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*St George: Iconoclasm, Iconophilia and England's patron saint: 1534-1553*

This article explores the changing representation of England's patron, St George, during the early part of the English Reformation. St George has often been an overlooked figure during this tumultuous period and the purpose of this paper is to chart the role that the iconography associated with the saint played during the Reformation at all levels of society.

The relationship between St George and the monarchy is first established as Henry VIII used the saintly patronage to portray himself as the chivalric Defender of the Faith. Symbolism related to the saint can be seen on the frontispieces of multiple editions of The Great Bible and served as a divine endorsement from the English church's break with Rome. St George's unique status as a lauded non-scriptural saint is also apparent when juxtaposed with the fate of St Michael the archangel, whose exalted place in the tradition of the English church did not survive the Reformation. The second half of the paper examines the iconography associated with St George at a popular level. St George's position as the patron saint of the monarchy and the country made him a vehicle through which English subjects could demonstrate their fealty to their monarch and the new church. Even as royal injunctions were enacted, forbidding the images of saints to exist and ending public devotional practices, representations of and celebrations related to St George continued throughout the Henrician Reformation. By detailing research of parishes across the country, the paper outlines how representations of the saint still existed in various forms during the period. Overall, the limited iconoclasm and changing forms of iconophilia related to St George serve as a window into the political and social history of the English Reformation.