the details of the divine plan. As Maton explained, "And though the joyes which God hath prepared for the Saints are unutterable; yet the place, the eternal habitation, which he hath prepared for them, is not inapprehensible" (Maton, *Israel's Redemption Redeemed*, sig. D3. On a similar note, Killcop believed that there would be no need to speak in the millennium (Killcop, *Ancient and Durable Gospel*, 105).

<sup>24</sup> Alexander Petrie, *Chiliasto-mastix. Or, The prophecies in the Old and New Testament concerning the kingdome of our savior Jesus Christ, vindicated from the misinterpretationes of the millenaries and specially of Mr. Maton in his book called Israels redemption, by Alexander Petrie minister of the Scots kirk at Roterdame. The epistle shevves the ground and pedigree of the mistake. To shew the originale of an errour is a convincing of it* (Rotterdam, 1644), 6 (introduction), cf. p. 5 (introduction).

<sup>25</sup> Petrie, *Chiliasto-Matrix*, 5 (introduction).

<sup>26</sup> Petrie, *Chiliasto-Matrix*, 3 (introduction).

<sup>27</sup> Petrie, *Chiliasto-Matrix*, 15.

<sup>28</sup> Petrie wrote that "when the words of Scripture being properly taken, teach any thing contrary to the analogy of faith or honesty in manners, or any thing frivolous that belongeth nothing to godliness, or dissonant from the scope of the text, or contrary unto other clear texts of the same purpose: these words must be expressed figuratively, and a figurative sense is the literal or primarily intended sense of these words" (Petrie, *Chiliasto-Matrix*, 10, cf. 15).

While men such as Thomas Killcop and Alexander Petrie had different reactions to Maton's work, their writings demonstrate Maton's influence. As the revolutionary events of the 1640s unfolded, Maton's influence grew and by 1646 he published another book entitled *Israel's Redemption Redeemed*.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, it does not appear that time will allow for a full discussion of this text, which runs to some 400 pages. While this new book was essentially a reply to Petrie, it demonstrates that Maton had become aware that his audience had grown considerably as the debate over the millennium took on increasing importance in English society.

In the process of responding to Petrie, Maton supplied new biblical texts and reasserted his original arguments. A few points which can be briefly gleaned from this new text are 1) that Maton's philo-Semitism is even further defined, 2) Maton gives a clear delineation of the authority of Scripture and insists that each passage must be restricted to a single meaning,<sup>30</sup> and 3) in his 1646 work, Maton makes it clear that the inauguration of the millennium is not to be a gradual event, but rather a sudden and dramatic happening--which is a further characteristic of seventeenth-century millenarianism.<sup>31</sup>

In 1652 Maton's 1646 work came under a new publisher and received a new title. This new edition trumpeted Maton's millenarianism by calling his work *Christs personall reigne on earth, one thousand yeares with his saints the manner, beginning, and continuation of his reigne clearly proved by many plain texts of Scripture, and the chiefe objections against it fully answered, explaining the 20 Revelations and all other Scripture-prophecies that treat of it*. Already Maton's work was being repackaged for an audience more accustomed to millenarianism. As Maton's work was read by an ever-wider public, Maton lost control of the interpretation of his ideas. Maton is thought to have died in 1653. He probably did not live to see either the millennial excitement or the bitter disappointed that surrounded the calling and failure of the Barebones Parliament. After Maton's death and in the wake of the millenarian radicalism unleashed after Barebones, a further edition of Maton's work was released. This edition bore a reverent portrait of Maton and was contentiously entitled *A Treatise of the Fifth Monarchy*.

While several historians have identified Maton as a Fifth Monarchist, his exact relationship with this radical movement remains unknown. His works do not indicate that he

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<sup>29</sup> The full title of this text is *Israel's redemption redeemed. Or, the Jewes generall and miraculous conversion to the faith of the Gospel: and returne into their owne land: and our Saviours personall reigne on Earth, cleerly proved out of many plaine prophecies of the Old and New Testaments. And the chiefe arguments that can be alledged against these truths, fully answered: of purpose to satisfie all gainsayers; and in particular Mr. Alexander Petrie, Minister of the Scottish Church in Rotterdam. By Robert Maton, the author of Israel's redemption. Divided into two parts, whereof the first concernes the Jewes restauration into a visible kingdome in Judea: and the second, our Saviours visible reigne over them, and all other nations at his nextappearing [sic]. Whereunto are annexed the authors reasons, for the literall and proper sense of the plagues contain'd under the trumpets and vialls.*

<sup>30</sup> Maton's emphasis on the paramount importance of the Biblical texts is stunning in this later work. In addition to his insistence that all tradition was surpassed by Scripture, in his new work Maton went on to explain that each passage of Scripture has only one meaning intended by God. He encouraged expositors not to be double-dealers, interpreting passages one way and then another in order to suit their interests. "God forbid," Maton declared. "Yea, let God be true and everyman a liar: as truth then is but one, so doubtless there can be but one true sense of any place in the Scripture, but one sense intended by God; and therefore to make the Scripture Janus-like to look both ways, is from man and not from God" (Maton, *Israel's Redemption Redeemed*, 126-7). Maton was confident that if people interpreted the Bible in a literal and consistent way, seeking to find the unique divine meaning of each passage, then they would ultimately arrive at the same conclusions concerning the millennium which he had tirelessly labored to reach.

<sup>31</sup> Petrie had also advanced a number of non-Scriptural arguments against Maton. For example, Petrie said that Christ would be offended by the carnal actions of men in the millennial kingdom described by Maton. To this Maton replied, in good puritan fashion, that the millennium was not a Muslim-style paradise of luxury. Indeed, simply because Christ's kingdom would be earthly did not mean that it would be worldly. While eating, drinking and marriage would continue, dissension and the evil intents in such actions would be eradicated under the peace of Christ's Kingdom (Maton, *Israel's Redemption Redeemed*, 259-60, 291).

would necessarily have been in sympathy with this millenarian movement's view that violence should be employed in order to make way for the earthly kingdom of Jesus. Whether he would have supported them or not, the reverent portrait and the new title of Maton's work demonstrates that the Fifth Monarchists considered him one of their heroes, a man who had helped to restore the truth of the millennium.

In conclusion, we have seen some aspects of Maton's millenarianism and his hermeneutic. His methodological approach, literalist interpretation and emphasis on Scriptural authority are all characteristics which previous and later millenarians would employ. Likewise, his forceful philo-Semitism, anti-Catholicism and his description of an earthly Kingdom would further characterize later millenarian writings. Maton's endeavor, his method and his conclusions had the effect of turning attention away from Christ's first coming towards the second. This in turn engendered further millennial speculation and also expectation. Aside from his subsequent influence, Maton is an important figure for further study because his writings reveal the way in which the early-modern English mind was re-approaching the ancient millennial heresy.

This discussion has aimed to broaden the picture of early seventeenth-century English millenarianism by examining lesser-known figures. In the end, the millennial excitement of puritan New England was neither unique nor did it develop in isolation. By discussing Robert Maton, Thomas Killcop and Alexander Petrie, this paper has shown that the millennial undercurrent in revolutionary England extended far beyond the authorization of the works of Mede. Thanks to the efforts of men like Maton, the millennium became the subject of fierce debate and hopeful expectation in the mother country. By the 1640s this ancient heresy had again entered the public sphere and reshaped the English imagination and spread outward.