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DIFFERING EXPERIENCES OF ICONOCLASM, 1532-1603: A COMPARISON OF THE
CATHEDRALS OF CANTERBURY, DURHAM, ELY AND YORK MINSTER.

TORI LAWFORD

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of MA by Research, History

University of Huddersfield

September 2017

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Abstract

Modern conceptions exist about each Tudor monarch. Henry VIII was a domineering king who turned England Protestant, Edward VI was a radical Protestant who oversaw a violent regime, Mary I was “Bloody Mary” and Elizabeth reigned over the “Golden Age”. This thesis attempts to dismantle some of these ideas and show how methods of religious change merged throughout the Tudor reigns. Henry’s Reformation was actually much more political than religious, and whilst Edward VI stimulated radical reform, it was the Elizabethan clergy who transformed England into a generally Protestant nation. The exploration of the high politics of religious reform leads to the assessment of Canterbury Cathedral, Durham Cathedral, Ely Cathedral and York Minster. The analysis of Tudor iconoclasm within these religious buildings simultaneously poses the question of geographical variances. Whilst the North of England was generally slower in implementing religious reform, the notion of a “conservative” North of England, versus a “reformist” South of England proves not to be so clean cut in terms of iconoclasm, and indeed image preservation, in English Cathedrals. The major iconoclastic missions undertaken by the Tudors started with the dismantling of shrines and the subsequent tarnishing of the reputations, miracles and cult of saints. Often regarded as merely a money-making scheme during the Dissolution of the Monasteries, this thesis will attempt to show the underlying political motivations of these attacks. Iconoclasm spanned further as the Tudor reigns progressed and increasingly included imagery, decoration, statues, relics and altars. The cathedrals and Minster offer an interesting, and varied, insight into which laws were implemented in each area; the aim of this thesis being to differentiate how far this reflected the monarch’s beliefs, individual cathedral personnel beliefs or the beliefs of the wider diocese. Ultimately a study of high politics rather than societal beliefs, the thesis aims to analyse how far cathedral personnel obeyed their monarch and the extent to which their respective cathedrals became model institutions for their diocese.

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Introduction

This thesis is an assessment of the iconoclastic attacks of the English Reformation examined through the lens of the impact on three Cathedral Churches and one Minster. In the context of the English Reformation, reformist iconoclasm involved the destruction of religious images, idols, practices and liturgy which encapsulated the “superstitious” or “idolatrous” beliefs rooted in Catholicism. The *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* defined how iconoclasts viewed images: ‘while “false idols” have no supernatural powers they are nevertheless so dangerous that they must be destroyed rather than ignored’.¹ In essence, during the medieval and early modern era, literacy levels were low amongst the general population, therefore images were a vital aspect of religion. Catholic images were a focal point for the devout, saints were worshipped in hope of miracles, and transubstantiation involved bread and wine being transformed into the Eucharistic elements of Christ’s flesh and blood. For Protestant reformists, these practices interfered with “justification by faith alone”; a direct relationship with God and led to the images being “abused” as worshipping tools. One research question which this thesis will explore is the traditional notion that the North of England was overtly more conservative and resistant to religious reform than the South of England. This will be assessed purely on iconoclastic actions since the historiography tends to focus solely on what survived rather than what objects, images and statues were destroyed. In order to consider geographical differences, this thesis will focus on four particular buildings; Canterbury Cathedral, Ely Cathedral, York Minster and Durham Cathedral. Although York Minster is not referred to as a cathedral, in the Reformation period it experienced similar iconoclasm, and largely demonstrated similar religious uses, as the other three cathedrals. Thus for the purpose of this thesis, York Minster will be treated in

¹ Blackburn, S. (2016). *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. (3rd Ed.). Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordreference.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780198735304.001.0001/acref-9780198735304-e-1564>.

the same respect as the cathedrals. Canterbury and Ely are both situated in the Province of Canterbury and York and Durham are situated in the Province of York, thus the case studies includes the mother church of each province as well as a major monastic cathedral from each in order to draw fair comparisons.

The English Reformation was the attempted conversion of the English nation from Catholic to a new reformed religion, Protestantism, starting in the sixteenth century. The eventual product of this was the Anglican Church of England, which is the official state church and religion of England in the present day. The doctrine of the Church of England was formulated during Elizabeth I's reign and was disseminated via the Book of Common Prayer, the Ordinal, the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Books of Homilies, and in the seventeenth century, the Church of England confirmed its rejection of the claims of Rome and refused to adopt the theological and ecclesiastical systems of the Continental Reformers.² In essence, Anglicanism had its roots in reformist ideologies and rejected many Catholic idols, imagery, practices and teachings, but it did so in a way that was different from the rest of Europe. England developed a distinctive religion and Edwin Smith and Olive Cook argue that 'the Reformation in England was unique in that it was political and not religious in origin; and the church established in consequence of it was unique in its synthesis of the old and the new'.³ Whilst many of the European Reformations during the sixteenth century were instigated and driven by purely religious ideas, the initial step towards religious reform in England was taken by Henry VIII – a Catholic.

This thesis will argue that the English Reformation was initially driven by the monarch, starting with Henry VIII in 1532 with the break from Rome and the 1534 first *Act of*

² Livingstone, E.A. (2014). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. (3rd Ed.). Retrieved <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199659623.001.0001/acref-9780199659623-e-256?rskey=SooqnC&result=254>.

³ Smith, E. & Cook, O. (1989). *English Cathedrals*. London: The Herbert Press. p.183.

Supremacy. This Act stated that 'the King our Sovereign Lord, his heirs and successors kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the only Supreme Head in earth of the Church of England called *Anglicana Ecclesia*'.⁴ This removed the power of the Pope in religious matters in England and placed Henry VIII (and subsequent monarchs of England) as the ultimate authority. However, the initial religious changes were often not due to the conversion of Henry VIII. Subsequent Tudor reigns were more focused on the religious ideology and implications of reform and counter-reform, but for Henry VIII the religious legislation was motivated by purely personal and political reasons. Peter Marshall argues that the Henrician Reformation was 'not a Protestant Reformation, nor in any meaningful sense "Catholicism without a Pope"'.⁵ Religious changes did occur but were driven by a pursuit of political power on Henry VIII's part. Even until his death Henry was a devoted Catholic and his later life was consumed with attempts to pull back some of the religious changes he had made. The *Act of Supremacy* was based on Henry's power hungry ego and his will to eradicate competition when it came to leadership of the English people. This was further demonstrated with the 1536 *Act against the Papal Authority* which stated that although Henry was made the Supreme Head of the Church of England, the 'Bishop of Rome and his see, and in heart members of his pretended monarchy, do in corners and elsewhere as they dare, whisper, inculce, preach, and persuade...the poor, simple, and unlettered people the advancement and continuance of the said Bishop's feigned and pretended authority'.⁶ Therefore, Henry ruled that anyone who listened to or helped to spread the Pope's message of authority would be 'lawfully convicted according to the laws of this realm'.⁷

⁴ Tanner, J.R. (1922). *Tudor Constitutional Documents, A.D. 1485-1603*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.47.

⁵ Marshall, P. (2003). *Reformation England, 1480-1642*. London: Hodder Arnold. p.57.

⁶ Tanner, J.R. *Tudor Constitutional Documents, A.D. 1485-1603*. p.49.

⁷ *Ibid*.p.50.

The main methodological approach of this thesis is an analysis of material culture. Andy Wood argued that to anyone who visited English parish churches ‘the wounds inflicted by Protestantism are there to be seen: holes in pillars where rood lofts had once hung; defaced rood screens and fonts; walls limed over where there had once been vivid paintings of saints – but the meaning of those wounds was locally specific’.⁸ This concept can also be applied to cathedrals and the following chapters will demonstrate how each of the cathedrals and Minster in this thesis still has existing evidence of Reformation iconoclasm. In order to really understand how cathedrals suffered throughout the Tudor Reformations, one must visit them and examine specific examples of iconoclasm. Therefore, particularly for the final chapter focusing on Catholic images and statues, the analysis revolves primarily around the photographs taken on these visits in order to try and decipher when the particular image was destroyed or preserved and how this occurred.

This thesis will start with an exploration of cathedral personnel (archbishops, bishops and deans) of Canterbury Cathedral, Ely Cathedral, York Minster and Durham Cathedral. It will highlight when cathedrals were conservative or radical in their iconoclastic changes and how these often coincide with the nature of the personnel of the time. Additionally, looking at cathedral personnel from Henry VIII’s reign to Elizabeth I’s helps to identify shifts in the religious beliefs of personnel, as well as waves of monarchical authority versus clergy authority, when implementing iconoclastic policies. Although Henry VIII was Catholic, he was the driving force behind the initial changes, which cathedral personnel often had no power or authority to prevent. Edward VI’s regime pushed iconoclastic policies further and cathedral personnel often had to conform. However, Mary I’s reign brought an attempted reversal of religious policy and many Catholics were appointed into bishoprics in order to achieve this. Elizabeth I’s reign demonstrated the most dramatic shift; radicals and Puritans

⁸ Wood, A. (2013). *The Memory of the People: custom and popular senses of the past in early modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.p.93.

were able to gain important positions due to the deprivations, old age and/or death of the previous occupants. From this point, archbishops, bishops and deans started to become the driving force behind religious change as they often pursued more radical policies and undertook more iconoclasm than what was legislated by the queen. Joel Hurstfield argued that as far as can be distinguished, Elizabeth was the only Tudor monarch who held no strong views on religion.⁹ This enabled the Elizabethan bishops to manipulate the uncertainty to their own advantage.

After establishing when and why the shift in authority from the monarch to the cathedral personnel occurred, the thesis delves into the specifics of iconoclasm. Although Henry VIII was the driving force behind the initial Reformation, it was on political rather than religious grounds. Thus, it is hard to imagine that much iconoclasm occurred throughout Henry's reign, since his main concerns appeared to be with the authority of religion rather than actual practices. However, this study will present a full chapter on the treatment of shrines, most of which occurred during the Henrician Reformation. The Dissolution of the Monasteries began in 1536 which dissolved monastic buildings and acquired their wealth for the Crown. As part of this policy, shrines became a major target. Even York Minster, which did not have a monastery, housed a shrine for St William of York and the other three cathedrals in this study were monastic at the time, each housing a shrine to their respective patron saints. The debate about Henry's motives centres on whether the attack on shrines and saints was religious or political. G.W.O. Woodward argued that 'as the attack had been concentrated chiefly upon such famous and richly adorned shrines...it is hard to escape the conclusion that the value of the potential booty in precious metals and rich jewels had been as important, if not more important than, the putting down of superstition'.¹⁰ The acquisition of wealth is a factor which Henry surely considered and shrines were an obvious

⁹ Hurstfield, J. (1960). *Elizabeth I and the Unity of England*. London: The English Universities Press. p.33.

¹⁰ Woodward, G.W.O. (1963). *Reformation and Resurgence, 1485-1603*. London: Blandford Press. p.82.

source of immense wealth. However, the policy was simultaneously directed at saints as well as shrines. Therefore, as Peter Marshall argues 'in effect, this was a declaration of war on the cult of saints, heartbeat of medieval popular religion'.¹¹ As the chapter on saints will show, Henry had a strong desire to attack the cult of saints for similar reasons as his break from Rome; they rivalled his authority. Whilst his policies were focused on one particular saint, Thomas Becket and his shrine in Canterbury Cathedral, the momentum surrounding the destruction of saintly reputations carried to the other cathedrals. All four saints in this assessment enjoyed the loyalties of many citizens from particular localities and this presented a conflict of interest, would they ultimately choose to follow their saint or their king?

Finally, this thesis will focus on iconoclastic attacks against Catholic images, statues and altars. Joel Budd suggests that 'the protracted war against religious images in England was fought primarily on the local level. It did not resemble a coordinated government campaign so much as a series of small skirmishes between zealots and conservatives in the parishes'.¹² However, this idea dismisses iconoclasm which occurred in cathedrals in order to influence the wider diocese as well as the role of the monarch and cathedral personnel in reforming England's religious practices. This chapter will focus solely on iconoclasm in cathedrals and how they were presented as models for the wider diocese. Eamon Duffy explained how 'late medieval Catholicism exerted an enormously strong, diverse, and vigorous hold over the imagination and the loyalty of the people up to the very moment of Reformation'.¹³ The imagination of the people was captured through images, shrines, statues and idols since the vast population was illiterate. Therefore, the iconoclastic experiences in cathedrals

¹¹ Marshall, P. *Reformation England, 1480-1642*. pp.53-54.

¹² Budd, J. (2000). Rethinking Iconoclasm in Early Modern England: the Case of Cheapside Cross. *Journal of Early Modern History*, 4 (3), 379-404. doi: 10.1163/157006500X00051.p.383.

¹³ Duffy, E. (1992). *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-c.1580*. London: Yale University Press. p.4.

portrayed how government religious policies were expected to be enacted and thus set the example for the rest of the diocese. The monarch, government and important members of the clergy had to direct attacks on these images in order to convert the nation. The assault on the Virgin Mary is one example of a government led campaign against Catholic images and figures, particularly throughout Elizabeth I's reign. Patrick Collinson argued that by the Elizabethan reign, "iconophobia" had overtaken iconoclasm; where images in general had become the focus of widespread fear and so they were all quashed rather than just images which portrayed Catholic ideologies.¹⁴ Therefore, 'in Elizabethan England the image of the Virgin was replaced by that of the virgin queen in polite and even popular devotion'.¹⁵ The Virgin Mary rivalled the notion of the Virgin Queen put forth by Elizabeth and her government. Although the Virgin Mary had been attacked previously as she was considered a saint to some, the Elizabethan regime directly led a campaign against the abolition of images of the Virgin Mary. Examples of such are found in cathedrals as well as parish churches. However, government policy had driven attacks against the Virgin Mary even before this point, with Cromwell's agents destroying the Lady Chapel in Ely Cathedral during the Henrician Reformation. The chapter will then focus on specific examples of iconoclasm within the four cathedrals, including empty niches where religious statues once stood, broken statues and defaced rood screens. However, preservation cannot be ignored. Whilst there are numerous examples of hiding images in an attempt to preserve them on a local level and within parish churches, there also existed examples on the high political scale of cathedrals. These examples can be found in all four cathedrals and help to evidence the fact that the monarch or bishops drove religious change, rather than the people, and ultimately conservative circles still existed in both provinces and made attempts to save their treasured Catholic images.

¹⁴ Collinson, P. (1986). *From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: the Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation*. Reading: University of Reading. p.8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p.23.

Chapter 1: Secondary Historiography

In order to understand and assess the success of iconoclasm in English cathedrals during the Reformation, the wider context of the religious changes need to be taken into account. Waves of historiography present new popular ideas throughout the decades, but this thesis does not categorically align with one particular “school” or historian. Nonetheless, whilst this thesis presents a combination of revisionist, post-revisionist and more focused iconoclastic arguments, it does not uphold any traditional notions. The traditional stance on the Reformation period argued that it was a rapid process instigated by the people of England. Writing in the 1960s, A.G. Dickens argues that the Reformation can clearly be seen as more than a mere act of state by the simple fact that a majority of the middle and upper classes in England had converted to Protestant opinions, despite Henry VIII’s opposition.¹⁶ Dickens extends this argument to also include the subsequent Tudor reigns. Despite Mary I’s reversal of Protestant gains, Dickens argues that even in the traditionally Catholic North of England, ‘there is clear evidence both of advancing Protestantism and of a proletarian heresy still owing something to the old Lollard tradition’.¹⁷ In reference to Elizabeth’s accession, Dickens suggests that the majority of English people could not possibly have been ardent and committed Catholics since the religious upheaval caused by Elizabeth’s Settlement encountered very feeble opposition’.¹⁸ Dickens’ views apparently overestimates the popularity of the Lollard community since there are several examples of the preservation of Catholic images, as well as conservative cathedral personnel who tried to stall reform.

Published in the 1970s, Keith Thomas’ *Religion and the Decline of Magic* also emphasised the idea that the Reformation was a rapid process driven by the people below. The main basis

¹⁶ Dickens, A.G. (1964). *The English Reformation*. London: Batsford. p.447.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p.450.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p.401.

for Thomas' thesis is that the Reformation era experienced a considerable decline in magic and superstition. Critiquing the late medieval period, Thomas argues that the decline of magic actually stemmed from Lollardy which showed an early denial of medieval Catholic beliefs; miracles, church exorcisms, transubstantiation and the concept that the Church had instrumental power given by Christ.¹⁹ Therefore, with the substantial rise of popularity of Protestantism during the early modern era, these early anti-Catholic views were further enforced. Since the Protestant faith depended on a personal relationship with God, it required a degree of understanding and literacy from the people. For Thomas, the rise in literacy and knowledge meant that superstition declined. An example which he provided is that the Anglican Church went from Latin to the vernacular in an attempt to remove the incantatory aspect of formal prayers.²⁰ To illustrate the success of Protestantism eradicating superstition and magic within religion, Thomas described Edwardian iconoclasm leading to altar stones becoming paving stones, bridges, fireplaces and kitchen sinks'.²¹ Whilst this demonstrates the decline of idolatry and the rise of iconoclasm to "purge" Catholic elements from cathedrals and parish churches, it does not explicitly prove that the people of England were the driving force. In fact, these traditionalist views significantly underplay the role of government and the clergy in enforcing change in religious institutions.

Although the views of traditionalists such as Dickens were respected for many years, the 1980s brought a widespread re-evaluation of the religious changes during the early modern period, known as "revisionism". Christopher Haigh's retort to Dickens was clearly marked from the outset with his book being entitled *The English Reformations*. The pluralisation of "Reformations" symbolised the new argument that the Reformation was not simply one swift movement, but rather a long process spanning several reigns. Haigh insisted that

¹⁹ Thomas, K. (1971). *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. London: Penguin Books. p.59.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p.70.

²¹ *Ibid.* p.86.

'Reformations in sixteenth-century England were haphazard and had only limited success'.²²

To Haigh, the process was long and relatively unsuccessful since religious changes were imposed on the people by the monarchs. In essence, 'it is likely that most of those who lived in Tudor England experienced Reformation as obedience rather than conversion; they obeyed a monarch's new laws rather than swallowed a preacher's new message'.²³ Eamon Duffy also supports the notion of a slow process imposed from above since 'the Reformation was a violent disruption, not the natural fulfilment, of most of what was vigorous in late medieval piety and religious practice'.²⁴ Notably, Duffy presents his arguments from a confessional viewpoint and thus his own Catholic beliefs naturally align in support of the Marian counter-Reformation. In an attempt to revive Mary I's popularity and oust the bad reputation she has developed, Duffy suggests that her reign 'consistently sought to promote a version of traditional Catholicism which had absorbed whatever they saw as positive in the Edwardine and Henrician reforms and which was subtly but distinctively different from the Catholicism of the 1520s'.²⁵ In essence, Mary attempted to introduce a "new and improved" version of Catholicism which the people of England welcomed. In his study of Morebath, Duffy states that West Country Protestants increasingly found themselves in a minority and many did not stay convinced in their reformed beliefs.²⁶ This thesis upholds the revisionist perspective on a basic level, arguing that indeed Protestant reforms were instigated and imposed from above by Henry VIII and Edward VI and the process spanned for decades. However, the major stray from the revisionist view presented in this thesis is the assessment of success. The Marian Counter-Reformation was not inherently successful in the four cathedrals within this study. This was partially due to Mary's short term as queen, but also

²² Haigh, C. (1993). *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p.12.

²³ *Ibid.* p.21.

²⁴ Duffy, E. (1992). *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-c.1580*. London: Yale University Press. p.4.

²⁵ *Ibid.* pp.525-526.

²⁶ Duffy, E. (2003). *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village*. London: Yale University Press. p.153.

the fact that the clergy and cathedral personnel became progressively more Protestant, hitting its sixteenth-century peak during Elizabeth I's reign.

The natural progression of historical opinion led to post-revisionist ideas about the Reformation. In 2009, Peter Marshall defined the word "post-revisionism" as an 'elusive and catch-all term' which represents a new historical perspective that there was a 'gradual yet profound cultural transformation rather than a swift Protestant victory of traditional historiography'.²⁷ Marshall assessed the English Reformation in theological terms and argues that it derived its theological ideas from wider European influences.²⁸ However, Marshall also argues that England implemented Protestantism differently and thus was the 'birthplace of a unique and distinctive strand of world Christianity – something called Anglicanism'.²⁹ The fact that England developed its own unique version of religion throughout the Reformation is not wholly surprising given that each Tudor monarch from Henry VIII onwards possessed very different religious beliefs; swinging England to and fro. Conflicts about what came under the remit of idolatry stemmed from the convolution of the monarchs' religious sentiments with the evermore progressive beliefs of cathedral personnel. Thus, England was unique in its stance on idolatry which included more icons and images as the Tudor reigns progressed, firstly pushed by Edward VI and his regime and then by the Elizabethan bishops. Focusing on the theological elements of the Reformation, Marshall argues that; 'it is often asserted that the Edwardian Reformation was a "Calvinist" one, with the implication that it was more extreme than its Elizabethan successor. Ironically, it was only in Elizabeth's reign that most English divines began to consider Calvin the supreme theological arbiter'.³⁰ Edward VI focused on changing the liturgy and encompassing

²⁷ Marshall, P. (2009). (Re)defining the English Reformation. *The Journal of British Studies*, 48 (3), 564-586. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/600128>.p.565.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p.578.

²⁹ *Ibid.* p.579.

³⁰ Marshall, P. (2003). *Reformation England 1480-1642*. London: Hodder Arnold. p.71.

all images in iconoclasm, but it was the Elizabethan bishops fighting against the queen's own beliefs who aimed to further radical ideas and iconoclasm. This thesis will centre on Marshall's argument that England's Reformation was quite separate and different from the European Reformations. It was from this fact that confusion stemmed about the extent of iconoclasm and whilst Edward imposed radical changes, it was the Elizabethan bishops who tried to push the queen to her limits and incorporate the Anglican Church.

Alexandra Walsham's book *Charitable Hatred* discusses the idea of Catholics hiding in plain sight. She argues that many Catholic subjects simply concealed their faith or outwardly conformed to the Elizabethan Settlement merely to avoid trouble, but this practice obviously left very little impression on record.³¹ Catholics who conformed to Elizabeth's wishes did so to avoid clashes with the law and Walsham argues that this behaviour was consistent throughout the Reformation since 'individuals moved easily between the various degrees of separation and detachment from the established Church, adjusting their behaviour in accordance with changing circumstances'.³² In terms of iconoclasm, this suggests that those who covertly practiced Catholicism may well have harboured and preserved images, statues, icons and relics. To the authorities this looked like conformity, "idolatrous" images had been removed and the people openly participated in Protestant services. However, Catholicism and "superstitious images" had merely been driven underground since authorities could not police what the general population did in the private sphere. This notion transfers to cathedrals also. Outwardly, cathedral interiors and practices were in line with the beliefs of the personnel, whether it was the dean, bishop or archbishop and these beliefs were either taken from the monarch or were more radical. This did not, however, mean that cathedrals represented the entire diocese. The iconoclasm that

³¹ Walsham, A. (2006). *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500-1700*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. p.188.

³² *Ibid.* p.188.

occurred in cathedrals did not necessarily take place in parish churches, and even if so, it did not automatically mean that they portrayed the beliefs of the wider nation. Walsham puts forth a similar argument in her article *The Reformation and 'The Disenchantment of the World' Reassessed*. The article attempted to assess the success of applying Max Weber's theory of "The Disenchantment of the World" to the English Reformation. In short, Weber argued that as the world became more educated and there was a rising popularity in Protestantism, superstitious ideas and rituals began to decline. Walsham recognised that the medieval era had been unfairly labelled as "uneducated", but in the present day, 'the idea of an enchanted middle ages is gradually evaporating'.³³ However, her ultimate argument is that Weber's thesis cannot be put into practice since there is 'some mileage in the proposition that magic and the supernatural did not so much disappear or decline as retreat from the public domain into the private sphere'.³⁴ Thus, this adds evidence to her claim that many ordinary people simply hid their Catholic beliefs during the Protestant Reformation.

Often collaborating on published works, Peter Lake and Michael Questier also attempted to reassess the traditional and revisionist views of the Reformation. Alternative to theological or social approaches, Lake and Questier adopted a political stance. In their journal article *Puritans, Papists and the "Public Sphere" in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context*, Lake and Questier emphasised how religion and politics became interlinked with a propaganda war between the Jesuits and the Elizabethan regime.³⁵ In regards to the Jesuit mission, Lake and Questier argued that 'however "pure" and strong the basic evangelical impulse that underlay the mission, the forms that impulse ended up taking were

³³ Walsham, A. (2008). The Reformation and 'The Disenchantment of the World' Reassessed. *The Historical Journal*, 51 (2), 497-528. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/20175171>. p.504.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p.521.

³⁵ Lake, P. & Questier, M. (2000). Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere" in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context. *The Journal of Modern History*, 72 (3), 587-627. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/316043>. pp.604-605.

structured by certain political and polemical contexts'.³⁶ In essence, as the state continued the condemn Jesuits, their mission and those who associated with them, Jesuits were then forced to defend themselves by attacking the state. Lake and Questier argue that the printing and distributing of Catholic works became a full frontal public attack on the Elizabethan state's representation of Catholics as treasonous, rather than merely a pastoral attempt to provide instruction and counsel.³⁷ These moves by the Jesuits thus made religion a political matter by directly challenging the regime. The political importance was further enhanced by the regime's retort to the actions of the Jesuits. Instead of merely killing Campion, the regime attempted to turn him into a political weapon by torturing him in order to portray Campion as a traitorous Catholic.³⁸

Alec Ryrie endeavoured to reach the core of religious change in the early modern period by explaining what it actually meant to be Protestant during that era. Ryrie argues that Protestantism on the whole was a 'university religion' which required the ability to read and interpret the Bible and practices for personal faith.³⁹ Therefore, the Protestant faith was based on a degree of self-consciousness which excluded most of the illiterate population.⁴⁰ Ryrie's *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* also highlights how unique the English Reformation was in comparison to the Scottish and various European Reformations. Ryrie argues that the Scottish break with its medieval past was more abrupt than England's due to the English Church's retention of some medieval trappings.⁴¹ This would suggest that iconoclasm was more urgent and intense during the Scottish Reformation, or at least the removal of Catholic imagery was rapid. The gap between the literate bishops, who had extensive educations and European influence, and the illiterate population, played a role in

³⁶ *Ibid.* p.603.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p.606.

³⁸ *Ibid.* p.620.

³⁹ Ryrie, A. (2015). *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.473-474.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p.474.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* p.471.

the struggle of iconoclasm in England. Obviously the more radical Protestants sought to sever all ties with the Catholic past, however 'puritans and conformists' devotional patterns united them, and they also insisted that, despite everything, they were united', an notion which Ryrie suggests we should believe.⁴² Although Protestantism was a new religion which spurred arguments about its boundaries and beliefs, in general Protestants united in their aim of spreading the new personal and "educated" religion. This argument is best applied to the liturgical change imposed by the Edwardian regime with the replacement of Latin service books with the Book of Common Prayer, which was further reinforced during the Elizabethan Settlement.

In regards to historiography focusing directly on iconoclasm during the English Reformation, the most prominent works are Patrick Collinson's *Iconoclasm to Iconophobia*, Margaret Aston's *Faith and Fire* and *Broken Idols of the Reformation* and Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars*. Margaret Aston illustrates the initial thought process of the Reformation; that iconoclasm was pointless until the idols of the mind were eradicated, but conversely, independent zealots destroyed images in order to accelerate reform.⁴³ The removal of Catholic imagery in cathedrals did not simultaneously lead to the conversion of the people. Iconoclasm was an outward backlash against Catholicism but in cathedrals it was generally undertaken by officials and cathedral personnel in an official capacity. Thus the iconoclastic attacks were prompted by the monarch and the extent to which they were put into practice was at the personnel's discretion, none of which involved the opinions and perspectives of the citizens living in the diocese. However, Aston stressed the importance of official iconoclasm. Despite what the citizens believed, the state was successful in sweeping away much of what reformers believed to be idolatrous "popish peltry" in the iconoclastic purges

⁴² *Ibid.* p.473.

⁴³ Aston, M. (1993). *Faith and Fire: Popular and Unpopular Religion 1350-1600*. London: The Hambledon Press. p.262.

undertaken by royal visitors throughout Edward VI's and Elizabeth I's reigns.⁴⁴ Despite this iconoclastic fervour from the regime, Aston argues that they attempted to keep the matter official, 'for by no means all church images were condemned as idolatrous, and the government, in attempting to distinguish between those that were inadmissible...and those that were valid...certainly never intended that individual subjects should start taking initiative on this matter'.⁴⁵ In essence, iconoclasm was the attempt to purge England of all spiritual and idolatrous Catholic images and objects, which the government attempted to control. However, the government's attempt to control the destruction led to discrepancies in the definitions of idolatry. Ultimately, there was a fine balance between official and organised iconoclasm and angry individual attacks throughout the Reformation era.

As previously mentioned, Eamon Duffy has a strong personal belief in the Catholic faith which leads to some of his works being rather confessional in nature. Undeniably, Duffy viewed iconoclasm in the Reformation period as negative and as having been forced upon the widely Catholic population. Duffy supports the notion that although official Edwardian iconoclasm meant that churchwardens throughout England co-operated in the destruction of traditional religion, it does not automatically translate to approval.⁴⁶ This concept could relate to his views on the Elizabethan Settlement, that 'the conformity of the majority did not mean the end of traditional religion'.⁴⁷ For many, the participation (or lack of reaction) to iconoclasm was a way of complying with the state to ensure personal safety, but it did not directly reflect their true personal beliefs practised in private. Duffy also stressed the lack of success that iconoclasm had on converting the nation to Protestantism. Iconoclasts were generally government officials or radical Protestants and hence the destruction of images was not a widespread activity undertaken by the masses. Therefore, 'even after the

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p.283.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* pp.275-276.

⁴⁶ Duffy, E. *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-c.1580*. p.462.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p.569.

iconoclastic hammers and scraping-tools of conviction Protestantism had done their worst, enough of the old imagery and old resonances remained in the churches in which the new religion was preached to complicate, [and] even...to compromise, the new teachings'.⁴⁸ Ultimately, for Duffy, iconoclasm was an unfortunate practise undertaken by Protestant regimes which did not reflect the true feelings of the English population and therefore was unsuccessful in its aim of completely eliminating Catholic beliefs. Susan Doran is another early modern historian who shares Duffy's sentiment about Mary I and the success of Catholicism. Doran argues that a majority of the population remained Catholic or conservative in their beliefs throughout Edward VI's reign, resulting in Mary's restoration of Catholicism being fairly easy.⁴⁹ Therefore, this would suggest that the Elizabethan Settlement, which was Protestant in nature, was a backwards step for a significant proportion of the population. Doran suggests that 'churchwardens were slow to comply with the law and rid the churches of Catholic plate, vestments, altars and images, not just in the more conservative north but also in southern parishes...where such items were not sold off until 1568'.⁵⁰ This highlights a public resistance to iconoclasm and even the peaceful removal of Catholic images from churches. Historians have discovered that along with hiding their personal beliefs, many Catholics also merely hid their Catholic images and objects instead of destroying or selling them. However, whilst this thesis will demonstrate a few examples of surviving images or hidden idols, the focus is on high politics rather than societal history. Parish churches and cathedrals experienced the Reformation and iconoclasm in different ways, and arguably parish churches represented the majority more than mother churches of a diocese. However, the aim of this thesis is to assess the success of iconoclasm on a national scale rather than local.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p.4.

⁴⁹ Doran, S. (1994). *Elizabeth I and Religion 1558-1603*. London: Routledge. p.4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p.65.

Patrick Collinson's *From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: the Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation* highlighted three major ways that religious ideology was spread through plays, music and images. Collinson argued that 'the first generation of Protestant publicists and propagandists, the Edwardian generation, made polemical and creative use of cultural vehicles which their spiritual children and grandchildren later repudiated as part of their rather general programme of rejection'.⁵¹ This statement highlights two main parts of Collinson's argument. Firstly, that the move to iconoclasm and the use of propaganda to promote such actions only started to appear throughout Edward VI's reign. Therefore, when studying the affects of iconoclasm as a result of the English Reformation, there is little point in studying Henry VIII's reign and the early events of the Reformation. However, this dismisses the widespread destruction of shrines and relics which were attributed to saints, which occurred throughout Henry's reign. The general focus on the Dissolution of the Monasteries and Henry's later move back to Catholicism tends to overshadow this early example of Reformation iconoclasm. Secondly, Collinson argued that there were significant differences between the Protestant reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I. Whilst Edward's reign promoted outright iconoclasm and the destruction of popish images, ceremonies and beliefs; the Elizabethan era moved towards "iconophobia". Collinson's thesis explains how the Edwardian era was hostile to false art which reinforced false belief, but was by no means anti-art or anti-popular.⁵² In contrast, the Elizabethan era 'came close to dispensing with images and the mimetic altogether, while disparaging the tastes and capacities of the illiterate, the mass of the people'.⁵³ In practical terms, this meant that the Elizabethan era made less attempts to differentiate between images and art as the urge to purge England of all Catholic imagery, due to genuine fear of it, was more prominent. However, iconophobia during the Elizabethan Settlement is best attributed to the Elizabethan bishops rather than

⁵¹ Collinson, P. (1986). *From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: the Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation*. Reading: University of Reading. p.8.

⁵² *Ibid.* p.25.

⁵³ *Ibid.* p.25.

the queen herself. Furthermore, this thesis will argue that iconophobia did indeed exist but its roots are in the Edwardian Reformation. The first piece of religious policies which legislated against *all* images occurred during Edward VI's reign. Although this may have been put into practice more effectively during the Elizabethan Settlement with the rise of Puritanism and radical bishops, the initial thought process was shown decades earlier.

Ultimately, historiography about the English Reformation centres firstly on whether it was a fast or slow process and whether it was imposed from above or pushed from below. The traditional and revisionist historians which debate these concepts set the initial groundwork for Reformation studies and this thesis argues that the English Reformation was a long process, spanning from Henry VIII's reign to Elizabeth I's and actually continues long after into the Civil War, however this study will focus solely on the advancements of the Tudor Reformations. The basis of this thesis will also agree with the notion that the Reformation, and subsequently iconoclasm, was imposed from above, at least initially. Henry VIII was the first monarch to allow reformist ideas to feed into national policies, albeit this was purely for selfish reasons, rather than a desire to convert the nation to Protestantism. Edward VI is the prime example of a monarch imposing iconoclasm on the nation and Mary portrayed similar qualities but for the opposing purpose of restoring Catholicism. However, the Elizabethan era demonstrated a shift in the driving force of the Reformation. Although generally perceived as a Protestant, Elizabeth I supported a moderate approach to national religion and merely encouraged outward conformity. The driving force behind further iconoclasm during the Elizabethan Settlement was the clergy. Many members of the cathedral personnel, predominantly archbishops, bishops and deans, were Protestant by the 1560s and many harboured Puritan beliefs or sympathies. Thus, whilst Elizabeth was apprehensive in pushing further reforms, the cathedral personnel generally carried out visitations and

issued injunctions which allowed for more changes and destruction within cathedrals in order to portray radical Protestant ideas.

Chapter 2: Cathedral Personnel: Their Role in Implementing Religious Reform

The body politic which set out the hierarchy of the nation placed the monarch as the head and therefore the ultimate authority. During the Reformation, Henry VIII implemented the theory of the body politic and enforced his leadership and personal beliefs upon England through his religious legislation. The 1534 *Act of Supremacy* declared the Pope's authority illegitimate and granted Henry the Supreme Headship of the Church of England.⁵⁴ The fact that the oath accepting Henry's Supreme Headship was taken even by many conservative members of the clergy indicates that the king was the true driving force behind the early Reformation with few daring to oppose him. Henry VIII's attack on shrines was the biggest concession to iconoclasm during his reign and the fact that the shrines of St Thomas Becket, St Cuthbert, St William of York and St Æthelthryth were all destroyed in the 1530s and 1540s advocates the notion that Henry made even the conservative dioceses conform to this religious policy. In contrast, the Elizabethan Settlement involved a series of moderate and vague religious policies which reflected the queen's personal struggle with radical Protestantism. Unlike her father, Elizabeth was less in control of national religion as she faced opposition from both sides; Catholic and Puritan. Elizabeth's major struggle was with the radical Protestants some of whom had begun to dominate the bishoprics in England, whilst others remained agitators on the side-lines of the official church. This surge of new Protestant bishops was possible due to a sudden opening with various vacancies due to the death, old age and retirement of the former occupants. Indeed, 'Mary and Pole are often criticised for dying with five sees vacant, so making Elizabeth's settlement easier'.⁵⁵ The geographical placement and level of co-operation of archbishops, bishops and deans played

⁵⁴ Tanner, J.R. (1922). *Tudor Constitutional Documents, A.D. 1485-1603*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.46-48.

⁵⁵ Palliser, D.M. (1987). Popular Reactions to the Reformation during the years of Uncertainty 1530-70. In C. Haigh (Ed.) *The English Reformation Revised* (pp. 94-113). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.110.

a vital role in the implementation of reforms, or counter-reforms, in each cathedral. Indeed, southern England was a Protestant hive, particularly London, which Joel Budd describes as 'both the seat of government and a stronghold of religious radicalism'.⁵⁶ Therefore, Patrick Collinson recognised the significance of religious leaders, especially in more conservative areas, since the 'Protestantisation of the north, depended, in the long term, on importing a new kind of clergyman'.⁵⁷ The extent of the implementation of religious beliefs, and ultimately iconoclasm, within each cathedral depended upon the beliefs of the personnel between 1532 and 1603. Whilst the break with Rome was instigated in 1532, and the destruction of shrines quickly followed this in the 1530s, the physical attack on Catholic images came with the 1550 *Act for the abolishing and putting away of divers Books and Images*, which demanded the destruction of idolatrous and superstitious images, statutes and idols.⁵⁸ Thus, the study of cathedral personnel is essential in order to assess which cathedrals committed to the new Protestant legislation, which remained conservative, and the speed in which new religious legislation was implemented.

Henrician Reformation, 1532 – 1547

Henry VIII was the first monarch to entertain the notion of changing the national religion of England from Catholicism to Protestantism. Although Henry instigated the break from Rome, the Royal supremacy of the church and the iconoclastic destruction of shrines, 'in the main, however, the services of the English church and its cathedrals remained traditional so long as Henry lived'.⁵⁹ Although the conversion to Protestantism was far from absolute, the

⁵⁶ Budd, J. (2000). Rethinking Iconoclasm in Early Modern England: the Case of Cheapside Cross. *Journal of Early Modern History*, 4 (3), 379-404. doi: 10.1163/157006500X00051.p.380.

⁵⁷ Collinson, P. (2008). *Grindal, Edmund (1516x20–1583, archbishop of York and of Canterbury*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11644>, accessed 10 March 2017.

⁵⁸ Tanner, J.R. *Tudor Constitutional Documents, A.D. 1485-1603*. pp.113-115.

⁵⁹ Lehmborg, S.E. (1988). *The Reformation of Cathedrals: Cathedrals in English Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p.99.

changes that did occur still need considering. The main iconoclastic mission of the Henrician Reformation was the abolition of saints and shrines and although Henry authorised and instructed this, he relied on the cathedral personnel to implement these policies in cathedrals. Henry was the authority of national religious change but archbishops, bishops and deans had the power to choose how to implement reforms and to what extent.

As the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1533 to 1555, Thomas Cranmer was the highest ranking religious official in England during the Henrician Reformation. Cranmer's long-standing fame derives from his close relationship with Henry, his role in triggering the Reformation and ultimately his assignment to the flames for his reformist beliefs by Mary I. Diarmaid MacCulloch summarises the hero versus villain narrative in modern historiography about Cranmer; 'the narrator's prime intention has been to comment on a large story...to legitimise the Church or to dismiss it...it is impossible to disentangle Cranmer's career from the confused manoeuvres which led to the birth of one strand of world Christianity, the Anglican Communion'.⁶⁰ Although Cranmer was a learned and respected religious figure, his power from the archbishopric of Canterbury was ultimately forced upon him directly by the king. Cranmer 'manifested great reluctance to undertake the responsible duties of this high station, [however] he was at length compelled to yield to the determination of the imperious monarch'.⁶¹ This was not through any lack of commitment to reform, but most likely due to balancing it with his involvement in politics. Cranmer showed loyalty to the kings' cause when he made a public statement against the oath of fidelity to the Pope, 'wherein he declared, that he intended not by the oath that he was to take, and was customary for bishops to take to the Pope, to bind himself to do any thing contrary to the

⁶⁰ MacCulloch, D. (1996). *Thomas Cranmer*. London: Yale University Press. p.1.

⁶¹ Cox, J.E. (1846). Biographical Notice of Archbishop Cranmer. In J. E. Cox, Cranmer, T. (Ed.) *The Works of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr, 1556, Volume 2* (pp. vii-xiv). The Parker Society: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.viii.

laws of God, the King's prerogative, or to the commonwealth and statutes of the kingdom'.⁶²

Cranmer's own words show his desire to substitute the Pope for the king's jurisdiction. Therefore, although Cranmer obviously believed in the king's cause, it was on Henry's command that the changes in Canterbury Cathedral occurred.

The most iconic change commanded by Henry in Canterbury Cathedral was the assault on St Thomas Becket. Though the attack on saints was nationwide, Becket was a figure of defiance against the monarchy, as well as a saint who enjoyed international fame and loyalties.⁶³ Like the Pope, Becket, and other saints, posed a threat to Henry's power over the English people. By organising the demolition of St Becket's shrine and relics, tarnishing his reputation and declaring his feast days illegitimate, Henry VIII targeted a core belief of Catholicism. This was also an attack on those who opposed the will of the monarch. Cranmer grew to hate the papacy too, especially since his involvement in the Aragon annulment and his devotion to the royal supremacy meant that he needed the king to fill the void of authority after the rejection of the pope.⁶⁴ Henry's desire to become the Supreme Head meant that Cranmer had found a new authoritative religious leader. Despite Cranmer's religious beliefs and accession to Archbishop, in terms of iconoclasm in Canterbury Cathedral, Jasper Ridley claims that although Cranmer approved of the campaign against relics in 1538, he did not play an active role as the 'daring and provocative policy of publicly exhibiting the relics for ridicule and destruction was not in keeping with Cranmer's tactics'.⁶⁵ However, as the Archbishop of Canterbury, it seems that Cranmer merely felt that it was not necessary for him to be personally involved in the actual destruction. Cranmer's Injunctions in the diocese of Hereford in 1538 actually displayed the archbishop's approval of iconoclasm since his first

⁶² Strype, J. (1840). *Memorials of the Most Reverend Father in God, Thomas Cranmer, sometime Lord Archbishop of Canterbury (A New Edition, with Additions), Volume 1, first published 1694*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.28.

⁶³ This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3: *The Fate of Saints, Shrines and Relics during the Reformation*.

⁶⁴ MacCulloch, D. (2015). *Cranmer, Thomas (1489-1556), archbishop of Canterbury*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6615>, accessed 3 July 2017.

⁶⁵ Ridley, J. (1962). *Thomas Cranmer*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p.159.

demand was 'that ye and every one of you shall, with all your diligence and faithful obedience, observe, and cause to be observed, all and singular the king's highness' injunctions, by his grace's commissaries'.⁶⁶ Despite Cranmer not taking up the iconoclastic tools himself, MacCulloch states that Cranmer was more involved in other acts of iconoclasm than historians, such as Ridley state. Rather than not being in keeping with Cranmer's tactics, MacCulloch argues that Cranmer was 'in other instances happy to lend his servants as agents in other acts of iconoclastic vandalism as the campaign against holy places and sacred images progressed during late 1538'.⁶⁷ Cranmer agreed with the reformist ideologies during the Henrician Reformation and played some part in enforcing the king's new religious policies, but used his position of Archbishop of Canterbury to reform the minds of the people, whilst others could be trusted to fulfil the king's iconoclastic demands.

Cranmer was as deeply involved in government politics as he was religion and thus the balance of power meant he was not the most prominent or visible force in Henrician iconoclasm. For bishops and deans, however, religion in their diocese was of paramount concern. Thomas Goodrich, bishop of Ely from 1534 to 1554, played an active role in iconoclasm within Ely Cathedral. Although Goodrich did not reside in Ely, in the early 1540s 'he held his primary visitation in person and showed interest in ways in which the new religious order could be enforced'.⁶⁸ Goodrich was 'a zealous forwarder of the Reformation', so he had a mutual interest with the king in destroying shrines.⁶⁹ Indeed his 1541 Injunctions meant that 'no traces remain of many famous shrines and altars, which formerly were the

⁶⁶ Cox, J.E. (Ed.) (1846). *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.81.

⁶⁷ MacCulloch, D. *Thomas Cranmer*. p.228.

⁶⁸ Heal, F. (2005). *Goodrich [Goodryck], Thomas (1494-1554), bishop of Ely and lord chancellor*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10980>, accessed 21 April 2017.

⁶⁹ Bentham, J. (1771). *The History and Antiquities of the Conventual and Cathedral Church of Ely: from the foundation of the monastery, A.D. 673 to the year 1771*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.190.

objects of frequent resort, nor any signs at all, that they had ever existed'.⁷⁰ Unlike many cathedrals who suffered the destruction of shrines at the hands of agents of the crown, Goodrich was seemingly successful in enforcing the policy himself. The official website of Ely Cathedral claims that 'the Bishop's men did their work thoroughly, and virtually nothing remains of Ely's medieval decoration'.⁷¹ Clearly Goodrich had assistance for such a huge task, but the important thing to note is that it was Goodrich himself who directed the men to destroy Catholic images, thus showing how he willingly enforced Henry's policies.

The fact that Henry VIII was the driving force behind the Reformation did not necessarily mean that the personnel from all four of the cathedrals in this thesis rallied to support his aims. In this respect, the Province of York proved to be a stark contrast to the Province of Canterbury. The archbishop of York from 1531 to 1544 was Edward Lee, not an overtly dedicated Catholic, but his time as archbishop led to a number of accusations and doubts of his commitment to Henry VIII's religious changes, quite the opposite of Cranmer and Goodrich. Although Lee supported the King's divorce from Catherine of Aragon and openly accepted the Act of Supremacy, he later started to show signs of conservatism. Claire Cross argues that 'perhaps with the intention of forestalling more drastic reform, in the summer of 1534 Lee began a series of visitations of religious houses in the vicinity of York until inhibited from proceeding further by the king at the end of September'.⁷² The fact that Lee tried to drag his heels when implementing reform indicates that a higher power was trying to dissuade him from core Catholic beliefs. Archbishop Lee did retain his position, however, until his death in 1544 but his time as archbishop was tainted by traitorous rumours and attempts on his part to discount them. In a letter to the king in June 1535 Archbishop Lee

⁷⁰ Bentham, J. *The History and Antiquities of the Conventual and Cathedral Church of Ely: from the foundation of the monastery, A.D. 673 to the year 1771*. p.190.

⁷¹ Ely Cathedral. (2017). *A Descriptive Tour of Ely Cathedral*. Retrieved from <http://www.elycathedral.org/history-heritage/a-descriptive-tour-of-ely-cathedral>.

⁷² Cross, C. (2004). *Lee, Edward (1481/2-1544), archbishop of York*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16278>, accessed 8 June 2017.

responded to claims that he failed in his charge to command 'all maner of prelats and eccliasticall persons wtin my diocese and Province...to open to the people youre Highness juste and raysonable caws, mouenge the same to refuse and to exclude ouzt of youre realme all the jurisdiction and authoritie of the saide bisshoppe of Rome'.⁷³ Although his letter is a clear protestation against the claims, it highlighted the fact that suspicion and rumours surrounded Lee's personal commitment to Henry's religious policies. The ambiguous religious position of Lee not only meant that 'doubts about Lee's commitment to Henry's ecclesiastical policy persisted' but he also 'received rough treatment at the hands of the rebels in the uprising of the northern counties because of his perceived support of Henry's policy'.⁷⁴ Hence, whilst Lee cannot be definitely labelled a "conservative" or a "reformer", in comparison to Bishop Thomas Goodrich or Archbishop Cranmer, Lee was certainly no radical and made limited changes to York Minster in terms of the decoration and presentation of the Cathedral Church.

In spite of the slow progress in York, the most obvious contrast to Cranmer and Goodrich was found in Cuthbert Tunstall. He was the Catholic bishop of Durham, from 1530 to the start of Elizabeth I's reign in 1559, with a brief interlude during the latter months of Edward VI's reign when he was deprived of his See. His longevity as bishop of Durham is surprising given his views. However, it can be accounted for by his loyalty to monarchy; although he was a Catholic and opposed most of the religious reforms during Henry VIII's reign, he was prepared to acquiesce when they became law, since his attitude was to stay obedient to the king.⁷⁵ Tunstall is a prime example of Henry driving the Reformation rather than the impetus deriving from the clergy. Tunstall often prioritised loyalty to the monarch over his private

⁷³ Ellis, H. (Ed.) (1846). *Original Letters, Illustrative of English History, Third Series, Volume 2*. London: Richard Bentley.p.325.

⁷⁴ Rummel, E. (2005). Introduction. In J . E. Phillips (Ed.) *Collected Works of Erasmus: Controversies* (pp. xi-xxvi). Toronto: University of Toronto Press. p.xiii.

⁷⁵ Newcombe, D.G. (2013) *Tunstal [Tunstall], Cuthbert (1474–1559), bishop of Durham and diplomat*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27817>, accessed 10 March 2017.

religious beliefs, but this did not necessarily lead to Tunstall undertaking the reforms himself since he 'never wavered in his personal attachment to those doctrines which he considered essentially Catholic, and he openly expressed his disapproval of all measures calculated to undermine their influence.'⁷⁶ Whilst the destruction of St Cuthbert's shrine occurred during his bishopric, this was undertaken by agents of the crown. Tunstall demonstrated how Henry relied on the loyalty of cathedral personnel to implement the initial religious reforms, even if the personnel did not necessarily believe in his cause. An account of St Cuthbert's shrine written by Harpsfield, highlights the conservative religious beliefs that the bishop of Durham harboured. When St Cuthbert's coffin was opened by the iconoclasts and his body was found without decay, Harpsfield stated that Tunstall 'was requested to give orders as to what he wished to be done with the body', to which 'a grave was made in the ground, in that very spot previously occupied by his previous coffin, and there his body was deposited'.⁷⁷ This is a key example of cathedral personnel implementing Henry's orders under their own discretion. Tunstall acquiesced in the destruction of St Cuthbert's shrine and tomb, but instead of burning the bones of a saint, Tunstall ordered their burial; a sure sign of respect for Catholicism. Nonetheless, for the king, the main objective was to prevent a diversion of loyalty from the monarchy to saints by destroying the credibility of saints and place of pilgrim worship. In this sense, Henry achieved his aim in Durham Cathedral.

The early Henrician Reformation has attracted polar views which Norman Jones summarises. The narrative put forward by those with conservative beliefs was that 'once upon a time the people of England were happy medieval Catholics, visiting their holy wells, attending frequent masses and deeply respectful of Purgatory and afraid of hell. Then lustful King

⁷⁶ Hinde, G. (Ed.) (1952). *The registers of Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, 1530-59, and James Pilkington, Bishop of Durham, 1561-76*. Durham: Surtees Society by Andrews. p.xxx.

⁷⁷ Harpsfield, N. (1622). *Historia Anglicana Ecclesiastica* [sept. seel] p.105. Translated in J. Raine (1828). (Ed.) *Saint Cuthbert: With an Account of the State in which His Remains Were Found Upon the Opening of His Tomb in Durham Cathedral*. (p. 176). Durham: Geo. Andrews. p.176.

Henry forced them to abandon their religion. England was never merry again'.⁷⁸ In contrast, the narrative of supporters of the Reformation was that 'once upon a time the people of England were oppressed by corrupt churchmen. They yearned for the liberty of the Gospel. Then, Good King Harry gave them the Protestant nation for which they longed'.⁷⁹ In a simplified generalisation, the cathedral personnel in the north of England perhaps attested to the first narrative, whilst Cranmer and Goodrich believed in the latter. Either way, there is one glaring similarity in both stories; Henry VIII was the leading man behind the Reformation. Apart from the break from Rome, Act of Supremacy and annihilation of saints, Henry's early Reformation wishes were also shown in 1537, in *The Institution of the Christian Man*, otherwise known as *The Bishops' Book*, part of the Thirty-Nine Articles. Following the Pilgrimage of Grace, Henry believed that the lack of unity in religious beliefs was the cause and thus ordered the bishops and leading theologians to set out the rudiments of Christian doctrine.⁸⁰ Therefore, all four men; Cranmer, Goodrich, Tunstall and Lee were involved in creating the premise of reformed religion in England. Whilst, naturally 'the bishops divided into reformers and conservatives, but not identically on every issue, and those inclined to reform or to conservatism differed in the degree of vehemence with which they argued their views', *The Bishops' Book* was created and largely set out Henry's personal religious beliefs as the roots of England's new religion.⁸¹ The *Preface of the Prelates* states that:

we do most humbly submit it to the most excellent wisdom and exact judgement of your majesty, to be recognised, overseen, and corrected, if your grace shall find any word or sentence in it meet to be changed, qualified, or further expounded, for the plain setting forth of your highness' most virtuous desire and purpose in that behalf.⁸²

⁷⁸ Jones, N. (2002). *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaptation*. Oxford: Blackwell. p.1.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p.1.

⁸⁰ Bernard, G.W. (2005). *The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church*. London: Yale University Press. p.476.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* p.477.

⁸² Cantuarien, T. etc. (1537). *The Institution of A Christian Man: The Preface of the Prelates*. In C. Lloyd (1856)(Ed.) *Formularies of faith put forth by authority during the reign of Henry VIII* (pp. 21-27). Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.26-27.

Despite the varying degrees of Protestantism amongst Cranmer, Goodrich, Lee and Tunstall, all four men accepted the authority of Henry VIII and thus conformed to his reforms, no matter how begrudgingly.

Mid-Tudors: Edward VI and Mary I: 1547 – 1558

The death of Henry VIII simultaneously meant that England had lost its king, and the early Henrician Reformation had lost its driving force. Nonetheless, the Reformation continued under Edward VI, however it is often perceived as dominated by violent iconoclastic acts in the struggle for religious conformity. Diarmaid MacCulloch argues that 'the Reformation of 1547 to 1553 carried out in his [Edward VI's] name was a revolutionary act, a dynamic assault on the past, a struggle to the death between Christ and Antichrist'.⁸³ However, this violent and radical assumption requires some re-evaluation, especially when considering cathedrals. Between 1547 and 1553, there are undoubtedly examples of iconoclasm, particularly in parish churches. However, this completely overrides the iconoclasm which had already been undertaken during Henry's reign. The shrines had already been removed and Goodrich had already ordered the removal of further images in Ely Cathedral. Thus, by the Edwardian Reformation, the cathedrals of Canterbury and Ely maintained their archbishop and bishop respectively, as they represented not just Protestant ideals but a commitment to successive reforming monarchs, Henry and Edward. In the north, Tunstall maintained his position as Bishop of Durham until he was eventually deprived in 1552. Destruction of Catholic imagery was clearly not within Tunstall's remit of beliefs and the government left it too late to install a Protestant bishop who could complete the purge of Durham Cathedral. Again Tunstall provides a prime example of how religious legislation was

⁸³ MacCulloch, D. (1999). *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation*. Berkeley: University of California. p.9.

implemented differently in each cathedral, in his case, very slowly. Although this is merely one example of one man's beliefs, it goes some way to discounting the notion that Edward VI's regime was wholly violent since Tunstall retained his position until the year before Edward's death.

In York Minster, the iconoclastic Reformation imposed by the Edwardian government was implemented much more thoroughly than the Henrician reforms. The change of monarch was not necessarily the main factor for change in York Minster at the time, rather it was the installation of Robert Holgate as Archbishop of York in 1545, following Edward Lee's death. Although Holgate's first visitation in 1547 focused on repairing fabrics and improving the condition of vestments, as the Edwardian Reformation progressed Holgate oversaw the abolition of organ music and the removal of images from above the high altar and their replacement with text from the scripture.⁸⁴ Holgate is just one example of the personnel within the four cathedrals who embodied the general view of an iconoclastic Edwardian Reformation. Admittedly, Cranmer and Goodrich embodied these beliefs too, but acted upon them much earlier, showing that Edward's reign is unfairly portrayed as the only radically iconoclastic movement. In essence, 'much has been written about this destructive side of Edwardian Reformations, usually in blanket condemnation'.⁸⁵

Unsurprisingly, the Marian regime brought with it a new wave of Catholic clergy. Despite all four of the religious institutions in this study receiving a Catholic leader during the mid-1550s, the supposed Counter-Reformation was not as productive as often presumed. Each archbishop and bishop possessed varying degrees of commitment to restoring Catholicism. For instance, Thomas Thirlby, bishop of Ely 1554 to 1559, found comfort in the Marian

⁸⁴ Parish, H.L. (2004). *Holgate, Robert (1481/2-1555), archbishop of York*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13504>, accessed 26 Feb 2017.

⁸⁵ MacCulloch, D. *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation*. p.14.

regime after enduring Edward VI's Protestant campaign, but this did not automatically lead to counter-reforms. Bishop Thirlby 'never resided in his diocese of Ely, relying on the capable chancellor, John Fuller, who had previously served him in Norwich'.⁸⁶ An entire diocese was hardly likely to change radically without the guidance of an active and determined bishop. There is a distinct lack of evidence for any major changes being made to Ely Cathedral during Thirlby's bishopric, especially after undergoing intense Protestantisation under Goodrich. Albeit, W.D. Sweeting claims that Thomas Thirlby was unfortunate in his timing, despite actually being a moderate man, he lived in turbulent time and was charged with the distasteful task of committing heretics to the flames.⁸⁷ Thirlby clung to his Catholic beliefs throughout his life but was not radical enough to impose a counter-reformation on Ely Cathedral. This may in part be due to the confusing times he lived in. He conformed to Henry VIII's religious changes, lived through Edward VI's more radical evangelicalism and finally found comfort in Mary I's regime. Finally, Thirlby 'felt unable to adapt his conscience once more to serve a new regime' under Elizabeth I.⁸⁸ Thirlby's refusal to take the Oath of Supremacy led to his deprivation of the bishopric of Ely, thus opening up the diocese to reformist influence.

This inability to trigger a counter-reformation within a cathedral was shared by the other high status personnel. Cuthbert Tunstall was returned to his See in Durham in 1556 but this gave him precious little time to achieve a counter-reformation before Elizabeth's accession in 1559. In fact 'Tunstall's injunctions to the dean and chapter of Durham allowed for the restitution of ornaments in the cathedral only by 1558 – and that was probably optimistic'.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Knighton, C.S. (2015). *Thirlby, Thomas (c.1500-1570), bishop of Westminster and of Ely*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27184>, accessed 21 April 2017.

⁸⁷ Sweeting, W.D. (1910). *Bell's Cathedrals: The Cathedral Church of Ely*. London: George Bell and Sons.p.125.

⁸⁸ Knighton, C.S. (2015). *Thirlby, Thomas (c.1500-1570), bishop of Westminster and of Ely*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27184>, accessed 21 April 2017.

⁸⁹ Pogson, R.H. (1987). Revival and Reform in Mary Tudor's Church: A Question of Money. In C. Haigh (Ed.) *The English Reformation Revised* (pp. 139-156). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.147.

The execution of a profound counter-reformation in northern England might have been more likely had the Archbishop of York been a committed and zealous Catholic. Instead, Nicholas Heath was installed from 1555 to 1559. David Loades proposed that 'Heath seems to have been having second thoughts about the extent of his evangelical commitment, and was one of those who benefitted from the conservative reaction of the early 1540s'.⁹⁰ Heath's changing of beliefs shows a degree of indecisiveness. His translation to Archbishop of York is easily overshadowed by other archbishops in the Reformation era due to inaction in the diocese. This inaction can be accounted for since 'he was still more distracted by secular business, especially once he had become chancellor', a similar position to Cranmer during Henry's reign.⁹¹

The juggling of duties was something also felt by Reginald Pole, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1556 to 1558 too. For Pole, his position actually did not allow him to implement as many constructive counter-reforms as he most likely wished. Pole's relationship with Queen Mary made him a busy character, since he frequently took a significant part in council business at Mary's demand, as well as playing a leading role in the reconstruction of the English church.⁹² Owing to Pole's involvement in the politics of the Marian regime, his full focus was not directly on reversing the reformist religious changes in the diocese of Canterbury. However, he did manage to find some time for religious matters and predominantly focused upon restoring papal authority. This obsession meant that he fostered the view that 'the heresies and disorders of Edward's reign [were] the inevitable outcome of Henry's schism and spoke of Henry himself as a tyrant'.⁹³ In terms of Canterbury, Pole attempted to trace back the ancestors of the Archbishops of Canterbury and claim that

⁹⁰ Loades, D. (2008). *Heath, Nicholas (1501?-1578), administrator and archbishop of York*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12840>, accessed 26 June 2017.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Mayer, T.F. (2008). *Pole, Reginald (1500-1558), cardinal and archbishop of Canterbury*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22456>, accessed 3 July 2017.

⁹³ Duffy, E. (2009). *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor*. London: Yale University Press. p.49.

'in that ladder of witness, there had been only one rotten rung, one false teacher: Pole's predecessor, Thomas Cranmer'.⁹⁴ Instead of being proactive and dismissing the men who destroyed Becket's shrine or removed Catholic images, Pole instigated a debate about Cranmer's unworthiness. However, despite Pole's close relationship with 'Bloody Mary' and his commitment to Catholicism, John Foxe claimed that 'he was none of the bloody and cruel sort of papistes'.⁹⁵

The Elizabethan Settlement: 1558 – 1603

The cathedral personnel implemented during the Elizabethan era were noticeably more radical, and even sometimes "Puritan", compared to the Edwardian personnel. Patrick Collinson's idea of new generations supporting new religious ideas aptly applies to cathedral personnel. Whilst this thesis argues that "iconophobia" took hold of religious policies earlier than Collinson proposes, with the idea evolving during the Edwardian Reformation rather than Elizabethan, a rapid advancement of reformist personnel and iconoclasm did occur.⁹⁶

Collinson argued that images were less accepted as Tudor reigns advanced:

those first-generation protestant communicators who exploited them were in continuity and communication with the tradition, sharing common cultural ground with their catholic opponents. This common ground ceased to exist round about 1580. So this significant cultural watershed occurred not between the last generation of traditional Catholicism and the first generation of Protestantism but between the first and second generations of Protestants. It divided the first and second Reformations.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p.55.

⁹⁵ Foxe, J. (2011). *John Foxe's The Acts and Monuments Online, 1570 Edition, Book 12, Page 2198*. Retrieved from <https://www.johnfoxe.org/index.php?realm=text&gototype=&edition=1570&pageid=2198>.

⁹⁶ The concept of iconophobia is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4: *The Effects of Reformation Iconoclasm: Statues, Images and Altars*.

⁹⁷ Collinson, P. (1986). *From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: the Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation*. Reading: University of Reading. p.8.

The divide between the Henrician Reformation and Edwardian Reformation appears to be wider than Collinson stated and the fear of images started during Edward's regime. However, there is a noticeable change in views between Edwardian and Elizabethan cathedral personnel. Although often perceived as a woman of compromise in religious terms, there is no doubt that Elizabeth was profoundly influenced by Protestantism. This influence was at the hands of her councillors and some, notably Archbishop Edmund Grindal, attempted to push for further reform due to their dissatisfaction with the *via-media* that the Elizabethan Settlement displayed.⁹⁸ In essence, it was during the Elizabethan Settlement that cathedral personnel began to play a huge role in influencing religious change. Firstly, more so than the previous reigns, Elizabeth had to contend with two religions, Catholicism and Puritanism. Secondly, there was a remarkable contrast between the 1530s when Henry VIII became the supreme head of the church and 1559 when Elizabeth I became the supreme governor – many bishops did not conform on the second occasion and at least three bishops who accepted Henry's title were deprived of their Sees for refusing Elizabeth's Oath of Supremacy.⁹⁹ With the conservative bishops deprived, the succeeding bishops were much more committed to the new Protestant religion, many of whom were significantly more committed than the queen herself. It is through the records of these Anglican bishops, archbishops and deans that the true approaches to iconoclasm and beliefs are brought to light.

Despite the supposed changes that occurred in cathedrals during the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations, the Province of York, proved to lag behind the Province of Canterbury in the implementation of Protestant reforms. Cuthbert Tunstall was one of the bishops who refused to accept Elizabeth's Oath of Supremacy and subsequently Bishop James Pilkington was installed in Durham in 1561. Pilkington discovered that his newly

⁹⁸ Guy, J. (1988). *Tudor England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.291.

⁹⁹ Woodward, G.W.O. (1963). *Reformation and Resurgence, 1485-1603*. London: Blandford Press. p.102.

acquired diocese was actually in a shockingly conservative state, even by the 1560s. The diocese of Durham had greater difficulties than those encountered by other bishops due to issues of Catholic survivalism, pluralism, non-residence, as well as a number of large inappropriate parishes and livings of small value in Durham.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, David Marcombe argues that 'Pilkington's first challenge was to procure loyal and reliable administrators and in this objective the visitation of 1561, in which the oath of supremacy was put to officials and clergy, was a major watershed'.¹⁰¹ Clearly, Pilkington's main focus during the early years of his bishopric was to install a level of conformity to Elizabeth's religious settlement, as well as surrounding himself with active cathedral personnel with similar reformist views.

Although most cathedrals relied on their deans to ensure the running and structure of services, the decoration and such, this thesis mainly focuses on the men of higher positions. However, Durham Cathedral during the Elizabethan era hosted a particularly important Protestant dean, William Whittingham, who arrived in 1563. Between Bishop Pilkington and Dean Whittingham, Durham experienced the start of a religious revolution, after a long period with Tunstall as a conservative bishop. In terms of physical iconoclasm Pilkington does not appear to have been a main culprit and he 'probably saw his chief contribution to Protestantism being made by means of education, which he always promoted earnestly'.¹⁰² Thus his primary focus was reforming the hearts and minds of the people in the Durham diocese. William Whittingham, on the other hand, focused on the physical eradication of Catholicism from Durham Cathedral and, as the Dean, had the authority to do so. Having a reputation for destroying Catholic traditions led to the *Rites of Durham* to refer to

¹⁰⁰ Marcombe, D. (2009). *Pilkington, James (1520-1576), bishop of Durham*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22269>, accessed 26 June 2017.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

Whittingham as 'a great villain of the Geneva Gang'.¹⁰³ The *Rites of Durham* not only asserted that Whittingham destroyed Catholic traditions and symbols due to his Protestantism, but also for his own personal profit. In reference to the bells in the cathedral, it was reported that Whittingham 'pceyving theme not to be occupied nor Rounge a great whyle before his tyme, was purposed to haue taiken them downe and broken them for other vses [and to make his pfitt of them]'.¹⁰⁴ Nonetheless, this greed should not be exaggerated, for it seems that Whittingham's real motivation was always his personal religious beliefs. In fact, 'Whittingham's biography, written by an anonymous author about 1603, paints a picture of a man who was very much a part of the European scene of his day and who brought the ideals of Calvinism and the Renaissance to the far north of England'.¹⁰⁵ Although arguably drawn from a favourable account, this exhibits the European influences on Whittingham throughout his exile, which led to his ardent reformed beliefs. Perhaps his radical beliefs, influenced by the European iconoclastic scene, were part of the reason Whittingham was installed in such a conservative cathedral as Durham. In the eyes of the evangelical ministers surrounding Elizabeth, a firmly traditional diocese required an aggressive and zealous reformer to bring it up to speed with the rest of the nation.

The desperate need for strong Protestant leadership in the north is also reflected in the instalment of Edmund Grindal as Archbishop of York in 1570. Often perceived as harbouring Puritan sympathies, it looked 'as if he was being kicked upstairs to a remote province where a bishop soft on puritanism could do less harm'.¹⁰⁶ This solved two problems in one appointment; a radical was needed to ensure the Province of York conformed to the new

¹⁰³ Fowler, J.T., Bates, G., Mickleton, J., Hope, W.H. (Ed.) (1903). *Rites of Durham, being a description or brief declaration of all the ancient monuments, rites, and customs belonging or being within the monastical church of Durham before the suppression, written in 1593*. Durham: Society by Andrews & co. p. 169.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p.39.

¹⁰⁵ Marcombe, D. (2008). *Whittingham, William (d. 1579), dean of Durham*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29329>, accessed 10 March 2017.

¹⁰⁶ Collinson, P. (2008). *Grindal, Edmund (1516x20–1583), archbishop of York and of Canterbury*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11644>, accessed 10 March 2017.

Protestant beliefs, but it also ensured that Grindal did not have time to interfere in dangerous Puritan circles in the south. Whether Grindal was actually “kicked upstairs” is unclear, but he did play a vital role in restoring Protestantism after the religious upheavals during Mary I’s reign and the Northern Rebellion of 1569. Grindal himself reported of his worries when travelling to York to take up his archbishopric. In a letter to William Cecil he reported that ‘I cannot as yet write of the state of this country, as of mine own knowledge; but I am informed that the greatest part of our gentlemen are not well affected to godly religion, and that among the people there are many remanents of the old’.¹⁰⁷ Thus, it is of no surprise that Grindal’s visitation of May 1571 addressed the problem of “survivalism” within the Province and the Minster, where his attack on altars and crosses was equivalent to the royal visitation of 1559.¹⁰⁸ Grindal had various men helping him to reform the Northern Province, Henry Hastings, 3rd earl of Huntingdon being one. Huntingdon was an ardent Puritan and served as President of the Council of the North from 1572 to 1595. Patrick Collinson noted that although the policies of Grindal and Huntingdon carried a risk, in the long term they were vindicated since the catholic community became neutralised and the culture of the whole region became in a broad sense Protestant.¹⁰⁹ Thus, with the exception of Huntingdon, the ‘momentous alterations in the civilisation of the north of England may have owed as much to Archbishop Grindal as to any other person’.¹¹⁰ Although the Province of York could not wholeheartedly claim to be Protestant after Grindal’s death, his reforming success cannot and should not be ignored or downplayed.

¹⁰⁷ Nicholson, W. (Ed.) (1843). *The remains of Edmund Grindal successively Bishop of London and Archbishop of York and Canterbury*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.325-326.

¹⁰⁸ Collinson, P. (2008). *Grindal, Edmund (1516x20–1583), archbishop of York and of Canterbury*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11644>, accessed 10 March 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Collinson, P. (1979). *Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp.190-191.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* p.191.

Nonetheless, Grindal was plagued by illness for the first year of his archbishopric and 'as soon as he was able to take his bearings Grindal discovered that he had exaggerated the instability of the north'.¹¹¹ Grindal sent a letter to Heinrich Bullinger, a prominent Swiss reformer, in 1572, which stated that 'I find the people more complying than I expected, as far as external conformity is concerned'.¹¹² However, Grindal admitted this is 'after the suppression of the later rebellion' and stated that 'I have laboured to the utmost of my power, and still continue to do, in the visitation of my province and diocese in getting rid of those remaining superstitions'.¹¹³ Therefore, it does appear that the people of the north became less rebellious and more receptive to change, but this was only after the quashing of the Northern Rebellion. Still, Grindal did continue with his reforms and he had the opportunity which had previously been denied to Holgate, to settle the life of York Minster on a securely reformed basis, since the prospects of converting the Minster into a powerhouse of reform were good by 1571.¹¹⁴ Similarly to the co-operation of Pilkington and Whittingham in Durham, Grindal had the extra luxury of having an equally zealous Protestant as dean of York Minster in order to help him enforce reforms. Matthew Hutton proved to loyally attend to Grindal's visitations and 'he lent his aid with renewed vigour to the building of a protestant commonwealth in the north of England'.¹¹⁵ Since shrines and images in the minster had largely been dealt with throughout Henry VIII's and Edward VI's reigns, Grindal's main aim was to reform the way people interacted with religion in York Minster by changing the place of the altar, the ceremonies and the use of liturgy. Unfortunately for Grindal, these changes were halted when he was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1575. In contrast to York and the problem of "survivalism", Grindal was

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* p.195.

¹¹² Robinson, H. (Ed.) (1846). *The Zurich Letters: Or, the Correspondence of Several English Bishops and Others, with Some of the Helvetian Reformers, During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth. Chiefly from the Archives of Zurich, Volume 52.* Parker Society: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.p.381.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* p.381.

¹¹⁴ Collinson, P. *Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church.* p.200.

¹¹⁵ Cross, C. (2004). *Hutton, Matthew (1529?-1606), archbishop of York.* Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14308>, accessed 10 March 2017.

appointed in Canterbury to deal with radical Protestants. However, 'it cannot now be proved that Grindal ever so much as visited Canterbury as archbishop, to sit in Augustine's chair, or to preach in Christ Church'.¹¹⁶ If this was the case, Grindal's commitment to overthrowing Catholicism in York seemed paramount and thus a study of iconoclasm must focus on his time in York rather than Canterbury.

Whilst Canterbury seemingly had a problem with radical Protestants, Ely which is also in the Southern Province, was not fully submerged in reforming rhetoric. Similarly to York and Durham, Ely Cathedral was installed with a Protestant bishop who had a desire to enforce the Elizabethan Settlement to a more radical degree than what the queen legislated. Although Elizabeth never overtly agreed to the further advancement of the religious settlement, this clearly did not prevent many of the bishops from attempting to reform their diocese to their own standards. Richard Cox became the Bishop of Ely in 1559 and was the only major Elizabethan bishop in Ely since the See was left vacant from his death in 1581 to 1600. Often described by various historians as 'one of the most influential of the first generation of protestant reformers', Cox focused on the conformity of the entire diocese rather than just Ely Cathedral as an illusion of Protestantism.¹¹⁷ His commitment to reform on an extreme scale is shown through his conflicts with Elizabeth, when he 'often expressed his opinions with surprising candour to the queen, most famously in his opposition to her use of the crucifix and candles in her private chapel'.¹¹⁸ This was a bold move on Cox's part, but it sufficiently demonstrated the Protestant opposition that Elizabeth faced from bishops. On the other hand, Cox's jurisdiction was not as powerful as perhaps expected. Cox faced difficulties instigating reform in Ely Cathedral. The major figure of opposition was the dean, Andrew Perne, who was a Catholic. Perne offers a direct contrast to dean Whittingham in

¹¹⁶ Collinson, P. *Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church*. p.224.

¹¹⁷ Heal, F. (2008). *Cox, Richard (c.1500-1581), bishop of Ely*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6526>, accessed 21 April 2017.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*.

Durham. Whilst the bishop of Durham enjoyed the co-operation of the dean in terms of reform and iconoclasm, Cox faced a long struggle. Cox was unable to remove Perne and in line with the times, the dean and chapter had effective control over the Cathedral.¹¹⁹ Scott Wenig argues that Perne could drag his feet in face of reform due to his crypto-Catholicism, something which frustrated Richard Cox.¹²⁰ However, whilst Durham battled with a conservative diocese left by a Catholic bishop, Ely Cathedral had previously undergone relentless iconoclasm by order of the late Bishop Goodrich. Although Cox struggled to influence the way the cathedral ran, the damage had already been done to many Catholic images and shrines.

Ely's situation in the Elizabethan era proved to be similar to that of Edwards VI's reign. The cathedral had generally been purged of Catholic imagery, but this did not reflect the wider diocese. In face of this challenge, Cox proved to be a vigorous diocesan who reformed his See with good discipline in the first decade of Elizabeth's reign.¹²¹ In 1561, Cox reported that parish churches had 'a curious body of evidence regarding the attitude of the people in this part of England three years after the death of Queen Mary' whereby it was 'clear that the enactments for defacing the churches, and even those for enforcing uniformity of ritual had not been attended'.¹²² In this sense, Cox's biggest contribution to reform was to use Ely Cathedral as a model example for the rest of the diocese. Scott Wenig argues that Cox was an aggressive reformer who actually sought to move Ely beyond mere conformity to the Elizabethan Settlement and closer to reformed churches he experienced in Europe.¹²³ Cox was apparently successful in pushing the see of Ely in a Protestant direction and by

¹¹⁹ Wenig, S. (2002). The Reformation in the Diocese of Ely during the Episcopate of Richard Cox, 1559-77. *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 33 (1), 151-180. doi: 10.2307/4144247. pp.178-179.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* p.179.

¹²¹ Heal, F. (2008). Cox, Richard (c.1500–1581), bishop of Ely. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6526>, accessed 21 April 2017.

¹²² Gibbons, A. (Ed.) (1891). *Ely Episcopal Records*. Lincoln: James Williamson. p.36.

¹²³ Wenig, S. (2002). The Reformation in the Diocese of Ely during the Episcopate of Richard Cox, 1559-77. *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 33 (1), 151-180. doi: 10.2307/4144247. p.152.

December 1573, he wrote to Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, that 'touching my diocese, I trust to find it in better order than London, the Universities, and many countries besides, I dare not compare with Kent'.¹²⁴ The implication that Kent was a region better reformed than even London suggests that Canterbury Cathedral, located in Kent, did not face the same struggles, as late as the Elizabethan era, as the other three cathedrals. Cox did reform Ely to an impressive degree, showing that he was not scared of arguing directly with the queen, or pursuing policies she did not approve behind her back. The most obvious reason for Cox's success was the fact that he was an active presence in the Ely diocese.

Ultimately, 'many scholars have also emphasised the role that iconoclasts played in the conversion process...they have argued that the destruction of images helped to eradicate traditional religious beliefs in England by ritually banishing sacred intercessors and forcing the laity to abandon practices that the reformers regarded as superstitious'.¹²⁵ The cathedral personnel played a vital role in implementing or stalling iconoclasm and thus the geographical differences are a portrayal of past archbishops, bishops and deans views, rather than the diocese. During Henry's reign, relics, saints and shrines were considered "superstitious" and 'these attitudes evolved quickly, and clergy and laity alike were obliged continually to modify their professed views in order to steer the narrow course between conservatism and reform'.¹²⁶ However, this was the furthest the Henrician Reformation went in pursuing iconoclasm and indeed Protestantism, since services and practices generally remained Catholic. On the other hand, the Edwardian regime took iconoclasm much further, so much so that by the short-lived Catholic revival under Mary I, most relics had vanished

¹²⁴ Cox, R. (1821). Letter from Bishop Richard Cox to Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker, 5th December 1573. In J. Strype (Ed.) *The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker: The First Archbishop of Canterbury in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, Volume 2 (pp. 348-349). Oxford: Clarendon Press.p.349.

¹²⁵ Budd, J. (2000). Rethinking Iconoclasm in Early Modern England: the Case of Cheapside Cross. *Journal of Early Modern History*, 4 (3), 379-404. doi: 10.1163/157006500X00051.p.382.

¹²⁶ Crook, J. (2011). *English Medieval Shrines*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. p.289.

forever.¹²⁷ Protestantism 'presented itself as a movement that would purge the dross of "magic" from the pure metal of the Christian "religion" and prune away the "superstitious" popish and pagan accretions that had sprung up around it'.¹²⁸ This is what occurred under the short Edwardian regime and was pushed much further by the radical cathedral personnel during the Elizabethan era. Rather than a "settlement", Elizabeth faced opposition from both sides; Protestants and Catholic. "Puritan" views were started to become more prominent amongst the clergy, especially with the influence of the European Reformation scene, and inevitably their zeal against images grew. This was possibly merely due to the ability of Elizabethan bishops to condemn the monarch's personal beliefs and decoration; notably Elizabeth's personal crucifix. Alexandra Walsham argued that 'the curious ecclesiastical hybrid engendered by the settlement thus ended up fostering discontent and dissent on both its left and right wings'.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* p.290.

¹²⁸ Walsham, A. (2008). The Reformation and 'The Disenchantment of the World' Reassessed. *The Historical Journal*, 51 (2), 497-528. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/20175171>. p.505.

¹²⁹ Walsham, A. (2006). *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500-1700*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.p.14.

Chapter 3: The Fate of Saints, Shrines and Relics during the Reformation

Medieval shrines were symbols of the traditional Catholic faith. In essence, medieval shrines were 'pilgrimage centres, claiming to house either relics of Jesus' life or of the saints or statues of the Virgin Mary, to be visited either for more effective prayer, to obtain indulgences, or for healing'.¹³⁰ Shrines became an inevitable target of the Reformation due to their "superstitious" nature which was enhanced by the associated cults, reputed miracles and the loyalty to that saint and their posthumous reputation that often developed. The 1539 *Second Act of Dissolution* demanded that the King 'shall have, hold, possess and enjoy to him, his heirs and successors, for ever all and singular such late monasteries, abbacies [etc.]...which...our said Sovereign Lord have been dissolved, suppressed, renounced, relinquished, forfeited, given up, or by any other mean come to his Highness'.¹³¹ Many monasteries included shrines to local saints, thus the Dissolution clearly threatened shrines in addition to the hierarchy of medieval religion and other objects which they possessed. Alexandra Walsham argued that 'the ecclesiastical and civil officials who conceived and carried through these policies were driven by a conviction that the removal of notorious shrines was the only way to liberate the populace from enslavement to a fake religion'.¹³² This study will focus on the major shrine in each of the four cathedrals in this thesis: St Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral, St Cuthbert in Durham Cathedral, St Æthelthryth in Ely Cathedral and St William in York Minster. Since all four shrines were destroyed during the Dissolution of the Monasteries, this particular chapter will focus predominantly on the reign of Henry VIII. However, shrines were more than just the saint's tomb and many housed

¹³⁰ Crowcroft, R. & Cannon, J. (ed.). (2015). shrines. In *The Oxford Companion to British History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordreference.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780199677832.001.0001/acref-9780199677832-e-3898>, accessed 13 March 2017.

¹³¹ Tanner, J.R. (1922). *Tudor Constitutional Documents, A.D. 1485-1603*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.65.

¹³² Walsham, A. (2011). *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.97.

relics connected to the saint. Some of the relics were not destroyed until the later Tudor reigns, and indeed some were not destroyed at all. Therefore, this assessment will venture into the later Tudor reigns at various points. Despite religious beliefs being the most obvious concept linked to the Reformation, the iconoclastic attacks on shrines were not always motivated by the desire to destroy Catholicism in England. Firstly, the immense amount of wealth possessed by shrines easily feeds into the notion of the Dissolution of the Monasteries purely being a money-making scheme for the realm. In general, it was the tombs and pilgrim offerings which held the wealth of the shrines, thus it is in this context that the fate of relics must be explored to uncover the true religious feeling in each cathedral. Besides from the tremendous wealth and the “superstitious” beliefs that Protestants believed shrines upheld, the saints themselves need to be examined in order to understand why their shrines were targeted. The extent of a saint’s popularity during life and posthumously through miracles and hagiographies determined the loyalties of the population, sometimes boosting the saint above the monarch. In the case of Becket, a saint could pose a serious political threat due to what their life and death symbolised, for example a challenge to the monarch, and this needs to be considered when assessing why shrines were so violently attacked during the Reformation. Despite the varying degrees of iconoclastic destruction between the major shrines in this study, none escaped unscathed, thus a satisfactory study of iconoclasm in the early modern era must address the treatment of shrines.

Dissolution of the Monasteries

The most rudimentary explanation given for the Dissolution of the Monasteries was that Henry VIII was in desperate need of money to fund his regime. G.W.O Woodward suggested that ‘the primacy of the financial consideration in governmental thinking is made plain by

the adoption of a purely monetary line of distinction between the smaller abbeys....and the larger abbeys'.¹³³ Monasteries were known for being wealthy institutions with G.W. Bernard calculating that 'the revenues of the religious houses, mostly from their accumulated endowments of land, amounted to over £130,00 a year, if the valuations in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* may be trusted, probably double the revenue the crown received from its own estates'.¹³⁴ Traditionally, historians adopted the view that the Dissolution of the Monasteries was a greed-driven initiative by Henry VIII. John Guy summarises this argument by stating that 'there was little to suggest that Henry's Reformation had much to do with spiritual life, or with God'.¹³⁵ Whilst there are more complex religious, political and personal reasons for Henry VIII commanding the suppression of monasteries than Guy suggests, the financial aspect cannot be ignored. The shrine of St Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral was one of the wealthiest pilgrimage centres in Europe. Even in the early medieval period, Matthew Paris remarked that the shrine was 'of the purest gold of Ophir and precious stones, and of workmanship even costlier than the material'.¹³⁶ Sarah Blick argues that whilst contemporary records of St Becket's shrine are not unanimous in the description of its appearance, 'all surviving accounts agree on one aspect: the overwhelming opulent nature of the shrine'.¹³⁷ Although all shrines had some wealth due to the expensive materials used to create them, as well as offerings by pilgrims, none of the other three shrines in this study were on the same scale as Becket's. When Becket's shrine was attacked 'the gold and silver of the shrine (says Pollini) filled 26 waggons'.¹³⁸ According to the same contemporary source,

¹³³ Woodward, G.W.O. (1966). *The Dissolution of the Monasteries*. London: Blandford Press. p.50.

¹³⁴ Bernard, G.W. (2011). The Dissolution of the Monasteries. *History*, 96. (4), 390-409. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-229X.2011.00526.x. p.392.

¹³⁵ Guy, J. (1988). *Tudor England*. Oxford: Oxford University. p.148.

¹³⁶ Paris, M. *Historia Anglorum, Rolls Series, Vol. 2*, p.241. In Mason, A.J. (1920). *What Became of the Bones of St Thomas?*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.79.

¹³⁷ Blick, S. (2003). Reconstructing the Shrine of St. Thomas Becket, Canterbury Cathedral. *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/ Journal of Art History*, 72 (4), 256-286. doi: 10.1080/00233600310019327.p.257.

¹³⁸ Thomas Becket.(19 Aug 1538). In Gairdner, J. (Ed.), *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VI, Vol. 13, Part II*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Retrieved from State Papers Online <http://go.galegroup.com/mss/i.do?&id=GALE%7CMC4302300139&v=2.1&u=hudduni&it=r&p=SPOL&sw=w&viewtype=Calendar>.

the orders against Becket were commanded 'to be put into execution 11 Aug...on the 19th (St. Bernard's day) [1538]...the sacrilege was completed and the sacred relics publicly burnt and the ashes scattered'.¹³⁹ These dates indicate the urgency of Henry's order being carried out. 1538 was at the very start of the Dissolution of the Monasteries and thus Becket's was one of the first shrines to meet its fate and it took a mere matter of days between the King's order being passed to the total eradication of Becket's shrine in Canterbury Cathedral.

Becket's shrine attracted high volumes of gifts and riches due to his international renown, nevertheless the shrines of St Cuthbert, St William and St Æthelthryth also had their fair share of riches. St Cuthbert's appears to have been the next fortunate due to his dominance in the north of England. The *Rites of Durham* claim that the shrine 'was estimated to be one of the most sumptuous monuments in all England, so great were the offerings and Jewells that were bestowed upon it, and no lesse the miracles that were done by it'.¹⁴⁰ Thus, whilst there are no estimates of the wealth of St Cuthbert's shrine, contemporary accounts suggest that it bore a spectacular appearance; made of great riches and offered even more by pilgrims. The *Rites of Durham* also offer a narrative of the destruction and claimed that 'in ye visitac'on yt Docter Ley [Lee, H. 45], Docter Henley, and mr Blythma heild at Durham for ye subuertinge of such monument in the tyme of King Henrie 8 in his suppression of ye abbaies where they found many woorthie and goodly jewells' and this led to the 'spoil of his ornamt'.¹⁴¹ This implies that the commissioners' main motive was indeed to acquire as much wealth as possible from the shrine, rather than to simply tarnish St Cuthbert's reputation.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Fowler, J.T., Bates, G., Mickleton, J., Hope, W.H. (Ed.) (1903). *Rites of Durham, being a description or brief declaration of all the ancient monuments, rites, and customs belonging or being within the monastical church of Durham before the suppression, written in 1593*. Durham: Society by Andrews & co. p.4.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* p.102.

In terms of the shrine of St Æthelthryth, a 1906 edition of the *Architect's Magazine* described the shrine's appearance prior to the dissolution of the monasteries. It stated that St Æthelthryth's shrine was 'covered with rich gems, and the silver reliquary blazed with pearls, onyx, beryl, amethyst, and other stone...the corpse of the saintly queen was placed in a sarcophagus of white marble'.¹⁴² This modern re-imagining of the shrine described how it would have looked even before the excessive gifts bestowed upon it by pilgrims. However, despite contemporary beliefs and the riches surrounding the shrine, 'when it was dismantled the discovery that it was made of "common stone" and not, as had been thought, of fine white marble was trumpeted by the Reformers as evidence that the Roman Church had blinded and corrupted the laity'.¹⁴³ The acquisition of wealth was obviously limited in this respect, but this example was used to establish the validity of the reformers' actions. Ian Atherton argued that the shrine was at the heart of the medieval church and was probably dismantled in 1539.¹⁴⁴ Even if the material was worthless, the place of pilgrimage for St Æthelthryth was still destroyed and the message of the king's authority was still delivered. In contrast, St William of York, who was arguably the least popular of the four saints, had the honour of a rich shrine; 'the portable shrine of St William's head became the greatest of the treasures of the medieval [York] minster, and the miracles associated with the archbishop and his triumphal return to York in 1154 were portrayed in the fourteenth and fifteenth-century stained-glass windows of the nave and transepts'.¹⁴⁵ R.N. Swanson argues that accounts of shrine-keepers are problematic as some portray a decline in gifts to shrines, however many counter this by showing a healthy flow of money and gifts from pilgrims, particularly on feast days.¹⁴⁶ Regardless of the specific amount of wealth, St William's shrine

¹⁴² The Shrine of St. Etheldreda. (1906). *Architects Magazine, 1900-1907*, 6(72), p.232. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/docview/6696877?accountid=11526>. p.232.

¹⁴³ Tavinor, M. (2016). *Shrines of the Saints: In England and Wales*. Norwich: Canterbury Press. p.79.

¹⁴⁴ Atherton, I. (2003). The Dean and Chapter, Reformation to Restoration: 1541-1660. In P. Meadows & N. Ramsay (Eds.) *A History of Ely Cathedral* (pp. 169-192). Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. p.172.

¹⁴⁵ Burton, J. (2004). *William of York [St William of York, William fitz Herbert] (d.1154), archbishop of York*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9606>, accessed 31 May 2017.

¹⁴⁶ Swanson, R.N. (1989). *Church and Society in Late Medieval England*. Oxford: Blackwell. pp.225-226.

was destroyed in October 1541 and all the treasures of the shrine and chantries were taken by the Crown along with nearly all the jewels, plate, copes, vestments and other ornaments of the Minster'.¹⁴⁷

Whilst the assault on Becket's legacy was targeted and political, and arguably to a lesser degree the same is true of St Cuthbert, the general national destruction of shrines appeared to be based on financial gains. York Minster did not have a monastery but was still ransacked for all its riches, not merely the jewels from St William's shrine. St William's popularity was arguably not a direct threat to Henry VIII like that of other saints, yet his shrine was still destroyed. Consequently, the contemporary records and modern evaluations of the shrines of St Thomas Becket, St Cuthbert, St Æthelthryth and St William imply that excessive amounts of money and goods were to be gained even just from shrines in the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Therefore, the financial incentive of destroying these shrines and taking the wealth for the crown is not so easily dismissed. The Dissolution of the Monasteries gained the most wealth from the lands and actual buildings, but examples such as twenty-six carts of treasures taken from Becket's shrine cannot be overlooked as an easy money-making scheme for King Henry VIII.

The Cult of Saints

Although the financial incentive to destroying shrines cannot be discounted, it does not tell the whole story of the fate of saints during the Henrician and subsequent reformations. The cult surrounding a particular saint played a vital role in determining the establishment and often the nature of their shrine. Whilst some saints received canonisation without hesitation, others sparked huge debates about their worthiness to become a saint. St Æthelthryth was one of the lucky ones. During her lifetime, Æthelthryth was extremely

¹⁴⁷ Cowie, L.W. (1978). York Minster before the Reformation. *History Today*, 28 (5), 331-337. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/docview/1299036215?accountid=11526>. p.337.

devout, thus 'Bede described her way of life there... [Ely] in terms intended to indicate that she strictly espoused monastic values, as promoted by Pope Gregory the Great'.¹⁴⁸ Coupling her devout life with what Alan Thacker claimed was the crucial factor in establishing her saintly reputation; the miracle of her incorrupt body in 695, there was little doubt in Æthelthryth's worthiness as a saint.¹⁴⁹ The notion of an accepted and celebrated saint in Æthelthryth is evidenced by the fact that in the thirteenth century, Bishop Hugh Northwold established a shrine for her when he rebuilt the whole of the east end of Ely Cathedral in order to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims who went there to pray.¹⁵⁰ Clearly St Æthelthryth was important to the local community of Ely both throughout her lifetime and after her death. Even by the medieval era, a shrine was built to commemorate her and offer a place for pilgrims to worship and pray to the patron saint of Ely Cathedral. The example of St Æthelthryth reflects how several saints and shrines were viewed right up until the Reformation. The level of loyalty and worship that the local community displayed towards their saint was a vital reason that they were targeted by Henry. Albeit on a smaller scale than Becket, St Æthelthryth threatened the monarch and government by posthumously possessing the love of the local populace.

St Cuthbert enjoyed an even more expansive cult than St Æthelthryth. Rather than being limited to one particular county or city of England, St Cuthbert had a national reputation. He had support particularly from the northern people, who are generally perceived as "conservative" in religion by historians of the Reformation. A.G. Dickens argued that the people of the North displayed an attitude of self-interest and conservatism throughout the

¹⁴⁸ Thacker, A. (2009). *Æthelthryth [St Æthelthryth, Etheldreda, Audrey] (d.679), queen in Northumbria, consort of King Ecgrith, and abbess of Ely*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8906>, accessed 31 May 2017.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Ely Cathedral. (2017). *A Descriptive Tour of Ely Cathedral*. Retrieved from <http://www.elycathedral.org/history-heritage/a-descriptive-tour-of-ely-cathedral>.

monastic dissolutions and this continued even throughout the Edwardian Reformation.¹⁵¹ However, whilst the north did generally harbour loyalty to St Cuthbert, this was no different to the loyalty of those in the Midlands to St Æthelthryth, or to the wider nation who followed St Thomas Becket. Geography was not the cause for attacking a saint, the strength of their cult was. David Rollason and R.B. Dobson argued that 'although the last of his recorded medieval miracles...occurred in 1503, a generation later the affection of northerners for their saint was still alleged to be the biggest obstacle to the progress of the Reformation north of the Tees'.¹⁵² Accounts of miracles continued for centuries after St Cuthbert's death which eventually solidified the affections of the people. The *Rites of Durham* described how glazed windows in the Cathedral 'hath in it all the whole storye life and miracles of that holy man St Cuthbert from his birth of his natiuitie and infancie unto the end and a discourse of his whole life...beinge a most godly and fine storye to behold of that holy man of St Cuthbert'.¹⁵³ The language used to describe St Cuthbert and his miracles, for example, "most godly", highlights the sentiments of the northern population. To the English government, the popularity of saints was a major problem during the Reformation. Like the Pope, popular saints rivalled the influence of the monarch, a problem which Henry in particular became determined to quash.

In contrast, St William of York did not experience the widespread popularity of St Æthelthryth and St Cuthbert. The problem stemmed even from St William's lifetime where he faced opposition and thus did not enjoy the full support of his community. Although William of York became the Archbishop of York in 1141, his election was accompanied with

¹⁵¹ Dickens, A.G. (1982). *Reformation Studies*. London: The Hambledon Press. p.26.

¹⁵² Rollason, D. & Dobson, R.B. (2004). *Cuthbert [St Cuthbert] (c.635-687), bishop of Lindisfarne*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6976>, accessed 31 May 2017.

¹⁵³ Fowler, J.T., Bates, G., Mickleton, J., & Hope, W.H. (Ed.). *Rites of Durham, being a description or brief declaration of all the ancient monuments, rites, & monastical church of Durham before the suppression*. p.3.

the resistance by the archdeacons of the church of York.¹⁵⁴ Janet Burton argues that the opposition St William encountered 'may have been due less to any general unsuitability on his part, than to his long experience at York, which would have made him less easily swayed or influenced by factional interests among his colleagues'.¹⁵⁵ Whereas St Æthelthryth was celebrated for her religious commitment during her life, St William of York's time as Archbishop of York was overshadowed by his enemies. The fact that St William suffered a lifetime battle for acceptance and was eventually deposed, to then be reinstated shortly before his death, indicates that he was not the most likely candidate for a saint. He did, however, eventually become a saint, but even his sainthood was plagued by a resounding lack of significance. Christopher Norton argues that 'the papal canonisation was the high point of William's international reputation...the universal proclamation of his sanctity was greeted by an almost universal lack of interest'.¹⁵⁶ Unlike St Cuthbert, St Æthelthryth and most notably St Thomas Becket, St William's canonisation was a very underwhelming event which helps to explain why he did not enjoy a huge cult following during the medieval era. Nonetheless, despite St. William's underwhelming national standing, he enjoyed a good reputation within his own city of York. This local popularity existed in his lifetime when, upon criticism of his election to Archbishop, the citizens of York proved equally determined to promote William, as he seemingly secured the affections of the cathedral city.¹⁵⁷

Overshadowing the popularity of all of these saints and shrines, however, was that of St Thomas Becket. Similarly to St Cuthbert's, not only was St Thomas Becket's shrine the victim of iconoclasm, but his entire posthumous reputation was targeted. This was, however, undisputedly on a much bigger scale than against St Cuthbert. Firstly, the attack was

¹⁵⁴ Burton, J. (2004). *William of York [St William of York, William fitz Herbert] (d.1154), archbishop of York*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9606>, accessed 31 May 2017.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Norton, C. (2006). *St. William of York*. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer.p.202.

¹⁵⁷ Burton, J. (2004). *William of York [St William of York, William fitz Herbert] (d. 1154), archbishop of York*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9606>, accessed 29 Aug 2017.

enforced directly from above, with Henry VIII giving the orders rather than the clergy in their own cathedral. Secondly, the command was extended to the entire nation, rather than being focused on just Canterbury Cathedral. Finally, the attack was not merely against physical objects related to the saint, but his entire existence; demanding that Becket's name be scratched from liturgical books and an immediate cease to honouring his feast days. Despite Becket's greater fame he did share one experience with that of St William of York. This similarity was the question of their suitability to be canonised and even St William did not provoke as heated a debate as Thomas Becket. In regards to Becket, David Knowles claimed that 'as to the character of the archbishop, all criticism was barred for almost four centuries', and many contemporary reports support this notion of a positive outlook of Becket's life and sainthood.¹⁵⁸ Although the dramatic end to Becket's life did much to stifle negative opinions, there are a few surviving accounts of contemporaries who did not conform to Becket's cult. Gilbert Foliot was a known rival of Becket and when Becket fled England in October 1164, Foliot asked of him 'and your annual revenues, my lord – do they mean so much to you that you would buy them with the blood of your brothers?'.¹⁵⁹ Counter to the perception of Becket as the great martyr of Christendom, this shows how others during his lifetime actually considered him to be cowardly and selfish. Despite opinions such as this being in the minority during the medieval era, they laid the foundation for Henry VIII's later attack on Becket and his shrine, claiming that he was undeserving of being proclaimed a saint. On the 16th November 1538, after Becket's shrine had already been destroyed, Henry VIII justified his actions, as well as encouraged a continued onslaught on Becket, by stating that he 'shall no longer be named a saint, as he was really a rebel who fled the realm to France and to the bp. of Rome to procure the abrogation of wholesome laws, and was slain upon a rescue made with resistance to those who counselled him to leave his

¹⁵⁸ Knowles, D. (1970). *Thomas Becket*. London: Adam and Charles. p.2.

¹⁵⁹ Morey, A. & Brooke, C.N.L. (Eds.) (1965). *The Letters and Characters of Gilbert Foliot*. London: Cambridge University Press. p.172.

stubbornness'.¹⁶⁰ This short extract from Henry VIII's command revealed the true reasoning behind the sustained attack on Thomas Becket's shrine, relics, images and feast days. The major difference between Thomas Becket and the other three saints in this study is what Becket symbolised during his lifetime – a direct threat to the realm. All of the saints rivalled Henry's authority to a degree by possessing the loyalties of their local communities. Yet, this was in no comparison to St Thomas Becket's posthumous international reputation. An example had to be made of Becket as he had the most far-reaching international cult, which also meant that stories of his defiance to the state and his martyrdom were known outside of England too.

The events during Becket's life fed into his growing cult after his canonisation. Although for a time Thomas Becket was a symbol of unity of the church with the state, considering his close relationship with King Henry II, his later life became riddled with conflict with the Crown. Whilst this in itself might have been forgotten over time, the fact that the conflict between Henry II and Thomas Becket resulted in Becket's murder in his own cathedral, by supposed agents of the king, made Becket a martyr. Thus, Becket's life symbolised conflict with the ordained king of England, and his martyrdom represented the unjustified treatment of an archbishop. By becoming a martyr, 'St Thomas was constructed as a good shepherd (*bonus pastor*), prepared to give his life to protect his sheep', hence he became the hero of the story and a figure of defiance against a cruel king and government.¹⁶¹ In addition, this version of events was given extra verification by King Henry II's own actions. Despite their previous conflicts, the king was noted to be visibly upset by the news of Becket's death and

¹⁶⁰ Heretical Books, Church Ceremonies, &c. (16 Nov 1538). In *State Papers, Henry VIII: General Series, SP 1/139 f.89, The National Archives of the UK*. Retrieved from State Papers Online <http://go.galegroup.com/mss/i.do?id=GALE%7CMC4302380863&v=2.1&u=hudduni&it=r&p=SPOL&sw=w&viewtype=Calendar>.

¹⁶¹ Webster, P. (2016). Introduction: The Cult of St Thomas Becket: An Historiographical Pilgrimage. In P. Webster & M. Pierre-Gelin (Eds.) *The Cult of St Thomas Becket in the Plantagenet World, c.1170-c.1220* (pp. 1-24). Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer. p.11.

according to Christopher Irvine, 'it was his public acts of penance that added impetus to the emerging cult of Becket'.¹⁶² Ultimately, Becket became a symbolic threat to the monarchy, especially considering the outcry at his murder and widespread popular cult. Webster states that 'the dangers of St Thomas Becket's potential as a political saint were not lost on the Plantagenet kings, from Henry II onwards' and they reacted by creating royal saints, such as the one attributed to Edward the Confessor.¹⁶³ Therefore, Henry VIII's fears were not a new or isolated case for a monarch, but it did take a Tudor king and a new religious ideology to crush the shrine and cult of Thomas Becket and claim his sainthood had always been illegitimate.

The widespread popular support for Becket's cult was also a sticking point for Henry VIII. In the north of England, St Cuthbert earned the loyalty of the northern populace which had the potential to draw away their loyalty towards the king. The cult of St Thomas Becket did the same, but on a much vaster scale. The cult was a threat not only because it spread the hagiographical story of Becket which Henry VIII attempted to quash, but since from the offset it was bred from popular support. Therefore, the cult was 'extraordinary in the speed and scale of its success: its rapid acceptance by all social classes, the combination of popular veneration and official recognition, its great geographical spread, and the sheer numbers of miracles and pilgrims'.¹⁶⁴ This was an obvious threat to the loyalty of commoners to their king and Henry took up the new Protestant ideas for his own benefit. Staunton claimed that Becket appealed to the masses as 'each could take from his memory and his image what they sought, whether it was the miracle-worker, the martyr, the champion of the Church or

¹⁶² Irvine, C. (2015). Canterbury Cathedral: Pilgrims and cathedrals as places of pilgrimage. *Theology*, 118 (6), 421-428. doi: 10.1177/0040571x15595947.p.424.

¹⁶³ Webster, P. Introduction: The Cult of St Thomas Becket: An Historiographical Pilgrimage. In P. Webster & M. Pierre-Gelin (Eds.) *The Cult of St Thomas Becket in the Plantagenet World, c.1170-c.1220*. pp.18-19.

¹⁶⁴ Staunton, M. (Ed.) (2001). *The Lives of Thomas Becket: selected sources translated and annotated*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.p.33.

a combination of these'.¹⁶⁵ However, the cult surrounding Thomas began to fade with negative reports about his character, coupled with the Protestant ideology which disagreed with everything Becket stood for. In an attack on Becket, Henry VIII played on the old suspicions that it was Becket's murder that enhanced his status rather than any saintly acts in his lifetime by professing that 'there appeareth nothing in his life and exterior conversation whereby he should be called a saint'.¹⁶⁶

Relics

Whilst the Dissolution of the Monasteries explains the fate of the tombs and the riches, jewels and gifts left as offerings by pilgrims, shrines were more than this. Many shrines also hosted relics which related to their saint. In the context of Catholicism, "relics" is a word 'most commonly applied to the material remains of a saint after his death and to sacred objects which have been in contact with his body'.¹⁶⁷ Whilst relics were often housed in the shrine of the saint they belonged to, there are instances of portable relics which were transported around the country. Many flocked to see relics, both portable and those in shrines, since one 'purpose for which relics were employed was to secure a personal contact with a saint so that his intervention might be the more effectively solicited on behalf of the suppliant for his general welfare, the forgiveness of his sins or for the good of his soul'.¹⁶⁸ Consequently, this sparked a debate about how far relics represented many of the same ideologies as the actual shrines and tombs of their saints. Material culture played a significant role in the lives of the religious population in England throughout the medieval

¹⁶⁵ Staunton, M. (2006). Thomas Becket and his Biographers. *Studies in the History of Medieval Religion*, 28, 1-249. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt81rgf>. p.216.

¹⁶⁶ Hughes, P.L. & Larkin, J.F. (Eds.) (1964). *Tudor Royal Proclamations, Volume 1: The Early Tudors, 1485-1553*. London: Yale University Press. p.276.

¹⁶⁷ Livingstone, E.A. (2014). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. (3rd Ed.). Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199659623.001.0001/acref-9780199659623-e-4894?rskey=G3Fc10&result=7>.

¹⁶⁸ Bosner, W. (1962). The Cult of Relics in the Middle Ages. *Folklore*, 73 (4), 234-256. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/1258503>. p.235-236.

and Reformation eras. Relics offered additional opportunities to worship and pray to a saint and consequently reinforced the notion of power that a particular saint had over a particular area. Therefore, it is of little surprise that relics sometimes became a target for reformists. Since the Henrician Reformation was not built on solid religious motives, then it is hardly surprising that many relics survived this period. Indeed, many relics survived the Reformation era as a whole, being hidden or not being deemed as worthy of destroying. Thus, there are examples of surviving relics. However, particular relics were targeted at particular times and these deserve to be assessed.

The relics of St Cuthbert and St Thomas Becket offer the most detailed and radical examples of attacks on relics. Admittedly, both were targeted in very different ways; St Cuthbert in one dramatic attack by the dean of Durham Cathedral, William Whittingham, and St Thomas Becket on a much harsher scale, commanded by the reigning monarch, Henry VIII. After Becket's shrine was destroyed Henry VIII declared that 'Thomas Becket shall not be esteemed, named, reputed, nor called a saint, but Bishop Becket, and that his images and pictures through the whole realm shall be put down and avoided out of all churches...[and] festival in his name shall not be observed.'¹⁶⁹ The fact that this was enforced shortly after the dismantling of the shrine demonstrates urgency and the threat that Henry VIII felt Becket posed, making this event unique to him. No such speech by a monarch directly targeted St Cuthbert, St William or St Æthelthryth. In essence, with Thomas Becket being the primary victim of Henry's onslaught against saints, it is of no surprise that 'at Canterbury more than elsewhere, the government needed to show the very impulse to venerate the relics to be grounded on fiction and lies'.¹⁷⁰ Whilst iconoclasts generally achieved their religious aim by destroying shrines, St Thomas Becket posed a political danger which prompted a larger nationwide attack in order to destroy his widespread loyalties and cult and wipe him from

¹⁶⁹ Hughes, P.L. & Larkin, J.F. (Eds.) *Tudor Royal Proclamations, Volume 1: The Early Tudors, 1485-1553*. p.276.

¹⁷⁰ Marshall, P. (2006). *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England*. Aldershot: Ashgate. p.141.

religious history. Multiple examples exist showing Becket's name being erased or scratched out of religious books (see fig.1). Henry's orders were clearly accepted and carried out by a lot of the population. However, the period of the Henrician Reformation was the first shocking introduction of reformist beliefs by the state; therefore the radical reform of the minds of the people did not occur immediately. Relics of St Thomas Becket exist even to this day, highlighting the fact that concealment and preservation took place by conservatives. A piece of Becket's skull can still be found at Stonyhurst College, in Lancashire, England (see fig.2). This particular relic of Becket was believed to have been saved and hidden by recusant families during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Whilst some relics of saints probably survived the Reformation era after being concealed and preserved, the skull of Becket is of particular interest since he was the only saint that was specifically named and targeted by Henry VIII on such a public scale.

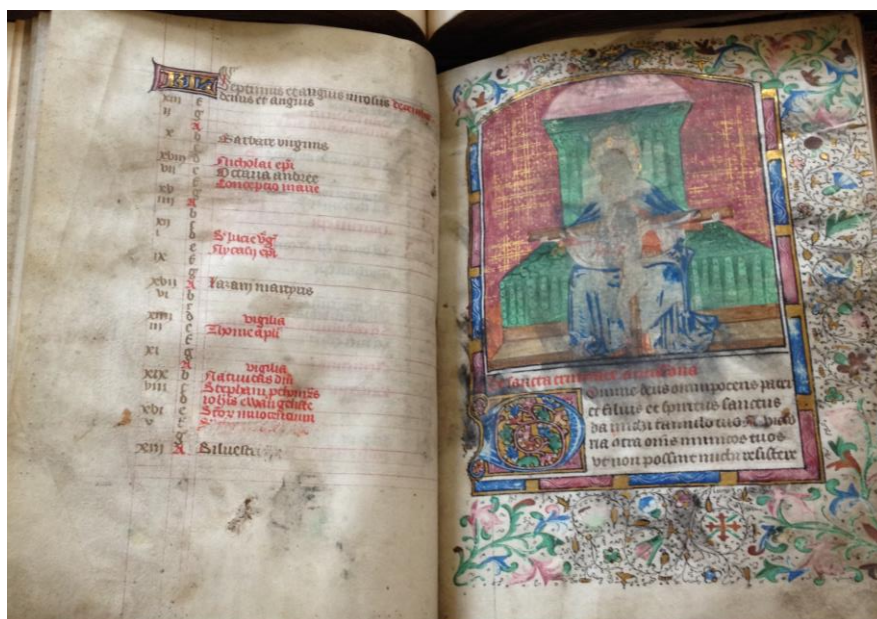


Figure 1.

Figure 1: (above) Book of Hours in Stonyhurst College Collections. St Becket's feast day has been deleted from the text.



Figure 2.

Figure 2: (left) St Thomas Becket relic; part of his skull in a portable casing. From Stonyhurst College Collections.

Becket is a figure very much entrenched in the Henrician Reformation. The assault upon his legacy, relics, feast days and general influence was a specifically calculated attack which the other saints did not experience to such an extent. St Cuthbert's relics, therefore, offer an insight into the Elizabethan Settlement and the way in which cathedral personnel became increasingly radical by taking on the view that all images and relics were idolatrous and dangerous. Cuthbert's relic suffered a much later blow than Becket's in the 1560s. Margaret Aston describes the events as the final "coup de grace", when the Dean William Whittingham's wife consigned the banner of St Cuthbert, the proud ensign for many northerners, to the flames.¹⁷¹ Katherine Whittingham 'participated in her husband William's crusade to rid Durham of the material reminders of Catholicism' and thus shared the workload as 'while Whittingham destroyed objects such as funeral monuments, Katherine supervised the public burning of the banner of St Cuthbert'.¹⁷² The fact that a woman was involved in cathedral iconoclasm is highly significant. St Cuthbert's cult upheld the 'exclusion of women from any but the westernmost parts of Durham Cathedral' which 'was perhaps motivated by the concerns of a celibate Benedictine cathedral community, was seemingly justified on the grounds of Cuthbert's alleged misogyny'.¹⁷³ Therefore, a woman not only being in charge of the fate of Cuthbert's relic but actively supervising its destruction sent out a powerful message of defiance against St Cuthbert as well as against monastic regulations. The fact that the burning of the banner was a public spectacle ensured that the message spread widely and those who doubted reform could see for themselves that burning the relic brought no immediate consequences from God. This delayed attack on Cuthbert's banner suggests that iconoclasm was not carried out as thoroughly or radically in Durham Cathedral during the earlier reigns. Thus, even into Elizabeth's reign, cathedral personnel

¹⁷¹ Aston, M. (2015). *Broken Idols of the English Reformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.146.

¹⁷² Levin, C., Bertolet, A.R. & Carney, J.E. (2017). *A Biographical Encyclopedia of Early Modern Englishwomen: Exemplary Lives and Memorable Acts, 1500-1650*. Oxon: Routledge. p.442.

¹⁷³ Rollason, D. & Dobson, R.B. (2004). *Cuthbert [St Cuthbert] (c.635-687), bishop of Lindisfarne*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6976>, accessed 31 May 2017.

had to fight against the cult of St Cuthbert and stage a dramatic attack on a beloved northern relic in order to not only destroy it, but prove that fire would eradicate the banner, hence showing its lack of mystical qualities.

In contrast, York Minster and Ely Cathedral do not offer many examples as notorious or well-documented. In his study of *Forgotten Shrines*, Bede Camm makes references to the clavicle of St William of York being found amongst other relics in the Weston family home of Sutton Place.¹⁷⁴ Without further detail or documentation, the best deduction that can be made is that the relic was purposely hidden or preserved by the Weston family who were conservative in their religious faith. In Ely, Virginia Blanton argued that material objects are essential to Ely's monastic identity as a means of demonstrating a saint's potency.¹⁷⁵ In this sense, it was the actual relics which helped to solidify a saint's sanctity and proved a pivotal point in their posthumous miracles. John Crook explains how material culture was as relevant immediately after Æthelthryth's death as during the medieval period since 'the clothes in which Æthelthryth had first been buried were powerful contact relics, used in exorcisms, and the original coffin proved efficacious in curing eye diseases'.¹⁷⁶ The radical Bishop Goodrich clearly understood the importance of relics and shrines to the Catholic faith and ordered that they 'be so totally demolished and obliterated, with all speed and diligence, that no remains or memory might be found of them for the future'.¹⁷⁷ In general, his words came to life and the attack was clearly unrelenting as 'only a few fragments survived the fury of the iconoclasts'.¹⁷⁸ However, In *Signs of Devotion: The Cult of*

¹⁷⁴ Reference to relic of St William at Sutton Place found in footnotes. Camm, B. (2003). *Forgotten Shrines: An Account of Some Old Catholic Halls and Families in England and of Relics and Memorials of the English Martyrs*. (2nd ed.) Leominster: Gracewing. p.376.

¹⁷⁵ Blanton, V. (2010). *Signs of Devotion: The Cult of St Æthelthryth in Medieval England, 695-1615*. Pennsylvania: Penn State Press. p.234.

¹⁷⁶ Crook, J. (2011). *English Medieval Shrines*. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer Ltd. p.61.

¹⁷⁷ Bentham, J. (1771). *The History and Antiquities of the Conventual and Cathedral Church of Ely: from the foundation of the monastery, A.D. 673 to the year 1771*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.190.

¹⁷⁸ Pevsner, N. & Metcalf, P. (1985). *The Cathedrals of England: Midland, Eastern and Northern England*. Middlesex: Penguin Books. p.106.

St. Æthelthryth in Medieval England, 695-1615, Virginia Blanton argued that despite moments of national crisis such as the Reformation and Interregnum when religious images were targeted, many images of St Æthelthryth survived, attesting to Æthelthryth's popularity.¹⁷⁹ This highlights, that the cult survived to some extent amongst devoted Catholics but it was driven underground and lost appeal outside of Catholic circles.

Through assessing the popularity and cult of saints during their lifetime and posthumously, direct comparisons can be drawn to the extent of the iconoclastic focus on their shrines and reputation from the Dissolution of the Monasteries to the reign of Elizabeth I. Shrines were a Catholic symbol of saints, miracles and pilgrimage that were immediately targeted with the start of the Reformation. The religious reasons cannot be forgotten. Many of the personnel in York Minster, Durham Cathedral, Canterbury Cathedral and Ely Cathedral became more zealously Protestant throughout the Tudor reigns, barring that of Mary I, although her short time as queen did not give her time to reverse the situation nationally. Even though all four shrines were destroyed in the 1530s and 1540s, the fact that Cuthbert's banner suffered iconoclasm in the 1560s and the removal of Becket's images throughout England started after the removal of his shrine, shows that there were clear religious motivations behind the iconoclasm of shrines that continued in later years. However, these were isolated cases since most of the shrines examined here were entirely destroyed in Henry VIII's reign, the focus has mainly been on the 1530s and 1540s. The fact that iconoclasm persisted much more brutally against other images and statues in later reigns shows that religious motivations were more clear cut in the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I. Therefore, when studying the fate of shrines during Henry VIII's reign, there is no option but to look further than purely religious reasons. The monumental wealth that shrines possessed, not just in the materials used to make them but in the gifts and offerings from pilgrims made shrines an

¹⁷⁹ Blanton, V. *Signs of Devotion: The Cult of St Æthelthryth in Medieval England, 695-1615*. p.295.

obvious target in the Dissolution of the Monasteries, with the aim of funding Henry VIII and his policies. This explains the looting of the shrines but not the extent that they were physically broken and burned. Consequently, religion plays some role in motivating the attacks, but the reputation of the individual saint during their lifetime, the miracles that they performed posthumously and the geographical spread of their cult were often the significant factors. Although St William and St Æthelthyrth's shrines were destroyed, they only enjoyed localised cults and thus were not the prime political targets in the sense that Cuthbert, and Becket especially, were. St Cuthbert was hailed as the northern saint, and since in traditional historiography the north of England was considered Catholic throughout the Reformation, the loyalties the citizens had to their Catholic saint needed to be destroyed. However, none suffered as much as Thomas Becket. Henry VIII had clear political and personal reasons for targeting Becket, mainly his international reputation as a martyr and symbol of defiance against the state. The destruction of shrines had clear financial incentives but for Cuthbert and Becket particularly, it was primarily about the assertion of power and control by Henry VIII, as well as the control of reformers over the physical space of the church.

Chapter 4: The Effects of Reformation Iconoclasm: Statues, Images and Altars

A vital note to remember concerning religious iconoclasm during the Reformation era was that images in general were not targeted – only those that Protestant believed were “abused” by being worshipped, since this contradicted the notion of “justification by faith alone”. The reformed religion abolished anything which appeared “superstitious” and focused solely on a personal relationship with God in order to gain access to Heaven. Even though the Elizabethan Religious Settlement was dominated by radicals, Helen Hackett explains that ‘an absolute iconoclasm, an attempt to purify the world completely of all images, was a virtually impossible position, and held by very few Elizabethan Protestants’.¹⁸⁰ Despite Henry VIII’s controversial break from Rome and the ensuing attack on shrines, the king never openly legalised widespread iconoclasm against all Catholic images and statues. In fact, ‘official policy moved in effect by stages, proscribing a wider range of imagery as time went on, with the result that iconoclastic reformers, jumping ahead to deal with further categories of idols, vented their dissatisfaction by acts of demonstrative destruction’.¹⁸¹ In essence, Henry VIII instigated the Reformation and launched a targeted attack on saints and shrines; Edward VI’s regime built on this and focused on the ultimate destruction of Catholic images and practises nationwide, particularly in those parish churches which had side-lined earlier reforms; and Elizabeth I faced opposition from her bishops about her personal use of a crucifix in worship. Nonetheless, regardless of what religious legislation demanded, cathedral personnel demonstrated their power again, through the extent that they reformed their cathedral and diocese. The most radical attempted to “purge” their cathedral churches and wider diocese of all Catholic iconography, whereas the conservative focused on

¹⁸⁰ Hackett, H. (1995). *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd. p.3.

¹⁸¹ Aston, M. (1993). *Faith and Fire: Popular and Unpopular Religion, 1350-1600*. London: The Hambledon Press. p.261.

technicalities, the Virgin Mary being a prime example. Debate centred on the extent that the Virgin Mary was categorised as a saint; if she was then she deserved the same fate as the other saints and shrines; if not then she was merely a religious and biblical figure who could maintain her place in cathedral decoration. The fact that debate surrounded such issues indicates that there were certain degrees of preservation and hiding of images. The same debates surrounded images and statues, concerning which were “abused” and which were merely decoration. Thus, the study of iconoclasm must be conscious of the various stages in which images and statues were swept into official iconoclastic legislation. Patrick Collinson summarised the progression of Reformation iconoclasm:

Iconoclasm implies a spirited attack, verbally violent or actually violent, on certain unacceptable images, but not the total repudiation of all images, which on my terms is Iconophobia. Indeed, Iconoclasm in this sense may imply the substitution of other, acceptable images, or the refashioning of some images for an altered purpose. It is hostile to false art but not anti-art, since its hostility implies a true and acceptable art, applied to laudable purpose.¹⁸²

The Virgin Mary

At the start of the sixteenth century the Virgin Mary was a core figure in Catholic worship. Indeed, she was ‘an active agent both in steering unbelievers onto the path of Christian salvation and in keeping believers morally orientated and away from sin’.¹⁸³ However, Stephen Bates also argues that ‘by the end of that century Protestantism had repositioned her, with the Scriptures and the Spirit of God picking up most of her workload’.¹⁸⁴ The re-writing of the Virgin Mary in reformed religion was for several reasons. Firstly, as Bates argues; Mary’s role in the Catholic religion conflicted many core reformed beliefs since

¹⁸² Collinson, P. (1986). *From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: the Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation*. Reading: University of Reading. p.8.

¹⁸³ Bates, S. (2015). *Salvatrix Mundi? Rejecting the Redemptive Role of the Virgin Mary*. In J. Willis (Ed.) *Sin and Salvation in Reformation England* (pp. 139-156). Farnham: Ashgate Publishing. p.140.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p.140.

Protestants 'rejected the late medieval balancing act of encouraging sinners not to sin, while reassuring them that mercy was nevertheless available'.¹⁸⁵ For many reformers only God had the ability to forgive people for their sins and this could only be achieved through "justification by faith alone" and a direct relationship with God. Thus, Mary lost her role as a figure to who one could repent their sins. Secondly, there was heated debate about whether the Virgin Mary was placed into the same category as other saints and as a result should face the same treatment. Therefore, Henry VIII's assault on saints and shrines created discrepancies amongst the cathedral personnel; should they destroy images, relics and statues of the Virgin Mary like they were expected to with local saints?

The debate about the legitimacy of the Virgin Mary in worship became even more complex during the reign of Elizabeth I. Clearly, even by the 1560s and onwards, Catholic loyalties still remained for some English people, and this included the worship of the Virgin Mary. However, it was in the Elizabethan era that the deconstruction of the Virgin Mary would occur. Similarly to Henry VIII and his attack on Becket, Elizabeth targeted the Virgin Mary for personal reasons rather than wholly religious ones. Although the "Virgin Queen" persona did not develop until later in Elizabeth's reign, her attempts to replace the Virgin Mary started immediately. Roy Strong argued that 'the Reformation had swept away many important Catholic feast days...[and] the rise of the Queen's Day festivities enabled these energies to be concentrated into a stream designed to glorify the monarchy and its policies'.¹⁸⁶ The abolition of the feast days of the Virgin Mary, combined with their replacement with feast days celebrating Elizabeth illustrates an early example of the Queen placing herself above the Virgin Mary as a figure of authority. This attempt to establish herself as a mighty monarch of England eventually led Elizabeth to adopting the Virgin Queen persona. Thus,

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p.146.

¹⁸⁶ Strong, R. (1958). The Popular Celebration of the Accession Day of Queen Elizabeth I. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 21 (1/2), 86-103. doi: 10.2307/750488. p.91.

the Virgin Mary was a direct contender for the devotion of the nation and a threat which needed removing. Although Elizabeth did enjoy decoration in her chapel, 'there was not a complete rejection of imagery, but rather the replacement of old, "false", Catholic images with new, "true", Protestant ones: in this case the Virgin Mary opposed to and destroyed by the Virgin Queen'.¹⁸⁷ On 30th August 1578, the government agent, Richard Topcliffe wrote to the Earl of Shrewsbury that whilst the queen stayed at Edward Rookwood's home, Euston Hall; 'an immaydge of our Lady was ther fownd...Her Majesty commanded it to the fyre, which in her sight by the cuntrie folks was quickly done, to her content, and unspeakable joy of every one but some one or two who had sucked of the idoll's poisoned mylke'.¹⁸⁸ Whilst there is doubt about the validity of this account, the letter at least portrays the real struggle between the Virgin Queen and the Virgin Mary. Placing Elizabeth as the figure who assigns the image of Mary to the flames reinforced the notion that the competition for loyalties was between the two women, and Elizabeth was determined to win.

Therefore, there were a multitude of reasons for reformists to dislike images of the Virgin Mary. Her presence intruded on the direct worship of God, her cult was widespread and the competition she posed to the Virgin Queen, are just a few of these reasons. Whilst it is not always clear why the Virgin Mary was removed from cathedrals, there are examples of iconoclasm. Ely Cathedral hosts a large Lady Chapel which was targeted during the Dissolution of the Monasteries (see fig.3). In *A History of Ely Cathedral*, Ian Atherton states that 'every one of the 147 statues of Mary and other saints in the Lady Chapel was systematically beheaded, and the statues in Bishop West's chantry chapel were similarly mutilated to render them innocuous'.¹⁸⁹ This suggests that statues were a targeted feature in Ely Cathedral and statues of the Virgin Mary were not cherry-picked for demolition but in

¹⁸⁷ Hackett, H. *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*. p.3.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p.3.

¹⁸⁹ Atherton, I. (2003). *The Dean and Chapter, Reformation to Restoration: 1541-1660*. In P. Meadows & N. Ramsay (Eds.) *A History of Ely Cathedral* (pp. 169-192). Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. p.173.

fact were put into the same category as saints and other statues. The Lady Chapel was heavily vandalised and ‘although it is not known when the iconoclasm was carried out, it was probably in response to Goodrich’s injunctions given at Ely on 21 October 1541 for the suppression of all images.¹⁹⁰ These injunctions called for ‘images, relicks, table-monuments of miracles, shrines...be so totally demolished and obliterated’.¹⁹¹ If this was the case, the attack on the Lady Chapel seemed to be firstly against idolatry due to the sheer amount of statues which once stood there and now only broken figures and empty pedestals remain (see fig.4). Secondly, the Lady Chapel was a large worship space dedicated to the Virgin Mary and therefore encouraged the worship of the Virgin, saints and other Catholic figures, which was a practice deemed “superstitious” by reformers such as Bishop Goodrich.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

Figure 3 (above): Panoramic view of Lady Chapel at Ely Cathedral.

Figure 4 (left): Empty niche in the Lady Chapel at Ely Cathedral.

Photos taken with kind permission of Ely Cathedral.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p.173.

¹⁹¹ Bentham, J. (1771). *The History and Antiquities of the Conventual and Cathedral Church of Ely: from the foundation of the monastery, A.D. 673 to the year 1771*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.190.

York Minster has a trumeau statue of the Virgin Mary holding the infant Christ outside the Chapter House. The Virgin Mary proved to be a targeted figure throughout England and similar to the attacks at Ely Cathedral, the statue at York Minster was vandalised (see fig.5). John Gough offered an overview regarding the fate of the statue, stating that 'the heads were destroyed at the Reformation, those now present having been added in 1902'.¹⁹² This seems to have been the product of Victorian Restoration, where architects provided historically purified icons to an Anglican clergy seeking to inspire a revival in religious feeling.¹⁹³ Although the heads were eventually restored, this did not occur during the Reformation era and thus the Virgin Mary was left as a defaced statue at the hands of the iconoclasts in York. The problem of using material culture is demonstrated in York Minster in regards to another sculpture of the Virgin Mary. Similarly to the trumeau statue of the Virgin Mary, York Minster hosts another example of a sculpture of the Virgin Mary holding the infant Christ (see figs.6 & 7). The sculpture suffered significant damage, again, particularly to the head and face of the figures. However, the problem with identifying iconoclasm is portrayed in the sculpture caption, reading: 'the sculpture may have been defaced by later builders in order to remove its religious significance, allowing it to be used as building stone. However, it may also be the result of 16th century iconoclasm', (see fig.7).¹⁹⁴ The major problem with material culture is that objects did not generally have records of their history and fate and any records that were made do not always survive. Whilst examples of iconoclasm may seem prominent in cathedrals, destruction was not limited to the sixteenth century. Iconoclasm occurred, arguably more drastically, during the seventeenth century Civil War in England, and as the caption states, destruction was not always religious, but could simply be the product of builders or even accidents and general wear. Considering that

¹⁹² Gough, J. (2015). *York Minster: A Handbook for Guides*. Hastings: Berforts Group Limited. p.168.

¹⁹³ Miele, C. (1995). 'Their interest and habit': professionalism and the restoration of medieval churches, 1837-77. In C. Brooks & A. Saint (Eds.) *The Victorian Church: Architecture and Society* (pp. 151-172). Manchester: Manchester University Press. p.151.

¹⁹⁴ See figure 7.

the trumeau statue of the Virgin and infant Christ lost its head during the Reformation, it is certainly possible that the sculpture was the victim of anti-Marian sentiments. However, the sculpture was 'rediscovered after the 1829 fire in the quire' (see fig.7) and thus could also reasonably point to the notion that it was perhaps buried or hidden from iconoclasts in an effort to preserve it. Whilst this sculpture demonstrates the issues with material culture, the notion of preservation cannot be completely disregarded. Aston argues that in dioceses such as York, 'proscribed imagery was still being harboured well beyond 1566'.¹⁹⁵ This is further emphasised by another example of preservation in York in 1835, when an excavation occurred at Frederick Swineard's house on Precentor's Court, York, where a statue which 'apparently represents Saint Margaret standing on the dragon' was found along with other statues, all exhibiting varying degrees of destruction.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, 'the stones were lying one upon another, the worked face being placed upwards, but carefully protected from injury by a covering of fine sand, indicating that they had been deposited there for concealment and preservation'.¹⁹⁷ Although the details surrounding these discoveries; when they were hidden, if they were purposely preserved and where the statues were originally placed, are not known, it offers a perspective about the wider diocese of York and how some people felt about Catholic statues. In essence, defaced statues cannot always be taken at face value as Reformation destruction. Decay whilst hidden, Civil War iconoclasm or even modern builders could cause similar defacement to a sculpture. However, Helen Hackett argues that 'before England's break with Rome, Marian iconography was both firmly entrenched and widely familiar in culture and society...it should not therefore be surprising to find elements of Marian iconography surviving or resurfacing in various areas of culture after the official Reformation'.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Aston, M. (2016). *Broken Idols of the Reformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.169

¹⁹⁶ Urban, S. (1844). Sculptured Shrine Found at York (with a plate). *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, 176 (October), 380-381. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/inu.30000080772787>. p.380.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.* p.380.

¹⁹⁸ Hackett, H. *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*. p.25.



Figure 5.

Figure 5 (left): Trumeau Statue of the Virgin Mary with the Infant Christ, outside the Chapter House at York Minster.

Figures 6 & 7 (below): Virgin and Child Sculpture with description, at York Minster.

Photos taken with kind permission of York Minster.



Figure 6.

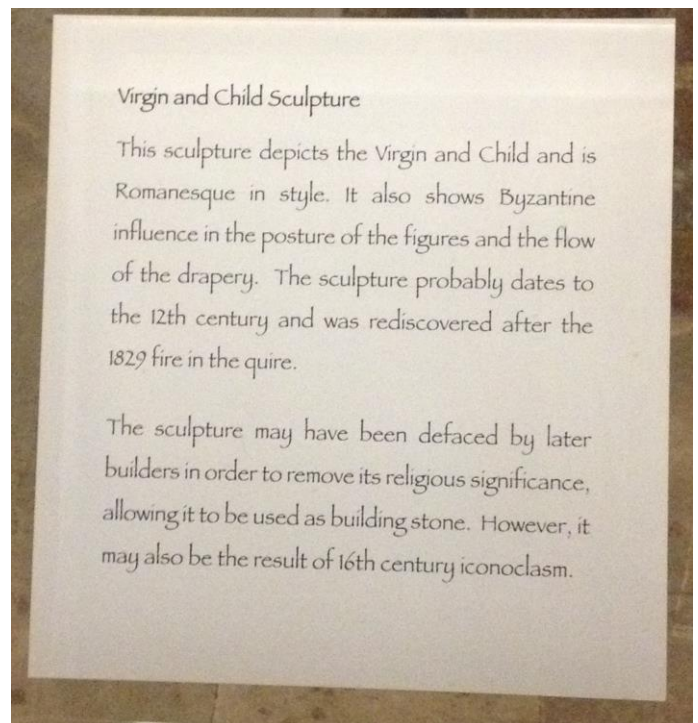


Figure 7.

Defaced Images and Statues

As previously mentioned a study of cathedral iconoclasm is not to simply visit a cathedral and ascribe any damage, defacement and missing objects to the Tudor iconoclasts. Whilst iconoclasm did extend to more Catholic objects, images and practices with each Tudor monarch since Henry VIII, barring Mary I, a complete “purge” was not achieved. In fact, cathedrals were targeted just as brutally during the Civil War and ‘the broad and dramatic iconoclasm of the mid seventeenth century was to be the final major resurgence of the phenomenon in this country’.¹⁹⁹ Therefore, when studying the era of Reformation, one must be conscientious when dealing with material culture not to attribute all change to the Tudors. Although at present there is an arch in Canterbury Cathedral which once held statues of the twelve apostles, (see fig.8), this actually demonstrates conservatism during the Reformation period as the figures were not actually lost until the Civil War. Images of Christ, the Holy Ghost, the twelve apostles and four evangelists and images of angels were destroyed in a night raid on Candlemas Day 1641.²⁰⁰ Despite Canterbury Cathedral experiencing men such as Thomas Cranmer, Matthew Parker and Edmund Grindal as Archbishops during the Tudor Reformation era, the Puritan iconoclasm during the Civil War shows that plenty of decoration still existed in the cathedral after Elizabeth I’s death. This also tends to be the case for stained glass windows in cathedrals; York Minster protected its glass against the Puritans and Canterbury Cathedral lost its stained glass to the Puritans. For this reason, this study does not focus on stained glass windows in cathedrals, since this was mostly a topic for the Civil War period, not the Tudor Reformations.

¹⁹⁹ Spraggon, J. (2003). *Puritan Iconoclasm During the English Civil War*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. p.xi.

²⁰⁰ Walsham, A. (2006). Angels and Idols in England's long Reformation. In P. Marshall & A. Walsham (Eds.) *Angels in the Early Modern World* (pp. 134-167). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.159.

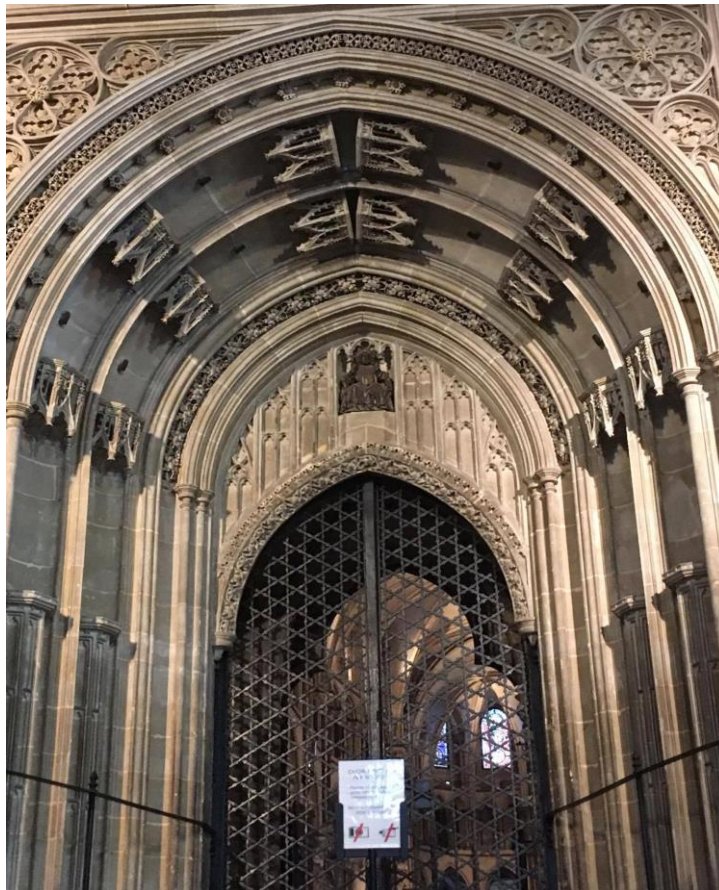


Figure 8 (left): Arch with empty niches that once contained statues of the 12 apostles, Pulpitum Crossing at Canterbury Cathedral.

Photo taken with kind permission of Canterbury Cathedral.

Figure 8.

Therefore, there was not a blanket destruction of all images and statues within cathedrals and churches throughout the Tudor reigns. Henry VIII is famed for his religious backtracking, attempting in his later years to reverse reform and taking a more conservative religious stance. The King was certainly the driving force which instigated the Reformation, but his reforming advisors manipulated the new religious climate to further iconoclasm. However, Margaret Aston correctly argues that Henry was able to apply the brakes on religious changes:

sensing the perils of Cromwellian policy, [Henry] had retreated in the 1540s from the spectacular iconoclasm of 1538. Reform of images continued, but the supreme head, who did not see eye-to-eye with his archbishop...was readier to complete the termination of major pilgrimage shrines than to undertake the eradication of idolatry.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ Aston, M. *Faith and Fire: Popular and Unpopular Religion, 1350-1600*. p.282.

This attempted eradication of idolatry eventually came in Edward VI's reign. Initially, Edward's regime focused on removing "abused" images, but this led to discrepancies over what was classified as "abused". A letter sent from the council to Archbishop Cranmer, on 11th February 1548, reflected the debate and shows the move to destroying *all* images; 'putting an end to all these contests, and that the living images of Christ might not quarrel about the dead ones, it was concluded they should all of them be taken down'.²⁰² Understandably, Edward's short reign meant that the complete destruction of idolatry in England was not completed. With the Edwardian injunctions hindered, followed by the Catholic rule of Mary I, it is no surprise that by Elizabeth I's reign, many images considered idolatrous by reformists still existed in cathedrals and parish churches alike. On the 2nd November, 1559, John Jewel wrote to Peter Martyr that 'the cathedral churches were nothing else but dens of thieves, or worse, if any thing worse or more foul can be mentioned'.²⁰³

By the Elizabethan era, Puritanism had grown in popularity. It was from this point that the driving force behind the Reformation diverted to the cathedral personnel, rather than the monarch. Elizabeth favoured compromise but many new cathedral personnel were at least sympathetic to Puritan beliefs. This widespread change of religious sentiments amongst the personnel led to the destruction of sundry surviving Catholic objects within cathedrals. Prior to this transformation of personnel, a stone carving of St Cuthbert vested for mass survived in Durham Cathedral. The carving had survived despite the destruction of St Cuthbert's shrine during the Dissolution of the Monasteries, and the further attack on images during the Edwardian Reformation. However, the cathedral personnel took action during the

²⁰² Burnet, G. (1820). *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England: Volume 2, Part 1*. London: J.F. Dove for Richard Priestley. p.97.

²⁰³ Robinson, H. (Ed.) (1846). *The Zurich Letters: Or, the Correspondence of Several English Bishops and Others, with Some of the Helvetian Reformers, During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*. Chiefly from the Archives of Zurich, Volume 52. Parker Society: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.60.

Elizabethan era. The Dean of Durham Cathedral, Robert Horne, 'had the housing pulled down and appropriated the lead. But the stone was still there set against the wall until Whittingham's arrival, when the new dean (it was reported) had the image defaced and broken to pieces'.²⁰⁴ As Margaret Aston explains; 'this all reads like a sustained effort to reform away a cult that was obstinate in dying. Horne and Whittingham must both have been shocked by the situation they found at Durham, and both made the most of the continental experience they gained abroad during Mary's reign'.²⁰⁵ Whilst Edward VI is often considered an advocate for iconoclasm, it was not until the appointment of radical cathedral personnel during the Elizabethan age that the carving of St Cuthbert was destroyed.

Durham Cathedral and York Minster offer an interesting contrast which shows that the early Reformation focused on "abused" images and statues, not simply all decoration in religious institutions. For example, images which depicted the royal supremacy were acceptable, but images of saints were not. Whilst the motive for attacking saints evolved from political to religious from the 1530s to the 1550s, the importance of royal authority remained. Durham Cathedral offers an example of the fate of saints with the Neville Screen. Prior to the Reformation, Stanford E. Lehmborg states that it 'supported 107 statues, some surrounding the high altar, facing the choir, and some facing east toward St. Cuthbert's shrine, which was behind the altar. All of these were richly painted and gilded; none survive, and the screen had held empty niches ever since the sixteenth century, probably since 1538'.²⁰⁶ The fact that the statues faced the shrine highlights the religious connotations behind the statues, decorating and possibly "advertising" the shrine of St Cuthbert. Conversely, York Minster housed a stone screen which separated the nave and choir (rather than behind the high altar) which contained fifteen statues, but was allowed to remain presumably since they

²⁰⁴ Aston, M. *Broken Idols of the Reformation*. p.146.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p.146.

²⁰⁶ Lehmborg, S.E. (1988). *The Reformation of Cathedrals: Cathedrals in English Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p.76.

depicted the kings of England from William the Conqueror to Henry VI, rather than saints.²⁰⁷

The statues in York Minster were left untouched as they were a symbol of remembrance and monarchical authority rather than religious sentiments. In this sense, “decoration” was allowed to remain since it did not interfere with the direct worship of God in the way that praying to saints and the Virgin Mary did.

Detailed medieval statues and figures were also carefully carved *into* the stone of cathedrals, as well as being placed into niches or stood around the cathedral. Somewhat surprisingly, considering the vast destruction by iconoclasts in the Lady Chapel, Ely Cathedral offers examples of surviving religious figures carved into the stone. The pillars surrounding the Octagon still host medieval carvings, ‘among the few medieval carvings to have survived the Reformation’.²⁰⁸ The official website for Ely Cathedral offers one possible insight into the survival of the carvings, suggesting it was ‘perhaps because they tell the story of St Etheldreda’ (see figs.9,10,11).²⁰⁹ This is certainly one possibility as St Etheldreda did hold a place in the sentiments of the diocese. However, alternative explanations must be considered, especially since St Etheldreda’s shrine was the victim of iconoclasm during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Perhaps the survival of the carvings is merely due to practicality. The position of the carvings being at a substantial height, thus out of arms reach, may have been a factor. The shrine and other statues placed at ground level were much easier targets for the iconoclasts and thus the carvings above them may have even gone unnoticed. Whilst the reasons for the survival are unknown, it seems strange that an entire series of carvings could survive in such a reforming cathedral and diocese. Not only do the carvings represent St Etheldreda, but they portray the importance of miracles, what

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p.76.

²⁰⁸ Ely Cathedral. (2017). *A Descriptive Tour of Ely Cathedral*. Retrieved from <http://www.elycathedral.org/history-heritage/a-descriptive-tour-of-ely-cathedral>.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

reformists branded “superstition”, since one (see fig.9) shows the unveiling of St Etheldreda’s incorrupt body 17 years after her death.



Figure 9 (left): Stone carvings in the Octagon at Ely Cathedral. This one depicts the miracle of St. Etheldreda’s body being found incorrupt 17 years after her death.

Photo taken with kind permission of Ely Cathedral.

Figure 9.



Figure 10 (left): Stone carvings in the Octagon at Ely Cathedral, depicting the life and miracles of St. Etheldreda.

Photo taken with kind permission of Ely Cathedral.

Figure 10.



Figure 11.

Figure 11 (above): Stone carvings in the Octagon at Ely Cathedral, depicting the life and miracles of St. Etheldreda.

Photo taken with kind permission of Ely Cathedral.

Being an integral part of the fabric of the building did not necessarily ensure the survival of images. Canterbury Cathedral hosts many carvings which show the signs of defacement. Although carved into the wall, many of the figures have had their hands and heads removed, or at least their faces scratched out to conceal the identity of the figure (see figs.12 & 13). Although the date of the vandalism of these particular carvings is not known, they clearly show how iconoclasts worked and that it occurred in cathedrals as well as parish churches. Since these carvings do not seem to portray saints or other “idolatrous” images, then perhaps the destruction occurred when Canterbury Cathedral had more Puritan-leaning

Archbishops and personnel during the Elizabethan reign, or perhaps later during the Civil War. This possibility derives from the notion that Canterbury Cathedral lacked dedicated reformist involvement from Archbishop Cranmer and Dean Wotton, who were both preoccupied with state matters. Patrick Collinson argued that ‘after Edward’s death and Mary Tudor’s successful *coup d’état*, Canterbury Cathedral may have been one of those places where the mass returned “of mere devotion”, without waiting for a legislated change’.²¹⁰ Due to these presumptions, the carvings were probably defaced during the Elizabeth Settlement or the Civil War, when Canterbury experienced more direct influence.

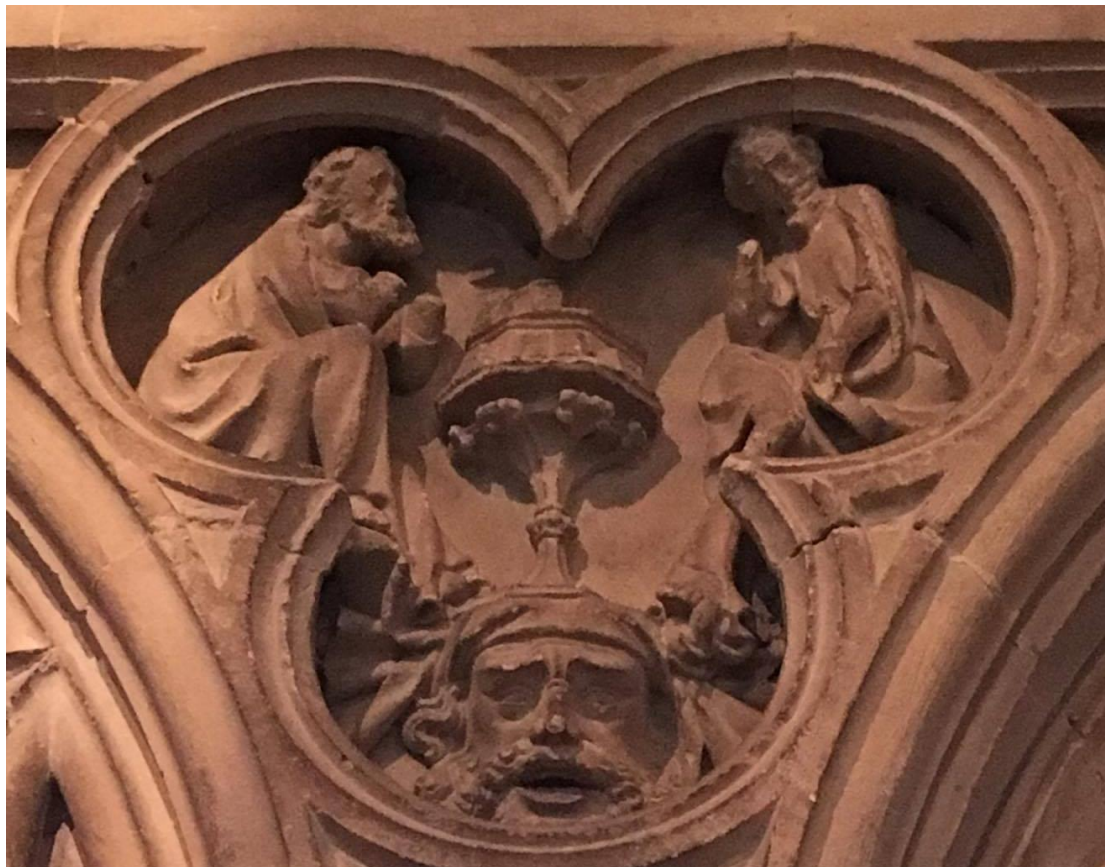


Figure 12.

Figure 12 (above): Stone carvings which have had their hands removed or broken, at Canterbury Cathedral.

Photo taken with kind permission of Canterbury Cathedral.

²¹⁰ Collinson, P. (1995). The Protestant Cathedral, 1541-1660. In P. Collinson, N. Ramsay, & M. Sparks (Eds.) *A History of Canterbury Cathedral* (pp. 154-203). Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.163-164.



Figure 13.

Figure 13 (above): Stone carving at Canterbury Cathedral, the face of the figure has decayed or been removed.

Photo taken with kind permission of Canterbury Cathedral.

Perhaps a less obvious example of iconoclasm is the existence of empty niches within cathedrals. Although this does not outwardly demonstrate broken or defaced images and statues, they do show how many statues once stood within the cathedral. L.W. Cowie argued that York Minster can now only provide visitors' imaginations with an idea of what it would have looked like prior to the Reformation since the colour and gilding on stone and wood has vanished, the treasures and ornaments were seized, monuments were destroyed and carved figures were removed from niches and recesses.²¹¹ Ultimately, the disappearance of objects and empty niches (see figs.14, 15, 16) are just as relevant in material culture iconoclastic studies as the existence of defaced images. Empty niches which once contained statues and figures are elements of iconoclasm which tie together and still exist in Canterbury Cathedral, Durham Cathedral, Ely Cathedral and York Minster.



Figure 14 (left): Empty niche in Canterbury Cathedral.

Photo taken with kind permission of Canterbury Cathedral.

Figure 14.

²¹¹ Cowie, L.W. (1978). York Minster before the Reformation. *History Today*, 28 (5), 331-337. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/docview/1299036215?accountid=11526>. p.332.

Figure 15.



Figure 15 (above): Empty niche in York Minster.

Photo taken with kind permission of York Minster.

Figure 16 (below): Empty niches in Bishop West's Chantry Chapel at Ely Cathedral.

Photo taken with kind permission of Ely Cathedral.



Figure 16.

Carvings of religious figures could also be found in rood screens. Rood screens existed in parish churches and cathedrals alike, and their primary purpose was to separate the chancel from the nave to act as the 'physical symbol of the ancient desire to protect the holiest part of the church from any threat of impurity, to keep the sacrament of the altar at a safe distance from the laity'.²¹² Not only did rood screens represent Catholic worship conventions, separating the clergy from the laity during mass, but they were 'overwhelmingly the most important single focus of imagery in the people's part of the church'.²¹³ Like many Catholic objects, rood screens were often decorated and carved with images of saints. For these reasons, rood screens were a prime target for reformist iconoclasts. Durham Cathedral was the home to a Romanesque rood screen which had been defaced and removed from the cathedral by 1593.²¹⁴ Before its removal, the *Rites of Durham* described it as 'ye most goodly and famous Roode yt was in all this land, wth ye pictue of Marie on thone side, and ye picture of John on thither...it was thowght to be one of ye goodliest monumt in that church'.²¹⁵ Two existing panels in Durham Cathedral are believed to be from the rood screen, one section showing the Transfiguration and the other the risen Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene (see figs. 17 & 18). Both panels have enough of the original carving left in order to determine the scenes they presented to medieval communities, but the faces of the figures have all been removed. In essence, 'the consistent and complete defacing of the figures on both panels suggests deliberate mutilation and is indicative of iconoclastic spoliation during the period of the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century as well as that which occurred during the waves of Puritan demolition

²¹² Wabuda, S. (2002). *Preaching During the English Reformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.29-30.

²¹³ Duffy, E. (2012). *Saints, Sacrilege and Sedition: Religion and Conflict in the Tudor Reformations*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing. p.56.

²¹⁴ Russo, T.E. (1994). The Romanesque Rood Screen of Durham Cathedral: Context and Form. In D. Rollason, M. Harvey, & M. Prestwich (Eds.) *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1193* (pp.251-168). Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer. p.252.

²¹⁵ Fowler, J.T., Bates, G., Mickleton, J., Hope, W.H. (Ed.) (1903). *Rites of Durham, being a description or brief declaration of all the ancient monuments, rites, and customs belonging or being within the monastical church of Durham before the suppression, written in 1593*. Durham: Society by Andrews & co. pp.33-34.

under Cromwell'.²¹⁶ Since only the faces of the figures were vandalised, rather than the panels as a whole, it seems as though the iconoclasts were hoping to send out a clear message. The attack was not on images in general, but rather on religious images that interfered with a direct relationship with God, namely saints. Since the rood screen was seen by the laity and the general illiterate population, the defacement of the carvings was a powerful way to show reform and the governments' attempts to eradicate the role of saints from religious worship. The fact that these carvings were probably found on the rood screen in Durham Cathedral enforces a deeper message that Catholic practices such as mass were also in danger during the Reformation years.



Figure 17 (left): Probably a panel from the Romanesque rood screen at Durham Cathedral. The scene depicts the Transfiguration and the faces of the figures have been removed.

Photo taken courtesy of Durham Cathedral.

Figure 17.

²¹⁶ Russo, T.E. The Romanesque Rood Screen of Durham Cathedral: Context and Form. In D. Rollason, M. Harvey, & M. Prestwich (Eds.) *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1193*. pp.252-253.



Figure 18 (left): Probably a panel from the Romanesque rood screen at Durham Cathedral. The scene depicts 'The Risen Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene'. The faces of the figures have been removed.

Photo taken courtesy of Durham Cathedral.

Figure 18.

Altars

Iconoclasm did not merely attack overtly Catholic images, but also objects which played a crucial role in Catholic worship. Altars, therefore, were a hotly contested issue throughout the Reformation period. The significance of altars is shown in the chosen title of Eamon Duffy's revisionist work *The Stripping of the Altars*; a piece dedicated to exploring the religious impact of the Reformation years on English society, with the title making reference to how bare churches became. Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke also provide a detailed account of altars in *Altars Restored*, where they claim that 'late medieval religion was characterised by its critics as inherently idolatrous, not just due to the alleged worship of images but because of the working of the miracle of the mass by a priest at an altar, and the

adoration of the elements thus consecrated'.²¹⁷ Thus, although altars did not necessarily portray images of religious saints nor were they objects of direct worship, they were inherently submerged in the practice of mass. The use of the altar to consecrate elements of the Eucharist meant that the altar played a vital role in transforming bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. To Protestants, this was seen as idolatrous. Therefore, altars were ordered to be stripped out of cathedrals and churches and 'by the end of Edward's reign a protestant communion service, celebrated at a table with the minister robed in a white surplice, had instead become the norm'.²¹⁸ This was one of the few issues for which Cranmer was directly involved in his diocese as Archbishop of Canterbury. By October 1550, at the latest, Cranmer excommunicated clergy and churchwardens for a failure to take down altars.²¹⁹ Even in the more "conservative" north, Archbishop of York, Robert Holgate anticipated the change from altars to communion tables and the significance of their placement within churches and issued an order that communion tables should be aligned east and west as opposed to north and south.²²⁰ However this outward conformity cannot be taken at face value.

Elizabeth I faced a major rebellion in 1569 with the Northern Rising. Although the rebellion was instigated by the Earl of Westmorland and the Earl of Northumberland for a variety of personal and political reasons, the religious elements cannot be forgotten. The earls claimed that 'divers disordered and evil disposed persons, about the queen's majesty, have...overcome in this our realm the true and catholic religion towards God; and...abused the Queen, disordered the realm; and now lastly, seek and procure the destruction of the

²¹⁷ Fincham, K. & Tyacke, N. (2007). *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Worship, 1547-c.1700*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.2.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.* p.8.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.* p.20.

²²⁰ *Ibid.* p.23.

nobility; we therefore have gathered ourselves together to resist by force'.²²¹ In order to demonstrate their religious grievances and the vast local following they acquired, the rebellion attempted a counter-reformation in Durham Cathedral. When the rebels stormed Durham Cathedral on 14th November 1569, they 'ripped asunder all Protestant books, overturned the communion table, and celebrated a Catholic mass'.²²² This reads as a calculated response to the Elizabethan iconoclasm that conservative people in the north felt they had suffered for ten years. Whilst the return of images may have only played a small role in parts of the rebellion, the focus was predominantly on celebrating mass. Margaret Aston argued that what happened in Durham Cathedral seemed to prove the worst fears of the authorities as altar stones and a holy water stoup were quickly returned and carts were available to take them and cement them back for use.²²³ The rapid re-emergence of altars implies that many in the Northern Province, perhaps including ones which existed in Durham Cathedral, were hidden and concealed before any destruction could be enacted. This coincides with the preservation of statues in the city of York and the reluctance of early-Reformation deans and bishops to carry out radical reforms in the Province of York. The return of altars during the Northern Rebellion signifies that despite the destruction of the shrines, the clamp down on idolatry by the Edwardian regime and the introduction of radical cathedral personnel during the Elizabethan Settlement, even by 1569 conservative religious sentiment still existed. The examples of iconoclasm in cathedrals did not necessarily mean that the hearts and minds of the population had been changed. In fact, 'for all the efforts of his visitations in 1561 and 1567 to erase and deface monuments of superstition and idolatry, Pilkington...had to recognise how much still remained at hand, hidden, but watched over

²²¹ Strype, J. (1824). *Annals of the Reformation and establishment of religion: and other various occurrences in the Church of England, during Queen Elizabeth's happy reign: together with an appendix of original papers of state, records, and letters: Volume 1, Part 2*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p.313.

²²² Kesselring, K.J. (2004). "A Cold Pye for the Papistes": Constructing and Containing the Northern Rising of 1569. *Journal of British Studies*, 43 (4), 417-443. Retrieved from <http://doi.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1086/421926>. p.417.

²²³ Aston, M. *Broken Idols of the Reformation*. p.212.

and remembered'.²²⁴ Aston also noted that the rebellion and re-emergence of altars was particularly shocking to Bishop Pilkington who took a hard-line over altars.²²⁵ Whilst the Northern Rebellion was a radical and unique event, limited to the North of England, it goes some way to portray the secret hiding of Catholic images and furnishings which were unknown to the authorities. The lack of rebellion elsewhere does not mean that concealment did not occur in other areas too, only that if objects were hidden, they stayed hidden.

Ultimately, the attack on images in England was not the product of a single, well-defined official order. The lack of clarity within official legislation caused debates around various images and figures; the Virgin Mary being a prominent example. Saints, shrines and popular figures such as the Virgin Mary rivalled the influence that King Henry VIII held over the English people. The Lady Chapel in Ely demonstrates how worship towards the Virgin Mary was attacked. However, singular carvings and sculptures of the Virgin Mary were not specifically legislated against and this is an example of where trouble brewed. During pre-Reformation England, it was through 'carved or sculpted representations that the average man achieved his most intimate contact with the God and saints to whom he prayed'.²²⁶ Therefore, the worship of images was a vital element of Catholic piety which began to encounter overt hostility during the 1530s.²²⁷ The solution eventually came in 1550 when Edward VI's regime clearly specified that all images should be removed and destroyed from religious institutions. Although Elizabeth I was hesitant, her forceful bishops and cathedral personnel continued to push the Edwardian agenda, which to them encapsulated even the queen's personal crucifix. Thus, from 1550 onwards, the iconophobia which Collinson

²²⁴ *Ibid.* p.214.

²²⁵ *Ibid.* p.214.

²²⁶ Whiting, R. (1982). Abominable Idols: Images and Image-breaking under Henry VIII. *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 33 (1), 30-47. Retrieved from <https://doi-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1017/S0022046900024477>. p.39.

²²⁷ *Ibid.* p.39.

described was born. Wholesale destruction of religious imagery was demanded, and as shown, York Minster, Durham Cathedral, Ely Cathedral and Canterbury Cathedral to this date show major signs of religious reforms stripping the interiors of idols and imagery. Whether certain statues were preserved, unknown to the reformist and radical bishops, their hasty removal and fearful hiding from iconoclasts demonstrated that iconophobia was rife, even if conservative deans did not personally agree.

Conclusion

Christopher Haigh argues that the 'English Reformations were about changing minds as well as changing laws, but it was the changing of laws which made the changing of minds possible'.²²⁸ The initial phase of Reformation was imposed from above and legislated religious reform into existence during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI. The attempted Counter-Reformation was also enforced by the monarch, Mary I, and she passed laws which would enable England to return to its Catholic roots. By the Elizabethan Age, however, the driving force of reform lay in the personnel of the church and relied on cathedral personnel to implement reform. Elizabeth faced a battle to ensure that these reforms were what she wanted. She preferred compromise and although her laws were still in line with Protestantism, opposition began to grow even from the reformist camp. The Catholic threat still existed, thus the changing of minds had not been fully accomplished in the early Reformations, but the growing popularity of Puritanism set the Elizabethan Religious Settlement apart from the previous Tudor reigns. By this point, the cathedral personnel played a much more vital role in reforming cathedrals. They no longer relied on the monarch's guidance, but often sought to push religious reforms further than the queen ruled. Since this is based on a high politics perspective, then the most effective way to assess the extent that the monarch's religious policies were implemented is through cathedrals.

Studies of the Reformation and religious policies tend to focus on liturgical changes, parish churches and the religious sentiments of local communities, or what survived iconoclasm. This thesis tackled iconoclasm in cathedrals, focusing particularly on what exactly was destroyed and why; what it represented to both Catholics and reformers; and what and why some things were preserved. The aim of this thesis was not to unearth the religious feeling

²²⁸ Haigh, C. (1993). *English reformations: religion, politics, and society under the Tudors*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.p.20.

on a societal level, but rather to show how cathedrals were often targeted by iconoclasts in order to morph them into models for the wider diocese in the emerging Protestant order. Whilst demonstrating the iconoclastic experiences of cathedrals, a further aim was to challenge geographical ideas. This thesis aimed to show how English cathedrals do not generally support the notion that the North of England was drastically more conservative and resistant to religious change and iconoclasm than the South of England throughout the Reformation, albeit the north could be slower in its reforms. Whilst in the early reformation there are examples of the Province of York being resistant to religious change, in general the four cathedrals in this study show that preservation of images occurred in the Province of Canterbury too. Most importantly, they also highlight the fact that mass iconoclasm was carried out, without much resistance, in both provinces. One factor which tied the two provinces together was the authority and policies of cathedral personnel. On the dawn of the Reformation, many archbishops, bishops and deans appeared committed to the Catholic faith, over time deprivations and vacancies through retirement and death allowed the reformist regimes to install Protestant men into these positions. Consequently, the divide between the north and south was not reinforced through cathedral personnel, and in fact there were many instances of radical Protestants being placed in positions in the Province of York to hurry the pace of reform.

Another example which linked the two provinces was the treatment of shrines in cathedrals. Despite the religious sentiments of the lay community and wider population, agents of the Crown and cathedral personnel were ordered to carry out the complete destruction of shrines. Each of the four cathedrals now merely mark where the extravagant and treasured shrines of their local saint once stood. The biggest contrast between the provinces was the treatment of individual statues, objects, relics and images. However, the differences seem to be unique to each area, rather than a clear-cut north versus south divide. Each diocese

reacted differently to iconoclasm and the various objects which were targeted. *Chapter 3: The Fate of Saints, Shrines and Relics during the Reformation* served to show how the initial iconoclastic attacks of the Reformation were indeed carried out during the Henrician Reformation, despite Henry's conservative religious stance. It aimed to show how religious changes did occur during the 1530s but they were driven by personal and political motives, rather than religious. The cathedrals were first targeted by Henry VIII with the Dissolution of the Monasteries beginning in 1536 and the subsequent attack on saints. This chapter also aimed to show how the attack on shrines was directed by Henry VIII and thus he was the driving force behind the Reformation, and as a result he could also be the one who applied the brakes. This in fact did happen and the cathedrals were spared full scale iconoclasm against images and the abolition of Catholic worship. In essence, Lehmborg summaries the effect of the Henrician Reformation;

for the cathedrals, as for the church generally, the reign of Henry VIII had brought profound constitutional and financial changes. The Henrician Reformation, however, had been almost entirely a political one. The adoption of Protestant theology and an English liturgy remained ahead.²²⁹

Whereas the materials in Chapter 3 served as evidence for Henry VIII's reign the focus in *Chapter 4: The Effects of Reformation Iconoclasm: Statues, Images and Altars* aimed to illustrate the arguments about iconoclasm and the role of cathedral personnel throughout Edward VI and Elizabeth I's reigns. By the time of Edward VI's reign, the cathedrals were slowly becoming indoctrinated with reformist personnel. As the personnel were became more radical, so were government policies and eventually *all* images were ruled as worthy of destruction. Diarmaid MacCulloch suggested that 'throughout the kingdom, what must have been most memorable about the visitation was its gleeful destructiveness, utilising public ridicule against traditional devotion on a scale not seen since Thomas Cromwell had

²²⁹ Lehmborg, S.E. (1988). *The Reformation of Cathedrals: Cathedrals in English Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p.100.

orchestrated a similar campaign in 1538'.²³⁰ The English people had suffered shocking changes in the 1530s and early 1540s and then they settled into a much calmer time until the accession of Edward VI. Although Edward VI's regime was radical, 'what is remarkable throughout all this sudden renewal of the violent Cromwellian campaign of destruction is the lack of resistance, given that most of the population must have found what was happening bewildering and distasteful'.²³¹ This not only supports the concept that religious change was enforced from above, but also that iconoclasm was a widespread phenomenon. Mary followed suit in enforcing religious change from above, albeit from the opposing religious side of Catholicism. Mary's short-lived reign meant that a Counter-Reformation was not possible, but the sentiments which it helped to stir up were present in Elizabeth's reign. Although the cathedral personnel were largely radical Protestants in Elizabeth's reign, the Catholic threat was still present. Despite Pilkington, Bishop of Durham 1561 to 1576, reaching his goal of reforming Durham more than his predecessors, his militant approach alienated the locals and helped to provoke the Northern Rebellion of 1569.²³² Admittedly the rebellion in Durham was caused by a number of political factors linked to the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland. However, their ability to stir up support clearly stemmed from the intense local dislike of radical Elizabethan bishops who tried to pursue more drastic changes. This event is just one of many which serve to prove that by Elizabeth's reign, cathedral personnel had taken over the role of enforcing further religious change on the nation.

It is easy to read events such as iconoclasm and rebellion as a portrayal of the attitudes of the wider society. Nonetheless, 'the problems of history are not caused by the average man

²³⁰ MacCulloch, D. (1999). *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p.71.

²³¹ *Ibid.* p.74.

²³² Wenig, S. (2000). *Straightening the Altars: The Ecclesiastical Vision and Pastoral Achievements of the Progressive Bishops under Elizabeth I, 1559-1579*. Oxford: Peter Lang. p.137.

with the average views. It needs only two vigorous minorities, confident in the righteousness of their cause, to split a country from top to bottom'.²³³ This needs to be kept in mind when dealing with material culture. The existence of defaced or broken images or indeed the preservation of them was not always carried out at the hands of the wider populace, but rather agents of the Crown or clergy who held a degree of authority within their cathedrals. Material culture is a growing trend amongst historians since 'historians faced with interpreting material culture as a route to finding out more about identity in history are perhaps closer than ever before to adopting the critical approaches of related disciplines'.²³⁴

Chapter 1: Secondary Historiography is naturally based on secondary sources, with *Chapter 2: Cathedral Personnel: Their Role in Implementing Religious Reform* largely based on written sources, both primary and secondary. An analysis of the role of individuals and attempting to distinguish how far they were involved in iconoclasm throughout the Reformation years and why is important in an era where the hierarchy held such power. However, material culture becomes a vital research method for the subsequent chapters, particularly *Chapter 4: The Effects of Reformation Iconoclasm: Statues, Images and Altars*. After introducing the secondary interpretations, as well as the arguments of this thesis, the material culture shown in photographs attempted to evidence the points made. The pros and cons of material culture are highlighted, but often objects are used to show how a particular person committed iconoclasm, where it occurred and the reason why that particular object or image was treated such way. Incidentally, visiting each of the four cathedrals and inspecting images, decoration and statues, enabled this thesis to draw some unique conclusions and comparisons between York Minster, Durham Cathedral, Canterbury Cathedral and Ely Cathedral.

²³³ Hurstfield, J. (1960). *Elizabeth I and the Unity of England*. London: The English Universities Press. pp.30-31.

²³⁴ Berry, H. (2009). Religion identity and material culture. In K. Harvey (Ed.) *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources* (pp. 139-157). London: Routledge. p.140.

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