Furnishing Sir Christopher Wren's churches:

Anglican identity in late seventeenth-century London

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Text

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines what the liturgical furnishings of Sir Christopher Wren's churches can tell us about Anglican identity in late seventeenth-century London. It argues that the building of so many churches in a short timescale gave the Church of England a unique opportunity to express its identity in the particular context of its re-establishment after the Restoration.

This study begins by looking at those involved in the furnishing process – within the parishes and among master-craftsmen – to establish their respective roles and influences. In particular it looks at how the emergence of a new genre of church furnishings in the classical style came about, and the intellectual culture which informed it.

This thesis considers the mandate in the *Canons Ecclesiastical* that pulpits be "comely and decent" and demonstrates that this was a sophisticated philosophy which influenced how materials were selected and treated, and how wood-carving was applied to items according to the hierarchy of their spiritual status and liturgical purpose.

The seventeenth-century Church was pre-occupied with proclaiming its virtues as the best of Churches, in response to popish and dissenting attacks. This thesis argues that the new church furnishings, and especially the reredoses, performed a key role in this polemical discourse. It considers how reredoses and screens were used to assert the Church's claim to spiritual descent from Biblical Israel and the Early Church through references to Solomon's Temple and early Christian worship – with divine worship of the purest times. It then looks at iconography which declared Anglican loyalty to the Stuart dynasty and episcopal governance.

The thesis examines the furnishings of five churches which Wren himself designed, and considers what can be learned about his approach to design and whether any conclusions may be drawn about his own churchmanship.

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A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY AND OTHER CONVENTIONS

I maintain that it becomes legitimate to use the term "Anglican" after the passing of the Act of Uniformity 1662 to refer to those who were committed to the re-established Church of England. This does not exclude those Anglicans who were sympathetic to dissenters, or who were willing to contemplate one or other form of comprehension or toleration but who, in the case of toleration, nevertheless saw their future within the Church of England.

I use the capitalised "Church" to refer to the institution, the Church of England, and "church" to the parochial building.

Although Wren was only closely involved in providing the furnishings for five churches, I use the term "Wrenian" for the genre as a whole, to reflect the influence which his architectural style had on joinery, as much as on brick and stone.

Quotations are reproduced with original spellings, save for adaptations of characters no longer used in modern typography, and I have rendered "ye" as "the."

Where possible, dates are given in new-style, though there are cases – especially when referring to churchwardens accounts – when it is not possible to identify a particular date within the old-style year and hence determine the correct new-style year. These are identified in the footnotes.

Where a footnote cites parish records, if it is clear from the text which parish is referred to, the footnote cites the document reference only. Rarely, if it is not clear from the text which parish is referred to, then the footnote also names the parish.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author, with the exception of the translation by David Wyatt of a chapter from William Beveridge's *Synodikon*, set out in Appendix H. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In 1667, seven leading parishioners of the parish of St. Mildred Poultry took up the theme of lamentation and repentance which gripped Londoners in the aftermath of the Great Fire of London. In the parish donors' book, they declared:

> Reflecting upon that heavy Judgment of the late dreadful fire … [and] acknowledging that that great Wrath was not yet in proportion to our … Iniquity … [and] might have buried us in the ruins of our houses and mingled our consumed Carcases with the ashes of the Citty, … [we resolve] to endeavour the restoreing of those meanes of Religion and Worship, which for our Sins have been cut of from us, to raise monuments to the glory of him that hath smitten us, and being assured that no People or Nation under heaven ever prospered where the Divine Worship was publickly neglected … we have subscribed towards the Rebuilding of that Church with the lowest prostration of our Soules.[1]

The Fire had been an act of God's judgement upon a sinful nation, and rebuilding the City's churches was a necessary act of expiation.[2] The iniquities of which the seven parishioners spoke included regicide, civil war, the spoliation of the Church, and probably the scandalous living of the Court and of much of London society. They then committed to give £325 and one ton of iron towards the rebuilding of the church. As events turned out, the building of the new churches was taken out of the hands of parishes, and most of these parishioners later became benefactors to the furnishing of them, in this case from the end of 1674 onwards.[3]

The declaration by the St. Mildred parishioners tells us that rebuilding and furnishing the new churches was a religious act, and not simply the replacement of a lost public amenity. At the direction of parish clergy, vestrymen, and lay benefactors, craftsmen created a visual and material expression of how the Restoration Church of England understood itself. Re-established in law

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[1] Thomas Milbourn, *The History of the Church of St. Mildred the Virgin, Poultry, in the City of London: with some particulars of the Church of St. Mary Colechurch (destroyed in the great fire, A.D. 1666)*, (London: John Russell Smith, 1872, 67-69, quoting (the now lost) "Donors' Book.")

[2] A view propagated by churchmen like Richard Allestree and Archbishop Sheldon. John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1991), 54-55.

[3] LMA/P69/MIL2/B/001/MS00062/001, fol. 93v.

but far from secure, the Church took the unique opportunity created by the Fire to proclaim its character, its ancestry, and its virtues through the rebuilding of the City's churches. But it was in the carved, liturgical furnishings of those churches, more than in their architecture, that assertions about the Church's identity were most evident. These furnishings – and the identity which they declared – are the subject of this thesis.

LITERATURE

Unfortunately, not one of the interiors of Sir Christopher Wren's new churches survives unaltered. Visiting today, it requires a deliberate effort of imagination to ignore the changes made in the nineteenth century, and still more those of 1940-41. Nor do we have any pictorial representation of them from the period. Restoration artists were primarily concerned with portraiture and courtly society, and no English artist chose to do for the new City churches what the Dutch artists Pieter Saenredam and Gerrit Berckheyde did for churches in the Low Countries (Fig. 0.1).[4] One must therefore imagine fresh, unstained oak, high box-pews, and triple-decker pulpits before even beginning to consider what might be important in points of detail.

We do, however, have a set of descriptions written by Edward Hatton, published in 1708 in *A New View of London, or an Ample Account of that City in Two Volumes*.[5] In his introduction, Hatton acknowledges his debt to John Stowe's 1598 *Survey of London* and states that he set out to do for post-Fire London what Stowe had done for the earlier city; he was an enthusiast for "this Famous and Flourishing City."[6] His descriptions of London's buildings are a valuable inventory of the City at the start of a new century, and his name will recur throughout this thesis. However, while conveying his admiration for the churches' grandeur and newness, his descriptions are largely actuarial. He lists features in a way which makes them difficult to reconstruct in the mind's eye, and he seems unable to translate his visual sensibility adequately into words. Bridget Cherry describes him as "enthusiastically descriptive rather than critical" and his descriptions of the churches in particular as "painstaking [and] sometimes rather pedestrian."[7] He clearly imagined his readers holding their copy while visiting the sites he described, rather than reading at home, trying to picture them in their imaginations. His account therefore provides an important point of reference, but is limited in its usefulness in seeking to understand the beliefs

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[4] Andrew Spicer, *Calvinist Churches in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 122-123, 148.

[5] Edward Hatton, *A New View of London, or an Ample Account of that City in Two Volumes* (London: 1708).

[6] Ibid., A2. John Stowe, *A Survey of London Written in the Year 1598* (London: 1598); J.F. Merritt, "The Reshaping of Stowe's 'Survey': Munday, Strype and the Protestant City," in *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720* ed. J.F. Merritt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 52-88.

[7] Bridget Cherry, "Edward Hatton's New View of London," *Architectural History* 44 (2001), 99, 96.

and mindset of those who furnished the new churches, and the doctrinal and ecclesial messages they wanted to convey in them.

A century later, antiquarians such as James Malcom and Thomas Allen began to provide more detailed descriptions, and offered artistic and religious opinions in a way that Hatton mostly did not.[8] Malcolm complained "that the rector and churchwardens [of St. Andrew Holborn] were strangely inattentive or ignorant" when, in 1718, they agreed to a stained glass window which, Malcolm feared, was dangerously close to promoting the idea of the "real presence" in the eucharist.[9] Allen was offended by neglect at St. Augustine Watling Street, and grumbled that "the obscurity of [the font's] situation, added to the appropriation of the pew in which it stands as a receptacle for rubbish, renders it scarcely visible."[10] Both brought an early nineteenth-century mindset to their commentary and neither showed any desire to understand the original intentions of those who fitted out the churches. Writing before the birth of the Oxford Movement, they probably felt no need to comment on liturgical practices, as their readers would readily have understood the Wren church setting of Anglican worship.

More surprisingly, though modern architectural historians have often touched upon the church furnishings, none has put them at the centre of a study. Understandably, when considering Wren's churches, architectural historians are mainly interested in the fabric of the buildings. How did Wren's Office actually work? Can we identify the contributions of Robert Hooke, Edward Woodroffe, John Oliver, and Nicholas Hawksmoor?[11] What was the inspiration for the Wren style? The furnishings are understandably subsidiary. Even where Margaret Whinney, for example, mistakenly asserts that Wren was responsible for the furnishings as well as for the buildings, she nevertheless shows no desire to apply the same analytical processes to them as she does to their surroundings.[12] Kerry Downes acknowledges with clear regret that the loss of many church furnishings, or their extensive alteration, fundamentally affects our conception of the churches as places of liturgical worship. But he limits his comments to a single paragraph, before moving on to discuss the architecture of the buildings.[13] In the relevant volume of the *Buildings of England* series, Nikolaus Pevsner and Simon Bradley note the influence which the

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[8] James Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum*, 4 vols (London: Rivington, 1802-07); Thomas Allen, *The History and Antiquities of London, Westminster, Southwark, and Parts Adjacent*. 5 vols (London: George Virtue, 1827-33).

[9] Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum*, vol. 2, 201.

[10] Allen, *Antiquities of London*, vol. 3, 525.

[11] In this vein, Howard Colvin, "The Church of St. Mary Aldermary," *Architectural History* 24 (1981): 24-31+145, proposes John Oliver as the architect of St. Mary Aldermary; and Anthony Geraghty, "Nicholas Hawksmoor and the Wren City Church Steeples," *The Georgian Group Journal* X (2000): 1-14, examines Hawksmoor's role in the design of the church steeples.

[12] Margaret Whinney, *Wren* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), 48-49, where she asserts that "Wren's pulpits were carefully placed" and "In every church except St. Clement Danes … Wren placed his altar against the flat east wall," going on to say with further inaccuracy that the altar was "raised above the main floor by a flight of steps."

[13] Kerry Downes, *The Architecture of Wren* (Reading: Redhedge, 1988), 55.

furnishings of the Wren churches had "throughout England and its nascent Empire" but they go no further, despite evident respect for what they find inside the churches.[14]

In what remains the fullest examination of all aspects of Wren's churches, Paul Jeffery's 1996 *The City Churches of Sir Christopher Wren* was the first to pay closer attention to the furnishings. He recognises that Wren handed over "bare boxes, without furniture, without fittings," and that "even before the Commissioners' craftsmen moved out, the parish craftsmen moved in."[15] The title of the relevant chapter in his book – "Christian Worship: The Liturgy, Fittings and Furnishings" – shows his understanding that liturgy and furnishings need to be considered as connected themes. It is an important first reminder that church buildings and their furnishings have a very particular purpose; to approach them without asking questions about how the material relates to that purpose will inevitably result in only a part-formed understanding. Jeffery then goes on to give his opinion that it was not until the eighteenth century that church *architecture* began to reflect liturgical practice in the same way that seventeenth-century church *furnishings* already had.[16]

Three art and architectural historians researching in related fields have recently shown the value of looking at domestic and ecclesiastical decoration with the same rigour as, and in the context of, their architectural setting. In particular, they have focused on questions of identity. Pierre de la Ruffinière du Prey's study of Hawksmoor's churches makes a strong connection between Hawksmoor's church architecture and theology, and some of his observations on church interiors apply as much to the Wren churches as they do to those of the generation after.[17] In particular, he demonstrates that Anglican interest in the Early Church pervaded Hawksmoor's design process.[18] Tara Hamling's *Decorating the Godly Household* engages with the critical question of how it was that decorative religious imagery came to be widespread in the houses of sober puritans after the Reformation and up to 1660.[19] How do we explain this phenomenon in an extended period punctuated by iconoclasm? Christine Stevenson's *The City and the King: Architecture and Politics in Restoration London* examines the relationship between the kings Charles II and James II and the City authorities, as worked out and expressed through architecture.[20] Stevenson makes clear that Londoners recognised that architecture was used, and

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[14] Simon Bradley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England. London: The City Churches* (London: Yale University Press, 2002 edition), 34.

[15] Paul Jeffery, *The City Churches of Sir Christopher Wren* (London: Hambledown Press, 1996), 152.

[16] Ibid., 151-163.

[17] Pierre de la Ruffinière du Prey, *Hawksmoor's London Churches: Architecture and Theology* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000).

[18] Ibid., 60-70 *et passim*.

[19] Tara Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain*, (London: Yale University Press, 2010).

[20] Christine Stevenson, *The City and the King: Architecture and Politics in Restoration London* (London: Yale University Press, 2013).

was meant to be understood, as a conveyor of meaning and polemic, whether in the form of the temporary arches erected to mark Charles II's coronation procession, or in the planning and rebuilding of London after the Fire.[21] The same was true for the new churches. Even though the scope of her proposition necessarily focuses more on architecture than on fittings, Stevenson interweaves discussion of the churches' fabric and furnishings, liturgy and meaning in a thought-provoking analysis, and she comments specifically on the "chancel screens" erected in two churches (discussed in Chapter 6 of this thesis).[22] Stevenson's discussion of fittings is limited to this one feature, but the questions which she asks about architecture and the screens also need to be asked about the rest of the furnishings.

Each in their own field, du Prey, Hamling, and Stevenson demonstrate the value of contextualising spatial, material, and visual art in their political and religious environment. This thesis endorses that approach and likewise aims to embrace the church-historical context, the better to understand the significance of the Wren church furnishings. If we are to find indicators of ecclesial identity in the church furnishings, then there needs to be a historical context in which that identity is located. That identity needs to be expressed in word and action in order to complement and explain its material expression in the form of the furnishings. This objective is made easier by the rebirth of Restoration historical scholarship since the 1980s and the fact that the period has long since ceased to be the poor relation of the Civil War, including in relation to church history. Ian Green's and John Spurr's works rectified Robert Bosher's assertions that the restored Church of England was predominantly the restoration of a Laudian hierarchy. They both also established an understanding of the Anglican "eco-system," encompassing its institutions, clergy, laity, and the characteristics of its devotional life.[23] Justin Champion, Mark Goldie, Tim Harris, and Paul Seaward have all rightly placed matters of religion at the centre of our understanding of Restoration politics.[24] The chapters in recent volumes edited by Grant Tapsell and N.H. Keeble have, by their diversity, highlighted the sheer complexity of English political and religious life in this period, and made clear that there remains no shortage of fields in need of further research. In particular, the theme of the fragility and insecurity of the Church which runs through several of these essays – internally, in its relations with the Crown, and in its

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[21] Ibid., 95-147.

[22] Ibid., 259-289.

[23] Ian M. Green, *The Re-Establishment of the Church of England, 1660-1663* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). Spurr, *Restoration Church*; Robert S. Bosher, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement: The Influence of the Laudians, 1649-1662* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 195.

[24] Justin Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and Its Enemies, 1660-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Tim Harris, Paul Seaward, and Mark Goldie, ed., *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990); Paul Seaward, *The Cavalier Parliament and the Reconstruction of the Old Regime, 1661-1667* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

response to dissent – will find echoes in this thesis.[25] In relation to London more specifically, Gary de Krey's *London and the Restoration* vividly sets the turbulent backdrop against which the building work on the churches was carried out, though his depiction of London Anglicans is shadowy compared with that of dissenters.[26]

The most notable historical contribution to have considered church furnishings in the seventeenth century has been Kenneth Fincham's and Nicholas Tyacke's *Altars Restored*, which concludes with the peaceful fitting out of Wren's churches with raised and railed altars after a century of violent contention on the matter.[27] *Altars Restored* demonstrates the profit to be gained by connecting politics, religion, church liturgy, and furnishings. It approaches an emblematic material aspect of the English religious settlement – the communion table – from a historical perspective in much the same way that du Prey, Hamling, and Stevenson approach their subject matters from an art historical perspective – as a golden thread for a larger proposition. It also presents a general challenge to treat the liturgical context of seventeenth century England – including church fittings – as a serious feature of historical analysis. However, it is telling that Fincham and Tyacke have to look back to 1948 – to G.W.O. Addleshaw's and Frederick Etchells' *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship* – to find an authority which discusses their historical field with a suitable focus on material culture.[28]

THESIS

Against the background of the current state of historical and art historical understanding of Wren's churches, the central purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that the furnishings in the City churches were intended to make explicit declarations about the identity, ancestry, beliefs, and values of the re-established Church of England. Establishing meaningful connections between the material fabric and questions of identity will enrich our understanding of the Restoration Church, its clergy, and the laity who gave it their loyalty. Inherent within this objective are the related questions of how the furnishings were commissioned and designed, and how they spoke their messages. Accordingly, the relevant chapter headings and sections within chapters are structured around the notions of "making" and "meaning."

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[25] Grant Tapsell, ed., *The Later Stuart Church, 1660-1714* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012); N.H. Keeble, ed., *'Settling the Peace of the Church', 1662 Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[26] Gary de Krey, *London and the Restoration, 1659-1683* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[27] Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c.1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[28] G.W.O. Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship: An Inquiry into the Arrangements for Public Worship in the Church of England from the Reformation to the Present Day* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948).

All architecture embodies and declares some form of identity, be it political, religious, social, or in other forms. The turbulence of the previous century meant that the new London churches were built and furnished in response to a more than usually complex inherited memory, and it is this which makes them especially worthy of examination. Old church buildings which had become a little neglected after the Reformation had been restored in the 1620s-30s, and sometimes reluctant congregations had experienced the imposition upon them of Laudian notions of the Beauty of Holiness.[29] During the Civil War, churches had once more been subjected to a campaign of iconoclasm, and communion tables had been put back in their Elizabethan and Jacobean positions – set lengthways in the chancel or nave – and their rails destroyed.[30] The abolition of the Church of England and expulsion of many royalist clergy from their livings had seen English parishes become less uniform, and freer to adopt their own preferred style of worship and systems of governance than ever before. In 1660, the collapse of the Protectorate and the return of the King did not at the time make a full restoration of the Church of England inevitable, but this is indeed what happened. Re-establishment was accompanied by the Great Ejection of ministers who refused to conform to the new prayer book, and in London sixty-one percent of parishes saw one or more of their clergy removed.[31] They were replaced by an influx of young Anglican clergy, a disproportionate number of whom would go on to become bishops.[32] The London that burned down had long been England's most politically problematic city, and the London that was rebuilt remained so, with, in the new lexicon of Restoration politics, the greatest concentration of Whigs and dissenters in the country.[33] Questions of religion were the pre-eminent questions of State policy, and London churchmen played a key role in contributing to public debate. This was the period of the Popish Plot, the Exclusion Crisis, the period of "Tory Reaction" against Whigs and dissenters, the Personal Rule of Charles II, the Rye House Plot, the accession of a Catholic king, the Monmouth Rebellion, and the Glorious Revolution.[34] There was regular unrest in the streets, and, at times, self-appointed vigilante groups raided houses in search of illegal dissenting meetings, and delivered the people they found to jail.[35]

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[29] The major theme of Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, but in particular 176-273.

[30] Julie Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm During the English Civil War* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 61-98; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 274-280.

[31] M.R. Matthews, *Calamy Revised: Being a Revision of Edmund Calamy's Account of the Ministers and Others Ejected and Silenced, 1660-2* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), passim; Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 42-52; Paul Seaward, *The Cavalier Parliament and the Reconstruction of the Old Regime, 1661-1667* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 162-195.

[32] Appendix B.

[33] De Krey, *London and the Restoration*, 54-66.

[34] Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 42-104, provides a concise account of these events as they affected the Church.

[35] Mark Goldie, "The Hilton Gang: Terrorising Dissent in 1680s London," *History Today* 47, no. 10 (October 1997): 26-32.

Wren's churches were built and furnished in the midst of this turmoil. Parish vestry minutes might lead one to think that vestries carried on fitting out their churches, untroubled by events outside their doors. But with architecture so thoroughly politicised, the churches clearly cannot be thought of as neutral spaces, simply conceived as a response to a natural disaster. Nor was the provision of their furnishings simply the practical provision of joinery to provide seats for congregations, and a platform for preaching. These were contested spaces which spoke of belief and religious identity. They had been fought over, and repeatedly re-ordered in recent generations, and many Londoners in the 1670s and afterwards must have thought that they might be so again in the future. The Fire gave the Church of England an opportunity to express its ecclesial identity with a thoroughness not seen before, and without the practical constraints inherent in modifying old buildings. That the Church was able to do so on such a scale and in such a short period of time makes these themes all the more meaningful and worthy of consideration. Whereas churches built in ones and twos across a long period can easily be understood as exceptional, the larger the number of examples in a shorter period, the greater the likelihood that we are seeing the emergence of a pattern which calls for interpretation.

SOURCES

The sources from which we can draw in order to answer these questions of identity are material, documentary, and literary, and their combination is remarkably rich.

The material furnishings

Although there are no surviving unaltered Wren church interiors, a large number of the principal liturgical furnishings do survive in a good state of conservation, both in their original locations and elsewhere. The principal losses have been triple-decker pulpits, every one of which has been dismantled, with the preaching part retained but moved to a less prominent position. Many sounding-boards, and most of the reader's and clerk's desks, have also been lost, as have nearly all box-pews – mostly removed during the nineteenth century, their timbers recycled as open benches. Most of the surviving reredoses have been raised on additional steps to reflect the liturgical practices of the Oxford Movement, but their appearance is little changed from when first installed. Many items from churches which were demolished in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were relocated by the diocese of London to newly-built churches, whose construction was sometimes partly financed by the sale of the site and materials of the

demolished Wren church.[36] These remain available for examination, and their preservation has been some small compensation for the loss of Wren's buildings. Appendix A identifies the current locations of the surviving furnishings, and the fate of those which do not survive.

The original disposition of fittings in the churches can be determined with some confidence from a combination of sources. First, a small number of original drawings for pew plans survive, and they make up in importance for what they lack in quantity, in particular in the way they shed light on the commissioning process. These will be referred to at several points in this thesis. The reliability of these plans is endorsed by engravings from the eighteenth century onwards, and by photographs from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Care needs to be taken with some engravings, though generally when an engraver exercises his fancy the effect is fairly obvious: there are several engravings of St. Stephen Walbrook, for example, which depict it without any furnishings at all, the engraver's objective being to emphasise the Roman stateliness of the church's architecture (Fig. 0.2). Other engravings which aim for a more factual representation are especially helpful in emphasising how prominent the pews were as physical structures in the churches (such as at St. Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange; Fig. 0.3). The engravings in George Godwin's *The Churches of London* (1838) are particularly useful in this regard.[37] Most of the lost churches survived into the photographic age and, generally, the earliest to be demolished had not been materially altered, meaning that we have a few photographs which depict the original appearance (such as of All Hallows Bread Street, demolished in 1877, Fig. 0.4). The fullest collections of these photographs are held in the Historic England collections at Swindon and the collection of the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, now at the Bishopsgate Institute, London; both of these collections are available online.[38]

Parish records

The administrative history of the furnishings is to be found in the parish vestry minutes and churchwardens' accounts, almost all of which are held by the London Metropolitan Archives. The survival rate of these documents is higher than for most other parts of the country for the same period. As will be described, the Wren Office provided the furnishings for two churches, and the records for these are thorough and well-presented. The loss of the records for Christ Church Newgate, St. Clement Danes, and St. James Piccadilly is particularly regrettable given that these were the large basilican churches closest to Wren's ideal model.

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[36] Jeffery, *City Churches*, 165-169.

[37] George Godwin, *The Churches of London: A History and Description of the Ecclesiastical Edifices of the Metropolis* (London: Tilt, 1838-39).

[38] https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/englands-places/results?place=London,%20C%20of%20Lon%20(Place)&terms=london&type=englandsplaces&i=0&wm=1; http://internetserver.bishopsgate.org.uk/results. All image collections consulted are listed in the Bibliography.

For all their quirks and shortcomings – especially in matters of financial accounting – these records have provided abundant fare for this thesis. In some individual cases, there may only be occasional minutiae, but the combination of evidence across all the parishes enables us to construct a narrative of the process of commissioning, designing, and financing the furnishings. Occasional incidents are recorded which give insight to the relationship dynamics between clergy, vestrymen, and craftsmen, and sometimes between parishes. We see how parishes took ideas from each other, how the strains of financing were managed, and how disputes were handled. Although there is very little overt discussion of matters of churchmanship or political loyalties, the names of benefactors, and details of the items they donated, are extremely valuable in drawing conclusions about motivations for giving and the nature of parochial loyalties.

Contemporary writings and etymology

One of the distinctive attributes of church furnishings is that there is a corpus of writings attached to them which speak to their meaning. The *Canons Ecclesiastical* of the Church of England, its *Homilies*, the rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer*, and the Visitation Articles used by bishops when inspecting their dioceses collectively established a set of rules and expectations, and a set of enforcement measures which was critical to ensuring uniformity. The fact that these requirements existed at all is important for this thesis, as they make plain the great significance attached to the furnishings: they were part of an expression of belief and identity. In these requirements, the choice of particular words is often as important as the purely factual mandate that a particular item of furniture be provided; and there is a rich hinterland of meaning which repays careful consideration.[39]

Works of commentary from the period are critical in giving meaning to the church furnishings, especially in relation to the Early Church and "primitive practice" in worship. On the whole, works of ecclesiastical scholarship written after the Restoration are less combative in tone than those before the Civil War, though this is not to say that the Patristic writings of Restoration churchmen like William Beveridge and Sir George Wheler are not partial in their propositions about the nature and ancestry of the Church of England.[40] There is a clear continuity of interest in such subjects across the whole century. The recent scholarship of Jean-Louis Quantin and

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[39] See in particular the discussion of "comely and decent" in Chapter 3.

[40] William Beveridge, *Synodikon sive pandectae Canonum SS. Apostolorum, et Conciliorum ab Ecclesia Graeca receptorum* (London: 1672); George Wheler, *An Account of the Churches and Places of Assembly of the Primitive Christians* (London: 1689).

Achsah Guibbory has enriched our understanding in this area, and is also relevant to the material discussed in this thesis.[41]

There are two areas where the absence of contemporary written material is striking. First, we have only occasional and indirect written comments from Archbishops Sheldon and Sancroft of Canterbury, and Bishops Henchman and Compton of London, which shed any light on their attitude to church buildings or furnishings in general. As regards the architecture of Wren's churches, this has always left a gap in our understanding, with the result that they are too easily considered purely for the stylistic origins of their architecture, and we miss the impact of whatever discussions there must have been between Wren and his ecclesiastical clients.[42]

The second absence is that of writings by critics of the Church of England, in marked contrast to the half-century before the Restoration. When the puritan lawyer, William Prynne, inspected Archbishop Laud's chapel at Lambeth Palace in the 1640s, he showed an almost art-historical engagement with visual form. For example, his description in *Canterburies Doome* of the chapel's stained glass is evocative and detailed, and he showed a grasp of the conventions of typology, and even identified the printed sources in Laud's library which had been used to design them.[43] No equivalent critique exists for the Wren church interiors. Indeed the few dissenting observations which do comment directly, do so favourably. John Fairfax, presbyterian minister of the newly built meeting house in Ipswich, commented on the "Stately, Magnificent and Sumptuous Structures [of] our publick [Anglican] Churches" saying:

> Had we the liberty of those places we should seek no other: But these Doors being shut against us, it is our necessity and not our choice to Worship God as conveniently as we can in meaner places.[44]

His own "meaner place" nevertheless had fine panelling around the gallery fronts and a handsomely carved and festooned pulpit which would not look out of place in a Wren church. The Baptist Thomas Delaune likewise counted the "Churches beautified with excellent various

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[41] Jean-Louis Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity: The Construction of a Confessional Identity in the 17th Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Achsah Guibbory, *Christian Identity, Jews, and Israel in 17th-Century England* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[42] Anthony Geraghty and Mark Kirby, "Rebuilding the City Churches after the Great Fire of London: the case of All Hallows the Great, Thames Street," in *Places of Worship in Britain and Ireland, 1550-1688*, ed. Paul Barnwell (Donington: Paul Watkins Publishing, forthcoming), discusses what can be deduced of the Commission's instructions to Wren.

[43] William Prynne, *Canterburies Doome, or the first part of a complete History of the Commitment, Trial, &c., of William Laud* (London: 1646), 58-61. Prynne's approach is discussed in James Jago, "The Dissemination and Reassessment of Private Religious Space in Early Modern England, 1600-1660," (PhD thesis, University of York, 2012), 172-190.

[44] John Fairfax, *Primitivae Synagogae: A Sermon Preached at Ipswich, April 26, 1700 at the Opening of a New Erected Meeting-House* (London: 1700), 18.

Towers, and Fronts of true *Roman* Architecture" among the features which had made London "infinitely more Beautiful, more Commodious" than before the Fire.[45]

SCOPE AND STRUCTURE

Scope

The scope of this thesis is defined in relation to the carved woodwork of the churches, which accounts for most of the key liturgical fittings, and thus those which speak most to the question of ecclesial identity. The earliest recorded furnishing activity was at St. Vedast in 1671, and the last to be completed were at St. Mary Somerset in 1698.[46] By the time Hatton published his *New View* in 1708, some of the earliest churches to be built and furnished were already starting to make decorative alterations. At St. Mary-le-Bow in 1704, when, *inter alia*, the parish provided its reredos with "Some Additional Ornament," installed new doorcases, and embellished the higher-ranking pews.[47] However, while taking the date of *New View* as a notional end-date, this thesis concentrates purely on the first campaign of furnishing in each church.

Outwith the scope of this thesis are several other features which nevertheless have merit of their own and would properly feature in a broader – and longer – study. Most notably, it omits discussion of pews except insofar as they relate to more liturgical fittings, or which shed light on the commissioning process. Two existing doctoral theses exist – by Kevin Dillow and Catherine Wright – which ably address questions relating to pews in an ecclesiological and societal context.[48] Both of these have been frequently cited, though neither has been published. Also absent from this thesis is any discussion of fonts and font-covers, organ cases, church plate, and painted glass – absent in the new churches except for armorial glass.

Numerically, the churches in this thesis are mostly those which Wren built to replace the ones destroyed in the Fire. However, it also includes the churches which Wren built further west: St. Andrew Holborn, St. Clement Danes, and St. James Piccadilly. These were private commissions for prestigious new churches in a social context which was different to those in the

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[45] Thomas Delaune, *The Present State of London* (London: 1681), 462.

[46] St. Michael-le-Querne, Churchwardens' Accounts 1605-1717, LMA/P69/MIC4/B/005/MS02895/002, n.p., Account of 1671; LMA/CLC/313/J/002/MS25539/010, fol. 3v.

[47] LMA/P69/MRY7/B/002A/MS05137, n.p., 17 May 1704, 26 July 1705, 14 August 1705.

[48] Kevin Dillow, "The social and ecclesiastical significance of church seating arrangements and pew disputes, 1500-1740," (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1990); Catherine Wright, "The Spatial Ordering of Community in English Church Seating, c.1550-1700," (PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2002).

City. The thesis also covers those churches with whose building Wren himself was less involved, such as St. Mary Aldermary and St. Michael Cornhill.[49]

Illustrative examples have been drawn as broadly as possible from across the whole body of the churches. Two, however, remain particularly elusive: St. Mary Somerset and St. Michael Bassishaw. A combination of the probable early alteration of the interiors, the absence of surviving documentation, and the happenstance of little or no illustration of any sort mean that these do not feature greatly in this thesis. A third – St. Anne Soho – is sufficiently elusive that it cannot be attributed to Wren with confidence and is not included in this thesis.

Structure

The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that the furnishings in the City churches were commissioned and designed to reflect the identity of the re-established Church of England. It is therefore about making connections between the material furnishings and the members of the Church. The structure of this thesis reflects those connections, beginning with the people and then moving on to the key categories of fittings.

The thesis is divided into three parts. Part I is a *dramatis personae*. Chapter 1 identifies and analyses the impact of the people who, in their various ways, influenced the decision-making processes surrounding the new furnishings: the bishops, clergy, vestrymen, and benefactors. It is this cohort of men and women whose perceptions of the Church of England were being represented and portrayed in the woodwork of the churches. The chapter considers the impact of the Church's organisational structures on how the fittings were commissioned and the significance of the nature of wider parochial relations, especially in relation to the financing of the furnishings.

Chapter 2 introduces the master-craftsmen involved and looks at the relationship between them and the vestries. It draws upon contracts and other parish records to ask what role parochial administrative processes had upon the design process, and also seeks to establish the role of external influences on these craftsmen in the evolution of the Wrenian style of church furnishings.

Part II examines themes and features which are to be found across all the new churches, and which are thus indicators of Anglican identity which were common across all types of churchmanship of the period. It begins in Chapter 3 with an examination of the pulpit. Of

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[49] Jeffery, *City Churches*, 274-276, 301-303.

particular interest here is the requirement of the *Canons Ecclesiastical* that the pulpit be "comely and decent."[50] While only specified in relation to the pulpit, understanding the meaning of "comely and decent" is also relevant for the other furnishings, as it gives insight to the mindset and expectations of those commissioning them.

Discussion of the reredos is split between three chapters, reflecting the complexity of the stylistic origins of the reredos which, in its Wrenian conception, was a new feature to English parish churches. Chapter 4 seeks to identify the conceptual origins of the design in order to understand the likely way in which parishioners would respond to the reredos. In particular, the chapter explains why parishioners accepted such a grand and seemingly image-laden structure so readily. Chapter 5 then analyses the meaning of the extensive and complex iconography of the reredos in order to identify the theological, ecclesial, and political messages being conveyed.

Moving from analysis of features which can be found in all the Wren churches, Part III then addresses a small number of cases where a single, more influential, guiding hand was at work. In these instances, it becomes easier to discuss whether a particular type of churchmanship is being expressed and, if so, by whom.

Chapter 6 continues the theme of identity but in the more particular circumstances of the two churches which were furnished with screens – All Hallows-the-Great and St. Peter Cornhill. The chapter asks what was being expressed by these screens, whether they provide evidence for a broader sense of Anglican identity, and what conclusions can be drawn in relation to the remaining fifty churches which did not install screens.

Lastly, Chapter 7 turns to the churches whose furnishings were designed by Sir Christopher Wren himself – his reredoses in particular. Where Wren was both the architect of the fabric of these churches and the designer of their furnishings, this naturally resulted in a greater capacity for planning the two so as directly to complement each other. This chapter examines what we can deduce from these furnishings about Wren's own churchmanship and that of his clients.

Writing in 1638, the anonymous author of *De Templis* wrote of church chancels that "there we behold the mystery of our Redemption lively expressed."[51] It is a motto which would well suit the rest of this thesis also.

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[50] Gerald Bray, ed., *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), 377.

[51] R.T., *De Templis, a Treatise of Temples Wherein Is Discovered the Ancient Manner of Building, Consecrating, and Adorning of Churches* (London: 1638), 200.

PART I

CHAPTER 1

CHURCHMEN

AND

THE LONDON PARISHES

INTRODUCTION

A casual visitor to Wren's London churches in 1700 would have been struck by how harmonious and uniform the furnishings of the new churches were, in their form and deployment, if not their details. He would not have been surprised, however, as he would have known that uniformity was the hallmark of the Church of England, re-established by the Act of Uniformity 1662. This Act recreated the episcopal structures and forms of worship of the Church of England but both its name and substance made clear that uniformity was a requirement to be imposed rather than a national expression of a pre-existing religious unity.

At the time of the Restoration, early presbyterian hopes of a broad Church settlement had been fostered by Charles II's Declaration of Breda and the Worcester House Declaration (in April and October 1660 respectively) – but they were to be short-lived.[1] The election of the Cavalier Parliament and the leadership of the episcopal party of Gilbert Sheldon, newly installed as Bishop of London, achieved a restoration of the Church in very much the same form as it had existed before the War.[2] The importance of an all-pervasive uniformity had become apparent during the proceedings of the Savoy Conference, held between the leaders of the presbyterians and episcopalians in 1661. At the beginning, while ostensibly seeking to create a settlement broad enough to comprehend both episcopalians and sober puritans, the parties debated *adiaphora*, or

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[1] Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 34-38; N.H. Keeble, "Introduction" Attempting Uniformity," in N.H. Keeble, ed., *'Settling the Peace of the Church': 1662 Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1-28.

[2] Bosher, *Restoration Settlement*, 152-154, 165-170; Green, *Re-Establishment*, 33-34; Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 29-42.

"things indifferent" – that is to say, aspects of church governance, practice, and ceremony which were not crucial to doctrine or salvation. Though the parties held broadly similar views on what constituted an indifferent matter in soteriological terms, the Anglican position was that if a matter was agreed to be "indifferent" then there could be no logical objection to its being made a fixed requirement in the new Church settlement.[3] The same polemical technique had been used by the Laudians in the 1630s.[4] Logically, the requirement for uniformity made imperative things otherwise held to be indifferent and, once imperative, therefore also a matter of obedience. "Men pretend conscience against obedience," declared Jeremy Taylor in 1661, "expressly against Paul's doctrine, teaching us to 'obey for conscience' sake;' but to disobey for conscience in a thing indifferent, is never to be found in the books of our religion."[5] Matters *adiaphora* turned out not to be indifferent at all. For uniformity was at the centre of Anglican consciousness and its answer to the religious, political, and social crises of the previous twenty years.[6] The very preamble of the Act of Uniformity itself declared the conviction that

> nothing conduceth more to the setling of the Peace of this Nation (which is desired of all good men) nor to the honour of our Religion and the propagation thereof then an universall agreement in the Publique Worshipp of Almighty God.[7]

Sheldon was equally convinced of the need for that uniformity to be enforced with rigour, writing to the Duke of Ormond in 1663:

> Tis only a resolute execution of the law that might cure this disease [nonconformity] – all other remedies have and will increase it – and 'tis necessary that they who will not be governed as men by reason and persuasion, should be governed as beasts by power of force; all other courses will be ineffectual, ever hath been so, ever will be.[8]

Against this background of institutional uniformity, should we therefore consider the visual uniformity of the rebuilt church interiors itself as a product of this drive for uniformity more generally; and, if so, how was it imposed? The institutional Church certainly had

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[3] Bosher, *Restoration Settlement*, 226-231; Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603-1690* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 365-373; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 306-309.

[4] Peter Lake, "The Laudian Style: Order, Uniformity and the Pursuit of the Beauty of Holiness in the 1630s," in Kenneth Fincham, ed., *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1643* (Basingstoke: The MacMillan Press Ltd, 1993), 183.

[5] Jeremy Taylor, *A sermon preached at the opening of the Parliament of Ireland, May 8. 1661* (London: 1661), second page of the epistle dedicatory.

[6] Jacqueline Rose, "The Debate over Authority: *Adiaphora*, the Civil Magistrate, and the Settlement of Religion," in Keeble, ed. *'Settling the Peace of the Church'*, 29-34, 37, 46-48.

[7] "Charles II, 1662: An Act for the Uniformity of Publique Prayers and Administrac[i]on of Sacraments & other Rites & Ceremonies and for establishing the Form of making ordaining and consecrating Bishops Preists and Deacons in the Church of England," in *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 5, 1628-80*, ed. John Raithby (s.l: Great Britain Record Commission, 1819), 364-370. *British History Online*, accessed May 16, 2014, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/pp364-370.

[8] John Spurr, s.v. "Sheldon, Gilbert (1598–1677)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; hereafter "*ODNB*"; online edn., accessed 25 April 2014), quoting Bodl., MS Carte 45, fol. 151; See also Richard Lingard, *A sermon preached before the King at White-Hall, July 26, 1668, in defence of the liturgy of our church* (London: 1668), 1-5: as Hezekiah commanded the Levites to use set texts for worship, so did Charles II; Seaward, *Cavalier Parliament*, 67-70; the same belief that toleration breeds rebellion was renewed in the Parliamentary debates on toleration in 1668.

considerable tools at its disposal for enforcing uniformity in these areas if it wanted to employ them. The Restoration saw the revival of the 1604 *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical* – the Church's principal body of law – and the ecclesiastical courts, and the slightly later revival of the system of episcopal and archidiaconal visitations.[9] Collectively, these provided a means for regularly inspecting the fabric, furnishings, discipline, and practices of parishes. However, these institutional structures provided a *post-hoc* regulatory system. Of themselves, they did not directly influence decisions taken within the parishes as they were built and furnished. Additionally, the regulatory mechanism which did exist for requiring prior consent to alterations – the Faculty Jurisdiction – seems to have been in suspense in the City of London for the duration of the rebuilding period, presumably in view of the scale of the catastrophe which had engulfed the City.[10] The earliest surviving record of a faculty intervention in relation to one of Wren's churches is in 1683, when the diocesan Vicar General took action against the churchwardens of St. Dionis Backchurch for moving the church door, building a vault, and "perturbation of a pew" without faculty.[11] (It may be relevant to note that in the modern arrangements, while alterations to the fabric and furnishings of existing churches require a faculty, the building of a new church does not.[12] If this were true in the late seventeenth century also, it would explain the absence of evidence for the faculty process being used in the rebuilding of the City churches.)

Given this analysis, we should not look to institutional mechanisms for an explanation of how the new furnishings were designed and put in place. Instead, we will see that it was the soft forces at work among a large cast of actors – from bishops to master-craftsmen – whose interaction shaped the process and the character of the furnishings themselves. Accordingly, Part 1 of this thesis sets out a *dramatis personae* of these actors in order to establish their backgrounds and the nature of the relationships they had, one with another. Chapter 1 looks at the contribution made by the Bishops of London, the parish clergy, the vestrymen, and ordinary parishioners, so as to understand the influences at work within the overall diocesan and parochial structure. Chapter 2 will then examine how parishes engaged with craftsmen, and will establish some of the foundations necessary for understanding the process of design for the new furnishings.

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[9] Green, *Re-Establishment*, 117-122, 135-140; Gerald Bray (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), 258-453, but in particular 375-383, "Things appertaining to churches."

[10] The early evolution of the Faculty Jurisdiction merits further research.

[11] Lambeth Palace Library, AA/V/H/77/18/1-2.

[12] The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules, 2015, Rule 2.2 (the definition of "church").

BISHOPS

The two Bishops of London in office during this period were Humphrey Henchman, who succeeded Gilbert Sheldon upon the latter's elevation to Canterbury in 1663, and Henry Compton, who succeeded Henchman upon his death in 1675, and who died in 1713.[13] Compton had episcopal oversight for most of the period during which the rebuilt churches were fitted out. Although there is no direct evidence of either man being actively involved in overseeing the building or furnishing of the new churches, it is in the nature of the office that the personal character of a bishop shapes that of his diocese. This was particularly true of London's bishops, for whom the necessity of spending time at Court and Parliament did not – as it did for other bishops – result in them regularly being away from their diocese; greater physical proximity between bishop and parish must have added to parochial awareness of their bishop's character and priorities. They therefore merit attention here.

Humphrey Henchman had solid royalist credentials, suffering sequestration during the Civil War and Interregnum.[14] During the Interregnum, he was in contact with Sheldon's underground group, who maintained the flame of Anglicanism during that period, and who laid the basis for the shape it was to take after the Restoration.[15] Appointed Bishop of Salisbury in October 1660 – one of the first bishops to be consecrated since 1644 – he was a member of the episcopalian negotiating team at the Savoy Conference in 1661.[16] Although no record survives of his direct involvement in the building or furnishing of the new churches, his actions elsewhere show him to have been committed to orderly, ceremonial, and reverent worship. In Salisbury diocese, he oversaw the re-creation of Anglican discipline, writing to Secretary of State, Sir Edward Nicholas in October 1661:

> In church government I find no such discouragement but that I hope … I shall regulate the clergy of the diocese in the same manner as they were governed twenty-four years since.[17]

"Twenty-four years since" takes us to 1637, the year in which Charles I instructed Henchman's predecessor as Bishop of Salisbury, the Calvinist John Davenant, to settle a dispute in Aldbourne parish by ordering the communion table to be placed permanently at the east end of the

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[13] John Spurr, s.v. "Humphrey Henchman," in *ODNB* (online edn., accessed 13 Feb 2014); Andrew M. Coleby, s.v. "Henry Compton," in *ODNB* (online edn., accessed 13 Feb 2014).

[14] Ibid.; Ian Green, "The Persecution of 'Scandalous' and 'Malignant' Parish Clergy during the English Civil War," *English Historical Review* 94, No. 372 (1979): 507-531. In relation to clergy, "sequestration" was the ejection of loyal royalists (or "notorious delinquents" in Parliamentary terminology) from their parish livings.

[15] Bosher, *Restoration Settlement*, 29-40; Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 10-12.

[16] Spurr, "Humphrey Henchman."

[17] Public Record Office, S.P. 29/43, fol. 68, quoted in Bosher, *Restoration Settlement*, 236.

church.[18] In 1662, Henchman composed his own Visitation Articles – which ran to 180 questions – rather than use any of the shorter drafts then being prepared by Convocation.[19] (The only other bishop to compose his own Articles in the immediate aftermath of the Restoration was the Laudian Bishop of Ely, Matthew Wren.[20]) Henchman asked in his articles whether the "Table [was] placed conveniently as it ought? And whether … it is used in or out of Divine service or Sermon, as is not agreeable to the holy use of it?"[21] On the evidence of these two occasions, Henchman seems to be making a point of setting himself firmly on the side of Laudian altars, even if – in John Spurr's view – he was not politically or theologically aligned with the Laudian party.[22] After translation to London, Henchman lobbied in favour of Christopher Wren's proposal to build a dome over the crossing of Old St. Paul's, suggesting some enthusiasm for architectural projects and what they could contribute to the institutional Church.[23]

Henry Compton was, if anything, still more royalist, and was present as a boy at Edgehill in 1642 with his father, the Earl of Northampton.[24] Ordained in 1666, it was the patronage of the Tory Lord Treasurer, the Earl of Danby, which ensured his rapid promotion; he became Bishop of Oxford in 1674.[25] His biographer, Edward Carpenter, praises his conscientious and practical administrative vigour, well above the norm for his generation.[26] Characteristic of his governance of the diocese of London was the holding of regular formal conferences with his clergy, each of which was followed up by a detailed letter, summarising the proceedings, and exhorting them to pastoral diligence.[27] A set of instructions to Rural Deans in 1689 likewise sets out Compton's clear expectations that Rural Deans act as his eyes and ears in their deaneries, and report to him matters of clerical misbehaviour or public immorality, requiring them

> diligently to inquire & give up information to the Rt. Reverend Father in God Henry Ld. Bp. Of London, or his Chancellor, of the Names of all such Persons Clergy or Lay within the precincts as shall be openly or publickly noted as defamed or vehemently suspected of any such Crime or Offence as is to be punished or reformed by the authority of the Ecclesiastical Court.[28]

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[18] Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 205-206.

[19] Donald Spaeth, *The Church in an Age of Danger* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 68; Green, *Re-Establishment*, 135-140.

[20] Green, *Re-Establishment*, 137.

[21] Humphrey Henchman, *Articles to be Enquired of in the Diocese of Salisbury, in the Visitation of the Right Reverence Father in God Humphrey Henchman Lord Bishop of Sarum* (London: 1662), 3.

[22] Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 35.

[23] Anthony Geraghty, *The Architectural Drawings of Sir Christopher Wren at All Souls College, Oxford: A Complete Catalogue* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2007), 47.

[24] Edward Carpenter, *The Protestant Bishop, Being the Life of Henry Compton* (London: Longman, 1956); Coleby, "Henry Compton.

[25] Carpenter, *Protestant Bishop*, 29-30.

[26] Ibid., 207-240.

[27] The first six of these were published as *Episcopalia, or, Letters of the Right Reverend Father in God, Henry, Lord Bishop of London, to the clergy of his diocess* (1686). Subsequent letters were published individually up until the last, in 1701.

[28] Bodl. Rawlinson CMS 984, fols. 123-124.

Compton's Visitation Articles relating to "Ornaments and Furniture" were succinct – a mere 112 words in 1677, compared with 2,502 in Matthew Wren's 1662 Articles – and simply asked whether the churches were "decently kept" and "looked after."[29] Compton conducted his visitations personally, so perhaps he delivered other questions directly.[30] The few visitation returns which survive provide a little – but not much – insight into his priorities.[31] For example, he paid attention to communion vessels and, in 1704, ordered new pews to be installed at St. Andrew Undershaft, presumably thinking the old ones inadequate; at St. Michael's, Colchester, he ordered that "the pulpit and desk be moved to the first pillar of the south aisle."[32] Moving a pulpit is no small exercise, as it is likely to involve moving other furniture in order to make space for it in its new location. Consequently, Compton must have felt there was a material problem with the old arrangement. The location to which he moved the pulpit suggests that audibility of the liturgy and preaching was important to him and that he wanted the pulpit to be prominent in the nave of the church. Compton's intervention here is consistent with Stephen Hampton's inclusion of him in his study of Reformed bishops and clergy, *Anti-Arminians*.[33]

After the completion of the new churches, Compton was sufficiently proud of what had been achieved to write to his clergy to encourage them to cooperate with John Strype in his revision to John Stowe's *Survey of London* (published in 1720); he urged them to provide Strype with information on their parish histories, and gave Strype access to visitation returns and other diocesan records during his research so that the *Survey* could properly celebrate the "Protestant zeal" of the London Church, to quote Julia Merritt.[34] In his chapter on the cathedral, Strype quoted from the letter of 1678 which "the careful Lord Bishop of London" published as part of the promotion of the fund-raising campaign to rebuild St. Paul's. There, Compton responded to the "great Prejudice [that] the Sumptuousness and Magnificence of Churches, is not at all suitable to the times of the Gospel, nor according to the simplicity of the primitive Christian Worship:"

> The publick Worship of God, tho' it doth suppose and require inward and spiritual
> Devotion, yet as publick is necessarily external; and as such, ought to express, in the best

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[29] Henry Compton, *Articles of Visitation and Enquiry Exhibited To the Ministers, Church-wardens, and Side-men of every Parish, in the Primary Episcopal Visitation of the Right Reverend Father in God Henry By Divine Permission Lord Bishop of London* (London: 1677), 3-4; Matthew Wren, *Articles of Enquiry for the Diocese of Ely: In the second Visitation of the R. Reverend Father in God, Matthew, Lord Bishop of that Diocese; Anno Dom. 1662* (London: 1662), 4-8.

[30] Carpenter, *Protestant Bishop*, 216.

[31] An incomplete summary survives of Compton's visitation orders for the Archdeaconry of Middlesex for 1685; see Bodl. Rawlinson CMS 983/91, fols. 1-20. See also Carpenter, *Protestant Bishop*, 218-219.

[32] Carpenter, *Protestant Bishop*, 217, 221.

[33] Stephen Hampton, *Anti-Arminians: The Anglican Reformed Tradition from Charles II to George I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Hampton emphasises the extent to which Compton used his authority to promote Reformed clergy in his diocese and his stoutly Reformed stance during the Trinitarian Controversy at the end of the century; see 13-16, 129-136.

[34] Merritt, "Reshaping Stowe's 'Survey'," 84-85.

manner we are able, that inward Honour and Reverence which we pay to the Divine Majesty. And therefore, that the Circumstances of it should not only be decent, but very solemn and magnificent, the Light of Nature seems plainly to require, and the Gospel doth no where gainsay.[35]

Compton went on to connect the rebuilding of St. Paul's to the building of the Temple of Jerusalem as an expression of the "high Regard and Esteem of so glorious a Majesty" which Christians owed to God.[36] Though these comments relate to a cathedral, they tell us much about Compton's wider belief in the importance of "Honour and Reverence" in parish churches as well.

PATRONS AND CLERGY

As we shall see, Compton had good reason to be confident in his clergy, both those in place when he became bishop and those appointed during his episcopacy.

The profile and character of the London clergy in this period reflected the way in which many of them arrived in their parishes in the aftermath of the departure of their puritan predecessors. This had begun within weeks of Charles II's return from exile and was spread over two phases. Across England, nearly 700 clergy were removed from their parishes shortly after the Restoration as returned royalists reclaimed the parishes from which they had been ejected in the 1640s.[37] A second phase – "the Great Ejection" – followed the Act of Uniformity 1662, and removed those who refused to conform to the requirements of the Act. Estimates of the total number of clergy ejected in both phases from parochial livings, lectureships, and university positions vary; most recently, N.H. Keeble has put the number at "some 2,000."[38] In the City of London, sixty-four out of the 105 parishes lost either or both of their incumbent and lecturer in the two ejections combined, a proportion which reflected the concentration of dissent in London and, indirectly, the presence of many of the presbyterian and independent leadership there.[39] These men were replaced in the coming weeks and months by conformist clergy appointed under the revived system of parochial patronage.[40] The appointment of so many new clergy in a

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[35] Henry Compton, *Open letter concerning the rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral* (London: 1678), 1.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, xi-xiv.

[38] Keeble, "Attempting Uniformity," 18; Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 43, gives a lower number of 1,760 which excludes parish lecturers and clergy in the universities.

[39] Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, passim.

[40] The process of appointing new clergy was often a slow one; thirty-five of the 130 appointments in the diocese of London as a whole took six months or more to make. Green, *Re-Establishment,* 159.

relatively short period provided the authorities with a rare opportunity to achieve a significant degree of conformity across the clerical class.

Ian Green has described the swift revival after the Restoration of the pre-war system of parochial patronage, with the right of each parish's patron (the holder of the "advowson") to present a new incumbent to the parish.[41] Nationally, approximately 26 percent of advowsons were held by churchmen – archbishops, bishops, the deans and chapters of cathedrals, etc. – with 10 percent held by the Crown; lay patrons accounted for most of the rest, with 53 percent held by peers and gentry, and the balance made up by colleges at the universities and other institutions.[42]

The situation in London was very different. Appendix B lists the seventy-two clergy who were in place during the furnishing phase of their parish churches, and identifies the patrons who appointed them. In contrast with the national profile, 53 percent of the relevant London presentations were made by churchmen, and 22 percent by the Crown, with only 7 percent by laymen, and 10 percent by trusts acting on behalf of the parishes themselves. The balance was held by livery companies, colleges, and hospitals. Two important implications flow from this profile. First, three-quarters of London's clergy can be considered to be Establishment appointments, compared with just over a third nationally. Secondly, in the archetypal rural parish church, the patron was often the local squire, who exercised intimate control over "his" church.[43] Most of the London patrons played a critical function at the time of appointing a new incumbent but, although often nearby, they were rarely involved in parish affairs thereafter; patrons are almost entirely absent from the vestry minutes.

London patrons understood the importance of appointing the "right men" to parishes, particularly given that London continued to have the highest concentration of dissenters in the country, and became the centre for the Whig opposition to the Court during and after the Exclusion Crisis.[44] Partly in that context, a report was prepared in 1672 – apparently for the King – which addressed the question of the profile of London clergy.[45] In it, the anonymous author

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[41] Ibid., 37-60.

[42] D.R. Hirschberg, "The Government and Church Patronage in England, 1660-1760," *Journal of British Studies* 20 (1980): 112-113. Donald Spaeth, in his study of parish relationships in Wiltshire, concurs, noting that "fewer than half" of advowsons in the diocese of Salisbury were held by gentlemen; see Spaeth, *Church in an Age of Danger,* 91.

[43] Spaeth, *Church in an Age of Danger*, 44-50, describes the tendency of many rural gentry who owned advowsons to treat their appointee as though he were a member of their household staff.

[44] Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 29, 45, notes the same recognition on the part of Marian and Elizabethan Church authorities of the importance nationally of getting the right men and right practices in place in London parishes. London's role in the opposition to the Court is one of the principal themes in de Krey, *London and the Restoration*, 87-100, 156-157 *et passim*.

[45] G. Lyon Turner, "The Religious Condition of London in 1672, as Reported to the King and Court by an Impartial Outsider," *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, 3 (1907-8): 192-205.

reviewed the leading clergy of London and focused primarily on their abilities as preachers and the esteem in which they were held by their parishioners. Indeed, in the author's mind, the esteem in which a cleric was held was directly related to his gifts as a preacher.[46] Of the rector of St. Dunstan-in-the-East he noted:

> Mr Giffard, Divinity Reader at Gresham Colledge, an excellent minister, a most Laborious person in his work, by which he hath a very great Audience, & but few Nonconformists in his parish. – From his person it may be observ'd that Learned, constant, preaching would cure a great deal of Nonconformity & prevent a great deal more: his Church was first furnisht since the Fire, & is Adorned with a handsome Organ.[47]

In contrast, the author was critical of those who were absent through pluralism and those who abandoned their parishioners during the Plague and Fire, some of whom had still not returned by the time he wrote his report to the King five and a half years later.[48]

Samuel Pepys' diary also confirms the expectation of an apparently unhappy London public that the appointment of new clergy after the Great Ejection would be a coordinated process, and that the men chosen would need to be of high calibre:

> 17 August 1662. I hear most of the Presbyters took their leaves to-day, and that the City is much dissatisfied with it. I pray God keep peace among us, and make the Bishops careful of bringing in good men in their rooms, or else all will fly a-pieces; for bad ones will not [go] down with the City.[49]

> 3 September 1662. Dr Fairbrother … told me … that the Bishop of London hath taken good care that places are supplied with very good and able men, which is the only thing that will keep all quiet.[50]

Pepys also picked up on the importance of parochial patronage as an instrument of control in 1667:

> 5 April 1667 … Mr. Young … told me that those few churches that are to be new built are plainly not chosen with regard to the convenience of the City; they stand a great many in a cluster about Cornhill; but that all of them are either in the gift of the Lord Archbishop, or Bishop of London, or Lord Chancellor, or gift of the City. Thus all things, even to the building of churches, are done in this world![51]

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[46] Ibid., 197-198, 204-205.

[47] Ibid., 204.

[48] Ibid., 203, 205. One such absentee was James Buck, rector of St. James Garlickhythe (1661-85). See LMA/P69/JS2/B/005/MS04810/002, fol. 291r. and LMA/P69/JS2/B/001/MS04813/001, fol. 160v.

[49] Samuel Pepys, *The Diary*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews (London: Harper Collins, 1995), vol. 3, 169.

[50] Ibid., vol. 3, 186.

[51] Ibid., vol. 8, 151-152.

Young was both right and wrong: the churches which were not rebuilt were under the same pattern of patronage as those which were; the significance of his observation comes from its recognition of where power lay. Appendix B lists the patrons who appointed the clergy of the rebuilt churches, and illustrates the pattern of alternating appointments between the patrons of united benefices. At the united parish of St. Antholin and St. John-the-Baptist-upon-Walbrook, for example, the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's – patron of St. Antholin – appointed William Assheton in 1674, and the Crown – patron of St. John – appointed his successor, George Thorp, in 1677.[52]

Appendix B also summarises the churchmanship and affiliations of those clergy in place while the churches were furnished. Nearly half of them merit an entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and they include eight future bishops, and one future archbishop, confirming the deliberate appointment of rising men of promise to the capital's livings. Of the thirty-one for whom the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* provides biographies, twenty-two (71 percent) can reasonably be said to have held strong views on "orderly" and "decent" ceremonial worship in the post-Laudian tradition. In the judgement of their Oxford biographers, they were royalist and predominantly Tory, and unlikely to stand idly by if they thought their churches were being inadequately furnished.[53] Possibly only five (7 percent) can be categorised as low-church men or latitudinarians who, while committed to conformity, tended to be less liturgically-minded, and less scrupulous in their use of the prayer-book.[54] In 1665, for example, a number of parishioners of St. Andrew Holborn submitted their "Humble Complaint of Divers Sober Christians" to Bishop Henchman complaining that their latitudinarian rector, Edward Stillingfleet, used extempory prayer and neglected parts of the prayer-book liturgy.[55] Similarly, the presbyterian Richard Baxter described the latitudinarians as "not at all for anything Ceremonious."[56] Though small in number, the latitudinarians became the most prominent London churchmen through their preaching and writing.

The period known as the Tory Reaction of 1681-85, during which persecution of dissent reached its peak, divided London clergy. Many were enthusiastic persecutors, while others did the bare minimum and were lambasted by the Tory news-sheets as "Divines that can Scruple and

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[52] Appendix B.

[53] Seaward, *Cavalier Parliament*, 56-64, notes that being royalist does not necessarily equate to Laudian churchmanship.

[54] Nicholas Tyacke gives a helpful assessment of the rise of the latitudinarians in Nicholas Tyacke, "From Laudians to Latitudinarians: a shifting balance of theological forces," in *Later Stuart Church*, 46-67. See also John Spurr, "'Latitudinarianism' and the Restoration Church," *The Historical Journal* 31, no.1 (1988): 61-82.

[55] Lambeth Palace MS. 3152, fols. 72-73.

[56] Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxteriannae*, ed. M. Sylvester (London: 1696), Part III, 19-20, quoted in Bryan Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reason: Worship and Sacraments in England and Scotland 1662 – c.1800* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 49.

Cant with the Times," "*Factious Whiggs* and *Trimmers*," and "the Monsters call'd Moderate Men."[57] Despite these divisions, what the London clergy held in common was a shared commitment to uniformity – even if some were willing to expand that uniformity to comprehend others – moral reform, the importance of preaching, and an unrelenting hostility to popery.[58]

Many of the London clergy were prolific polemicists, publishing sermons, tracts, and pietist writings. Consistently hostile to popery, London clergy of all stripes took a leading role in the final outburst of opposition to James II's Catholicising policies after 1685.[59] An unusually concerted example of their literary output can be found in the volume published with Compton's sponsorship in 1683, *A Collection of Cases and Other Discourses Lately Written to Recover Dissenters to the Communion of the Church of England, by some Divines of the City of London*.[60] The publication of the *Collection* reflected mounting Anglican concern at the threat posed by James while he was heir to the throne, and was an attempt to seek some form of rapprochement with more sober types of dissenters in defence of the Protestant cause.[61] The essays contained in the *Collection* set out a defence of the Protestant and Biblical origins of prayer-book worship and the Anglican use of ceremony. Six of the contributing authors were in place at the time of the furnishing of their churches in the City, to which can be added the rectors of St. Clement Danes and St. James Piccadilly in Westminster, whose churches were also (re)built by Wren in the same period.[62]

We therefore have persuasive evidence that these men had thought through liturgical matters carefully, and regarded them as sufficiently important to be defining characteristics of Anglican practice and ones which could be deployed in defence of wider Protestantism, and against popery.

In Chapters 6 and 7 we will return to some examples where individual clergy left their particular mark on their new church furnishings. The profile of the others is often less evident from the vestry minutes but, as with the bishops, this cannot have been due to lack of interest or

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[57] Roger L'Estrange, *The Assembly of Moderate Divines* (London: 1681), 1-2. *The Character of a Church-Trimmer* (London: 1683), 1-2; Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 78-83.

[58] For a discussion of the role of London clergy in variously supporting and opposing the Tory Reaction, see Gareth Walker, "Politics, Religion and the 'London churchmen', 1662-89," (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2009), 126-172, and for their opposition to popery under James II see 228-237.

[59] Jacqueline Rose, *Godly Kingship in Restoration England: The Politics of the Royal Supremacy, 1660-1688* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 244-251.

[60] *Various: A Collection of Cases and Other Discourses Lately Written to Recover Dissenters to the Communion of the Church of England, by some Divines of the City of London.* (London: 1685). Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 85-86; Rose, "The Debate over Authority," 55-56.

[61] William Gibson, "Dissenters, Anglicans and the Glorious Revolution: The Collection of Cases," *The Seventeenth Century* 22, no. 1 (2007): 168-184.

[62] Appendix B: William Cave (All Hallows-the-Great, 1679-89), Edward Fowler (All Hallows Bread Street, 1673-81; future Bishop of Gloucester), Gregory Hascard (St. Clement Danes, 1678-1708), John Sharp (St. Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange, 1675-76; future Archbishop of York), William Sherlock (St. George Botolph Lane, 1669-91), Edward Stillingfleet (St. Andrew Holborn, 1665-89; future Bishop of Worcester), Thomas Tenison (St. James Piccadilly, 1685?-92; future Archbishop of Canterbury) and John Williams (St. Mildred Poultry, 1673-96; future Bishop of Chichester).

qualification to pass comment. We should rather conclude that their influence was exercised more informally, through their daily contact with vestrymen and parishioners, and their ability to steer vestry meetings in the desired direction. It was, however, the vestries which had the practical and administrative function of delivering the furnishings, and it is their critical role to which we now turn.

VESTRIES

There is no modern equivalent of the seventeenth-century parish vestry. Its functions were both civil and ecclesiastical. In the civil arena, vestries were responsible for the administration of poor relief, and a modest level of policing and street-cleaning. In the ecclesiastical arena, their duties related to the parish church – including the fabric and furnishings – and to matters of church discipline, such as the enforcement of attendance at Sunday worship. Organisationally, there were two types of vestry: "general vestries," where in theory the vestry comprised all adult male rate-payers; and "select vestries," smaller bodies, where the vestrymen mostly elected their own successors, or were appointed according to a prescribed qualification – at St. Mary-at-Hill for example, the vestry comprised the churchwardens and all previous churchwardens.[63] The combination of election by laymen and their ecclesiastical role had made vestries an object of suspicion to the Laudian party in the 1620s and 1630s, especially as this arrangement blurred the lines of authority between bishop and parish. Julia Merritt and Kenneth Fincham have both discussed the impact of this on Church politics before the Civil War, and the same issues continued beyond 1662.[64] After the Restoration, therefore, it was all the more important to Church authorities that the vestries be manned by men of right thinking and loyalty. Just as Sheldon took steps to ensure the placement of good conformists to benefices after the Great Ejection, so likewise he sought to increase the reliability of vestries. Paul Seaward has vividly described the lengths to which Sheldon went as Bishop of London to purge the vestries of unreliable elements.[65] The Select Vestryes Act 1663 sought the "prevention of the evils which may arise from Vestry men not conforming to the Government and Discipline of the Church of England as it now is by Law established."[66] The evils which Sheldon had in mind are apparent

[63] Hatton, 2, 376.

[64] Julia Merritt, "Contested Legitimacy and the Ambiguous Rise of Vestries in Early Modern London," *Historical Journal* 54, no. 1 (March 2011): 25-45; Kenneth Fincham, "'According to Ancient Custom': The Return of Altars in the Restoration Church of England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 13 (2003): 34, 46-49 in particular as regards tussles between loyal Anglicans and those with dissenting leanings.

[65] Paul Seaward, "Gilbert Sheldon, the London Vestries, and the Defence of the Church," in *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England,* ed. Tim Harris, Paul Seaward, and Mark Goldie (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 49-73.

[66] Article I, "Charles II, 1663: An Act for regulating Select Vestryes," *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 5 (online edn., accessed 25 April 2014). The Act required vestrymen to swear the oath set out in the Act of Uniformity and deprived those who did not of their office "as if such person were naturally dead."

from the instruction he sent to change the form of the vestry of St. Bartholomew-the-Great, in which he stated that

> during the unhappy times of wilfullness and disorder in this kingdom there hath also happened amongst you so much irregularity in the managing and despatch of your business and affairs relating to your said parish and church, so much remissness and neglect in things necessary, so much heat and violence in others less requisite, and so much faction in all, by the meaner sort of people who have least interest in the same, and as little judgement in the management thereof who taking it upon them to impose such in your said parish who are of far better rank and condition, have carried on all things tumultuously by number rather than worth.[67]

Select vestries, on the other hand, would be easier for the authorities to influence, and once one set of trustworthy vestrymen was in place, they could usually be relied upon to perpetuate the same model of churchmanship.

Seaward believes that as many as twenty-four general vestries became select vestries in the metropolitan parts of the diocese during Sheldon's two-and-a-half year episcopate in London – though most of the City vestries remained general.[68] It may be coincidental, but when two (and in one instance three) benefices were united after the Fire as the authorities sought to rationalise the number of London parishes, in eight of the nine cases where one parish had a select vestry and the other had a general one, it was the parish with the select vestry whose church was rebuilt and whose name took precedence over the other.[69]

Sheldon's objective was to secure the position of the re-established Church of England, and to bring the turbulent London parishes under stronger discipline. If we assume that his commanding tone to the vestry of St. Bartholomew-the-Great was known across London, it helps explain why vestries generally avoided giving their bishop any cause to intervene, and indirectly makes it likely that this also contributed to the management of fitting out the rebuilt churches as well. In the context of Henchman's first visitation in Salisbury diocese in 1662, Donald Spaeth similarly notes that churchwardens there were "eager to please," at least at this early point after the re-establishment of the Church. The work of fitting out the new churches was therefore mostly in the hands of "sound" men.[70] They were, indeed, sufficiently sound that

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[67] "Vicar General's Books," LMA/DL/C/0344, fol. 207v., quoted in Seaward, "London Vestries," 55.

[68] Ibid., 53-55. For examples of the complexities of parish and vestry politics, see Mark Goldie and John Spurr, "Politics and the Restoration Parish: Edward Fowler and the Struggle for St. Giles Cripplegate," *English Historical Review* 109, no. 432 (June 1994): 572-596; and Clare Haynes, "The Politics of Religious Imagery in Late Seventeenth Century England," in *Fear, Exclusion and Revolution: Roger Morrice and Britain in the 1680s*, ed. Jason McElligott, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 49-66.

[69] Appendix C. The exception was Christ Church Newgate, which had a general vestry; there, the much larger size of the church trumped the smaller St. Leonard Foster Lane, which had a select vestry.

[70] Spaeth, *Church in an Age of Danger*, 68.

the vestries became the object of sustained Whig attack after 1690, implying that they were recognised to be predominantly Tory and Anglican in their outlook.[71]

Vestrymen were predominantly men of business, drawn from across all trades. The profile and mix of backgrounds of the vestry of St. Christopher-le-Stocks in 1671 are typical of most parishes, their names scrupulously listed in the minute book in order of social rank, as set out in Table 1. The list is headed by the parish notables, those of sufficient wealth and standing to hold office in the City's government structures. Booth is a Gentleman, his hands unsullied by trade. Houblon's house was immediately to the east of the church and was, in T.M.M. Baker's opinion, "one of the finest and largest of the City merchants' house" in London, fitting for a man who rose to become Lord Mayor and the first Governor of the Bank of England.[72] These two, and two more, were elected to civic office. The remaining men were of the second or third tier of society. Much the same could be said about other parishes, reflecting the way in which the rich, the middling, and the poor lived cheek-by-jowl in seventeenth-century London. This characteristic breadth and manner of social composition ensured that proposals from master-craftsmen could be scrutinised with a business-like mindset from the outset (discussed in Chapter 2), and that the influence and social status of some members could be used to good effect if needed.

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[71] Merritt, "Reshaping Stowe's 'Survey'," 83-84.

[72] T.M.M. Baker, *London: Rebuilding the City after the Great Fire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2000), 90; Woodhead, s.v. "John Houblon," in *Rulers of London* (online edn., accessed 7 April 2014); H.G. Roseveare, s.v. "Houblon, Sir John (1632–1712)," in *ODNB* (online edn., accessed 7 April 2014).

TABLE 1: PROFESSIONS[73] AND CIVIC OFFICES[74] OF THE VESTRYMEN OF ST. CHRISTOPHER-LE-STOCKS, 28 NOVEMBER 1671

Rich: Booth	Esq	Fined for Alderman 1688[75]
John Houblon	Merchant	Common Councilman 1688-89, Alderman 1689-1712, Sheriff 1689, Lord Mayor 1695
Wm: Allen	Upholder	Common Councilman 1660 & 1686
Nathaniell Brooke	Staconer	
Peter Aylworth	Clothworker	Common Councilman 1672-83, Deputy 1679-83
William Horsey	Cordweyner	
Robert Kerrington	Merch'taylor	
John Elliott	Leatherseller	
Thomas Kemble	Draper	
Edward Buckerfield	Leatherseller	
Edward Goodman	Merch'taylor	
Joseph Franklyn	Plumer	
Thomas Russell	Haberdasher	
Sam: Powell	Grocer	
Henry Lascoe	Grocer	
Francis Lucy	Grocer	

The most important contracts which vestrymen needed to assign were those of joiner and carver and these almost always went to men outside the parish. Smaller contracts, however, sometimes went to the vestrymen themselves. Thus the carpenter and vestryman, Robert Horton, was contracted in 1676 to build the plinths for the pews at his church, St. Stephen Coleman Street.[76] Two vestrymen of St. Margaret, New Fish Street – the bricklayer, Mr. Browne,

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[73] LMA/P69/CRI/B/001/MS04425/001, fol. 72r.

[74] Details of office-holding are taken from John Woodhead, *The Rulers of London 1660-1689 A Biographical Record of the Aldermen and Common Councilmen of the City of London* (London: London & Middlesex Archaeological Society 1966), online edn., accessed 4 December 2015, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/london-rulers/1660-89.

[75] Ibid., s.v. "Richard Booth," (accessed 4 December, 2015). Booth was elected Alderman in 1688 but opted to pay a fine of £520 rather than take office.

[76] LMA/P69/STE1/B/001/MS04458/001/001, fol. 379.

and glazier, Mr. Taynton – received payments for work carried out at their united parish church of St. Magnus-the-Martyr in the year 1680/81.[77] Vestrymen were therefore well-placed to carry out work themselves or to monitor its execution by others. Moreover, in the building site that was London in the post-Fire period, experience of how to handle builders and associated tradesmen must have been near universal among men of property and business.

As men of business, and in what appears to be a strong reflection of a preference for collegiate decision-making, establishing a committee drawn from themselves, and occasionally from former vestrymen, was the preferred method for managing the process of furnishing the churches. In some cases, a prior committee overseeing the rebuilding effort simply continued with a new remit, such as at St. Stephen Coleman Street in February 1676.[78] When powers were delegated to a committee, their meetings required a specified quorum and at least one of the churchwardens to be present. There is evidence of growing clerical involvement in these vestry committees, which technically speaking addressed matters which were not their concern, as the requirements of Canons 80-88 relating to furnishings laid responsibility on churchwardens not clergy.[79] At All-Hallows-the-Great, when the rector William Cave first appeared at a committee meeting, the clerk underscored his name twice in the minutes, as if he were either surprised or disapproving of Cave's arrival.[80] Thereafter Cave increasingly took control of the process and he will be a major figure in this thesis. In other parishes, however, clergy were not necessarily in command when present. By way of example, Benjamin Woodroffe, rector of St. Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange, 1676-1711, offered to pay for the additional cost of making the pulpit and reredos in cedar-wood rather than oak at a vestry meeting in June 1679. The tone of the minute book makes Woodroffe sound almost supplicatory, and it is very clear where decision-making power lay. First the rector

> did desire to know whether the Parish intended a Pulpit & Alterpeice conformable to the pews to which the Vestry Answering that their intention was such Hee was pleased freely and voluntarily to declare a promise that if they thought good to have the Pulpit & Alterpeice done with Cedar, hee would bear the Cost which the doing thereof in Cedar amounted to above the Charge of what the same Pulpit & Alterpeice would cost in Wainscott for which promise Thanks was returned to the said Dr Woodroffe in the presence of us.[81]

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[77] LMA/P69/MGT3/B/014/MS01176/002, fol. 13v. Entries in the churchwardens' accounts do not have individual dates, so it is not possible to give the date in new style. Taynton may also be the Robert Tainton who gave the Royal Arms to the church; see John Strype, *A survey of the cities of London and Westminster* (London: 1720), vol. I, 443.

[78] LMA/P69/STE1/B/001/MS04458/001/001, fol. 377.

[79] Bray, *Canons*, 375-383.

[80] LMA/P69/ALH7/B/001/MS00819/001, fol. 323.

[81] LMA/P69/BAT1/B/001/MS04384/003, fol. 55.

This instance is unusual in giving a sense of the meeting. More commonly, both vestry minutes and other committee minutes simply record the decisions made but not the discussion which gave rise to them, or what opinions were expressed, and by whom. As a result, the influence of a single dominant figure in a meeting, either lay or clerical, can be absorbed into a collective decision taken at the end of a meeting, and all evidence of meeting dynamics is lost.

Following the rationalisation of the post-Fire parishes under Article 55 of the second Rebuilding Act (1670), thirty-two of the rebuilt churches served two parishes and one served three.[82] However, the old parishes retained their independent legal identity, and they continued their civic governance roles with their own vestries. The fact that two or three vestries were involved in the furnishing of many of the new churches unavoidably complicated decision-making, and efficiency must have depended very largely on the quality of the human relationships involved. The historic interests of the old parishes and their vestries had already defeated the intentions underlying the first Rebuilding Act (1666) that only thirty-nine churches be rebuilt after the Fire.[83] It is unsurprising that relations between vestries could sometimes be frosty, and that cooperation over the furnishing of the churches was sometimes lacking. For most parishes, this does not seem to have stood in the way of progress being made, as the dominant parish whose church had been rebuilt generally took the lead. It did, however, sometimes create financial difficulties which took time to resolve.

In one case, that of St. Mary Abchurch and St. Lawrence Pountney, the apparently poor relations between the two parishes have benefited historians in that the vestrymen of St. Lawrence Pountney were particularly diligent in checking payments made by St. Mary Abchurch, and would challenge any payment not made in consultation with them, or which they felt only related to Abchurch matters rather than relating to the works for the united parishes. In one instance, the churchwarden for 1685/6, Mr. Stevenson, set down a list of queries to follow up with St. Mary Abchurch:

> 1 Division. The purse and monny is given without our knowledge or approbation so suppose wee ought to pay no part. As for the rubbish if for the clearing of the church wee ought.
>
> 2 Division. If done as I Suppose without our knowledge also, so no ways oblidged in my opinion.
>
> 3 Division. Wee ought to see the Several bills and approve of them as well as they.
>
> 4 Division. If this was by consent of our Church or else Suppose no obligation.

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[82] Appendix C.

[83] "Charles II, 1666: An Act for rebuilding the Citty of London," *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 5 (online edn., accessed 22 February 2014); Jeffery, *City Churches*, 23-26.

5 Division. Is all Spent and Suppose all by their Parish without knowledge of our Church so Suppose no obligation.

6 Division. The Same.

Note on the article of 64* in the 3 division is mentioned for Levelling the Church that doth undoubtedly not appartain to us Seing they wish making the vault ware the cause of it.[84]

Elsewhere, the vestry's refusal at St. Mary-at-Hill to allow the parishioners of St. Andrew Hubbard access to their pews until they had paid their share of the cost dragged on for the best part of nine years.[85]

Relationships between many united parishes were more practical and more edifying. St. Lawrence Jewry and St. Mary Magdalen, Milk Street, set up a joint committee right at the very beginning of the furnishing process in August 1671 and there is no evidence from surviving records of any tensions between the two parishes.[86] Similar arrangements can be found between St. Magnus-the-Martyr and St. Margaret, New Fish Street, which were formalised in a four-page set of Articles of Agreement, transcribed into the Joint Committee Minute Book in June 1677.[87] Likewise, after some disagreements about the share of costs to be borne by the subordinate parish of St. Mary Colechurch relating to decisions taken unilaterally by the vestry of St. Mildred Poultry, a solution was eventually agreed and set out in a lengthy formal Agreement in February 1684, which concluded with the words:

> Lastly it is agreed and ordered that to increase Love and Unity and prevent any future differences or Strife betwixt the two said Parishes or any [of] the Parishioners thereof this mutuall Agreement be signed.[88]

Disputes between united parishes arose in a minority of cases and, where they did arise, did not impede progress in furnishing the churches to any apparent degree. Whether one parish dominated the other or the two worked in "Love and Unity," there was generally sufficient business experience to hand to ensure that the process of furnishing could be pushed ahead to completion.

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[84] LMA/P69/LAW2/B/020/MS03925, fol. 11r.

[85] LMA/P69/MRY4/B/001/MS01240/001, fol. 104v.; LMA/P69/AND3/B/001/MS01278/002, fols. 56v., 66, 75, 90.

[86] LMA/P69/LAW1/B/001/MS02590/002, fols. 27-28.

[87] LMA/P69/MAG/B/010/MS01183/001, fols. 1r.-2v.

[88] LMA/P69/MIL2/B/001/MS00062/001, pasted in opposite fol. 244v.

PARISHIONERS, FINANCING, AND BENEFACTORS

Vestrymen were drawn from their parish, and although membership of the vestry would change over time, most parishioners had no direct opportunity to participate in making decisions about the furnishings. Where they did have an important role was in financing the exercise, although, as will be seen, this need not have been a reluctant or passive process.

The fabric of most of the new churches was paid for out of the Coal Tax established by Article 33 of the Rebuilding Act 1670, but parishes were expected to furnish and decorate the interiors at their own expense – though the rationale for the different approach is unknown.[89] In one sense, the way in which vestries set about the necessary fund-raising could be viewed simply as a financial process. However, one of its distinguishing features is the way in which it drew in the involvement of the whole parish and made it very much a communitarian exercise.

Part of the problem which vestries had to address was that normal parish sources of income were often hypothecated to specified expenses. Tithes paid for the maintenance of the incumbent and were regularised by law in London following the uniting of the parishes.[90] Charity funds left as a bequest – sometimes in the form of rental income from a particular property – were usually linked to specific aspects of poor relief – doles of bread at one end of the spectrum and maintenance of alms houses, schools, and hospitals at the other.[91] These charitable payments to the poor – such as from the bequest of Mr. Fishbornes, of St. Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange – resumed after the Fire as early as 1668.[92] Revenue from parish poor rates was specifically intended for poor relief. Generally, the only unattached income came from properties which could be rented or leased and which were not limited by the terms of a bequest; this source of revenue, of course, had itself been disrupted by the Fire and the need to rebuild. Additionally, parishes incurred on-going civic operating expenses – wages for the parish clerk, constable, inquestman, and scavenger – as well as pastoral expenses. At a household level, individual parishioners – who would in due course finance the church furnishings – faced comparable challenges as they rebuilt their homes and businesses. In the most testing of circumstances, therefore, it is remarkable that the process was as well-managed and as undisruptive as it was, and does not appear to have left any lasting financial scars.

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[89] Article 33, Rebuilding Act 1670: "there should be paid by way of Imposition thereupon for every Chauldron or Tunn of Coles the summe of Twelve pence ... to be applyed [inter alia] … for the rebuilding of the respective Parish Churches by this Act appoynted to be rebuilt." Jeffery, *City Churches*, 23-24.

[90] "Charles II, 1670 & 1671: An Act for the better Setlement of the Maintenance of the Parsons Vicars and Curates in the Parishes of the Citty of London burnt by the late dreadfull Fire there," in *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 5 (online edn., accessed: 21 May 2014).

[91] See, for example, Merritt, "Reshaping Stowe's 'Survey'," 54-88.

[92] LMA/P69/BAT1/B/001/MS04384/002, fol. 439.

In the absence of reserves and income sufficient for the task, vestries faced challenges of both capital and liquidity. Parishes which had opted to advance sums of money on deposit to the Chamber of London – through which flowed the coal tax revenues – secured their place in the queue for the rebuilding programme, but often tied up what reserves they had in the process; deposits had to be made in units of £500 – a significant sum.[93] Ready cash was therefore in short supply when it was needed to start paying craftsmen's bills for furnishing, and sometimes parishes had to petition the Chamber for the return of funds, such as at St. Lawrence Jewry in March 1676.[94] In some cases, the building of the steeples several years after completion of the main body of the church also put parish finances under strain, as the same mechanism was employed by the Chamber for that programme also.[95] The challenges of financing the rebuilding therefore evolved into those of the furnishing, and then back into building again, each time overlapping. Paul Jeffery's description of the process at St. Lawrence Jewry is a useful example of the difficulties raised by the need to make payments to the Chamber, how hard parishes had to press to get their deposits repaid, and how this complicated the parishes' ability to pay their craftsmen's bills.[96] At one stage, in February 1678, so much of the parish's money was lodged with the Chamber that Comptroller Joseph Lane – one of the officials who ran the Chamber – personally lent the parish £50 so that Edward Pearce could buy more materials; Pearce claimed that, without this, work "was likely to stand still or at least to be greatly retarded."[97]

There were four methods by which vestries could meet these challenges: through loans, "pew money," subscriptions, and from benefactors. Parishes drew on a combination of these, spreading their fund-raising across several sources in what appears to have been a pragmatic effort to access contributions as best they could, and in whatever form might be available to them. Unfortunately, the partial survival-rate of vestry minutes and churchwardens' accounts, and the eccentricities of those which do survive, make it impossible to provide an analysis of the aggregate figures for the amounts raised. The figures which follow should therefore be regarded as illustrative of the types of fund-raising activity rather than a definitive statistical analysis.

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[93] For discussion of the financial role of the Chamber of London in the church rebuilding programme, see Anthony Geraghty, "New Light on the Wren City Churches; the Evidence of the All Souls and Bute Drawings," (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1999), 43-54; and Jeffery, *City Churches*, 44-49. For an example of payments to the Chamber, see St. Michael Bassishaw in November 1676, LMA/P69/MIC1/B/001/MS02598/001, fols. 54, 56.

[94] LMA/P69/LAW1/B/001/MS02590/002, fols. 71-72.

[95] Jeffery, *City Churches*, 42-48, in particular referring to the Commission's freeze on further work on towers and steeples in 1677.

[96] Jeffery, *City Churches*, 253-255.

[97] LMA/P69/LAW1/B/001/MS02590/002, fol. 107.

Loans

In monetary terms, the largest tool used was for parishes to borrow money – predominantly from their own parishioners – often secured on parish rental incomes, properties, or other assets. St. Edmund-the-King borrowed £300 in this way in September 1674, the loans being secured on parish properties; and St. Magnus-the-Martyr borrowed £200 in 1678 from a former churchwarden, Nicholas Smith.[98] A notable feature here was the way in which parochial participation was clearly held to be as important as the practical matter of raising the money itself. Naturally, the wealthiest parishioners would be able to lend the most money but some of the amounts lent were so small – as low as £2 – that a sense of identification with the parish must have been part of the motivation. For example, nine parishioners of St. John Zachary lent an aggregate of £21 between them and William Whitehall lent £150.[99] Similarly, a group of twenty-nine people lent £525 to St. Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange in the year ending March 1683 – mostly in amounts of £10 or £20 and with one individual, Joseph Hall, lending £200.[100]

Pew money

Borrowing money eased the problems of managing liquidity and paying craftsmen's bills when they became due, but parishes also needed to raise capital funds. The main cash-raising mechanism for the vestries was known as "pew money," the funds from which were used to finance all furnishings and not only pews.[101]

The obligation to pay pew money was calculated by reference to the poor rate assessment, which each vestry maintained by law to determine the amounts payable by parishioners for poor relief; the rates are often recorded in the vestry minute or account book itself, as at, for example, St. Peter Cornhill.[102] This meant that vestries already had an assessment to hand of parishioners' capacity to pay, and that they could employ the same proportionate methodology to financing the furnishings. This seems to have made pew money an attractive and equitable way of raising the necessary funds. The levy was usually made in multiples of the poor rate. Thus, the vestry of St. Christopher-le-Stocks ordered one year's poor rate to be levied in July 1672 and a further "two Taxes" in November 1673.[103] The vestry of St. Peter Cornhill levied pew money to finance the "Communion Table, Pulpitt, Reading Desk, pewes, and other

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[98] LMA/P69/EDK/B/017/MS20392, n.p., 18 September 1674; LMA/P69/MAG/B/018/MS01179/001 fol. 324.

[99] LMA/P69/JNZ/B/014/MS00590/001, fols. 304v., 320v.

[100] LMA/P69/BAT1/B/006/MS04383/001, n.p., Y/E March 1683.

[101] "Pew money" should be distinguished from "pew rents," which had nothing to do with financing the installation of pews.

[102] Bodl. MS Rawlinson D 897, fols. 72r.-74v.

[103] LMA/P69/CRI/B/001/MS04425/001, fols. 73r., 74r.

necessaries," with four year's poor rate in March 1681, which they extended to five years in February 1682.[104]

Subscriptions

The third mechanism was to raise funds through voluntary subscriptions, either as well as, or instead of, pew money. Only seven parishes are recorded as opting for this method, presumably because the enforceability of pew money provided a greater rate of collection. In the cases of voluntary subscriptions at St. Antholin, individual donations ranged from 10s to £50, with forty-eight contributions overall amounting to £269, 1s, 6d.[105] Similarly, St. Dionis Backchurch raised £123, 10s, 4d in forty-six contributions in sums ranging from 10s to £10.[106]

Benefactors

One particular source of funding – and the most vivid example of parochial participation – deserves greater discussion – that of benefactors. Early modern philanthropy has benefited from recent scholarly attention by Ian Archer, Julia Merritt, Joseph Ward, and (indirectly) Anthony Hotson, in particular as it relates to societal expectations of the obligation of philanthropy, the fulfilment of civic duties, and notions of memorialisation.[107] The development of Anglican pietism and influence of the writings of men like Henry Hammond, Jeremy Taylor, and Richard Allestree, which are also relevant in any study of seventeenth-century charitable giving, has likewise been analysed by John Spurr.[108]

Recalling the declaration of the parishioners of St. Mildred Poultry mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, it is not surprising that some parishioners had strong religious motivation for giving to the rebuilding and furnishing of the churches. Other than the St. Mildred declaration, no documentation survives which gives similar direct insight to the thinking of any individual benefactor, or on what role that thinking might have played in the design of the items for which they paid. We are therefore left to draw some cautious conclusions from what

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[104] LMA/P69/PET1/B/001/MS04165/001, fols. 495, 517.

[105] LMA/P69/ANL/B/004/MS01046/001, fols. 278v.-279r.

[106] LMA/P69/DIO/B/038/MS04215/001, fol. 175.

[107] Ian W. Archer, "The Arts and Acts of Memorialization in Early Modern London," in *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720,* ed. Julia Merritt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 89-116; Ian W. Archer, "The Charity of Early Modern Londoners," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12, (2002): 223-244; Anthony Hotson, "Late-Stuart Moneyed Men and their Patronage of Sculpture and Architecture, circa 1660 to 1720" (PhD thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 2006); Merritt, "Strype and the Protestant City," 52-88; Joseph P. Ward, *Culture, Faith, and Philanthropy: Londoners and Provincial Reform in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[108] Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 279-311.

we know of them more generally, from the fact that they were benefactors at all, and from the particular items for which they paid.

Appendix D catalogues the names of the 171 benefactors who are known from parish records, benefactors' boards, and antiquarian sources. It also summarises the profiles of those for whom a degree of biographical information is available; this helps to inform a discussion about their background and establish certain patterns in their giving. The number of contributors overall, and the fact that there are so many about whom we know almost nothing, further highlights the fact that this was a communitarian exercise involving many for whom this record is their only footprint in history. The list therefore reflects how parish identity was central in the everyday lives of Londoners of all social and financial backgrounds, and of all political persuasions. Although all parishioners had been required to attend church every Sunday since the Elizabethan Act of Uniformity 1559, benefactions such as these indicate a much closer affinity than mere legal compliance.[109] Of still greater interest is the number of donors whom we might not consider to be "natural" Anglicans.

In looking at the pattern of churchmanship among benefactors, the three most generous – though exceptional in the level of their giving – provide a telling cross-section which highlights the diversity of those involved. These were, in order of sum given, an Anglican pietist lady, a prominent presbyterian who never conformed to the re-established Church of England, and one who was subsequently revealed to be a covert Roman Catholic.

Dame Dyonis Williamson (c.1610-1685) was the heiress of a wealthy London grocer.[110] She married Sir Thomas Williamson, a shire knight, and lived out a long widowhood in Loddon in Norfolk. She gave colossal sums of money after the Fire: she was the largest private donor to the rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral (£2,100) and also gave £2,000 to St. Mary-le-Bow and £4,000 to St. Dunstan-in-the-East, which had been her family church in London. Dame Dyonis' funerary monument at Loddon depicts a pious, matronly lady, soberly dressed, modestly veiled, and holding a small book – perhaps a prayer-book or devotional work (Fig. 1.1). Her depiction here is far removed from the "Lely's Beauty" style increasingly common for women of her status, and speaks for the nature of her spirituality. She was memorialised in the setting up of her Arms in St. Mary-le-Bow.

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[109] "Act of Uniformity (1559), 1 Elizabeth, Cap. 2," in *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, ed. Henry Gee and William John Hardy (New York: Macmillan, 1896), 463.

[110] Elvie Herd, *Dionysis Williamson née Hale c1610-1685*, (Loddon: Loddon and District Local History Group, 2010); William Dugdale, *History of Saint Paul's Cathedral, in London, from Its Foundation Etc; With a Continuation and Additions. ... by Henry Ellis* (London: Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor and Jones et al, 1818), 149, 159, 162, 164, 168. LMA/P69/MRY7/B/001/MS05006/001, fol. 1, 16; Jeffery, *City Churches*, 238.

Sir John Langham (1584-1671) was a presbyterian and City worthy.[111] He became a Royalist after the Civil War and secretly financed the exiled Charles II during the Interregnum; he was rewarded with a baronetcy in 1660. In business he was a grocer, and member of the Levant Company. In politics, he rose to become Alderman and Sheriff (the magistrate second to the Lord Mayor). He gave £250 to St. Lawrence Jewry, £350 to St. Mary Aldermanbury, £100 to St. Mary-le-Bow, and £500 to St. Michael Cornhill, even though none of these was his own parish church – which was St. Helen's Bishopsgate, which had escaped the Fire. Apart from churches, he gave £1,000 each for rebuilding the Royal Exchange and Grocers' Hall, and major donations to almshouses, hospitals, and schools on his Northamptonshire estates. Despite his gifts to London churches and a gift of church plate to his rural parish church, he never conformed to the Church of England as required by the Act of Uniformity 1662, and he employed a dissenting chaplain at his London house, Crosby Place.

The third of these exceptional benefactors was George Holman (d.1703), who came from a family of grocers but seems not to have led a life of commerce himself.[112] He gave £1,000 to furnish St. Benet Fink in 1670-73, and was allocated two pews and a family vault in perpetuity. His brother John was a Whig MP and member of Shaftesbury's Green Ribbon Club, and thus an active Exclusionist and opponent of Catholics.[113] In 1679 it was revealed that George Holman had converted to Catholicism, probably while abroad; John Holman denied in Parliament that he knew anything about his brother's conversion.

This diversity of backgrounds is reflected in the list of benefactors in Appendix D. Many show good Anglican and royalist credentials and are unsurprising. More interesting is that seventeen donors have been identified as having had presbyterian sympathies, identifying with a churchmanship which had been ejected from the Church in 1660-62. At least fifteen were Whigs. Neither of these groups would normally be considered as obvious candidates to support the refurnishing of Anglican churches. Why did they do so?

First, although many of these less-expected benefactors were distinguished, few were in the top presbyterian or Whig leadership. There are a few Whig leaders in the list, but they tended

[111] Hotson, "Late-Stuart Moneyed Men," 66-68, 72-73; M.W. Helms and Eveline Cruickshanks, s.v. "Langham, John (1584-1671), of Crosby Place, Bishopsgate, London and Cottesbrooke, Northants," in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1660-1690*, ed. B.D. Henning (London: Boydell and Brewer, 1983), hereafter "*History of Parliament*," online edn., accessed 24 May 2014; http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/research/members/members-1660-1690; LMA/P69/LAW1/B/008/MS02593/002, fol. 467; LMA/P69/MRY2/B/001/MS03570/002, fol. 128r.; LMA/P69/MRY2/B/005/MS03556/002, n.p., 9 September 1675; LMA/P69/MRY7/B/001/MS05006/001, fol. 1; LMA/P69/MIC2/B/001/MS04072/001/002, fol. 254r. Woodhead, s.v. "John Langham," in *Rulers of London* (online edn., accessed 24 May 2014).

[112] LMA/P69/BEN1/B/001/MS01304/001, n.p., 4 October 1670; Leonard Naylor and Geoffrey Jaggar, s.v. "Holman, John (d.1700), of Banbury, Oxon. and Weston Favell, Northants," in *History of Parliament (online edn., accessed 28 May 2014)*.

[113] De Krey, *London and the Restoration*, 181-182. The Green Ribbon Club included the burning of effigies of the pope among its activities.

to be Whigs who held City office rather than being national figures. Thus, Sir Robert Clayton, who was Lord Mayor in 1681, and Sir Thomas Player, who was City Chamberlain – in which capacity he was closely involved in administering the central financing of the rebuilding of the churches – were both donors.[114] However, neither the Duke of Buckingham, nor the Earl of Shaftesbury were, though they both maintained houses in the City.[115] Clayton's donation of £10 to St. Mary-le-Bow looks somewhat tokenistic when it is remembered that he was one of the City's wealthiest men, and spent £6,955 on entertainments during his mayoral year.[116] Player likewise only gave £10 to St. Magnus-the-Martyr.[117] Nevertheless, alongside the Guildhall and livery halls, City churches were among the several venues which played their part in civic ceremonial, and which therefore needed to look the part. This was particularly true of St. Mary-le-Bow, as we see from the preponderance of benefactions from sometime Aldermen, Sheriffs, and Lord Mayors evident in Appendix D. The Lord Mayor would occasionally attend his church "in State" accompanied by other dignitaries, and with the Sword Bearer processing in front of him to place the ceremonial sword on the (usually wrought iron) sword rest attached to his pew, and sometimes flanked by a carved and painted lion and unicorn.[118] Examples of gifts by men like Clayton most likely reflect this sense of association more than they do a desire to make a meaningful contribution to financing Anglican worship. Even this, though, remains a possibility: for all his presbyterian connections, Player described himself as "a devout son of the Church of England."[119] The gift of the Royal Arms by the Whig (and future Lord Mayor) Sir Edward Clarke to St. Matthew Friday Street was probably also a useful way of countering Tory accusations that Whigs were fundamentally disloyal to the Stuart Crown.[120]

An interesting feature of the "presbyterian gifts" listed in Appendix D is that, although they were often generous, they wholly avoided gifts of liturgical items – such as reredos, communion table, rails, or font. They either gave money – such as Sir Christopher Packe's gift of £100 to St. Michael Bassishaw and Sir Andrew Riccard's gift of £50 to St. Michael Cornhill – or non-liturgical features – such as Sackford Gunson's gift of wainscot for the vestry and Thomas Powell's gift of a Bible, both for St. Magnus-the-Martyr.[121] While wanting to support the new

[114] Eveline Cruickshanks, s.v. "Clayton, Sir Robert (1629-1707), of Old Jewry, London and Marden Park, Godstone, Surr," and s.v. "Player, Sir Thomas (d.1686), of Hackney, Mdx. and Basinghall Street, London," *History of Parliament (online edn., accessed 28 May 2014).*

[115] Strype, *Survey*, Book 3, 13; Walter Thornbury, *Old and New London: A Narrative of its History, its People, and its Places* (London: Cassell, Petter & Galpin, 1878), vol. 2, 220.

[116] LMA/P69/MRY7/B/001/MS05006/001, fol. 1. This is not to say Clayton was un-philanthropic: he gave £10,000 for the rebuilding of Christ's Hospital; Cruickshanks, "Sir Robert Clayton."

[117] LMA/P69/MAG/B/028/MS02792, n.p., back page.

[118] Tony Tucker, *Sword Rests of the City* (Stoke-on-Trent: Friends of the City Churches, 2015).

[119] Cruickshanks, "Sir Thomas Player."

[120] Woodhead, s.v. "Edward Clarke," in *Rulers of London* (online edn., accessed 16 August 2016).

[121] LMA/P69/MIC1/B/001/MS02598/001, fol. 70; LMA/P69/MIC2/B/001/MS04072/001/002, fol. 262v.; Strype, *Survey*, vol. I, 443; LMA P69/MAG/B/018/MS01179/001, fol. 371.

churches, there were clearly limits to the specific ways in which they felt able to express that support.

This pattern of engagement points to the on-going sense of identification with the parish in the minds of parishioners, whatever their background, and the ways in which that identity could be expressed without compromising religious belief. In this way donors could fulfil their social obligation, and express their sense of association with their parish, but without overtly expressing allegiance to the Church of England. Perhaps an on-going sense that the religious settlement of England was still not fixed kept those associations alive. Kenneth Fincham has commented on the continued engagement in parish life "not just [of] dissenters, who regarded themselves as members of the national church, but also [of] dissenters' Anglican sympathisers."[122] We see this reflected in patterns of benefactions to the new churches also. Despite persecutions, dissenting conventicles continued to meet, and many parishioners saw no particular obstacle to their hearing an Anglican sermon on a Sunday morning and an illicit dissenting one in the afternoon.[123] N.H. Keeble has recently commented on how presbyterians felt "unable to conform to a deliberately exclusive church, [but] yet would not separate from it completely."[124] Mark Goldie and John Spurr have shown that, even during the Tory Reaction, dissenters regarded their parish church as no less "theirs" for the fact that the also attended conventicles.[125] Partly, this was because dissenters had reasonable justification for expecting some form of accommodation. Charles II was known to favour some form of toleration – the acceptance of dissenting congregations alongside Anglican ones – or comprehension – revisiting the 1662 settlement to widen the embrace of the Church to include the more sober dissenting types.[126] As the overthrow of James II got underway, even Archbishop Sancroft offered an olive branch to dissenters.[127]

Lastly, two parishes were held to be too poor to fit out their new churches at their own expense: St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe and St. Mary Somerset. Both parishes paid for their own pews, but the Lords Commissioner agreed that coal tax money would cover the costs of their wainscot, pulpit and sounding board, reredos, communion table, and communion rails.[128] The costs for these are recorded in the Wren Office Building Accounts, each item introduced with

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[122] Fincham, "Ancient Custom," 53.

[123] John Ramsbottom, "Presbyterianism and 'Partial Conformity' in the Restoration Church of England," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 43, no.2 (1992): 249-270.

[124] Keeble, "Attempting Uniformity," 20-21.

[125] Mark Goldie and John Spurr, "Politics and the Restoration Parish: Edward Fowler and the Struggle for St. Giles Cripplegate," *English Historical Review* 109, no. 432 (June 1994): 572-596.

[126] Seaward, *Cavalier Parliament*, 67-70, 162-180; Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 29-42.

[127] Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 97.

[128] LMA/CLC/313/J/002/MS25539/004, fols. 116r-121r.

variations of the phrase, "To [name] for worke done by him about the Pulpitt by particular order of the Lords &c in consideration of the poverty of the Parish of [name]."[129] The observation is of more than simply financial interest, as it provides us with an indication of the Commissioners' view of the bare minimum requirements for church furnishings.

These two parishes kept their costs down as best they could. St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe transferred the very cheap pews from their tabernacle to the new church, and were only able to raise a very modest £75 19s in a series of pew money levies across the four-year period 1692/93 to 1696/97.[130] (Twenty-seven such "tabernacles" were erected as temporary places of worship after the Fire and were paid for by the Commissioners. They were little more than large sheds built on brick bases.[131]) In respect of other items, they gave one guinea to "Sir Christoph Draughts man in obtaining the Wainscott in the front of the Galleries in the Church gratis" in 1691/92, and the same again to "Mr Hawksmore Sr Xoph Wren's Gentleman in gaining the Altar piece."[132] Even for the modest amount of work for which the parish itself had to pay, they only finally paid off their debts to tradesmen in 1697, nearly four years after the church was back in use for worship.[133]

In closing this discussion of parochial financing, the picture is one where the strain of managing liquidity was universal and, for a few, the capital expenditure was beyond their capacity. Despite the struggles, the process was relatively well managed and, other than in the two poorest parishes, there is no evidence of any parish incurring long-term financial debts as a result of furnishing their new churches. It is the communitarian character of the exercise, however, which stands out as its most prominent feature. In his inaugural sermon at the opening of St. Peter Cornhill, the rector William Beveridge reflected on this and thanked his congregation:

> But if it can be fully made out, That the Service which is here to be performed, doth highly conduce to the Advancement of Gods Glory and your Happiness, the great Ends wherefore such Places are erected, then you cannot but acknowledg [sic] that whatsoever any of you have contributed towards it, is the best Money that you ever spent.[134]

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[129] LMA/CLC/313/J/002/MS25539/004, fol. 121r.

[130] The tabernacle pews cost £1 3s 9d each, and fifteen benches were provided for a total cost of £1 1s. LMA/P69/AND1/B/009/MS02088/002, n.p., 1674/75, 1692/93, 1693/94, 1695/96.

[131] Jeffrey, *City Churches*, 45-46.

[132] LMA/P69/AND1/B/009/MS02088/002, n.p., 1691/92, 1692/93.

[133] Ibid., 1696/97.

[134] William Beveridge, *The Excellency and Usefulness of Common Prayer* (London: 1681), 3.

Beveridge was speaking as much to those who paid a few shillings in pew money as he was to Richard Blackburne, who gave £150, or Samuel Purchas, who gave the font.[135]

CONCLUSION

Gilbert Sheldon's efforts to rebuild the institutional structures of the diocese of London paid off, as it seems that no centralised control was required to make parishes fit out their churches in an acceptable way. Rather, it was the soft power of those structures of diocesan and parish life, with a network of relationships encompassing bishops, clergy, and vestrymen which ensured that those involved in decision-making were predominantly of like mind when it came to matters of church furnishings. The natural sense of identity in belonging to a parish added a further element to this, as one parish after another looked at what their neighbours had done, and were able to form their views about appearance and quality.

While the active financial support of loyal Anglicans is not to be wondered at, the often generous support of parishioners who might have been dissenters at heart, and who were not ordinarily associated with orderly Anglican worship, suggests that identification with one's parish remained strong, despite the divisive effects of the Act of Uniformity.

The next chapter looks at the way in which vestries managed the process of furnishing their churches at a lower level of detail. Here we will see that the creative process itself had features embedded within it which also contributed to the development of a recognisable style.

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[135] LMA/P69/PET1/B/001/MS04165/001, fol. 467; Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), hereafter "RCHME," *London, 4, The City of London* (London: HMSO, 1929), 87.

CHAPTER 2

JOINERS AND CARVERS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses how the vestries engaged with their master-craftsmen, taking them in the order in which they worked – first the joiners and then the carvers. The vestry minutes, churchwardens' accounts, and contracts are the key sources here, and they contain valuable evidence about the vestries' objectives. Although Wren himself was distant from the furnishing phase (the exceptions are discussed in Chapter 7), we will see that his opinion counted for much – both directly through personal recommendation, and indirectly in the widespread choice of craftsmen who were associated with him. This chapter also lays important foundations for understanding how the Wrenian church furnishings emerged as a genre, by looking at how the vestries first expressed their objectives to their craftsmen, and the source materials which those craftsmen had at their disposal in order to create their designs. These two factors proved critical to achieving the uniformity of appearance of the new furnishings. The chapter establishes these themes in general terms which apply to all the furnishings; specific examples are addressed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

STARTING THE PROCESS: JOINERS AND CONTRACTS

The vestries were understandably keen to proceed with fitting out their churches as soon as possible. John Bennett, churchwarden of St. Dionis Backchurch, obtained prices for pewing from the joiner William Grey in January 1673 even though the roof of the church was not yet finished.[1] Indeed, carpenters were paid six shillings in June 1674 for taking down scaffolding inside the church a year and a half after work had begun on furnishing – though it may be

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[1] LMA/P69/DIO/B/001/MS04216/001, fols. 256-257, 262.

prudent to trim this time a little to allow for the habitual slow payment of tradesmen's bills evident across many parishes.[2] In all cases, all manner of plastering, painting, joinery, and other work must have continued – with all its resultant mess and disorder – long after worshippers had moved back from their temporary tabernacles or borrowed company livery halls.[3] With this sense of urgency, finding the right craftsmen was a key decision for vestrymen to make.

Vestry minutes and churchwardens' accounts reveal that a frequent approach in reaching design decisions was for vestrymen to visit other churches to view their furnishings, with inspections of pews being particularly common. For example, the vestrymen of St. Stephen Walbrook visited five churches before deciding to adopt the pew design of St. Nicholas Cole Abbey.[4] St. Michael Cornhill adopted the model of St. Mary Woolnoth for their pews, and the design of the Cornhill pews was in turn adopted by St. Mary Aldermanbury.[5]

The close attention given to pews was probably due to their functional character rather than their appearance.[6] Indirectly, Hatton's *New View* provides us with an explanation as to why this might have been the case. As well as providing the first description of London's new churches, Hatton also lists the number of services and lectures they held.[7] Summarising these, most (twenty-eight) held services three times per week, but nine churches held services twice daily, and eight held daily services. In addition, the more devout parishioners had a choice of fifty-one lectures to attend each week, with St. Antholin providing six lectures a week in addition to its daily service.[8] It should also be remembered that the re-institution in 1660 of the Elizabethan Act of Uniformity 1559 had made attendance on Sunday legally compulsory once more.[9] Very probably, therefore, the vestries were looking for pews which were robust enough to

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[2] LMA/P69/DIO/B/038/MS04215/001, fol. 182. For discussion of late payments, see Melody Mobus, "Surviving Late Payments: Strategies of Christopher Wren's masons from Burford," in *Proceedings of the First Conference of the Construction History Society*, ed. James Campbell, *et al.* (Cambridge: Construction History Society, 2014), 273-278.

[3] LMA/P69/MIC2/B/001/MS04072/001/002, fols. 259v. 261v-262r.; LMA/P69/MIL2/B/001/MS00062/001, fol. 92r. At St. Michael Cornhill, the new church was actually built around the tabernacle, which stood in the nave and north aisle of the church. St. Mildred Poultry used the rebuilt Grocers' Hall.

[4] LMA/P69/STE2/B/001/MS00594/002, fol. 173.

[5] LMA/P69/MIC2/B/001/MS04072/001/002, fol. 268v.; LMA/P69/MRY2/B/001/MS03570/002, fol. 134r. Anya Lucas, "Costly without, richlier inlaid': London's Post-Fire Livery Halls," *The Georgian Group Journal* XXVI, (2018): 1-20, notes the same methodology being employed by livery companies when furnishing their new livery halls after the Fire; and Lucy Wrapson, "Towards a New Methodological Approach for Interpreting Workshop Activity and Dating Medieval Church Screens," in *The Art and Science of the Church Screen in Medieval Europe: Making, Meaning, Preserving*, ed. Spike Bucklow, Richard Marks, and Lucy Wrapson (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2017), 52-53, has found similar examples in the commissioning of late medieval chancel screens.

[6] As noted in the Introduction, the scope of this thesis excludes discussion of the societal aspects of pews and of contentious matters such as receiving communion in the pews. The content in this chapter is included in order to illustrate the administration of contracts, in particular in the selection of joiners.

[7] Hatton, *New View*, passim. Lectures were, in essence, weekday sermons.

[8] Hatton, *New View*, vol. 1 (hereafter "Hatton, 1"), 134.

[9] In 1650, the Rump Parliament revoked the obligation to attend parish worship. "September 1650: Act for the Repeal of several Clauses in Statutes imposing Penalties for not coming to Church.," in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), online edn., accessed May 14, 2018, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp423-425. After the Restoration, all "pretended orders and ordinances of both

withstand heavy wear and tear. This may explain why the pewing contracts were so specific on the thickness of timber to be used for each part of the pew structure – front, partition, bench, and desk – as evidenced in the contract between St. Peter Cornhill and Messrs. Poultney and Athew (Appendix E).

Having established the desired design, the general approach for selecting a master-joiner was by way of competitive tender in which the vestry invited bids and reviewed the prices, designs, and models of the bidding joiners. The number of master-craftsmen in London upon whom vestries could call had increased, as Article 16 of the Rebuilding Act 1666 had eased livery company restrictions in order to facilitate faster rebuilding by allowing tradesmen from outside London (called "foreigners"), who were not freemen of the City, to carry on business there.[10] In theory, therefore, parishes had plenty of names they could call upon, albeit that they did so in competition with other building projects across the City. Appendix F lists the joiners and carvers for whom we have extant records of work in the furnishing of the City churches, together with a summary of other projects which they are known to have worked upon.[11]

Although the churches are known for the quality of their carving, it was the joiners who had the bigger value contracts and who mostly seem to have been responsible for managing the commercial relationship with the client. At St. Stephen Walbrook, for example, the vestry's payments to the carver William Newman were paid via the joiner, Thomas Creecher, and it was Creecher who submitted the designs for the pulpit, reredos, and west screen, which were to incorporate Newman's work.[12] This was not universally the case, however; what appears to have been a close partnership between the joiner, Richard Kedge and the carver, Edward Pearce, at St. Lawrence Jewry saw Pearce providing the design for the reredos there.[13] The balance of contribution made by either craftsman must have been determined largely by their respective abilities.

A core of the joiners employed in furnishing the churches had also worked for Wren as joiners during the construction phase. The modern conception of the term "joiner" belies their economic importance in the late seventeenth century, and they were one of the dominant forces

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or either House of Parliament" made without Royal Assent were deemed void, though some were individually ratified; see "Introduction" in ibid.

[10] Article 16, *Rebuilding Act*, 1666; Douglas Knoop, and Gwilym Jones, *The London Mason in the Seventeenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1935), 10-17; Adam Bowett, *English Furniture 1660-1714 From Charles II to Queen Anne* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2002), 31-33; John Summerson, *Georgian London* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1988), 39-40.

[11] Appendix F is not intended to be exhaustive, and the more complete sources from which it has been compiled are listed at the end of each entry.

[12] LMA/P69/STE2/B/026/MS01056, fol. 33; Newman's bill is headed "A Bill of Carvers Worke Done at St. Stephens Wallbrooke for Mr Creecher."

[13] LMA/P69/LAW1/B/001/MS02590/002, fols. 103-104.

in the building industry. Their status – at least for the most successful of them – is best illustrated by the career of William Cleere.[14] Cleere was a long-term associate of Wren and had worked with him at the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford in 1668-69; he also made the First Model for St. Paul's Cathedral in 1669-71, and the joinery of the Great Model in 1673-74. Cleere did not only work for Wren, however. In 1676, Cleere both designed and built the first Stowe House in Buckinghamshire for Sir Richard Temple (see Fig. 2.1), an important illustration of the extent to which terms like "joiner" and "mason" in this period must be understood very much more widely than as implying simply a workman with a bag of tools. Pete Smith observes that Wren must have held Cleere in high regard to trust him to translate his evolving thoughts for the design of St. Paul's into a three-dimensional model. Cleere went on to work as joiner in the building of at least thirty-one churches and St. Paul's Cathedral. Probably because of the scale of this workload, rather than for want of talent, he only provided furnishings at seven churches, five of which were mostly furnished before construction-work began on the cathedral, suggesting that, thereafter, the cathedral occupied his time.[15]

We can assume that those joiners who worked at several churches did so by reason of their skill and reputation, and three others fall in to this category. Thomas Creecher provided joinery at five churches, William Grey at six, and Richard Kedge at three.[16] The parishes which Cleere, Creecher, Grey, and Kedge worked at, between them, included most of the wealthier ones: Cleere at St. Mary-le-Bow and St. Michael Cornhill; Creecher at St. Mary Abchurch and St. Stephen Walbrook; Grey at St. Bride, St. Dionis Backchurch, and St. Mary Abchurch; and Kedge at St. Lawrence Jewry.[17] This suggests that reputations became established quickly, and that more prosperous parishes were able to secure the services of the more able craftsmen.

A further twenty-two joiners worked at one or two churches each.[18] Perhaps the more functional nature of much of the joinery – especially panelling and pews – made it more difficult to differentiate quality than was the case with wood-carving, and meant that a broader range of joiners was capable of finding work.

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[14] Cleere's career is discussed in Pete Smith, "William Cleere, Master Joiner," *The Georgian Group Journal*, XVIII (2010): 8-34. Smith states that Cleere was joiner in the building phase at thirty-two or possibly thirty-three churches, though he does not list them; see 14. Arthur T. Bolton and H. Duncan Hendry, ed. *The Wren Society*, 20 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924)*,* vol. X, 46-53, lists thirty-one churches.

[15] Appendix F.1.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Neil Cummins, Morgan Kelly and Cormac Ó Gráda, "Living standards and plague in London, 1560-1665," *The Economic History Review* 69, no. 1 (February 2016), 3-34, assesses the relative wealth of the City's parishes upto the eve of the Fire.

[18] Ibid.

It is not clear from parish records whether vestries put out an open tender or whether they approached a small number of joiners directly. At St. Michael Cornhill, after viewing the "offers" of three joiners, the vestry remained undecided, and the all-important opinion of Wren was sought – even though St. Michael was not rebuilt under the supervision of the Wren Office – following which:

> Upon recommendation of Dr. Wrenn treaty was had with Mr. William Cleere a Joyner for making the pewes according to the workmanship of the pewes in St. Mary Woolnoth Church.[19]

Messrs. Turner and Athew were given twenty shillings each "for their paynes in drawing draughts of the pewes."[20]

The committee of St. Lawrence Jewry likewise reviewed "the Draughts of severall persons" and narrowed them down to a shortlist of Richard Kedge and (possibly Charles) Williams before selecting Kedge's slightly more expensive offer; cost was not always the principal driver for a decision.[21] The design was stated to be after that of St. Nicholas Cole Abbey, and Williams was generously compensated with one guinea "for three draughts of the pewes of the Church."[22]

Having selected their joiner, vestries entered into contracts with them, eleven of which survive. There are also references to lost contracts in the vestry minutes, which occasionally refer to a particular provision such as the cost or height of the pews – for example five feet at St. Michael Cornhill.[23] These contracts are either written directly into the minute book or pasted in near the relevant dates, and are often written in a scrivener's hand different from the normal handwriting of the parish clerk. The surviving joinery contracts are as follows in Table 2:

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[19] LMA/P69/MIC2/B/001/MS04072/001/002, fol. 268v.

[20] Ibid.

[21] LMA/P69/LAW1/B/001/MS02590/002, fols. 80-82.

[22] LMA/P69/LAW1/B/008/MS02593/002, n.p., year ending 25 March 1677.

[23] LMA/P69/MIC2/B/001/MS04072/001/002, fol. 268v.

TABLE 2: SURVIVING JOINERY CONTRACTS	
All Hallows Lombard Street	William Grey & John Mitchell[24]
St. Andrew Holborn	Valentine Houseman[25]
St. Antholin	Thomas Cooper, Nathaniel Miles & Zachary Taylor[26]
St. Benet Fink	William Grey[27]
St. Lawrence Jewry	Richard Kedge[28]
St. Mary-le-Bow	William Cleere[29]
St. Matthew Friday Street	Richard Kedge[30]
St. Peter Cornhill	Thomas Poultney & Thomas Athew[31]
St. Stephen Coleman Street	Thomas Creecher[32]
St. Stephen Walbrook (two contracts)	(i) Roger Davies & Stephen College[33]; and (ii) Thomas Creecher & William Newman[34]

The St. Peter Cornhill contract is one of the fullest, covering all the furnishings of the church in a single contract, and is transcribed at Appendix E as an example. The St. Mary-le-Bow contract likewise covers all the furnishings, whereas the others are narrower in scope, relating either to pewing only or, in the case of the Walbrook contract with Creecher and Newman, to the pulpit and reredos. Interestingly, Cleere was unable to sign his contract with St. Mary-le-Bow, instead signing it with a mark (Fig. 2.2).[35]

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[24] LMA/P69/ALH4/B/023/MS18989, n.p., 20 April 1694.

[25] LMA/P82/AND/B/018/MS04256, fol. 7.

[26] LMA/P69/ANL/B/013/MS07622, n.p., 20 November 1682.

[27] LMA/P69/BEN1/B/001/MS01304/001, n.p., 27 February 1673.

[28] LMA/P69/LAW1/B/001/MS02590/002, fols. 208-209.

[29] LMA/P69/MRY7/B/023/MS07810.

[30] LMA/P69/MTW/B/013/MS07683.

[31] LMA/P69/PET1/B/001/MS04165/001, fols. 489-492.

[32] LMA/P69/STE1/B/001/MS04458/001/001, fol. 379-380.

[33] LMA/P69/STE2/B/026/MS01056, fol. 16.

[34] LMA/P69/STE2/B/026/MS01056, n.p., fol. 66-67.

[35] LMA/P69/MRY7/B/023/MS07810. David Cressy, "Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530-1730," *The Historical Journal* 20, no. 1 (1977): 1-23, points out that writing was taught in schools after reading, and it was not uncommon for children to leave school having learned the basics of reading without having mastered writing; Cleere's inability to sign his name does not necessarily mean that he could not read.

The contracts define the work to be provided and what the client regarded as the key characteristics of the relevant items of furniture. They specify the dimensions of the pews, or the height of panelling on the walls, and are often very precise about the measurements of the detailing on them, such as the thickness of raised and fielded panels on the pews, and the size of bolection or ogee (written "O G:" in the Cornhill contract) on them. The contracts more generally refer to "draughts," "modells," "scheames," and "plotts" which, in the case of Cornhill, were originally attached to the contract itself. Only the pew plan referred to survives, the others presumably having been so heavily used as working diagrams that they were not in a fit state to be kept.

The contracts also provided mechanisms for monitoring whether the craftsmen had complied with their contractual obligations, with pricing agreed "by measure."[36] This approach was also Wren's preferred method in building projects, as it gave him the closest control over the process and cost:

> There are three ways of working: by the Day, by Measuring, by the Great. If by the Day, it tells me when they are lazy. If by the Measure it gives me light on every particular, and tells me what I am to provide. If by the Great I can make a sure bargain neither to be overreached nor to hurt the undertaker ... I think the best way in this business is to worke by measure: ... But you must have an understanding trusty Measurer.[37]

The vestries also took the measuring process seriously. At the end of each contract, the final results were "surveyed" or "measured" against the specification set out in the contract before final settlement of any outstanding bills was made. In order to avoid any suggestion of ill-feeling from a competitor who had failed to win the contract, the St. Peter Cornhill contract with Poultney and Athew provided that the measurement should be carried out

> according to the good likeing or Judgement of two such persons who shall be able workmen as the Comitte Chosen for the same by the vestry men of the said parish shall appoint provided that noe person or persons shall be Ajudger of the said worke that weere any of the Joyners whoe putt in to doe the same.[38]

"Measuring" was no mere formality, and bills were regularly abated if the quality was thought to be below expectation or if elements in the bill were thought unjustifiable. The churchwarden Charles Ryves reported to the vestry of St. Dionis Backchurch

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[36] For discussion, see Malcolm Airs, *The Tudor & Jacobean Country House: A Building History* (Sutton: Bramley Books, 1998), 57-63.

[37] *Wren Society*, vol. V, 20. Letter from Wren to John Fell, Bishop of Oxford, 25 June 1681.

[38] LMA/P69/PET1/B/001/MS04165/001, fols. 491-492.

that the pewing had been measured by Mr Sawsby & viewed by Artists who had estimated that the pewing in the church was short in goodness to the pewing of St. Mary-at-Hill Church to which Mr Grays Contract refereth.[39]

The vestry decided to postpone all payments to workmen until proper examination could be made and Grey could be called to account. Similarly, at St. Stephen Walbrook, carvers and joiners recommended abating Thomas Creecher's joinery bill by the considerable sum of £40 and for carving by £8 16s, though the records do not give the reason; the vestry paid five surveyors for work of this sort, one of them being Robert Hooke.[40]

CARVERS AND THE ORIGIN OF DESIGN

Many of the characteristics of the relationship between vestries and joiners arise in relation to carvers as well. However, as Wren's churches are much better known for the quality of their wood-carving than for their pews or panelling, the carvers and their work are more germane to this thesis. More particularly, the critical questions of the introduction of a fully developed classical style to English church furnishings, and of the communication of ecclesial identity are much more obviously addressed in the carved work than the joinery.

Just as vestries visited other churches to examine their pews, so they did with other furnishings. Some could be quite particular. The vestry of St. Anne and St. Agnes wanted their font to be like that at St. Michael Wood Street, the gallery front like that of St. Olave Jewry – but with less carved work – and the communion table and rail to be simplified versions of those at St. Bride.[41] Nevertheless, deciding to copy the design of, say, a pulpit by a particular joiner or carver did not automatically result in commissioning that joiner or carver to make it. It would seem that there was still a degree to which craftsmen were regarded interchangeably as producers of a commodity rather than as artists creating a work of art, at least to the extent that they came from a cohort of broadly comparable skill. They are frequently referred to in parish records as simply, for example, "the joiner," as at St. Matthew Friday Street.[42]

Today, it seems strange that the work of these master-craftsmen could be viewed as a commodity, given that many of the carvers were among the most talented and sought-after craftsmen of the late seventeenth century. Grinling Gibbons' reputation exceeds all others and is

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[39] LMA/P69/DIO/B/001/MS04216/002, fols. 6-7.

[40] LMA/P69/STE2/B/001/MS00594/002, fol. 190.

[41] LMA/P69/ANA/B/001/MS01604/001, n.p., 26 March 1680, 16 June 1680.

[42] LMA/P69/PET4/B/006/MS00645/002, fols. 133r., 137r., 141r, 144r.

firmly lodged in the public imagination, but the best work of William Emmett, Jonathan Maine, Edward Pearce, and Edward Strong is also of the highest quality. However, the quality of their work and the esteem in which it is held today are misleading as an indicator of how and why they were selected by parish vestries. In the 1670s, however, most of these men were up-and-coming craftsmen, rather than well-established names; but they were gifted with the great opportunity created by the Fire. Gibbons apart, it was often their work on the churches which created their reputations, rather than their reputations which obtained for them their positions.

Four carvers built or developed successful businesses, largely on the basis of their work in the City churches. William Emmett (c.1641-1700) was the son of the Master Bricklayer of the Office of Works, Maurice Emmett, but was only made a liveryman of the Joiners' Company in 1666 and is largely unknown before he began work in the City churches.[43] Jonathan Maine (fl. 1680-1709) seems to have been one of the youngest of those who eventually became prominent, with minor work at St. Stephen Walbrook in 1679 being his first recorded work – the scrollwork panels for the pews, the Grocers' Company arms in the panelling, and some work in the screens.[44] Edward Pearce the Younger (c.1635-95) was, like Emmett, well-connected, thanks to his father's reputation, by virtue of which he was made free of the Painter-Stainers' Company by patrimony in 1656; he was therefore one of the better established church carvers.[45] Pearce worked for Sir Roger Pratt at Horseheath Hall near Cambridge, built for Lord Alington in 1661 and was Wren's mason and carver at Pembroke College chapel, Cambridge, in 1663-65. Pearce was one of several whose personal skills and business operations crossed the boundaries of materials between stone and wood, though his masonry business was larger than his wood-carving business. (Unfortunately, we know almost nothing about how these men structured and operated their businesses in this period.) In 1670 Pearce was engaged in London to work on the restoration of the Guildhall. Lastly, Edward Strong (1652-1724) was born into a family of Cotswold quarry-owners and masons; he was apprenticed in 1672 to his brother Thomas, from whom he inherited several London contracts when Thomas died in 1681.[46] He was made free of the Masons' Company by redemption as late as 1680, reflecting the fact that he was one of the "foreigners" who came to London in the wake of the Rebuilding Act. Strong was as good a

[43] Geoffrey Beard, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England, 1660-1820*, (London: Bloomsbury Books, 1986), 258; *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain, 1660-1851* ed. Ingrid Roscoe, Emma Hardy and M G Sullivan (London: Yale University Press, 2009), s.v. "William Emmett."

[44] LMA/P69/STE2/B/026/MS01056, fol. 26; Beard, *Craftsmen,* 269. *Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain,* s.v. "Jonathan Maine."

[45] *Dictionary of British Sculptors, 1660-1851* ed. Rupert Gunnis (New rev. ed. London: Abbey Library, 1968), s.v. "Edward Pearce"; *Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain,* s.v. "Edward Pearce"; A.V. Grimstone, *Building Pembroke Chapel: Wren, Pearce and Scott*, (Cambridge: Pembroke College, 2009), 4, 24-26.

[46] *Dictionary of British Sculptors,* s.v. "Edward Strong"; *Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain,* s.v. "Edward Strong."

businessman as he was a craftsman and he left a considerable estate, including the Hertfordshire lordship of the manors of Hyde at Abbots Langley and Herons at Wheathampstead.[47]

John Summerson somewhat ungenerously describes the contributions of these men to the building of the churches as being "rather gross aldermanish vernacular."[48] Summerson does not define "aldermanish vernacular" or cite any specific examples to illustrate his criticism. Given the number of tradesmen involved in rebuilding London, there undoubtedly were examples of architecture in the rebuilt London which might merit such a description – such as the entrance to Sir Robert Clayton's house on Old Jewry (Fig. 2.3) – but Wren's churches, and the features of them which can be attributed to masons and wood-carvers, are less deserving of it.

Two characteristics of many of the church carvers combined to help embed classical architectural rules in London and help it to mature. The first was the long-term collaboration which many of them had with Wren, and the second was their access to, and use of, architectural source materials in the development of their carving practice.

As with the joiners, a frequent pattern among the carvers was that their first work in the churches was as Wren's mason-contractor or mason-carver during the construction phase, and it was as masons that their main area of practice and reputation tended to remain. Of the more prolific among them, eight – Thomas Cartwright, Richard Cleere, William Emmett, Samuel Fulkes, Christopher Kempster, Edward Pearce and the brothers Edward and Thomas Strong – worked between them as masons in the building of thirty-six churches in this way and went on to carry out wood-carving on the furnishings of thirty, though not necessarily in churches where they had worked as mason.[49] James Campbell estimates that some of these masons were running seven contracts simultaneously, and the fact that a good proportion of them were engaged at various times, both as mason at one church and wood-carver at another goes some way to explain the congruence of the furnishings with their architectural surroundings.[50] It meant that these craftsmen were intimately familiar with the fabric of the churches, their architectural idiom, and the characteristics of the spaces which Wren had created.

Through these personal connections and ways of working, Wren's architectural style was bound to influence the style of the furnishings as well, even when he himself had no direct input.

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[47] *Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain,* s.v. "Edward Strong."

[48] Summerson, *Georgian London*, 41.

[49] *Wren Society,* vol. X, 46-53; James Campbell, "Building a Fortune: The Finances of the Stonemasons Working on the Rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral 1675-1720," in *Proceedings of the Third International Congress on Construction History, Cottbus, May, 2009*, ed. Karl-Eugen Kurrer, Werner Lorenz, and Volker Wetzk (Berlin: Construction History Society, 2009): 297-304; Appendix F.2.

[50] Campbell, "Building a Fortune," 303.

These factors also help to explain what can otherwise seem like an abrupt stylistic discontinuity between, for example, the strapwork decoration of earlier pulpits (as at St. John's Leeds; Fig. 2.4) and the swags and drops of the new ones (as at St. Swithin-London-Stone; Fig. 2.5). Wren's carvers did not need to be told to make the transition, in part because they had already absorbed the new style by working on the stonework of the churches. It would have been incongruous to do otherwise, and therefore comes as no surprise that what they produced in the furnishings fits the architecture of the setting, shares a common language of classical form and is respectful in scale to the building. In particular, the reredoses which were provided in the first campaign of furnishing sit below the sill of the east window, whereas, conversely, the alterations made by the next generation to the reredos at St. Mary-le-Bow in 1705 resulted in the reredos blocking the east window (Fig. 2.6).[51]

We should not conclude from this that the carvers simply copied from Wren. While not as erudite as Wren, they were not uneducated either. Scholarship in recent years has greatly enhanced our understanding of the way in which master-craftsmen of this period used pattern-books and architectural treatises as source material for designs of their own. Anthony Geraghty has drawn attention to the extensive collection of architectural source materials built up by Robert Hooke, and which was typical of "the sort of working collections amassed by the more sophisticated London craftsmen and surveyors."[52] The collecting of such source material by architects and master-craftsmen, and the use to which they were put, is also profitably discussed by Matthew Walker in *Architects and Intellectual Culture in Post-Restoration England*.[53] Both Geraghty and Walker cite the example of Hooke who, in June 1677, bought a collection of prints from the London joiner, Roger Davies, who worked as joiner at St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe and St. Stephen Walbrook.[54] Davies was newly returned from Paris, and the collection which Hooke bought included views of churches in Paris and Rome, "18 chimneys and altars" – presumably engravings from Jean Barbet's 1633 *Livre d'Architecture d'Autels et de Cheminées*, which will be discussed in Chapter 4 – and 108 engravings by Israel Sylvestre.[55]

We also see the important role played by engravings in the oft-cited story of John Evelyn's chance "discovery" of Grinling Gibbons in a cottage in Deptford in 1671, when Evelyn came across Gibbons carving a limewood relief of Tintoretto's Crucifixion from an engraving by

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[51] LMA/P69/MRY7/B/002A/MS05137, n.p., 26 July 1705.

[52] Anthony Geraghty, "Robert Hooke's Collection of Architectural Books and Prints," *Architectural History* 47 (2004): 113-125, especially 121.

[53] Matthew Walker, *Architects and Intellectual Culture in Post-Restoration England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 54-101; see also Elizabeth McKellar, *The Birth of Modern London: The Development and Design of the City, 1660-1720* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 138-154.

[54] LMA/CLC/313/J/002/MS25539/004, fol. 121r.; LMA/P69/STE2/B/026/MS01056, fol. 16.

[55] Geraghty, "Robert Hooke's Collection," 116-117; Walker, *Architects and Intellectual Culture*, 62.

Agostino Carracci (Fig. 2.7).[56] He subsequently set about promoting Gibbons to Wren and the King, though without immediate success. Mention of the Carracci illustrates how critical engravings were as a source of design and how widely works by continental artists, including those with religious themes, were disseminated in England – even to a jobbing workmen like Gibbons, who at that stage of his career was mainly occupied with carving figureheads and ornamentation for ships and river-barges.[57] The anecdote also shows how "discovery" by one well-connected individual could lead to introductions to others who might be able to provide commissions and help construct a broader patronage circle; this was more true of connections with Wren than it was of connections with Evelyn.

Edward Pearce (Fig. 2.8), a more established master-craftsman at the start of this period, was both a collector and a publisher of engravings: he republished his father's pattern-book of decorative friezes (first published in 1640) in 1668 and then again in c.1680 (Fig. 2.9).[58] The timing of these dates of re-publication shows a good commercial mind and an awareness that there was a healthy market for pattern books, coming just when the gargantuan rebuilding of London was in full swing. On his death in 1695, he left the pick of his "Clositt of Bookes, prints and drawings" to his "very good friend," the architect William Talman.[59]

Robert Pricke was a translator and publisher of numerous French and Dutch books on architectural and decorative design, especially in the aftermath of the Fire, publishing, among others, English editions of works by Jean Barbet, Jean Dubreuil, Alessandro Francini, and Pierre le Muet.[60] The title page which Pricke gave to Julien Mauclerc's illustrated edition of Vitruvius in 1669 included the exhortation, "A work necessary for Architects, Painters, Carvers, Engineers, Gold-smiths, Masons, Carpenters, Brick-layers, Joyners," adding in case he had not cast his commercial net wide enough, "in general, for all that are concerned in the famous Art of BUILDING."[61] Books like these were targeted at the master-craftsman as much as to the connoisseur-gentleman, and John Evelyn confirms that they had a good effect. In the introduction to the second edition of his *Account of Architects and Architecture*, Evelyn records the

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[56] John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, vol. 3, ed. E.S. de Beer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 567-568; David Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons and the Art of Carving* (London: V&A Publications, 1998), 16-33; *Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain,* s.v. "Grinling Gibbons."

[57] Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 18-19.

[58] *Dictionary of Sculptors,* s.v. "Edward Pearce."

[59] Ibid.

[60] Jean Barbet, *A Booke of Archetecture Containing Seeling Peeces Chimny Peeces and Severall Sorts Usefull for Carpenters Joyners Carvers Painters Invented by I. Barbet*, translated by Robert Pricke (London: 1670); Jean Dubreuil, *Perspective Practical, or, A Plain and Easie Method of True and Lively Representing all Things to the Eye at a Distance by the Exact Rules of Art ... / by a religious person of the Society of Jesus*, translated by Robert Pricke (London: 1672); Alessandro Francini, *A New Booke of Architecture,* translated by Robert Pricke (London: 1670); Pierre Le Muet, *The Art of Fair Building Represented in the Figures of Several Uprights of Houses, With their Ground-plots, Fitting for Persons of Several Qualities*, translated by Robert Pricke (London: 1670).

[61] Vitruvius, *A Treatise of Architecture*, translated by Robert Pricke (London: 1669), title page.

gratitude which Wren's "Chief Work-men" had expressed to him for the first edition, "gratefully Acknowledging the Assistance it had afforded them."[62] Wren's craftsmen were therefore themselves familiar with the latest architectural treatises and with continental design (the first edition of Evelyn's *Account* had been appended to his translation of Roland Fréart de Cambray's *Parallèle de l'achitecture antique et de la moderne*).[63]

Nor was collecting engravings purely the preserve of architects and designers. Samuel Pepys makes frequent references in his diary to trips to his bookseller, and showed an avid interest in architectural and topographical materials, including continental churches:

> 1 January 1662. … Mr. W. Pen came to me and he and I walked out, and to the Stationer's, and looked over some pictures and traps [i.e. trappings] for my house.[64]
>
> 20 April 1663. … and then to Mr. Grant's. There saw his prints, which he shewed me, and indeed are the best collection of any things almost that ever I saw, there being the prints of most of the greatest houses, churches, and antiquitys in Italy and France and brave [i.e. excellent, fine, handsome] cutts.[65]
>
> 29 September 1663. [My wife] and I to put up some paper pictures in the red chamber, where we go to lie very pretty, and the map of Paris.[66]

These examples support the assertion that this use of source material was a well-established norm in this period, both among professionals and the sort of educated laymen who might find themselves elected to vestries. Coupled with Wren's long-term patronage, all this meant that the leading craftsmen were part of a well-connected and well-informed circle. As much by their day-to-day contact with their own kind, they operated in a milieu where they had ready access to the latest architectural and design ideas, to source-books, and to a variety of types of printed materials which provided them not only with information on architectural design but also with those features appropriate to ecclesiastical work. In Chapter 4, we will build on these general observations about the importance of printed sources, and apply them in more detail to two specific genres of engravings which played a major role in the design of the City church reredoses.

Once the construction of the new churches began in 1670, parish vestrymen would swiftly have become aware of the work of the carvers working in the City churches, whether

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[62] John Evelyn, *An Account of Architects and Architecture* (London: 1706), dedication to Wren.

[63] Roland Fréart de Cambray, *A parallel of the antient architecture with the modern*, translated by John Evelyn (London: 1664).

[64] Pepys, *Diary*, vol. 3, 1.

[65] Ibid., vol. 4, 106; "brave, adj., n., and int.." *Oxford English Dictionary*, hereafter "*OED*" (online edn., accessed 12 December 2017).

[66] Pepys, *Diary*, vol. 4, 320. The map of Paris is shown hanging in Pepys' library in York Buildings, London, in a drawing of c.1693; reproduced in Robert Latham (ed.), *The Illustrated Pepys* (London: Book Club Associates, 1978), 171.

because they had already built their own parish churches, from the frequent formal visits they made to each other's churches when seeking design inspiration, or simply by walking the streets of London. A master-craftsman's reputation could be built very quickly in such an environment. And, as Appendix F illustrates, it served to develop a body of men known to be proficient in church architecture and decoration whom vestries could trust to "beautify" a church. For those who worked on the City churches, it provided the grounding for many of them to progress to work on St. Paul's, the royal palaces of Whitehall, Hampton Court, Kensington, and Winchester, and major Office of Works projects such as the hospitals at Chelsea and Greenwich, in all of which their relationship with Wren and the esteem in which he held them was essential. Several of them also went on to have commissions at aristocratic houses such as Boughton, Burghley, Canons, Chatsworth, and Petworth.[67]

Not all of the carvers working in the churches had successful careers with royal commissions to their names. In the surviving records, seventeen carvers are recorded as having worked at only one church each, and of these almost nothing is known. Their work is generally competent, but unexceptional.[68] Names such as John Bullymore, who worked at St. Dionis Backchurch, and William Mildman, who worked at St. Alban Wood Street, appear to have left no notable mark elsewhere.[69]

Although the picture we have of the wood-carvers is more vibrant than that of the joiners, the process by which they were selected and appointed is more opaque. As already noted, it was the joiners who appear to have managed the contractual relationship with the vestry, and the absence of references to a tender process for appointing carvers suggests that it was probably the joiner who introduced one or more carvers to the vestry for their approval. In most parishes, the joiner who had been appointed to make the pews went on to provide the other furnishings also, and perhaps by that stage vestries were willing to accept their joiner's recommendation for carver without the need for a competitive process. St. Stephen Walbrook was an exception to this pattern. They appointed Thomas Creecher as joiner, in partnership with the carver William Newman, to make the pulpit, reredos, and west screen, in succession to Roger Davies and Stephen College, who had together made the pews.[70] Davies failed in his independent bid to

[67] See Appendix F.2.

[68] Ibid.

[69] LMA/P69/DIO/B/038/MS04215/001, fol. 185; LMA/P69/OLA3/B/002/MS01257/002, n.p. 23 May 1685.

[70] LMA/P69/STE2/B/026/MS01056, fols. 16, 66-67.

make the pulpit and reredos, possibly tarred by his association with the politically radical College.[71]

Once the vestries' attention had turned from the relatively generic subject of pews to other more liturgical furnishings, the vestry minutes become more informative about the design process, even if indirectly. An example from St. Stephen Walbrook is helpful both because the vestry minutes there are more fulsome than many others and because presentation drawings survive to illustrate how the words used by the vestry were turned into a series of design proposals. The vestry "ordered that there be a Convenient Alterpeece pulpitt & type made very well wrought in form in some measure Agreeable to St. Lawrence & the pulpitt & type."[72] (The "type" is the sounding-board, or tester, above the pulpit.) As before, the entry shows that vestries were aware of what was being erected in other churches and that they had an outline idea of their preferred structure and shape. Their desire for the pulpit to be "very well wrought" also shows that the quality of execution was a high priority for them. Elizabeth McKellar notes that the practice of specifying a design by reference to a nearby precedent was common in the London building trade, and that it seemed to be an accepted way for patrons to provide an implied guidance to the craftsmen involved as to the structural components, decorative characteristics, and quality of workmanship which they expected to be delivered.[73] Crucially, the qualified phrase used in the Walbrook example – "in form in some measure Agreeable to" – provided the craftsman with the latitude to exercise his own skills of design and manufacture, rather than the vestry simply instructing him to replicate the reredos and pulpit at St. Lawrence Jewry. In this particular case, we can compare the two surviving presentation drawings of a rejected design for the reredos by Roger Davies, and a rejected design by Thomas Creecher with the reredos as executed by Creecher with carving by William Newman (Figs. 2.10-2.12).[74] Assuming that Davies and Creecher had not ignored the brief specified by the vestry, we can deduce that the drawings were indeed in the spirit of being "in form in some measure Agreeable to St. Lawrence." The three designs have a common theme of having a single wide compass pediment and shorter side panels – perhaps the feature which attracted the vestry to the design at St. Lawrence – but otherwise there are notable differences in design. In particular, paintings of Moses and Aaron by William Davies are set in Creecher's executed reredos but do not appear in his rejected presentation drawing.[75] The fact that we have a surviving rejected design by Creecher, as well as

[71] College, dubbed "the Protestant Joiner," was executed in 1681, technically for having "imagined the death of the sovereign" but, in reality, for his part in stirring up the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis, and for his satirical poems and broadsheets. Gary S. de Krey, "Stephen College," *ODNB*, (online edn., accessed 13 Feb 2014).

[72] LMA/P69/STE2/B/001/MS00594/002, fol. 177.

[73] McKellar, *Birth of Modern London*, 147-152.

[74] They also rejected three designs by Roger Davies and others for a square pulpit and tester, which would have been the only one of its type in the City had it been commissioned. See *Wren Society,* vol. X, Plate 22.

[75] LMA/P69/STE2/B/026/MS01056, fol. 35.

his executed design, suggests either that Creecher presented more than one design at the outset, or that there was an iterative process of review and adaptation between the vestry and the designer of the proposal.

The same process is evident at St. Michael Cornhill. There, "Mr Cleere the Joyner showed [the vestry] 2 Modells of the Joyners Works intended to be at the East End of the Chauncell where the Ten Commandments are to be placed, and the Vestry approved of the Modell Richest in Workmanship having Scroles on the sides upon Pedastalls for which he demanded £70." A month later the vestry invited Cleere back to discuss a proposal to incorporate paintings of Moses and Aaron into the reredos.[76] The initiative came from the vestry, and this appears to be the first instance of Moses and Aaron being included in a Wrenian reredos (August 1672); as usual, we know nothing of the discussion which gave rise to the decision.[77] It is also interesting that neither the parish clerk nor Hatton thought it worth recording that Cleere's design incorporated gothic pointed arches, somewhat awkwardly combined with classical cherubim and festoons (Fig. 2.13). Not long afterwards, the same vestry considered five models for an organ-case and gallery and, as with the reredos, "the better and richest whereof (though of greatest price) was best liked."[78] These two comments are brief but informative. The two items – reredos and organ – make a significant visual impact on the appearance of a parish church: one faces the worshipper as he arrives in church and during the service; and the other faces him as he leaves. Faced with a selection of designs, the vestry chose the ones which were the most splendid, the most ornamented – scrolls on pedestals being highlighted enthusiastically – and which were judged to be "better" than the others, presumably in a qualitative and artistic sense. It is these aspects which the parish clerk thought most worthy of recording, and not any feature which expressed any notions of theology or ecclesial identity, despite these being the most critical features of the design of the reredos. We will see in Chapter 5 just how significant these features were, but for now we have a clear sense that overall visual impact was the consideration uppermost in the minds of the vestrymen, and that that justified paying the highest price. In contrast, Adam Bowett notes that when the more remote, centralised, and bureaucratically-minded Commissioners for the Fifty Churches reviewed tenders from craftsmen after 1710, they always chose the cheapest one.[79]

From this collection of observations on the processes at two parishes, we can conclude that parish vestries wanted their furnishings to impress with the richness of their design and the

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[76] LMA/P69/MIC2/B/001/MS04072/001/002, fols. 274r.-274v.

[77] Ibid. The meeting was held on 12 September 1672.

[78] Ibid., fol. 321r.

[79] Adam Bowett, "The Mahogany Reredos, Pulpit and Altar Table in the Church of St. George, Bloomsbury," *The Georgian Group Journal*, IX (1999): 168.

quality of their execution. While they looked for inspiration at other churches, that did not imply slavish copying; craftsmen were given the opportunity to develop designs of their own. Lastly, the process was an iterative one; vestries could change their minds about what they wanted, and possibly craftsmen could also propose alternatives after submitting a first proposal.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that the critical feature in the commissioning of master-craftsmen by the City vestries was the close relationship which a large proportion of them had with Wren. These craftsmen established their reputations as Wren's masons, joiners, and carvers during the construction of the churches, and this is what secured many of them the commissions to furnish the churches as well. That same connection influenced the emergence of a particular style in the church furnishings, which was fed and nurtured by a combination of those craftsmen's absorption of Wren's own style through their earlier work with him, and by the ready availability of printed architectural source material in London. The vestries' practice of comparing work already undertaken in other churches further contributed to the dissemination of that style and the growth of a sense of the Wrenian furnishings as a distinct genre. It was most likely these considerations – the profile of the craftsmen and vestries' visits to each other's churches – which contributed to the uniformity of style of the new church furnishings. Vestrymen may have had some thought of seeking to achieve a uniformity of appearance for ecclesial reasons, though, if they did, they did not express that objective in their records. The more persuasive conclusion is that the uniformity of the church furnishings was due to the success of the new classical style evident across the whole of London. With its origins in France and Italy, and its dissemination through printed works, classical style secured its influence over the intellectual culture of the period, and its leading light was Wren himself.

Having established the profiles of those who were involved either in commissioning or providing the church furnishings, and their organisational arrangements, the three chapters of Part II move from the general to the specific. They examine in detail the designs for pulpits and reredoses. Here we will see how the design processes introduced in Part I were applied in practice. In particular, these chapters will examine how craftsmen creatively used engraved design sources to develop church furnishings which were calibrated to express notions of Anglican churchmanship.

PART II

CHAPTER 3

"COMELY AND DECENT":
PULPITS, PREACHING & LITURGY

INTRODUCTION

When John Strype published his revised edition of Stowe's *Survey of London* in 1720 – in which he had been encouraged by Bishop Compton – the quality and quantity of preaching in London were, in his view, among the defining virtues of the City:

> Thus is this city signally blessed, in Respect of the Means and Opportunities of Grace that it enjoyeth. … There is not a City under the Cope of Heaven so wealthy in spiritual provision. … Others may exceed you in the Glory of outward Structures, in the Largeness of Extent, in the uniform Proportion of Streets, or Ornaments of Temples: but your Pulpits do surpass theirs, and your Preaching can lift up Cities to Heaven.[1]

Many Londoners would have agreed with him. When they could not hear sermons, they still wanted to read them, and sermon publishing was a major part of the booksellers' trade. The London stationer Benjamin Tooke informed a customer in 1688 that there were "two or three Booksellers who keepe Catalogues of all Sermons whatsoever whether in volumes or single, under the names of the Authors and by the Text they were preached on."[2] Another bookseller, Richard Chiswell, reputedly paid £2,500 – a sum of money large enough to build a respectable merchant's house – for the rights to publish Archbishop John Tillotson's sermons not published during his lifetime.[3]

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[1] Strype, *Survey*, 22.

[2] Benjamin Tooke to Sir Robert Southwell, 22 September 1688: Derbyshire Record Office, Matlock, D364 Z/B1-145, quoted in Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 182.

[3] Rosemary Dixon, "Sermons in Print 1660-1700," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, ed. Peter McCulloch, Hugh Adlington, and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 466; Grant Tapsell, "Pastors, Preachers and Politicians: The Clergy of the Later Stuart Church," in *Later Stuart Church,* 81.

If it is difficult, in the twenty-first century, to grasp quite how significant preaching was in the seventeenth century, these brief indicators tell us that it was both a spiritual and a commercial phenomenon. The pulpit was the birthplace of each sermon, and any parishioner who was paying attention during services spent more time looking towards the pulpit than in any other direction.

However, the archetypal pulpit of the period – the "triple-decker" – was more than simply the platform from which a preacher delivered his sermon. As well as what we might consider the pulpit "proper," it incorporated two "desks." The higher of these was the "reader's desk," and it was from here that the minister led divine service, by reading the liturgy, the form of service set out in the *Book of Common Prayer*. The lower of the two desks was the "clerk's desk," from which the parish clerk led the congregation in their set responses, and in reciting the Psalms. The pulpit in its three elements was therefore the principal focus of attention in all services, except during communion services and what was known as the "ante-communion," when the minister led those parts of the service from the north end of the communion table.[4] The liturgical aspect of the pulpit is often overlooked, and this chapter seeks to redress that imbalance by exploring both aspects of its functions – preaching and the leading of divine service.

This chapter therefore sets out first to locate the Wrenian pulpit in a more complete religious and liturgical context, as well as noting its role in political life.[5] It then discusses the important notion of "comeliness and decency" which was applied to the pulpit, first as a statement and reflection of values, and then in relation to the details of the materials, form, and ornamentation of the pulpit. Finally, the chapter considers the significance of the physical location of the pulpit, in particular where the choice of location made particular statements about churchmanship.

PULPITS, PREACHING, AND DIVINE SERVICE

Pulpits and preaching

When used for preaching, a seventeenth-century pulpit was much more than a modern lectern. Seventeenth-century pulpits had a specific purpose, which was to reflect and enhance the status

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[4] The decline in this practice is discussed at the end of this chapter.

[5] For a recent discussion of the combined religious and political output of clergy, see Tapsell, "Pastors, preachers and politicians," 71-100.

of preaching in a society which accorded profound importance to the preached Word of God. Although puritans, Laudians, Restoration clergy of all stripes, and dissenting ministers may have held differing views on the nature of preaching and how, and by whom, it should be conducted, it was never unimportant to any of them.

The pre-War Laudian dedication to the sacraments and reverent ceremonial placed preaching in a subordinate – though not unimportant – role.[6] The Laudians' principal anxiety was not so much that preaching was inherently problematic, but rather that it was dangerous when in the wrong hands – puritan hands in particular.[7] Though an extreme example, Laud's *protégé* Anthony Sparrow scarcely had a good word to say about preaching, and maintained that even the non-canonical books of the Apocrypha

> may be read publickly in the Church, with profit and more safety, than Sermons can be ordinarily preacht there. For certainly Sermons are but humane Compositions, and many of them not so wholsome matter, … The pulpit is no security from errors. Men may as well speak blasphemy or vanity … in it.[8]

Laudian misgivings about preaching intensified in the context of parish lectures. These were given on weekdays, and were as significant in the weekly pattern of parish life as Sunday sermons.[9] The fact that lecturers were appointed by parish vestries rather than patrons, and were often endowed by godly legacies, further made them the object of Laudian suspicion in the 1630s.[10] The choice of title of Laud's abortive 1640 Canon 8 – "Of Preaching for Conformity" – amply illustrates his perspective on the matter. It opens with the words, "Whereas the Preaching of Order and Decencie, according to St. Paul's rule, doth conduce to edification …."[11]

For all this, preaching required a dignified setting – a 1640 example at St. Mary, Cerne Abbas, Dorset, is particularly fine (Fig. 3.1) – subject always to the pulpit's subordination to the chancel and altar.[12] For this reason, Laudian pulpits always stood to the side of the chancel arch or in some other place which did not block the view from the nave into the chancel.[13]

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[6] Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 120, 124-125; Mary Morrissey, "Scripture, Style and Persuasion in Seventeenth-Century English Theories of Preaching," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 53, no. 4 (2002): 697-699.

[7] Lake, "Laudian Style," 168-171; Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, 115-116.

[8] Anthony Sparrow, *A Rationale Upon the Book of Common Prayer* (London: 1672), 41, 222.

[9] For a thorough discussion, see Paul S. Seaver and G.R. Elton, *The Puritan Lectureships; the Politics of Religious Dissent, 1560-1662* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970).

[10] Appendix E in Seaver, *Puritan Lectureships*, 306, notes that there were 120 London parishes with lectureships in 1655-59, of which thirty-one were endowed, suggesting a puritan spirit in those parishes. See also 243-251; Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, 43-47, 79-94, 115-116.

[11] *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiasticall, 1640*, London: 1640, n.p.

[12] John Newman and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Dorset* (London: Yale University Press, 1972), 133; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 149.

[13] Ibid., 244.

What Emma Rhatigan calls "sermon-centred piety" in the early part of the century prospered thereafter, and "sermon-gadding" – the practice of visiting churches other than one's own parish church in order to hear the preacher – was an established feature of London life, whether among the particularly pious, anxious to hear God's Word as often as possible, or for less spiritual reasons of society fashion.[14] Even Pepys, hardly a model of piety, spent one Sunday "going from one church to another and hearing a bit here and a bit there."[15] For a major event such as Stillingfleet's sermon on the solemn day of fasting a fortnight after the Fire, Pepys could be enticed to hear a celebrity preacher, going to St. Margaret, Westminster, only to find that others had so filled the church that he could not get in.[16] Pepys seems genuinely to have found the sermons at the French Huguenot church on Threadneedle Street to be helpful, and would occasionally visit there on his own; once he arrived too late, and went to St. Dunstan-in-the-East instead.[17] Seemingly on some Sundays, not hearing a sermon was simply not an option.

The importance of preaching in the popular mind was reflected by the fact that, nation-wide, the highest status pews – and those with the highest pew-rents – were generally those for the pews closest to the pulpit. Kevin Dillow's unpublished DPhil thesis, "The social and ecclesiastical significance of church seating arrangements and pew disputes, 1500-1740," remains the most comprehensive analysis of the allocation of seating for this period.[18] Dillow analyses a 1662 named pew plan for St. Peter Cornhill (Fig. 3.2) which, though dated before the Fire, is relevant for this thesis also.[19] This plan shows the pulpit placed part-way down the nave of the church on the north side, with a cluster of pews encircling it, occupied by the leading men of the parish, and with a matching number of pews occupied by their wives immediately to the west of them. The remaining men's pews recede from the pulpit in decreasing order of rank towards the east, and the women's to the west. Consideration of other pew plans from around the country reinforces the view that in most churches the pulpit was the key determinant of the status of particular pews and their orientation.[20] Rhatigan also notes that in churches which had proprietary family pews – mainly country parishes – those pews were mostly orientated towards the pulpit rather than the communion table.[21] Interestingly, these patterns of seating allocation

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[14] Emma Rhatigan, "Preaching Venues: Architecture and Auditories," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, 92; Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, 187-228.

[15] Pepys, *Diary*, vol. 2, 47.

[16] Ibid., vol. 7, 316.

[17] Ibid., vol. 2, 270, 276-277.

[18] Dillow, "The significance of church seating."

[19] Ibid., 128-129.

[20] Ibid., 153-157.

[21] Rhatigan, "Preaching Venues," 96.

could result in the "worst" seats being those closest to the communion table and having their backs to the table.

Pulpits and divine service

In the same month that Archbishop Laud was executed, Parliament abolished the *Book of Common Prayer*.[22] However, the prayer book's abolition only drove it underground, and it became hallowed among Anglicans by persecution during the Civil War and Interregnum, helping to keep the spirit of Anglicanism alive.[23] It was inevitable that the drive to re-introduce the prayer book would be central at the Savoy Conference in 1661, and probably inevitable that presbyterians and episcopalians would be unable to reconcile over it.[24] The subsequent requirement of the Act of Uniformity 1662 that clergy swear their "unfeigned assent and consent" to the prayer book precipitated the Great Ejection, in which some 2,000 clergy were removed from their livings for refusing to do so.[25] On the day of the Ejection, Pepys was told by friends that:

> There hath been a disturbance in a church in Friday Street [St Matthew's, whose rector, Henry Hurst, had just been forced out]; a great many young people knotting together and crying out "Porridge" [their nickname for the prayer book] often and seditiously in the church, and took the Common Prayer Book, they say, away; and, some say, did tear it; but it is a thing which appears to me very ominous.[26]

For the Restoration Church, commitment to the prayer book was not simply a matter of advocating one order of service in preference to another, but a reflection of the conviction that uniformity in worship was central to the spiritual well-being of the kingdom and the existence of the national Church. John Spurr comments on the flood of books and tracts aimed at encouraging the loyal to continue in their devotions, and also to persuade dissenters.[27] He cites the title of the anonymously published *Publick Devotion, And The Common Service Of The Church Of England Justified, And Recommended To All Honest And Well Meaning, (however Prejudiced) Dissenters. By a Lover of his Country and the Protestant Religion* (1675) as typical of many. The author proclaimed, "Nothing is here more beautiful and becoming than uniformity … in the worship and service of God."[28]

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[22] Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 3. "January 1645: An Ordinance for taking away the Book of Common Prayer, and for establishing and putting in execution of the Directory for the publique worship of God," in *Acts of the Interregnum* (online edn., accessed 20 April 2018).

[23] Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. 3, 203-204; Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 14-20.

[24] Keeble, "Attempting Uniformity," 14-18.

[25] Ibid., 18.

[26] Pepys, *Diary*, vol. 3, 178; Stephen Wright, "Hurst, Henry (1629–1690)," *ODNB* (online edn., accessed 31 Jan 2017).

[27] Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 337.

[28] Anon., *Publick Devotion, And The Common Service Of The Church Of England Justified, And Recommended To All Honest And Well Meaning, (however prejudiced) Dissenters. By a Lover of his Country and the Protestant Religion* (London: 1675), 28-30.

A particular reason for emphasising the importance of the liturgical role of the pulpit is that it is frequently overlooked by architectural historians, who think of Wren's church interiors, and comparable ones which preceded or followed them, as being mere preaching halls. Peter Guillery quotes selected phrases from Wren's famous 1711 letter to one of the Commissioners for the Fifty New Churches, to the effect that Wren wanted his churches to be "fitted for Auditories," where the congregation could "hear distinctly, and see the Preacher."[29] The selection from Wren's words in quotation marks is Guillery's, but his selection omits other important features which Wren also addresses. Paul Jeffery likewise limits the purpose of auditories to providing "an uncluttered space in which seeing the preacher and hearing what he had to say [was] all important."[30] The inference that the liturgy of the prayer book had become unimportant to Restoration clergy would have startled Gilbert Sheldon. Possibly, this focus on preaching at the expense of liturgy has arisen because so many triple-decker pulpits lost their two desks during the nineteenth century – nationwide as much as in the City. Pulpits have therefore been reduced to the preaching component of the pulpit, and the liturgical function of the desks easily slips out of mind. Indeed, the modern mind naturally associates the word "pulpit" with preaching. The relevant section from Wren's letter is as follows, and must now be considered at greater length (emphasis added):

> The Churches … must be large; but still, in our reformed Religion, it should seem vain to make a Parish-church larger, than that all who are present can both hear and see. The Romanists, indeed, may build larger Churches, it is enough if they hear the Murmur of the Mass, and see the Elevation of the Host, but ours are to be fitted for Auditories. I can hardly think it practicable to make a single Room so capacious, with Pews and Galleries, as to hold above 2000 Persons, *and all to hear the Service*, and both to hear distinctly, and see the Preacher. I endeavoured to effect this, in building the Parish Church of St. James's, Westminster, which, I presume, is the most capacious, with these Qualifications, that hath yet been built … [and which] may be found beautiful and convenient, and as such, the cheapest of any form I could invent.[31]

Wren was not contrasting Catholic Mass with Protestant preaching alone, but with Protestant divine worship *and* preaching together. The congregation was to hear *the service*, and hear it distinctly. The auditory principle which so characterises Wren's churches therefore applied as much to the liturgy as to preaching in Wren's mind, and in this he was following in the footsteps of previous generations. In the same way in the 1630s, the poet-clergyman George Herbert commissioned a matching pulpit and reader's desk, set either side of the chancel arch at his church at Leighton Bromswold, Huntingdonshire, declaring that preaching and leading prayer:

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[29] Peter Guillery, "Suburban Models, or Calvinism and Continuity in London's Seventeenth-Century Church Architecture," *Architectural History* 48 (2005): 91.

[30] Jeffery, *City Churches*, 82.

[31] Lydia M. Soo, *Wren's Tracts on Architecture, and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 115.

> should neither have a precedency or priority of the other; but that prayer and preaching, being equally useful, might agree like brethren and have an equal honour and estimation.[32]

Herbert implicitly acknowledges that preaching was ordinarily given primacy, and also that it was universal for people to think about matters such as the physical arrangement of church furnishings and accord them significance. The use of twin pulpits of equal height ensured that there was no implied subordination of liturgy to preaching.[33]

Pulpits and politics

Finally, the pulpit also had a distinct political and civic function. Sermons given on the anniversaries of the Gunpowder Plot, Charles I's martyrdom, and Charles II's return were used to remind parishioners of their obligations of obedience to authority.[34] Grant Tapsell notes the "powerful intermingling" of politics and religion, and Tony Claydon goes so far as to say that "within [the] clerical function the political sermon was central."[35] The opening of the twice-yearly circuit of Assize sessions began with a sermon in which judges and magistrates were reminded of the bond between Moses and Aaron, Magistracy and Ministry, and clergy were required to read Royal Proclamations from the pulpit.[36] London preaching was also occasionally coordinated to deal with perceived danger, whether to the State or to Church doctrine; Rosemary Dixon describes the so-called "pamphlet sermons" of the 1670s-80s as "part of the Restoration divines' systematic onslaught on the misleading doctrines and political dangers of popery;" and Gary de Krey notes the frequency with which London clergy were used to keep down political, as well as religious, dissent, especially during the period of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis (1678-83).[37] One commentator complained of "the high-flown Crape-Gown-Men that thunder briskly against the Dissenters."[38]

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[32] Izaak Walton, *The Life of Mr George Herbert* (London: 1670), 48.

[33] Trevor Cooper, "Seventeenth-century twin pulpits in England," *Ecclesiology Today* 55 & 56 (May 2018): 7-46, discusses the phenomenon of twin pulpits, in particular the appeal which they had to Laudians such as John Cosin.

[34] Tony Claydon, "The Sermon, the 'Public Sphere' and the Political Culture of Late Seventeenth-Century England," in *The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and History 1600-1750*, ed. Lori Ferrel and Peter McCulloch (Manchester University Press 2000), 215-217.

[35] Tapsell, "Introduction: the later Stuart Church in context," in *Later Stuart Church*, 1; Tapsell, "Pastors, Preachers and Politicians," 71-100; Claydon, "The Sermon," 216.

[36] Hugh Adlington, "Restoration, Religion and Law: Assize Sermons, 1660-1685," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, 423-441.

[37] Dixon, "Sermons in Print*," 461-463; de Krey, *London and the Restoration*, 152-156, 285-288, 354, 382.

[38] Tim Harris, "Was the Tory Reaction Popular? Attitudes of Londoners Towards the Persecution of Dissent, 1681-86," *London Journal* 13, (1987): 114. The "Crape-Gown" refers to the black clerical gown worn when preaching.

In all this politicking, clergy were enthusiastic participants, never missing the opportunity to defend the interests of the Church when perceiving a threat, particularly if the threat was from a Catholic king.[39] Claydon points out that during the Allegiance Controversy in the 1690s, two-thirds of the pamphlets published were by clergy and began their lives as sermons.[40]

Pulpits were thus the location from which both the spiritual life of the nation was directed, and popular opinion could be formed. Preaching was therefore a high priority in the London churches, not only for its intrinsic importance, but also as a means of keeping Londoners well-disposed towards the Church, and less inclined to entertain dissent. So, just as a theatre stage needed its proscenium arch, so the sermon needed its own grand and prominent physical setting or, in the language of vestry minutes and the Canons, one which was "comely," "decent," "convenient," and "seemly."[41]

THE "COMELY AND DECENT PULPIT"

Article 83 of the 1604 Canons required churchwardens to "provide a comely and decent Pulpit, to be set in a convenient place … and to be there seemly kept for the preaching of God's Word."[42] As with the other canonical provisions, the requirement made no specific provision for style or to specific features. The requirement for comeliness and decency must therefore have contained a set of meanings which would have been understood both by the churchwardens upon whom those requirements were laid and by those enforcing them.

What, then, did the terms "comely," "decent," and "convenient" mean to the vestrymen and craftsmen charged with furnishing Wren's churches? The question is particularly important given that their meaning has since changed. As will be seen, these meanings were heavily dependent upon context, encompassing themes around the form and material, suitability for purpose, and ethical expression. It takes some time to unpack, and we shall see that *how* a person used these terms said much about their religious outlook, including in relation to church furnishings.

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[39] Claydon, "The Sermon," 219-222.

[40] Ibid., 223. The controversy concerned the legitimacy of the Williamite regime.

[41] Bray, *Canons*, 377.

[42] Ibid. Unlike the provisions relating to the communion table, Article 83 did not specify any preferred location for the pulpit, which is left to "the Discretion of the Ordinary of the place." In most cases, the Ordinary, the person with immediate authority over the parish, was the diocesan bishop.

The most common usage of "comely" in the period was to describe the appearance of a person or their clothes, and while it could simply describe beauty or prettiness, it mainly suggested an alignment of moral virtue with physical beauty.[43] As we will now see, there is an assumption that each reflected the other. A similar alignment extended to architectural and ecclesiastical usage also, and although the modern usage of "decorum" has retained that notion of appropriateness, "comely" has largely fallen out of use. The distinction between the two may, however, have been marginal to the early modern mind. The frequency with which "comely and decent" appears as a single phrase might almost imply that it was a single, unified term, rather than suggesting measurably different qualities. "Comeliness," however, does seem to have been preferred by Anglican writers over "decorum" when used on its own; perhaps it conveyed a spiritual quality which they felt that an Anglicised use of "decorum" lacked.

When used in a secular architectural context, the use of the concepts of comeliness and decorum conveyed notions of fitness, propriety, and suitability, alongside considerations of appearance. The architectural writer, Sir Henry Wotton summarised "decor" as "the keeping of a due Respect betweene the Inhabitant, and the Habitation."[44] For Sir Balthasar Gerbier, "Blew Slates [for a roof] are most comely for a Noblemans Palace" because red tiles needed constant repair "and render … the Noble mans rooff, as a Beggers Coat."[45] Here the suitability was not only for appearance's sake, but also as an appropriate mark of rank: the costlier material provided a cleaner and more uniform appearance, and exhibited congruity between the standing of the patron and his building. Congruity or mutuality was important: the blue slates not only *reflected* the patron's nobility; they were *a necessary part* of what made and sustained it.

When used in a religious context, this element of congruity in the meaning of "comely and decent" took on added meaning, as it also included a divine, spiritual, and moral dimension. The test of appropriateness and congruity therefore had to be applied in relation to God himself, not merely an aristocratic patron. Although generalisation can be dangerous, it is interesting to note here that puritan/dissenting use of "comely" tended to differ from Anglican/conformist use. Puritan use was primarily in the context of personal holiness. For example, the London presbyterian minister Obadiah Sedgwick combined the Biblical theme of the believer "putting on Christ" with the idea of comely clothing in a 1658 sermon:[46]

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[43] "Comely, adj.." *OED* (online edn., accessed November 14, 2015): A.2.a., "Appropriate; decent; proper; conforming to acceptable moral or social standards," A.2.b., "Suitable for a particular purpose."

[44] Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture, collected by Henry Wotton Knight, from the best authors and examples* (London: 1624), 119.

[45] Sir Balthasar Gerbier, *The First and Second Part of Counsel and Advice to all Builders: for the choice of their Surveyors, Clerks of their Works, Bricklayers, Masons, Carpenters, and other Workmen therein concerned. As also in respect of their Works, Materials, and Rates thereof* (London: 1664), 50-51.

[46] Galatians 3:27.

> The righteousness of Christ … is our *comely and glorious Ornament*, which for the glory of it, is called the cloathing of the Sun, and beautiful Ornaments; *such as make us altogether comely*, and lovely, without spot or wrinkle, and very pleasant and precious: It is the choicest Jewel which the Christian can wear.[47]

When a puritan did use "comely" in relation to an architectural setting, the same spiritual virtue carried over, and it communicated opposition to ostentation in matters of worship. In his sermon at the opening service of Epping chapel in 1622, Jeremiah Dyke contrasted the "seemly and a grave comelinesse [which] becomes Gods Ordinances, and the places of publike Assemblies [with their] golden and graven Altars [which] wee dare not meddle with."[48]

In contrast, Anglican usage tended to relate to physical objects or outward expressions – such as the conduct of liturgy, ceremony, vestments, furnishings, and buildings. Thus, in the *Second Book of Homilies* (1571), having likened the parish church to the glorious Jerusalem Temple as a reminder of the holiness which was to be expressed, Bishop John Jewel stated the importance "whiche apparteyneth to the mayntenaunce of Gods house, [and the need] to have it *well adourned, & comely*, & cleane kept."[49] The future Archbishop Sancroft described the institution of episcopacy in 1660 as "this comely, and exquisite Order."[50] Specifically in the context of how a church should be furnished and maintained, the cleric George Alsop emphasised the comeliness of worship in his *Orthodox Plea for the Sanctuary of God* as being a requirement which flows from the very holiness of God:

> If there be a God and Religion, then there must be a Worship; and if a Worship, then a Tabernacle or Temple; and if so, then *it must be answerable to his glory in a comely manner. …* Our words in our Service are Gods words, our gestures and carriages with our habits, are *decent and comely*, when we perform our Worship; … [It is to be lamented] that *order and comely decency* in Gods Service makes the pure Worship of God despicable [to dissenters].[51]

The differences between dissenting and Anglican linguistic use of "comely" point to their deeper divisions.[52] They also illustrate the way in which the term was subjective and contextual. Whatever one most regarded as being indicative of one's character and belief – to one's values – was what should be comely and decent. Consequently, when writers used the

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[47] Obadiah Sedgwick, *The Parable of the Prodigal* (London: 1660), 206; see also Josias Bonham, *The Churches Glory* (London: 1674), 13, 40, 101 for a Baptist example.

[48] Jeremiah Dyke, *Sermon dedicatory, Preached at the consecration of the chapell of Epping in Essex, October, 28. 1622* (London: 1623), 10, discussed in Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 123.

[49] "An Homilee for repairing and keping cleane, and comelye adourning of Churches," in *Second Book of Homilies* (London: 1571), 162-163, 167-168.

[50] William Sancroft, *A sermon preached in S. Peter's Westminster, on the first Sunday in Advent* (London: 1660), 3.

[51] George Alsop, *An Orthodox Plea for the Sanctuary of God, Common Service, White Robe of the House* (London: 1669), 11, 44, 71; emphasis added.

[52] Lake, "Laudian Style," 179-180.

terms, we can see where their priorities lay, and what it was they held to be an expression of their personal, religious, or institutional identity. Repeated use of the term cemented its meaning in each mindset without further need for it to be spelled out.

Very similar comments could be made about the usage of the word "convenient," especially in a spiritual context.[53] In his 1678 *Of Idolatry*, Thomas Tenison referred to those features of church decoration which survived the Edwardian iconoclasm as "the convenient Ornaments of God's house."[54] Kenneth Fincham cites a Royal Order of 1683 condemning the use of the communion table at St. Clement, Sandwich, for civic business purposes as one of "several horrid inconveniences committed in the chancel of the said church."[55] The fact that the Latin edition of the Canons renders "a comely and decent pulpit" of Article 83 as "Pulpitum *conveniens et decorum*," further emphasises the etymological overlap between "convenient" and "comely."[56]

Comeliness, decoration, and materials

How, then, was this notion of comeliness expressed in relation to church furnishings? In order to answer this question, we need to examine the evidence of the furnishings themselves, looking, as it were, through the wrong end of the telescope in order to deduce what must have constituted the detailed expression of comeliness as expected by the vestries and delivered by the craftsmen. The terms comely, decent, and convenient clearly implied a particular degree of quality of decoration necessary to confer distinctiveness to any particular item, be it a pulpit, reredos, or other item. This was achieved through the use of materials and treatment of surfaces, through the application of carved work, and through the selective use of gilding. In each case, these features take us back to the defining characteristics of comeliness as a means of expressing values through the physical form of an item and, in particular, of establishing congruity between the treatment of the item and the values it represented, or the status it held.

We begin with materials, though this aspect is more difficult to assess visually today than in the late seventeenth century, as layers of varnish have obscured the underlying woodwork. Helpfully, an important reference in the building audit of St. Andrew Holborn shows that the

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[53] "Convenient, adj. and n.." *OED* (online edn., accessed 14 November 2015): A.3.a., "Agreeing with or consonant to the nature or character of; in accordance with; in keeping with; befitting, becoming (*to* or *for* a thing or person)."

[54] Thomas Tenison, *Of idolatry: a discourse, in which is endeavoured a declaration of, its distinction from superstition, its notion, cause, commencement, and progress, its practice charged on Gentiles, Jews, Mahometans, Gnosticks, Manichees Arians, Socinians, Romanists* (London: 1678), 309.

[55] Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library, U3/172/4/1 (reversed and unfol.), quoted in Fincham, "Ancient Custom," 47.

[56] "*83.* Pulpita idonea in Ecclesiis parranda," in *A collection of articles injunctions, canons, orders, ordinances, and constitutions ecclesiastical with other publick records of the Church of England; chiefly in the times of K. Edward. VIth. Q. Elizabeth. and K. James.* (London: 1661), 345. For the term "convenient altarpiece" see, for example, St. Stephen Walbrook, vestry minutes, 25 June 1678, LMA/P69/STE2/B/001/MS00594/002, fol. 177.

difference in types of timber used was a key component in the assertion of comeliness. The contract between St. Andrew Holborn and the joiner Valentine Houseman was highly particular about the qualities of wood to be used, setting down a hierarchy of quality, with different qualities of timber being required to differentiate the status of each part of the church furnishings.[57]

TABLE 3: CONTRACTUAL DESCRIPTION OF TIMBER QUALITIES REQUIRED BY ST. ANDREW HOLBORN	
Reredos	"Right Wainscott of the best & cleanest stuff"
Pew fronts, pilaster cases	"right Wainscott of cleane and well cullered stuffe"
Doorcases, ground floor pew partitions, gallery fronts	"right wainscot"
Ground floor panelling, gallery entablature	"wainscot"
Pew benches, gallery & stairs panelling, gallery pew partitions	"dry/good Dram Dale"
External doors	"dry seasoned English oak"

The hierarchy of quality is even reflected in the use of capitalisation: "Right Wainscot" is superior to "right Wainscot," which is superior to "right wainscot," and so on. Here we find the gradations of comeliness explicitly acknowledged by the vestrymen of St. Andrew Holborn, and drafted into a legal agreement, in order to be reflected in liturgical furnishings.

In this period, the term "wainscot" normally refers to the slow-grown oak imported from Scandinavia, the Baltic, and Poland. This timber was straighter and more free of knots than English-grown oak, and was thus the timber of choice for furniture makers.[58] Specifying wainscot in a contract was therefore more particular than specifying oak. "Dram Dale" (or "deal") refers to fir-wood – usually spruce or pine – which takes its name from the Norwegian river and port

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[57] LMA/P82/AND/B/018/MS04256, fols. 7-8.

[58] Adam Bowett, *English Furniture 1660-1714 From Charles II to Queen Anne* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2002), 310-312 and *Woods in British Furniture-Making: An Illustrated Historical Dictionary.* (London: Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 2012), s.v. "wainscot." A geographical term, e.g. "Norwegian" and later on "Dutch" can sometimes refer to where the timber was cut rather than where it was grown. Luke Hughes, "Seventeenth-century ecclesiastical joinery - the influence of economic and social developments," *Ecclesiology Today* 52, 2015, 25-60.

of Drammen, which was a prime export centre for the timber – though the term "deal" was used to cover other Norwegian firs more widely, and sometimes Swedish ones also.[59]

Secondly, the Holborn contract demonstrates that the colour and treatment of the woodwork as it first appeared was also an important consideration in the assertion of comeliness. Clearly, the difference in the quality of the grain and colour specified in the contract only has meaning if those differences are visible on the surface of the joinery and are not obscured by heavy varnish or stain, of the type favoured by later generations. References elsewhere in the building audit reinforce this point. The deal used in the galleries was to be painted "Wainscot colour," and the reredos and pulpit – the highest status items – were to be given a coat of white spirit varnish. This, when roughed with dried rushes, brings out the grain while preserving the underlying colour.[60] We may also cite Bishop John Williams' fitting out of the chapel of Lincoln College, Oxford, in cedar-wood in 1629-31; there, the woodwork was lightly roughed on the day of its consecration to ensure that there was a cedar-wood aroma in the air; once again, the comment only makes sense if the wood had not been varnished.[61] These references highlight a strikingly unfamiliar appearance of mostly bare untreated oak, which can still be seen in some Dutch churches today (Fig. 3.3). Hentie Louw notes that the seventeenth-century English and Dutch shared a preference for leaving the natural colour of wood in wainscot, even in royal palaces, in contrast to the French preference for paint or whitewash.[62] Adam Bowett also explains that Baltic oak has lower tannin levels than British oak, which give it a paler colour, and that, in this period, "whiteness" was the most desirable characteristic as an indicator of the quality of the timber.[63] Partly, this whiteness came from the process of floating the timber down rivers and storing it in the water before sawing, which had the effect of leaching out the oils and tannins in the wood, and making the colour paler.[64]

At Holborn, therefore, the specifications laid down by the vestry reveal a keen appreciation of the best available wood grain and "culler" as demonstrating quality and status in its own right. Bearing in mind that comeliness expresses congruity between form and status, it was appropriate that the best timber be used for the highest status liturgical items – the reredos and the pulpit – further re-enforced by treating the timber with white spirit varnish. The impact

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[59] Bowett, *Woods in British Furniture-Making,* s.v. "deal"; William Ellis, *The Timber-tree Improved: or the Best Practical Method of Improving different Lands, with proper Timber* (London: 1744), vol. V, 105.

[60] LMA/P82/AND/B/018/MS04256, fol. 12; Bowett, *English Furniture*, 165-168.

[61] Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 186.

[62] Hentie Louw, "Dutch Influence on British Architecture in the Late-Stuart Period, c.1660-c.1714," *Dutch Crossing* 33, No. 2 (2009): 107.

[63] Bowett, *Woods*, 243.

[64] I am grateful to Kevin Rogers, historic buildings consultant and Head of Parish Property Support for the Diocese of London, for this comment.

of this is quite lost when the woodwork is varnished more darkly, and undoubtedly, carved detail is much easier to read in paler wood than dark, especially in poor light. Some restoration work after the Second World War sought to lighten the colour of historic woodwork – such as at St. Vedast – and the present joinery at St. Nicholas Cole Abbey gives a good approximation of the appearance of aged, untreated oak (Fig. 3.4).

Next, after materials and finish, it is clear that the extent and quality of carved work was also a way to express comeliness, and that this too was expected to follow the rules of congruity between form and status. Consequently, the hierarchy of qualities of timber in the Holborn contract also matches the hierarchy of carved work. The finest timber is used for those items which also have the most extensive and finest carving. For the same reason, Hatton describes some features as being "curious" or "curiously carved," having the sense of being skilfully or expertly carved, inviting examination in order to be interpreted and thereby properly understood.[65] It is overwhelmingly the high status liturgical items where the greatest concentration of the extent and quality of carved work is to be found.[66]

It was, of course, the wealthiest members of the vestries who carried the greatest weight in decision-making, and there is a sense here that the quality of carving must have been expected to match, or exceed, what all but the very wealthiest parishioners would experience in their own homes in its intricacy and realism, in the sophistication of its design, and in exhibiting the skills of the carver. The Dean of St. Paul's pressed home this point in promoting the fundraising campaign for rebuilding the cathedral when he asked:

> And do these men indeed think, that building great Houses for themselves, and adorning them with the richest Furniture … is more agreeable to the Design of the Gospel, than serving God in a Beautiful and Magnificent Church?[67]

When approaching how to judge the appropriate degree of carved work, vestrymen could also call upon recent precedents. They doubtless remembered what had been lost in the Fire, and might have been familiar with those in other churches which had escaped it, such as the pulpit at All Hallows Barking (Fig. 3.5). They then took these as a minimum standard for their expectations of comeliness for their new pulpits. Recalling vestrymen's habit of visiting each other's churches in search of ideas, it probably took only the first few examples of pulpits in the

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[65] "Curious, adj.." *OED* (online edn., accessed 1 December 2015): II.7.a., "Made with care or art; skilfully, elaborately or beautifully wrought"; 15, "Calling forth feelings of interest; interesting, noteworthy."

[66] Hatton, 1, 204, and vol. 2, 360, where the pulpit of St. Clement Danes and reredos of St. Mary Abchurch respectively are described as "curiously carved."

[67] Edward Stillingfleet, *Open letter concerning the rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral* (London: 1678), 1.

new style to be made in the City churches for that new notion of comeliness to come to define itself, and to be taken up by all those which followed.

Finally, gilding was used as a further means of differentiating the status of particular features. None of the pulpits seems to have been gilded in any way, and gilding was restricted to those features which spoke directly of the members of the Trinity and God's presence in the church. This complex theme is addressed in Chapter 5; suffice to say here that it meant that gilding was limited to particular features of the reredos and communion table.

For the majority of those who, after 1662, controlled the Church of England and occupied its key positions, it therefore becomes apparent that the richness of decoration applied to a pulpit (or a reredos, or other item of church furnishing) was something which reflected the deeply held view that such items *should* be richly decorated in a comely manner *because*, to use George Alsop's words, they answered to God's glory.[68]

THE MATERIAL PULPIT

The shape of the pulpit

The standard form for English pulpits has been mostly hexagonal, and occasionally octagonal, from medieval times. Some one hundred pre-Reformation wooden pulpits and more than sixty stone ones survive in this form, with fragments of a fourteenth-century example at Fulbourn, Cambridgeshire, possibly being the earliest wooden survivor (c.1348).[69] The "triple-decker" pulpit was well-established before the Great Fire, and all the post-Fire City pulpits were probably of this type.[70] Its three stations of pulpit for preaching sermons, reader's desk for clergy to lead the liturgy of each service, and clerk's desk for the clerk to lead the congregation in Psalms and responses uniquely reflected the requirements of the rubrics and liturgical patterns of the prayer book.[71] By contrast, though some other Protestant denominations after this period occasionally had a reader's desk of some sort, none had a third desk. The presbyterian meeting house in Ipswich, for example, was one of the earliest to be built after the Act of Toleration 1689 (built in

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[68] Alsop, *Orthodox Plea*, 11.

[69] J. Charles Cox, *Pulpits, Lecterns and Organs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1915), 36-88; Nikolaus Pevsner and Simon Bradley, *The Buildings of England; Cambridgeshire* (London: Yale University Press, 2014), 544.

[70] Parish records are insufficiently detailed to be completely certain.

[71] The "rubrics" in the prayer book are guidance and instructions to those leading and participating in services. They set out physical actions to accompany the words to be spoken (e.g. when to stand or kneel) and in some cases provide commentary on the doctrinal significance of a particular point in the liturgy. For commentary on the rubrics and prayer book more generally, see Brian Cummings, *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

1699), and it has a fine pulpit which can match any in the City churches for the quality of its carved work, but has only one desk in front of it (Fig. 3.6).[72] The same is true for continental Protestant churches, such as at the Huguenot Temple at Charenton (Fig. 3.7).

The London model of the triple-decker had two versions. The first version was one in which all three elements were lined up, one in front of another. The 1680 pew plan for St. Peter Cornhill shows this type, with the triple-decker set against one of the north pillars and aligned north-south (Fig. 3.8). As will be discussed shortly, in a few cases this version was set in the centre alley, aligned east-west. The second, and more common, version was one in which the two desks were placed alongside each other, with both set in front of the pulpit. This version can be seen in an early photograph of All Hallows-the-Great (Fig. 3.9).

The decoration of the pulpit

Pulpits made in the earlier part of the seventeenth century were decorated with strapwork, arches and low-relief niches – a decorative style typical of the period, whether in an ecclesiastical or a domestic setting. The only surviving pre-Civil War pulpit in the City is at St. Helen's, Bishopsgate (Fig. 3.10; there is disagreement over its date and Pevsner settles for c.1633); it is a fine example, with tapered pilasters and detailing reminiscent of continental styles from the late sixteenth century; the cherub-heads underneath the sill were lucky to survive the London iconoclasm of the 1640s.[73] Vestrymen and craftsmen alike would have had this degree of decoration in mind as the measure of a previous generation's notion of comeliness.

It is clear from the Bishopsgate example that the form of the Wrenian pulpit is a continuation of what had gone before, and the changes which we see are in style and choice of decoration, the craftsmen navigating the transition from the Jacobean to the classical, using the knowledge they had built up, as described in Chapter 2. There are some similarities with Dutch pulpits of the same period which evolved in parallel with their English contemporaries (Fig. 3.11), which are also mostly hexagonal and set on a wineglass stem, but the London style is fundamentally an evolution of an English tradition. By contrast, there was much greater variety and malleability of forms and materials in many post-Tridentine Roman Catholic churches. The level of decoration on some, such as the 1651 pulpit at Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, Paris (designed by Laurent de La Hyre and carved by Claude l'Estocart; Fig. 3.12), and which English Interregnum exiles might have seen, would have been unimaginable in London.[74]

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[72] Nikolaus Pevsner and James Bettley, *The Buildings of England; Suffolk East* (London: Yale University Press, 2015), 296-297.

[73] Pevsner, *City Churches*, 89.

[74] Aline Dumoulin et al. *Paris d'Eglise en Eglise* (Paris: Massin, 2008), 109.

The invoice of the carver, William Newman, for his work on the pulpit and sounding-board at St. Stephen Walbrook (Fig. 3.13) lists the archetypal components of the pulpit of the period, with its collection of bolections, foliage, and acanthus strips. At the same time, it shows how each individual component was priced and, by extension, how the pulpit was put together. Each carved piece was produced as one or more units of work, before being pinned or glued to the carcass of the pulpit, made by the joiner. It is this process of carving and pinning multiple individual pieces which gives the Wrenian pulpit carvings their three-dimensionality, in contrast to the generally flatter style of most pre-War examples, where decorative elements are often incised rather than standing proud (Fig. 3.1).[75]

With the exception of cherub-heads, the pulpits are devoid of figurative art and rarely display any obvious symbolism. However, the combined visual and spatial dominance of the reredos and pulpit should probably lead us to view the type of decoration deployed on them in a connected way. We will see in the next two chapters how the iconography of the reredos makes extensive assertions about sanctity and ecclesial identity. Although it is difficult to draw exact typological parallels, the pulpit's use of the same festoons, drops, and cherub-heads within a few feet of the reredos must mean that the holiness asserted by the carvings of the reredos extends to and encompasses the corresponding features in the pulpit as well. It is a visual evocation of holiness by association and proximity.

A few pulpits do incorporate simple representational forms. The pulpit at St. Stephen Walbrook has an open Bible on each face, and the cherubim on several pulpits seem to be transported into ecstasy through delight at hearing the Word (such as at St. Nicholas Cole Abbey; Fig. 3.4). The pulpit at St. Margaret Lothbury has two trumpets on each face, emerging from behind foliage, heralding the preached Word (Fig. 3.14). Even these examples are modest and point to on-going reticence about the use of imagery.

The very plain pulpit at St. Mary Somerset (now at Holy Trinity, Hoxton, north London, Fig. 3.15), suggests that there might be a degree of flexibility in the application of the rule of comeliness in particular circumstances.[76] Did this parish break the rule, or did "comely and decent" mean something different to them? St. Mary Somerset was one of the two parishes whose furnishings were financed out of coal tax monies – because the parish could not afford to provide them themselves – and they were overseen by Wren's Office. At just under £60, the pulpit and sounding-board were less than half the price of that at St. Stephen Walbrook (just

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[75] The processes of carving and under-cutting are described in Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 188-205.

[76] Nikolaus Pevsner and Bridget Cherry, *The Buildings of England: London 4: North* (London: Yale University Press, 2002), 513.

over £129), and it should be remembered that the cost of materials was probably similar in both cases, the difference in price being accounted for by the skill of the joiner and carver and the degree of decoration applied.[77] Looking at the surviving body of the St. Mary pulpit, the drops at the angles comprise three small clusters connected by ribbons, rather than the usual continuous drop, and they are slightly lumpen, with minimal depth of carving and no small flowers, widespread elsewhere. The beading at the base and detailing of the cavetto at the cornice are executed to a similarly shallow degree. It is almost as if the carved work is in roughed-out form, still waiting for the fine detailing to be applied. Nevertheless, the carver here was Jonathan Maine – one of Wren's favoured carvers, who worked also at St. Paul's Cathedral, and whose work in oak, at Burghley, David Esterly places on a par with Gibbons' in limewood.[78] It is a useful reminder that even the best carvers of the period sometimes had to adjust their designs to a tight budget, and that attributions should not be based solely on quality.

Straightforward budgetary pragmatism may have had a role in determining the plainness of this particular pulpit – Wren's Office appearing to make a judgement that a plainer pulpit would suffice. However, that need not imply that the rule of comeliness was broken here. Indeed, if we are right that the comeliness of church furnishings is partly a matter of making them distinctive and superior in quality to what we might find in parishioners' homes, then this more modest example probably still achieves that goal in the context of a poor parish.[79]

The decoration of the desks

Not one Wrenian pulpit survives in its full triple-decker form. They mostly fell victim to Victorian re-ordering, though parts of the joinery of the desks were occasionally re-used decoratively in other pieces. At St. Mary Abchurch, for example, the choir stalls which were installed in a nineteenth-century re-ordering incorporate the fronts of the two desks (Fig 3.16, which also shows the similar scrollwork panels retained in some pews). For the most part, however, the removal of the desks resulted in the loss of some particularly ornate carved work, as the photographs of All Hallows-the-Great (Fig. 3.9) and St. Clement Danes (Fig. 3.17) illustrate.

[77] LMA/CLC/313/J/002/MS25539/010, fol. 2r-2v; LMA/P69/STE2/B/026/MS01056 fols. 17, 33.

[78] LMA/CLC/313/J/002/MS25539/010, fol. 2r; Esterly, *Grinling Gibbon*, 96.

[79] St. Mary Somerset was demolished in 1869; Pevsner, *City Churches*, 113. As well as the pulpit, the font and font cover are also now at Holy Trinity Hoxton and the font cover is similarly plain, being a simple hexagonal dome with plain ribs. Unusually, the fate of the reredos of St. Mary Somerset is unknown; perhaps it was so plain that it was not thought worth preserving.

Sounding-boards

Most of the Wrenian pulpits also had sounding-boards, or testers, whose practical function was to help project the preacher's voice, but which also undoubtedly add considerably to the grandeur and status of the pulpit.[80] They are large, some of them huge, dominating the pulpit, and competing with the reredos for attention (such as at All Hallows Lombard Street; Fig. 3.18). On the other hand, a Wrenian pulpit without its sounding-board, such as at St. George Botolph Lane, makes a much-diminished visual impact (Fig. 3.19). Sounding-boards, too, built upon an existing English tradition. The antiquarian Charles Cox suggests that a mid-sixteenth-century sounding-board over a fifteenth-century pulpit at St. Peter, Claypole, Lincolnshire, may be the earliest surviving example.[81]

Decoratively, sounding-boards provided their designers with scope for variety and creativity, which could be carried out in its height – the greater the height and mass, the greater the scope for decoration and variety in form – and in the execution of the cresting above the cornice. A few are relatively simple, such as the one originally at St. Michael Queenhithe, and now at St. James Garlickhythe (Fig. 3.20). Many are very elaborate, the most elaborate of all being that of St. Stephen Walbrook, with a large cupola and much carved work (Fig. 3.21) making it even more of a visual focal point in the church than the reredos.[82]

The Walbrook sounding-board is one of only three to feature cherubs in full-body form, rather than the usual head and wings; the other two are from All Hallows-the-Great (now at St. Margaret Lothbury) and St. Clement Eastcheap. In all three cases, the cherubs stand in an oratorical pose, with one arm raised as if making a point, and they are clearly meant to reinforce the act of preaching, both through their attitude, and as a reminder that angels and cherubim in the Bible are God's messengers (Fig. 3.22). In contrast, the cherub-heads on reredoses assume an expression of worship or angelic joy. Their presence on sounding-boards therefore gives to preaching the exalted status of words from God himself. The scarcity of full-body cherubs almost certainly reflects the continued nervousness about physical representation which is discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

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[80] Gaps in parish records and Hatton's erratic descriptions make it difficult to be certain but the following six churches probably lacked a sounding-board: St. Anne and St. Agnes, St. Antholin, St. Augustine Watling Street, St. Edmund-the-King, St. James Garlickhythe, and St. Michael Wood Street.

[81] Cox, *Pulpits, Lecterns and Organs*, 67-68. Historic England dates the pulpit to the fourteenth century and is non-committal on the date of the sounding board; https://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101062912-church-of-st-peter-claypole#.Wx5CO6kh3kI, (online edn., accessed 11 June 2018).

[82] Pevsner, *City Churches*, 130; the current cupola is a 1987 recreation of the lost original.

THE LOCATION OF THE PULPIT

Very little evidence survives for the location of pulpits in the City churches before the Fire, but there is rather more for the Wren churches after it. The 1662 pew plan for St. Peter Cornhill (Fig. 3.2) is the only surviving one to illustrate a pre-Fire arrangement. In addition, pew plans survive for four of the new churches, and several eighteenth and nineteenth-century engravings and early photographs show largely unaltered arrangements in several other cases (such as an 1876 photograph of All Hallows Bread Street; Fig. 0.4).[83] From these in combination, it is reasonable to assert that the most common location in the new churches was approximately one-third of the way down from the east, either against the wall in single-cell churches, or against a pillar in aisled ones.[84] Irrespective of their location, these pulpits were aligned facing south or north, but not west.

Placing a pulpit part-way along the east-west axis results in a minority of seats being to the east of the pulpit. In this respect, the London arrangements after the Fire are consistent with common practice elsewhere in the country, and Trevor Cooper has identified a pew plan of 1569 for All Saints, Trull, Somerset, as probably being the earliest dateable example of this practice.[85] Although this arrangement meant that members of the congregation who sat to the east of the pulpit had their backs to it, this does not seem to have been thought problematic. Indeed, in churches with square box pews, with seats around three sides, it was inevitable that some parishioners would have their backs to the west and others to the east; a c.1880 watercolour of St. Bartholomew-the-Great shows one of the more extreme examples of a high, three-sided box pew (Fig. 3.23). At least in this respect, audibility was clearly thought to be more important than visibility.

In a minority of cases, the triple-decker pulpit was placed in the centre aisle, aligned east-west. In the context of Restoration London, these are of particular interest as some are associated with Wren personally and one case, as we shall now see, explicitly evokes the practice of the Early Church – a critical theme in Anglican self-perception which will be discussed fully in Chapters 5 and 6.

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[83] The pew plans are for All Hallows Lombard Street, 1693 (LMA/P69/ALH4/B/001/MS04049/002, fol. 48r.); St. Matthew Friday Street, 1684 (P69/MTW/B/013/MS07683, n.p.); St. Peter Cornhill, 1680 (LMA/P69/PET1/B/001/MS04165/001, glued in after fol. 492); and three unexecuted designs for St. Stephen Walbrook, 1678 (LMA/P69/STE2/B/025/MS07695, n.p.).

[84] The pulpit in the temporary tabernacle which housed the parishioners of St. Antholin before the new church was built was at the west end. The mention in the vestry minutes is intriguing but difficult to interpret in the absence of knowing the broader layout of the tabernacle. LMA/P69/ANL/B/001/MS01045/001, fol. 113.

[85] Trevor Cooper, "The interior planning of the English parish church 1559–*c*.1640," in *Places of Worship in Britain and Ireland, 1550-1688*, citing Somerset Records Office D/P/tru 24/5. I am grateful to Trevor Cooper for giving me an advance copy of his chapter.

In his 1711 letter, Wren advocated the design of St. James Piccadilly as being his preferred model and the one which the Commission should follow:

> Concerning the placing of the Pulpit, I shall observe – A moderate Voice may be heard 50 Feet distant before the Preacher, 30 Feet on each Side, and 20 behind the Pulpit, and not this, unless the Pronunciation be distinct and equal, without losing the Voice at the last Word of the Sentence, …[86]

St. James Piccadilly is larger than most of the City churches and, being built on a virgin site, enabled Wren to build a rectangular basilican church, unconstrained by medieval foundations or awkward street boundaries. A c.1724-29 engraving of St. James' shows the pulpit aligned east-west and set in the centre aisle (Fig. 3.24). There are, in fact, only two rows of pews behind the pulpit proper, three behind the reader's desk, and four behind the clerk's desk – somewhat less than the twenty feet which Wren mentioned in his letter.[87] In a second example, a c.1680 drawing by Wren of the plan of St. Clement Danes shows the triple-decker in two locations (Fig. 3.25).[88] One is drawn in ink in the centre aisle, approximating to the Piccadilly position, and the other is sketched in pencil immediately north of that position, on the inner-most edge of the north pew-block. In the third example, at the Temple Church, Wren again placed the pulpit in the centre aisle, in this case approximately half-way down (Fig. 3.26). Placed centrally, these pulpits largely blocked the main vista towards the reredos behind, particularly where they also had sounding-boards. Clearly, when he had the space to do so, this was Wren's preferred arrangement, and we can assume that this is what he would have done if his original street plan for a rationalised London with fewer, larger churches had been implemented after the Fire.[89] Unfortunately, we have no definitive evidence for the original positions of the pulpits at the other three churches with whose furnishing Wren was personally involved: St. Andrew Holborn, St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, and St. Mary Somerset. (It is likely that an 1839 engraving of St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe shows its pulpit in the original position, on the inner edge of the south nave pew-block, but we cannot be completely certain.)[90]

Although the Temple Church is outside the scope of this thesis, it does provide insight into Wren's thinking about the positioning of pulpits in a specific case, during the 1680s, and is

[86] Soo, *Wren's Tracts*, 115.

[87] *Wren Society*, X, n.p., Plate 5. Timothy Clayton, s.v. "Hulsbergh, Henry (*d.* 1729)," *ODNB* (online edn., accessed 22 June 2016). Note that the numbering of pews in Hulsbergh's plan again shows the highest status pews – with the lowest numbers – closest to the pulpit in the same manner as the analysis of St. Peter Cornhill in Dillow, "The significance of church seating," 128-129.

[88] John Harris, *A Catalogue of British Drawings for architecture, Decoration, Sculpture and Landscape Gardening 1550-1900 in American Collections* (Upper Saddle River: The Gregg Press, 1971), 287.

[89] Jeffery, *City Churches*, 18-22.

[90] See drawing by Frederick McKenzie, engraved by John Le Keux in George Godwin, *The Churches of London: A history and description of the ecclesiastical edifices of the metropolis* (London: Tilt, 1838), n.p., opposite the title page for St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe. The desks have been removed from the pulpit and placed on the opposite side of the aisle, suggesting that alterations had been effected at some point; additionally, the desks are not seventeenth-century in appearance. On balance, the pulpit is probably in its original position.

worth brief consideration. Wren's thinking here is somewhat different to that set out in his later comments in his 1711 letter to the Commissioner, and has been analysed by Robin Griffith-Jones.[91] Drawing on the records of the Inner and Middle Temples, the Inns of Court whose Peculiar the Temple Church is, Griffith-Jones notes Wren's interest in the Jerusalem Temple and patristic studies – parallel themes to which this thesis will return. Griffith-Jones argues that Wren persuaded the Benchers to evoke aspects of Early Church practice in the manner in which he refurbished the interior of the church in 1682-84.[92]

A critical feature of Wren's re-ordering related to the Early Church practice – at least, as understood by scholars at the time – of dividing the areas occupied by worshipers in church according to their "Christian Qualities, or Ecclesiastical Degrees."[93] This entailed defining different spaces, through which one would progress from being a Penitent – of whom there were several categories – to becoming a Catechumen (or "learner"), and finally becoming one of the Faithful.[94] These different areas also related to the position of the "Ambo," which seventeenth-century scholars variously equated with the pulpit or reader's desk.[95] These scholars located the Ambo midway down the church, with the Faithful to the east of it and the Catechumen to the west, providing a visual and spatial representation of the Catechumens' need to hear the Word as part of their spiritual growth before moving to the east of the Ambo as members of the Faithful.

However, the division of believers into these categories becomes problematic when applied to seventeenth-century Englishmen. The legal presumption was that to be English was to be Christian and, moreover, to be a member of the Church of England. This does not seem to have concerned Wren in the case of the Temple Church or, on the basis of their final acceptance of his proposals, the Benchers of the two Inns of Court. They settled on an arrangement in which the pulpit (Ambo) was placed in the centre aisle with the Benchers to its east and the Juniors to the west, creating an implied correspondence between their status as practitioners of the law and their spiritual status.[96]

Wren does not mention this conceit in his letter to the Commissioner twenty years or so later, even though the same physical disposition of elements was clearly his preferred solution. Instead, his 1711 letter focuses much more on matters of practicality: the audibility and visibility

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[91] Robin Griffith-Jones, "An Enrichment of Cherubims," in *The Temple Church in London: History, Architecture, Art*, ed. Robin Griffith-Jones and David Park (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 135-173.

[92] Ibid., 150, 157, 160-163. A "peculiar" is a church which is non-parochial, and outside the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishop.

[93] Wheler, *Primitive Churches*, 69-72.

[94] William Cave, *Primitive Christianity: or, the Religion of the Ancient Christians in the First Ages of the Gospel in two volumes* (London: 1673), 139; Wheler, *Primitive Churches*, 33-34, 76-78, 96-97.

[95] Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, 139; Wheler, *Primitive Churches*, 76-78.

[96] Griffith-Jones, "An Enrichment of Cherubims," 159-164.

of both the liturgy and sermon, and the cost. Whatever arguments Wren deployed with the Benchers of the Inns of Court, it seems that the Temple Church example should be read as an exercise in allusion on Wren's part, but only a very informal one. Wren was not asserting that the Inns' Juniors were *spiritually* inferior to the Benchers, but was providing them with a reminder of ancient Christian practice which focused on the importance of preaching and learning. At St. James Piccadilly, meanwhile, the central pulpit was too far east to symbolise the same division between Faithful and Learners, with only two to four pews behind it, suggesting that, here, it was the practical reasons set out in his 1711 letter which determined the layout, rather than any ecclesiological thought process. Wren certainly did not put his assertion of audibility to too great a test behind the pulpit.

In any case, Wren's preferred model was a revival of one which had begun to emerge before the Civil War in those churches belonged to the moderate Calvinist movement of the early seventeenth century. In 1635-39, for example, the Calvinist Bishop of Lincoln, John Williams, sponsored the building of the Broadway Chapel in Westminster, whose design John Newman has interpreted as a deliberate provocation to the Laudians. One of its key features was a triple-decker pulpit set in the centre aisle, and the cross-in-square design of the building clearly owed more to contemporary Dutch Calvinist churches than to the Laudian sacramental ideal.[97] This too was an illustration of the dual liturgical-preaching function in action, and the same feature probably also appeared at Poplar Chapel, built in 1642-54.[98]

There is also evidence for central pulpits in three other Wren churches, where the churches were not fitted out by Wren. In 1848-49, the architect John Clayton published measured drawings of the large majority of Wren's churches, which were later reproduced by the Wren Society in 1932-33.[99] Clayton's drawings are immensely helpful but contain inconsistencies; they sometimes show the location of pulpits, for example, and at other times do not. Two of the drawings – for Christ Church Newgate and St. Nicholas Cole Abbey – show centrally placed pulpits (Fig. 3.27). The records for both churches have been lost, and no descriptions earlier than 1848 mention the location of these pulpits. Christ Church was a large, basilican church of the Piccadilly model, and a central pulpit is consistent with the other instances already discussed. St. Nicholas is a smaller, single-cell church, and the location of the pulpit is therefore more interesting. In a smaller space, where audibility is less of a problem, placing a pulpit centrally makes a strong assertion of the importance of preaching and the liturgy, and constitutes a bigger

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[97] John Newman, "Laudian Literature and the Interpretation of Caroline Churches in London," in *Art and Patronage in the Caroline Courts: Essays in Honour of Sir Oliver Millar*, ed., David Howarth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 185; Guillery, "Suburban Models," 73-80.

[98] Guillery, "Suburban Models," 79.

[99] John Clayton, *The Works of Christopher Wren: The dimensions, plans, elevations, and sections of the parochial churches of Sir Christopher Wren. Erected in the cities of London & Westminster* (London: Longman, 1848-49); *Wren Society*, vols. IX, X.

obstruction to sight-lines to the reredos behind than would be the case in a larger church. Correspondingly, it would be a greater cause of offence to any continuing Laudian sentiment.

The central pulpit was also a common feature of continental Protestantism. As early as 1551 the Strasbourg Reformer, Martin Bucer, urged his clerical hosts during his exile in England to adopt a central position when leading services and preaching, so that they could best be heard and understood.[100] Likewise, the Huguenot Temple at Charenton had its immense pulpit placed in approximately the same position (Fig. 3.7), and George Wheler, in his advocacy of primitive practice, noted the similarity between ancient Ambos, the Charenton Temple and the Calvinist cathedral in Geneva:

> As [a central pulpit] is agreeable to the most Ancient manner; so hath it also Modern Example to warrant it: For this was the Form of most of the Protestant Churches beyond the Seas. The Great *French Church* of *Charenton,* had the Pulpit … placed about a fourth part of the whole Length of the Temple from the East-End.
>
> The Cathedral at Geneva is just so accommodated.[101]

The main difference between Wren's arrangement and many Calvinist examples – and some Lutheran ones – is that Calvinist churches could give absolute pre-eminence to the pulpit, whereas Anglican pulpits needed to share their status with the reredos and communion table.[102] Calvinist pulpits could therefore be set against, or in front of, any wall, depending on the size of the church and questions of practicality. Anglican central pulpits, on the other hand, always had to stand forward from the east wall and cede that position to the communion table, and to balance the equal requirements of liturgy, sacrament, and preaching. Although these few London churches seem to have placed their pulpits centrally without provoking any adverse reaction from conformists, that was not universally true elsewhere in the country, and Kenneth Fincham has discussed just such a controversy in a Norwich parish.[103]

The Piccadilly model became widespread during the next century in newly-built Anglican churches, both in the British Isles and the colonies. In the USA, the church of Holy Trinity in Newport, Rhode Island – built in 1726-29 – still has its original pulpit located in the centre aisle, and the arrangement makes a striking impression (Fig. 3.28). The fact that the pulpit is brought

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[100] Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 22-23, 245-246. The 1549 Prayer Book had already made a step in this direction towards prioritising audibility, requiring the minister to read the lessons "standing and turnyng hym so as he maye beste be hearde of all, such as be present." Cummings, *Book of Common Prayer*, 8.

[101] Wheler, *Primitive Christians*, 117.

[102] Andrew Spicer, "'Hic coeli porta est, hic domus ecce dei': Lutheran Churches in the Dutch World, c1566-1719," in Andrew Spicer, ed., *Lutheran Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 467-473; Spicer, *Calvinist Churches*, 123-125, 134-135, 148.

[103] Kenneth Fincham, "Material Evidence: The Religious Legacy of the Interregnum at St. George Tombland, Norwich," in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England*, ed. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 231.

forward makes its presence in the midst of the congregation a dominating one, made still stronger by the orientation of the gallery pews inwards towards it; the modest reredos is obscured from direct view.[104]

It is relevant to note that all bar one of these examples of centre pulpits are in galleried churches – the exception being St. Nicholas Cole Abbey. The corollary of having a large part of the congregation in a gallery, and another part underneath it, is that the minister has to give his attention to the vertical plane as well as the horizontal. Purely in practical terms, this is more easily achieved by placing the pulpit midway between the opposite north and south galleries – as at Piccadilly – or on the inner edge of one of the pew-blocks – as at St. Andrew Holborn and St. Bride. If the pulpit were attached to a column in one of these churches then an entire gallery would be behind or below the preacher with little ability for him to face in their direction, and the two desks would be almost invisible to those in the gallery, making audibility of the liturgy a problem. An 1837 engraving of St. Olave Hart Street illustrates the way in which this principle works even in a building whose fabric is medieval (Fig. 3.29); the partial obscuring of the reredos is again noteworthy.[105]

Hatton records twenty other Wren churches as being fitted with only a west gallery, but the arrangement in these was different to the galleried, mostly aisled, churches discussed so far. First, they tend to be smaller in size, and the gallery was most likely to be used as a platform for an organ, or to accommodate children. A few others also had a north or a south gallery – such as St. Margaret Lothbury – but the sense here is generally that of needing to squeeze in more congregants than the footprint of the church allowed, rather than that a gallery was intrinsically desirable of itself.[106] In the case of St. Swithin-London-Stone, this was to seat "young men."[107] In contrast with those churches with galleries around north, west, and south sides of the church – especially the courtly churches of Westminster or the Holborn legal district – the galleries in most of these smaller City churches did not lend themselves to use as expressions of social status.[108] Accordingly, the pulpits in these churches more comfortably sit at a usual height, and are placed other than in the centre aisle.

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[104] Stephen Dorsey, *Early English Churches in America, 1607-1807* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), 20.

[105] Drawing by Robert Billings, engraved by John Le Keux in Godwin, *Churches of London*, n.p., in the pages for St. Olave Hart Street.

[106] LMA/P69/MGT1/B/001/MS04352/002, fols. 21r., 22v.

[107] LMA/P69/SWI/B/004/MS00559/001, fol. 92r (1685/86).

[108] The role of galleries as indicators of high social status is discussed in Gordon Higgott, "Wren's Galleried Churches and his First Model Design for St. Paul's Cathedral, 1669-70" in *L'Architecture Religieuse Européenne au Temps des Réformes*, ed. Monique Chatenet and Claude Mignot, (Paris: Picard, 2009), 185-199.

One final observation on the location of pulpits needs to be made, which is wholly Anglican and liturgical in character, as a postscript to the notion of the Wrenian auditory church. The Additional Directions of the rubrics for the communion service in the prayer book state that:

> Upon the Sundaies and other holy days (if there be no Communion) shall be said all that is appointed at the Communion, until the end of the general Prayer together with one or more of these Collects last before rehearsed, concluding with the Blessing.[109]

This has come to be known as the "second service" or "ante-communion," and comprised the first part of the communion service; it followed on from the Morning Prayer and the Litany parts of the prayer book in normal Sunday morning services when there was no communion.[110] Its relevance here is that the second service, as technically part of the communion service, was required to be led by the minister while standing at the north side of the communion table – the normal place for leading communion services – whereas he led the rest of the liturgy from the reader's desk.[111] (At the Savoy Conference, presbyterians had objected to this requirement as one of the unacceptable Laudian ceremonial innovations.)[112] This meant that the minister was supposed to descend from the reader's desk, go within the communion rails, and continue to lead the service from there. Practically, this must have been problematic in the large basilican churches with centrally placed pulpits, given that the minister would be partially obscured by the pulpit both during the second service and communion services, with consequential impact both on visibility and audibility.[113]

The problem created here by this clash of rubrical requirement and preferred ordering of church interiors may partly explain the decline in compliance with the rubric in this period. This became a matter for acute debate, including in the publication of *Parish Churches Turn'd into Conventicles* in 1683 by Richard Hart. Hart called himself a "Friend to all the conformable clergy and laity of the true and apostolical Church of England [which was] the most glorious Church in the World," and he denounced the "very great Sin," committed by "willful Transgressors," of reading the second service from the reader's desk rather than from the communion table.[114] An anonymous responder pleaded for common sense, and urged that priority should be given to the other rubric requiring that the minister "should read distinctly, with an audible Voice, so

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[109] Cummings, *Book of Common Prayer*, 406.

[110] *New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship.*, 2005 ed. Paul Bradshaw (Norwich: SCM Press, 2005), s.v. "Ante-Communion."

[111] The "accustomed place." Cummings, *Book of Common Prayer*, 239, 757.

[112] G.J. Cuming, *A History of Anglican Liturgy* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1969), 156.

[113] As a passing observation, there may also be a connection here to the fact that most of Wren's churches do not have a physically distinct chancel and that those that exist are shallow. Wren may have had in mind the question of the audibility of the minister when leading the second service and communion service from within the communion rails.

[114] Richard Hart, *Parish Churches Turn'd into Conventicles* (London: 1683), title page, 2, 4.

standing, and turning himself, as he may be best heard of all such as are present," and he accused Hart of being a crypto-papist.[115] The fact that Hart felt the need to publish on this subject at all suggests that Bishop Compton had been relaxed on the point and had not enforced what was technically the legally required position.[116]

CONCLUSION

The Richard Hart episode reads amusingly to the modern reader, but it serves once again to remind us of the passions that could be aroused by something as seemingly quotidian as the use of a wooden reader's desk in seventeenth-century London. In the same way that Hart and his respondent regarded their dispute as being significant enough to take to print, so vestries would likewise have had in their minds that the decisions they made about their pulpit were weighty and had consequence. For them, the triple-decker pulpit was the physical embodiment of the *Book of Common Prayer* made in wood. Vestries' interpretation of the canonical expectation of comeliness and decency in relation to their pulpit tells us much about their collective view of how spirituality and ecclesial identity should be expressed. The notion of comeliness was something which, while complex and sometimes unspoken, was understood by vestrymen and carver alike. It required the use of materials which were graded in quality according to the status of each object being made. Decoration, too, should reflect the different uses of different items, and should be appropriate to the social setting of each parish church. These requirements needed to be addressed even before matters of choice of iconography could be made. Exactly the same can be said to a still greater degree in relation to the reredos, whose iconography is considerably more complex than that of pulpits, as we shall explore in the next two chapters.

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[115] Anon., *Parish-Churches No Conventicles, From the Minister's reading in the Desk when there is no Communion* (London: 1683), 2, 15.

[116] See also Fincham, "Ancient Custom," 44.

CHAPTER 4

THE MAKING OF THE REREDOS

INTRODUCTION

The reredoses in the Wren churches are the most iconographically rich feature of the new furnishings, and also the most prominent and eye-catching to any visitor entering one of the churches today. Stylistically, they were a new and remarkable feature in London – startling even – and in order to understand how they emerged, we need to consider three background themes which provide the context for the inconographical displays on the reredoses. In turn, this lays the basis for Chapter 5, which examines the iconography in detail.

The first part of this chapter considers the much more modest predecessors to the Wrenian reredos after the English Reformation: the tables of the Ten Commandments and other texts, painted either directly on the walls of churches, on wooden boards, or on painted cloth. It notes the politicisation of these Commandment boards during the 1630s and their association with the Laudian cause.

Chapter 2 set out in general terms how architects and master-craftsmen collected engravings and illustrated books to use as educational tools for themselves, and as a repository of design material from which they could draw intelligently and selectively in their design practice. The second part of this chapter builds upon those general observations to establish how such sources could be used in the specific context of the Wrenian reredos.

The third part of this chapter then assesses the manner in which the reredoses used existing presentational conventions to convey meaning through the use of iconography. A case study brings all these observations into focus.

POST-REFORMATION PRECURSORS OF THE WRENIAN REREDOS

By the late sixteenth century, setting up the Ten Commandments (or "Decalogue") and other texts drawn from the Bible or the *Book of Common Prayer* had become common; it marked the impact of the Reformation on the English parish church.[1] These texts replaced the medieval imagery of the reredos and the rood with the simple Word of God. They signalled the depravity of man, the need for repentance, the offer of divine grace and, by extension, the rejection of the Roman Catholic doctrines of penance and purgatory. The Commandments were required to be taught by Royal Injunction of 1536, along with the Lord's Prayer and Apostles' Creed, and were included in the catechism of the prayer book in 1552.[2] Their recitation by the minister in the communion service, with responses from the congregation, was included in the prayer book from that date onwards.[3] Contemplation of them became a regular feature of popular devotional works.[4] This went beyond a simple compliance list of ten items but was elaborated upon to cover the full breadth of one's spiritual life, relationship with God and with one's fellow men.[5] Jeremy Taylor was one of many to do so, and he included a stern section in his otherwise mostly pastoral and poetic 1651 work, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying*, entitled "An Analysis or resolution of the Decalogue, and the speciall precepts of the Gospel, describing the duties injoyned and the sins forbidden respectively," in which those facing death were exhorted to examine themselves against the requirements of the Commandments.[6]

That the Commandment Boards set up in Edward VI's reign were understood to be an expression of Protestantism was clearly grasped by the Marian Counter-Reformers, and many boards were, in turn, destroyed during Mary's reign as "vain scribblings."[7] They returned once more under Elizabeth I, who formalised the practice in 1560, ordering

> that the tables of the commandments may be comlye set, or hung up in the east end of the chauncell, to be not only read for edification, but also to give some comlye ornament and demonstration, that the same is a place of religion and prayer.[8]

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[1] Ian M. Green, "The Dissemination of the Decalogue in English and Lay Responses to its Promotion in Early Modern English Protestantism," in *The Decalogue and its Cultural Influence,* ed. Dominik Markl (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 171-189. There is an exceptionally early record of the Decalogue in a parish church at St. Christopher-le-Stocks in 1488, along with "dyuerse good prayers"; J.T. Micklethwaite, *Alcuin Tracts, no. 1: The Ornaments of the Rubric* (London: Longman, Green & Co, 1897), 45.

[2] Ibid., 176-179.

[3] *The Book of Common Prayer*, "The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion."

[4] Jonathan Willis, "Repurposing the Decalogue in Reformation England," in *The Decalogue and its Cultural Influence*, 190-204; Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 349-350.

[5] Green, "Dissemination of the Decalogue," 181-182.

[6] Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (London: 1651), 216-227; Green, "Dissemination of the Decalogue," 181-189.

[7] Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 131-132.

[8] "1560 Royal Injunctions of Elizabeth I to Archbishop Matthew Parker," in Edward Cardwell, *Documentary Annals*, vol. I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1844, 2nd edition), 296.

Article 82 of the 1604 *Canons Ecclesiastical* renewed Elizabeth's Injunction and encouraged the use of other Scriptural texts as well, requiring

> that the Ten Commandments be set up upon the East-end of every Church and Chapel where the people may best see and read the same, and other chosen Sentences written upon the Walls of the said Churches and Chapels in places convenient.[9]

This series of royal mandates from 1536 onwards throws light on a key objective of Tudor and early-Stuart policy. In Reformed Protestant thought, the Decalogue had a public didactic purpose as a summary of Biblical Law, a source of moral instruction, and an invitation to self-examination in one's personal devotional life.[10] The 1560 Elizabethan Injunction went further, and, as discussed in Chapter 3, introduced the critical principle of comeliness. In this instance, the requirement for comeliness is clearly not simply a matter of surface decoration, but is explicitly purposive: it was part of an assertion that an English church had a greater spiritual significance than being a mere place of assembly; being "a place of religion and prayer" required it to be marked out in this way.

The English use of the Decalogue was part of the European Protestant mainstream and it matches the use at the Huguenot Temple at Charenton, which also had the Creed and Lord's Prayer painted on panels (Fig. 3.7).[11] Similarly, it can be seen in the allegorical late sixteenth-century German engraving, *Vera imago veteris Ecclesiae Apostolicae*, where it is placed alongside a portrayal of an open book, which we can take to be the Gospels, coupling representations of the Old and New Covenants (Fig. 4.1). Early examples also survive in the Calvinist Netherlands and Lutheran northern Europe.[12]

The form in which the Decalogue was displayed in English parish churches even as late as the Civil War was mostly either as text painted directly on to the wall, or on wooden boards, or canvas.[13] Early rectangular boards survive at Ludlow, Shropshire (1561) and Badgeworth, Gloucestershire (1591).[14] However, the style settled by common practice to the use of round-headed panels – for the Decalogue, and sometimes for the Lord's Prayer and Creed – such as at

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[9] Bray, *Canons*, 377.

[10] Tara Hamling has shown that the same didactic use occurred in puritan domestic settings as well. See Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household*, 106-109, 162, 285.

[11] Spicer, *Calvinist Churches*, 194-199.

[12] For discussion of the Lutheran approach to church decoration in the main Lutheran states in Early Modern Europe, see Spicer, *Lutheran Churches;* for specific discussion of other Huguenot Decalogue boards see Spicer, *Calvinist Churches*, 173, 177-178.

[13] Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 131-134.

[14] Nikolaus Pevsner and John Newman, *The Buildings of England: Shropshire* (London: Yale University Press, 2006), 360; https://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101340103-church-of-the-holy-trinity-badgeworth#.W0cxn34nZMY, accessed 12 July 2018.

Minehead, Somerset (1630s; Fig. 4.2), intended to echo the presumed shape of the stone tablets which Moses brought down from Mount Sinai. Hatton mentions several examples of Decalogues in the form of "old paintings," sometimes on cloth, in the churches which were not burned down in the Fire, such as at All Hallows Staining and St. Botolph Aldersgate.[15]

These illustrations show that most early Decalogue boards in parish churches were simple affairs. Those which were more elaborate can mainly be associated with private chapels and episcopal patronage – such as at Whitgift Hospital, Croydon (c.1601; Fig. 4.3) and Laud's patronage of the chapel at the Charterhouse in London (c.1635) – and in cathedrals.[16] Despite the Biblical and Protestant credentials of the Decalogue, some of these examples were targeted for destruction during the Civil War. The Charterhouse example was one such. Its fragments were only rediscovered in 1977, and it included alabaster statues of Moses and Aaron.[17] It was probably the combination of its "popish" decoration and the identity of its benefactor which sealed its fate, and none of the Parliamentary ordinances of the 1640s required the removal of Decalogues in general. Some of the more extreme radicals, like the Leveller Samuel Chidley, did object to them – and indeed to church buildings at all – and Julie Spraggon cites an example of their opposition to the Decalogue boards which were still in place in Gloucester Cathedral as late as 1652.[18]

The memory of Parliamentary iconoclasm remained after the Restoration. In 1669, George Alsop perceived the Decalogue to be a divisive issue between true churchmen and the "Phanaticks" who

> first, begin to cavil and grumble at the number, as well as the bigness of our Churches, then at Revenues … Next at the Ornaments, the windows they are too gawdy, this Altar that's too superstitious, the Commandments too Mosaical, the Bells they make too much noise.[19]

If there was some controversy around ornamented Commandment boards in the earlier part of the century, it begs the question as to how the considerably grander and more imposing architectural reredoses of the Wren churches could be accommodated quite so easily. This chapter therefore now asks what the inspiration was underlying this change, what were its design origins and how it was implemented.

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[15] Hatton, I, 110, 157.

[16] Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 89-90; Philip Temple, *Survey of London: The Charterhouse* (Yale University Press: London, 2010), 94-105; Trevor Cooper, ed. *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia During the English Civil War* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2001), 250-251.

[17] Temple, *The Chaterhouse*, 94-101.

[18] Julie Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm During the English Civil War* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 194.

[19] Alsop, *Orthodox Plea*, 29.

THE ARCHITECTURAL REREDOS

Chapter 2 highlighted the importance of European travel and printed sources in disseminating architectural and design ideas in Restoration England. As we turn in this section to specific examples of this phenomenon, and consider the particular influence of continental design, it is worth adding the observation that this process should not be considered as a matter of crude English designers aping continental models. Rather, this process was an established feature of mainstream design methodology. The Swedish architect, Nicodemus Tessin the Younger, recorded the Italian Bernini speaking with him in 1673:

> You need to draw using your eye, that is, imprint everything in your mind, and always make sketches and drawings of your different ideas keeping in mind the advice of great men. Put one thought after the other down on paper, judge them, consider their errors against ancient and modern works, make *modelli* in clay, always preserve that idea even in the most elaborately worked things, and contemplate many prints in order to see variations on the idea.[20]

Here we see regard for the best of ancient and modern precedent, the encouragement of discernment, consciousness of the capacity for creating variety around a particular theme, and the skill of feeding one's own creative imagination with the examples of others, all coming together in one sage piece of advice. Creative fluency and accomplishment came from being immersed in the wider language of design and architecture. Clearly, if this was a good enough practice for a Bernini, Wren, or Tessin then it was certainly good enough for a Roger Davies or Thomas Creecher.

This section will show how the availability in England of engravings of designs for French altar-pieces in the first half of the seventeenth century played a major role in shaping the design and overall concept of the Wrenian reredos. We will see that the uses of the sources, explored by Geraghty and Walker in the context of architecture (see Chapter 2), applied no less to the fitting out of the churches by master-craftsmen also.[21] London's master-craftsmen used engravings in the same creative way that Bernini recommended, not simply being copied, but being used as a large resource from which shapes and details could be drawn, mixed, and rearranged, whether for aesthetic purposes or in order to convey particular meaning.

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[20] From Nicodemus Tessin the Younger's *Osservazioni dal discorso del Sig. or Cav.ro Bernini*, quoted in Tomaso Montanari, "Creating an Eye for Models: The Role of Bernini," in *Bernini: Sculpting in Clay*, exhibition catalogue, ed. C. D. Dickerson III, Anthony Sigel, and Ian Wardropper (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Yale University Press, 2012), 65.

[21] Geraghty, "Robert Hooke's Collection"; Walker, *Architects and Intellectual Culture*; discussed in Chapter 2.

We begin with France. In an extensive study, Frédéric Cousinié has examined the more than sixty altar-pieces built in Parisian parish and conventual churches during the first half of the seventeenth century.[22] Most of these fell at the hands of the French revolutionaries and only three remain, though engraved sources and descriptions exist for some of those which have been lost.[23] These altar-pieces ranged in scale from the relatively modest to the towering three-tiered structure built by François Derand at the Jesuit church of Saint-Louis in 1638, which rose to 46 feet and reached almost to the pinnacle of the vault (Fig. 4.4); this example was built in polychrome marble, with free-standing columns, decked with statues of kings and saints, and it housed paintings by Simon Vouet, Philippe de Champagne, and Claude Vignon.[24] Cousinié analyses the artistic and spiritual relationship between the critical components: the role of relics, the presence of the consecrated host in the tabernacle above the altar, and the placement of statues of saints and Biblical figures flanking an altar-piece painting, which in turn are arranged to draw attention to representations of the Godhead in an upper tier.[25] He characterises the combination of all of these as being the necessary requirements for the altar-piece to "function" properly as the mechanism by which the prayers of the faithful are channelled to God the Father, by means of the spiritual power of the relics, the intercession of the saints, and the intermediation of Christ.[26]

Cousinié also considers the teachings of the Counter-Reformation Church, in particular those of Carlo Borromeo, Cardinal-Archbishop of Milan.[27] However, whatever emphasis Borromeo and his generation may have placed on the need to understand the art and sculpture of an altar-piece as *aids* to prayer and spiritual dedication – rejecting any notion that they were themselves objects of veneration, or to be prayed *to* – every one of the Parisian altar-pieces would have been anathema to English belief.

How then could such structures come to influence the design of the characteristic Wrenian reredos, especially when set against the sobriety of earlier Commandment boards?

Within the abundance of continental architectural source material available to master-craftsmen in Restoration London, a particular genre addressed itself to ecclesiastical design. This genre included designs for altar-pieces, and the large number of such works testifies to the scale

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[22] Frédéric Cousinié, *Le Saint des Saints: Maîtres-autels et retables parisiens du XVIIe siècle.* Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence, 2006. Kindle.

[23] Ibid., locs. 72-86 of 12604, Kindle.

[24] Bernard de Montgolfier and J.-P. Willesme, *Saint-Paul - Saint-Louis, les Jésuites à Paris* (Paris: Musée Carnavalet, 1985), 22-23, 34; Guillaume Kazerouni, *Les Couleurs du Ciel: Peitures des Églises de Paris au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Musée Carnavalet, 2013), 122-123.

[25] Cousinié, *Le Saint des Saints*, locs. 724-1011 of 12604, Kindle.

[26] Ibid., locs. 994-1011 of 12604, Kindle.

[27] Ibid., locs. 372-406, 1624-1636, 1739-1777 of 12604, Kindle.

of church building and renewing activity in Counter-Reformation Europe. We have already seen that within the bundle of engravings which Roger Davies sold to Robert Hooke were individual plates from one such book, Jean Barbet's *Livre d'Architecture d'Autels et de Cheminées*. Other noteworthy collections of engravings which could also have influenced design in London include Jean Marot's *Petit oeuvre* (1655-1659), and possibly Jean Le Pautre's slightly later *Nouveaux dessins d'autels à la romaine* (c.1658-70).[28] These are representative of the genre as a whole: engravings produced with the specific intent of providing models for others to emulate and adapt to their own needs. Some are engravings of actual altar-pieces – in particular Marot's (Fig. 4.5) – and others are generic models which could be contemplated by Church authorities and craftsmen. Le Pautre, for example, published some fifty-three designs for altar-pieces and their associated tabernacles, and numerous other designs for church screens, monuments, and other church furnishings (Fig. 4.6).[29]

Part of John Evelyn's motivation in publishing his translation of Fréart's *Parallèle de l'achitecture antique et de la modern* had been to encourage English master-craftsmen to explore exactly these types of publication.[30] We shall now see how English craftsmen took up that challenge, how they used the sources which they had to hand, and adapted the engravings in front of them to suit different tastes and circumstances. The sections which follow address key components in this process of adaptation and invention, and should be considered, as it were, as parallel themes leading to a common conclusion.

Starting at the basic level of building blocks, a characteristic feature of the Parisian altar-pieces and the City churches reredoses is the widespread use of structures topped with a compass pediment, acting as an eye-catching frontispiece. It can be found in royal palaces in the Cour Carrée of the Louvre (1579, Pierre Lescot) and the Luxembourg Palace (1615-45, Salomon de Brosse).[31] In an ecclesiastical setting, it can be seen at Saint-Étienne-du-Mont (1610-22, after an earlier design of Claude Guérin), at Saint-Gervais - Saint-Protais (c.1616, Salomon de Brosse; Fig. 4.7), and the Convent of the Feuillants (1622-24, François Mansart; Fig. 4.8).[32] Wren, Roger

[28] Maxime Préaud, *Inventaire du fonds français. Graveurs du XVIIe siècle, Tome 12, Jean Lepautre* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1999); Jean Marot, *Recueil des Plans, Profils, et Elevations Des plusieurs Palais Chasteaux Eglises Sepultures Grotes et Hostels, Bâtis dans Paris, et aux environs, avec beaucoup de magnificence, par meilleurs Architectes du Royaume, desseignez, mesurés, et grauez par Jean Marot Architecte Parisien.* (Paris: 1655-1659); Jean Le Pautre, *Plusieurs dessins d'autels à la romaine* (Paris: 1665).

[29] Préaud, *Jean Lepautre,* 281-291, 314-317.

[30] Evelyn, *An Account of Architects*, introduction, n.p., "To the Reader."

[31] David Thomson, *Renaissance Paris: Architecture and Growth, 1475-1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 77-90; Rosalys Coope, *Salomon de Brosse and the Development of the Classical Style in French Architecture from 1565 to 1630* (Pensylvania: The Pensylvania State University Press, 1972), 110-134.

[32] Dumoulin, *Paris d'Eglise en Eglise,* 108; Coope, *Salomon de Brosse,* 135-146; Florence Bergerat-Gentner, et al., *Les Cisterciens à Paris* (Paris: Musée Carnavalet, 1986) 33-59.

Davies, and any number of other architecturally interested English visitors to Paris would have seen some or all of these.

Howard Colvin has identified the Parisian compass pediment as the origin of the frontispiece in Archbishop Laud's Canterbury Quadrangle at St. John's College, Oxford (1631-36).[33] There, it is used in conjunction with aedicules for statues of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, and with cartouches for the Royal Arms and for Laud's own arms as Archbishop of Canterbury. The frontispiece structure breaks the rhythm of the classical arcades to draw the viewer's attention to the centre, where the vigorous unification of symbols of Crown and Church declares its purpose as an institution under archiepiscopal patronage, and which is intrinsically loyal to the Stuart dynasty. This building, too, would have been known to Wren from his Oxford days.

Simon Thurley has similarly argued that John Webb's c.1662 reredos in Henrietta Maria's chapel in Somerset House shows an indebtedness to Parisian precedent, as well as to Inigo Jones.[34] In particular, he makes a case for Derand's altar-piece at Saint-Louis providing the key compass pediment motif, and speculates that this might be connected with the dowager Queen's close relationship with Father Apolinaire of the French Capuchin Order. Whether this was Webb's source, or whether he drew from any number of other plausible candidates, it nevertheless adds to the corpus of supportive continental – especially French – precedents.

BOOK FRONTISPIECES AND TRIUMPHAL ARCHES

The impact of pedimented structures as frontispieces is amplified by their role in this same period in two seemingly quite different phenomena, which nonetheless share a common purpose and technique. These are book frontispieces and the temporary triumphal arches erected, for example, to mark coronations or other *joyeaux entrées*. Much worthwhile attention has been given to both of these themes in recent years.[35] The visual similarities between book frontispieces, triumphal arches, and the reredoses in Wren's church are more than simple matters of architectural forms and style. What, then, are their purposes, and why are they relevant?

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[33] Sir Howard Colvin, *The Canterbury Quadrangle: St. John's College, Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 44-52. Colvin also cites the Palazzo Communale in Bologna (1580, Domenico Tibaldi) as having influenced de Brosse; it functions at Bologna in a very similar manner to that at the Canterbury Quadrangle.

[34] Simon Thurley, *Somerset House: The Palace of England's Queens, 1551-1692* (London: London Topographical Society, 2009), 69.

[35] See in particular Sir Howard Colvin, *Essays in English Architectural History* (London: Yale University Press, 1999), 67-93; Christine Stevenson, "Occasional Architecture in Seventeenth Century London," *Architectural History* 49 (2006): 35-74, and *The City and the King*, 63-117; and John Ogilby, *The Entertainment of Charles II* (London: 1662), reprinted with an introduction by Ronald Knowles (Binghamton, New York: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1988), 9-42.

In their study of *The Comely Frontispiece*, Margery Corbett and Ronald Lightbown trace the origins of the symbolic, engraved book title-page to the late fifteenth century, and they focus in particular on the use of the architectural model in book frontispieces.[36] Their study of twenty frontispieces from across a broad range of subject-matter illustrates the use of emblems and symbolism as something which is purposeful and not simply decorative. Their purpose derives from the triumphal arches of antiquity, which were raised to celebrate and glorify a particular person or event: one can think of the Arch of Titus in Rome, with its depiction of his triumph and the looted ritual items taken from the Temple of Jerusalem.[37] In the context of the early-modern book frontispiece, the reader was likewise expected to engage with the symbolism used, symbolism which should be "not so plain that it deprived the ingenious reader of the pleasure of working out its meaning."[38]

> Accordingly when [the symbols] are understood, they draw [the reader] to admiration with an increase of his delight, especially when they conceal in a pleasant obscurity, as if beneath a veil, something of solid excellence under apt and subtle inventions.[39]

It was a format particularly well-suited to religious usage, whether in a book or a more solid form. In book form, the architectural frontispiece is used to good effect in, for example, Cornelis Boel's frontispiece to the first edition of the King James Bible in 1611, and David Loggan's for the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, a model which could sit very comfortably as the centre-part of a reredos (Fig. 4.9).

The same methodology can be seen translated into three dimensions in the use of the temporary arches erected in London to mark the coronations of James I and Charles II. Christine Stevenson has drawn particular attention to these in *The City and the King*, a study of the use of architecture in displaying and giving shape to the complex relationship between the Crown and the City authorities.[40] The arches of James I look festive and ephemeral, in the manner of court masque scenery, whereas those of Charles II are more structurally sober, and look as though they might be models for a permanent structure (Figs. 4.10 and 4.11), though their celebratory and proclamatory purpose is much the same.

John Ogilby's contemporary account, *The Entertainment of Charles II*, served to explain the arches' role in providing a series of stages, or platforms, along the King's processional route, at

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[36] Margery Corbett and R. W. Lightbown. *The Comely Frontispiece: The Emblematic Title-Page in England, 1550-1660* (London: Boston: Routledge and K. Paul, 1979).

[37] Paola Guidobaldi, *The Roman Forum* (Milan: Electa, 1998) trans. Caterina Guzzo, 64-67.

[38] Corbett and Lightbown, *Comely Frontispiece*, 18.

[39] Hadrianus Junius, *Emblemata* (Antwerp: 1565), 65, quoted in Corbett and Lightbown, *Comely Frontispiece*, 19.

[40] Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 95-117.

which musical and theatrical performances would take place to celebrate particular aspects of the King's rule, and his relationship with his people.[41] This remained very much in the performance spirit of the court masque but here, in contrast, taking place in public, in front of the London population who crowded every possible vantage point to watch the entertainments as they unfolded. Each of the four arches had a particular theme: the defeat of Rebellion and Confusion, the Navy, Concord, and Plenty.[42] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to describe the meanings of the messages with which these arches were so profusely decorated, but the illustrations in Figures 4.10 and 4.11 show very clearly the expectation that people should engage with them and interpret them in the light of the performances carried on about them, at each place where the King stopped along the way. Ogilby's book itself formed part of the process of providing that interpretation in a manner which would last beyond the temporary life-span of the arches themselves and which would therefore retain part of their power.[43]

Christine Stevenson makes a connection between the frontispiece of Laud's Canterbury quadrangle with the use of the same compass pediment in the Arch of Concord – these being only the first and second appearances of that motif in England.[44] According to one royalist commentator at the time, the Arch was, moreover, intended to represent the "power which Episcopacy hath over Presbytery."[45] The subsequent adoption of the compass pediment in most of the Wren church reredoses, as we shall see, must therefore endue them with the same significance.

Charles II's coronation arches remained standing for ten months, only being taken down when winter storms damaged them in February 1662.[46] Reaching to between eighty and one hundred feet high, they cannot have failed to make a strong impression, not only for the power of their political message, but also for the concept of architectural structure as mediator of that message.[47] When considering the architectural character of the City reredoses, that understanding must therefore have been in the minds of those who came to work upon them. It is surely no coincidence that Edward Pearce the Younger worked both on the design of the coronation arches – the preliminary drawings for which in the RIBA Collection are in his hand – as well as at several of the new churches.[48]

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[41] Ogilby, *The Entertainment of Charles II.*

[42] Ibid., 13, 43, 111, 139.

[43] Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 112.

[44] Ibid., 98-99.

[45] Ronald Knowles, ed., "Introduction," 17-18, Ogilby, *The Entertainment of Charles II.*

[46] Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 117.

[47] Ibid., 98-99.

[48] Ibid., 99.

Once again, the connection between such different structures as temporary triumphal arches and reredoses was a Europe-wide phenomenon. Serlio describes an engraving of such a structure in his *Architectura*, explicitly linking the scope for a design for an altar, triumphal arch, gateway, and other features all to a common source:

> This figure following [i.e. the engraving] may be used by the learned workeman for divers things, and may bee altered according to the accidents that shall happen: it will also serve for a Painter to beautify an Altar withall, as men at this day doe in Italy: it may also serve for an Arch triumphant, if you take away the Basement in the middle. Likewise, you may beautifie a Gate withal, leaving out the wings on the sides: sometimes for setting forth a Window, a Niche, a Tabernacle, or such like things.[49]

Serlio explicitly sees this practice as an exercise in creativity, not imitation.

In the French context, Cousinié draws the same connection between Parisian altar-pieces and the equivalent triumphal arches in France, citing ten examples of temporary celebratory arches dating back to Charles IX's entry to Paris in 1571.[50] Marot, Le Pautre, and Alessandro Francini all produced engraved designs of both arches and altar-pieces, and the very title of Barbet's book – seemingly counter-intuitively including altars and chimney-pieces in a single title – demonstrates the flexible application of the model. The fact that these and other similar works were available in English in Restoration London says rather more for the flexibility and diversity of application of the notion of the frontispiece than it does for what otherwise must have been a rather niche interest in triumphal arches. The businessman Robert Pricke could be confident in advertising his plates of continental designs because he knew that the frontispiece notion was a phenomenon which spanned building, decorative, and print types in a manner which London craftsmen – and Londoners – understood, just as had Serlio.[51]

By their repeated use in multiple contexts, the triumphal arch in the public sphere established a series of visual associations which shaped the way in which an observer's mind would respond to them. They provided a focal point and stage setting for performance, were ceremonial and celebratory, were highly assertive of authority, and were intended to draw the eye to the iconography deployed upon them. Such a structure was perfectly suited to be used by a restored King on the way to his coronation, and equally by a restored Church, actively engaged in its first major building programme since its re-establishment.

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[49] Sebastiano Serlio, *The Seven Bookes of Architecture*, 1537, translated by Robert Pricke (London: 1611), Book IV, 25.

[50] Cousinié, *Le Saints des Saints*, locs. 3469-3482 of 12604, Kindle.

[51] Leona Rostenberg, *English Publishers in the Graphic Arts, 1599-1700: A Study of the Printsellers & Publishers of Engravings, Art & Architectural Manuals, Maps & Copy-books* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1963), 58.

The architectural reredoses of the Wren churches stand within this frontispiece tradition. In one case, this was made particularly explicit. At St. Mary Aldermary the original reredos (now lost) carried the inscription:

> This *frontispiece*, with the rails and frame of the communion-table, was the gift of Dame Jane Smith, relict of John Smith, knt. and alderman of this city, who lies interred near this place.[52]

In the manner of a frontispiece, the reredos provided a grand frame, calculated to express confidence and authority through the monumentality of its structure, and through the sophistication of the iconography which adorned it. Just as with architectural frontispieces, the coronation arches, and book frontispieces, the structure and decoration of the reredoses were understood as an invitation to examine the decoration, in order to identify its meaning and ponder its significance. Its placement in a church meant that the viewer was expected to read it in a theological and ecclesiological manner. Its even more specific placement against the east wall of the church, as a backdrop to the communion table, meant that that reading should be eucharistic and covenantal. These themes will be explored in detail in Chapter 5.

A CASE-STUDY OF THE MAKING OF A REREDOS – A JEAN BARBET DESIGN

Seven parish churches commissioned a reredos based closely on one of the designs contained in Jean Barbet's *Livre d'Architecture d'Autels et de Cheminées* (1633; Fig. 4.12).[53] The craftsmen of one other church took this design as a starting point and then adapted it in various ways. However, having attributed the origin of the design of this group of reredoses to Barbet, it must immediately be said that Barbet's published design should not necessarily be thought of as being original to him. Many such published plates drew on existing realised edifices, or on other engraved sources in their turn. This particular design has antecedents at least to the mid-sixteenth century in a design for a gateway by Sebastiano Serlio, included in his *Libro Estraordinario* (1566; Fig. 4.13) and a similar design in Wendel Dietterlin's *Architectura* (1598; Fig. 4.14).[54] Yet another version appears in Robert Pricke's edition of Alessandro Francini's *New Book of Architecture* (1669; Fig. 4.15).[55] It is also interesting to note that many examples of the design as executed in French

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[52] James Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum* (London: Rivington, 1803), vol. 2, 332, original italics.

[53] Barbet, *Livre d'Architecture*, vol. 2, Plate 1. The versions at St. Margaret Lothbury and All Hallows Lombard Street survive. Three survive in part, though relocated elsewhere, from St. Antholin, St. Benet Fink, and St. Dionis Backchurch. Those at Christ Church Newgate and St. Alban Wood Street were destroyed in 1940 and 1941 respectively. See Appendix A for details.

[54] Sebastiano Serlio, *Libro Estraordinario* (Venice: 1566), Plate XVI; Wendel Dietterlin, *Architectura: Von Außtheilung, Symmetria und Proportion der Fünff Seulen* (Nürnberg: 1598), Plate 154.

[55] Francini, *New Book of Architecture*, Plate IIII.

churches are far more richly embellished than the design in Barbet's book, such as in the high altar at Larrazet (Tarn et Garonne; Fig. 4.16). Ultimately, the source may rest in antiquity: the Arch of Trajan at Timgad in Algeria (c.100AD; Fig. 4.17) bears a distinct similarity to this design, with paired compass pediments set above niches for statuary.[56] In approaching how to use this model for use in London's churches, joiners and carvers were simply adding one further stage in a trans-national process of design dissemination and evolution which had preceded them for at least a century. With this in mind, this section now examines how joiners and carvers could take an engraved design from a pattern book and adapt it for their own particular purposes.

A comparison of the Barbet design (Fig. 4.12) with two surviving examples at St. Margaret Lothbury (Fig. 4.18) and All Hallows Twickenham (originally at All Hallows Lombard Street; Fig. 4.19) illustrates how the adaptive process could be made to work in practice, with strikingly different results – the one rather sober and proper, the other eccentric and playful. Some of the changes are material and stylistic, but most reflect the particular requirements of Anglican belief and liturgy, and the overriding necessity of not appearing to be popish.

Of the stylistic changes at Lothbury, the closed compass pediments of Barbet's design have become broken pediments, with the sides projecting slightly. The break in the pediments means that the flaming acroters need to be placed either side of the break, rather than on the centre, necessitating having four in total rather than two. Barbet's design includes doors either side of the altar itself leading to a sacristy or choir behind; in so doing it also indicates the monumental scale of the altar-piece as a whole, made possible – indeed necessary – by the generally large size of parochial and conventual churches in major French cities, especially in Paris. In the confines of the small City churches, neither the scale nor the need to access a part of the church behind the reredos existed and, in the case of St. Margaret Lothbury, the overall proportions of the silhouette of Barbet's design have been retained by shortening the height of the plinth and elongating the main body of the reredos by a corresponding amount. (Extrapolating from the height of the altar and doors, Barbet's design could have been approximately forty feet tall, compared with the twenty feet of the Lothbury reredos.)

The ecclesiological changes require greater – though not complicated – analysis. Barbet's design reflects the Counter-Reformation requirements of the Catholic Church in which the components of the altar-piece serve to remind worshippers of the intercession of the saints, the role of relics in facilitating prayer, and to act as aids to devotion. The aedicules which here contain angels bearing branches – but which could as easily contain saints, particularly the

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[56] Henri Stierlin, *The Roman Empire: Volume 1: From the Etruscans to the Decline of the Roman Empire*, trans. Suzanne Bosman (Cologne: Taschen, 1996), 185-189.

patronal saint of the church – gesture towards the centre panel which would contain an appropriate devotional painting.[57] In turn, the disposition of figures in the painting would often be arranged so as to draw the eye further upwards towards the upper panel in which would be displayed a representation of God the Father, the Trinity, or the Virgin Mary.[58]

The process of conversion to Anglican requirements starts with the replacement of the central panel for an altar-piece painting with the two panels of the Ten Commandments. Generally, aedicules imply the existence of statues – as in Barbet's design – which would normally be unacceptable in an English church setting, and the space taken by the statues is therefore replaced by the panels of the Lord's Prayer and Creed.[59] The relative proportions of Barbet's centre panel and aedicules serendipitously accommodate the double width of the two Decalogue boards and the single panels of the Lord's Prayer and Creed. The final element of converting this Catholic design to an Anglican one – at least in this instance – is the replacement of the upper panel, with its probable representation of the Godhead, with the Royal Arms. This upper tier panel is no longer extant at Lothbury, but is described by Hatton as part of the reredos with the entry, "under a triangular Pediment, are the Queen's Arms well carved in *Relievo*."[60] It is reproduced in Fig. 4.18 using "Photoshop" software, making the derivation from Barbet all the more apparent.

The All Hallows Lombard Street reredos (Fig. 4.19) takes the same design as a starting point and develops it both in structure and decorative detail. Starting with Barbet's design more closely than the others, it retains the upper panel in order to house a "Glory" (which will be discussed in Chapter 5) rather than the Royal Arms, and extends the diagonals of the centre pediment outwards to the full width of the reredos, creating what might be read as a full-width pediment or a gable-end. Above each of the compass pediments in the outer bays of the reredos are inserted another triangular pediment of the same dimensions as the central one inherited from Barbet's design. If the "gable" is read as a pediment, this reredos sports a total of ten of them. The lavish carved work is discussed further in Chapter 5 and includes more surface decoration than on any other of the City reredoses.

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[57] Cousinié, *Le Saint des Saints*, locs. 3545-3562 of 12604, Kindle, identifies Marian themes (e.g. the Annunciation and the Assumption) as the most common themes for these paintings.

[58] Ibid., locs. 3623-3886 of 12604, Kindle.

[59] The entrance to the new Royal Exchange, built by Edward Jarman in 1669 also bears comparison with the Barbet altar-piece design and had aedicules with statues of Charles I and Charles II. The acceptability of aedicules containing statues on a secular building like this illustrates another important aspect of the notion of "decorum": styles and features which are acceptable in one context may not be in another. See Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 157-169.

[60] Hatton, 1, 324.

OTHER REREDOS DESIGNS

Similar evidence of modification of pattern book designs can be traced in other reredoses. The most common core structural form is one in which the two panels of the Decalogue sit beneath a compass pediment and there are one or two panels to either side – depending on whether or not the reredos contains paintings of Moses and Aaron – these lateral panels being under a flat cornice. This group of designs bears comparison with the centre part of the lowest tier of the great altar-piece of Saint-Paul - Saint-Louis (Fig. 4.4), and also the much plainer example at the Jesuit church of Rue Saint-Jacques (by Pierre II Biard, 1640-43), followed by a series of adaptations similar to those in the Barbet example.[61] In some cases, side panels are also topped by a small pediment (as at St. Clement Eastcheap; Fig. 4.20), and in other cases not, and no particular religious significance need necessarily be ascribed to such differences.

In all cases, whenever a French origin can be identified in a Wrenian reredos, the process of adaptation always involved simplification as well as conversion of iconography from Catholic to Anglican. The relevance of this becomes still more important when noting that it was already the simpler French designs which appear to have drawn the eye of London craftsmen in the first place. In the same way, out of all the reredoses of the new churches, Hatton is only explicit about six having an upper storey.[62] By contrast, single-storey French altar-pieces appear to have been rare, and many of those which survive rise close to the full height of the vault, such as at Saint-Louis de la Flèche, Anjou (Fig. 4.21).

CONCLUSION

The use of a French, Counter-Reformation model for the Wrenian reredos might at first glance seem problematic in late seventeenth-century London. Even if the man in the pew was unaware of this origin, he could see for himself that the form was architecturally grander than anything which had gone before. Might he not have considered it popish? That this does not seem to have been the case was primarily due to acceptance of the frontispiece convention, and the manner in which that structure could be used in a wide variety of circumstances – civic, secular, and religious; temporary and permanent; and in book form – as a conveyer of meaning. With so many other examples around them, clergy, vestrymen, craftsmen, and parishioners would have been likely to understand the function of the frontispiece without taking exception.

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[61] Cousinié, *Le Saints des Saints*, Plate 71, loc. 8544 of 12604, Kindle.

[62] Hatton, *New View*, passim.

Nevertheless, when used in solid architectural form, the frontispiece was not a neutral pin-board on which to attach iconography. Even before any consideration of the iconography itself, the scale and grandeur of the City reredoses, and the use of "comely" materials and decoration, spoke of permanence, self-confidence, and authority. These were important considerations for a restored Church, taking the opportunity afforded by the Fire to make its mark on the rebuilt City.

CHAPTER 5

THE MEANING OF THE REREDOS

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 introduced the important notion of "comeliness" and established that how a person used that term indicated his or her values, in particular religious and ethical values. The expectation of comeliness had a specific relevance in relation to the pulpit, given the wording of the formal requirement in the *Canons Ecclesiastical*.[1] We also saw that the notion of comeliness went more broadly and permeated all aspects of religious discourse from the late sixteenth century onwards, and how it applied to other expressions of ecclesial identity as well. Against that background, Chapter 4 then looked at the origins of the Wrenian reredos and traced them to the Decalogue boards set up in churches from Edward VI's reign onwards. The Elizabethan requirement that these boards "give some comlye ornament and demonstration, that the same is a place of religion and prayer" introduced an additional assertion – however modest – about the necessity for the physical and material presentation of a church interior to reflect the nature of a church building as in some way sacred, or at least as one that was distinct from a purely secular space.[2] Comeliness was, therefore, equivalent to the secular notion of "decorum" expressed in architecture, whereby it was expected that there be a congruity between the fabric of a building and its purpose or, in the case of a house, the person who occupied it.

Chapter 4 also established the role of the reredos as a frontispiece for displaying meaning, and this chapter addresses the reredoses' collection of meanings themselves. The reredos will be shown to be an intensely potent assemblage of iconography. It makes assertions of a divinely ordered covenant relationship between God and the English Church. It draws upon a corpus of literary and polemical writings from across the century which sought to defend the Church of England against the criticisms of both popery and dissent. Naturally enough for the

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[1] Bray, *Canons*, 377.

[2] "1560 Royal Injunctions," 296.

space where the communion table stands, the reredos will be seen as an expression of an Anglican view of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, subtly calibrated for the purposes of late seventeenth-century sensitivities. It will also be seen from several of its distinctive features that the reredos makes uncompromising assertions about the nature and centrality of the Royal Supremacy over the Church, not simply as a matter of fact but as a divinely ordered authority.

These several "purposes" of the reredos will be seen to be critical to the Church of England's conception of its doctrinal and ecclesial identity. Consequently, if comeliness is to be understood as achieving congruity between the purpose of a structure and its physical expression through the use of joinery, carving, and gilding, then we should expect to see that demonstrated in the reredos as well. This chapter will note particular examples where this is especially apposite, but it does not need to be laboured throughout. It is worth saying at the outset, however, that the reredoses contain the most extensive and highest quality of such decoration of all the church furnishings – a necessary and comely reflection of the importance of the messages which they proclaim.

THE LIMITATIONS OF IMAGERY

For all the strength of the meanings being conveyed by the reredoses in the new churches, and for all their architectural grandeur, the iconographical language which they speak is very carefully contrived, and is set out in a way which recognised the events of the recent past. As explored in Chapter 4, some aspects of the process of transforming a Parisian altar-piece into a London reredos were relatively straight-forward. Points of sensitivity were well-known. During the early 1640s, the City and Parliamentary authorities had conducted a thorough-going cleansing of the City churches, including organising the periodic public burning of "scandalous" and "offensive" items removed from churches.[3] Most Restoration Londoners would have been aware that certain symbols were deemed unacceptable and that, in particular, images of the Trinity, the Virgin Mary and saints (whether painted or as statues) were likely to be read as signs of popery.[4] The new churches were, after all, being built and furnished against the political backdrop of the Popish Plot, the Exclusion Crisis, the Rye House Plot and the Glorious Revolution, when sensitivity on such matters was more than usually high.[5] Judging the boundaries of acceptable imagery and ornamentation was therefore particularly important.

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[3] Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm*, 119.

[4] Ibid., 63-67.

[5] Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. 4, 534-535. Evelyn attended a Catholic Mass at James II's new chapel at Whitehall in 1686 and recorded his horror in his diary: "I could not have believed that I should ever have lived to see such things in the King of England's palace, after it had pleased God to enlighten this nation."

Navigating a way through this process mostly seems to have been conducted judiciously and autonomously within the parish, with no indication of central direction by Church authorities, mandating what should be avoided or what should be included. However, there are a few examples where conflict or controversy did arise, and these provide us with some clues as to how politically charged the question of boundaries (and how to identify them) could be. Three examples are particularly helpful in this regard: All Hallows Barking, St. Magnus-the-Martyr, and All Hallows-the-Great, all of which relate to the sanctuary or chancel end of these churches.[6] The first two are cases where parishes were divided over where those boundaries lay; these have been explored by others and the summaries which follow are given to provide context to the remainder of this chapter. The third is a case which, on the face of it, could have provoked controversy but where local circumstances enabled boundaries to be pushed further out than normal.

All Hallows Barking and the statue of St. Michael

Although not in one of the new churches, the controversy over a statue of St. Michael at All Hallows Barking which erupted in 1681 is relevant for this study also; that it happened to take place in a church which was not burned in the Fire does not detract from its value. Clare Haynes has examined this case closely.[7] It is a confusing episode, but one which illustrates the way in which attitudes to defining what is, and is not, acceptable in churches might change over time, and might be brought to the fore during times of religious crisis. At All Hallows, a statue of St. Michael was hung at the west end of the church in 1658 – the date itself indicative of the declining authority of the Protectorate.[8] The subsequent vicar and future non-juror, George Hickes, moved the statue in 1675 to hang above the communion table at the east end. Neither of these actions appears to have provoked dissent at the time. Then in 1681, some while after the "discovery" of the Popish Plot, while the Exclusion Crisis was nearing its peak, and when fears of the Catholic threat to the Church were high, a dispute broke out which led to a court case in which a group of parishioners protested against what one of the litigants (one of the churchwardens) called "this abominable Badge of Superstition."[9] The churchwarden was one of many in the parish who, though outwardly loyal Anglicans, still had much in common with those of more puritan backgrounds. The court failed to reach a determination, and the churchwarden

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[6] All Hallows Barking is known today as All Hallows-by-the-Tower.

[7] Haynes, *Pictures and Popery*, 112-121; Clare Haynes, "The Politics of Religious Imagery in Late Seventeenth-Century England," in *Fear, Exclusion and Revolution: Roger Morrice and Britain in the 1680s*, ed. Jason McElligott (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 49-66.

[8] Haynes, "Religious Imagery," 49.

[9] Edmund Sherman, *The Second Part of the Birth and Burning of the Image Called St. Michael: Or A New Letter to Mr. Jonathan Saunders Lecturer of All-Saints-Barking.* (London: 1681), 13, discussed in Haynes, "Politics of Religious Imagery," 56.

took matters in to his own hands by taking the statue down and using it for firewood in the vestry-house. The case attracted much attention and one news-sheet concluded that

> 'tis hoped all church-wardens throughout the nation will take warning, not to suffer such seducing trinkets, and small preparatories for Popery to continue in their Church contrary to Law.[10]

It was, in other words, the thin end of the wedge.

It may be no coincidence that in 1686, the parish erected a "standard" Wrenian reredos, which was much more judicious in its design and choice of iconography.[11] A key point to note from this episode is that laity exercised a critical role in the process of furnishing the churches, and that an incumbent could not automatically do as he pleased, but required the support or acquiescence of his vestry.

St Magnus-the-Martyr and its communion table

One of the defining features of the Laudian style was, where practicable, the raising of chancels by a number of steps and the further raising of the communion table above the level of the chancel. For Foulke Robarts, this implied an ascent of steps sufficient to make the communion table visible from afar:

> to be the more in the eyes and view of the people: that so for their edification they may the better behold the behaviour of the Priest, Consecrating and setting apart the elements to become a Sacrament. And that the very sight of the holy Table, at all times, may beget in the beholders an hunger and thirst after that blessed food.[12]

Fincham and Tyacke note that while "the more zealous Laudians," like bishops Wren and Montagu, and officials such as Sir John Lambe (commissary for the archdeacon of Buckingham) shared Robarts' point of view, enforcement was far from universal, and they highlight instances where bishops Wright, Piers, and even Laud himself, were satisfied with railed tables without insisting on an ascent of steps.[13] There was, therefore, some degree of variation in practice during the Laudian ascendancy, though the majority of examples cited by Fincham and Tyacke are ones where multiple steps were advocated or installed.[14]

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[10] *True Protestant Mercury*, No. 22, 12 March 1681, quoted in Haynes, "Religious Imagery," 53.

[11] Haynes, *Pictures and Popery*, 120.

[12] Foulke Robarts, *God's Holy House and Service, According to the Primitive and most Christian Forme thereof* (London: 1639), 45.

[13] Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 242, 248.

[14] Ibid., 143, 156, 167, 182, 196-197, 255.

It is not possible to form a complete picture across all of the new City churches due to patchy documentary evidence, but the evidence we do have – from a statistically meaningful sample of forty-nine – shows that, though present, steps were far from prominent. These are summarised in Appendix G. A combination of references in Hatton, some eighteenth-century engravings, early commentaries, and a few early photographs suggests that the most common arrangement was for there to be a single step for the platform on which stood the communion table. Some thirty-one to thirty-seven churches (60-73 percent) had only one step, and a further eight to eleven had two (16-22 percent). If early photographs of All Hallows Bread Street (1876), St. Dionis Backchurch (1878), and St. Margaret Lothbury (taken before alterations in the 1890s) are indicative of the wider situation then some of these steps were very shallow indeed, scarcely more than a ledge (Fig. 5.1).[15] The small number of steps is partly due to the fact that only a minority of Wren's churches had physically distinct chancels, where the depth of space available made it possible to provide steps both at the entrance to the chancel and at the base of the communion table. In Wren's rectangular churches, however, it was impractical to raise several steps when the table was set against a broad east wall. To do so would progressively eat into the floor-space, which, judging from pew plans and early photographs, was prioritised for pew-space; this is unsurprising given that many of the new churches served congregations previously housed in two churches. The three surviving pew plan proposals submitted by joiners to the vestry of St. Stephen Walbrook make interesting examination in two regards (Fig. 5.2-5.4). First, the amount of space between the step and the frontmost pew is narrow – about four feet. Secondly, the vestry clearly had not specified the number of steps to be made for the base of the communion table: the three plans variously show one, two, or three steps.[16] The vestry's eventual choice was for one step. Coupled with the high height of many parishes' box-pews, a single step is unlikely to have added much to the visibility of the celebrant or the sanctuary as a composition. Overall, therefore, this was a very modest arrangement compared with the chancel arrangements which had caused such ire during the 1630s-40s, which had been in medieval church buildings.

What should we make of this? The laying of the base for a communion table was carried out as part of the construction phase of the churches, and was thus under Wren's direction.[17] Although there is no explicit evidence from the parish records to point to discussion between Wren's Office and the parish about this point, those contacts took place frequently – churchwardens' accounts record frequent visits to Wren and the making of gifts, such as at critical moments of the construction of St. Dionis Backchurch in 1671 – and it seems reasonable

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[15] All in Historic England's "England's Places" (online collection, accessed 25 May 2017), https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/englands-places/results?place=London,%20C%20of%20Lon%20(Place)&terms=london&type=englandsplaces&i=0&wm=1

[16] Depending on how one reads it, Fig. 5.2 may show no step, though this seems unlikely.

[17] LMA/CLC/313/J/002/MS25539/002, fol.130v.

to assume that the arrangements for the base of the communion table must have been discussed in some instances.[18] Indeed, given how sensitive this issue had been before, it is difficult to imagine that parishes would have left this decision to their architect, even if he did have the assumed backing of the Commissioners. In conclusion, it would seem that the dignity of the communion table could be adequately served by the laying of just one step.

Mostly, we are obliged to reach this conclusion by looking at the physical evidence in the churches themselves and a few independent references. However, one church helpfully provides some documentary clues of its own to confirm the existence of on-going sensitivity on the matter of raised chancels and communion rails. The minutes of the joint committee of the combined parishes of St. Magnus-the-Martyr and St. Margaret, New Fish Street are, like most such minutes, relatively bland records of decisions taken. In late 1677 and the spring of 1678, however, they give more insight than usual to the underlying discussions, and the minutes of 12 November 1677 record that the vestry ordered

> that the pavement of the East end or plate where the Communion Table is to stand in St. Magnus Church be made or laid with black and white marble as to the discretion of the Churchwardens of St. Magnus and St. Margaretts shall seeme fitting with two stepps (viz) one made stepp and the next to be the floore.[19]

The description of the layout of the steps is unusually (in fact uniquely) precise, suggesting that it was thought particularly important to avoid any confusion about how many steps there should be and how they related to each other. A decision to raise steps is also consistent with the fact that St. Magnus was one of only ten City parishes which voluntarily re-instated communion rails in the early 1660s, before the Fire.[20] However, that the discussion must have been contentious is then proved by the minutes of 13 May 1678, by which time the steps had obviously been laid, when it was

> ordered that the Marble pavement and steppes now at the East end of St. Magnus Church be forthwith taken up and laid flatt and even with the other part of the pavement of the Chancell or East part of the said Church And the Communion Table so be sett in the body of the new Church or Chancell according to the Rubrick of the Church of England … and that Mr Massey be the Workman that shall doe the East end worke of St. Magnus at fifty six pounds Sterling … so farr as it may be lawfully done.[21]

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[18] LMA/P69/DIO/B/038/MS04215/001, fols. 161, 165, 166.

[19] LMA/P69/MAG/B/010/MS01183/001, fols. 3r., 4r.

[20] Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 271, 317-318, 327. Fincham and Tyacke note that this episode continued a parochial dispute dating back to 1641, when some parishioners resisted the removal of the communion rails.

[21] LMA/P69/MAG/B/010/MS01183/001, fol. 4r.

We see here the same precision in the instruction and a strong citation of the authority for levelling the chancel completely and returning the table to an Elizabethan position – even though confusion over the exact meaning of the Elizabethan requirement had enabled a variety of practices to subsist.[22] The cost of doing so – £56 – is very high, so the decision cannot have been taken lightly, and must have been a matter of high principle for those whose argument eventually won the day.[23] It is clearly possible that some of these decisions could go one way or another, depending on who happened to attend the crucial meeting when a decision was taken; unfortunately, however, while those attending the 1678 meeting are named in the minutes, those attending the 1677 meeting are not.[24]

The picture of a divided parish in which one group was apparently able to assert puritan values is complicated by the fact that the reredos at St. Magnus is among the grander ones, having two stories, very fulsome carving, painted panels of Moses and Aaron, and also the most elaborately painted Glory of any of the City churches. It is difficult to know how to reconcile such conflicting expressions of churchmanship except as an indication of competing groups within the parish, whose relative influence on decision-making fluctuated, depending on the circumstances. The arrangement of the communion table at St. Magnus – with the table standing forward from the east wall, presumably set "table-wise" rather than "altar-wise," and presumably also without communion rails (none are mentioned in the parish records at this point), all within a space very restricted by the front-most pews – lasted only until 1681/82. At this point, Sir John Shaw is recorded as giving £10 towards a set of communion rails and the joiner William Grey was paid £10 for making them, which implies the moving of the table back to the east wall once more.[25] This time the records give no indication of the type of discussion which had given rise to this second change of mind, though we have already seen in Chapter 1 that Bishop Compton instructed communion tables to be railed-in at his visitations to other parishes. Even if the vestry of St. Magnus had not been so instructed, it is difficult to see that they could have held out for very long.

All Hallows-the-Great and its stone reredos

A case at All Hallows-the-Great raised the same potential for controversy over matters of statuary as that at All Hallows Barking, and with additional features in the use of stonework

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[22] Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 44-47.

[23] Fincham, "According to Ancient Custom," 39, proposes that the phrase "so farr as it may be lawfully done" suggests that the step was not in fact levelled. However, the payments made to the mason, Massey, in the relevant period, and the fact that communion rails were not installed until 1681/82, argue for the likelihood that the step was indeed levelled.

[24] LMA/P69/MAG/B/010/MS01183/001, fols. 4r and 3r respectively.

[25] LMA/P69/MGT3/B/014/MS01176/002, fol. 13r., 14v.; Pevsner, *City Churches*, 99. The present wrought iron rails were installed c.1704.

rather than wood. And yet the result was wholly different. The rector at All Hallows-the-Great was William Cave, a patristic scholar and author of *Primitive Christianity* – a lengthy examination of the doctrines, worship practices, liturgy, and architecture of the Christian Church in the first four centuries, and one of a large corpus of works on this subject to which we shall return later in this chapter.[26] Cave's arrangement of the sanctuary in his church has to be considered in the light of *Primitive Christianity*, and it is difficult to avoid concluding that he made very creative use of his own studies. The specific points of interest all relate to the sanctuary: the communion table, the reredos and Cave's use of statues (Fig. 5.5). In his book, he notes that:

> As for *Altars,* the first Christians had no other in their Churches than *decent Tables* of wood, … which were much of the same kind with our *Communion-Tables* at this day. For that they had not any such *fixed and gaudy* Altars (as the *Heathens* then had in their *Temples,* and *Papists* still have in their *Churches)* is most evident, … This was the state of *Altars* in the Christian Churches for near upon the first three hundred years; till *Constantine* coming in, and with him peace and plenty, the Churches began to excel in costliness and bravery every day, and then their wooden and moveable Altars began to be turned into fixed Altars of *Stone* or *Marble,* though used to no other purpose than before.[27]

The "other purpose" to which Cave refers is the Lord's Supper and he is careful to emphasise in the paragraph in between these two extracts "that the *best* and most *acceptable* Sacrifice to God was a *pious heart*," and not a sacrifice in an Old Testament sense of the word.[28] In Cave's own church, Hatton describes the communion table of All Hallows as "a large Marble Slab, supported by a Figure in Stone of the Angel Gabriel."[29] Most of the furnishings of the demolished All Hallows-the-Great are accounted for and can be found in other locations.[30] Unfortunately, Cave's communion table cannot be found and we have to rely on Hatton's description and a late nineteenth-century drawing for its appearance (Fig. 5.6). The drawing shows a bare-breasted female angel holding up the table-top rather than Hatton's male archangel; if the drawing is correct, it raises the stakes quite considerably. Nevertheless, Cave clearly felt that his table came under the heading of acceptable "fixed Altars of Stone or Marble" of the post-Constantinian period and not the unacceptable "fixed and gaudy Altars" of pagans and papists. The only attempt at explaining the subtle distinction seems to be his comment that what made a stone table acceptable was that it was "used to no other purpose than before" – that is, in the eucharistic manner of a communion table.

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[26] Cave, *Primitive Christianity*.

[27] Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, vol. 1, 142-144. Original emphases.

[28] Ibid., 144.

[29] Hatton, 1, 106.

[30] Appendix A. *The Builder*, 4 November 1871, 864, reported that the marble top of the table had been lost and the "kneeling figure" had been put out in the churchyard, having already been "relegated for some years to the ringing-loft."

Cave drew a similar distinction between what we might call the *early* primitive Church and the *later* primitive Church (before and after Constantine) in his thinking on statues and images, on which subject he notes:

> The Council of Illiberis that was held in Spain some time before Constantine expresly provided against [statues and paintings], decreeing that no Pictures ought to be in the Church, nor that any thing that is worshipped and adored should be painted upon the walls: words so clear and positive, as not to be evaded by all the little shifts and glosses which the Expositors of that Canon would put upon it.[31]

Without pausing, Cave immediately proceeds in the next sentence to note:

> The first use of Statues and Pictures in publick Churches was meerly historical, or to add some beauty and ornament to the place, which after Ages improved into Superstition and Idolatry.[32]

Cave therefore posits a period of time in which statues were used for acceptable historical (by which he means didactic) purposes, and as ornament, but without the unacceptable idolatrous worship or veneration of "after Ages." In addition to the stone angel, Cave set up stone statues of Moses and Aaron either side of his reredos. These survive and are now at St. Michael-Paternoster-Royal. The reredos itself was also of stone – the sole example in any of the City churches – and the cost of the whole of the composition in what the vestry minutes called "the ornamentall part of the church" probably exceeded £300.[33] The combination of the choice of material and inclusion of three statues – one of them arguably "indecent" – *prima facie* looks highly provocative, though here there is no contemporary evidence of opposition. Later, the nineteenth-century antiquarian James Malcolm recorded in his 1802 *Londinium Redivivum* that the statues of Moses and Aaron were nearly destroyed at one point because people had been seen to bow towards them. The comment is plausible but, unfortunately, Malcolm gives no source or date for it.[34]

William Cave succeeded where George Hickes did not. Other references in the vestry minutes and churchwardens' accounts indicate that All Hallows-the-Great was a relatively uniform parish in which rector and parishioners were of like mind. The parish records mention a pulpit cloth made of cloth-of-gold (whereas a fringed, green velvet cloth was the norm elsewhere), the tantalisingly unelaborated mention of the use of rented hangings at the

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[31] Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, 147-148.

[32] Ibid., 148.

[33] LMA/P69/ALH8/B/013/MS00823/003, n.p., year ending April 1688; LMA/P69/ALH7/B/001/MS00819/001, fol. 33. The smaller of the united parishes, All Hallows-the-Less, paid £146 10s to the mason, William Hammond, and the contribution of All Hallows-the-Great is likely to have been the same or higher.

[34] Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum,* vol. 1, 43.

consecration service in 1683, and the gift of a green velvet communion table cover and purple velvet cushion, both embroidered in gold and silver and with gold tassels.[35] Although none of these has an "image" of any sort, it suggests that Cave's parishioners were less likely to be offended by statues than were Hickes' at All Hallows Barking. Together with the case at St. Magnus-the-Martyr, these seem to have been the only cases which had such a clear potential for controversy. The decision-makers in most other parishes were very likely to have had questions of boundaries in their minds, and they stayed carefully within them.

WHO WERE THE DECISION-MAKERS?

Cases such as the three described in the previous section add strength to the suggestion that vestry discussions about new furnishings must have included a doctrinal component at some stage, even though it may be difficult to establish precisely when. An additional practical consideration is that, ordinarily, vestries invited offers from craftsmen to be submitted to them in as little as two weeks' time, and then made their choice between the submitted designs at a single meeting. St. Lawrence Jewry, for example, invited tenders for "pulpitt pewing paving and other work" on 20 November 1676 and made their choice on 12 December.[36] The question must therefore arise as to whether it is plausible that joiners and carvers could have produced designs as rich in theological and ecclesiological meaning as the Wrenian reredoses in so short a timescale. Indeed, the fact that the detail of ornamentation in the surviving presentation drawings is relatively indistinct (e.g. Figs. 2.10-2.11, 5.7) also suggests that these matters may have been worked out after the choice of craftsman had been made, based principally on approval of an outline design. Craftsmen's understanding of the genre would doubtless have increased with experience as the churches were gradually built and furnished, but at the beginning, they can surely have had little concept of what an Anglican reredos should be. It is possible that we see a little of this in William Cleere's reredos at St. Michael Cornhill, which survives in part, and was only the second to be made in London, in 1672.[37] It is decorated, but is iconographically understated when compared with most of those which followed it (Fig. 2.13). Painted decoration was later added to the walls of the chancel, which included the doctrinal themes which we shall find in most of the other reredoses.[38] Presumably, the parish felt that their own reredos did not adequately convey the required meanings. While it is speculation, it is easy to imagine that

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[35] LMA/P69/ALH8/B/001/MS00824/001, n.p., for the year ending April 1678; LMA/P69/ALH7/B/001/MS00819/001, fol. 257r.; LMA/P69/ALH7/B/013/MS00818/001, fol. 262v.

[36] LMA/P69/LAW1/B/001/MS02590/002, Fols. 80, 82.

[37] LMA/P69/MIC2/B/001/MS04072/001/002, fols. 274r., 274v.

[38] Hatton, 2, 420. The parish records are insufficiently clear to provide a precise date before 1708.

parishes whose churches were furnished next decided that they had to take greater control of the design details in order to provide themselves with something more appropriate.

It would be easy to assume that any theological input must have come from the clergy, but this would be simplistic. Tara Hamling has considered the same conundrum of largely undocumented patronage in her study of religiously-themed decoration in domestic households, mainly in the sixteenth century. She has identified cases where knowledgeable lay patrons must have given engravings to their craftsmen to copy in wood, plaster or paint; in one example the clearly unthinking painter even reproduced the monogram of the engraver in his completed work.[39] With parallels to the de-Catholicisation of the Parisian altar-piece design, Hamling also cites the conscious process in which woodblocks used to illustrate Lutheran and Roman Catholic continental Bibles, and which showed representations of God the Father as an old man, had to be physically altered for use in the English "Bishops' Bible" of 1568 and 1572. These replaced the old man with a "Glory" (discussed late in this Chapter).[40] The particular choice of image to be used and its acceptability might be determined by function, subject matter, or even by the particular room in the house where it was installed.[41] Critically for this discussion of the City church furnishings, Hamling shows that laity had access to religiously-themed, engraved design resources which they were able to interpret in a knowledgeable manner, and which they themselves could adapt to remove doctrinally unacceptable features to make them appropriate to a Protestant domestic setting. Laity were sufficiently well-educated (indeed, often steeped) in the Bible and theological understanding that they could make their own choices in these areas. The churchwarden who led the opposition to George Hickes at All Hallows Barking was one such individual, and his published tracts show him to have been theologically literate.[42]

Some vestry members were clearly competent to make a meaningful contribution to the choice of iconography in their church furnishings. A key difference between the church context and that of Hamling's book is, of course, that clergy are part of the picture as well, but it would be a leap too far to conclude that the presence of clergy forced the laity out of the decision-making process. As we saw in Chapters 1 and 2, vestries held significant power in parish affairs and it was they, rather than clergy, who mostly drove the administrative process of lobbying Wren for completion of their church buildings, and selecting craftsmen to furnish them. Across so many parishes, relations between clergy and laity must have been as varied as in any other context of human relationships, and there must have been individuals in most vestries who had

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[39] Hamling, *Godly Household*, 20.

[40] Ibid., 186-188.

[41] Ibid., 43-52, 126-140.

[42] Haynes, *Pictures and Popery*, 114-116.

the knowledge necessary to discuss the choice of iconography on equal terms with their rector. Chapters 6 and 7 will discuss in more detail some examples where, at one end of the spectrum, the influence of the rector is especially clear, and we have already seen, at the other end of the spectrum in the example of All Hallows Barking, how lay opposition to a strong-willed rector could thwart clerical intentions for the beautification of a church. In between lay any number of degrees of nuance in which both clerical and lay input must have been present in one form or another. Especially as the process of furnishing the churches moved on, and a corpus of precedents grew, the role of joiners and carvers must have had a role to play here too.

Where, then, did the reredos iconography come from?

THE LITERATURE OF ANGLICAN ECCLESIAL IDENTITY

An increasingly influential corpus of literature developed over the course of the late sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century which examined, and frequently speculated upon, the architecture of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem and the architecture and worship practices of the Early Church, or "primitive Church." In this corpus, these two strands run in parallel with each other and occasionally intermix. At first glance strange bed-fellows, their uniting feature was that they could both be presented as depicting the worship of God in times of the greatest spiritual purity, especially in a national context. The architecturally magnificent Temple had been built by David's son, Solomon, and its completion and ritual purity had been blessed by God at its dedication when his glory entered the Holy of Holies, witnessed by all those who stood around.[43] In the case of the Early Church, it was self-evident to the early-modern mind that the closer in time one looked to the Apostolic Age, the more likely it was that one would identify both doctrine and practice untainted by heresy or institutional corruption. William Cave wrote to this effect in the preface to *Primitive Christianity:*

> If the footsteps of true Christian piety and simplicity were any where to be found, it must be in those times, when … the blood of Christ was yet warm in the breasts of Christians, and the faith and spirit of Religion more brisk and vigorous.[44]

Equally importantly, both periods came before decline. In the former case, after the flourishing of the Davidic Empire, Israel fell into national division, idolatry, military defeat and exile.[45] In the latter case, the supposed purity of the primitive Church gave way to the superstition and idolatry

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[43] 1 Kings 8:10-11.

[44] Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, n.p., second page of the "Preface to the Reader."

[45] 2 Kings.

of popery. Departing from the purity of these models – whether to popery or dissent – courted national and spiritual disaster.

Fincham and Tyacke's *Altars Restored* has been complemented more recently by other helpful works which look at these two specific themes as they influenced both the Laudian movement and the Restoration Church. In *Christian Identity, Jews, and Israel in 17th-Century England*, Achsah Guibbory considers the attention paid from the late sixteenth century onwards to Jewish practice, and Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem in particular.[46] She illustrates how, from Richard Hooker's first volume of *The Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity* of 1594 onwards, the Church of England associated itself with Israelite priestly authority and specifically with the Temple.[47]

The second work is Jean-Louis Quantin's *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity: The Construction of a Confessional Identity in the 17th Century*.[48] Quantin examines the use made of the Early Church Fathers in developing a distinctly Anglican approach to doctrine. In particular, he demonstrates quite how single-minded were the clergy of the period to use the Fathers both to distance the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church and, as the seventeenth century progressed, from puritanism and dissent with equal vigour.[49] For the most part, this began as a response to Catholic taunts that the English Church was schismatic – that is, it had left the Universal Church. Clergy and scholars set out to demonstrate English consistency and compatibility with the practices of the earliest Christian worshippers who were, as they all unfailingly mention, untainted by the later corruptions of popery.[50] To this effect they emphasised that the Universal Church was not only the body of Christians now living, but comprised all those who had ever lived.[51] Consequently, a recurring mantra in this line of thought was the appeal to the authority of "the best and primitive times, of the ages next the Apostles, and before the dayes superstition crept on," in order to make a case that it was the Roman Church which had moved away from the truth, the beliefs of the Universal Church, and the Church of England which held closest to it.[52] Notably, the preface to the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* three times asserts its faithfulness to "the mind and purpose of the old Fathers."[53]

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[46] Guibbory, *Christian Identity*.

[47] Ibid., 56-88.

[48] Quantin, *Confessional Identity*.

[49] A particular theme of Quantin's analysis is to note the way in which men of very different theological persuasions would mine the Fathers for arguments in support of their own positions, and debate precisely which Fathers could be relied upon, on which matters and in which periods. This selective use of precedent and argument is reflected in the approach to furnishing the churches also.

[50] Quantin, *Confessional Identity*, 191-199, 267-270, 349-352; Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 107-141; Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, 399.

[51] Beveridge, *Excellency*, 26.

[52] Robarts, *Gods Holy House*, n.p., last page of the epistle dedicatory.

[53] *Book of Common Prayer*, "Concerning the Service of the Church."

Defining the Fathers by reference to the centuries up to 500 AD had the added political advantage that the contemporary Church of England could claim descent from the native Christian Church in the British Isles, before the arrival of St. Augustine of Canterbury in 597 AD, which imposed papal authority upon a previously autonomous Church.[54] If that were not sufficiently persuasive, others cheerfully asserted that it had in fact been Joseph of Arimathea who had brought Christianity to England in the Apostolic Age itself and that (the, alas, mythical) King Lucius had been the first Christian King of the Britons "five or six years before 'tis pretended S. Peter ever came at, or founded any Church at Rome" in AD 47.[55] In all this, it mattered less that writers made somewhat optimisitic use of their sources than that they believed those sources to be true, and that such citations should persuade others also. In their minds, therefore, just as the English Church was marked out as distinct from Rome, so this should be reflected in their own church buildings.

Quantin goes on to describe the process by which Laudian redirection of use of the Fathers from primarily doctrinal matters to support of the Beauty of Holiness movement drove puritans to regard use of the Fathers as evidence of popery, and how, through the experience of Interregnum persecution, the Restoration Church grew to be yet more insistent that the restored Church stood on patristic foundations.[56]

It has to be said that neither Temple studies nor patristics were a uniquely English phenomenon, but in both cases they were developed there with an enthusiasm and commitment which sometimes baffled continental observers.[57] Continental scholars might cite the Fathers when it suited them, but only in the Church of England were they held as the primary badge of orthodoxy.[58] Jean Daillé, the Huguenot minister at Charenton concluded from his discussions with Anglicans that they "have preconceived that their rites differed in nothing from antiquity', [and therefore] tend always to believe that everything that is said of the ancients is actually meant of themselves."[59] Anthony Sparrow was a good example of what Daillé meant. In his *Rationale on the Book of Common Prayer* – first published in 1655 during the Protectorate, and republished several times after 1660 – Sparrow consciously interwove Biblical and patristic references in his

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[54] Quantin, *Confessional Identity*, 74-79.

[55] William Cave, *A Dissertation Concerning the Government of the Ancient Church by Bishops, Metropolitans and Patriarchs*, (London: 1683), 244-245. See also John Pocklington, *Altare Christianum*, (London: 1637), 23-24.

[56] Quantin, *Confessional Identity*, 252-256.

[57] Ibid., 279-282, 296. For Lutheran examples, see Vera Isaiasz, "Early Modern Lutheran Churches: Redefining the Boundaries of the Holy and the Profane," in *Lutheran Churches*, 25-26.

[58] Quantin, *Confessional Identity*, 310.

[59] Jean Daillé, *De Cultibus Religiosis Latinorum* (1671), 103-104, quoted in Quantin, *Confessional Identity*, 282.

commentary on the prayer book, according equal authority to both, and describing conformity "to the usages of Primitive Antiquity" as the Church's "aim in all her services."[60]

Both Guibbory's and Quantin's works address the on-going influence of their subject matters across the whole of the seventeenth century in contributing, as both titles attest, to the formation of an Anglican identity. Their conclusions must therefore also be considered as important inputs to understanding of the furnishings in Wren's churches. Quantin judges the 1670s and 1680s, the period in which the churches were being built and furnished, to have been "the heyday of English patristic scholarship."[61]

The corpus of Temple and patristic studies went much wider than architecture and ritual practice, but it is important to set the use made of these studies by London clergy after the Fire in a doctrinal and ecclesial context before we look at the arrangements in the new churches. Without the preceding paragraphs there is otherwise a danger that references to the Temple and early churches might look like an exercise in antiquarian eccentricity. They were, to the contrary, vital expressions of doctrinal belief, and of the necessity of proclaiming that the Church of England was "the Envy of Rome, and the Glory of all Christendom," and whose clergy were, "*stupor mundi*," the marvel of the world.[62]

The principal English works from within this corpus which are relevant to the furnishing of the churches are, in date order:

- Joseph Mede, *Clavis apocalyptica* (1627), translated into English in 1643 as *The Key of the Revelation, Searched and Demonstrated out of the Natural and Proper Character of the Visions*;
- John Pocklington, *Altare Christianum* (1637);
- Joseph Mede, *Churches, that is, Appropriate Places for Christian Worship; both in, and ever since the Apostles Time*, and *The Reverence of God's House* (both in 1638, the latter being a sermon);
- "R.T.", *De Templis, a Treatise of Temples Wherein Is Discovered the Ancient Manner of Building, Consecrating, and Adorning of Churches* (1638);
- Foulke Robarts, *God's Holy House and Service, According to the Primitive and most Christian Forme thereof* (1639);
- John Lightfoot, *The Temple: Especially as it Stood in the Dayes of our Saviour* (1650);

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[60] Sparrow, *Rationale*, 260.

[61] Quantin, *Confessional Identity*, 312.

[62] Edward Pelling, *Sermon preached before the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen at St. Mary le Bow, 5 Nov 1683* (London: 1683), 37; William Cave, *Chartophylax ecclesiasticus* (London: 1685) sig. A6ʳ, quoted in ibid., 313. Cave was quoting Bishop John Fell of Oxford and clearly enjoyed the phrase.

- William Beveridge, *Synodikon*, (1672);
- William Cave, *Primitive Christianity: or, the Religion of the Ancient Christians in the First Ages of the Gospel* (1673);
- William Beveridge, *The Excellency and Usefulness of Common Prayer* (1681);
- George Hickes, *The Moral Schechinah, or, A discourse of God's glory* (1682);
- George Wheler, *An Account of the Churches and Places of Assembly of the Primitive Christians* (1689); and
- Joseph Bingham, *Origines Ecclesiasticae, or Antiquities of the Christian Church* (1708).

To these we can also add Presbyterian and Jewish works relating to the Temple: Samuel Lee's *Orbis Miraculum; or, the Temple of Solomon, pourtrayed by Scripture-light* (1659); and *A Relation of the most Memorable Thinges in the Tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Salomon: according to text of scripture* (1675) by the Dutch Rabbi, Jacob Judah Aryeh Leon. This section does not discuss these individually, or as a subject-matter in their own right, but will draw upon them to illustrate the rationale for relevant features in the City churches' furnishings.

The spread of these works from the peak of the Laudian ascendancy, through the Interregnum and the Restoration, and into the eighteenth century indicates quite how important this school of thought was within the Anglican psyche. Also relevant is the breadth of churchmanship of these authors, comprising ultra-Laudians such as Pocklington and partial-conformists such as Lightfoot.[63] Despite the common themes, there are differences between writers and the emphases they wish to make, in particular between those writing before and after the Civil War. Those books written before the War are frequently combative in tone, part of an overall polemic which is targeted at puritan critics, and which seeks to justify the sanctity and dignity of churches and the imperative of the Beauty of Holiness. This is perhaps most true of John Pocklington, whose sacerdotalism was extreme even by most Laudian standards, and who was deprived of his living by the House of Lords in 1641, condemned as "a chiefe author and ringleader in all those Innovations which have of late flowed into the Church of England."[64] Those works written after the Restoration tend to have a more academic voice, and pay much more attention to archaeological matters in seeking to identify sometimes quite specific points of commonality between ancient and contemporary Church practice. This is particularly true of George Wheler, whose *Account of the Churches and Places of Assembly of the Primitive Christians* is based on his study of Eusebius and his personal explorations in the Near East.[65]

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[63] Vivienne Larminie, "Pocklington, John (d. 1642)," *ODNB* (online edn., accessed 13 Jan 2016); Newton E. Key, "Lightfoot, John (1602–1675)," (online edn., accessed 13 Jan 2016).

[64] Larminie, 'Pocklington.'

[65] George Wheler, *An Account of the Churches and Places of Assembly of the Primitive Christians* (London: 1689), title-page.

The architectural impact of these writings and their influence on the late seventeenth century has been examined in recent years by Pierre de la Ruffinière du Prey in *Hawksmoor's London Churches: Architecture and Theology* and by Robin Griffith-Jones in *The Temple Church in London: History, Architecture, Art* (discussed in Chapter 3).[66] Du Prey's study is primarily of Hawksmoor, but he provides an extensive prelude which looks at the evolution of academic interest in the Temple and primitive churches.[67] An interesting feature of both these studies – and one which reflects the character of the writings which they expound – is the way in which thinking about the Temple and Early Church practice could intertwine and blend together. This constitutes an important health-warning before we look at how this is reflected in the churches themselves; it has to be said that much in seventeenth-century understanding of both of these areas would struggle to survive modern archaeological scrutiny. On occasion, the contemporary literature reads as if seventeenth-century practice were a precise copy of the ancient, whereas we should more accurately consider it as an evocation of the spirit of the thing, while still dressed in seventeenth-century garb.

The earliest of these clerical writers, Joseph Mede, set many of the parameters for those who followed. Like those who followed afterwards, Mede's objective was to establish the Church of England's divine lineage.[68] His first contribution (in 1627) was in the form of a passing observation in a commentary on the Book of Revelation. In Revelation 11, the writer John is instructed to measure the inner court of the heavenly Temple which he sees in his vision. Mede boldly asserts:

> The court of the Temple within wich those that worship therin, to be measured by the reed of God, *setteth forth the Primitive state of the Christian Church exactly conformable to the rule of Gods word*: and not yet as afterwards (when it came to the times of the outer court) irregular by the contagion of idolatrous worship, but *orderly* worshipping God for a few ages.[69]

He claimed that the heavenly Temple of John's vision had the same plan as the churches of the early Christians, and contrasted the idolatrous worship of Roman Catholics with the orderly worship of the primitive Church, thus aligning virtuous Anglican practice – invariably self-

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[66] Pierre de la Ruffinière du Prey, *Hawksmoor's London Churches: Architecture and Theology* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), 3-46; Griffith-Jones, *Temple Church*, 135-173.

[67] Robert Hooke's library also held books about the Temple by Lightfoot and Pocklington, and two copies of Samuel Lee's *Orbis Miraculum; or, the Temple of Solomon, pourtrayed by Scripture-light* (1659 and 1665). http://www.hookesbooks.com/, passim, accessed 26 January 2016.

[68] See, for example, du Prey, *Hawksmoor's London Churches*, 23.

[69] Joseph Mede, *The Key of the Revelation* (London: 1643), Part 2, 2-3. Emphasis added.

described as "orderly" – with the divinely ordained practice of the Early Church itself, and as something which was distinct from popery.

In 1682, William Beveridge's opening sentence in his influential sermon at the consecration of St. Peter Cornhill, *The Excellency of Common Prayer*, likewise began by connecting the celebrations for the reopening of the City churches after the Fire with those of the rededication of the Jerusalem Temple after the fall of the Seleucids in Judea:

> When *Judas Maccabeus* had new built the Altar, and repaired the Temple at *Hierusalem,* after it had been polluted and laid waste for Three years together, the Church of God at that time and place rejoiced.[70]

Beveridge went on to affirm that:

> It may be sufficient to observe at present that the Chancel in our Christian Churches, was always looked upon as answering to the Holy of Holies in the Temple, which, you know, was separated from the Sanctuary or Body of the Temple, by the Command of God himself.[71]

In 1676, Thomas Comber considered the connection between the Temple and the Church of England so complete that he chose as the title for his commentary on the prayer book and litany, *A Companion to the Temple*.[72] Likewise the "Homily for Repairing and Keeping Clean" (first published in 1571, and republished in 1670 by the King's order during the middle of the reconstruction of the City churches) refers repeatedly to the "church or temple."[73] So for all these clerical writers, contemporary English parish churches stood in line with the historical patterns of Biblical times and the practices of the Early Church, and in turn presaged the model of the heavenly city of Revelation. The Church of England was therefore in the centre of a divinely ordained timeline which neither "the furious Malice of papists on the one hand, & Fanaticks on the other" could defeat.[74] The fact that clergy felt equally comfortable drawing upon the historical descriptions of 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles as well as the prophetic visions of Revelation and, as we shall see shortly, Ezekiel, illustrates how they saw that timeline as having both historic and spiritual dimensions, and that the spiritual could be rendered in physical form.

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[70] Beveridge, *Excellency*, 1.

[71] Ibid., 26.

[72] Thomas Comber, *A Companion to the Temple: The Litany, with the occasional prayers* (London: 1676).

[73] *The Second Tome of Homilies* (1571), 162, 164, 165.

[74] Bishop John Fell' Bodl. MS Tanner 31, fol. 156, "Bp Fell's speech at his triennial visitation in the year 1685," quoted in Grant Tapsell, "Introduction" in *The Later Stuart Church,* 4.

It must also be relevant in this context that, when parishes erected temporary structures after the Fire to act as their places of worship before the completion of their new parish churches, they called them "tabernacles."[75] This was the name given to the temporary tent and enclosure in which the Israelites kept the Ark of the Covenant, all the while they were in the wilderness, and which acted as the centre of their worship until Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem.[76] Just as for Israel the Tabernacle was a physical reminder that they had not yet reached the Promised Land where God would dwell with them in his permanent Temple, so the tabernacles in London reminded parishioners of their own future places of worship. The choice of word was a conscious act of connecting English Christians with Biblical Israel and reminding them of the sanctity of worship and of the physical place of worship.

Drawing on these sources as background material, we now turn our attention to the most theologically rich part of the iconographical scheme of the Wrenian reredos.

THE REREDOS AS THE OLD COVENANT HOLY OF HOLIES

"R.T.," the anonymous author of the 1638 *De Templis*, provides us with a good starting point in stating his view that:

> Of all parts of the Chancell, that where the Communion Table stands, has ever beene accounted most sacred; In adorning that, no cost ought to be thought too much. There we behold the mystery of our Redemption lively expressed. Nor can we make publique profession of our Christian faith, hope, and love, any way so wel, as being studious in adorning the sacred Altars, did we verily believe Christ Jesus … to be truly present with us, so oft as the blessed Sacrament is celebrated.[77]

In other words, the whole of the sanctuary was expected to reflect the significance of the liturgy and actions which were to be carried out there by clergy and laity. This was to be done both in the manner in which it was decorated and as a statement of Anglican eucharistic theology. As we will see as we unfold these thoughts, the governing theme is one of covenantal theology, drawing together symbols of the Old Covenant (represented by the Mosaic Law, the Ark of the Covenant, and Temple sacrifice) and the New Covenant (the fulfilment of the Old Covenant by Christ's death on the cross). In looking at this, having so far focussed primarily on the reredos,

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[75] Discussed in Jeffrey, *City Churches*, 45-46.

[76] Exodus 25:8-9; 26; 36:8-38.

[77] R.T., *De Templis, a Treatise of Temples Wherein Is Discovered the Ancient Manner of Building, Consecrating, and Adorning of Churches* (London: 1638), 199-200.

we now need to broaden our consideration to the sanctuary as an ensemble, comprising the step (or steps), the communion rail, the table, and the reredos set behind.

The Old Covenant and the Temple of Solomon

First, we need to describe those features of Solomon's Temple which bear upon the ornamentation of the reredoses in the Wren churches. The Biblical description of the Temple is set out in 1 Kings 6 and 2 Chronicles 4 and we shall use the former to illustrate the parallels with the new City churches. Here we read that Solomon lined the walls and ceiling of his Temple with cedar-wood.[78] The cedar walls inside were carved with gourds, open flowers, cherubim, and palm trees, and the entire interior was overlaid with beaten gold.[79] The rear part of the Temple was partitioned off to form the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was to be kept.[80]

The Ark itself was a gold-covered, acacia box in which were kept the stone Tablets of the Law given to Moses at Sinai; on the lid of the box were two gilded cherubim, one at either end facing inwards.[81] The Ark was made while the Israelites were still in the Sinai desert, and Exodus 25 describes how God dictated its specifications directly and in detail to Moses.[82] It was held to be the single most sacred object in the Jewish world. To touch it invited death and it had to be kept in a specially made tent – the "Tabernacle."[83] The special sanctity of the Ark resulted from God's declaration to Moses that he would meet with him and give his commandments for the Israelites from above the Ark, and he would "sanctify the whole of the Tabernacle with His Glory," for which reason the Tabernacle was also called the "Tent of Meeting."[84] His Glory would be on the "Mercy Seat," the space between the two cherubim on the lid of the Ark.

Several centuries later, 1 Kings 8 recounts how, after Solomon had completed the Temple to house the Ark, and the Temple was dedicated, the Ark was carried in to the innermost part of the Temple complex, the Holy of Holies, and how the Glory of the LORD – the *Shechinah* – filled it.[85]

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[78] 1 Kings 6:8.

[79] 1 Kings 6:18, 29, 32, 35.

[80] 1 Kings 6:16, 1 Kings 8.

[81] Exodus 25:8-22.

[82] R.T., *De Templis*, 177-178, and others picked up on the relevance of this point. "Some men there are who envy the Ornaments of the Church, and grudg at any cost bestowed upon it, yet wee read in holy Scriptures, that God himselfe dictated to *Moyses* the ornaments of the Tabernacle, &c."

[83] 2 Samuel 6:3-7.

[84] Exodus 25:22, 29:43.

[85] 1 Kings 8.

The Reredos as the Holy of Holies

Gradually, we shall see how these Temple references are incorporated into the Wrenian reredos, and unpack their significance. Thirty-six of the new reredoses presented themselves as an evocation of the Holy of Holies, setting out the key elements in a carefully worked-out iconographic scheme. They are not an attempt at a literal recreation of the Holy of Holies, such as that envisaged earlier in the century by the Jesuit priest-architect Juan Battista Villalpando (Fig. 5.8).[86] Rather, they adopt the frontispiece convention described in Chapter 4, and apply to it those particular features which make the desired Solomonic references. The intention is one of evocation rather than illustration. In brief, these elements are: the choice of material used, the physical arrangement of the Decalogue boards, the placement of cherubim around them, positioning a "Glory" above the Decalogue and cherubim, and, finally, the ornamental use of fruit, foliage, and palms around the rest of the structure. This is represented in schematic form in Fig. 5.9.

Although the architectural shape of the reredoses varies among a small number of predominant designs, it is the consistency of the decoration of them which carries the Solomonic message. It would be appealing to be able to argue that the architectural form itself was intended to represent the fabric of the Temple, but no suggestions in any contemporary accounts suggest that this was the case. If this had been so, it might have been expected that there would have been greater stylistic similarity between them, possibly even with one single design, and on balance, the frontispiece convention is much to be preferred as an explanation of the reredos' architectural style and form.

Materials

One of the key differences between the Wrenian reredoses and the large majority of their Parisian cousins was in the change of material from stone to wood, most of the Parisian altar-pieces being built of polychrome marbles and different types of stone. All Hallows-the-Great was the one notable exception. The choice of material was not simply a matter of cost. Laudian altars and reredoses made of stone – such as at the chapel of Charterhouse – had been targeted for destruction during the early 1640s, as indicating a higher degree of popery than those made of wood.[87]

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[86] Juan Battista Villalpando and Hieronymo Prado, *In Ezechielem Explanationes et Apparatus Vrbis Templi Hierosolymitani* (Rome 1596-1604).

[87] Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm*, 181, relates the destruction of the stone altar at Worcester Cathedral. Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 116-117, 137-138, 158, 179 et al, give examples of controversies about stone altars.

The choice of wood for the reredos is therefore consistent with the avoidance of materials associated with popery – whether French or Laudian – and of seeking to establish a counter-association with Solomon's Temple. It is, in a sense, the achievement of comeliness by exclusion – the assertion of a particular point of virtue and identity by the choice of materials opposed to those associated with popery. Perhaps surprisingly, however, there was only one parish in which cedar-wood is recorded as having been considered rather than the usual oak.[88] In Chapter 1 we saw how Benjamin Woodroffe, rector of St. Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange proposed that the reredos and pulpit be made in cedar-wood.[89] The associations were clear in Woodroffe's mind, just as it was in Bishop John Williams' fitting out of the chapel of Lincoln College, Oxford, in 1629-31.[90] Cost considerations made cedar more expensive than oak, but it is unexpected that this is the only example where its use was even considered.

The reredoses are also the principal feature in the churches to which gilding was applied. By contrast, none of the pulpits appears to have had any gilded elements, and this absence seems to point us back once more to the rules of comeliness and decency. Gilding seems to have been limited mostly to the representational elements of the reredos: Glories, cherub-heads, pelicans and the frames of the text boards, suggesting a conscious choice to limit the use of gilding to those aspects specifically identified with the Godhead or which correspond to the golden Ark of the Covenant. It seems to have gone without saying that the pulpit was not to be gilded, not even its cherub-heads. The message implied is that, although the pulpit must reflect the high worth of preaching in its prominence, elaboration, scale, and the quality of its materials, it must nevertheless defer to the holiness of God and his Temple as depicted in the reredos.

The Ark of the Covenant

The Ark of the Covenant itself is represented in the centre of the reredos, primarily in the form of its key content – the Tablets of the Law – the Decalogue boards. Possibly where the frames of these boards were gilded, which seems mostly to have been the case, this could be read as representing the gold-covered box which contained the Tablets.

Likewise, just as the Ark had two golden cherubim set upon its lid facing inward towards each other, so gilded cherubim are also placed above and to the sides of the Decalogue. In a few cases – St. Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange, St. Clement Eastcheap St. George Botolph Lane, St.

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[88] Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum*, vol. 3, 317, records that the pre-Civil War reredos at St. Katherine Cree – famous as the location of Laud's elaborate consecration service – was made of cedar-wood and was destroyed by Parliamentary iconoclasts. See also Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 142-143.

[89] LMA/P69/BAT1/B/001/MS04384/003, fol. 55.

[90] Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 186.

Margaret Lothbury, St. Michael Cornhill, and St. Olave Jewry – these faced inwards (as per Exodus 25:20) towards a plaque or cartouche which was painted with **יהוה**, the Hebrew letters for YHWH, the name of God, referred to as the *Tetragrammaton* in an arrangement known as a "Glory." Those of St. Margaret Lothbury and St. Olave Jewry (now also at Lothbury) survive sufficiently unaltered to give a good impression of this conscious evocation of the form of the Ark and its lid (Fig. 4.18).[91] Other examples additionally had "DEUS" and "ΘΗΟΣ"painted on them.[92]

The two-storey reredoses presented a greater opportunity for artistry and scale and, consistent with the Parisian use, they place their Glories in the upper storey. Of these, the Glory at St. Magnus-the-Martyr is the grandest one to survive, depicting some very jolly cherubim nestling in a crescent-shaped cloud, below a golden sunburst, with the dove of the Holy Spirit at its centre (Fig. 5.10). George Hickes preached a sermon in 1682 entitled *The Moral Shechinah*, in which he began by describing the occasions on which Scripture describes these episodes of the appearance of God's Glory:

> I must desire you to take notice, that the first Notion of Gods Glory in the Scripture is a Physical Notion for the visible appearance of God, or the visible manifestation of himself by Fire, Light, Clouds, Brightness, and other Meteorous Symbols of his presence.[93]

The St. Magnus Glory manages to convey all these various elements in one depiction. Hickes proceeds to work through many of the Old Testament references to God's Glory before concluding the first half of his sermon, "By this time you may perceive, that the Glory of God … the *Shechinah*, … comes to signifie his Presence."[94]

The inclusion of a Glory in the reredos therefore serves a double purpose. It is a reminder to the congregation of the Glory of God in the Israelite Tabernacle and the Jerusalem Temple, in a form which emphasises his holiness and unapproachability. At St. Magnus and elsewhere, God is represented as a brilliant light which has to be shielded by cloud in order to protect those who come before him. It is also the assertion of his presence with them themselves in their own parish church, as reflected in Archbishop Laud's description of the altar as "the greatest place of God's Residence upon Earth."[95] Moreover, the Glory achieves this in an

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[91] Hatton, 1, 324; Exodus 25:17-22.

[92] Hatton, 1, 125, 128, 214, for examples at St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, St. Anne & St. Agnes, and St. Dunstan-in-the-East.

[93] George Hickes, *The Moral Shechinah, or, A discourse of Gods glory in a sermon preached at the last Yorkshire-feast in Bow-church* (London: 1682), 2-3.

[94] Ibid., 9.

[95] William Laud, *The History of the Troubles and Tryal of the Most Reverend Father in God and Blessed Martyr, William Laud, Lord Arch-Bishop of Canterbury* (London: 1694 edition), 361.

acceptably Protestant form – as Hamling noted in the engraved plates in the Bishops' Bible.[96] At the beginning of the Civil War, the Parliamentary Ordinances against superstition and idolatry had singled out "scandalous Pictures of any One or more of the Persons of the Trinity, and all Images of the Virgin Mary" for removal from the very beginning of the campaign of iconoclasm in 1641, eventually requiring them (in 1643) to be defaced after removal to prevent any prospect of them being kept for later re-use.[97] Six decades later, if Hatton is to be taken as representative of the wider population in the early eighteenth century, this prohibition continued to have currency. In his description of the reredos at St. Olave Hart Street – one of the churches not burned in the Fire but fitted with a new Wrenian reredos – he notes that, "Within an arched Space, under the Pediment, is the Effigies of an old Man (I think very improperly placed here, in the room of a Glory) betn 2 Cherubims."[98] Hatton tends not to provide personal religious commentary of this sort, so he must have been particularly disturbed or offended by the painting to make this comment.

Cherubim

The liturgical historian Horton Davies notes that cherubim were a particular feature of Laudian ornamentation.[99] The ceiling of the chapel at Peterhouse, Cambridge – created by arch-Laudians Matthew Wren and John Cosin in the 1630s – for example, had a winged cherub set in each of its panels, each one surrounded by a Glory; William Dowsing ordered them all removed in his visitation in 1643.[100] Certainly in the new City churches, there seems to have been general willingness to accommodate many cherubim, not only on the reredos but also on the pulpit, sounding board, font, and font cover, as well as those incorporated in the stonework and plaster of the ceilings. Davies sees the use of cherubim as enabling "sensitive Anglicans to visualise the heavenly context in which the liturgy is celebrated."[101] This is especially so in the prayer book declaration by the minister during the communion service:

> Therefore with Angells and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnifie thy glorious Name, evermore prayseing thee, and sayeing, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high.[102]

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[96] Hamling, *Godly Household*, 186-188.

[97] Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm*, 257-259.

[98] Hatton, *New View*, vol. 2 (hereafter "Hatton, 2"), 442.

[99] Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Cranmer to Baxter and Fox, 1534-1690,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 38.

[100] Cooper, *Dowsing*, 155-156.

[101] Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 38.

[102] *Book of Common Prayer*, "The Communion."

Davies points out that the words in the prayer book are taken from Isaiah 6, which describes Isaiah's vision of God in his Temple, surrounded by cherubim.[103] So we have, here, a perfect combination of heavenly vision, Biblical citation, Anglican liturgy, and carefully calibrated artistic representation in wood and paint. For some, this was much more than a spiritual reminder of angelic presence in the ancient Tabernacle and Temple. Joseph Mede had asserted against his nay-sayers during the Laudian period:

> You will say; Such a presence of Angels perhaps there was in that Temple under the Law; but there is no such thing in the Gospell? No? why? Are the Memorials of Gods Covenant, his *Insignia* in the Gospell, lesse worthy of their attendance, than those of the Law. ... But heare thou me, and know, that Angels are every where, *and that, chiefly in the house of God, they attend upon their King, where all is filled with incorporeall Powers.*[104]

> For this cause all the curtaines of the Tabernacle were filled with the pictures of Cherubins, and the wals of Solomons Temple within with carved Cherubins; the Ark of the Testimony overspread and covered with two mighty Cherubins, having their faces looking towards it and the Mercy-seat with their wings stretched forth on high, called *The Cherubins of glory,* that is, *of the divine Presence:* all to signifie, that where Gods sacred Memoriall is, the ensigne of his Covenant and commerce with men; there the blessed Angels out of duty give their attendance.[105]

As the Tabernacle and the Temple of Jerusalem were, so must the parish church be, though perhaps with one particular difference. Cherubim are first mentioned in Genesis 3:24, where they stand as fearsome guards with flaming swords to guard the way back to the Tree of Life, after Adam and Eve are expelled from Eden. The fifteen-foot high golden cherubim in Solomon's Temple perform the same fierce role, as do those in Ezekiel's vision (see Ezekiel 10 for example), and in Revelation 7-11, where they are instruments of God's judgement. The chubby-faced boy-cherubs of the City churches might struggle to live up to those expectations, and owe more to the Renaissance and baroque adoption of the classical putto than to any Biblical description.

Fruit, foliage and palm trees

The final component in this schematic of the Holy of Holies is the use of festoons and drops of fruit, foliage, flowers and palms to decorate other parts of the surface of the reredos, which recalls the description in 1 Kings 6:29-35. These were universal across the churches (for example, at All Hallows Bread Street; Fig. 5.11). It might be argued against this connection that the same could be said of many an overmantel in a domestic setting, but surely here it is a question of the context determining the meaning, especially given the cumulative evidence of the other motifs

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[103] Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 38.

[104] Mede, *The Reverence of God's Holy House*, (London: 1638), 26. Emphasis added.

[105] Mede, *Churches*, 24-25.

discussed here. While there are arrangements of fruit, flowers and foliage, there are no game birds, lobsters, or violins present – such as one might find on a domestic overmantel – and only Grinling Gibbons had sufficient confidence in his own reputation to include the otherwise un-Biblical chains of seashells in his compositions for St. James Piccadilly and St. Mary Abchurch (Fig. 5.12).

Lastly, normally set within framed panels or in the frieze of the cornice, arrangements of palm fronds appear in several reredoses – such as at St. Clement Eastcheap – recalling the carved palm trees set into the interior walls of Solomon's Temple, and which recur in Ezekiel's vision of the Temple (Fig. 4.20).[106] The engraving in Villalpando's commentary on Ezekiel, referred to earlier, depicts the interior of the Holy of Holies with floor-to-ceiling palm trees, complete with their trunks (Fig. 5.8). The parishes of late seventeenth-century London were content, once more, with an evocation of palms rather than full-scale representation.[107]

Conclusion

The literary sources connecting chancel decoration, such as the reredos, with the Temple of Solomon tend to come from pre-War Laudians like R.T., or from Restoration ceremonialists like George Hickes. The fact that the same references can be found on reredoses in churches where ex-Presbyterians like John Meriton at St. Michael Cornhill and William Durham at St. Mildred Bread Street were rector suggests that the meaning of those references held value more widely than just among ceremonialists, and that they had been, to some degree, detoxified of their earlier popish associations.[108] In all these approaches to evoking the Ark of the Covenant and Solomon's Temple, care was taken to avoid reproducing unacceptable elements of Catholic style, and to focus on those features which spoke directly of the Old Covenant sacrifices of the Holy of Holies. The Old Covenant is inextricably theologically linked to the New Covenant, to which we now turn.

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[106] Ezekiel 40:16, 37; 41:18-20, 25

[107] Occasionally, Wren or his craftsmen incorporated these same elements in the fabric of the churches: the coffered dome at St. Stephen Walbrook, for example, is decorated with palms and open flowers.

[108] Ian L. O'Neill, "John Meriton," *ODNB*, (online edn., accessed 7 June 2018); C.D. Gilbert, "William Durham," *ODNB*, (online edn., accessed 7 June 2018). Meriton attended almost all vestry meetings, suggesting that he brought some influence to bear on the furnishings. The St. Mildred minutes are more sparse and Durham's influence is difficult to discern.

THE NEW COVENANT

A minority of the City church reredoses incorporate eucharistic iconography alongside Solomonic iconography. These elements are symbols which represent the bread and the wine of the Last Supper, described in the Gospel narratives.[109] In his sermon at the consecration of St. Peter Cornhill, William Beveridge set out his view of the Lord's Supper as one in which both the liturgy and the architecture of the church building were intended to take worshippers on a journey of edification through repentance, prayer, and listening to teaching, all of which led up to the Lord's Supper itself:

> And now we may be well supposed to be so far edified, as to be raised up to the highest pitch of Devotion that we can arrive at in this world, and so are fit to be admitted to the highest Ordinance of the Church, the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. … First, That the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, being the highest Mystery in all our Religion, as representing the death of the Son of God to us, hence that place where this Sacrament is Administred, was always made and reputed the highest place in the Church.[110]

How is this belief reflected in the Wren churches?

The reredoses at All Hallows Lombard Street and the destroyed reredos of Christ Church Newgate are representative of the genre, though very different in style. At All Hallows, interwoven strands of vines, with grapes, and ears of wheat seem to grow in a wave pattern on three sides of the engaged columns on the reredos, carved in relief into the surface of the columns (Fig. 5.13). These are flanked by more deeply cut drops of fruit and foliage, including more ears of wheat and bunches of grapes, in formations which are presumably pinned or glued to the surface of the area between the columns and the text boards. Although the reredos of Christ Church Newgate was lost in the Second World War, late photographs show the panels below the text boards of the Lord's Prayer and Creed decorated with the same eucharistic symbols arranged on a suspended and draped cloth (Fig. 5.14). These symbols therefore provide an appropriate backdrop for the liturgy of the Lord's Supper.

John Spurr discusses some of the "constructive ambiguities" of Anglican eucharistic theology in this period in *The Restoration Church*.[111] Devotional writers focused their attention on communion as an occasion for proper preparation, sincere repentance, and faithful reception of absolution but, says Spurr:

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[109] Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-23.

[110] Beveridge, *Excellency*, 25-26.

[111] Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 294-295, 344-346.

> After explaining that the sacraments were signs, seals, pledges and means of grace, Restoration Anglicans shied away from defining how they operated, or even gloried in their mystery.[112]

We see this reflected in the simplicity of the iconography of the Wrenian reredos and communion table. The references to the Last Supper and to the elements of bread and wine are clear, but there is nothing in them to give any inference as to any particular eucharistic doctrine. The principal fear here, of course, was to avoid suggestions of popish priestly miracles, transubstantiation – the Catholic doctrine of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ – or of any suggestion of forgiveness being dependent upon receiving the elements. In this light, several features which are commonplace around the medieval altar or a contemporary Parisian altar-piece are notable for their absence. Even images as simple as bread and wine are avoided, probably out of concern that this might appear to be some sort of reservation of the consecrated elements, and the reredoses only dare to display wheat and grapes.

More revealing of the legacy of the 1640s than any of these, although communion is a remembrance of Christ's death on the cross, none of the reredoses has any form of representation of the crucifixion.[113] Nor do any of the surviving inventories of parish plate – which record in detail the weight, size, and provenance of communion cups, salvers, and flaggons – mention a cross or crucifix for the communion table, not even at All Hallows-the-Great. Putting the central event of the Christian faith into imagery had been one of the greatest causes of offence to the puritan mind of the previous generation, and crosses and crucifixes had been an early priority for destruction by Parliamentary orders, as mandated in the first of the iconoclastic ordinances of the 1640s.[114] London had seen a concerted campaign to remove crosses from all public places and the demolition of the Cheapside Cross in 1643 was made into a public spectacle, commemorated in print and engraving.[115] The opposition to crosses had a lasting impact. Even outside the new churches, none has a cross at the apex of the roof, and all the steeples are topped by a weather-vane rather than a cross.

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[112] Ibid., 344.

[113] Pevsner, *City Churches*, 98. The rood composition and panels either side of the Glory which are now on the reredos at St. Magnus-the-Martyr were added by Martin Travers in the 1920s.

[114] "Order of the H.C. to prevent Superstition and Innovations in the Church," "House of Lords Journal Volume 4: 8 September 1641," in Journal of the House of Lords: Volume 4, 1629-42, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1767-1830), 390-392. *British History Online*, accessed July 23, 2018, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/lords-jrnl/vol4/pp390-392.

[115] Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm*, 159-161; Vicars, *True Information*, 17; Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 29-30, suggests that the reason that Charles II declined to buy Grinling Gibbons' carving of the crucifixion when shown it by John Evelyn in 1671 may well have been that the theme was too dangerously suggestive of popery.

Communion tables

Against the richness and iconographical sophistication of the reredos, most of the Wrenian communion tables are plain by comparison. Compared with their nineteenth-century successors they are also small, being large enough to place the essentials for communion – one or more flagons, chalices, and pattens. These plain communion tables were in the tradition of those from the late sixteenth century onwards, that is to say, being very clearly tables (as at St. Martin Ludgate; Fig. 5.15) and not fixed and solid stone altars of the type visible in the Parisian designs. In theory, they are movable, though as we have already seen from the example of St. Magnus-the-Martyr, the requirement in Canon 82 that tables should be placed in the body of the chancel or nave for communion was all but dead.[116] Certainly, once a communion table was set behind rails, there was little prospect of it being moved at all.

These tables mostly have simple bobbin-turned or spiral legs, but with minimal other decorative detail. Given that Canon 82 required communion tables to be covered with a linen cloth during communion services, and with a "carpet of silk or other decent stuff" during other services, arguably there was less need for decoration.[117] By way of example, Edward Pearce's design for a reredos for St. Michael Paternoster Royal shows a full-length table covering typical of the period (Fig. 5.7).[118]

As well as the stone and marble table at All Hallows-the-Great, two churches had wooden-framed communion tables with marble slabs for a top: St. Antholin (c.1684) and St. Mary Aldermary (c.1700), the latter of which survives, though probably lengthened at a later date.[119] The table at Aldermary was given by a Mr Edward Watts and cost £30; any benefactor's choice of gift to a church reflects his or her personal religious priorities, and the choice not only of a communion table but also one with a marble top suggests a personal high regard for the sacrament.[120] Again, the presence of a cloth covering during services would have shielded the marble top from any parishioners who might have taken offence at it.

A few communion tables were more elaborately carved and decorated. The table at St. Clement Eastcheap still survives (c.1691; Fig. 5.16) and is supported by cherubs; it probably does

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[116] Bray, *Canons*, 377.

[117] Ibid.

[118] This might explain why Hatton sometimes fails to mention some of the more decorated tables, such as the highly ornamented table at St. Stephen Coleman Street, which had an eagle at each corner and a seated cherub with an open Bible or prayer book in the centre (R.C.H.M.E., *City of London*, Plate 43). Possibly on occasion he didn't look underneath the velvet cover. This is also a problem with many early photographs, which tend to show them dressed in floor-length covers.

[119] Hatton, 1, 133; LMA/P69/JNB/B/006/MS00577/002, fols. 30-38; Hatton, 2, 365; Pevsner, *City Churches*, 107-108.

[120] Pevsner, *City Churches*, 107-108; Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum*, vol. 2, 332.

merit Summerson's description of "gross aldermanish vernacular."[121] Others at St. Dunstan-in-the-East (c.1671), St. Lawrence Jewry (c.1676), and St. Stephen Coleman Street (c.1677) – all of which were lost in 1940-41 – had angels, cherubs and eagles holding up the table top, respectively.[122] The communion table at St. Andrew Holborn (1686) was wooden and seemingly without carved work but was heavily gilded with "90 ft. of flatt gilding," at a cost of £18.[123]

The picture of generally quite simple communion tables is also reflected in the choice of terminology in vestry minutes and churchwardens' accounts (see Appendix G). This can at best only be an indicative survey rather than a definitive analysis, given the partial survival of parish records. However, the trend seems sufficiently clear to be helpful. All twenty-three of the parishes which mention them – making allowances for variations in spelling – refer to "tables" or "communion tables;" of these, four also refer to "altars" elsewhere in their records. Although Laudians of the previous generation had been at pains to assert that the terms "table" and "altar" had been neutral and interchangeable since primitive times (and even Matthew Wren used "Communion Table" in his 1662 *Visitation Articles*), these figures suggest that the term "altar" was still a highly-charged term which was best avoided, at least in the minds of laity.[124] Three parish clerks also seem to have gone to some lengths to avoid the term "altar-piece" when referring to the reredos, producing the rather mangled phrases "the piece over the Communion Table" (St. Lawrence Jewry), "the Joyners Works intended to be at the East End of the Chauncell" (St. Michael Cornhill), and the "worke Round the Communion Table" (St. Peter Cornhill).[125] In one other example of attitudes to the sanctity of furnishings, the vestry of St. Clement Eastcheap ordered a new communion table to be made in 1691 and the old one to be moved into the vestry-room, suggesting that they did not regard the table as being intrinsically holy.[126]

TYING TOGETHER THE OLD COVENANT & NEW COVENANT

In some parish churches, the reredos contained both Temple and eucharistic iconography, a combination which serves to connect the messages of the two covenants closely together.

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[121] LMA/P69/CLE/B/001/MS00978/001, n.p., 24 November 1691. See Chapter 2 for Summerson's views on the City churches' woodwork.

[122] These dates are approximate, reflecting the main period of furnishing activity in the parish records or the completion of the church. Hatton, 1, 214, 306; R.C.H.M.E., *City of London*, Plate 43.

[123] LMA/P82/AND/B/001/MS04251/001, fol. 12.

[124] Sparrow, *Rationale*, 327-328; Matthew Wren, *Visitation Articles of 1662*, 4-7.

[125] LMA/P69/LAW1/B/001/MS02590/002, fols. 102-103; LMA/P69/MIC2/B/001/MS04072/001/002, fol. 274r.; LMA/P69/PET1/B/001/MS04165/001, fol. 513.

[126] LMA/P69/CLE/B/001/MS00978/001, n.p., 24 November 1691.

Accustomed to considering religious iconography with a typological mindset, members of the congregation would readily have drawn the connection between the two, and would have read them as expressive of the importance of the Lord's Supper. In one composition, we see both the Old Covenant Mercy Seat and the New. John Spurr has discussed the manner in which all clergy – of whatever churchmanship – were at pains in this period to encourage their congregations to participate in communion frequently and "worthily."[127] Beveridge gave part of his inaugural sermon at the reopening of St. Peter Cornhill to this theme, encouraging weekly communion "that [parishioners] might be edified and confirmed in the Faith," and John Tillotson urged the same in his 1683 *A Persuasive to a Frequent Communion*.[128] The anonymous *A Week's Preparation Towards a Worthy Receiving of the Lord's Supper*, first published in 1679, was another which emphasised the importance of spiritual preparation and self-examination before receiving communion.[129] The German-born pietist and London cleric, Anthony Horneck, wrote in similar vein in his own devotional work on the eucharist, *The Fire of the Altar*:

> Blessed news! O King of Kings thou cryest, *It is fulfilled;* The work is done, the vast work of redemption; Now thy Fathers anger is broke, now the Floodgates of indignation are shut; Now Heaven stands open; Now thy Fathers bosom is held out to all that thirst after thee.[130]

The spirit of these covenantal connections is captured in a 1680 frontispiece to the Bible (Fig. 5.17), by an unnamed engraver whose depiction of the Holy of Holies is derived closely from the engraving in Villapando's 1604 *In Ezechielem Explanationes* (Fig. 5.8). The frontispiece shows the curtain of the Temple in the foreground being torn by two angels to reveal the Holy of Holies behind, with the Ark and its attendant cherubim. As well as the torn curtain, the engraver has breached a hole through the wall, through which we see the three crosses of Calvary in the background. The flying cherubs witness to these two scenes: the cherub upper-left bears a scroll with Christ's words Τετέλεσται ("It is finished," John 19:30) and the one on the right has a scroll with the words ἐσχίσθη δὲ τὸ καταπέτασμα ("The Temple curtain was torn," Luke 23:45). These mark the moment at which the Old Covenant was fulfilled by the establishment of the New. God's demand for atoning sacrifice has been perfectly fulfilled in Christ's death, and the ceremonial rites of the Jewish Temple therefore no longer have any meaning. We see the same message in the churches with the pairing of the reredos (representative of the Temple of Solomon and the Old Covenant) with the communion table (representative of the Last Supper,

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[127] Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 341-361.

[128] Beveridge, *Excellency*, 27; John Tillotson, *A Persuasive to a Frequent Communion*, (London: 1684).

[129] Anon., *A Weeks preparation towards a worthy receiving of the Lords Supper after the warning in the church for the celebration of the Holy Communion* (London: 1679).

[130] Anthony Horneck, *The fire of the altar, or, Certain directions how to raise the soul into holy flames before, at, and after receiving the blessed sacrament of the Lords Supper* (London: 1683), 49.

the Crucifixion and the New Covenant).

Hatton picks up this point and records curtains painted on east walls at three churches: St. Benet Gracechurch Street (which was "beautified" in 1693); and also at St. Bride and St. Michael Bassishaw – both of whose dates are unclear and not necessarily part of the original decorative scheme.[131] The painting at St. Bride, sketchily indicated in Fig. 5.18, was particularly ambitious, including curtains, architectural features, Moses and Aaron, and heavenly beings.

> The upper Part [i.e. above the reredos] is painted, and consists of 6 Columns (3 on each side of a handsome arched 5-Light-Window, adorned with a neat Scarlet-silk Curtain, edged with Gold Fringe) with their Architrave, Friese, and Cornish finely done (white and vein'd) in strong Perspective. In the Front of which are the Pourtraictures of Moses, with the Two Tables in his Hands, and Aaron in his Priest's Habit; over the Window 'tis painted Nebulous, and above the Clouds appears (from within a large Crimson Velvet Festoon painted Curtain) a Celestial Choir, or a Representation of the Church Triumphant, in the Vision and Presence of a Glory in the shape of a Dove, all finely painted, the Enrichments are gilt with Gold.[132]

The artist Glyn Jones captured the spirit of this creation in his 1957 trompe l'oeil behind the reredos in Godfrey Allen's reconstruction of the church after 1955 (Fig. 5.19).[133] Painted curtains such as these became a common decoration for the east wall of churches in the eighteenth century.[134]

Do the arrangement of reredos and communion table or the 1680 frontispiece tell us anything specific about Restoration Anglican covenant theology? Unfortunately not. They certainly instruct the viewer to read them as representative of the Old and New Covenants, but they say nothing more on what one should believe those covenants, or their inter-relationship, to be. As with Spurr's and Quantin's observation on Anglican eucharistic theology in this period, they are constructively ambiguous. Stephen Hampton assesses one of the fiercest debates on covenant theology after the Restoration – between the Arminian George Bull and the Reformed Thomas Barlow and Thomas Tully – all of whom could have used the reredos-table composition as a visual image for their preaching if they had so chosen.[135]

Of itself, "contructive ambiguity" is not necessarily a poor conclusion if we are looking for indications in wood and paint of ecclesial identity in this period. In contrast, a Laudian altar

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[131] LMA/P69/BEN2/B/001/MS04214/001, fol. 120; Hatton, 1, 172-173; vol. 2, 416.

[132] Hatton, 1, 172-173.

[133] Pevsner, *City Churches*, 76-77.

[134] Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum*, passim.

[135] Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 55-60, 92-117.

of the 1630s, dressed with cross and candles, was far from ambiguous, and spoke of a degree of sacramentalism which was still dangerous to express before the turn of the next century. The City clergy comprised men from across the theological spectrum: High Churchmen *avant la lettre* like William Cave, moderate Calvinists like William Beveridge, and Latitudinarians like Edward Stillingfleet and John Tillotson. In all probability, as with the performances acted out in front of Charles II's coronation arches, the full meaning of the Wrenian sanctuary can only be understood in combination with the liturgy carried out there, the attitude of the celebrant, and the mostly unrecorded references made to it in sermons.[136] The reredos therefore acted as a backdrop to liturgy and preaching, the intention and message of which might vary from one clergyman to another. It becomes an embodiment in wood of "that impartiality and indifferency to truth which this happy Church of England hath maintained, not turning the scale either this way or that way, for Luther or Calvin's sake, or whomsoever else, it hath given us the advantage to be most comely in Discipline [and] most retentive of good antiquity."[137]

Lastly, the *Canons Ecclesiastical* themselves appear to envisage the Decalogue and communion table being jointly treated as part of a single covenantal theme. The provisions which relate to parish church fabric and furnishings appear in the chapter, "Things Appertaining to Churches." They are arranged by subject, and occasionally group different but related items together. Thus Canon 80 requires every church to have a Bible and a Prayer Book in a single Canon.[138] Although the provision of a reredos is not a canonical requirement, it must nevertheless be more than coincidence that Canon 82 (entitled "A decent Communion-table in every church") sets out *in a single requirement* that the Decalogue be set on the east wall and that the communion table be set beneath it when not in use.[139] Given that Canon 82 as originally conceived envisaged the table being moved into the chancel or nave for communion services, the only logical explanation for specifying in the same Canon that the table and Decalogue be set in the same location at other times is that they were seen as having related significance. They provided a permanent visual reminder at the front of the church of the relationship between the Old Covenant and the New.

So far, this chapter has looked at those aspects of the reredos which spoke of Anglican perceptions of its relationship to Biblical Israel and the Early Church, and which set out certain

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[136] The vestrymen of St. Clement Eastcheap commissioned a new communion table in 1691, and moved the old one into the vestry, suggesting that they, at least, did not regard the table as a think intrinsically holy in itself. LMA/P69/CLE/B/001/MS00978/001 n.p., 24 November 1691.

[137] John Hacket, *A Century of Sermons* (London: 1675), 947. "Indifferency" has here the sense of being unpartisan or unprejudiced; "indifferency, n.." *OED* (online ed., accessed 20 June 2018): I.1, "Absence of bias, prejudice, or favour for one side rather than another; impartiality, equity, fairness."

[138] Bray, *Canons*, 375.

[139] Ibid., 377.

theological statements. The following sections turn to the ways in which the reredos spoke of the Royal Supremacy.

MOSES AND AARON

In his 1708 *New View*, Edward Hatton records sixteen of the new churches as having paintings of Moses and Aaron set in their reredos.[140] Seven of the surviving medieval churches also had such paintings.[141] Their inclusion turns the generally four-bay reredos – if we consider the two Decalogue boards as separate bays – into a six-bay design, with Moses and Aaron placed in the second and fifth bays respectively, flanking the Ten Commandments and with the Lord's Prayer and Creed in the outermost bays (see for example, St. Stephen Walbrook, Fig. 2.12).

Appearance

The paintings are mostly competently executed, but not high art. Those by Robert Streater, the King's Sergeant Painter, are at the better end of the quality spectrum (as at St. Benet Fink, now at Emanuel School, Wimbledon; Fig. 5.20). The size and shape of the panels inevitably limits the artist in his ability to create imaginative poses, and both pose and expression are stiff and formulaic, with none of the movement and emotion one would expect of a Catholic altar-piece. This is, of course, deliberate. In his 1678 anti-Catholic work *Of Idolatry*, the future Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Tenison, addressed this point and argued that the less realistic a painting was, the less likely it was to be made an object of worship:

> There is not so great danger in the Images of things without life, especially if they be flat Pictures, not Protuberant Statues, nor Pictures which the Artist hath expressed with roundness. The worse and the more flat the work is, the less danger there is of its abuse. Titian hath painted the Virgin and the Child Jesus so very roundly, that (as Sir Henry Wotton a very good judge both of pictures and dispositions of men, saith of it) a man knows not whether to call it a piece of Sculpture or Picture.
>
> In some kind of Pictures, if there be found analogy, and that analogy be discreetly expressed (as by the name *Jehovah*, or according to the Jewish modesty, *Adonai*, incircled with clouds and rays of glorious Light;) I know no sin in the making of it, or contemplating it, in a Metaphorical way.[142]

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[140] Hatton, *New View*, passim. Appendix G.

[141] Hatton, 1, 112, 120, 165, 181, 249; vol. 2, 355, 546.

[142] Thomas Tenison, *Of Idolatry* (London: 1678), 269-271, in which Tenison also objects to the use of a lifelike, sculptural dove to signify the Holy Spirit, a motif which appears in several City churches, especially on font covers, recalling the Gospel accounts of the baptism of Christ, in, for example, Matthew 3:16.

The formulaic appearance of the Moses and Aaron paintings thus gave them some protection on this count and renders them, in modern parlance, more a matter of branding than of aids to devotion. Moses is robed with encircling garments of a classical type, and in some examples gestures to the Ten Commandments to the right, sometimes with a rod in his hand (Exodus 4). Aaron is garbed in his vestments as High Priest following the description given in Exodus 28, including the breastpiece with twelve gems symbolising the twelve tribes of Israel, and wearing a turban; he is mostly depicted carrying a censer. It has to be said that his vestments often have an episcopal appearance: his sleeves could easily be mistaken for a bishop's lawn-sleeves, and in some cases his turban is represented as a mitre, worn at ninety degrees to that of a bishop (as at St. Benet Fink; Fig. 5.20).[143]

The single departure from painted representation – at All Hallows-the-Great, where Moses and Aaron were presented as statues siding either side of the reredos – has already been discussed. Other painted panels were added in later campaigns of decoration at St. Christopher-le-Stocks, St. Mary Somerset, and St. Swithin-London-Stone after the period the subject of this thesis.[144]

This phenomenon was seemingly short-lived. No such paintings appear in the twelve "Fifty Churches," built from 1713 onwards, though they do gradually disperse into the counties, especially those surrounding London, and to corporate towns and cities.[145] The questions therefore arise as to why they were set up at all, and why they appear to be concentrated in such a short period.

The role of typology

First and most obviously, Moses and Aaron are natural companions to the Ten Commandments, and act as a visual reminder of the Biblical authority of the Decalogue and the moral importance of its commandments. They give added comely ornament to the Commandments, and both figures are always slightly turned towards the texts and usually gesture towards them. This gives them a role similar to that of heraldic supporters either side of a coat of arms – they are important but are always subordinate to the text which is between them.

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[143] Sparrow, *Rationale*, 335-336, explicitly justifies wearing the surplice by reference to God's command to Moses to make vestments for Aaron (Exodus 28:2). The title page to *Rationale* itself depicted Moses and Aaron standing either side of the title inscription in the six editions from 1657 to 1684 (though not the first edition, 1655).

[144] Pevsner, *City Churches*, 101, dates the St. Christopher paintings to c.1700, though they are not mentioned in Hatton, 1, 198-199 of 1708; Paterson, *Pietas Londinensis*, 66, mentions "beautification" carried out in 1712, which seems a likely date for these paintings.

[145] The churches built by the Commission established under the New Churches in London and Westminster Act 1710; 9 Anne cap 17; Summerson, *Georgian London*, 57-72. Suffolk has a number of eighteenth-century paintings of Moses and Aaron, such as at Chediston, Little Glemham, and Shotley; Nikolaus Pevsner and James Bettley, *The Buildings of England; Suffolk East* (London: Yale University Press, 2015), 172, 399, 485.

The setting up of Moses and Aaron so prominently and so frequently, in conjunction with the Decalogue, and being set in a structure which references the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Jerusalem, could easily leave the parishes open to criticism that they were propounding a purely Old Covenant theology, in which salvation is earned by obedience to the Law and by works. It might therefore argue against the assertion of this chapter that the arrangement of the sanctuary is a conscious marrying together of the Old and New Covenants.

In her insightful work *Decorating the Godly Household*, Tara Hamling addresses much the same question, but as it arises in the context of domestic decorative schemes after the Reformation and through the first half of the seventeenth century.[146] Hamling has analysed a large number of surviving examples, which do indeed strongly favour Old Testament themes rather than New Testament ones, and which therefore raise the same question as to the meaning and belief being conveyed by the use of Old Testament references in the City churches. Hamling's arguments are persuasive, and she demonstrates the complexity which existed in English Reformed thinking about the acceptability of the use of images. This was dependent upon a combination of function, context, form, subject matter, and any unacceptable historic associations.

At its core, the problem which early modern patrons were seeking to avoid was the association with the widespread devotional use of images of New Testament figures in Catholic practice – seen as idolatrous in Protestant thought. Even in a context which was intended to be didactic, the risk that someone might be led to pray *to* such a painting or figure was sufficiently great that New Testament figures are extremely rare in the period of Hamling's study.[147] They are wholly absent from the City churches.

However, the use of images of Old Testament figures gave rise to much less concern. Historically, these had been much less used as objects of veneration in pre-Reformation times and in the Counter-Reformation Church. Nor nor were they associated with the intercession of the saints. Instead, both in the domestic setting of Hamling's study and in churches also, Protestant thinking accepted the use of Old Testament references for didactic purposes.[148] In particular, Old Testament figures could be used as instances of typology to represent New Testament figures, events, and beliefs.

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[146] Hamling, *Godly Household*, 233-242.

[147] Ibid., 26-39, 43-52.

[148] Ibid., 28, 38, 252.

The origins of typology as a means to interpret the Bible are found in the New Testament itself, in which the gospel writers and St. Paul identify examples of Old Testament events which pre-figure, have parallels in, or are fulfilled by, New Testament events – primarily in relation to Christ. For example, Matthew's account of Jesus' exile in Egypt, the forty days in the wilderness, and giving his law from a mountain are explicitly seen as analogues of ancient Israel's time in Egypt and the desert, and of the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai.[149] Artistically, typology can be found in medieval stained glass – such as in the early thirteenth-century "theological windows" at Canterbury Cathedral – and it continued to flourish among Protestants of all stripes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[150] The relevance of typology for Hamling's study, and for this thesis, is that it enabled Biblically-literate early modern Protestants to use images of Old Testament events (the "type") to represent the corresponding New Testament one (the "anti-type"), without running the risk of idolatry otherwise associated with a New Testament image itself. A particularly common theme was Abraham about to sacrifice his son Isaac.[151] The scene prefigures the sacrifice of Jesus, God's son, on the cross and invites the viewer to contemplate the covenant in which God both requires and provides the sacrifice (the ram caught in the thicket in the Abraham example); it does this in a way which would be at considerably greater risk of idolatry if presented in its New Testament form; Abraham and Isaac become a "type" for the "anti-type" of Christ on the cross.[152] Hamling terms this use of Old Testament references as "types as 'surrogate images'."[153] In the particular context of the crucifixion, the London cleric and future bishop, Simon Patrick judged the risk of idolatry to be especially relevant in relationship to representations of the crucifixion, writing in 1667:

> But though God was willing to teach us by outward and sensible representations, yet he thought it both unsafe, and likewise unfit, and no ways conducing to the spiritual ends he intended in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, that we should have a Picture of Christ, or an Image of him set before our eyes. There is too much of sense in the Tragical and Theatrical representations which are made by some Papists of Christs Sufferings. The outward actions are in danger not only to take place of all spiritual affections, but quite to thrust them out. The eye and ear are so fully possessed, that their objects work of their natural strength, and not by the Souls considering and meditating powers.[154]

A good general example of seventeenth-century typology can be found in the Scottish Episcopalian William Guild's *Moses Unveiled; or, those figures which served unto the pattern and shadow of*

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149 Matthew 2:13-21, 4:1, 5-7.

150 M.A. Michael, *Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral* (London: Scala, 2004), 46-101.

151 Hamling, *Godly Household*, 238-245.

152 Ibid.

153 Ibid., 233.

154 Simon Patrick, *Mensa Mystica: Or, A Discourse Concerning the Sacrament of the Lords Supper*, (London: 1667), n.p., 3rd page of the Introduction.

heavenly things, pointing out the Messiah Christ Jesus, briefly explained.[155] This was first published in 1618, and was reprinted after the Restoration in London in 1664. The title page cites the Biblical principle of typology with a reference to Hebrews 10:1 – "For the Law had the shaddow of good things to come, and not the very Image of the things themselves." And in the dedicatory epistle (dedicated to Bishop Lancelot Andrewes), Guild describes typology in general as identifying the

> mysticall promises [which] went before mercifull performance, darke shaddowes [which] were the fore-runners of that bright substance, obscure types [which] were harbingers to that glorious Anti-type the Messiah.[156]

Hatton also mentions typology in his description of the reredos at All Hallows-by-the-Tower, which depicted a lambskin:

> By the Levitical Law the priest was to have the skin of the lamb offered; so that it is here placed, to demonstrate, that our high priest Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God, hath offered himself a sacrifice for us, of which that under the Law was only a type.[157]

In the same way in the new City churches, the lives of Moses and Aaron were also an accepted type for Christ – that is to say, in the Old Testament many of the events of their lives pre-figure the events of the life of Christ and aspects of his work. Guild sets out his comparison of these types and anti-types in two columns, to assist his readers in seeing the connections.[158] Of particular relevance to the Wrenian reredos, Jesus is described in Hebrews 7 as "a priest for ever in the order of Melchizedek," being both priest and king. The writer to the Hebrews explains the Christian belief that Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the Mosaic Law and now combines the magisterial, Law-giving role of Moses with the high priestly role of Aaron, in the same manner as the mysterious figure, Melchizadek – who meets Abraham and offers him bread and wine – is described in Genesis 14:18 as both "king of Salem" and "priest of the most high God." The need for further Temple sacrifice is removed by virtue of his own death on the cross and instead, Christians commemorate Christ's death at the communion table, which is set just below, and between, the paintings of Moses and Aaron. Although the reredos at St. Benet Paul's Wharf does not have Moses and Aaron paintings, it makes the same point through setting additional text boards in their place (Fig. 5.21). On the left above the Lord's Prayer, the text reads, "The Law was given unto Moses" (Old Covenant) and on the right above the Creed, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (New Covenant). This quotation from John 1:17 serves the same purpose

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[155] William Guild, *Moses Unveiled; or, those figures which served unto the pattern and shadow of heavenly things, pointing out the Messiah Christ Jesus, briefly explained* (London: 1618).

[156] Guild, *Moses Unveiled*, (1658 edition), n.p., second page of the epistle dedicatory.

[157] Hatton, 1, 98. Hatton's approving tone contrasts with his criticism of the "old man" at St. Olave Hart Street, mentioned earlier.

[158] Guild, *Moses Unveiled*, 47-53, 56-57.

as the Moses and Aaron typology, while at the same time proclaiming this particular parish's Reformed credentials.

Typology can be a multi-layered thing and the fact that the typological and visual connection being made in this instance is between Moses and Aaron and the communion table, rather than the Decalogue, supports the argument that the sanctuary as a whole is intended to represent covenantal theology. It presents both the fulfilment of the Law by grace and provides further visual meaning to the setting of the communion table.

Moses and Aaron – Crown and Mitre

On the face of it, it might be thought from these emphatically Biblical and typological references that the paintings of Moses and Aaron would have had a broad acceptance across Protestant thought, and would be a unifying and uncontroversial feature. However, this was not the case, and we need briefly to turn back in time to the early-Stuart period and the Civil War to illustrate quite how politically and ecclesiologically loaded the use of these paintings could be made to be.

Judith Maltby points out that the use of Moses and Aaron as a metaphor for Crown and Church was used at least as early as 1559, when Bishop John Aylmer used it to defend Elizabeth I's rights as Supreme Governor.[159] For our purposes, however, a key moment in their transformation from being orthodox pictures of Protestant piety into figures associated with Stuart Royal policy can be dated to James I's Hampton Court Conference of 1604. It was there that James angrily rounded on those advocating replacing episcopacy with presbyterian governance for the Church with the phrase, "No bishop, no king."[160] The great legacy of that conference was the commissioning of the *Authorised Version of the Bible*.[161] The first edition was printed by the King's Printer, Robert Barker in 1611, with a title page by the Flemish engraver Cornelis Boel (Fig. 5.22). Here, Moses and Aaron stand either side of the central panel containing the text of the title; they are the largest and most dominant figures on the page – more prominent than the Gospel writers or the Apostles – with all the same attributes that we find in the City churches.

Our awareness of the presence of other representations of Moses and Aaron in churches and chapels during the reigns of James I and Charles I is distorted by the fact that many paintings

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[159] Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 168.

[160] Keeble, "Attempting Uniformity," 2.

[161] Alister McGrath, *In The Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible, and How it Changed the Nation, a Language and a Culture* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2001), 155-65.

were lost to wartime iconoclasm, and many more may have gone unrecorded. However, as noted earlier in this chapter, those which have been recorded, or which have survived, have tended to have strong episcopal, cathedral, or more general Royalist associations, such as those at the Whitgift Hospital in Croydon, Surrey (Fig. 4.3), and the Charterhouse Hospital in Clerkenwell, London.[162] There are records of such depictions at the cathedrals of Chichester, Exeter, and Norwich, and there were almost certainly many more.[163]

Laud himself cited Moses at his trial in 1644, defending himself against a charge of idolatry by asserting the right of the Crown to determine what could, and could not, be placed in an English church:

> The command given for destroying of the idols, when [the Israelites] came into the land of Canaan, was not left at large to the people, but settled in Moses the chief magistrate, and his power.[164]

The association of these paintings and sculptures with episcopalianism and the Royalist cause was sufficiently strong that they were targeted for destruction during the Civil War. The Parliamentarian lawyer John White cited Laud's sculpted figures of Moses and Aaron in the Charterhouse chapel as one of the justifications for the sequestration of the Laudian preacher there, Daniel Tutivall, and in the light of other examples we can reasonably assume that the Royalist connotations of Laud's reredos also played a part in Tutivall's removal, and the subsequent destruction of the reredos.[165] Writing in 1643, the Royalist cleric Bruno Ryves recounted the destruction of the Decalogue in Chichester Cathedral by Sir William Waller's troops in 1642:

> At the East end of the Quire, did hang a very fair Table, wherein were written the Ten Commandments, with the Pictures of Moses and Aaron on each side of the Table; possessed with a zeal, but not like that of Moses, they pull down the Table, and break it into small Shivers. 'Twas no wonder they should break the Commandments in their representation, that had before broken them all over in their Substance.[166]

For Ryves, destroying the Decalogue boards was almost as bad as breaking the Commandments themselves.

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[162] Temple, *The Charterhouse*, 94-101; the debris of the broken reredos was removed, to be rediscovered as recently as 1977.

[163] Bruno Ryves, *Mercurius Rusticus, or, the countries complaint of the barbarous outrages committed by the sectaries of this late flourishing kingdom*, (London: 1685 edition), 139-140; Cooper, *Dowsing*, 251.

[164] Laud, *History of the Troubles*, 335.

[165] John White, *The First Century of Scandalous Malignant Priests* (London: 1643), 5; Temple, *The Charterhouse*, 94-101.

[166] Ryves, *Mercurius Rusticus*, 139-140.

In a parish context, the journal of William Dowsing, Parliamentary "commissioner for the destruction of monuments of idolatry and superstition" in the eastern counties, records the destruction of "Moses with a rod, and Aaron *with his mitre*" at Otley, Suffolk, as seeming to be particularly offensive items.[167] Paintings of Moses and Aaron were also among the "9 superstitious pictures in the church, and 7 in the chancel," which Dowsing "brake down" at Castle Comps in Cambridgeshire.[168] The paintings of Moses and Aaron at All Hallows-by-the-Tower were painted over in 1643 and other offensive items removed.[169]

The destruction of these paintings and sculptures illustrates that puritans identified them as a part of the package of Laudian idolatry and, by association, appropriated to the Royalist cause. In the same way, Anglican loyalists maintained a memory of them as something which they had lost, and which became part of their own sense of identity, hallowed by loss and persecution. Returning our attention to the City, it was against this background that the vestry of St. Peter Cornhill seized the opportunity to proclaim their long-suppressed (or possibly just rediscovered) loyalty and on 10 May 1660 – two weeks *before* Charles II returned from exile – ordered

> that the King's Armes in Painted Glass, and other Armes painted, should be refreshed; and Moses and Aaron are forthwith to be set up by the Churchwarden at the Parish charges.[170]

That Moses and Aaron, flanking the Decalogue, were emblems of Crown and episcopal authority was understood by Anglicans and dissenters alike.[171] The scale of their revival after the Fire and in the refurbishment of other churches drew upon, and reinforced, this feature of the Anglican Royalist narrative. It was a reminder of the Supreme Governor who had proclaimed, "No bishops, no king," of the martyred King who had died to protect his Church, and of the restored King under whose authority the Church of England had been re-established.

The theme was taken up with gusto by Restoration preachers, who indeed had plenty of opportunities to use the Mosaic analogy. It was Moses who led God's chosen (English) people out of (Cromwellian) oppression and gave them the Law. His brother Aaron had unique and divinely ordained access to the presence of God in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. Between them they ensured the physical and spiritual survival of the Israelites/English. The

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[167] Cooper, *Dowsing*, 250-251. Emphasis added.

[168] Ibid., 278.

[169] Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm*, 156.

[170] LMA/P69/PET1/B/001/MS04165/001, fol. 339. Curiously, despite having been first to restore Moses and Aaron paintings after the Restoration, St. Peter's was not one of the post-Fire churches to have Moses and Aaron paintings in its new reredos.

[171] See also Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 48, 59-60.

annual day of solemn fasting to commemorate the execution of Charles I and the opening of each assize session also provided particularly appropriate opportunities for such messages to be preached and then published to a wider audience.[172] Among many examples, Edward Stillingfleet used Numbers 16 as the text for his sermon before the King in 1669, on the anniversary of the Royal martyrdom, and drew an extended analogy between "the late Rebellion" and Korah's rebellion against Moses.[173] Both he and his hearers doubtless enjoyed the destruction of the non-priestly Levites (presbyterians) by plague and fire (1665 and 1666) for having usurped the role of the priestly caste.[174] In a commentary on the prayer book intended to provide preaching material for clergy to draw upon in preaching and leading services, Thomas Comber neatly brought together several themes of this particular genre:

> … the Plague was sent *for their obstinate Rebellion against Moses* [Charles I] *and Aaron* [Laud; original italics]. There is usually some peculiar Sin, which doth provoke the Almighty, and is the Cause of the Mortality; and we shall do well to enquire, what it is that hath occasioned our Misery, that we may especially repent of that Sin. Let us enquire, if it be not (as this was) *for Rebellion* and Schism. Moses had the Legislative and Royal Power, Aaron had the Pontifical and Spiritual Dignity and Honours. Now Corah, a Levite [Presbyterian], thought Aaron, the High Priest, to be proud and covetous, and censured him for engrossing the Profits, and the Jurisdiction of the Priesthood to himself, when there were many Levites, yea Laybrothers [those who ministered without episcopal ordination] as well gifted as he. And Dathan and Abiram gave it out that Moses was too absolute in his Monarchy, and ought to behave himself only as the Trustee of the People, without whose consent he ought to do nothing (the lively Embleme of our late Schismaticks and Rebels). … God … accounts it Sedition, Schism and Rebellion; yea an impious resisting his own Authority in those whom he had given the Government unto: Wherefore … he sends Fire from Heaven to consume the pert aspiring Levites, that their angry heats against their lawful Governours might be suitably punished by devouring fire.[175]

Against the background of the frequency and tenor of comments like these from the pulpit and in print, the paintings of Moses and Aaron in so many reredoses in the City churches were a confrontational reminder of the expectation of passive obedience to Crown and Church, of the profound Anglican assertion of the inseparable bond between them, and the necessity of obedience. Richard Allestree linked obedience and uniformity together:

> When men once depart from Uniformity … may not divisions be as infinite as mens phansies? … It is *one God, one Faith, one Worship* makes *hearts one*. Hands lifted up in the Temple they will joyn and clasp: and so *Religion* does fulfil its name *a religando*, binds

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[172] See also Robert Conold, *A Sermon preached before the Maior of the City of Norwich, January 31 1675* (London: 1675); Thomas Long, *A Sermon Against Murmuring in Exeter Cathedral on 29 May 1680* (London: 1680) and *Moses and the Royal Martyr, Parallel'd in a Sermon, 30 January 1684* (London: 1684); George Seignior, *Moses and Aaron: A Sermon preached before the King, April 17, 1670* (London: 1670).

[173] Edward Stillingfleet, *A sermon preached before the King, January 30, 1668/9* (London: 1669).

[174] Ibid., 33-35, 40.

[175] Comber, *A Companion to the Temple*, Part II, 350-351.

Prince and subjects all together; and they who thus do *seek the Lord their God*, will also *seek David their King*.[176]

Allestree conveys the belief that this uniformity, and the alliance of Moses and Aaron which it prescribed, was no abstract notion. It reflected the profound sense of horror at the experiences of the Civil War, the regicide, and the Interregnum, and the belief that uniformity in Church, and obedience to the Crown were prerequisites of a peaceful and orderly society.[177]

ROYAL ARMS

A characteristically English twist to the post-Reformation appearance of church interiors was the prominent display of the Royal Arms, reflecting the monarchical origins of the English Reformation. A fine Elizabethan example survives at Tivetshall (1587; Fig. 5.23) and a 1630 one at Shipdham (no longer in its original position in the church and amended in 1661 from Charles I to Charles II), both in Norfolk.[178] These were painted on the tympanum, occupying the place formerly taken by the rood – Christ on the cross, flanked by the Virgin Mary and St. John – one of the strongest evocations of medieval belief. Both have elaborate Royal Arms set authoritatively above the Decalogue, and the Restoration Church was equally unembarrassed in doing the same in the City churches.

Even during the month before Charles' return, while England was at least in theory still under a republican government, Pepys noted that among his contacts,

> 21 April 1660. … All their discourse and others are of the King's coming, and we begin to speak of it very freely. And heard how in many churches in London, and upon many signs there, and upon merchants' ships in the river, they had set up the King's arms.[179]
>
> 22 April 1660. Several Londoners, strangers, friends of the Captains, dined here, who, among other things told us, how the King's Arms are every day set up in houses and churches, particularly in Allhallows Church in Thames-street, John Simpson's church, which being privately done was, a great eye-sore to his people when they came to church and saw it.[180]

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[176] Richard Allestree, *Sermon Preached at Hampton Court on … the Anniversary of His Sacred Majesty's Most Happy Return* (1662), 16-17.

[177] See for example Rose, "The Debate over Authority," 29-56.

[178] Nikolaus Pevsner and Bill Wilson, *The Buildings of England; Norfolk 2: North-West and South* (London: Yale University Press, 2002), 735, 646.

[179] Pepys, *Diary*, vol. 1, 112-113.

[180] Ibid., 113. The significance of Pepys mentioning John Simpson is that Simpson was one of the founders of the extreme radical Fifth Monarchist movement; see Bernard Capp, "Simpson, John (1614/15–1662)," in *ODNB* (online edn., accessed 21 July 2015).

The usually dry vestry minutes of St. Michael Cornhill became the opportunity for a lengthy outpouring of carefully crafted joy and loyalty when the vestry emphasised that they voted, "noe man gainsaying," that the Royal Arms be restored in the east window on "this day *being the day before* the publick Proclamation" of the return of "the most potent and undoubted King."[181]

It was, however, only the timing of setting up the Royal Arms which surprises and not the fact that they came to be restored *per se*. Consequently, it is no surprise that the rebuilt churches should all be furnished with a new set to replace those lost in the Fire. All bar two of the surviving Wren churches still have their original Royal Arms – St. Margaret Lothbury and St. Martin Ludgate are the exceptions. They are carved in wood in heavy relief, and most are painted in the requisite heraldic colours and gilded (as at St. Margaret Pattens; Fig. 5.24). The quality of carving is uniformly good, and much better than the Royal Arms of before the Interregnum, most of which were painted on board or directly onto the wall.

The placement of the Royal Arms in the churches today conceals an additional impact which they had when first set up. Hatton mentions thirty-two of the new churches having the Royal Arms set upon the cornice or pediment of the reredos, and a further eleven of the surviving medieval churches also doing so.[182] Today, they have all been relocated to gallery fronts, mostly on the west gallery, or over doorcases. Set right at the front of the church, the original location is altogether more striking, and gives the Royal Arms an added degree of symbolism which matches the Elizabethan example at Tivetshall for bravado. Fig. 4.18 shows the reredos of St. Margaret Lothbury reconstructed using Photoshop software to show the Royal Arms from St. Margaret Pattens superimposed "under a triangular Pediment," as described by Hatton.[183] An unexecuted design by Roger Davies for the reredos for St. Stephen Walbrook also incorporates the Royal Arms within the space created by a broken pediment (Fig. 2.11) and indicates the dominating size of the Royal Arms.[184] The visual effect is remarkable, especially when bearing in mind that the Arms would have been entirely painted and gilded, whereas the reredos below would have originally been of unstained wood, with gilding applied relatively sparingly to the frames for the text boards and key iconographical features. It would have been the Royal Arms which dominated.

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[181] LMA/P69/MIC2/B/001/MS04072/001/002, fol. 222r., emphasis added.

[182] Hatton, *New View*, passim; Appendix G.

[183] Hatton, 1, 324.

[184] St. Stephen Walbrook, seventeen pen and ink drawings. LMA/P69/STE2/B/025/MS07695, n.p.

Placing the royal Arms at the highest point of a frontispiece structure – the place of honour – was already an established trope, and would have been familiar from examples on city gates across the country, including Aldersgate in London (Fig. 5.25). More widely, the practice of setting over-sized coats of arms in the breaks of a pediment over gateways or doorcases can also be seen in printed architectural sources, such as in Francini's *Livre d'architecture* (Fig. 5.26). In the context of a reredos derived from the Counter-Reformation altar-piece, however, the Arms take the position of a panel or aedicule normally used for some form of representation of the Trinity, God the Father, or the Virgin Mary. The City church reredoses therefore continue the tradition of those at Tivetshall and Shipdham of placing the symbols of monarchy in the place of the symbols of divinity.

Hatton also records five of the new churches as having the Royal Arms in painted glass in the east window and one on the west.[185] Two Queen Anne examples survived long enough to be photographed in black and white, at St. Andrew Holborn and St. Edmund-the-King (Fig. 5.27), before and after the Act of Union respectively, and these probably give a fair representation of the examples which have been lost. A sense of the use of colour can be obtained from a set of Royal Arms by Henry Gyles of 1682, which are thought to have come from the Guildhall at York, and are now in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 5.28). In particular, the sulphurous yellow of silver stain is typical of painted glass of this period as, stylistically, is the voluminous baroque scale of the mantling in ermine and gold, billowing out from behind the sovereign's helmet.

The Royal Arms at St. Michael Bassishaw (Fig. 5.29) are the only sculptural example in the City churches not to be carved in wood. Cast in plaster and then painted, they are fifteen feet wide, and were originally fixed to the west wall of the church.[186] Removed when the church was demolished in 1900, they are now installed in a corridor in the London Guildhall.[187]

Just as Foulke Robarts had asserted in 1639, as the storm clouds of war gathered, Restoration clergy were entirely at ease with the appropriateness of so prominent a placing of the Royal Arms, powerfully asserting the divine connection between faith and kingship:

> Let us looke well about: least any nooke yet shrowde some superstition. Here are the Kings armes set up: not for any matter of divine worship: But to professe and testifie the subjection of every soule to the higher power. For as the written sentences upon the

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[185] Hatton, 1, 116, 239 and vol. 2, 404, 420, 580; Appendix G.

[186] Hatton, 2, 416.

[187] Nikolaus Pevsner and Simon Bradley, *The Buildings of England; London 1: The City of London* (London: Yale University Press, 2002), 305.

walls by letters, so these Scutchions, by their expressions, do put us in minde of that *Defender of the Faith,* and of our duty to him, who is *next and immediately under God, supream governor over al persons and causes as well ecclesiasticall as Temporall in all his Majesties Realmes & Dominions.* And in all this there is no Superstition.[188]

THE PELICAN IN HER PIETY

Hatton mentions six of the new churches having a "Pelican in her Piety" incorporated into the iconographical scheme of the reredos.[189] Of the churches not burned, he only mentions there being one – at St. Giles Cripplegate – though the reredos there was new, and a weak imitation of the Wrenian style.[190] The depictions in the new churches show a mother pelican with her wings spread over a brood of chicks gathered in a nest; the mother pelican is far from naturalistic, with a beak like that of a raptor, and a nest which is equally un-naturalistic, usually being a highly manicured, woven basket-like structure; the chicks reach upwards to feed from blood which the mother has drawn by pecking at her own breast.

The image of the Pelican in her Piety is common in medieval bestiaries, but has more ancient roots going back at least to the second century Bishop Physiologus, and to a number of somewhat confused ancient myths.[191] The un-naturalistic representation of the pelicans in the City churches – such as that at St. Magnus-the-Martyr – owes more to their depiction in these bestiaries and to the heraldic tradition than to anything which is recognisably anatomically a pelican (Fig. 5.30). The common theme in these myths and bestiaries is that the mother pelican gives life to her chicks – including, in some versions, to dead ones – by shedding her own blood.[192] The image was taken up in medieval art as a symbol of Christ's death on the cross and of the eucharist, for which reason the two Corpus Christi Colleges at Cambridge and Oxford both have the pelican on their coat of arms. The feast of Corpus Christi was one of the great feasts in the medieval Church calendar and involved the veneration of the consecrated host, being the real presence of the body of Christ in the Catholic tradition.[193] Though from a genre which might be thought too popish for seventeenth-century Anglican tastes, the image of the

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[188] Robarts, *Gods Holy House*, 46. The italics are original. The "sentences upon the walls" are, of course, the Ten Commandments and part of Robarts' assertion here is that the King is "Keeper of Both Tables," in other words, having authority both over his subjects' relationship with God (the four commandments in the first table) and with each other (the six commandments in the second table).

[189] Hatton, passim; Appendix G.

[190] Hatton, 2, 249.

[191] Willene B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts: The Second-family Bestiary: Commentary, Art, Text and Translation* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), 177-178. See also the thirteenth-century *Pierre de Beauvais' Bestiary: A Medieval Book of Beasts*, trans. Guy R. Mermier (Lewiston, Queenston and Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 32-35.

[192] Clark, *Medieval Book of Beasts*, 177-178.

[193] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, 2nd ed. (London: Yale University Press, 2005), 43-44.

pelican was made acceptable in England by its adoption by Elizabeth I as one of her many badges, casting herself in the role of self-sacrificial, nursing-mother of her nation – a form of secular typology.[194] The pelican remained current after the Restoration in writings and sermons, including among presbyterians and Catholics as well as Anglicans, as an acknowledged and customary symbol for the eucharist.[195] Placing it in the reredos above the communion table therefore sat comfortably within this tradition.

However, just as with the paintings of Moses and Aaron, a second more political thread also runs through the use of pelican imagery. The evidence for this is thinner than for the Mosaic paintings, but sufficient for the message to be understood, and once more we see the appropriation of a religious image for Royalist polemical use.

The starting point in literature for this transformation was the publication of the *Eikon Basilike* in early February 1649, just a few days after the execution of Charles I.[196] The *Eikon Basilike*, with its hagiographical frontispiece (Fig. 5.31), purported to be the King's meditations on his reign and on kingship, written during his imprisonment. Reflecting on the moment when his captors dismissed his chaplains, leaving him alone, the *Eikon* quotes Psalm 102:6, "It is now thy pleasure that I should be as a Pelican in the wilderness," thereby associating Charles with King David, who fled his rebellious son Absolom and hid in the wilderness across the River Jordan.[197] The instant popularity of this portrayal of a saintly, martyred king was remarkable, running to thirty-nine editions in 1649 alone, and twenty foreign language editions.[198] There is a (probably knowing) irony in establishing the King as an icon at just the same time as the Royal Arms and other emblems were being removed and defaced from churches and public buildings by order of Parliament; if the King's faithful subjects could not see his emblems in church, they could instead have them in their own homes.[199]

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[194] See in particular, the "Pelican Portrait" of Elizabeth I by Nicholas Hilliard (c.1575) at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/collections/paintings/13c-16c/item-239117.aspx (accessed 28 May 2018).

[195] For examples of each, see presbyterian minister John Flavel, *The Fountain of Life Opened* (London: 1673), 268; Roman Catholic polemicist John Gother, *A Discourse of the Use of Images in Relation to the Church of England* (London: 1687), 6; and Anglican bishop John Hacket, *A Century of Sermons upon Several Remarkable Subject* (London: 1675), 509.

[196] Charles I, *Eikon Basilike* (London: 1649); Andrew Lacey, *The Cult of King Charles the Martyr.* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 78-80. After the Restoration, Bishop John Gauden, who had been one of the King's chaplains during his imprisonment, claimed to have rescued and edited the King's notes to present them in published form. Lacey broadly accepts that the *Eikon Basilike* was written by the king and arranged for publication by Gauden.

[197] 2 Samuel 15. The quotation is from the Authorised Version; modern translators note the difficulty of knowing to what species of bird the Hebrew refers.

[198] Lacey, *Cult*, 81.

[199] Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm*, 80-82.

The *Eikon* caused alarm among the republican authorities, and John Milton was commissioned to respond in print.[200] Published in October the same year, Milton's *Eikonoklastes* dismissed both the notion of Charles' authorship and the credibility of its description of his rule. Although Milton did not pick up upon the pelican reference in the *Eikon* at that stage, a fast Royalist response to *Eikonoklastes* did. An anonymous tract, *The Princely Pellican*, defended the attribution to Charles, and the pelican title began to take on distinctly Caroline associations.[201]

The French writer, Claudius Salmasius provoked the Commonwealth authorities again in November 1649 with another defence of Charles in *Defensio Regia pro Carolo I*.[202] At one point in a long defence of divine right kingship, he likened the dependent relationship of people to their king with that of bees to their queen and, rather curiously, classified bees as being among the "birds." Milton's reply, *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*, was published in February 1651 by order of Parliament, and printed with the Commonwealth Arms on its title page. Milton ridiculed Salmasius' classification of bees as birds, retorting:

> Istos onocrotalis tuis tende laqueos; nos tam stolido aucupio non capimur [or, "Set those snares for your own pelican; we are not caught by such foolish bird-traps"].[203]

Karen Edwards proposes that Milton's choice of Pliny's term for pelicans, *onocrotalus* rather than the more generic *pelicanus*, was chosen deliberately so as to connect the bird to Pliny's description of it – Salmasius himself having published a treatise on Pliny's work in 1629 – as "insatiable and given to plunder, a noxious pest whose reputation for piety is wholly spurious."[204]

If Milton hoped to turn the pelican metaphor against the Royalist hagiographers then he was to be disappointed. Perhaps sensing that it seemed particularly irksome to republicans, Royalists quickly established the pelican metaphor as a lasting feature of the rapidly emerging Royalist mythology and cult of the late king. At the Restoration, the Somerset clergyman, William Langley, rejoiced in the return of a new pelican to England, adding his own "short reflections of government, governours, and persons governed, the duty of kings and subjects, the unlawfulness of resistance, with other things of moment, and worthy consideration" in order to demonstrate his Royalist credentials to the returning Supreme Governor.[205] For the vicar of Aylsham, John

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[200] Lacey, *Cult*, 81, 87-94.

[201] Anon, *The Princely Pellican: Royal Resolves Presented in Sundry Choice Observations Extracted from His Majesty's Divine Meditations, with satisfactory reasons that his Sacred Person was the only Author of them* (London: 1649).

[202] Claudius Salmasius, *Defensio Regia pro Carolo I* (1649)

[203] Karen Edwards, "An Early Modern Bestiary," *Milton Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (December 2008): 262.

[204] Ibid., 262-263.

[205] William Langley, *The Death of Charles the First lamented, with the restauration of Charles the Second congratulated delivered in a speech at the proclaming of our gratious King* (London: 1660), title page, 24.

Philips, Charles II had already assumed the mantle of the Davidic Pelican in the Wilderness while still in his exile.[206] From a very different perspective, the complex and maverick cleric Edmund Hickeringill took up the metaphor – in a Miltonian frame of mind – to heap sarcasm on the King's Supreme Governorship of the Church of England:

> Upon the Pinacle of this Church of *England* sits a *Pelican* most kindly pecking and piercing her Breast to suckle her young with her dear hearts Blood, (and he makes her *speak Latine too) Proprio vos sanguine Posco.* Whereby he seems to Insinuate that this kind Pelican (his Prelatical little Church) has nourisht Mr. *Hickeringill* with her *dearest* and most precious *Treasures,* her *very Hearts-blood,* (such he takes her best Preferments to be) and indeed some men had as leeve part with their heart-blood as their flush Ecclesiastical Promotions) calling him (in his Epistle to the Reader) *A Divine of the Church of* England, *who hath also a share in her Government.*[207]

Hickeringill certainly understood the emblem to be part of the Royalist conception of sacralised monarchy.

Charles II seems readily to have accepted and strengthened this royal association. In his creation of the new chapel at Windsor Castle (1680-82), Charles commissioned Grinling Gibbons to carve no fewer than twenty-eight pelicans, one to go over each of the round-headed niches behind the choir stalls, firmly entrenching the pelican as a symbol of Stuart sacral monarchy.[208]

The use of the pelican as a Royalist metaphor in sermons and other print is frequent enough to make it clear, at least for a few, that setting a pelican on the reredos would have had strong loyalist connotations, in addition to its historic sacramental inference. However, the references are not as frequent as those to Moses and Aaron. Similarly, Milton may have enjoyed his joke at Salmasius' expense, but both men's treatises were published only in Latin and the audience was therefore limited. Perhaps, here we may see a perpetuation of an earlier trope, one which had maybe lost its original resonance but remained treasured by a few clergy and others three decades and more after the execution of Charles I.

Conclusion

The assertive imagery of Royal Arms, Moses and Aaron, and the Pelican in her Piety all speak of Stuart Royal Supremacy over the Church. This must have made a perfect backdrop to the series

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[206] John Philips, *God and the King. Gods strength the Kings salvation A sermon preached at Aylesham in the county of Norfolk, upon the 29 day of May 1661, being the anniversary day of thanksgiving, for the thrice happy and glorious restauration of our most Gracious Soveraign King Charles the second, to the royal government of all his Majesties kingdoms and dominions* (London: 1661), 19.

[207] Edmund Hickeringill, *A vindication of the naked truth, the second part In Answer to a Libell called Leges Angliae, or the Lawfulness of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction in the Church of England* (London: 1681), 1-2.

[208] Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 154. They are also visible in a coloured engraving in William Pyne, *The History of the Royal Residences* (1818), vol. 1, plate 21, showing the chapel before its destruction by Sir Jeffry Wyatville in 1827.

of loyal annual sermons marking the anniversary of the execution of Charles I, the return of Charles II, and the Gunpowder Plot – which, collectively, Spurr describes as "a repository of the church's political teaching."[209] They proclaimed the uncompromising message that Crown and Church had returned and were united.

The irony is that these images did not reflect the relationship of Crown and Church as it actually stood, but rather as the Church wished that it would stand, against a background of political tension. Parliament and Church together stymied Charles II's hopes for religious comprehension in the early years of the Restoration, and successfully opposed all his subsequent efforts as well.[210] Anthony Fletcher has characterised the ferocity of the persecutions of the two Conventicles Acts as the product of a deep-seated Anglican insecurity, and bewilderment at a King who did not defend the Church.[211] The rift went wider, and there was a moral dimension also. Bishop John Dolben preached in the Chapel Royal itself against the "Sensual Revellings, and Bacchanal Rites" of Court life.[212] Gilbert Burnet claimed that Archbishop Sheldon told the King to his face to "put away this woman that you keep" – Lady Castlemaine, Charles' principal mistress – and found himself out of court favour for the remainder of his life.[213] Bishop Wren – who had been imprisoned throughout the Interregnum – defiantly told the King "Sir, I know my way to the Tower," when an argument about a disputed appointment reached breaking point.[214]

These tensions took on constitutional proportions in the reign of James II, when the Church of England's challenge transformed from one of struggling with a libertine Supreme Governor with dangerously tolerant religious views, to one of facing a Catholic one who left English episcopal sees vacant and used their revenues to finance Catholic churches in Ireland. James established an Ecclesiastical Commission, in the words of the Earl of Sunderland, one of the commissioners, "to regulate the licence of the Protestant ministers and to curb the audacity of bishops;" he issued his own Declaration of Indulgence, suspended Bishop Compton and put seven bishops on trial for sedition.[215]

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[209] John Spurr, *The Post-Reformation, 1603-1714* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2006), 149.

[210] Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 50-52, 61-65.

[211] Anthony Flecther, "The Enforcement of the Conventicle Acts, 1663-1679." *Studies in Church History* 21 (1984): 235-246.

[212] John Dolben, *A sermon preached before the king on Tuesday, June 20th. 1665* (London: 1665), 27, quoted in Matt Jenkinson, "Preaching at the Court of Charles II: Court Sermons and the Restoration Chapel Royal," in *Early Modern Sermon*, 453.

[213] Gilbert Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's History of his own Time*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1833), 463.

[214] Jeffrey R. Collins, "The Restoration Bishops and the Royal Supremacy," *Church History, Studies in Christianity & Culture* 68, no. 3 (1999): 579.

[215] Spurr, *Restoration Church*, 90, 89-97; Carpenter, *Protestant Bishop*, 90-97, 102, 156-167; Tapsell, "The later Stuart Church in context," 8.

After the Revolution, while the Act of Toleration of 1689 preserved the Church of England's status as the established Church, it also implicitly acknowledged that it was no longer the National Church, and that neither Crown nor Parliament could be relied upon to look after its interests with quite the confidence of previous generations. Perhaps this explains why Moses and Aaron and pelicans make far fewer appearances in the generations after those who furnished Wren's churches: they evoked a relationship of Church and Crown which had existed under James I and Charles I, but which had by then become a thing of the past.[216]

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that the Wrenian reredos was used as a sophisticated mechanism for making assertions about the Church of England's own self-perception in the late seventeenth century. It used the well-established frontispiece convention to deploy an iconographical scheme which spoke of the grand Biblical narrative of the Old and New Covenants. These schemes had many parallel and interwoven themes: doctrinal themes which culminated in a focus on the communion table and the Lord's Supper; and national themes which identified the English Church with Biblical Israel and the Early Church. The importance of these combined themes was demonstrated through the architectural grandeur of the reredoses' structure, through the quality of their wood-carving, and through the gilding of selected elements where necessary to give correct comely expression to their meaning. This was especially so where that meaning was about God's presence with his chosen – English – people.

The Wrenian reredos remained as an architectural concept long into the eighteenth century, and spread to parish churches across the country, as well as to the colonial churches of Dublin and the Americas. However, the richness and complexity of its messages about identity were very much of that particular moment. The Wrenian reredos spoke of a Church which was re-established, and notionally in possession of most of its old power, but which felt exposed to attack from both Catholicism and dissent, and was vulnerable in its relationship with the Crown. The constitutional upheavals of the Glorious Revolution, the Toleration Act, and the Hanoverian Succession had their own impact on how a reredos spoke. For the most part, Georgian reredoses lack the iconographical complexity of those in the City churches, and few speak of Temple and patristic identity; the appetite for typology clearly faded. Even in expensive, privately-commissioned, examples such as that at St. Peter, Gayhurst, Buckinghamshire (c.1728; Fig. 5.32), their decoration is often limited to a Glory, and any other features become decorative rather than symbolic as Burlingtonian classicism succeeded that of Wren.

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[216] These tensions are particularly well-explored in Rose, *Godly Kingship*; see, for example, 130-137.

PART III

CHAPTER 6

SCREENS

INTRODUCTION

Part II of this thesis set out how the two most prominent features of the Wren church interiors – pulpits and reredoses – were consciously imagined and given form to express critical aspects of Anglican identity. These employed the notion of comeliness – in materials, form, and decoration – to express spiritual and ecclesial status and values. They used extensive iconography in woodcarving to convey messages about the Church's theology, the divinely ordered governance of the Church by bishops, and the Royal Supremacy. These features were common to all the new churches, and to that extent can be considered as normative. They contributed to providing a uniform setting for uniform worship.

This Part III addresses a number of individual cases where not only Anglican identity was being asserted, but particular emphases were being drawn out which indicated a particular type of churchmanship within the spectrum of late seventeenth-century Anglican belief. This Chapter 6 continues the theme of the Church's assertions of its relationship with the Early Church, and examines the screens erected in two churches at the direction of their incumbents, both of whom were patristics scholars. Chapter 7 will then look at the reredoses of four churches whose furnishings were designed by Wren himself or, at the very least, by colleagues in his office, under his supervision.

The two screens which are the subject of this chapter were erected at St. Peter Cornhill in 1680-81 and at All Hallows-the-Great, probably in 1683.[1] In these two parishes, we see the agency of two clergymen at work, though most likely with the support of their vestries and wider parishioners. Immediately, one very obvious observation to make is that only two churches installed such screens, out of the total of fifty-two churches built in this period, whether in the

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[1] LMA/P69/PET1/B/001/MS04165/001, fols. 489-492, 504; LMA/P69/ALH7/B/001/MS00819/001, fols. 318, 328.

Fire-damaged City or further west. Their extreme rarity therefore makes them both interesting as an indication of a particular point of view of the two rectors concerned, as well as probably being unrepresentative of the clergy and vestrymen of the City at large. Nevertheless, the motivation which led those two clergymen to decide that a screen was not just desirable but necessary was the same as that of all parishes in addressing their own furnishings in general. It was to express their notions of ecclesial identity visually inside their churches.

THE POST-REFORMATION CHANCEL SCREEN

Medieval screens survive in relative abundance in English parish churches, especially in East Anglia, the south-west, and the Welsh Marches.[2] The Reformation fundamentally removed their core functions of separating the priestly caste from the laity and of performing a liturgical role in the Mass.[3] This was accompanied by the removal of their roods – the statue of the crucified Christ, flanked by the Virgin Mary and the Apostle John – and the defacement of images on the dado – the lower, solid part of the screen.[4] In London, Bishop Edmund Grindal ordered the destruction of all remaining rood lofts in 1560, and the records of St. Andrew Hubbard tell of the demolition of a rood loft which had only been installed in 1554-56 during Queen Mary's reign.[5] There was not, however, any concerted official campaign to remove the screens themselves, and Elizabeth I actually required them by edict in 1561, though this mandate was not included in the *Canons Ecclesiastical* in 1604.[6] Existing screens continued to be repaired and restored in the first half of the seventeenth century, and about one hundred new ones were installed in that period.[7] Trevor Cooper notes that some of these were installed by conformist Calvinists, and even by some puritans, and warns against seeing the installation of a screen as indicative of a particular type of churchmanship.[8]

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[2] Whiting, *Reformation*, 3-20.

[3] Duffy, *Stripping the Altars*, 25-26, 40, 110-113, 157-158.

[4] Ibid.; Whiting, *Reformation*, 15-20.

[5] Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 244;* "Introduction," in *The Church Records of St Andrew Hubbard, Eastcheap, c1450-c1570*, ed. Clive Burgess (London: London Record Society, 1999), vii-xxxiii. *British History Online*, accessed July 7, 2018, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol34/vii-xxxiii. For discussion of the role of the rood loft in relation to liturgy, the invocation of the saints, and pre-Reformation concepts of salvation, see Richard Marks, "Framing the Rood in Medieval England and Wales," in *The Art and Science of the Church Screen in Medieval Europe: Making, Meaning, Preserving*, ed. Spike Bucklow, Richard Marks, and Lucy Wrapson (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2017), 7-29; Marks' discussion of the role of the loft bears comparison with Cousinié's description of the role of the Counter Reformation altar-piece, discussed in Chapter 4.

[6] Whiting, *Reformation*, 15, notes that Elizabeth's edict was widely honoured in the breach.

[7] Cooper, "Interior Planning of the English Parish Church, 1559-c.1640," forthcoming, citing Michael Good, *Compendium of Pevsner Buildings of England*, 2nd edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), CR-ROM.

[8] Ibid.

The clericalism and notions of sacred space inherent in the medieval origin and purpose of the chancel screen nevertheless made them especially appealing to Laudians. Bishops Montagu of Norwich and Juxon of London enquired in their Visitation Articles about the maintenance of chancel screens, but many others did not in the period immediately before the Civil War.[9] Matthew Wren, surprisingly, did not so enquire in 1636, but then did so after the Restoration in 1662 and 1665.[10] As rector, John Cosin installed an elaborate late-gothic screen at Brancepeth in County Durham in c.1638-39.[11] Decorated with tall pinnacles over the clergy stalls – which have their backs towards the congregation – rising to the apex of the chancel arch, it was self-consciously medievalist, clerical, and sacramental in its purpose.[12]

Despite the Laudian association evident in some screens, they were not targeted for general destruction either by Dowsing in East Anglia, or during the 1640s purification of London churches by the Parliamentary Commission. However, there were individual instances of screens being removed where there was a particularly provocative aspect to them. One such was at St. Giles-in-the-Fields, London, where an apparently lavish screen – only recently installed as a gift of Duchess Dudley – was removed in its entirety in 1644, "it being found superstitious;" it included large statues of Saints Peter, Paul, and Barnabas, and carved cherubim and lions; the church was, moreover, notably ceremonial in its worship.[13]

There are prominent examples of other screens of high quality which do not appear to be associated with the Beauty of Holiness movement, or which came before it. In the early 1600s, the Fortescue family paid for the refurbishment of St. Mary, Croscombe, Somerset, which included an ornate two-tier screen, richly designed in Jacobean style (Fig. 6.1).[14] Its carved work includes lions' heads, woodwose men and women, and bare-breasted reclining women, but no saints or cherubim.[15] It is an oddly neo-pagan collection in an allegedly iconophobic age. The moderate Calvinist Bishop of Bath and Wells, Arthur Lake, donated an equally grand pulpit in 1616.[16] In 1631, another religious moderate, John Harrison, paid for the building of St. John's

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[9] Michael Williams, "Medieval English Roodscreens, with special reference to Devon," PhD thesis, University of Exeter, 2008, 238-239, citing Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church*, vol. II (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), 192. See also Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 242-243.

[10] Matthew Wren, *Articles to be enquired of in the Dioces of Norwich, at the Visitation, holden in the yeere of our Lord, 1636* (London: 1636); *Articles of Enquiry (With some Directions intermingled) for the Diocese of Ely: 1665* (London: 1665), 7; *Articles of Enquiry (With some Directions intermingled) for the Diocese of Ely: 1665* (London: 1665), 7.

[11] Adrian Green, *Building for England: John Cosin's Architecture in Renaissance Durham and Cambridge* (Durham: Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, Durham University, 2016), 39, 41-42.

[12] Ibid.

[13] John Parton, *Some Account of the Hospital and Parish of St. Giles in the Fields, Middlesex* (London: Hansard, 1822), 200-202. I am grateful to the Ven. Dr. W.M. Jacob for bringing this reference to my attention. Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 252, 256, 257.

[14] Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England; North Somerset and Bristol* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958), 178.

[15] Author's inspection.

[16] Pevsner, *North Somerset*, 178; Kenneth Fincham, "Arthur Lake (*bap.* 1567, *d.* 1626), bishop of Bath and Wells," *ODNB* (online edn., accessed 24 January 2017).

chapel-of-ease in Leeds, which was also furnished with good quality fittings, and also has a fine screen running the entire width of this double-nave church (Fig. 6.2). As at Croscombe, the woodwork is a "melange of bastardized classical features" of the type to be found in a pattern book by Vredeman de Vries or Wendel Dietterlin.[17]

These examples indicate that the persistence of the chancel screens in the seventeenth century was a complex phenomenon and that they were not intrinsically controversial. If they could be erected by puritan-leaning Calvinists and Laudians alike, we need to be cautious in the way we approach the two screens in Wren's churches. Screens could be installed by those with very different churchmanship, seemingly without creating overt division. Nevertheless, there does seem to have been a decline in the installation of screens in newly-built churches in London. None of the churches which Peter Guillery examines in his article on suburban London churches was provided with one.[18] At the same time, Guillery helpfully points out that there was much nuance and occasional surprise in the way in which these churches were designed. The chapels built by Calvinist conformists like Bishop John Williams (at Broadway, Westminster, 1635-39) and puritans like Maurice Thomson (at Poplar in 1642-54, and Shadwell in 1656-57) had strong east-west axes and (at Shadwell) a projecting chancel, which are not normally thought of as Calvinist features.[19] We should not be surprised if similar nuances arose in the Wren church arrangements as well.

Purely on grounds of (an albeit waning) tradition, then, we might have expected more than two of the Wren churches to have been given screens. Absent any contemporary comment, we need to consider why there weren't. One possibility is that, while screens had not been sufficiently odious to the Parliamentary authorities to provoke their demolition – the Edwardian, Elizabethan, and Parliamentary removal of lofts and images meant that the most offensive elements had already gone – nor did they have a clear purpose anymore. Thus, it was not obvious that a screen destroyed in the Fire needed to be rebuilt afterwards. Additionally, consistent with his views on the audibility of divine worship, Wren did not build any of the new churches with a physically distinct chancel of medieval proportions – that is to say, one large enough for choir stalls as well as places for the clergy.[20] Consequently, a screen placed across the opening of the small chancel spaces at St. Edmund-the-King or St. James Garlickhythe – which are only sixteen feet, six inches and fourteen feet wide respectively – would look odd, enclosing on the fourth

[17] John Ellis Stocks, St. *John's Church, Leeds* (Leeds: Whitehead & Miller Ltd, 1934), 25-33. Janet Douglas and Kenneth Powell, St. *John's Church, Leeds* (London: Redundant Churches Fund, 1993), n.p., "Architectural Description."

[18] Guillery, "Suburban Models," 69-106.

[19] Ibid., 72-79, 81-88.

[20] When choir stalls were installed in Wren's churches in Victorian re-orderings, they were all placed in what had previously been the space of the easternmost pews of the nave.

side what was already a very small space.[21] Likewise, in the churches which Wren built with a rectangular, basilican, or a central plan, the architecture of the building did not provide a distinct chancel-like space across which one might place a screen. And any screen, therefore, would have had to run the full width of the church in order to create that space, which is precisely what was done at St. Peter Cornhill and All Hallows-the-Great. If, then, there was a prevailing view across the City as a whole that screens were no longer necessary, why were they installed at St. Peter Cornhill and All Hallows-the-Great at all? This chapter seeks to answer that question.

THE MAKING OF THE CITY SCREENS

The Cornhill screen was the first of the two to be installed, the contract between the vestry and the joiners Thomas Poultney and Thomas Athew being executed on 5 August 1680.[22] This came approximately half-way through the period during which the City churches were being built and furnished, or, to put it another way, after half of the churches had already been built and furnished without a screen. Being asked to provide a screen therefore posed a problem for the joiners in that, unlike the frequent examples of parishes copying each other's pulpits and reredoses, they had no precedent to follow. Additionally, as noted in Chapter 2, Poultney and Athew were not part of Wren's circle of preferred craftsmen. Poultney had worked as joiner in the building of St. Margaret Pattens but at no other churches, and neither of them seems to have worked on any of the projects of the Office of Works.[23]

The Cornhill screen is closer to the new classical style than those at Croscombe and Leeds and it omits the pinnacles, obelisks, and strapwork decoration characteristic of that earlier period (Fig. 6.3). Poultney and Athew paid due regard to the fabric of the church, and the columns of the centre arch are copies of the pilasters of the east wall behind them. The upward sweep of the cavetto cornice at the centre creates a theatrical space for the Royal Arms, which is set in a cartouche over the centre arch and flanked by a lion and a unicorn standing on pedestals – a pleasant and more three-dimensional alternative to the usual wall-mounted arrangement, executed in relief.

The arcades to either side are, depending upon one's taste, either delicate or flimsy, and are easy to overlook if viewed at mid-level against the background of the wainscot behind. They also retain a double-hanging-arch motif which is also present at Croscombe and other early

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[21] *Wren Society*, IX, Plates XXI and XXIII.

[22] Appendix E.

[23] *Wren Society*, vol. X, 46-53.

seventeenth-century locations, and which is more a feature of Jacobean style than Restoration.[24] The proportions of the arcade columns show that the joiners were aware of the rules of the classical orders. They have tried to compensate for the extreme narrowness of the columns by increasing the height of the plinth to about one quarter of the whole arcade height, indicated by the addition of a notional plinth-cap half-way up, leaving the top half roughly in the correct proportion of width to height. Arguably, the fragility of the arcades is no different to that of many medieval screens, and it conveys the same lightness of touch as some East Anglian screens do. It was, after all, never the purpose of such screens to block the view to the chancel, but rather to signal the significance of its separation from the nave and, as we shall see in this case, to facilitate the notion of congregational movement from one space to another.[25] However, the classical rules of proportion and the orders make it more difficult to achieve the delicacy at which perpendicular gothic tracery so excels.

Did Poultney and Athew design the screen on their own?[26] There is a tantalising mention in the vestry minutes of 17 May 1681 of Beveridge and the churchwardens being about to "Consult with Sir Christopher Ren about the alteration of the Screene and about some other small alterations belonging to the pewes."[27] The churchwardens' accounts for the year to Easter 1679 also make frequent reference to payments to Wren's staff, including John Oliver and Wren's "clerk" or "man," as well as money "spent with Sir Christopher Wren severall times."[28] How should we read these references? The dates are consistent with the building phase and with the level of contact which most parishes maintained with Wren and his staff. They need not be read as implying a greater degree of his involvement than was usual in the furnishings, though the fact that Wren himself "measured" the finished "Walls and … Portals" – meaning the panelling and doorcases – suggests that he showed greater interest in St. Peter Cornhill than some other churches.[29] We have also seen in Chapter 2 that parishes periodically sought Wren's views on aspects of their furnishings even where he was not directly involved. Most likely, it would seem to be that the scholarly Beveridge wished to exchange thoughts with the equally learned Wren about his new screen, some feature of which had not satisfied him as much as he had anticipated. The terms of the contract with Poultney and Athew make no reference to Wren being involved, and "the disigne and Modell" of the reredos is later stated to be "delivered by the said Mr

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[24] The author's inspection; Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 4: North* (London: Yale University Press, 2002), 286.

[25] Duffy, *Stripping the Altars*, 112, "The [pre-Reformation] screen itself was both a barrier and no barrier. It was not a wall but rather a set of windows, a frame for liturgical drama."

[26] T.F. Bumpus, *Ancient London Churches* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Press, 1908), 381, asserts that the screen was designed by Wren's daughter, but provides no evidence.

[27] LMA/P69/PET1/B/001/MS04165/001, fol. 504.

[28] Bodl. MS Rawlinson D 897, fols. 46v.-49r.

[29] Ibid., 49r.

Poultney to Doctor Beveridge."[30] Moreover, the double-hanging-arch motif seems most unlikely to have come from the mind of someone whose main inspiration was contemporary France and Italy. The screens of the two west chapels of St. Paul's Cathedral are much more obviously Wrenian in character; they are more robustly architectural and are in greater harmony with the rest of their surroundings than the screen at Cornhill (Fig. 6.4). There is, therefore, no compelling reason to assume that Poultney and Athew were not the designers, albeit under Beveridge's supervision.

The screen at All Hallows-the-Great followed that at Cornhill two years later. A committee to oversee the furnishing was set up in December 1681, and the church reopened in December 1683 (Fig. 6.5; the screen was transferred to St. Margaret Lothbury after the demolition of All Hallows in 1894).[31] The parish records make no reference to the screen until 1714, when it is said to be in danger of collapse, and needed to be held up by iron supports.[32] Thomas Powell was the joiner, and (probably William) Woodroffe and Thomas Thornton the carvers for those other furnishings which are mentioned in the parish records, and it is reasonable to assume they were responsible for the screen also.[33]

The All Hallows screen has the same delicacy as that at Cornhill and has other features in common: the double-hanging-arch motif, slender columns – here in the form of double spirals – and a cavetto cornice, sweeping up at the centre. The treatment of the centre is different: the delicacy of the double spiral columns of the arcade is matched by a pierced, or fretwork, pair of flat pillars supporting an open compass pediment. Christine Stevenson describes it as "an elegantly attenuated triumphal arch."[34] Within the break of the pediment sits a florid set of Royal Arms, and below its cornice, an eagle is suspended with its wings open and ribbons billowing to either side. This eagle is unique in Wren's churches and has given rise to a myth that the screen was given by the Hanseatic League, whose London base – the Steelyard – was in the parish.[35] Paul Jeffrey has rebutted this myth and, in any case, the Hanseatic eagle was double-headed, and one might have expected the Hansa merchants to have depicted their own emblem correctly.[36] It is more likely that the eagle represented the gospel, in the same way that countless brass eagle-

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[30] LMA/P69/PET1/B/001/MS04165/001, fol. 508.

[31] LMA/P69/ALH7/B/001/MS00819/001, fol. 310; LMA/P69/ALH7/B/013/MS00818/001, fol. 257r.; Pevsner, *City Churches*, 100.

[32] LMA/P69/ALH7/B/001/MS00819/002, fol. 113.

[33] LMA/P69/ALH8/B/013/MS00823/003, n.p., year ending April 1688.

[34] Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 283.

[35] Paul Jeffrey, "The Great Screen of All Hallows-the-Great," *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* 37 (1993): 157-158.

[36] Ibid.

lecterns do across the country.[37] It also responds to the smaller eagle set on the front of the sounding board a few feet away. Perhaps placing a symbol of the gospel on the screen roughly in the position of the unacceptable medieval Rood also helped to detoxify any remaining suspicion that screens were inherently Catholic in nature.[38]

THE MEANING OF THE CITY SCREENS

Introduction

The two rectors, William Beveridge and William Cave, are by now familiar as patristic scholars who believed profoundly that the Church of England took its descent from the earliest Christians in the post-Apostolic Age, and who wished to express that belief in the furnishings of their respective parish churches. There are no explicit indicators in either parish's vestry minutes, but it would seem that both rectors had the cooperation of their churchwardens and vestries. However, we do have two sources which provide rich information on Beveridge's thinking about the purpose of screens in churches. The first source is his 1672 treatise on the Councils and Canons of the Early Church, *Synodikon* – specifically a chapter which describes the layout and use of primitive church buildings.[39] The second source is the influential sermon which Beveridge preached at the opening of his church in 1682, which was published in at least thirty-nine editions under the title *The Excellency and Usefulness of Common Prayer*.[40]

Commentators have noted the parallel which Beveridge draws in *Excellency* between primitive practice and contemporary Anglican practice in various areas, in particular between the "Skreen or Partition of Network" in primitive churches and the chancel screen of later ones.[41] Beveridge's comment about the screen is brief and made in a section which is principally an intense exposition of the spiritual importance of the Lord's Supper. Beveridge marks this out as "the highest Ordinance of the Church," requiring "the highest pitch of Devotion that we can arrive at in this world." Indeed, "nothing contributes more than frequent Communion at our

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[37] For discussion of post-Reformation, pre-Victorian eagle lecterns, see Marcus van der Meulen, *The Brass Eagle Lecterns of England* (Stroud, Amberley Publishing, 2017).

[38] Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 283, suggests the eagle refers to Exodus 19:4: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." Absent supporting references elsewhere, the connection is unproven.

[39] William Beveridge, "Annotations on the Canons of the First Nicene Council - On Canon XI," in William Beveridge, *Synodikon*, 71-77. I am grateful to David Wyatt for translating this chapter from Beveridge's Latin and Greek text; it is set out in Appendix H, and all subsequent references are to the section headings there, and not to the original text.

[40] British Library, *Short Title Catalogue*, online edition, lists thirty-nine editions from 1682 to 1799.

[41] Du Prey, *Hawksmoor's London Churches*, 31-36; Griffith-Jones, "Enrichment of cherubims," 159-163. Other scholars make the same comparison; see Peter Doll, *'After the Primitive Christians': The Eighteenth-Century Anglican Eucharist in its Architectural Setting* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 1997), 27; and Peter Doll, "The Architectural Expression of Primitive Christianity: William Beveridge and the Temple of Solomon," *Reformation & Renaissance Review: Journal of the Society for Reformation Studies* 13, no. 2 (August 2011): 275-306.

Lords Table" to ensuring that Christians "might be edified and confirmed in the Faith."[42] Anxious not to delay his main Eucharistic theme for too long, Beveridge adds as an aside:

> I could easily demonstrate from the Records of those times [that primitive churches had screens]. But having purposely waved Antiquity hitherto, I am loath to trouble you with it now. But I mention it at present, only because some perhaps may wonder why this should be observed in our Church, rather than in all the other Churches which have been lately built in this City. Whereas they should rather wonder why it was not observed in all other as well as this. For besides our Obligations to conform as much as may be to the practice of the Universal Church, and to avoid novelty and singularity in all things relating to the Worship of God; it cannot be easily imagined that the Catholick Church in all Ages and places for 13 or 1400 years together, should observe such a Custom as this, except there were great reasons for it.[43]

The screen was clearly no mere whimsy on Beveridge's part. He felt *obliged* to install a screen, and his disapproval of churches without them should be taken at face-value. However, his reference to primitive practice as the justification for installing a screen is problematic. This becomes clearer when we compare the lengthy description of a primitive church building in *Synodikon* with what he actually installed at Cornhill. *Synodikon* also includes a conjectural reconstruction of the ground-plan for this church, which du Prey comments upon in *Hawksmoor's London Churches* (Fig. 6.6).[44] Du Prey draws out the physical connection between the plan and the Cornhill screen, but pays less attention to the text, in which Beveridge describes the various activities which went on in his primitive church building, by which actors, and in which parts.[45] Beveridge identifies no fewer than nine different classes of person present, each of whom is assigned to a particular role and place. These begin with the "wailers" – those with the lowest spiritual status – who stand in the portico seeking to demonstrate their sincerity to those who are allowed to enter further.[46] Three further classes of penitent stand in the narthex, where they may, in separate groups, first "learn," and then "hear" what is happening inside the church building.[47] Inside the church itself, Beveridge describes further separations of laity into three groups, also determined by their spiritual state. Finally, the bishop and his deacons occupy the sanctuary at the eastern part of the church.[48] At each stage, Beveridge relates these classes to the architectural features of the church, paying particular attention to the believer's progression from the portico, through to standing east of the lectern, in front of the sanctuary screen.

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[42] Beveridge, *Excellency*, 25-27.

[43] Ibid., 26.

[44] Beveridge, *Synodikon*, Plate opposite 71 in the original text.

[45] Du Prey, *Hawksmoor's London Churches*, 31-37.

[46] Beveridge, *Synodikon*, II.

[47] Ibid., VII-VIII.

[48] Ibid., XIII.

Synodikon's references to the actual screen are brief and scattered at several points in the text, mostly as comments tangential to more substantive observations. For example, Beveridge notes that the screen could be seen through but acted as "a kind of preventative from going through," and that it was, at times, veiled by a curtain; but he then discusses at much greater length the propriety of the emperor entering the sanctuary – the only layman ever to do so – and the actions of the priests and bishop behind the screen and curtain.[49]

This short summary compresses Beveridge's long and detailed conclusions from his study of the Fathers and other later writers, and omits his discussion of other activities in, and features of, the church building. Crucially, the overall picture is wholly removed from anything recognisable as seventeenth-century Anglican practice, and, indeed, from Beveridge's own Reformed theology.[50] In particular, the exclusion of so many laity from communion contrasts powerfully with the legal requirement of Canon 21 that all English men and women receive communion three times per year.[51]

It may be just as well, therefore, that Beveridge chose to "wave Antiquity" in his sermon, and that *Synodikon* was written in Latin, with extensive sections in Greek, and was thus inaccessible to most of his parishioners.[52] We are left with the conundrum that Beveridge's own scholarly work appears not to support the use he himself made of it in his sermon. As we have also seen with the reredos, we therefore need to conclude that the screen must be read as an evocation and allusion to something of particular ecclesial importance. Nevertheless, it is an evocation in the loosest possible sense. It would certainly seem that Beveridge was not concerned with a precise archaeological reconstruction of primitive church architecture or its internal layout. In one sense, this did not matter. The source inspiration – the Church of England as the heir of antiquity – required that there be a screen, and Beveridge provided one. It was enough that he declared it to be an allusion to primitive church practice in order to fulfil its purpose, without needing to appear like something one might find in fourth-century Byzantium.

William Beveridge and the administration of communion at St. Peter Cornhill

We see a more overtly seventeenth-century eucharistic purpose for the screen in Beveridge's sermon, *Excellency*. In particular, it is helpful if we read the relevant sections alongside the pew

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[49] Ibid., X-XIII.

[50] In particular, the theme in *Synodikon* of the progression of the individual from penitent to one of the "Faithful" – a process lasting several years – is far removed from a Reformed theology of grace.

[51] Bray, *Canons*, 291, 293; Beveridge, *Synodikon*, III, IV, VIII, where all but the Faithfull and "those standing with them" are commanded to leave.

[52] Beveridge, *Excellency*, 26.

plan drawn up by the joiners, Poultney and Athew (Fig. 3.8), and an illustration of the church interior as it first appeared (Fig. 6.7).

First, the Cornhill screen, and the space behind it, are clearly distinguished from those of medieval origin in the absence of any steps rising to the chancel, such an ascent having been a key feature of a Laudian ideal chancel. More importantly, the screen is placed two bays down the length of the rectangular-planned, basilican church, with three rows of pews placed to the east of the screen – a feature to which Laudians objected.[53] Still more objectionable to Laudians, there are pews set with their ends against the east wall, either side of the communion table and orientated towards it. The Cornhill table did, however, stand on one step and was railed on three sides (Fig. 3.8). The details of the contract with Poultney and Athew tell us that the pews east of the screen were to be made one inch higher than those west of the screen – a small detail but, by applying the rules of decorum, indicating some notion of difference in status, function, or, in a church context, spiritual significance.[54] In a further illustration from *Excellency* of the attention to liturgical detail which Beveridge brought to the church furnishings, the dimensions of these pews have been specified so as to accommodate kneeling:

> To take off all those little excuses that men are apt to make for themselves in this case, the Seats in this Church are so disposed, and all things so prepared in them, that there can be no inconvenience at all in it, but rather all the conveniences for kneeling that can be desired.[55]

At a height of three feet and nine inches when measured from the floor – specified in the contract with the joiners – these pews were shorter than many others in City churches and enabled those sitting in them to see the minister at the communion table even when kneeling, if we allow for the height of the pew plinth and assume some sort of kneeling rail on the floor of the pew.[56]

Beveridge describes the key liturgical actions of communion as follows (italics added to highlight particular points of physical movement between spaces and the need to specify the different function of those spaces):

> It may be sufficient to observe at present that the Chancel in our Christian Churches, was always looked upon as answering to the Holy of Holies in the Temple, which, you know, was separated from the Sanctuary or Body of the Temple, by the Command of God himself. *And that this place being appropriated to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, it ought*

[53] Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 132, 143, 187-191, *et al.*

[54] Appendix E.

[55] Beveridge, *Excellency*, 29.

[56] Appendix E. These pews were removed in 1872; see Appendix A.

to be so contrived, as may be most convenient for those who are to partake of that Blessed Ordinance. But it must needs be more convenient for those who are to enjoy Communion with Christ, and in him with one another, in this holy Sacrament, *to meet together, as one body, in one place separated for that purpose*, then [sic] to be dispersed, as otherwise they would be; some in one and some in another part of the Church. Or in short, *it is much better for the place to be separate, than the people.*

Furthermore, *It is not only convenient, but in some sense necessary, for every Communicant to observe and take special notice of the several Circumstances which our Lord hath ordained to be used in this Sacrament, as the Breaking of the Bread, and the Consecrating both that and the Wine*, to represent his Death, the breaking of his Body, and the shedding of his Blood for our sins; that so our hearts may be the more affected with it, and by consequence our Souls more edified by it. *But this cannot be so well done, except there be a place set apart for it, where they may all be placed, about or near to the Communion Table, and so behold what is there done at the Consecration of the Elements. Hence also it is, that the Seats there are and ought to be so ordered, that all that are in them may still look that way*, and contemplate upon their Blessed Saviour, there evidently set forth as Crucified for them.[57]

The clear message is that worshippers are seated for most of the service in their allocated pews west of the screen, but move east of the screen for communion, so that they can personally see and hear the blessing of the bread and wine. The implication is that the eastern pews were empty, other than at a communion service, and there is no suggestion in *Excellency* that some parishioners were already routinely there. From the number of those eastern pews, we can deduce that administration must have been carried out in groups until all communicants had received. Beveridge emphasises that the Lord's Supper is both a "Communion with Christ" and a communion "with one another," and he clearly decided that that mutual communion would be better expressed by enabling a larger number of communicants to gather together than would be the case if they only met together around the communion rails, which might only have accommodated eight to ten people.[58] His reference to communicants being "dispersed" about the whole of the church is a reference to the preference of some puritans for the bread and wine to be administered in the pews.[59] Unfortunately, we cannot deduce from this whether Beveridge administered communion in the eastern pews or at the communion rails, though the latter seems more likely.

It might be argued against this interpretation that Beveridge was only referring to the pews or benches set against the east wall, and which face inwards towards the communion table, or to the space between the communion rails and the first of the eastern pews. However, given Beveridge's emphasis on large numbers being able to witness the breaking of bread and pouring of wine, this seems unlikely. (Two of the rejected original pew plans for St. Stephen Walbrook also have pews or benches set north and south of the table and facing inwards (Figs. 5.3-5.4).

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[57] Beveridge, *Excellency*, 26-27.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ephraim Udall, *Communion Comlinesse*, 4, complained about this practice for the same reason in 1641.

This suggests that the desire to enable more people to witness the breaking of bread remained current in Restoration London. Given that only two of the Walbrook plans included these pews, that also suggests that they had not been specified by the vestry in their request for proposals and must instead have been at the instigation of the joiners themselves – an interesting instance of craftsmen making liturgical decisions of their own.[60]) It could also be argued that reserving so much space for occasional use would put pressure on seating elsewhere in the church. However, St. Peter's is a large church and may have had seats to spare. Moreover, it was a parish which had not been united with another after the Fire, and therefore did not have the additional pressure of seating two parishes in one building.[61] Lastly, Beveridge attached great importance to communion, saying that his preference would be to hold communion services every week, doubtless justifying reserving an area for that special purpose.[62]

We must address one final inconsistency between *Synodikon* and *Excellency*. While discussing the sanctuary area behind the screen in *Synodikon*, Beveridge describes the absolute prohibition on laity (other than the emperor) entering and then laments:

> In our days – oh how sad! – in which heaven and earth seem to have got mixed up, everyone enters this holy sanctuary quite freely, contrary to what was established scrupulously by the primitive Church.[63]

This sits uncomfortably with *Excellency*, in which Beveridge asserts the very opposite – the importance of communicants coming through the screen in order to witness and receive communion.[64] Again, we have to conclude that Beveridge was making a subtly different point in erecting a screen in his church. He claimed ancient authority for screens but was content for one to be installed without the need for it to be used in the same way. The screen was about allusion, rather than archaeological reconstruction, and about identity, rather than praxis. This may also be an illustration of the sort of situation which continental observers like Jean Daillé found so perplexing in the Anglican use of the Fathers (Chapter 5).

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[60] LMA/P69/STE2/B/025/MS07695.

[61] Appendix C.

[62] Beveridge, *Excellency*, 28.

[63] Beveridge, *Synodikon*, XII.

[64] Beveridge, *Excellency*, 26-27.

Other seventeenth-century "communion rooms"

What Beveridge set out at St. Peter Cornhill was his own particular approach to providing a space which was dedicated to the Lord's Supper, which provided audibility and visibility for large numbers of congregants, and which made a statement about Anglican descent from the Early Church. Other equally experimental approaches can be found in the preceding generations – not necessarily accompanied by screens – and are worth noting in order to add further context to Beveridge's case. We can consider these as "communion rooms" in the sense that they are a particular response to providing a space for communion – sometimes in an existing chancel – which differed from the Laudian ideal, principally by their inclusion of seating in the "communion room."

Fincham and Tyacke identify All Hallows Staining, London, as having a space explicitly referred to as a "communyon room" in 1598-99, and point to other examples in London and Gloucestershire where pews were set around a communion table which was placed centrally in the chancel.[65] The same imperative of enabling communicants to come together in numbers, to see and hear the liturgy held in these cases also. The Calvinist Bishop of Lincoln, John Williams, cited audibility as a prerequisite in his letter to the Laudian Vicar of Grantham in 1627, in which he mandated the setting of the communion table table-wise in the body of the church or in the chancel.[66] Williams cited both the rubrical requirement that the liturgy be audible and instructed the vicar that, if there was any doubt, "your Parishioners must be Iudges of your audiblenesse."[67] Although Williams did not explicitly advocate here the creation of a communion room, he nevertheless insisted that a communion service required audibility and a space to accommodate as many people as possible.

The church of St. John's, Leeds, was built in 1631 with a double-nave plan, with the pulpit nearly halfway down the nave and – unusually – set forward from the wall in the north nave, without being attached to a pillar.[68] The screen runs the full width of the church across both naves, and creates a large, nearly empty space east of the screen which is difficult to describe as a chancel as normally understood, other than by virtue of being at the east of the building.[69] Its floor was originally level with the nave, and the large space was set with inward-

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[65] Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 58.

[66] The text of Williams' letter is appended to the Laudian riposte in Peter Heylyn, *A Coale from the Altar* (London: 1636), 67-78, and is discussed in Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 152-164.

[67] Ibid., 77-78.

[68] Stocks, *St. John's, Leeds*, 11, 15.

[69] Douglas and Powell, *St. John's, Leeds*, n.p., "Architectural Description," second page.

facing pews around the perimeter, and used solely for communion.[70] Here we see much the same balance as Beveridge achieved at Cornhill. The main body of the church is focused on the liturgical and preaching centre of the triple-decker pulpit, and the sense of corporate communion is emphasised by large numbers of people able to move together through the screen to receive the bread and wine as one body.

In and around London, at Broadway Chapel, Westminster (1635-39) and Poplar Chapel (1642-54), both these newly built chapels probably had "communion rooms" from the beginning, set at the eastern end within their rectangular ground-plan, and the later Shadwell Chapel (1656-57) was even provided with one in the shape of a projecting chancel, its puritan credentials notwithstanding.[71]

At St. Augustine Watling Street, in 1641 the rector Ephraim Udall wrote in *Communion Comelinesse* of having placed four rails around the communion table, which stood in the centre of the chancel, and enabled him to administer to forty to fifty communicants at a time, gathered in two rows, one at the rails, and the others in pews behind them, "& when they had received, another company after them, and so till all had received and administered with much ease, quick despatch and benefit."[72] Like Beveridge later, Udall emphasised that the Lord's Supper "is not onely a Communion of the Faithfull with Christ, but of the Faithfull also one with another," and he stressed with some passion how vital it was for communicants to see and hear what was being done, "which things cannot be effected but by coming up to the Table in sight and hearing of the Minister," so that "an outward Signe of an inward and spirituall Thing … be received of the heart by Faith."[73] Udall also noted that the French and Dutch Stranger churches in London had similar arrangements, as did churches in Scotland.[74]

Julia Spraggon has identified churches in London where Laudian alterations to chancels were reversed in 1640-41. At St. Anne and St. Agnes, the communion table was moved, and pews were set up in the chancel "as before."[75] At St. Michael Crooked Lane in 1641-42, pews were erected in the east end of the chancel, implying that the table had been moved and that the communion rails had been taken down.[76]

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Guillery, "Suburban Models," 73-77, 85-87.

[72] Ephraim Udall, *Communion Comelinesse* (London: 1641), 4 in unpaginated epistle to the reader.

[73] Ibid., 4, 4 in unpaginated epistle to the reader, 3.

[74] Ibid., 6-7.

[75] Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm*, 138.

[76] Ibid., 141-142.

Returning to the post-Fire London churches, at All Hallows-the-Great – which was furnished after St. Peter Cornhill – William Cave matched Beveridge's patristic efforts with his own screen. Although he did not write specifically about his London church, or preach a sermon which set out his ecclesial thinking in the way that Beveridge did with *Excellency*, his own writings, especially *Primitive Christianity*, show that his motivations were the same as Beveridge's in their patristic origins.[77] He was also, as we saw in Chapter 5, pro-active in taking the furnishing of his church under his own control. Having said this, precisely how Cave intended the space east of the screen to be used routinely is less clear: there were five rows of pews east of the screen – compared with three at Cornhill – and the overall seating capacity of the church was less than at Cornhill, and served two parishes, making it more likely that the eastern pews were routinely occupied, and not just at communion times.[78] Overall, it therefore seems less likely that Cave was able to set aside his chancel solely for communion in quite the same manner, and his primary interest was the allusion to primitive practice. Possibly, in view of his churchmanship and the exceptional fittings of his reredos (discussed in Chapter 5), Cave sought to make an assertion of the special holiness of the sanctuary through the reredos and table rather than by separation of spaces, albeit in a chancel which was compromised by the presence of so many pews.

The models for administering communion described in the preceding pages, and the diversity of churchmanship of those involved, serve to emphasise the manner in which differences between the specifics of any individual's eucharistic theology should not mask the fact that all Protestants viewed communion as being sacramentally and spiritually significant, to be undertaken with spiritual care and preparation.[79] At Leeds, the patron was a religious moderate and the minister a puritan.[80] Udall was a moderate who found himself attacked on one side by Laudians, and on the other by puritans.[81] Beveridge was theologically Reformed and motivated by his desire to emulate the purity of primitive practice. Lastly, Cave was a High Churchman, but one who shared Beveridge's perception of the Church of England as the true spiritual heir to the earliest Christians.

As these brief summaries make clear, for some clergy, it was important that their practical and architectural arrangements reflected their sense that the Lord's Supper was a communion, a *shared,* participatory action and expression of faith in which, at the prayer book

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[77] Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, 138-140.

[78] Appendix C.

[79] For discussion of the importance attached to communion across the theological spectrum, including the implications of receiving the elements worthily or unworthily, see Arnold Hunt, "The Lord's Supper in Early Modern England," *Past and Present* 161 (1998): 39-83; and Alec Ryrie, "The Lord's supper," in Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 336-351.

[80] Douglas and Powell, *St. John's, Leeds*, n.p., "The Early History of Leeds and the Life of John Harrison."

[81] Arnold Hunt, "Udall, Ephraim (*bap.* 1587, *d.* 1647)," *ODNB* (online edn., accessed 24 Dec 2015).

invitation to draw near with faith, communicants physically rose from one place and moved to another. There, parishioners gathered together in large numbers in a place in which they could see and hear together all that happened in the communion service.[82] This gives further weight to the need to read Wren's "auditory" comments as being as much about the experience of the liturgy as simply a functional matter of being able to see and hear the preacher. It is this spiritual experience which Beveridge wanted to achieve at Cornhill, to use a screen to mark out, not a Laudian sanctuary made holy by the presence of an altar, but a communion space specially reserved for the corporate celebration and witnessing of the Lord's Supper.

THE CHURCHES WITHOUT SCREENS

Finally, we should return to the question of why the clergy and vestrymen of only two parishes erected screens in their churches. Did the other parish clergy not share Beveridge's and Cave's sense of identification with the Early Church? As discussed in Chapter 5, the attention given to questions of Church identity in the period was intense, and the focus on idealised notions of the Jerusalem Temple and primitive practice was common. Beveridge and Cave stood apart from their London colleagues in being patristic scholars, and it ought not to be surprising that they engaged with the idea of recreating some aspect of primitive practice more enthusiastically than others did. However, it is possible that others may have done so too, albeit in a much smaller way, and which was more representational in nature than architectural.

Scholars of the period all commented on the "cancelli," the rails or screens which existed in early churches. These are variously described as "Skreen or Partition of Network" (Beveridge), "neat rails" (Cave), "open work" and "fenced in by a Low Wenscot" (Wheler), and "certain Rails of Wood; curiously and artificially wrought in the Form of Net-work" (Bingham).[83] Something matching these descriptions – but less substantial than a chancel screen – did indeed exist in many of the new churches. Pews were arranged in blocks, sometimes with a cross aisle (as at St. James Piccadilly; Fig. 3.24) and sometimes not (as at St. Peter Cornhill; Fig. 3.8). In some cases, at the back of each pew-block stood a "screen," twelve to eighteen inches high, carved and usually pierced with acanthus scrollwork or other foliate decoration, as at St. Stephen Walbrook (Fig. 6.8). With the nineteenth-century removal of box pews, some of these survived as decoration on other features, and only at St. Mary Abchurch is it still possible to see them in something close to their original use and position (Fig. 3.16). The scrollwork design is archetypally seventeenth-century in style and can be found in domestic settings too, especially on

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[82] Cummings, *Book of Common Prayer*, 399.

[83] Beveridge, *Excellency*, 26; Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, 139; Wheler, *Primitive Churches*, 70, 117; Bingham, *Origines*, 163.

staircases (Fig. 6.9); in Chapter 2, we saw how Edward Pearce the Elder produced a pattern book of designs for such pieces in 1640 (Fig. 2.9), which his son republished in 1668 and 1680. Possibly, when applied in the new churches, these low screens were more than just decorative, but were intended to be a symbolic reference to the "cancelli" of primitive churches. There appears to be no contemporary reference to support this suggestion, but the Victorian antiquary the Rev. W. Sparrow Simpson, rector of St. Matthew Friday Street, noted of his own church that:

> A small carved screen standing upon the pews, scarcely more than 18 inches above the moulding on the backs, divided the church into two parts, forming, as is the case in most of Sir Christopher Wren's churches, a quasi-chancel. This screen was removed but a few years ago, though before my incumbency. From its carved panels, which were fortunately preserved, I have constructed the present reading-desk.[84]

No illustration survives, but the 1684 pew plan appended to the contract with the joiner Richard Kedge shows a line drawn across the church, north-south, dividing three pews east of that line from the rest (Fig. 6.10).[85] The same feature can also be seen in the 1693 pew plan and joinery contract for All Hallows Lombard Street (Fig. 6.11), and two out of three of the surviving pew plans for St. Stephen Walbrook.[86] These lines are not directly explained in the parish records. However, the Lombard Street contract also refers to setting up "pewes in the said Church and in the Chancell thereof."[87] There are also references in the records of five other churches which also had no physically distinct chancel to pews being "in the chancel": St. Antholin, St. Lawrence Jewry, St. Mary Abchurch, St. Mary Aldermanbury, and St. Matthew Friday Street.[88]

Seemingly in Simpson's mind, these low screens did convey meaning, and although he mentions a "quasi-chancel," he clearly did not have a medieval, or architectural, meaning of "chancel" in mind. Additional evidence from St. Stephen Walbrook also suggests that these screens were intended to signify. In the contract for building the pews, the joiners were instructed to make some of the benches for the pews out of oak and others out of the cheaper wood, deal.[89] This suggests that the status of some of those pews, most likely the ones closest to the pulpit, might be reflected in the material of which they are made, as well as by the use of these screens to demarcate the eastern and western halves. They are also visible in several other engravings showing the interiors of churches, such as St. Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange (Fig.

[84] W. Sparrow Simpson, "Notes on the History and Antiquities of the United Parishes of S. Matthew Friday Street and S. Peter Cheap in the City of London," *Transactions of the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society*, III (1870): 378.

[85] LMA/P69/MTW/B/013/MS07683, n.p., dated 11 November 1684.

[86] LMA/P69/ALH4/B/001/MS04049/002, fol. 48r.; LMA/P69/STE2/B/025/MS07695.

[87] LMA/P69/ALH4/B/001/MS04049/002, fol. 48r.

[88] LMA/P69/ANL/B/004/MS01046/001, fol. 289r.; LMA/P69/LAW1/B/001/MS02590/002, fol. 127.; LMA/P69/LAW2/B/020/MS03925, fol. 6; LMA/P69/MRY2/B/001/MS03570/002, fol. 148v.; LMA/P69/MTW/B/005/MS01016/002, n.p., 28 March 1687.

[89] LMA/P69/STE2/B/026/MS01056, fol. 20.

0.3), where the status of certain pews seems to be represented by differences in height – three different heights in this case – as well as separation of the eastern-most block by screens. We have already seen in Chapter 3 that the Benchers of the Middle and Inner Temples accepted Wren's allusion to primitive practice, which equated themselves with the Faithful and their Juniors with catechumen. Maybe in parish churches, too, it was acceptable to make a distinction between those of greater rank and those of less by means of an oblique reference to primitive practice.

CONCLUSION

William Cave coupled his screen with a stone reredos and communion table, both of which also incorporated statuary. Though he did not write explicitly about his screen, Cave's defence of stone altars in *Primitive Christianity* shows that he wanted to make a strong reference to Early Church practice in his newly furnished church.[90] William Beveridge did not feel the need to use stone, and his reredos at St. Peter Cornhill is restrained, bearing comparison to Wren's wainscot reredoses (Fig. 6.12). But his desire to link the Restoration parish church with early churches is clear. Cave's differentiation between acceptable stone altars and unacceptable ones (Chapter 5) has a subtlety similar to the apparent inconsistency between Beveridge's description of primitive practice and the use of his own screen. In neither case did this much matter. The screens were about allusion not reconstruction. Their purpose was to declare to parishioners that they were descended from their fellow believers in what they were told had been the purest spiritual times. Beveridge reminded his hearers that the Lord's Supper was a communion among believers as well as with Christ. As they passed through his screen to take communion, they were reminded, too, that they were in communion with the saints down the ages.

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[90] Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, vol. 1, 142-144. Discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 7

THE REREDOSES

OF

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN

INTRODUCTION

Wren can be connected confidently with the furnishings of five churches: St. Andrew Holborn, St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, St. Clement Danes, St. James Piccadilly, and St. Mary Somerset.[1] The circumstances by which Wren came to be involved with these churches differs from the large bulk of the City churches. Three were private commissions to the west of the Fire-burned City, and the two which were in the City itself were handled by Wren for the exceptional reason of the parishes' poverty and by direction of the Commission that its furnishings would be paid for by coal tax monies. The particular coalescence of circumstances in these four parishes means that it is possible to draw conclusions about churchmanship with greater confidence here than in most other churches. Additionally, we will see that Wren avoided pattern book frontispiece models for his reredoses, and chose to create ones which related more closely with their surroundings.

The best attested of the churches discussed in this chapter is St. Andrew Holborn, where the building audit records that the joiner, Valentine Houseman, was instructed

> To performe & finish all the Joyner's work viz Pews Wainscott on Walls & Pillasters Fronts of the Galleries, the Doors, Port holes & Alterpiece and all other Joyner's work, the Pulpitt excepted. As Schedule and design of Sir Chr. Wren.[2]

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[1] It is possible that Wren was also involved at his other Westminster church, St. Anne Soho, but the loss of records and destruction of the church makes attribution difficult.

[2] LMA/P82/AND/B/018/MS04256, fol. 7.

At Holborn – furnished from May to November 1686 – Wren's client was Edward Stillingfleet, who, in addition to being rector, was also Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, and thus Wren's most important client after the King himself.[3]

The relevant parochial records of St. Clement Danes and St. James Piccadilly – whose buildings were completed in 1670 and 1684 respectively – have been lost, but it is highly likely that Wren was closely involved in the furnishings here as well. These churches were new private commissions, built in the aristocratic districts of Westminster and the Strand.[4] The patron and chief financier of St. James Piccadilly was the courtier, and intimate of the Queen Mother, the Earl of St. Albans, and the rector of St. Clement was Gregory Hascard, royal chaplain and future Dean of Windsor.[5] Consequently, at Holborn, Piccadilly, and St. Clement, Wren had individual clients who were prominent churchmen and courtiers, and who were directly interested in the churches being built. This was, in a sense, a more normal type of relationship between architect and client than the one which prevailed in the City. For the City churches, Wren had a trusting but inactive client – the Commission – whose main concern was with the rapid rebuilding of a large number of functioning church buildings by a safe pair of hands, and who were content to remain remote from the detailed building programme. The frequent references in City vestry minutes and churchwardens accounts to visits to Wren and presentations of gifts have a definite supplicatory air.[6] In 1673, the churchwardens of St. Mary Aldermanbury petitioned Wren and Hooke to furnish their church, hoping: "that they may be encouraged to assist in the Pewfiting that Worke, [the vestry] now Ordered that the Parish by the Churchwardens doo present Dr Wren with seventy Ginnies and Mr Robert Hooke with ten Ginnies they were authorised by their vestry to make gifts to Wren and Hooke totalling 80 guineas" – a considerable sum of money. They they returned home disappointed, and only gave £21.[7] West of the City, such inducements were unnecessary; according to an inscription carved into the chancel wall of St. Clement Danes, Wren gave his services without charge.[8] It is easy to understand how such commissions appealed to him, giving him a largely unconstrained site where he could exercise his skills without the limitations of medieval City boundaries. Given the status of his clients, it is also most unlikely that Wren would have wanted to delegate the design of the furnishings to a joiner, or indeed that his clients would have let him do so.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Jeffery, *City Churches*, 229-232, 250-252.

[5] F.W.H. Sheppard, *St. James Westminster, Survey of London*, vol 29 (London: London Survey Committee, 1960), 31-55; Anthony R.J.S. Adolph, "Jermyn [Germain], Henry, earl of St Albans (bap. 1605, d. 1684)," in *ODNB* (online edn., accessed 16 Feb 2018); "Gregory Hascard, (CCEd Person ID 35722)', *The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540–1835* <http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk>, accessed 20 July 2018; Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum*, vol. 3, 394; Jeffery, *City Churches*, 63-64.

[6] Jeffery, *City Churches*, 56-58.

[7] LMA/P69/MRY2/B/001/MS03570/002, fol. 133v., LMA/P69/MRY2/B/005/MS03556/002, n.p., 13 April 1673.

[8] Hatton, 1, 203.

The final two churches in this category are St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe and St. Mary Somerset, and we have seen that the installation of the furnishings here was managed through Wren's Office (Chapter 1). The extent of Wren's personal involvement is unclear, however, and furnishing London's two poorest parish churches may have been a low priority for him at a time when building St. Paul's was in progress.[9] At St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, John Oliver and Nicholas Hawksmoor are both mentioned in the churchwardens' accounts, and payments were "given Sir Christoph Draughts man in obtaining the Wainscott in the front of the Galleries in the Church gratis … [and] gaining the Altar piece," suggesting that Hawksmoor had a leading role in the enterprise, albeit under Wren's supervision.[10] As the design of the reredos at the Wardrobe is so similar to that at Holborn, we may include it in this chapter. The fifth church – St. Mary Somerset – was demolished in 1871, and some of its furnishings were dispersed (Appendix A); the reredos was discarded, and Hatton's description of it is too indistinct to be able to include it in this discussion with sufficient confidence.[11] As a small, single-cell church, the spatial context was, in any case, very different from the others.[12]

The cases listed here therefore provide us with the opportunity to study Wren's own work in relation to the furnishings, in identifiable circumstances where he is responding to the demands of prominent clients. The four churches share the same galleried, basilican form, and are clearly closely related examples of Wren's ideal, as set out in his 1711 auditory letter.[13] Their shared authorship is further proclaimed by the fact that their reredoses are also variations around a common theme, as will be seen. Moreover, the model also differs markedly from most of the City church reredoses. Most of the latter – especially where the frontispiece convention was being employed – have structures which emphasise the vertical, in the manner of an archway or gate. Here we shall see that the reredoses in these churches emphasise the horizontal. Despite the similarities between the four, closer examination reveals that the more standard architect-client dynamic which was at work here involved Wren responding to his clients' specific desires to express a particular type of churchmanship in each instance. The following sections begin with discussion of the physical form of the reredoses, and then move outward to identify the aspects in which their design responds to those needs.

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[9] Jeffery, *City Churches*, 200, 291; Campbell, *Building St. Paul's*, 74. St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe and St. Mary Somerset were both built in 1685-88, just as work was beginning on the nave of the cathedral.

[10] LMA/P69/AND1/B/009/MS02088/002, n.p., years ending March 1687, 1692, and 1693.

[11] Hatton, 2, 404.

[12] Jeffery, *City Churches*, 289.

[13] Soo, *Wren's Tracts*, 115.

THE MAKING OF WREN'S REREDOSES

Very probably in the light of his own visit to Paris, Wren himself seems to have felt that the compass pediment was particularly well-suited to an Anglican ecclesiastical setting. He used it in all of the Anglican reredos designs with which he is associated, both royal commissions – Charles II's Whitehall Palace chapel, and the chapels at Hampton Court and Chelsea Hospital (Figs. 7.1-7.3) – as well as parochial ones.[14] St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe and St. Andrew Holborn were both reduced to a shell in 1940-41, but we have many drawings and photographs showing their arrangement at various dates (e.g. Figs. 7.4-7.5). The evolution of the reredos at St. Clement Danes is difficult to track with certainty. A 1751 engraving by Boydell (Fig. 7.6) shows a compass pediment like those at Holborn and the Wardrobe, but Hatton talks of this pediment, which enclosed three cherubim carved *in relievo*, sitting beneath a triangular pediment – a phrase which is difficult to interpret.[15] Moreover, the reredos was modified and embellished in minor ways during the eighteenth century, replacing whatever pedimented structure which previously existed with a slightly rococo finish, set over a Pelican in her Piety.[16] This was also destroyed in 1941, and the recreation which was installed after the War is closer to the modified design than to the original one (Fig. 7.7).[17] Notwithstanding the curious triangular pediment, the St. Clement Danes reredos nevertheless seems to have been related to the others in this group. The recently restored reredos at St. James Piccadilly is the only one of this group which exists in its original form, though its surrounding, somewhat municipal, panelling results from Sir Albert Richardson's restoration of 1947-54 and is not Wren's (Fig. 7.8).[18]

The common characteristic of Wren's parochial reredoses is their contextual integration into the fabric of the church and its other furnishings. This marks them out from the City churches. While this is not to say that other parishes were disrespectful of the fabric which Wren had given them, the sense of integration is more explicit in these cases than elsewhere. Given that Wren would have seen some of the monumental high altars of the churches in Paris during his visit there in 1665, but despite his enthusiasm for French design, the designs of these parochial reredoses represent a deliberate rejection of that genre, as we shall now see.

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[14] Simon Thurley, *Whitehall Palace: An Architectural History of the Royal Apartments, 1240-1698* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1999), 116-118, 133-135; Howard Colvin, ed. *The History of the King's Works, vol. V, 1660-1782* (London: H.M.S.O., 1976), 290-293; Simon Thurley, *Hampton Court: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 217-219; Pevsner, *London North West*, 564.

[15] Nikolaus Pevsner and Simon Bradley, Buildings of England: *London 6: Westminster* (London: Yale University Press, 2005), 289-291; Hatton, 1, 204; Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum*, vol. 3, 395, mentions the addition of small statues of Moses and Aaron above the entablature and five candlesticks over the pediment.

[16] *Wren Society*, vol. IX, 22.

[17] Pevsner, *Westminster*, 289-291.

[18] Ibid., 584-587.

In Wren's reredos designs, the centre of the reredos marked by the pediment is closely integrated into the wainscot of the "chancel" to a degree which is not found in any other of the parish churches. The cornice of each reredos is at the same height as the rest of the wainscot and, at Holborn and the Wardrobe, the pediment is set within an attic storey rather than standing proud above the cornice or an entablature (Figs. 7.4-7.5). There is therefore a continuous run across the east end of the church and, where there is a physically distinct chancel, around the flanking north and south walls also. Pilasters and engaged columns – absent outside the chancel – provide articulation to what would otherwise be a plain wainscoted wall, and the impression is relatively two-dimensional. This design of reredos is less eye-catching than those in most of the other churches. None of these reredoses had a Glory, generally an important iconographical feature in the majority of the churches.[19] The attic storey presents itself as a continuation of the gallery fronts, and is articulated by the same series of raised and fielded panels and bolection mouldings as those fronts. The whole of this structure sits below the sill of the east window. Wren's refitting of the chancel of the Queen's Chapel, St. James', for Catherine of Braganza in 1682-83 (Fig. 7.9) exhibits the same attention to its integration with the rest of the decorative scheme, and with the overall architecture of the space.[20]

Unlike most of the City churches' reredoses, the reredoses at Holborn and the Wardrobe were decorated with wood-carving only sparingly, with little by way of festoons, drops, and cherub heads of the type which characterise most of the others. The overall effect is one of restrained and slightly austere structural grandeur, and there is a certain muscularity to it, especially when taken in combination with the stocky, wainscoted pillars supporting the galleries. At Holborn, the visual effect of this austerity was relieved by the boards proclaiming the Decalogue, Lord's Prayer, and Creed being executed with black script upon a gold background, a vibrant form of presentation used in many other churches, of which only that at St. Anne and St. Agnes survives (Fig. 7.10).[21]

The notion of integration is also reflected in contemporary documents and building records. The building records for St. Andrew Holborn refer to the entire east wall as "the altarpiece," and Hatton uses the same term to describe all three sides of the chancel of each of these churches in *New View*.[22] We have seen in Chapter 5 how the use of the term "altar" was sensitive, and we could easily imagine that "altarpiece" would be equally problematic. Given how

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[19] The lost reredos at St. Mary Somerset, however, did. LMA/CLC/313/J/002/MS25539/010, fol. 3v, mentions a "sweep pannell in the pediment being a Glory, Cherubim heads and Drapery."

[20] Colvin, *King's Works,* vol. IV, *1485-1660, Part II,* (London: H.M.S.O., 1976), 248-253; John Harris and Gordon Higgott, *Inigo Jones: Complete Architectural Drawings,* (London: The Royal Academy of Arts, 1989), 182-185.

[21] Hatton, 1, 116. Hatton, *New View*, passim, mentions twenty-one churches having either the Commandments, or the Lord's Prayer and Creed, being painted on a gold background.

[22] LMA/P82/AND/B/018/MS04256, fol. 8; Hatton, 1, 116, 125.

far removed the reredoses in these particular churches are from those discussed by Cousinié (Chapter 4), the fact that Hatton and others could refer to what was, essentially, three sides of a wainscoted room as an "altarpiece" suggests that the term had been, or was being, largely de-sensitised.

The reredos at Piccadilly differs from those in the City churches in two respects. Though of the same basic design, it is richly decorated with some of Grinling Gibbons' finest work (Fig. 7.8).[23] This was doubtless appropriate for the fashionable, courtly new development around St. James' and probably reflected the decision of the donor, Sir Robert Gayer.[24] It also differs in that it lacks an attic storey, while still displaying the same sense of continuous wainscot around the chancel as the other churches in this group. Wren brings a distinctly minimal approach to the character of the reredos. The compass pediment simply breaks out of the cornice, and the pilasters have been reduced to an elemental level, being implied by the application of a bolection mould rather than the full structural form of a pilaster as normally understood – with base, shaft, and capital. Perhaps this was intended to provide a plain background against which the richness of Gibbons' carvings would stand out all the more.

The combination of attic storey and integration with the chancel wainscot which Wren clearly favoured may owe something to Inigo Jones. On a much larger scale, Jones' screen for Winchester Cathedral (1637-38, dismantled in 1820, Fig. 7.11) also had an attic, within which there was a small central pediment – albeit a triangular one.[25] The spacing of the columns and pilasters on the Winchester screen is very close to Wren's deployment of them at Holborn and the Wardrobe. Although the two churches lack the outermost bays of the Winchester screen along their eastern length, they are nevertheless echoed at Holborn in the small return at the western edge of the north and south sides of the chancel; thus, the elevation of the composition as a whole matches that of Winchester. In both churches, in adapting the Winchester screen, the aedicules containing statues of James I and Charles I have been replaced with the boards for the Lord's Prayer and Creed.

It is probable, therefore, that Jones provides an important bridge between the simple parish Commandment Boards of the late sixteenth century and the more architectural treatment they receive in Wren's churches. This is not necessarily only an ecclesiological point, or the simple copying of precedent. Jones brought the same sense of unity of design to his domestic interiors in which panelling, overmantels, doorcases, and picture frames are conceived as a whole,

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[23] Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 100-103.

[24] Pevsner, *Westminster*, 586.

[25] Harris and Higgott, *Inigo Jones: Drawings*, 248-250.

and in an explicitly architectural manner. This is apparent in the Double Cube Room at Wilton House, for example, features of which also derive from Jean Barbet's *Livre d'Architecture d'Autels et de Cheminées* and Pierre Le Muet's *Traicté des Cinq Ordres d'Architecture*, discussed in Chapter 3.[26]

THE MEANING OF WREN'S REREDOSES

Can we draw any conclusions from Wren's reredos designs about his churchmanship and personal theology? The fact that Wren used the same basic model both in aristocratic St. James' and at the Wardrobe – one of the poorest London parishes – certainly suggests some sort of a preference. Nor was the relative austerity of the model dictated by lack of finance in the case of Holborn, where the whole of the joinery and carved work for the chancel – using Hatton's definition – and communion table and rails cost approximately £191, against the mere £41 for the same fittings at the Wardrobe.[27] Holborn spent a further £42 on gilding.[28] Decorum was as much at work here as budgetary constraints. Rather the design was one to which Wren felt particularly drawn, and it seems that Wren regarded this design of reredos as part and parcel of his auditory church design.

It should not be a surprise that, when there is a single, directing mind behind both the architecture and the furnishings of an individual church, there should be a greater harmony between them. We can imagine the architect visualising the completed, furnished church in his mind's eye, as the architectural structure begins to take shape at the design stage, and then being carried forward. At the very least, it is difficult to imagine the architect Wren setting up a large east window which the furnisher Wren then half-blocks with a two-storey reredos of the triumphal arch type, as happened at St. Mary-le-Bow, for example.[29] Arguably, the use of broadly similar forms in these churches, carefully integrated with the rest of the furnishings and fabric, conveys permanence and congruity, in a way which is less apparent in the churches where architecture and reredos came from different imaginations. The question, then, is whether this is purely a uniformity of appearance, or is also an ecclesial one.

It may help to widen the scope of consideration for a moment to the reredoses which Wren designed in his capacity as Surveyor of the King's Works. These were for two separate

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[26] Margaret Whinney and Oliver Millar, *English Art, 1625-1714*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 41; Leona Rostenberg, *English Publishers in the Graphic Arts, 1599-1700: A Study of the Printsellers & Publishers of Engravings, Art & Architectural Manuals, Maps & Copy-books*, (New York: Burt Franklin, 1963), 55.

[27] LMA/P82/AND/B/018/MS04256, fols. 8-9; LMA/CLC/313/J/002/MS25539/004, fol. 121r.

[28] LMA/P82/AND/B/018/MS04256, fol. 12.

[29] *Wren Society*, vol. IX, 44.

royal chapels at Whitehall Palace, first for Charles II in 1676, and then for James II in 1685-86; for the chapel at Hampton Court, for Queen Anne in 1710-11; and for the chapel at Chelsea Hospital in 1681-87.[30] Though not part of the output of the Office of Works, we may add to these Wren's unexecuted monumental reredos for St Paul's Cathedral (1696) (Figs. 7.12).[31] The contrast in scale and degree of ornamentation between these and Wren's parochial reredoses clearly illustrates a conscious expression of decorum – the suitability of the piece for the context in which it sits and the purpose it serves – which, in an ecclesiastical setting, is both an aesthetic and spiritual expression.[32] Particularly telling is that Wren's high altar for James II's Catholic chapel at Whitehall reflects both its status as a royal chapel, and as a functioning altarpiece for the Catholic mass, in the manner described by Cousinié (see Chapter 4).[33] It was built in polychrome marble and mosaic work, and filled the whole of the east wall of the chapel (Fig. 7.13). Its three storeys rose nearly forty feet high, and it was adorned with "lifesize" angels, and a painting of the Annunciation by Benedetto Gennari.[34] The fact that James's altarpiece was so manifestly Catholic also shows that Wren had an understanding of the liturgical requirements and eucharistic meaning of the mass; like Pepys and Evelyn, he could have attended mass at Jones' Queen's Chapel at St. James' Palace if he had wanted to.[35] He therefore knew quite how different those requirements were from those of the Anglican communion service. The Hampton Court reredos, in contrast, is of the triumphal arch model, and very similar to that in Charles II's lost Whitehall chapel (Figs. 7.2 and 7.1).[36] It is executed in oak, with double columns supporting an open compass pediment. The relatively limited carved work is by Gibbons. All the surface area is executed in a trellis-like marquetry pattern, seemingly deliberately avoiding notions of a Catholic altar-painting. Wren was clearly capable of designing a reredos of the grander sort when it was appropriate, and in a manner which responded to his clients' particular requirements: Italianate for the Catholic James; monumental but sober for Queen Anne.[37] He was aware of the particularities of confessional identity and knew how to express them architecturally. If Wren understood this in the context of the royal chapels, then we should assume he did so in the parish churches as well, and we can therefore look at what he provided in the parishes as an indicator of their eucharistic purpose. It is particularly important here to continue to note the manner in which the architecture and furnishings work closely together.

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[30] Thurley, *Whitehall Palace*, 116-118, 133-135; Thurley, *Hampton Court*, 217-219; Pevsner, *London North West*, 564.

[31] Newman, "Fittings and Liturgy in Post-Fire St. Paul's," 229-230.

[32] See Chapter 3.

[33] Thurley, *Whitehall Palace*, 133-135.

[34] Ibid.; Colvin, *History of the King's Works*, vol. 5, 290-293.

[35] Pepys, *Diary*, vol. 3, 202; Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. 4, 534-535.

[36] Colvin, *History of the King's Works*, vol. 5, 174-175; Thurley, *Hampton Court*, 217-219.

[37] Thurley, *Hampton Court*, 217-219.

At Holborn and the Wardrobe, Wren created a wide, shallow, chancel-like area against a flat east wall – approximately thirty-seven feet wide at Holborn and twenty-eight feet at the Wardrobe (Figs. 7.4-7.5).[38] This was open to the view of the whole congregation, especially those sitting above in the galleries. The width and openness of the chancel minimise separation from the congregation, and limit any attempt to create a sense of the mystery or otherness which we might associate with Laudian requirements. Both chancels had one step, on which sat the communion rail, and at Holborn, the communion table was raised by a further step (visible in Fig. 7.4).[39] At Holborn, at the request of the Latitudinarian rector, Edward Stillingfleet, the communion rail ran the full width of the chancel, rather than being set in three-sided fashion around the communion table, which was the more common arrangement in the City churches.[40] This arrangement – a single, full-length rail set across a wide chancel opening – enabled a large number of communicants to receive the bread and wine together, making an emphasis on the Lord's Supper as a shared experience, which we also saw in Chapter 6.

The reference to Stillingfleet in the Holborn records reminds us that even Wren was not given a completely free hand, and he had to interact with the vestries and clergy of the churches for whom he worked when working outside the City. A latitudinarian and "Cambridge Platonist," Stillingfleet was also an advocate of frequent communion, and the broad space created at Holborn probably reflects those priorities.[41] Stillingfleet, too, had his own understanding of the rules of decorum, and in his capacity of Dean of St. Paul's – along with the rest of the rebuilding commission for the cathedral – rejected Wren's Great Model for the cathedral on the grounds that it lacked proper space for a choir and sufficient processional space.[42] These were important considerations in the context of a cathedral, but he clearly did not think them relevant in the context of a parish church.

At the risk of over-simplifying, St. Andrew Holborn provided a sound model for a latitudinarian church. It had grandeur in its structural forms but lacked the degree of decoration and iconography commonly found in the other Wren churches – suitable for those whom Baxter considered "not at all for anything Ceremonious."[43] Its dominating high pulpit provided the platform for a preaching style which emphasised praxis more than doctrine, and its broad, open

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[38] Measurements taken from *Wren Society*, vol. IX, 5, 8.

[39] *Wren Society*, vol. IX, 5, 6.

[40] LMA/P82/AND/B/018/MS04256, fol. 15, mentions the design of the communion rails being made wider "by the Deanes [i.e. Stillingfleet's] order."

[41] Spurr, "Latitudinarianism," 61-82; Barry Till, "Stillingfleet, Edward (1635–1699)," *ODNB* (online edn., accessed 11 July 2016).

[42] Newman, "Fittings and Liturgy in Post-Fire St. Paul's," 220-223.

[43] Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxteriannae*, Part III, 19-20.

chancel and communion rail reflected a wish to see as many come forward as a body of believers as possible.[44]

Despite the fact that Wren's Westminster churches had much the same structural reredos as those of Holborn and the Wardrobe, the much greater extent of decoration stands in contrast to their two City sisters. Taking St. Clement Danes as an example, Wren seems to have created a chancel form intended to convey a more overt sense of the separation and otherness of the chancel and its furniture (Fig. 7.7). The church building has a form of triple-apsidal end. At floor-level, the first semi-circular apse of which one becomes aware takes up the full width of the church. This then becomes narrowed by the effect of the gallery piers and vault to a second semi-circular apse, or half-dome, the width of the nave of the church. This half-dome then draws the eye downwards and eastwards to a second half-dome over a third apse, in which small space sits the communion table and reredos. Even without the ornamentation being more extensive than in the two City churches, Wren has already signalled through the fabric of the building that a higher conception of the eucharist is being expressed here.

Although the parish records for St. Clement Danes have been destroyed, it is nevertheless possible to make some reasonable suggestions to identify the priorities at work in Wren's composition. First, the church is in the middle of the Strand and thus included within its parish the string of aristocratic mansions and palaces which lined the north bank of the river.[45] We have noted that, at the time of rebuilding, the rector was Gregory Hascard, a royal chaplain and future Dean of Windsor. We see a declaration of Hascard's Stuart loyalties in the huge size of the Royal Arms placed in the eastern vault, and in the plasterwork either side with its field of English roses on one side and Scottish thistles on the other (Fig. 7.14). The overall lavish effect of the plasterwork in the church, and the use of greater decoration, such as the engaged Corinthian columns of the reredos, indicate both a difference in the social makeup of the parish, when compared with Stillingfleet's at Holborn, and a much greater appetite for courtliness on Hascard's part. Much the same may be said for Gibbons' carved work on the reredos at Piccadilly. Work of this magnificence was more usually associated with royal palaces such as Windsor Castle or ducal ones such as Petworth.[46]

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[44] Spurr, "Latitudinarianism," 66-79.

[45] Thurley, *Somerset House*, 61.

[46] Esterly, *Grinling Gibbons*, 154-155, 108-117.

CONCLUSION

The principal conclusion we can draw from looking at the church furnishings which Wren designed himself is that he acted as a professional architect and designer for clients who had differing requirements. In all likelihood, they specified those requirements to Wren directly. The incumbents of St. Andrew Holborn and St. Clement Danes clearly had particular ecclesial and liturgical preferences, which Wren was able to accommodate while adhering to his own strong preference for furnishings which were integrated closely into the design of the building itself. His responsiveness to the needs of his clients, especially in such a small sample size, makes it difficult to draw strong conclusions about Wren's own churchmanship based on these examples alone, though we can observe trends.

The apsidal chancel of Gregory Hascard's St. Clement Danes certainly does convey something of the spirit of Laudian Beauty of Holiness. But it is the only one out of Wren's entire production of parish churches which does so quite so unequivocally. Moreover, when advocating the model of St. James Piccadilly as his optimal church design, in his 1711 letter to the Commissioner (discussed in Chapter 3), Wren's tone was rational and his argument prioritised matters of pragmatism, not dogma – the optimum number of seats, and maximising visibility and audibility. At Piccadilly, he designed a broad, flat east end which minimised any possibility of creating a sense of mystery and remoteness. And he placed the pulpit directly in front of the communion table and reredos. These was not the acts of a man whose instincts were Laudian. Instead, these features would tend to support Michael Hunter's conclusion that Wren's was a "somewhat rationalistic and prudentialist religious outlook."[47] Considering Wren's churches more widely, Christine Stevenson agrees with John Newman that Wren's centralised church plans "would have had no meaning in the context of Laudian liturgy."[48] Lastly, it is tempting to think that if Wren had indeed absorbed and adopted for himself the full-blown Laudianism of his father and uncle, then his inventive genius would have found a way to make a more overt expression of the Beauty of Holiness than what he actually provided in the City churches.

[47] Michael Hunter, *Science and the Shape of Orthodoxy: Intellectual Change in Late Seventeenth-Century Britain* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 52.

[48] Stevenson, *The City and the King*, 280; Newman, "Laudian Literature," 185.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to examine what the furnishings of the City churches tell us about Anglican identity in late seventeenth-century London. This has involved focusing on the people whose identity was being expressed, and understanding the organisational and cultural influences which were at work upon them. The administrative history of the furnishings has been examined in detail and has provided a wealth of information to build a narrative of how decisions were made, and has given several insights to the reasoning behind those decisions. The literature of the period has revealed the importance of etymology and has shown how meaningful and impactful the use of seemingly innocuous words could be. Understanding the presentational forms and conventions used has provided a starting point for interpreting the carved work in the churches as sophisticated and polemical displays of iconography. All this context has then been brought to an examination of the material evidence of the furnishings themselves in order to establish precisely what were the key messages of identity being conveyed in the pulpits, reredoses, and screens of the City churches.

The initial challenge to arise in meeting the objective for this thesis is that the subject matter is not an individual private commission, such as a country house or a painting. In these cases, the number of people involved is limited to the individual patron or family who commission a work and the architect or artist who carries it out. The dynamic between those involved may be personally complex – especially in architecture – but the *dramatis personae* is limited. In the case of the City churches, however, the situation was significantly more complicated. There were exceptions, but for the most part this has not been a story about individuals. What we have seen was an Anglican eco-system at work. Church of England parishes were the living product of a network of relationships – from bishops to clergy to vestrymen to ordinary parishioners, as well as among themselves. Collectively, these people operated in a manner of mutual dependence and support, without the need for overt intervention by authorities. Doubtless, an organisational structure which was preoccupied with uniformity naturally minimised the likelihood of deviation from desired norms. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that this network produced such an iconographically rich and consistent collection of furnishings without there being a single directing hand at work. This testifies to the strength of the re-establishment of Anglican control of London's parochial structures, and the behaviours

that went with it. This recreation of an Anglican parochial eco-system was the first pre-condition for creating a new corpus of liturgical furnishings which proclaimed Anglican belief and identity.

The second pre-condition was the availability of a cohort of master-craftsmen who had the talents needed to represent ecclesial identity in joined and carved wood. The influx of craftsmen to London after the Fire was part of this. It enabled Wren to exercise his own powers of patronage, and to foster a cadre of skilled craftsmen who satisfied both his requirements as he built the churches, and those of the parishes as they fitted them out. The talents of masons, carvers, and joiners helped develop Wren's own reputation as an architect, and in turn his patronage contributed to the development of their reputations and businesses. We have seen that Wren and his master-craftsmen drew inspiration from continental architecture, sometimes through their personal experience, but more widely thanks to the lively industry of printmakers and publishers in London. The closeness of the relationship between Wren and the craftsmen, and their access to these sources, therefore meant that it was never in doubt that the stylistic idiom of the church furnishings would be classical.

These two pre-conditions combined to shape the new church fittings as a recognisable genre which displayed a high degree of uniformity in style – perfectly suited for an institution which prioritised uniformity in all matters ecclesiastical. The achievement of this uniformity does not appear to have been consciously driven by an overt ecclesiological imperative, but rather by an innate way of thinking, in which vestrymen grasped a new architectural style with enthusiasm and continually compared their own churches and furnishings with those of their neighbours. Of course there was an ecclesiological element in this, but it was not the sole driver: company livery halls arguably demonstrated a similar uniformity in their own particular context. Turning to the master-craftsmen who created the furnishings, the relationship between Wren and his craftsmen, and the evolution of an architectural intellectual culture in London which embraced continental style, also contributed significantly to the uniformity of the new furnishings. The network of relationships and the widely shared use of source material created as much of an artistic eco-system as there was a revived parochial one.

However, when it comes to questions of representing identity, the importance of the classical was less in the choice of a particular style than it was in providing a language of display which was orderly and seemly – great Anglican virtues both – and one which was well-suited to expressing notions of "comeliness." The legal requirement that pulpits, for example, be "comely and decent" dated from the 1604 *Canons Ecclesiastical*, and it was clearly not a rule which mandated the use of any particular style. The classical style of fittings which was provided for the

new churches was therefore simply its most recent stylistic manifestation. It was the moral purpose of comeliness which was important, rather than questions of style.

From a study of the use of the word in print sources, we can see that contemporaries understood comeliness as the alignment of an object's or a person's appearance with those beliefs, priorities, qualities, or virtues which one held in most esteem, *and* which were the most fitting or appropriate for that object or person. In the context of church furnishings, comeliness was firstly a matter of distinguishing the sacred from the profane. Secondly, it implied an approach to decoration which could incorporate gradations of sacred status, and express congruity between appearance and the spiritual role or status of each individual item. In its practical application, comeliness primarily expressed itself in the differentiation of the quality of timbers used, of the extent and quality of carved work, and the treatment of surfaces with varnish and gilding. That differentiation worked across several dimensions. *Within* each church, the gradations of comeliness required a visibly greater degree of beautification for the reredos than for the pulpit, and for the pulpit than for the pews. *Between* the church and its environs, comeliness required that its decoration be sufficient to inspire awe and reverence in the minds of worshippers. In turn this meant that there was a spiritual necessity for the furnishings of a Westminster church attended by courtiers to be more elaborate than those of a riverside church attended by wharfingers. This was a matter of religious propriety and not a crude reflection of a parish's ability to pay. The same way of thinking meant that comeliness was not the reserve of the wealthy, nor did it equate to elaborate decoration: even a plain pulpit could be acceptably comely in the appropriate social circumstances.

In its Anglican manifestation, comeliness was a phenomenon which went across the theological spectrum. Just as, visually, comeliness did not equate to elaborate decoration, so, in terms of churchmanship, it did not equate to ceremonialism. The most detailed documentary evidence we have of the conscious and focussed way in which comeliness was applied in practice is the treatment of the woodwork at St. Andrew Holborn – a project driven by the latitudinarian rector, Edward Stillingfleet. The same principle drove the same man, as Dean of St. Paul's, in an altogether grander direction in building and decorating the new cathedral.

When we have understood the rule of comeliness, we have a fuller understanding of which items inside the churches are the most important, that is to say, which ones are the most sacred in the context of contemporary Anglican belief and identity. It comes as no surprise that comely treatment is applied most obviously to liturgical features, and so this thesis has examined those in order to understand precisely which beliefs and what identity were being expressed. Liturgical furnishings have a distinct purpose – an actual function to be fulfilled. Those liturgical

functions and the associations that went with them could not be changed by the whim of those commissioning the furnishings. Indeed, their liturgical function was directly related to their appearance and material treatment in the minds of those who commissioned them. These requirements and expectations therefore acted as a force which exercised a control over the creative process of commissioning and making the furnishings.

First and foremost, it was the reredos which afforded the greatest opportunity to speak of belief and identity. The use of the frontispiece convention for the reredos operated at several levels. First, it meant that the structure of the reredos was based in part on the classical triumphal arch, and we must therefore read it firstly as an expression of triumphalism. One is struck by the imposing scale and grandeur of the reredos before the eye begins to settle on individual features. Triumph speaks of victory over opponents, and the victory in this case was the almost miraculous restoration of Crown and Church after the near extinction of the Anglican flame during the Interregnum.

The second level at which the frontispiece operated was as a frame for the display of iconography. This aspect of the frontispiece convention was popularly understood through its repeated use in public architecture, and in the title pages of books, as an approach which called for contemplation of the symbolism being used, and for interpretation of its messages. Close examination of the carved work on the reredoses reveals a sophisticated and carefully choreographed assemblage of messages which were both theological and political in scope. These messages spoke of the continued Anglican pre-occupation with demonstrating that its worship was in a spiritual line of descent from that of Solomon's Temple and of the Early Church – two periods which could be held up as exemplars of divine worship at its purest. Overlapping references to the Old and New Covenants asserted God's special favour for – and presence with – his English Church. And the special attention paid to gilding those symbols which spoke of God's presence in his Temple and to the eucharist was an implied rebuke to those who had smashed communion rails in the earlier part of the century.

Woven through the theological symbolism was a strong and unembarrassed declaration of monarchical loyalty. Sermon culture promoted the notions of Moses and Aaron – magistrate and high priest – demanding obedience to lawful authority. And Moses and Aaron looked out at the congregation from a large proportion of the new churches' reredoses. Pelicans spoke of the Royal Martyr. The placement of the Royal Arms above all the complex theological elements in the reredos' symbolism declared both that the authority of the Crown was a God-given authority and that the Crown was the protector and guardian of true religion. In most cases, the Royal Arms were the largest single component of the reredos, and the most colourful.

The religious and political assertions made by the reredos' symbolism were not new, but making them in the context of a Church which had been re-established under a restored Supreme Governor following the regicide and Interregnum gave them added resonance. The Act of Uniformity provided for a Church of which every Englishman and woman was, in theory, a practicing member, but much of the polemical discourse of the period – not to mention the penal laws – addressed the plain reality that the Church of England did not command the affection or loyalty of the whole population. Even the titles of Anglican publications like *The Unreasonableness of Separation* suggest a sense of mystified perplexity that dissenters could not understand the manifest virtues of the Church.[1] There is, therefore, an inescapable problem of a disconnect between the confident triumphalism of the form and meaning of the reredos on the one hand, and the actuality on the other. Nor was this a problem only in relation to the general population at large. At no point during the period from the Restoration to the turn of the century could the Church of England rely on its Supreme Governor in the way churchmen imagined they had been able to rely upon the sainted Charles I and his Solomon-like father.

This is not to say that the assertive confidence of the reredos was some sort of whistling in the dark. Rather, it reflected deeply held beliefs about what the divinely ordered world should look like. The proclamation of identity which the church furnishings made was therefore a part of the polemic of the period – spoken in carved wood rather than printed on paper. It was a permanent and visible message to loyal Anglicans about spiritual truth and was intended as a reassurance about the eternal rightness of their cause.

The Anglican appeal to antiquity was one which churchman made across the century. If it could be demonstrated that the Church of England was descended without corruption from the Early Church then, surely, sober dissenters could be brought back within the Anglican fold. We have seen that this was one of the messages contained in the reredos. Two London clerics were sufficiently committed to their patristic scholarship that they went one step further and erected a screen in their two churches. Liturgically-speaking, these were not derived from the medieval rood screen, but instead made reference to the screens which existed in primitive churches. As it happened, they neither looked like, nor were they used in the same way as, the screens in primitive churches. Their significance was that they alluded to those early churches in a physical form with which late seventeenth-century parishioners could identify, and which could be explained to them in an appropriately Anglican way. At one of the two churches – St. Peter Cornhill – the rector, William Beveridge, positioned his screen in the special context of the prayer book communion service, and he emphasised that when his parishioners participated in

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[1] Stillingfleet, *Unreasonableness*.

the Lord's Supper, walking through the screen as they did so, they were in communion with fellow-believers from the earliest times. The ecclesial message of Beveridge's screen is less bombastic than the political messages of some of the City reredoses, but it is no less Anglican.

The assertion running thoughout this thesis is that the furnishings of the new churches say more about Anglican ecclesial identity than does their architecture, at least as regards the churches built in the City. There, Wren handled the constraints of medieval foundations and limited budgets as best he could. By the same reasoning, looking at the small number of churches whose furnishings were designed or overseen by Wren personally should tell us something about his own churchmanship. Easily labelled as a Laudian because his father and uncle were Laudians, we have seen that the evidence of his furnishings calls for a more nuanced conclusion. Wren was capable of designing a grand and ceremonialist interior at St. Clement Danes. And if we compare his designs for the reredoses in royal chapels with those of the parish churches, we can see that he too understood the rules of comeliness. But overall, there are too many other indicators to make the Laudian label stick with any degree of conviction. His stated preference for galleries and centrally placed pulpits was anathema to the Laudian generation. His wish for congregations to see and hear the liturgy was based on rationalism and pragmatism – seasoned with a pinch of anti-Catholicism – and it reduced opportunities for ceremony or for creating a sense of mystery. His designs for reredoses were iconographically understated, and were driven by a professional desire to integrate architecture and furnishings in a single holistic vision. Overall, Wren the practicing architect is more easily discerned than Wren the churchman, but his churchmanship was not at any extreme.

Within the range of Restoration churchmanship, the Wren style in both architecture and furnishings had the support of Laudians like his uncle Bishop Matthew – for whom he built the classical chapel at Pembroke College, Cambridge – Reformed churchmen like Bishop Compton and William Beveridge, High Churchmen like William Cave, and Latitudinarians like Thomas Tenison.[2] In some political circumstances, different churchmen found themselves in different camps, but they were always united in their belief that the Church of England was – both rationally and spiritually – the best and most faithful of Churches. The claim to descend, spiritually speaking, from Biblical Israel and the Early Church was shouted loudly from the reredoses in Wren's churches in order to reassure the faithful, and challenge dissenters and papists. The attention to the extent of decoration and treatment of wood finishes showed a particularly Anglican consciousness of the hierarchy of spirituality, and the imperative of making that clear in physical and visual form, without risking idolatry. The display of monarchical,

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[2] Pevsner, *Cambridgeshire*, 165-167.

Mosaic, and Aaronic symbols showed a Church intrinsically loyal to its untrustworthy Supreme Governor, and intrinsically episcopal in governance.

The furnishings of Wren's churches were, in Dean Stillingfleet's words, "finished with extraordinary beauty and conveniency."[3] They were also an essay in ecclesial identity, expressed in wood.

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[3] Stillingfleet, *Open letter*, 2.