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SAINTS AND RELICS DURING THE ENGLISH
REFORMATION OF THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD, 1558-
1625: HOW FAR DID THIS CATHOLIC BELIEF
CONTINUE/CHANGE FROM MEDIEVAL ENGLAND?

JACQUELINE ADRIENNE PEDDER

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

The University of Huddersfield

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Abstract

There are preconceptions about the Tudor and Stuart period when it comes to the religious identity of England. One of the extreme views is that the Reformation aimed at eliminating any and all aspects of Catholicism from England. Within the Tudor and Stuart periods, Henry VIII started the dissolution, Edward VI progressed it further, Mary attempted to revert England back to Catholicism and Elizabeth created Catholic martyrs to get rid of the Catholic threat, whilst James was an extreme Protestant determined to push forward with the Reformation. By considering a specific Catholic belief, saints and relics, the religious and political ideas surrounding this Catholic doctrine can be brought to the fore. This thesis will look at the survival of Catholicism in England, by representing the continued belief and support by English Catholics through saints and relics of the early modern period. The focus will be the Reformation from 1558 to 1625, covering the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. It will be argued that there was a continuation from the medieval period of the belief in the power that saints and relics could provide Catholics, and that there was a revitalisation during the Reformation period, 1558-1625, in the collection and preservation process, as new saints and relics were being established throughout the period in question. Using a combination of material objects and written sources, which will include legislation as well as popular culture; it will depict the importance and significance that this one area of Catholic devotion entailed. Through this, I will be able to determine how saints and relics survived the Reformation and how the reliance on objects continued throughout.

By analysing how saints and relics were venerated, we will see a shift away from the public collections in cathedrals to private collections in domestic settings. Relics were still preserved but in the private not the the public sphere with increased emphasis on the domestic sphere. This thesis aims to analyse how far the Catholic faith in England continued in relation to saints and relics during the Reformation.

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Introduction

The study of Catholic saints and relics during and after the Reformation has recently become a part of scholarly debate centring on how far the Catholic faith survived in Protestant England. Most studies, like those led by Michael Questier and Peter Lake, have focused on the life of a saint such as Margaret Clitherow and the influence they had within England during their lifetime. For Clitherow in particular, 'her martyr's death...served to confirm the rightness of her stand and to condemn her opponents as either persecuting heretics or sadly lapsed, imperfect, indeed schismatic, Catholics'.¹ However, if we take into consideration material culture, and more specifically the relic material of saints, we begin to see changes in the attitudes and ideals of the early modern populace. The superstitious belief in the miraculous powers that saintly objects had continued to some extent throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, despite the best efforts of reformers, who tried to show the fakery that had come to surround Catholic objects. In light of the accusations 'the Catholic Church reacted to the claims of scandalous fakes that formed one main prong of the reformers' attack with a period of prudence and humanist caution, before vigorously reasserting the validity of devotion to sacred relics'.²

Relic materials continued to be collected, hidden, preserved, and worshipped during the early modern period, but some have survived to the present day. However, as Alexandra Walsham argues, 'the Reformation involved a redefinition of the relic as a symbolic memento rather than a miraculous divine entity'.³ The period 1558 to 1625, i.e. the reigns of both Elizabeth I and James I, will be covered to best analyse how

¹ Peter Lake and Michael Questier, (2011), *The Trials of Margaret Clitherow: Persecution, Martyrdom, and the Politics of Sanctity in Elizabethan England* (Continuum International Publishing Group, London), p. 195

² Alexandra Walsham, (2010), 'Introduction: Relics and Remains', *Past and Present* 206/5, p. 21

³ *Ibid.*, p. 22

Catholic adherence to saints and relics (and the material culture of this practice) survived in the early modern period through a time when Catholicism was criticised and challenged.

The importance of saints and relics cannot be underestimated through the early modern era, as 'together with devotion to the Eucharist, the cult of saints constituted the most visible badge differentiating Roman Catholicism from Protestant confessions, so it can be no surprise to discover that the almost ceaseless processing of relics...intensified during this period'.⁴ This research will address a number of essential questions. Areas that will be considered for example consist of the canonisation process of martyrs, the continued belief of the Catholic laity in the power of saints and relics despite growing reform and how Catholic beliefs changed during the period of evangelical reform and Catholic reformation from the medieval era.

To understand the significance that saints and relics played in the Reformation we must first consider what had been in place in England before this period of religious reform. What processes of canonisation were in place? Who had access to relic materials and how was this material created or obtained? The cult of saints and relics had been in place since the seventh century in England. Saint cults were used as points of power and extolled devotion from Catholics whilst relics gained status as they were seen as being able to perform miracles e.g. via being in their presence or touching them. Relics were materials owned and protected by the church and were viewed as vessels of God's power. To best understand differences in saint veneration, the canonisation and continued worship of St Thomas Becket and St George will be examined since these are examples of medieval saints whose worship was adapted

⁴ Simon Ditchfield, (2009), 'Thinking with Saints: Sanctity and Society in the Early Modern World,' *Critical Inquiry* 35/3, p. 575

and persisted under Protestantism. This will draw out similarities and differences comparing the medieval practice with what occurred during the Reformation to understand just how far medieval Catholic traditions survived.

During the Reformation people who died in defence of their faith were considered to be martyrs of the Catholics faith and the relics that Catholics collected from the deceased were believed to provide miracles. In practice, martyrs had been loyal to the Catholic Church because they would not be swayed to change religion and they would maintain the Catholic traditions such as transubstantiation, the Latin Bible and relic collection. By obtaining a piece of a saint it was believed that they would then provide miraculous powers to the person who possessed that material. The importance of such material objects is that it was 'not a mere symbol or indicator of divine presence, it is [and was] an actual physical embodiment of it, each particle encapsulating the essence of the departed person...in its entirety'.⁵ This belief in the powers that objects could possess was what provoked Protestants in their rally against the Catholic Church, the way in which the Catholic Church was built around this belief was why Protestants challenged superstitious concepts of the Church.

Catholic beliefs

Within Medieval England Catholics believed that saints had powers, could perform miracles and that the power they had continued to exist in the material objects that had been closest to them. During the early modern period, 'true Catholic practice, as opposed to Protestant parodies of it, used the glory of the physical as a stimulus for thought about the spiritual'.⁶ The retention of body parts and pieces of saints evidence

⁵ Alexandra Walsham, 'Introduction: Relics and Remains,' *Past and Present* 206/5 (2010), p. 12

⁶ Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, (2010), *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Material Culture*, Surrey: Ashgate, p. 5

the importance of the physical and the small nature of these relics made them easy to hide once they were contraband goods. The macabre aspect of this practice was most common because parts of the saint were the most powerful, they were not just 'things' that belonged to the saint, they were the saint. A direct relic of the saint provided a more powerful connection to the saint. As Eamon Duffy indicates 'their bodies, having been temples of the Holy Spirit, were sources of power, the alabaster box of spiritual ointment from which healing flows'.⁷ For Catholics it meant that they had a personal link to a saint and the power that it possessed. With the Reformation, obtaining relics of saints became more readily available as they could be collected from the scaffold, this will be discussed in depth in the Elizabethan chapter (page 47). As Frances Dolan suggests, 'the underlying or dislocation of Catholicism paradoxically promoted its survival by forcing Catholics into a more tactical and fluid relation to space and a more adaptive, transportable, clandestine, devotional practice'.⁸

Churches in England and on the continent held relic materials in high regard by protecting and preserving them as sacred religious tools. The placement of 'relics of the martyrs and saints beneath every altar [was] eloquent testimony to the power of popular religious needs'.⁹ Churches in England not only held relics for sacramental reasons, but also to encourage pilgrimage, a source of income for the church and a means for people to gain the much-anticipated need to be in contact with, or simply close to, a saint.

⁷ Eamon Duffy, (1992), *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, London: Yale University Press, p. 170

⁸ Frances E. Dolan, (2002), 'Gender and the "Lost" Spaces of Catholicism,' *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 32/4, p. 664

⁹ Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell, (1982), *Saints, and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000-1700*, London: University of Chicago Press, p. 208

The Reformation- Protestant beliefs

The process of Reformation took away relic materials along with much of the wealth of the church to rid England of Catholic influence. Some relic materials were exposed as fakes and challenged by reformers as being abused objects of the church. Yet as the Reformation continued so too did the collection and preservation of saints and relics by Catholic loyalists, particularly in the areas away from London and the pressures of court life. The making of saints and the collection of relics in the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I can be seen via accounts written from both Protestant and Catholic viewpoints. These expound on the sanctity, or lack thereof, of relic materials.

To fully comprehend how relics and saints became a point of contention we have to consider the changes that started in 1536 in the reign of Henry VIII. His minister, Thomas Cromwell, was a man who strongly believed in the Protestantism that was emerging from Europe led by Martin Luther. Cromwell was the driving force of the English Reformation. Those desiring reform said the Catholic Church was corrupt and misleading the laity, resulting in the dissolution of the monasteries and the gradual destruction of shrines, relics, stained glass windows and rood screens. Yet some aspects of the medieval Catholic church survived, as 'a significant side-effect of the Reformation was to transfer relics from the custodianship of monasteries and churches into private hands and domestic settings'.¹⁰ During the dissolution, many of the bones and skeletons found in shrines were re-interred as opposed to being destroyed.¹¹ Rosemary O'Day advocated that 'Henry himself, [was] doctrinally a Catholic and sharing little with the early Protestants other than a dislike of the power of Rome,' the

¹⁰ Alexandra Walsham, (2010), 'Skeletons in the Cupboard: Relics after the English Reformation,' *Past and Present*, 206/5, p. 126

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 139

Act of Ten Articles showed that Henry was not a true convert.¹² Henry lacked the conviction to ensure that Catholicism was completely eradicated from churches within England. Reform was therefore a slow process, which continued into the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I.

Despite growing levels of literacy starting from Edward VI's reign (1547-1553), the lay community still relied on spoken and visual aspects to teach them about the Bible and inform them of God's word. In the medieval church paintings, stained glass windows, crosses, relics and even feast days dedicated to a saint were used as symbols of faith, of God's connection to His people. Relics of saints in particular were points of worship and were believed to be a source of power, yet 'the wonders said to have been worked by the remains of these martyred priests exposed English Catholicism to fresh outbursts of Protestant ridicule'.¹³ As the Reformation began to implement changes and attempted to rid England of Catholic influence, it must be remembered that 'at parish level the issues were blurred, and it is more helpful to recognise that for the peasantry the old religion was a complex of social practices, many of which remained available'.¹⁴ As the Reformation progressed and more legislation and emphasis was placed on eliminating Catholicism, there 'seems to be 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'.¹⁵ Alexandra Walsham in particular advocates this point and suggests that as persecution increased and Catholicism was

¹² Rosemary O'Day, (1986), *The Debate on the English Reformation*, London: Routledge, p. 11

¹³ Walsham, 'Skeletons in the Cupboard: Relics after the English Reformation,' p. 129

¹⁴ Christopher Haigh, 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation,' in Christopher Haigh (ed.) (1990), *The English Reformation Revised*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 179

¹⁵ Alexandra Walsham, (2008), 'The Disenchantment of the World Reassessed,' *The Historical Journal* 51/2, p. 521

made to step back from the public eye, the domestic sphere became the new place of worship.

Mary I- A Return to Catholicism

Mary was a devoted Catholic and attempted to return England to the Catholic Church as soon as she assumed the throne. Her efforts to return England to the Catholic Church however reversing the destruction that had taken place was easier said than done. As David Loades suggests, Mary 'was assiduous in her private devotions, and no doubt this would have involved many prayers to the Virgin Mary and other saints, but she took no steps to restore any of the great Marian shrines, which might have been expected to feature among her first priorities'.¹⁶ Throughout Henry's Reformation and Edward's Mary had remained loyal to the Catholic faith, 'it was not the denial of the papacy, or the English Bible or even justification by faith which was the crime against the Holy Ghost, but the rejection of transubstantiation'.¹⁷ For Mary this Catholic revival that she attempted was a religious movement as 'she was quite incapable of treating heresy- and particularly sacramental heresy- as a political problem' unlike Elizabeth who treated religious actions as treason.¹⁸

Religion under Elizabeth I

At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, there appeared to be higher levels of toleration in terms of some Catholic beliefs. From written materials such as legislation and even poetry, it is clear to see that 'the struggle to reconcile the duty of obedience to the monarch and obedience to God was the central preoccupation of many,' it was not

¹⁶ David Loades, (2016). 'The Personal Religion of Mary I', in Eamon Duffy and David Loades (eds.) *The Church of Mary Tudor*, London and New Haven: Routledge, p. 21

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25

only their personal take on religion which was a cause for concern but Elizabeth's own stance as well.¹⁹ Whilst Elizabeth may have placed herself in the category of being a Protestant there were visual aspects of her religion which looked Catholic, such as vestments for the clergy, crosses, candles for ceremonies and the paintings used to depict religious teachings. These are and were points used to challenge Elizabeth's devotion to furthering the reformed faith, which led to, in limited areas, lay men joining 'forces with zealous ministers to set up the very type of Protestantism the queen herself most opposed'.²⁰

Yet Elizabethan religion was reformed religion and this led to the development of a Catholic minority who formed what John Bossy termed an English Catholic community.²¹ This community saw the creation of new martyrs for the Catholic faith consisting of Jesuits and lay people who had risked their lives to re-convert England. Their executions meant that Catholics had new relics more readily available, which they collected, thus maintaining the cult of saints and relics. Relic materials of martyrs both past and present were used by 'seminary priests and Jesuits [who were] sent across the Channel after 1574 [they] deliberately and skilfully harnessed supernatural power in their attempts to combat heresy, reinforce contested tenets, reclaim backsliders, and win converts to their cause' as they became teaching tools for Catholics.²² By making Jesuits and even members of the laity martyrs, Elizabeth inadvertently revitalised the belief in martyrs and made them uncanonised saints to Catholics.

¹⁹ O'Day, *The Debate on the English Reformation*, p. 10

²⁰ Claire Cross, (1969). *The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, p. 114

²¹ John Bossy (1975) *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850* (Oxford, Oxford University Press), p. 2

²² Alexandra Walsham, (2003), 'Miracles and the Counter- Reformation Mission to England,' *The Historical Journal* 46/4, p. 781

Unlike her predecessors who had been clearly devoted to religious progression, 'Elizabeth's private religious opinions seem to have been those of a conservative Protestant,' but this did not mean that Elizabeth was relaxed when it came to Catholic persecution and the elimination of relics.²³ The Elizabethan Settlement that consisted of the Act of Supremacy, the Act of Uniformity, the new prayer book, the Injunctions and the Book of Homilies, combined aspects of religion that had been settled in the reign of Henry VIII and Edward VI. As a Queen who was neither radical like her brother nor as conservative as her father, Elizabeth tried to create a state based on conformity and has become renowned for having created a *via media*. As Christopher Haigh states:

'the words of administration at communion had been altered to allow a Catholic understanding of a real presence of Christ in the bread and wine; the vestments and ornaments at communion were to be those of the mass; abuse of the Pope was deleted from the literacy; and in church services ministers were to stand where Catholic priests had stood'.²⁴

Elizabeth 'hoped to disturb as little as was necessary the mass of her subjects who still followed the old ways in religion, and, more important, to minimize the difference between the English church and the Catholic continental churches'.²⁵ Yet it seems that toleration was limited, as Jesuits and relics were actively sought out as they were being smuggled in and out of the country.

It has been argued in the past by Claire Cross, that what was most important to Elizabeth was the recognition of herself as the Supreme Head of the Church, as opposed to the details of running the Church. Cross suggests that 'as long as the church appeared quiescent and to be inculcating the habit of obedience among her

²³ Cross, *The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church*, p. 71

²⁴ Christopher Haigh, (1998), *Elizabeth I*, London: Pearson Education Limited, p. 35

²⁵ Cross, *The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church*, p. 26

subjects, the queen tended to allow ecclesiastics considerable freedom to rule the church in their own way'.²⁶ The way in which Elizabeth also withheld giving bishoprics in order to gain the income from the land, develops the point that religion in the localities was not her main concern. This allowed communities some freedom to support shrines and remain dedicated to their local saint as had been done in the medieval period.

The latter years of her reign saw a change in attitude towards Catholics as threats to the throne came to fruition. Up 'until 1582, Elizabeth had been afraid to persecute Catholics: thereafter, she was afraid not to' as threats to her monarchy from Mary, Queen of Scots, the excommunication from the Pope and questions over the loyalty of English Catholic came to the fore.²⁷ Andy Wood suggests that 'from the latter part of Elizabeth's reign onwards, early modern people saw the Reformation as representing a historical fault-line, a defining moment of change in the history of their communities'.²⁸ This brings into question just how far local communities adhered to the will and legislation of the monarch. David Cressy supplies one example as he suggests that in the 'purged religious calendar only the feasts of the Apostles, the Blessed Virgin, St George, the Nativity, Easter day, St John the Baptist, and St Michael the Archangel would be preserved as high holy days or days of general offering'.²⁹ Whilst certain measures had been taken to eliminate Catholicism there were ways and means for the lay society to hold on to what they thought of as significant and powerful symbols of their faith. For many of the 'church-going laity of early Elizabethan England [they] retained a strong attachment to aspects of the devotional life of the late-medieval

²⁶ Ibid., p. 69

²⁷ Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, p. 43

²⁸ Andy Wood, (2013), *The Memory of the People: Custom and Popular Senses of the Past in Early Modern England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 78

²⁹ David Cressy, (2004), *Bonfire and Bells*, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited, p. 5

Church whilst accepting the ministrations and hearing the sermons of their ministers'.³⁰

Relics are just one area where Catholic lay society could maintain a hold on medieval traditions as well as create new relics from Catholic martyrs sentenced to death under Elizabeth and James.

When James I came to the throne he posed as a king who would be tolerant of Catholics; a king who was aiming for peace rather than forcing his people to follow Protestant practices. James believed the actions and restrictions placed on Catholics were barbaric and 'characterized the Roman church as the mother church, which had fallen into deep, though redeemable, corruption'.³¹ It was not until the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 that James took a more active approach to Catholics. The Oath of Allegiance was one way in which he tried to implement loyalty. The threat to the King's supremacy in Scotland, made it necessary to defend and articulate the validity of a monarch's power, which James did in his own writings, stating the rights and responsibilities of a King.³² The coronation oath summarised what the duty of a King was, something that for James acted as a justification of his power and authority. The oath stated that 'the Princes duetie to his subjects is so clearly set downe in many places of the Scripture'.³³ James built upon the way in which a King, chosen by God, was in no way an inferior within the Church as it was the duty of a King 'first to maintaine the Religion presently professed within their countrie, according to their laws, whereby it is established, and

³⁰ William J. Sheils, (2011), 'The Catholic Community,' in Susan Doran and Norman Jones (eds.) *The Elizabethan World*, London: Routledge, p. 257

³¹ John Cramsie, (2006), 'The Philosophy of Imperial Kingship and the Interpretation of James VI and I,' in Ralph Houlbrooke (ed.) *James VI and I: Ideas, Authority, and Government*, Hampshire: Ashgate, p. 55

³² [Constitution Society, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies \(1598\)*, <http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/stuart.html> \(Accessed on January 2, 2017\)](http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/stuart.html)

³³ [Constitution Society, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies \(1598\)*, <http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/stuart.html> \(Accessed on January 2, 2017\)](http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/stuart.html)

to punish all those that should presse to alter, or disturbe the profession thereof'.³⁴ Through his writings he explained that it was after all the King who was 'countable to that great God, who placed him as his lieutenant ouer them,' the subjects' it was up to the king to prevent any opposition to his rule.³⁵ It was the king who would therefore influence the outcome of saint and relic worship, which would have been dependent on his own religious views and opinions.

The research that will be carried out will include looking at the lives of individual saints including Jesuits such as Edmund Campion, Henry Garnet and Philip Howard, why they were martyred, and buried (if burial occurred), as well as what aspects of them were taken to be preserved as relics. It will consider the ways in which relics were both hidden and used throughout the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I by the lay population and how these materials were sent to the continent for safekeeping. Material aspects of Catholicism combined with written sources such as John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and *The Life of Luisa de Caravajal*, will add to the key debates that surround the Reformation and will look at the way that Catholicism was able to survive with the main focus being the Reformation from 1558 to 1625. The overall argument will be that the Catholic tradition of saint and relic worship continued from the medieval period and throughout the Reformation as there was a revitalisation in the belief with a shift from the public to domestic sphere.

³⁴ [Constitution Society, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* \(1598\), <http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/stuart.html> \(Accessed on January 2, 2017\)](http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/stuart.html)

³⁵ [Constitution Society, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* \(1598\), <http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/stuart.html> \(Accessed on January 2, 2017\)](http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/stuart.html)

Historiography

Catholicism in England has been considered by Eamon Duffy, Alexandra Walsham and Michael Questier. They have considered social, political and economic reasons which can be used to explain how and why the Reformation took place. By considering Catholic material culture, we can identify the significance that it had for the general population. This will also highlight the debates between Catholics and Protestants with regards to saints and relics, as well as the religious devotion that was given to them from Catholics in terms of how they were hidden, maintained, and used throughout England's religious transformation. Studying saints and relics will not only provide a better understanding as to why and how medieval Catholic items survived, but also how new saints and relics came to be recognised under Elizabeth I and James I through martyrdom. This will further develop our understanding about the Catholic community, as well as the changing attitudes and practises in relation to the sanctity of saints and relics.

Nature and importance of Saints

Historians Danna Pirovsky and Simon Walker contemplate how political martyrs were made by the medieval church through their deaths, a practice that continued throughout the Tudor and Stuart periods. They ask whether death was the only factor that made a saint, and what other aspects contributed to sainthood. As Pirovsky states, 'any study of the idea of political martyrdom and its manifestation in the form of political martyr cults should be undertaken with the understanding that they constituted an organic part of late medieval life, an entity in which not only political, but

communal and private, local and regional, devotional and social aspirations mixed'.⁶⁶ Political martyrs show the connection between state and the church, the ways in which individuals died for their faith and had a much wider impact by defying the state and providing an example of devotion to God. This is key for the Reformation as martyrs were made after being executed by the state as they acted against the legislation set out to disband and prohibit Catholicism in England.

Robert Bartlett provides an overarching study on the cults of saints and relics as well as the canonisation process that developed in the medieval period, contemplating the purpose behind relic materials, what they were used for and how they were presented. This is an extensive study looking at the gradual changes from the medieval church through to the Reformation. It will consider the miraculous properties that relics were thought to possess, the popular cults within England and the continent, the veneration process and the disputes that surrounded the cult of the saints. This will be achieved using various source materials including, images, written texts, shrines, objects, and relics.

The work of Andre Vauchez also takes into consideration the veneration of saints and the popular opinion of the laity in medieval society. Written in 1981, there have since been developments in the study of sainthood which bring into focus the opinion of the laity and help to bridge the gap in understanding of the role played by saints and relics during the Reformation. Shrines dedicated to the veneration of saints formed an important part of the medieval church and were often destroyed during the Reformation. The most famous being the shrines of St Cuthbert, St Thomas Becket, St Chad and Edward the Confessor. Ben Nilson argues that shrines managed to

⁶⁶ Danna Pirovansky, (2008), *Martyrs in the Making: Political Martyrdom in Late Medieval England*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 4

survive up to the fifteenth century and even beyond but there was nevertheless decline of the shrines over time for several reasons. Economically cathedrals could often no longer maintain them, they were therefore left to ruin, and politically the state no longer supported the Catholic Church. The political factor links with the religious and social aspects of the Reformation as Protestantism did not rely on materials for faith and actively rejected public displays of such objects. With the decline of public spaces such as cathedrals available for Catholic worship, Catholicism moved to the domestic sphere.

Ronald Finucane has also taken into account the medieval stages of saint and relic worship as well as how this devotion remained throughout the Reformation, by considering the process of canonisation or the lack thereof. Finucane argues that there was a problem when it came to the veneration of saints, 'the problem of official versus popular saints seems to have been especially serious among the English who persisted in honouring their heroes regardless of ecclesiastical cautions.'⁶⁷ Interestingly, Finucane proposes that it was the laity who decided the saints that they remembered and chose to worship. Even from within the Catholic communities in the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I this held true with martyrs from the Reformation period who were held in esteem and named as blessed without formal canonisation. The procedure of 'canonical inquiry or inquisition into a prospective saint's life, morals and miracles increased in complexity and formality from the thirteenth century.'⁶⁸ This combined with 'the high cost explains why, usually, only the members of religious orders, royal families, or bishops of larger sees found their way into the universal

⁶⁷ Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London, 1977), p. 33

⁶⁸ Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London, 1977), p. 36

calendar of medieval saints and why the canonized peasant saint was a rarity.⁶⁹ The purpose of using Finucane as a point of reference is that his work explains some of the reasons why martyrs were given such high regard even without the official approval from the Vatican. Finucane also explores lay canonisation which became more prominent during the early modern period.

The creation of these popular saints came to rely on the opinion and devotion of the lay community and this continued through to the early modern period as more and more Catholic martyrs were made. On a local level there was no longer a need to wait on the approval of the Catholic Church to announce that martyrs such as Margaret Clitherow and Edmund Campion were saints as within recusant communities they were held to be so without having to go through formal canonisation. The collection of either their body parts or their material belongings is evidence of this as it the fact that these precious items were sent to the continent to be preserved. The laity collected these objects and found them sacred enough to protect and preserve, in safety on the continent and away from reformers. Lisbeth Corens provides a detailed argument stating that relic materials linked Catholics all over the world as a community no matter where they were.⁷⁰ She provides a continental take on relic materials and how they impacted Catholicism in England despite being so far away from the objects themselves.⁷¹

Continuities with the medieval are plentiful and one in particular is highlighted by Robert Scott who affirms that 'of all the features of medieval religion, the faith in saints

⁶⁹ Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (J.M.Dent and Sons Ltd., London, 1977), p. 37

⁷⁰ Lisbeth Corens, (2016), 'Saints Beyond Borders: Relics and the expatriate English Catholic Community', in Gary K. Waite and Jesse Spohnholz, *Exile and Religious Identity 1500-1800* (Routledge, London and New York), p. 29

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29

was one of the most potent. Ordinary people thought of them as friends, protectors, advocates, and personal intercessors with God'.⁷² This survived via personal devotion, lay canonisation, the roles of Jesuits and even in written materials produced at the time. Some of the written materials that will be analysed in relation to relic material are by Henry Garnet, a prominent Catholic who wrote influential works that proclaimed faith and devotion to the Catholic Church. These were designed to enhance the perception of the Jesuits as well as persuade the public to revert to Catholicism. The combined works show religious devotion in several ways; from poetry to public defences of Catholic persecution they declare Catholicism as the one true religion, as the means to salvation. One piece of work that will be considered in more depth is the writings of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, a Spanish woman who was so dedicated to the Catholic faith that she came to England in 1605 in hopes of becoming a saint. Instead she spent her life collecting, preserving, and distributing relic materials throughout England and the Continent to inspire and maintain the faith.

It is only recently that historians have started to consider how material culture can contribute to the study of the Reformation by considering the relevance of objects and what meaning they had. Through studying primary source material directly related to saints and relics within the early modern period, historians can gain a more comprehensive understanding of why and how certain objects were held in such high regard. Historians such as Tara Hamling, Catherine Richardson, Alexandra Walsham, Patrick Collinson and Elizabeth Williamson, will be key in helping to determine whether materials such as saints and relics are just as important as written sources in re-evaluating the impact of reform. Studies concerning the Reformation have focused on

⁷² Robert A. Scott, (2010), *Miracle Cures: Saints, Pilgrimage, and the Healing Powers of Belief*, London: University of California Press, p. 28

Protestantism and how far this was embedded in society, and they usually consider whether it was implemented from the top down or the bottom up. There has been less focus on Catholic martyrs and the impact they had, along with the materials that they used to support and even spread Catholicism despite religious and political changes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Anne Dillon, is one historian who has recognised this gap and in her study entitled, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535-1603* she discusses 'how the Catholic community utilized the symbol of the martyr and the concept of martyrdom in maintaining a recusant stance and in mediating the Catholic faith'.⁷³ The research that she has conducted looks at the difference between genuine martyrs and pseudomartyrs, with specific examples such as Thomas More and John Fisher, taking into account Catholic writings and the propagandist nature of some of the material produced. Using a combination of legislation, Catholic writings and the martyrs that were made during the Reformation, Dillon argues for the importance of martyrs and what they can teach us about the Reformation as 'the martyr was, after all, their most potent symbol of identification'.⁷⁴

When considering relic materials historians such as Alexandra Walsham need to be consulted in order to comprehend just how important they were during the early modern period. Walsham focuses on the macabre nature of such materials and reinforces the idea that having a piece of a martyr brought that person, town and even country closer to that martyr and the powers they were believed to possess. Walshams' argument will be key to this discussion in understanding the continuities of

⁷³ Anne Dillon, (2016), *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535-1603* London and New Haven: Routledge, p. 37

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37

this Catholic belief and reliance on the miracles that they were believed to provide to the faithful. Alexandra Walsham writing '*The Disenchantment of the World Reassessed*,' contemplates the de-sacralisation of Catholic materials that took place during the Reformation. Studying material culture allows historians to think about what kind of significance religious objects had in terms of the 'old religion' and how these 'godly' objects changed in a world of reformed religious practice. As Walsham acknowledges, for contemporaries to see and take part in destroying Catholic items 'without disaster striking was to be convinced that these structures and artefacts were indeed lifeless and vacuous and that acts against them were not, in fact, forms of sacrilege'.⁷⁵ Even with the loss of religious objects Walsham argues 'the proposition that magic and the supernatural did not so much disappear or decline as retreat from the public domain into the private sphere'.⁷⁶ The move from the public to private sphere is one way in which Catholics and indeed their devotional items were able to survive the persecution that was generally aimed at them throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Rejection of Relics and Saints

The challenge posed to Catholic saints and relics from Protestants was based on the idea that the written word of God provided true salvation without the need for material objects which distracted attention away from God's word. Historians such as Jack Scarisbrick have considered the Reformation and to what extent people converted to the faith due to faith alone. Scarisbrick has contemplated how Protestants believed that the Catholic Church was corrupt, they 'argued that the obsession with prayers and

⁷⁵ Alexandra Walsham, (2008). *The Disenchantment of the World Reassessed*. *The Historical Journal*, p. 507

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 521

masses for the dead, expiation and Purgatory, were very unchristian, that belief in Mary and the saints as intercessors was virtually polytheism, and preoccupation with lights, shrines and pilgrimages and so on semi-pagan or worse'.⁷⁷ Despite the adverse rejection of Catholic traditions, Scarisbrick argues that 'there is no evidence of loss of confidence in the old ways, no mass disenchantment'.⁷⁸ The rejection of Catholic traditions was based on the concept that they had for too long misled people into providing alms to the church and into building up an institution based on corruption and fakery.

To understand how important saints and relics were and the impact that ridding England of such traditional icons would have Alec Ryrie considers saints and relics on a local level by writing about the importance of the medieval church. One particular point that he makes is how Mass was 'a sacrament of unity, drawing together all believers, including the dead. And in late medieval Christianity, the dead were a vividly important part of that community, at the forefront of believers' minds'.⁷⁹ Martyrs and saints were a part of the local community they were the ones who Catholics turned to for help when in need. However, as it will be discussed in more depth later, Protestants worked to eliminate the belief in such things in order to return attention back to the Bible and the written word. Focusing on the written word instead of the grandeur of the Pope and the Church of Rome would provide people with all the true knowledge that they would need for salvation.

The Protestant Reformation of the early modern period as A. G. Dickens states, would allow 'scholastic philosophy, ungodly medieval science, the mumbo-jumbo of saints,

⁷⁷ J. J. Scarisbrick, (1985), *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell), p. 55

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12

⁷⁹ Alec Ryrie, (2013), *The Age of Reformation: The Tudor and Stuart Realms 1485-1603*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 19

relics and pilgrimages, the lusts of hypocritical monks and nuns...[to] be swept away, and the godly monarch would lead forth the nation in the light of the Gospel'.⁸⁰ The monarch was believed to be appointed by God, the closest one to God and therefore to Protestants the most appropriate and significant person on earth to lead the church. The Reformation would mean that 'the supremacy was now used to implement rationalising reforms of religious observance which struck at the heart of traditional religion'.⁸¹ The power of the Catholic Church was rejected along with the traditions that had been posed on England for centuries, the Reformation allowed England to break with Rome and establish a religion solely based on the written word and not on the materialistic nature that everyone had come to rely on as symbols of worship and saintly power.

Peter Marshall takes into account the Protestant opinion with regards to the making of martyrs. From a Protestant viewpoint and as Marshall states 'sympathy for the victims was countered by assurances that they deserved to die; that they were not martyrs but malignants'.⁸² Marshall provides a detailed examination of how Protestants targeted Catholic beliefs and practices throughout the Reformation and with regards to martyrs, saints and the cults that surrounded these practices. As Marshall explains, 'lay devotions in front of the consecrated host were thus superstitious and idolatrous... [a belief which came] to embrace other popular practices- pilgrimage, veneration of saints, images and prayers for the dead'.⁸³ Protestants worked to eradicate from England Catholic traditions by promoting 'neutrality, and for declaring off-limits the defence of doctrines- such as purgatory and veneration of saints- lying at the heart of

⁸⁰ A. G. Dickens, (1964), *The English Reformation*, p. 193

⁸¹ Eamon Duffy, (2003), *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press), p. 91

⁸² Peter Marshall (2017), *Heretics and Believers: A History of the English Reformation* (London and New Haven, Yale University Press) p. 406

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 101

medieval Catholic orthodoxy'.⁸⁴ Protestants worked to promote the belief in the written word, in making sure that Catholics did not corrupt religion in England any longer with their medieval traditions and reliance on material objects for faith.

Consideration of political aspects of the debate within the Early Modern period have been led by Peter Lake and Michael Questier. They argue that the Elizabethan State manipulated the religious 'threat' to create a more evident divide, as a Catholic was not considered able to remain loyal to the throne, especially after excommunication.⁸⁵ With a monarch who not only ruled in the political realm but the religious as well, 'antipopery was not just an aspect of state security but also a political language that made it possible to comment on the formulation and direction of large swathes of government policy'.⁸⁶ Lake and Questier suggest that the Elizabethan government created the "public sphere", which helped to formulate popular opinion on matters of interest to the public, including religious threats, marriage of the queen and even succession.⁸⁷ The state used the "public sphere" to their advantage to combat the Catholic threat so that 'by the middle of 1581, a full-scale propaganda campaign had been sustained for months using all the media mobilized by the regime against them and more- manuscript, rumour, illicit print, personal performance'.⁸⁸ Both claim that during Elizabeth's reign there was an active persecution of Catholics throughout England and use the Jesuit Edmund Campion, who became a martyr and saint in 1581, as an example of this.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 219

⁸⁵ Peter Lake and Michael Questier, (2000), 'Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere" in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context,' *The Journal of Modern History*, p. 594

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 594

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 594

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 613

Peter Lake has gone so far as to claim that there was even a Calvinist Consensus throughout England. As Peter Marshall points out in his article, '*(Re)defining the English Reformation*,' Nicholas Tyacke and Patrick Collinson have also agreed with the idea of a "Calvinist Consensus" whereby 'adherence to Calvin's doctrine of predestination was virtually universal among English Protestants, providing a "common and ameliorating bond" between prelates, clergy, and educated laity'.⁸⁹ That all Protestants were Calvinist at the start of Elizabeth's reign in 1558 is an extreme view considering some of the legislation and the stance that Elizabeth took within her reign concerning not only her own religion, but church practices nationwide. This suggests that Catholic traditions were all but forgotten with implemented political policies. However, as Elizabeth Williamson points out, 'despite or perhaps because of these changes in official policy many of the material objects associated with traditional religion survived and were adapted to new purposes'.⁹⁰

Past studies around the Reformation, about how and why Catholics were persecuted, by, William J. Sheils, Christopher Haigh and Susan Doran, have looked at legislation made during the time of the Reformation. Focusing on legislation means we can understand the religious restrictions of the period, 'it is only relatively recently that scholars across the range of humanities disciplines have foregrounded material evidence for the study of past culture'.⁹¹ As Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson state, 'true Catholic practice, as opposed to Protestant parodies of it, used the glory of the physical as a stimulus for thought about the spiritual'.⁹² It needs to be considered

⁸⁹ Peter Marshall, (2009), '*(Re)defining the English Reformation*', *The Journal of British Studies*, p. 568

⁹⁰ Elizabeth Williamson, (2009). *The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern English Drama*, Surrey: Ashgate, p. 7

⁹¹ Hamling and Richardson, *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Material Culture*, p. 1

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 5

how certain objects, as well as the Catholic faith, survived after the last Catholic monarch of the Tudor period. Focusing specifically on the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, we are presented with a long time in which Catholics were persecuted and made to hide from the public eye due to the Protestant origin of the monarchs. In both reigns, reformed religion was the norm, and both saw fluctuations in the forced suppression of Catholicism through persecution and martyrdom.

In terms of how martyrs and therefore saints were created, Sarah Covington suggests that you cannot separate the political aspect from the religious. To consider one without the other cannot be done as within Reformation England where the head of the church was the monarch, a religious act against the Church of England was also an act against the monarch. Particularly in the reign of Elizabeth 'the Catholic priests as well as some noteworthy supporters put to death...were charged for the political crime of treason...even though most answered with a plea of not guilty, proclaimed themselves to be persecuted on religious grounds, and behaved very much as martyrs'.⁹³ Many Catholics claimed their loyalty both to their church and to the monarch, but ultimately given the number of martyrdoms that took place during the period it was believed to be impossible for anyone to be loyal to both parties. Therefore, 'the Protestant and Catholic conflicts of the early modern period witnessed a resurgence of martyrdom, and with it a reinvigoration of martyrologies which harkened back to works of the early Christian era at the same time that they reflected present-day concerns'.⁹⁴

⁹³ Sarah Covington, 'The Tribunals of Christ and of men': Law and the making of martyrs in early modern England', *Mortality* 19/2 (2014), p. 136

⁹⁴ Sarah Covington, 'The Tribunals of Christ and of men': Law and the making of martyrs in early modern England', *Mortality* 19/2 (2014), p. 136

Christopher Haigh, like Eamon Duffy and Jack Sacrisbrick, argues that the Reformation was very much a top down with little consensus when it came to accepting Protestantism with many wanting to maintain Catholic traditions such as the decoration within churches. Haigh has also called into question how far Elizabeth was a devout Protestant and claims that 'she was a political realist, but this does not mean that she was indifferent to spiritual things: she cared about right religion, but she would not take foolish risks for it'.⁹⁵ Elizabeth cared for state security and put this belief above the enforcing of her own beliefs on the rest of the country as her predecessors had done. The fact that she preferred vestments, ornaments and candles within her church have, for some, been the root cause of bringing into question her religious preferences. Patrick Collinson has also addressed this debate and suggests 'it remains possible that the Elizabethan compromise of Protestantism was a concession not only to the conservative prejudices of Elizabeth's subjects but to her own feelings'.⁹⁶ Collinson's argument would provide leverage to the idea that Elizabeth created a *via media* state, not only for political reasons but personal religious reasons as well. Yet, Catholic persecution would counter this claim; as it will be seen later; Catholics, priests and materials including relics were actively sought throughout her reign.

William J. Sheils argues that the 'church-going laity of early Elizabethan England retained a strong attachment to aspects of the devotional life of the late-medieval Church whilst accepting the ministrations and hearing the sermons of their ministers'.⁹⁷ In relation to saints and relics that were so dear to the Catholic community, Sheils proposes that 'suffering and, if need be, martyrdom, became for English Catholics a

⁹⁵ Haigh, (1998). *Elizabeth I*, p. 31

⁹⁶ Patrick Collinson, (2009). The Queen's Religious Position: Windows in a Woman's Soul. In D. Stump, & S. M. Felch, *Elizabeth I and her Age* (pp. 696-711). London: W. W. Norton and Company Ltd, p. 706

⁹⁷ Shiels, 'The Catholic Community,' p. 257

signifier of the truth for which they stood and an intrinsic part of their identity'.⁹⁸ He uses the example of Margaret Clitherow, who actively engaged in preserving Catholic beliefs and practices.⁹⁹ Even though Catholics may have conformed to the Elizabethan church on a public level to demonstrate their loyalty to the Queen, they were willing to die if it became necessary to maintain their devotion to Catholicism.

The last decade of Elizabeth's reign, according to Patrick Collinson, has been 'regarded as the period when the Church of England began to recover its equilibrium and to assert...the distinctive sanity of the *via media*, marginalizing not only puritanism but Calvinist theology'.¹⁰⁰ The Millenary Petition and the Hampton Court conference welcomed James I to the English throne. Yet James had experience of Protestant unrest and calls for further reform, his idea of kingship and authority combined with his own Calvinistic beliefs were to prompt changes to the church that Elizabeth had left behind which would have had consequences for English Catholics.

Jenny Wormald's article, '*The Word of God and the Word of the King: the scriptural exegeses of James VI and I and the King James Bible*,' considers the state of the last decade of Elizabeth's reign and the circumstances in which James came to the throne. Wormald argues that James was an experienced king who was politically and religiously aware of what he wanted in his realm; in Scotland as well as England. Making it clear that 'for King James, English episcopacy might offer something preferable to Scottish Presbyterianism, but English bishops were singularly lacking in

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 265

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 265

¹⁰⁰ Patrick Collinson, (1999), 'Ecclesiastical vitriol: religious satire in the 1590s and the invention of puritanism,' in John Guy (ed.) *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge), p. 153

style and wit also'.¹⁰¹ James wanted to develop the existing Protestant church and it was a church that adhered to the desires of the monarch unlike the Church of Scotland.

The paranoid state that Elizabeth had undoubtedly created by the end of her reign 'gave way to the calmer state of a church presided over by a king far less obsessed about conformity, far less afraid of differing theological opinions, than his predecessor and her bishops'.¹⁰² He was not afraid to adapt the state to suit his own views and opinions, whether they were political, religious or even social, as King he had the right to do so as God's elect, which he constantly stated in his various works. Whilst James may have been more willing to impose religious changes that suited him, there were still remnants of Catholicism which had been hidden during Elizabeth's reign. As Wormald asserts 'being a member of James's English church was therefore a great deal more relaxed than being a member of the church of Elizabeth or Charles I...he never insisted that only Calvinism was acceptable in his church'.¹⁰³ James' first opinion of Catholics when he came to the English throne was that they were treated in a harsh and barbaric manner, he wished to instil peace and the fact that there were undoubtedly fewer saints made during his time on the throne is evidence of this. However, saints were made and, as will be discussed further, special cases allowed relic collection and the Jesuit society to continue throughout James' time on the throne.

Continuing importance

¹⁰¹ Jenny Wormald, (1999). Ecclesiastical Vitriol: the kirk, the puritans and the future king of England. In J. Guy, *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (pp. 171-191). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 173

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 190

¹⁰³ Jenny Wormald, (2016, November 14). *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14592>

Using medieval historians such as Robert Bartlett and Danna Pirovansky and early modern historians such as Anne Dillon, Alexandra Walsham and Sarah Covington as well as material historians Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, it will be argued that the survival of Catholic traditions in England can be demonstrated by the continuing presence of saints and relics. Moreover, that there was a revitalisation of the cults of saints and relics within Catholic communities during 1558-1625 when new saints and relics were being established.

Alongside the material sources written sources that will be considered such as John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and Georgiana Fullerton's *The life of Luisa de Caravajal*, look at the changes that took place both from a Catholic and Protestant perspective. They provide evidence of persecution and popular opinions from both Catholics and Protestants alike. By taking into account both points of view it will be shown that saints, relics and the cults that surrounded them adapted to the time in terms of what was collected, how it was collected and the significance that they had to both religions during the Reformation.

Methodology

Using a combination of physical and written materials to demonstrate the continued Catholic devotion in England to saints and relics, will provide a more dynamic approach to understanding the importance of saints and relics. The work carried out by John Tosh, Caroline Byrum and Ludmilla Jordanova will help to shape the way that this piece of work considers and uses the written and material sources depicting the

Catholic past. We must remember that 'culture...has a long and absorbing history, going back to the earliest efforts to represent human experience or observation before writing had been invented'.¹⁰⁴ As Ludmilla Jordanova states, 'historians do well to consider and to integrate a wide range of evidence, to present it accurately and scrupulously, to explore the fresh insights that visual and material sources may afford, and to encourage their readers, whether inside or outside scholarly nominations, to engage with original objects and images themselves'.¹⁰⁵ Material culture in relation to Catholic saints and the wider Catholic community will provide an in depth look at how Catholicism continued throughout England and how the collection continued during a time of reform and persecution.

Primary material sources included in this research are contained at Stonyhurst College which was founded in 1593 at St Omer, the College and many of the objects subsequently moved to Bruges in 1762 and Liège in 1773 before returning to England and their current location of Stonyhurst in Lancashire. The college was primarily an educational establishment designed to train and teach in the Catholic faith, but it also became a home for Catholic objects, which were under threat in England. The relics of saints now preserved at the school came from the continent establishments where, they were sent in order to protect them from being destroyed. Whilst it may seem that this dimmed the connection between English Catholics and the Catholic faith, this was not the case. Lisbeth Corens highlights that by sending English Catholic relics to the continent 'through the physical and spiritual bonds created by the relics, English Catholics preserved their own distinct and coherent community while remaining

¹⁰⁴ John Tosh, (2015), *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of History* (London and New Haven: Routledge), p. 205

¹⁰⁵ Ludmilla Jordanova, (2008), 'Review: Image Matters,' *The Historical Journal* Cambridge University Press, 51/3, p. 778

administratively and geographically within the universal Catholic Church'.¹⁰⁶ Relics sent to the continent 'often travelled between the various towns inhabited by the English in France, the Low Countries, Italy and Spain,' allowing English Catholic recusants to maintain a connection to their Catholic heritage and country.¹⁰⁷ This was not unusual as 'the wide dispersion of physical fragments of one single saint or sacred object had been characteristic for relics since the days of the earliest Christian martyrs'.¹⁰⁸ By remaining a safe distance away from reformers 'English Catholics established a material connection not solely with their past but also with their future, for those objects would be part of reclaiming England for Catholicism'.¹⁰⁹

Amongst the relic materials are the skull and toe nail of St Thomas More, the hand of Margaret Clitherow, a piece of the true cross that belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots and the rope that had been used to tie Edmund Campion down as he was dragged to his death. These are just some of the people who were put to death for their religious views, who were martyred for standing by their religious beliefs and who were believed to pose a threat to the English throne. Each one has a story behind their death, a reason that they were persecuted and furthermore each one has a relic to represent them as a saint, a relic that was worshipped as a symbol of holiness during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. In conjunction to works produced by Catholics, legislation created by Elizabeth I such as the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Oath of Allegiance under James I will be considered. John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, published in the Acts and Monuments, will supply a significant Protestant viewpoint on martyrdom and criticisms of what would be thought of as key Catholic beliefs that had been instilled in

¹⁰⁶ Lisbeth Corens, 'Saints beyond borders: Relics and the patriate English Catholic Community'. In Gary K. Waite and Jesse Spohnholz Exile and Religious Identity 1500-1800 (Routledge, London and New York, 2016), p. 25

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 28

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 28

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 30

England since the medieval period. Alongside these sources Catholic writings such as Georgiana Fullerton's *The life of Luisa de Caravajal*, will look at the changes in relic collection and veneration. Taking into account these various works they will provide evidence of persecution and popular opinions from both Catholics and Protestants alike. By taking into account both points of view it will be shown that saints, relics and the cults that surrounded them adapted to the time in terms of what was collected, how it was collected and the significance that they had to both religions during the Reformation.

Tara Hamling argues that 'an engagement with the morality of material life is central to this period's understanding of the role which objects played in spiritual affairs'.¹¹⁰ It must be considered why lay people used certain relics and why after the Reformation these objects still had some significance to the population even after the Church of England had denounced them. Thomas Cromwell had worked to prove that relics and holy objects that people believed to have had powers were nothing more than tricks by the Catholic Church, they were fakes used to mislead the people and to increase their obedience to the Church. Alexandra Walsham who has looked at relics after the Reformation in her own research states that 'some were rescued from destruction or confiscation and lovingly preserved for posterity by religious conservatives confident that the Catholic faith would one day be restored to its dominant status'.¹¹¹ The faith that people held towards these objects remained throughout the Reformation, the survival of relics is evidence of this.

Changing views on saints and relics, what made a saint a saint and what purpose relics had, are some aspects of this transformation but the study of material culture

¹¹⁰ Hamling and Richardson, *Everyday objects: Medieval and Material Culture*, p. 5

¹¹¹ Walsham, 'Skeletons in the Cupboard: Relics after the English Reformation,' p. 126

will allow a clear understanding of the role that they played in people's lives. It will be argued using research by Hamling and Walsham, that saints and relics remained important to Catholics throughout the Reformation and that there were continuities from the medieval period through to James I's reign. It will also be argued that the laity had the power, as they did in the medieval period, to venerate these objects and it was the laity who enabled the cult of saints to continue through the survival of relics.

Early Reformation

To understand the significance of the survival of relics in the reign of Elizabeth we need to comprehend what kind of religious England she was inheriting. When Elizabeth came to the throne she inherited Marian England, a country that Mary had reverted back to Catholicism and tried to restore Catholic icons back into daily life. Nevertheless, Mary's attempt had not quite managed a full Catholic conversion due to the damage done in Henry and Edward's reign. The Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII (1536-40) saw the emptying coffers led by Thomas Cromwell, a Protestant reformer. The Protestant faith objected to the splendour and wealth of the Church, advocating that the key to salvation was in the written word making objects and imagery obsolete. Salvation was by faith alone removing the need for Catholic traditions of alms giving and the superstitious beliefs in the powers of saintly objects. Now there was no need for stained glass windows that depicted scenes of the Bible or charity work that stimulated the growth of religious morals. Some of the many sacred objects that had been kept in religious houses 'on the eve of the Reformation [included] many hallowed bone, fragments of flesh, droplets of blood, and scraps of fabric [where they] remained in the safe-keeping of monasteries, cathedrals, and churches, where they attracted a steady stream of pilgrims to gaze upon, kiss, and even lick them'.¹⁴³ They were objects that not only provided spiritual value for the church and those in contact with the items, but also enabled the church to gain income through devotion and pilgrimage. The main 'purpose of pilgrimage had always been to seek the holy, concretely embodied in a sacred place, a relic, or a specially privileged image'.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Walsham, 'Skeletons in the Cupboard: Relics after the English Reformation,' p. 122

¹⁴⁴ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, p. 191

St Thomas Becket one of the most famous Catholic saints from the medieval period became one of the first saints to be attacked during the Reformation under Henry VIII. A saint who had been worshipped since the twelfth century was put to the test when 'he was given thirty days to 'defend himself' by miracles and when none were forthcoming, he was found guilty, his bones were to be burned and his personal property forfeited to the crown'.¹⁴⁵ The steps taken in 'the disposal of saintly bones and the destruction of their shrines upset a great many English subjects'.¹⁴⁶ Becket's destruction in particular, 'was seen as an outrage: it was deeply deplored and angrily resented both by those who were consciously opposed to the new ecclesiastical policy and also by those who looked upon the Canterbury pilgrimages as a valuable source of amusement and profit'.¹⁴⁷ The trial itself no doubt demonstrated to others that saints and relics indeed had no power. However, Becket had been a very popular saint and even though 'the government of Henry VIII demoted Thomas Becket from saint to upstart priest, and saw to the destruction of his shrine... the cult of St Thomas was much harder to eradicate from popular memory'.¹⁴⁸

David Cressy argues that even 'at Canterbury, the seat of the martyr, the pageant of St Thomas was halted in 1536, revived under Mary, and continued with some ambivalence under Elizabeth until 1564'.¹⁴⁹ This would suggest that despite the original dissolution which acted to eradicate all elements of Thomas' cult, there still remained within the local area a section of the population who had not forgotten. In theory Becket had been destroyed in the reign of Henry VIII when his relics failed the challenge to perform miracles, in failing to do so they were burned. Yet the image below is of a relic

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 242

¹⁴⁶John R. Butler, (1995). *The Quest for Becket's Bones: The Mystery of the Relics of St. Thomas Becket*, London and New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 127

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 127

¹⁴⁸Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, p. 5

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 5

of Becket, a piece of his skull, which was placed in a silver reliquary to protect the bone. The image below provides evidence that at least part of St Thomas' relic survived; in this case the relic was sent away from England and kept in safety in Esztergom, Hungary for centuries.¹⁵⁰ There are obvious problems with this as there is no way of knowing if the piece of skull below is actually from St Thomas Beckett or not which in turn illustrates the problem with using material culture. Wrapped in a piece of red velvet there is extreme care taken with the bone to make sure that it was not damaged and yet was still visible supposedly to prevent claims of fakery. The reliquary that it is contained in is small enough for it to be concealed whilst in public, it would have allowed whoever possessed the relic to move freely about without attracting unwanted attention which might have resulted in persecution. The fact that this piece still exists supports the argument that relic materials from the medieval period were protected and held sacred in secret, Catholics afforded them sanctity and protection from Reformers by sending them to the continent for protection.



Figure 1: By the permission of the Governors of Stonyhurst College: *A reliquary holding a piece of skull belonging to St Thomas Becket*

¹⁵⁰ <https://rcdow.org.uk/vocations/blog/reuniting-the-relics-of-st-thomas-becket/>

We see both continuities and changes therefore in relation to Saints. What is clear is the influence and power that the laity had in deeming who they thought worthy of sainthood even without the consent of the church from the thirteenth century. As it will be seen, this continued throughout the early modern period as there was a return to violent persecution and martyrdom, the laity chose whom to admire. In terms of relics this was a gradual development that started by simply being near the saint's grave or tomb, but which led to an open desire and need to possess any material that could be imbued with the saint's power. As the laity were kept at a distance at official sites, the desire grew for contact with relics. By the early modern era they could obtain relics at the point of death. These ideologies were embedded into society over centuries, and cult of saints and relics grew and provided the Catholic Church with phenomenal income, dedication, and influence not only in England but around the world. Even in an era of persecution, this attachment to relics and saints did not disappear.

However, reformers presented these objects of Catholicism as signs of the abuse and corruption of the church and emphasised the need for people to find salvation in the Bible. Martin Luther and John Calvin started to produce books to sway people away from the Catholic Church but throughout Europe monarchs reacted against reforms, 'the pious King of England had been one of the most determined and most organised opponents of the new teachings,' so much so that 'the reformer's books were publicly burned in London, and his English followers pursued and executed'.¹⁵¹ Henry may have been *Defender of the Faith* yet, from as early as 1536 'the clergy were required to preach against superstitious images, relics, miracles, and pilgrimages while injunctions in 1538 ordered the removal of all 'feigned' images and decreed that

¹⁵¹ Eamon Duffy, (2003). *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation in an English Village* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 84-85

candles must only be burnt before the rood, the tabernacle (for the host), and the (Easter) sepulchre'.¹⁵² The objects which the Catholic faith believed to be sacred and held in such high regard were in theory to be removed and dissolved from English churches yet the reality on a local level was somewhat different. As Eamon Duffy shows, in 1541 when Henry journeyed into Yorkshire the 'traditionalist feeling was particularly strong in connection with the cult of saints, and evidently many "abused" images and shrines still stood, in defiance of Henry's injunctions and proclamations'.¹⁵³

Destroying the monasteries and shrines would in theory have allowed the Crown to eradicate any false church doctrine and return to the ancient church whilst taking possession of any wealth, land as well as any material objects that were then sold. It would have also allowed the crown to take possession of any relics as Foxe has outlined, 'Abbeyes and Monasteries were taken their chiefe iewls. The king first beginneth with the iuels of Abbeyes and reliques'.¹⁵⁷ Foxe's account provides an interpretation of the first acts against Catholicism which he states were focused on images and objects, which held most value both in terms of monetary and spiritual value. John Foxe wrote that:

'the vowing and going of pilgrimage to images, or to the bones and reliques of any Sainctes hath ben superstitiously vsed and cause of much wickedness and idolatrie, and therefore iustly abolished by the said late king of famous memorie, and the images and reliques so abused, haue ben of great and godly consideratios defaced and destroyed'.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵² E. W. Ives (2016, November 14). *Henry VIII (1491-1547)*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12955>

¹⁵³ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, p. 431

¹⁵⁷ John Foxe, Book 9, p. 1098, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO* (1583 edition) (HRI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011). Available from: <http://www.johnfoxe.org> [Accessed: 01.03.17]

¹⁵⁸ John Foxe, Book 9, p. 1381, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO* (1583 edition) (HRI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011). Available from: <http://www.johnfoxe.org> [Accessed: 01.03.17].

Pilgrimages to shrines were a long-established tradition within Catholicism, as a way for people to get close to the remains of saints both as a religious experience and in order to make supplication; Cromwell and his fellow reformers wanted to eliminate both Catholic traditions from England during the sixteenth century. The emphasis of the new faith rested more on the written word. There was a shift away from the need to take part in pilgrimages and the destruction of shrines ensured there was very little to visit.

When Edward VI came to the throne it was clear that Protestant reforms would be pushed forward more rapidly with the help, or rather the driving force, of Thomas Cranmer. Injunctions put in place in 1547 'launched an aggressive attack on the remaining shrines. Images might remain but only as a remembrance of the saints portrayed on them. There must be no acts of reverence towards them, no candles or incensing'.¹⁶⁵ The Forty- Two Articles that were introduced in 1553 'declared that the worship and adoration of 'images, as of reliques, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainlie feigned, and grounded upon no warrant of scripture'.¹⁶⁶ Placing emphasis on the text of the Bible, anything not specified in the text such as saint and relic was prohibited in the kingdom. Yet even with the added pressure for people to conform there were, as Claire Cross argues, 'in limited areas all over England laymen [who] allied with priests to preserve Catholicism: on much greater scale laymen joined forces with zealous ministers to set up the very type of Protestantism the queen herself most opposed'.¹⁶⁷ Here there was open opposition to the legislation set out by the monarch which shows that there was still an attachment to the Catholic Church. This attachment manifested in Catholicism moving from the public to private sphere of

¹⁶⁵ Freeman, *Holy bones, Holy Dust: How Relics Shaped the History of Medieval Europe*, p. 243

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 244

¹⁶⁷ Cross, *The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church*, p. 114

devotion and doing this through various ways, one being collecting and hiding relic material to have and maintain that saintly connection to God.

England had gone through a vast religious change in a short period of time, from the 1530s and after the death of Edward, Mary I attempted to return England to Catholicism. With a Catholic queen on the throne it opened the way for shrines, church decoration and relics which had not been destroyed to return to their rightful place in the church. According to Eamon Duffy 'in the country, the restoration of the Mass and the outlawing of the Book of Common Prayer after December 1553 signalled a majority return to catholic observance'.¹⁶⁸ He explains that 'the reconciliation with the papacy on 30 November 1554 was the signal for an escalation of the whole process of systematic enforcement, a process given potentially lethal teeth when the heresy laws came back into force at the end of January 1555'.¹⁶⁹ It was a slow process, but one that Mary continued to push forward in order to return England back to Catholicism. Indeed, 'when Mary came to the throne no one in England under the age of sixteen had ever seen Becket's famous memorial or for that matter any of the other great shrines their parents might still mention now and then'.¹⁷⁰ Yet, whilst Mary was a devout Catholic and as David Loades suggest 'assiduous in her private devotions,' certain shrines which had been prominent in the past such as 'St Thomas of Canterbury, St Cuthbert and Our Lady Walsingham remained desolate'.¹⁷¹ What is also interesting is that 'neither did Mary ever undertake a pilgrimage as queen,' despite her renowned devotion to the Catholic Church.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Eamon Duffy, (2010) *Fires of Faith: Catholic England Under Mary Tudor*, (London and New Haven: Yale University Press), p. 1547

¹⁶⁹ Eamon Duffy, (2010) *Fires of Faith: Catholic England Under Mary Tudor*, (London and New Haven: Yale University Press), p. 1547

¹⁷⁰ Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England*, p. 213

¹⁷¹ Loades, 'The Personal Religion of Mary I,' p. 21

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 21

Mary used persecution to subdue the growth of the opposing faith and this gave rise to Protestant martyrs who, like Catholics, died in the name of their faith. John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* highlighted the ways in which Protestants suffered at the hands of a Catholic monarch. By the end of her reign 'nearly 300 went to the stake, mostly labourers and artisans, and many of them women'.¹⁷³ The burning of Protestants portrays Mary as a queen unable to deal with religio-political threats which gave rise to Protestant persecution. It created an alternative set of martyrs whose lives proved inspiration to the new reformed faith, but who did not bring with them the materiality in the same way. Marian restoration was short lived. If religious relics were to survive they needed to disappear again. Hidden from the public eye as they became ensconced in the homes of devout Catholics. Catholic persecution and therefore the creation of Catholic martyrs and saints increased throughout Elizabeth's time on the throne and into the reign of James I leading to a revitalisation of new saints and relic collections.

In summary, Henry VIII introduced England to Protestantism and changed the face of the English church forever, his attempts at changing England were for many reasons, none of which were religious as he remained a Catholic at heart. Despite his obvious devotion to the Catholic Church, Henry pushed forward with the break with Rome and started England on the path to reform. When Edward came to the throne he was more aggressive in his approach to the Reformation and did so for religious reasons, however, like Henry's religious changes, they were short lived. The church that Henry had left behind was still Catholic in identity, 'before Edward's reforms, the parish church was an assault on the senses- gleaming chapel plate, painted walls and ceilings, stained glass, elaborate statuary, reliquaries and shrines lit by wax tapers and

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 28

tallow candles'.¹⁷⁴ Being born into Protestantism and growing up believing in that faith meant that Edward, and certainly his uncles who ruled alongside him, were more devoted than Henry had been to Protestantism. The belief solely in the written word of the Bible indicated that they had no need for Catholic decoration, 'the new church was a monument to the plain and lively word of God'.¹⁷⁵ This meant that Mary I's attempt to reinstate the Catholic faith into England was difficult due as lands had already been sold off and buildings destroyed. Yet Mary pursued a counter-reformation as 'altars and rood-lofts were rebuilt, images returned, vestments and capes worn, the utensils and ornaments of the mass restored, and the necessary missals, antiphonaries, breviaries, etc. obtained'.¹⁷⁶ Even with all her efforts to restore the Catholic faith to England, Mary's reign, like her brother before her, was short lived, her changes were easy enough to eradicate in order to restore England as a Protestant nation led by a Protestant monarch.

¹⁷⁴ Childs, *God's Traitors: Terror and Faith in Elizabethan England*, p. 15

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15

¹⁷⁶ John Guy, (1988). *Tudor England* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 237

Catholicism under Elizabeth I

It has been established that saints, relics, and shrines dedicated to martyrs, were an integral part of late medieval English Catholicism, which the Reformation aimed to suppress. However, the Elizabethan era saw new martyrs, saints, relics and cults being created within the Catholic community. This chapter will look at the specific martyrdom of Margaret Clitherow and Edmund Campion as new Catholic martyrs of the Reformation. It will take into consideration the veneration afforded to them by the laity, as well as the relic materials that surrounded their cults and inspired others to remain loyal to the Catholic faith. The writing of John Gerard, a Jesuit, will be taken into account to gain a Catholic perspective on the making of martyrs and saints as well as the collection of relics. The work of John Foxe will also be considered as a piece of Protestant propaganda used to provide an explanation for the Reformation and why it continued. This, like the work written by John Calvin, influenced and promoted Elizabeth's religious regime and worked to eradicate the use of saints and relics in the Protestant faith, all whilst ridding England of Catholics and their practices. All of this will provide a more detailed exploration of relics and the persecution faced by Catholics to establish how important these objects were to the laity in everyday life.

Like her siblings, when Elizabeth came to the throne, she established England's religious doctrine, which came in the form of the Thirty-Nine Articles introduced in 1563; Article twenty-two eliminated the sanctity associated with religious objects. Yet regardless of the proclamations set out to prohibit Catholic practice within society, the importance and relevance of 'devotional objects like crosses, statues, relics and images contributed to a material and visual language which had the power to mediate devotional messages to different audiences and- maybe more than written texts- to

transcend class, gender and ethnic differences'.¹⁷⁷ Later in Elizabeth's reign, there was a rise in Catholic persecution resulting in political martyrdom and created a growth of relic materials as Catholics died on the scaffold. This did not prevent devoted English Catholics from practising nor did it discourage them from collecting bodily relics, which they had held in such high regard in England since the seventh century. The shrines that had stood in commemoration of saints and relics were 'in contrast to the small relics which people carried about on their caps or in rings'.¹⁷⁸

The Council of Trent 1563- England and the Continent

The Council of Trent held from 1545 to 1563 took an active approach to eradicate all the abuses that had been held against them by reformers. The Council, held in 1563, addressed:

'the usage of the Catholic and Apostolic Church received from the primitive times of the Christian religion, and agreeably to the consent of the holy Fathers, and to the decrees of sacred Councils, they especially instruct the faithful diligently concerning the intercession and invocation of saints; the honour (paid) to relics; and the legitimate use of images'.¹⁷⁹

It was outlined at the Council that:

'in the invocation of saints, the veneration of relics, and the sacred use of images, every superstition shall be removed, all filthy lucre be abolished; finally, all lasciviousness be avoided; in such wise that figures shall not be painted or adorned with a beauty exciting lust; nor the celebration of the saints, and the visitation of relics be by any perverted into revellings and drunkenness'.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Silvia Evangelisti, (2013). 'Material Culture,' in Alexandra Bamji, Geert H. Janssen and Mary Laven (eds.) *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation*, Surrey: Ashgate, p. 415

¹⁷⁸ Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Belief in Medieval England*, p. 27

¹⁷⁹ J. Waterwoth (1848). *The Council of Trent The Twenty-Fifth Session*, The Foundation of Sacred Arts: Recovering the Beauty in Catholic Sacred Arts, London: Dolman

<http://thesacredarts.org/newsite/knowledge-base/from-the-holy-see/105-the-council-of-trent-on-the-invocation-veneration-and-relics-of-saints-and-on-sacred-images-1563> [Accessed, 25.01/2017]

¹⁸²J. Waterwoth (1848). *The Council of Trent The Twenty-Fifth Session*, The Foundation of Sacred Arts: Recovering the Beauty in Catholic Sacred Arts, London: Dolman

<http://thesacredarts.org/newsite/knowledge-base/from-the-holy-see/105-the-council-of-trent-on-the-invocation-veneration-and-relics-of-saints-and-on-sacred-images-1563> [Accessed, 25.01/2017]

Reformers attacked the use of material objects not because they were completely against them but because they believed the Catholic Church had corrupted their meaning for their own gain. The meeting that was held brought to light the problems associated with objects of the church, the basis of establishing whether or not something would remain part of church doctrine, depended on whether it could be traced back to the ancient church. If saints and relics could be authenticated as part of the early church, they would remain part of the church with caution of authenticity for the clergy thereafter. The clergy had to be able to make sure that the relic did indeed belong to the saint that was claimed and was not a fake item. For the Catholic Church, it meant that there was scepticism surrounding relic materials and the process of saint veneration had been a long, drawn out process needing the “right” evidence of a martyr’s life and death for them to become a saint.

The Council of Trent was a continental event that addressed all Catholics, reshaping the Catholic Church to the ancient church. For English Catholics it allowed them to remain connected to the continent and hold on to the hope that England would return to Catholicism. Catholics both in England and on the continent used relic materials and cults to hold on to the past, ‘historical practices and traditions were an important element in community formation and their recording both reflected the memory of community and contributed to its preservation and crystallization’.¹⁸³ Collecting relics and maintaining saint cults remained an integral part of the Catholic faith even after the meeting. The council addressed Protestant concerns about the abuses of the

¹⁸³ Lisbeth Corens, ‘Saints beyond border: Relics and the expatriate English Catholic Community’. In Gary K. Waite and Jesse Spohnolz *Exile and Religious Identity 1500-1800* (Routledge, London and New York, 2016), p. 33

materials but ultimately Catholics believed these sacred items provided a connection to the past and a connection to the saint and God.

John Calvin- The Treatise on Relics

Within the same year that the Council of Trent was held (1563), John Calvin published his work, *The Treatise on Relics*, which argued for the implausibility of relic material and its availability. This may explain why the Catholic Church felt the need to address the issue of relics so directly at the Council. By taking into consideration *The Treatise on Relics*, it highlights the Protestant issues with the superstitious beliefs of Catholics and lack of validity surrounding so called saintly relic materials. Calvinist doctrine heavily influenced the Elizabethan church and helped to outline throughout the period the problems with placing so much faith in material objects. According to Alexandra Walsham 'he spared not an ounce of withering contempt and acerbic wit in cataloguing the vast reservoir of counterfeit bones, blood, shirts, caps, and assorted other 'baggage' and 'geare' that filled the churches of Europe and was cunningly manipulated by the devil and the papists to pervert the simple'.¹⁸⁵

Calvin addressed the misdirection that he thought the Catholic Church had taken on relic and saint veneration by considering the illogical claims that surrounded Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the Apostles. Many churches held a fragment of the True Cross; for Calvin 'an account of those merely with which I am acquainted would fill a whole volume, for there is not a church, from a cathedral to the most miserable abbey or parish church, that does not contain a piece'.¹⁹⁰ Logically it was well known, at least to the reformers such as Calvin, that 'if we could have the register of all the relics that are to be found in the world, men would clearly see how much they had been blinded,

¹⁸⁵ Walsham, 'Skeletons in the Cupboard: Relics after the English Reformation,' p. 121

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 233

and what darkness and folly overspread the earth'.¹⁹¹ Specifically in relation to the relics of the Virgin Mary, 'for five hundred years after the death of the Virgin Mary there was never any talk of such things'.¹⁹² Calvin did not see how 'these relics, so devoid of all appearance of truth, are devoutly kissed and venerated by crowds' when the Bible, the true meaning of faith was so readily available for salvation.¹⁹³ He questioned where and why people maintained and created such beliefs when the answers to the 'true' religion were contained in the Bible.

By the Elizabethan era the *Acts and Monuments* more usually known as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, provides a Protestant explanation as to why the Reformation was necessary, particularly in relation to saints and relics. Foxe asserted that 'so many Sainctes we had, so many gods, so many monasteries, so many pilgrimages. As many churches, as many reliques forged and fayned we had. Agayne, so many reliques, so many lying miracles were beleued'.¹⁹⁴ It was during the dissolution that Cromwell uncovered relics as 'often [being] pigs' bones that deluded the credulous minds of the faithful'.¹⁹⁵ Foxe's book published in Elizabethan England was a propaganda piece aimed at promoting further reform and depicting how people had been misled by a corrupt church. Yet Foxe's book indicated that whilst superstition was to be rejected martyrdom was not and in fact gained increased importance in sixteenth century reformed narratives. Protestants had their own martyrs and used these as evidence of Catholic brutality. Before the Reformation Protestant narratives portrayed themselves as the persecuted, but by the Elizabethan era there is a reversal of fortune

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 226

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 250

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 250

¹⁹⁴ John Foxe, Book 8, p. 1094, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or TAMO (1583 edition) (HRI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011). Available from: <http://www.johnfoxe.org> [Accessed: 01.03.17].

¹⁹⁵ Freeman, *Holy Bones, Holy Dust: How Relics Shaped the History of Medieval Europe*, p. 240

as Protestants are portrayed by the Catholics as the persecutors and themselves as the martyrs.

The Reformation created new martyrs and saints throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In relation to the Catholic community it could be suggested that with an increase in Catholic persecution it gave rise to the laity once again revering relics and expressing their want and or need to possess them as an affirmation of their faith. Religious objects were something that people could touch and feel, providing that connection that brought people close to God as opposed to placing faith and salvation in the hands of a written text. Relics 'proved' their power through the miracles that they performed.

Whilst texts such *The Treatise on Relics* attempted to open the eyes of Protestants and Catholics alike to the vast and impossible store of relics, Catholicism, and the traditions that it entailed, were ingrained in many in England. The Reformation was slow to progress and Catholicism remained in England despite persecution. As Elizabeth Williamson affirms 'any study of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries must also attempt to acknowledge the considerable local fluctuations in the enforcement of Protestant reforms,' it was not the same for every locality.¹⁹⁸

Catholicism within Localities and the Domestic Sphere

In the North of England for example, where Catholicism was more embedded, the laity did not necessarily adhere to the wants, needs, and demands of the state when it came to ridding churches of Catholic items. Eamon Duffy and William J. Sheils have both looked at specific areas to understand how different areas tried to preserve traditional religion. Sheils for example, argues that 'for many of the laity the character

¹⁹⁸ Williamson, *The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern English Drama*, p. 7

of its Protestantism remained to be defined, and in several parishes, as at Morebath in Devon or Masham in Yorkshire, liturgical implements and vestments were retained by individual clergy, in anticipation of a return to more traditional devotions'.¹⁹⁹ As suggested by Jack Scarisbrick, 'saints, especially patronal and local ones, provided an 'alternative' patronage system, so to speak, to whom anyone could turn, however humble, and which would never ignore or betray a suppliant'.²⁰⁰ Further still, episcopal visitations and church-wardens' accounts from all parts of the country demonstrate that some churches retained their Catholic altars, rosary beads and holy water, while their priests continued to say masses for the dead, revere images and 'counterfeit' the mass in the communion services'.²⁰¹

Localities, mainly in the North such as Yorkshire and Lancashire, did what they could to retain Catholicism and they received help from the continent in the form of Jesuit priests as well as the remaining Marian priests to achieve this. By the later Elizabethan era relics and priests were smuggled both in and out of the country to maintain Catholicism as well as help in conversion. Within England 'in the 1560s over 150 deprived Marian priests were active in Yorkshire and 75 in Lancashire, offering masses, baptisms and churchings, celebrating prohibited feasts and hearing confessions'.²⁰² They risked their lives to bring people back to the faith and for some this resulted in martyrdom, creating powerful icons of faith. There are many accounts pertaining to the discovery of seminary priests as well as papist books and objects in Elizabeth's reign. One example in 1585 states:

'Report of Edward Soer, Constable of Paris Garden, and John Bartlem, Bailiff there, touching the search of Hugh Catlyne's house for a Papist. His

¹⁹⁹ Shiels, 'The Catholic Community,' p. 257

²⁰⁰ Jack J. Scarisbrick, (1985). *The Reformation and the English People*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, p. 170

²⁰¹ Susan Doran, (1994). *Elizabeth I and Foreign Policy 1558-1603*, London: Taylor and Francis, p. 50

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 50

forcible opposition. Discovery of John Worrall, a notorious person for papistry, and two others. Many papistical books found, and popish relics'.²⁰³

Another in aid of a Catholic priest:

'Certificate of Mr Sheriff Spencer's search in Holborn and the places adjoining, committed to him by Mr Owen. Popish relics found in the house of Robert Holme, *alias* Fynche, a Jesuit priest; letters and papers found in Arden Waferer's house in Chancery Lane'.²⁰⁴

Both show that anyone suspected of helping Catholics or of being Catholic themselves were actively searched and sought out including any objects relating to their faith. The referral to 'popish relics' distinguishing that they were of the Catholic church, either brought over from the continent or venerated as some English martyrs bodily remains. Both sources are records made stating what is being seized, the Catholics discovered as well as the materials that they were trying to hide on their persons. The records would have been used to estimate the growing Catholic problem in England and how far the influence of the Pope was still embedded. The wording of the sources shows that these Catholics were suspected by neighbours and reported. Bringing suspicions to people of power led to these searches and ultimately if found guilty punishment and possible death. The examples above demonstrate that Catholicism was a political problem for the crown and these examples present evidence of active persecution by local law enforcement, carrying out searches to eliminate any papist influence within England. As Alexandra Walsham indicates, 'seminary priests and Jesuits sent across the Channel after 1574 deliberately and skilfully harnessed supernatural power in their attempts to combat heresy, reinforce contested tenets, reclaim backsliders, and win

²⁰³ *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1581-1590*. Ed. R. Lemon. London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1865 State Papers Online, Gale, Cengage Learning, 2017

²⁰⁴ *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1581-1590*. Ed. R. Lemon. London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1865 State Papers Online, Gale, Cengage Learning, 2017

converts to their cause'.²⁰⁵ In other words, they used the powers associated with relic materials as tools of inspiration to convert people back to the folds of the Catholic Church; they were the power of the saint providing miracles.

Another example of Catholicism shifting to the domestic sphere is contained in *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers*, who describe one particular event on Tuesday 18th December 1593 when 'a search made before Christmas last at York, in the castle, where the Catholics are kept in...defence and profession of their faith'.²⁰⁶ During the search:

'they broke and beat down, without scruple, walls, ceilings, floors, hearths of chimnies, boards, yea they untiled the house; and, breaking down all within the chambers, they tossed and trod under their feet our clothes and bedding, the lime, plaster, dust, and dirt falling upon it and made their common way over all, without sparing. They found great store of books and church stuff also, as chalice and cruets of silver, crosses of silver and gilt, with relics, pictures and antependiums, borders, and all other furniture belonging unto the altar, which had been sent and bestowed upon us by former prisoners and good benefactors'.²⁰⁷

Here we have an example of Catholics in prison, doing what they could in order to hide religious objects, and the significant amounts discovered. The mass scale of hiding and collecting shows that it was not just relic materials which Catholics hid but the entirety of what they needed to administer the sacraments and mass. Alexandra Walsham argues that 'it was the way in which relics were caught up in the heated confessional conflicts of the ear that transformed them, on both sides of the theological divide, into proverbial skeletons in the closet, sources of ideological anxiety and

²⁰⁵ Alexandra Walsham, (2003. 'Miracles and the Counter- Reformation Mission to England,' *The Historical Journal* 46/4, p. 781

²⁰⁶ *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefather: Related by Themselves*, (1875). John Morris (ed.) London: Burns and Oates p. 159

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 162

potential scandal'.²⁰⁸ If they were able to have these objects whilst in prison, this indicates the value placed on them and the desire to maintain their religion.

Martyrdoms and the Creation of Relics

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Catholic persecution gave rise to new saints being created, they died in defence of their faith and to the Catholic community, on a local level, were considered saints. Creation of new Catholic martyrs

Two people who had suffered during Henry's reign for their faith were Thomas More and John Fisher, both devout Catholics who refused to defy their faith and commitment to the Catholic Church. More had 'until the king's divorce...enjoyed a brilliantly successful career as lawyer, scholar and royal servant and advisor'.²⁰⁹ G. W. Bernard states 'from the evidence of what he said and did- and did not say and did not do- it is very hard to see him as an active and threatening political opponent of the king'.²¹⁰ Yet he was deeply and conventionally devout and could not accept Henry as head of the church. In '1534 More refused to swear the oath of succession and after four days in the custody of the abbot of Westminster was sent to the Tower, where he remained until he was tried and executed in July 1535'.²¹¹ Many Catholics considered More's actions as worthy of sanctification and it was English lay Catholics who venerated More (he was not canonised by the Church until 1935). It was also the laity who took it upon themselves to collect relic materials. For example, surviving relics of More, include his skull which was given to his daughter and a toe nail that was preserved in

²⁰⁸ Walsham, 'Skeletons in the Cupboard: Relics after the English Reformation', p. 143

²⁰⁹ G. W. Bernard, (2007). *The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church* London and New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 127

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 151

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 140

his memory (now kept at Stonyhurst college).²¹² Below is an image of one of More's relics. The fact that such a small direct relic was collected and preserved shows that for Catholics there was no part of the saint's body that was not precious enough that could not offer the same kind of miraculous power as any other.



Figure 2: By the governance of Stonyhurst College: *The toe nail of Sir Thomas*

Another man who suffered persecution under Henry was John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, until his execution in 1535. Unlike More, he actively spoke out against reformers and even the King as he tried to obtain a divorce from Rome. In the early 1520's Fisher spoke out against Luther at St Paul's Cross.²¹³ As Henry VIII started to push for divorce Fisher '...publicly opposed the king ..., defended the interests of the church against parliamentary criticism and rallied churchmen to resist, up to a point, the demand Henry and his councillors were making that the church recognise the king as its supreme head'.²¹⁴ Fisher was also executed, but unlike More the relic that is

²¹² *Lady Margaret Roper and the Head of Sir Thomas More*, Lynsted with Kingsdown Society, http://www.lynstedsociety.co.uk/Library/Books/Margaret_Roper_and_head_of_Sir_Thomas_More.html [Accessed: 14.08.2017]

²¹³ Bernard, *The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church*, p. 111

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 111

used to represent him is a contact relic, a walking staff that he used on a daily basis. This is now part of a private collection in Oxfordshire and evidences of the diversity of relic materials that started to appear in the sixteenth century as Catholic persecution increased. Using More and Fisher as examples of diversity we see examples of bodily relics and contact relics which draws a comparison with the medieval. Both More and Fisher were canonised in 1935 but were recognised as saints at the point of their deaths. They received popular veneration from the sixteenth century and just like in the medieval period did not need the Catholic church to approve the sainthood for this to occur. They also share the same martyr status as that of Thomas Becket for resisting a monarch's will, yet another similarity between medieval and early modern martyrdoms. In Elizabeth's reign, further martyrs were created as the persecution increased and men and women died for their faith.

The collection of bodily relics depended on the accessibility of the saint's body. The burial of Catholics, of martyrs, should have been in a church on consecrated ground, however what became the norm for martyrs was that they were placed in unmarked graves or left where they were executed for the most part. In 1585 Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel was brought 'before the Star Chamber on charges of being a Roman Catholic, fleeing from England without the queen's leave, intriguing with William Allen and Robert Persons, and claiming title to the archdeaconry of Norfolk,' and was sentenced to death but he died of sickness whilst in prison in 1595.²¹⁵ Instead of receiving the traditional Catholic burial, he was given an inexpensive funeral with his body being placed in the chapel of St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower.²¹⁶ For 'all such

²¹⁵ J. G. Elzinga, (2016, November 16). *Howard, Philip [St Philip Howard] thirteenth earl f Arundel (1557-1595)*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13929>

²¹⁶ J. G. Elzinga, (2016, November 16). *Howard, Philip [St Philip Howard] thirteenth earl f Arundel (1557-1595)*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13929>

as die in prisons they will not permit to be buried in churchyards, but in obscure and profane places' and for many who were not as lucky as Howard that included dunghills'.²¹⁷ It was not until James I came to the throne that Howard's wife approached the king for permission to re-bury her husband in the way that it should have been. Whilst this is not an entirely unpartisan source, not having the correct burial would mean that there was a sense of unrest with regards to the deceased. This example indicates the poor treatment and lack of respect for Catholic practice.

A text entitled *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers* refers to the burials of Catholics after execution. This work was a compilation of the writings of Catholic Jesuit priests who witnessed the transgressions imposed on Catholics going into detail about the treatment of Catholics during and after execution. It is described how:

'they [Protestants] use singular diligence and wariness in martyring us, that no part of blood, or flesh, or garment, or anything belonging to the martyr be either unburnt or escape their hands. The sacred blood they conculcate and cast into the fire. The apparel the murderers take and dispose, the pins, points, buttons, and all, lest Catholics get them and use them for relics'.²¹⁸

The fact that Catholics were collecting relics was no secret and once executed, executioners were left to make certain that Catholics could not preserve any part of the deceased whether it was a direct or contact relic. However, the reliability as to whether the claimed relic actually belonged to the saint they claimed it to be comes into question. The authenticity of relics came to be important, there had to be an official 'certificate' stating who the relic had come from and how it had come into a person's possession.

²¹⁷ *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefather: Related by Themselves*, (1875). John Morris (ed.) London: Burns and Oates, p. 99

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99

William Blundell (1560-1638) was from a prominent Catholic family during Elizabeth's reign, 'the family, who had been landowners in the area since the thirteenth century, resisted the Reformation and suffered persecution throughout the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries'.²¹⁹ After the minister of his parish church Sefton near Liverpool, had refused to allow the burial of Catholics, in 1611 he established a cemetery for local Catholics on his own land. Blundell discovered Anglo-Saxon coins which he took 'as a sign of divine favour of his family's endurance in the face of persecution'.²²⁰ The cemetery itself was a collection of relics and is another example of relics and saints moving into the domestic sphere. This encompasses 'the idea that the land was composed of a matrix of holy places that commemorated the miracles of English saints, the good deeds of virtuous Anglo-Saxon kings, and the steadfastness of early modern Catholics [this] was central to the definition of England for Blundell'.²²¹ This would not have been the only case in England when Catholics were refused burial at the local parish church but it provides evidence that some Protestants wanted to remain separated from Catholics and refused Catholics burial for not conforming to State religion.

Margaret Clitherow was a Catholic laywoman executed in 1586 for attempting to help a Catholic priest; she is just one example of someone who died in defence of her faith. Originally from York, Margaret 'is first cited, in the city's records, as a recusant in June 1576,' she defied State and her own conformist husband by taking in Jesuit priests

²¹⁹ D. R. Woolf, (2017, January 11). *Blundell, William (1530-1638)*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68216>

²²⁰ D. R. Woolf, (2017, January 11). *Blundell, William (1530-1638)*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68216>

²²¹ Phebe Jenson, (2013). 'Religious Identity and the English Landscapes: William Blundell and the Harkirk Coins,' in Arthur F. Marotti and Chanita Goodblatt (eds.) *Religious Diversity and Early Modern English Texts: Catholic, Judaic, Feminist and Secular Dimensions*, Michigan: Wayne University Press, p. 71

and hiding them from local authorities in her own home.²²² Like many Catholics in England, Margaret acted to protect her religion and defend those that risked their lives to continue providing the sacraments and mass. Peter Lake and Michael Questier have argued that 'Margaret Clitherow was one of those who, in the later 1570s, were swept up into an, at times, vigorous campaign of civil disobedience, a campaign which focused on the stipulations of the 1559 act of uniformity and the issue of church attendance'.²²³

She is another example of a Catholic not receiving proper burial by Protestants as, after being pressed to death on 25 March 1586, she was 'buried beside a dunghill'.²²⁴ Claire Walker states that 'six weeks later John Mush and other friends found her body and buried it in an unknown location in accordance with Catholic rites'.²²⁵ *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers* goes into more depth with regards to how she was laid to rest:

'Mrs Clitherow's body was buried beside a dunghill in the town, where it lay full six weeks without putrefaction, at which time it was secretly taken up by Catholics and carried on horseback a long journey, to a place where it rested six days unbowelled, before necessary preservatives could be gotten, all which time it remained without corruption or evil savour, and after was laid up as a worthy treasure until God redeem us out of servitude and tyranny of these furious blood-suckers'.²²⁶

The lack of decay of her body for such a period of time is further evidence that she was worthy of sainthood in the eyes of Catholics.

²²² Lake and Questier, *The Trials of Margaret Clitherow: Persecution, Martyrdom and the Politics of Sanctity in Elizabethan England*, p. 17

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 13

²²⁴ *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefather: Related by Themselves*, (1875). John Morris (ed.) London: Burns and Oates, p. 99

²²⁵ Claire Walker, (2017, January 11). *Clitherow, Margaret [St Margaret Clitherow] (1552/3-1586)*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5692>

²²⁶ *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefather: Related by Themselves*, (1875). John Morris (ed.) London: Burns and Oates, p. 99

Margaret is a unique case as she was a woman, martyred under a queen who upon hearing about her death, instantly stated that it should not have happened. As a female martyr who suffered as she was slowly and painfully crushed to death, she was made a saint in 1970 as one of the forty English martyrs, yet her story was preserved, and her cult sustained within her local area long before this. Her hand was placed in a reliquary and was placed in the Bar Convent in York, though this was a hundred years later and it is difficult to trace exactly what happened in that time to the relic. This is evidence that saints continued to be made and held great significance in the local area as cults of the saints were established. It was ultimately the lay society who decided who they venerated and who they would build a cult around, just as they had in the medieval period.

Whether a Catholic was seen as a saint in the eyes of the Catholic populace in England depended on what they died for and. Religious and political reasons for executions became blurred as the monarch was head of state and church in England. As official shrines could not be made the act of remembering and upholding Catholic beliefs in saints and their cults, it came to rely on Catholic collecting their own sacred items. As Alexandra Walsham argues, 'fragmentation and display at the behest of the Tudor and Stuart regime only made the bodies of the martyrs more accessible to the faithful and more available for appropriation'.²²⁷ Thus, the state inadvertently created martyrs and impromptu shrines. It allowed 'Catholics to collect fragments of their flesh, to dip clothes and handkerchiefs in their blood and to gather up their cassocks, garments, stockings, spectacles, rosary beads, crucifixes, letters, and other possessions, along with the equipment used to put them to death'.²²⁸ What became apparent was that the

²²⁷ Walsham, 'Skeletons in the Cupboard: Relics after the English Reformation,' p.128

²²⁸ Ibid., p.128

bodies of martyrs were being fragmented or thrown into dung heaps in hopes of deterring Catholics from actively seeking out and collecting direct relic materials. Yet, we know from the surviving relics of Catholic saints that this did not deter them, instead the horrific deaths that these martyrs suffered increased the desire for relics to be collected and helped in sustaining Catholicism.

Two Jesuits who had a long and lasting effect on England were Edmund Campion and Robert Persons who came as part of the Jesuit mission in 1580. As Peter Lake and Michael Questier state, they aimed to target state politics against Catholics rather than religion. Both Campion and Persons worked to persuade the Queen 'that Catholic nonconformity was strictly a matter of conscience and thus devoid of any political connotations or meanings whatsoever'.²²⁹ They hoped to achieve this by using rumour, print, public meetings and manuscript to challenge the legitimacy and authority of the regime to invoke a reaction, their approach 'even though laced with professions of spiritual zeal and political loyalty to the queen, was extremely perilous'.²³⁰ Overall, they aimed to prove to the Queen that Catholics were not a threat to her but wanted the freedom to be Catholic without the threat of punishment. Unfortunately, this was not a case that was easily won as the State 'sought to turn Campion- in other words to make him renounce the Church of Rome. When he refused, the regime put him on trial, condemned him and then publicly executed him as a traitor to the queen'.²³¹ After being tried and convicted in 1581 Campion was tied to a board and dragged through the streets of London before he was put to death. The image below depicts the scene leading up to Campion being hanged, drawn, and

²²⁹ Lake and Questier, 'Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere" in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context,' p. 610

²³⁰ Lake and Questier, *The Trials of Margaret Clitherow: Persecution, Martyrdom and the Politics of Sanctity in Elizabethan England*, p. 52

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52

quartered. As a result, the regime sought those who had helped him, which 'culminated in a range of new statutes aimed at making the lives of English Catholics altogether more difficult'.²³²



Figure 4: By the permission of the Governors of Stonyhurst College: *A reliquary holding the rope relic of Edmund Campion*

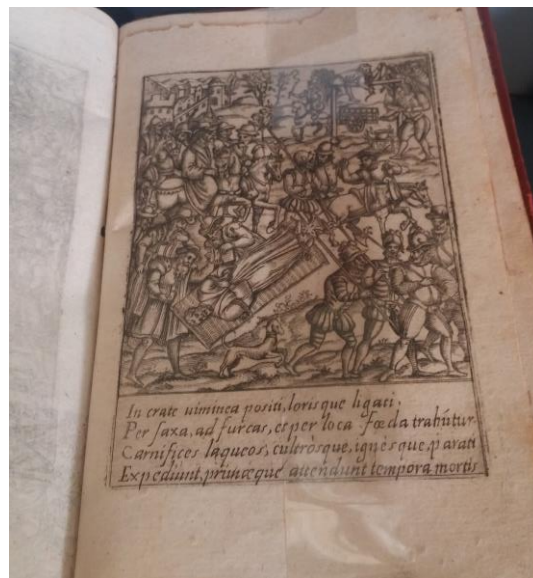


Figure 3: By the permission of the Governors of Stonyhurst College: *A book titled: A True Report of the Life and Death of Edmund Campion written by Richard Verstegan (Jesuit) who witnessed Campion's execution.*

²³² Ibid., pp. 52-53

The rope that had tied Campion down was saved as a relic (see above) and presented to Robert Persons who after acquiring it, forever after carried it on his person.²³³ It acted as a daily reminder of a man who had died for his faith and a dear friend who had worked with him for the Jesuit mission. Relics became part of a persons wardrobe, worn like this piece of rope to be close to the person who possessed that material. New martyrs were treated with the same reverence that was afforded to saints and martyrs who had been established within the medieval period.

Shortly after Campion was executed, Ralph Sherwin, an English Catholic priest, followed and a piece of his bone was collected and preserved; this can be seen below. It is a small piece that could have been easily hidden and transported around the country.



Figure 5: By the permission of the Governors of Stonyhurst College: *A piece of bone belonging to the saint Ralph Sherwin*

²³³ M. A. Graves, (2017, January 13). *Campion, Edmund [St Edmund Campion] (1540-1581)*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4539>

This, like the rope, is now part of a private collection at Stonyhurst College, which has its roots with a Catholic school for boys founded in 1593 by Robert Persons at St Omer. Stonyhurst was originally a house that had belonged to the Sherwin family, devout Catholics for centuries and which was home for many Jesuits. The school holds many relics from Jesuit martyrs which were preserved in exile all of which provide evidence that for Catholics, relics and saint cults held importance throughout England despite the Reformation and the persecution that took place. It is assumed that the rope would have been left at the college after the death of Persons.

Another point to consider is how far, if at all, did the belief in miracles change during the Reformation? Having a physical part of the saint, whether that was a direct link (remains and fluids) or an indirect link (clothing and other possessions that belonged to the saint) to a saint who would then work on their behalf remained popular throughout the Reformation. Having something connected with a saint that could be used, touched, and kissed provided secular society with a personal link with God to deal with daily issues of sickness, childbirth and much more. The Reformation presented Catholics with an opportunity to possess relics more readily directly from the scaffold: it was a step away from the ancient church that had kept materials and the congregation at a distance. Alexandra Walsham argues that 'even for Protestants the healing power was transferred 'to other material objects, notably the Bible, but also catechism and prayer books'.²³⁴ As for Catholics, the reliance on material objects as points of worship remained and the dedication that they gave to relic material is evidence of this, even at a time such as the Reformation when these objects were

challenged as being fake Catholics continued to collect and preserve them. The belief in supernatural powers, an aspect of the ancient church, survived the Reformation and indeed, Walsham argues, the belief in the miracle powers still remained even for Protestants who transferred the belief from relics to the Bible.²³⁵

It is clear to see a variety of relic materials from the three examples discussed above; Margaret Clitherow and Ralph Sherwin provide examples of direct relics (body parts) whereas Edmund Campion provides us with an example of a contact relic (material touched by the saint).

Jesuits were not the only Catholic threat faced by Elizabeth, some Catholics hoped that a Catholic monarch would be restored to the English throne and Mary, Queen of Scots was that hope personified. After years of pressure from her council, Elizabeth signed Mary's death warrant in 1587, which ended any future hopes. The image below shows the execution of Mary and in the background a man holds up her head to the bystanders as proof of her death. Antonia Fraser states how 'the blood-stained block was burnt. Every particle of clothing or object of devotion which might be associated with the queen of Scots was burnt, scoured or washed, so that not a trace of her blood might remain to create a holy relic to inspire devotion in years to come'.²³⁶ Catholics were collecting materials and to prevent any further collection of yet another Catholic relic, Protestants took a proactive approach in ridding England of any materials that could be used. The significance about the thorough destruction of the blood was because 'as a holy relic, blood memorialized the life and triumph of the martyr, keeping

²³⁶ Antonia Fraser, (2009). *Mary Queen of Scots*, London: W and N, p. 222

alive that martyr and thus fortifying the community of the faithful'.²³⁷ Whilst all relics had a holy significance, 'blood's metaphorical mutability made it a powerful vehicle for promoting older devotional practices and images'.²³⁸



Figure 6: By the permission of the Governors of Stonyhurst College: A depiction of Mary, Queen of Scots execution

To English Catholics Mary Stuart became a martyr, as she remained loyal to her faith throughout the struggles that she had faced when she was Queen of Scotland. Despite the attempts to destroy bodily relics, a rosary that she had taken up to the scaffold, was bequeathed to the Countess of Arundel, and preserved as a relic. This is now part of a private collection, which according to the Stewart Society, is kept by the current Duke of Norfolk.²³⁹ The cross has Christ on the front and the Virgin Mary on the back,

²³⁷ S. Covington, (2009). *Wounds, Flesh, and Metaphor in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, p, 166

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p, 166

²³⁹ *Rosary of Mary Queen of Scots*. (2017, January 23). Retrieved from The Stewart Society: <https://www.stewartsociety.org/history-of-the-stewarts.cfm?section=historical-objects&subcatid=41&histid=227>

both icons of the Catholic Church kept close for times of prayer. It was a symbol of her faith and of persistence in withstanding pressures of conformity which survived the Reformation as a contact relic, one in which she would have kept close to hand.

The above-mentioned martyrs' deaths have political connotations, to consider religion in this period is to consider the political as they went hand in hand in making martyrs and saints for Catholics during this time. Political martyrs were those who openly acted against the crown, to advocate any religion other than Protestantism was considered an act of treason and lead to the death of many Jesuits and Catholic laity.

Protestant Writings

The view of Protestants, or more accurately the opinion the monarchy wanted to assert about the errors of Catholic traditions, needs consideration here. John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* is useful in depicting a vehemently Protestant take on the Reformation. His work was not the 'official position' of the crown but rather one created by Foxe and then used by the state if and when it suited them. Before Elizabeth's reign, Foxe had been promoting the new reforms. However, his 'congenial activities in teaching, writing, and iconoclasm – came to an end with Mary's accession in July 1553,' only to develop again upon his return in 1559 when 'he also returned with a goal: the completion, on his own terms, of the martyrology that he had started'.²⁴⁰ His experience and beliefs led to the creation of the *Book of Martyrs*. As Sarah Covington advocates, 'John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* represented the supreme achievement in early modern martyrology, with its encyclopaedic scale, its history which extended back to the early church, its use of print (including visual material) and its vivid portrayal

²⁴⁰Thomas S. Freeman, 'Foxe, John (1516/17–1587)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10050>, accessed 1 Sept 2017]

of Protestant martyrs under Mary'.²⁴¹ Throughout Elizabeth's reign there were various editions responding to new events and concerns. He hoped to educate and warn Protestants away from any Catholic beliefs including saints and relics. He wrote about the lives of saints and stated that:

'all things be not true and probable, that be written of Sainctes liues, I haue oftentimes before complained that the stories of sayntes haue bene poudered and sawsed with diuers vntrue additions and fabulous inuentios of men, who either of a superstitious deuotion, or of a subtill practise, haue so mingle mangled their stories and liues, that almost nothing remayneth in them simple and vncorrupt'.²⁴²

Woodcuts depict executions of those who would not renounce their faith in Protestantism and challenged the Catholic faith openly in a way that was perceived to have threatened the peace and more importantly the throne. One of the woodcuts, entitled, *The Image of the True Catholick Church of Christ*, is a depiction of ten methods of persecution from the early church with the Catholic Church being the persecutor. This was placed in the 1570 edition of the *Book of Martyrs* in response to the papal bull excommunicating Elizabeth. It was a powerful form of propaganda and iconography highlighting the persecution that the church was built on and discouraging people from remaining faithful to a repressive and controlling church

²⁴¹ Sarah Covington, 'The Tribunals of Christ and of Men': Law and the Making of Martyrs in Early Modern England,' *Mortality* 19/2 (2014) p. 1

²⁴² John Foxe, Book 1, p. 124, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO* (1583 edition) (HRI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011). Available from: <http://www.johnfoxe.org> [Accessed: 01.03.17].

*K. Hen. 7.**The Image of the true Catholicke Church of Christ.*

Figure 8: *From the Book of Martyrs by John Foxe, p.804, The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO (1583 edition) (HRI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011). Available from <http://www.johnfoxe.org> [Accessed: 01.03.2017]*

John Foxe took great care to discuss the cult of the saints, specifically the Virgin Mary. The Virgin Mary was an aspect of contention for reformers: ‘they wished her to play her part in the biblical narrative which they were proclaiming to the world, and which they felt to be threatened from the two opposed forces of papistry and radicalism’.²⁴³ Mary became a centrepiece for Christian belief and she became a focal point with which Protestants began to re-shape religious life in England. The fact that Foxe’s work was so popular indicates that his work was able to reach a bigger audience, which meant that ‘in England official sanction and the ridicule of the Reformers

²⁴³ Diarmaid MacCulloch, (2004). ‘Mary and Sixteenth-Century Protestants,’ in R. N. Swanson (ed.) *Studies in Church History: The Church and Mary Vol. 39*, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, p. 191

destroyed the cult and its observances before reform and renewal could take place'.²⁴⁴ *The Book of Martyrs* allowed Foxe to 'use aspects of the traditional veneration of the Virgin Mary as an instrument to hack away at pillars of English Catholicism'.²⁴⁵ For certain families who 'could afford it, the 'Book of Martyrs' became a household treasure...bequeathed- often to daughters, in order that they should read it to their children, thus firmly implanting Protestant values in the minds of succeeding generations'.²⁴⁶ *The Book of Martyrs* was a key Protestant literary piece used as a propaganda tool to dissuade the reformed from returning to the Catholic Church. Protestant texts such as *The Book of Martyrs* pushed 'home the point that individual reading of hearing of communal readings constitute[d] fundamental components of evangelical belief'.²⁴⁷

Catholic Writings

After considering the impact and aim of Protestant literary outputs Catholic writings should also be taken into account. As Alistair Fox argues, 'literature is potentially a very powerful tool in the political process, for it can imaginatively articulate prevailing cultural, ideological and social values in such a way as either to elicit assent to them, or else to serve as a focus for questioning, dissent and resistance'.²⁴⁹ The power of the written word during the early modern period cannot be underestimated; Catholic

²⁴⁴ Thomas S. Freeman, (2004). 'Offending God: John Foxe and English Protestant Reactions to the Cult of the Virgin Mary,' in R. N. Swanson (ed.) *Studies in Church History: The Church and Mary Vol. 39*, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, p. 238

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 238

²⁴⁶ Brett Usher, (2011). 'New Wine into Old Bottles: the doctrine and structure of the Elizabethan church,' in Susan Doran and Norman Jones (eds.) *The Elizabethan World*, London: Routledge, p. 209

²⁴⁷ John N. King, (2006) *Foxe's Book of Martyrs' and Early Modern Print Culture*,(Cambridge, Cambridge University Press p. 183

²⁴⁹ Alistair Fox, (1999). 'The complaint of poetry for the death of liberality: the decline of literary patronage in the 1590s,' in John Guy (ed.) *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 229

writers during this time portrayed England as a state ruthlessly martyring Catholics who claimed to be loyal to the crown and just wished to practice their faith. As previously seen with Edmund Campion the making of martyrs was a political and religious matter an argument supported by both Danna Pirovansky and Sarah Covington.

John Gerard, who was a Jesuit during the reign of Elizabeth I, wrote about the eighteen years that he spent in England as part of the mission at the order of his Superiors. This order was probably given in the spring of 1609, four years after the execution of Henry Garnet'.²⁵⁷ According to the preface of his works, he wrote in Louvain, a safe location. Gerard wrote about the people he met and influenced as well as other Jesuits who eventually became martyrs. Those included were Henry Garnet, a Catholic priest during the time of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605, and Robert Southwell a Jesuit and poet who wrote about relics in his works: *The Burning Babe*, *The Virgin Salvation* and *The Virgin Mary to Christ on the Cross*, expressing the importance and significance afforded to relics and saints. The work of Gerard 'does not spare any sensitivity about the utter brutality of the English Protestants determined to stamp out the traditional faith of the English people,' and he makes it clear that 'the seminaries on the European continent, where young Englishmen were educated to return home, were filled with men who were under no illusions. They knew what was in store for them if they were captured on their return to their homeland'.²⁵⁸ He was preparing them for martyrdom. The significance of Gerard's work is that he not only lived through the Reformation and was a Jesuit amidst the persecution, but he provides a Catholic viewpoint. His work was meant to inform, encourage, and even warn future Jesuits of the danger and

²⁵⁷ Philip Caraman S. J, (2012). *The Autobiography of a Hunted Priest by John Gerard, S. J.* San Francisco: Ignatius Press, p. xiii

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. x

the spiritual journey that they would embark upon. The advocating of suffering as an affirmation of faith was a key part of recusant literature in an era of persecution.

Each man knew what could happen if they were discovered and Gerard accounts for the way in which all Jesuits moved about the country in clothes that presented them as gentlemen 'of moderate means...[as they] had to move in public and meet many Protestant gentlemen...[otherwise they] could never have mixed with them and brought them slowly back to a love of the faith and a virtuous life'.²⁵⁹ Throughout his account there is an overlying feeling of fear and concern about being caught, which is understandable given the Catholic persecution that was running through the kingdom.

Nevertheless, Gerard can provide some insight from a Catholic point of view as to the extent to which Catholicism was able to survive in a Protestant society; he is also able to identify the religious status of different localities. For example, he writes: 'in Lancashire, I have seen myself more than two hundred present at Mass and sermon. People of this kind come into the Church without difficulty, but they fall away the moment persecution blows up. When the alarm is over, they come back again'.²⁶⁰ On the other hand, in some areas Catholics were very few 'they were mostly from the better classes, non, or hardly any, from the ordinary people, for they are unable to live in peace, surrounded as they are by most fierce Protestants'.²⁶¹ Here Gerard states that it was the pressure of the gentle folk which caused the laity to be Protestant as they would not want Catholic servants working for them just as Catholics would not want Protestants working for them for fear of betrayal.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 22

²⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 40

²⁶¹ Ibid., p. 40

Throughout his work there is reference to relic material, and its importance to the Catholic faith alongside discussions of the authentication of the material itself. One item was a Holy Thorn (from the Crown of Thorns) that had belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots. This had been a present given to her by the King of France when they married, an image of this can be seen below. For Gerard, there was no doubt that this was a true relic as opposed to fake ones, as it was given by a Catholic of good standing. When the Queen of Scots died this was given to the Earl of Northumberland who was subsequently martyred. Gerard states that 'while he lived, the earl used to carry it round his neck in a golden cross, and when he came to execution he gave it to his daughter, who gave it to me'.²⁶² The relic was placed in a reliquary with Scottish pearls as can be seen above It was made to be visible to the onlooker and Gerard's account provides authentication.



Figure 7: By the permission of the Governors of Stonyhurst College: *A relic of the True Cross that belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots*

²⁶² Ibid., p. 60

In conclusion, the Elizabethan period presented a time of Catholic persecution, as there was a revitalisation with new saints and relics being made and venerated according to the opinion of the laity and not the church; 'only in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries...did martyrdom again dominate the ranks of the saints to a degree approaching their importance in the early church'.²⁶³ Relics still held the same significance and potency amongst Catholics and were avidly collected from the place of execution. Instead of being venerated remembered and sought after through pilgrimage, relics and the devotion owed to saints moved into the domestic sphere and adapted with circumstances to be made portable and hidden when necessary. Jesuits used local relic materials to provide incentive for conversion, examples of God's power and encouraged the collection and preservation of these materials. Saints and relics, whilst targeted by Reformers through physical collections and literary means, remained a part of religious debate concerning Catholic practice. Despite being actively hunted they still remained an integral part of Catholic devotion as Catholics worked to collect and preserve saintly relics in memory of what martyrs died for and as inspiration to English Catholics to continue with the mission and remain loyal to the faith.

²⁶⁵ Barry Coward, (2012). *The Stuart Age in England, 1603-1714* (fourth edition) Harlow: Pearson Education Limited p. 98

James VI of Scotland and James I of England

Through Elizabeth's reign, saints and relics continued to be targeted by Protestants and the same can be seen by looking at the reign of James I. Certain events such as the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, the Oath of Allegiance in 1606, the collection and preservation of relics by people such as Luisa de Carvagel. Even in popular culture that used plays to both educate and continue with the Reformation demonstrate the continued survival of Catholicism in England through saints and relics. Throughout James' reign, there was a continued presence of Catholics in England, which saw the continued collection and veneration of relic materials throughout the early seventeenth century. By taking each point into consideration this chapter will determine how far saints and relics remained part of the Catholic community in England through their continued collection and protection arguing that the belief in saints and the collection of relics continued throughout the early modern period despite the Reformation.

What is interesting about James' reign and why his reign should be included in this study, is that he preferred to make political connections and close links between religion and politics, which meant that he was willing to overlook the differences in faith to build a stronger kingdom;²⁶⁵ From James' perspective a connection with Spain via marriage of his son meant a powerful ally, but for 'Protestant zealots [it] became [an] alert for signs of Popish remnants and intrusions, and had little difficulty finding them'.²⁶⁶ James would enforce his religious views and opinions on his subjects, making them adhere to his agenda. The fact that he carried on with the alliance despite

²⁶⁵ Barry Coward, (2012). *The Stuart Age in England, 1603-1714* (fourth edition) Harlow: Pearson Education Limited p. 98

²⁶⁶ Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, p. 34

protests from these Protestant zealots, shows that James favoured politics over religion.

Yet religion for James, like his predecessors remained a vital issue and one on which he had many formed opinions from his time in Scotland. For James it was 'the ultrapist notion that Rome had a right to depose kings [that] infuriated him no less than the assertion of some Puritans that they could appeal to Scripture to censure and perhaps even remove a monarch with whom they fundamentally disagreed'.²⁶⁷ One specific piece that James wrote entitled *Ane Fruitful Meditation* written in 1588, shows his supposed hatred of Catholicism in particular, as 'it not only appears utterly to reject Catholicism by asserting that the pope is the Antichrist, but proposes that the whole island should join together in the face of external threat'.²⁶⁸ His work seems like a contradiction as he rejects Catholicism, but is willing to let people exercise the faith if they adhere to the King and not the Pope as the main source of authority. Therefore, James did not so much reject Catholicism, as he did the power that the Pope tried to exercise over kings and their countries. *Ane Fruitful Meditation* was republished along with *Trew Law of the Free Monarchies* and *Basilikon Doron* in 1603, the beginning of his English reign. They were made public for the wider community to understand the new king and his viewpoint on religious and kingly matters. James would allow people to practise their own religion in private to an extent, provided they recognised James as the king, his divine right to rule as the head of the kingdom and as the man chosen by God.

²⁶⁷ Glyn Redworth, (2011). *The She-Apostle: The Extraordinary Life and Death of Luisa de Carvajal*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 132

²⁶⁸ Jane Rickard, (2006). 'The Word of God and the Word of the King: The Scriptural Exegeses of James VI and I and the King James Bible' in Ralph Houlbrooke (ed.) *James VI and I: Ideas, Authority, and Government*, Hampshire: Ashgate, p. 140

As a retaliation tactic, the *Popes Pyramides* written in the last year of James' reign, 1624, condemned the behaviour and unrighteousness that England, in the eyes of the continent, was demonstrating. It was directly aimed at James, who 'With Triple crowne, and with his horned might, In waite lies for, children of the light'.²⁶⁹ There was a set agenda to combat the success of Protestantism in England; it would have worked to discourage any others from acting in the same way. By likening James to a serpent, in other words, the devil, there was an instilled fear that Protestantism was not only heresy but the tool of the devil. It also had the purpose of discrediting Protestants so that the Catholic Church would benefit by bringing people back into the folds of 'Rome's Temples built, for pure Religion'.²⁷⁰ Catholicism was in steady decline through the later sixteenth century and even more so after the Gunpowder Plot (1605), which saw a reawakening of Catholic persecution. As England re-associated sacramental icons with the Ancient Church, through the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, Catholics, at least on the continent, sought retribution, which they only achieved through religious propaganda.

The Hampton Court conference in 1604 was a means of defining the English Church under his authority as Supreme Head of the Church. Through his involvement in religion and the involvement of many different Protestants, complete conformity to Calvinism was not expected. It had the aim of ending all Catholic influence, a goal that many, Protestants wanted to achieve. The conference focused on Confirmation,

²⁶⁹ Early English Books Online, Anonymous, *The Popes Pyramides* (1624), <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:33143294> (Accessed October 25 2016)

²⁷⁰ Early English Books Online, Anonymous, *The Popes Pyramides* (1624), <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:33143294> (Accessed October 25 2016)

Communion, the use of the cross and private baptism; sacramental icons that James wanted to change to return England to the Ancient Church that was uncorrupted by adaptations and developments that suited later religious leaders. James 'regarded the ceremonies in the public worship of the church, the wearing of the surplices by the clergy, and government of the church by bishops as 'indifferent things,' matters undecided by God and left to human authority.²⁷¹ This led to the conclusion that as long as the written word was acknowledged the other factors were not as significant or important to God and therefore, James. The Hampton Court conference notified the Bishops 'that they now had a master prepared to interest himself in the minutiae of church discipline, worship and administration, and to approach matters of religion with a much more open mind than Elizabeth's'.²⁷² What was expected was a combination of doctrine that worked not to create a *via media*, but to enhance the Church with loyalty and obedience to the King; as Wormald states, 'the Calvinist church was utterly clear about doctrinal unity,' the formation of a universal church.²⁷³ Croft summarises that 'it gradually became clear after Hampton Court that what the king required was not full ceremonial conformity but loyalty, obedience and goodwill'.²⁷⁴

Originally, 'James's accession to the throne had led many recusants to hope they would soon be able to practise their religion openly' as he had been baptised a Catholic.²⁷⁵ Unfortunately, this was not the case and the refusal of the king to support the Catholic cry for toleration led to the Gunpowder Plot in 1605. It was hoped by a small select number of Catholics that they would be able to kill the king and replace

²⁷¹ John Spurr, (2006). *The Post-Reformation: Religion, Politics, and Society in Britain, 1603-1714*, (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, p. 38

²⁷² J. P. Kenyon, (1978). *Stuart England*, London: Viking, p. 50

²⁷³ Jenny Wormald, (1981). *Court, Kirk, and Community: Scotland 1470-1625*, London: Edward Arnold, p. 130

²⁷⁴ Pauline Croft, (2003). *King James*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, p. 158

²⁷⁵ Redworth, *The She- Apostle: The Extraordinary Life and Death of Luisa de Carvajal*, p. 131

him with a more amenable monarch and a Catholic if possible. The origin of the plot reflects the localities that had been more steadfast in their approach to holding on to Catholicism and the traditions that it entailed; 'most of those involved in the plot came from recusant gentry families with estates in the English Midlands, or in the East Riding of Yorkshire, and many were united by ties of blood and marriage'.²⁷⁶ Catholic survival had been strongest in the North, and the Gunpowder Plot was an act of aggression made not only because of the Hampton Court Conference, which would not grant tolerance or a reinstatement of Catholicism, but also:

'the horrible persecution, the maddening oppression and the refinements of cruelty, which drove a few men wild with despair to plan the sudden destruction of a King and of a Parliament which were heaping upon Catholics the direst sufferings, and imperilling the souls of their children by the prohibition of Catholic worship and education'.²⁷⁷

Men involved in the plot 'Catesby, Fawkes, Thomas Winter, and Christopher Wright had all been involved in efforts, stretching back into the 1590s, to engineer a Spanish invasion of England and a consequent restoration, through force of arms, of Catholicism as the official state religion'.²⁷⁸ Shortly after the event 'when news of the plot travelled across Europe, the pope and every Catholic regime hastened to denounce the wickedness of the design,' therefore making sure that the King of England did not retaliate in any way against them for any possible involvement.²⁷⁹ The failed murder of the king saw the death of several men, some such as Henry Garnet had nothing to do with the plot but their knowledge and Catholic association led to their execution. James was reluctant to make new martyrs, he only executed when

²⁷⁶ Mark Nicholls, (2016, December 16). *Gunpowder plotters (act. 1603-1606)*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/95640>

²⁷⁷ Lady Georgina Fullerton (1881). *The Life of Luisa de Carvagal*, London: Burns and Oates, p. 179

²⁷⁸ Mark Nicholls, (2016, December 16). *Gunpowder plotters (act. 1603-1606)*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/95640>

²⁷⁹ Mark Nicholls, (2016, December 16). *Gunpowder plotters (act. 1603-1606)*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/95640>

provoked, which was an indirect way of ridding England of saint and relic material. As John E. Thick states, 'the martyrs' saintly act was threatening not only because it imitated the Saviour's death so closely but also because the clarity of such imitation could shine forth in a single moment in which the ambiguities of spiritual struggle and sinful weakness were eternally banished'.²⁸⁰

As mentioned briefly before, a man that was innocent in the Gunpowder Plot and simply caught up in the event was Henry Garnet, a Jesuit priest who had been named superior of the English mission in 1586.²⁸¹ Through his time in England as superior, 'he organized the clergy, administered sacraments, ran printing presses, wrote polemical and devotional works, and evaded authorities for nearly two decades'.²⁸² It was Catesby who had confessed to Garnet of his plans to assassinate the King, information which Garnet did not disclose to the King as he believed it would be against the rights of confession. When it came to rounding up and persecuting those who had taken part in the event Garnet 'protested his innocence on the grounds that he could not impart what had been said in the confessional and that everything humanly possible had been done to dissuade Catesby'.²⁸³ This was not enough to save him and Garnet was executed in the spring of 1606, yet James 'made it clear to Cecil and his Privy Council that he did not view the actions of Catesby and his treacherous friends as reflecting the sympathies of the Catholic community as a whole'.²⁸⁴ Whilst Henry Garnet was never canonised, he was still venerated at the time he died by English Catholics despite James' best efforts to prevent Catholic martyrs from being

²⁸⁰ John E. Thick, *Icons of Hope: The Last Things in Catholic Imagination* (Indonesia, University of Notre Dame Press, 2013) p.77

²⁸¹ Henry Garnet, (2009). 'Of Indulgences or Pardons, 1592-6,' in Robert S. Miola (ed.), *Early Modern Catholicism: An Anthology of Primary Sources*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 81

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 81

²⁸³ Redworth, *The She-Apostle: The Extraordinary Life and Death of Luisa de Carvajal*, pp. 134-135

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 146

made. A relic associated with Garnet was also said to have existed, it was 'the famous 'straw', a small husk on which a drop of Garnett's blood bore a strong resemblance to his face'.²⁸⁵ It is another example that proves the continued devotion to such materials as well as the commitment to collecting them as inspirational and powerful objects. Unfortunately, this was lost but the story is mentioned in the memoirs of Luisa de Carvajal who had been close to Garnet during her time in England.²⁸⁶

As a result of the Plot two laws were passed against Catholics in 1606. One was the Oath of Allegiance, it was introduced and based on the idea that 'those who were 'popishly affected [but] retained in their hearts the print of their natural duty towards their sovereign' would distance themselves from potential and neutral traitors like Guy Fawkes'.²⁸⁷ The second was a proclamation, which charged all Jesuits and seminaries to depart from the land, by doing so it would mean that Catholics would be left without encouragement and access to regular sacraments. James did not want to persist in the martyr-making that had taken place under the Tudor monarchs, so much so that 'in 1606 after fresh anti-Catholic legislation in Parliament, a royal proclamation emphasised that although the king's recent experience of Catholic treachery would more than justify the harshest measures, he continued to prefer that Jesuits and seminary priests should simply leave the realm'.²⁸⁸ Throughout James' reign 'the number of priests imprisoned and executed dropped sharply ...but the death penalty did not disappear: 19 suffered during his reign, most of them at periods of diplomatic crisis'.²⁸⁹ The result of these proclamations meant that 'while the Catholic minority was allowed to worship in private, in peace, and indeed to increase slightly in numbers, the

²⁸⁵ T. M. McCoog, (2017, January 13). *Garnett, Henry (1555-1606)*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10389>

²⁸⁶ Redworth, *The She-Apostle: The Extraordinary Life and Death of Luisa de Carvajal*, p. 135

²⁸⁷ Croft, *King James*, p. 161

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 161

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 162

anti-Catholic prejudices of Englishmen were appeased, partially at any rate, by the harsh legislation of 1606'.²⁹⁰

The extent to which James pursued Catholics to persecute them and therefore prevent them from practising within England has been a subject of scholarly debate, yet the fact that martyrs were made during James' reign is significant when considering this line of argument. Barry Coward has argued that 'in the first decade of James's reign there were few defenders of the papal deposing power among English Catholics; even Robert Persons (who died in 1610) no longer urged his co-religionists to support it'.²⁹¹ As argued by Coward, 'the decade of the 1590s...marks the end of 'the heroic age' of English Catholicism'.²⁹² Martyrs under James were few in number when compared to the significant amount of martyrs made under Elizabeth, which could be explained as there were more men taking part in the Jesuit mission in the earlier period. Another reason could also be that Elizabeth took a more proactive approach in seeking out and arresting Catholics to prevent them from meeting, as shown in the earlier Men were often caught smuggling relic materials as well as Jesuits in and out of the country. This is not to say that this did not occur under James, as the Jesuit mission continued. As James' reign progressed he even tried to marry his son to the Spanish Princess as an act of peace and an avid attack on Catholics would not have helped him develop a union with a Catholic country.

Coward's argument is supported by Michael Questier who suggests that the Catholic mission was gradually phased out as the

clergy experienced religious proscription, could not publish and sell books openly, had no benefices in the English Church and were restricted to the

²⁹⁰ Barry Coward, (2012). *The Stuart Age in England, 1603-1714* (Fourth Edition) Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, p. 105

²⁹¹ Ibid., p. 103

²⁹² Ibid., p. 103

houses of a minority of the gentry; and, in sum, since few Englishmen ever saw a seminary priest, the history of the English Catholic clergy in this period must be that of declining influence and, at times, virtual intolerance.²⁹³

Indeed this theory has some merit as there were fewer martyrs made during James' reign and with this 'powerful people with catholic sympathies moved into the higher reaches of government and for a time even seemed to dominate it'.²⁹⁴ On the other hand, as Alan Dures suggests, even though 'in the early 1590s there were only nine Jesuits in England...by 1620 there were over a hundred'.²⁹⁵ Dures argues that there was an increase in the size of the mission, but a decline in the number of persecutions. Numbers continued to expand throughout James' reign yet, 'the executions and general harassment of priests lessened considerably...This meant that the catholic laity could practice their religion more easily'.²⁹⁶ As well as figures to show that the Jesuit mission continued and increased there is also evidence that Jesuits had the continued support of English and foreign Catholics despite there still being laws to punish Catholics who acted against the king. It will be argued that the Catholic collection of relics and veneration continued throughout James' reign despite further reformation that took place in popular culture to remind the laity of the abuses and misleading devotion given to saints and relics.

The Account of Luisa de Carvajal

A unique account from the perspective of a foreign Catholic during James' reign concerning saints and relics is that of Luisa de Carvajal. She was a Spanish lady

²⁹³ Michael C. Questier, (2006). *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c. 1550-1640*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 288-289

²⁹⁴ Michael C. Questier, 'Loyalty, Religion and State Power in Early Modern England: English Romanism and the Jacobean Oath of Allegiance,' *The Historical Journal* 40/2 p. 311

²⁹⁵ Alan Dures, (1983). *English Catholicism 1558-1642*, Harlow: Longman, p. 64

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54

whose memoirs and letters were drawn into a biography by Luis Munoz and published in Madrid in 1632.²⁹⁷ This was then translated in 1873 by Lady Georgiana Fullerton, an English novelist and philanthropist who spent her life in support of various charities by publishing 'stories, a play, and some poetry, as well as biographies of eminent Catholics, including St Frances of Rome (1855), Luisa de Carvojal (1873), and Elizabeth, Lady Falkland (1883)'.²⁹⁸ Through her translations and biographies Lady Fullerton was able to work closely with the church in Rome, although it was not until 1846 that she became a Roman Catholic herself. She had a religious reason as to why it was she worked on these texts and the various works that she has accomplished led to a memorial of her at the church of St George and the English saints in Rome'.²⁹⁹ Fullerton's work shows the significant impact that Catholic women had in relation to the church and she translated the works of de Carvagal so that it could be read and understood in English, she did it not only for the benefit of the church but to inform and inspire conversions to the Catholic faith. In England.

Luisa de Carvagal, a Spanish born lady, sailed for England 27 January 1605, in hopes of being made a martyr in England, whilst collecting, preserving, distributing relics, and supporting the Jesuit Mission. Glyn Redworth has carried out extensive research on Luisa de Carvajal and her role in Catholic survival in England by taking into consideration her activities including her support given to Jesuits, how she travelled from safe house to safe house, as well as the collection of relic material and the dangers that she undertook in the name of Catholicism. The purpose of her journey was that 'she could not conceive a greater joy than to go to that distant land, and by

²⁹⁷ Fullerton, *The Life of Luisa de Carvagal*, p. 10

²⁹⁸ S. C. Robinson, (2017, February 26). *Fullerton, Lady Georgiana Charlotte (1812-1885)*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10242>

²⁹⁹ S. C. Robinson, (2017, February 26). *Fullerton, Lady Georgiana Charlotte (1812-1885)*. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10242>

her life or her death confirm the faith of her afflicted brethren'.³⁰⁰ When Luisa came to England 'she reached a place where the Fathers of the Society had secured for her a most hospitable reception,' whilst the exact location is unknown it has been identified as being on or near the borders of Kent and Sussex.³⁰¹ Here the Jesuits can be seen to be operating in close proximity to London and provides further evidence that the mission was being continued in areas that, so close to the city, would have been predominantly Protestant areas that needed to be returned to the folds of the Catholic church.

Arriving in England and travelling to the safe house secured by the Society, de Carvagal was placed in a Catholic household where the 'owners had lived there for three years perfectly unmolested'.³⁰² From her description of the house it is clear that Catholicism was a very much domesticated religion as 'their chapel...was adorned with pictures and images, and enriched with many relics'.³⁰³ All of these were Catholic traditions continued from the medieval period and offer evidence to support the argument that Catholicism did survive and relics did remain a vital part of worship. This account proves that there was a shift away from the public sphere to the domestic. When it came to leave,

'a secret warning was given to the master of this hospitable mansion, that he had been denounced as a harbourer of priests, and that the pursuivants would invade his house on the morrow...measures were immediately taken to hide all traces of Catholic worship, and a general dispersion took place'.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ Fullerton, *The Life of Luisa de Carvagal*, p. 146

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 175

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 175

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 175

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 177-178

It is difficult to say whether the relics were hidden within the house or smuggled away with the priests, but either way we can decipher that these materials were protected and remained part of a private and domestic Catholicism within England.

What is unique about Luisa, according to this account of her life, is that it appears her entire time in England during the seventeenth century was to collect relics of persecuted Catholics, to memorialise martyrs. One passage describes how:

‘when her eyes rested on the heads or their limbs, exposed on the gateways, or on London Bridge, she reverently bowed her head, and said- “Oh, how unseemly a place for such holy relics. God forgive this deluded people who commit so great a sacrilege on the eyes of His Divine Majesty”. She preserved as many of these relics as she could, in order to preserve them with due care and reverence’.³⁰⁵

Her piety and commitment to the preservation of relics cannot be doubted and she used these objects to distribute ‘amongst her pious friends, as the most valuable present she could make to them’.³⁰⁶

Within the account there is one example of her devotion and the lengths to which she was willing to go to collect and preserve martyrs: in 1611 when the last two Catholic martyrs, Father Scott, a Benedictine Father, and Richard Newport, a secular priest, were executed. Luisa appealed to the Spanish Ambassador ‘and to the gentlemen of his household to recover the bodies of the two martyrs, which had been thrown into the bottom of a deep pit...for the express purpose, the executioner declared, of preventing the Papists from getting hold of them’.³⁰⁷ As a reward for retrieving the bodies ‘the count’s gentlemen would [only] accept...portions of the honoured relics’.³⁰⁸

The fact that the bodies were thrown into a pit to prevent Catholics from obtaining any

³⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 264

³⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 264

³⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 266

³⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 268

relic material shows that it was still a “problem” in the early seventeenth century as it had been under Elizabeth.

Luisa is a unique account as she poses a political problem as well as a religious one given her Spanish heritage and connections. When she initially came to England it was illegal to defend the Pope’s supremacy or give material support to Catholicism’.³⁰⁹ As Redworth highlights, ‘to say that King James was a heretic or suggest he was a schismatic and outside the true Church could lead to an accusation of treason, with a similar fate awaiting those who imported copies of papal pronouncements, converted anyone to Catholicism, helped the persecuted escape abroad, or gave shelter to a priest who had come over from the Continent’.³¹⁰ Yet, Luisa had political immunity to a certain extent, as this only applied to those who had been born in England or those who had been given denizenship.³¹¹ The fact that she had come into the country illegally with Jesuits would suggest that if she was caught in their midst she would not go unpunished, it was not until after she took up housing in the Spanish Embassy that she received a modicum of protection and yet even Pedro de Zuniga, appointed to the London embassy, ‘categorized her as a potential source of friction between the two governments’ given her determination to obtain relics and help the Jesuit mission.³¹²

Luisa was arrested only once for speaking out openly with regards to Catholicism. The reason behind Luisa’s arrest was for standing in the streets and ‘preaching’ about Catholicism, Mass, confession, Holy orders as well as the Pope:

‘For two hours she spoke on these points, and told those she was addressing that she regretted that her imperfect knowledge of their language prevented her from being able fully to show them the falsehoods with which they had been deluded with regard to the Catholic

³⁰⁹ Redworth, *The She-Apostle: The Extraordinary Life and Death of Luisa de Carvajal*, p. 131

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 131

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 131

³¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135

religion, and the necessity of embracing it if they wished to save their souls'.³¹³

Persecuting and indeed making Luisa a martyr would have prevented a Spanish-English alliance from happening and preventing England from gaining a powerful ally:

'the King's Council, and one Robert Cecil in particular, happened to see the papers relating to her arrest at a moment when for political reasons the English Government was anxious to conciliate the Spanish Ambassador, and at ten o'clock Wednesday night she and her companions were set at liberty and conducted at once to Don Pedro's house'.³¹⁴

Being a foreign Catholic with links to all levels of Spanish society had protected Luisa from harsh persecution.

After being liberated from prison, the Counter off Poultry Lane, Luisa continued, with the help of Catholics, to collect, preserve and distribute relics.³¹⁵ One example of the executioner (unknown) taking part in relic distribution was in 1608 at the execution of Thomas Garnet, the nephew of Henry Garnet where Luisa 'later obtained from the executioner a piece of the shirt that the young man had worn to his death, and the following year she distributed pieces of the holy relic to friends in Spain'.³¹⁶ Luisa had escaped persecution but 'if King James's spies ever found out that she was involved in the glorification of those whom the state had killed, she could not expect to be treated as leniently as before'.³¹⁷ The fact that she was given a second chance and avoided any harsh punishment by the state suggests that her status as a Spanish lady helped to protect her from the executioner.

³¹³ Fullerton, *The Life of Luisa de Carvagal*, p. 208

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 218

³¹⁵ Redworth, *The She-Apostle: The Extraordinary Life and Death of Luisa de Carvajal*, p. 196

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 214

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 222

Whilst Luisa was committed to relic preservation and her actions were on behalf of God and the Jesuit society> She was never herself made a saint as she did not die through persecution, yet her sanctity was upheld by those around her and knew of her life. Upon her death, relics were given and requested by those who knew of her; 'our Lord worked many cures by her relics, and those who petitioned Him to grant them favours through her intercession obtained great graces'.³¹⁸ Here is yet another example that the belief in the miracle working powers of relic materials had survived from the medieval period, through the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth. Possessing a piece of the martyrs was still important to Catholic society in England. Luisa is one example of a Catholic going to extreme lengths to collect and preserve relic material. By sending these objects as gifts to friends and other Catholics, she not only preserved the memory of the martyrs, but also offered a link to Catholic tradition and created a community, a network in which relics became inspirational to those who owned them. Luisa kept relic materials as a part of the Catholic faith alive in a time when Martyrdom was declining. Whilst she may not have been an official saint, the fact that those who had known of her requested relic materials of her provides a connection to popular local saints who the laity chose to worship in opposition to the teaching of the church.

Popular Culture

Relic material was not something that the Protestants in society could escape from, as even in the world of drama it became props for plays. Elizabeth Williamson argues that 'although Protestant statutes specified that churches and homes were to be entirely cleansed of potentially distracting material objects, in practice English

³¹⁸ Fullerton, *The Life of Luisa de Carvagal*, p. 312

worshippers continued to rely heavily on the physical accoutrements that anchored their faith'.³¹⁹ The state worked to undermine any value and meaning that objects had yet it did not prevent play companies from 'taking advantage of audience members' residual interest in the materiality of religion, revealing ongoing contradictions between post-Reformation theory and practice while taking full advantage of the highly visual, object centred nature of their own medium'.³²⁰ Williamson's interpretation of the Book of Homilies suggests that 'religious objects provoke idolatry whenever they are brought out in public, and should thus be considered dangerous even when presented as part of secular preferences'.³²¹ Protestants were clear that religious objects should not deeper meaning and they should not be worshipped as articles of power, the means to salvation and God was in the Bible, in the written word itself.

Plays worked to bring to light some of the key social issues that existed at the time; they could be used for political messages and to express religious changes. Using relic material in plays meant that religion remained at the fore of people's minds, not only in the religious and political sectors but in the social as well; yet these object could be emphasised as remnants of a false and superstitious religion. Play companies often took 'advantage of audience members' residual interest in the materiality of religion, revealing ongoing contradictions between post-Reformation theory and practice while taking full advantage of the highly visual, object centred nature of their own medium'.³²² William points out that 'one of the most suggestive artefacts was the fragment of a rosary made of bone with copper alloy links,' a connection to the Catholic faith.³²³ It was a small object easily concealable with a religious link to a saint or

³¹⁹ Williamson, *The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern English Drama*, p. 4

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5

³²² *Ibid.*, p. 5

³²² *Ibid.*, p. 5

³²³ *Ibid.*, p. 1

martyrs used in a play to symbolise the abuses of the Catholic Church or to bring to focus the continued reliance on such materials.

Saints and relics were also used as a subject for popular culture during James' reign as they had been under Elizabeth. What is interesting about the plays written and performed in James' reign is that they reflected Catholic persecution, not only the ones that took place under Elizabeth but also James, keeping these Catholic traditions very much at the forefront of people's minds within society. As Elizabeth Williamson states 'just as there is no clear line between Protestant and Catholic practice during this period, the theatre is anything but monolithic in its treatment of religious subjects'.³²⁴ Macbeth for instance offers one example of a look to the past, with a reference to Henry Garnet (Superior of the English mission 1586), within the play.

The porter appears in Act 2 Scene 3 and Garnet is referenced as the Equivocator, and Farmer (one of his pseudonyms).³²⁵ The scene depicts his trial and execution and even talks about the relic material of Garnet, which was collected from the scaffold, 'here's the farmer that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty. Come in time, have napkins enough about you'.³²⁶ These 'napkins' were used on the day of execution to mop up the blood of the martyr by Catholics and used as relic material. Within the same scene there is a strong accusation that Garnet was 'an equivocator that could swear in both the scales against either scale, who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven'.³²⁷ It is referring to Garnet's inability to reveal the Gunpowder Plot and says that despite him having

³²⁴Ibid., p. 12

³²⁵ *The Trial of Henry Garnet, 1606*. (2017, January 23). Retrieved from British Library: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-trial-of-henry-garnet-1606>

³²⁶ *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, (1982). London: The Chancellor Press, p.782

³²⁷ Ibid., p.783

committed treason supposedly in the name of God, he has is not in heaven, he is not a saint; though to English Catholics he was.

The Changeling, written and performed in 1622, near the end of James' reign, shows that the Catholic tradition of retaining relic material remained a matter of contention within society. This play was posed as a direct challenge to the match with Spain as well as the cult of the relics and the miraculous powers that they were believed to hold. Even though 'Catholics saw holy remains as a naturally efficacious bridge between earth and heaven, reformers saw them as fleshy distractions from the spiritual imperatives of worship'.³²⁸ This play, written by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, focuses on the still surviving thoughts and beliefs that Catholics and some Protestants held onto and 'not only represents relics as dangerous objects but also elicits the semiotic deceit intrinsic to the religious cult of relics itself'.³²⁹ The play had the aim of showing 'how the body can be rendered false, misleading, and dissimulative even when it appears as the subject of adoration or the signpost of virtue'.³³⁰ This was achieved by drawing 'on holy relics to stage physical dismemberment and semiotic deception, the play also shows how relics were re-imagined on the English stage in the wake of the Protestant Reformation'.³³¹ It was a way for playwrights to draw on an aspect that was dramatic and recognisable to the public.

James wanted to redefine the Church, with a radical Calvinist perception as shown through the King James Bible in 1611. The list of saints' days in the Bible had been targeted as a text in need of much refinement to end any false understanding with regards to saints and holy days. As Tom Webster states, 'in each church the dominant

³²⁸ Zysk, 'Relics and Unreliable Bodies in *The Changeling*,' p. 407

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 409

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 400

³³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 400

theology was Calvinist in terms of the doctrine of grace, accepting the predestination of the saved, the elect, and the damned, the reprobate'.³³² James wished to establish a truly Protestant Church Compared to the older Bibles; the King James Bible dramatically reduced the number of holy days. Alison Chapman states that 'although the large column listing the feast days remained the dominant regulator of Protestant religious life, the reduction of saints' names and the expanse of unmarked days between the great feasts suggest a different temporal imagery: one in which time was not least somewhat more homogenous and in which most days lacked intrinsic religious significance'.³³³ Doing so took away a fundamental Catholic tradition and acted to eliminate the significance of sainthood on a mass scale.

The state of religion that James left when he passed in 1625 is questionable. Elizabeth had been focused on the conformity of the country to her religious dictates yet, as Jenny Wormald argues, 'in time, religious tensions gave way to the calmer state of a church presided over by a king far less obsessed about conformity, far less afraid of differing theological opinions, than his predecessor and her bishops'.³³⁴ James wanted recognition as the sole authority figure within the kingdom, which led to persecution if Catholics were brought forward as opposing the king. Saints and relics remained a vital concern during the early seventeenth century and whilst James may have promoted the concept of a peaceful country, persecution still took place. By considering the account of Luisa de Carvajal there is evidence that the relics of martyrs were collected and preserved by being sent to the safety of the continent and that the power of veneration stayed with the laity as opposed to the church.

³³² Tom Webster, 'Religion in Early Stuart Britain 1603-1642,' in Barry Coward (ed.) *A Companion to Stuart Britain*, p. 253

³³³ Alison A. Chapman, (2007). 'Making Time: Astrology, Almanacs, and English Protestantism,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 60/4, p. 1273

³³⁴ Wormald, 'Ecclesiastical vitriol: the kirk, the puritans and the future king of England,' p. 190

Popular culture during this period was used to progress with the Reformation, to highlight to the public the downfalls of the Catholic faith and why people should not be tempted to convert to a faith filled with abused objects. Relics were used as an example with plays such as *Macbeth* and *The Changeling* to demonstrate the falsehood of miracle claims as well as the Catholic attempts at getting a piece of the martyr. James' reign shows a continuation from Elizabeth's, whilst the persecution might not have been so drastic it still happened, drawing comparisons throughout the early modern period with the medieval traditions of what made a martyr. James VI of Scotland and James I of England was a King dedicated to the progression of the Reformation throughout his time on the throne. James openly acknowledged that whilst there may have been several religious groups throughout his realm, the idea of peace was paramount to continue his reign and keep his supremacy.

Conclusion

Using material objects and written sources as historical references and building upon work done by Christopher Haigh, Eamon Duffy, Lisbeth Corens and Sarah Covington, Anne Dillon, Alexandra Walsham, and Tara Hamling, this thesis has argued that for Catholics the belief in saints and relics continued throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The objects themselves were increasingly moved from being housed in the public sphere, such as a church, to the domestic sphere. As Catholicism increasingly became a household religion, so relics became the preserve of the domestic sphere. This thesis has attempted to demonstrate how the Catholic belief in saints and relics continued throughout the Reformation despite the many challenges posed by Protestantism. Throughout the Reformation, the belief in saints and relics from the medieval period followed through to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with adaptations made by Catholics at the time to best protect and maintain their faith. To better understand how materials continued to be used during the Reformation, 'the study of material culture teaches us that objects often have their own life histories'.³³⁵

Through the consideration of relics we see the difficulties in knowing every aspect of their survival, but their survival nonetheless demonstrates how important these materials were to Catholics. Written sources are able to present another aspect of history, but as Walsham suggests, 'it is important to underline the frequency with which our knowledge of such episodes comes from hostile sources and is reflected through the distorting lens and rhetorical conventions of confessional polemic'.³³⁷

³³⁵ Williamson, *The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern Drama*, p. 31

³³⁷ Walsham, 'Skeletons in the Cupboard: Relics after the English Reformation,' 5 p. 133

The Reformation and the movement of Catholicism to a religion of the persecuted saw a move from confessional saints to persecuted saints. Martyrdom created a revitalisation to the desire for relics as they became more readily available from home grown saints whose faith was proved by their death. From the medieval period, set criteria was created by the Papacy to determine what made a martyr a saint, thereby defining and controlling who could be classified as a holy saint and who could not. While the papacy sought to control the process of canonisation, popular recognition of local saints continued from the medieval period. It was the English Catholic laity who created and sustained the cults of the martyrs, who, overall did not receive formal canonisation before the nineteenth century. The laity, though not openly acknowledged, had a lot of power within the church when it came to the veneration of saints.

Whilst the church may have deemed someone worthy of the title saint, it did not necessarily mean that the saint automatically became popular amongst the laity. A local link to a saint meant that they were more likely to be remembered and held in high regard within the locality. This has been seen with regards to Margaret Clitherow who, despite not being canonised until the twentieth century, was recognised as a saint within her locality. It was the communities in the North who held onto the traditional faith more vehemently, which attempted, and in some areas succeeded, in holding onto the old saints such as Thomas Becket. The laity who decided whether they continued saint worship and whether they recognised a new Reformation saint.

Saints and relics were a point of contention between Protestants and Catholics. Protestants favoured the Biblical text and challenged what they believed as church abuses of holy images and materials. Catholics on the other hand believed that these materials possessed the supernatural ability to perform miracles and cures for those

who believed in them. From the medieval period and throughout the Reformation relic material was collected, preserved, and held in high regard by Catholics, they believed that these materials and the devotion that they gave to saints would provide them with the means to being closer to God. Each view has been considered in the previous chapters as the topic of saints and relics remained a point of debate for both religions. For Catholics, they were evidence of a higher power, for Protestants they were an abused material by the Catholic Church.

There was a clear growth in the need for Catholics to be closer to relic materials, graves as well as fragments of the saint's body or personal belongings accounts for the growing obsession during the Reformation to have a personal link to a martyr. With a revitalisation of Catholic interest in relics at the execution of martyrs 'Catholics scrambled to collect fragments of their flesh, to dip cloths and handkerchiefs in their blood and to gather up their cassocks, garments, stockings, spectacles, rosary beads, crucifixes, letter, and other possessions, along with the equipment used to put them to death'.³³⁸ The laity had the chance to possess these items, unlike during the medieval period when saints had been preserved and kept at a distance within cathedrals and churches, in order to consecrate the altar and act as a pilgrimage tool for the church to gain income. Relic objects moved from being very much a church possession (the public) to a personal item (the domestic) collected by Catholics, shared as an educational and inspirational tool, and preserved in memory of the martyr.

Protestants constantly referred to saints and relics Reformation in their ideology and writings to prove the abuses of religion that had been imposed by the Catholic Church.

³³⁸ Ibid., p. 128

The abuses of saints and relic materials were called into question by Reformers such as John Calvin and Martin Luther and, as Alexander Walsham suggests in, 'emphasising the precept that God wished to be worshipped in spirit and truth, Protestants saw relic worship as a heinous violation of the first commandment itself'.³³⁹ They paved the way for people such as John Foxe to openly write about and criticise a long embedded Catholic tradition, questioning the authenticity of such objects and indeed the Roman Catholic Church itself. With this open criticism that surrounded these objects and the publications such as John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and John Calvin's *Treatise on Relics* as Zysk suggests, 'the Catholic teaching that the body parts of a saint could free souls from purgatory, cure sickness, bleed at will, and secure favours was to the reformed mind both implausible and idolatrous'.³⁴⁰ Whilst this may have been enough to deter some from reverting to the Catholic faith, it did not prevent Catholics from collecting relic materials, and nor did it prevent Catholics from venerating martyrs. Creating martyrs through persecution strengthened the importance of relic materials.

The Reformation created new martyrs and saints and stimulated a revitalisation of saint cults. As argued by Jay Zysk, 'of all devotional objects, relics are particularly alluring because they provide trace to an otherwise absent body that is a source of succour and intercession'.³⁴¹ It has been argued that Catholicism saw a decline during the Reformation as more and more people moved over to Protestantism. However, Christopher Haigh argues that 'there was much more continuity in England than those who have distinguished between 'medieval Catholicism' and 'Counter Reformation Catholicism' have allowed, and that emerging English recusancy owed much to what

³³⁹ Ibid., p. 125

³⁴⁰ Zysk, 'Relics and Unreliable Bodies in The Changeling,' p. 405

³⁴¹ Ibid., p. 405

had gone before: the English Reformation was not a precise and dramatic event, it was a long and complex process'.³⁴² Jack Scarisbrick stipulates that, 'however imperfect the old order, and however imperfect the Christianity of the average man or woman in the street, there is no evidence of loss of confidence in the old ways, no mass disenchantment'.³⁴³ The adherence to objects was clear within recusant communities.

The complexity of the Reformation cannot be doubted. As the Reformation progressed people were continuously reminded and encouraged in various ways not to believe in the sacred objects so highly valued and protected by Catholics, through legislation or even dramatic performances,. Taking one Catholic tradition such as saints and relics, allows us to see how Reformers continued to work against the Catholic Church. , Catholicism may have been a barely tolerated minority in England but its support on the Continent meant it continued to be threat to Protestantism in England. Catholicism managed to survive the Reformation period 1558-1625 and it did so at all levels of society. The numerous executions that took place in an attempt to suppress the Catholic faith and the relic materials that have survived such as the hand of Margaret Clitherow are evidence of this.

This study about saints and relics has considered the reinvention of the cult of martyrs and their relics in the context of the Reformation covering 1558 to 1625. It has provided evidence to support the argument that Catholicism was still very much an integral part of England in that time and Reformers continued throughout the reign of James I to persuade and educate the laity on the falsehood that they believed surrounded these objects of affection and power. Reformers, with state encouragement, or rather

³⁴² Haigh, 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation,' p. 178

³⁴³ Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People*, p. 12

permission, targeted saints and relics as an aspect, which was central to the Catholic faith. Material study allows us to interpret 'objects to get to the heart of individuals' engagements with the wider processes of social, cultural and religious change which shaped their everyday existence'.³⁴⁴ Whilst saints and relics are just one aspect of Catholicism that was targeted, it shows that for both Protestants and Catholics alike, this topic remained a point of contention and was used by both religions to argue their varying opinions with regards to which faith they believed was the true faith. Catholicism survived in England throughout the Reformation period, saints and relics give just one aspect of evidence for this conclusion and by considering the material objects that still survive to this day, we can draw conclusions as to why they were important and why so many were willing to give up their lives to protect the Catholic faith.

³⁴⁴ Hamling and Richardson, *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Material Culture*, p. 23

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