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MAGGIE BULLETT, *The Reception of the Elizabethan Religious Settlement in Three Yorkshire Parishes, 1559-1572*. This article explores how the Elizabethan religious settlement of 1559 was experienced at parish level, up to the year 1572. Churchwardens' accounts for the Yorkshire parishes of Masham, Sheffield and St Martin's, Coney Street, York, are used alongside ecclesiastical court records and other sources to build a picture of local responses to the settlement. The factors found to be significant include the degree to which the reforms demanded a change in previous community practices, and the pace and sequence with which sacred material objects were removed and installed. The latter are viewed as concrete aspects of religiosity which gave meaning to more abstract doctrines for both clergy and laity. The way in which authority was realised in the parishes, through coercion, collaboration, negotiation or conversion is also explored. Most significantly, the ability of lay parishioners to negotiate among themselves, and with external agents of authority during the process, determined the resulting style of local Protestantism.

Key Words: Elizabethan Reformation; images; Masham; Sheffield; York; churchwardens' accounts

THE RECEPTION OF THE ELIZABETHAN RELIGIOUS SETTLEMENT IN THREE YORKSHIRE PARISHES, 1559 - 1572

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In 1571 the three Yorkshire parishes of Masham, Sheffield and St Martin's, Coney Street, York, dismantled their rood lofts in accordance with Elizabethan religious legislation. In Masham there were violent confrontations over the symbolic burning of the rood loft, in Sheffield the wood from the loft was sold in lots, while in York the rood was carefully dismantled and the space repaired.¹ These very different scenes reflected the experience of reform in each parish and the divergent religious directions that were beginning to take shape. Reform had been sudden in Masham and a recusant group was forming outside parochial control. Sheffield and York had experienced a more gradual reform, but were developing Puritan and ceremonial styles of Protestantism respectively. The factors which led to these different paths are the subject of this essay. Prior practices, the pace and sequence of events and how authority was realised locally, all impacted upon the way this stage of the Elizabethan Reformation was brought about.

Although the title uses the term 'reception', this is not meant to imply that authority always moved down through a fixed hierarchy, hitting a floor at parish level, below which the people were recipients rather than shapers. A political historian,

Michael Braddick, considers that power was contested, so that outcomes were more the result of negotiation and relationships than absolute, 'top-down' control.² The degree to which local individuals and groups participated in the exercise of authority is central to debates about how the Reformation was brought about and historians write from particular stand points on this. Eamon Duffy emphasises that parishes were 'being policed by the continuing process of visitation and inspection.'³ He portrays an environment of coercion through draconian visitation processes, leading firstly to reluctant acquiescence, then acceptance over time. Diarmaid MacCulloch takes Duffy's end point as his start, to claim that the later Reformation was a great success through preaching and conversion.⁴ By contrast, Ethan Shagan considers that greed ran alongside resistance to reform and resulted in local collaboration with the aims of the government, so that neither persistent central pressure or conversion were necessary for the Reformation to occur.⁵ An alternative explanatory framework sidesteps the issue of authority and claims that strong elements of continuity smoothed the passage of unsought changes. Christopher Marsh sees the Church providing a sense of belonging and an opportunity for community participation throughout the sixteenth century.⁶ He points out that the Elizabethan Church largely retained its pre-Reformation hierarchical structure and personnel, physical buildings and liturgical form of worship.⁷ A more dynamic version of the continuity model is formulated by Tessa Watt from a study of ballad sheets. She demonstrates that change and continuity could mix in a constantly renewing process of syncretic evolution.⁸

This study finds elements of coercion, conversion, negotiation, collaboration and continuity in all three parishes, but the relative mix varied, leading to very different experiences. Understanding the process at the local scale can feed into debates surrounding what Marsh calls the 'compliance conundrum', or how a

Reformation, which most historians now agree was unpopular and unsought, became an established reality by the middle of Elizabeth's reign.

Sources

Churchwardens' accounts can offer an insight into the lives of those respectable but ordinary parishioners who rarely left a direct voice in the historical record. Only 4 per cent of churchwardens' accounts survive for the diocese of York for the period 1558-1660, so detailed local pictures are more appropriate than generalisations.⁹ For this study, the churchwardens' accounts for Masham 1542-1572, and for St Martin's 1553-1572 were used. Extracts from churchwardens' accounts, 1557-1572, mainly from Hunter's *Hallamshire*, were used for Sheffield.¹⁰ The churchwardens' accounts record the timing of removal and installation of religious furniture, books and ornaments. These objects were more than equipment. The removal of prohibited 'monuments of superstition' – the images, ornaments and sacred furnishings of the late medieval Church – and the acquisition of the books and furnishings for reformed worship, brought about a dramatic change in the tangible experience of religion. D'Avray contends that religion is composed of abstract and concrete elements.¹¹ The abstract consists of ideas and verbal communication, typified by the sermon, while the concrete consists of sacred physical objects and symbols, rituals and practices which engaged personal memory. While there is no strict division between the abstract and concrete, D'Avray states that the impact is greatest when the two aspects are present.¹² The implication for this study is that the timing of removals and installations impacted on how the new religion was experienced.

Although dominant personalities appeared, churchwardens were not picked from a narrow ruling elite. They were in a position where two worlds overlapped,

balancing the demands of the parish with the ecclesiastical hierarchy above them.¹³ This dual facing role is important in understanding how the stipulated reforms were actually carried through in the parishes. Churchwardens were required to present to the ecclesiastical courts those parishioners who transgressed moral expectations and canon law; at the same time they were also chosen by their peers and were part of the community. Churchwardens' accounts provide the background to incidents which come to light from the ecclesiastical court records and reading the two in conjunction is useful.¹⁴ Regular visitations by the Church hierarchy were part of the machinery of compliance, but they relied upon churchwardens for information concerning infringements. However, not only are the records incomplete, but caution should be used in interpreting silence. Dissembling churchwardens could conceal failings if all the parish was behind them and they felt the risk to be reasonable.¹⁵ From 1561 onwards, the traditional Church courts were augmented by the High Commission, with powers 'to visit, reform, redress, order, correct and amend errors, heresies, schisms, abuses, offences, contempts and enormities.'¹⁶ It could imprison and fine offenders and became the principal means of enforcing compliance during Elizabeth's reign.

Other sources include the records of specific government commissions, such as the Royal Visitation of 1559 and the reprisals following the Northern Rebellion.¹⁷ Wills, civic records, personal accounts and physical artefacts also help to create a fuller picture, and are expressions of identity and relationships.¹⁸

The Elizabethan Church – proscriptions and prescriptions

The leaders of the early Elizabethan Church were concerned about the physical setting of religious worship for good reason. Clive Burgess claims that the images, ornaments

and ritual utensils associated with traditional religion all acted as a 'visual mnemonic further reinforcing dogma'.¹⁹ The objects were the concrete expression of a religion which had prayed for the dead, interceded with helper saints, and developed a whole calendar of feasts and ceremonies to mark time and life-cycle. Most centrally, Christ as man was symbolised by the prevalence of crosses (roods) and the belief that the Eucharist became the body of Christ in the sacrifice of the Mass.²⁰ The belief that good works and penance had an impact on one's prospects before and after death may have been shaken in some localities by religious changes since the 1530s. Nevertheless, the rituals of traditional religion provided opportunities for drama and spectacle, socialising, display of status and economic activity. They were thus woven into the very fabric of society.

In principle, the bishops returning from Geneva wanted nothing less than a complete transformation to a Calvinist doctrine of salvation by faith alone, and the removal of all aspects of religion they deemed to be idolatrous. In reality, the stringencies of the godly bishops were subject to compromise through the Queen as Supreme Governor, the lower clergy and lay authority. The spectrum of Protestant opinion on idolatry ranged from the moderate Lutheran reform, which allowed for some kind of spiritual presence in the host and permitted unabused images, to the advanced position of Calvin and Zwingli, where Communion was an act of remembrance and all religious images were deemed idolatrous. Religious policy during the course of Edward VI's reign had moved from a moderate to an advanced position, and the 1559 settlement would be drawn from this existing range of doctrine. While mainly based on the Prayer Book of 1552, the settlement incorporated some aspects of the more conservative 1547 Injunctions regarding images and ornaments. Communion in the form of plain wafers, or 'singing breads', was one such

concession.²¹ Arriving at a standard definition of an unabused image proved impossible, and so the exact approach to images was largely down to the personnel enforcing the settlement. According to Aston, this ambiguity was deliberate in order to allow a wide interpretation.²² For instance, the Commissioners in 1559 condemned copes, vestments, altar cloths and books as ‘monuments of superstition’, although the Injunctions did not require their destruction.²³

There were some positive changes to be made as well. The 1559 legislation required parishes to buy the Prayer Book, Bible, *Paraphrases of Erasmus*, and a communion table. To limit iconoclastic destruction, and preserve church fabric, Elizabeth also issued a proclamation in September 1560 against the destruction of tombs, stained glass and bells. Just over a year later Elizabeth issued another proclamation, this time demanding the removal of rood lofts, while preserving the screen and steps. The Ten Commandments were also to be painted on the wall over the communion table. This assumed compliance with the injunction to keep the communion table in an altar-wise position at the east end, except during Communion services.²⁴ The dual position of the communion table was another attempt to satisfy both conservatives and radicals. The 1560 *Bishops’ Interpretations* required a surplice to be worn by the minister, with a cope for the Communion service. Advanced reformers saw this as a concession to popery, and refused to wear them.²⁵

The bishops issued a set of Homilies in 1563, including the homily ‘*Against peril of idolatry and superfluous decking of churches*’, which condemned all religious images. In the same year, the Thirty-Nine Articles defined the faith of the Church of England. Article Twenty-Two clearly associated images with popery.²⁶

1571 saw the end of the ambiguity in the North, with Archbishop Edmund Grindal issuing uncompromising Injunctions to both clergy and laity concerning

images and rituals, followed up with a thorough visitation.²⁷ The individual utensils and ornaments of traditional religion were now listed as proscribed. Parishes were ordered to replace chalices with communion cups and to search for those items kept illegally. Parishioners not attending services or non-communicating were to be reported.

Community and prior practices

The degree to which parish social organisation and lay integration were changed by the Elizabethan settlement can be revealed by pre-1559 sources. Burgess and Kumin state that 'in parishes where collection and levy predominated, the living were obliged to organise themselves into a regime of active collaboration'. They contrast this style of late medieval parish with the increasing number of wealthy urban parishes, where land or bequests from the dead formed 'an act of charity relieving co-parishioners of the duty to make regular payment to the parish'.²⁸

Masham's churchwardens' accounts reveal that in the last years of Henry VIII's reign approximately a quarter to a third of Masham's parish income (around 15s.) was spent on wax for candles.²⁹ The wax came in small volumes from up to sixteen different sources, often from women and less prominent members of the laity. Others were paid for making the candles and supplying wicks. Some of the candles were for holy days, such as the Assumption and Christmas, when between eight and eleven pounds of wax was required. A local tradition was the twelve pound Rowell, or Rolle candle. This was a candle before the rood, as permitted under the Henrician injunctions, but its name suggests a connection with the Bede roll, which usually listed dead benefactors. The 'Alms Light' before the rood at Morebath was for the dead and a similar function could be assigned to the Rowell candle in Masham.³⁰ The

Rowell candle was paid for by collections in the church plus regular collections in Masham and the surrounding seven hamlets. These collections are noted in the churchwardens' accounts as 'Rowell eggs'.

The churchwardens' accounts show that expenditure on wax and collections for the Rowell candle disappeared in 1548, but were reinstated almost immediately after Mary's accession. On the eve of the Elizabethan settlement, Masham's wax consumption was on the increase, with twenty-eight pounds of wax being consumed in 1558, at a cost of 28s. As the total parish expenditure was 70s. for that year, clearly the candles and Rowell egg collections were a major part of parish life. Both came to an abrupt end in 1559.

It is a puzzle why the Rowell, and other intercessory candles, were abandoned so promptly in 1559, when other aspects of traditional worship continued for more than a decade at Masham. One suggestion could be that care for the dead in purgatory was burdensome, and there was some relief when this was no longer required.³¹ However, their swift restoration upon Queen Mary's accession attests to the popularity of intercession and candles. The parishioners may have been concerned that the funds would be seized by Commissioners. This links to a third explanation based on the understanding that the intercessory candles and Rowell were part of a belief in purgatory which had traditionally included practices outside the parameters of the official Church. On proscription, the whole of the purgatorial rituals may have slipped outside the Church, and so from the historian's view. This explanation is supported by reports of candles and crosses in the homes of the lately dead and during funeral processions in late sixteenth century Lancashire.³² Ronald Hutton sees the hill top All Saints Eve fires, known as Teen-lays, as remnants of this tradition which survived until the nineteenth century.³³

Until 1559, the whole parish was integrated into the activity of providing wax, making candles and collecting funds for candles. Judith Bennet has explored the use of ales as a similar means of charity without loss of pride for the recipient.³⁴ This was a source of social cohesion, and especially important for women. As French points out, fundraising – in this case, wax and candle making – integrated the lesser men and women into the parish.³⁵ Those who had been integrated into the parish and earned small incomes from the candles were hardly likely to be enthusiastic about a reform which took this benefit away. The impact was similar to that experienced in Morebath when the parish ales were abrogated. Duffy calls this a ‘body-blow ...[to the] lynchpin of social life’.³⁶ This community cohesion, lingering for some time after the candles were no longer used in church, could have contributed to the united front the parish presented to the High Commission and the archbishop’s visitation of 1567. The lack of material changes recorded in the churchwardens’ accounts following the latter’s visitation could be explained by parishioners feeling confident enough in their solidarity to avoid revealing the true situation to visitors.

The royal patent creating the Twelve Capital Burgesses and Commonality of Sheffield in 1554 includes the phrase ‘until the thirtieth year of the reign of our dearest father the late King Henry the eighth at which time by pious gifts and alms of the people and inhabitants of the said parish and by other ways and means three priests were sustained’. These ‘other ways and means’ were collections at May games and other social gatherings.³⁷ When the collections ceased in 1539, the three assistant priests became entirely funded out of parish land rents, as the 1554 *Petition to the Queen* makes clear: ‘the inhabitants of the said parishe were enforced and constrained ...to imparte and yerlye bestawe some porchon of the reveueues of the

said premises to and for the fyndynge of III. Prestes'.³⁸ This led to the controversial seizing of £17 9s. in 1548, when the Royal Commissioners assumed the land rents were to support chantry priests serving the altars of St Mary and St Katherine within the parish church. The return of the rents to support the work of the three assistant priests in the outlying townships of the parish was the purpose of the *Petition to Queen Mary*. The rents were returned to the parish, under the management of a newly patented body, the 'Twelve Capital Burgesses and Commonality of the Town and Parish of Sheffield', which was charged with appointing and funding the three assistant priests, repairing bridges and providing for the poor.

Whether or not the petitioners told the truth about the purpose of the priests and the sums involved, the *Petition* and *Patent* show that during the reign of Henry VIII, Sheffield moved from a mixed income, which included collections among the living, to one dominated by rents. The Elizabethan Reformation, two decades later, did not therefore necessitate a loss of practices which promoted whole community integration.

Although it appears that there were no guilds specifically attached to St Martin's in the late medieval period, some parishioners were members of city-wide guilds. Adam Bynkes, a parish auditor and churchwarden of St Martin's, was chamberlain of the Corpus Christi guild in 1550.³⁹ The Corpus Christi play continued intermittently until 1572, and craft guilds continued throughout the sixteenth century. This may have led to a more complex loyalty and sense of community than in rural parishes, where the parish was the social centre. In the late medieval period there had been at least five chantries within the parish, which had been endowed by bequests of lands and rents, but these had decayed by the 1540s.⁴⁰ The Marian churchwardens'

accounts for St Martin's show the parish income predominantly arising from rents, and this continued unchanged throughout the early Elizabethan years.⁴¹

The abandonment of collections among the living and reliance on rents as parish income in Sheffield and York concur with the late medieval trend detected by Burgess and Kumin. French considers the social implications of this change to be 'the parish came to value its role as a source of spectacle – liturgy and decorations – more than its role as an inclusive and broadly supportive institution'.⁴² The Elizabethan Reformation entailed both a reduction in spectacle and the abrogation of practices which had promoted community integration. Masham was subject to change on both fronts, and as such its parishioners experienced a more profound disturbance than those of Sheffield and York.

The pace and sequence of change

After losing the candles and prayers for the dead from the church, the Masham churchwardens' accounts show that the only other effort at reform until 1570 was the purchase of the 'Communion boke' and the repair of a Bible, in 1559.⁴³ These minimal measures, probably to satisfy the Royal Visitation, were not accompanied by removal of the ritual objects of traditional religion. The Prayer Book was almost certainly soon discarded, as the churchwardens were prosecuted for lacking 'certayne books' in 1570 and a new one had to be bought in 1571.⁴⁴ There was a lady choir still in existence in 1566 and the churchwardens' accounts for 1568-70 date a transaction to the 'Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross', which demonstrates a traditional ritual calendar still in common use. By 1572, the church was dramatically different. The accounts record the removal of tabernacles first, in 1570. The rood loft was

dismantled, and its altar and images burnt at the command of the minister in 1571. At the same time, the ceremonial objects of the Mass: vestments, chalices, corpaxes, a pyx, and altar cloths, were put away into a chest and a group of parishioners charged with their safe keeping. In 1572, a communion cup and table, and the *Psalms* and *Homilies* books were purchased. There is no specific mention of the main altar being destroyed, but there were ‘chargs of workemen a bowt the churche at that tyme’ and lime was bought for whitewashing the church. In two years, Masham church underwent changes which would take the other two parishes twelve years to complete.

In traditional religion, images, ornaments and rituals held what Duffy calls ‘encoded memories’, binding parishioners tightly to a doctrine of salvation by the Mass and good works.⁴⁵ When new abstract beliefs in predestination and communion as remembrance were introduced at Masham, they had, as yet, no concrete place in the understanding of parishioners. There was no poor box, Ten Commandments, communion cup or table when the old objects were destroyed or removed. The sequence of change – in this case imposing a new theology without allowing time for meaning to be embedded in tangible ways – would bring the parish to a crisis.

There were elements of continuity, such as the church building and liturgical worship, during the period of greatest change in Masham. These did not prove to be enough for large numbers of the laity, who rejected the Established Church. Continuity as an explanatory concept therefore requires careful application, always taking specific account of the real religious beliefs of the parishioners.

In 1558, Sheffield parish church was equipped for traditional rituals, such as the veiling of the Easter Sepulchre, but there is not enough information in the churchwardens’ accounts to distinguish duty from enthusiasm.⁴⁶ The parish promptly

bought wood for a communion table in 1559 and removed the four altars in 1560. The reformed liturgy had a staggered start. Unspecified books were bought in 1562, and the *Paraphrases* and the *Homilies* were bought in 1564. From this point onwards the churchwardens' accounts demonstrate enthusiasm for new style worship. The funds which had previously been spent on ritual and ornament were now redirected. Pews were installed in 1565, and the following year the considerable sum of 39s. was spent having the church white-limed and scriptures written on the walls. In 1569, the Bible, Communion book and Psalter were upgraded with new versions from London. These purchases were followed by Jewell's *Apology* (a treatise against Catholicism), four song books of Genevan Psalms in 1570, and a Psalter in meter in 1571.

The song books and metrical psalms were voluntary purchases. Watson considers the congregational singing of psalms to be 'clear indicators of the great divide that existed between the children of God and their enemies'.⁴⁷ D'Avray places the singing of psalms at the concrete end of the religious spectrum. So, by 1570, Sheffield parishioners were experiencing both abstract and concrete aspects of advanced Protestantism. However, this was not the whole picture. Sheffield had a history of polyphonic singing which had been converted to English prick-song for the funeral of the 5th Earl of Shrewsbury in 1560. The churchwardens' accounts also show that the organ, installed in 1528, was repaired in 1560, 1569, 1570 and 1572, indicating continued use, even though Genevan psalms were normally sung unaccompanied.⁴⁸ There must have been some parallel, or alternating, use of the organ alongside psalm singing, indicating the syncretic nature of religious change.⁴⁹ The continuing use of the organ may have helped traditionalists to adapt to the new worship, as would the use of 'singing bread' for communion noted in the

churchwardens' accounts for 1569. As Tessa Watt notes, 'pre-Reformation cultural forms were appropriated for Protestantism'.⁵⁰

With psalms, organ, pews, walls newly painted with scripture and singing breads, the new doctrines were given a composite tangible expression before the last remnants of the old religion were removed – the rood loft and churchyard cross were taken down in January 1571. This allowed moderate conservatives and evangelicals to create a Protestant identity, which, maybe because of rather than despite its internal contradictions, managed to include most parishioners.

The churchwardens at St Martin's were drawn from a pool of competitive craftsmen and merchants who were used to a tradition of civic drama. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the Marian churchwardens' accounts reveal the enhancement of ritual ornaments and church furnishings. There were painted images of St George and St Michael, in addition to those on the rood. The St George image, at least, received devotional lights and the tabernacles were gilded. Other objects used in traditional worship were the 'Judas cross', painted Lenten cloths, painted candlesticks and censers.⁵¹ The parish was enthusiastically engaged in traditional worship when Elizabeth ascended the throne.

The churchwardens bought a Bible, Communion book and Psalter at the time of 'puttyng in of oure Inventory' at the 1559 Royal Visitation. This could be interpreted as a show of conformity because, doubting the permanence of the settlement, the parish decided to rent rather than buy a communion table. Again, the removal of altars was delayed until the communion table was established; in this case, eighteen months after the loaned table became a feature of the church. There were other elements of continuity. Although the statue of St George was removed in 1561,

the church still had a stained glass window in his honour. The spectacular west-end window, dedicated to St Martin, and featuring didactic scenes from traditional religion, also remained (fig. 1). The retention of stained glass images was not uncommon. William Harrison, writing in 1586, described how ‘stories in glasse windowes’ still remained in most areas.⁵² Other furnishings also provided continuity, such as the bells and the organ, which was repaired in 1562.

Pride in the appearance of the church continued into the reign of Elizabeth, indicated by the money ‘payd to a labourer and for candles at the dressing of the churche when the stalles was sett’ and candles in the choir at Christmas. The table of the Ten Commandments was promptly installed in 1561, and in 1566 scripture was painted over newly white-limed surfaces. The motivation for this voluntary signifier of Protestantism may not have been evangelical zeal so much as the replacement of visual interest in the church. A dislike of sermons caused the churchwardens to record that the *Homilies* were bought only because the archbishop so commanded.⁵³

In early 1567, the churchwardens noted that, again at the archbishop’s command, they disposed of certain vestments, candlesticks and painted cloths. A year later, the churchwardens finally bought a permanent communion table, and the parish seems to have adopted the Communion service as a new focus. The parish spent 6s. a quarter on ‘Malmsey’, which was administered to the communicants from the old chalice. The latter was eventually traded in for a silver communion cup of almost equal weight in early 1571. ‘Syngyng breads’ were used during Communion and the minister wore a cope, embellished with lace and silk.⁵⁴ The service appears as close ceremonially to the Mass as legally possible, with the special dress of the minister encouraging the understanding of some kind of divine presence in the host. The old vestments were clearly still important to the parish as the churchwardens’ accounts

record how some were transformed into communion table coverings, while those in storage were described in great detail. As with Sheffield, the last symbol of traditional religion to be removed was the rood loft, in 1571, by which time the Communion service had developed its own traditions.

The impression at St Martin's is of an initial show of obedience, followed by several years of delay, despite repeated visitations from senior clergy. Between 1559 and 1567, the parish possessed the means of delivering the new services, but retained many of the symbols and sacred objects associated with the Mass. The minister and laity made the most of what ceremony was allowed by law and enhanced the associated ornaments. Thus a thread of material religious expression was maintained throughout the verbal and theological changes in worship, and was reflective of the minister's and laity's conservatism. This demand for the correct ceremony would lead to the development of Judith Maltby's 'Prayer Book Protestants' within the next generation, and later still, 'Anglicanism'.⁵⁵

The churchwardens' accounts for the three parishes show how important the pace and sequence of change was for reception of the Reformation. Where parishioners were allowed to develop attachment to new forms of worship before the old forms were removed, a Protestant identity could evolve from below, alongside that imposed from above. The elements which were most effective in the syncretic mix were those which were used in ritual or during actual services. Possibly the most important of these elements was the coexistence of the altar and communion table. The altar's position against the east wall was part of its significance as a locus of intercession and sacrifice, while the communion table's position towards the nave, surrounded by the laity, represented the new understanding of 'a uniting of a

community with Christ'.⁵⁶ The 1559 Injunctions required the table to be repeatedly moved from one position to the other, which resonated with both theologies. By the time the altars were removed and the table came to rest permanently in the communion position, the transition had been blurred.

The reality of lay and ecclesiastical authority

The Act Books of the Elizabethan High Commission repeatedly refer to attendance at church as a duty, suggesting that the ecclesiastical authorities were more interested in outward obedience than inner belief.⁵⁷ At any particular time and place, conformity could consist of the nearest fit agreed between individuals as to which acts or practices warranted reporting as contumacious. Therefore conformity was not a fixed state, and was dependent upon the relationships of those involved. If the mix of persons changed, nonconformity could become apparent without any change in real conditions.

Although Duffy characterises the 1559 Royal Visitation as 'draconian', Kitching states that, in the Northern Province, the churchwardens' returns were not very thorough and there were many omissions. Only one parish in the province reported that images had not been destroyed and eight declared that images were secretly kept. The visitation did not reach Doncaster deanery at all.⁵⁸ The churchwardens of Masham and York made a display of obedience for the visitation with the purchase of Communion books, which was not followed through with general reform for some time.

In the longer term, the highest level of ecclesiastical authority for the three parishes was the archbishop of York. After Archbishop Heath resigned in 1559 there was nearly a two-year gap before Archbishop Young was installed. Young also led

the High Commission, and was Lord President of the Council in the North from 1564 until his death in 1568. His personality, therefore, had a great impact on the enforcement of the settlement. Palliser claims that he was a weak leader, while Aveling regards his approach as pragmatic in an area where lay authority was conservative in religion.⁵⁹ Young was also hampered by staff who were either ineffective or not committed to Protestant reform. The High Commission Act Books for 1561/2 show that many people summoned to the court simply did not turn up or could not be found by the chief apparitor, Richard Smurthwaite.⁶⁰ Smurthwaite was also the apparitor-general for the other ecclesiastical courts. Widespread lack of reform was revealed in Young's visitation of 1567, when numerous parishes were reported for failure to remove images.⁶¹

When Archbishop Grindal arrived in early 1571, he began to replace conservative staff with determined Protestants. He sacked Smurthwaite for his 'mocking, anticlerical spirit' and then summoned him to appear at the very court which had employed him, for non-attendance at church.⁶² In 1571, Grindal issued detailed and uncompromising Injunctions to the clergy and laity, followed up by a visitation. The placement of the godly Earl of Huntingdon as Lord President, in 1572, brought lay and ecclesiastical policy together. From that point onwards, the pressure to conform was increased, and the discovery of non-attendance and non-communicating became the focus of enforcement.

As a Peculiar, Masham held its own ecclesiastical court and was not subject to the frequent archidiaconal visitations – there is no suggestion of a visitation in the churchwardens' accounts between 1559 and 1567. There is also no record of anyone from Masham being summoned in the High Commission Act Books for 1561/2,

although Archbishop Young knew the local gentry to be ‘no favourers of religion’.⁶³ The churchwardens were required to appear at Ripon during the 1567 archiepiscopal visitation, but there were no subsequent alterations in church furnishings. Masham parishioners, including the gentry and clergy, appear to have been acting in a united way to conceal their lack of reform.

Catholic, or strongly conservative, gentry have been regarded as crucial in Catholic survivalism and the emergence of recusant communities. Cliffe claims that 122 out of 154 North Riding gentry were Catholic in 1570.⁶⁴ There were two interrelated gentry families in Masham, the Danbys and Wyvills. Christopher Danby had been involved with the Pilgrimage of Grace, and the churchwardens’ accounts record a ‘Memorandum’ for this event in 1565.⁶⁵ Danby’s younger son was actively involved in the 1569 rebellion, while the older son, Thomas, appears to have behaved somewhere between the positions of recusant and church papist. Nevertheless, Thomas was friendly with the Cecils and was High Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1575.⁶⁶ He seems to have trodden a fine line between commitment to Catholicism and his public role in local government. That important roles were entrusted to those known to be out of sympathy with government religious policy suggests that the exercise of authority was a complex operation, depending on relationships and role performance, rather than absolute command and obedience.

Christopher Danby’s daughter, Magdalen, was married to Marmaduke Wyvill, who was also one of the rebels in 1569. He was pardoned and later knighted by Queen Elizabeth. Christopher Wyvill, Marmaduke’s father, left a will in 1577 in which he left £10 to be distributed to the poor for ‘ye healthe of my soule’. Marmaduke’s mother left a clearly Catholic will in 1584, bequeathing her soul to the ‘blessed trinitie and all the blessed companie of heaven’.⁶⁷ Marmaduke Wyvill was buried in the

parish church in 1617. Nigel Llewellyn's study notes that, as funeral monuments were expensive and highly regarded, 'patrons reserved rights over the significant, sign bearing aspects'.⁶⁸ This was especially so when the monument was erected in the patron's life time, as was the case with the Wyvill monument, dated 1613. Therefore, no feature of the monument should be regarded as accidental. This apparently secular monument contains symbols of Wyvill's continuing Catholicism, although these had to be hidden to protect the tomb from iconoclastic action. An embroidered cushion displays tendrils forced into representing a cross and the small book in the hands of Magdalen has a tiny cross on its cover (figs 2 and 3). Crosses were seen as remnants of popery by advanced Protestants, such as Grindal, who prohibited their use.⁶⁹ These hidden indications of Catholicism were not unique. Sherlock describes a 1559 Wiltshire tomb which has 'barely discernible etchings of the crucifix and five wounds of Christ' on an otherwise secular tomb.⁷⁰

Peacock's *A List of Roman Catholics in the County of York, 1604*, names over eighty recusants in Masham.⁷¹ Extracts from the Masham Peculiar court records in the reign of James I also show the Danby and Wyvill families acting as focal points for the recusant communities.⁷²

The above evidence clearly points to a prolonged Catholicism among the Masham gentry. But what sort of relationship did the gentry have with their parish church during Elizabeth's reign, and did they try to influence the form of worship there? The Wyvills had acquired a share in the farm of the parish tithes and had presented the vicar to the parish in 1551.⁷³ This interest led to a 1582 dispute with a member of the Danby family over the tithes of Masham.⁷⁴ The Wyvill funeral monument and its prominent position within the parish church was a deliberate expression of prestige by its owner. Therefore, as claimed by Sarah Bastow, the

recusant gentry continued to have relationships with the parish church for business and social status.⁷⁵ The parish and its public institutions were still a forum where lay power relations were contested and displayed, even while this power was being used to protect the incipient recusant community outside the parish structure. This paradoxical situation is seen in the 1571 churchwardens' accounts, where the gentry publicly associated themselves with the putting into storage of banned religious items.⁷⁶

The clergy were also agents of authority in the parish. Francis Rydall was presented as vicar of Masham in 1557, by the patron, Trinity College, Cambridge.⁷⁷ The lack of material change in the church suggests that he conducted Catholic worship there until he resigned in early 1570. Rydall's resignation coincides with the arrival of *Regnans in Excelsis* in the country, in which the Pope relieved Catholics from their loyalty to the Queen. He seems to have joined the Catholic priests serving illicitly in the area.⁷⁸

Rydall's replacement, Anthony Ford, was presented by Trinity College on 6 March 1570.⁷⁹ Six months later, the churchwardens of Masham were required to appear before the High Commission for 'diverse things lacking in the churche to wytt a communion table and certayne bookes for the churche and neither punishment nor presentment for those come not to the churche at all'.⁸⁰ The accusation attests to the beginnings of a recusant community long before the arrival of the missionaries from mainland Europe, which supports the argument for continuity between Marian and later Catholicism.⁸¹ Those staying away from services may have only begun to do so in the previous six months, as there would seem to have been little confessional reason for recusancy before Ford's arrival.

Grindal's 1571 visitation saw the churchwardens having to travel to Bedale and Ripon and twice to York.⁸² It seems that the Archbishop's staff persisted until the churchwardens had to admit the extent of their failings. At the same time, Vicar Ford and his curate ordered the taking down of the rood and images, and their ceremonial burning near the church wall. This sparked violent reactions from at least two parishioners, whose subsequent appearance at the High Commission was recorded. Firstly, Leonard Atkynson was presented for coming out of his house with a pike staff to 'resist the burning of them ther'. He claimed that the location of the burning was a problem owing to the proximity of the pyre to his father's house. This hints at a deliberate shaming gesture by Vicar Ford, who chose a spot for the public burning which was near to the abode of one who opposed his reforms. Atkynson's real issue, however, was not the location of the burning but the burning itself, as indicated by his statement that he 'trusted to se them that plucked downe the rood lofts be as glad to set them upp again and that the Archb. Of Yorke had nothing to do to cawse any rode lofte to be pulled down ther'.⁸³ That he was embedded in the old religion is seen from the additional accusation that he possessed 'yrons for printed caks'. Atkynson was therefore involved with the making of Eucharistic wafers with crosses on them, evidence that the Mass had been continuing until very recently within the parish church, and was now probably continuing elsewhere. The second offender, Evan Ryplye, had denounced the Archbishop and those about him. He attempted to rescue the images before they were burnt by threatening the curate, who was guarding them, with a dagger. He also threatened to put the curate and vicar 'oute of the towne by the eares and that he would get dogs to byte such ronnagates' if he had another man to 'sticke to him'.⁸⁴

There are several points to be drawn out of this incident. The new minister had been in Masham for a year by the time of the burning. That year must have been filled with mounting tensions as Ford clashed with a laity still deeply attached to traditional religion. This explains the fury of the outburst when matters finally came to a head with the removal of the images and rood. The vicar and curate were not strong enough on their own to proceed with this removal – the Archbishop’s visitation had provided additional weight to their demands. Both Atkynson and Ryplye condemned the external authority of the Archbishop as the source of the changes, referring to their understanding of the rights of a Peculiar parish to independence. But what had actually happened here? The visitation had called on upstanding members of the parish community (the churchwardens and those appointed to assist them) to play a role in the governance of the Church. Repeated appearances at the visitation court had pressurised them into complying with the role demanded of them by the Church hierarchy as opposed to the role demanded of them by fellow parishioners. The mixture of flattery and threat used by the High Commission is illustrated in a letter from that body, recorded in the Act Book of 1580.⁸⁵ Some of the dominant laity – the gentry and substantial yeomen such as the Beckwiths – may have already begun organising an extra-parochial Catholicism and so had partially withdrawn from the contest. Therefore, ordinary parishioners had a three-way choice – acquiesce with reform, join the recusants and retreat from parish involvement, or stay within the parish and attempt to shape the form of worship.

The background to the decision they faced was the recent memory of Sir George Bowes scouring the parish, looking for eight men who had been involved with the 1569 rebellion, with the intention of hanging at least one of them. Bowes hanged at least fourteen men in the wapentake of Hang East, the administrative area which

included Masham.⁸⁶ Archbishop Grindal himself observed, in a letter of January 1572,

After the suppression of the late rebellion I find the people more complying than I had expected as far as external conformity is concerned; the reason is that they have been sufficiently distressed and therefore humbled by these calamities which are always the concomitants of civil war.⁸⁷

At the scene of the image burnings many individuals may have been internally debating which course of action they should take. Ryplie's plea for 'anyone to stick to him' shows that he knew at least some of the parishioners were also inclined to prevent the burnings. It was a test of resolve which, in the end, left Ryplie and Atkynson to face the High Commission alone. Members of the laity were involved in the dismantling of the rood loft and two of them were willing to appear as witnesses against the men who reacted with violence.⁸⁸ This was not a community intent on harmony at all costs, but a group of individuals uncomfortably having to choose between unattractive alternatives. This nervous looking to do as the majority in a moment of crisis, reveals how little the community had learned to deal with conflict among itself. If this study was extended beyond 1572, we would see signs of the Catholic community organising itself, as certain members of families attended church to remain within the law, allowing others to be full recusants.⁸⁹ But in 1571 a previously cohesive community had not been accustomed to dealing with division within itself, nor had the leading laity of the parish been practiced in mediating the demands of external authority; what had been its strength in pre-Reformation times was now, temporarily, its weakness.

The parishioner's nerves did not completely fail. As mentioned above, the churchwardens, with the support of local gentry, subsequently recorded the putting into storage of the ornaments and utensils for the Catholic Mass. The recording was partly so that everyone would know the whereabouts of valuable items, but it was also possibly an act of defiance against the order from Grindal to destroy all such objects.⁹⁰ In 1572, nine men from the parish refused the position of churchwarden and were fined twelve pence each, which was also the sum for non-attendance at church under the 1559 Act of Uniformity.⁹¹ Occasional refusals of the position were not unheard of, but the block refusal of nine worthy parishioners suggests a disavowal of the new regime and a recusant Catholic community in formation. Yet, four other men were willing to stand as churchwardens in the parish that year. Maybe those who stayed within the parish found themselves in roles previously unobtainable, and so conformed without conversion.⁹² Many of the churchwarden surnames continue across the 1571 divide, but new names appear in the later years too. Despite this, Duffy's view of draconian visitation bringing about the Reformation in parishes must be the strongest explanation here, with the qualification that the ecclesiastical authority's power was temporarily in the ascendant owing to weakness elsewhere. Power relations were dynamic, and in 1571 Grindal and Ford triumphed for a while. For ecclesiastical authority to prevail long term in a meaningful way, however, the co-operation of the laity was vital. As the recusant community grew over the following decades, its size and co-ordination would exert its own influence as an alternative to the authority of the established Church .

By the time of the Elizabethan settlement, lay authority in Sheffield parish was represented by the Earl of Shrewsbury, the lower gentry, the Twelve Capital

Burgesses and Commonality of the Town and Parish of Sheffield, and the Town Trust. Both the 5th and 6th Earls had conservative religious preferences, but understood the political need to conform, and display their conformity. The 5th Earl was retained as Lord President of the Council in the North on Elizabeth's accession until his death in 1560, despite initially opposing the Act of Uniformity. The need for public display of loyalty and conformity at this level of society is seen in a contemporary account of his funeral, which was held in Sheffield Parish Church.⁹³ Elaborate ceremony and traditional elements, such as choir sung prick-song and prayers over the hearse, supplemented a reformed liturgy of psalms in English, sermon and Communion. His successor, the 6th Earl, had a reputation for extreme loyalty to the Queen and acted as Mary Queen of Scot's gaoler for fifteen years.

If the Earls were loyal, though reluctant, Protestants, their lower gentry following in the Sheffield area were mainly Protestants of a hotter sort.⁹⁴ At the dissolution of monasteries, the Swyft family of Broomhall had acquired the advowson and one-third share of the tithes of the parish, from which the vicar's stipend was paid. This family was of the religious mien to produce Robert Swyft, one of the clergy pressing for further reform in the vestments controversy of the 1560s.⁹⁵ William Swyft not only controlled the appointment of the vicar, presenting Richard Heyward at the start of Elizabeth's reign, he was also the first named of the Twelve Capital Burgesses listed in the 1554 patent.⁹⁶ He was a dominant member of that body, linked through property and marriage to several of the other members, and thereby extending his control to the appointment of the three assistants as well the principal vicar. When he died in 1568, William Swyft left a will which shows an old chalice being regarded simply as a material object with which to pay a debt.⁹⁷ The advowson then passed to Richard Jessop, who was married to William Swyft's niece. In 1569, Jessop presented

the preaching minister, Robert Holland, who was commended by Archbishop Sandys.⁹⁸ Jessop was an auditor for the churchwardens' accounts and his Puritan son would later be associated with the Pilgrim Fathers.⁹⁹ It can be concluded that a limited number of godly lay elite, namely the Swyfts and Jessops, dominated the religious direction of the parish. However, one of the Twelve Capital Burgesses, Richard Fenton, would be presented as a Catholic recusant in 1577 and later imprisoned.¹⁰⁰ Within the early years of the settlement he may have represented a minority strand supporting traditional religion in the parish.

The commons were not totally oppressed under the authority of the nobility and gentry. Firstly, there was not always a clear rank division between the commonality and the Twelve Capital Burgesses, with yeomen and innkeepers among the latter group. The Free Tenants sued the Earl of Shrewsbury for his encroachment on to their common land in 1573 and called on his 'good lordship' during their dispute with another landowner.¹⁰¹ The commonality also presented a query to the Council of James I regarding how disputes between them and the Twelve Capital Burgesses should be settled.¹⁰² So, if the commons were capable of exerting their own pressure, did they want the same form of religion as the gentry? It is difficult to assess their enthusiasm for the new religion, but there is a hint that some of the 1,600 parishioners may have retained conservative sympathies.¹⁰³ Figure 4 reveals the sharpness of the cross on the pre-Reformation altar stone, now restored in the Shrewsbury chapel. This could indicate that it had been carefully laid face down on sand when removed to be used as a paving slab. The deliberate preservation of the sacred surface, and avoidance of its defilement, suggests a lingering reverence for the concrete aspects of the old religion among those who did the removal work. The continuing presence of the organ and singing breads has already been mentioned; but

these were minimal concessions, and the parish continued to develop in a Puritan direction. By 1604 a small number of recusants had separated themselves from the Church.¹⁰⁴

The forces which secured the Reformation in Sheffield were principally the godly beliefs of the lower gentry and middling sort, and the clergy they installed. Conversion and preaching *were* important for the Reformation in Sheffield. The peerage were more concerned with a display of obedience and had conservative tastes, and the commons may also have contained a conservative strand. There was a limited amount of accommodation between these groups, leading to a mainly evangelical Protestantism, but with hints that some aspects of traditional worship were still valued and retained, at least until 1572.

Claire Cross states that the Council in the North and the High Commission 'between them guaranteed York's position as the administrative and judicial capital of the North until 1642'.¹⁰⁵ While this meant that a show of obedience from York parishioners was necessary, they were not in a total state of oppression. When the High Commission was inaugurated in 1561, two of its judges were York aldermen. The three hundred or so staff of the Council formed a market for products in a city suffering from depopulation and poverty.¹⁰⁶ Public officeholding was widespread in the city, with Palliser estimating that at any one time one in five freemen held office.¹⁰⁷

The patrons of the parish of St Martin's were the Dean and Chapter of York. The vicar they presented was a pluralist and the clergyman who actually officiated through the whole of the early Elizabethan years was the curate, Thomas Grayson. He had been a regular canon at the Augustinian Newburgh Priory, and then a chantry

priest at the Minster. He was sympathetic to traditional religion, although he conformed as necessary to remain in place until his death in 1578.¹⁰⁸

There was no direct nobility or gentry control of the parish. The churchwardens tended to be prosperous citizens, urbane and well used to smoothing the edges of competition through sociability. Some had a legal background and others were competent in business or in crafts. The churchwardens' accounts record the method for selecting the four new churchwardens in 1566.¹⁰⁹ The retiring churchwardens each nominated two candidates for election by the freemen of the parish. This shows a mechanism for retaining influence and patronage, while allowing a limited voice to the freemen. Such a balance would be familiar to those used to the civic power structure in York. The fact that the results of the election were recorded, to avoid disputes, indicates the competition for the role. This was partly due to prestige, but the role was also attractive because churchwarden duties could be combined with business, as seen in the case of Richard Aynley. A member of the city's common council, he was a churchwarden 1554-57, parish auditor 1557-60, and then churchwarden again 1563-66. He was a searcher for the vintners, and supplied the parish with communion wine.

The churchwardens and senior laity appear to have controlled most aspects of parish life. In 1556, under the leadership of Aynley, the churchwardens presented their vicar, Robert Fox, to the Dean and Chapter's court under the charge of 'drunkenness, unlearned, sower of discord in the parish'.¹¹⁰ This action shows that Aynley was someone who liked to see things done properly. His accusation of Fox being 'unlearned' has reformist overtones; however, Aynley's later actions and appearance before the High Commission make this unlikely.¹¹¹

The churchwardens' accounts record repeated expenses for meat, drink and wine associated with visitations by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. With many of the staff in the ecclesiastical courts during the 1560s having conservative sympathies, these dinners were an opportunity to negotiate the pace and degree of change in parish worship. They reduced the formality of the occasion and were an important part of the custom of hospitality still prevalent in conservative areas like York.¹¹² An example from the civic records illustrates how this could have worked. On 15 January 1563, Richard Aynley presented a petition from the common council to the aldermen and mayor. The common council wanted the right to have a say in the letting of public property and for the craft guilds to have a voice in electing the mayor and sheriffs. This was a political challenge to the elites of the city and the mayor declared that these articles would be considered at an unspecified future date. A week later, at the next assembly, Aynley pressed for a response. The mayor agreed when he saw 'suche the conformitie and obediens of the sayd Common Council'.¹¹³ This instance demonstrates that transactions between levels of authority were not straightforward and involved 'performance' of expected attributes – in this case a show of obedience from the common council.¹¹⁴ Men like Aynley would be experienced in this kind of relationship.

The political skills of the laity were evident when the parish twice ran into trouble with Archbishop Young and the High Commission in 1567. In May, the archbishop commissioned the London stationers to search for illegal books in York. As a result of this search, a chest containing various banned vestments was discovered at St Martin's. The churchwardens recorded wine being provided by a Mr Sawris for those appointed to search for the illegal books, and ale provided by Mr Bynkes during two separate meetings at his house to discuss the delivery of the illegal objects to the

archbishop. The first demonstrates the smoothing of relations with authority by social custom and the latter the ability of the laity to debate and come to communal decisions and strategies. Both show the laity in control of the situation. During the same searches, Aynley paid some money to 'Richard summoner in reward for his friendship when the p'motor for churche goods were at our churche'.¹¹⁵ This Richard may have been the summoner, Smurthwaite, who would later be discharged by Grindal for lack of respect and refusal to come to church. Aynley, and others like him, could develop relationships with such officers which eased times of tension. The result was that that no one was punished for the illegal items and the vestments were sold. The curate, Grayson, kept his place, even after a further appearance before the High Commission in July that year. He had been caught returning illegal books from an outlying area to York, after the London stationers' search for such items was concluded.¹¹⁶

The tense atmosphere following the Northern Rebellion required another 'performance' of loyalty by the parish. This was fairly simply and cheaply done with the voluntary purchase of a 'booke againste the last Rebellyon' in 1570.¹¹⁷ There must, though, have been lingering doubts among Grindal's ecclesiastical administrators about the parish, as Aynley had to appear before the High Commission in 1571 to deny the possession of vestments.¹¹⁸ In York, we have the nearest example of Shagan's mechanism for the acceptance of the Reformation, where people started to behave in Protestant-type ways without conversion. After repeated 'performances' of being a Protestant, it became an identity, although it meant something very different for St Martin's parishioners compared with those in Sheffield.

In all these considerations of the people involved with religious change there has been a silent voice. Religion was just as tightly woven into the lives of women as of men. Their views and actions must have been part of the process of adaptation to the Reformation, and they must have helped to shape the forms of Protestantism that developed. Women are mainly visible in the records of transgression; the High Commission and Church courts have many examples of female recusants. It is harder to get at the role which women played in shaping the mainstream. Did women act only unofficially by influencing their husbands and sons, or did they form networks to challenge authority obliquely, as described by Capp?¹¹⁹ This is one question these sources have not been able to answer.

Conclusion

The study of Elizabethan religious change in the three parishes illustrates the large part played by the laity in determining religious practice. The idea of authority being exercised through the consistent application of pressure emanating solely from the centre is also brought into question. The wholesale imposition of coercive measures at the local level only holds for isolated, brief periods, when all elements in the power structure were aligned, as at Masham in 1571. Most of the time, there was a degree of mediation or accommodation involved when implementing change. This may have been small concessions, as the conservative parishioners at Sheffield had to be satisfied with, or it could be a general smoothing of relations and consequences, as Aynley worked at York. The lack of accommodation at Masham, and the behaviour of parishioners there, raises questions about the impulse for consensus among parishioners. The churchwardens' accounts suggest a pre-Reformation community bound by common values with wide-ranging involvement in the parish. However

attractive this picture is, the social order in Masham meant that the community had not learned to navigate through conflict, so they were actually more vulnerable in times of crisis. In York the parishioners were familiar with debate, conflict and competition. They held strategy meetings, which were recorded in the churchwardens' accounts. By doing so, the leading laity of the parish created a role for themselves in the matrix of authority which allowed them some control in the implementation of change.¹²⁰ The efforts of the conservative parishioners in York to limit the impact of reform should not be seen as a failure because they became Protestants. The ecclesiastical administrative machine may have been flawed, but the parish was directly under its gaze. The laity and their minister survived being brought before both Archbishops Young and Grindal without losing their positions in society. They evolved a ceremonial style of Protestantism which suited them and kept most parishioners onboard: only two recusants were noted from the parish in 1576.¹²¹ Their skills are attested to by the continuing competition for the role of churchwarden. In 1576 there were fifteen candidates for the post of churchwarden at St Martin's. This contrasts with the nine refusing the role at Masham in 1572.¹²²

The evidence tends to point towards a conclusion that the slow pace of reform in its early years was actually the Elizabethan Reformation's greatest strength. Concessions in the 1559 Acts and Injunctions, such as the use of wafer bread, the wearing of copes and the altar-wise position for the communion table, helped to ease parishes into Protestantism. Continuity explanations for the Reformation need to be specifically related to religious practices if they are to do justice to the very real need for Early Modern people to feel that their religion was a means of salvation. Awareness of how meanings became embedded in concrete aspects of religion and the syncretism of the new and old forms helps in understanding the process of change.

For the theologically educated, abstract doctrines were sufficient, but for the majority, ideas were given meaning by sacred objects, rituals, personal expression and memories. These signifiers had never been cast in stone – the century before the Reformation had seen changing religious fashions come and go. Parishioners could cope with change, even as major as a change in the means of salvation, but they needed time to evolve the traditions, meaning and tangible attachments which embedded the new beliefs into their everyday lives. Where the pace of change was such that old and new traditions were allowed to co-exist for a time, such as in York and Sheffield, most parishioners went along with the process. Where the pace was forced too suddenly, as at Masham, community breakdown could result and any elements of continuity remaining were not enough for substantial numbers of parishioners to remain within the Church.

APPENDIX I

*Letter from the High Commission in York to Agents*¹²³

October 1580

‘To our loving frindes Miles Staveley, Gilbt. Dawson gen., Henrie Jenkinson yeoman and the rest of the juries for causes ecclesiastical within Ripon and the liberties thereof and the wapentake of Claroe and to everies of them.

After our hearty commendacions whereas the Xth.of August last you appeared before us and other her Majesties Commissioners for causes ecclesiastical at our sitting at Rippon and were then and there sworne on her Majesties behalf to make true presentment unto us of all such persons as you should find disobedient in matters of religion which service for her majestie you did dutifullie performe as appeare by your presentment on the Xxiith of the said August you delivered unto us wherein your paines taken deserved good commendacion Notwithstandinge for as much as the time then limited unto you was but short for the accomplishment thereof as also for that the Lords of her Majesties privie counsel require at our a more exact certificate of the state of this countrey we are further in her majesties name to require yow and everies of yow that yow assemble yourselves at such convenient times and places as yow shalbe thought requisite and fit for that purpose and make further inquirie by all such waies and means as yow may of such other offenders as yow can get knowledge of which in the like sorte (as those whom yow have already presented) are in anie respect undutiful and disobedient suiects in matter of religion now established....we require yow not to faile as yow tender her majesties service and will answeere the contrarie. At Bushopthorp this XXXth October.

Your Lovinge Frinds

E.Ebor, Ro.Lougher, Ra. Coulton, Wm. Palmer, H.Huntingdon, Matth. Hutton

APPENDIX II

*Articles from the 1559 Injunctions*¹²⁴

‘...to the intent that all superstition and hypocrisy crept into divers men’s hearts, may vanish away, they shall not set forth or extol the dignity of any images, relics or miracles; but declaring the abuse of the same, they shall teach that all goodness and health ought to be both asked and looked for only of God, as of the very Author of the same, and none other.’

‘Where also it was in the time of king Edward VI used to have the sacramental bread of common fine bread, it is ordered for the more reverence to be given to these holy mysteries, being the sacraments of the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, that the sacramental bread be made and formed plain, without any figure thereupon, of the same fineness and fashion round, though somewhat bigger in compass and thickness, as the usual bread and wafer, heretofore named singing cakes, which served for the use of private mass.’

Article 22 of the Thirty Nine Articles 1563

‘The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God.’

APPENDIX III

Note on the use of transcripts

For this article, transcripts of the churchwardens’ accounts were used for the parishes of Masham, St Martin’s York and Sheffield. All three appear to have reproduced the orthography of the original, thereby minimising any loss of meaning through translation. However, the manuscript eighteenth-century transcript of the Sheffield

churchwardens' accounts (Sheffield City Archives MSS, CB/160), and its printed version in Hunter's *Hallamshire*, are in the form of extracts. The transcriber has imposed a selection process upon the whole of the information available in the original. This process reflects the concerns of the transcriber, such as the presentation of Protestantism as a progressive force and the omission of evidence indicating resistance to reform. The Masham and St Martin's transcripts (North Yorkshire County Record Office, CRONT 1502; Borthwick Institute, Add.MSS.125) are twentieth-century documents and appear to be unedited versions of the original. The Masham transcript was compared to the original (NYCRO, PR/Mas/3/1/2, Microfilm 995) and some differences are discernible. This could be the result of the transcript being taken from a slightly different original source from that preserved on microfilm, as several versions of the accounts might have been in circulation at the time of the transcription, a situation alluded to by McCall.¹²⁵ The additional meanings and interpretations that an original manuscript provides, such as incidental pen strokes and marginalia, may not be available on transcripts. For instance, a variety of motives could be proposed for the light crossing through of names in the original Masham churchwardens' accounts, (see fn. 90 above).

Figure 1: A pane from the window dedicated to St Martin, St Martin's, Coney St, York

Figure 2: Monument tomb of Sir Marmaduke Wyvill, St Mary the Virgin parish church, Masham, showing a cross on the cushion

Figure 3: Monument tomb of Magdalen Wyvill, St Mary the Virgin parish church, Masham, showing a small cross on the book cover

Figure 4: The pre-Reformation altar stone, St Peter's parish church, Sheffield





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¹ J. S. Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents of the Diocese of York* (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 151-52; J. Hunter, *Hallamshire. A History and Topography of the Parish of Sheffield in the County of York* (1819), p. 141; B(orthwick) I(nstitute), Add.MSS,125, Churchwardens' Accounts for St Martin, Coney Street, York. 1553-1586, transcript by A. Hamilton Thompson, fol. 94. All dates in this article are given as in the modern calendar, so February 1571 represents February 1570/1.

² M. J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, c.1550-1700* (Cambridge, 2000); P. Griffiths, A. Fox, and S. Hindle, *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1996), passim.

³ E. Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (2001), p. 145.

⁴ D. MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603* (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 113.

⁵ E. H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 266.

⁶ C. Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth Century England: Holding their Peace* (Basingstoke, 1998), p. 61.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 209-10.

⁸ T. Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 131.

⁹ A. Foster, 'Churchwardens' Accounts of Early Modern England and Wales; Some Problems to Note, but Much to be Gained', in *The Parish in English Life 1400-1600*, ed. K.L. French, G.G. Gibb and B.A. Kumin (Manchester, 1997), p. 78.

¹⁰ N(orth) Y(orkshire) C(ounty) R(ecord) O(ffice), PR/Mas/3/1/2, Churchwardens' Accounts and Select vestry minute book for St Mary the Virgin, Masham, MIC 995; NYCRO, PR/MAS, C(ounty) R(ecord) O(ffice) N(otes) and T(ranscripts) 1502, Churchwardens' Accounts and Select vestry minute book for St Mary the Virgin, Masham. 1542-1634; BI, Add.MSS.125; S(heffield) C(ity) A(rchives), MSS, CB/160 Church Acct Book from 1557 to 1574, with an Index; Hunter, *Hallamshire*, pp. 139-41. See Appendix III for a note on the use of transcripts.

¹¹ D. D'Avray, 'Popular and Elite Religion: Feastdays and Preaching', in *Elite and Popular Religion*, ed. K. Cooper and J. Gregory, *Studies in Church History*, XLII (Woodbridge, 2006).

¹² Ibid., p. 166.

¹³ B. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community, The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Aldershot, 1996), p. 23; J. Craig, *Reformation, Politics and Polemics: The Growth of Protestantism in East Anglian Market Towns, 1500-1610* (Aldershot, 2001), p. 37.

¹⁴ *Archbishop Grindal's Visitation, 1575 Comperta et detecta Book*, ed. W. J. Sheils, B(orthwick) T(exts) and C(alendars), (York, 1977); *Ecclesiastical Cause Papers at York: Dean and Chapters' Court 1350-1843*, ed. K. M. Longley, BTC (York, 1980); Leeds Univ(ersity) Lib(rary), Special Collections, Large Modern History B-8.5 PUR *The Act Book for the Elizabethan High Commission of York for the years 1561/2-1580*, ed. J. S. Purvis (1979) (I would like to thank Dr Sarah Bastow for directing me to this source); Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*; extracts from High Commission books (BI, R.VI/A.3a), ed. J. C. H. Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York 1558-1791* (Catholic Records Society, 1970); 'Act Books belonging to the Ecclesiastical or Peculiar court of Masham from the year 1583 to the year 1641', ed. J. Fisher, *The History and Antiquities of Masham and Mashamshire* (1865).

¹⁵ R. A. Marchant, *The Church under the Law, Justice Administration and Discipline in the Diocese of York 1560-1640* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 115.

¹⁶ Leeds Univ. Lib., Special Coll., *Act Book*, p. 3.

¹⁷ *The Royal Visitation of 1559, Act Book for the Northern Province*, ed. C. J. Kitching, Surtees Society (SS), CLXXXVII (1975); H. B. McCall, 'The Rising of the North: A new light upon one aspect of it', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* XVIII (1904-5).

¹⁸ Copy of the Will of Christopher Wyvell, ed. Fisher, *History Masham*; abstract from the will of William Swift in *North Country Wills, 1558-1604*, ed. J. W. Clay, SS, CXXI (1912); *York Civic Records* vol. vi (1558-1569) and vol. vii (1570-1578), ed. A. Raine, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, CXII & CXV (1946); *The Solemn Funeral of Francis Talbot E. of Shrewsbury at Sheffield in Com. Ebor. Oct 21st 1560*, printed in Hunter, *Hallamshire*; the monument tomb of Sir Marmaduke Wyvell, Masham Parish Church; the pre-Reformation altar stone, Shrewsbury Chapel, Sheffield Parish Church.

¹⁹ C. Burgess, "'Longing to be Prayed for": death and commemoration in an English parish in the later Middle Ages', in *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. B. Gordon and P. Marshall (Cambridge, 2000), p. 47; Article II of the 1559 Injunctions sets out the cause of concern, see Appendix II.

- ²⁰ J. Phillips, *The Reformation of Images; Destruction of Art in England, 1535-1660* (1973), pp. 22, 27.
- ²¹ See Appendix II.
- ²² M. Aston, *England's Iconoclasts: Laws Against Images 1536-1563* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 304-05.
- ²³ Phillips, *Reformation of Images* p. 117.
- ²⁴ 'Queen Elizabeth's Injunctions 1559', in *Documentary Annals of the reformed Church of England: being a collection of Injunctions, Declarations, Orders, Articles of Inquiry &c. from the year 1546 to the year 1716*, ed. E. Cardwell (Oxford, 1844), p. 234; K. Fincham and N. Tyacke, *Altars Restored, The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547- c.1700* (Oxford, 2007), p. 40.
- ²⁵ Fincham & Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 46.
- ²⁶ See Appendix II.
- ²⁷ Item seven of *Injunctions Given By the Most Reverend Father in Christ, Edmonde, by the Providence of God, Archebishop of Yorke, 1571, (For the Laytie)* E(arly) E(nglish) B(ooks) on L(ine) http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/fulltext?source=configpr.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=D00000998471240000&FILE=../session/1280496331_6202&DISPLAY=AUTHOR
- ²⁸ C. Burgess, and B. Kumin, 'Penitential bequests and Parish Regimes in Late Medieval England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XLVIII (1993), 625-26.
- ²⁹ NYCRO, PR/MAS, CRONT 1502.
- ³⁰ Duffy, *Voices of Morebath*, p. 25.
- ³¹ P. Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford, 2002) p. 46.
- ³² D. Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death, Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 400-01.
- ³³ R. Hutton, 'The English Reformation and the Evidence of Folklore', *Past and Present* CXLVIII, (Aug., 1995) 105.
- ³⁴ J. M. Bennet, 'Conviviality and Charity in Medieval and Early Modern England', *P&P*, CXXXIV (Feb., 1992) 38- 40.
- ³⁵ K. L. French, *The People of the Parish, Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia, 2001), p. 99.
- ³⁶ Duffy, *Voices of Morebath*, p. 120.

- ³⁷ 'Patent of the Twelve Capital Burgesses and Commonality of Sheffield 1554', in G. Tolley, *We of our Bounty: a History of the Sheffield Church Burgesses* (The Memoir Club, 1999), p. 26; D. Hey, *The Fiery Blades of Hallamshire, Sheffield and its Neighbourhood, 1660-1740* (Leicester, 1991), p. 29.
- ³⁸ 'Petition to the Queen from the inhabitants of Sheffield, 1554', in Hunter, *Hallamshire*, p. 133.
- ³⁹ D. J. F. Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power: Religious Guilds in Late Medieval Yorkshire 1389-1547* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 127, 271.
- ⁴⁰ P. M. Tillott, 'The Parish Churches', in *A History of the County of York: the City of York* (1961), ed. Tillott, p. 387.
- ⁴¹ BI, Add.MSS,125, passim.
- ⁴² French, *People of the Parish*, pp. 115-16.
- ⁴³ NYCRO, PR/Mas/3/1/2, MIC 995, fol. 58.
- ⁴⁴ Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, p. 63.
- ⁴⁵ Duffy, *Voices of Morebath*, p. 178.
- ⁴⁶ Hunter, *Hallamshire*, p. 139.
- ⁴⁷ J. R. Watson, *The English Hymn. A Critical and Historical Study* (Oxford, 1997), p. 45.
- ⁴⁸ SCA, MSS. CB/160.
- ⁴⁹ M. Williamson, 'Liturgical Music in the Late Medieval English Parish: Organs and Voices, Ways and Means', in *The Parish in Late Medieval England*, eds C. Burgess and E. Duffy (Harlaxton Medieval Studies, XIV, 2006), p. 221; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 65.
- ⁵⁰ Watt, *Cheap Print*, p. 41.
- ⁵¹ BI, Add.MSS,125, fols 8, 9, 18, 20.
- ⁵² Watt, *Cheap Print*, p. 137.
- ⁵³ BI, Add.MSS,125, fols 45, 57, 60.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, fols 74-75.
- ⁵⁵ J. Maltby, "'By this book': parishioners, the Prayer Book and the established Church' in *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640*, ed. P. Marshall (1997), p. 261. The problematic terms 'Puritan' and 'Anglican' are used as short hand for Word- and sacrament-centred styles of piety respectively, as explicated by P. Lake and M. Questier, in ' *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c.1560-1660* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. xix.
- ⁵⁶ MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation*, p. 62.

- ⁵⁷ Leeds Univ. Lib., Special Coll., *Act Book*, p. 41.
- ⁵⁸ E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (Yale, 1992), pp. 566-69; *The Royal Visitation of 1559*, xxix, xxxiii, xxxv.
- ⁵⁹ D. M. Palliser, *Tudor York* (Oxford, 1979), p. 245; Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy York*, p. 22.
- ⁶⁰ Leeds Univ. Lib., Special Coll., *Act Book*, p. 25.
- ⁶¹ Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, pp. 15-34.
- ⁶² Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy York*, pp. 40, 170.
- ⁶³ Leeds Univ. Lib., Special Coll., *Act Book*.
- ⁶⁴ J. T. Cliffe, *The Yorkshire Gentry, From the Reformation to the Civil War* (1969), p. 169.
- ⁶⁵ NYCRO, PR/MAS, CRONT 1502.
- ⁶⁶ Fisher, *History Antiquities Masham*, p. 109.
- ⁶⁷ 'Copy of the Will of Christopher Wyvell', and 'Copy Will of Margaret Wivell' in Fisher, *History Antiquities Masham*, p. 89.; P. Tyler, *The Ecclesiastical Commission and Catholicism in the North* (Leeds, 1960), pp. 86-87. Tyler relates that Christopher Wyvill and his wife were imprisoned by the High Commission for their Catholicism.
- ⁶⁸ N. Llewellyn, 'Honour in Life, Death and in the Memory: Funeral Monuments in Early Modern England' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th Series, vi (1996), p.190; Phillips, *The Reformation of Images*, p. 119.
- ⁶⁹ *Injunctions, 1571*, EEBO.
- ⁷⁰ P. Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 108, 114.
- ⁷¹ *A List of Roman Catholics in the County of York 1604*, ed. E. Peacock, (1872).
- ⁷² 'Extracts taken from the Act Books belonging to the Ecclesiastical or Peculiar court of Masham' in Fisher, *History Antiquities Masham*, pp.73-77.
- ⁷³ H. B. McCall, 'The Peculiar of Masham cum Kirkby Malzeard', *YAJ*, xx (1909), 252.
- ⁷⁴ *Ecclesiastical Cause Papers at York*, p. 32.
- ⁷⁵ S. L. Bastow, *The Catholic Gentry of Yorkshire, 1536-1642: Resistance and Accommodation* (Lampeter, 2007), p. 139.
- ⁷⁶ NYCRO, PR/MAS, CRONT 1502.
- ⁷⁷ Fisher, *History Antiquities Masham*, p. 333.

⁷⁸ H. Aveling 'The Catholic Recusants of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1558-1790', *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society*, x part VI, (1963), pp. 198, 208. Aveling notes at three occurrences of a Catholic priest with the name Rydall, or similar spelling, operating in the West Riding, post-1571.

⁷⁹ Fisher, *History Antiquities Masham*, p. 333.

⁸⁰ Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, p. 63; Tyler *Ecclesiastical Commission*, p. 64. Tyler suggests that the report to the High Commission was the act of a private lay individual, but the timing could also suggest that Ford was involved.

⁸¹ C. Haigh, 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation', *P&P*, XCIII (Nov., 1981), 44. Haigh claims that Rydall remained in Masham as a Catholic priest.

⁸² NYCRO, PR/MAS, CRONT 1502.

⁸³ Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, pp. 151-52.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ See Appendix I.

⁸⁶ McCall, YAJ, XVIII, 81-82

⁸⁷ R. L. Arundale, 'Edmund Grindal and the Northern Province' *Church Quarterly Review*, CLX (1959), p. 186.

⁸⁸ Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, pp. 151-52; Tyler, *Ecclesiastical Commission*, p.65. Tyler's account of the High Commission records reveals that one of the churchwardens, John Beckwith, was charged with secreting images in his own house at this time (June, 1571). He was ordered to publicly burn the images and pay for a pulpit and Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* to be installed in the church as recompense, along with a fine of over £3 to the Crown.

⁸⁹ Richard Beckwith was churchwarden 1593 and 1594, while his wife was listed as a recusant by Peacock in 1604.

⁹⁰ NYCRO, PR/Mas/3/1/2, MIC 995. These original churchwardens' accounts show that the lines have been scored through, but only lightly so they can still be read.

⁹¹ NYCRO, PR/MAS, CRONT 1502.

⁹² In line with Shagan's theory, *Popular Politics*, p. 22.

⁹³ *The Solemn Funeral of Francis Talbot, E. of Shrewsbury*, Hunter, *Hallamshire*, p. 56-58.

⁹⁴ M. Walton, *Sheffield, Its Story and its Achievements* (Wakefield, 1968), p. 81.

- ⁹⁵ D. Marcombe, 'Swift, Robert (c.1534–1599)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.
- ⁹⁶ Tolley, *We of our Bounty*, p. 26.
- ⁹⁷ Abstract from the will of William Swift in *North Country Wills*, p. 54.
- ⁹⁸ Hunter, *Hallamshire*, p. 153.
- ⁹⁹ J. Hunter, *Collections Concerning the Early History of the Founders of New Plymouth* (1849).
- ¹⁰⁰ P. J. Wallis, 'Sheffield Church Burgesses: A Biographical Register' *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society (THAS)*, VII, Pt 1 (1951), 26.
- ¹⁰¹ Walton, *Sheffield*, pp. 58-59.
- ¹⁰² Hunter, *Hallamshire*, p. 137.
- ¹⁰³ D. Postles, 'An Early Modern Town, Sheffield in the Sixteenth Century' *THAS*, XII (1983), 66.
- ¹⁰⁴ *A List of Roman Catholics*, p. 9. Eleven recusants are listed for Sheffield.
- ¹⁰⁵ C. Cross, 'The Sixteenth Century', in *The History of York: From the Earliest of Times to the Year 2000*, ed. P. Nuttgens (Blackthorne, 2001), p. 163.
- ¹⁰⁶ Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy*, p. 11.
- ¹⁰⁷ Palliser, *Tudor York*, p. 78.
- ¹⁰⁸ Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy*, p. 324.
- ¹⁰⁹ BI, Add.MSS,125.
- ¹¹⁰ *Ecclesiastical Cause Papers at York*, p. 20.
- ¹¹¹ Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy*, p. 171.
- ¹¹² Marchant, *The Church under the Law*, p. 135; F. Heal, 'The Idea of Hospitality in Early Modern England', *P&P*, CII (Feb., 1984), 73.
- ¹¹³ *York Civic Records*, CXII, p. 52; *The Parish Registers of St Martin, Coney Street, York. 1557-1812*, ed. R. B. Cook, Publications of the Yorkshire Parish Register Society, XXXVI (1909). The parish register for St Martin's lists two burials of a Richard Aynley, in 1565 and 1575. If the first of these was not an infant, there may have been two adult Richard Aynleys active in the parish in the early Elizabethan period. Even if this is the case, the likelihood is that they were close relatives and the point remains of a co-ordinated and effective dealing with authority by the parish laity.
- ¹¹⁴ Braddick, *State Formation*, p. 76.
- ¹¹⁵ BI, Add.MSS,125, fol. 68.
- ¹¹⁶ Tyler, *Ecclesiastical Commission*, pp. 8, 12; Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy*, p. 324.

¹¹⁷ BI, Add.MSS,125, fol. 89. This Homily did not become a required purchase until Grindal's Injunctions of 1571, item 4 of the *Injunctions*.

¹¹⁸ Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy*, p. 171.

¹¹⁹ B. Capp, 'Separate Domains? Women and Authority in Early Modern England' in Griffiths, *The Experience of Authority* p. 130.

¹²⁰ K. Wrightson, 'The Politics of the Parish in Early Modern England' in *ibid.*, p. 34.

¹²¹ *York Civic Records*, CXV, p. 117

¹²² Palliser, *Tudor York* p. 78

¹²³ 'Leeds Univ. Lib., Special Coll. *Act Book*, pp. 64-65.

¹²⁴ Cardwell *Documentary Annals* pp. 212, 234.

¹²⁵ M^cCall, YAJ, XX, 233-53. M^cCall's notes suggest the existence of two manuscripts.