

**ASPECTS OF RELIGIOUS CHANGE, REGIONAL CULTURE AND
RESISTANCE IN YORKSHIRE, c.1530-1580**

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Contents

Abstract	ii
List of Abbreviations	iv
Acknowledgements	vi
Introduction	1
The Sources	24
Chapter 1: Religious Change in Yorkshire up to 1553	39
Religious Culture on the Eve of Henrician Reform	39
Reactions to Reform under Henry VIII – The Clergy	44
Reactions to Reform under Henry VIII – The Laity	50
The Coming of the Official Reformation	55
The Reception in the Towns	68
Dissolution – The Monasteries and Friaries	76
Dissolution – The Chantries and Religious Guilds	83
Rebellion and Riot	89
Conclusion – An Effective Reformation?	101
Chapter 2: The Marian Reaction?	103
Chapter 3: Conservatism and Recusancy from 1558	140
1558-69	141
The Northern Rebellion	159
After the Rebellion	164
Conclusion - A Protestant County?	175
Chapter 4: The Experience of a Cathedral City: Religious change in York	178
Chapter 5: Contrasting Communities: Religious change in the deaneries of Holderness and Cleveland	216
The Deanery of Holderness and Hull	216
The Deanery of Cleveland	236
Conclusion	253
Conclusion	255
Bibliography	261

Abstract

Studies of England during the Reformation period have been broad-ranging and often controversial. Ever changing perspectives and altering interpretations of the archival materials, alongside a lasting interest in the process of religious change make this a topic of enduring interest. For Yorkshire, first studied by Dickens some 70 years ago, recent approaches have opened the way for a return to the ecclesiastical archives and have created a need for their re-interpretation in the light of work by historians such as Shagan and Hoyle.

This thesis examines religious change in Reformation Yorkshire in the context of regional culture and resistance. The extent to which these three issues were intertwined influenced the ways in which Yorkshire towns, villages and parishes received religious change, the ways in which they resisted it, and the ways in which elements of reform became adopted as part of evolving local cultures. The county witnessed extremes of belief on both sides of the confessional divide, from early engagement at Hull to continued conservatism at Whitby, whilst the majority of the population continued to attend church and conform to the religion they were offered. Resistance to change ranged from open rebellion to sullen acquiescence, and included more subtle and underground forms of opposition. As religious change became more embedded in societies it is possible to see its influence in even the most traditional forms of regional culture.

Drawing on the extensive ecclesiastical archives for the Diocese, and taking Dickens' interpretations as a starting point, this thesis demonstrates the complexity and diversity of the process of religious change in a region traditionally perceived to be isolated, backward and Catholic, and through local examples emphasises the continued importance of regional studies to a fuller understanding of the interaction of change, culture and resistance in early modern English religion.

Abbreviations:

<i>BI</i>	Borthwick Institute for Archives
<i>BIHR</i>	Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research
<i>BL</i>	British Reading Rooms, Boston Spa
<i>Chanc.AB</i>	Chancery Act Book
<i>CRS, 22</i>	Ryan, Rev. Patrick, S.J (ed.), 'Diocesan Returns of Recusants for England and Wales, 1577' <i>Catholic Record Society Publications</i> , 22 (1921)
<i>CRS, 53</i>	Talbot, C (ed.), 'Return of Recusants 1582-95,' <i>Catholic Record Society Publications</i> , 53 (1961)
<i>CRS, 71</i>	Bowler, Dom Hugh & McCann, Timothy J. (eds), 'Recusants in the Exchequer Pipe Rolls 1581-92,' <i>Catholic Record Society Publications</i> , 71 (1986)
<i>CRSP</i>	Catholic Record Society Publications
<i>CSPD</i>	Calendar of State Papers, Domestic
<i>CSPD, 1591-1594</i>	Mary Anne Everett Green (ed.), <i>Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Elizabeth 1591-1594</i> (London, 1867)
<i>CSDP, 1594-1597</i>	Mary Anne Everett Green (ed.), <i>Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Elizabeth 1595-1597</i> (London, 1869)
<i>CSDP, 1598-1601</i>	Mary Anne Everett Green (ed.), <i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth 1598-1601</i> (London, 1869)
<i>CSDP, Addenda</i>	Mary Anne Everett Green (ed.), <i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth 1601-1603, with Addenda, 1547-1565</i> (London, 1870)
<i>EHR</i>	English Historical Review
<i>HJ</i>	Historical Journal
<i>JEH</i>	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
<i>LP, I</i>	J.S Brewer & R.H Brodie, R.H (eds.), <i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, Vol. 1, 2nd Edition</i> , (London, 1920)

<i>LP, II - IV</i>	J.S Brewer (ed.), <i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII</i> , Vols. 2-4 (London, 1864-1876)
<i>LP, V - XXI</i>	James Gairdner (ed.), <i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII</i> , Vols. 5-21 (London, 1880-1910)
<i>LP, Add. I</i>	- (ed.), <i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII</i> , Addenda Vol. 1 (London, 1929)
<i>ODNB</i>	Online Dictionary of National Biography http://www.oxforddnb.com/subscribed/
<i>Prob.Reg.</i>	Probate Register
<i>Raine, 3-8</i>	Angelo Raine (ed.), <i>York Civic Records Vols. III – VIII</i> (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 106, 108, 110, 112, 115, 119, 1942-1952)
<i>REED</i>	Alexandra F. Johnston & Margaret Rogerson (eds.) <i>Records of Early English Drama: York</i> (Toronto, 1979)
<i>SCH</i>	Studies in Church History
<i>SP</i>	State Papers
<i>SS</i>	Surtees Society
<i>TRHS</i>	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society
<i>TNA</i>	The National Archive
<i>YAJ</i>	Yorkshire Archaeological Journal
<i>YASRS</i>	Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series

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Introduction

The English Reformation can, with some justification, be considered one of the most significant episodes of any period of English history. Yet interpretations of the Reformation have always been contentious, and there is a seemingly continuous cycle of acceptance and overthrow of schools of thought. This thesis will take three key issues; religious change, regional culture, and rebellion, and will approach them through the prism of the most recent interpretations of and approaches to the Reformation, whilst revisiting key primary sources, in an attempt to provide a greater understanding of how these three issues interacted at a local level, and how they affected the process of the English Reformation. Traditional historiography has portrayed religious change as the move, however implemented, from Catholicism to Protestantism. From the popular Reformation from below approach pioneered by A.G Dickens in the mid-twentieth century through the revisionist approaches of Christopher Haigh and Jack Scarisbrick, the story of the Reformation and the progress of confessional change have received considerable attention. These approaches however were both in many ways imprisoned in a paradigm defined by the goal of national conversion. Though the revisionists rightly placed Catholicism back in the story of the Reformation, they continued to view the success, or not, of religious change as a composite of individual conversions which eventually tipped the nation into Protestantism.¹ More recently, scholars such as Norman Jones and Eamon Duffy have recognised that religious change was much more complex than simply the move from Catholic to Protestant, and that more needs to be asked of the English Reformation than straightforward questions of success or failure. Dickens's approach to the study of the English Reformation radically differed from those which went before it as he dismissed the Reformation Acts of the Tudor State as of secondary importance, and concluded that a popular desire for Protestantism was widespread long before Henry VIII broke with Rome. His conclusions were remarkably similar to those of the martyrologist John Foxe, and his approach proved controversial, but Dickens can perhaps be credited with the resurgence of interest in the Reformation; certainly his claims provided the starting point for many subsequent arguments. Dickens also pioneered regional studies of religious change. His detailed work on the extensive ecclesiastical archives at York inspired considerable similar research on other areas,

¹ Ethan Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 5.

and led to a plethora of regional studies, each adding a different perspective to the Reformation story.²

In recent years these regional histories³ have given way to broader cultural studies of the Reformation, though there has also been a resurgence of attempts to locate the populace of Reformation England within the rapid changes taking place around them. The political processes of religious change, and the consideration of resistance and reluctance, have been replaced by considerations of the processes by which the assimilation of Protestant practice and belief occurred over the course of three generations.⁴ Ethan Shagan's work has been particularly significant in this respect, and his arguments that people were fully engaged with the Reformation process, and that popular and individual responses to religious change shaped the way the Reformation was received within individual communities, have provided a major justification for my revisiting of Reformation Yorkshire. As Shagan has argued, religion was not a rigid or self-contained sphere, but was structured through its interactions with the culture in which it was embedded. It was the very pervasiveness of religion in early modern society which has necessitated the study of religious change beyond its formal spiritual settings and within the more mundane situations in which the social meanings of religion were constructed and contested.⁵ These recent studies by Shagan, Jones, and others have recognised that religious change was also a matter of cultural change, of changing social and cultural behaviour and practice, and of altered social relationships. Doctrinal and theological changes represented an incursion of religious innovation into English culture without damascene conversions of the populace, or even their systematic acceptance and actualisation of these changes. This is no longer simply a story of success or failure, but of cultural accommodation that cannot be easily mapped onto a confessional axis, and of the co-operation and collaboration of the people with the regime which has long been overshadowed by

² It has however been recently claimed that Dickens was in fact a son, not a founding father, of the tradition of local reformation studies. C. Haigh, 'A.G. Dickens and the English Reformation', *Historical Research*, 77:195 (2004), p. 25.

³ For example A.G Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-1558*, 2nd Edition, (London, 1982), Christopher Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1975), Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989), James Oxley, *The Reformation in Essex to the Death of Mary* (Manchester, 1965) and Caroline Litzenberger, *The English Reformation and the Laity: Gloucestershire 1540-1580* (Cambridge, 1997).

⁴ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 2nd Edition, (Yale, 2005), p. xxxiii.

⁵ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, pp. 1-2.

traditional understandings of the Reformation as a theological event.⁶ As monasteries, chantries, hospitals, schools and ‘superstitious’ customs disappeared, the ways in which communities adapted and responded to these changes initiated new political and social realities that altered local cultural experiences.⁷

Religion in sixteenth century England was a very fluid entity, and represented far more than simply attendance at church. Religion was central to people’s social and cultural lives, religious festivals dominated the calendar and affected working patterns, and the rites of baptism, confirmation, marriage and burial shaped individual lives within the context of the church. Religion was a communal activity, and thus religious order was largely dependant upon social cohesion. In Durham, James has argued that the power and rites of the pre-Reformation church had a quasi-magical character, which made the efficacy of the sacraments dependant upon their ritual performance.⁸ Obviously this concept of power and the extent to which it was controlled by the clergy was dramatically reduced by the Reformation, but religious change was equally mutable, and it was the ambiguity of many new religious ideas that allowed them to penetrate English culture at points in the belief system where ideas and practices were not fully aligned. At sites of social friction even the smallest change of ideas could alter political dynamics in important and tangible ways, and lead to significant changes in people’s relationships with the sacred, even if they never considered themselves to be enemies of traditional religion.⁹ Equally, changing political circumstances could dramatically affect the cultural experience of religion. Shagan has used the example of the Mass, which was a very different cultural and religious experience in a church in 1533 than it was in a barn in 1553. Similarly pilgrimages, which long continued at places such as St. Hilda’s well in Hinderwell parish in Cleveland, had a very different relationship with the divine when performed in secret at night to when done travelling openly in huge processions.¹⁰ Through studying how religious change interacted with regional cultures and rebellion in Yorkshire this thesis will revisit the archival materials studied so extensively by Dickens through the prism of modern cultural

⁶ *ibid*, pp. 7, 13.

⁷ Norman Jones, *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaptation* (Oxford, 2002), p. 2

⁸ Mervyn James, *Family, Lineage and Civil Society: A Study of Society, Politics, and Mentality in the Durham Region, 1500-1640* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 54-5.

⁹ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, p. 7.

¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 11.

approaches to the Reformation and thus provide a new interpretation of the process of religious change in Yorkshire.

Cultural change is much more difficult to identify than straightforward religious change - cultures were varied and continually changed - yet in beginning to tackle the issue of cultural change modern historians have begun to move closer to understanding how the English Reformation came to be implemented with comparatively little resistance. Regional cultures are particularly problematic for historians. English political culture was remarkably decentralised on the eve of the Reformation, and remarkably open, which arguably left more space for other groups and organisations, such as religious corporations, noblemen and towns to exert their influence upon regional culture.¹¹ Cities, towns, parishes and villages all had their own individual cultural characteristics which together contributed to and formed an example of different regional cultures, and the effects of religious change upon these regional cultures were undoubtedly divisive. As Duffy has stated, the Reformation in England 'represented a deep and traumatic cultural hiatus' and a dramatic break from the late medieval past.¹² In addition, the large size and remote terrain of many Yorkshire parishes, like those in Lancashire, allowed non-conformity to flourish and preserved the distinctive local and regional cultures of many areas as effective policing of the implementation of religious change was impossible.¹³ Even prior to the Reformation there were many variations in regional cultures, and Helen Jewell's work has emphasised the presence of a distinct pre-industrial north-south divide in this respect.¹⁴ Jewell has argued that southerners travelling north confidently expected to superimpose what they perceived as their more sophisticated culture and behaviour onto the inferior north, whilst northerners travelling south were more cautious, and perhaps less likely to return home once their cultural horizons had been broadened and they had become assimilated into the south.¹⁵

¹¹ Tim Thornton, 'Propaganda, Political Communication and the Problem of English Responses to the Introduction of Printing,' in *Propaganda: Political Rhetoric and Identity, 1300-2000*, ed. Bernard Taithe & Tim Thornton (Stroud, 1999), p. 48.

¹² Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. xxxiii.

¹³ Helen Jewell, *The North-South Divide: The Origins of Northern Consciousness in England* (Manchester, 1994), p. 177.

¹⁴ *ibid*, *passim*.

¹⁵ *ibid*, pp. 170, 209-10.

James has used the monasteries as an example of these variations, contrasting the mystic spirituality of Mount Grace Priory in the North Riding with the religion of visual images expressed through ritual and works of art in a decorative architectural setting at Durham, and naturally the cults which grew up around different local and regional saints all took different forms and contributed different things to regional cultures.¹⁶ Visual imagery was central to religious cultures across pre-Reformation England. York Minster, and many of the city's parish churches, such as All Saints North Street, Holy Trinity Goodramgate, St. John Micklegate and St. Martin-le-Grand Coney Street retain their medieval stained glass windows. These reflect the centrality of Christ's passion in the religious culture of the region, something which was reiterated by the use of banners bearing the image of the five wounds of Christ during the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536 and Northern Rebellion of 1569.¹⁷ A rare survival of medieval wall paintings at Pickering church also shows scenes from the Passion, alongside moral subjects such as the corporeal acts of mercy and images of popular local saints, which can also be viewed in surviving medieval stained glass in All Saints North Street. All Saints also retains its medieval 'Pricke of Conscience' window, which depicts scenes from the final days of the world. This provides a link with the writings of the hermit Richard Rolle, and is evidence that Rolle's teaching extended well beyond his base in South Yorkshire.¹⁸ The dramatic change from an image-based to a word-based religion in England thus removed much popular regional culture at a stroke. Saints days and many of the church festivals, rituals and ceremonies which played such a central role in local cultural experiences were abolished almost overnight and these losses undoubtedly produced tensions and conflicts which were bound up in religious change and its effects.

After the Reformation the issue of authority, upon which all religious belief and practice necessarily depended, even if that dependence was understated, caused the interrogation of all aspects of religious and cultural beliefs and practice. The basis upon which they were held suddenly became important, and many of the battles of the Reformation were fought over issues of authority.¹⁹ Evidence of changing cultures

¹⁶ James, *Family, Lineage and Civil Society*, p. 56.

¹⁷ Medieval glass survives in numerous other York churches, and in some cases has been preserved from churches now demolished. All Saints Pavement for example contains medieval windows which originally came from St. Saviour's church, and which also depict scenes from the Passion.

¹⁸ Richard Rolle and his influence on religious culture in Yorkshire will be discussed more fully in the following chapter.

¹⁹ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, pp. 11, 21.

follows much the same geographical path through Yorkshire as evidence of religious change; though there were no pronounced regional differences in *official* religious practices and cultures, as will be seen in subsequent chapters differences in the process of change, both subtle and dramatic, were evident almost everywhere. The trading and market towns of the West and East Ridings, which were the first parts of Yorkshire to evince any hint of sympathy towards reformed religion, were also the areas where cultural change was earliest and most pronounced. The loss of religious guilds from many urban areas by the 1530s is a clear demonstration of changing religious cultures, and the move towards trade and craft guilds an indication that perhaps regional culture was becoming somewhat separated from religion. Nevertheless, a persistent preoccupation with the afterlife is represented by the survival of some religious guilds until the eve of their dissolution, and with the persistence of the practice of ringing bells and saying prayers for the souls of the dead.²⁰ James has argued that across the north of England this concern was reflected in popular folk beliefs and rituals which contained significant pre-Christian elements.²¹ The concept of purgatory remained a crucial element of popular belief long after its official abolition, yet also presented problems for popular belief systems, for clearly these dramatic doctrinal, theological and cultural changes did not cause the world to collapse. Understanding how people dealt with the effects of such dramatic alterations to their belief systems is crucial to appreciating the impact of religious and cultural change at a regional level.

In many ways the regional culture of Yorkshire in the sixteenth century was characterised by rebellion. Although rebellions occurred elsewhere during the Tudor period, only in Yorkshire did three separate, serious rebellions take place which had many of the same aims and objectives. The 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace, the 1549 Seamer Rebellion and the 1569 Revolt of the Northern Earls all sought, in one way or another, to turn back the tide of religious change and restore the traditional, conservative Catholicism which contributed so much to other aspects of regional culture. In 1536, rebellion was sparked by the dissolution of the monasteries, and by rumoured of the destruction of parish churches and the loss of their imagery and treasures. In 1549 the new Prayer Book, coupled with the opportunism provided by

²⁰ See the following chapter for more on the continued popularity of the guilds, the York guilds of Corpus Christi and St. Christopher and St. George for example remained popular until their suppression. See chapter 3 for more on continued bell-ringing for the dead, this persisted into the 1570s in some parishes in Richmondshire.

²¹ James, *Family, Lineage and Civil Society*, p. 52.

rebellions elsewhere, sparked a reaction against the Edwardian official Reformation which was simultaneously a reaction against the recent dissolution of the chantries and the subsequent, and often dramatic, reduction in clerical personnel and pastoral provision. In 1569, a decade after the implementation of what was to be the final Protestant settlement of religion, religious change reared its head again. Although high politics were the most likely cause of the uprising, this should not be allowed to detract from the importance of religious feeling amongst the rebels. Although religious traditionalists had not, up to that point, been much persecuted by the Elizabethan regime, nor were they permitted to follow the religion of their choice, and the rebellion of 1569 provided an opportunity to air their dissatisfaction with the outcome of religious change and the loss of much of the traditional culture of their regions. That the largest contingents of rebels came from the most enduringly conservative regions of Yorkshire must surely serve as an indicator that the preservation of traditional religion and culture remained important. Culture was so intertwined with religion that the loss of one was seen to lead to the loss of the other, yet viewing the religious change and regional culture of early modern Yorkshire through the spectrum of rebellion would certainly distort our understanding of how the Reformation was received in Yorkshire. Whilst rebellion was certainly important, was certainly sparked by changes to both religion and culture, and affected the lives of many people in Yorkshire, it was not a universal response to change. After the massive scale of the Pilgrimage of Grace, it is reasonably fair to state that only the north eastern and north western regions of the county were subsequently significantly affected by rebellion. Only these most conservative areas continued to resist the enforced changes to their religion and attempts to suppress their traditional cultural practices, and therefore dissidence, doubt and open rebellion, which have been the focus of much revisionist historiography, must not be taken as the only responses to change despite their greater visibility in the extant records.

Subtle forms of resistance were as important as open rebellion, and examples of this will be seen throughout this thesis. Subtle resistance slowed rather than confronted change, and also demonstrated the tenacity of traditional religion and culture, but after the collapse of the Pilgrimage of Grace it was perhaps the only viable option for those who opposed religious change. There was a need for a new strategy of resistance, which will be seen in the attempts of churchwardens and parishioners to hide church

goods and furnishings, and in the activities of former monks who continued to use traditional services and ceremonies long after they were officially abolished.²² Behaviour was sullen rather than openly defiant, and resistance was often carried out under the guise of conservatism; those who concealed church goods almost always attended the prescribed services. Eventually, such forms of subtle, hidden resistance generally shaded into conservatism, but they could also form a seed-bed from which more open dissent grew, such as the recusant communities of the North Riding. Acceptance, collusion and collaboration were also important as the English people formed a dialogue with the state on the issue of religious change and its corresponding effects on local and regional cultures, and local adaptations must be studied in order to understand how the Catholic recusants of Elizabethan Cleveland could remain part of the same single state church as the Puritans of Halifax and Hull. The Reformation had to be made to fit local conditions, and to work with the aspirations and expectations of local people. Regional responses to the Reformation therefore varied according to the circumstances at a given point in time.²³

The history of Reformation Yorkshire has been dominated by the work of Dickens. Thus this next section will provide an introduction to Dickens's work and to the arguments his conclusions have sparked amongst other scholars. These issues will be returned to and expanded upon throughout the course of this thesis, as I put forward my own arguments and conclusions drawn from revisiting the archival material. Despite the lasting importance of his work Dickens was very much inspired by his own agenda. A patriotic man who retained a lasting affection for his native Yorkshire, Dickens contrived to write a history of the English Reformation as something inspired and created within England, and very separate from the parallel continental Reformation. Thus he played down English connections with Continental reformers, and argued that native Lollardy initiated a desire for change amongst people at all levels of society. Indeed, given the fragility and hostility of European relations in the mid-twentieth century, it is perhaps unsurprising that the German roots of Protestantism were overlooked. Jonathan Hughes has since demonstrated that late medieval Yorkshire was to a certain extent a leading light in religious change, but

²² See chapter 3 especially for examples of these practices.

²³ Jones, *The English Reformation*, p. 5.

significantly *within* the Catholic church.²⁴ However following in the footsteps of Foxe, finding support for Lollardy enabled Dickens to claim that reformed beliefs existed at a popular level long before the Tudor State Reformation, and indeed the German Lutheran Reformation. Perhaps building upon the base set down by Foxe in his *Actes and Monuments*,²⁵ Dickens over-emphasised the scanty evidence of heresy in Yorkshire to support his argument for a popular Reformation, and his confessional bias is as evident throughout his work as his patriotism. In this however Dickens was simply following the trend that history was generally written by the winners. Contemporaries would, in contrast, have viewed the Edwardian Reformation, not the Marian reaction, as the mid-Tudor religious aberration.

Dickens's work was almost solely concerned with the period before 1559, and the short forays he made into Elizabethan Catholicism were, on his own admission, undertaken with the sole purpose of demonstrating that medieval Catholic belief had disappeared long before Elizabeth's accession, and that the seminary priests completely recreated a very different style of Catholicism in England.²⁶ Nevertheless his dismissal of any consideration of what was good in the late medieval Church, and concentration on dissatisfaction with it, suggest that he was always working to show that Catholicism in England was dead by 1558. He never considered notions of Protestantism as a protest movement, rather argued that reform, and liberalisation from a dominant and authoritarian Catholic Church was actively sought by the English population. Dickens's writings on the Pilgrimage of Grace and the rebellions at Wakefield and Seamer were also clearly written to support his wider view of a popular Protestant Reformation, which compelled him to find a non-religious impetus for the rebels, despite having little firm ground upon which to base his claims. This only seems to be confirmed by his complete omission of the 1569 Northern Rebellion with its restoration of the Mass and destruction of Protestant worship books. Dickens was succeeded by a generation of scholars who sought to put the Catholics back into the English Reformation, arguing against his claims of widespread anti-clericalism and deep-seated dissatisfaction with the medieval church. Recent scholars such as Shagan and Questier have continued to recognise the importance of traditionalists and

²⁴ Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge, 1988).

²⁵ See <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/> for Foxe's complete Acts and Monuments.

²⁶ A.G Dickens, 'The First Stages of Romanist Recusancy in Yorkshire, 1560-1590,' *YAJ*, 35 (1943), p. 180.

conservatives in the religious and cultural history of the later sixteenth century, and have in many ways returned Catholics to the forefront of Reformation and Post-Reformation history.²⁷ Certainly no serious Reformation scholar would now claim that the English Reformation ended with the Elizabethan Settlement of Religion in 1559. Rather many would argue that 1559 marked only the start of religious reform, and there is evidence to suggest that in Yorkshire this reform came later still. Outside the circles of university educated lawyers, courtiers and senior churchmen Protestant beliefs came gradually as a result of long-term compliance, and it is now accepted that England did not begin to become a truly Protestant nation until well into the reign of Elizabeth I.

Despite his very English, Protestant agenda, and significant failings with his arguments, Dickens's archival work has proved particularly valuable for his successors. He was one of the first to overturn the ill-informed antiquarian views of an ignorant and reactionary north, and as noted above his demonstration of the wealth of archival material available for the York diocese inspired similar research elsewhere. However Dickens's use of the archives was somewhat selective. He omitted much that has since been used by others to demonstrate continued sympathy with Catholicism, and often took the information in his sources at face value, adding his own spin to strengthen his arguments and giving little or no consideration to the purposes and influences behind the creation of particular documents. Equally, Dickens made selective use of silence amongst the archives. Rather than assuming for example that an absence of heresy cases amongst the Yorkshire records indicated the predominance of Catholic conformity Dickens argued, particularly with reference to the Marian period, that it must be indicative of Protestant local authorities reluctant to persecute their co-religionists.²⁸ In addition, despite the wide range of material Dickens consulted, he dealt with many of his sources in isolation, and failed to fully utilise the sources available to him despite his heavy reliance on their evidence. By considering a variety of materials in conjunction, this thesis will provide a more comprehensive interpretation of their information.

²⁷ Ethan Shagan (ed.), *Catholics and the Protestant Nation: Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2005), chapters 1, 3 & 4; Michael Questier, 'Conformity, Catholicism and the Law,' in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church c.1550-1660*, ed. Peter Lake & Michael Questier (Woodbridge, 2000).

²⁸ A.G Dickens, *The Marian Reaction in the Diocese of York: part II – The Laity*, (Borthwick Papers 12, York, 1957).

The controversy Dickens's work has inspired amongst his successors is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the explosion of scholarship on the Lollard movement from the mid-1960s, much of which shows signs of Dickens's influence, though none agreed with his suggestion that Lollardy was present in Yorkshire. Most scholars admit that even at the height of its influence in the late fourteenth-century Lollardy had little presence in the north. Charles Kightley stated explicitly in his extensive study of early Lollardy that he had found no evidence of Lollard communities in York or Yorkshire, and both John Thomson's geographical survey of later Lollardy and Anne Hudson's more recent work suggest that Lollardy made little headway in the Northern Province.²⁹ Dickens's use of a perceived sixteenth century resurgence of Lollardy as a foundation upon which to base his claim for the popularity of reformed doctrines has also aroused debate, but Claire Cross has argued that the perceived resurgence of Lollardy may simply have been an illusion created by increased persecution as government concerns about the development of heretical doctrines grew.³⁰ This concern is reflected in the increase of heresy cases recorded in the Yorkshire archiepiscopal registers after 1528. Dickens claimed these cases, and the handful before this date, were evidence of the presence of Lollardy in Yorkshire, but this seems unrealistic given the lack of any other evidence for Yorkshire Lollardy and the considerable continental influences to which Yorkshire was subject. In addition Lollard heresies were very difficult to identify as Lollards remained within the church, and continued to communicate and confess with their Catholic neighbours. Rather than cutting themselves off from their spiritual communities they simply held separate meetings in addition to their participation in organised religion, and their heresies were so similar to those existing before and after the Lollard movement it is difficult to identify convicted heretics as Lollards.³¹

In Yorkshire Protestant ideas developed first in the cloth trading towns of the West and East Ridings which had strong continental links, thus suggesting Lutheran rather than Lollard influences. Dickens's attribution of Lollard beliefs to the Dutchmen

²⁹ Charles Kightley, 'The Early Lollards 1382-1482' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of York, 1975), chp. 1; John, A.F Thomson, *The Later Lollards 1414-1520* (Oxford, 1965), chp.8; Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 126-7.

³⁰ Claire Cross, *Church and People: England 1450-1660*, 2nd Edition (Oxford, 1999), chapters 1 & 2 *passim*, esp. pp. 21-2.

³¹ A Larson, 'Are All Lollards Lollards?' in F. Somerset et al, *Lollards and their Influence in Late Medieval England* (Suffolk, 2003), pp. 59-72.

accused of heresy in York further strengthens this assertion, and that he focussed on these cases involving aliens suggests that Dickens found little if any evidence of native Yorkshire heresy. Indeed, most Yorkshiremen who acquired heretical beliefs did so whilst working or studying outside of Yorkshire; few returned north, and there is little to suggest that those who did successfully planted their new ideas in Yorkshire. Instead the reception to heresy in Yorkshire seems to have been invariably hostile.³² Strong overseas trading links ensured numerous Yorkshiremen came into contact with Lutheran beliefs, but it is likely that few participated in Protestant worship, and in any case few would have had the linguistic abilities to do so. However traders and sailors may have witnessed acts of iconoclasm and the destruction of Catholicism, and simply talking about what they saw may have been perceived by authorities keen to combat any hint of heresy as an interest in Lutheranism and thus a serious heresy threat in England. This was not always the case however, and as will be seen the town of Hull, which had perhaps the closest continental trading links of all Yorkshire towns, demonstrated a much earlier adoption of reformed religion than elsewhere in Yorkshire, and brought in a Protestant preaching minister almost as early as the law permitted them to do so.³³

Although Dickens maintained that Lollards were the founding fathers of the Reformation, it is now generally agreed that the movement had little impact upon Protestant reform in England. Lollardy has been subjected to considerable scrutiny in recent years by scholars such as Anne Hudson and Richard Rex, and the roots of the Reformation are now understood to lay more in the Catholic past rather than the dissenting heretical past of medieval England.³⁴ That heresy was never an issue in the north, and that there was no significant Lollard presence for Protestant reformers to

³² Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, p. 4 & chapters 2 and 4 *passim*, A.G Dickens, 'Heresy and Origins of English Protestantism', in *Reformation Studies*, ed. A.G Dickens (London, 1982), p. 378.

³³ This man was Melchior Smith, who was appointed in 1561. Hull will be considered in chapter 5.

³⁴ For more on Lollardy and the origins of the Reformation see J.F Davis, 'Lollardy and the Reformation in England', in P. Marshall (ed.), *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640* (London, 1997); M. Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London, 1984), pp. 231-2; D. Smeeton, 'Lollard Themes in the Reformation Theology of William Tyndale', *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies*, 6 (Kirkville, Mo., 1986), p. 62; Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, pp. 508-13; R. Rex, *The Lollards* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 77-8; C. Haigh (ed.), *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 5; C. Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford, 1993), p. 55; Patrick Collinson, 'Night schools, conventicles and churches: continuities and discontinuities in early Protestant ecclesiology' in P. Marshall & A. Ryrie (eds.), *The Beginnings of English Protestantism* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 209-235.

build upon seems to be further illustrated by the occurrence of four popular rebellions in Yorkshire, all in opposition to religious change. Dickens wrote extensively, and controversially, on three of these; the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace, the 1541 Wakefield plot and the 1549 Seamer rebellion. Perhaps naturally given its scale and importance Dickens concentrated primarily upon the Pilgrimage of Grace, focussing on the motivations of the rebels. Dickens's need to find a non-religious stimulus for the rebels has been noted above, but his resulting argument that the rebellion was caused and maintained by social and economic grievances is tenuous, and made more so by his frequent references to important religious triggers in the rebellion before his denunciation of religion as a cause. Such a contentious approach has led to a wealth of subsequent work on the rebellion, but most historians have agreed that, for various reasons, religious grievances were *the* essential feature of the inception and continuation of the Pilgrimage of Grace.³⁵ Furthermore it is now accepted that although religion played a key role in the rebellion, and provided it with a vital cohesion, religious grievances were set against a background of social, economic and political discontent. This is reflected in the rebels' Pontefract Articles, which alongside the predominant religious issues feature sundry social, economic and political grievances, and also in the differing priorities of the separate groups of rebels across the north.³⁶

Dickens's work on the Wakefield plot and Seamer rebellion also demonstrates a certain amount of contradiction, though it is possible that these inconsistencies were simply the result of a progression of thought. Dickens claimed Wakefield represented a continuation of the grievances present in 1536, yet he afforded the plot primarily religious motivations and went on to compare it to the 1549 Prayer Book rebellion in the southwest, thus essentially eliminating any connection with his socio-economic Pilgrimage of Grace. Dickens also made comparisons between the southwestern and Seamer rebellions, despite attributing the Seamer rebels with a secular motivation, which should perhaps instead have prompted comparison with the socio-economically

³⁵ C.S.L Davies, 'The Pilgrimage of Grace Reconsidered' *Past & Present*, 41 (1968), p. 74. See also Davies' essay 'Popular Religion and the Pilgrimage of Grace' in A. Fletcher and J. Stevenson (eds.) *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1987); R.W Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Politics of the 1530s* (Oxford, 2001), esp. p. 413; M. Bush, *The Pilgrimage of Grace: A Study of the Rebel Armies of October 1536* (Manchester, 1996).

³⁶ The Pontefract Articles are printed in A. Fletcher & D. MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions*, 4th Edition, (Harlow, 1997), pp. 135-7. Bush, *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, provides a particularly good account of the varied motives of rebels from different regions of Yorkshire.

stimulated Kett's rebellion in East Anglia.³⁷ The causes of the 1549 rebellions have been as hotly debated as those of the Pilgrimage of Grace, but it is now generally agreed that rebel grievances were largely social and economic, with religion also a major feature in Seamer and the South West. There is no evidence of political opposition to the Edwardian regime.³⁸ It has been suggested that the unrest of 1549 represented a coordinated plan for a national rebellion, and though there is no firm evidence of this, the extent of this unrest might be taken to indicate that opposition to Edward's regime was widespread and not, as Dickens suggested, minimal and localised.³⁹ Dickens further undermined this argument by indicating that he adhered to this concept of a national rebellion when he linked the Seamer rebellion with those in Devon and Norfolk.

Dickens made little reference to sixteenth-century Yorkshire's final rebellion, the 1569 revolt of the Northern Earls. Admittedly this revolt falls outside the chronological scope of the majority of his work, but perhaps more significantly the very occurrence of the rebellion detracts from Dickens' beliefs that Protestantism was already firmly established in the north by 1558. Until recently comparatively little has been written about the Northern Rebellion.⁴⁰ Like the Pilgrimage of Grace, the revolt was a complex mix of local and national religion and politics, and although the earls of Northumberland and Westmorland arguably rebelled primarily in response to their increasing political marginalisation by Elizabeth I, the revolt was underpinned by the religious discontent in Yorkshire and the North East. The ultimate failure of the rebellion suggests that in 1569 Catholic religious beliefs were insufficient to overcome political loyalty, but the level of support the earls attracted is a clear indication of the

³⁷ A.G Dickens, 'Sedition and Conspiracy in Yorkshire During the Late Years of Henry VIII', *YAJ*, 34 (1939), pp. 379-98, esp. p. 391; A.G. Dickens, 'Some Popular Reactions to the Edwardian Reformation in Yorkshire', *YAJ*, 34 (1939), pp. 158 & 163.

³⁸ Amanda Jones, "'Commotion Time" The English Risings of 1549,' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Warwick, 2003); See also Joyce Youings, 'The South-Western Rebellion of 1549', *Southern History*, 1 (1979), pp. 102-14; W.K Jordan, *Edward VI: The Young King* (London, 1968), pp. 457-8 and Jennifer Loach, *Edward VI*, pp. 72-6 for the south western rebellion, and Jordan, *Edward VI*, chapter 15; Loach, *Edward VI* (Yale, 1999), chapter 7; S. K Land, *Kett's Rebellion* (Ipswich, 1977); D. MacCulloch, 'Kett's Rebellion in Context', *Past & Present*, 84 (1979), for Kett's rebellion.

³⁹ Jordan, *Edward VI*, p. 442; MacCulloch, 'Kett's Rebellion', p. 45; Dickens, *Lollards & Protestants* chapter 6.

⁴⁰ Susan Taylor, 'The Crown and the North of England 1559-70: A Study of the Rebellion of the Northern Earls, 1569-70, and its Causes', (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Manchester, 1989) has long been the most comprehensive account of the 1569 rebellion. Krista Kesselring's recently published book *The Northern Rebellion of 1569: Faith, Politics and Protest in Elizabethan England*, (Basingstoke, 2007), has emerged too late for inclusion in this thesis, however I am grateful to Krista for allowing me to see a copy of her typescript.

continued support for Catholicism in the north. The failure of many northern gentry to assist royal forces in crushing the rebellion further implies that sympathy for the Earls' cause was even more widespread than was active support. Yorkshire certainly provided the largest contingents of rebels in 1569, though it is undoubtedly significant that most of those came from Allertonshire and Richmondshire, which were respectively a peculiar of the Bishopric of Durham and part of the diocese of Chester, and as a result were not under the direct jurisdiction of the authorities at York.

Like the Northern Rebellion, English religion in the reign of Mary Tudor has until recently been somewhat neglected by Reformation historians.⁴¹ Nevertheless work on the Marian restoration of Catholicism, and the extant evidence for Yorkshire, combine to further undermine Dickens's image of a Protestant mid-Tudor England. Historians' views of the reception of the restoration have varied from the belief that the return of Catholicism was welcomed, to Dickens's view that England in 1553 was already Protestant. In all probability the truth lies somewhere in between. Andrew Pettegree's recent studies of Marian Protestantism have demonstrated that the new faith remained important during the attempted restoration of the old, and that the education and high social status of many Marian Protestants gave the movement a greater force than its small numbers might suggest.⁴² In Yorkshire it seems certain that the Catholic restoration was welcomed. The writings of Robert Parkyn, priest of Adwick-Le-Street in South Yorkshire reveal that here at least Mass was spontaneously celebrated from early August 1553,⁴³ and the number of discoveries by Elizabethan visitation commissioners of Catholic church furniture and worship books suggests that on the whole Yorkshire parishes re-equipped themselves for Catholic worship reasonably thoroughly, either by removing old goods from hiding or by purchasing new. This may simply have been in compliance with government orders, but the continued efforts of many parishes to retain this equipment after Mary's death suggests more than mere obedience. For many people in Yorkshire the Marian reaction meant a return to traditional rituals and ceremonies, but probably little thought was given to theology and liturgy beyond the correct celebration of the Mass. Whilst it is evident that the Mass was quickly restored, religion was experienced differently in every

⁴¹ D. Loades & E. Duffy (eds.), *The Church of Mary Tudor* (Aldershot, 2006), is the most recent study of Marian religion.

⁴² A. Pettegree, *Marian Protestantism: Six Studies* (Aldershot, 1996), *passim*, esp. introduction p. 3.

⁴³ A.G. Dickens (ed.), 'Robert Parkyn's Narrative of the English Reformation', *EHR*, 62:242 (1947), p. 78.

parish, and although many aspects of traditional regional religious cultures had been too thoroughly destroyed to see any kind of revival, there was perhaps little shared cultural practice beyond the Mass. Arguably the concentration of the Marian regime on the Mass might indicate that nothing else was required, but this basic framework could not compare to the richness of medieval Catholicism, and whilst it is still possible to talk of regional religious cultures, there were perhaps fewer distinct regional differences than thirty years previously.

Dickens's work on the Marian reaction in the York Diocese is amongst the last of his work on Yorkshire, and is also some of his most valuable. He provided an excellent introduction to the extant archives and his own biases, though still present, are less in evidence than in much of his other work. His work on the Marian Yorkshire clergy in particular seems to present an objective picture, without any of the anti-clericalism upon which he placed so much emphasis elsewhere, and many of his conclusions have been verified by the work of Claire Cross and Peter Marshall.⁴⁴ Dickens paid considerable attention to, and perhaps over-emphasised, the importance of clerical marriage in his attempt to demonstrate a strong Protestant presence in Yorkshire, though in later work he admitted he had found clerical marriage to be a poor indicator of Protestant belief.⁴⁵ Ultimately, Dickens admitted that he found little evidence in the York records of any active Protestantism amongst the clergy, and the few examples he did uncover were solely concerned with members of the university educated upper clergy, few of whom spent much time in Yorkshire.⁴⁶ On the other hand, Dickens implied a belief that had the opportunity arisen a significant number of Yorkshire clergy would have welcomed the opportunity to join an organised evangelical group,⁴⁷ though he was significantly silent on the subject of underground Protestant organisations in Marian Yorkshire. It has been claimed that attendance at such conventicles was not typical behaviour of Marian Protestants, but other evidence

⁴⁴ C. Cross, *Urban Magistrates and Ministers: Religion in Leeds and Hull from the Reformation to the Civil War*, (Borthwick Paper, 67, York, 1985); C. Cross, 'Ordinations in the Diocese of York 1500-1630', in C. Cross (ed.) *Patronage and Recruitment in the Tudor and Early Stuart Church*, (Borthwick Studies in History, 2, York, 1996); P. Marshall, *The Face of the Pastoral Ministry of the East Riding, 1525-1595*, (Borthwick Paper, 88, York, 1995); Other historians have since shown anti-clericalism to be minimal throughout England. See for example Haigh, *English Reformations*, p. 44; C. Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 92-3; J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People*, (Oxford, 1985), pp. 45-9.

⁴⁵ Dickens, *The English Reformation*, p. 308.

⁴⁶ A.G. Dickens, *The Marian Reaction in the Diocese of York', part I: The Clergy*, (Borthwick Paper, 11, 1957), pp. 16-17.

⁴⁷ *ibid*, p. 21.

has suggested that they were widespread, and though no confirmed Yorkshire examples have yet been provided it will be seen in chapter five that such congregations may have gathered in Marian Hull.⁴⁸

The lack of reaction of Yorkshire's former monastics to Mary's attempts to revive the religious life was also evidence for Dickens that Catholic beliefs were virtually extinct. Dickens believed Mary's attempts achieved 'no more than a feeble splutter' in Yorkshire,⁴⁹ and whilst the monastic revival did not achieve widespread support research by Claire Cross has suggested that had the holders of former monastic lands in Yorkshire returned them to the church there would have been no shortage of ex-religious wishing to resume the habit. Dickens used the failure of the laity to follow Mary's example and return their lands to the church as a further example of a general reluctance to return to the old ways, but Cross has demonstrated that some monastic communities in Yorkshire began to be reconstructed during Mary's reign.⁵⁰ Several former inhabitants of Monk Bretton had continued to live with their prior since the dissolution, and maintained the religious life as far as possible, and evidence from wills has indicated that numerous former religious anticipated a monastic revival in Yorkshire. Cross has further suggested that Yorkshire Cistercians may have begun to reconstitute during Mary's reign, though she admits this is impossible to verify.⁵¹ Were it true, this would be of considerable importance to the history of Marian religion for there is no other extant evidence of attempts to re-found Cistercian communities, and Cistercian monks were noticeably absent from the communities Mary did re-establish.

Dickens concentrated his claims for a Protestant Yorkshire laity on evidence of contempt for the Eucharist, something which provided a vital role in his attempts to link Marian Protestantism with Lollardy. Disrespect for Catholic Eucharistic practices had been one of the most common means of identifying Lollards, and became an important way of detecting Protestants in Marian England. However Dickens failed to observe that most Lollards remained within the church and continued to receive alongside their Catholic contemporaries, a significant contrast to the outspoken nature

⁴⁸ D. Loades, *The Reign of Mary Tudor*, 2nd Edition, (London, 1991), p. 117; J.W Martin, 'The Protestant Underground Congregations of Mary's Reign,' *JEH*, 35:4 (1984), pp. 525-6.

⁴⁹ Dickens, *The Marian Reaction*, II, p. 19.

⁵⁰ C. Cross, 'The Reconstitution of Northern Monastic Communities in the Reign of Mary Tudor', *Northern History*, 29, (1993), p. 204.

⁵¹ *ibid*, pp. 200-3.

of and specific breaks from the Establishment made by early evangelicals. The controversy aroused by Dickens's work on Lollardy has already been considered, but it is worth referring briefly to his conviction that Lollardy persisted into the 1550s in Yorkshire. The 1555 heresy case against Christopher Kelke of York, which will be discussed in chapter four, saw Kelke accused of Lollardy, and led Dickens to argue that the revival of the term was evidence of the presence of continued Lollard beliefs in Yorkshire.⁵² However it is far more likely that Kelke was merely subjected to an old form of abuse for holding less than orthodox religious beliefs, particularly given York's commercial links with the Protestant Netherlands. The presence of such heresy cases amongst the Marian court records led Dickens to suggest that Protestantism was well established in Yorkshire, but this cannot be substantiated by large numbers of either exiles or martyrs. Yorkshire contributed few to the English Protestant communities in Europe in the mid-1550s, a direct contrast to the considerable numbers of Yorkshire Catholics entering voluntary exile after 1559. Dickens used figures compiled by Christina Garrett to claim twenty-two Marian exiles for Yorkshire, but it is likely that few of these were resident in the county at the time of their exile.⁵³ Amongst approximately 300 Marian Protestant martyrs even fewer can be claimed for Yorkshire with Richard Snell, who was burnt at Richmond just two months before Mary's death in 1558, the only Yorkshire martyr during the reign.

This absence of martyrs and exiles might indicate that the persecution of evangelicals was not so effective in Yorkshire as elsewhere, but may also be symptomatic of genuine conservative beliefs amongst the people and a much less deep-seated presence of reformed religion than that implied by Dickens. On the other hand, Dickens believed the lack of persecution was in itself indicative of Protestant beliefs amongst the Yorkshire authorities, who were reluctant to persecute their fellow believers. Dickens's suggestion that the Marian reaction was unpopular in Yorkshire is further hampered by the lack of resistance to it. Across England Mary's restoration of Catholicism aroused none of the armed insurrection that the Protestant reforms of her father, brother and sister did. Only Wyatt's rebellion of 1554 disturbed the peace and this was primarily motivated by opposition to her Spanish marriage; its association with Protestantism was merely a result of subsequent propaganda instigated by the

⁵² Dickens, *The Marian Reaction*, II, p. 4.

⁵³ *ibid*, p. 23; D.M Palliser, 'Popular Reactions to the Reformation During the Years of Uncertainty 1530-1570', Haigh, *The English Reformation Revised*, p. 101, quotes that Yorkshire and Lancashire together produced only 40 Marian exiles.

queen.⁵⁴ In Yorkshire Thomas Stafford's attempt to launch a Protestant invasion of England via Scarborough in 1556 was swiftly halted by the townspeople, few of whom shared his hostility to Catholicism.

Dickens also neglected the wills of the Marian laity, and even suggested that the evidence provided by wills was an insufficient cross-section of public opinion to be of any great value.⁵⁵ This neglect can perhaps be explained by the findings of subsequent scholars who have demonstrated that the Marian restoration saw an upsurge in the number of traditional wills.⁵⁶ This is at odds with the picture of an increasingly Protestant north that Dickens wanted to portray, though in support of his claims Loades has constructed an argument based on Dickens's figures for Protestant preambles, which suggested that Protestants were more numerous than the Catholic zealots who persecuted them.⁵⁷ This may be true, but it is also likely that there were many more moderate Catholics than zealots. Furthermore Dickens concentrated his examples from wills, and indeed of heresy cases, primarily upon evidence relating to the cloth towns of the West Riding, many of which later became centres of Puritanism. This is an important reflection of the general distribution of Protestantism within Yorkshire at this time, but by omitting legal and testamentary evidence from other parts of Yorkshire Dickens limited the usefulness of his conclusions. Dickens also omitted other evidence of support for Catholicism amongst the people of Marian Yorkshire, and, in contrast to much of his other work, made little reference to the writings of Robert Parkyn. Parkyn wrote specifically of the joy with which the return to Catholicism was welcomed, and made clear both his own personal Catholic faith, and his belief in the inherent Catholicism of his fellow Yorkshire men and women.⁵⁸ In contrast Dickens openly stated his belief that Marian policies remained weak in Yorkshire, and concluded that enthusiasm for the regime was limited to a handful of extremists.⁵⁹ He believed the period was something of a limbo between the old world and the new, and failed to appreciate that to contemporaries the success of Protestantism was by no means a foregone conclusion.

⁵⁴ D. Loades, *The Oxford Martyrs* (London, 1970), p. 123.

⁵⁵ Dickens, *The Marian Reaction*, II, p. 22.

⁵⁶ D. MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603*, 2nd Edition, (Basingstoke, 2001); Haigh, *English Reformations*; A. Bartholomew, 'Lay Piety in the Reign of Mary Tudor' (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Manchester, 1979); Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People*; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*.

⁵⁷ D. Loades, 'The Enforcement of Reaction 1553-1558', *JEH*, 16 (1965), p. 62.

⁵⁸ Dickens, 'Parkyn's Narrative,' pp. 78-80.

⁵⁹ Dickens, *The Marian Reaction*, II, p. 21; Dickens, *English Reformation*, p. 309.

Dickens's overwhelmingly negative view of Mary's reign, and of later medieval Catholicism, resulted in an inability to see how Mary's restoration of Catholicism could have led to a revival of traditional religion. This view has been vigorously contested by Scarisbrick, Duffy, and others, who portrayed the reign as a respite for Catholicism and recognised the importance of Mary's religious reforms.⁶⁰ Dickens gave no evidence of these reforms, many of which were initiated by Cardinal Pole as a result of the ongoing work of the Council of Trent. Furthermore Marian Catholicism played an important role in halting any spread of popular Protestantism that had begun by 1553. As well as ignoring Mary's reforms, Dickens consistently played down the crucial role of the Marian clergy in establishing strong and long-lasting Catholic communities across Yorkshire, yet evidence from the Elizabethan period demonstrates how they ensured the continuation of a broad base of Catholic support. The desire for Catholicism long continued in Yorkshire and the difficulties faced by the Elizabethan government in enforcing the 1559 settlement there can only strengthen the case in favour of the persistence of Catholic belief in the region.

Regardless of the suggestion that 'Yorkshire recusant history *is* much of the actuality of recusant history,'⁶¹ only two historians, Dickens and Aveling, have studied Yorkshire recusancy in much detail, and their conclusions differ considerably. Dickens dealt with recusancy only briefly early in his career, and maintained throughout his work that the recusant communities were insignificant as Protestantism had already won the day.⁶² However despite using the same archival materials, and agreeing with Dickens that only around 1.5-2% of the population of Yorkshire were recusant, Aveling's work demonstrated how important Catholicism remained in many parts of

⁶⁰ A.G Dickens 'The Early Expansion of Protestantism in England 1520-1558', *Late Monasticism and the Reformation* (London, 1984), p. 131; Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People*, chapters 6-7; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, chp.16; Elizabeth Russell, 'Mary Tudor and Mr Jorkins', *BIHR*, 63, (1990), also expresses the view that Mary handled the Catholic restoration gently and skilfully, and suggests that had she lived longer, or produced a Catholic heir, she would have been remembered as a skilled politician. For contrasting views about Mary's reign see Dickens, *English Reformation*, pp. 309-11 and Elton, *Reform and Reformation: England 1509-1558* (London, 1977), p. 385.

⁶¹ J.C.H Aveling, 'Some Aspects of Yorkshire Catholic Recusant History 1558-1791', *SCH*, 4 (1967), p. 106.

⁶² Dickens, 'Romanist Recusancy'; A.G Dickens, 'The Extent and Character of Recusancy in Yorkshire, 1604', *YAJ*, 37 (1951); J.C.H Aveling, *Post Reformation Catholicism in East Yorkshire 1558-1790*, (East Yorkshire Local History Society, 11, 1960); *The Catholic Recusants of the West Riding of Yorkshire 1558-1790*, (Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, Literary and Historical Section, 10:6, 1963); *Northern Catholics* (London, 1966); *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York 1558-1791*, (CRSP Monograph Series, 2, 1970).

the region.⁶³ Furthermore Dickens's demonstration of a pre-conceived belief that Catholicism in Yorkshire was virtually dead before the arrival of the seminary and Jesuit priests, anticipated the subsequent arguments of Bossy and Cliffe that post-Reformation Catholicism was solely a creation of the seminarist priests as by 1580 little enthusiasm remained for the old faith.⁶⁴ Bossy's work has been disputed by Haigh, who argued that the seminary priests built upon and strengthened a Catholicism that had survived from medieval times.⁶⁵ Aveling's work on Yorkshire recusancy was much more extensive than that of Dickens, and his separate, in-depth studies of the city of York and each of the Ridings were the product of detailed research using a wide range of archival materials. Nevertheless, despite his conviction of its unimportance, Dickens's work provided a valuable introduction to the sources available to historians of post-Reformation northern Catholicism, and he made the important distinction between the conservatism of the 1560s and the legal nature of the recusancy of the later Elizabethan period as well as providing useful, if somewhat selective, examples of the geographic distribution of conservatism and recusancy.⁶⁶

Dickens's argument against the survival of medieval Catholicism rested on his being able to demonstrate that early conservatism did not develop into recusancy. His use of the word 'trivial' to describe examples of early conservatism from the Archbishop's visitation returns emphasises the lack of significance he attributed to the continuation of Catholic belief in Yorkshire and his concentration on evidence from areas such as Holderness, where conservatism largely did not become recusancy, seems to have been deliberate. Dickens omitted any mention of the early conservatism of Cleveland, which, as he himself admitted, later became one of the largest recusant communities in Yorkshire, and also neglected to refer to smaller pockets of Catholicism that survived in the predominantly conformist West and East Ridings. Nor did Dickens make any reference to York, though he suggested elsewhere that the city was largely indifferent to religion and was predominantly concerned with economic issues.⁶⁷ In contrast Aveling's work on York and Sarah Bastow's more recent research

⁶³ Dickens, 'Extent and Character', p. 33, see also p. 43 where Dickens argued against the much larger figures produced by R.G Usher in 1910; Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, p. 8.

⁶⁴ J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850* (London, 1975); J.T Cliffe, *The Yorkshire Gentry from the Reformation to the Civil War* (London, 1969), p. 167.

⁶⁵ Haigh, *English Reformations*, chp. 15.

⁶⁶ Dickens, 'Romanist Recusancy', *passim*.

⁶⁷ A.G. Dickens, 'Tudor York', in *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: A History of Yorkshire – The City of York* ed. R.B Pugh (Oxford, 1961), pp. 148-55.

have demonstrated that Catholicism persisted in York throughout the Reformation, and that the missionary priests arriving there found a thriving recusant community. Bastow admitted the difficulty in identifying a distinct Catholic community in York prior to 1572 because of a lack of evidence, but suggested that limited traces can be found, and went on to emphasise the continuing strength of York's Catholic community despite the difficulties in maintaining priests.⁶⁸

It is difficult to find evidence of strong religious feelings in the early years of Elizabeth's reign, but the lack of Catholic opposition to her policies, and the lack of implementation of reform, reflects the continued social power of the conservative gentry and nobility in the north. The continued reliance of the government upon these men to maintain social order ensured that there was little pressure to enforce conformity in the north. In many places, such as the West Riding cloth towns, this lack of pressure led Catholicism to slowly die out. In many more places however Catholics continued to practise their faith whilst demonstrating a minimal level of conformity, and Haigh has identified several men who were active underground Catholic leaders in Yorkshire in the years before the arrival of the missionary priests.⁶⁹ Only after the 1569 rebellion did persecution begin in earnest, and Catholics begin to withdraw fully from the Established Church. This was almost certainly partly a result of the arrival of Edmund Grindal as Archbishop of York and the Earl of Huntingdon as president of the Council of the North. Formerly Bishop of London, Grindal had been at the cutting edge of reform and was vehemently anti-Catholic. Huntingdon too was a firm Protestant and their partnership saw the first real attempt to implement reformed religion in the north of England. A few years after the arrival of Grindal and Huntingdon came the seminary and missionary priests from the colleges in Europe whom Dickens and Bossy claimed brought about the rebirth of English Catholicism. Certainly the introduction of reformed post-Tridentine Catholicism can be attributed to these priests, but they were largely working amongst, and re-educating, people who already held Catholic beliefs. Their arrival brought a new style of Catholicism, but an apparent increase in the number of Catholics was probably due to the increased effectiveness of methods of enquiry, and the full commitment of large numbers of Church papists to Catholicism. It is difficult to see how Catholicism could have

⁶⁸ Aveling, 'City of York', chp.1 & pp. 159-60; S.L Bastow, 'The Catholic Gentry and the Catholic Community of the City of York, 1536-1642: The Focus of a Catholic County?' *York Historian*, 18 (2001), pp. 14-16 & 20.

⁶⁹ Haigh, *English Reformations*, p. 255.

survived in England long-term without the missionaries, but equally difficult to see how the mission could have succeeded in the late sixteenth-century without a Catholic base to work from. It has also been suggested that the Catholic missionaries were the first post-reformation evangelists to parts of Yorkshire, and it is therefore possible that had the Protestants preceded them the spiritual enthusiasm of the people would have embraced the new religion.⁷⁰

It cannot be disputed that Catholicism was limited to particular areas of Yorkshire. Certain regions were undoubtedly more suited to the religious and social growth of a recusant community than others, but Dickens gave little serious consideration to the concept of organised Catholic communities and thus underestimated the importance of recusants. Nor did he discuss the role of recusant women, something recently shown to have been of considerable importance,⁷¹ and he believed post-reformation Catholicism was strictly a gentry faith. Dickens, and later Bossy, maintained that virtually no centres of recusancy existed without active gentry support, and it cannot be denied that Catholicism did increasingly become a gentry household faith.⁷² However for Elizabethan Yorkshire there is strong evidence to suggest that Catholicism remained as strong amongst the peasants and artisans as amongst the gentry. In York Aveling and Bastow have demonstrated that although links were maintained with gentry outside the city, the core of York's recusant community were drawn from amongst tradesmen.⁷³ Aveling has further identified several other recusant communities across Yorkshire, which existed independently of the gentry, and my own recent work on the North Riding has indicated that despite the overall protection of the Catholic gentry the peasant and yeoman farmers exercised considerable initiative in maintaining their faith.⁷⁴ The protection of Catholic gentry landlords was surely welcomed, but in some areas a combination of other factors

⁷⁰ Aveling, 'City of York', p. 45; W.J Sheils, 'Catholics and Their Neighbours in a Rural Community: Egton Chapelry 1590-1780', *Northern History*, 34 (1998), p. 119.

⁷¹ See for example P. Crawford, *Women and Religion in England, 1500-1720*, (London, 1996); Sarah Bastow "'Worth Nothing But Very Wilful": Catholic Recusant Women of Yorkshire 1536-1642' *Recusant History*, 25 (2001), pp. 591-603; E. Watson, 'Disciplined Disobedience? Women and the Survival of Catholicism in the North York Moors in the Reign of Elizabeth I,' *SCH*, 43 (2007), pp. 295-306.

⁷² Dickens, 'Romanist Recusancy', p. 179; 'Extent and Character', p. 40; Bossy, *English Catholic Community*, p. 181.

⁷³ Aveling, 'City of York', p. 65; Bastow, 'The Catholic Gentry', *passim*.

⁷⁴ Aveling, 'Aspects of Yorkshire Catholic Recusant History', p. 120; 'West Riding', p. 223; E. Watson, "'A Stiff-necked, wilful and obstinate people": The Catholic Laity in the North York Moors, c.1559-1603,' *YAJ*, 77 (2005).

seems to have enabled Catholicism to flourish independently of gentry patronage.⁷⁵ In contrast to Dickens's view the old faith seems to have continued to thrive, if in revised form, in many parts of Yorkshire throughout the sixteenth century.

Dickens's work aroused many controversies and scholarly debates, but his influence cannot be underestimated. The Reformation was a complex story with many inconsistencies, which are only now beginning to be understood and appreciated. However the greater awareness of the scope of archival materials beyond strictly ecclesiastical records has enabled changes in the approach to Reformation scholarship to be made, and the influences and implications of religious change to be re-assessed once more. Revisionist and post-revisionist scholars have reconsidered many of the themes of Dickens's work, and many more convincing arguments have been put forward, yet despite a clear indication that much remains to be done no attempt has yet been made to fully reassess the intertwined religious and political histories of sixteenth-century Yorkshire in response to these continually changing patterns of interpretation. Limits of time have ensured that this thesis cannot consider all the available sources for religious change in Yorkshire, however by using both the work of Dickens and the questions and angles of approach taken by recent scholarship this thesis will revisit the core ecclesiastical archives to provide a reassessment of how Yorkshire parishes experienced the Reformation. A general chronological approach has been combined with more detailed case studies to emphasise the continued importance of regional studies as well as the great differences in the religious cultures and behaviour of Reformation Yorkshire.

The Sources

Alongside the vast array of Reformation historiography, the process of religious change has a broad range of extant archival material. Yorkshire in particular has a valuable archive of ecclesiastical documents for the sixteenth century. This study of religious change, regional culture and resistance in Yorkshire has drawn heavily on the records of the church courts and ecclesiastical visitations, as well as on parish records, personal papers and records of central government. Naturally, no single source can give a full account of the history of a region, but together they can provide a much

⁷⁵ Aveling, 'Aspects of Yorkshire Catholic Recusant History', p. 120; 'West Riding', p. 223.

more comprehensive understanding of the effects of the Reformation on Yorkshire. As historiographical trends have changed over time, so too has the interpretation of the extant sources, with the materials being used today to very different intellectual purposes to those of thirty or forty years ago. Dickens, for example, used the Yorkshire ecclesiastical archives to support his notion that both county and country had become Protestant by 1553, and thus he interpreted documents such as those relating to the Dutchmen in York and the case of Christopher Kelke, to give an impression that this might have been the case. Today historians are more inclined to make studies of specific documents to reveal what they can tell us about a particular time or event, as well as taking note of what they omit, or what influences there might have been on their creation.

The most heavily used sources for this study have been the returns of the Elizabethan visitations, the records of the York Consistory and Chancery courts, and those of the Northern Ecclesiastical Commission. Despite the post-Reformation decades being their busiest ever, the English ecclesiastical courts were undoubtedly weakened by the Reformation, and reached the limit of their development in the succeeding decades.⁷⁶ Though they became more closely integrated into the Tudor administrative machinery, and were more closely identified with the crown, their increased workload after the Reformation was not supported by any increased power or indeed strengthening of the existing mechanisms. The spiritual sanctions they imposed lost their effect when many people became indifferent or hostile towards the Established Church, and many Puritans came to see them as relics of the old church and believed they were unsuitable instruments for Godly Reformation.⁷⁷ There are nevertheless some records of the receipt of certificates that penance had been performed, suggesting that spiritual sanctions did still retain some force.⁷⁸ Traditional criticisms caused many historians to neglect the records of the ecclesiastical courts, and to view them as unpopular and ineffectual.⁷⁹ Since the 1960s and 1970s these views have been largely overturned, but the court records are still being explored and

⁷⁶ Roland A Marchant, *The Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York 1560-1642* (London, 1960), p. 1; Roland A Marchant, *The Church Under the Law; Justice, Administration and Discipline in the Diocese of York 1560-1640* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 1.

⁷⁷ Ralph Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and People During the English Reformation 1520-1570* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 1, 15; Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England 1570-1640* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 4.

⁷⁸ For example V1567-8/CB2, f49r, V1571-2, f101r, 102v; V1578-9/CB1, f31r, 97r, 101r; V1600/CB.1A, f23v, 86r, 110r, 111r, 127r, 130v, 144v, 166v, 175r, 211r, 226v.

⁷⁹ Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, pp. 4, 7-8.

the full extent of their value to historians of early modern social and religious history is only gradually being realised as questions about local context and the local and regional implementation of laws and injunctions are considered. The officers of the church courts were amongst the most familiar figures of external authority within the parish; the regular, annual, visitations of each parish carried out by archdeacons would have ensured that they and their commissioners were frequent visitors and the roughly triennial archiepiscopal visitations meant that nor were the archbishop's commissioners unfamiliar. However great the decline in respect for ecclesiastical justice it is almost certain that parishioners would have known of the courts, the types of cases dealt with and the forms of justice meted out. Certainly, as will be seen in the following chapters, there is evidence that parishioners were sufficiently familiar with the workings of the courts to be able to utilise them in pursuit of their own agendas.

The work of Houlbrooke, Marchant and Ingram has demonstrated the difficulties faced by the ecclesiastical courts as they attempted to impose discipline, and the sheer size of the diocese of York undoubtedly contributed to this.⁸⁰ In addition, it can be strongly argued that however efficient, or not, the work of the church courts in reforming religious or moral offenders, they could not have performed this work without the cooperation, and indeed collusion, of parish representatives. Haigh has suggested that this was a central weakness of the ecclesiastical court machinery, though Ingram cautions against using the church court records without remembering that they were part of a much larger jurisdictional machinery in which non-professional local officials were involved at many levels.⁸¹ These men, generally churchwardens, who were responsible for making initial presentments of misdemeanours to the courts, had to take into account their neighbours' opinions, and it is unlikely that many would have been prepared to upset the harmony of their community for the sake of sticking strictly to the letter of the law over minor misdemeanours, though in some cases parishioners were happy to take action against persistent troublemakers in an attempt to maintain this harmony.⁸² It is also possible that even the most conscientious churchwardens were not aware of every misdemeanour in their parishes, and many churchwardens may have simply responded to the questions set in visitation articles rather than presented every petty offender.

⁸⁰ Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and People*; Marchant, *Puritans and the Church Courts*; Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*.

⁸¹ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 18; Ingram, *ibid*, pp. 27, 29.

⁸² Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, pp. 30-31.

Doing this would allow them to conform to the law, whilst maintaining some level of social harmony within their communities, but could also backfire as occasionally the churchwardens themselves were cited for failing to make presentments.⁸³

The job of churchwarden was onerous and often unpopular; leading to the suggestion that they were ineffective agents of authority and were as open to the influence of local gentry as that of the Church.⁸⁴ On the other hand, it has also been argued that the visitation returns in particular are the best evidence of the conscientious and scrupulous manner in which churchwardens discharged some of their duties.⁸⁵ However there are numerous examples in the visitation returns of churchwardens failing to fulfil their duties, suggesting that this argument was perhaps rather too positive.⁸⁶ The overall volume of presentments makes it hard to disagree with the suggestion that churchwardens were generally careful to show that they had not been negligent, even if they had been unable to obtain complete information.⁸⁷ Popular views, the nature of parish relations and general attitudes towards deviance and lawbreaking were as important as the official scale of priorities in determining the steps taken against those presented, and Purvis has suggested that it was probably relatively easy to return defective presentations.⁸⁸ Certainly several cases were brought before the church courts during the first half of Elizabeth's reign that dealt with the discovery of Catholic objects that had previously been hidden from the visitors, indicating that a change of churchwarden, or the thoroughness of the commissioners, could make all the difference over time.⁸⁹ Equally however, the political context of a particular time could affect the thoroughness of visitations. The threat posed by the 1569 Northern Rebellion led to much more determined efforts to quash conservatism in the north, and it is notably after this date that churchwardens began to appear more frequently for not sticking strictly to the letter of the law.

⁸³ See for example V1567/8 CB1, f. 115v when the churchwardens of West Rounton in Cleveland were charged with not making any presentment or answer to the articles ministered to them.

⁸⁴ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 18.

⁸⁵ J.S Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents in the Diocese of York* (Cambridge, 1948), p. 185.

⁸⁶ See for example V1567-8/CB1, f115v, 186v, 189v; V1578-9/CB1, f44r, 50v, 58r, 64r, 68v, 97r; V1586, f15v, 17v, 18r-v, 61r, 75v, 94r, 98r.

⁸⁷ Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, p. 185.

⁸⁸ Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, p. 30; Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, p. 47; Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, p. 36.

⁸⁹ Such examples naturally decrease over time, but a handful can be found as late as the 1590s. See for instance V1590-1/CB1, f153r when Catholic goods were discovered at Helmsley, and V1586, f24r when vestments were found at Thirsk.

The church courts were undoubtedly an invaluable channel through which the official requirements of state religion could be communicated, but many of the officials whose job it was to pass on this message were opposed to it, and many more were simply incapable of communicating the *spirit* of the faith rather than just the contents of the injunctions. The effective implementation of religious change required more sustained pressure and supervision than most local officials were prepared to give, and the workload of the courts meant they could never have more than a superficial view of the religious life of each parish.⁹⁰ However the selectiveness of churchwardens in making their presentments was not simply evidence of their negligence, but also enabled them to act as a valuable filter on the information sent to the courts. By presenting only the most persistent offenders, and those who would not respond to local chivvying, the churchwardens were able to help prevent the already busy courts from being swamped with business. By distinguishing between the serious and the trivial they were also able to prevent futile and bitter local conflicts.⁹¹ Whilst this also makes it almost impossible for historians to gain an accurate picture of the true extent of non-conformity and resistance to religious policies from the church court records, it also illustrates the persistent importance of social harmony, which at a local level was often considered more important than theological differences.⁹²

Furthermore, it is likely that the degree of authority held by local and regional officials varied. It is unclear from the records just how much control was held by central authorities, and how much power was delegated to lesser officials. It is equally unclear how far these officials were in agreement with the religion established at the time they held office, or how far, if at all, they made an effort to assist in its implementation. Christopher Haigh has argued that the county of Lancashire, from 1541 within the Diocese of Chester, was sufficiently large, and sufficiently remote from Chester, to have made the devolution of authority essential.⁹³ Given that Yorkshire was geographically larger than Lancashire, and that parts of the county were equally remote from York, it would seem certain that here too authority was delegated to lesser officials, which undoubtedly had an impact upon the rigorousness and consistency with which misdemeanours and offences were reported to central authority. The enthusiasm of the Archbishops of York for enforcing conformity also

⁹⁰ Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, pp. 257-8.

⁹¹ Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, p. 328.

⁹² *ibid*, pp. 107, 327-8.

⁹³ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 4.

affected the levels of action taken by the church courts. The Elizabethan Archbishop Edmund Grindal is well known for his vigorous attempts to root out Catholicism, but his successor, Edwin Sandys, was less concerned with the issue of religious non-conformity, so long as non-conformist doctrines were not openly preached.⁹⁴

Differing regional situations also affected the nature of prosecution through the courts. As Tyler has pointed out, many leading Yorkshire families remained Catholic well into Elizabeth's reign, yet because of the paucity of Protestant magnates and gentry, they were still required to keep the peace in some areas.⁹⁵ The strict enforcement of the recusancy laws against such gentlemen would have led ultimately to unrest with which the government could ill afford to deal. The records of the ecclesiastical courts therefore reveal little about the non-conformity of families such as the Radcliffe's of Lythe and Cholmley's of Whitby, both in Cleveland, but other records confirm the long-standing Catholicism of both. In many cases Tyler has argued, the York ecclesiastical commissioners took the line of least resistance when dealing with recusants, which, from the point of view and purpose of a modern historian, will have impacted hugely on the completeness of the records.⁹⁶ Again, the extent of this toleration will have been directly influenced by the attitude of the ruling archbishop of York, and the persecution of Catholics fluctuated according to the opinions and beliefs of senior officials. Equally however, non-conformist gentry and noble families were often beyond the purview of standard ecclesiastical jurisdiction, again as a result of social considerations. Those responsible for making presentments were generally socially inferior, and lacked the authority to command the attendance of their superiors before the courts. Furthermore the mobility of the gentry between their estates could confuse the issue of which locality was responsible for ensuring their conformity. The Ecclesiastical High Commission, largely established to deal with more serious cases of religious non-conformity, and with powers almost equal to those of the Council of the North, was also a useful tool for disciplining non-conformist gentry. Not only did the Commission have the power to impose harsher penalties than other ecclesiastical courts, the people with whom it dealt were frequently those from the upper echelons of society.

⁹⁴ Marchant, *Puritans and the Church Courts*, pp. 16, 20.

⁹⁵ Philip Tyler, 'The Significance of the Ecclesiastical Commission at York,' *Northern History*, 2 (1967), pp. 37-8.

⁹⁶ *ibid*, p. 38.

Haigh has also noted that the locations of the two consistory courts within the Chester diocese, at Chester and Richmond, were both equally difficult to access by parishioners in Lancashire.⁹⁷ Once again, a similar argument can be put forward for Yorkshire. Although the visitation courts sat at various locations, the Consistory court for the York diocese was solely based at York until the establishment of an outpost in Hull at the end of the sixteenth century.⁹⁸ For parishioners in the more remote deaneries, such as Cleveland in the north or Craven in the west, a journey to York would have proved lengthy and expensive, and would have discouraged them from bringing cases before the court, or from attending when cited. That said, distance was a legitimate excuse for failing to respond to court citations, and for absence from church, and in any case the time and trouble involved in litigation is likely to have discouraged all parishioners, not just those living far distant from York, from becoming involved in lawsuits. Many cases that did reach the courts had to be dropped because of the refusal of witnesses to travel and cannot be traced beyond an initial appearance in the records. Perhaps more surprising is the conspicuous lack of success of the ecclesiastical courts within the city of York. Given the location of the ecclesiastical authorities in York this might seem difficult to explain, but York's wealth had declined dramatically in the century leading up to the Reformation, and poverty was rife. Like distance, poverty was a justifiable defence for absence from both church and court, and there was little point in the authorities presenting parishioners who had a ready made and legitimate excuse for their behaviour, even if it was a cover for their conservatism.

In addition to difficulties in securing attendance, sanctions such as suspension and excommunication were difficult to enforce even where they were accepted, particularly over long distances, and Haigh has argued that for some parishioners living under these sanctions may have been less onerous than a journey to court.⁹⁹ This contradicts Marchant's suggestion that the threat of excommunication 'claimed respect and attention' from most Yorkshire parishioners, and that only in remote areas such as Cleveland, or districts with large numbers of poor people, such as Halifax, was it less regarded.¹⁰⁰ However, to further confuse the issue, Marchant has elsewhere argued that very few of those excommunicated by the church courts ever sought absolution unless pressurised to do so by their minister or employer, though he does not take into

⁹⁷ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 11.

⁹⁸ Marchant, *The Church under the Law*, p. 118.

⁹⁹ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁰⁰ Marchant, *Puritans and the Church Courts*, p. 9.

consideration issues such as the high cost of absolution, nor the fact that excommunication would have meant very little to those who disagreed with the doctrine of the established church.¹⁰¹ As I have shown elsewhere, obtaining a Catholic baptism or marriage service was not impossible in Elizabethan Yorkshire, particularly after the arrival of the seminary priests, and illicit burials also occurred.¹⁰² The need for these ceremonies might have prompted many of those excommunicated for moral offences to seek absolution, but for religious non-conformists who were aware of where and how to obtain a different service, there was perhaps less pressure to do so. The ecclesiastical court records rarely reveal how people responded to the sentences handed down to them, and even then seldom give more details than simply that a penance was performed. Furthermore the very small number of prosecutions by the church courts for consorting and communicating with ex-communicants, coupled with the large number of recorded excommunications and lack of records of the issue of absolution, might be used to further the argument that the state of excommunication was held in scant regard both by those upon whom it was imposed and their neighbours. It is likely that many excommunicants slipped back into regular life without ever securing absolution, and in large parishes it is probable that both clergy and churchwardens would have been somewhat hazy about who was and was not excommunicate, again emphasising the gaps in the information provided by the records of the church courts.¹⁰³

Even where useful references can be found in the ecclesiastical court books, they rarely give any supplementary material beyond the basic reason the defendant was taken to court and records of the procedure of the case through court. Often, even the nature of the offence is omitted, and the extent of supplementary material appears to vary according to the importance of the defendant.¹⁰⁴ Though they appear only rarely and with sparse detail in the visitation returns, the case of Lord Thomas and Lady Edith Metham's Catholic resistance to the Elizabethan settlement can be traced in considerable detail through the act books of the High Commission, and it might be argued that such attention was given to this case because of the influence the

¹⁰¹ Marchant, *The Church Under the Law*, p. 221.

¹⁰² Watson, "A Stiff-necked, Wilful and Obstinate People," pp. 194-196.

¹⁰³ Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, pp. 357-8.

¹⁰⁴ J.S Purvis, *An Introduction to Ecclesiastical Records* (London, 1953), p. 64; W.J Sheils, 'Sources for the History of Dissent and Catholicism at the Borthwick Institute,' *Borthwick Institute Bulletin*, 3:1 (1983), p. 13.

Metham's had in Howdenshire in the East Riding.¹⁰⁵ Howdenshire was a peculiar jurisdiction of first the prior and convent and then the dean and chapter of Durham, and as such was a semi-autonomous community and not directly subject to the authority of the ecclesiastical courts at York. It is perhaps significant that Allertonshire in Cleveland, a peculiar of the Bishop of Durham, was also a stronghold of Catholicism, and it seems that residence within a peculiar gave somewhat greater religious freedom as well as increasing the need for a body such as the Ecclesiastical Commission to counteract the Catholic families who moved between peculiars to avoid ordinary channels of prosecution. For many of the cases recorded in the Consistory and High Commission court books, cause papers relating to the case remain extant. These often provide extensive detail in the form of lists of charges, the responses of defendants, the depositions of witnesses and sentences, but for historians of religious change these are of limited use. The majority of well-documented extant cause papers deal with matrimonial, tithing and testamentary issues, though there are exceptions. Most of those dealing with religious offences contain few details, though the already extensive details of the Metham case can be further supplemented by cause paper material. At the opposite end of the religious spectrum the cause paper relating to the case of Melchior Smith is similarly extensive.¹⁰⁶ Smith was the Protestant preaching minister who arrived in Hull in 1561, and was in trouble for his Puritan non-conformity and refusal to wear a surplice at the celebration of the Eucharist. Smith's outspoken Protestant convictions, and active preaching, certainly influenced the religious culture of Hull, and he will be considered fully in chapter five.

The Archdiocese of York has a remarkably complete set of visitation returns for the second half of the sixteenth century, and despite their drawbacks these do provide a valuable glimpse of the attitudes of the Elizabethans to the faith imposed upon them by statute, as well as the lengths to which some would go to avoid participating in the Anglican service. The presentments in these returns can be used to trace the broad outlines of religious change within communities, but they cannot provide a comprehensive testimony to the religious beliefs of the people, or trace specific developments, progress and resistance in religion within particular parishes. Indeed they were not designed to do so. The visitations were not, even at the time they

¹⁰⁵ The Metham's case can be traced through the first five High Commission Act Books, HC.AB1-5, and also see below, chapter 3.

¹⁰⁶ HC.CP1564/1; HC/CP1563/4; CP.G.3281.

were conducted, regarded as an effective way of dealing with non-conformists, and it was commonly accepted that additional sources of information were required to successfully prosecute recusants and Puritans. Houlbrooke has argued convincingly that given the extensive routine workload of the ecclesiastical courts they could do little more in the fight against Catholicism than see that the trappings of the old order were destroyed and that churches purchased books and other equipment required by the established order.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, it might be expected that the visitation returns would give an idea how closely the parishes of Yorkshire were adhering to the injunctions issued by the Archbishops, and thus the extent to which they were conforming to established religion.¹⁰⁸ However Tyler has suggested that the records of the Ecclesiastical High Commission throw more light on the nature of royal rule in the north than do the visitation returns, and has argued that the intentions of the government often bore little relation to what local and regional representatives could (or would) put into action.¹⁰⁹ Normal ecclesiastical administration was generally ineffective in the implementation of central policy, thus further emphasising the importance of the Ecclesiastical Commission in this respect, particularly as not everywhere was subject to such a Commission. The difficulties faced by those attempting to implement the Established Church in Yorkshire after 1560 were clearly regarded as sufficiently serious that the region warranted tighter ecclesiastical control, and the ability to impose harsher penalties and deal with those who viewed themselves exempt from normal ecclesiastical law. No matter what the government intended they could never guarantee that their desires would be accurately represented on the ground by local officials whose opinions often differed, and this undoubtedly affects the value of all ecclesiastical records.

Similar questions can be asked of many of the other sources available to historians of early modern England, and perhaps most specifically of wills. These documents have been heavily utilised by historians, yet their use has also been problematic and much disputed. The religious preambles of wills in particular have sparked debate amongst scholars such as Alsop, Marsh, and Zell.¹¹⁰ Traditionally used

¹⁰⁷ R.A. Houlbrooke, 'The Letter Book of John Parkhurst, Bishop of Norwich, Compiled during the years 1571-5,' *Norfolk Record Society*, 43 (1974-5), p. 48.

¹⁰⁸ Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ Tyler, 'The Significance of the Ecclesiastical Commission' p. 36; P. Tyler, *The Ecclesiastical Commission and Catholicism in the North, 1562-1577* (York, 1960), p. 3.

¹¹⁰ J.D Alsop, 'Religious Preambles in Early Modern English Wills As Formulae,' *JEH*, 40:1 (1989); Christopher Marsh, 'In The Name of God? Will-Making and Faith in Early Modern England,' in G.H

as indicators of religious belief, it is uncertain how far contemporaries regarded preambles as a place for the expression of their religious beliefs and devotion, and how far they simply saw them as a formulaic necessity to be inserted by their scribe.¹¹¹ Bequests in wills, and other sources, often give a clear example of religious belief for testators whose preambles were short and non-committal.¹¹² Nevertheless, from the mid-sixteenth century bequests to the churches became increasingly rare, and requests for masses and prayers for the soul, obits and candles set before images almost disappear after the 1530s. It is likely that most early modern testators would have been concerned had the preamble been omitted altogether, and wills with no religious content at all remained rare well into the seventeenth century. Testators may not have agonised over the form of words used to deal with their soul, but it seems probable that most wished their wills to reflect their basic faith and desired them to be couched in broadly religious terms.¹¹³

John Craig and Caroline Litzenberger have argued that wills were an opportunity to express partisan religious views from the relative safety of the grave during the chaos of the Reformation, but few testators left highly polemical wills.¹¹⁴ Probate could be refused if a will were seen as contrary to established doctrine, but there are examples of wills written in one reign and proved, unchanged, in a later reign in which religious policy had changed and also deathbed wills which do not conform to the established religious doctrines of the time. As late as 1602 traditional will preambles were still being used in Yorkshire and in the early period of the Reformation a few preambles express radical Protestant sentiments.¹¹⁵ The earliest extreme Protestant preamble, in the will of William Tracy of Gloucester, will be considered alongside early examples of reformed sympathies in Yorkshire wills in the following chapter, but Tracy's will was significant beyond simply the expression of his own radical views, and the rarity of such radical statements.¹¹⁶ The publicity generated by his posthumous burning for heresy represented an early triumph for the evangelical

Martin and P. Spufford (eds.) *The Records of the Nation* (Woodbridge, 1990); Michael Zell, 'The Use of Religious Preambles as a Measure of Religious Belief in the Sixteenth Century,' *BIHR*, 50 (1977).

¹¹¹ Also, 'Religious Preambles,' p. 19; Marsh, 'In the Name of God?,' p. 216.

¹¹² Marsh, 'In the Name of God?,' p. 216.

¹¹³ *ibid*, p. 237.

¹¹⁴ John Craig and Caroline Litzenberger, 'Wills as Religious Propaganda: The Testament of William Tracy,' *JEH*, 44:3 (1993), p. 416.

¹¹⁵ For the traditional 1602 preamble of Margaret Robson of Robin Hood's Bay in Cleveland see Prob. Reg. 28 fols 590v-591r.

¹¹⁶ See Craig & Litzenberger, 'Wills as Religious Propaganda,' pp. 417ff for more on William Tracy, and chapter 1, below.

party, and his preamble was subsequently copied by early Protestants as far a field as Yorkshire and Sussex.

Testamentary scribes were most often parish priests, though professional scribes could also be used and by the later sixteenth century the growth of literacy ensured that the circle of those able to write down a testator's last wishes was wide, and included a body of specialist lay will writers. Arguably the choice of a clerical scribe in places where a range of lay scribes was available carried a significance that had not been there when the priest was the only literate man in the village, and Marsh has argued that northern clergymen were consistently regarded as essential participants in will making to a much greater extent than were their southern counterparts.¹¹⁷ Set formulae for will preambles were certainly used, and the extent of the use of these, and of scribal influence, has been widely debated.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, it is unlikely that a testator would choose a scribe whose religious views differed from their own, and there is little chance that any Catholic would have accepted Protestant wording, or vice versa. Either might use a neutral form which gave away nothing about their beliefs however, and some wills contain a confused mixture of both Catholic and Protestant belief.¹¹⁹ Wealthy testators were arguably more likely to have developed their own wording for the religious preamble of their will rather than relying on printed formulae, but this did not necessarily mean that the statement was a true reflection of the faith, for the wealthy were also arguably under greater pressure to conform to the approved religious conventions of the day.¹²⁰ Pious statements in wills were in many respects essentially literary constructs, and can only rarely be taken to reveal the true nature of a testator's religious beliefs.¹²¹

Even where wills do give a clear indication of belief, it is possible that, as the majority of wills were written as the testator was on the verge of death, the deathbed experience caused many to exhibit a piety they had not shown in life.¹²² It also needs to

¹¹⁷ Marsh, 'In the Name of God?', pp. 235-6.

¹¹⁸ Alsop, 'Religious Preambles,' pp. 20, 22; Claire Cross, 'Wills as Evidence of Popular Piety in the Reformation Period: Leeds and Hull, 1540-1640,' in *The End of Strife*, ed. D. Loades (Edinburgh, 1984), pp. 48-9; Margaret Spufford, 'The Scribes of Villagers Wills in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and Their Influence,' *Local Population Studies*, 7 (1971), pp. 33, 35.

¹¹⁹ Alsop, 'Religious Preambles,' pp. 22-3.

¹²⁰ Michael Zell, 'The Use of Religious Preambles as a Measure of Religious Belief in the Sixteenth Century,' *BIHR*, 50 (1977), pp. 246-7.

¹²¹ R. N. Swanson, *Church and Society in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 1989), p. 266.

¹²² Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, p. 29.

be remembered that although the social penetration of wills was reasonably broad, not all of those with goods saw the need to make written arrangements, and very few women made wills.¹²³ Wills are varied, incomplete and possibly misleading documents, and though they can be used to give a limited impression of how far individuals committed themselves to religion and expressed their piety, used alone they are an inadequate guide to the religious practice and procedure of both individuals and communities.¹²⁴ The wills produced by individuals within a particular community do not necessarily reflect the ecclesiastical history of that community.¹²⁵ Any emerging general trends were more likely to mirror official policy than genuine shifts in the nature of popular belief, though clearly any wills running contrary to predominant developments must not be dismissed lightly.¹²⁶ Like court records, wills were not produced to serve the needs of historians, and must be used with equal caution. As Burgess has stated, 'rather than offering mirrors of the soul, wills are all too often undeniably vague,'¹²⁷ and might be argued to hide more from historians than they reveal. The effect of the Reformation on the content of wills was undeniably significant. Frequent religious changes created uncertainty and confusion. This led to increasing ambiguity in the religious expressions used in wills, and a loss of status for the church. Wills are useful tools for mapping local patterns of changing religious cultures and traditions, and for identifying the extent of clerical influence in a particular parish, but can rarely be relied upon to identify testators' personal beliefs.

The records of the ecclesiastical courts and wills are undoubtedly the prime sources for northern ecclesiastical history; however there are other valuable extant materials. Churchwarden's accounts are potentially the most useful of these, as their records of sales and purchases of church goods allows the historian to track the speed of responses to changing religious laws and injunctions within a particular parish. There are unfortunately very few extant churchwardens' accounts for sixteenth century

¹²³ Swanson, *Church and Society*, p. 266; Peter Heath, 'Urban Piety in the Later Middle Ages: The Evidence of Hull Wills,' in Barrie Dobson (ed.), *The Church, Politics and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century* (Gloucester, 1984), p. 212 states that the first Hull testator to describe himself as a labourer did not do so until 1530.

¹²⁴ Swanson, *Church and Society*, p. 268; Clive Burgess, 'Late Medieval Wills and Pious Convention: Testamentary Evidence Reconsidered,' in Michael Hicks (ed.), *Profit, Piety and the Professions in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1990), p. 27.

¹²⁵ Marsh, 'In the Name of God,' p. 216.

¹²⁶ Christopher Marsh, "'Departing Well and Christianly'" Will Making and Popular Religion in Early Modern England' in Eric J. Carlson (ed.), 'Religion and the English People 1500-1640: New Voices, New Perspectives,' *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies*, 45 (1998), p. 243 .

¹²⁷ Burgess, 'Late Medieval Wills,' p. 30.

Yorkshire, and the majority of these are for York city parishes. Whilst these can give an idea of the speed of compliance with certain religious injunctions, the differing Reformation experiences of York and many parts of Yorkshire suggest that they should not be taken to represent Yorkshire as a whole, though Hutton's work on churchwardens' accounts nationally has suggested that compliance was generally reasonably swift. Archbishop's registers can reveal much information about the administration of the diocese, but by the sixteenth century give little insight into its religious situation, and notably omit anything concerning the monasteries. Whilst medieval registers contained almost everything to do with the diocese, increasing bureaucracy and consequently increasing amounts of paperwork had led by the sixteenth century to the creation of separate volumes for different purposes, decreasing the value of the registers as sources for diocesan history, but at the same time providing a wealth of other documents. Nevertheless, it is the archbishop's registers that provide almost all the available evidence for religious non-conformity during the reign of Henry VIII, and thus their importance should not be disregarded.

The question of conformity is significant when considering the value of the archbishop's registers. In the early stages of the Reformation people were rarely presented for not attending church, as absence was not yet associated with religious dissent and treason. The requirement for church attendance may have been reinvigorated each time a visitation took place, though the absence of any extant pre-Elizabethan visitations means it is not possible to test this for Yorkshire. Hamilton-Thompson's work on the visitations of the diocese of Lincoln from 1517 to 1531 has suggested that these did deal with numerous habitual absentees and those who took no account of services, but suspected heresy cases appear to have been very rare and most absentees were found in alehouses or plying their trade; similarly to many of those presented for absence in the returns of Elizabethan Yorkshire.¹²⁸ In some respects it might be argued, the Reformation had little effect on popular attitudes to church going. In addition, the existence of a significant number of peculiar jurisdictions in the diocese of York meant the registers did not represent the whole region. However the registers of the mid-sixteenth century can be used to show the continuity of administrative procedure in the diocese throughout the turbulent years of the Reformation. Hamilton-Thompson has suggested that with the exception of the

¹²⁸ A. Hamilton-Thompson (ed.), *Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln 1517-1531*, vol. I (Lincoln Record Society, 33, 1940), pp. xlvii-xlix.

introduction of phrases recognising the royal supremacy there is little trace of the great changes experienced by the English church at this time, with political and institutional changes mirrored only faintly and the dissolution of the monasteries completely omitted.¹²⁹ Even the rebellions that affected Yorkshire in 1536, 1549 and 1569 are scarcely mentioned, and Hamilton-Thompson has further argued that the consideration of omissions such as these gives greater insight into the impact of the changes effected by the Reformation.¹³⁰

Central state records are the final important source material for this period; however Yorkshire does not feature prominently amongst these. There are, naturally, numerous items concerning land grants throughout the period, but beyond the periodic rebellions in Tudor Yorkshire the records of central state give little idea of the responses of the people of Yorkshire to state policies. This is undoubtedly due to the presence of the Council of the North at York, which would have held all records concerning the government, administration and religion of the north. The loss of virtually all of the council's records has entailed considerable losses for historians of the north. The records of rebellion however do give some insight into both the impressions of southern government officials to the religious and political state of the North, and also to the rebels' attitudes to royal policies. The state records can also provide some valuable insights into the spread of recusancy beyond that given by the ecclesiastical court records, as occasional surviving examinations of Catholic seminary priests working in Yorkshire can reveal much about where and with whom they worked, enabling the construction of patterns of recusancy in a particular area.¹³¹ Once again though, central state documents can conceal more than they reveal and cannot be taken at face value. The author of the documents and their purposes must be considered, for like all other extant records of Tudor England, they were not produced for the benefit of historians. Like the historiography for Reformation England, the archival materials can both enlighten and confuse, but used with care can enable the construction of a reasonably complete picture of certain aspects of lay and clerical responses to the religious and political changes wrought by the Tudor state.

¹²⁹ A. Hamilton-Thompson, 'The Registers of the Archbishops of York,' *YAJ*, 32 (1936), pp. 258-9

¹³⁰ *ibid*, p. 259.

¹³¹ The examination of Thomas Clarke, a seminary priest captured in London in 1592 after many years spent working in Yorkshire, is particularly useful in this respect. *CSPD 1591-1594*, pp. 305-6.

Chapter 1 – Religious Change in Yorkshire up to 1553

As we have seen, the work of A.G Dickens proposed new theories that religious change was both desired and embraced at an early stage in Yorkshire, and claimed that the late medieval English heretical movement Lollardy had played a role in this. Modern scholarship has largely overturned these theories, and there is scant evidence of any widespread support for reformed religion in the county before the reign of Elizabeth I. This chapter will briefly examine the religious situation in pre-Reformation Yorkshire, before looking at the effects of Henrician and Edwardian policies of religious reform. It will also consider events such as the dissolution of the monasteries and chantries, and will study the resistance expressed by the inhabitants of Yorkshire to these policies, particularly in the form of the rebellions of 1536 and 1549.

Religious Culture on the eve of Henrician Reform

Despite Dickens's claims that Lollardy played a significant role in the religious life of late medieval and early Tudor Yorkshire, no subsequent scholars have found evidence that the movement had much support in the Northern Province. Charles Kightley, whose doctoral thesis provided a detailed geographical study of the Lollard movement in the period 1382-1428, found evidence of a thriving Lollard community in Nottingham in the late fourteenth century, and slightly more scanty evidence of a small group of Lollards in Newcastle, which does not seem to have lasted beyond 1406.¹ Kightley found nothing for the regions in between however, and specifically stated that there is no evidence of any Lollard communities in York or Yorkshire. Claire Cross has also argued that Lollardy appeared to have been extirpated in the north after the early fifteenth century, despite remaining entrenched in parts of the south, and Parker stated that none of the Lollard leaders took the movement further north than Nottingham in the fourteenth century.² There is evidence that some discontents in Yorkshire were involved in the 1414 Oldcastle rising, but, as Kightley argued, this did not make them Lollards, and in any case their early pardons suggest

¹ Charles Kightley, 'The Early Lollards, 1382-1428,' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of York, 1975), pp. 12-13, 19.

² Claire Cross, *Church and People: England 1450-1660*, 2nd Edition, (Oxford, 1999), p. 17; G.H.W Parker, 'The Morning Star: Wycliffe and the Dawn of the Reformation,' *Paternoster Church History*, 3 (1965), p. 60.

that their roles were minor.³ Thomson has argued that in Yorkshire the small number of proceedings for heresy before the sixteenth century arose against those suspected of practising sorcery rather than those with dubious religious beliefs, though the 1426 case of Thomas Richmond, a York friar, suggests that there was some uneasiness about the possible presence of heresy in the north.⁴ Richmond was accused of openly declaring that a priest in deadly sin was no priest and that a secular judge who attacked a priest in deadly sin was not attacking a priest. Whilst this is clearly an attack on the priesthood, it gives no indication of heretical beliefs, rather an abhorrence of clerical abuses, but the authorities were clearly concerned that Richmond's evident desire for the reform of the priesthood might develop into heretical ideas. This was an isolated case however, and whilst the records of the province of Canterbury for 1511 and 1512 reveal a concerted effort by Archbishop Warham to root out Lollardy in Kent there is nothing to suggest a similar purge in Yorkshire.⁵

Two Yorkshire men were charged in this period however. Thomas Cudworth, the vicar of Silkstone, failed to purge himself of a charge of heresy in 1511, and Roger Gargrave of Wakefield was charged with attacking Eucharist practices the following year.⁶ Whilst these men appear to have acted in opposition to established orthodoxy, they cannot be definitively identified as Lollards, and there are no further charges of heresy in the Yorkshire records until 1528, when a small number of Dutch residents of the city of York were charged with heresy. Cudworth and Gargrave may have belonged to the small number of migrant Lollards identified by Rex, but they clearly had no lasting impact on the region's religious culture, and it is more likely that the later cases were the result of continental rather than home-grown influence.⁷ Yorkshire's continental trading links arguably meant that any early reformed influence probably arrived along international trade routes, a contrast to other northern counties such as Lancashire, which seems to have received its first taste of reform from men educated elsewhere who worked on their own initiative to convert their friends and

³ Kightley, 'The Early Lollards,' 25-7; John A.F Thomson, *The Later Lollards 1414-1520* (Oxford, 1965), p. 194.

⁴ Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, p. 197; The Dean of Durham (ed.), *The Records of the Northern Convocation*, (Surtees Society, 113, 1906), pp. 145-172.

⁵ Norman Tanner, 'Penances Imposed on Kentish Lollards by Archbishop Warham 1511-12,' in Margaret Aston and Colin Richmond (eds.) *Lollardy and the Gentry in the Later Middle Ages* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 229-33.

⁶ Abp. Reg. 26, Bainbridge, fols 74r-76r.

⁷ Richard Rex, *The Lollards* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 70; Rex went on to add that these migrants had no lasting impact in the north. See chapter 4, below, for more on the case of the Dutchmen.

families. Their success was limited, but personal rather than trade links seem to have been of primary importance in spreading reform in the northwest.⁸ A similar argument can be made for Cheshire, though Tim Thornton has suggested that trade links also played a part there, as, no doubt, did the proximity of many parts of Cheshire to Manchester, where John Bradford and George Marsh later preached to large crowds.⁹ The link between Lollardy and early English Protestantism is very tenuous, despite Davis's claim that Lollardy had a profound influence on the English Reformation.¹⁰ The presence of the biographies of several Lollards in John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* might be taken as evidence of such a link, but they were more probably used as a means of justifying the Reformation.¹¹ Whilst it is likely that reformers would have had an interest in the Lollard tradition, and whilst Lollard arguments both anticipated and would aid those of the sixteenth century reformers in a number of ways, the two were very different forms of heresy.¹² It is possible that areas with a history of religious dissent provided a foothold for the first generation of evangelical preachers, but the likelihood of a direct Lollard influence on early English Protestantism is slim, and many of the areas most associated with early reformed activity in England had no connection with previous Lollard traditions.¹³

Dickens's views have been challenged by the argument that late medieval Yorkshire experienced important religious change within the Catholic Church.¹⁴ Jonathan Hughes maintained that the York diocese produced a large proportion of late medieval spiritual literature, from writers such as Nicholas Love and Walter Hilton, the Carthusian monks of Mount Grace priory and hermits and recluses such as Richard Rolle. Hughes has argued that Yorkshire was at the heart of an eremitic movement that rivalled those of the eleventh and twelfth centuries; something Rex has argued would

⁸ C. Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 163, 170.

⁹ Tim Thornton, *Cheshire and the Tudor State 1480-1560* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 234-6.

¹⁰ J.F. Davis, 'Lollardy and the Reformation in England,' in *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640*, ed. Peter Marshall (London, 1997), pp. 37-52.

¹¹ Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers* (London, 1984), pp. 219-20.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 220; Alec Ryrie, 'The Strange Death of Lutheran England,' *JEH*, 53:1 (2002), pp. 79-82 has suggested that Lollard interest in sacramentarianism might have influenced the direction taken by the English Reformation, and the greater influence of Calvinist rather than Lutheran theology, and suggests that Lollard influence is the most plausible explanation for much of what we can see happening in the 1540s.

¹³ Rex, *The Lollards*, pp. 118-9, 120-131; C. Haigh, *English Reformations*, (Oxford, 1993), p. 197.

¹⁴ Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge, 1988), is one of the earliest works to suggest this, and the idea has since produced a wide range of literature.

have meant any form of heresy would not have been tolerated in Yorkshire.¹⁵ As will be seen, investment in monastic houses and chantries in Yorkshire continued unabated virtually up until the time of their dissolution, and the popularity of cults such as that of Rolle ensured that pilgrimages to sites such as his cell at Hampole priory in South Yorkshire persisted into the sixteenth century.¹⁶ In addition, the continued copying and translation of the works of Love, Hilton and others into the sixteenth century, suggests a lasting legacy of active religious debate and writings within Yorkshire, which persisted into the Reformation.¹⁷ The influence of Christ's Passion on these writings perhaps ensured their durability. The Passion remained a focus of local devotion; it was a central part of the York and Wakefield Corpus Christi cycles down to their suppression, and also became the primary focus for dissent on both sides of the religious divide from the mid-sixteenth century.¹⁸

Yorkshire also experienced a proliferation of new and revived cults of saints in the fifteenth century which was unequalled elsewhere in England, emphasising that Yorkshire men and women were engaged with and participating in their religion.¹⁹ The shrine of St. John of Bridlington became a pilgrimage centre of national importance, and pilgrimages were also made to St. Oswald at Nostell priory, and to Thomas Wake at Haltemprice priory. A large number of Yorkshire religious houses possessed girdles that were lent to assist women in childbirth. Others, such as Basedale priory, which possessed a vial of the Virgin's milk, and Haltemprice, which had an arm of St. George and part of the true cross, had relics that were the object of popular lay

¹⁵ *ibid*, pp. 3, 6; Rex, *The Lollards*, p. 96.

¹⁶ Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, pp. 71, 73, 77-8, 83, 88, 93; Other Yorkshire hermits were also influential, such as Robert of Beverley, Robert Manfield, a canon of Beverley, John the Hermit, Elizabeth Hotham and Joan de Ayleston, and the writings of the Mount Grace monks John Norton and Richard Methley reflected the influence of Rolle's mystical tradition. A.G Dickens, 'The Writers of Tudor Yorkshire,' *Reformation Studies*, (1982), pp. 223-4.

¹⁷ Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, pp. 125, 242-3, 356-7; For more on Love and Hilton see W. N. M. Beckett, 'Love, Nicholas (d. 1423/4)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53111>, accessed 14 Feb 2007] and J. P. H. Clark, 'Hilton, Walter (c.1343-1396)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13328>, accessed 14 Feb 2007].

¹⁸ REED, pp. 670-79; there are 20 pageants in the York cycle dealing with Christ's passion, at least 8 of which were still being performed in the 1550s, and at least 2 into the 1560s; The Wakefield cycle too also contains a number of pageants dealing with Christ's passion, the texts of which are available online at: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-old?id=AnoTown&tag=public&images=images/modeng&data=/lv1/Archive/mideng-parsed&part=0> (accessed 1 Nov 2007); See also Jeremy Goldberg, 'Performing the Word of God: Corpus Christi Drama in the Northern Province,' *SCH*, subsidia, 12 (1999).

¹⁹ Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, p. 299.

devotion.²⁰ Clearly, items and practices that the monastic commissioners regarded as superstitious in 1535 and 1536 were embedded in the popular religion of late medieval Yorkshire, and formed a central part of local and regional culture. In York, the former archbishop William Fitzherbert, was the focus of an important local cult which led to the installation of the huge St. William window in the Minster in 1415. This is one of the largest pictorial cycles of the lives of saints ever attempted in glass, and though its installation was partly for political purposes the window must nevertheless reflect the popularity of the cult of St. William in York.²¹ Equally significant was the guild of St. Christopher and St. George in York. As will be seen in chapter four efforts were made to preserve this guild in the 1540s, and it was closely linked to the feast of Corpus Christi, which was so prominent in the liturgical festivities in York.²² The Corpus Christi guild itself also played a significant role in the religious culture of the city, and its wealth at the dissolution suggests that members were continuing to make bequests and gifts to the guild.²³ Other cults also emerged. The tomb of Thomas Earl of Lancaster in Pontefract priory, for example, saw the performance of miracles after his execution for treason, and the town of Pontefract established a guild in his honour. Similarly Philip of Beverley became an important focus for popular devotion, and his tomb, in the parish church of Keyingham, was also a scene of miracles.²⁴

Drama was a significant part of local and regional religious culture. The Corpus Christi cycles have been mentioned above, and their continuation into the 1580s is a reflection of their importance as part of an urban identity for York and Wakefield, as well as a lasting link with traditional religion. Contemporary records emphasise the extent to which institutions and guilds in York at least were occupied with the staging of these plays.²⁵ However there is also evidence of the importance of drama on a smaller scale. An undated letter reputedly written by Henry VIII to an unknown JP in Yorkshire refers to the 'acting of a religious interlude of St. Thomas the Apostle' made

²⁰ J.W Clay, *Yorkshire Monasteries Suppression Papers*, (YASRS, 48, 1912), pp. 16-18.

²¹ Christopher Norton, *St. William of York* (York, 2006), p. 202; this book provides a thorough study of William's life as first treasurer of York Minster and archdeacon of the East Riding and then Archbishop of York as well as the circumstances leading to his canonisation and the establishment of his cult.

²² See Eileen White, *The St. Christopher and St. George Guild of York* (Borthwick Papers, 72, York, 1987), for a study of this guild and its role in York.

²³ REED, pp. 642-644; See also D.F. Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power: Religious Guilds in Late Medieval Yorkshire, 1389-1547* (York, 2000), for more on the significance of guilds in late medieval regional religious culture.

²⁴ Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, pp. 299-300; chapter 6 discusses in full the new cults of saints which emerged in the York diocese in the late medieval period.

²⁵ REED, pp. 208-396 gives copies of records relating to drama in York from 1509-1580.

in York the previous August. The letter goes on to state that the late rising (presumably the Pilgrimage of Grace) in the city was 'owing to the seditious conduct of certain papists who took part in preparing for the said interlude,' apparently a recognition, and perhaps a fear, of the strength of traditional religious culture in Yorkshire, and of the potential effect of traditional religious dramas on the response of both clergy and laity to religious change.²⁶ Perhaps most important is the fact that new and revived cults of saints, as well as pilgrimages, drama and other spiritual celebrations, owed as much to popular initiative as to clerical direction. This allowed the expression of shared religious feelings and cultural expressing, and helped to bind communities together, whilst demonstrating a changing attitude towards holiness.²⁷ Turning to the saints was a natural part of popular attempts to deal with a world they did not fully understand. Prayer, God's mercy and the intercession of the saints were seen as necessary for the well being of the world and its people. These trends towards private worship and a more personal relationship with God were later reflected in the increasing emphasis on individual worship and prayer of the Protestant reformers, but demonstrate that religious change within the medieval church was not an alien concept.²⁸ People were evidently keen to ensure that their spiritual and pastoral needs were met, and that they protested when central elements of their personal piety and communal religious culture were removed suggests a continued depth of feeling towards and identification with Catholicism. It is perhaps a given that interest in the new ideas was more likely to come from those with an existing interest in the reform of the church rather than those disenchanted with it, and whilst it is unlikely that *reform* would have been opposed, Reformation was something different altogether.²⁹

Reactions to Reform under Henry VIII: The Clergy

Early Tudor church-state relationships tended to be characterised by compromise and cooperation and mutual acceptance of the authority of courts of law; royal authority was recognised and accepted by the church despite nominal papal

²⁶ REED, pp. 649-50; the original of this letter is no longer extant, but it is possible that the play in question was the Scrivener's Pageant of Doubting Thomas, a copy of which was known to exist when this letter was published in 1848, before the discovery of the York Mystery Plays manuscripts.

²⁷ Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, pp. 319, 338.

²⁸ *ibid*, p. 366.

²⁹ Richard Rex, 'The Friars in the English Reformation,' in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (Cambridge, 2002), p. 41.

overlordship, and heresy was a minor problem.³⁰ Regular visitations were an important means of ecclesiastical control, and though jurisdictional structures were complex, court procedures were clearly defined and concerned to see justice done. There was no widespread hostility towards clerical bureaucracy.³¹ There were undoubtedly problems with certain parish priests; absenteeism, pluralism, simony, nepotism, lack of education, and lack of clerical discipline were arguably widespread, and one anonymous petition of 1515 suggests not all parish priests were performing their duties to the sick and dead, particularly amongst the poor.³² However the scanty surviving evidence gives little suggestion that such grievances were prevalent in Yorkshire, and Haigh has argued that what little discontent there was with the English clergy came mostly from moral reformers within the clerical ranks.³³ It is now generally agreed that anti-clericalism was more likely to have accompanied than preceded the Reformation.³⁴ The 1539 charge against Alice Bucktrout of Aberford, near Leeds, for defaming her chaplain Henry Taylor by slandering him in local alehouses as a 'hoore mayster preste bawdie preste noghtye harlothe noghtye knave' appears to reflect a personal dislike of Taylor rather than anticlericalism, but it may also indicate a heightened sensitivity about clerical reputations and an uncertainty about the role of the profession in an uncertain religious atmosphere.³⁵ More radical anti-clerical sentiments can be found in the writings of Wilfrid Holme. Little is known of Holme, a gentleman of Huntington near York, beyond his 1537 poem *The Fall and Evill Success of Rebellion*. In this, Holme defended the royal supremacy, praised the abolition of clerical privileges and mortuary fees and offered an advanced manifesto of anti-clericalism, an onslaught of monasticism, saint worship and scholasticism, and great scorn for superstitions.³⁶ Holme's knowledge and ideas run contrary to the conservative tradition of the Yorkshire gentry, and given his residence near York his

³⁰ John A.F Thomson, *The Early Tudor Church and Society 1485-1529* (London, 1993), pp. 74, 81-2, 105.

³¹ *ibid*, pp. 120, 125, 132, 138.

³² *LP*, II, i, 1315.

³³ Haigh, *English Reformations*, p. 8; There are no extant cause papers from the York diocese relating to clerical discipline until 1530. See for example CP.G.239, DC.CP.1547/3. There are far more post-Reformation cases involving clergymen, though this may reflect a better survival of records for the later period.

³⁴ Peter Marshall (ed.) *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640* (London, 1997), p. 2; John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 293-4.

³⁵ TRANS.CP.1539/2.

³⁶ Dickens, 'Writers of Tudor Yorkshire,' p. 226; William Joseph Sheils, 'Holme, Wilfrid (d. 1538)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53917>, accessed 16 Aug 2007]; Holme's poem published in 1572/3, when it was used as anti-rebellion propaganda in the wake of the 1569 northern rebellion.

radicalism is startling, however this poem demonstrates that reformed ideas and religious debates were circulating within Yorkshire, and that they were not always rejected as heretical.

Problems within the monasteries were similarly endemic, and were almost certainly perceived as a greater threat because of the uncertainty and fluidity of the current religious situation. Support from the laity continued until the dissolution in the form of testamentary bequests, and the Carthusian order in particular was held in high esteem and never acquired the same taint of worldliness as other orders.³⁷ Hull Charterhouse was linked with the treason of the London Carthusians who refused to submit to the royal supremacy, but the Hull monks did not share these sentiments.³⁸ Support also remained for the friars, whom Rex suggests were not only flourishing on the eve of the Reformation but continued to recruit successfully into the 1530s, and enjoyed patronage as well as support from their local communities.³⁹ Evidence for the York friars confirms this, and testamentary evidence has suggested that support for the friars within urban areas was extensive as a result of their involvement in the community as preachers and teachers.⁴⁰

There is some evidence that Archbishop Lee was moving towards monastic reform before the king began his enquiries, suggesting that they were still perceived as an integral part of the church, and that the need for reform was recognised. Lee began to hold visitations of the Yorkshire monastic houses in 1534 and 1535 enquiring into the moral character of the religious. He was ordered to halt the process in September 1535 but seems to have found little to suggest that the Yorkshire monasteries were especially corrupt, something that was reflected in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*.⁴¹ Lee appears to have experienced considerable difficulties in implementing the early stages of the Henrician Reformation, and complained in 1535 that he had fewer than a dozen preachers within his diocese.⁴² However, the poverty of many Yorkshire livings meant

³⁷ Thomson, *Early Tudor Church*, p. 222; *LP*, VII, 1047.

³⁸ This will be fully discussed in chapter 5

³⁹ Rex, 'Friars,' pp. 38-40.

⁴⁰ Michael Robson, *The Franciscans of the Medieval Custody of York*, (Borthwick Paper, 93, York, 1997), *passim*.

⁴¹ Anon, 'Visitations in the Diocese of York, holden by Archbishop Edward Lee (A.D. 1534-5) *YAJ* 16 (1902), pp. 424-5; the details of the visitation returns can be found on pages 431-56; *LP*, IV, i, 953; See below for more on the dissolution of the monasteries.

⁴² R.B. Manning, 'The Spread of the Popular Reformation,' *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies*, 1 (1970), p. 40; *LP*, VIII, 869, 963; Lee was himself in trouble for failing to preach, teach the royal

the best clergy were not attracted to them, and Lee also reported that clergy who did attempt to promote reform were often met with hostility from their parishioners, a clear indication that he was aware of the strength of traditional religious culture in the region and that he thus could not push the implementation of religious change too far.⁴³ This was a problem which persisted in Yorkshire, for in 1537 the vicar of Kirkby Ravensworth claimed that he risked his life to exhort the royal supremacy as the people of his parish were ignorant and would not accept the supremacy as he did.⁴⁴ Nor was the lack of preachers quickly remedied. In late 1537 Lee wrote to Cromwell reminding him of his previous suit for ‘preachers and residence of the church of York,’ and advising that there were few or no copies of the catechism in Yorkshire, despite, he claimed, many men desiring to have it.⁴⁵ Arguably, Lee’s reform efforts were neither comprehensive nor effective, and though Audley’s report to Cromwell in 1537 suggested that the Yorkshire clergy had been negligent in the implementation of religious injunctions, it is likely that they received little direct pressure to do so from Lee.⁴⁶

Lee’s complaint about the lack of preachers in the diocese was genuine, but beyond London and the Home Counties this shortage was normal, and it might be argued that the tenacity of conservative parish and monastic clergy and their resistance to change had a greater impact on the history of religious change in Yorkshire than did the early evangelicals. Most conformed, but even after the issue of sermons for use in parish churches in 1536 Lee reported that many parish priests continued to preach on purgatory.⁴⁷ Purgatory was not yet a banned subject, but that it continued to provide a focus for sermons emphasises its importance to regional religious culture, and reflects the lasting attachment of the clergy to traditional religion. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, prayers for the dead continued to be recited long after they had been officially abolished, and some areas served by ex-monastic priests later became centres of recusancy.⁴⁸ By making an effort to preserve elements of traditional religion these men undoubtedly eased the passage of reform. Other preachers were more

supremacy, or erase the pope’s name from service books, but he claimed that the accusations were unfounded and they do not appear to have been followed up.

⁴³ *LP*, VIII, 903.

⁴⁴ *LP*, XII, i, 786 (no. 14); A.G Dickens, ‘Sedition and Conspiracy in Yorkshire during the later years of Henry VIII,’ *YAJ*, 34 (1939), p. 379.

⁴⁵ *LP*, XII, ii, 1093.

⁴⁶ *LP*, XII, ii, 329, 717.

⁴⁷ *LP*, Add. I, i, 907; *LP*, VII, 464, 1043; *LP*, IX, 704.

⁴⁸ See chapters 3 and 5.

obviously seditious. In 1537 John Ainsworth, a Lancashire born priest who was educated at Cambridge, briefly visited the city of York. Ainsworth was refused permission to preach a sermon in the church of St. John, Ousebridge, and in response posted a copy of his sermon to the church door. This action clearly mirrored Luther's posting of his Ninety-Five theses at Wittenburg in 1519, and his choice of location was significant.⁴⁹ As Ousebridge was the only bridge across the river at York in 1537, the church of St. John was a particularly public building. Ainsworth's sermon, which contained material opposing the Acts of Supremacy and Succession, would have been seen by large numbers of people, and it is likely that the church was chosen specifically to maximise the impact of his sermon. His subsequent arrest demonstrates the concern of the city authorities with the potential unrest risked by the content of his sermon and further suggests that radical ideas were not widely popular.

There is limited evidence of clerical reactions to early religious change in Yorkshire, and though change does not appear to have been widely welcomed, there is evidence that heterodox beliefs had begun to take root amongst the parish clergy from the 1530s. In 1531 Richard Browne, the priest of North Cave in the East Riding confessed that he taught his parishioners that the sacrament was not truly the body and blood of Christ, but merely presented the same, and that a layman might hear a confession.⁵⁰ In imparting these ideas Browne clearly acted in opposition to two central tenets of the Catholic Church; he denied both the capacity of priests to act as intercessors between man and God, and the doctrine of transubstantiation. As will be seen in the following chapter, this focus of opposition was also present amongst reformed sympathisers in Marian Yorkshire, but Browne, like his Marian successors appears to have readily submitted himself to the church for correction, and promised that he would no longer teach such ideas, nor speak of them. Interestingly Browne's statement also included a declaration that he would never 'use rede teach kepe by or sell any books volumes or queres any workes called Luthers works or any oder mannes

⁴⁹ *LP*, XIII, i, 533, 705; An example of a similar case can be found in the Cathedral city of Exeter, when in 1531 one Thomas Benet, a friend of the reformer Thomas Bilney and a member of the reforming circle at Cambridge, was apprehended in Exeter after posting anonymous attacks on Catholic doctrine on the Cathedral doors. He was burnt for heresy on the edge of the city in 1532. Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640: The Growth of a County Town* (Cambridge, 1958), p. 186; Thomas S. Freeman, 'Dusgate, Thomas (d. 1532)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8329>, accessed 16 Nov 2007].

⁵⁰ Abp. Reg. 28, Lee, fols 99v-100r.

books of his hereticall sect,'⁵¹ or indeed any other books containing heresies within them or which were prohibited by the laws of the church. Although there is no specific accusation that Browne had had access to Lutheran texts, the fact that he was ordered to make this declaration, when coupled with the nature of his non-conformity, suggests he had some familiarity with Lutheran ideas and doctrines as well as indicating a local acceptance of Lutheranism. The proximity of North Cave to Hull, and its location on the main road from Hull to the West Riding, may well have opened up avenues for Browne to obtain heretical texts and make contact with German and Dutch Lutherans.

Browne clearly had some sympathy with and interest in reform, but other cases suggest that royal policy did not penetrate very far. In 1535 Christopher Michell, the parish priest of Winestead in Holderness, was condemned for his denial of the royal supremacy, for teaching his parishioners that there was a Pope and for encouraging them to pray to the saints. Michell also failed to erase the Pope's name in his service books, instead merely covering it with easily removable strips of wax paper.⁵² Such actions were relatively common, though other priests refused to even cover the name of the Pope. The priest of Harwich in Essex, for example, was denounced by his parishioners after their repeated pleas failed to persuade him to conform, and the parson of Dymchurch in Kent was arrested for the same offence.⁵³ Such outright refusal to comply demonstrated a firm commitment to traditional Roman Catholic religion, and an implicit definition of the Papal headship of the church. Reversible deletions such as that of Michell also demonstrated conservative sympathies, but did not present such a challenge to the government. Close links can be made with the behaviour of Elizabethan church papists; their bare compliance masked at best ambivalence, but compliance alone was required officially.⁵⁴ Michell's continued preaching of papal authority did present a challenge however, for all he attempted to construct his position within a loyalist paradigm, and those who did not cover the Pope's name, or erased that of the King instead, would have perceived Michell's behaviour as complicity with heresy.⁵⁵

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² *LP*, VIII, 990, 1011, 1020.

⁵³ Ethan Shagan, 'Confronting Compromise: the schism and its legacy in mid-Tudor England,' in *Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation': Religious Politics and Identity in England, 1534-1640*, ed. Ethan Shagan (Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 51.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 52.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

Less explicit, but still manifestly expressing opposition to the king and his advisors, were Sir Robert Keriby, the parish priest of Kirkby Moorside in the North Riding, and his clerk Robert Lyon, who according to a parishioner, William Wodd, rejoiced at the (inaccurate) news which reached Yorkshire in 1538 of the king's death. On hearing the news Keriby reportedly declared that vengeance had taken the king on account of those he had wrongfully put to death, whilst Lyon declared that Cromwell's death also would be no great loss. Keriby apparently threatened his parishioners not to report the matter; that Wodd did so anyway suggests that the climate remained unsettled in Yorkshire, and perhaps that Wodd feared prosecution himself if he kept the matter quiet.⁵⁶ In the same year John Dobson, the vicar of Muston in the East Riding, was executed for treason. Dobson had been reported by some of his parishioners for failing to pray for the king, and for only belatedly and reluctantly setting forth the royal supremacy, but perhaps more significantly in the climate of post-Pilgrimage of Grace Yorkshire, he was accused of predicting the expulsion of the king and the restoration of papal authority in England. Many of his parishioners attempted to shield him, suggesting that Dobson's views were widely shared within his parish, and his condemnation, given that little evidence was produced against him, suggests that in the aftermath of a rebellion dominated by rumour and prophecy the issue remained a sensitive and potentially threatening one for the northern authorities.⁵⁷ Whatever the truth behind this case, it is evident that rumour and prophecy both expressed and fuelled the discontent which was so widespread in Yorkshire in the mid-1530s, and depositions in the case indicate that copies of the prophecies for which Dobson was executed had travelled at least between York, Beverley and Scarborough before reaching Muston.⁵⁸

Reactions to Reform under Henry VIII: The Laity

The evidently conservative sympathies of the parishioners of Muston appear to have been shared by a large number of their contemporaries across Yorkshire. For the majority of English people religious life was centred on the parish, and though it is difficult to measure the state of lay-clerical relations within parishes, Thomson has argued that the overall impression to be gained from the early Tudor church is one of

⁵⁶ *LP*, XIII, i, 1282.

⁵⁷ *LP*, XII, ii, 1212; the Pilgrimage of Grace, and the role of rumour and prophecy within it, will be discussed more fully below.

⁵⁸ *LP*, XII, ii, 1212.

widespread but unremarkable piety, which gave no indication of the forthcoming upheavals, or of any great desire to abandon traditional religious practices. Rather parish religion showed every sign of flourishing.⁵⁹ Work on wills from across England has demonstrated that people were still pouring money into the church on the eve of the Reformation and beyond, and that Catholic piety remained until it was overtaken by change.⁶⁰ The investments made in many wills suggest that no one foresaw the collapse of the traditional order; active enthusiasm for the church may have been waning, but there is nothing to suggest widespread dissatisfaction. The decades leading up to the Reformation also saw the rebuilding and adornment of many parish churches and monastic houses.⁶¹ The central tower at Fountains abbey for example was not completed until 1529; a mere ten years later the house was no longer in existence. Elsewhere Bolton saw building works halted by the dissolution, and the parish of St. Michael-le-Belfrey in York was spectacularly rebuilt in the 1520s and 1530s. The continued popularity of pilgrimages has been alluded to above, and there is also evidence that guilds too remained popular and continued to play a significant role in the spiritual and social lives of their members. For many the death knell came only with the final abolition of purgatory and intercessory prayers in 1547.⁶² The absence of the records of the Council of the North, and of visitation returns, makes any attempt to understand the effects of the early Reformation in Yorkshire fraught with difficulty, but an attempt will be made in this section to give some idea of popular responses to religious change from the sources available.

Many revisionist historians have sought to demonstrate that the evidence does not support the Dickensian view of a popular, grass roots Reformation and that there was no reason to suggest discontent with the late medieval church.⁶³ John Hooper's 1546 letter to Heinrich Bullinger reported that traditional religion continued to be held in high esteem by the English population, and that whilst Henry had destroyed the pope, he had not destroyed popery.⁶⁴ Hooper may have been exaggerating, but his

⁵⁹ Thomson, *Early Tudor Church*, pp. 359-62.

⁶⁰ J.J Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 2-9.

⁶¹ *ibid*, p. 13.

⁶² Clay, *Yorkshire Monasteries Suppression Papers*, pp. 16-18; White, *St Christopher and St. George Guild*, *passim*.

⁶³ Marshall, *The Impact of the English Reformation*, p. 1-2.

⁶⁴ *LP*, XXI, i, 131; Hooper was an early convert to reform and spent much of Henry VIII's reign in Europe. He returned to England to serve the Edwardian regime as bishop of Gloucester and Worcester, and in 1555 became a Protestant martyr after he was burnt by the Marian regime for his faith. See D. G.

letter undoubtedly reflects the prevalence of conservative religious beliefs across England, and the persistence of the traditional practices which Duffy in particular has demonstrated were deeply embedded in popular culture.⁶⁵ Perhaps one of the most important issues in establishing the early spread of reformed ideas is the question of how to gauge reformist sympathies. Ryrie has argued that it is more appropriate to ask how quickly and in what numbers the English cooperated with the political forces propelling them towards change rather than whether they jumped or were pushed into religious reformation, and Shagan has drawn attention to the crucial questions of why people cooperated with change, and what made them collaborate with the regime.⁶⁶ By the middle of Elizabeth's reign Protestantism had effected decisive changes in English cultural life which affected everyone, but this success owed much to continuities from the past, and in the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI these changes had not yet had any real impact.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the issue of compromise or resistance, and the necessity of making a choice, was present from the 1530s, and Shagan has argued that Catholic inability to agree about what compromise meant was a key reason for the success of the Reformation.⁶⁸ Compromise could easily shade into collaboration, and many who saw themselves as pious Catholics were seen by others as traitors to the Catholic cause.⁶⁹ Some compromisers felt themselves duty bound to denounce non-conformists, and they often found that their conformity was an effective weapon in litigation or local politics. Others simply chose conformity, and thus collaboration, over treason. They were no less Catholic than their more intransigent neighbours, but furthered the Reformation by collaborating with the state for their own purposes.⁷⁰ In addition collaborators and resisters were often the same people; how they were defined was entirely dependant on the perspective of those imposing the label.

Both the religion and terminology of the early Reformation were very fluid. The term 'Protestant' was initially used to refer to German Lutherans, and was not widely used in England until the later 1540s. Even then, meanings remained

Newcombe, 'Hooper, John (1495x1500–1555)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13706>, accessed 23 Oct 2007].

⁶⁵ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, (Yale, 1992), *passim*.

⁶⁶ Alec Ryrie, 'Counting Sheep, Counting Shepherds: The Problem of Allegiance in the English Reformation,' in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. Marshall and Ryrie, p. 84; Shagan, 'Confronting Compromise,' pp. 49-68.

⁶⁷ Marshall, *The Impact of the English Reformation*, p. 7.

⁶⁸ Shagan, 'Confronting Compromise', p. 49.

⁶⁹ *ibid*, p. 50.

⁷⁰ *ibid*, p. 53; E. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 15-16.

ambiguous and other terms were used. Later confessional divides had no place in the complexity of the Henrician Reformation, but recent historiography has shown an increased awareness of the extent to which religion and society interacted in the early modern period, and of the complexity and unpredictability of these interactions.⁷¹ The preaching of early evangelicals might not have made many religious converts, but they certainly drew crowds, and whether or not they agreed with them, people had many opportunities for exposure to new ideas. The preaching of John Bale in Doncaster in the 1530s was sufficiently well known that he was tried for heresy, but there is no evidence that Bale received any support from the Doncaster townspeople similar to that received by the Protestant preacher George Marsh in Chester.⁷² Bale's activities in Doncaster will be discussed in more detail below, but it is just possible that he might have influenced a wider audience, and by 1537 there were certainly printed ballads attacking the doctrine of purgatory circulating in Yorkshire.⁷³

In Rotherham, not far from Doncaster, William Senes, a schoolmaster, was arrested in 1537 for his argument that prayers could not aid the souls of the dead as every soul went either straight to heaven or to hell after death. Two of William's associates were charged with him. Thomas Frauncys was imprisoned for a short time, and released 'by reason of friends,' but the records of the case give no further information about the charges against him. John Padley however was accused of being 'an heretic and a loulere', and of speaking against the sacrament. The term 'Lollard' was however used as a general term of abuse towards those who held heterodox beliefs, and clearly had gained currency amongst church authorities dealing with cases of non-conformity. More is known about William Senes. He was also imprisoned, and admitted to keeping a copy of the New Testament, however the accusations against him were more concerned with his declaration against purgatory and his open criticism of service books. Senes was also reported to have ridiculed the act of sprinkling water on the tombs of the deceased, denounced the intercession of the saints and claimed that the sacrament was merely bread, and it appears he was familiar with John Frith's work *A boke made by Johan Fryth*.⁷⁴ One of the earliest English converts to Protestantism, Frith went into exile for his beliefs in 1528, and except for a brief visit to his followers in 1531 did not return to England until 1532. He was imprisoned in the tower almost

⁷¹ Marshall and Ryrie, *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, pp. 5-8, 11.

⁷² Thornton, *Cheshire*, p. 236.

⁷³ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, p. 242.

⁷⁴ Frith wrote this text whilst imprisoned in the tower for heresy.

immediately and executed for heresy in 1533, but maintained his contacts throughout his imprisonment and produced some of his most influential writings whilst in prison. Frith's writings provided significant inspiration for early English evangelicals, and his arguments on purgatory are clearly reflected in the beliefs of William Senes. Senes's familiarity with the book is evidence both that heretical works were circulating in the north, and that networks of early evangelicals extended beyond London. It is also possible that Senes heard Bale preach at Doncaster.⁷⁵ Senes escaped with only a short imprisonment thanks to Cromwell's protection, but faced further trouble for his beliefs in 1540 after the commencement of persecution under the cover of Act of Six Articles. This time Senes submitted himself to correction, and after performing his penance he vanishes from the records.⁷⁶

It was not only the educated that expressed unorthodox beliefs. In 1539 Thomas Pratt of Thirsk admitted to saying 'that god never bled all his blode, for if he had ... he cold not have risen ageyn from death to liffe' and William Bull, a Dewsbury shearman, implicated his friends when he claimed he would rather be confessed of a layman than a priest and expressed anti-clerical sentiments.⁷⁷ Clearly, heterodox beliefs had become widely scattered, if not particularly common, across the county and people were beginning to question the orthodox that was presented to them, if not to completely abandon it. Not everyone shared their beliefs however. Richard Burdone and John Grove, two sacramentaries who had been part of the circle around Anne Askew were arrested in Yorkshire when they fled north after her execution, but there is no evidence that they attempted to convert Yorkshire men and women to their beliefs, and indeed they were later pardoned after fully and publicly recanting their beliefs.⁷⁸

These early examples of support for religious reform, and of the defence of traditional religion are few in number, both amongst the clergy and the laity. For the clergy, the example of the Northern Convocation was undoubtedly significant. This body of senior clergymen appears to have offered less overt resistance to the royal

⁷⁵ For more on Frith's life and works see David Daniell, 'Frith, John (1503–1533)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10188>, accessed 23 Oct 2007]; See also Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 187-8.

⁷⁶ Details of the case against Senes can be found in *LP*, XII, ii, 436, 925; Chanc.AB.3, fols 129r, 148v, 149r, 154r, 154v, 156v; A.G Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York* (London, 1982), pp. 37-44.

⁷⁷ Chanc.AB.3, fols 81v, 82r, 86r, 90r, 91v [Pratt], fols 297v, 298r, 298v [Bull].

⁷⁸ *LP*, XX, i, 390, 391; *LP*, XXI, i, 1181; *LP*, XXI, ii, 596, 630.

divorce and the break from Rome than did their Southern counterpart, and subsequently did not actively oppose Henrician reform, though their responses to the Ten Articles suggest that they remained unhappy with the idea of a secular head of the church, with secular seizure of ecclesiastical lands, and with secular intervention in the processes of ecclesiastical law.⁷⁹ The Convocation exhibited the same obedience as the lesser clergy, who in turn influenced their parishioners. This obedience, it has been argued, was in many ways the essence of the Henrician Reformation. Ryrie has suggested that the beliefs of the general population were marginal to the politics that created the English Reformation, and has argued that although the people had a potentially enormous power to influence policy, this power was virtually impossible to wield, leaving small numbers of reformers with friends in high places in a position of much greater influence than their numbers might suggest.⁸⁰ Even so, there is little to suggest that Henrician Yorkshire was in any way prepared to welcome the further changes that would be imposed upon it after the accession of Edward VI.

The Coming of the Official Reformation

Edward's reign was brief, but for Dickens, and also Geoffrey Elton, it was the culmination of twenty years of reform that had ensured that by 1553 'England was almost certainly nearer to being a Protestant country than to anything else.'⁸¹ Revisionist arguments have since refuted these claims, but it can be confidently argued that the first three years of Edward's reign saw the most sweeping religious innovations in English history. Existing religious policy was overturned, and by the end of the reign the English church was almost unrecognisable from that of 1520. Catharine Davies has called this period a 'revolution from the top in the name of a king wielding a Bible as well as a sword,' but undoubtedly the compromise and collaboration witnessed during the Henrician Reformation persisted into the Edwardian period and eased the progress of reform. Repeated religious change had made the nation somewhat unstable, and there continued to be much uncertainty during Edward's reign about the nature of religious truth and what people were permitted to

⁷⁹ A.G. Dickens, 'The Northern Convocation and Henry VIII,' *Church Quarterly Review*, 127 (1938), p. 96, documents relating to this opposition, which was arguably virtually the sole doing of Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of Durham, can be found printed in *The Records of the Northern Convocation*, ed. The Dean of Durham, (Surtees Society, 113, 1906), pp. 207-237.

⁸⁰ Ryrie, 'Counting Sheep,' pp. 107-8.

⁸¹ A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 2nd Edition, (London, 1989), pp. 230-42; G.R Elton, *Reform and Reformation: England 1509-1558* (London, 1977), p. 371.

believe and do according to the statutes of the realm. Nothing about the future of England, or of religion in England, was certain, and the confusion created by this uncertainty permeated all levels of society. The enforcement of change remained uneven, but nevertheless remarkably rapid and orderly; there was little open opposition to Edwardian religious change and that was comprehensively stifled in 1549.⁸² Indeed a letter sent by Somerset to Cardinal Pole in June 1549 suggested that the new form of service, established by statute, had been publicised to ‘...so great a quiet as ever was in England and as gladly received of all partes.’⁸³ Doubtless this was propaganda given Pole’s status as a Catholic exile, but the choice of words appears strange given that the nation was in the grip of rebellion, one element of which was being openly posited as the work of Catholic priests.⁸⁴

By way of contrast, Dr. William Turner wrote to Cecil that the situation at York was not as the reformers might have wished.⁸⁵ Turner claimed that York Minster was in danger of being transferred to profane uses, and suggested that the church in general faced threats from heretics and wild papists. Turner wrote with the intent of gaining an appointment in Yorkshire, and thus may have exaggerated the severity of the situation,⁸⁶ but Cecil received a similar, if less explicit letter from the Duke of Northumberland in 1552, in which it was reported that one Litster, a merchant tailor of York ‘usethe a booke of prophecy and of a very lewde sorte and dothe ... expound & rede it to many peple.’⁸⁷ Lord Wharton, who had initially brought the matter to light, believed that ‘many matters were very like to aper’ were Litster’s house to be searched, indicating that Litster’s behaviour opposed the religious settlement of the regime. As only a minority became fully committed to the reformist cause, men such as Litster were probably not uncommon, but the case suggests that few concerted efforts were made to enforce the Edwardian religious injunctions. In May 1549 the President and members of the Council of the North were required to urge the people to conform to the ordinances of Parliament about religion, but the scanty evidence means it is very

⁸² Catharine Davies, *A Religion of the Word: The Defence of the Reformation in the Reign of Edward VI* (Manchester, 2002), pp. 2-3.

⁸³ SP 10/7, no. 28.

⁸⁴ Edwardian propaganda blamed the clergy for the religious overtones of the 1549 rebellion in the South West.

⁸⁵ SP 10/10, no. 34.

⁸⁶ Whitney R. D. Jones, ‘Turner, William (1509/10–1568)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27874>, accessed 10 Aug 2007].

⁸⁷ SP 10/15, no. 36.

difficult to assess the extent to which these instructions were acted upon.⁸⁸ Similarly, when instructions were issued regarding the distribution of the order for the delivery of communion in both kinds to all priests, it is unknown how many priests received these books, issued to ensure the uniformity of prayer across England.⁸⁹ Bishops were reminded that simply publicising the order was insufficient because of ‘the craftie practises of the devell ... and considering further that a greate nombre of the curates of the realme either for lacke of knowledge cannott or for want of good mynd wyll not be so readie to sett fourthe the same...’ and that they should act to ensure parish clergy had

‘...sufficient tyme well to advise and instructe themselves for the distribution of the most holy communion according to thorder of this booke before this Easter tyme and also that they maye be by yor good meanes well directed to use suche good gentle and charitable instruction of there weake simple and unlearned parisheners...’⁹⁰

However as in the Henrician Reformation, the commonest response of both clergy and laity was conformity, and in many respects by 1553 religious change in England had progressed little further than it had been allowed to do under Henry VIII. Edward’s Reformation was far from as complete in 1553 as posited by Dickens and Elton, and undoubtedly the persistent conservatism of the parish clergy was partially responsible for this.

As with the Henrician clergy, there is little evidence of the religious experiences and opinions of the parish priests of Edwardian Yorkshire. It is also clear that the lack of a competent preaching ministry continued to hinder the implementation of the Edwardian Reformation in many regions, and the drop in clerical numbers after the dissolution of the chantries affected many Yorkshire parishes. Whilst this decline was somewhat hidden in urban areas such as York, which had a large number of parishes, in rural areas, or towns such as Leeds and Hull which had only one or two parishes, it was much more dramatic. These problems of personnel, along with the many opportunities for the continuation of traditional services, were perhaps the most insurmountable difficulties faced by the Edwardian church. There were nevertheless a number of licensed preachers in Edwardian England, and a list issued in early 1548

⁸⁸ SP 15/3, no. 47.

⁸⁹ SP 10/4, no. 2.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

contains eighty-one names. Almost all of these were university educated, but only one, John Rough, is known to have worked in Yorkshire during Edward's reign.⁹¹ Rough, a Scotsman who had connections with Archbishop Holgate and was undoubtedly a significant influence upon Hull, will be considered in more detail in chapter five. Of the others in the list Edmund Grindal and Edwin Sandys, both of whom came from St. Bees in Cumberland, later served as archbishops of York, but are not known to have had any prior connections with Yorkshire. A number of others also had northern roots. Edmund Gest was born at Northallerton and was initially educated at York grammar school, but seems never to have returned north following his further studies at Eton and Cambridge, and though Thomas Cottesford was appointed prebendary of Apesthorpe in York Minster in May 1553 it is unlikely he ever visited the city before he fled abroad on Mary's accession.⁹² This lack of evidence of reformed sympathies does not mean that the parish priests of Edwardian Yorkshire were uniformly Catholic. Men such as Richard Browne, who held reformed beliefs in the 1530s, would not have come to the attention of the authorities during the reign of Edward but they undoubtedly existed in small numbers. Equally, it appears that little concerted effort was made to impose Edwardian reform in Yorkshire, and it is likely that many parishes experienced little change to the nature of their services, not least because of the number of former monastic priests serving in the county. The parish of Brodsworth in South Yorkshire, for example, was served by Robert Scolay, formerly of Monk Bretton priory, from the dissolution until his death in 1579, and Roger Dowe, a former canon at Ellerton priory served as curate there until at least 1556. Similarly two canons of Bolton priory, William Blakbourne and Thomas Preston, continued to hold the livings of Skipton and Long Preston respectively until the 1560s, both of which had been obtained prior to the suppression of their house.⁹³

For lay parishioners, in addition to the English liturgy, the marriage of their parish priest would have been one of the most notable changes they experienced during the Reformation. Clerical marriage has often been regarded as central to the English

⁹¹ SP 10/2, no. 34.

⁹² Jane Freeman, 'Guest, Edmund (1514–1577)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11712>, accessed 9 Aug 2007]; Felicity Heal, 'Cottisford, Thomas (d. 1555)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6401>, accessed 9 Aug 2007].

⁹³ C. Cross & N. Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns in Sixteenth Century Yorkshire*, (YASRS, 150, 1995), pp. 26, 244, 250, 375.

Reformation, and was continually debated by contemporaries, but historians have generally agreed that marriage is not a good indicator of clerical religious beliefs. The number of clerical marriages tended to reflect the advance of reformed religion in a particular region. Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex for example, where the new learning had made considerable impact, saw more than twice as many clerical marriages as did the more conservative Yorkshire and Lancashire. Perhaps surprisingly however, the majority of Edwardian bishops, most of whom had some sympathy for Edwardian religious policies, remained unmarried, and many active reformers maintained a restrained position regarding the marriage of priests.⁹⁴ The extent of religious conservatism and uncertainty in Yorkshire, and indeed many other counties, is suggested by the low figure of one in ten clerical marriages, which were largely repudiated after Mary's accession.⁹⁵ Clerical marriage long remained unpopular in Yorkshire, and where both parishioners and clergy remained religiously conservative, and services little changed despite the Edwardian laws and injunctions, the marriage of a priest would have been a particularly radical and shocking event for the laity.

Yorkshire was nevertheless home to one of England's most high profile cases of clerical marriage, that of Archbishop Robert Holgate. A former monk and supporter of Cromwell, Holgate served on the reconstituted Council of the North from 1537, and was promoted to president the following year.⁹⁶ He was appointed archbishop of York in 1545, and at his service of consecration became the first bishop to take the oath of supremacy and renounce papal authority.⁹⁷ Holgate later served on both Yorkshire chantry commissions, and the thirty injunctions he issued to York Minster in 1552 emphasise his commitment to learning and the vernacular scriptures. He was clearly concerned that his clergy should be able to preach effectively, and they were encouraged to study, and to memorise parts of the Scriptures. Holgate also worked to modernise the Minster library to include the works of the early church Fathers, Lutheran literature, and the works of Erasmus, Calvin and Bullinger, and his concern

⁹⁴ E.J Carlson, 'Clerical Marriage and the English Reformation,' *Journal of British Studies*, 31 (1992), pp. 6, 10.

⁹⁵ Marian deprivations for clerical marriage will be discussed in the following chapter, as will those who repudiated their wives to retain their positions.

⁹⁶ For details of Holgate's life, marriage and work, and further information, see A.G Dickens, *Robert Holgate – Archbishop of York and President of the King's Council in the North*, (Borthwick Paper 8, 1955); A.G. Dickens, 'The Marriage and Character of Archbishop Holgate,' *EHR*, 52 (1937) and H. L. Parish, 'Holgate, Robert (1481/2–1555)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13504>, accessed 15 Aug 2007].

⁹⁷ *LP*, XX, i, 115.

that good education should be available can also be seen in his foundation of schools at York, Hemsworth and Old Malton, as well as the financial assistance he provided to several others.⁹⁸ However Holgate was no revolutionary, and what enthusiasm he did hold for reform does not seem to have reached beyond the walls of the Minster precinct. There is no evidence that he worked to reform the parish clergy in his province, and nothing to suggest that he vigorously enforced royal policy. Holgate was walking something of a tightrope during Edward's reign however. A moderate evangelical rather than a committed Protestant, he was clearly uncertain about the direction of reform and it was this balancing act that led ultimately to his ill-fated marriage to Barbara Wentworth in 1550. Already an old man, Holgate married only under pressure from Northumberland, who had taunted him as a papist. The marriage created a scandal in itself due to a childhood pre-contract between Barbara and one Anthony Norman, and it undoubtedly damaged Holgate's reputation in the north in addition to contributing to his deprivation in 1554. Holgate's regret was later made evident in his *Apology*, but even taking into account the unpopularity of his marriage, in the short time he served as Archbishop Holgate arguably cannot have been expected to make a huge impact on the religious experiences of Yorkshire.

Holgate's evangelical sympathies nevertheless provide a direct contrast to the beliefs of the majority of Yorkshire parish clergy. Whilst few of these left any direct insight into their thoughts on religious change, the writings of Robert Parkyn, the conservative and educated parish priest of Adwick-le-Street in South Yorkshire provide a snap-shot of one cleric's responses to reform, and can be usefully compared with the writings of Christopher Trychay, the priest of Morebath in Devon.⁹⁹ Parkyn, the eldest son of a wealthy yeoman family based at Owston, near Adwick, wrote several texts on English history and literature, which reflect the lasting influence of late medieval mystical and contemplative devotion in the area.¹⁰⁰ Parkyn's devotion to traditional religion is further evident in his transcription of four of Sir Thomas More's prayers, which were eventually published in 1557, and his 1551 verse chronicle of the Kings of England in which he expressed the opinion that 'myche evill [was] doyne'

⁹⁸ Holgate's licence to found these schools can be found at *LP*, XXI, ii, 332, grant no. 72.

⁹⁹ See Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (Yale, 2001), for more on Trychay's writings; he will also be considered further in the following chapter.

¹⁰⁰ A.G. Dickens, 'The Last Medieval Englishman,' in *Christian Spirituality: Essays in Honour of Gordon Rupp*, ed. Peter Brooks (London, 1975), pp. 147-149, 159.

during the reign of Henry VIII to 'the utter destruction of holly Church.'¹⁰¹ Most enlightening however is Parkyn's *Narrative of the Reformation*.¹⁰² Written around 1555 the text is a personal reflection of the English Reformation to Mary's restoration of Catholicism, and Parkyn does not trouble to conceal his conservative religious affiliations. The text is clearly rooted in pre-Reformation religion, and Parkyn's lengthiest criticisms are reserved for issues such as the abrogation of traditional Eucharistic doctrine and ceremonies, the confiscation of ecclesiastical properties and clerical marriage. His disgust with the English prayer book, and abhorrence at the marriage of Archbishop Holgate to one of his parishioners, are very much in evidence, and Parkyn readily attributed the troubles of his times to heresy. The document is also very local, although Parkyn was clearly aware of issues affecting the nation as well as the region, he demonstrated little real comprehension of the political intrigues of the reign of Edward VI, classing Somerset and Northumberland together as 'two cruell tiranntes,' and the text reveals nothing about the impact of the Reformation beyond Parkyn's own immediate area.

Parkyn commenced his *Narrative* with an account of the Henrician beginnings of religious change, which he believed occurred 'to the grett discomforth of all suche as was trew christians.'¹⁰³ He regarded Henry's divorce from Katherine of Aragon as wrongful, and considered the royal suppression of the Pilgrimage of Grace as deceitful, though there is no evidence that he was personally involved in the rebellion and his knowledge of its intricacies appears to have been limited. Although he could not fail to be aware of the Pilgrimage, Parkyn seems to have regarded it as purely aimed at the 'mayntenance of [the] holly church' and either ignored, or was unaware of, the wide variety of other grievances held by the rebels. Like the rebels, Parkyn openly blamed Cromwell for the religious changes and unrest of 1530s England; though he perceived the ruin of the church to have begun during Henry's reign, Parkyn never explicitly held Henry responsible. Nor did he blame Henry's son for the changes imposed in his name, instead he considered that Edward Seymour was fully responsible for all the laws and injunctions regarding religion.¹⁰⁴ Parkyn's account of Edward's reign is more detailed, and though there is little hint of Parkyn's own opinion in these paragraphs, his tone

¹⁰¹ *ibid*, pp. 154-5, 157.

¹⁰² Parkyn's *Narrative* is printed in full in A.G Dickens, 'Robert Parkyn's Narrative of the Reformation,' *EHR*, 62:242 (1947), pp. 58-83.

¹⁰³ *ibid*, p. 64.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid*, p. 71.

suggests a deep resentment at the loss of familiar rituals, ceremonies and images, and the dramatic changes to the services of Easter 1548 are emphasised in some detail. Parkyn's reference to the relatively rapid cessation of the use of hallowed bread and holy water at communion services in Suffolk, Norfolk, Kent and Wales perhaps implies that the north, or at least Parkyn's own area, was not complying quite so readily, and he clearly disapproved of the removal of pyxes and the holy bread they contained, considering that they were 'dispittfully cast away as thinges most abominable.'¹⁰⁵

Parkyn also hinted that he, and doubtless many other conservative priests, were continuing to practise traditional rites despite the introduction of reform when he reported that those priests who had married '...wolde mayke no elevation at masse after consecration, butt all other honest preastes dyd...' something which also further emphasised his disapproval of clerical marriage.¹⁰⁶ Parkyn's comments on the 1552 prayer book also accentuated his intense dislike of the reformed service. He considered the prayer book an 'abhominable heresie and unsemynge ordre' and recommended that 'every man pondre in his owne conscience' as to whether the service was lawful, godly and appropriate for the church as it was only issued, as Parkyn saw it, with the intent of subduing the 'most blisside sacramentt of Christ bodie & bloode under forme of breade and wyne.'¹⁰⁷ This provides rare evidence for early Reformation Yorkshire that the Mass became the centre of religious disputes for many in the provinces as well as those involved in theological disputes. As will be seen in the following chapter, the Mass was the means through which many with reformed sympathies expressed their discontent at the Catholic restoration, and Parkyn's evidence suggests the same was true of conservatives during Edward's reign. Books and images also mattered however; Parkyn clearly disapproved of the commission to seek out and deface them, and blamed both Somerset and Northumberland for the removal of the altars from parish churches, calling the subsequent communion table in his church 'a littill boorde to be sett in myddest of the qweare.'¹⁰⁸

Parkyn's choice of words and phrases often reflect disapproval, rather than outright condemnation of religious change, and his *Narrative* is unique in the light it

¹⁰⁵ *ibid*, p. 68.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid*.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid*, pp. 75-6.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*, p. 72.

casts upon the reception of religious change in Yorkshire.¹⁰⁹ However it was also part of a wider movement that was beginning to see the role of history in understanding current events and situations, and its use in contemporary polemics. Parkyn's *Narrative*, whilst in many ways simply a reflection of one man's views of religious change, was also a historical account of the events of the Reformation and in this respect can perhaps be compared with the histories of Polydore Vergil, Edward Hall and John Rastell as well as Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs.' These replaced medieval chronicles, whose importance was diminished by the effects of religious change and political events on historians, and the increasing utilisation of the pen to put across points of view. The forces of religious change, political and military events and a growing sense of nationalism in England dictated alterations in the writing of history, and saw the increasing importance of historical accuracy in published texts, partly as a result of the fear of false rumour such as that which had inspired the Pilgrimage of Grace. In a broad sense all histories published in the sixteenth century claimed to be true, and Parkyn was in a way a product of this changing literary culture, for though his work reflected his personal opinions he also produced a largely accurate report of the process of religious change in England.¹¹⁰

It may be significant given the alignment of Protestantism with the written word, and Parkyn's own conservatism, that he chose to put his story of the English Reformation down on paper, but perhaps this merely serves to support Alexandra Walsham's argument that oral and literary cultures in the Reformation period were not divided along confessional lines. Arguably the fierce conflicts over the question of English history and national identity were influenced by confessional differences, but adherence to traditional religion did not necessarily mean adherence to oral methods of communicating stories and histories. Nor indeed did Protestant sympathies rule out the use of oral communication, and indeed in many Protestant anthologies of the wrath of God against sinners the materials had been gathered orally.¹¹¹ Similarly the late

¹⁰⁹ *ibid*, pp. 72-3.

¹¹⁰ W.R. Trimble, 'Early Tudor Historiography,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 11:1 (1950), pp. 30-41; Patrick Collinson, 'Truth, lies, and fiction in sixteenth-century Protestant historiography,' in *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain: History, Rhetoric, and Fiction, 1500-1800*, ed. Donald R. Kelley and David Harris Sacks (Cambridge, 1997), p. 43.

¹¹¹ Alexandra Walsham, 'Reformed Folklore? Cautionary Tales and Oral Tradition in Early Modern England,' in *The Spoken Word: Oral Culture in Britain 1500-1850*, ed. Adam Fox and Daniel Woolf (Manchester, 2002), pp. 173-187; Collinson, 'Truth, lies and fiction,' pp. 44-5; Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford, 2000), has also demonstrated the continued use of oral

medieval church had also made use of printed materials; Thornton has demonstrated that printed indulgences were popular across England.¹¹² Parkyn's *Narrative* also provides a useful, conservative, contrast to that of Robert Crowley. Crowley's 1551 allegorical history of the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations, *Philargyrie of Greate Britayne*, portrays religious change as instigated by Truth, rather than the monarch, and demonstrates Crowley's own reformed sympathies as clearly as Parkyn's text reveals his conservatism.¹¹³ Similarly, after the accession of Mary, many histories of the Reformation period reflect Parkyn's views that the Reformation was caused directly by Henry's lust for Anne Boleyn, and that Mary's accession was the purge of the corruption caused by Henry's first divorce, or the Reformation produced by the need to crush heresy. Marian historians such as Miles Hogarde and John Proctor portrayed Protestantism as the cause of social unrest and disorder in much the same way as Parkyn, as well as enacting and celebrating the escape from a heretical past through their histories of early religious change.¹¹⁴

Robert Parkyn did nevertheless conform throughout the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations, and would do likewise during the Protestant regime of Elizabeth I, but there is little evidence to suggest that his own personal opinions ever changed despite the neutral tenor of his will.¹¹⁵ The vast majority of Parkyn's contemporaries did likewise. Conservatism persisted, but was veiled rather than open, unobtrusive rather than threatening. The ambiguity of the first Edwardian prayer book would have made the continuation of conservative services much easier as many theological points were deliberately left open to interpretation, and the general uncertainty of the period, coupled with the lack of enforcement of the official Reformation in Yorkshire, undoubtedly increased the confusion amongst parishioners and clergy about what was and was not permitted.

The lack of evidence, partially the result of the loss of the records of the Council of the North, and the undoubtedly limited efforts to impose the Edwardian

traditions in the sixteenth century, as well as revealing the extent to which the written word penetrated society at all levels.

¹¹² Tim Thornton, 'Propaganda, Political Communication and the Problem of English Responses to the Introduction of Printing,' in *Propaganda: Political Rhetoric and Identity, 1300-2000*, ed. Bernard Taithe & Tim Thornton (Stroud, 1999), p. 44.

¹¹³ Thomas Betteridge, *Tudor Histories of the English Reformations, 1530-83* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 1-2.

¹¹⁴ *ibid*, chapter 3, *passim*.

¹¹⁵ For Parkyn's will see Prob. Reg. 19, fols 54v-55r.

Reformation within the parishes, has limited our knowledge of lay as well as clerical reactions to the official Reformation. Whilst radicalism was certainly present there is little evidence of any organised congregations in Yorkshire; absence from the communion was a more common way of expressing separatism, and of course this could reflect conservative as well as radical sympathies.¹¹⁶ Although heterodox beliefs were becoming increasingly common, there are few signs of open support for the new religion in Edwardian Yorkshire and as was noted above the enforcement of reform within a resistant and often hostile culture was problematic and had to be undertaken with care. Even during the reign of Elizabeth the full penalties for recusancy were rarely imposed upon gentry families whose political loyalty remained crucial to the maintenance of social order in many parts of Yorkshire. Nevertheless, the changes of the Edwardian Reformation had an arguably greater effect on the laity than those of Henry VIII, not least because the dissolution of the chantries removed at a stroke the doctrine of purgatory, large numbers of clergy, many traditional rituals and ceremonies, and large amounts of church goods, many of which would have been donated and bequeathed by parishioners and their ancestors. The dissolution of the chantries will be dealt with below, but this policy, and earlier rumours anticipating it, undoubtedly influenced the ways in which the Edwardian laity in Yorkshire responded to the new wave of religious change.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, most prominent amongst the laity appears to have been fears for the survival of their parish churches and their goods. The government's request for details of sales of church goods in early 1548 was the result of hurried sales in parishes across the country following rumours similar to those current during the Pilgrimage of Grace that royal commissioners were going to remove plate and valuables from churches. The report of John Bird, Bishop of Chester, details the sales of church goods within the archdeaconry of Richmondshire, but reveals that in fact few had taken place.¹¹⁷ Details of sales are only given for two parishes. At Bedale the churchwardens sold a chalice for 40s, which went towards the repair of the church, and the churchwardens at Well sold vestments and a cope. There are no records of how the proceeds of these sales were invested, but it is unsurprising that in many parishes people wanted to retain the wealth of their parish. Often the goods in question had personal and familial links to parishioners, and many felt it was preferable to sell them

¹¹⁶ Davies, *A Religion of the Word*, pp. 67, 76.

¹¹⁷ SP 10/3, no. 4.

and put the money to church use rather than see them taken away and melted down for crown use. Evidence from Mary's reign, which will be considered in the following chapter, further suggests that many more such objects were hidden away rather than sold, in the hope that they would one day be of further use.

That further instructions regarding the sale of church goods were issued to all JPs in February 1549 suggests that such sales had continued despite any efforts made to stop them.¹¹⁸ In 1549 however, orders were issued that every parish should produce an inventory of all goods in their parish church. A copy was to be kept in the church, and one deposited with the regional *custos rotulorum* to ensure the inventories could not be tampered with, whilst the parishioners and curates were ordered to ensure that henceforth no church goods were sold, with the threat of legal proceedings and compensation payments if they were. Clearly the government was anxious to ensure that no more revenue was lost from parishes, but perhaps more importantly was concerned that such sales, particularly when made without the consent of the parishioners, would cause tensions and unrest within local communities, which had the potential to create widespread problems of disorder. Certainly a case that will be considered in the following chapter suggests that illicit sales during the Edwardian period could and did cause persistent localised unrest.¹¹⁹ These orders were not popular, but the inventories can provide useful indicators of the extent to which parishioners were continuing to make bequests to churches. The long lists of goods produced by some churches gives an idea of the dramatic change that the confiscation of many of these items would have made to the visual interior of the parish church, not to mention the removal of important focuses of devotion. Though there are no extant Edwardian inventories for Yorkshire, the churchwardens' accounts for Sheriff Hutton include an undated list of the contents of the parish church.¹²⁰ Probably made in the 1530s this appears to be a relatively complete list of the equipment required for the saying of Mass, but also includes items donated by parishioners. The accounts make no mention of any sales of goods during Edward's reign, nor of any substantial purchases during Mary's, which might suggest that these goods were successfully hidden from the Edwardian commissioners. This cannot be confirmed, but clearly the parishioners would have had a vested interest in preserving items they or their ancestors had

¹¹⁸ SP 10/6, no. 25.

¹¹⁹ CP.G.608, and see chapter 2 below for this case, which concerns Easingwold and Raskelf.

¹²⁰ PR.SH.13, fols 1r-2r.

bequeathed. Inventories can also reveal the extent to which parishioners were hiding goods from the Edwardian commissioners. The parishioners of Morebath in Devon received several visits from commissioners who knew their inventory was incomplete, but even the final submission omitted many items which had been dispersed about the parish, and it is notable that no chasubles were listed.¹²¹

The search for old objects of superstition intensified after the fall of Somerset, and met with surprisingly little resistance, perhaps because the dissolution of the chantries had ensured the removal of large numbers of such items. Undoubtedly the types of sales discussed above can partly explain this search, and many items were stolen from churches with a similar aim of preservation. Reports of Somerset's fall had caused some people to believe that they would see a restoration of traditional religious services and some had thus begun to re-use their Latin books. As a result, the king once again ordered the destruction of all Latin service books in order that they could no longer be used in place of the Book of Common Prayer. Subsequent searches were to be undertaken periodically, and any who refused to comply faced gaol.¹²² In many places regular checks appear to have been undertaken to ensure that official orders were being carried out, and in Hull the commissioners personally destroyed statues left standing in the parish churches when faced with the non-compliance of the parishioners.¹²³ Further orders to enforce parishioners to pay for the bread and wine for the communion clearly suggests that many were refusing to do so, which might in turn indicate a widespread passive resistance to religious change had been established.

In addition, injunctions were issued to bishops in 1553 regarding articles sent out to each diocese.¹²⁴ These injunctions were to be subscribed to and observed by all preachers and teachers, and required the regular teaching of the catechism, which was to be checked by the regular visitations of schools. Any who refused to subscribe would be judged as unable and a recusant. Again, it is impossible to estimate how comprehensively these instructions were carried out, or the extent to which the Yorkshire parish clergy subscribed and adhered to them. Haigh has suggested that in Lancashire orders to destroy old service books were widely ignored, and given the

¹²¹ Duffy, *Voices of Morebath*, p. 145; the chasuble was the main Mass vestment.

¹²² SP 10/9, no. 57.

¹²³ Christopher Daniell, 'Reaction to the Sale of Church Goods at the Reformation,' *Reformation*, 1 (1996), accessed online 30/08/07, <http://www.tyndale.org/Reformation/1/daniell.html>.

¹²⁴ SP 10/18, no. 25.

similar conservative trends of the two counties it can be speculated that the same was true of Yorkshire.¹²⁵ There is however evidence from one York parish that compliance was reasonably prompt. The extant churchwardens' accounts for St. Martin Coney Street commence shortly before the death of Edward VI in 1553, and record that payments had been made for the compilation of an inventory of church goods for the commissioners, and for a copy of the Book of Common Prayer. An additional reference to the sale of old vestments and hangings suggests that perhaps the church had complied with official injunctions to remove all traditional objects and decorations from the church, and accounts from St. Michael Spurriergate in York also indicate that orders to remove altars and images and whitewash walls were followed reasonably swiftly.¹²⁶ The accounts from Sheriff Hutton tell a similar story. Though there is no record of the purchase of a prayer book in 1548, the parish paid for a communion book and table in 1552, and for the compilation of an inventory for the King's commissioners.¹²⁷ Despite these examples of compliance however, passive resistance through refusals to provide for communion services, retention of church ornamentation and sales for parish use appears to have been more usual. However there is also evidence that popular attitudes in Yorkshire during the Edwardian Reformation contained elements of self-interest and conservation, and behaviour does not seem to reflect Christopher Daniell's argument that it was the religion and church at the heart of the parish that was important, not the contents within it.¹²⁸ By the reign of Edward, people had been on the receiving end of sufficient religious change to be aware that the confusion it created could be put to good use as a means of self-promotion, and that the manipulation of change with self-interest in mind was always possible.

The Reception in the Towns

The urban experience of the Reformation was undoubtedly different to that of rural areas, yet urban history is a relatively new sub-field of Reformation studies and concentration has often been upon change rather than continuity.¹²⁹ 'Reformation'

¹²⁵ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 143.

¹²⁶ PR.Y/MCS.16, pp. 5-6; PR.Y/MS.3, fols 84v, 85r.

¹²⁷ PR.SH.13, f. 18r.

¹²⁸ Daniell, 'Sale of Church Goods'.

¹²⁹ Robert Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns in England: Politics and Political Culture, c. 1540-1640* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 4-5; Tittler has provided comprehensive discussion and studies of urban Reformation history in his book, and also in Robert Tittler, *Townpeople and Nation: English Urban Experience 1540-1640* (Stanford, 2001), and Robert Tittler, 'Reformation, Resources and Authority in

meant considerably more than doctrinal change for early modern English towns; many towns simultaneously underwent dramatic economic, social, and political changes.¹³⁰ Urban areas have often been portrayed as hotbeds of reform, yet whilst they were more likely to attract preachers and act as channels for the exchange of ideas and information, not all towns were equally receptive to new ideas. Robert Whiting has suggested for the southwest that though the decline in Catholic commitment was faster in the towns than in the countryside, there was no strict division and a similar, if smaller scale, decline was equally evident in rural parishes.¹³¹ The great variety of Reformation experiences means it is difficult to generalise about the religious experiences of Yorkshire towns. Whilst some certainly saw early evidence of evangelicalism and reform, others continued to offer vigorous resistance to change and clung firmly to the ritual and ceremony of traditional religion, probably as a result of their different ecclesiastical structures. As will be seen in subsequent chapters York, which had a large number of small parishes, and Hull, which had just two parishes and a much smaller number of clergy, provide dramatically different examples of urban responses to religious change.¹³² Medieval religious belief and practice, and by association the clergy, formed an essential underpinning of urban religious culture, and an attendant ideal of the social harmony which was crucial to an ordered society. The wholesale destruction of this was undoubtedly crippling to the political culture of many towns and the consequent need for a new civic political culture and strategies for upholding civic order became a central preoccupation for urban authorities. The effects of the Reformation in shaping these were visible for decades afterwards.¹³³

It was the dissolutions of the 1530s, and more particularly those of the 1540s, which most dramatically affected the towns, and which represented the most obvious breaks with the past. Every town would have had at least one intercessory institution, and in York as many as 140 have been identified.¹³⁴ Guilds particularly were considered an integral part of the fabric of urban life, and were vitally important in

English Towns: An Overview,' in *The Reformation in English Towns 1500-1640* ed. Patrick Collinson and John Craig (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 190-201.

¹³⁰ Tittler, *Townspeople and Nation*, pp. 12-13.

¹³¹ Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 146.

¹³² See chapters four and five below; Claire Cross, 'Parochial Structure and the Dissemination of Protestantism in Sixteenth Century England: A Tale of Two Cities,' *SCH*, 16 (1979), has also argued that the ecclesiastical structure of a town shaped its reactions to the Reformation.

¹³³ Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns*, pp. 9-11, 43, 249-50; Tittler, *Townspeople and Nation*, pp. 13-16.

¹³⁴ Barrie Dobson, 'Cities and Chantries,' in *Church and City 1000-1500: Essays in Honour of Christopher Brooke*, ed. D. Abulafia, M. Franklin & M. Rubin, (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 314, 316.

establishing local identity and civic values, and as will be seen the evidence suggests that both guilds and chantries continued to receive bequests until the eve of their suppression.¹³⁵ The massive land redistribution which followed the dissolutions ultimately allowed many towns to increase their wealth and autonomy, but towns were rarely the first purchasers of their confiscated monastic and chantry lands; they often lacked wealth, and the threat to political stability caused by the demise of the traditional, doctrinally informed, urban culture was of greater immediate importance. The subsequent search for a new form of civic culture, an alternative, secularised, collective memory and identity, and new methods of ensuring civic harmony undoubtedly provoked divisions despite the evidence of much continuity in the Godly Puritan civic political cultures and those of civic Catholicism which had preceded them.¹³⁶ It is possible to see the same compromise and collaboration in the towns as elsewhere during the Reformation period, though arguably this was more necessary as urban authorities had more to gain from cooperation with the government. Certainly in many towns the authorities benefited from the increase in oligarchical rule, which increased social polarisation and caused the townspeople to lose their former avenues of civic expression and community service. Whilst the move towards oligarchy was clearly evident in some larger towns before the Reformation, it was certainly accelerated by religious change.¹³⁷ Ruling oligarchies, like rural churchwardens, acted as brokers between the ecclesiastical authorities and the people. They were a source of initiative, yet simultaneously the source of authority and control. They had to plot a route through the often bitter divisions caused by religious change, but at the same time they were attempting to increase their own power and control within their community.¹³⁸ New forms of civic political culture were ultimately fashioned to serve the needs of the urban oligarchies who constructed them, but many of the devices and strategies they used came to include an alternative form of religious legitimisation which provided doctrinal justification for civic authority, and encouraged charitable works and civic responsibility in much the same way as traditional urban political and religious cultures had.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Peter Cunich, 'The Dissolution of the Chantries,' in *The Reformation in English Towns*, ed. Collinson & Craig, pp. 164, 168-9.

¹³⁶ Tittler, *Townspeople and Nation*, p. 17; Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns*, p. 250.

¹³⁷ Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns*, pp. 18-20, 139-146.

¹³⁸ John Craig, *Reformation, Politics and Polemics: the Growth of Protestantism in East Anglian Market Towns 1500-1610*, (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 179-80.

¹³⁹ Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns*, pp. 337-8.

In Yorkshire the reception of religious change in many ways mirrors that elsewhere, and serves to emphasise the extent of local and regional, as well as urban and rural, differences in the implementation of religious change. The experiences of two of Yorkshire's most important towns, York and Hull, will be studied in some detail in later chapters, but this section will consider evidence from other urban areas within the county. It is certainly in the towns that most examples of early reform can be detected, but it remains difficult to speak of reformed communities before the reign of Elizabeth. David Lamburn has argued that reformed religious views first arrived in the town of Beverley in the East Riding in the early 1530s, and were spread along family, friendship and neighbourly connections and trade routes as well as by clergy obeying religious injunctions.¹⁴⁰ His work on testamentary evidence for the town has nevertheless suggested that attachment to traditional religion remained strong, despite evidence of changing religious expectations, and he has argued that despite a lack of monastic institutions within the town and its immediate vicinity, many testators still made bequests to religious houses. He has also suggested that religious guilds, another supposedly moribund aspect of late medieval Catholicism, were not only thriving in early sixteenth century Beverley, but were increasing in importance.¹⁴¹ A later attachment to reformed religion caused some difficulties for the town authorities, but in the years immediately before the advent of religious reform in England the people of Beverley were strongly attached to the devotional life and traditions of the pre-Reformation church, and despite hints of a priest preaching against the king's injunctions and the word of God at Beverley, there is no sign that he was reaching a receptive audience.¹⁴²

Whatever the early impact of reformed ideas in the town, the traditional order retained a sufficiently strong hold that the rebels of the Pilgrimage of Grace, the Yorkshire branch of which broke out in Beverley, placed the dissolution of the monasteries and the rumoured spoliation of parish churches foremost amongst their grievances, alongside a long-running dispute with the Archbishop of York and Lord of the Manor of Beverley over commercial rights, government and electoral

¹⁴⁰ David Lamburn, 'Politics and Religion in Early Modern Beverley,' in *The Reformation in English Towns 1500-1640* ed. Collinson and Craig, p. 66.

¹⁴¹ Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, p. viii; David Lamburn, 'The Laity and the Church; Religious Developments in Beverley in the first half of the Sixteenth Century,' *Borthwick Papers*, 97 (2000), pp. 7, 10.

¹⁴² Lamburn, 'The Laity and the Church,' pp. 12-13, 15; *LP*, XIII, i, 1247; this priest was allegedly a chaplain of the archbishop, though he denied it.

arrangements.¹⁴³ The defeat of the rebels was perhaps the defining moment for religious development in Beverley, as the town was thereafter compliant and had embraced Protestantism sufficiently before the death of Edward VI that signs of a resumption of Catholic practice after Mary's accession were virtually non-existent.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, signs of attachment to reformed religion remained strong in Beverley during Mary's reign, particularly amongst members of the urban oligarchy who, in the absence of significant gentry families in the town would have been responsible for setting religious patterns and trends. Religious change led to deep divisions within Beverley's ruling oligarchy, something that Craig's research on East Anglian market towns has suggested was not unusual. Craig has argued that deep political and economic rivalries between the town and abbey of Bury St. Edmunds pushed many of the townsmen towards reformed religion whilst others remained largely conservative, and has suggested that the later failure of the town to obtain a charter allowed the growing religious divisions to pose a political challenge to the governing oligarchy and which resulted in the Bury stirs of 1578 to 1586, a series of religious controversies centred on the twin issues of preachers and preaching.¹⁴⁵

The West Riding town of Halifax also became known as a centre of radical Protestant opinions, despite having no history of religious dissent before 1530, and like Beverley it is probable that reformed ideas arrived along cloth trade routes. Halifax is also renowned for being one of the places where the controversial Protestant will preamble formula of William Tracy was first copied. The preamble of Tracy's will of 1530 vigorously upheld Protestant doctrines, and he significantly failed to leave any of his considerable estate to the church.¹⁴⁶ Whilst it is hard to escape the conclusion that radical wills were intended at least in part as public statements for a wider audience, they were nevertheless scarce during the Henrician Reformation. Tracy's will was refused probate in 1531, and his body was exhumed and burnt for heresy, but his preamble was copied throughout the country, circulating in print from at least 1535.¹⁴⁷ Its appearance in Halifax, in the 1548 will of the yeoman Edward Hoppay, predated

¹⁴³ *ibid*, pp. 18-20; this dispute with the archbishop was over the form used for the election of civic officials in the town, and the riots which resulted from it saw Sir Ralph Ellerker, who was later to be a significant player in the Pilgrimage of Grace, take a lead role in the disturbances in Beverley. *LP*, VIII, 721, 774; STAC 2/19/242, STAC 2/19/243.

¹⁴⁴ Lamburn, 'The Laity and the Church,' pp. 20-22.

¹⁴⁵ Craig, *Reformation, Politics and Polemics*, chapter 4, especially pp. 67, 78-80, 86-89.

¹⁴⁶ John Craig and Caroline Litzenberger, 'Wills as Religious Propaganda: The Testament of William Tracy,' *JEH*, 44, 3 (1993) p. 417.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid*, p. 423.

the majority of its other provincial appearances and is thus significant in the story of religious reform in Yorkshire. Clearly those sympathetic to reform within Halifax had contacts with other evangelicals, and were not merely those involved in the cloth industry with its inherent and wide-ranging networks.¹⁴⁸ Other will preambles suggest that both clergy and laity were involved in spreading reformed religion within the parish, but the involvement of the townspeople in the conservative backlash that was the Pilgrimage of Grace suggests that sympathy for reform remained confined to a very few at least until the reign of Edward VI.¹⁴⁹

In other ways the early Reformation scarcely touched Halifax. The parish priest from 1525 until his murder in 1556 was Robert Haldesworth, a man who had considerable influence in the area, but little sympathy for the Reformation cause. Whilst he did conform, he quickly returned to Catholicism in 1553, and complaints were made to Cromwell in 1538 about his lack of preaching in the parish.¹⁵⁰ Robert Farrer, the complainant, was an early Cambridge Lutheran, who subsequently became a Marian martyr, and his submission to Cromwell reported that although the people were keen to learn there was not one faithful preacher in the towns of Yorkshire.¹⁵¹ A former servant of Haldesworth, one William Bodinam, also reported the priest's criticism of the new order, and a number of Halifax parishioners sued Haldesworth in the Court of Chancery in 1535 for making them pay the traditional tax to Rome, Peter's Pence, before they could receive their Easter communion. They added to their complaint confirmation of their own belief in the royal supremacy.¹⁵² Haldesworth appears to have had a persistently tempestuous relationship with his parishioners, for he was also subjected to an attack on and thefts from his vicarage during the 1530s, which resulted in a protracted Star Chamber case.¹⁵³

Additionally there were few monastic houses in Halifax parish, meaning it was virtually untouched by the dissolutions of the 1530s. Instead parish churches and chapels were the primary focus of devotional giving, and there is little doubt that

¹⁴⁸ William and Sarah Sheils, 'Textiles and Reform: Halifax and its Hinterland,' in *The Reformation in English Towns*, ed. Collinson and Craig, p. 131.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid*, pp. 138-9.

¹⁵⁰ *LP*, IX, p. 463.

¹⁵¹ Gerald Hammond, 'How they brought the Gospel to Halifax,' *Reformation*, 1 (1996), pp. 11-28, accessed online, 30/08/07, <http://www.tyndale.org/Reformation/1/hammond.html>.

¹⁵² PRO C 1/827, fols 1r-v; Shagan, *Popular Politics*, pp. 15-16; *LP*, IX, 404.

¹⁵³ STAC 2/21/174; see also H.B McCall (ed.) *Yorkshire Star Chamber Proceedings vol. II*, (YASRS 45, 1911), pp. 184-9.

conventional piety funded significant improvements in pastoral provisions within the community.¹⁵⁴ The Edwardian dissolution of the chantries decreased clerical provision in Halifax as elsewhere, yet there is no evidence of any unrest at their loss, despite the large number of chapels in the parish. The wills of some sectors of the community furthermore reveal an increasing awareness of the Edwardian Reformation.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Halifax's Puritanism was not built upon a history of early evangelical dissent, but began amongst small, interconnected networks of kinship, business, friendship and acquaintance, with families such as the Maudes and Bests early pioneers of religious reform.¹⁵⁶ Similarly in Hadleigh in Suffolk, reform spread along specific networks within a particular group of committed Protestants, and despite their presence, and a legacy of Lollardy, sympathy for reform grew slowly. Unlike in Halifax, early reform did not result in later Puritanism, or even the employment of a town preacher.¹⁵⁷ Despite its later reputation, early Protestantism in Halifax was rooted amongst the parochial establishment, and remained low key; continuity was not expressed through consent, but through a lay integration into the life of the local worshipping communities which gradually adopted evangelical ideas and practices.¹⁵⁸ There is no evidence of dissent from Henrician or Edwardian Halifax; reform in the town instead grew slowly and cautiously.¹⁵⁹

The West Riding towns of Doncaster and Leeds were similarly attached to traditional religion in the 1520s and early 1530s, yet provide something of a contrast to the stories of Beverley and Halifax. Despite the preaching of Lutheran doctrines in the town by John Bale in the 1530s, Doncaster retained its attachment to traditional religion longer than either Beverley or Halifax, and increasing affluence in the town led to a larger number of later bequests to guilds, perhaps also a reflection of their lasting popularity.¹⁶⁰ Bale served as prior of Doncaster's Carmelite friars from 1530 to 1534, and came under the influence of Lutheranism whilst studying at Cambridge. He was charged with heresy before the Archbishop of York in 1534, and has become

¹⁵⁴ Sheils, 'Textiles and Reform,' pp. 133-5.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid*, p. 140.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid*, p. 138.

¹⁵⁷ Craig, *Reformation Politics and Polemics*, chapter 6, especially pp. 156, 171, 174.

¹⁵⁸ Sheils, 'Textiles and Reform,' p. 143.

¹⁵⁹ This development of reform can be contrasted with the town of Coventry, where several men were indicted in 1542 for denying the intercessory role of priests, advocating clerical marriage, denying the sanctity of the sacrament and advocating the removal of all ornaments and decorations from churches. *LP*, XVII, 537.

¹⁶⁰ Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power*, p. 249.

known as one of the more radical of England's early Protestants.¹⁶¹ In Doncaster he was publicly attacking the veneration of saints and the doctrine of purgatory as early as 1530, but seems to have exercised virtually no influence over the ideas of the townspeople despite public disputations with the Franciscan prior in the town. One William Broman claimed in 1535 that Bale had taught him some four years previously that Christ lived not in churches but in heaven and in the hearts of men, suggesting that Bale's teaching was remembered if not widely accepted.¹⁶² Claire Cross's research on Doncaster has further suggested that only later in the reign of Edward VI did parishioners cease to openly demonstrate their attachment to traditional religion in their wills.¹⁶³

Similarly in Leeds will preambles remained predominantly traditional until the 1550s, with bequests for masses and the desire for the intervention of the saints remaining common whilst more muted, less traditional religious sentiments emerged only gradually. After Edward's death, traditional testamentary forms quickly re-emerged in Leeds.¹⁶⁴ The Edwardian period did however see a corresponding increase in bequests to the poor box, and it has been argued that Leeds wills provide evidence that religious change was adopted more rapidly within Leeds than in surrounding areas.¹⁶⁵ The opposition of Thomas Roodes of Rawdon, near Leeds, who was imprisoned in York Castle in 1534 for speaking against the royal supremacy, appears to have been an exception, and evidence from Mary's reign will demonstrate that collaboration and compromise were not uncommon in Edwardian Leeds.¹⁶⁶ Both Doncaster and Leeds might be used as examples of a strict compliance with Tudor religious injunctions. The evidence for both towns suggests compliance with the Protestantism of Edward's reign, followed by a virtually complete reversion to Catholicism after the accession of Mary. Doncaster's geographical position on the old great north road does not seem to have increased the speed with which reform was adopted, suggesting that although the town may have received new ideas and

¹⁶¹ For more on John Bale see John N. King, 'Bale, John (1495–1563)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1175>, accessed 5 Nov 2007].

¹⁶² *LP*, IX, 230; Cross and Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns*, pp. 11, 474.

¹⁶³ Claire Cross, 'Religion in Doncaster from the Reformation to the Civil War,' in *The Reformation in English Towns*, ed. Collinson and Craig, pp. 52-3.

¹⁶⁴ Claire Cross, 'Wills As Evidence of Popular Piety in the Reformation Period: Leeds and Hull 1540-1640,' in *The End of Strife*, ed. D. Loades (Edinburgh, 1984), p. 45.

¹⁶⁵ Alister Lonsdale, 'A Note on Leeds Wills,' *Thoresby Society*, 50, 1 (1965), p. 82.

¹⁶⁶ *LP*, VII, appendix 26; *LP*, VIII, 277.

polemical arguments it was not especially receptive to them and conformed out of obedience. The role of the authorities was undoubtedly significant in this conformity, and it has been suggested that Doncaster barely noticed the Reformation because of the dedication of its urban leaders to religious uniformity, and consequently, social and civic harmony.¹⁶⁷ Similarly there is no evidence that reform was enthusiastically embraced by the clergy of either town before the accession of Elizabeth I. There is no evidence of clerical marriages in Leeds or Doncaster, and no Protestant ministers travelled to Leeds during the Edwardian period.¹⁶⁸

Those towns considered above all demonstrated ready conformity and in some cases some enthusiasm for evangelical ideas but others, such as the city of York which will be considered in a later chapter, and the coastal town of Whitby, saw large sections of their populations, including the ruling classes, retain a long lasting attachment to traditional religion. Whitby was of course a monastic town, and its institutions, like those of Guisborough, which similarly retained a lasting Catholic presence, were significantly disrupted by the dissolution of the monasteries. Such domination by a monastic institution left the towns little to fall back on after their suppression, and the sudden crisis they faced undoubtedly affected their development. This provides a distinct contrast with the Reformation experience of towns such as Beverley and Halifax, which did not have the same monastic control, and emphasises the lack of uniformity in the process of religious change in the towns.

Dissolution: The Monasteries and Friaries

The dissolution of the monasteries and friaries has provided further fuel for the debates between scholars of the Henrician Reformation and the story of the dissolution is too well known to warrant repeating here. Suggestions that English monasticism had already passed the peak of its popularity by the beginning of the sixteenth century have led to arguments that the monasteries were unpopular, but novices were still being attracted to the religious life, and the religious institutions, particularly the friaries, remained popular beneficiaries in wills.¹⁶⁹ In religious terms the dissolution was

¹⁶⁷ Collinson and Craig, *The Reformation in English Towns*, p. 15.

¹⁶⁸ Claire Cross, *Urban Magistrates and Ministers: Religion in Hull and Leeds from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Borthwick Papers 67, York, 1985), pp. 10-11.

¹⁶⁹ H. Aveling, 'The Monks of Byland Abbey after the Dissolution,' *Ampleforth Journal*, 60 (Exeter, 1955), p. 3; Robson, *The Franciscans*, p. 31.

probably the greatest institutional change that occurred during the reign of Henry VIII, and arguably it hit Yorkshire particularly hard as the region had more religious houses than any comparable English county. Initially at least the effects of the enormous transfer of land in the aftermath of the dissolution would have been felt far more keenly in Yorkshire than were the early doctrinal changes. The predominantly rural and often isolated terrain of the county meant some people had easier access to monastic chapels than to their own parish churches, and thus also suffered from a loss of spiritual succour after the dissolution. The naves of the churches belonging to the Augustinian monks at Bolton priory in Craven and the Benedictine nuns of Marrick Priory in Richmondshire for example continue to serve as parish churches to their communities today, and clearly were of some value to the scattered communities within which they lay during the sixteenth century. Those travelling across the sparsely populated landscape also lost out in terms of hospitality.

The friaries in their turn played an arguably greater part in lay religious lives. Based in the towns, the friars were actively integrated into urban religious life as preachers, confessors, will makers, and educators. There are indications that some friars embarked on preaching tours in the run-up to major festivals, and visits of the York Franciscans to Batley and Leeds are mentioned in fifteenth century wills.¹⁷⁰ Friars were also regular participants at burial services, and testators, such as Thomas Percy of Scarborough in 1536, frequently bequeathed small sums to every friar who attended their burial and celebrated mass for them.¹⁷¹ The extent of the friars' involvement in urban life is further illustrated by the admission of some friars, such as the Franciscan William Vavasour, as members of the guild of Corpus Christi in York, and in the use of friary buildings by the Burgesses of Beverley for holding their meetings.¹⁷² That they remained popular amongst the laity until the very eve of the dissolution is also evident, for in 1538, only weeks before the suppression, William Smyth of Pool in the parish of Otley in the West Riding bequeathed 8d to each friar in the community.¹⁷³

The reports of Doctors Layton and Legh suggested that there was little out of the ordinary in the religious houses of Yorkshire; Layton's letters report great

¹⁷⁰ Robson, *The Franciscans*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁷¹ *ibid*, pp. 23, 28.

¹⁷² *ibid*, p. 24, Vavasour was admitted into the guild in 1529-30.

¹⁷³ *ibid*, p. 31; the community in question is not specified, but Robson has argued that it was York.

corruption, but it is important to recognise that the commissioners had a purpose, and thus identified as superstition and corruption what many of their contemporaries would have seen simply as aspects of traditional Catholicism.¹⁷⁴ The use of saints' girdles to assist women during their lying in was a common aspect of the experience of childbirth for example, as was the worship of other relics such as the part of the holy cross and finger of St. Stephen held by the priory of Keldholme.¹⁷⁵ The presence of relics, and the intercession of the saints, such as at Arden priory where women prayed to the image of St. Bridgett and made offerings when their cows were ill or lost, were considered normal and were simply part of long-standing local religious cultures and traditions, but had to be regarded as corrupt by the visitors because of their official abolition. There is no overt evidence of corruption or immorality, though the suppression papers suggest that some were seeking release from their orders.¹⁷⁶ One Edward Payntter, a monk of Jervaulx was punished for leaving the abbey, and by 1532 was in the custody of the Bishop of London after his impeachment for heresy, but his case appears to have been exceptional.¹⁷⁷ The Yorkshire returns of the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* took some time to gather. This was partly due to the absence of personnel in London and elsewhere, and probably had much to do with the size of the county and the number of institutions, but there is an implication that information was supplied reluctantly, and the archbishop was forced to deal with a number of enquiries as to where the information was, and subsequently about errors and omissions contained within it.¹⁷⁸ In many cases the omissions were from regions that were not under the direct jurisdiction of the archbishop. The archdeaconry of Richmond for example, and various lands outside of Yorkshire which nevertheless appertained to Yorkshire prebends were not included, but in other cases it may simply have been scribal errors, misunderstandings about the names of parsonages and rectories, or perhaps carelessness in the rush to complete the assessments. Thornton in Pickering Lythe for example was listed incorrectly as a vicarage instead of a parsonage, and Londesborough was listed as Levesbrogh.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ LP, X, 92, 137; See also Clay, *Suppression Papers*, pp. 5-10 for printed copies of some of these letters.

¹⁷⁵ Clay, *Suppression Papers*, pp. 16-18.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid*; LP, X, 364.

¹⁷⁷ LP, V, 1203.

¹⁷⁸ LP, VIII, 696, 720, 754, 945; LP, IX, 1070 (no. 4).

¹⁷⁹ LP, IX, 1070 (no. 4).

On the whole, the monastic houses appear to have been keen to assist the commissioners. The abbots of Byland and Fountains acted as Cromwell's visitors of the northern houses, and were also instrumental in securing the removal of Abbot Cowper at Rievaulx.¹⁸⁰ This suggests that they supported the initial idea of monastic reforms, which in turn indicates a continued, active interest in and attachment to the traditional order and the religious way of life and the way this was perceived by outsiders. The involvement of the houses of Bridlington and Jervaulx in the Pilgrimage of Grace is a further indication of a desire to preserve the monastic life. The extent to which this involvement was voluntary is not entirely clear, but the story of the Jervaulx monk George Lazenby suggests there was some strong opposition to Henrician religious policy. Lazenby publicly denounced the royal supremacy in 1535, before a crowd which included Francis Bigod, who had some sympathy with reform and led an ill-fated attempt to prolong the Pilgrimage of Grace in early 1537. During his subsequent examination Lazenby signed articles which stated his continued adherence to Roman jurisdiction, and which were refuted by all other members of the house. He also claimed to have received a vision of the Virgin Mary whilst visiting Mount Grace priory and it is certain that he knew what he was defending and the significance of it. His fellow monks would also have been aware of this, and it is possible that Lazenby was at the centre of a group who came to see him as martyr in the aftermath of his execution. Another Jervaulx monk, Thomas Mudde, supposedly obtained Lazenby's head after his death and escaped to Scotland with it. Nothing more is known of Mudde in Scotland, or of what became of Lazenby's head, but Mudde ultimately died a Catholic prisoner in Hull in 1583, and it is possible that in removing the head he was attempting to preserve a relic. Certainly the case has parallels with that of Thomas More, whose daughter Margaret Roper similarly removed and preserved his head following his execution.¹⁸¹ At Mount Grace too the desire to maintain the monastic life is evident. As late as January 1540 John Wilson, the prior, deposed that he had had difficulty in persuading his brethren to accept the illegality of papal supremacy, and had been forced to imprison four of his brethren in order to secure their compliance. Wilson's reluctance to surrender his monastery is clear, but there is a sense of resignation to the inevitable in his tone.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Aveling, 'The Monks of Byland Abbey,' p. 6.

¹⁸¹ *LP*, VIII, 1025, 1033, 1069; Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 79-81.

¹⁸² *LP*, XV, 125; these imprisoned monks were Geoffrey Hodgeson, Robert Foster, Richard Marshall and Thomas Lyghton.

Whatever their significance before the dissolution however, in its aftermath many former monastics made a substantial contribution to the preservation of traditional religion within Yorkshire. Declining ordination rates from the early 1530s ensured that many former monks and friars were able to take livings as parish or chantry priests.¹⁸³ The former Malton canons Richard Dobson and William Ryngeewood, for example, served the cures of Brampton and Malton respectively for at least ten years following the dissolution, and Thomas Jackson, a former monk of Rievaulx became a chantry priest in Helmsley.¹⁸⁴ Similarly the Beverley Dominican friar John Atkinson served as vicar of St. John's in Beverley until at least 1575, and the York Dominican Thomas Bradforth was priest of Walkington from at least 1543 to 1559.¹⁸⁵ A more emphatic expression of devotion to both Catholicism and monasticism can be found amongst a group of former monks of Monk Bretton priory in South Yorkshire. After the dissolution of their monastery in 1538 the prior, sub-prior and two other monks continued to live together in a house in Worsborough, South Yorkshire, where they reassembled books from their monastic library, and continued to follow the Benedictine rule as far as possible.¹⁸⁶ Monks from Kirkstall also made efforts to preserve their library, and maintained links with one another which Cross has argued were more than the casual associations of men who lived in the same vicinity. In addition many former Yorkshire monastics left testamentary provisions for the removal of goods to their former religious houses, should monasticism be restored.¹⁸⁷ Many also bequeathed goods to each other, and used each other as witnesses and executors of their wills, suggesting that links between former monks remained strong even after the destruction of their entire way of life.¹⁸⁸ Cross has further argued that had Mary Tudor been able to secure former monastic lands in the north for the re-foundation of religious houses, many ex-monks and nuns would have eagerly returned to their former way of life.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸³ Robert Whiting, *Local Responses to the English Reformation* (Basingstoke, 1998), p. 23 has suggested that ordinations virtually ceased in the dioceses of Yorkshire, Chester, Durham and Lincoln during the Reformation years.

¹⁸⁴ Claire Cross, 'The Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Yorkshire Church in the Sixteenth Century,' in *Government, Religion and Society in Northern England 1000-1700*, ed. J.C Appleby and P Dalton (Stroud, 1997), pp. 166-7.

¹⁸⁵ Cross & Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns*, pp. 426, 432; this volume contains numerous other examples of former monks and friars who went on to serve a parish and chantry priests.

¹⁸⁶ Claire Cross, 'Community Solidarity among Yorkshire Religious after the Dissolution,' in *Monastic Studies: The Continuity of Tradition*, ed. Judith Loades (Bangor, 1990), p. 247.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid*, p. 248.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid*, p. 249-51.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid*, p. 248.

Conservatism, rather than reformed sympathies, was a hallmark of the majority of ex-religious in Yorkshire, and these men arguably provided one of the most crucial links between late medieval and counter-Reformation Catholicism. Robert Pursglove for example, the former prior of Guisborough priory, served both the Henrician and Edwardian reforming regimes, but was formally reconciled to Catholicism in 1555 and in 1559 lost all of his numerous offices for refusing to swear the oath of supremacy. Two years later Pursglove was reported as an obstinate papist and was confined to his estates in the parish of Lythe. Pursglove's staunch adherence to Catholicism and his conservative reputation in the 1550s and 1560s undoubtedly influenced the thriving Catholic communities that grew up in North Yorkshire during Elizabeth's reign.¹⁹⁰ The often open conservatism of men such as Pursglove ensured that traditional religion was not forgotten, and that when missionary priests began to arrive in Yorkshire from the late 1570s Catholic, or at least conservative, communities remained within which they were able to minister.

The dissolution of the monasteries in Yorkshire also provides an excellent example of the ways in which people were prepared to cooperate and collaborate with the regime. Whilst the dissolution was undoubtedly unpopular, it nevertheless resulted in widespread looting which cannot be read as animosity towards the monks.¹⁹¹ People reacted to an opportunity and acted as their neighbours did, but at the same time unwittingly gave their approval to the process of dissolution. During the reign of Elizabeth Michael Sherbrook, the rector of Wickersley, near Rotherham, recalled in his tract defending the monasteries his father's involvement in the plundering of Roche Abbey. He claimed that his father had thought well of the monks, but had spoiled and destroyed the abbey simply because others did and he felt he should also have a share of the profit.¹⁹² There may also have been a perception that the monastic sites were no longer sacred, and thus any inherent fears of destroying a hallowed site were removed. Equally there was clearly some desire for the preservation of goods which *were* still perceived as sacred. In Wensley parish church there remains a rood screen taken from Easby abbey and a wooden box which was supposedly a reliquary of St. Agatha, and

¹⁹⁰ For more on Pursglove see Dan O'Sullivan, *Robert Pursglove of Guisborough and his Hospital* (Great Ayton, 1990) pp 7-28, and Claire Cross, 'Pursglove, Robert (1503/4-1580)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22904>, accessed 30 Oct 2007].

¹⁹¹ Scarisbrick, *Reformation and the English People*, p. 70.

¹⁹² Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, p. 208.

the rood screen and abbot's stall from Jervaulx abbey have been preserved in Aysgarth church. Perhaps more surprisingly, Halifax parish church retains stalls thought to have come from Kirkstall abbey. Similarly many claims for monastic lands came from the descendents of founders who felt their honour to be at stake, and others from those who feared for the balance of power in their region. In early 1536 the Earl of Northumberland petitioned Cromwell that all the abbeys his ancestors founded in the north, as well as all those in Northumberland, not be granted until he had spoken to the king, presumably to advance his own suit for the sites and lands and ensure he retained his power in the north.¹⁹³

There is no evidence of predatory demands on monastic estates before the dissolution; the opportunity created the appetite, the supply the demand.¹⁹⁴ Evidence from the well-documented dissolution of Hailes abbey in Gloucestershire has revealed the wide variety of people profiting from the suppression. Servants, artisans, gentry and priests all plundered the abbey, but though evangelicals were an active force in the dissolution of Hailes, few of the plunderers would have considered themselves reformers. They were nevertheless complicit, and the whole community must have known about and benefited from the destruction.¹⁹⁵ However the dissolution was also used to pursue personal feuds, and in Cheshire the fact that his ancestral burial ground was sited at Norton priory did not prevent Sir Piers Dutton from exploiting local resistance to the suppression of the priory in order to create difficulties for his long standing enemy Sir William Brereton.¹⁹⁶ In the same way Gregory Conyers of Whitby used Francis Bigod's involvement in the Pilgrimage of Grace as leverage against him in their ongoing disputes.¹⁹⁷ The dissolution caused further divisions amongst those who saw themselves as Catholics. Some saw the monasteries as an integral part of Catholicism, others felt they could live without them, but most had no clear ideological objective and simply took advantage of the prospect of some small increase in wealth.¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Shagan has argued that their participation in the plunder is evidence that people had internalised the official reordering of the church and state, had accepted the profound spiritual consequences, and adopted new assumptions. In

¹⁹³ *LP*, X, 509.

¹⁹⁴ Scarisbrick, *Reformation and English People*, pp. 72-4.

¹⁹⁵ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, chapter 2, provides a detailed case study of the destruction of Hailes abbey.

¹⁹⁶ Thornton, *Cheshire and the Tudor State*, p. 234.

¹⁹⁷ For more on the disputes between Conyers and Bigod see Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 83-4.

¹⁹⁸ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, p. 189.

collaborating with the despoliations, people were consenting to the Reformation process.¹⁹⁹

Dissolution: The Chantries and Religious Guilds

A similar story of lasting popularity, followed by suppression and popular cooperation and collaboration in this can be found in the dissolution of the chantries and guilds during the Edwardian Reformation. Given that the earliest dissolution of monastic houses resulted in the Pilgrimage of Grace in Yorkshire, it is perhaps surprising that the loss of the chantries and guilds did not provoke more of a response in Yorkshire. These dissolutions, which arguably had a much greater impact upon the lives of the laity, did not provoke anything like the same response, and have not received the same consideration from historians. It is possible that royal retribution in the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace was still too fresh in people's memories for them to risk another large-scale rebellion against official policies, but chantry priests across England quietly accepted the Edwardian dissolutions even when they had opposed Henrician policies. There was less material loss, but this does not fully explain why no action was taken to support the chantries and guilds, particularly as the final repudiation of purgatory which necessarily accompanied this dissolution was the repudiation of one of the central aspects of traditional custom and devotion.²⁰⁰ In addition, the first half of the sixteenth century saw the establishment of fifty-nine new intercessory institutions within Yorkshire, a particularly large number when compared to thirteen in Lincolnshire and eight in Wiltshire, and nature of chantries and guilds ensured that all but the very poorest were able to contribute in some small way to their upkeep, even if it was just the bequest of a few pence for a lamp. The intercessory institutions dissolved in 1548 were a tangible part of the lives of most laymen.²⁰¹

In many respects however religious guilds had been doomed for some time. Though there is every indication that in many parts of Yorkshire, and indeed elsewhere, guilds were continuing to flourish on the eve of their dissolution, official policies towards the monasteries and chantries indicated that the guilds had limited time remaining to them. Guilds were not attacked on doctrinal grounds until 1547, but

¹⁹⁹ *ibid*, pp. 190, 193.

²⁰⁰ A. Kreider, *English Chantries: The Road to Dissolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979), pp. 1-2.

²⁰¹ *ibid*, p. 90; C.J. Kitching, 'The Chantries of the East Riding of Yorkshire at the Dissolution of 1548', *YAJ*, 44 (1972), p. 182.

earlier attacks on the cult of saints, lights before images, and the question of intercession for the dead removed their central focus and purpose. Whilst the denial of purgatory might have destroyed a major intellectual justification for guild membership, the gradual removal of its ritual forms was almost certainly even more destructive. Some guilds nevertheless demonstrated signs of revival as reform slowed in the later years of Henry VIII, and at least two new guilds were founded in Yorkshire after the accession of Henry VIII.²⁰² Religious guilds remained an integral part of popular religious activity, emphasising that regional engagement with the religious guilds was at odds with official policies towards them. In York the guild of Corpus Christi saw a higher number of new members in 1543 and 1544 than in any single year since 1534, and an inventory of guild property compiled in 1546 demonstrates that the guild continued to attract bequests and gifts from the laity.²⁰³ In rural parts of Dickering and Holderness guilds proliferated until at least the 1530s, aided by growing prosperity, and similar arguments can be made for the increasingly prosperous West Riding textile centres. Similarly the decline of religious guilds in towns such as Beverley and Scarborough can be attributed at least in part to their decline in prosperity, though it is also likely that the increased devotional activities of occupational guilds was partly responsible for the decline in religious organisations.²⁰⁴

Many guilds actively attempted to conceal their assets, and in some cases deny their existence, when the commissioners began to draw up certificates. The concealment of the guild of St. Anthony in York enabled the city's mayor and aldermen to take possession of the guildhall by 1551, which they subsequently leased to guilds without their own hall for meetings. In Ripon, the property of the Holy Cross guild was used to found a school, and the authorities in Richmond took over a number of guilds.²⁰⁵ Many Yorkshire guilds were significant landowners; others had connections with powerful local and national figures, and in urban areas guild activity was closely connected to the people and mechanisms of civic government.²⁰⁶ This undoubtedly contributed to the attempts to conceal both guilds and their wealth, in the

²⁰² Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power*, p. 241; New guilds were founded in Pocklington in 1514 and in Hull in 1523, *LP*, I, ii, 2964; *LP*, III, ii, 3146 (no. 9).

²⁰³ Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power*, p. 226, 231; REED, pp. 642-644.

²⁰⁴ Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power*, pp. 220, 248-9.

²⁰⁵ *ibid*, pp. 238-9.

²⁰⁶ *ibid*, pp. 244-5.

same way people attempted to keep the wealth of their monasteries and chantries within their communities.

Dickens has argued that chantries commanded little respect by the 1530s, and certainly the official abolition of purgatory in the 1543 King's Book meant that chantries, like guilds, essentially lost their *raison d'être*.²⁰⁷ Nevertheless, an estimate can be made that there were at least 350-400 chantries in Yorkshire at the time of the dissolution, suggesting that for many laymen and women the chantry continued to play an important role in their spiritual lives and afterlives.²⁰⁸ Few, if any, parishes would have been unaffected by the dissolutions of 1548, but the 1545 surveys of chantries, guilds, hospitals and colleges may have prepared people to a certain extent that these institutions would, sooner or later, go the way of the monasteries. Such feelings can only have been enhanced by a suggestion of the 1545 Parliament that lands bequeathed to support priests to pray for souls should be given over to support the cost of strengthening coastal fortifications, and an act regarding the union of all churches standing less than one mile apart or valued under £6 per year must have led many of those involved in the 1536 rebellions to believe that their fears and rumours were coming true.²⁰⁹ Furthermore the frequent siphoning of wealth away from the chantries prior to their closure would have eroded public confidence in purgatory and prayers for the dead as much as evangelical and government propaganda, and forced people to seek alternative avenues for investment and salvation.²¹⁰ It is probable that change occurred because people feared the government's greed rather than because they no longer desired intercessory services. As controversy surrounding prayers for the dead increased, people grew nervous about paying for them, fearing that their money would end up in the hands of the Crown.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ A.G Dickens, 'A Municipal Dissolution of Chantries at York, 1536,' *YAJ*, 36 (1947), p. 168; Kreider, *English Chantries*, pp. 94, 129.

²⁰⁸ This estimate has been drawn from the numbers of chantries recorded in the printed chantry certificates for the West and North Ridings, and from the lists drawn up by Christopher Kitching from other sources (in the absence of any extant chantry certificates) for the East Riding. The figure does not include the guilds, free chapels, memorial services, hospitals or colleges which are also listed in these records, or other chantries which had decayed before the dissolution, and does not take into account the numbers of institutions for which chantry certificates are no longer extant in the North and West Ridings. Kitching, 'The Chantries of the East Riding,' pp. 185-89; William Page, *The Certificates of the Commissioners Appointed to Survey the Chantries, Guilds, Hospitals, etc., in the County of York*, part I (SS, 91, 1894), part II (SS, 92, 1895).

²⁰⁹ *LP*, XX, ii, 850, 852.

²¹⁰ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, p. 237.

²¹¹ *ibid*, pp. 242-3.

Kitching has argued that the lack of unrest at the dissolution of the chantries was a result of the lack of contribution most cantarists made to parish life, but in fact chantry priests provided an important reserve of parochial support and pastoral work, and could be employed to write wills or provide emergency baptisms or last rites and also education for the parish youth.²¹² Occasionally, they were also involved in money lending, though there are no Yorkshire examples of this.²¹³ Perhaps unsurprisingly given the large number of chantries in Yorkshire, Kreider has argued that the county had more chantry-supported schools, hospitals and important chapels of ease than did any other English county.²¹⁴ Cantarists ran schools such as those at Beverley, Hull and Pocklington in the East Riding, though it is unlikely that many would have been able to provide more than a rudimentary education. Whilst they were generally found to be honest, chantry priests were rarely learned; the four cantarists in the church of St. John the Evangelist on Ousebridge in York appear provide a representative sample in this respect, as do those of Tadcaster, and a contrast to those of St. Mary's church in Beverley who were recorded as learned.²¹⁵ Guilds too were occasionally capable of supporting hospitals, *maison dieu* and schools; in York the guilds of Corpus Christi, St. Anthony and Holy Trinity Fossgate all supported hospitals, and the schools in Topcliffe were run by guilds.²¹⁶ The dissolution of the chantries and guilds therefore caused a much greater loss than simply the abolition of prayers and masses for the dead, the resultant loss of clerical personnel had a knock-on effect in terms of the pastoral provision which many founders of chantries had intended should be provided by their chapel in addition to prayers for their own souls.²¹⁷

Some chantries were suppressed before the Edwardian dissolution however, though invariably not for religious reasons. Dickens argued that the early dissolution of a small number of chantries at York helps to explain why the English Reformation became possible, but this move was almost certainly administrative and did not reflect

²¹² Kitching, 'The Chantries of the East Riding,' p. 183.

²¹³ Claire Cross, 'The Incomes of Provincial Urban Clergy 1520-1645,' in *Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800*, ed. R. O'Day and F. Heal (Leicester, 1981), pp. 74-5; C. Webb, *Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Michael, Spurriergate, York, 1518-1548*, (Borthwick Texts and Calendars, 20, York, 1997), p. 1.

²¹⁴ Kreider, *English Chantries*, p. 3.

²¹⁵ Kitching, 'The Chantries of the East Riding,' p. 182; Page, *Certificates*, part II, pp. xii-xiii, 374-5, 458-9, 538-9.

²¹⁶ Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power*, pp. 247.

²¹⁷ Christopher Kitching, 'Church and Chapelry in Sixteenth Century England,' *SCH*, 16 (1979), p. 281.

dissatisfaction with traditional religion.²¹⁸ Similar steps were taken in 1544 when the civic authorities in Richmond appropriated the lands and properties of six chantries, two chapels and ten obits for corporate use in an effort to preserve them from private seizure. The priests were given pensions from borough incomes to support them as they continued their intercessory duties, and it is likely that the seizures occurred with the collusion of the cantarists.²¹⁹ Elizabeth I later enquired into these appropriations and court action was brought against Richmond's burgesses in 1560, but the issue was dropped when the jury found in favour of the town.²²⁰ Similar successful attempts to hide chantries could be found elsewhere in England; in Lancaster for example the almshouse chantry survived until 1560, and numerous small endowments within Yorkshire were successfully kept hidden from the Edwardian commissioners and only uncovered during the Elizabethan investigations of concealed lands.²²¹ It seems certain, given the inclusion of an enquiry about the alienation of lands, property and goods in the 1546 injunctions issued to chantry visitors that the practice was widespread, and perhaps that in some cases the dissolutions were anticipated.²²²

Clear attempts were being made to preserve the benefits provided by chantries and their properties for the locality, but the actions of the town councils at York and Richmond may also be evidence of cautious responses to the events of the 1530s. The loss of the monasteries had a huge impact on many parts of Yorkshire, and these attempts to secure the future of local chantries may represent evidence of attempts to put something in place before the government was able to expropriate it. There is some evidence of disorder in towns such as Hull and Pontefract in the aftermath of the dissolution of the chantries. Late eighteenth-century historians of Hull have suggested that there was considerable unrest following the destruction of images in the parish church of Holy Trinity, and have also claimed that the dissolution of certain chantries resulted in a vigorous protest which led to the restoration of these institutions to their previous purpose.²²³ In Pontefract disturbances were centred on the loss of the clergy rather than the destruction of Catholicism. Kreider's research has revealed that at least

²¹⁸ Dickens, 'A Municipal Dissolution of Chantries,' p. 168; see chapter 4 below for more on the dissolution of chantries in York.

²¹⁹ Kreider, *English Chantries*, p. 158; Leslie P. Wenham, 'The Chantries, Guilds, Obits and Lights of Richmond, Yorkshire,' *YAJ*, 38 (1955), p. 97.

²²⁰ Wenham, 'Chantries, Guilds, Obits and Lights,' pp. 105-110.

²²¹ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, pp. 147-8; Kitching, 'The Chantries of the East Riding,' p. 179

²²² *LP*, XXI, i, 69.

²²³ A.G Dickens, 'Some Popular Reactions to the Edwardian Reformation in Yorkshire,' *YAJ*, 34 (1939), pp. 153-4.

one cantarist in Pontefract, and at least one in Halifax, were witnessing vociferously Protestant wills from 1545.²²⁴ Whilst this cannot be used to suggest that the cantarists themselves held reformed religious beliefs, it is evidence that the role of the chantry within certain contexts was beginning to decline in importance as increasing numbers of people rejected the idea of purgatory and thus the intercessory role of the chantry priest, and also emphasises the variety of other roles within parishes which were performed by chantry priests. The city of York, which had far more chantries than did Pontefract, might be expected to have felt the dissolution more keenly. However the large number of small parishes in York, coupled with a number of former monks and friars, meant that the city was never short of clergymen. In addition, the poverty of many of the livings meant that many York cantarists were pluralists and held several chantries simultaneously. Indeed Kreider has revealed that over half of all the pluralist cantarists in Yorkshire were serving in the city of York.²²⁵ Not all York cantarists suffered financially however. Thomas Wyrall, or Worrall, who spent his entire clerical career without a benefice, nevertheless had goods worth over £20 at his death as a result of his work as a stipendiary priest at St. Michael Spurriergate. Wyrall was also paid to manage the extensive property belonging to the parish, and to draw up the church accounts, suggesting that he would have been a familiar figure in the parish, with a significant role to play beyond reciting services for the dead.²²⁶

Like the dissolution of the monasteries, the suppression of the chantries presented opportunities for personal gain, and individual patrons as well as civic officials attempted to alienate chantry lands to themselves even before the dissolution was considered. Both chantries and guilds were targeted by those who wished to see their wealth remain within communities rather than be taken for government use.²²⁷ In 1534 William Percy seized the endowments of St. Mary Magdalene chantry in Scarborough, which his ancestors had founded 140 years previously, and similar seizures by patrons occurred in Halifax, Metham and Northallerton from 1536 to 1545.²²⁸ In the East Riding the heads of Sutton College, the hospital of St. Sepulchre near Preston in Holderness, and the hospitals of Killingwold Graves and Newton Garth

²²⁴ Kreider, *English Chantries*, p. 31.

²²⁵ *ibid*, pp. 33-4.

²²⁶ Cross, 'The Incomes of Provincial Urban Clergy,' pp. 74-5; Webb, *Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Michael, Spurriergate*, p. 1.

²²⁷ Dickens, 'Some Popular Reactions,' p. 155.

²²⁸ Kreider, *English Chantries*, pp. 155-7.

joined forces with the prebendaries of St. Michael and St. Andrew at Beverley in petitioning the Crown for licences to surrender their properties into the hands of Sir Michael Stanhope, a prominent local figure who was in Crown favour due to his position as Somerset's father-in-law.²²⁹ Clearly Stanhope was trusted not to alienate these lands and their benefits from the local communities. Familial and territorial interest certainly played a part in these actions, but it is certain that the dissolution of the monasteries had led to fears that the chantries would follow. Chantries and guilds remained important, but clearly some people were aware that their days were numbered and tried to make the best of the inevitable by retaining what they could for personal and communal use. The lack of opposition to the dissolutions may also be partly explained by the increased use of other, cheaper, forms of memorial such as the obit by the 1540s, which reduced the importance of the chantries. Crouch has argued that the lack of opposition to the loss of the guilds was not down to acceptance of new beliefs but to the gradual whittling away of the ritual basis of the guilds' public demonstrations, the abolition of their intercessory role together with the abolition of purgatory, and the evident futility of protest as demonstrated by the failure of the Pilgrimage of Grace.²³⁰ This combination ensured that by the time the guilds were attacked directly the capacity for resistance within the county had been destroyed, and the same could easily be argued for the chantries. Additionally, the context within which guilds and chantries operated had been destroyed so completely that attempts to resurrect them during Mary's reign largely failed.²³¹

Rebellion and Riot

The depth of northern piety, and the strength of the links between this and a regional culture which had strong religious elements and was much focussed upon the Passion of Christ, became abundantly clear in 1536 with the outbreak of the Pilgrimage of Grace. The centrality of the Passion in local religious culture is evident in the importance of the Corpus Christi plays at York and Wakefield, which provided an opportunity for the laity to identify with the crucifixion, and also in the number of surviving late medieval stained glass panels and alabaster tablets depicting images

²²⁹ Kitching, 'The Chantries of the East Riding,' p. 179.

²³⁰ Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power*, p. 250.

²³¹ *ibid.*, pp. 236, 242.

which represent the deposition of Christ's body.²³² The rebels' choice of the badge of the five wounds as their banner emphasised the continued importance of this devotion to the Passion. This religious imagery, and its mimicry of both pilgrimage and crusade with the rebels marching behind the cross, ensured that many believed they would receive the traditional crusade indulgence and forgiveness.²³³ Parishioners in Halifax removed the cross from their parish church to carry before them, as did the commons of Howdenshire in the East Riding.²³⁴ The strength of this piety and regional religious culture means it is not surprising that religious change was met with resistance.

The Pilgrimage of Grace was arguably the most serious rebellion to face any of the Tudor monarchs; certainly it was the largest popular uprising in England between the 1381 peasants' revolt and the civil war of the 1640s.²³⁵ Interpretations of the rebellion have changed over the years, and the large scale of the rebellion has caused numerous disputes about its causes. Religion has generally been regarded as the unifying issue, but the array of other social and economic grievances has ensured that in many respects it is difficult to see the Pilgrimage as a religious rebellion. Recently Ethan Shagan has shown how people used rebellion in their search for a legitimate voice with which to oppose the Henrician regime, but he has also suggested that it was an inability to agree on what constituted a rightly ordered society, even within the conservative majority, which caused the rebellion to collapse.²³⁶ The Pilgrimage was never simply a conflict between Catholic and Protestant, but was rather a fusion of religious values and a sense of communal property set against destructive spoliation. However its defence of the traditional means it has often been seen as a rebellion of 'Catholic' values against innovation.²³⁷ The Pilgrimage was a rebellion against change which was religious in the widest sense of the word, yet divisions were simultaneously emerging between conservatives, and whilst the rebels were opposed to the Henrician

²³² Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, pp. 109, 275, 289-92; such stained glass images are extant in York Minster, as well as the churches of St. Martin-le-Grand in Coney Street, Holy Trinity Goodramgate, and St. John in Micklegate in the city of York.

²³³ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, p. 93.

²³⁴ SP1/117, fol. 192v [LP XII, i, 784]; Shagan, *Popular Politics*, p. 93.

²³⁵ The best modern accounts of the Pilgrimage of Grace are Michael Bush, *The Pilgrimage of Grace – A study of the Rebel Armies of October 1536* (Manchester, 1996), and R. W Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Politics of the 1530s* (Oxford, 2001), both of which provided detailed studies of the progresses and causes of the rebellion across the north, as well as discussing previous Pilgrimage historiography.

²³⁶ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, chapter 3.

²³⁷ C.S.L. Davies, 'Popular Religion and the Pilgrimage of Grace,' in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. A. Fletcher and J. Stevenson (Cambridge, 1987), p. 80.

Reformation in all its guises, they were unable to agree what an acceptable religious settlement might look like.²³⁸

Three key issues emerge from the Pilgrimage of Grace in Yorkshire, which specifically expressed the religious concerns of the population in the 1530s. The dissolution of the monasteries, rumour and prophecy all reflect popular dissatisfaction with the policies of the Henrician regime and the attempt, or at least desire, to halt religious change. Though most of the monks involved in the rebellion were reluctant participants, and very few had actively opposed the royal supremacy, some, such as Roger Hartlepool of Jervaulx, went into exile after its collapse.²³⁹ Others, like George Lazenby, were executed. The rebels however were undoubtedly concerned with the material effects of the royal supremacy as well as the growing threat of heresy. The dissolution of the smaller monasteries sparked fears of wholesale dissolution, social and economic losses, and the spoliation of parish churches. In Richmondshire the dissolution was a primary concern, and many supporters were recruited from the lands of the dissolved houses of Easby and Coverham and the surrounding areas.²⁴⁰ Fears of the destruction of parish churches were also widespread, and many resented the reduction in the number of holy days and declining provision of intercessory prayers. When John Dakyn preached against the Pope in Richmond parish church in December 1536 he had to be saved from physical violence by parishioners who had been heavily involved in the rebellion and still sought a return to the old ways.²⁴¹ Even before the rebellion broke out there was opposition to the royal supremacy. In 1535 when the priest of Guisborough was reading out the articles of supremacy to his parishioners, he was interrupted by one John Atkinson who 'came violently and took the book furth of the priest's hands and pulled it in pieces.'²⁴² Though Richmondshire's concerns about the loss of Papal authority were not echoed elsewhere in Yorkshire, the rumour that only one parish church would be left standing every ten miles was more widely believed.²⁴³

²³⁸ Scarisbrick, *Reformation and the English People*, p. 82; Shagan, *Popular Politics*, p. 90.

²³⁹ TNA, E 36/119, fol. 23r [LP XII, i, 201] Shagan, *Popular Politics*, p. 125; both Jervaulx abbey and the grey friars at Beverley were threatened with burning if they did not cooperate with the rebels.

²⁴⁰ M.L Bush, 'The Richmondshire Uprising of October 1536 and the Pilgrimage of Grace,' *Northern History*, 28 (1993), p. 72.

²⁴¹ SP 1/117, fol. 206r [LP XII, i, 788]; R. Fieldhouse and B. Jennings, *A History of Richmond and Swaledale* (London, 1978), p. 84.

²⁴² LP VIII, 1024.

²⁴³ Bush, 'The Richmondshire Uprising,' p. 73; Haigh has argued that adherence to papal authority remained strong in parts of Lancashire; *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 101; LP, XII, i, 1011.

Rumour and prophecy abounded in the Pilgrimage.²⁴⁴ Religious changes had occurred which would have been inconceivable a few years earlier, and this led people to believe the often far-fetched rumours that the entire structure of the church faced imminent downfall. There was, after all, no reason to disbelieve them, and when they were propagated by parish clergy, the local ecclesiastical authority, they were granted further credibility. Undoubtedly the authority of rumours apparently spread by the Trinitarian friars at Knaresborough was a result of the friars' status in their society, and Wilfrid Holme was adamant that the clergy were responsible for the invention of the rumours.²⁴⁵ However the unofficial, independent, and uncontrolled nature of rumour allowed considerable freedom of thought and speech, and demonstrated that central politics mattered locally. Through rumour people presented their own spin on political events, expressed their hopes and fears without fear of reprisal and disseminated and interpreted new ideas.²⁴⁶ Rumour also stemmed from local concerns, which prompted parishioners to act in ways they may not otherwise have done in order to protect what they perceived was threatened. Fears for the destruction of parish churches came from anxiety about investments and a sense of pride in local churches, rather than from purely financial concerns.²⁴⁷

Rumour spread easily along normal lines of communication, often emerging gradually from a multitude of commonly circulating ideas, and could quickly become integrated into the normal discourse of communities.²⁴⁸ However during the rebellion free-flowing rumours were also deliberately spread by means of messengers, imagery and manuscript handbills, turning them into something more controlled and precise.²⁴⁹ Often several rumours could be rolled together into one. Philip Trotter, a prisoner in the Tower after the Lincolnshire rebellion reported that it was commonly bruited in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire that all the abbeys would be destroyed except Westminster, all the jewels belonging to churches would be removed and replaced with items made

²⁴⁴ Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace* has more on the role of Yorkshire rumours during the Pilgrimage, pp. 89-92.

²⁴⁵ *LP*, XI, 1047; William Mansell wrote to Sir Arthur Darcy that the friars spread rumours of taxes to be paid to the king for ploughs, animals and baptisms; Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, p. 92.

²⁴⁶ Ethan Shagan, 'Rumour and Popular Politics in the Reign of Henry VIII,' in *The Politics of the Excluded, c.1500-1850*, ed. Tim Harris (Basingstoke, 2001), pp. 32, 47-8, 58; Krista Kesselring, 'Deference and Dissent in Tudor England: Reflections on Sixteenth Century Protest,' *History Compass*, 3 (2005), p. 9.

²⁴⁷ Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power*, p. 234; *LP*, XII, i, 392, 1011.

²⁴⁸ Shagan, 'Rumour and Popular Politics,' p. 35.

²⁴⁹ *ibid*, pp. 35-6; See *LP*, XII, i, 808 for examples of similar rumours in Shropshire.

of tin and that parishes would be amalgamated and churches made redundant.²⁵⁰ Opponents of the rebellion also reported rumours. Wilfrid Holme's poem *The Fall and Evil Success of Rebellion* included references to the rumours current in Yorkshire in 1536, particularly those relating to taxation on certain foods, and on ploughs, baptisms, marriages and burials.²⁵¹ Even before rebellion broke out there is evidence that rumours of the spoliation of the church were spreading. In late 1535 William Thwaites, the parson of Londesborough, is reported to have fuelled existing rumours of tax increases by reporting that the extra money would go towards helping to bring about the king's 'false purpose,' and was also accused of saying that the realm of England was interdict and forsaken by all except the Lutherans, and of prophesying the destruction of the king by 'the most vile people in the world.'²⁵²

Although there was no open challenge to the established social structure of deference and obedience in 1536, the rebels were also motivated by prophecies of the overthrow of the regime, and thus the rebellion arguably does not really conform to the standard model of conservative, deferential protest.²⁵³ On the other hand, the demands of the rebels were overwhelmingly conservative, and the rebels themselves appear to fit James's theory that few resorted to violence or explicitly questioned the authority of the Crown.²⁵⁴ Rumours and prophecies of the death of the king proliferated in the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace, and in April 1538 one Mabel Brigge of Hollym in Holderness²⁵⁵ was executed after being accused of holding a magical fast to bring about the deaths of the king and the Duke of Norfolk.²⁵⁶ When a rumour that Henry VIII had died reached Yorkshire in June 1538, it was explicitly understood to be the result of Mabel Brigge's fast, and the case seems to further indicate that even after the acceptance of the royal pardon in late 1536, royal policy remained unpopular in Yorkshire.²⁵⁷ It is not inconceivable that Mabel Brigge was influenced by the cult

²⁵⁰ LP, XII, i, 70, no. 10; Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, p. 90.

²⁵¹ Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, p. 89.

²⁵² LP, IX, 791.

²⁵³ Kesselring, 'Deference and Dissent,' pp. 2, 8.

²⁵⁴ M. E James, *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1986), see especially the following essays; 'Obedience and Dissent in Henrician England: The Lincolnshire Rebellion, 1536,' pp. 188-269, and 'English Politics and the Concept of Honour,' pp. 308-415.

²⁵⁵ The records in the state papers list Brigge as being both late of Holmpton, and of Hollym; the two parishes are adjacent along the southeastern coastline of Holderness.

²⁵⁶ LP, XIII, i, 487.

²⁵⁷ Shagan, 'Rumour and Popular Politics,' pp. 41-2; Also in 1538 rumours arrived from Scotland concerning the imminent downfall of Henry VIII, and the threat of an invasion force led by James V but largely made up of English exiles. Given the numbers of rebels who fled to Scotland after the collapse of the rebellion, this was perhaps not an inconceivable suggestion. Shagan, *Popular Politics*, p. 126.

which sprung up around Elizabeth Barton, the nun of Kent who notoriously predicted the death of the king in 1534. Barton's influence over some of Henry's most intimate advisors ensured that before her anti-monarchical prophecies she was respected as a genuine prophetess in the medieval tradition. Her fame spread haphazardly but widely along channels of pilgrimages, the veneration of saints, and possibly the pulpit, so it is likely that knowledge of her had reached Yorkshire.²⁵⁸

The Yorkshire gentry took little action against the rebellion. Bush has argued that this was the result of a lack of knowledge of who was involved and the belief that they could not trust their tenants and servants not to go over to the rebels; indeed Lord Darcy wrote to Henry VIII that the gentry could trust none but their household.²⁵⁹ Few fled however, and many seem to have been fairly willing conscripts. Barnard Castle, which later played a key role in resisting the Northern Earls, yielded easily to the rebels in 1536 despite being well equipped to resist.²⁶⁰ Indeed many gentry families later associated with recusancy were involved in the Pilgrimage of Grace. The Nortons, Constables, Babthorpes, Vavasours, Methams and others all appear in records of the rebellion, and all were associated with Elizabethan recusancy. Similarly the earls of Northumberland and Westmorland, whose heirs led the 1569 rebellion against Elizabeth I, were both indirectly involved in the Pilgrimage.²⁶¹ Disaffected gentry used the rebellion to promote their own grievances, whilst protecting themselves from future retribution by claiming to have been forced into participating.²⁶²

Another important Yorkshire prophetess and witch, Mother Shipton of Knaresborough, does not appear to have concerned herself with events surrounding the Reformation. Her most famous prophecy was the downfall of Wolsey, but her words regarding the fall of certain York churches were interpreted by some in the seventeenth century to be a prediction of the dissolution of the monasteries, which was in fact prophesied by the Cheshire prophet Robert Nixon. For more on Nixon and Shipton see Tim Thornton, 'Reshaping the Local Future: The Development and uses of Provincial Political Prophecies, 1300-1900,' in B. Taithe and T. Thornton (eds), *Prophecy: The Power of Inspired Language in History, 1300-2000* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 51-67; Arnold Kellett, *Mother Shipton, Witch and Prophetess* (Maidstone, 2002); Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1991), chapter 13; Arnold Kellett, 'Shipton, Mother (*supp. fl.* 1530)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25420>, accessed 28 Nov 2007]; Stephen Wright, 'Nixon, Robert (*supp. fl.* late 15th-early 17th cent.)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20211>, accessed 28 Nov 2007].

²⁵⁸ For more on the Barton case see *LP*, VI, 1468; *LP*, VIII, 72; Shagan, *Popular Politics*, chapter 2.

²⁵⁹ *LP*, XI, 692.

²⁶⁰ Bush, 'The Richmondshire Uprising,' p. 80.

²⁶¹ R. B Smith, *Land and Politics in the England of Henry VIII – The West Riding of Yorkshire 1530-1546* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 171-173; Westmorland's son joined the rebels, and though there is no direct evidence of Northumberland's involvement, he was certainly not opposed to the rebellion, and his return from London within 2 weeks of its breaking out is perhaps significant.

²⁶² *ibid*, p. 84-5.

The involvement of a significant contingent of men from Allertonshire is likely to have been a response to the persistent attempts of the Henrician government to centralise control of the realm, and regain control over the numerous peculiar jurisdictions in the north.²⁶³ Allertonshire was under the jurisdiction of Durham, as indeed was Howdenshire, in which another particularly strong contingent of rebels was raised and led by Robert Aske. Increased royal control would have been unpopular amongst men used to a certain degree of autonomy, and it is likely that the Pilgrimage was seen as an opportunity for grievances to be aired and, potentially, an agreement for the return to power of the Palatinate. These links with Durham are also reflected in the use of the five wounds banners, an image particularly associated with Durham, and it is significant that Allertonshire and Howdenshire both later developed as significant centres of recusancy. Similarly in Richmondshire, which was under the immediate jurisdiction of the bishop of Chester, and which was also later a stronghold of traditional religion, much support was obtained from the estates of the Neville and Percy families, both of whom saw their powers reduced by the Henrician government, and both of whom were also involved in the rebellion.²⁶⁴

Small-scale revolts in the aftermath of the royal pardon of December 1536 were extensive, and mostly stemmed from a mixture of a deep distrust of the government and a belief that the rebels had been sold out by their leaders.²⁶⁵ Many rebels believed they had petitioned the crown rather than rebelled against the King, and some argued that they would have preferred to see their petitions granted than to have received the pardon. Others believed that the pardon trivialised what was a very real sense of grievance.²⁶⁶ Nevertheless, by May 1537 Darcy was able to report that the north was quiet and obedient.²⁶⁷ In the end, the Pilgrimage of Grace was the spark which led to the reorganisation of government in the north of England and the revival

²⁶³ The Allertonshire men were led by James Strangeways, Roger Lascelles and Roland Place.

²⁶⁴ Fieldhouse and Jennings, *Richmond and Swaledale*, p. 81.

²⁶⁵ Michael Bush and David Bownes, *The Defeat of the Pilgrimage of Grace* (Hull, 1999), pp. 25-6.

²⁶⁶ *LP*, XI, appendix 12; The rebels never blamed the monarch; the threat to the godly commonwealth was seen to come from the government, and in calling for a Parliament to be held at York the rebels openly rejected the king's claim that the break with Rome and the religious legislation of the 1530s had been passed with the consent of the whole realm. It was a source of considerable anger in the North that the Ten Articles of 1536 had not been put before the Northern Convocation. Bush, *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, pp. 55-6; G.W Bernard, 'The Tyranny of Henry VIII,' in *Authority and Consent in Tudor England: Essays Presented to C.S.L Davies* ed. G.W Bernard and S. Gunn (Aldershot, 2002), p. 118; Shagan, *Popular Politics*, pp. 98, 113-14; SP36/119, fol. 29r [*LP* XII, i, 201].

²⁶⁷ Bush and Bownes, *The Defeat of the Pilgrimage of Grace*, pp. 297; *LP*, XII, i, 1129.

of the authority of the Council of the North.²⁶⁸ Membership of the council was altered to include more men who had spheres of influence and authority in the north in their own right, and as the supreme authority in the north the Council was to be the only means of communication between the northern people and the government; all royal proclamations and orders reached the north through the council and the council acted as the supreme court of justice in the region.²⁶⁹

Ultimately the Pilgrimage of Grace deepened rather than healed divisions caused by the radical political and religious changes of the 1530s, but also clearly demonstrated the tenacity of northern regional culture and the extent to which it was linked with religious change. For many of the rebels the pervasiveness of religion in northern culture doubtless suggested that the loss of one would entail the loss of the other. This gave a deeper meaning to the fight against religious change, and the rebellion might be perceived as a defining moment in the nature of resistance. Both Catholics and reformers were separated along lines of those who were prepared to live in Henry VIII's vision of England, and those who could not equate that vision to their own. The Pilgrimage of Grace demonstrated a calculated balancing of religious and civil obligations, and reflected the relationship between outward obedience and inward beliefs upon which the English Reformation primarily acted. The royal supremacy imposed a paradigm of political loyalty upon people's religious sensibilities, and divisions subsequently grew up not over whether individual policies were laudable, but whether they were legal and legitimate.²⁷⁰ The Pilgrimage of Grace reveals much of the scale of differences in interpretation and understanding that people had of the events of the 1530s, and of the extent to which they were prepared to go to stand up for their rights and beliefs. Rebellion was clearly not the answer, but the rebels of 1536 believed they were offering a legitimate protest to the unjust laws imposed upon them as a result of low born advisors influencing their monarch and threatening the social order.

From mid-1537 Yorkshire largely remained quiet and obedient. On the whole the county accepted the subsequent religious changes imposed by Henry and Edward with little audible comment; the one significant exception to this, the Seamer rebellion

²⁶⁸ Rachel Reid, *The Kings Council in the North*, (London, 1921), p. 147.

²⁶⁹ *ibid*, pp. 154, 158-9, 285.

²⁷⁰ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, pp. 127-8.

of 1549, will be discussed below. The doctrine of obedience, which had begun to emerge with the royal supremacy and was widely promoted by Cromwell, had begun to take root by the late 1530s. Obedience, an essential part of a stable society, was deeply ingrained in early modern secular society. The dramatic religious and political changes in England altered the traditional nature of obedience, and arguably the widespread preaching and teaching of the doctrine of obedience ensured it was one of the most successful aspects of Henrician Reformation propaganda.²⁷¹ In the same way as Elizabeth was later more concerned with outward conformity than inward conviction, obedience and uniformity were the primary aim of Henry's Reformation.²⁷² Nevertheless, neither the doctrine of obedience, nor the threat of severe reprisals, nor the increased governmental control over the north prevented the emergence of a plot against the Henrician regime in Wakefield in 1541. There is comparatively little contemporary evidence for this plot, and Dickens has provided a useful account of its process and causes.²⁷³ Some of the plotters had also participated in the Pilgrimage of Grace, and Dickens argued that the plot was essentially a continuation of the grievances of 1536, heightened by subsequent punishments and the maintenance of unpopular government policies. The assertion of the Imperial Ambassador that the dissolution of the monasteries remained an important issue, and that the people were concerned about a reduction in the amount of coinage in circulation in the north, indicates that some continuity was certainly present as both grievances had been prominent in 1536.²⁷⁴ The ambitious plans of the Wakefield conspirators suggest that they were confident of a large following, but the treachery of one of their number ensured that the plot was discovered before it got off the ground.

The initial religious laws and injunctions of the Edwardian regime provoked little comment from the English people, but the introduction of the new English prayer book in 1549 led to the only real open resistance to the Edwardian regime. Admittedly the Prayer Book was not the cause of all the rebellions that occurred across England in 1549, but it was certainly significant in some. The so called Prayer Book rebellion in the south west and Robert Kett's socio-economic rebellion in East Anglia have been

²⁷¹ For more on the doctrine of obedience during Henry's reign see Richard Rex, 'The Crisis of Obedience: God's Word and Henry's Reformation,' *HJ*, 39:4 (1996), pp. 863-894.

²⁷² *ibid*, p. 894; Marjo Kaartinen, *Religious Life and English Culture in the Reformation* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 27.

²⁷³ A.G Dickens, 'Sedition and Conspiracy in Yorkshire during the later years of Henry VIII,' *YAJ*, 34 (1939).

²⁷⁴ *ibid*, p. 391.

extensively studied by historians, but until recently far less attention was given to other disturbances, despite their obvious significance for historians studying reactions to the Edwardian regime.²⁷⁵ It is possible that the various rebel leaders of 1549 ultimately intended to link their movements, but there is little firm evidence of this and traditionally historians have argued that the rebellions were simultaneous yet disparate movements.²⁷⁶ Although the true threat in each of the rebellions of 1549 was local and regional, the simultaneous occurrence of unrest in so many places created a cumulative and serious threat to the national government, and Amanda Jones has suggested that although there is no conclusive evidence of links between the different risings, there is sufficient to warrant further investigation.²⁷⁷ Given their geographical isolation from the other rebellions, it is surely significant that the rebels at Seamer were aware of occurrences elsewhere in England, and there is a clear reference in John Foxe's account of the rebellion to the intention of the Seamer rebels to join up with those elsewhere in order to see the fulfilment of a prophecy.²⁷⁸

The rebellion in Seamer, near Scarborough, though relatively small in scale, was fleetingly serious. Traditional historiography has generally regarded it as an isolated outbreak of disorder in the north, but when contextualised by the experiences of other nearby counties the Seamer rising does not appear to have been quite so much of an anomaly.²⁷⁹ The Seamer rebels shared the religious concerns of the south west, but also desired that other issues be addressed, and were distinguished somewhat by their brutal murder of four men.²⁸⁰ In addition prophecy, which had been so prominent in the Pilgrimage of Grace, also played an important role. The Seamer rebels addressed

²⁷⁵ The best recent work on the 1549 rebellions is Amanda Jones's doctoral thesis, "Commotion Time" The English Risings of 1549,' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Warwick, 2003); however other useful accounts of the rebellions in East Anglia and the South West are Stephen K. Land, *Kett's Rebellion: The Norfolk Rising of 1549* (Ipswich, 1977), D. MacCulloch, 'Kett's Rebellion in Context,' *Past and Present*, 84 (1979), Joyce Youngs, 'The South-western Rebellion of 1549,' *Southern History*, 1 (1979), B.L Beer, B.L, *Rebellion and Riot: Popular Disorder In England During the Reign of Edward VI* (Kent, USA, 1982), and Julian Cornwall, *Revolt of the Peasantry in 1549* (London, 1977).

²⁷⁶ Cornwall, *Revolt of the Peasantry*, pp. 1, 3; W.K Jordan, *Edward VI: The Young King* (London, 1968), p. 442; Land, *Kett's Rebellion*, pp. 25, 61 also argues that although the 1549 risings were connected by timing and shared causes, there were no other links and each rising occurred spontaneously, concerned only with local affairs.

²⁷⁷ Cornwall, *Revolt of the Peasantry*, pp. 6, 144, 149; MacCulloch, 'Kett's Rebellion in Context,' p. 45; Jones, "Commotion Time," pp. 294-5, 321.

²⁷⁸ http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/main/9_1570_1500.jsp [accessed 08/08/07].

²⁷⁹ Jones, "Commotion Time," pp. 290ff.

²⁸⁰ Beer, *Rebellion and Riot*, p. 159; Jones, "Commotion Time," pp. 298-9; Popular violence was minimal during the 1549 rebellions, but the murder of Matthew White, a Kent man who served as a chantry commissioner in Yorkshire, together with his wife, a servant of the commissioner Walter Mildmay and the former lord mayor of York, Richard Savage, distinguished the Seamer rebels in this respect.

themselves to the poor and to those opposed to the new prayer book, but though the rebellion has been characterised as straightforwardly religious, Jones has argued that its motives are in fact far from clear.²⁸¹ Defence of conservative religion appears to have been prominent, and resentment at the dissolution of a large number of chantries in the area may also have been an issue.²⁸² John Foxe claimed that 'Fyrst & principally their traiterous hartes [were] grudging at the kinges most godly procedinges, in aduancing and reforming the true honor of God, and his religion.'²⁸³ Nevertheless, it is likely that secular concerns were also present, for Somerset alleged that the Yorkshire rebels had attempted to pull down enclosures, and it is likely that poverty and oppression were also important sparks.²⁸⁴ Foxe additionally suggested that the radical anti-aristocratic prophecy that rebellions begun at the south and north seas would sweep away King, nobility and gentry was significant, and this reflects the prominence of complaints against the King's evil counsellors during the Pilgrimage of Grace. Whilst it is likely that Foxe, as an undoubtedly hostile source, exaggerated the importance of this to support his own arguments about the destructive nature of false prophecies, it is nonetheless plausible that the Yorkshire rebels believed the rebellion in the south west was a partial fulfilment of the prophecy, and that they themselves would fulfil the northern aspect, and thus bring about a new political order.²⁸⁵

Though support was expected from those who wished to defend traditional religion as well as those simply tempted by spoil, unlike in the rebellions of 1536 and 1541 there is no evidence of clerical involvement. Nor is there any indication that the rebels succeeded in restoring the Mass, despite their justification for the rising as a crusade against the Edwardian Reformation.²⁸⁶ It is however possible that the Mass remained readily available, for the first Edwardian prayer book was only introduced a few weeks before the rebellion and it is unclear how widely or quickly it was used. The large number of former monastics and cantarists serving cures in the area doubtless delayed the replacement of traditional services, aided by the ambiguity of many aspects of the new prayer book. The rebels were also helped by the lack of gentry in

²⁸¹ Jones, "Commotion Time," p. 295.

²⁸² Dickens, 'Some Popular Reactions,' p. 160; The murder of White strengthens the suggestion that the suppression of the chantries was widely resented in the Seamer area.

²⁸³ http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/main/9_1570_1500.jsp [accessed 08/08/07].

²⁸⁴ Jones, "Commotion Time," p. 296.

²⁸⁵ *ibid*; http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/main/9_1570_1500.jsp [accessed 08/08/07]; Kesselring, 'Deference and Dissent,' p. 10.

²⁸⁶ Jones, "Commotion Time," p. 301.

the Seamer area. Whilst there was no power vacuum such as that created in the south west by the fall of the Courtney family and bitter religious divisions, the absence of resident local gentry allowed the rebels a certain freedom from surveillance as they plotted their rising, and gave them more time in which to act before forces could be raised against them.²⁸⁷ Ultimately the Yorkshire gentry effectively suppressed the Seamer rebellion, but their absence amongst the rebel ranks provides a sharp contrast to previous Yorkshire rebellions; undoubtedly previous reprisals played a role, as did the presence of the Council of the North at York. The harsh repression of the Seamer rebellion indicates the seriousness with which it was regarded, and arguably that the local gentry contained the rising without government assistance is more indicative of their fortuitous circumstances in comparison with the gentry elsewhere in 1549 than with a lack of severity of the rebellion.²⁸⁸

It is perhaps surprising given the general conservatism of most parts of the county that the Seamer rebellion never spread beyond a small section of North and East Yorkshire. The rebellion lasted several weeks before it was crushed, and estimates of the number of rebels have ranged from Foxe's 3,000 to the 10,000 of Archbishop Holgate's *Apology*.²⁸⁹ Holgate's role in the suppression of the rebellion gave him good reason to exaggerate, particularly given the circumstances in which his *Apology* was written, but the accuracy of his facts in other respects might be used to give credence to his numerical estimate. In all likelihood the number was probably somewhere between the two estimates, though how many were willing participants and how many were coerced into joining remains a matter for speculation. The fear of retribution was surely significant, but by 1549 the power of the north to react had in any case been dramatically curtailed. The Council of the North was established as a focal point of regional authority and order, and the ruling families of the north had been converted, by both fear and self-interest, into crown accomplices. The frequent repetition of homilies such as the *Exhortacion to Obedience* further emphasised the authority of the monarch, though there is no way of knowing how widely they were used. Nevertheless, the events at Seamer suggest that though discontent in the north remained widespread in 1549, disorder failed to set the region alight as it had in 1536. The defeat in 1536, particularly after some significant early victories for the rebels, may have led to

²⁸⁷ Jordan, *Edward VI: The Young King*, p. 441; Jennifer Loach, *Edward VI* (Yale, 1999), pp. 74-5.

²⁸⁸ Jones, "Commotion Time," pp. 299-300.

²⁸⁹ Dickens, 'Some Popular Reactions,' p. 166 (n);

http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/main/9_1570_1500.jsp [accessed 08/08/07].

recognition that rebellion could not halt the pace of religious change.²⁹⁰ Subsequent peace in the north, at least until 1569, was perhaps a long-term effect of the Seamer rising. Though it affected only one region, it was widely acknowledged and the news from other counties would doubtless have reinforced the idea that rebellion was essentially fruitless. By 1553 any Yorkshire resistance to the Edwardian regime was very much underground; loyalty, conformity and collaboration predominated as it had throughout the Henrician Reformation and there was no overt and active opposition, however unpopular the religious policies of the regime may have been.

Conclusion: An Effective Reformation?

The impact of the early Reformation in Yorkshire was more physical than spiritual, yet it undoubtedly planted new ideas and caused people to question existing ones. The loss of the monasteries and chantries, of much traditional ritual and ceremony, and the overturning of all established ideas were undoubtedly significant, and the unpopularity of change on such a vast scale is visible in Yorkshire's involvement in rebellions against government policy. Nevertheless, rebellion played only a small part in the responses of the Yorkshire people to the early Reformation. The loss of Henrician and Edwardian ecclesiastical records for the north makes reaching any firm conclusions fraught with difficulty, yet the fluidity of religious boundaries and the lack of time for new theological ideas and liturgical practices to become ingrained might suggest that there would in any case have been little to find. The overwhelming conservatism of the majority of the Yorkshire clergy, and the slow, piecemeal nature of early reform would indicate that change was occurring so gradually that many people barely noticed it. Dramatic change was certainly unpopular, but slower implementation and the retention of some elements of the past meant people adapted; what had been new gradually became normal and was integrated into regional cultures, and religious change caused many to act in ways they would never previously have considered. There is no way of telling how widely the Yorkshire clergy used new forms of service, and though surviving churchwardens' accounts indicate reasonably swift material compliance, there are so few extant that they cannot be deemed truly representative. Furthermore, the speed with which Catholic services were revived after Mary's accession suggests that in many places they had never been fully replaced by

²⁹⁰ Jones, "Commotion Time," p. 303.

Protestant forms of worship. The roles of compromise, conformity and collaboration cannot be underestimated. Subtle changes in belief patterns and religious behaviour could alter political dynamics within a region and lead to changing relationships between the people and the sacred, which are perhaps most dramatically illustrated by the plunder of the monasteries and reactions to the loss of intercessory institutions.²⁹¹ Many would have preferred not to risk their lives for what must, particularly after the collapse of the Pilgrimage of Grace, have often appeared to be a lost cause. Others did not believe they had strayed from traditional religion despite the implementation of reform.²⁹² Again, the plunder of the monasteries, and the sales and concealment of parish church goods usefully illustrate the alteration of popular behaviour towards the church, as well as the difficulties in interpreting this. Plunder did not necessarily indicate a dislike of the monasteries, and concealment of images could indicate both resistance and collaboration. Shagan has argued that many Edwardian contemporaries would have preferred an influx of foreign missionaries or soldiers to the underground survival of the Mass, and doubtless the same was true of the many Marians who hoped the Catholic restoration spelt the end of the aberration of reform in England.²⁹³ Whatever the extent of alterations in their personal beliefs, there is no doubt that by 1553 people had hugely altered perceptions of the church as an institution and of their relationship to it. Regional culture had certainly changed, even if religious beliefs had not, and Yorkshire was not as uniformly conservative and traditional as has often been assumed.

²⁹¹ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, p. 7.

²⁹² Shagan, 'Confronting Compromise,' p. 65.

²⁹³ *ibid*, p. 66.

Chapter 2 – The Marian Reaction?

‘...tholle comonalltie in all places in the northe partes grettlie reioiced, makyngre grett fyers, drynkinge wyne and ayle, prayssing God...’¹ So stated Robert Parkyn, the educated and conservative priest of Adwick-le-Street in South Yorkshire, when Mary Tudor came to the throne. His view contrasts sharply with the subsequent judgement of A.G Dickens, to whose work modern historians owe much of their knowledge of Parkyn and his writings. This chapter will revisit both the archival material and secondary scholarship in order to provide a reassessment of the reception of the Marian restoration of Catholicism in Yorkshire. This now seems necessary given the recent revival of interest in Mary’s reign and the many challenges to traditional debates which have emerged from this.² Issues such as the Spanish involvement, the Council of Trent, the role of synods, the burnings and Protestant responses have all been reconsidered, as has the central role of the Mass in Marian theology. However it is Ethan Shagan’s work on issues of consent and cooperation, the problem of authority and the fluidity of relationships between Catholic and Protestant that has provided the justification for further study on Marian Yorkshire.³ I will demonstrate here that despite the conservative reputation of the county, Yorkshire’s reaction to the Marian restoration was far from straightforward or uniform. Lines of division were fluid, distorted, and easy to cross, and the extent to which people utilised change becomes starkly evident. Revisiting the archival material, and interpreting it in the light of recent historiographical developments in the Marian period, will reveal a distinct pattern of consent, cooperation and targeted opposition in Marian Yorkshire, which will provide a valuable addition to any consideration of popular reactions to the Marian restoration of Catholicism. In doing so it will also reiterate that regional studies continue to have much to add to current debates.

According to traditional historiography, Mary’s primary aim for her reign was to restore Roman Catholicism in England, which meant restoring England to the spiritual jurisdiction of the papacy. Penry Williams claimed that Mary’s entire reign

¹ A.G Dickens, ‘Robert Parkyn’s Narrative of the Reformation,’ *EHR*, 62 (1947), p. 78.

² The most recent work on Mary’s reign can be found in Eamon Duffy and David Loades (eds.) *The Church of Mary Tudor* (Aldershot, 2006).

³ Ethan Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, (Cambridge, 2003), Ethan Shagan, ‘Confronting Compromise,’ in E Shagan (ed.) *Catholics and the ‘Protestant Nation: Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2005).

must be assessed primarily in the light of that policy. However Elizabeth Russell believed religion was neither Mary's first nor principal priority, and others have argued that in order to achieve her political aims Mary interfered in ecclesiastical affairs as readily as Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.⁴ Such contradictory opinions appear throughout the historiography of Marian England, and despite a shift towards a more sympathetic portrayal they persist in modern accounts. It is easy to see the Marian regime as a failure, but when measured against the reign of Edward, or the early years of Elizabeth, Mary's reign appears much less ineffectual than it has often been portrayed.⁵ Mary swiftly took steps to repeal Edwardian legislation, restoring the religious position of the later Henrician years. Over the course of her reign a full re-implementation of Catholicism was attempted, including some of the new ideas emerging from the ongoing Council of Trent.⁶ Traditional scholarship has maintained that Mary's loyalty to the Pope, together with her marriage to Philip II of Spain, meant that Catholicism was presented to her subjects as an alien, foreign form of religion, which the xenophobic English found particularly fearsome and unattractive.⁷ However recent studies have suggested that Mary was less concerned with papal orthodoxy than with the Mass and that the reformed Catholic faith she attempted to impose had roots deep in the Henrician religious policy and Humanism of her youth.⁸ Too much had changed for religion to be any longer based on tradition; values and expectations had changed as the populace adopted certain aspects of reform whilst also retaining elements of traditional religion. Much that was destroyed during the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations was never restored, and perhaps never would have been. The Mass however regained a place of central importance, and both conservatives and reformers held loyalty to the Mass to be the most important single indicator of Catholic allegiance.⁹ In Marian Catholicism the Mass served as a focus for popular piety, a powerful appeal to antiquity and a vehicle for religious and political reform. Links

⁴ Penry Williams, *The Later Tudors: England 1547-1603* (Oxford, 1998), p. 113; Elizabeth Russell, 'Mary Tudor and Mr Jorkins,' *BHHR*, 63 (1990), pp. 266-7, 269; David Loades, 'The Enforcement of Reaction, 1553-1558,' *JEH*, 16 (1965), pp. 54, 59; Lucy Wooding, 'The Marian Restoration and the Mass,' in *The Church of Mary Tudor*, ed. Duffy and Loades, p. 236; Jennifer Loach, *Parliament and the Crown in the Reign of Mary Tudor* (Oxford, 1986).

⁵ Duffy and Loades, *The Church of Mary Tudor*, p. xiii.

⁶ The final decrees of the Council of Trent were ratified in 1563.

⁷ Claire Cross, *Church and People: England 1450-1660*, 2nd Edition (Oxford, 1999), p. 106.

⁸ David Loades, 'The Marian Episcopate,' in Duffy and Loades, *The Church of Mary Tudor*, p. 50; David Loades, 'The English Church in the Reign of Mary,' pp. 33-4, 41; Lucy Wooding, 'The Marian Restoration and the Language of Catholic Reform,' p. 53, both in *Reforming Catholicism in the England of Mary Tudor: The Achievement of Friar Bartholomé Carranza*, ed. John Edwards and Ronald Truman (Aldershot, 2005).

⁹ Wooding, 'The Marian Restoration and the Mass,' pp. 228, 251-2.

with the past, particularly with the reign of Henry VIII, sharpened the appeal of the restoration and lessened the threat of the Protestant aberration.¹⁰

Mary's reign has often been written off as a failure. For Elton Mary was 'devoid of political skill, unable to compromise, set only on the wholesale reversal of a generation's history and persistently attached to the papal church and religion in a way which made her exceptional even amongst those who had watched the Reformation with misgivings and reluctance.'¹¹ Pogson argued that her ecclesiastical policy was negative and lacked direction, and Dickens believed that the Marian regime achieved little beyond 'arid legalism.'¹² However Alison Bartholomew's work on the literature of the Marian regime has suggested that the reign did make considerable steps towards spiritual regeneration.¹³ Mary and Cardinal Pole have been criticised for being out of touch with English political and religious affairs, for their apparent failure to discover the Counter-Reformation, and for refusing to accept assistance from the Jesuits. In fact Duffy has argued that Jesuit assistance was not permanently ruled out, and the absence of Jesuits may have been a wise policy, for the presence of alien religious evangelists at a time when Mary had made an unpopular Spanish marriage is likely to have caused more problems than it solved.¹⁴ Recent research has demonstrated that Mary and Pole were keen advocates of preaching, education and evangelism, and in fact anticipated the most forward looking of the Tridentine decrees in their emphasis on clerical education and the pastoral duties of the episcopacy.¹⁵ Duffy and Loades have reminded us that it is a mistake to assume that England was untouched by the theology and intellectual priorities of the Counter Reformation, and Duffy has emphasised how closely the religious priorities of Mary's reign paralleled much that is now thought to be characteristic of the Council of Trent. He further argues that Mary and Pole were not trying to return to the Catholicism of the 1520s; rather they promoted a version of traditional Catholicism that included aspects of Henrician and Edwardian reform whilst emphasising the positive value of visual ceremony and sacrament, elements

¹⁰ *ibid*, pp. 228, 231-2.

¹¹ G.R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation: England 1509-1558* (London, 1977), p. 376.

¹² Rex Pogson, 'Reginald Pole and the Priorities of Government in Mary Tudor's Church,' *HJ*, 18 (1975), p.3; A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 2nd Edition (London, 1989), pp. 308-9.

¹³ Alison Bartholomew, 'Lay Piety in the Reign of Mary Tudor,' (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Manchester, 1979), p. 92.

¹⁴ Eamon Duffy, 'Cardinal Pole Preaching: St. Andrew's Day, 1557,' in *The Church of Mary Tudor* ed. Duffy and Loades, pp. 176-7.

¹⁵ J. Loach and R. Tittler (eds.), *The Mid-Tudor Polity c.1540-1560* (London, 1980), p. 7; Duffy, 'Cardinal Pole Preaching,' pp. 178, 181-2, 184-6.

with which the people could identify.¹⁶ Early evidence that Mary valued the use of preaching can be found in directions to her council in 1554, when she willed that good preaching ‘... may supplie and over come the evell preachinge in tyme past...’ and lamented the ‘...want of good preachers, and such as should ... overcom the evell dilligence of the abused preachers in the tyme of the scysme...’.¹⁷ In this respect Mary was no different to Edward or Elizabeth; all of Henry VIII’s children recognised the value of evangelical preachers in the nationwide dissemination of their respective religious settlements, and all faced chronic shortages of men sufficiently educated and qualified to fulfil the role satisfactorily.

The virtually unanimous refusal of the Marian episcopate to subscribe to the Elizabethan settlement in 1559 indicates that morale had returned to the English Catholic church, at least amongst its upper echelons, and it is generally agreed amongst modern scholars that England was not a Protestant nation in 1553.¹⁸ Nor was it entirely Catholic however, at least not in the medieval sense. Reformed religion had made significant headway amongst certain groups, but its impact was scattered and patchy, and its supporters offered little overt opposition to the Marian restoration of Catholicism. Furthermore the apparent fluidity of dividing lines, the confusion created by rapid change, and the inherent loyalty of the majority to the state ensured that most conformed. For most people the ‘Protestant Aberration’ was over. Nevertheless, some no doubt perceived that hope remained for the ultimate success of Protestant reform as long as Mary remained childless.¹⁹ Furthermore Andrew Pettegree has maintained that Protestantism was more deep-rooted by the end of Mary’s reign than it had been on the accession of Edward. He views it as a more diverse, and more important, movement than its small numbers might imply.²⁰ Pettegree argued that the survival of reformed religion during Mary’s reign owed at least as much, if not more, to Nicodemites as to exiles, martyrs and conformists, even suggesting that the Elizabethan settlement was in fact a Nicodemite reformation.²¹ For many radical evangelicals martyrdom was seen as the obvious choice over recantation. For the Nicodemites however, as for the Lollards

¹⁶ Duffy and Loades, *The Church of Mary Tudor*, p. xx; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (London, 1992), pp. 525-6, 531.

¹⁷ SP 14/190, fols 133r-v.

¹⁸ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603*, 2nd Edition (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 22.

¹⁹ English Catholics retained a similar hope as long as Elizabeth I remained childless and the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots remained her unofficial heir apparent.

²⁰ A. Pettegree, *Marian Protestantism: Six Studies*, (Aldershot, 1996), pp. vii, 3.

²¹ *ibid*, pp. 89, 106.

of the late Middle Ages, recantation held no shame, and in fact had been common amongst Henrician religious reformers.²² It has also been argued that underground Protestant conventicles were widespread during Mary's reign. Although there is no firm evidence of any such groups in Yorkshire, it will be seen in chapter five that there are some suggestions of such gatherings in Marian Hull. Moreover, in Wakefield several men gathered in the house of the innkeeper William Casson whilst High Mass was being celebrated on the Feast of the Assumption in 1557.²³ It might be speculated that these men were holding an alternative service form, and were emphasising their dissent by doing so on a Catholic feast day, although they did join the service in their parish church part way through. That they had all missed the central celebration of Mass on a feast day is significant; it suggests that they were opposed to this central element of Catholicism, if perhaps not sufficiently separatist to be holding conventicles.

Reactions to the Marian restoration of Catholicism in Yorkshire were wide-ranging. The evidence suggests that in some parishes rejoicing and the spontaneous local restoration of Catholic services did occur, and many parts of Yorkshire remained strongholds of traditional religion into the seventeenth century. However Mary's attempts to restore Catholicism were not universally welcomed. At first glance, and particularly in comparison with southern England, resistance to the Marian restoration appears slight in Yorkshire. As so often in this period, loyalty to the Tudor dynasty appears to have superseded loyalty to the church, but this does not mean that people were satisfied. It is notable that the majority of the cases of resistance originated in towns, which reflects both the importance of trading links in the spread of reformed religion, and also the concerns of the authorities with the threat of urban dissent. In addition, there was greater surveillance of behaviour in the towns, meaning illegal activities, whether religious or secular, were more likely to have been detected. It was harder to hide in towns, but perhaps also easier to spread discontent. The close proximity of authorities and the communities meant friction was more likely to persist in an urban environment, particularly if the authorities were seen to be collaborating with an unpopular regime, or indeed resisting a popular one.

²² *ibid*, p. 97.

²³ Chanc.AB.8, fols 193v-194r.

In the coastal town of Scarborough, the landing point for Thomas Stafford's failed 1556 invasion of England, there is evidence of unrest from 1554 when Thomas Miles faced the chancery court accused of averting his face at the Elevation of the Host during Mass. When questioned Miles replied 'that his maker was in heven and not there for that could do no more for hym and he could do for yt', a response which indicates sympathy with the reformed religion of the previous reign, and some sort of belief in the doctrine of justification by faith.²⁴ In the same year William Newton, vicar of Scarborough and rector of Burythorpe, was accused of being slow to hear his parishioners' confessions during Lent, and of celebrating Mass with unconsecrated bread at New Year. When his parishioners questioned why he had not hung up the sacrament in Scarborough parish church at Easter as it was in York Minster, he responded that 'yf they wold make the gallowes he wold hange upp the thefe.' Newton was further accused of saying that one Thomas Hutton 'was of a contrary religion unto hym' and refusing to minister the sacrament to him at Easter.²⁵ In Burythorpe the parishioner William Pekket was accused of taking the chalice from the church and keeping it for three weeks with the intent to hinder the saying of mass and divine service.²⁶ All these cases suggest opposition to the central Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. This was an issue on which the Marian authorities focussed in their campaign against heresy, and appear to have used as a benchmark for the identification of dissenters. Miles's aversion of his face at the elevation and Newton's use of unconsecrated bread and refusal to raise the sacrament at Easter clearly suggest that both harboured doubts about the Catholic Eucharist. Although the case against Newton concentrated more on his failure to adhere to correct forms of ritual than his theological orthodoxy, his omission of certain aspects of ritual had important theological implications. Newton's influence clearly also reached beyond Scarborough, for Pekket's removal of the chalice with the deliberate intent to hinder Catholic services demonstrates a similar opposition to the central rituals and theology of Catholicism. Scarborough was evidently religiously divided, and sufficient doubts about transubstantiation had been raised in the town for conflict to arise. This conflict may have encouraged Thomas Stafford to choose Scarborough as the landing point for

²⁴ Chanc.AB.6, f. 21v-22r.

²⁵ Chanc.AB.6, f. 24v; this case was quite protracted, and entries relating to it can be seen throughout Chanc.AB.6, and Chanc.AB.7.

²⁶ CP.G.3490; this cause gives the plaintiff as Edmund Newton, rector of Burythorpe, and is unfortunately undated, though it cannot have been made before January 1554/5. It is likely that the rector in question was in fact the William Newton known to have served both there and Scarborough.

his invasion attempt, perhaps believing that support from dissenters would be forthcoming for his invasion.

Stafford, a nephew to Cardinal Pole and descendant of the Dukes of Buckingham, had been briefly imprisoned in the Fleet for his involvement in Wyatt's rebellion in 1554, and later fled to France where he began intriguing with other exiles. Although apparently irresponsible and incompetent, Mary's advisors nonetheless feared his potential to cause trouble with the French, and a spy was placed in his household who passed on information about Stafford's plans to invade England. Stafford sailed from Dieppe on Easter Sunday, 18 April 1556, with two ships full of French and English men. He seized the poorly protected Scarborough Castle a week later, where he declared himself Lord Protector of the realm, denounced the queen and her Spanish marriage and promised a return to the time of Henry VIII. However despite the evident presence of some sympathisers of reform in the town Stafford failed to attract any significant local support, and three days after his seizure of Scarborough he was captured by the Earl of Westmoreland. He was tried, condemned, and executed at Tyburn in May 1557.

What Stafford hoped to achieve from this venture is as unclear as the identity of his financial backers, or where he found the resources for his expedition. Certainly he could have chosen a landing point with greater incidence of reform than Scarborough, and a place where his family had greater influence. Whilst in exile in France he used his royal blood (he was descended from the house of York) to proclaim himself the next heir to the English crown and adopt the royal coat of arms, and it is possible that the French government financed Stafford hoping to use a pretender to distract and restrain the English government. However given Henri II's fears of an Anglo-Spanish alliance against France this seems unlikely. Stafford himself had little recent knowledge of England, of warfare and rebellion, or of how to raise popular support. Michael Hicks has suggested that Stafford's rebellion was simply a misguided attempt to draw attention to himself and thus secure a future, but he went on to argue that the rebellion failed so absolutely that, in retrospect, it looks completely unrealistic and its purpose and potential cannot be properly assessed.²⁷ Perhaps the one lasting

²⁷ Michael Hicks, 'Stafford, Thomas (c.1533–1557)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26215>, accessed 1 Aug 2007].

effect of Stafford's adventures in Scarborough was that his failure succeeded in preventing any further attempts of a similar nature by the Marian exiles in France.²⁸ Certainly the rebellion seems to have had singularly little impact upon Yorkshire. Scarborough might have been showing signs of religious division during Mary's reign, but evidently there were no similar tensions in the townspeople's loyalty to the crown.

Religious dissatisfaction appears to have been more widespread in Beverley, and as in Scarborough demonstrated a clear opposition to the sacrament. In April 1554, seven men appeared before the Chancery court charged with heresy for speaking irreverently about the sacrament.²⁹ It was objected against Robert Bigott that he 'dothe not onely hym self rayle agaynst tholly and blessyd Sacrament of thalter but also haith many and sondry other evill disposyd persons resortinge to his howse that in lyke manner rale agaynst the same most holly Sacrament.' The case against Thomas Settrington stated 'that since St. Thomas daye last past he hath oft and sondry tymes spoken unreverently of the Sacrament of thalter.' Similarly Edward Smithley had 'unreverently spoken of [the] blessyd Sacrament of thaltar...in mokkyng, Jestinge and Scoffynge at [the] same.'³⁰ Clearly it seems that like those who showed signs of resistance in Scarborough, this group of Beverley men held little regard for the central issue of Catholic theology and ritual, and it is easy to imagine that the Beverley authorities feared their gatherings in Bigott's alehouse might lead to further, organised, resistance against the regime.

Two years after the cases against Bigott and his companions, in April 1556, John Bonsaye, a former member of St. John's College Beverley and a pensioned former choirman of Beverley Minster, was also charged with speaking against transubstantiation, and with possessing books entitled *The Voice of the People*, *The Ymage of God or Layeman's Book* and *The Governace of Virtue*. These were published by Nicholas Grimald, Roger Hutchinson and Thomas Becon respectively during the reign of Edward VI.³¹ All three writers saw their careers advance during Edward's reign, and all were Protestant sympathisers. Becon certainly spent the Marian years in exile in Strasbourg after serving as personal chaplain to both Cranmer and Somerset during Edward's reign, and Grimald was imprisoned for religious

²⁸ D. M. Loades, *Two Tudor Conspiracies* (Cambridge, 1965), p. 174.

²⁹ Chanc.AB.6, fols 37v-38v.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ Chanc.AB.8, f. 36r-v.

reasons by the Marian authorities, but may have recanted to save himself from burning.³² Bonsaye admitted to having owned the books for some time, though under interrogation he claimed he no longer had them, but had delivered them to one John Pesegrave. Like most of his contemporaries Bonsaye's answers to the interrogatory questions about his beliefs were strictly orthodox, but this merely reveals that he was providing the answers he must have known were required by his interrogators in order to avoid the full penalties for heresy.³³ That Bonsaye owned Protestant books is more revealing of his personal religious beliefs, although he nevertheless compromised with the regime once brought before the courts. John Pesegrave, to whom Bonsaye claimed he had given his books, appeared at the same time, charged with the possession of '...thre books written against the Catholike fath of Christe...', which he was ordered to publicly burn in Beverley market place during market time.³⁴ These books are not identified in the records, but it is likely that they were those listed in the Bonsaye case. That the authorities ordered the public burning of the books is indicative of their concerns about the presence of heresy within the town, and suggests that the opinions of Bigott, Settrington, Bonsaye and their neighbours were more widespread than the extant evidence reveals. A final Beverley case saw the appearance in June 1557 of Gawin Brakeringe for saying that the priest brought the devil when he came to minister the sacrament to him. Once again the offence was directed against the Mass, and the case suggests a lack of conviction in the doctrine of transubstantiation and the ability of priests to make things holy.³⁵

Aside from the importance of these cases in themselves, a number of the men named within them were wealthy, well-connected and important individuals. Thomas Settrington and Arkinwald Shepherd were both governors at the time of their appearance, John Jennison and Thomas Booth were both councillors and Nicholas Willimot was the son of a governor. Together with Robert Bigott, all were accused of speaking out against the sacrament. Clearly their connections and official roles put them in an ideal position to influence Beverley's religious life, and thus to the town's

³² L.R. Merrill, *The Life and Poems of Nicholas Grimald*, (Yale, 1969); Caroline Brett and James Carley (eds.), *Index Britanniae Scriptorum: John Bale's Index of British and Other Writers* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 301-4, 403, 431. Details of all three writers can be found in the ODNB. Grimald's tract was published anonymously in 1549, and was directed against clergymen who failed to perform their duties to their flocks. Hutchinson, who may have originated from northern England, published his text in 1550, dedicating it to Thomas Cranmer.

³³ Chanc.AB.8, fols 36r-v, 37v-38r.

³⁴ Chanc.AB.8, f. 37v.

³⁵ Chanc.AB.8, fols 171v, 171a, 177v.

authorities they posed a considerable threat to the established order.³⁶ Beverley was a recognised Protestant stronghold by the end of Elizabeth's reign. However, it is clear that reformed views attracted influential support and became entrenched in the town much earlier, leading to a crisis of authority as religious frictions grew and developed into factions. These offences were insufficient to create martyrs in Beverley, but the authorities were clearly worried, and in line with official policy were attempting to stop the spread of potentially seditious behaviour.

Martyrs indeed were scarce in Yorkshire. The county produced only one, Richard Snell of Bedale, who was burnt at Richmond in 1558.³⁷ The location of this martyrdom in rural Swaledale is perhaps surprising, but Bedale was a market town, and its location on the edge of the Vale of York increased its accessibility. John Foxe gave only a brief account of the case and unlike in his other reports gave no theological references, perhaps suggesting that the conservatism of the area and the presence of a powerful Catholic elite meant any form of heterodox belief was punished and that Snell was an outsider rather than a Protestant. However, it could simply be that Foxe lacked information about the case, and that he was confident enough to include Snell in his martyrology surely indicates that Snell's beliefs were not Catholic. Foxe also emphasised how Richard's brother John, who was also considered suspect in religion, drowned himself in a fit of remorse for abandoning his faith after he recanted and heard Mass. Foxe's report that one Robert Atkinson responded to Snell's prayer for aid at his execution by declaring 'hold fast there, and we wil all pray for thee' might indicate that reformed religion had touched more hearts than just Richard and John Snell in Marian Richmondshire, but there is no other evidence of this. It is however worth noting that though most of Richmondshire remained strongly Catholic throughout Elizabeth's reign, the town of Richmond itself experienced a much more varied religious experience. Yorkshire was similarly lacking in exiles, and though Christina Garrett has identified twenty Marian exiles with Yorkshire origins, almost all of these had left Yorkshire before they were suspected of heresy. Many were educated

³⁶ David Lamburn, *The Laity and the Church: Religious Developments in Beverley in the first half of the Sixteenth Century* (Borthwick Papers, 97, York, 2000), p. 24.

³⁷ See John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*,

http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/main/pref_1570_0023.jsp;

http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/main/12_1583_2149.jsp; accessed 27 March 2007, and A.G.

Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York 1509-1558* (London, 1982), p. 222 for details of the Snell case.

at the universities, or the Inns of Court, and on their return to England after the accession of Elizabeth few if any returned to Yorkshire.³⁸

The centrality of the sacrament in the incidents of resistance seen in Scarborough and Beverley can also be seen elsewhere. In May 1554 a number of Leeds men were reported to be of 'the new sorte.' This implies support for the new religion, but only against Christopher Jackson were more specific accusations made.³⁹ Jackson was said to have '...rayled agaynst the sacramente and burnyd the Image of oure Lady'. In itself, such behaviour during Mary's reign can be taken as evidence of opposition, however when Jackson admitted the offence, he claimed that it had been '...abouht v yeres last past...beynge sworne thereunto by the commissioners appoynted in that behalf.' In Leeds Marian officials were prosecuting parishioners for actions against Catholicism undertaken during a Protestant regime when they were not only legal and acceptable, but also expected, and religion was clearly surfacing as a cause of dispute within the town.⁴⁰ The offences of Jackson and his companions may well have been an expression of collaboration with a Protestant regime rather than of a personal attachment to the Protestant religion, but clearly religious divisions within the town were sufficient for conforming Marian Catholics to use them as a means of furthering local disputes, and as a form of payback for having participated in the unpopular reforming activities of Edward's reign. Nor was this case unique. In the village of Calcott in Cambridgeshire the sale of a chalice to fund soldiers to help suppress Kett's rebellion in 1549 led in Mary's reign to the punishment of Robert Peck, a villager and clerk of the peace who had advised the sale. Although Peck was initially arrested for supporting Jane Grey, he was also reported for allegedly embezzling the proceeds of the sale of the chalice four years earlier and his neighbours demanded he pay for a new one. As communities in Leeds were divided by explicit actions against the Catholic church during Edward's reign, so a seemingly simple financial expedient caused divisions in Calcott when the villagers once again required a chalice for the celebration of Mass.⁴¹ Although Jackson and those accused with him

³⁸ Christina H. Garrett, *The Marian Exiles: A Study in the Origins of Elizabethan Puritanism* (Cambridge, 1966), *passim*.

³⁹ Chanc.AB.7, fols 1v-2r, 23r, 36r; William Stable later appeared and produced compurgators to clear his name.

⁴⁰ Chanc.AB.7, f. 1v; A similar case can be found in 1561, when Thomas Fugall, vicar of Hessle and Hull was brought before the Elizabethan courts charged with offences committed during Mary's reign. This will be discussed in the following chapter. CP.G.1041.

⁴¹ Shagan, 'Confronting Compromise,' p. 54.

had to answer for their offences in court, there is also evidence that a number of other Leeds men previously considered to be of the new sort were dismissed as they had recently conformed and behaved appropriately.⁴² This perhaps indicates that although Christopher Jackson had been charged for his actions during the previous regime, his behaviour after the Catholic restoration continued to be less than orthodox.

In the same month in Rothwell, near Wakefield, Gabriel Walker was committed to the archiepiscopal prison for heretics. He was accused of calling the ritual of casting incense at *veni creator* a 'Cristenmas play' and a 'gay yole layke,' and of laughing and saying how his daughter would laugh also had she seen it.⁴³ Walker claimed he had simply asked his neighbour what the ritual meant, and upon being told that it signified the coming of the Holy Ghost had merely wished his daughter were there to see it too. He cannot have remained in prison for long, as he submitted a certificate confirming that his penance had been performed only four days after his initial appearance before the court.⁴⁴ Like William Newton's disruption of Easter celebrations at Scarborough, the disruption of a major festival, in this case Pentecost, is significant, but Walker's apparent ignorance of the significance of Catholic rituals and ceremonies also reflects the huge impact of the reforms of the previous two decades.⁴⁵ It is impossible to say if the timings of these events were deliberately chosen to coincide with major festivals, but their expression of anti-Catholic feelings means this cannot be ruled out.

Resistance also occurred in Halifax, a town which, like Beverley, was later to develop Puritan tendencies. In 1554 William Dean and Richard Best were accused of removing the sacrament from Halifax parish church and tearing down and removing the crucifix, probably from the rood screen.⁴⁶ Best was also accused of refusing to confess or to receive the sacrament at Lent.⁴⁷ This case has clear evidence of iconoclasm, a relative rarity in England in comparison to continental Europe. The actions of Best and Dean also expressed their disrespect for and disbelief in the miracle of transubstantiation both through Best's refusal to receive the sacrament and their

⁴² Chanc.AB.7, f. 2r.

⁴³ Chanc.AB.7, f. 15v.

⁴⁴ Chanc.AB.7, fols 23r, 30v.

⁴⁵ Chanc.AB.7, fols 15v, 23r, 30v.

⁴⁶ Chanc.AB.7, f. 77r.

⁴⁷ Chanc.AB.7, fols 78v-79r.

removal of the elements from the church. They also went further than those involved in the other cases considered here, in that their dislike of Catholicism was further articulated through their iconoclasm. Edward Riding, also of Halifax, was accused of looking down during the elevation of the elements at Mass, and of refusing holy water.⁴⁸ Again, he was actively denying the idea of transubstantiation by refusing to observe the elevation, and his rejection of the holy water indicates a refusal to sanctify himself as he entered the church. Riding thus also denied the ability of priests to make things holy; he saw no need for the intercession of priests, a further offence against the restored Catholic faith. In Hull too the sacrament was removed from the parish church, again suggesting a denial of both central Catholic theology and the capacity of priests to make things holy. This time however, the sacrament was removed with the consent of, and in the presence of, the curate of St. Mary's.⁴⁹ Hull also later developed into a centre of Puritanism, and the evidence of this case suggests that a core of heterodox and reformed beliefs was already taking shape in the town during Mary's reign, probably with the clergy at its centre. Certainly the 1561 appointment of Melchior Smith as minister of Hull suggests that Protestantism within the town had both an influential and growing number of supporters, for Smith was repeatedly in trouble with the Elizabethan ecclesiastical courts for being too radical, and nowhere else in Yorkshire was a Protestant preaching minister appointed so soon after Mary's death.⁵⁰

There were also scattered incidents in more rural areas, such as those of Agnes Sampson of Aberforth who refused to be confessed of a priest,⁵¹ and of William Pulleyn of Snaith who was accused of failing to bear a candle at Candlemas, or a palm on Palm Sunday, and of not receiving the holy bread or holy water.⁵² Pulleyn responded that he sometimes received and sometimes did not, perhaps suggesting mere indifference, however his actions imply that he did not truly believe in the spiritual nature of the ritual and ceremony associated with Catholicism, and therefore perhaps not in the theology either. Sampson's admittance of the charges against her also suggests an attachment to the reformed faith, and again a lack of belief in the role of priests as intercessors. Similar disrespect for, and thus potentially disbelief in, the

⁴⁸ Chanc.AB.7, f. 79v.

⁴⁹ Chanc.AB.7, fols 84v-85r.

⁵⁰ For the case against Melchior Smith see HC.CP.1563/4; HC.AB 1, fols 95r, 102v, 105r and HC.AB 3, fols 21v-22r, 72v, 85r-v, 98v, 101r, 120r; the experiences of Hull will be discussed more fully in chapter 5.

⁵¹ Chanc.AB.7, f.100r.

⁵² Chanc.AB.7, f. 36v, 43r, 47v.

sacrament can be seen in Oswaldkirk, where William, Elizabeth and George Walker were all presented before the court charged with failing to show due reverence to the sacrament at the time of elevation.⁵³ The exact nature of their offence is not given, but it seems clear that like so many others in Yorkshire they were expressing their religious preferences more subtly than those who were exiled or martyred for their faith, though undoubtedly the exiles and martyrs would have considered them collaborators with the regime simply for attending church. The words of Marmaduke Walker of Knapton, in the parish of Wintringham, also indicate a dislike of the restored Catholic religion. Walker, who ultimately submitted himself for penance, reportedly stated that he would sooner drown the crucifix than christen it, a clear expression of a dislike of idolatry and the Catholic concentration on Christ crucified, rather than Christ reborn.⁵⁴ Leonard Warlesworth of Penistone parish also appeared before the ecclesiastical courts, for casting water in his parish church in mockery of the priest casting holy water, and of misusing himself in the pulpit.⁵⁵ Again, this case shows a lack of respect for the Catholic priesthood, and derogatory behaviour towards the ritual and ceremony of the Catholic Church, with its inherent theological implications. Warlesworth's behaviour is indicative of scant regard for either the ceremony or theology of the newly restored Catholic Church, and suggests that his sympathies lay with the reformers. That he was ordered as part of his penance to exhort the youth of the parish not to copy him suggests an inherent fear amongst the authorities that those whose religious beliefs differed from those prescribed by the state were encouraging and influencing reformed opposition.

There is no indication in the court records of the social status of these men and women, however we have seen from the cases in Beverley that opposition to Marian religious policies crossed social boundaries, and in the parish of Middleton in Pickering Lythe in North Yorkshire Ambrose Beckwith's status as a gentleman did not exempt him from the ecclesiastical justice system. Beckwith's case further demonstrates the spread of opposition to Mary beyond the towns, for Middleton was, and remains, a rural area. Like so many of his contemporaries, Beckwith was accused of speaking aloud against the sacrament and other ceremonies of the church, and of

⁵³ Chanc.AB.7, fols 50v, 65r-v.

⁵⁴ Chanc.AB.7, fols 120v-121r.

⁵⁵ Chanc.AB.7, fols 66v-67r.

holding the holy bread and holy water in derision.⁵⁶ The case has obvious similarities with those discussed above; the central sacrament of the Mass was rejected, implying also a rejection of transubstantiation, ritual and ceremony were disregarded, and the capacity of priests to make holy such items as bread and water was also denied. It was not merely through speaking out against the sacrament that people demonstrated their opposition to the restored Catholic faith however. Richard Hansby of Catton was charged with not confessing or receiving the sacrament, and with eating meat during Lent,⁵⁷ and John Esgate of Langton was likewise charged with failing to confess or to receive sacrament. He claimed that he had refrained from communicating as he had been out of charity, but said that his differences had been resolved and that since the preceding Easter he had confessed and received the sacrament twice.⁵⁸ To return briefly to the urban environment, there is also evidence of heterodox beliefs from the city of York, with perhaps the most intriguing being the accusation of Lollardy levelled at Christopher Kelke, a gentleman of the parish of Holy Trinity, Goodramgate.⁵⁹ Kelke's case, and others involving York citizens, will be considered in chapter four, but it is relevant to observe here that these cases illustrate the ways in which people were prepared to work with repeated religious change for their own purposes, and to reiterate the importance of central aspects of Catholic theology as a focus for resistance. They also reflect the differing understandings of the meanings behind religious identities and the issue of conformity.

In addition to those cases which suggest that Protestantism had begun to take a hold in certain Yorkshire towns and parishes, and to those which appear to be isolated incidents of resistance, there is also a hint that Protestant evangelists were moving around the county. On 30 April 1556 the Council of the North reported to its President, the Earl of Shrewsbury, that a company of six or seven travelling players wearing the livery of Sir Francis Leke were travelling around the north of England performing plays containing '...very naughty and seditious matter touching the King and Queen's Majesties, and the state of the realm, and to the slaunder of Christ's true Catholic

⁵⁶ Chanc.AB.8, fols 36v, 56r; Beckwith's will is extant in the probate registers of the Borthwick Institute, and fully conforms to the norms of Marian England, with Beckwith bequeathing his soul to 'God Almighty, our blessed lady his mother and all the holy company of heaven' and requesting that his executor (his son) 'distribute and geve all of my goods in the honer of God and for the healthe of my soule.' Prob. Reg. 15, f. 320r.

⁵⁷ Chanc.AB.8, fols 171v, 171a, 177v.

⁵⁸ Chanc.AB.8, f. 37r.

⁵⁹ CP.G.3511; Chanc.AB.7, fols 139r-141r.

Church...'⁶⁰ Such troupes of players were later to have an important role in the dissemination of Catholicism in Yorkshire, particularly in the parishes of the North York Moors, towards the end of the sixteenth century, but unfortunately nothing more is known about this Marian reforming group. Francis Leke himself was a Derbyshire gentleman who served all the Tudor monarchs except Henry VII; he was appointed *custos rotulorum* of Derbyshire for life in 1548 and was involved in border warfare for much of his career. He may not have known about the activities of his retainers until the council instructed Shrewsbury to order Leke to send those concerned to answer to the Council for their activities.⁶¹ The absence of any records of the Council of the North is the likely reason that so little is known about this group of itinerant players, however it seems that Leke's standing was at its lowest during Mary's reign, which could indicate that he was not an ardent supporter of her regime, and perhaps did tacitly support the seditious plays performed by his men.

Taken together, the cases considered above indicate a clear pattern of sacrament-orientated resistance in Marian Yorkshire, and similar cases can certainly be found elsewhere. In April 1554 for example a dead cat with a shaven head and a paper disc between its paws was hung from a gallows in Cheapside, a clear mockery of a priest saying Mass, whilst Ipswich saw a series of demonstrations against the Mass in August and September the same year.⁶² Such opposition to the sacrament may not have been particularly widespread within Yorkshire, but there was clearly sufficient non-conformity to cause concern amongst the authorities that this would spread and cause serious social unrest. The cases are largely, but not entirely centred in the county's towns, a reflection of both the ease with which non-conformist and heterodox beliefs were able to spread within towns, but also of the more concerted attempts of town officials to root out non-conformity and their concurrent fears of urban unrest. Yorkshire clearly did not wholly offer the enthusiastic welcome for the Catholic restoration expressed by Robert Parkyn, and clearly theology mattered to parishioners as well as officials. Sufficient doubts had emerged about Catholic theology for the

⁶⁰ John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials, relating chiefly to Religion and the Reformation of it, and the Emergencies of the Church of England under King Henry VIII, King Edward VI and Queen Mary I, Vol. III, part II – Historical Memorials, Ecclesiastical and Civil, of Events under the Reign of Queen Mary I* (Oxford, 1822), pp. 413-4.

⁶¹ S.T Bindoff, *The House of Commons 1509-1558*, Vol II (London, 1982), pp. 518-20; The instructions from the Council to Shrewsbury regarding this matter are printed in full in Edmund Lodge (ed.), *Illustrations of British History, Biography and Manners in the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth and James I* (London, 1838), pp. 260-2.

⁶² Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations*, (Oxford, 1993), p. 219.

issue to be a growing concern, yet it is also evident that what Shagan has labelled retroactive revenge was also occurring.⁶³ Although there is clear evidence of adherence to reformed theology in some of the cases discussed here, in others there is more suggestion of previous collaboration than current resistance. Central to Marian Catholic theology, adherence to the sacrament of the Mass and the ceremony surrounding it became the line against which religious behaviour was measured. Whilst this undoubtedly accounts for the predominance of offences against the sacrament in the Yorkshire material, the same line could be used by those seeking retroactive revenge against those who had collaborated with, and no doubt profited from, the previous regime. Nevertheless, it must also be remembered that contemporary views of resistance were very different from ours. Whilst I have argued that Thomas Miles in Scarborough and Edward Riding in Halifax were resisting Mary's regime by refusing to observe the elevation of the elements, their Protestant contemporaries might instead have perceived their mere attendance at church to be collaboration with the anti-Christ. There is scope for further research to establish whether the predominance of the sacrament and the doctrine of transubstantiation seen in Yorkshire opposition were evident amongst popular resistance and official concerns elsewhere, and to consider how this links to the attitudes of local and national authorities. The Yorkshire evidence clearly indicates concurrence in the focus of the doubts and concerns of parishioners and officials, and the identification of similar patterns in other dioceses would be of some significance to Reformation historians.

It has been argued that many of those denounced by their priests or neighbours were simply guilty of a careless slip of the tongue; others were victims of local disputes little concerned with religion, and all were victims of governmental fear of sedition, which for Mary was clearly linked with heresy.⁶⁴ It seems unlikely that this was the case for Yorkshire however, as in each of the cases examined above there is clear evidence of deliberate anti-Catholic behaviour, however subtly enacted. Many of the numerous signs of 'heresy', for example not wearing beads, could easily have other motivations. Forgetfulness, old age, infirmity and poverty could have accounted for several, and general irreverence (rather than a specific dislike of Catholicism) would have covered the rest. None of these indicators could be accurately taken as a sign of genuine heretical religious beliefs amongst the majority of average parishioners. Even

⁶³ Shagan, 'Confronting Compromise,' p. 54.

⁶⁴ Loades, 'The English Church,' pp. 36, 46.

in Kent, a county long identified with the early advance of Protestantism, Collinson has recently demonstrated that many of those burnt as heretics were not orthodox Protestants but rather held heterodox opinions which have been linked to a strong Lollard tradition in the county.⁶⁵

The excessive concentration of martyrs in the south was probably the result of a combination of the zeal of the ecclesiastical authorities and the proximity to the centre of government, and the inherent need to show that something was being done to eradicate heresy, yet even in supposedly Protestant Kent, much of the ruling establishment was conservative.⁶⁶ Loades has recently argued that few bishops relished persecution, and often made great efforts to avoid burning their victims. Nevertheless, some zealous reformers perceived that martyrdom was a mark of true faith and anticipated that the physical suffering of martyrdom would bring generous spiritual compensations.⁶⁷ Loades has also argued that other demands on their time meant that many JPs placed searching for heretics very low on their lists of priorities and were reluctant to get involved in the defence of the church.⁶⁸ This supports Dickens' claim that the Marian persecution was very irregular, and depended much on the personal position of the authorities of a particular area. Houlbrooke has suggested that in Norfolk the recalcitrant were actively encouraged to reform, yet in Yorkshire Archbishop Nicholas Heath was largely absent from his diocese, and it may be significant that he had been heavily involved in the early evangelicalism of Henry VIII's court. Although Heath died a Catholic, and was involved in moves against heresy during Mary's reign, his own eirenic disposition might well have encouraged him to ignore what probably appeared to be isolated incidents of opposition to Mary's religious policies.⁶⁹

Beyond those cases considered above, there is little evidence that the Marian regime experienced any difficulty in enforcing the Catholic restoration in the north,

⁶⁵ P. Collinson, 'The Persecution in Kent,' in *The Church of Mary Tudor*, ed. Duffy and Loades, p. 312-3.

⁶⁶ Collinson, 'The Persecution in Kent,' p. 313.

⁶⁷ Loades, 'The English Church,' p. 46; David Loades, *The Oxford Martyrs* (London, 1970), p. 101.

⁶⁸ Loades, 'Enforcement of Reaction,' p. 61.

⁶⁹ A.G Dickens, 'The Early Expansion of Protestantism in England 1520-58,' in A.G. Dickens *Late Monasticism and the Reformation*, (London, 1994), p. 109; Ralph Houlbrooke, 'The Clergy, The Church Courts and the Marian Restoration in Norwich,' in Duffy and Loades, *The Church of Mary Tudor*, p. 143; David Loades, 'Heath, Nicholas (1501?-1578)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12840>, accessed 5 April 2007].

and the ecclesiastical records of Marian Yorkshire are overwhelmingly concerned with the small numbers of Yorkshire clergymen who had married during the previous reign. Dickens has documented these cases in detail, and thus this chapter will consider the issue of clerical marriage only to question some of his conclusions.⁷⁰ Dickens admitted that in Yorkshire clerical marriage was viewed with some hostility, a feeling which persisted into the reign of Elizabeth; yet he failed to consider that this might indicate the persistence of popular conservative feeling, and simply moved on to discuss those exceptions to the rule, the approximately 10% of Yorkshire clergy who had married.⁷¹ This figure is not dissimilar to those for other English dioceses, and nor is the fact that the majority of priests who did marry during Edward's reign put aside their wives after 1553 in order to continue their calling in the priesthood.⁷² Haigh has claimed that Mary's campaign against the married clergy was one of her most successful, and argued that this was because she had the backing of the laity.⁷³ Certainly there was little overt opposition to the policy of deprivation, though Frere claimed the major reason for this was that most of those who would have defended clerical marriage were already in exile abroad.⁷⁴

Dickens made much, and perhaps too much, use of clerical marriage as evidence that Protestantism was penetrating society, but appeared never to have considered that marriage was more likely to have occurred for socio-economic reasons than because of a firm belief in reformed religion.⁷⁵ Clerical marriage is a complex issue, which has received considerable scrutiny from historians, and whilst Dickens and others have used incidents of clerical marriage as an indicator of the spread of Protestantism, such claims are tenuous.⁷⁶ Too many other issues were involved for marriage to be used to determine the confessional position of the mid-Tudor clergy. Marriage, rather than heretical religious beliefs, was the main reason for the deprivation of clergy during Mary's reign, but many deprived priests were subsequently re-instated in another parish. Given the shortage of properly qualified

⁷⁰ A.G. Dickens, *The Marian Reaction in the Diocese of York, Part I - The Clergy*, (Borthwick Papers, 11, York, 1957).

⁷¹ Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, p. 187.

⁷² Haigh, *English Reformations*, p. 226.

⁷³ *ibid*, p. 226.

⁷⁴ W.H. Frere, *The Marian Reaction in its Relation to the English Clergy* (London, 1896), pp. 74-5.

⁷⁵ Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 188-9.

⁷⁶ In addition to Dickens' work see also Helen Parish, *Clerical Marriage and the English Reformation: Precedent, Policy and Practice* (Aldershot, 2000); J.F Williams, 'The Married Clergy of the Marian Period,' *Norfolk Archaeology*, 32, part 2 (1959); E.J Carlson, 'Clerical Marriage and the English Reformation,' *Journal of British Studies*, 31 (1992).

Catholic clergy, the Marian regime had little option but to permit those priests who did repudiate their wives to return to serve elsewhere, but the level of repudiations clearly indicates that religion was not the reason behind the majority of marriages.

There is nevertheless evidence that attempts to separate priests from their wives in Yorkshire were strongly supported by conservative parishioners who saw clerical celibacy as an integral part of the Catholic faith. Robert Parkyn claimed that married priests were openly mocked after Mary's accession and 'began to be asshamyde of tham selffes, for the common people wolde pontt tham withe fyngers in places when thay saw tham'.⁷⁷ However Parkyn's viewpoint was necessarily limited, and there is no other evidence for such behaviour in Yorkshire, though hostility towards married priests remained widespread well into Elizabeth's reign.⁷⁸ Clerical marriage was far from universally popular, and despite the small numbers of cases, deprivations for marriage would have had a significant impact on the spiritual lives of the affected parishes, even if new clergy were promptly instituted. Perceptions of the clergy would have been damaged, perhaps irrevocably, by their passage through the church courts for marriage, and in areas where there were few if any other signs of religious reform the marriage of a parish priest would have seemed particularly radical to the laity.⁷⁹ Henry Watson, who declared that he would '...rather be restored to thoffice of a prieste than to continew with his wyf...' was perhaps a more typical example than Robert Thweng, a Beverley priest who in 1554 stated that he would '...rather continew with his wyf and lyve lyke a laman yf yt mighte so stand with the law...'⁸⁰ Despite his apparent reformed sympathies, Thweng does not appear in any of the Beverley non-conformity cases, but it is conceivable that he was connected with a growing circle of Beverley men who opposed the Catholic restoration.

Perhaps more importantly, a handful of Yorkshire clergymen ordained during Edward VI's reign were re-ordained in Catholic rites after Mary's accession. Cambridge graduate Anthony Ascham, or Askham, was ordained deacon at Egton in August 1552, but travelled to London in December 1553 to be ordained to all orders from first tonsure to priesthood. Ascham, a brother of the Humanist Roger Ascham, was born at Kirby Wiske and appears to have practised medicine before his ordination,

⁷⁷ Dickens, 'Parkyn's Narrative,' p. 79.

⁷⁸ See D/C C.P 1589/3 for an example of hostility towards the wife of the vicar of Sherburn.

⁷⁹ Parish, *Clerical Marriage*, pp. 189-91.

⁸⁰ Chanc.AB.6, f. 26r.

as well as being widely noted for his treatises on astrology. He was appointed by the crown as rector of Methley, near Leeds, and vicar of Burneston, near Kirby Wiske, in 1552. He probably owed this advancement to his friendship with John Cheke, though his re-ordination in Catholic rites is evidence that he never shared the Protestant commitment of his brother and patron. It has been argued that Ascham may have married during Edward's reign and fathered a daughter, though the scanty evidence suggests that this is unlikely, and had he done so his wife must have died prior to 1553.⁸¹ Thomas Thomson and Leonard Cowll were similarly initially ordained during the reign of Edward, albeit only just, but both were re-ordained to all orders at London in February 1553/4. Thomson's later career is uncertain as three men of this name were ordained at London at the same time, but Cowll later went on to serve at Marske in Cleveland.⁸²

Evidence from the cases of former monastics also indicates that religion was not a major motivation in the decision to marry. There was no practical value for the regime in forcing former religious to maintain their vows in secular life, and it is difficult to see what the government hoped to gain from forcing nuns, whose pensions were largely insufficient to live on, to renounce their husbands, other than an anticipation of large-scale renewed monasticism. Certainly at local and regional levels it can only have been as a means of demonstrating support for the re-establishment of the clerical estate that men and women who were likely to subsequently be dependent upon support from the parish were forced to lead separate lives. Margaret Basforth, a nun of Moxby priory, specifically stated that she had married only '...for lacke of lyvinge...' but was nevertheless forced to divorce.⁸³ In May 1556, despite having been divorced from his wife Elizabeth Metcalfe, Anthony Blake was charged with keeping suspect company with her at her house in Doncaster. Blake, who had been deprived of his living of Whiston in April 1554, and excommunicated in May 1555, denied the charges and was simply ordered to produce compurgators who confirmed that he had only been seen her in company.⁸⁴ However he later obtained letters from Cardinal Pole

⁸¹ Frere, *The Marian Reaction*, pp. 127-8, 218, 236; C.H Cooper and T. Cooper (eds.) *Athenae Cantabrigienses, Vol I, 1500-1585* (Cambridge, 1858), p.197; Bernard Capp, 'Askham, Anthony (c.1517-1559)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/730>, accessed 6 Aug 2007].

⁸² Frere, *The Marian Reaction*, pp. 127-8, 218.

⁸³ Chanc.AB.6, f. 22v.

⁸⁴ Chanc.AB.6, f. 32v; Chanc.AB.8, fols 56v, 59v.

absolving him from his excommunication and allowing him to hold a benefice, suggesting that he did finally sever all ties with his wife.⁸⁵

Others were more attached. In July 1556, despite previous orders to separate, Guy Fairfax was charged with keeping his wife Jane, a former nun of Sinningthwaite and Nun Appleton priories in his house. He confessed, and was, as previously, ordered to put her out of his house, despite them having had a child together.⁸⁶ In August Guy and Jane were once more ordered to separate, but in October they were recorded as contumacious, indicating that they had yet to comply with the court injunctions. There is no evidence that they ever divorced, and despite the best efforts of the courts they seem to have succeeded in remaining together.⁸⁷ Evidence from Norfolk suggests that the continuation of relationships with wives who had been put aside was not uncommon there, and the region also gives evidence of more extreme action. Gilbert Bartley, a former regular who had been serving as a rector at Attleborough in Norfolk fled to Frankfurt after Mary's accession, together with his wife Agnes Wynter; his return after Mary's death saw his promotion to the Bishopric of Bath and Wells from 1560 to 1581.⁸⁸ These are just a few examples however, and the York chancery court books are scattered with references to clerical matrimony. The repeated attempts of the courts to secure the separation and divorce of married clergymen and former monastics can be taken as evidence of the links between the Marian regime and the emerging Counter Reformation, which demonstrated a distinct lack of tolerance for concubinage. This desire to ensure priests were not living with women might explain why cases such as that of Anthony Blake and Elizabeth Metcalfe were followed up even after they were divorced, and in this case excommunicated. Nevertheless, although enlightening about clerical attitudes towards the regimes they served under, these marriages cannot be used as evidence of any sort of firm commitment to the reformist cause.

Perhaps the most significant, and certainly the most well known married clergyman in Marian Yorkshire was Robert Holgate, Archbishop of York, who has been considered in the previous chapter.⁸⁹ Though he reached high political and

⁸⁵ Chanc.AB.7, fols 121v, 122v.

⁸⁶ Chanc.AB.7, f. 120r; Chanc.AB.8, f. 79r.

⁸⁷ Chanc.AB.8, fols 86v, 96r.

⁸⁸ J.F Williams, 'The Married Clergy of the Marian Period,' *Norfolk Archaeology*, 32, part 2 (1959), pp. 89, 94.

⁸⁹ For details of Robert Holgate's life and marriage see H. L. Parish, 'Holgate, Robert (1481/2–1555)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004

secular office, Holgate was never a major political force in the north and remained moderate in his religious views. He nevertheless supported the reformed Edwardian liturgy, but it was his controversial marriage that led to his deprivation and imprisonment after Mary's accession. It was also his marriage that provided both the starting point for his *Apology* later in 1554, and the sole source of his regret. Holgate used the *Apology* to try and justify his position, and though he succeeded in securing his release from the Tower he was never restored to the priesthood, and died in London only a few months later. It is likely that Holgate's expressions of regret for his marriage and his support for the reforming party in the *Apology* were sincere, not least because the scandal of his marriage had undermined his authority.⁹⁰ Like many of his contemporaries, Holgate was ingrained with obedience to the Tudor state, and his *Apology* emphasises the good service he had provided to Henry VIII and Edward VI, as well as his willingness to keep to the Marian religious laws and serve the Marian church.⁹¹ However, the *Apology* gave away little about Holgate's personal beliefs. A monk who took secular office late in life, he was in many ways no different to other monks who had married under pressure to demonstrate their conformity, or to ease their economic circumstances, but he nonetheless provided a contrast to the majority of senior clergymen in Yorkshire, who were generally unmarried and inclined towards traditionalism.⁹²

Nevertheless, an undated petition directed to Mary might be used as evidence that Holgate had in fact held clerical marriage in some favour, and that his regret for his own marriage might not have been entirely genuine. The petitioner, John Houseman, claimed damages against Holgate for refusing him admission to the priesthood and removing him from his living in York Minster due to his opposition to clerical marriage.⁹³ Houseman's petition appears to have been successful in that his career flourished during Mary's reign. He was clerk and deacon in the Minster, was ordained in London in 1553 and appointed curate of Bilbrough in the West Riding. He also appears to have held other appointments in Nottinghamshire, and in Essex, where

[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13504>, accessed 1 Aug 2007], A.G. Dickens, *Robert Holgate – Archbishop of York and President of the King's Council in the North*, (Borthwick Papers, 8, York, 1955) and A.G. Dickens, 'The Marriage and Character of Archbishop Holgate,' *EHR*, 52 (1937).

⁹⁰ SP 11/6, no.84; Dickens, 'Holgate's Apology,' pp. 452, 454; See Dickens, 'The Marriage and Character of Archbishop Holgate,' for details of the scandal surrounding his marriage.

⁹¹ Dickens, 'Holgate's Apology,' pp. 450-459.

⁹² Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, p. 189.

⁹³ SP 15/7, no. 8.

he allegedly played a part in persecuting Protestants.⁹⁴ Houseman's distaste for clerical marriage is clear, and he presented Holgate as strongly in favour of it. Given his later preferment under Mary, it is perhaps more surprising that Houseman originally wished to be ordained during Edward's Protestant regime. It could perhaps be argued that Houseman was a career cleric, who had no strong religious feelings, but if so he does not appear to have progressed far up the career ladder. It is however interesting that his appointments included benefices in Essex, a county which had shown considerable enthusiasm for religious reform, perhaps suggesting that the Marian regime found him a useful ally in the campaign against heresy.

Dickens, perhaps unsurprisingly given his negative attitude towards Catholicism and his belief in the sterility of Mary's reign, emphasised in his work the incidents of resistance and opposition to Marian religious policy in Yorkshire. However, by ending his studies of the Reformation in 1559, Dickens failed to take into account the continuing strength of Catholicism into Elizabeth's reign and beyond. He also failed to make use of the evidence that demonstrates rapid compliance to Mary's religious laws and injunctions, and played down the significance of any overt pleasure at the revival of traditional religion.⁹⁵ Despite Dickens's arguments in favour of the early spread of Protestantism, and Jones's claim that there is little evidence of a genuine Catholic religious revival under Mary Tudor,⁹⁶ it seems likely that the majority of English parishioners welcomed the return of Catholic ceremony, often enthusiastically. This can hold true even if the failure to revive monasticism, the cult of saints and elaborate prayers for the dead demonstrates how the break with Rome had changed both the type of Catholicism practised in England, and popular attitudes to religious belief. David Loades has described religious feelings at Mary's accession as 'frequent enthusiasm, occasional resistance, and a large amount of unchronicled indifference,' and this would certainly seem to reflect the effect of two decades of religious change, which had increased the zeal of a minority on both sides of the theological divide whilst leaving the majority in a state of confusion.⁹⁷ Mary herself assumed that all her subjects remained Catholic at heart, and had simply been led astray by a minority; like her sister later did with English Catholics, Mary initially

⁹⁴ A.G. Dickens, 'Two Marian Petitions,' *YAJ*, 37 (1950), pp. 376-7.

⁹⁵ Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, chapter 6; Dickens, *English Reformation*, chapter 12.

⁹⁶ W.R.D. Jones, *The Mid-Tudor Crisis 1539-1563* (London, 1973), p. 102.

⁹⁷ David Loades, quoted in Robert Tittler, *The Reign of Mary I* (Harlow, 1983), p. 24; Loades, 'Enforcement of Reaction,' p. 59.

ignored reformers and evangelicals, hoping they would gradually disappear. She firmly believed that the removal of a few hardliners would solve the 'Protestant Problem.'⁹⁸ That this was not the case is well known, but it is possible that had she lived, or produced an heir, Mary's restored Catholic Church might have endured in England.⁹⁹ As will be seen in the following chapter, Marian priests were fundamental in ensuring the continuity of traditional religion in England prior to the arrival of missionary priests from Europe. They can perhaps, as Scarisbrick claimed, be considered the founders of the English Catholic mission.¹⁰⁰

Nevertheless, whilst the Marian regime was reasonably successful in creating a core of committed Catholic priests, who continued to be favoured by many conservatives over those ordained after the Elizabethan settlement, attempts to revive monasticism in England were considered by Dickens to have been disastrous. Loades has argued that despite her hopes for a grand restoration of monasticism Mary herself took no initiative in this respect but rather waited for the monks to approach her. Only when a group of Benedictines did so in 1555 did Mary begin to re-found monastic communities, but, Loades claimed, these had few new vocations, little real vitality and made little contribution to the restored Catholic church in England.¹⁰¹ The English laity did not follow Mary's lead in returning to the church the ex-monastic lands they had secured in the years after the dissolution, and only a handful of the surviving former monks, nuns and friars returned to the cloister. The Spanish ambassador Simon Renard informed Mary that Catholics owned more ex-monastic lands than did 'heretics,' and their refusal to hand it back to the church has been used to argue that there was little desire for a return to Catholicism.¹⁰² However regardless of religious belief, it is unsurprising that landowners wished to hold onto their economic assets in a time of dearth and inflation, and this cannot be held up as evidence that they cared little for the Catholic church, though undoubtedly some of their contemporaries may have viewed those who held such land as collaborators. Shagan has argued that Pole and other Catholics of his complexion viewed this failure to return lands and wealth to the church as a fundamental break from the Catholic past and the irredeemable corruption of those involved. Those returning to Catholicism were supposed to be truly

⁹⁸ Tittler, *The Reign of Mary I*, 24; David Loades, *Mary Tudor: A Life* (Oxford, 1989), p. 193.

⁹⁹ J.J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and The English People* (Oxford, 1985), p. 136-7.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*, p. 145.

¹⁰¹ Loades, *Mary Tudor*, pp. 246-7, 329-30.

¹⁰² Loades, 'Enforcement of Reaction,' p. 55.

reconciled, and welcoming back those who retained the fruits of their schism was regarded as the equivalent of pardoning the unrepentant.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, two decades without monasticism would certainly have raised doubts over the value of its return in England, and it is likely that even the most conservative Catholic laymen would no longer have considered monasticism an essential bastion of Catholic orthodoxy.¹⁰⁴

Despite this, by the close of her reign Mary had established four male and two female religious houses, which had a combined population of around one hundred.¹⁰⁵ All of these were located in and around London, yet many Yorkshire monks and nuns had continued their way of life, as far as possible, outside the cloister. There is evidence to suggest that there was some hope and expectation that Mary's London foundations would be added to by re-founding houses in other areas. Seven Yorkshire Carthusians, one from Hull and six from Mount Grace travelled south to join the re-founded Charterhouse at Sheen, and amongst those who remained in Yorkshire several stipulated in their wills that goods such as books, chalices and vestments be returned to their former monastic homes should they ever be re-founded. Indeed, the late prior of Monk Bretton, who had been living together with some of his monks in a state of covert-monasticism, bequeathed everything he owned to his former monastery should it be restored.¹⁰⁶ Claire Cross has also argued that some Yorkshire Cistercians had begun to reconstitute their communities soon after Mary's accession. She based this on a letter supporting the ordination of a deacon to the priesthood, and although she admitted that it is impossible to tell whether or not any firm steps towards a recreation of Cistercian communities had been taken, Cross argued that this letter shows that it was still possible for former monks to come together. She also suggested that had any secular owners of ex-monastic lands in Yorkshire returned these to the church, there would have been no shortage of monks ready to resume their monastic vows.¹⁰⁷ This is an interesting supposition, and serves to highlight the continuing strength of conservative religious feeling in the north. It does however also raise the question, if so many monks were seemingly ready to resume the habit, why did they not travel to join

¹⁰³ Shagan, 'Confronting Compromise,' pp. 63-4.

¹⁰⁴ Rex H. Pogson, 'The Legacy of Schism: Confusion, Continuity and Change in the Marian Clergy,' in J. Loach and R. Tittler (eds.), *The Mid-Tudor Polity c.1540-1560* (London, 1980), p. 120; Cross, *Church and People*, p. 92.

¹⁰⁵ Dom. David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England, Vol. III – The Tudor Age* (Cambridge, 1959), p. 440.

¹⁰⁶ Claire Cross, 'The Reconstitution of Northern Monastic Communities in the Reign of Mary Tudor,' *Northern History*, 29 (1993), pp. 200-201.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid*, pp. 203-4.

the houses Mary did recreate? The issue of order offers one reason, yet monks of many different orders joined together in the new houses, particularly in Westminster.¹⁰⁸ Regional ties were more significant; large numbers of monastics joined local institutions, and ideas of medieval monastic life were deeply localised. Whilst Yorkshire monks such as those at Monk Bretton might have readily joined a new foundation in their area, it is unsurprising that they did not move to London.

The effects of the dissolution of the monasteries in England were widespread and varied, and some Yorkshiremen took advantage of the Catholic Marian regime to try to regain for their towns some of the benefits previously provided by religious institutions. One such appeal was presented before Cardinal Pole and Purstan Jaglin, sub-controller of the household under Henry VIII and Mary, by John Hamerton of Monkrode on behalf of the town of Pontefract, said to have been devastated by the loss of its religious foundations. The mayor and burgesses of the town had previously made similar petitions, which presumably had been unsuccessful, and though Hamerton's petition is undated it is likely to have been presented between 1556 and 1558.¹⁰⁹ Pontefract does not appear to have been worse off than any other Yorkshire town at this time however. The old almshouse continued to operate, whilst the parish clergy were financially better off than they had been when the priory had held the advowson, and were unlikely to have been any worse educated. The loss of the chantries was perhaps felt most keenly, but there was no general collapse of parochial endowment in Pontefract in the 1550s, merely a reduction in the number of clergy and masses.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, Hamerton's petition is indicative of lasting ill feeling in Pontefract towards the religious changes of the previous twenty years. The townspeople felt these had deprived them of services and benefits they had taken for granted under a pre-Reformation Catholic regime, and which they apparently hoped Mary's regime would restore.

Thus far, this chapter has concentrated primarily on opposition to the Marian regime in Yorkshire, and on the difficulties faced during the attempts to restore Catholicism. However, as has been seen opposition was not extensive. Despite MacCulloch's claim that the Catholic restoration in Yorkshire only began a couple of

¹⁰⁸ Knowles, *The Tudor Age*, p. 426.

¹⁰⁹ SP15/7, no. 51; Dickens, 'Marian Petitions,' p. 377.

¹¹⁰ *ibid*, pp. 380-1.

years into Mary's reign and was left incomplete by her death, there is plenty to indicate that the return to traditional religion was, if not exactly universally welcomed, at least implemented relatively rapidly, and often before official injunctions were issued.¹¹¹ London chronicles indicate that the Mass had returned by autumn 1553, and Robert Parkyn wrote of a return to Catholic Mass in many parishes almost immediately after Mary's accession. He claimed that those who waited until after the repeal of Edwardian religious statutes and the issue of Marian injunctions did so because they were not bold enough to act in opposition to the law 'thowghe ther hertts was wholly enclynede thatt way.'¹¹² Parkyn was biased, but it seems fair to say that in most Yorkshire parishes the restoration was relatively rapid, and in a few it was immediate, emphatic, and, if not complete in the medieval sense, was at least over and above official requirements. Haigh's work on the Marian Episcopal visitations has shown that although many parishes had defects, serious efforts to restore Catholic worship had been made almost everywhere, and that levels of parish expenditure were higher in real terms than at any other time in the sixteenth century.¹¹³ At parish level, Haigh argued, the church showed signs of vitality unknown since the 1520s.¹¹⁴ Duffy has drawn attention to Kent, where despite its reputation as a 'Protestant' county, the 1557 visitation revealed that almost every parish had complied with the restoration injunctions. Duffy admitted that there were numerous signs of the persistence of reformed beliefs, but argued that the majority of those accused of suspicious beliefs and practices accepted their penance and subsequently conformed.¹¹⁵

Ronald Hutton, in his survey of churchwardens' accounts, has similarly reached the conclusion that compliance with the restoration was rapid, and that most parish churches provided far more decoration than the minimum requirement.¹¹⁶ Often assessments were used to raise the capital for the purchase of church goods, but many parishioners returned items they had obtained during the reign of Edward VI and actively hidden from commissioners. There are few extant churchwardens accounts for Yorkshire in the mid-1550s, however each of these supports Hutton's claim that the

¹¹¹ MacCulloch, *Later Reformation*, p. 112.

¹¹² Bartholomew, 'Lay Piety in the Reign of Mary Tudor', pp. 133-4; Dickens, 'Parkyn's Narrative,' p. 79.

¹¹³ Haigh, *English Reformations*, pp. 211-12.

¹¹⁴ *ibid*, pp. 214-15.

¹¹⁵ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 557-8, 561.

¹¹⁶ Ronald Hutton, 'The Local Impact of the Tudor Reformations,' in *The English Reformation Revised*, ed. Christopher Haigh (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 129.

restoration was achieved relatively quickly, and contradicts Dickens's argument that Mary failed to inspire any positive Catholic enthusiasm in the people of Yorkshire.¹¹⁷ Of the extant accounts, the majority are from parishes within the city of York, and will be considered in a later chapter, though it is worth mentioning here that they demonstrate a rapid and thorough compliance with the restoration, and suggest that perhaps not every parish in York conformed strictly to the Edwardian regime. At Sheriff Hutton, to the northeast of York, a new altar was purchased and set up in 1553, only a year after the parish had purchased a communion book and table. New Catholic service books were bought in the same year, and a rood was purchased and transported to the parish from York.¹¹⁸ An extract of accounts for Easingwold, hidden within the records of a consistory court case, is very revealing about the physical progress of the Catholic restoration in Easingwold and Raskelf parishes, as well as the retention of church goods across changing regimes.¹¹⁹ Between 1553 and 1557 the churchwardens paid for setting up the altar, covering the sacrament, repairs to the sepulchre (which, interestingly, suggests that this was never destroyed during Edward's reign), a rood with Mary and John, a paten for the chalice, the image of the 'head hallow', various books and vestments.¹²⁰ Though re-equipment was not quite as rapid as in the York city churches, these accounts serve to reinforce the argument that, on the whole, compliance was normal, and was not entirely dependant upon the proximity of ecclesiastical officials. Nevertheless, despite the value of churchwardens' accounts for assessing the speed with which parishes restored the material trappings of Catholicism, they cannot reveal how the parishioners received these changes. Were records of visitation extant for Marian Yorkshire it may have been possible to estimate the extent to which the Catholic restoration was welcomed, but the restoration of ornaments and furnishings alone can reveal little beyond adherence to the Marian laws and injunctions. Equally, all the extant accounts for Marian Yorkshire continue into the reign of Elizabeth, and all suggest that compliance with the Elizabethan regime was also reasonably swift. Indeed at Sheriff Hutton payment was made for the removal of the rood loft in 1558, before the settlement was even reached.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Dickens, *English Reformation*, p. 309.

¹¹⁸ PR.SH.13 fols 18r, 19v, 20r, 21r.

¹¹⁹ CP.G.608.

¹²⁰ Easingwold Churchwardens accounts, extract, CP.G.608.

¹²¹ PR.SH.13, f.32r.

In addition to these accounts however, the cause in which the Easingwold accounts are hidden is of interest in itself. The churchwardens and parishioners of Easingwold accused the inhabitants of their chapelry of Raskelf of failing to contribute to assessments and of concealing church goods and selling them below their market value without the consent of the parishioners.¹²² The initial articles in this case, which were produced in 1556, include a list of the items of church furniture still missing at Easingwold, in addition to repairs that were required to the church fabric. The implication here is that the Easingwold churchwardens expected their neighbours at Raskelf to allow them to use any surplus items, but seemingly the inhabitants of Raskelf, and, presumably, those at Easingwold, had complied with the injunctions issued by the Edwardian council, for they were reported to have sold vestments, a Lenten cloth, sensors and iron taper stands, and a chalice. The churchwardens initially claimed this chalice had belonged to an unspecified guild, and had accordingly been disposed of by them, though they later argued that the chalice had only been sold as a result of rumours stating that each church should only have one, and stated that they had only sold the Lenten cloth after a proclamation that such cloths should not be used. They also protested that ‘all the sayd vestementes wer ... so ould and overworne that ... they wer nather semely nor honest to do divine service wythe in the sayd church of Easingwold.’¹²³ Although the churchwardens were open about the sales they had made prior to the court hearing, it is clear that rapidly changing regimes and subsequent movement of goods had led to tensions and destabilisation in the parish. Like Christopher Jackson in Leeds they were being prosecuted retrospectively for actions undertaken at a time when they were both legal and expected.

Similar incidents of the sale of church goods, and a subsequent dispute over their retrieval or replacement can be found for a number of other parishes within Yorkshire during Mary’s reign, though unfortunately the records do not always identify these parishes. In June 1554 for example, one Thomas Beswick was reported to possess ‘...a cope of blue damaske, one handbell and one bell stryng...’ which he was said to ‘...reteyne and keppe to his owne use...’¹²⁴ Beswick claimed he purchased these legitimately from Edwardian commissioners and stated that he had returned them to the church. However the implication is that he had not returned them prior to the

¹²² CP.G.608.

¹²³ *ibid.*

¹²⁴ Chanc.AB.7, f. 51r.

commencement of this case, suggesting perhaps that he was reluctant to lose out financially and had not taken the objects merely to preserve them. The court book reveals neither the parish in question, nor whether Beswick had in fact returned these goods to his church, and if so whether he loaned, sold or gifted them. In the same month Emma Clayton, widow of Ralph Clayton, a deceased regular clergyman of Hutton Bushell, was accused of retaining a handbell and ‘...a greate barr of Iron which dyd stand under as a stay and upholde the rode lofte...’¹²⁵ Emma was ordered to restore these items to the church under pain of excommunication, and though she admitted to having had the iron bar, she claimed it had already been restored to the church. This case dragged on for some time as William Clayton, a son of Ralph, contested the administration of his father’s will.¹²⁶ However the issue of the hand bell and iron bar seems to have faded into insignificance after the initial hearings of this cause, and was perhaps only used by William Clayton as a pretext for disputing the will in the courts in the full knowledge that the retention of Catholic furnishings would be taken seriously at a time when churches were re-equipping for Catholic worship.

Later in the year, in December 1554, William Barton, gentleman, and John Wright of the chapel of Ludderton within Sheriff Hutton parish were accused of possessing a variety of items which the courts felt should have been restored to the church.¹²⁷ However Wright claimed that his vestment, and Barton that his vestment, bells, towel, chalice and candlestick were not put away but always ready to be used in divine service whenever a priest ministered in the chapel. Frustratingly, once again this case makes no further appearance in the court books, and thus we can only speculate that Barton and Wright were jealously guarding items they viewed as their property, and were only prepared to loan these things to the church after facing prosecution for keeping them for their own use. However the fact that the parish’s churchwardens’ accounts show no sign that any goods such as these were purchased during Mary’s reign does perhaps serve as a useful indicator that Barton and Wright did return, or at least loan, their purchases back to the church. Indeed, the failure of particular ornaments or items of church furniture to appear in the extant churchwardens’ accounts is as likely to indicate that they were taken out of hiding and returned to the church as that the parish did not comply with the new laws and injunctions. In a

¹²⁵ Chanc.AB.7, f. 51v.

¹²⁶ Chanc.AB.7, f. 55v, 76r ff, *passim*.

¹²⁷ Chanc.AB.7, fols 99r, 100r.

slightly different case, which again does not indicate the parish concerned, one William Buckton, gentleman, was accused of not providing and maintaining the rood and other lights from his lands as had been done in the past.¹²⁸ Buckton admitted that he held the lands, but stated that he rented them from the queen's officers, therefore effectively passing responsibility for the provision of these missing lights to the Crown. Again the court book has no record of the outcome of this case, but once more it implies an unwillingness to part with any wealth in order to provision the church, and might perhaps be read as a measure of indifference towards the Catholic restoration as well as possibly representing the great upheaval of landownership in the aftermath of the dissolution of the monasteries and chantries.

Retention of Catholic goods throughout the Protestant years of Edward VI was doubtless widespread. Duffy's work on Morebath has shown more explicit evidence than is available for Yorkshire of the return of such goods to the parish church after the Catholic restoration; cloths, images, books and divers other goods gradually made their way back to Morebath church, though not all were given freely.¹²⁹ Equally, other research has demonstrated that the embezzlement of goods during Edward's reign often led to court proceedings during Mary's. In 1557 Margaret, Countess of Lennox, was investigated for embezzling goods worth thirteen shillings from the chantry chapel of Newsham in the parish of Wressle, and though she denied it clearly someone had obtained the items and was refusing to return them even under a Catholic regime. Similarly in Lancashire a commission was issued to investigate the alleged theft of chalices, bells, jewels and even cattle belonging to the former chantry chapel of Farnworth in the parish of Prescott, which was reinstated as a chapel of ease during Mary's reign.¹³⁰ For Catholics who had remained unequivocally committed to the pre-Reformation church, such embezzlements were not merely avaricious, but also sowed the seeds of heresy, and cases like these can be used to demonstrate the ongoing dispute over how to interpret the events of the previous two decades. Disagreements about the legitimacy of recent government actions and the moral status of those who benefited from them were common, and these disagreements served to deepen existing

¹²⁸ Chanc.AB.7, f. 50v.

¹²⁹ Eamon Duffy, *Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (Yale, 2001), pp. 162-3.

¹³⁰ Shagan, 'Confronting Compromise', p. 62.

divisions amongst men and women who regarded themselves as Catholic to the extent that even under Catholic rule they could not agree on what was right.¹³¹

As was seen in the previous chapter, some of the most revealing sources for the progress of Reformation and restoration in mid-sixteenth century Yorkshire are the writings of Robert Parkyn, priest of Adwick-le-Street near Doncaster. A local man, who had a private landed income as well as his clerical stipend, Parkyn retained strong conservative sympathies despite conforming to successive reforming regimes, although his will suggests that these sympathies were much muted by the time of his death in 1569.¹³² There is no evidence that Parkyn ever received a university education, yet the inventory of his books included in his will provides an interesting glimpse into his intellectual life. This was almost certainly of a higher standard than that of the majority of his contemporaries, and Parkyn was kept well informed about changes at higher levels through regular correspondence with his brother John, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. John also periodically sent parcels of books to Robert, which he in turn seems to have lent to neighbouring clergymen such as William Watson, curate of Melton-on-the-Hill.¹³³ The inclusion of works by John Calvin and John Jewel amongst his bequests suggests that if nothing else Parkyn was at least making an effort to get to know his enemy.¹³⁴ Watson's will, proved on the same day as Parkyn's provides an interesting comparative; the Calvinist statement in his preamble suggests that whatever his joy at the Catholic restoration Watson came ultimately to embrace reformed religion.¹³⁵ Far less is known about Watson, but the few surviving letters from his correspondence with Parkyn indicate that he shared Parkyn's happiness at the restoration of traditional religion. Watson wrote in 1555 of his joy that Parkyn was in agreement with him on the subject of trentals, and prayed that they will both be granted '...grace, health and space to accomplyshe that thing which my hartt have longe desyrede...'¹³⁶ His tone implied that the revival of trentals was not uncommon in Marian England, and though it does not appear to have been

¹³¹ *ibid*, pp. 58, 63.

¹³² Prob. Reg. 19, 54v-55r.

¹³³ A.G Dickens, 'The Last Medieval Englishman,' in *Christian Spirituality: Essays in Honour of Gordon Rupp*, ed. Peter Brooks (London, 1975), pp. 148-9; A.G Dickens, 'South Yorkshire Letters, 1555' in *Late Monasticism and the Reformation*, ed. A.G. Dickens (London, 1994), p. 192.

¹³⁴ Prob. Reg. 19, fols 54v-55r.

¹³⁵ Prob. Reg. 19, fols 52v-53r; Watson's preamble stated that he hoped by the merits of Christ's passion to be one of God's chosen elect.

¹³⁶ Dickens, 'South Yorkshire Letters,' p. 196.

common locally it is significant that some aspects of traditional Catholicism were revived when so many had been irretrievably lost to reform.¹³⁷

Parkyn's dislike of reform as seen in his *Narrative of the Reformation* has already been discussed, but this document also provides an invaluable glimpse of his reactions to the Marian restoration. The writing is personal; there is no evidence that other texts or manuscripts have been consulted, and Parkyn appears to have firmly blamed all the ills of his time on the effects of the religious schism. The *Narrative* clearly reflects the personal pleasure Parkyn himself felt at Mary's accession, and also reveals a detailed knowledge of events occurring far from Adwick-le-Street. Parkyn claimed that the proclamation of Mary's accession in York was met with widespread rejoicing, and reported that in many places 'preastes unmariede was veray glade to celebratt & say masse in Lattin, ...accordynge for veray ferventt zealle and luffe that thai had unto God & his laws.'¹³⁸ Parkyn claimed that by early September 1553 there were few churches in Yorkshire in which Mass was not celebrated, and that the parishes willingly embraced orders to re-equip their churches for Catholic worship 'with owtt compulsion of any actt, statutte, proclamation or law, butt only thatt...Her Majestie dyde wishe...thatt the sayme religion wiche ever she professide...were of all her subiectes quietlyt & charitablie embracide.'¹³⁹ The overall impression of Parkyn's writing is not only that he was delighted with the restoration of the old faith, but also that he, probably along with many of his contemporaries, believed the religious schism in England to be at an end.

Although such writings are rare, comparisons can be made with Sir Christopher Trychay, the vicar of Morebath in Devon from 1520 to 1574.¹⁴⁰ Like Parkyn, Trychay served his cure throughout the period of the English Reformation, and conformed to each religious change. Unlike Parkyn he did not write a tract against the English Reformation, but his conservative opinions can be gleaned from the personal commentary he added to his churchwardens' accounts. Certainly the difference in the way he wrote about the Edwardian period as one in which 'the church ever decayed,' whilst it 'was comforted again' during the reign of Mary is a clear indication of his

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

¹³⁸ Dickens, 'Parkyn's Narrative,' p. 80.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Duffy, *Voices of Morebath*, pp. 165, 168.

dislike of religious reform and joy at the restoration of Catholicism.¹⁴¹ Duffy has argued that Trychay's passages, written with hindsight after five years of Marian restoration, are formal in character, but comparison with Parkyn's writings suggests that Trychay's words were an expression of personal opinion. However as Duffy has pointed out, they can also be seen as a sign of the endorsement of the parish of Morebath, or at least of the vicarage, of the wider values of the Marian regime and the perception of the Reformation and reformed religion as a disastrous, un-English rebellion against God.¹⁴² Similar expressions of conservatism across several regimes can also be seen in the notes of Sir Thomas Butler, vicar of Much Wenlock in Shropshire, who recommenced saying Latin Mass on 2 September 1553, only two weeks after the Queen's proclamation permitting it, and who welcomed Elizabeth's accession with an elaborate series of Catholic services and celebrations.¹⁴³

Other evidence also indicates that the people of Yorkshire both welcomed the restoration and had retained some knowledge of what they could expect from Catholic services and pastoral care. In another case which will be considered more fully in chapter four, the parishioners and churchwardens of St. Martin's parish on Coney Street in York began a long-running court case against their curate in 1556 which revealed their concerns and attitudes towards clerical provisions and services, and also demonstrated their knowledge of the Latin rites. The parishioners of St. Martin's were not alone in taking legal action against their curate to ensure that their services were properly administered however. In 1555/6 the inhabitants of Butterwick, a chapelry within the parish of Foxholes in the East Riding, brought action against Robert Smallwood, rector of Foxholes.¹⁴⁴ Smallwood was accused of failing to provide a sufficient curate for Butterwick despite having great profits from the chapelry. The Butterwick residents claimed that neither Smallwood nor his 'simple' curate had provided, or were able to provide, sermons or godly exhortations, and protested that their lack of sufficient curate meant '...that ther was nether masse nor mattens nor evensonge songe or saide nor other sacraments or sacramentalls ministered nor the cure served ther, for faute of a chapleyne or curette namelye upon Sondais and holidais...' Butterwick cannot have been the only chapelry not receiving its full quota of services, but this case further demonstrates that many people were aware of the

¹⁴¹ *ibid*, p. 165.

¹⁴² *ibid*, pp. 165, 168.

¹⁴³ *ibid*, pp. 154, 169-70.

¹⁴⁴ CP.G.867.

nature and number of services they could normally expect to receive, and were keen to take steps to ensure that they were not missing out. That the parishioners of St. Martin's and Butterwick took the trouble of taking their rector to court does not indicate that the Catholic restoration was unpopular, rather that the people were eager to see the full implementation of the newly restored rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church.

Despite evidence of both opposition and eager conformity, the real extent of Catholic re-conversion across England only really became apparent with the change of government on Mary's death in 1558. Nevertheless there are also hints that Tudor England was already moving towards becoming a secular society, and it may be that loyalty to the political state, rather than to the church, was the reason the successive changes of religion were accepted with so little large-scale opposition. More personal and localised resistance was far more widespread however, and though Elizabeth later moved as quickly as Mary had to impose a change of religion, she faced a life-long struggle with those who opposed her settlement. It would be inaccurate to state that Mary's restoration of Catholicism was an unqualified success, just as it is inaccurate to state, as Dickens did, that the majority of English people were Protestant by 1553. The extreme religious policies of Edwardian and Marian England created a small number of outspoken zealots on each side, and a huge majority of people for whom churchgoing was an ingrained habit. Like Robert Parkyn, most people conformed and escaped the notice of the ecclesiastical authorities. A few did resist, though almost all submitted after performing the penance prescribed for them, and only one became a martyr. Perhaps this was because the people of Yorkshire had largely remained Catholic throughout Edward's reign and were, as Parkyn claimed, happy to see what they perceived to be an end to religious strife in England. However this does not account for those who clearly had established a personal belief in reformed religion, and directed their opposition at the central tenet of Catholic theology and ritual: the sacrament of the Mass. Clearly, the reception of the Marian restoration in Yorkshire was far more diverse than has hitherto been realised, and this has important implications for further studies of the Marian reaction and restoration. The cases studied in this chapter reveal that this supposedly Catholic county did not universally welcome the restoration of traditional religion and was visibly feeling the effects of repeated sudden reversals of religious policy.

Inevitably these reversals led to a crisis in the nature of authority, which can only have been emphasised by issues such as clerical marriage. Protestantism had taken a foothold where Catholicism supposedly reigned supreme, just as Catholicism remained strong in parts of supposedly Protestant Kent, and Catholics continued to collaborate even when the old religion was once again ascendant. All of this suggests that further regional studies are necessary for a more complete understanding of the complex political and religious realities of Marian England and the reactions of the English people. Certainly the history of Marian Yorkshire is characterised not so much by conformity and dissent, though naturally dissent is evident, but by religious uncertainty and ferment which continued, if in different forms, into the reign of Elizabeth I. It is undoubtedly becoming more and more difficult to characterise reactions to religious change simply along the lines of conformity and dissent, and regional studies such as this can only emphasise the fluidity and indistinct nature of these lines.

Yorkshire's reputation as a Catholic county has largely arisen from research on the later decades of Elizabeth's reign, when recusancy presentments dominated the ecclesiastical court proceedings. However as the previous two chapters have demonstrated, reactions to religious change across Yorkshire were far from uniform, and in this chapter I want to explore the early years of Elizabeth's reign, and consider whether Yorkshire was already showing signs of its later recusant tradition in the 1560s and 1570s. The lasting debate amongst scholars over whether Catholicism in post-Reformation England was a pre-Reformation survival or was revived by incoming priests has particular importance for Yorkshire, as the large numbers of priests working in Yorkshire have often been neglected by scholars in favour of studies of missionary work in southern England. The survival / revival debate will be discussed more fully below, but needs to be borne in mind whilst considering the evidence for the first decades of Elizabeth's reign. Nevertheless, it must also be remembered that religion in the 1560s remained a fluid, unstable entity, and levels of commitment, whatever the confessional preference, are notoriously difficult to gauge. The complexity and variation of personal religious choices and experiences, the lack of clear confessional divides and the uncertainty about the future of the church creates further difficulties for the historian, and conformity and partial conformity must be viewed as positive religious choices alongside Protestantism and Catholicism. Some viewed partial conformity as a way of reconciling conflicting political and religious loyalties, and for others it may have been a cloak for subversive activities, but for all conformity reflected the cooperation and collaboration of the early Reformation, whether or not this was recognised.¹ Protestantism had no clear definition in England until the early 1570s, which added to the difficulties of identifying boundaries, and undoubtedly every parishioner in 1560s Yorkshire had their own ideas about what Protestantism was. For a few it would have been a set of theological beliefs and ideas to which they adhered, and for many it was perhaps simply anything that was not traditional Catholicism. These differing views would undoubtedly have led to different interpretations of 'normal' religious behaviour, thus influencing the nature of non-conformity presentments in the courts and leading to varied interpretations of the

¹ Alexandra Walsham, "Yielding to the Extremity of the Time": Conformity, Orthodoxy and the Post-Reformation Catholic Community,' in Peter Lake & Michael Questier (eds), *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c.1550-1660* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 213.

severity of different transgressions. The wealth of material for Elizabethan Yorkshire has ensured that it has already received much attention, but much of this has been the result of particular scholarly objectives. The changing nature of scholarly approaches to the history of religious change in England has suggested that it is worth revisiting the Yorkshire material and offering a new interpretation of reactions to changing religious cultures and practices based on these differing modern approaches.

1558 to 1569

The accession of Elizabeth I in 1558 ended the brief Marian resurgence of Catholicism, and saw the last of the succession of religious changes imposed by the Tudors. The newly established Church retained many symbolic rituals alongside a Protestant theology, but despite the attempt to create a *via media* many people were not inclined to compromise. It is likely that many local magistrates found that social harmony was more easily achieved by ignoring religious differences than by enforcing uniformity. Manning has argued that in Sussex, a county which shared the relative geographic isolation of the north and many of its conservative social structures, social stability was prioritised over religious uniformity, and the Yorkshire evidence suggests that adherents of both faiths were able to live side by side. Shagan has argued that some finely balanced toleration for Catholicism existed within every community, which when it collapsed did so as a result of changes in public discourse about confessional identities rather than changes in people's beliefs.² The continued fluidity of confessional boundaries in the early Elizabethan period increases the difficulties for historians. Many political issues crossed the confessional divide, and Catholics, Shagan argued, were just as adept as their Protestant neighbours at the performance of political action in public settings.³ Conformity was far from ideologically coherent, and was often generated by social rather than religious concerns, and Questier has suggested that the same must often have been true of non-conformity.⁴

² Norman Jones, *The English Reformation* (Oxford, 2002), p. 106; Roger Manning, *Religion and Society in Elizabethan Sussex* (Leicester, 1969), p. 272; Ethan Shagan, 'Introduction: English Catholic History in Context,' in *Catholics and the Protestant Nation: Religious Politics and Identity in England, 1534-1640*, ed. Ethan Shagan (Manchester, 2005), p. 14; Egton in Cleveland is a good example of a parish in which Catholics and conformists lived together in peace. See W.J Sheils, 'Catholics and Their Neighbours in a Rural Community: Egton Chapelry 1590-1780,' *Northern History*, 34 (1998).

³ Shagan, 'English Catholic History in Context,' pp. 14-17.

⁴ M. Questier, 'Conformity, Catholicism and the Law,' in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c.1550-1660*, ed. P Lake & M. Questier (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 241.

The injunctions accompanying the 1559 settlement of religion required the unswerving loyalty of the English people to the newly created church, to be expressed by regular attendance and thrice-annual receipt of the Holy Communion at their parish church. In the north, religious change was accompanied by increasing governmental control and a loss of influence and high office for conservative magnates. It has been demonstrated that at least two-thirds of the office holding gentry were conservative, as were many of the parochial officials and local authorities upon whom the government relied to implement the 1559 settlement.⁵ The acute shortage of Protestant manpower in 1559 meant the government was unable to replace conservative JPs and parish priests, which naturally affected the extent to which the religious injunctions were implemented. Ten years later, in the midst of the Northern Rebellion, Ralph Sadler famously wrote to Cecil that 'there be in this country not ten gentlemen that do favour and allow of her majesty's proceedings in religion and the common people be ignorant, full of superstition and altogether blinded by the old popish doctrine.'⁶ Though conservative local JPs were more likely to find themselves removed from office than were members of the Council of the North, by 1564 the composition of the commissions of the peace in Yorkshire was little different than 1558. Conservative magnates and gentry remained dominant everywhere except the East Riding, and even there conservatism predominated amongst the general population.⁷ Archbishop Young faced considerable opposition when he asked that all JPs swear the oath of Supremacy, and there were few places in England with higher numbers of JPs unsympathetic to the new religion.⁸

The significance of the favourable commission in the East Riding will be considered in more detail in chapter five, but in the West Riding too Protestantism had made considerable headway, particularly in the growing industrial towns and their neighbourhoods, aided by the presence of men such as Thomas Gargrave, who held lands around Wakefield.⁹ Gargrave was increasingly concerned with the need for religious conformity in the north, and during Elizabeth's reign he served as vice-president of the Council of the North (from 1557 to his death in 1579) and a JP for the

⁵ J.T. Cliffe, *The Yorkshire Gentry From the Reformation to the Civil War* (London, 1969), p. 169.

⁶ A. Clifford (ed), *The State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler* (Edinburgh, 1809), pp. 54-6.

⁷ Susan Taylor, 'The Crown and the North of England 1559-70: A Study of the Rebellion of the Northern Earls 1569-70, and its Causes,' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Manchester, 1981), pp. 17, 19.

⁸ W.R Trimble, *The Catholic Laity in Elizabethan England 1558-1603*, (Massachusetts, 1964), p. 17.

⁹ Cliffe, *Yorkshire Gentry*, p. 169; Gargrave held former monastic lands at Nostell, near Wakefield.

West Riding (from 1542 to his death), as well as both Sheriff (in 1569 to 1570) of and MP for Yorkshire (in 1563, 1571 and 1572).¹⁰ Elsewhere the contrast was remarkable. Cleveland, which will also be studied in chapter five, continued to see the appointment of Catholics as JPs. In Richmondshire also, prominent religious conservatives such as Sir William Ingleby of Ripley and Richard Norton of Wath acted as local justices throughout the 1560s.¹¹ Members of both families were later presented for recusancy, and the Nortons were heavily involved in the Northern Rebellion. Richard Norton was also the only member of the Council of the North not reappointed in 1558, though he was certainly not the only Catholic member; the change to a Protestant Council was long and slow and the succession of early Elizabethan presidents did little to counteract Catholicism in the region.¹² Thomas Gargrave's 1570 claim that all the gentlemen in Richmondshire were 'evil in religion' was no great exaggeration.¹³ Even Robert Hebblethwaite, the Bishop of Chester's commissary in the Richmond archdeaconry, was suspected of being Catholic, and in 1570 an anonymous informer claimed that one Doctor Siggiswicke had been preaching the old religion in Richmond since the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. This was probably Dr. Thomas Sedgewick, a Cambridge graduate who played a prominent part in the Marian restoration of Catholicism and who in 1561 was confined to a small area around Richmond. He was accused of being a major fomenter of rebellion in 1569, and of using the terms of his 1561 bond to avoid summons to court in York, though he was ultimately committed to York Castle and died there in 1573.¹⁴ In 1580 one Lucy Sedgewick, possibly a relation of Thomas, was charged with deliberately corrupting gentlemen's children by keeping a Catholic school in Richmond, and was subsequently imprisoned in the town gaol.¹⁵ She was a unique example of a female teacher, almost all schoolmasters were male.

¹⁰ Ian W. Archer, 'Gargrave, Sir Thomas (1494/5–1579)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2006 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10383, accessed 31 May 2007].

¹¹ Hugh Aveling, *Northern Catholics: The Catholic Recusants of the North Riding of Yorkshire 1558-1790* (London, 1966), p. 78.

¹² R. Reid, *The Kings Council in the North* (London, 1921), pp. 186-7; Taylor, 'The Crown and the North of England,' pp. 14-16.

¹³ Cliffe, *Yorkshire Gentry*, p. 169; R. Fieldhouse and B. Jennings, *A History of Richmond and Swaledale* (London, 1978), p. 92.

¹⁴ Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, pp. 40-1.

¹⁵ Fieldhouse and Jennings, *Richmond and Swaledale*, p. 96; Lucy may also have been related to Dame Alice Sedgewick, formerly a nun at Nunkeeling priory. Alison Shell has demonstrated the importance of children and young people in the spread of Catholicism in post-Reformation England, arguing that many of those educated abroad came from families prepared to compromise with the Elizabethan state, and suggesting that on occasion Catholic children converted their parents. Alison Shell, "'Furor juvenilis': Post-Reformation English Catholicism and Exemplary Youthful Behaviour,' in *Catholics and the Protestant Nation*, ed. Ethan Shagan, chapter 8.

The conservatism of the north gave the Elizabethan government cause for concern throughout the 1560s, but crown interference was resented and many of the men appointed to positions in the north lacked local influence. The intentions and will of the government frequently bore little resemblance to what local representatives in the north could or would do. Control at a local level remained almost exclusively in the hands of conservative northern lords and parish officials and even as late as 1580 the Earl of Huntingdon believed that the continued connivance of churchwardens and local magistrates was concealing much recusancy in Richmondshire.¹⁶ Not all the officials of the northern ecclesiastical courts supported the changes they were required to implement, and the cooperation they required from sheriffs, JPs and churchwardens to implement reform and detect and punish offenders was received reluctantly if at all in Yorkshire, and indeed in neighbouring Lancashire.¹⁷ Conservative churchwardens were unlikely to diligently report conservative practices in their churches, especially if the rest of the parish shared their views, and conservative heads of household could play an important role in preventing the spread of Protestant views by refusing to allow their children and servants to receive a Protestant education. William Burton of Kirby Grindalythe in the Buckrose deanery, for example, was presented during the 1567 archiepiscopal visitation for refusing to allow his child to be instructed in the catechism. At Easington in Holderness the churchwardens were presented in the same year because none of the youth of the parish came to be instructed, and at Blacktoft and Bubwith in Harthill deanery the churchwardens were presented for not sending their own children and servants for instruction, the Blacktoft wardens instead sending them 'forth to plays and games.'¹⁸

Churchwardens and parishioners also actively concealed Catholic furnishings from visiting ecclesiastical officials, and the visitation returns of the 1560s are scattered with references to the discovery of books, ornaments and vestments, which can be used to map the activities of the authorities as well as the survival of elements of traditional religion. The visitation returns for the 1560s suggest that the West Riding

¹⁶ P. Tyler, 'The Significance of the Ecclesiastical Commission at York,' *Northern History*, 2 (1967), pp. 36-7; Taylor, 'The Crown and the North of England,' pp. 39-40; Fieldhouse and Jennings, *Richmond and Swaledale*, pp. 92, 96.

¹⁷ Ralph Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and People During the English Reformation 1520-1570* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 7, 15, 38; C. Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 231-2.

¹⁸ V1567-8/CB1, fols 153r, 186v; CB2 fols 34v, 38r.

deaneries of Ainsty and Pontefract demonstrated few signs of traditionalism during the 1560s. In Pontefract no Catholic books or church furnishings were found during the early Elizabethan visitations, and the majority of those presented for failing to attend church or receive communion had excuses such as sickness or working away, or had already been excommunicated for other offences, usually sexual immorality.¹⁹ This would seem to indicate that traditional sympathies in the Pontefract deanery were weak, yet continued bell ringing for the souls of the dead and a long-term refusal to receive the communion in Wakefield nevertheless confirm that even where conformity appears to have predominated, it was not uniform.²⁰ Similarly in Ainsty the people largely appear to have conformed to the 1559 settlement, though Cawood parish, the residence of the Archbishop of York, retained a handbell even after an investigation by High Commission officials in 1563, and Seth Brown of Harewood repeatedly failed to obey commands to declare certain superstitious books he kept in his house.²¹ Similar discoveries can be found elsewhere. In the 1559 royal visitation images were reportedly kept secretly in Bridlington and Foston, four parishioners of Fishlake were presented for their dislike of the new service, and an image of the Virgin Mary was still used for pilgrimage in Bainton, a clear indication of the continued strength of conservative beliefs and practice.²² Thomas Wood of Rillington in Buckrose deanery was found to have a vestment in his house in 1567, which he claimed was given to him by the vicar to deface, and numerous Catholic images and books were uncovered at a house in Ripon.²³

In the parish of Aberford in Ainsty criticism of the new regime was more explicit. Nicholas and Janet Backhouse and Janet Wilson were presented for reviling the churchwardens 'calling them robbers of the church for that they did taicke downe the crosse and Roode lofte with other things.' Nicholas went on to explicitly refuse permission for his house to be searched during service time to see if he was hiding others who failed to attend church, suggesting that this was so and clearly indicating continued support for traditional religion.²⁴ Presentments for the retention of images,

¹⁹ V1567-8/CB2, f.55r; V1571-2, f.188v; Edmund Flockton of Pontefract claimed sickness, and Edmund Blackburne of Linthwaite, parish of Almondbury, claimed he had been working away.

²⁰ V1567-8/CB2, f. 100r; V1567-8/CB1 fols 78v, 79r.

²¹ V1567-8/CB2, fols 125r, 132r, 154r, 158r, 171r, 187r, 210v, 217v, 223v; V1571-2, f. 90r.

²² C.J. Kitching (ed.), *The Royal Visitation of 1559, Act Book for the Northern Province* (SS, 187, 1975), pp. 65, 69.

²³ V1567-8/CB1, fols 102v-103v, 150v.

²⁴ V1571-2, f. 85r.

vestments and books were most numerous during the 1560s, which suggests that compliance could be enforced through visitations, but also reflects the increased efforts of the authorities to combat conservatism. In many of these cases the objects involved were eventually defaced and destroyed, but that so much survived is no doubt a reflection of the uncertainty surrounding the regime, and of hopes that the newly established Protestant church might not last. During the 1560s many people were simply waiting to see what would happen rather than making a conscious decision about whether or not to conform, and the Elizabethan regime facilitated, or perhaps enforced, this waiting game in the north by failing to take any decisive action on the issue of religious conformity and uniformity.

The records of the Northern High Commission shed further light on the religious culture of the Elizabethan period. Whilst regular visitations were able to deal with the majority of non-conformists, those who reached the court of the High Commission were generally more serious, or repeat, offenders, and the occasional appearance of the same names in both records emphasises that action was being taken. For the deaneries of Pontefract and Ainsty the small number of High Commission cases suggests that there was little non-conformity with which the visitations were unable to deal effectively. However these cases also suggest that whilst the local authorities were working to enforce the religious conformity and uniformity sought by the government, they were not always successful. Indeed Questier has questioned whether the government ever believed it was possible to compel total conformity despite appearing to seek conformity rather than conversion.²⁵ In Ainsty in 1564 Richard Poole, the rector of Kirkby Overblow, was accused of conservative practices which included continuing to ring an old sacring bell and failing to preach sermons or correctly say the litany.²⁶ Poole also ceased saying divine service and ministering the sacraments during the 1569 rebellion, which further emphasised his opposition to contemporary religious policy. His behaviour would have affected the religious experiences of his parishioners, but he does not appear to have been deprived, despite being viewed as a threat to the establishment of reformed religion.²⁷ In 1566 at Rothwell near Wakefield three men were charged with ‘concilinge and keapinge of Images sometimes apursteyninge to the parishe church of Rothwell,’ and two years

²⁵ Michael C. Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England 1580-1625* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 98, 126.

²⁶ HC.CP 1564/2.

²⁷ HC.AB5, f.100v.

later a Latin primer was found and ordered to be defaced and burnt outside Rothwell church.²⁸ This case was protracted, and local officials seem to have had some difficulty in ensuring that the primer was burnt, a possible reflection of popular local feeling. As Wakefield continued to stage its medieval *Corpus Christi* pageant until at least 1576, it is possible that the retention of this important element of the traditional calendar encouraged the continuation of other conservative beliefs and practices in the area, though as was seen in the case of Gabriel Walker in the previous chapter not all Rothwell parishioners resented reform.²⁹ In Darrington, also near Wakefield, a licence was issued to the churchwardens to seek out, deface and burn any remaining images.³⁰ There is no evidence to suggest that anything was found, but the evident strength of conservative feeling in the area, and the nature of the cases which appeared before the High Commission, perhaps gave rise to more diligent attempts to enforce conformity there.

Richmondshire, which though geographically located within the county of Yorkshire was under the jurisdiction of the diocese of Chester from 1541, demonstrated significantly different reactions to religious change in the 1560s. There are no extant visitation returns for Richmondshire until the late 1570s, merely odd scraps of information found amongst other materials, and a number of cases dealt with by the High Commission. These reveal that in the parish church of Kirkby Malzeard all the 'monuments of idolatry' remained undefaced in the late 1560s, and that a cross still stood in the rood loft. Additionally, despite the 1559 churchwardens' accounts for the adjacent parish of Masham recording the purchase of a communion book and psalter, the visitation information stated that neither Kirkby nor Masham possessed a communion table or all the required books. Similarly Richmond was using an 'old chest' in place of a communion table, and was not displaying the table of the Ten Commandments.³¹ In 1563 the churchwardens of Kirk Hammerton had to be forced by the courts to deface and destroy images and other superstitious objects, and by 1571 the parish evidently still lacked several books as the vicar Robert Caldbeck was

²⁸ HC.AB 3, f.45r; HC.AB 4, fols 33r-v, 34r, 73v, 81r, 86r-v, 97r, 99v, 114v; HC.CP 1569/2.

²⁹ H. Aveling, *The Catholic Recusants of the West Riding of Yorkshire 1558-1790* (Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society; Literary and Historical Section, 10:4, Leeds, 1963), p. 195; p. 114, above.

³⁰ HC.AB 1, f. 13v.

³¹ V1567-8/MISC; John Fisher, *The History and Antiquities of Masham and Mashamshire* (London, 1865), p. 581 (Kirkby was missing a bible and other books, Masham 'certain books'); J.S Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents in the Diocese of York* (Cambridge, 1948), p. 63.

presented for refusing to contribute towards the cost of their purchase, most probably a sign that he held conservative sympathies.³² At Ainderby Steeple and Bolton upon Swale the churchwardens were in trouble in 1564 for not providing service books, and a commission was issued to certain gentlemen of Bolton parish to seek out, deface and destroy images, an indication that ecclesiastical officials felt that Bolton's conservatism ran deeper than simply not providing Protestant worship books.³³

More emphatic evidence of the continuation of Catholic practice can be found in the behaviour of William Strickland of Croft, who in 1564 was accused of procuring the clerk George Smithson to baptise his child at Middleton Tyas without licence from his own minister, perhaps indicating that he sought a different baptismal ceremony to that prescribed in the prayer book.³⁴ Equally significant is a list of Richmondshire men and women who had been reconciled to the papacy before 1572.³⁵ A number of these were priests, one of whom, Sir Humphrey Nattres was a former monk of Peterborough abbey. Another, Mr Marton, had recently been in Rome, and one Henry Bovell was believed to have had dealings with Mary Stuart.³⁶ All were reportedly also reconciling others. Amongst the laymen cited, William Ingleby was named as employing two priests, and Francis Lascelles and his wife of Downholme were suspected to have been reconciled. Lascelles had been imprisoned in York castle in 1562 for speaking '... opprobrious words openlie in the churche ... to the disturbance of devyne service settfurthe by the boke of comon prayers,' and that the Earl of Huntingdon, president of the Council of the North from 1571, considered the Ingleby family 'a nest of dangerous traitors' merely serves to reinforce their importance in the continued survival of Catholicism.³⁷

Reconciliations were not confined to Richmondshire however, for in 1571 William Ardington of Adel in Ainsty was similarly presented, and a comparable dedication to traditional religion can be found in the case of Lord Thomas Metham and his wife Lady Edith. The Metham's first appeared before the High Commission in

³² HC.AB 1, f. 66r; V1571-2, f. 86r, 122v; It is possible that the books missing in 1571 had been destroyed during the Northern Rebellion, but the parish does not feature in the High Commission records alongside others whose books were destroyed by the rebels.

³³ HC.AB 1, fols 143v, 144r, 144v, 151v, 153v.

³⁴ HC.AB 1, f. 145v, 149v, 169v.

³⁵ HC MISC 1.

³⁶ Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, p. 40.

³⁷ HC.AB 1, fols 28v, 29v; Aveling, *Catholics of the West Riding*, p. 213.

1564 when Edith was accused of failing to receive communion and failing to be purified after childbirth, and Thomas of employing a Catholic tutor for his children.³⁸ Their failure to attend court, or carry out the penances imposed upon them in their absence saw that Thomas forfeited his bond of £200, whilst Edith was declared excommunicate. Both were imprisoned, but repeated examinations throughout the 1560s found them steadfast in their beliefs. In 1570 the High Commission was forced to admit defeat, and unsuccessfully appealed to the Privy Council to deal with the case. The Methams never conformed, and spent the rest of their lives either imprisoned or under heavy bond or house arrest. They appeared occasionally in the visitation returns for Howden, and it may have been their influence that caused Howdenshire to become a stronghold of recusancy in the later sixteenth century despite the general conformity of the East Riding.³⁹ Howden's position as an administrative peculiar may also have been significant, for the peculiar of Allertonshire and the liberty of Ripon also emerged as early Catholic strongholds.

Despite the strength of conservatism in Richmondshire, there is evidence that the authorities, like their counterparts elsewhere, were trying to take action against Catholicism. In 1565 William Thompson and Edward Weeks of Boroughbridge were called before the High Commission to answer charges of 'contempte for keaping bookes, Images and other monuments of Superstitious Religion.'⁴⁰ Both were committed to York castle for their offences, and though Thompson admitted he had kept the images for three years, Weeks claimed those found in his possession had been in a chest in his house when he came to it, and that he had not known the contents of the chest.⁴¹ For the commissioners, imprisoning these men was insufficient. Both were ordered to burn their books and make public declarations of their errors and offences in both York and Boroughbridge, suggesting that regional officials were concerned about levels of conservatism in the deanery, and about the potential threat to the regime that this might pose.⁴² By ensuring these Catholic texts were publicly burnt and the offenders humiliated the authorities were clearly hoping to create an example which would discourage people from continuing to follow traditional religious beliefs and

³⁸ V1571-2, fols 117r, 125v; For full details of the Metham case see P. Tyler, *The Ecclesiastical Commission and Catholicism in the North 1562-1577* (York, 1960), pp. 39-45; HC.CP 1564/1; HC.AB3 fols 63r-v, 164r-v; HC.AB5 fols 232v-233r.

³⁹ V1582, f. 192r.

⁴⁰ HC.AB 2, fols 22r, 24v.

⁴¹ HC.AB 2, fols 27r, 28r.

⁴² HC.AB 2, fols 30r-v, 35r.

practices in the same way that the Marian authorities had hoped to use similar punishments to discourage Protestants. Two years later, in 1567, undefaced idols, images and Latin books found in Aysgarth were also publicly burnt, and the ten parishioners involved in their concealment were to undertake humiliating public penances.⁴³ Local officials again evidently hoped that making an example of offenders would encourage conformity, but they never managed to completely remove all traces of Catholicism from Aysgarth, for the church still retains the rood screen and other pieces of carved wood salvaged from Jervaulx abbey at the time of its suppression in 1537.

In addition to these more obvious traces of traditional religion, the visitation returns in particular dealt with parishioners who were not attending services. The reasons for this were many and varied, and absence did not necessarily indicate non-conformity. Even in the pre-reformation period not everyone attended church regularly, indeed some rarely went at all.⁴⁴ Sickness, as claimed by Edmund Flockton of Pontefract and Richard Westerdale of Bridlington, was a common, and often valid, excuse for absence from church, and from answering court summons.⁴⁵ Some parishioners, such as Thomas Wilkinson of Bridlington, Thomas White of Haxby and Richard Batchelor of St. Martin cum Gregory, York, were obliged, or chose, to work on Sundays and protested that they were not mislikers of religion but were simply going about necessary business.⁴⁶ However White's reputation as a common drunkard may have been the real reason for his absence. Several men, including Richard Bilet of Ottringham in Holderness, and the York citizen William Hewett of Holy Trinity King's Court, claimed they remained at home for fear of arrest for debt, another acceptable reason for absence.⁴⁷ That parishioners appear to have had some knowledge of canon law is significant, they were aware of the acceptable reasons for absence, and no doubt many traditionalists would have used this knowledge to their advantage. Others would have been kept at home by physical disability or old age, and many preferred to spend their Sundays and holy days drinking and gambling, or participating

⁴³ HC.AB 3, fols 104r-105v; HC.CP 1567/1; See Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, pp. 144-6 and 225-7 for transcriptions of documents relating to this case.

⁴⁴ M Ingram, 'From Reformation to Toleration: Popular Religious Cultures in England 1540-1690' in T. Harris (ed) *Popular Culture in England c.1500-1850* (Basingstoke, 1995), p. 111; J.J Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford, 1985), p. 163.

⁴⁵ V1567-8/CB2, f. 55r, V1571-2, fols 60v-61r.

⁴⁶ V1567-8/CB1, f. 165r-v; CB2, fols 69r, 82r.

⁴⁷ V1567-8/CB1, f. 189r; CB2, fols 78v, 80v.

in dances, games and sports; presentments for playing host to drinkers and gamers during service time were not uncommon.⁴⁸ Finally, the sprawling nature of many Yorkshire parishes over often inhospitable territory, coupled with the loss of many chapels after the dissolution of the monasteries and chantries, caused some parishioners to protest that they lived too far from their church to attend regularly. After the dissolution of Grosmont priory in Cleveland for example, the village had no chapel until the nineteenth century. The nearest, those at Egton and Sleights, each lay some three miles distant along rough moorland tracks.⁴⁹

Similarly the numerous incidents of disturbances within parish churches were not necessarily born of a desire to deliberately disrupt the services of the established church. Cases of assault such as those between Roger Barker and Thomas Spencer of Wistow in Holderness, or John Stock of St. Michael le Belfrey in York and an unnamed parishioner of St. Martin, Coney Street, were almost certainly personal disputes, for there was little need for violence if the only intent was to disrupt the service.⁵⁰ It is of course possible that such disputes were religiously motivated; one Katherine Stocke of Michael-le-Belfrey parish was indicted for recusancy in 1584 and it is not inconceivable that the goldsmith John Stocke named as her husband in this indictment was the man involved in the assault of 1567.⁵¹ Many disturbances were concerned with pew rights, and in asserting their rights of social precedence, or in disputing those of others, parishioners could cause considerable disruption to the service whether or not they approved of the form in use. Though the layout of the average parish church had, in theory at least, changed dramatically during the Reformation years, some parts of the building continued to be perceived as holier than others, and pews gained much symbolic importance from their location.⁵² It is nevertheless difficult to separate social and spiritual status, and to assess the role of religious conflict in seating disputes for many were doubtless the result of interpersonal tensions much older than the Reformation.⁵³ Incidents of talking or 'wrangling' in church might indicate a deliberate attempt to disrupt services, particularly in cases such as that against William and Robert Jeffrayson, Reginald

⁴⁸ See for example V1567-8/CB2 fols 27r, 28r.

⁴⁹ D.W Clarke & J.A Soulsby, *The Story of Grosmont: Church and Village* (Helmsley, 1975), p. 14.

⁵⁰ V1567-8/CB1, fols 195r-v.

⁵¹ Hugh Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in York 1558-1791* (CRSP Monograph Series, 2, 1970), p. 204.

⁵² Christopher Marsh, 'Sacred Space in England, 1560-1640: The View from the Pew,' *JEH*, 53:2 (2002), pp. 288-90.

⁵³ *ibid*, pp. 308-9.

Hemsworth, Richard Goffarth and Henry Wright of Blacktoft, whose attendance at church seems in any case to have been under duress.⁵⁴ Holding a personal conversation was one way of ignoring the new service, whilst conforming sufficiently through attendance to avoid penalties, though undoubtedly many conservative contemporaries would have viewed this as collaboration with the policies of the regime. It must also be remembered that the church was in many ways a social space, and in parishes with several scattered settlements attendance at services may have been seen as a rare opportunity to socialise.

Arguably the government cared little for the reasons behind non-attendance at church or disturbances during service time, but merely sought to enforce conformity and uniformity as a means of strengthening social control. The majority of non-attendance cases give no reason for the absence of the defendant, but those who felt they had a legitimate excuse for their absence were at pains to make this clear to the authorities and few people completely cut themselves off from the church in the 1560s. The numbers of church papists, although always difficult to detect, were certainly high in the first half of Elizabeth's reign. Many conservatives were simply waiting to see what would happen next before making a conscious commitment, yet like their predecessors were collaborating with the regime simply by attending services. By choosing to conform rather than resist they were unconsciously assisting the establishment of the Elizabethan church. Walsham argued that church papistry remained the normal course of action for most English Catholics, whilst recusancy was perceived as a form of religious extremism, though Michael Questier has since suggested that there was more of a relationship between recusants and conformists than has often been allowed.⁵⁵ This seems to be born out by the Yorkshire evidence. Long term conformity ultimately led the majority to accept the Established Church, whilst only a few stood out for their refusal to cooperate, and only a minority of those who were proceeded against as recusants were unambiguously separatist Catholics. Questier has argued that recusancy was a much less clear-cut form of dissent than has often been acknowledged, and has suggested that the ambiguity surrounding it meant many known Catholics avoided persecution whilst occasional conformists were pursued for their partial non-conformity. Equally, definitions of recusancy relied upon

⁵⁴ V1567-8/CB2, f. 35r.

⁵⁵ Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (London, 1993), pp.73-4; Questier, 'Conformity, Catholicism and the Law', pp. 240-1.

the decisions of local authorities about who was sufficiently popish to be indicted, and the varied expressions of recusancy were as important as the permeable line between recusancy and conformity, a line which has often been obscured by the narrow categories used by contemporary polemicists and by the extent to which the prayer book of the Established Church was open to local interpretation.⁵⁶

Thus far I have concentrated on the behaviour of the Yorkshire laity in the decade after Elizabeth's accession, and on the importance of the attitudes of local secular authorities in the implementation of Established religion. Equally significant, and arguably more so, were the parish clergy. The nationwide shortage of reformed clergy in the 1560s was more acute in the north than elsewhere, which meant that many conservative clergymen escaped the purges of the first years of the reign and continued to offer Catholic or crypto-Catholic services to their parishioners. As only the most obstinate were deprived, the government was often reliant on unwilling ministers to implement the reforms of 1559. The unanimous rejection of the Elizabethan religious settlement by the bishops was not reflected lower down the clerical scale, and outright resistance by the clergy was unusual, but there was no effective way of policing their ministry. Few parish clergy refused to subscribe, and the majority of those who did seem to have submitted later, though Taylor suggested that up to one-fifth of Yorkshire clergy avoided any commitment by simply failing to attend when summoned to swear the oath subscribing to the settlement.⁵⁷ From 1561 to 1568 approximately seventy clerics appeared before the ecclesiastical authorities at York for conservative offences, and though none seem to have been openly saying Mass, many may have been counterfeiting it, and other aspects of Catholic liturgical life were continued.⁵⁸ Some clergymen continued to ring bells at All Hallows during the 1560s, others held communion services for the dead, and a few rang bells for the souls of the dead.⁵⁹ The presence of Catholic furnishings in many parishes, and the persistent failure of some churches to fully equip themselves with Protestant service books, strengthens the likelihood that many parish priests continued to use a predominantly Catholic form of service whilst facing little pressure to do otherwise. Though the few extant churchwardens' accounts for Yorkshire, mostly from the city of

⁵⁶ Questier, 'Conformity, Catholicism and the Law,' pp. 242-5, 257, 260; Jones, *The English Reformation*, p. 110.

⁵⁷ Taylor, 'The Crown and the North of England,' pp. 42-3.

⁵⁸ *ibid*, p. 53.

⁵⁹ V1567-8/CB1 fols 79r, 187r, 188v, 194v, 205r, 206v, 207v; CB2 fols 36r, 37r.

York, indicate that the fulfilment of official requirements was reasonably swift, it is impossible to know how widely the books were used once purchased, and in any case the records of visitation suggest that many parishes long resisted official pressure to purchase books.⁶⁰ The parish of Garton in Dickering deanery, for example, was lacking a book of homilies in 1567, and by 1575 had not only failed to procure one but was also missing a copy of Erasmus's *Paraphrases*.⁶¹ Similarly Aston parish in Doncaster deanery avoided purchasing a Bible and communion book until 1582.⁶²

Many of the clergy serving the early Elizabethan church in Yorkshire were former Marian or monastic clergy. Haigh has argued that those who remained active in their communities without holding a benefice were as important as seminary priests in the preservation of Catholicism beyond 1559. This argument has been disputed, but the importance of these old priests must not be under-estimated.⁶³ Furthermore, the large number of advowsons held by Catholic laymen since the dissolution of the monasteries meant that the death of an existing Catholic incumbent did not necessarily entail the end of traditional ministry in a parish. Absenteeism and pluralism, both common problems as a result of the shortage of ordained clergy and the large number of poor benefices in Yorkshire, also ensured that Catholic priests who did not hold official livings had more freedom to actively proselytise in the north.⁶⁴ Many of these had powerful lay protection, and their work further undermined the attempts of the government to impose crown religious policy. Nevertheless, as Duffy has argued, that priests such as Robert Parkyn of Adwick-le-Street, and Christopher Trychay of Morebath in Devon, could continue to function in the Elizabethan church goes some way towards explaining the success of the English Reformation; their continued presence throughout the changes of the mid-sixteenth century no doubt helped their

⁶⁰ Elizabethan churchwardens' accounts are extant for Holy Trinity Goodramgate, York (PR.Y/HTG.12 vol.1) St. Martin Coney Street, York (PR.Y/MCS.16), Easingwold (CP.G.608) and Sheriff Hutton (PR.SH.13).

⁶¹ V1567-8/CB1 f. 302v, V1575 f. 91r.

⁶² V1582, f. 254r.

⁶³ C. Haigh, 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation,' in C. Haigh (ed) *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 37; Patrick McGrath and Joy Rowe, 'The Marian Priests under Elizabeth I,' *Recusant History*, 17, (1984-5), p. 117 claimed that these old priests would simply have made the transition easier by creating an illusion that the new church was little different from the old. Hugh Aveling has identified around 150 Marian priests active in Yorkshire up to and beyond 1569, though not all of these held benefices. Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, p. 34. Claire Cross and Noreen Vickers have similarly provided a valuable study of the destinations of former Yorkshire monastics; *Monks, Friars and Nuns in Sixteenth Century Yorkshire*, (YASRS, 150, 1995).

⁶⁴ V1567-8 records over thirty presentments for clerical absenteeism and pluralism, and many more occurred in subsequent years.

parishioners to adapt.⁶⁵ Both Parkyn and Trychay had welcomed the Marian restoration of Catholicism, but both remained in their livings until their deaths some years after Elizabeth's accession. Elements of their own traditional preferences would have undoubtedly continued to influence the nature of their conformity and the way in which the Elizabethan church was received by their parishioners, though significantly Trychay was a regular preacher in his parish. This was a rarity in Devon, and indeed in Yorkshire, and perhaps suggests that Trychay's conformity became more than just a grudging minimalism.⁶⁶

Other old priests were not so ready to conform. In 1570 William Wright, a former canon of Egglestone priory who held the living of Catterick, was charged with saying Mass during the Northern Rebellion.⁶⁷ As will be seen, others faced similar charges after 1569, but Wright's monastic heritage might suggest that he had never ceased to say Mass, and was only discovered as a result of the increased persecution following the rebellion. Thomas Mudde, the former Jervaulx monk who reputedly carried the head of George Lazenby into Scotland, returned to England during Mary's reign and acted as a schoolmaster in Knaresborough before becoming chaplain to the Earl of Northumberland. He was forced into hiding by the failure of the rebellion, but probably continued to provide Catholic services and sacraments as he passed between safe houses across Richmondshire, until his capture at Boroughbridge in 1579.⁶⁸ In 1568 the curate of Ripon, Thomas Blackburne, was accused of continuing to say traditional services, particularly the service for the purification of women after childbirth, in a former chantry chapel within Ripon church, which still contained an altar. Blackburne was also accused of removing certain images from the main church, but it is unclear whether he placed these in the chapel, or whether they formed part of the haul uncovered in a house in Ripon by the commissioners.⁶⁹ William Bell, the vicar of Kirkburn in Harthill deanery was taken before the High Commission for the retention of altar stones, a tabernacle and popish books in the church following a report from his disgruntled former clerk John Marshall soon after what Marshall believed to be his unfair dismissal.⁷⁰ That Marshall had made no effort to report Bell for retaining

⁶⁵ Eamon Duffy, *Voices of Morebath: Reformaton and Rebellion in an English Village* (Yale, 2001), p. 177.

⁶⁶ *ibid*, p. 175.

⁶⁷ Cross and Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns*, p. 369.

⁶⁸ *ibid*, p. 135; Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, p. 44.

⁶⁹ HC.AB 3, fols 182v-183r, 185r, 189r-190r; V1567-8/CB1 fols 102v-103v.

⁷⁰ HC.CP 1570/4.

such items prior to his dismissal suggests that he had no intrinsic objection to them and had perhaps assisted in their concealment. Rather he may merely have wanted to see some form of retribution against his former employer, and knew that religious non-conformity, particularly evidence of conservatism, would be treated seriously. By collaborating with the regime Marshall perhaps overlooked his own religious preferences in favour of pursuing his grievance, evidence of Shagan's arguments that the Reformation brought a religious dimension to many other issues.⁷¹ Edward Moore of Barnborough may also have used the religious conservatism of his parson Richard Salvin to his own advantage in their ongoing dispute.⁷² The accusations against Salvin included his neglect of services, failure to observe the religious injunctions, assault and fornication. Moore's involvement in at least two other High Commission cases with Barnborough parishioners suggests he may have been something of a troublemaker, but the Salvins were known Catholics, and Richard's failure to fully conform to the Elizabethan settlement may have provided Moore with the validation he needed to press ahead with his other charges.⁷³ To many northerners, Catholicism in the 1560s was sufficiently widespread and flourishing to have appeared a credible alternative to the Elizabethan settlement, and the belief that Catholicism would one day be restored does not appear to have been uncommon in the decade before 1569.⁷⁴

Increasing incidents of Catholic non-conformity after 1570 are as likely to have been the result of increased governmental pressure to conform, and of greater diligence by a growing number of Protestant officials in the north to seek out adherents of the old religion, as they were to growing numbers of conservatives seeking reconciliation to the Catholic church, at least until the arrival of the seminary and Jesuit priests from the late 1570s. Non-conformity was not the only choice available however. Conformity, though difficult to measure as its legality often obscured its existence, was arguably the choice made by the majority.⁷⁵ Often it was the parishioners who conformed that were responsible for reporting their neighbours, and occasionally their

⁷¹ Ethan Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2003).

⁷² HC.CP 1566/1; HC.AB 3, *passim*; HC.AB 5 fols 228v-229r.

⁷³ See HC.AB 5 fols 225v-227v for the other cases Moore was involved in.

⁷⁴ D. Marcombe, 'A Rude and Heady People: The Local Community and the Rebellion of the Northern Earls,' in *The Last Principality: Politics, Religion and Society in the Bishopric of Durham, 1494-1660*, ed. David Marcombe, Nottingham (1987), pp. 135-36; Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, pp. 242-4, has argued much the same for Lancashire, suggesting that the Lancastrian church simply did not have the machinery to either enforce the settlement of religion or resist the threat from recusancy.

⁷⁵ Judith Maltby, *Prayerbook and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 5, 13.

clergy, for failing to adhere to the religious injunctions.⁷⁶ This might indicate that parishioners were familiar with prayer book services, and desired them to be used, but also emphasises the importance of neighbours in the process of enforcing the religious settlement. The influence of officials such as JPs and even churchwardens was often indirect, and relied upon parishioners to provide information about the non-conformity or immoral behaviour of their neighbours. Many cases clearly involved the retention of traditionalism, but arguably cases in which clergy were presented for refusing to wear a surplice, such as Melchior Smith of Hull and Francis Green of Birkby in Cleveland, indicate a continued desire for the retention of links with the ceremony and ritual of the past, and suggest that more radical Protestant beliefs were as unpopular as open conservatism.⁷⁷ Obviously only a minority of Yorkshire parishioners resorted to the church courts, not least because to do so was beyond the bounds of financial possibility for most of them, but the fact that some did is evidence that the prayer book service came to have some keen adherents, and that not all those attending prescribed services were simply waiting for a return to Catholicism.

Most early attachment to Protestant worship occurred in the towns, and the earliest developments in urban centres such as Halifax and Beverley have been considered in the previous two chapters. It has been argued that the presence of these Protestants aroused considerable antagonism, and did more harm than good to the reformed cause in the region, but in many urban centres the final transition from Catholic to Protestant was relatively smooth if not especially rapid.⁷⁸ Doncaster for example had attracted educated Protestant preachers since the 1530s, and had well-established links with the universities in Oxford and Cambridge.⁷⁹ Beyond the survival of images in the vestry until 1559, there was little evidence of conservatism or Catholic non-conformity in Doncaster after Elizabeth's accession, and the town was served by Puritan ministers from 1579.⁸⁰ Similarly in Beverley the transition from Catholic to Protestant was relatively smooth. Reformed religion spread along trade routes and kinship connections, and through the clergy, almost all of whom were university graduates from 1560, and by the 1580s the town was becoming a noted

⁷⁶ *ibid*, p. 20.

⁷⁷ *ibid*, pp. 36-9; The cases of Smith and Green will be discussed in chapter 5.

⁷⁸ Taylor, 'The Crown and the North of England,' p. 63.

⁷⁹ C. Cross, 'Religion in Doncaster from the Reformation of the Civil War,' in *The Reformation in English Towns, 1500-1640*, ed. P. Collinson and J. Craig (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 51-2.

⁸⁰ R. Marchant, *The Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York 1560-1642* (London, 1960), p. 320; Kitching (ed.) *The Royal Visitation of 1559*, p. 67.

centre of Protestant preaching.⁸¹ Catholic gentry from outside the town caused religious divisions towards the end of the century, but Beverley was never a Catholic town during Elizabeth's reign, despite a disproportionately high number of recusants.⁸² Solid relations between the clergy and urban magistrates were essential to the smooth implementation of reformed religion in Doncaster and Beverley, and as will be seen below the story was much the same in Leeds and Halifax. This success does not appear to have spread much beyond the towns, despite orders issued by Archbishop Grindal for JPs to receive and assist preachers who were ordered to travel around the county providing sermons.⁸³ Whilst active Protestantism certainly existed in 1560s Yorkshire it was largely confined to small urban groups. Elsewhere, despite the conformity of the majority, the policies of the crown were widely unpopular.

It is likely that far more incidents of conservatism existed in early Elizabethan Yorkshire than appear in the visitation returns and court records, and as Haigh has suggested was the case for Lancashire, I would argue that in parts of the county conservatism was so widespread that it was simply not reported.⁸⁴ There are obvious dangers in using silence amongst the extant archival material to construct an argument, but for Yorkshire there is sufficient supporting evidence from later decades to uphold the suggestion that conservatism was much more widespread than the records of the 1560s suggest. Degrees of conformity varied enormously even in parishes considered to be predominantly conservative, but it seems likely that Catholicism in Cleveland and Richmondshire was largely ignored by Catholic local officials, and that concerted efforts against traditional religion were only made when more senior government figures became involved, such as after the 1569 rebellion. Archbishop Young significantly failed to actively engage in the anti-Catholic movement in the 1560s, or to closely examine the confessional positions of his clergy, and, despite the establishment of the High Commission in 1561, by 1569 there had been no positive Reformation in the north. Young rarely utilised the power and influence of the Commission, and the majority of its early work involved disciplining the most recalcitrant clergy and destroying the traditional church furnishings which remained in

⁸¹ David Lamburn, *The Laity and the Church: Religious Developments in Beverley in the first half of the Sixteenth Century*, (Borthwick Papers, 97, York, 2000), p. 8.

⁸² David Lamburn, 'Politics and Religion in Early Modern Beverley,' in *The Reformation in English Towns*, ed. Collinson and Craig, pp. 66-7 & 72-3.

⁸³ R.R Reid, 'The Rebellion of the Earls, 1569,' *TRHS*, 2nd series, 20 (1906), p. 190.

⁸⁴ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 264.

so many churches across the region.⁸⁵ Few attempts were made in the 1560s to eradicate conservatism amongst Yorkshire's lay leaders, and even when parishes physically conformed it was impossible to remove traditional beliefs as swiftly as the images and ornaments they accompanied. During the 1560s religion in Yorkshire was more about destruction of the old than construction of the new, and it is perhaps unsurprising that when the only serious armed rebellion of Elizabeth's reign broke out in 1569, Yorkshire provided the largest contingents of men who rose in support of traditional religion.⁸⁶

The Northern Rebellion

Arguments about the Northern Rebellion of 1569 have primarily centred on the roles of religion and politics, the significance of the presence of Mary Queen of Scots and court intrigue. The story of the rebellion is well known, and has been given detailed recent attention by Krista Kesselring, so it will not be repeated here.⁸⁷ The collapse of the rising before any concerted effort was made to crush it has led many to conclude that it marked a decisive moment in Elizabethan politics and religious governance, but in fact the Northern Rebellion posed little real threat to the crown. The insecurity of Elizabeth's throne, the tensions caused by repeated religious change in recent decades, the example of contemporary European religious wars and the threat of foreign Catholic assistance for the rebels, all of which were compounded by the presence of Mary Queen of Scots, meant that contemporaries took the rebellion very seriously. Traditional historiography of the rebellion has often viewed religion as simply a rallying cry by the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland to gain

⁸⁵ Tyler, 'The Significance of the Ecclesiastical Commission,' p. 27.

⁸⁶ Hugh Aveling, 'Recusancy Papers of the Meynell Family,' *CRSP*, 61 (1964), pp. xi & xvi; G Thornton, 'The Rising in the North 1569' *Northern Catholic History*, 17 (1983), pp. 4-6; K. Kesselring, 'Mercy and Liberality: The Aftermath of the 1569 Northern Rebellion,' *History*, 90 (2005), p. 217; Taylor, 'The Crown and the North of England,' p. 262; H.B McCall, 'The Rising in the North: A New Light Upon One Aspect of it,' *YAJ*, 18 (1905), pp. 74-87; all give an idea of the numbers involved from Richmondshire and Allertonshire, and the letters of George Bowes, printed in Cuthbert Sharp, *Memorials of the Rebellion of 1569* (London, 1840), track the arrival of groups of rebels from Yorkshire.

⁸⁷ For histories of the Northern Rebellion see Taylor 'The Crown and the North of England'; A. Fletcher & D. MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions*, 5th Edition, Harlow (2004), pp. 102-16; Sharp, *Memorials*; Reid, 'The Rebellion of the Earls,' pp. 171-203; Marcombe, 'A Rude and Heady People,' pp. 117-45; K.J Kesselring, "'A Cold Pye for the Papistes": Constructing and Containing the Northern Rising of 1569,' *Journal of British Studies*, 43 (2004); Kesselring, 'Mercy and Liberality'; I am also grateful to Krista Kesselring for sending me a copy of the typescript of her new book *The Northern Rebellion of 1569* (Palgrave, 2007) which has appeared too late for inclusion in this thesis, but nevertheless supports the findings of my research.

support for their primarily politically motivated rebellion.⁸⁸ However the Elizabethan government recognised that the number of conservatives in the north was too high to risk making religious truth the focus of official arguments against the rising.⁸⁹ The queen aimed in her proclamations against the rebellion to make the northerners choose between dissolute and dishonest leaders and a benevolent, peaceful queen rather than between the Protestant and Catholic churches. The production of a small number of popular ballads portraying the earls as heroes might suggest that Elizabeth was not entirely successful, and in any case in 1569 dividing lines between the old and new religions remained blurred and uncertain.⁹⁰ The Earl of Sussex, the queen's agent in the north, found it more difficult to ignore the issue of religion, and it was his emphasis that the Earls used religion only as a cover for their own, baser, motives that became the standard line in official pronouncements on the revolt.⁹¹

There are evident similarities between the 1569 rebellion and the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace. Conservative sentiments ensured that accounts of high political intrigue found a receptive audience amongst a population that already resented the attacks on their parish churches, and clearly the affairs of state were both of relevance and interest to the northern populace. Likewise rumour, particularly regarding the fate of parish churches, was as widespread and influential in 1569 as in 1536 and similarly provided a channel through which people were able to articulate their political opinions and become active participants in the political process.⁹² Similarly, it seems certain that as in 1536, the clergy were actively instigating and spreading rumour, though given the number of parish clergy still displaying conservative sympathies during the 1560s this is perhaps unsurprising. The rebels of 1569 did not publicise their aims like their predecessors in 1536, but whilst the rebellion may have begun as the ill-planned result of the political fears and intrigues of the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland, and may have been ended by their flight, as far as there can be said to have been a unifying factor amongst the rebels this was, as in the Pilgrimage of Grace, almost certainly religion. Ralph Sadler, working as Elizabeth's agent in the

⁸⁸ Reid, 'The Rebellion of the Earls,' pp. 171-203; C. Haigh, *English Reformations*, (Oxford, 1993), p. 257; A. Somerset, *Elizabeth I*, (London, 1997), p. 297; The Earls' proclamation can be seen in Sharp, *ibid*, pp. 41-2.

⁸⁹ Kesselring, "A Cold Pye," p. 431.

⁹⁰ J.K Lowers, *Mirrors for Rebels: A Study of Polemical Literature Relating to the Northern Rebellion, 1569*, (Berkeley, 1953), pp. 47-9.

⁹¹ Kesselring, "A Cold Pye," pp. 431-2; Raine, 6, pp. 175-77.

⁹² Tim Harris (ed.), *The Politics of the Excluded, c.1500-1850* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp. 1, 8; See also essays in this volume by Ethan Shagan, Andy Wood and Steve Hindle.

north, certainly believed that most of the rebels joined up because of their affection for the old religion.⁹³ Similarly, many rebels carried banners depicting the five wounds of Christ, or the red crusading cross, which as in 1536 served to unify them behind the common cause of religion. Kesselring has argued that the rebellion can be treated at least in part as a popular religious rebellion that for many people offered the chance to repudiate the religious changes forced upon them.⁹⁴ Certainly one example can be given of reconciliation to Catholicism as a result of the rebellion. John Acrigge, a former chantry priest in Richmond who later became a curate there, had conformed to the Elizabethan church but fled abroad after the rebellion, later returning as a missionary priest. He was captured, imprisoned, and died in Hull Blockhouse in 1585, but clearly the Catholic rhetoric of the rebellion had a considerable impact upon him.⁹⁵ The wider appeals of the Earls for assistance failed, largely because their names meant little south of Yorkshire, but perhaps also because there had been insufficient persecution of Catholics by 1569 to incite a widespread desire for rebellion. The continued presence of Mary Queen of Scots in England, and the unsecured succession, doubtless ensured that many English Catholics still hoped for a restoration and in 1569 remained content to bide their time without jeopardising existing opportunities for conservatism within the Established church. Even within Yorkshire none of the gentry listed as Catholic in Thomas Gargrave's 1572 list were directly associated with the 1569 rebellion, though some did send their brothers or sons, and as will be seen in chapter five the refusal of some to participate ensured that their tenants also refrained from rebelling.⁹⁶

The rebellion undoubtedly had a significant impact upon religious behaviour and culture in some areas. There are only six known cases of the celebration of Mass in Yorkshire, all in parishes situated between Richmond and Ripon, but the destruction of Protestant service books was widespread.⁹⁷ In early 1570 a quarter of all Richmondshire parishes were ordered by the High Commission to replace Protestant service books damaged or destroyed during the course of the rebellion, and of these

⁹³ Clifford, *The State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler*, Vol. 2, pp. 54-56 & 66-7; Sharp, *Memorials*, pp. 42-7 & 103.

⁹⁴ Kesselring, "A Cold Pye," pp. 426-7, 429.

⁹⁵ Fieldhouse and Jennings, *Richmond and Swaledale*, pp. 95-6.

⁹⁶ Sharp, *Memorials*, pp. 75-6; J.J Cartwright, *Chapters in the History of Yorkshire Being a Collection of Original Letters, Papers and Public Documents, Illustrating the State of that County in the Reigns of Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I* (Wakefield, 1872), pp. 29-30.

⁹⁷ HC.AB fols 114r, 124v, 144r, 159v, 169v; Protestant books were destroyed in at least 65 Yorkshire parish churches, see HC.AB *passim*, especially fols 33v-52r & 63v-67r.

over half were situated in Catterick deanery, home to a large number of the rebels.⁹⁸ Some men, such as Thomas Beckwith of Well, were personally charged with replacing lost and damaged books, and many others, both clerical and lay, were fined for their offences during the rebellion. Others, such as Christopher Hutcheson, clerk, and Robert Ward, both of Richmond, and the clerk Christopher Beckwith of Burneston were threatened with imprisonment for their roles in the rebellion and a number of wealthier men, such as John Gower, the gentleman Thomas Wray and Robert Heighington, escaped abroad.⁹⁹ Gower was later ordained at Douai, though it is unlikely he ever returned to England, and Thomas Wray's arrest alongside one Robert Smelt in 1574 led to the discovery of several Catholic books in their possession which had previously belonged to one John Moore, a chantry priest.¹⁰⁰ It was in Catterick deanery too that the majority of known Catholic Masses were held during the rebellion. Robert Hewart was charged with hearing Mass during the rebellion at Kirkby Fleetham parish church, though he claimed he had simply come upon the service by chance, and Richard Percy was charged with the same offence in Bedale.¹⁰¹ Christopher Simson, the vicar of Kirkby Fleetham admitted that he had said Mass in his parish church, but claimed he was forced to do so, and in Hispswell, a chapelry of Catterick parish, James Bower confessed that he had provided the Latin service book that the curate William Knight had used to say Mass there during the rebellion.¹⁰² Catholic services were also held in Ripon, and were seemingly well attended for around thirty lay parishioners from Ripon appeared before the High Commission in 1570 for involvement in Catholic worship.¹⁰³

James has argued that this activity should not be used as evidence of fervent Catholicism as the initiative often lay with the rebel leaders and people were often reluctant to act without the authority of their social superiors. However there were several parishes in the Bulmer and Boroughbridge deaneries in which books were damaged or destroyed, but no rebels or rebel leaders produced, and attendances at the Masses held during the rebellion seem to have been significant, suggesting that

⁹⁸ HC.AB 5, fols 63v-67v; 24 out of 99 parishes were presented for missing books, 13 of these were in the Catterick deanery; the destruction of books was also widespread in Cleveland, see chapter 5 below.

⁹⁹ HC.AB 5, fols 62r, 73r, 95v-98v, 233v, 236v, 237r; Fieldhouse and Jennings, *Richmond and Swaledale*, 93; Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, p. 56 suggested that Gower may have secretly visited Richmond in 1572, but this is unsubstantiated.

¹⁰⁰ Fieldhouse and Jennings, *Richmond and Swaledale*, p. 96.

¹⁰¹ HC.AB 5, fols 124v, 144r.

¹⁰² HC.AB 5, f. 159v.

¹⁰³ HC.AB 5 f. 114r.

pressure to celebrate Mass may have come from parishioners rather than rebel leaders, an argument substantiated by Christopher Simson's claims in his examination.¹⁰⁴ Similarly rebels evidently came from areas that did not see the destruction of books, for a Star Chamber case of 1572 refers to the involvement of a number of Craven men in the rebellion, and particularly William Kighley. The primary concern of this case was with an incident of poaching, but there is an implication that Kighley continued to spread sedition after the collapse of the rebellion.¹⁰⁵ Conservative feelings clearly ran deep in areas not directly affected by the rebellion, for in 1570 William Forrest, a churchwarden at Hunsingore in Boroughbridge deanery, was accused of concealing vestments, and Christopher Jackson of Terrington parish in Bulmer deanery came before the High Commission for openly voicing support for the rebels and expressing his desire to hear Mass again soon.¹⁰⁶ Jackson denied the accusation, but further charges in which he was reported to have made repeated verbal attacks on married clergy and their families suggest that Jackson harboured a deep dislike of the religious settlement.¹⁰⁷ Even in Pontefract deanery there is evidence of the reach of the rebellion, for Otho Hunt, the vicar of Kirkburton and rector of Methley was summoned before the archbishop in 1570 for his involvement.¹⁰⁸ Northern conservatism did not spark the 1569 rebellion, but it was sufficiently strong and widespread to prevent reformed religion making much progress in many areas and the violence towards symbols of the new faith reflects genuine popular grievances that predated the rebellion. In addition the recent burnings of traditional images and books, and the humiliating public penances for their guardians, meant many northerners were ready to take advantage of the opportunity presented to them and participated enthusiastically in the destruction of the furnishings and equipment of the newly established religion.¹⁰⁹

In many ways the Northern rebellion was doomed to failure from the outset, but ultimately it proved to be a turning point in the fortunes of English Catholicism in the north, and it certainly ended most hopes of a legal restoration. The papal bull of

¹⁰⁴ M.E James, *Family, Lineage and Civil Society: A Study of Society, Politics, and Mentality in the Durham Region, 1500-1640* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 60-1; Taylor, 'The Crown and the North of England,' pp. 272-5; HC.AC 5 fols 64r-67v.

¹⁰⁵ STAC 5/T5/14; William Kighley, William Dunwell and Roland Norton were named in this case as former rebels, but the implication is that they had been part of a sizeable contingent of rebels, though they claimed that the Craven region had received the Queen's pardon for their involvement.

¹⁰⁶ HC.CP 1570/1.

¹⁰⁷ HC.CP 1570/2.

¹⁰⁸ Aveling, *Catholics of the West Riding*, 200.

¹⁰⁹ Kesslering, "A Cold Pye," pp. 428-9.

1570 which excommunicated Elizabeth was of dubious legality even within Catholic circles, but coupled with the failure of the rebellion it nevertheless helped to harden much conservatism into Catholic resistance and began the process of consolidation of the old faith which was continued by the seminary priests from the late 1570s.¹¹⁰ The rebellion also marked something of a turning point in contemporary Protestant polemical literature, and arguably was the beginning of the radicalisation of positions on either side of the confessional divide. Pamphleteers such as Thomas Norton and John Phillips began to use the terms 'papist' and 'traitor' synonymously, deploying the anti-Catholic vocabulary which so clearly shaped the English religious culture of subsequent decades. For Protestant polemicists the rebellion offered proof that papistry and treason were synonymous, and the broad, popular attachment to traditional religion demonstrated by the rebels, coupled with the participation of ordinary men and women in the rebellion represented something extremely sinister.¹¹¹ The crown sought to play down the religious element of the rebellion, but in doing so made its significance clear, and whilst the actions of the rebels do not demonstrate the committed Romanism attributed to them by Protestant contemporaries, widespread and deep-seated dissatisfaction with Elizabethan religious reforms clearly existed, which continued and crystallised into more obvious forms as the reign progressed.

After the Rebellion

The results of the 1569 rebellion were diametrically opposed to those hoped for by the rebels. Whilst there was no obvious loss of Catholic power and seigniorial authority in Yorkshire such as that caused in Norfolk by the execution of the Duke of Norfolk, the rebellion clearly exposed the lack of governmental policy for the north, and the extent to which the new regime had failed to take root. The government quickly took steps to strengthen crown control in the north and promote Protestantism more aggressively by promoting to influential positions both men of known Protestant credentials, such as Grindal and Huntingdon, and new men who owed their wealth and status directly to the monarch.¹¹² The failure of the rebellion also provided an

¹¹⁰ M.B Rowlands (ed), *English Catholics of Parish and Town 1558-1778* (CRSP, Monograph Series 5, 1999), p. 11.

¹¹¹ For more on the literature produced in response to the rebellion see Kesslering, "A Cold Pye," pp. 436-441; Lowers, *Mirrors for Rebels*; and D. Busse, 'Anti-Catholic Polemical Writing on the 'Rising In the North' (1569) and the Catholic Reaction,' *Recusant History*, 27 (2004).

¹¹² Kesslering, 'Mercy and Liberality,' pp. 224 & 226-7.

opportunity for the crown and archbishop to gain greater control over the northern clergy. A few livings were immediately vacated by the flight or removal of priests involved in the rebellion, and the forfeiture of lands of laymen who had supported the Earls meant control of a number of advowsons now passed into crown hands.¹¹³ A more determined drive against Catholics was begun in the years following the rebellion, and the translation of Edmund Grindal to the See of York in 1570, closely followed by the promotion of Henry Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon, to president of the Council of the North clearly signalled the government's intention to firmly establish the Elizabethan regime in the north. Nevertheless, despite stricter tests being applied to surviving Marian clergy in the aftermath of the rebellion, and a fresh wave of deprivations, there were still insufficient Protestant clergy to replace all those who did not fully subscribe to the 1559 settlement, and many conservative clergy remained within the Established church. Equally many of those who were deprived remained active in the north, and exiles often maintained their contacts in northern England.¹¹⁴ The ability of these men to preserve traditional practices and prevent the spread of Protestantism was crucial in determining the nature of northern conservatism.

On his arrival in Yorkshire Grindal declared the diocese to be like another church so untouched was it by the Reformation, and within three weeks he had declared the three evils of the inhabitants to be 'great ignorance, much dullness to conceive better instructions, and great stiffness to retain their monted errors'.¹¹⁵ It was Grindal's primary visitation as archbishop which appeared to mark the initial implementation of the Reformation in many areas of Yorkshire, and the first real attempt to rebuild religion after a period of destruction. Grindal's injunctions and articles of inquiry contained a comprehensive programme of reform for the north, which was clearly much more ambitious than anything previously issued there. Provision was made for education, all remnants of popery were to be sought out and destroyed, penances were to be accompanied by sermons and all churches equipped with a low pulpit for preaching.¹¹⁶ Grindal's aim was to destroy Catholicism, and his archiepiscopate marked the first vigorous attempt to crush the widespread survival of traditionalism in Yorkshire in the same way that Richard Curteys' virtually

¹¹³ *ibid*, p. 226.

¹¹⁴ Taylor, 'The Crown and the North of England,' pp. 46-9.

¹¹⁵ P. Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal 1519-1583* (London, 1979), p. 195; W.H Frere (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation* (London, 1910), vol. 3.

¹¹⁶ Collinson, *Grindal*, pp. 188-90, 199; Frere, *Visitation Articles*.

simultaneous tenure of the bishopric of Chichester saw the arrival of learned and enthusiastic Protestant ministers to combat persistent conservatism in Sussex.¹¹⁷ Instead of ensuring the establishment of the reformed faith by hastening the disappearance of Catholicism however, the increasingly vigorous efforts to enforce conformity hardened the will of many Catholics to resist, and in many ways marked the beginning of a crystallisation of Catholic feelings into recusancy. The northern rebellion, and the government's reaction to it, marks the point at which religious divisions within England began to be more sharply defined; from 1570 it starts to become possible to think in terms of Catholics and Protestants, rather than conservatives and evangelists or traditionalists and reformers. There are difficulties with all confessional labels, not least because they are often imposed by modern historians, but in Yorkshire at least the arrival of Grindal and Huntingdon appears to mark the beginning of much clearer confessional divisions.

Before 1569 little force had been used to try and impose religious uniformity on the north, but from the 1570s the hunt for surviving relics of popery intensified and the persecution of non-conformists through the courts increased. The authorities no longer relied entirely on visitations, but began to use search warrants and to search houses on mere suspicion that they might contain something they should not.¹¹⁸ Despite the evangelical campaigning of Grindal and Huntingdon in the years after 1570, and the increased numbers of preaching ministers trained in the Elizabethan church, not all churches were yet fully equipped for Protestant worship and significant numbers of people in Yorkshire continued to ignore the religious injunctions of the realm. From 1582 lay non-conformity was expressed by recusancy as well as absence from church and non-communication, and though it is certain that initially at least the growing numbers of presentments were a result of increased diligence in seeking out non-conformists, it also seems certain that non-conformity was increasing. As will be seen in chapter five the steadily escalating numbers of recusants detected in Cleveland cannot have been solely the result of improved investigation. The numbers were too high, and in any case many of the communities were long protected from the

¹¹⁷ Manning, *Religion and Society in Elizabethan Sussex*, pp. 274-6; Curteys was eventually suspended as his concept of reform represented a threat to social stability and was considered too radical at a time when England was threatened by foreign invasion.

¹¹⁸ Tyler, *Ecclesiastical Commission*, p. 63.

interference of zealous Protestants.¹¹⁹ Similarly in Richmondshire the increased persecution that accompanied the recusancy laws entailed such a dramatic increase in the records of Catholic non-conformity it seems certain that the region cannot have had anything other than a strong background of conservatism, and it is almost certain that the surprisingly low numbers of recusancy presentments in Catterick deanery reflected continued control by Catholic local officials and thus the presentment of only the most persistent offenders to satisfy more senior authorities that action was being taken.¹²⁰

Richmondshire's Catholic communities appear to have been thriving; bells were still rung on All Saints day at Boroughbridge and Gilling during the 1570s, and at Gilling and Staveley the clergy actively resisted catechising the parish youth.¹²¹ Also in Gilling, a runagate priest named William Gargett who may have previously been deprived of the living of Gilling was presented for not attending church or receiving the communion, and it is likely that he continued to minister to other Catholics after his deprivation.¹²² In addition a considerable number of parishioners were refusing to attend church or to receive the communion, including one Ralph Hydten, of Smeaton, who told the churchwardens that he 'could have as good a devocion els wher,' perhaps an indication that he had access to Catholic ministry.¹²³ Clearly the hold of traditional religion remained strong, and despite the opportunity for the crown to pursue a more rigorous enforcement of Established religion provided by the execution and exile of some of those involved in the Northern rebellion, the presence of seminary priests in the archdeaconry from at least 1579 when John Wright was captured in Boroughbridge, made it clear that the overthrow of Catholicism was never going to be easy.¹²⁴ As late as the 1590s crosses made of napkins were still being laid on the

¹¹⁹ V1582, f.234r – Jane Burton of Egton in Cleveland was the first Yorkshire recusant to appear in the visitation records. I have demonstrated the importance of women within Catholic recusancy in Yorkshire elsewhere, however it is important to note that the large number of presentments of women undoubtedly reflected the need for social harmony. The presentment of significant male figures was much more likely to disrupt this than was the presentment of their wives. E Watson, 'Disciplined Disobedience? Women and the Survival of Catholicism in the North York Moors in the Reign of Elizabeth I,' *SCH*, 43 (2007). Other good accounts of the role of female recusants in both Yorkshire and England can be found in Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England 1500-1700* (London, 1993); Marie Rowlands, 'Recusant Women 1560-1640,' in *Women in English Society 1500-1800*, ed. Mary Prior (London, 1985); and Sarah Bastow, "'Worth Nothing But Very Wilful": Catholic Recusant Women of Yorkshire 1536-1642' *Recusant History*, 25 (2001).

¹²⁰ V1595-6/CB3.

¹²¹ V1578-9/CB2, fols 81v, 82r, 93v, 95r.

¹²² V1578-9/CB2, f. 81v; Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, p. 28.

¹²³ V1578-9/CB2, f. 85r for Hydten; for other examples see fols 81v, 82r, 84v, 85r, 87r, 89r, 89v, 90v, 92v, 93r, 94r, 94v.

¹²⁴ Aveling, *Catholics of the West Riding*, p. 204.

bodies of the dead, and in 1586 Robert Middleton, the vicar of Nidd, was charged with continuing to say the Latin Mass and crossing the sacramental bread.¹²⁵

Elsewhere, during the crack-down which occurred in the immediate aftermath of the rebellion, Catholic goods were found stashed in the home of Leonard Lewtie of Spofforth parish in the Ainsty deanery. These had been entrusted to him by the parish churchwardens, in much the same way as various parishioners of Morebath in Devon had been given items to conceal and protect from the commissioners. In the same year three other parishioners of Spofforth tore up several Protestant service books, perhaps a rather extreme reaction to the end of the parish's decade-long attempt to preserve its traditional heritage.¹²⁶ Also in Ainsty, the parishioners of Garforth were suspected to have access to popish priests in 1582.¹²⁷ The evidence nevertheless suggests that local officials were actively working to combat such cases; when John Mallet of Normanton near Wakefield was presented for his non-communication and non-attendance during the visitation of 1586 it was revealed that his non-conformity was already being dealt with by the Privy Council, and that he had been ordered to learn conformity by conference with learned men. It is perhaps significant that the churchwardens of Normanton were some of a number in the Pontefract deanery presented for failing to levy the forfeiture for non-attendance, but clearly Mallet's non-conformity was considered a serious problem in this largely conforming region.¹²⁸ There is little evidence that either Ainsty or Pontefract were much visited by seminary priests, which might suggest that at least some of the growing dissatisfaction with the Established Church in the Pontefract deanery was Puritan rather than Catholic.¹²⁹ A higher concentration of urban, industrial, settlements such as Halifax and Bradford in the deanery may provide one explanation for the lack of evidence of the continuation of Catholicism, as it is commonly accepted that Protestantism made its earliest and deepest roots in urban areas.

¹²⁵ *ibid*, pp. 195, 201.

¹²⁶ V1571-2, fols 82v-83r, 121v-122r; Duffy, *Voices of Morebath*, p. 171.

¹²⁷ V1582, f. 174v.

¹²⁸ V1586, fols 167r, 167v.

¹²⁹ Aveling, *Catholics of the West Riding*, p. 204, has identified priests John Amias and Richard Kirkman as both having worked in the Wakefield area; In the Pontefract deanery numbers of recusants were low, but presentments for non-attendance and non-communication continued to grow in the last decades of Elizabeth's reign.

The returns of the visitations undertaken during the reign of Elizabeth are perhaps the most valuable source for identifying cases of religious non-conformity within the parishes of Yorkshire. However, as confessional divides sharpened in the years following the Northern rebellion, increasing numbers of laymen and clergy brought cases of religious non-conformity against their neighbours in the court of High Commission. In 1587, for example, Agnes Brand of Beverley accused Isabel Raffles of defamation, claiming that Raffles had called her a papist and a witch.¹³⁰ Raffles did not deny the accusation, and in her responses argued that Brand had told her she regularly attended secret Masses at Hemingbrough, and that her sister and cousin were imprisoned in York castle for their religion. There is an implication in the case that Brand had contacts with other Catholics beyond the boundaries of her parish and town, and certainly Hemingbrough, a parish in the peculiar of Howdenshire, is known to have had a significant recusant community. Three years later, in 1590, Richard Willy of South Otterington in Bulmer deanery was accused of Catholic practice and the harbouring of recusant priests, which latter was then punishable by death.¹³¹ Willy denied the accusation, and none of the published lives of seminary priests recorded that they were ever harboured by anyone in South Otterington. Indeed Nicholas Vasey, alias Richardson, does not appear in the lists of missionary priests compiled by Anstruther, Challoner and Bellenger, perhaps supporting Richard's claim that Nicholas was a member of his wife's family. It is possible that Vasey was a Marian priest who continued to work amongst Catholics in Yorkshire after the accession of Elizabeth, though if so he would have been an old man by 1590.

With few exceptions beyond urban areas Yorkshire parishes were too poor to attract educated ministers or afford itinerant preachers, which meant that outside the towns many parishioners lacked the religious instruction and edification a good preacher could provide. This in turn certainly contributed to the lack of conformity in many parishes, and the visitation returns identify a number of parishes, such as Thornton-le-Dale in Ryedale, where in 1567 the rector Marmaduke Atkinson was reported to have preached no sermons for seven years.¹³² In the same year many parishes in Holderness reported that their incumbents were not preaching, and in 1586 large numbers of parishes reported a lack of sermons to the visitation commissioners,

¹³⁰ CP.G 2456.

¹³¹ HC.CP 1590/3.

¹³² V1567-8/CB1, f.138v.

though by 1600 the issue appeared to have been resolved.¹³³ Even within ostensibly urban parishes, sprawling rural hinterlands such as that at Halifax made it impossible for even the most zealous reformed minister to provide sufficient pastoral care and education for all his parishioners, many of whom would have been significantly affected by the loss of chapels after the dissolutions of the 1530s and 1540s. As with cases of recusancy, the increase in presentments for failure to provide sermons may have been the result of increased investigation by the ecclesiastical commissioners, but it might also have reflected increasing levels of conformity and a growing attachment to Protestantism amongst the parishioners, expressed through a desire to hear sermons. However, even where sermons were preached and the relevant service books provided there was no way for the authorities to ensure that parishioners believed what they were taught. Sermons alone could not provide religious conformity and uniformity, and the attitude of regional and parish officials and clergy towards non-conformity was vital in determining how great an effort was put into persecution of non-conformists and education in reformed religion. The extent of popular support for the old religion in the north during the 1569 rebellion extinguished the government's prior anticipation that Catholicism would slowly die out as a result of the gradual death of the last generation of conservative priests. Consequently from 1570 investigations into religious behaviour were much more systematic and much more determined to seek out non-conformists. The more detailed results of these investigations nevertheless revealed that non-conformity remained widespread, and that it was often the result of clerical example.

The debate about the importance of the Catholic missionary priests and surviving Marian and monastic priests has been touched upon above, but is very significant in the story of Catholicism in Elizabethan Yorkshire. Bossy and Aveling have argued that the seminary priests arrived in England just in time to rescue Catholicism from the brink of extinction, and that their arrival sparked a wave of reconciliation from conformity to the reformed, post-Tridentine Catholicism in which the missionaries were trained.¹³⁴ Certainly it might be argued that the English Catholic mission was simply a rescue mission. The secrecy in which the priests were obliged to work meant they would rarely have come into contact with those completely cut off

¹³³ V1586; V1600/CB.1A, *passim*.

¹³⁴ J. Bossy, *English Catholic Community 1570-1850* (London, 1975); H. Aveling, *The Handle and The Axe* (London, 1976).

from the old faith and would have had few opportunities to make converts outside the circles of existing conservative families, though their importance in the decision making of waverers must not be underestimated. Thomas Clerke, a missionary priest who was captured in London after many years working in Yorkshire stated during his examination in 1593 that he had 'never persuaded any to the Romish religion, as he had no conference with any but Catholics,' though it might be argued that he was in any case unlikely to confess to making any conversions.¹³⁵ On the other hand it is likely that the lack of Protestant officials in many parts of Yorkshire, as in Lancashire, enabled priests to work with relative freedom, and Shagan has argued that their missionary work could be remarkably aggressive and was not confined to merely providing pastoral care for those who required it. Furthermore in certain circumstances, such as in prisons, it was frequently possible to win converts and in their defence of the Roman church against Protestantism these priests could often assume a very evangelical stance.¹³⁶ Haigh has countered the arguments of Bossy and Aveling with his suggestion that priests trained at the European seminaries were simply continuing the work of Henrician and Marian priests. He, and Questier, have argued that the seminarists' concentration on the spiritual welfare of the Catholic gentry in the south and east came at the expense of the far more numerous lay Catholics in the north and west.¹³⁷ However although it is certainly true that many of the incoming priests did land on the south coast and never venture further north than London, it is also true that with over one hundred Catholic priests Yorkshire had more active missionaries in the Elizabethan period than any other single county.¹³⁸ Significantly for their success rate, these priests, like those in Lancashire and in contrast to those in the south, did not have to rely solely on gentry households for shelter and support.¹³⁹

Yorkshire's long and largely isolated coastline, together with the presence of prominent Catholic families, such as the Conyers and Cholmleys of Whitby, the Babthorpes of Osgodby and the Constables of Flamborough, near to the coast ensured

¹³⁵ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 62; Cliffe, *The Yorkshire Gentry*, p. 193; *CSPD, 1591-1594*, pp. 305-6.

¹³⁶ Shagan, 'English Catholic History in Context,' p. 11

¹³⁷ C. Haigh, 'From Monopoly to Minority: Catholicism in Early Modern England,' *TRHS, 5th Series*, 31(1981), p. 145; M Questier, 'What Happened to English Catholicism After the English Reformation', *History*, 85 (2000), p. 129.

¹³⁸ G. Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests Vol.1, Elizabethan 1558-1603* (Durham, 1969), pp. 394-5.

¹³⁹ E. Watson, "'A Stiff-necked, wilful and obstinate people": The Catholic Laity in the North York Moors, c.1559-1603,' *YAJ*, 77 (2005), pp. 185, 188-9; Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, pp. 279-81.

that newly arrived priests were able to find shelter and refreshment before being sent on their way with provisions, instructions and directions. There was a well-established network of Mass-houses at various points across the North York Moors, and these in turn had regular contact with Catholics further west. Richmondshire in particular had a number of families, such as the Tunstalls of Barningham and Laytons, Smithsons and Meynells of Kirby Ravensworth, who actively sheltered priests.¹⁴⁰ Solomon Swale and his family, of Grinton in Swaledale, are known to have nurtured a Catholic congregation in the parish, for which Solomon, a JP in the area, was imprisoned for a time.¹⁴¹ It has been suggested that many of the priests active in later Elizabethan Yorkshire were in fact returning to their home county after receiving training abroad, and for younger sons of Catholic families a Catholic education in Europe became increasingly common.¹⁴² Thomas Atkinson for example returned to Yorkshire after his training and ordination abroad and spent almost thirty years ministering to Catholics in the county before his capture in 1616. John Fingley, Richard Kirkman and William Lacey similarly returned to Yorkshire after foreign training, though none evaded capture quite so long as Atkinson, and John Gower and William Heighington, whose father's had fled abroad after the northern rebellion both became seminary priests after 1580.¹⁴³ Even after foreign education was made illegal in 1585 it remained relatively easy to obtain travel passes, and the Yorkshire coastline was as useful for getting Catholic students out of England as it was for getting priests in.¹⁴⁴ Ships such as that seized in 1585 en route to Scarborough with a sizeable shipment of catechisms, primers, meditation books and New Testaments were doubtless also willing to transport students.¹⁴⁵

It was not just the Marian and missionary priests who were having an effect on the religious behaviour of men and women in Yorkshire in the 1570s. Despite an initial shortage of clergy so acute that it proved impossible for the state to replace all conservative priests, it is possible from the 1570s, and indeed earlier in some urban parishes, to see a slow but steady influx of ministers trained in the Elizabethan church

¹⁴⁰ Fieldhouse and Jennings, *Richmond and Swaledale*, p. 326; See Watson, 'The Catholic Laity,' for more on the Mass circuit of the North York Moors.

¹⁴¹ Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, pp. 175-6; Fieldhouse and Jennings, *Richmond and Swaledale*, p. 325.

¹⁴² Anstruther, *Seminary Priests*; R Challoner *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* 2nd edition, revised and edited by JH Pollen (London, 1969).

¹⁴³ Anstruther, *Seminary Priests*, pp. 13, 117, 199, 203; Fieldhouse and Jennings, *Richmond and Swaledale*, p. 324.

¹⁴⁴ Cliffe, *Yorkshire Gentry*, pp. 198-9.

¹⁴⁵ Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, p. 53.

into Yorkshire's parishes. Success was varied, but there is evidence of growing attachment to Protestantism. In Leeds religion was characterised by conservatism prior to the accession of Elizabeth and the appointment of Alexander Fawcett to the living in 1559. Fawcett did not hinder the implementation of reformed religion in his parish, but nor did he make an effort to suppress Catholicism and his lack of preaching ability led some to call him a 'dumb dog.'¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, by the 1570s Leeds had a small but committed Protestant core, and the arrival of Robert Cooke on the death of Fawcett in 1584 saw the implementation of a preaching ministry in the parish. A local man educated at Oxford, Cooke was an active preacher who had won renown as a Puritan polemicist, and his incumbency saw the first testamentary bequests for funeral sermons in Leeds.¹⁴⁷ Clearly clerical influence was significant in Leeds, for though the parishioners largely conformed to the Elizabethan settlement during Fawcett's incumbency, it was only after the arrival of an enthusiastic preaching minister that they began to demonstrate signs of Protestant activity. Similarly in Hull, which will be considered in chapter five, the presence of an enthusiastic preaching ministry from 1561 ensured that Protestantism became established in the town relatively rapidly, leading to the establishment of Hull as a Puritan stronghold by 1600. In contrast, an important Protestant community developed in Halifax with little initial encouragement from the clergy, yet like Hull the town had a reputation as a centre of radical Puritan opinions by the early seventeenth century. Protestantism remained low-key in Halifax from its emergence during the reign of Henry VIII to the 1590s when an increased demand for a preaching ministry led Halifax to emerge as a centre of Puritanism.¹⁴⁸ The town had no Elizabethan recusancy presentments, and only a handful for non-communication and non-attendance, which could just as easily have been radical Protestants as conservatives. By way of contrast, the significant number of presentments from 1571 to the turn of the century for drinking, gaming, keeping lewd company and playing games during service time perhaps serves to illustrate the extent to which Halifax had become a Puritan town.¹⁴⁹ No other Yorkshire parish was quite so zealous in reporting those enjoying recreations outside of church on Sundays and holy days.

¹⁴⁶ Gordon Forster, 'From Elizabeth I to Ralph Thoresby,' in *Religion in Leeds*, ed. Alistair Mason (Stroud, 1994), pp. 29-31.

¹⁴⁷ Claire Cross, *Urban Magistrates and Minister: Religion in Hull and Leeds from the Reformation to the Civil War*, (Borthwick Papers, 67, York, 1985).

¹⁴⁸ William & Sarah Sheils, 'Textiles and Reform: Halifax and its Hinterland,' in *The Reformation in English Towns, 1500-1640*, ed. P. Collinson and J. Craig, pp. 130, 140-143.

¹⁴⁹ V1571-2, fols 147r-160v; V1600/CB.1A fols 214r-217r.

It was not solely urban parishes that attracted Protestant ministers however; Marchant's work has identified some fifty-four Yorkshire parishes served by Puritan ministers before 1600. Few of these saw the arrival of a Puritan ministry before the 1590s, but in a handful of parishes, from rural Giggleswick, Kildwick and Huggate to urban Bradford and Rotherham, Puritans were serving the livings from the 1560s and 1570s.¹⁵⁰ None of these parishes demonstrated any significant cases of non-conformity during the course of the sixteenth century. Growing religious conformity and uniformity was not always a result of an actively Protestant minister however, and whilst the confessional positions of parish clergy could be very influential, parishioners were nevertheless actively making independent personal choices in religion, and thus influencing the progress of Reformation in their communities. In 1575 the married vicar of Skipwith was found to be insufficiently learned in Scripture, but this does not appear to have affected the conformity of his parishioners.¹⁵¹ Skipwith did not appear in the visitation returns at all until 1582, and though four recusants were reported in 1586 by 1600 the only religious non-conformists in the parish were two women who had failed to receive the communion and both subsequently produced certificates of their conformity.¹⁵² Contrarily, Protestant ministers did not always succeed in eliminating traditional religion from their parishes, even when they made specific efforts to enforce the conformity of their recalcitrant parishioners. In 1595 Richard Comyn, vicar of Leake in Allertonshire, claimed that he had used all means to persuade members of the Catholic Danby family to conform, but they remained recusants and continued to be presented for recusancy for the rest of the reign.¹⁵³ In the same year the vicars of Guisborough, Pickering and Ebberston had similar problems with parishioners who refused to receive instruction in the prescribed faith, emphasising that clerical influence could be severely limited in areas where conservative sympathies remained deeply embedded.¹⁵⁴ Perhaps the Established Church had begun to evangelise too late in some parts of Yorkshire however. By 1595 Catholic seminary priests had already made a considerable impact in many parishes, particularly those in Cleveland, Richmondshire and parts of Craven, and Anglican

¹⁵⁰ Marchant, *Puritans and the Church Courts*, pp. 319-324 gives a list of all Yorkshire parishes served by Puritans in the period 1560-1642.

¹⁵¹ V1575/misc; Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, p. 118.

¹⁵² V1600/CB.1A, f.56r.

¹⁵³ *CRS*, 53, p. 45.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid*, p. 43.

ministers were competing with an established mission that was building upon the existing conservatism of the people and thus was more attractive to many than the attempts of the Established Church to completely overturn their notions of religion.

After 1580 the authorities increasingly concentrated on the persecution of Catholic priests and gentry, hoping to cut off the mechanisms for supplying the old faith, but this did not mean that other Catholics were ignored. Persecution was nevertheless sporadic; local government was often inefficient, many people conformed sufficiently to hide their true allegiances, parishes were lax in the collection of recusancy fines, and many gentry families were adept at avoiding the payment of fines. Considerable evidence from the visitation returns supports Aveling's claim that despite increasing pressure from the courts parochial officials almost universally ignored the exaction of the shilling fine for absence from church as its collection would have led to increasing levels of poverty, which in turn would have placed a burden on the parish. Given that probably a third to a half of all recusants would have been unable to pay this fine the potential burden on parishes was immense, and several churchwardens gave the poverty of their people as the reason for their failure to levy fines.¹⁵⁵ At the opposite end of the scale, the Catholic gentry in many regions escaped fines as their retention of power and influence in their localities ensured that the government could not afford to lose their goodwill. The cost of persecution drove many, such as the Cholmleys of Whitby, into conformity, but in others it hardened their determination to resist the Elizabethan church. The concentration of persecution on the gentry was deliberate, as the government recognised that most Catholics were dependant upon the gentry for leadership and access to a priest.¹⁵⁶ By removing priests and the gentry who protected them the regime hoped to kill the spirit of other Catholics and crush them into conformity, but the implementation of the policy very much depended upon the character and sympathies of government representatives in the north.¹⁵⁷ Though Yorkshire Catholics, unlike many of their southern counterparts, were not entirely dependent upon gentry support and priests working as tutors and chaplains within gentry households, the Yorkshire gentry could become a serious obstacle to the

¹⁵⁵ H Aveling, 'Some Aspects of Yorkshire Recusant History 1558-1791', *SCH*, 4 (1967), p. 108; V1586 fols 11v, 75v, 111r.

¹⁵⁶ Cliffe, *Yorkshire Gentry*, p. 175; I have argued elsewhere that this was not the case for Cleveland, Watson, 'The Catholic Laity.'

¹⁵⁷ P. McGrath, *Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I* (London, 1967), pp. 186-7.

implementation of reform in the parishes and many of them, whilst loyal to the Queen, were not in favour of the new religion and consequently did nothing to enforce it.

A Protestant County?

By the end of Elizabeth's reign English religious culture was dramatically different to that of 1530, though much post-reformation culture was recognisably adapted from what had gone before.¹⁵⁸ Both positive and negative images of traditional religion continued to flood popular culture as debates in the government and church continued to be dominated by Catholicism, both real and imagined.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, those who remained attached to the old religion experienced it in a very different way to their ancestors. Although crown control of the provinces had greatly increased by 1600, in many parts of Yorkshire local government continued to be exercised by Catholics, and significant numbers of parishioners were marking out for themselves a religious identity very different to that prescribed by the state. Even in supposedly Protestant Kent the process of change was slow and in the early years of Elizabeth's reign at least most parishes conformed only to the bare minimum, though in contrast to Yorkshire resistance was negligible and by 1569 the majority of Kentish clergy were offering prayer book services.¹⁶⁰ Unlike Yorkshire, and indeed Sussex, the majority of Kentish gentry and urban magistrates were Protestant, and numbers of recusants there were tiny, enabling useful comparisons to be made with Holderness, which as will be seen in chapter five also had largely Protestant gentry, urban magistrates and local authorities, and only rare occurrences of recusancy.¹⁶¹ Initially, it may have been a lack of clarity over religious issues which allowed Catholic practices to continue unchecked in some areas, as well as a lack of any organised programme of repression by the government, whilst the increased persecution and the arrival of missionary priests from the 1580s ensured that more commitment and effort was required to be a Catholic. The extent to which Catholics appear to have been integrated into their wider communities suggests that any evidence we have of the continuity or revival of traditional religion can only tell part of the story.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Jones, *The English Reformation*, p. 3.

¹⁵⁹ Shagan, 'English Catholic History in Context,' p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ Michael Zell, 'The Establishment of a Protestant Church,' in *Early Modern Kent 1540- 1640*, ed. Michael Zell (Kent, 2000), pp. 233-4, 236.

¹⁶¹ *ibid*, pp. 238-9.

¹⁶² There is little evidence of conflict between Catholics and Protestants, and Catholics continued to serve as JPs in some parts of Yorkshire even into the reign of James I - Sarah Bastow, 'Aspects of the

The records themselves can produce a distorted view as by their very nature they primarily provide evidence about the minority who disobeyed the religious laws whilst most people continued to attend church as they always had whatever form of worship was offered to them. The early modern parish was not only the basic unit of secular administration in England, but was the centre of parishioners' lives in a social as well as spiritual sense and although many seem to have lived under the sentence of excommunication with no adverse effects, many more must have come to accept the Protestant faith simply through continuing to worship in the same church. The upheavals of the Reformation have caused some to date the growth of secularisation to the early modern period, but this overlooks the continued importance of the church community to early modern men and women, something perhaps emphasised by the efforts to which Yorkshire Catholics went to establish such strong networks and links with each other. The northern rebellion and subsequent persecution provided the catalyst for many Yorkshire people to make a conscious decision about their religious future, a decision which for the majority seems to have been conformity, and thus to many of their contemporaries collaboration with the regime. It is likely that by 1600 there were as few zealous Protestants as zealous Catholics in Yorkshire, and the case studies of the following two chapters will further emphasise the great differences in the responses of Yorkshire people to the changes of the Reformation, and will argue that further regional studies are required before any real conclusions can be drawn. It is likely that Yorkshire, and neighbouring Lancashire, were not conservative exceptions in an otherwise conforming nation, but were simply more extreme examples of what existed elsewhere.¹⁶³ Reform was a long, slow process, but whilst many people vigorously resisted the change from Catholic to Protestant, others embraced it, and many simply quietly accepted it without voicing their opinions.

Catholic Gentry of Yorkshire from the Pilgrimage of Grace to the First Civil War,' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Huddersfield, 2002), pp. 354, 362. Sarah Bastow's book based on this research, *The Catholic Gentry of Yorkshire, 1536-1642: Resistance and Accommodation* (Edwin Mellen, 2007) appeared too late for inclusion in this thesis.

¹⁶³ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 267.

The city of York experienced an almost constant presence of government officials during the sixteenth century. The Archbishop of York, the Council of the North and the Ecclesiastical High Commission undoubtedly affected the ways in which the city reacted to official injunctions for change, and how conformity and opposition were played out. My research has suggested that the experiences of the city of York during the Tudor Reformations were different to those of the rest of Yorkshire, and this chapter will consider those experiences in more detail and assess the impact of the close proximity of the city and government representatives as well as offering brief comparisons with other Cathedral cities. During the years preceding the Reformation, the city of York appears to have been an orthodox community, in which secular and ecclesiastical lives were closely interlinked. Palliser's work on late medieval York wills has led him to suggest that friendship and kinship networks between York's secular and religious inhabitants were strong, and that both secular and religious clergy appear to have been well integrated with the rest of the population.¹ There is little evidence of heresy in Henrician York, or of support for the official Edwardian Reformation, and much to suggest that sympathy with traditional religion continued to prevail. Testamentary bequests for temporary chantries, obits and funeral masses continued on a large scale into Edward's reign, and though the monastic houses do not seem to have aroused particularly extensive devotion, the friars continued to be commissioned to provide sermons until 1538.² This is unsurprising. York's four friaries, like those in other Yorkshire towns such as Doncaster and Beverley, were actively engaged in the life of the city and friars continued to play important roles as preachers and teachers. They were much more familiar figures in the urban environment than were monks.³ However there is little to suggest that York's friars were as significant to the process of religious change as were those in Exeter. Amongst the Franciscans of Exeter, one John Cardmaker was responsible for welcoming Hugh Latimer to the city in 1534, and was later burnt for his heresy during Mary's reign.

¹ D. M Palliser, *Tudor York*, (Oxford, 1979), p. 226; D.M Palliser, *The Reformation in York, 1534-1553*, (Borthwick Paper, 40, York, 1971), p. 2.

² Palliser, *Reformation in York*, pp. 2-3, 4; Palliser, *Tudor York*, p. 227.

³ For more information see for example David Lamburn, *The Laity and the Church: Religious Developments in Beverley in the first half of the Sixteenth Century*, (Borthwick Papers, 97, York, 2000) and essays by Claire Cross and David Lamburn in P. Collinson and J. Craig, *The Reformation in English Towns 1500-1640* (Basingstoke, 1998).

Gregory Basset too was suspected of heresy, though he was sought during the early 1560s for his continued celebration of the Mass.⁴

The civic records of York for the reign of Henry VIII demonstrate little concern with religion; indeed religious matters only appeared at all after 1540, and were then concerned with administrative matters such as the order of the *Corpus Christi* procession of 1541.⁵ It is, of course, almost impossible to measure spirituality, but the continued performance of the *Corpus Christi* plays almost annually until 1570 suggests that their message struck a chord with many. The *Corpus Christi* celebrations were a central part of the traditional cultural life of the city, in the same way that they were in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, where religious dramas also continued to be performed after Elizabeth's accession, and they represented much more to the citizens than a particular doctrinal belief.⁶ In addition, during the early stages of the Reformation absence from church and religious uniformity did not have the significance they acquired during the reign of Elizabeth. They had yet to gain their association with sedition and treason, and the dividing lines of religion were generally too fluid to identify any but the most extreme non-conformists before the 1570s.

York experienced some riots in 1536 that hinted at religious tensions, but these were ultimately swallowed up by the Pilgrimage of Grace, which received substantial sympathy from the citizens, and acquiescence if not encouragement from the aldermen, who permitted the rebels to enter York in October 1536.⁷ At this stage, only two of the eight religious houses in York appear to have been closed, and fragmentary evidence suggests that the nuns of St. Clement's and monks of Holy Trinity were restored by the rebels. The heads of at least two of the friaries were heavily implicated in the rebellion, and the Dominican John Pickering was subsequently hanged for his involvement.⁸ Ultimately, the eventual closure of the religious houses was of far greater consequence

⁴ Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640: The Growth of an English County Town* (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 175-6, 187.

⁵ Raine, 4, p. 51.

⁶ REED, York, demonstrates the centrality of the Corpus Christi celebrations in account books of numerous institutions and authorities within the city, illustrating their importance in the religious and cultural life of the city. See pp. 252-328 for the period 1530-1558. Thereafter the celebrations continued in a muted form following the return to a Protestant settlement under Elizabeth I. Whilst certain of the pageants had had to be dropped during the Edwardian years, there is little indication that the celebrations lost any significance in the cultural life of the city as a result; Caroline Litzemberger, 'The Coming of Protestantism to Elizabethan Tewkesbury,' in Collinson and Craig, *The Reformation in English Towns*, p. 79.

⁷ Palliser, *Reformation in York*, pp. 5, 7-9.

⁸ *ibid*, pp. 10-11.

to the people of York than was the Pilgrimage of Grace. It caused a significant proportion of York's housing and lands to change hands in a short period of time, and flooded the north with ex-monastic priests, many of whom subsequently served in York churches.⁹ Richard Speght, the former prior of Holy Trinity, spent the rest of his life after the dissolution serving at the parish church, and Thomas Baynes, a former deacon of St. Mary's abbey obtained the living of St. Mary Castlegate.¹⁰ This surplus of ex-monastics willing to take on livings so small and poor that few priests were attracted to them ensured that in the immediate aftermath of the dissolution the citizens of York would have noticed little difference in levels of clerical provision, and also suggests that a strong conservative influence persisted throughout the reign of Edward, alongside considerable continuity of Catholic practice. There was no danger in York that a single appointment might change the whole nature of ministry in the city in the same way it might in Hull. Certainly testamentary evidence suggests that spirituality in York remained conventionally orthodox, and in any case reforming priests rarely travelled north. Places served by them were exceptional, and tended to be within reach of Cromwell's influence.¹¹

There are nevertheless isolated examples from the 1520s and 1530s which suggest that this orthodoxy was not universal in York. Gilbert Johnson, a Dutchman and carver living in Coney Street was brought before the ecclesiastical courts in 1528 for speaking against confession and purgatory.¹² Johnson admitted his transgression, saying he would make his confession 'onlye to god omnipotente bot to no priest also that nother pape Archbushope or Ordinary hath authoritie to curse any man or woman,' and that 'prayers and suffrages of the church here in erthe colde not helpe nor do no succor to ded folke.' Johnson also denied the value of holy bread and holy water, saying it was good only for those who were hungry or who wished to cool themselves; he refused to fast, and denied the virtue of carrying candles at Candlemas. Perhaps in line with the anti-clericalism some have supposed to be rife at this time, Johnson compared priests with Judas, saying that they would 'sell god for half a penny' and refusing to pay tithes or offerings to the clergy. Though it is now widely agreed that

⁹ *ibid*, p. 14.

¹⁰ Claire Cross and Noreen Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns in Sixteenth Century Yorkshire*, (YASRS, 150, 1995), pp. 62-5, 78.

¹¹ Palliser, *The Reformation in York*, p. 4.

¹² Abp. Reg. 27, Wolsey, fols 131v-132r; A.G. Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York 1509-1558*, 2nd Edition, (London, 1982), pp. 17-19.

there was little general anti-clericalism in England, there were certainly disputes between individual clerics and their parishioners, and evangelicals and humanists continued to push for the reform of the clergy.¹³ Johnson's case bears some similarity to that of Robert Robynson of Hull, which will be considered in the following chapter, and was taken seriously by the authorities. This suggests that such ideas and beliefs were relatively common currency in some areas, and certainly Johnson's denial of the capacity of priests to make things holy was mirrored in a number of early cases of non-conformity in Yorkshire.

Some years later, in 1540, Denys Johnson, possibly a child of Gilbert, was arrested for declaring that the sacrament was 'not the blessyd body of Christe,' an opinion which had also been expressed in the 1530s in Worksop, Nottinghamshire, by the Dutchmen Lambert Sparrow and Gyles Vanbellaer.¹⁴ Much attention has been paid to the importance of overseas communities in London in the spread of reformed ideas, but clearly similar communities were also present in the north. Dickens has suggested that the York Dutchmen accused of heresy had been influenced by home-grown Lollardy, but given the absence of any concrete evidence of Lollardy in the York diocese, influences from the continent seem to be a much more feasible suggestion.¹⁵ Perhaps significantly there is no evidence of any clerical influence in these cases, an indication that reformed ideas and doctrines were circulating relatively freely amongst ordinary laymen. Nevertheless, there is little to suggest any early spread of reformed ideas in York, indicating that attempts to preach the new religion met with limited success and were possibly restricted to the Dutch communities. Two other Dutchmen with York connections, Edward and Valentine Freez, also developed heretical opinions, though Edward spent much of his adult life in Essex, where he was imprisoned for his beliefs. Valentine too fled York, but ultimately returned, and was burnt there for heresy in 1540.¹⁶ It is possible that it was the deeply embedded conservatism of the city which caused the reporting of their heresy and their initial flights south; certainly they seem to have met with little sympathy. However the position of the Freez's father,

¹³ Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 133-4; Peter Marshall, *The Catholic Priesthood and the English Reformation* (Oxford, 1994), chapter 8; The majority of conflicts between clergy and laity concerned sexual behaviour or tithes, and useful examples can be found in Tim Cooper's study of the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield. Tim Cooper, *The Last Generation of English Catholic Clergy* (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 169-183.

¹⁴ Abp. Reg. 28, Lee, fols 50r-v, 82v-83r, 89v-91r, 141v.

¹⁵ C. Kightley, 'The Early Lollards 1382-1428,' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of York, 1975) has demonstrated that there were no established Lollard communities in Yorkshire.

¹⁶ *ibid*, pp. 30-33.

Frederick, as one of York's earliest book printers suggests that Valentine and Edward may have had numerous opportunities to obtain and disseminate their heresies and their family would have had extensive connections with other book sellers and printers in England and Northern Europe.¹⁷

The last years of the reign of Henry VIII saw little opposition to royal policy in York, perhaps as a result of the severe recriminations which followed the Pilgrimage of Grace, or possibly a reflection of a lack of depth of religious feeling. As a body, the York church seems to have offered nothing more than quiet resistance, and evidence from the few surviving churchwardens' accounts for Tudor York suggests that compliance was generally forthcoming, if not immediate. The executions of John Ainsworth, who was considered in chapter one, in 1538, and of Valentine Freez and his wife in 1540 appear to have been exceptional.¹⁸ The prevailing religious spirit amongst York citizens remained conservative, at least amongst those who left wills.¹⁹ It is perhaps significant that whilst religious statements in many wills elsewhere were growing increasingly neutral, with occasional examples of more explicitly Protestant beliefs, there are no examples of Protestant will preambles in York prior to the death of Henry VIII. Similarly, the churchwarden's accounts for the parish of St. Michael Spurriergate, unique for Yorkshire in that they survive from the Henrician and Edwardian periods, give no indication that anything changed during Henry's reign. The practice of worship and of parish business appears to have continued virtually unchanged, though the accounts do record the removal of the light from before the image of St Sitha.²⁰ Images were still in the church in 1542, and even 1546, despite the outlawing of the worship of saints during the previous decade, and it was not until the reign of Edward that any kind of move away from the traditional liturgical calendar can be seen.²¹

¹⁷ A.G Dickens 'Tudor York: Religion and the Reformation,' in *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: A History of Yorkshire - The City of York*, ed. R.B Pugh (Oxford, 1961), pp. 142-3.

¹⁸ Palliser, *Reformation in York*, p. 18; Raine, 4, p. 150.

¹⁹ The difficulties of using wills to identify religious beliefs have been considered in the introduction to this thesis, however they can be useful for identifying broader patterns of change.

²⁰ D. Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power: Religious Guilds in Late Medieval Yorkshire 1389-1547* (York, 2000), pp. 229-31.

²¹ C.C. Webb (ed.), *Churchwarden's Accounts of St. Michael Spurriergate, York, 1518-1548*, (Borthwick Texts and Calendars, 20, York, 1997), pp. 249, 305; Spurriergate church was also known as St. Michael's, Ousebridge End.

During the reign of Edward VI, religious changes had a far greater impact upon the city of York, and elsewhere, than had those of Henry VIII. Not least was the dissolution of the chantries and guilds, which had a negative effect upon clerical provision within York.²² York, like other Cathedral cities such as Exeter, Lincoln, Salisbury and Hereford, was exceptionally well-endowed with chantries which, as has been seen in chapter one, were an extraordinarily important urban resource.²³ The ease with which the York Corporation was able to close a number of chantries in the city in 1535 might be perceived to lessen the importance of the chantries. However York had such a large number of intercessory institutions in 1535 that the suppression of a small number which were no longer viable is unlikely to have been perceived as significant by many contemporaries. In any case, the closures entailed neither material nor significant spiritual loss for the citizens but can rather be read as part of a process of re-ordering, the endowments of the chantries concerned were retained for the benefit of the city at a time when York was experiencing considerable economic difficulty.²⁴

As always, the material effects are much more obvious than is the impact of the loss of the chantries upon religious opinion and spirituality. There was no obvious opposition in York; as was seen in chapter one the only major opposition to the Edwardian regime in Yorkshire was the Seamer rebellion. However there was considerable passive resistance and compliance appears to have been at only the minimum level required. Despite the Protestant regime, conservative practice proliferated. In 1549 and 1550 the vicars choral continued to openly pray for the dead, arrangements for the saying of masses in the city continued to be made, and the medieval *Corpus Christi* plays continued to be performed annually, despite a reduction in festivities in 1551 and a cancellation in 1552 due to the plague.²⁵ The speed of the Marian restoration of church furnishings evident from some city churchwardens' accounts is a clear indication that at least some York parishes, like the parish of Morebath in Devon and many others across England, simply stored the goods the Edwardian injunctions had ordered them to remove from their churches. Indeed, the

²² Palliser, *Reformation in York*, p. 21.

²³ Chapter 1, above; Peter Cunich, 'The Dissolution of the Chantries,' in Collinson and Craig, *The Reformation in English Towns*, pp. 165-6.

²⁴ Palliser, *Tudor York*, p. 234; A.G Dickens, 'A Municipal Dissolution of Chantries at York, 1536,' *YAJ*, 36 (1947), p. 168.

²⁵ Palliser, *Tudor York*, p. 27; Raine, 4, pp. 166-7; Raine, 5, pp. 56, 77.

accounts of St. Michael Spurriergate record the removal of many items into storage.²⁶ In addition, much medieval stained glass survived the Edwardian Reformation in York, both in the Minster and in parish churches such as Holy Trinity Goodramgate and All Saints North Street. Unlike Worcester, Kent and East Anglia which all saw outbreaks of iconoclasm, there are no reports of similar behaviour in York. Even in Canterbury, where reformed religion arguably took hold at an earlier date, the cathedral retains much of its medieval glass.²⁷ Similarly there are examples of medieval windows at Beverley Minster, and in Ripon Cathedral much medieval glass survived the Reformation only to be lost during the Civil War of the 1640s. It is undoubtedly significant that the orders for the removal of images, roods and altars never specifically required the removal of windows containing images of saints, and it was almost certainly the prohibitive cost of replacement windows which ensured that such images largely remained untouched even in towns such as Beverley where Puritanism later came to dominate.

In an interesting contrast to the general conservatism of York, a number of notable Protestants were introduced into the Minster chapter by Archbishop Holgate. Thomas Cottesforde for example, a translator of several European Protestant works who spent Mary's reign in exile, was appointed prebend of Apesthorpe at York in July 1553, though this late date suggests any influence he may have borne over the Minster clergy would have been minimal and short-lived.²⁸ William Turner, who was exiled for his religious radicalism late in the reign of Henry VIII, was made prebend of Botevant at York in 1550. His influence was arguably as minimal as that of Cottesforde however, for he seems to have spent little time in York and was exiled again after Mary's accession. In addition his views were too advanced to have permitted him many points of contact with the rest of a largely conservative clerical body.²⁹ Indeed, there is no evidence that these men attempted to disseminate Protestant teachings beyond the Minster chapter. There were no preachers or enthusiasts enlisted for the parishes, and

²⁶ E. Duffy, *Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (Yale, 2001); Webb, *Churchwardens Accounts*, pp. 28-32.

²⁷ D. MacCulloch, 'Worcester: A Cathedral City in the Reformation,' in *The Reformation in English Towns*, ed. Collinson and Craig, p. 99; M.A Michael, *Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral* (London, 2004), provides a useful study, and illustrations, of many of the medieval windows in Canterbury Cathedral.

²⁸ Felicity Heal, 'Cottisford, Thomas (d. 1555)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6401>, accessed 11 June 2007].

²⁹ Whitney R. D. Jones, 'Turner, William (1509/10–1568)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27874>, accessed 11 June 2007]; Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, p. 193.

there is no way of knowing how far injunctions ordering the simplification of services and the use of the vernacular were adhered to.³⁰ By contrast the remodelling of the Cathedral priory in Worcester into a chapter enabled greater government interference in the religious life of the town, and the clergy chosen to be bishops of Worcester exactly mirrored the varying fortunes of the Reformation.³¹ This ensured conformity, and separated Worcester from its environs in a way that did not happen in York.

A small number of the Edwardian parish clergy of York are known to have married, though it is debateable how far clerical marriage can be taken as an indicator of Protestant belief, and more probable that other factors were perceived as more important by those involved. There is no evidence that the Edwardian regime placed any pressure on the York clergy to marry, and indeed, celibacy continued to be presented as the ideal even after the legalising of clerical marriage.³² Nor does any pressure appear to have been forthcoming from Archbishop Holgate, despite his own marriage under some pressure from Northumberland, and a number of the York chapter remained opposed to clerical marriage.³³ Furthermore, there is considerable evidence to suggest that for many parishioners the marriage of their priest was considered scandalous. As not all those who married were convinced Protestants it is perhaps unsurprising that the laity continued to regard clerical wives as concubines and whores. Priests were expected to be different, and to be able to transcend the sexual and emotional needs of other men, and the late medieval church accorded respect and status to clergymen based upon this supposition. Even after the legitimisation of clerical marriage, many laymen continued to expect the clergy to remain chaste as pledge and proof of their power over fleshly desires.³⁴

There is evidence that during Edward's reign the city corporation was taking steps to carry out some reforms to the church, though it seems likely that this was at the behest of central government. By 1548 St. Michael's Spurriergate was already complying with injunctions to remove traditional imagery and furnishings from the

³⁰ Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 178, 201.

³¹ MacCulloch, 'Worcester,' pp. 96-8.

³² Marshall, *The Catholic Priesthood*, p. 166.

³³ Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, p. 189; Marshall, *The Catholic Priesthood*, p. 166, 171.

³⁴ Marshall, *The Catholic Priesthood*, pp. 169-73; it is perhaps unsurprising given the widespread opposition to the idea of clerical marriage in early Reformation England, that Tim Cooper's study of the pre-Reformation clergy of the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield does not mention the issue at all. Clearly marriage was an issue which simply did not arise for the majority of clergymen until it was added to the Reformation agenda of the government.

parish church. Wages were paid to those who took down the altars, roods, images, and Easter Sepulchre, and then helped move them into the schoolhouse for safekeeping. This is significant. Clearly a decision had been made that these items would not simply be destroyed despite government orders. Whilst the church walls were whitewashed and valuable objects were sold to raise money for the parish, there was clearly an effort to preserve some items, perhaps in anticipation of a future restoration of traditional religion. It must be remembered that in 1548 there were no indications that a Protestant religious settlement would last, and Edward's reign was widely viewed as an aberration by many contemporaries. The parish also split the proceeds of the sale of a pyx, used to carry the consecrated host to those unable to attend church, with one Richard Bargman, who had bought it from the goldsmith Thomas Dixon, who in turn had stolen it from the parish church.³⁵ Similar conformity is recorded in the accounts of the parish of St. Petroch in Exeter, which purchased a Great Bible as early as 1538. Undoubtedly the residence of many of Exeter's leading citizens in the parish, most of whom supported the crown during the 1549 rebellion, contributed to this conformity.³⁶ Edwardian York also witnessed a proposal for the unification of parishes in the city whose livings were too small to attract a learned priest. This is perhaps an indication that steps were being taken to encourage the progress of the Edwardian Reformation in York, and a reminder that the city's conservatism had been noted and was being watched, but in the event the proposed amalgamations were not implemented until the 1580s.³⁷ Attempts were also made to enforce orders that restricted the hours people were allowed to frequent alehouses in an attempt to enforce attendance at church.³⁸ This clearly reflects the centrality of the doctrine of obedience during the Reformation, and the idea that obedience in religion was a mainstay of a stable and regulated society. The senior authorities in the city were undoubtedly aware of the continued threat of unrest, and of the widespread dissatisfaction with religious change. The need for obedience would have thus taken on an even greater importance as they sought to impose discipline and order on the city.³⁹

³⁵ Webb, *St Michael, Spurriergate*, pp. 328-332.

³⁶ MacCaffrey, *Exeter*, pp. 188-91; it is perhaps also significant that none of the city clergy in Exeter supported the rebels either.

³⁷ Raine, 4, p. 168; Raine, 5, p. 77; for more on the unions of York city parishes see David Palliser, 'The Unions of Parishes at York, 1547-86,' *YAJ*, 46 (1974), pp. 87-102.

³⁸ Raine, 5, p. 77.

³⁹ I touched on the issue of obedience during the early Reformation in chapter 1, and see also Richard Rex, 'The Crisis of Obedience: God's Word and Henry's Reformation,' *HJ*, 39:4 (1996), pp. 863-94.

Overall, the evidence available for the early part of the Reformation suggests that York was a deeply conservative city and particularly unresponsive to change. This conservatism doubtless went some way towards ensuring that in only a few places in the rest of Yorkshire had Protestantism begun to make any headway by the time of Edward's death in 1553. York was clearly setting a regional example which was at odds with the ideals of the Edwardian regime, but there is no evidence to suggest that the regime made any concerted efforts to address this. The wills of York citizens continue to display conservatism throughout Edward's reign; only 9% can be identified as Protestant.⁴⁰ The veneration of, and bequests to, a former anchoress of Bishophill continued despite her removal from her cell in 1543, and preambles remained overwhelmingly traditional. Prayers were requested repeatedly, even in the latter half of Edward's reign. The notary public John Rayncoke, for example, asked for a trental of masses and other prayers in 1551.⁴¹ Palliser has argued that despite the likely influence of scribes on preambles, York wills were much more conservative than those for other regions, even within Yorkshire, well into the reign of Edward. The growth of neutral and Protestant will preambles was very slow. Indeed, conservative preambles were present until the 1580s, and even by 1600 it was neutral, rather than Protestant, statements which were most consistently used by York citizens.⁴² Requests for masses and torches at burial services, and bequests for altar cloths or lights to burn before images continued into the 1560s, which indicates a continued attachment to traditional religion.⁴³ Only two York wills from 1559 and 1560 were overtly Protestant; most were traditional, though some suggest a certain amount of ambiguity.⁴⁴ This attachment to traditional religion appears to have quickly fallen away in the early 1560s however, for by 1565 there were few overtly traditional wills from York testators. Nevertheless, in 1569 Isabel Ward of Holy Trinity Micklegate proved to be a model conservative conformist and asked for the prayers of the Virgin Mary and a *dirige* to be said at her burial.⁴⁵ Conservatism also remained amongst the city authorities; in 1568 alderman Copeland requested candles and torches at his funeral if the law permitted it - an intriguing request for he must have been familiar with the law

⁴⁰ Palliser, *Reformation in York*, p. 28.

⁴¹ Prob. Reg. 11, f. 760; Prob. Reg. 13, fols 570r, 770r-v, 842r, 959; Palliser, *Reformation in York*, p. 32 (appendix).

⁴² Palliser, *Tudor York*, p. 249.

⁴³ Prob. Reg. 16, *passim*; J.C.H Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York*, (CRSP, Monograph Series, 2, 1970), pp. 16-17.

⁴⁴ For the Protestant preambles see Prob. Reg. 16, fols 139v (Smythe), and 146r (Calome).

⁴⁵ Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York*, pp. 29-30.

and known that such things were forbidden - and in 1576 alderman Richardson bequeathed his soul to God and the saints.⁴⁶

The speed with which Catholic services and furnishings were restored after Mary's accession is clear from the few extant churchwardens' accounts, and is evidence of lasting conservative sympathies. In the parish of St. Martin Coney Street interesting comparisons can be made with their compliance to the earlier Edwardian injunctions. The Book of Common Prayer, copes, vestments, and organs were only purchased in June 1553, though it appears that the parish had sold some old vestments and hangings.⁴⁷ Later the same year the churchwardens were making payments for the high altar to be set up and the church paved, for frames to be set up for the lights that would stand before images, and for the holy water vat to be set up; they also bought coverings for the altar, a paten for their chalice, and a pair of Latin censers.⁴⁸ The restoration continued into 1554 when one Annetson was paid for painting the rood and two images, the holy water vat was paid for, the rood set up, the tabernacle painted, candlesticks for the rood were bought and painted, and a Judas cross purchased.⁴⁹ Not only the speed with which this restoration was carried out, but also the extent of the restoration, suggests that the parishioners of St. Martin's were happy to see the return of Catholicism, and their much slower reaction to the Elizabeth Reformation can only support this argument.

A similar picture is found in the parish of Holy Trinity Goodramgate, where it is clear from the records of purchases of candle wax, oil, and charcoal for the hallowed fire, that by 1554 the Catholic form of worship had been fully restored, and the Easter celebrations that year were carried out according to the Catholic rites.⁵⁰ These accounts also record the restoration of the rood in the church, the painting of the screen and images of Mary and John, and the painting of a cross and staff.⁵¹ Additionally the church set up a sepulchre, purchased a holy water vat, and repaired damaged windows, all of which might be taken to indicate that Holy Trinity, like St. Martin's, was going above and beyond the requirements of the Marian injunctions.⁵² Unlike St. Martin's,

⁴⁶ Palliser, *Tudor York*, pp. 249-54; Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York*, p. 30.

⁴⁷ PR.Y/MCS.16, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁸ *ibid*, pp. 7-9.

⁴⁹ *ibid*, pp. 9, 18.

⁵⁰ PR.Y/HTG.12 vol.1, pp. 1-3.

⁵¹ *ibid*, pp. 65-6.

⁵² *ibid*, p. 96.

the accounts for Holy Trinity make no mention of the re-erection of an altar in the church. However the accounts only begin in 1554, and an altar might already have been provided by this date. Additionally, the survival of three altar stones to the present might well serve as an indicator that Holy Trinity had never removed its altars during the reign of Edward. The small number of York clergy deprived after the accession of Mary is also a good indication that the majority remained conservative. Only four York clergy were deprived, three of whom were vicars choral at York Minster, who would have had little impact upon ordinary parishioners. Of these two were pluralists and there is no record of their restoration, whilst the other held no other living and was subsequently restored. The fourth man deprived, Ralph Whitling, rector of St. Michael Spurriergate, was restored after separating from his wife and performing his penance.⁵³

York's civic records further suggest a degree of delight at the restoration of Catholicism. A letter sent by Mary and Philip ordering celebration parties after England's reconciliation to Rome was copied into the civic records, together with a note that the letter had been openly read in the city and that warning would be given 'for bonefiers to be made ... accordyngly with rejoysyng and thanksgyvyng to God for his mercyfullnesses now and alle tymes.'⁵⁴ An obvious compliance with the law, but I would argue that the immediate response and wide publication of the letter indicates more than simple obedience, and suggests that the celebrations were widely supported rather than imposed on a population who had only reluctantly received the restoration of Catholicism. The city also ordered the altar to be set up again in St. Thomas's Hospital, revived the St. George's day pageant and various other processions, and restored the Marian plays to the *Corpus Christi* cycle.⁵⁵ The accounts of the city chamberlains for 1554 clearly demonstrate the effort and expense involved in the staging of the full *Corpus Christi* cycle. Similarly, extant guild accounts for 1554 to 1556 show that efforts were made to collect money from members towards the cost of staging their part of the pageant, as well as detailing the cost of payments 'to the plaers ffor playng off the pagand' and 'ffor the plaers dynners off corpus christi day'.⁵⁶ The

⁵³ Chanc.AB.6, f. 2v, 3r, 15r, 15v, 21r; Chanc.AB.7, fols 1v, 8v, 11r, 18v, 25v, 26v, 38r, 40r; Given the evident efforts of St. Michael's church to preserve the goods removed from their church during the Edwardian Reformation, it is almost certain that Whitling did not marry for religious reasons.

⁵⁴ Raine, 5, pp. 112-3.

⁵⁵ *ibid*, pp. 96, 100, 105; REED, pp. 310-11.

⁵⁶ REED, pp. 313-325.

support of York for the Marian regime is further evident in the city's response to Thomas Stafford's attempted invasion in 1556. Immediate defensive measures were adopted in the city when news was received of the capture of Scarborough castle, and the gentry were advised to be ready to serve the queen.⁵⁷ Edward Galpyn was rewarded for providing the city authorities with a detailed report of the doings of the rebels at Scarborough, and the city subsequently received a letter from the King and Queen in thanks for its readiness to serve the queen and for the defensive measures taken.⁵⁸ Clearly York supported England's Catholic monarchy, not the attempts of the Protestant rebels.

The strength of this conservatism in York can be further emphasised by the case brought by the parishioners and churchwardens of the parish of St. Martin, Coney Street, against their priest, Robert Fox, in 1556. This case was long running and complex, and has been usefully analysed by Claire Cross.⁵⁹ Robert Fox, a local man with no university education, was instituted to the cure in October 1552. On paper he was little different to his predecessor, Thomas Ovington, who had served the cure for over twenty-five years until his death in 1551, but he swiftly fell foul of his parishioners primarily due to his penchant for heavy drinking.⁶⁰ Despite repeated admonishments from Archbishop Holgate and the vicar general John Rokeby, witnesses subsequently recall seeing Fox on many occasions so drunk that he was incapable of saying or singing services.⁶¹ In 1556 the parishioners took their case before the Dean and Chapter court in York, and in addition to his drunkenness, Fox was accused of being a 'great bragger and quarreller emongst his parishioners,' thus bringing them 'gretlye out of Charitie,' and of being unlearned and unworthy to serve the cure.⁶² Several witnesses provided evidence that Fox had called his parishioners names including knave, beggarly knave and tomfool, and refused to offer forgiveness for sins. Such proclamations in cases of clerical misconduct can hardly have been uncommon in the sixteenth century, but in this case the witnesses were also asked to comment on Fox's level of education, in to response claims that he did not minister the sacraments correctly.

⁵⁷ Raine, 5, pp. 158-9.

⁵⁸ *ibid*, p. 160.

⁵⁹ Claire Cross, 'Lay Literacy and Clerical Misconduct in a York Parish during the Reign of Mary Tudor,' *York Historian*, 3 (1980), pp. 10-14.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, p. 10; D/C.CP/1556.1.

⁶¹ D/C.CP/1556.1.

⁶² D/C.CP/1556.1; D/C.AB.4, f. 68v.

Witnesses were asked about their knowledge of Latin, and to provide precise evidence about Fox's errors. Only two witnesses, John Langton, a sixty-year-old baker, and John Clarke, a forty-six year old scrivener, admitted any knowledge of Latin, and both provided examples of Fox's errors. However, a lack of Latin did not stop George Cooke, who claimed that several times he had heard Fox speak false English, or Adam Binke, who relied on what other men had said about Fox's Latin to maintain that he should be deprived for his unworthiness. John Foxgaile, the parish clerk, also admitted he knew no Latin, yet claimed that Fox spoke the wrong words during the baptism of one Mr Middleton's child.⁶³ It is perhaps unsurprising that the parishioners of St. Martin's were so quick to turn to the law to solve their problems with their parish priest, after all they were at the centre of the city which was in its turn the centre of ecclesiastical administration in the north of England, and the lawyers of the church courts were doubtless familiar figures. The parishioners also acted in ways reminiscent of Shagan's theories of collaboration, turning to Fox's laxity in providing services as the best means of securing the removal of a man who appears to have been deeply unpopular for many reasons.⁶⁴ Perhaps more unusual, and certainly more unexpected, is the level of familiarity claimed by some of these parishioners with the Latin forms of service, all the more remarkable given the years in which they had been replaced with an English liturgy. Fox's parishioners had no apparent problem with his religious opinions; at least one of them, Richard Ayneley, was later in trouble with the ecclesiastical courts for concealing copes and other vestments belonging to the parish church.⁶⁵ Instead it seems they were enthusiastic worshippers who were keen that their services and sacraments should be ministered properly according to the Latin liturgy and objected to not receiving proper levels of pastoral care.

There are however some indications that conservatism was not uniform, and that reformed religious beliefs had begun to make some headway within the city by the time of Mary's accession. York saw one of the most intriguing cases of religious non-conformity in Marian Yorkshire with the 1555 Lollardy accusation levelled against

⁶³ Cross, 'Lay Literacy,' p. 14; No judgement was passed in this case, and Fox had died by September 1557 when Thomas Grayson, a former canon at Newburgh and Minster chantry priest was admitted to the living.

⁶⁴ Ethan Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 15-16, 21-22.

⁶⁵ HC.AB.6, fols 2r, 3r.

Christopher Kelke, a gentleman of the parish of Holy Trinity Goodramgate.⁶⁶ Unfortunately the sparse details of this case reveal little of the reasons behind the charges, but for Dickens, this case was proof that Lollardy had existed in late medieval Yorkshire and had continued to thrive into Mary's reign, revived by contact with Protestants in continental Europe.⁶⁷ It is more probable that the Marian revival of old heresy laws had led to a parallel revival of old terms of reference in cases of religious unorthodoxy, and that Kelke was merely subjected to an old form of abuse for (possibly) holding heterodox opinions. However it is also possible that Christopher was a kinsman of one Roger Kelke, a Yorkshire born preacher and fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, during the reign of Edward, and exiled in Basle during that of Mary, and thus might have been exposed to the teachings of the new religion even if he did not openly embrace them.⁶⁸ This link remains unproven however, and it is equally possible that Kelke was a victim of malicious gossip or of an enemy seeking revenge. The case is perhaps more useful as an insight into the ways people used religious change for their own ends than for detecting specific religious beliefs. It clearly demonstrates that people knew a heresy accusation would be dealt with seriously, and was thus an effective way of pursuing a personal vendetta. As Shagan has argued, people were aware of the political and religious circumstances of the nation, and of the personal advantages which could be gained from their exploitation; thus they sometimes chose to act as mouthpieces for the regime even if they did not specifically support its religious policies.⁶⁹ However the case also reflects differing understandings of the meanings behind religious identities. Non-conformity did not necessarily mean heresy; twenty years of changing religion had led to broadening perspectives as well as confusion, and heterodox beliefs were not uncommon, but opportunities were clearly taken when both heterodox and reformed beliefs were perceived as heretical.

Kelke's case was not isolated within the city of York. In 1557, two years after his accusation of Lollardy, Joan Wynter was accused of despising and spitting at the image of Christ, and saying she would worship no such monument.⁷⁰ Although she denied the charges against her, Joan's sacrilegious offences were considered

⁶⁶ CP.G.3511; Chanc.AB.7, fols 139r-141r.

⁶⁷ A.G. Dickens, *The Marian Reaction in the Diocese of York – Part II – The Laity*, (Borthwick Papers, 12, York, 1957), p. 4; Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 243-4.

⁶⁸ N. G. Jones, 'Kelke, Roger (1523/4–1576)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15283>, accessed 27 March 2007].

⁶⁹ Shagan, *Popular Politics*, pp. 15-16, 21-22.

⁷⁰ Chanc.AB.8, fols 171v, 172r; Wynter was also known as Joan Arnold.

sufficiently serious that she was committed to the Bishop's prison in York. Wynter's behaviour would suggest that, even though she did not engage in active iconoclasm such as occurred in Halifax, she had similarly little regard for the worship of images. Earlier the same year, John Hynde, a draper and Freeman of the city of York, was accused of making '...certan forme of gallos upon the altars' of Durham Cathedral after they were re-edified following Mary's accession, and also of copying forbidden books, and of the 'art of necromancy in calling demons and malign spirits by using divers writings in his own hand.'⁷¹ Hynde's activities do not suggest a specific interest in reformed religion, but they are clearly anti-Catholic, and he was obviously in contact with Protestants and had access to Protestant materials. His heterodox ideas were quickly linked to witchcraft by an authority sensitive to anything that was not strictly orthodox, and the case reveals one of the ways in which the authorities regarded subversion and shaped it into a recognisable form. The case also bears some similarities to that of Anne Askew who was burnt for her beliefs some thirteen years earlier, and to the ways in which European Inquisitors used witchcraft accusations as part of their campaigns to make suspected heretics believe they had done things they may not actually have done en route to securing a confession.⁷² Hynde initially denied the charges, and admitted only to buying a book in Durham, the contents and meaning of which he claimed not to understand. However when confronted with Scriptural writings, letters, and articles and ordinances subversive to the church he admitted that they were in his own hand. Hynde had evidently received some education, and his trade would have given him opportunities for building wide-ranging contacts. There is little information about the nature of the writings in question, but Hynde's desecration of the altars at Durham, and the implication that he was involved in copying and was in contact with others regarding this during the reign of Edward VI further emphasises his anti-Catholic attitude.

After the accession of Elizabeth there was little enthusiasm and much passive resistance to the 1559 religious settlement, and it seems clear that Mass was still being celebrated openly in some York parishes. In April 1559 John Carter was accused of

⁷¹ Chanc.AB.8, fols 134v, 137v; *Register of The Freemen of the City of York,* vol. I - 1272-1558, (SS, 96, 1897), p. 275; Hynde was admitted to the Freemen in 1554. The quotation regarding necromancy has been translated from the Latin original.

⁷² For more on Anne Askew see Diane Watt, 'Askew, Anne (c.1521-1546)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/798>, accessed 10 Dec 2007].

taking singing breads and pretending to minister the sacrament to himself whilst drunk in church on Easter Sunday, and was ordered to do penance in the churches of St. Mary, Castlegate, and St. Michael.⁷³ The form of the penance was virtually identical to those used during Mary's reign, and the offence appears to have been a mockery of actual events. The accession of Elizabeth had clearly not sparked the same 'restoration' of reformed religion as that of Mary had of traditional religion. The records of the 1559 royal visitation for Yorkshire indicate that altars were still standing in the Minster, and reformed services read so that they were incomprehensible to listeners.⁷⁴ This provides a marked contrast to Exeter cathedral, where the arrival of the reformer Dr. Simon Haynes as dean in 1537 saw an early effort to remove many traditional items from the church, and the imprisonment of conservative members of the chapter after the accession of Edward VI.⁷⁵ There are few references to York parish churches in the records of the 1559 visitation, but extant churchwardens' accounts indicate that responses to early Elizabethan injunctions were noticeably slower than to those issued by Mary.

Although the parish of St. Martin Coney Street purchased a communion book and psalter in 1558, the altars and images were not removed until 1561, the same year in which the table of the Ten Commandments was purchased. Only in 1564 was a book of Homilies bought for the parish, and vestments and candlesticks were not sold until after 1566.⁷⁶ Books for the parish continued to be purchased into the 1570s, including one, unspecified, volume 'agaynste the lait Rebellyon' in 1570, and only in 1569 or 1570 was the parish's silver chalice sold.⁷⁷ Reactions seem to have been a little swifter at Holy Trinity, Goodramgate, for in 1558 and 1559 the parish not only purchased a communion book and psalter, but also paid for 'takeinge of the churche gere a waye' and the burning of images, and the following year the parish purchased a Bible and oversaw the removal of the altar.⁷⁸ Interestingly, a later entry in the accounts refers to the 'doore where ye Images and also ye masse bokes doth lye,' which suggests that

⁷³ Chanc.AB.8, f. 300r; The records do not specify in which St. Michael's church the penance was to be performed.

⁷⁴ C.J Kitching (ed.), *The Royal Visitation of 1559: Act Book for the Northern Province*, (SS, 187, 1972), p. 70.

⁷⁵ MacCaffrey, *Exeter*, pp. 187-8.

⁷⁶ PR.Y/MCS.16, pp. 35, 43-45, 59, 68.

⁷⁷ *ibid*, pp. 84, 89, 95, 121.

⁷⁸ PR.Y/HTG.12 vol. 1, pp. 5-6, 13.

numerous items were stored rather than destroyed.⁷⁹ This was not unusual; St. Michael Spurriergate and the parish of Morebath in Durham have already been noted for their storage of church goods, and further examples will be seen in the following chapter.⁸⁰ Like St. Martin's, Holy Trinity continued to purchase such books as were required reasonably promptly throughout Elizabeth's reign.⁸¹ Other records reveal that St. Crux church was still using communion cloths in 1569, and in 1565 St. Michael-le-Belfrey parish, which lay adjacent to the Minster, was still collecting the traditional 'head Mass penny' from parishioners. There are no references at this stage to the removal of rood screens from parish churches, and in most cases these were not dismantled until orders from Archbishop Grindal enforced their destruction in 1570 to 1571.⁸²

The behaviour of certain York citizens also suggests that the new regime was less than welcome. In 1562 John Swinburne was fined and bound over for good behaviour and religious conformity after confessing before the President and others of the Council of the North that he had procured 'one Bailye clerk to say masse and yt he hath divers and sundry tymes herde the same & spesallie sence x[christ]enmas last.'⁸³ This is a clear indication that Swinburne was opposed to the new settlement of religion, and is also one of only a small number of cases involving York citizens which were dealt with by the High Commission. Despite its presence in the city the High Commission appears to have had little involvement in dealing with individual cases of religious non-conformity there, instead allowing the city corporation and regular ecclesiastical visitations to contend with the problem. As was seen in chapter three, the High Commission dealt primarily with the most obstinate offenders, and with the gentry and nobility whose social status often enabled them to avoid other channels of prosecution. In addition, the Commission relied upon the visitation commissioners and civic authorities for many of its cases before 1580.⁸⁴ As a result, the relative scarcity of cases of Catholic non-conformity, and of persistent offenders prior to 1580, as well as the likelihood that many gentlemen lived beyond the city boundaries, would have ensured that most of the conservatism which was uncovered in the city was dealt with by the lesser courts. Although Swinburne makes no other appearance in the extant

⁷⁹ PR.Y/HTG.12 vol. 1, p. 16.

⁸⁰ See above, chapters 1 and 3.

⁸¹ PR.Y/HTG.12 vol. 1, pp. 24, 99.

⁸² Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York*, p. 26.

⁸³ HC.AB 1, f. 7r.

⁸⁴ Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York*, pp. 54-5.

court records, (there are in any case no extant visitation records for this date), his offence was clearly considered very serious by the authorities, and it is likely that he was a persistent offender who had resisted previous attempts to enforce his conformity.⁸⁵

The records of 1567 visitation detail numerous parishioners from across the city that did not attend church or receive the communion, including Leonard Dente of Holy Trinity Goodramgate who boasted that he had never heard a sermon in his life.⁸⁶ However in very few cases is there any indication of dislike of the new religion. Most had an excuse for their absences, which demonstrated their knowledge of which excuses were considered legitimate and what they could get away with. Robert and Isabella Willie of All Saints Pavement, claimed their non-attendance was due to Robert being out of charity with one of their neighbours.⁸⁷ Robert Davison of St. Saviour's claimed he was so indebted he did not attend church for fear of imprisonment, whilst his wife Alice argued that their poverty meant she had to stay at home to care for their young child as they could not afford a servant. William Hewett of Holy Trinity King's Court similarly argued debt and impoverishment as the reason for his absence.⁸⁸ Richard Batchelor of St. Martin cum Gregory argued that he was never absent, but was often delayed by customers wishing to buy shoes from him, and others, such as a group of parishioners from Holy Trinity, Micklegate, were presented for past absences, but had reformed themselves before the cases came before the court.⁸⁹

Further cases in the parishes of St. Martin cum Gregory and All Saints North Street give a greater hint of the underlying conservative tendencies probably present across the city. In St Martin's the parish clerk Edward Sandall was accused of being a misliker of the current religion and a sower of seditious rumour. He reportedly said

⁸⁵ It is possible that John Swinburne was related to Henry Swinburne, an important city lawyer from the 1570s, though they were not immediate family. As the case against John occurred when Henry was only a child, Henry's later prominence in York cannot have been the reason for John's appearance before the High Commission. Nevertheless, Catholic or conservative York citizens who were connected to prominent city officials were more likely to have had their cases heard by the High Commission as they were considered a greater threat to urban stability. In an interesting aside Henry's son Toby secretly converted to Catholicism in 1637, which might suggest that Catholic sympathies were already present amongst other family members, and thus strengthen the suggestion of a familial connection between John and Henry. For more on Henry Swinburne see J. Duncan M. Derrett, *Henry Swinburne (?1551-1624) Civil Lawyer of York* (Borthwick Paper, 44, York, 1973).

⁸⁶ V1567-8/CB2, fols 85r, 116v.

⁸⁷ V1567-8/CB2, f. 75v.

⁸⁸ V1567-8/CB2, fols 78v, 80v.

⁸⁹ V1567-8/CB2, fols 82r, 79r-v.

that he 'trusted to see the daie when he shall have xxtie of the heretike heads that now be in authoritye under his girdle,' and he was further accused of continuing to pray to the saints and to teach children despite being commanded to cease because he was considered to be a 'corrupter of yowthe.' Sandall admitted only that he had taught the boy who served him, but the courts ruled against him, and he was commanded to carry out public penance in several locations.⁹⁰ This case suggests that traditional training could still be obtained in York, even if only at a rudimentary level, long before the arrival of the seminary priests. Across the city at All Saints, the churchwarden Thomas Styddy was accused of disturbing the minister during service time and constantly quarrelling with him, and of keeping two popish priests in his house 'who doyth practase things to the discredit of the ministry and Relegion now set furth and openly sayth ther popyshe mattens and service.'⁹¹ Like Edward Sandall, Styddy denied the charges against him, but he appears to have done his penance and caused no more trouble as he was serving as constable of his parish and helping to make returns of recusants in 1571.⁹² Nevertheless the potential presence of popish priests in All Saints parish perhaps adds another dimension to the absence from church of Robert and Isabella Willie. Perhaps their being out of charity was simply a convenient and legalistic excuse to avoid attending the services of the Established church.

The evidence against the York stationers John Schofield, Thomas Richardson, John Goldthwaite and Thomas Wrayth in 1567 suggests that there was a market in the city for conservative texts, and also for new, Counter-Reformation, literature.⁹³ The booksellers were interrogated about the numbers of Latin primers, missals, works by Harding, Allen and numerous others they had received into their shops, where they had obtained them, how many they had sold and to whom. Wrayth claimed he had received only one old missal from Leeds, which he still had, though he said he had received over a hundred primers in English and several grammars and accidences from London. Richardson similarly claimed that he had received only one unbound portasse, which remained in his shop, and Schofield denied receiving any forbidden books. Goldthwaite on the other hand, admitted that he had received seventeen Latin primers and two Latin ABCs from London stationer Gerard Dawes, who also offered him some

⁹⁰ V1567-8/CB2, fols 83r-v, 115r-v, 149r-v, 192v, 210r-v, 213r.

⁹¹ V1567-8/CB2, fols 120r, 122v-123r, 139r, 150r, 159r, 185r, 192v, 198v, 207r, 212v, 221v.

⁹² Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York*, p. 28.

⁹³ HC.CP 1567/2.

books by Thomas Dorman, which he had refused to take.⁹⁴ Goldthwaite claimed he had not yet sold any of these books, and, like Wrayth, admitted he had also received a large number of English primers, accidences and grammars from London. An inventory of their shops indicates that the stationers were largely truthful in their interrogations; however, a York Mass book was discovered in Wrayth's shop which was not mentioned in the interrogation. The stationers appear to have escaped with little more than a warning and the forfeiture of their books, though undoubtedly the penalties would have been much more severe had they been found to possess any writings of the Catholic authors named in their examinations.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, that they were still stocking Latin texts suggests that there must have been a market for them, and it is worth noting that both Wrayth and Goldthorpe were recusants in later years.⁹⁶ Furthermore, that these booksellers were interrogated about texts such as the works of Harding and Allen suggests that York was suspected to be part of a network of European circulation of Counter-Reformation literature, and that the authorities saw these connections as a greater threat than continued adherence to traditional ceremony and ritual. Owning and reading such recent and controversial texts would suggest a greater level of engagement with the Catholic faith, and indeed with the political issues surrounding religious dissidence, than would a simple devotion to tradition.

It seems certain that the Crown knew of the threat of unrest posed by the continued attachment to traditional religion in the north of England. Letters from the queen to the council in 1562 ordered city officials to watch out for those wandering the county and spreading rumours and unrest, and to be ready to put down any revolts that broke out.⁹⁷ Yet the attachment of the city authorities to this same traditional religion can be argued from another letter, of June 1569, in which York was reprimanded for not carrying out the instructions of the Council of the North for dealing with vagabonds and sedition amongst other things.⁹⁸ This civic conservatism is further emphasised by Archbishop Young's claim in 1564 that only two of the thirteen city aldermen were favourers of religion, and in 1572 the Catholic alderman William Allen was elected mayor of York. One of his first actions as mayor was to revive the

⁹⁴ For further information on Thomas Dorman see Frank A. James III, 'Dorman, Thomas (c.1534–c.1577)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7834>, accessed 11 June 2007].

⁹⁵ Robert Davies, *A Memoir of the York Press* (Westminster, 1868), p. 33.

⁹⁶ Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York*, p. 32.

⁹⁷ Raine, 6, p. 42.

⁹⁸ *ibid*, pp. 153-5.

Paternoster play and stage the last performance at the door of the Protestant alderman Christopher Herbert, who succeeded him as mayor the following year.⁹⁹ This is a clear indication of religious divisions amongst the civic authorities. Such divisions would have ensured there was no comprehensive policy against Catholics in the city, allowing the relatively easy survival of Catholic communities. Furthermore, it was not until June 1569 that the city officials issued an order banning the traditional practice of rush-bearing during summer festivities, but it appears that this was less for the sake of reform than the result of a crackdown following reports of the unrest that became the Northern Rebellion.¹⁰⁰ Despite this, and the growing suspicions of the Council of the North that unrest in the north was growing, none of the justices examined by the mayor of York at the behest of the council claimed to have heard any rumours of sedition.¹⁰¹

Nevertheless, the city did take defensive precautions after the outbreak of rebellion, and York was kept informed of the progress of the rebels by letters from queen and her representatives in the north. Some troops were provided to aid the royal army against the rebels, and York's citizens were placed on standby to be of immediate service if required.¹⁰² Proclamations were issued in York denouncing the rebels, urging true subjects of the realm to flee from them, and warning against the use of any speech or language that might hinder the Queen's service or favour the rebels and their cause, an indication perhaps that York's conservative reputation had led to fears that the city might declare for the rebels.¹⁰³ These fears may have had some grounds, as Charles Bachelar, glazier, Martin Wayte, jerkin maker, William Petre, baker, and James Whit, buttoner, were all listed as having joined the rebel army by mid-November 1569.¹⁰⁴ Wayte returned to York a few weeks later with a letter of protection from the Earl of Warwick and the Admiral of England, suggesting that he had not remained long with the rebels and had perhaps worked for the crown.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Palliser, *Tudor York*, pp. 244, 247.

¹⁰⁰ Raine, 6, p. 157.

¹⁰¹ *ibid*, p. 160.

¹⁰² *ibid*, pp. 161-169, 171-173; See S. Taylor, 'The Crown and the North of England, 1559-70: A Study of the Rebellion of the Northern Earls 1569-70 and its Causes,' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Manchester, 1981) and K. Kesselring, *The Northern Rebellion of 1569: Faith, Politics and Protest in Elizabethan England* (Basingstoke, 2007) for details of the Northern Rebellion, and Cuthbert Sharp *Memorials of the Rebellion of 1569* (London, 1840) for printed copies of documents relating to the rebellion.

¹⁰³ Raine, 6, pp. 168, 170-1.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid*, p. 171.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid*, p. 181.

Although the city of York was not directly involved in the rebellion and had little contact with the rebels, it was nevertheless the first place to hear the royal proclamations issued during and after the rebellion, not least the demand of April 1570 that the laws respecting religious observance and against disturbances of the peace were to be carried out strictly within the city and elsewhere.¹⁰⁶ It was also the place of execution for the Earl of Northumberland. In addition, the arrival of Edmund Grindal as Archbishop of York in 1571 saw the first attempt by a committed Protestant to combat conservatism in the city. Attacks were made on traditional ceremonies, such as the mystery plays, and Grindal's diocesan visitations witnessed a concerted effort to enforce conformity. Together with the appointment of Henry Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon, as president of the Council of the North in 1575, Grindal's translation to York represented the first effective stage in the Protestantisation of the north, something which had been carried out much earlier, if not entirely successfully, in Exeter under the guidance of John Jewel.¹⁰⁷ The civic authorities demanded that householders should send at least two of their members to hear sermons preached in York Minster, and in 1574 the queen issued orders that lists were to be made of the names of the increasing numbers who were not attending church.¹⁰⁸ The letter clearly recognises the still strong traditional sympathies amongst both citizens and officials, for it clearly suggests that the York authorities were suspected of turning a blind eye to religious non-conformity within the city.¹⁰⁹ Two years later, the records list the names of almost forty individuals, almost all women, from parishes across York who were not attending church.¹¹⁰ Despite the preparation of this list only a year after the 1575 archiepiscopal visitation, only four of the names on it appeared in the visitation for non-attendance or non-communication, and other known Catholics, such as Michael Tirrey, appeared in the visitation but not on the 1576 list.¹¹¹ There are occasional cases of non-conformity for which more detailed court records have survived, and which suggest that a strong core of religious traditionalism remained in the city, and that conformity was the more general form of behaviour. In 1569 Peter Williamson of St. Crux parish was accused of hiding the wafer he received at the time of communion,

¹⁰⁶ Raine, 7, pp. 9-11, 25-27.

¹⁰⁷ For more on Grindal see P. Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583* (London, 1979) and Patrick Collinson, 'Grindal, Edmund (1516x20-1583)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2005 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11644>, accessed 4 Oct 2007]; MacCaffrey, *Exeter*, p. 193.

¹⁰⁸ Raine, 7, pp. 13, 99-100.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid*, p. 99.

¹¹⁰ *ibid*, pp. 117-118.

¹¹¹ V1575/CB1, fols 3v-7v; Tirrey will be considered below.

and of saying that he trusted to 'see the people runne as fast and faster to masse, pilgrimags and such lyke things as ever they went to comunyon and Also yt he trusted to lyve to se the Quene to be of yt religion yt he himself is of'.¹¹² Williamson denied these charges, but various witness statements suggested he was widely known as a misliker of established religion, and actively worked to dissuade others from it.¹¹³

1575 saw the examination of Michael Tirrey for his refusal to attend his parish church and receive the communion.¹¹⁴ Tirrey, an Oxford educated schoolmaster who had previously worked in Guisborough, confessed that until recently he had attended church and received communion, though his previous examinations by the High Commission suggest that he had long been suspected of non-conformity. O'Sullivan has argued that Tirrey's appointment at Guisborough might have been a result of his having already demonstrated Catholic sympathies, as the school's trustees were the prominent Catholics Dr Roger Lee of York and Roger Tocketts of Guisborough.¹¹⁵ Tirrey nevertheless conformed whilst at Guisborough, despite the school's reputation, and claimed that his own private reading had led him to believe that his conformity was erroneous and that the church of Rome, not the Church of England, was the true church. He stopped attending church and communicating as the sacrament offered was 'not then in right forme and dulle ministered inasmuch as there is neyther priest to minister neyther any suche thinge ministere as he owght to receyve.' Tirrey also openly proclaimed the Pope as head of the church, and admitted that he had conferred about matters of religion and written a book with one Thomas Bell, a prisoner in the Kidcote at York. Tirrey was imprisoned for his offences, and disappears from the records until he is recorded in the 1612 North Riding recusancy returns as a parishioner of Wensley, near to his birthplace in Aysgarth parish. The vicar's concern about Tirrey's conservative influence upon local parishioners appears to have caused him to again be imprisoned for his beliefs.¹¹⁶ Tirrey's connections with Richmondshire and Cleveland were undoubtedly influential in his reconciliation to Catholicism, but other links with London, Oxford and Doncaster suggest that he would have been well

¹¹² CP.G 1430.

¹¹³ CP.G 1430; see especially witness statements of Richard Burdon and Henry Moore.

¹¹⁴ CP.G 1781; V1575/CB1, f. 6r.

¹¹⁵ D. O' Sullivan, *Robert Purslove of Guisborough and his School* (Great Ayton, 1990), p. 34.

¹¹⁶ *ibid*, p. 37.

informed about the religious and political climate of the realm as well as having the opportunity to engage with other Catholics and networks of religious dissent.¹¹⁷

Thomas Bell was perhaps a more significant figure in the history of Catholicism in York, and indeed Yorkshire.¹¹⁸ Born near Thirsk, Bell embraced Calvinism during his studies at Cambridge. He entered the church and served as curate of Thirsk from 1569 to 1570, possibly also acting as schoolmaster there. In 1570, after reading books loaned to him by a parishioner, Bell embraced Catholicism, abandoned his post and attempted to flee the country. He was captured and imprisoned in York Castle, where he declared that the Pope was the supreme head of the church. After escaping in 1576, Bell first went to Douai before taking Catholic orders at the English College in Rome. He returned to England as part of the Catholic mission in 1582, and for the next ten years was one of the most influential and energetic seminarists in Yorkshire and Lancashire. Bell played a key role in setting up a network of safe houses across the north, and notoriously celebrated High Mass in York castle in July 1582. However in the context of increased persecution by Protestant authorities, Bell attracted controversy in the early 1590s when he began to preach that Catholics could attend Protestant services provided they declared that it was solely a gesture of political loyalty and not an abandonment of their faith.

Such theories were doubtless viewed as a lifeline for beleaguered lay Catholics, and Bell's influence was such that his critics felt drastic action was needed to limit the damage to Catholicism his views were believed to threaten. These views were not, however, nearly as unusual as his critics made out. Robert Pursglove had expressed a similar opinion much earlier, and though it is likely that many other northern missionaries shared his views Bell was unable to pull them together into a coherent group. It may have been the subsequent dispute between Bell and other Catholic clergy, particularly the Jesuits, over the issue of occasional conformity which caused Bell to

¹¹⁷ Hugh Aveling, *Northern Catholics: The Catholic Recusants of the North Riding of Yorkshire 1558-1790*, (London, 1966), pp. 29-30.

¹¹⁸ The following details of Thomas Bell's life and work are taken from Alexandra Walsham, 'Bell, Thomas (b. c.1551, d. in or after 1610)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2026>, accessed 5 Oct 2007]; Michael C. Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England 1580-1625* (Cambridge, 1996), *passim*; Alexandra Walsham "'Yielding to the Extremity of Time: Conformity, Orthodoxy and the Post-Reformation Catholic Community,' in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church c.1550-1660*, ed. Peter Lake and Michael Questier (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 211-236.

apostatise and hand himself over to the Protestant authorities, to whom he revealed everything he knew about the Catholic mission in the north, including comprehensive lists of recusants and church papists in Lancashire. Bell's position as a renegade meant he was one of few people able to testify with any accuracy to the clerical status and ordination of captured Roman priests, and armed with a commission he reportedly searched houses at nighttime for hidden priests. Subsequently Bell became a zealous evangelical preacher in the north, delivered sermons to Catholic prisoners in York Castle, and participated in public disputations with the Jesuit Henry Walpole at York. He also received a generous pension from the state, and counted important Yorkshire Puritans amongst the patrons of his numerous tracts designed to exploit the factional divisions amongst Catholic clergy.

In the first visitation after the Northern Rebellion there is little sign that any real crackdown was being made on religious conservatism in the city, though it is evident that non-conformity remained relatively widespread.¹¹⁹ There are a scattering of presentments for failure to attend church or receive the communion, and in the parish of St. Mary Bishophill senior, the commissioners discovered that both the altar stone and a table of images remained undefaced, and that the church lacked a pulpit and service books.¹²⁰ However, it is evident from other sources that some Catholics were missed in this visitation. William Tessimond, the parish constable of St. Michael le Belfrey in 1571, was imprisoned for his Catholicism in 1572. He admitted that he had been a recusant for the last two or three years, and confessed that he disliked the services of the Established church because they did not offer sacrifices for the dead.¹²¹ A more concerted effort against traditional religion appears to have been made in 1575, undoubtedly a result of the partnership between Grindal and Huntingdon. Parishioners across the city were presented for not attending church or communicating, and in several churches it was discovered that books were missing. Even in Bishopthorpe, home to the archbishop's palace, the church was lacking both books of Homilies, Erasmus' *Paraphrases* and a table of the Ten Commandments, as well as a linen cover for their communion table, and a copy of the queen's injunctions.¹²² In the parish of St.

¹¹⁹ Sarah Bastow, 'The Catholic Gentry and the Catholic Community of the City of York, 1536-1642: The Focus of a Catholic County?' *York Historian*, 18 (2001), p.15.

¹²⁰ V1571-2, fols 47v-48r, 101r.

¹²¹ Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York*, p. 41.

¹²² For missing books see for example V1575/CB1, fols 4r (St. Crux), 5r (St. Sampsons), 6r (St. Oswalds), 6v (Bishopthorpe).

Margaret Walmgate, several old vestments were discovered, which their keeper John Troughton had refused to give up to the churchwardens for defacing.¹²³ This effort appears to have had some effect, for in 1578 although there were occasions where children were not catechised, homilies not read and sermons not preached, there were no references to parishioners failing to attend church.¹²⁴ Instead the overwhelming problems appear to have been clerical pluralism and the decay of parish church and vicarage buildings, both of which can be attributed to the general poverty of York city parishes. Only in the parish of St. Mary was a Book of Homilies still missing, and one parishioner, John Hewbanke, was suspected to have objects of superstition in his possession.¹²⁵

This scarcity of evidence of Catholic non-conformity in York during the 1560s and 1570s is perhaps unsurprising when the civic elite are considered. Thomas Standeven, a notary public who also served as alderman and mayor, left a decidedly conservative will in 1566, and members of his family were later involved in recusant activities within the city.¹²⁶ Alderman Robert Cripling, whose wife was a known recusant, served as mayor in the late 1570s, and spoke out against the clergy and sermons. Cripling was subsequently deprived of his position as alderman for offences committed whilst serving as mayor, which included failing to implement government ordinances for the punishment of those who ‘obstinatly and wilfully refused to come to devyne service in their parisshe churches.’¹²⁷ It was also during Cripling’s mayoralty that the city was asked to employ a civic preacher, and it is perhaps unsurprising to see that he did nothing to encourage this. York’s first preacher was in fact appointed by Cripling’s successor, the Protestant Robert Askwith.¹²⁸ The council was clearly growing increasingly Protestant during this time, but that Catholics continued to serve is a further indication that conservative feeling remained high within the city. It is possible that popular opinion prevented the authorities from levying the recusancy fines with any regularity, though of course these were heavy enough that their regular imposition would have caused many to become a burden on parish charity. However even when the officials themselves conformed, they often retained familial links with

¹²³ V1575/CB1, f.5v.

¹²⁴ See for example V1578-9/CB1, fols 12r (St. Michael’s), 12v, 13r (All Saints, North Street).

¹²⁵ V1578-9/CB1, fols 16r, 16v.

¹²⁶ Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York*, p. 23.

¹²⁷ Raine, 8, p. 28.

¹²⁸ Palliser, *Tudor York*, pp. 254-5.

Catholics. Edward Fawkes, who served as Registrar of the Exchequer and Consistory Courts from around 1562 until his death in 1579 was married to Helen Harrington, a daughter of the grocer William Harrington. Helen was related to the Cowlings, a family of butchers and cordwainers who produced two Jesuit missionaries, and after her husband's death in 1579 she left York, remarried and became a recusant. Edward was also the father of the infamous Guy Fawkes of the Gunpowder Plot, but Guy seems to have owed his Catholicism to his mother's family. Similarly William Dunwich, proctor of the Visitation and Consistory courts, married into the circle of York butcher families affected by recusancy. His wife Jane became a recusant shortly before his death in 1576, though she surprisingly appears to have remained unmolested by the authorities for her religion.¹²⁹

Even in 1582, the date of the first archiepiscopal visitation after the passing of the recusancy laws, the city of York features only briefly in the returns, and there is little hint of the presence of Catholic communities which other sources confirm to have been present in the city. At All Saints Pavement the curate was again presented for failing to catechise the children of his parish, and All Saints Peaseholme Green was missing a pulpit.¹³⁰ Only in one parish, St. Mary Castlegate, were parishioners presented for not attending church, though similar presentments were made at Naburn parish on the edge of York.¹³¹ One John Palmes, gentleman, of Naburn was accused of entertaining 'an old runagate, prattling Scottish priest' at his house, and of failing to attend church. Palmes' own dislike of Established Religion is evident, but it is perhaps more significant that his manor was evidently used as a refuge for Catholic priests, who may also have ministered to the surrounding community.¹³²

In 1586 York witnessed what might be considered a more concerted effort to enforce conformity, which was undoubtedly a reflection of an increased national awareness. Government concerns about the threat of urban unrest, as well as fears aroused by the threat of the Spanish Armada and plots such as that led by Anthony Babington, undoubtedly filtered through to the provinces. Nevertheless, despite the passing of the recusancy laws there were no presentments for recusancy in the city during this visitation. Although a small number of parishes had not received sufficient

¹²⁹ Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York*, pp. 23, 316-7.

¹³⁰ V1582, fols 153r, 156v.

¹³¹ V1582, fols 153v-154v, 155r.

¹³² V1582, f. 154r.

sermons, and at St. Olave's one Mr Fisher was teaching without a licence, the majority of presentments in this visitation were concerned with parishioners who were not attending their church, or receiving communion.¹³³ Nevertheless, some cases clearly reflect the continued attraction of traditional religion in York. In St. Cuthbert's parish, Thomas Wood was presented for harbouring Robert Sturdie and his wife, and both he and Alice Wood were recorded as known papists and excommunicate persons.¹³⁴ Nicholas Brown of St. Martin cum Gregory parish was similarly regarded as suspect in religion when presented for not attending church or communicating, and widow Dawson of St. Saviour's was suspected to hold mass in her house.¹³⁵ Richard Meverell, a gentleman of St Mary Castlegate, and his wife were also presented for not attending church, and Meverell's refusal to pay the fines for his absence suggests that at least some efforts were being made against non-conformists in the parish. Meverell claimed he was not actually of the parish and thus should not have to pay, but there is no record of where he was resident. On the outskirts of York, Fulford parish church walls were not yet whitewashed and the recusancy fines were not being levied. Nor did the church have all the required books, and many parishioners were choosing alehouses over services.¹³⁶

The 1580s also saw the issue of bonds by the court of High Commission for the good behaviour of those already in trouble for their Catholicism. In May 1584 the York butcher John Clitherow was bound over for the conformity of his wife Margaret on her release from imprisonment in York Castle, or her voluntary return to prison if she would not conform, and also to prevent Margaret from conferring with any others who were disobedient in religion.¹³⁷ Clitherow had forfeited a similar bond in 1581 when Margaret, whose Catholicism will be discussed below, neither conformed nor returned to prison after childbirth.¹³⁸ In a similar case, the York draper George Hall appears to have ensured his wife Frances either conformed or returned to prison when he was bound on her release due to pregnancy in 1581, as there is no indication that his bond was forfeit.¹³⁹ Another similar bond, which, though undated, is probably from around 1584, was issued to John Jackson, a tanner, and William Fletcher, a ship's

¹³³ V1586, fols 6r, 6v, 8r.

¹³⁴ V1586, f. 5r.

¹³⁵ V1586, fols 4v, 7r.

¹³⁶ V1586, fols 2v, 3r.

¹³⁷ HC Bonds, 101.

¹³⁸ HC. Misc, 3, file 1 of 2.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*

carpenter, for the good behaviour and religious conformity and education of one John Fletcher, then a prisoner in Hull as a result of his erroneous religious opinions. There is a suggestion in this bond that John Fletcher had been actively persuading others to reconcile to Rome prior to his imprisonment, but no indication that he was a priest.¹⁴⁰

Margaret Clitherow is York's most famous Catholic martyr, and her experiences highlight some key issues in the story of Catholic recusancy in the city of York. The youngest daughter of Thomas Middleton, a wax chandler and Freeman of the city, Margaret was brought up Protestant, and only began to explore religious alternatives after her marriage to John Clitherow in 1571 at age eighteen.¹⁴¹ It has been argued that the Margaret Clitherow known to history is largely a creation of the martyrological skills and polemical agenda of her biographer and 'ghostly father' John Mush, but her story nonetheless illustrates that it was possible to live as a Catholic under the nose of both civic and provincial authorities.¹⁴² Lake and Questier have argued that Margaret's story provides much information about the wider social, cultural and political dynamics of English religious change.¹⁴³ Margaret's daily routine appears to have been devoted as much to the service of God as to the fulfilment of conventional women's duties, and through her faith she challenged conventional male-female roles.¹⁴⁴ What was technically a conforming household effectively became an open house for Catholics, a kind of seminarist conventicle, and the priests Margaret harboured within this space would have ensured ready access to Catholic ministry for Margaret and her circle.¹⁴⁵ The high incidence of recusancy within Margaret's parish of Holy Trinity King's Court is perhaps an indication that she enjoyed considerable missionary success, as is the presence of a number of butcher's wives, almost certainly

¹⁴⁰ HC. Bonds, 111.

¹⁴¹ John Mush, *An Abstract of the Life and Martyrdom of Mistress Margaret Clitherowe, who suffered in the Year of Our Lord 1586 the 25 of March* (1619), A3.

¹⁴² Claire Cross, 'An Elizabethan Martyrologist and his Martyr: John Mush and Margaret Clitherow,' *Studies in Church History*, 30 (1993); Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535-1603* (Aldershot, 2002), p. 281

¹⁴³ Peter Lake & Michael Questier, 'Margaret Clitherow, Catholic Non-conformity, Martyrology and the Politics of Religious Change in Elizabethan England,' *Past and Present*, 185 (2004), p. 45; For more on the life of Margaret Clitherow see Mush, *Life and Martyrdom*, Cross, 'An Elizabethan Martyrologist,' Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom*, and Claire Walker, 'Clitherow, Margaret [St Margaret Clitherow] (1552/3–1586)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5692>, accessed 12 July 2007].

¹⁴⁴ Lake & Questier, 'Margaret Clitherow,' pp. 46-8, 50; that Margaret rented a room in a neighbour's house for her priest might be taken as a way of avoiding a direct confrontation with her husband's authority as head of the household, and gave him plausible deniability as well as freeing her from open defiance of patriarchal authority.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid*, pp. 49, 54.

Margaret's neighbours, alongside her in a 1577 list of the city's recusants. Many of the butchers themselves also appeared in a list from 1580, suggesting that the aggressive policies of the authorities had little tangible effect on York's Catholic communities.¹⁴⁶

On the other hand, Lake and Questier have argued that Margaret's zeal and her assertive and socially disruptive form of Catholicism set her apart from other Catholics as well as Protestants. This might suggest that the presence of other Catholics in the same parish was coincidental, but also reflects the variety of ways in which people perceived it possible to be Catholic, and the controversy over the issue of conformity that became acute from the late 1570s. Indeed, many of Margaret's critics believed themselves to be no less zealous than her, but believed that their Catholicism demonstrated a better way of negotiating conflict with the state; Clitherow's radicalism was seen by some as an obstacle to negotiations in York over the conformity issue.¹⁴⁷ Margaret herself was connected to important players on both sides of this debate, and Lake and Questier have argued that her story was part of a long-standing deliberation amongst Catholics about the need for recusancy and a feature of the wider debate about recusancy and church papistry which was prominent in the north at the time.¹⁴⁸ Margaret's behaviour disrupted both the public sphere of religious dispute and political disobedience, and the private sphere of family religious observance and it is thus unsurprising that she was made an example of. Her arrest may be seen as an attempt by the Protestant establishment to exacerbate and exploit long-standing divisions amongst York Catholics, an attempt which Margaret's refusal to plead, or to name her associates, might be read as an effort to frustrate.¹⁴⁹ The public nature of her shaming and silencing can also be read as a direct response to Margaret's flagrant Catholicism. As the wife of a prominent citizen and the step-daughter of an up-and-coming man, Margaret's repeated actions of religious dissent were performed on the most public of stages in a city with a very tight society and gossip networks. The city authorities sought in her humiliation to demonstrate their own authority and the supremacy of the Protestant Establishment, yet were nevertheless deprived of their propaganda victory by Margaret's refusal to plead and her demeanour of martyrdom during the proceedings against her.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ CRS, 22, pp. 12-36; Bastow, 'The Catholic Gentry,' p. 16.

¹⁴⁷ Lake and Questier, 'Margaret Clitherow,' pp. 56-7, 61, 66.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid*, p. 64.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid*, p. 67.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid*, pp. 72-3, 78-9.

York's prison populations were undoubtedly a major contributor to the continued presence of recusancy within the city, for whilst there are surprisingly few incidents of Catholic non-conformity reported in the visitation and High Commission records for York itself, there are countless records of Catholics from other parts of Yorkshire imprisoned in the city. Men such as Thomas Metham and his wife Edith, who possessed Counter-Reformation literature, William Hussey, Christopher Lascelles and Thomas Pannell all spent time in prison or under house arrest in York during the 1560s.¹⁵¹ That Oswald Wilkinson, the gaoler of York castle, was considered 'the most pernicious papist in all the country and glories to be so reputed' can only have aided Catholic prisoners during the 1560s, though Oswald does appear to have conformed until his involvement in the 1569 rebellion.¹⁵² Other Catholic prisoners went to Hull, where there appears to have been no similar effect on the perseverance of Catholicism. Recognition of this by the authorities was perhaps the reason why most priests and schoolmasters, as well as the more significant laymen, were imprisoned there. The 1577 return of recusants lists five priests and three schoolmasters as prisoners at Hull, alongside Dr Thomas Vavasour and the gentlemen Roger Tocketts, William Lacye and Henry Oglethorpe, and in 1585 a number of priests were transferred from York to Hull to remove them from the laity to whom they were continuing to minister.¹⁵³ In contrast the majority of the prisoners listed at York were women. Nevertheless, the proliferation of Catholic prisoners in York ensured that the prisons themselves became strongholds of Catholicism, with the inmates forming their own communities in an environment ideally suited to prayer, contemplation, study, and fasting. Despite their absence from the 1577 list for York, Catholic priests such as Thomas Bell were also incarcerated there, ensuring that other prisoners had easy access to Catholic ministry and teachings.

The reliance of prisoners upon friends and relatives for sustenance whilst in prison further broadened the spectrum of those with relatively ready access to Catholic priests, and the ease with which gaolers could generally be bought off often led to lax procedures in the system of imprisonment. Catholic prisoners, whilst supposed to be segregated, often had the opportunity to form congregations, networks and alliances

¹⁵¹ Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York*, p. 32.

¹⁵² *ibid*, p. 34.

¹⁵³ *CRS*, 22, pp. 16-18; Raine, 8, p. 114.

and prisons were obvious places for confessions and reconciliations to Rome despite the authorities staging recantations within them and forcing prisoners to hear Protestant sermons.¹⁵⁴ The discovery of a large number of books, images, beads, holy water, candles, vestments and other items in York's Kidcote prison in 1584 is evidence that Catholic ministry took place there. There is also evidence that the children of William Huton, an imprisoned draper, were at liberty to come and go from the prison and were probably carrying letters to and from the prisoners.¹⁵⁵ As a result, further restrictions were placed on the prisoners, and Huton's children were sent to their mother, who was in a different gaol, in a clear attempt to halt this prison revival of Catholicism. Prisoners were able to provide mutual support and encouragement, and to an extent were able to interact with the wider community. The traffic of those from beyond York visiting prisoners or attending court hearings ensured that meetings of Catholics must have been commonplace, which in turn would have both formed and consolidated relationships. Gatherings of Catholics in York prisons, in addition to existing ties of kinship and friendship must have gone some way towards facilitating the relative ease with which Catholic priests were able to travel around much of Yorkshire.

The relative lack of visitation evidence for religious non-conformity in York up to and including the 1580s is surprising. It might be argued that conservatism was so widespread that it was simply not reported, or perhaps the city was simply overlooked as the authorities assumed the proximity of York parishes to the Council of the North and the Archbishop would be sufficient to ensure conformity. Certainly there is a considerable discrepancy between the actual number of parishes in Elizabethan York and the number that appear in the visitation returns, and evidence from other sources suggests that the picture of quiet conformity presented by these returns was not wholly accurate. By the 1580s however, the city officials had come to realise that the presence of the Archbishop and Council had not ensured the conformity of York parishioners. In 1580 York commissioners sent to the Privy Council lists of all those who were not attending church, which may explain why so few parishioners were presented for this offence in the 1582 visitation. Two of those presented in 1582 were also included in the list of 1580, but others, such as the group of parishioners of St. Michael-le-Belfrey

¹⁵⁴ Michael C. Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580-1625* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 159-60, 199(n), 200.

¹⁵⁵ Raine, 8, p. 72; Huton was first mentioned as not attending church in the civic records of 1576; Raine, 7, p. 124.

who failed to attend church, or those from St. Martin Coney Street who did not receive communion, are not mentioned in this visitation, or that of 1575.¹⁵⁶ In addition to non-attendance and non-communication, it is clear that some parishioners were actively encouraging their neighbours to break from the Established Church. James Granger of St. Crux parish was suspected to be have seduced others from conformity in addition to refusing to attend church or communicate himself.¹⁵⁷ In another case, similar to that of Peter Williamson of St. Crux in 1569, the wife of Christopher Raines, a butcher of Christ's parish, was reported for attempting to hide rather than eat the sacrament wafer after the priest had delivered it to her, suggesting that she was both attending church and communicating under duress.¹⁵⁸

A slightly different story is revealed in the final archiepiscopal visitation of Elizabeth's reign, that of 1600. The numbers presented for recusancy are lower than might be assumed from other sources, with only thirty-two parishioners, most of whom were women, accused of recusancy. Two of these, Thomas, a cook, and Thomasin Barker were also accused of not having a child baptised in their parish church. However there is no other evidence of clandestine baptisms taking place in York, and only one example of a secret marriage, in St. Olave's parish, when one Mr Dymocke was married to mistress Mary Crest by an unknown minister in the house of Anne Farley, who claimed she had no knowledge of the marriage.¹⁵⁹ A number of citizens were also presented for non-attendance and non-communication, and a small number of men in the parish of St. Michael-le-Belfrey were accused of opening their shops and forcing their servants to work during prayer time on festival days.¹⁶⁰ There are also very occasional references to missing books or insufficient sermons, but this seems to have been a very minor problem by this date, with the service of the Established church and the equipment required for holding them generally firmly in situ.¹⁶¹ Overall the archiepiscopal visitations for the city of York reveal very little about the nature of religious belief and practice in the city. Overwhelmingly they suggest conformity, with

¹⁵⁶ V1582, f. 155r; HC. Misc 3, file 1 of 2.

¹⁵⁷ HC. Misc 3, file 1 of 2.

¹⁵⁸ HC. Misc 3, file 1 of 2; 'Christ's Parish' is likely to have been the parish of Holy Trinity, King's Court, which was also known as Christ Church.

¹⁵⁹ V1600/CB.1A, fols 13Av, 19r.

¹⁶⁰ V1600/CB.1A, f. 11r.

¹⁶¹ St. Saviour's parish was lacking sufficient sermons, and St. Lawrence's had no communion book, and a damaged bible. V1600/CB.1A, fols 15v, 17r.

only an insignificant problem of Catholic non-conformity towards the very end of Elizabeth's reign.

During the 1570s and 1580s however York City Corporation remained concerned with the numbers who were not attending church, and the civic records include several royal proclamations and orders to attend church, together with some hints that the corporation did attempt to enforce these, though almost all the royal orders refer to the failure of the city authorities to do enough.¹⁶² Again, there is little evidence that the High Commission was particularly active against York citizens, with most references relating to the cases of men and women from beyond the city boundaries arriving to be tried, fined or imprisoned for their offences. However it was the Commission who dealt with the case of Alderman William Allen in 1570, a reflection of his status in the city, and the severity of his offences of continuing to make the sign of the cross and openly criticising a sermon on the marriage of the apostles in York Minster.¹⁶³ In 1576, several citizens were examined before the mayor and Aldermen because of their non-attendance at church. These men and women ranged in social status from poor widows to tradesmen to Dorothy, the wife of physician Thomas Vavasour, yet with few exceptions their reasons for not attending church were some variation of 'ther is nithere preist, altaur nor sacrifice' or the protestation that their consciences would not serve them to attend.¹⁶⁴ Clearly, Catholicism retained a hold amongst all social classes in York; it was not a preserve of the gentry. York was nevertheless moving inexorably towards Protestantism, and it is perhaps significant that the purge of non-conformists during the 1570s and 1580s was followed by the appointment of the city's first civic preacher.

The social diversity of Catholic non-conformity in York is reflected in later lists of recusants in the city. The 1577 list included Elizabeth Dyneley, wife of the mayor, and Lady Pacock, wife of an alderman.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, Catholic physicians appear to have proliferated, and York appears to have been a popular city in which to seek medical attention, with men such as Thomas Vavasour and Dr Lee particularly prominent.¹⁶⁶ Vavasour was well educated, and relatively successful in hiding from the

¹⁶² Raine, 7, pp. 123-125, 143-144.

¹⁶³ HC.AB.5, fols 190r-v, 237v-238r.

¹⁶⁴ Raine, 7, pp. 130-137.

¹⁶⁵ CRS, 22, p. 23.

¹⁶⁶ CSPD, *Addenda*, pp. 223-4; Bastow, 'The Catholic Gentry,' pp. 18-19.

authorities, though he did spend time in prison in the 1570s, and he seems to have used his medical practice as a means to aid Catholicism in the city. He was evidently involved in the early creation of a group of educated, informed Catholics in York, as distinguished from the mass of conservative conformists and mislikers.¹⁶⁷ Dislike of the new religion in York appears to have been endemic, and although the numbers listed in the city records are small, they serve to indicate that conservatism was spread throughout York's parishes and social strata. In the 1576 York Corporation recusancy list alone, representatives appear from eighteen parishes, often only in ones and twos, but occasionally, in parishes such as Holy Trinity King's Court, much larger numbers of parishioners were presented. Margaret Clitherow appears for the first time in this list, which also notes both that she did not attend court due to an advanced state of pregnancy, and that she was in prison. She was subsequently joined there by a number of others who appeared in this list after they, or more often their wives, refused to conform.¹⁶⁸ In the house books of 1579 the city's attempts to persuade some of those who wilfully absented themselves to attend church are recorded. Several of those named promised to attend. Others, such as Agnes Johnson of York and Alice Sympton of Huntingdon stated that they would 'goo to the churche of God and not to this churche' suggesting that they retained a strong attachment to traditional religion, and, perhaps, had access to Catholic ministry.¹⁶⁹ Clearly, York city was home to a vibrant and thriving Catholic community, which was able to provide for both bodily and spiritual needs.

It is evident that the introduction of the recusancy laws in England made some difference in the way religious non-conformity was dealt with in York. In 1583 plans were made for the Archbishop and his chaplains, as well as the city preacher, to preach in several churches, whose parishioners were warned in advance that they must attend, and payments were made to a Mr Belt of London for the making of indictments against papists.¹⁷⁰ This increased activity may have been the result of the receipt of a letter from the crown detailing the ways resident papists and incoming seminary priests should be dealt with, a letter which perhaps more significantly offered the city a chance to repair the faults of its former negligence in dealing with the continued survival of traditional religion. This communication may hint that Robert Cripling was

¹⁶⁷ Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York*, p. 42.

¹⁶⁸ Raine, 7, pp. 132-133, 150-1.

¹⁶⁹ Raine, 8, pp. 5-6.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 58-9, 71.

not the only member of York's administration who had not taken action against the city's Catholics.¹⁷¹ Even later in Elizabeth's reign York's civic authorities were still concerned with the growing number of citizens who were not attending church, and extracts of recusant lists from the pipe rolls suggest that Catholics remained scattered throughout the city during the 1580s.¹⁷² In February 1589 it was agreed by the city corporation that

warrantes shalbe made to the constables to geve warninge to the howseholders of everye parishe that they and their families make resorte and repaire to dyvyne service and sermons on Sondaye and Holye dayes ... and that all householders do shutt up ... their doores or shoppe windowes upon Sabbott dayes in tyme of dyvyne service or sermons ...

Householders were also to be warned that their servants and retainers should be forbidden from playing games in the streets during service time, or from being idle, clearly a reflection of heightened fears of Catholic sedition in the aftermath of the threat from the Spanish Armada and the increased identification of Catholicism with treason.¹⁷³ It is clear that the orders were to some extent enforced, for one Anthony Graves junior was imprisoned and fined in May 1589 for allowing drinking and gaming in his house during service time, and for resisting Alderman Birkbye when he came to search the house.¹⁷⁴ The following month, Thomas Ketland faced a similar fine for baking bread on the Sabbath, though he was not imprisoned.¹⁷⁵ The orders clearly met with considerable resistance however; they were re-issued a number of times during the 1590s, and the imprisonment of a number of men for trading and gaming during service time suggests that attendance at church was not a priority for all York citizens. In addition, a letter from the mayor accompanying the orders in 1590 acknowledged the widespread neglect of divine worship and services within the city, and suggested that many citizens were continuing to follow their own minds over religion, persistently flouting both central and local attempts to force them to attend the services of the Established Church.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ *ibid*, pp. 64-6.

¹⁷² Dom Hugh Bowler and Timothy J. McCann (eds), 'Recusants in the Exchequer Pipe Rolls 1581-92,' *CRSP*, 71 (1986), *passim*.

¹⁷³ Deborah Sutton (ed.), 'York Civic Records,' IX, *YASRS*, 138 (1976), p. 39.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid*, p. 51.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid*, pp. 55, 126.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid*, pp. 87-8, 94-5; Raine, 8, pp. 37, 166.

It is evident that in York the presence of senior officials was no great deterrent to those who insisted on flouting religious laws, but in many respects the city would have been an easy place in which to hide religious non-conformity. York would have been bustling with people, and the numerous small parishes and intricate streets and alleyways would have made it relatively easy to avoid detection. As in most places, the majority of citizens did conform, if reluctantly, but for those who did not, the not inconsiderable remnants of the pre-Reformation clergy would have made access to a priest far easier for York Catholics than for those in the more remote parishes. However it is the evident reluctance of the city corporation as a whole to embrace religious reform that appears to have had the greatest impact on the survival of traditional religion in York. A lack of effective persecution meant there was, initially at least, little deterrent for many citizens to abandon traditional religion. It seems that in York, as in Exeter, the unity and privileges of the city were considered more important than was religious conformity.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, it would appear that York's deeply embedded conservatism at all social levels enabled the city to resist the implementation of reformed religion for longer than most despite the gradual conformity of senior civic officials. York also continued to reflect the religious atmosphere of the surrounding countryside. Unlike in Worcester, the presence of senior ecclesiastical officials in York - even men such as Grindal who were hand-picked to support the regime - did not cause the city to become aloof from its environs.¹⁷⁸ York retained a lasting attachment to traditional religion until at least the end of the sixteenth century, which undoubtedly encouraged and facilitated the similar persistence of Catholicism elsewhere in the county, one example of which will be seen in the following chapter, alongside one contrasting case study.

¹⁷⁷ MacCaffrey, *Exeter*, p. 202.

¹⁷⁸ MacCulloch, 'Worcester,' pp. 111-2.

*Chapter 5 – Contrasting Communities: Religious Change in the Deaneries of
Holderness and Cleveland*

To place the story of York within its context, the deaneries of Cleveland and Holderness serve as additional case studies. Situated in the northeast and southeast of Yorkshire respectively, Cleveland and Holderness lay roughly equidistant from York. Holderness, the hinterland of the increasingly Protestant Hull, and Cleveland, the hinterland of the persistently conservative Whitby, both remain predominantly rural regions even today, though the high, moorland terrain of Cleveland is very different from the lowland agricultural land of Holderness. Although Hull was a thriving trading port within Holderness, industry in both regions occurred on a small scale and communities were largely self-sufficient. Both deaneries are marked by their long and largely isolated North Sea coastlines, which were put to very different use in terms of religious change. In addition, both contained many poor parishes which were unattractive to educated ministers. Neither Holderness nor Cleveland experienced the same presence of regional authority as did York, yet each demonstrated a very different pattern of conformity and non-conformity throughout the Reformation, though there are hints that for Cleveland the extant evidence does not reveal the full story. It was only after the accession of Elizabeth and the implementation of what was to be the final Protestant Settlement of Religion however, that the experiences of Holderness and Cleveland really began to diverge. These deaneries have been chosen for closer consideration because they are atypical in many ways. However their demonstration of wide-ranging responses to religious change despite their geographical similarities is undoubtedly significant for our understanding of popular reactions to the English Reformation. These case studies are therefore intended to open up the way for more detailed regional research as a consequence of the new approaches taken in more broad-ranging studies of the Reformation, its changes and effects.

The Deanery of Holderness & Hull

Most of the extant evidence of religious culture and practice in Holderness during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary concerns the port of Hull, which had strong trading connections with the Protestant Netherlands and northern Germany.

There are nevertheless hints that reformed religion began to take root from a relatively early date in Hull, and certainly the presence of the traditional church is far less obvious in Hull than it is in York. David Lamburn has uncovered evidence of changing religious expectations in Hull, and has suggested as a result of his work on local wills that religious guilds were declining in popularity at the expense of trade guilds, whilst pilgrimages, offerings at shrines and bequests to both saints and parish clergy had declined dramatically by 1530. Peter Heath has also argued that Hull testators expressed their piety, and their orthodoxy, in different ways in the later Middle Ages, and he has suggested that they showed a marked preference for less extravagant memorials with only seven perpetual chantries founded during the century to 1529.¹ This provided a direct contrast to the city of York, in which twenty-one chantries were founded during the fifteenth century, and in which religious guilds continued to thrive until the dissolution. However whilst enthusiasm for traditional religion appeared to have been declining, there is no evidence of open disaffection, nor any indication that the people of Hull had any interest in religious innovation before the onset of religious reform in England. Although Hull's position as a shipping port meant the town became a melting pot of different European and English traditions from an early stage, the culture of Hull and Holderness remained orthodox.²

Possibly the small number of monastic houses in Holderness contributed to the early decline in enthusiasm for traditional religion; the deanery had only six religious houses, three of which were in Hull. Of these, the houses of Austin and Carmelite friars appear to have been small, though extant records for the pre-dissolution period are patchy.³ The other, Hull Charterhouse, appears to have played a larger role in city life despite the hermit-like existence of Carthusian monks. In a letter petitioning for the continuation of the house beyond 1536, Sir Ralph Ellerker emphasised to Cromwell the high regard in which the townspeople held the monks, and confirmed that they were ready to subscribe to the King's articles.⁴ This petition runs somewhat contrary to

¹ Peter Heath, 'Urban Piety in the Later Middle Ages: The Evidence of Hull Wills,' in *The Church, Politics and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Barrie Dobson (Gloucester, 1984), p. 219.

² C.C. Webb, "'Toward the Salary and Fyndyng of Jhesu Masse": The Obit of Robert Dale, Shipman and Citizen of York in 1503,' in *The Church in Medieval York: Records edited in Honour of Barry Dobson*, ed. D.M Smith (Borthwick Texts and Calendars, 24, York, 1999), pp. 132, 135; David Lamburn, *The Laity and the Church: Religious Developments in Beverley in the first half of the Sixteenth Century*, (Borthwick Papers, 97, York, 2000), pp. 12-13, 15; Heath, *ibid*, pp. 210, 228-9.

³ Claire Cross and Noreen Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns in Sixteenth Century Yorkshire*, (YASRS, 150, 1995), pp. 475-6, 494.

⁴ *LP*, X, 980; Ellerker's letter was dated 28 May 1536, the day after the visitation of the Charterhouse.

the rare occurrence of the Charterhouse in pre-Reformation Hull wills, and to the lengthy disputes between the monastery and the town during the first decades of the sixteenth century. Heath has argued that the close association of Hull Charterhouse with the de la Pole family may have lessened its attraction for the town burgesses, and as the burgesses were the main instigators of religious fashions and initiatives in the town their examples were no doubt followed by many townspeople.⁵ Furthermore, despite the Carthusians being one of the few religious orders in England which were still held in high regard, the order played a central role in opposition to the royal supremacy. Ellerker's letter suggests an attempt to persuade the government that Hull was not caught up in this, and there is no evidence that the house was directly involved. The government's attempt to crush the strong opposition from the London Charterhouse by sending two monks, John Rochester and James Walworth, to Hull in May 1536 further substantiates this suggestion. Both remained vehemently opposed to the royal supremacy however, and in 1537 were executed for their resistance.⁶ This resistance does not appear to have altered the opinions of the Hull Carthusians; their readiness to accept royal policy, and to pay a substantial fine to the crown, suggests that Hull Charterhouse sought more than anything to avoid suppression.⁷

Of those religious houses beyond Hull two were the small nunneries at Swine and Nunkeeling, which were unlikely to have had any enduring impact on their communities. The location of the third, Meaux abbey, in the parish of Wawne, situated on the western edge of the deanery, north of Hull, suggests that any impact it may have had would have been limited to the north of Holderness, and the neighbouring deanery of Harthill. It was Meaux nevertheless which provided a number of parish clergy to Holderness in the aftermath of the Dissolution. John Wallas was curate of Winestead in 1547 and of Welwick in 1551, Willam Saunders served as curate of Keyingham from at least 1550 to 1560 and Richard Sympson held the rectory of Sproatley until his death in 1570. Similarly John Barrow, the only former Meaux monk still receiving his pension in 1582, served at Beeford and possibly later at Nunkeeling.⁸ The continued conservatism of both Barrow and Sympson is undisputed, as both were presented during the visitation of 1567 for continuing to use the communion for the dead.⁹

⁵ Heath, 'Urban Piety', pp. 221-2, 228.

⁶ Cross and Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns*, pp. 222-4.

⁷ *LP*, X, 980; Cross & Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns*, p. 219.

⁸ Cross and Vickers *Monks, Friars and Nuns*, pp. 157, 163, 165.

⁹ V1567-8/CB1, fols 194v, 206v.

Nevertheless, the long-term influence of these ex-monastic clerics appears to have been limited as the parishes they had served witnessed only a handful of non-conformity cases. Welwick was still missing sermons in 1575 and books in 1586, and had a small number of recusants and non-communicants. Sproatley produced a rector who performed an illicit marriage in 1582 and a single recusant in 1600, and Beeford and Nunkeeling had occasional cases of non-communication and non-attendance.¹⁰

Despite the small number of religious houses situated within the deanery however, prior to the Dissolution patronage of almost half the parishes in Holderness lay with monasteries. Kirkstall abbey near Leeds held extensive estates there, and Guisborough priory in Cleveland was responsible for providing a vicar for Hessle and Hull. The priories of Pontefract, Kirkham, Bridlington and Thornton in Lincolnshire also held lands and appropriations within Holderness.¹¹ As monasteries often held estates as a means of income rather than expenditure, the generally poor Holderness parishes were sometimes left without a resident incumbent, and certainly the area attracted few graduate ministers even well into the reign of Elizabeth. Most priests were local men, often born in the parish they later came to serve, though the parish of Beeford, which was served by graduates John Brandesbie, followed by Cuthbert Scott, from 1539, was an exception.¹² There is little evidence of opposition to Henrician policy amongst Holderness parish priests. Only Richard Hildyard, who amongst other livings served the parish of Winestead, was attainted in 1539 for his opposition to the royal supremacy and subsequently fled to Scotland. Hildyard's employment as chaplain to Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of Durham, from 1536 may have influenced his opposition, for Tunstall had been a vocal opponent of the royal supremacy.¹³

The first sign of open religious non-conformity in the region was that of Robert Robynson of the parish of Holy Trinity, Hull, in 1528. During his examination

¹⁰ V1575/CB1, f. 76v; V1582, f. 210v, V1586, fols 150v, 151r; V1600/CB.1A f. 144v [Welwick]; V1582, f. 211r; V1600/CB.1A f. 131r [Sproatley]; V1586, f. 147v; V1600/CB.1A f. 127v [Nunkeeling]; V1600/CB.1A f. 125v [Beeford].

¹¹ Alison Garritty, 'The Parish Clergy in the Deanery of Holderness 1475-1550,' (Unpublished MA thesis, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of York, 1981), p. 1; Claire Cross, *Urban Magistrates and Ministers: Religion in Hull and Leeds from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Borthwick Papers, 67, York, 1985), p. 2; N.A H Lawrence, 'Fasti Parochialis – Deanery of Holderness,' unpublished manuscript, held in the Borthwick Institute, MD63.

¹² Garritty, 'The Parish Clergy,' p. 6 and appendix; Lawrence, 'Fasti Parochialis - Holderness,' suggests that although there were a handful of university educated clergymen in Holderness throughout the Tudor period, they served in very few parishes before the late 1580s and were often pluralists.

¹³ Lawrence, 'Fasti Parochialis - Holderness.'

Robynson was made to abjure his beliefs 'that God had never man fast,' 'that God made never prayers,' by which it must be assumed he meant formal, communal, rather than personal prayers, 'that if I were at the point and article of death I would not confess me at a priest, but that I would confess myself to God,' 'that sancte Peter was never the pape of Rome,' and 'that sancte Peter was never ordered priest.'¹⁴ Robynson confessed his errors, submitted himself to the authorities for correction, and swore to abjure his heretical beliefs. Nevertheless, his obviously unorthodox beliefs, which specifically opposed the idea of the clergy as intercessors between man and God, were treated seriously by the authorities and he was assigned prolonged and humiliating penances in both Hull and York. Dickens has argued that Robynson's beliefs were paralleled in Lollard cases, however, as Robynson was one of a group of men who had travelled from Hull to the Netherlands and Germany in 1528, and had witnessed Lutherans worshipping, his influences were more likely to have been continental.¹⁵

Visitation records from north Lincolnshire report the examination of one Henry Burnett of Barrow, a village on the banks of the Humber almost directly opposite Hull, which presumably had close links with the town. In his examination Burnett stated that early in 1528 he and five men from Hull, who he named as Robynson, Robert Clarke, Roger Danyell, Nicholas Bayly and one William, an apprentice to Mr Mycolow, had travelled to Amsterdam in a Dutch ship full of merchandise. On travelling from Amsterdam to Bremen, they discovered that

the people did followe Luters warkes and no masses were said ther, but on the Sondaye the priest would revest hym self and goo to the aulter and procedid till nygh the sacryng tym, and then the prest and al that were in the church, olde and yonge, wolde syng after their mother tong, and ther was noo sakryng.

Burnett claimed during his examination that all the men would have willingly attended Mass had they been able to, but said that though they visited various places there was no Mass, 'but after Luter's opynyons was the people ordered, and they had every Sondaye sermondres and preachinges,' which Burnett said neither he nor his companions understood.¹⁶ It seems likely that Burnett was only captured because he

¹⁴ Abp.Reg. 27, Wolsey, fols 132r-v.

¹⁵ A.G. Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-1558*, 2nd Edition (London, 1982), p. 24.

¹⁶ E. Peacock, 'Extracts from Lincoln Episcopal Visitations,' *Archaeologia*, 48 (1885), pp. 257-8.

was both somewhat slack in his religious observances, and talked too much about what he had seen, but despite a close examination he seems to have escaped without punishment. Roger Danyell was forced to hand over to Brian Higden, dean of York and vicar general for the diocese, a copy of Tyndale's English New Testament which he probably purchased on the Continent, though it may have been available in Hull.¹⁷ Only Robynson appears to have openly expressed non-conformist beliefs but it is difficult to see how far he might have been influenced by his visit to the continent. He was almost certainly unable to understand Dutch or German, and probably also Latin, which led Dickens to argue that he must have contacts with Lollards within Yorkshire.¹⁸ Nevertheless, Robynson's undoubtedly extensive contacts with other sailors and traders make it probable that he came into contact with English speaking Lutherans. Although he represents an isolated case of non-conformity in the extant records of Henrician Hull, Robynson's experiences reveal that this vibrant trading port was receiving reformed ideas and literature, which were spreading amongst ordinary and semi-literate men as well as the elite.

Despite this, Claire Cross's work on Hull has demonstrated that the town showed little enthusiasm for the Henrician Reformation.¹⁹ Sales of church plate in the 1530s pre-empted the government confiscation of church goods, but were made by the corporation to meet town expenses and with the preservation of civic unity rather than of the church in mind. Hull also remained ambivalent during the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace. Though the aldermen attempted to hold the town for the king they ultimately surrendered to the rebels under the threat of a siege and the recognition that many townspeople sympathised with the rebels. They were less cooperative with Francis Bigod's men however, and successfully quelled his attempt to prolong the rebellion in early 1537.²⁰ There is said to have been 'a conservative group which murmured when the images in Holy Trinity church were destroyed,' but there is no firm evidence of this, and the extant evidence points to the general compliance of Hull and elsewhere.²¹

The dissolution of the chantries during Edward's reign undoubtedly affected religious provision within Hull, as the already comparatively small number of

¹⁷ *ibid*, pp. 257-8.

¹⁸ Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 26-7.

¹⁹ Cross, *Urban Magistrates*, pp. 5-6.

²⁰ *ibid*, p. 6.

²¹ Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, p. 183.

clergymen in the town was further reduced. Perhaps more significantly for the religious experiences of Hull, the reign saw the appointment of a reformed preacher in Hull. John Rough, a Scotsman who graduated from St. Andrew's and had been a Dominican friar at Stirling, fled to England in 1547 after being attacked in Scotland for his anti-Catholic sermons and accepted a pension from Protector Somerset. He subsequently married a relative of Archbishop Holgate, and with his help obtained a benefice in Hull, which he retained to the end of Edward's reign when he fled abroad. He was later captured and executed by the Marian authorities in London, where he was serving as minister to an underground Protestant congregation.²² It is possible that Rough preached beyond Hull, and Dickens has argued that his influence would have reached other parts of Holderness. However Alison Garritty's claim that the Holderness clergy remained 'conventionally orthodox' in their religious beliefs until at least 1550 is perhaps more likely to reflect the reality.²³ Many parish clergy were probably unaware of the nuances of the new religion, and, even for those who sought them, access to Protestant sermons and theological texts would have been limited though they were certainly arriving into the region through Hull. It is, however, probable that the presence of an enthusiastic Protestant preacher had a significant influence on the townspeople of Hull, perhaps most particularly on those whose minds had already been opened to the new ideas through contacts with the Continent.

Evidence from the reign of Mary also indicates that reformed beliefs were present in Hull, but again there is little to suggest that such beliefs extended farther into Holderness. In October 1554 the sacrament was removed from the parish church of St. Mary's in Hull, both with the consent of and in the presence of the curate.²⁴ This indicates that at least some of the parishioners had come to reject the Mass and to accept the Protestant theology which denied the capacity of priests to make things holy, thus denying two central aspects of Catholic theology. Hull's later development into a centre of Puritanism is well known, yet the evidence of this case suggests that a core of heterodox and reformed beliefs was already taking shape in the town during Mary's reign, probably with clerical support, and possibly as a result of the earlier ministry of John Rough. The nature of the theological opposition in this case also links closely

²² http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/main/12_1563_1658.jsp (accessed 02/07/07); Richard L. Greaves, 'Rough, John (c.1508–1557)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24167>, accessed 21 Sept 2007]; SP 10/2 no. 34.

²³ Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, p. 198; Garritty, 'The Parish Clergy,' p. 49.

²⁴ Chanc.AB.7, fols 84v-85r.

with the ideas expressed by Robert Robynson some twenty-five years earlier, which might indicate that this core, or at least its ideas, had already begun to form during the reign of Henry VIII. Certainly the 1561 appointment of Melchior Smith as minister of Hull suggests that Protestantism there had both an influential and growing number of supporters. Smith was repeatedly in trouble with the Elizabethan ecclesiastical courts for being too radical, and nowhere else in Yorkshire was a Protestant preaching minister appointed so soon after Mary's death.²⁵ Again, this would seem to indicate that Rough had made a significant contribution to the spread of the new religion within Hull during Edward's reign which had survived the Catholic ministry of Thomas Fugall during the reign of Mary.²⁶ A Comparison can be made with Colchester in Essex, which saw the 1559 appointment of the Protestant pastor John Pulleyne, who by the time of his death in 1565 had effectively secured Colchester's identity as a Protestant town. Similarly the Midlands town of Coventry saw the Lancashire-born Thomas Lever appointed as minister of St. John's Bablake and archdeacon of Coventry in 1559.²⁷ A committed Protestant, Lever had been an active preacher during the reign of Edward VI, and was involved in disputations with Catholics, before he fled to the continent following his support of Jane Grey's failed coup. During Elizabeth's reign Lever, like Melchior Smith, was in trouble for his refusal to wear a surplice and breaches in church discipline. Smith had also established a reputation as an advanced Protestant, and had served as a lecturer at Boston in Lincolnshire until he was persuaded to come to Hull by the town corporation. Subsequently in 1568 he came into conflict with papists in his home town of Burton upon Trent, Derbyshire, for actively teaching Calvin's catechism and psalms to local children.²⁸ Smith was not universally welcomed in Hull however. His religious opinions and the vigour with which he expressed them antagonised some of his parishioners, and he was opposed by a Catholic clique which remained in the town and was led by Aldermen Jobson and

²⁵ For full details of the case against Melchior Smith see HC.CP.1563/4; HC.AB 1, fols 95r, 102v, 105r; HC.AB 3, fols 21v-22r, 72v, 85r-v, 98v, 101r, 120r and J.S Purvis (ed.), *Tudor Parish Documents in the Diocese of York* (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 209-25.

²⁶ Fugall will be discussed in detail below.

²⁷ Mark Byford, 'The Birth of a Protestant Town: The Process of Reformation in Tudor Colchester 1530-1580,' in *The Reformation in English Towns 1500-1640* ed. P.Collinson and J Craig (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 38-42; Further details of Lever's life can be found at Ben Lowe, 'Lever, Thomas (1521-1577)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16535>, accessed 18 Sept 2007].

²⁸ G.C.F Forster, 'Hull in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,' in *A History of the County of York: East Riding, Volume I – The City of Kingston upon Hull* ed. K.J. Allison (Oxford, 1969), p. 95; R.A Marchant, *The Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York 1560-1642* (London, 1960), pp. 279-280.

Dalton. Nevertheless, Smith's radicalism ensured he was made an example of by Archbishop Young and forced to submit and conform.²⁹

Hull's corporation largely shared the Puritan desire for sermons, and this alliance between a Protestant ministry and magistracy was effectively cemented by the establishment of a civic lectureship in Hull, which saw the provision of a resident graduate preacher from 1570.³⁰ Griffith Briskin, the first lecturer, emphasised the growing Puritan tendencies in the town when he was in trouble with the authorities in 1578 for not adhering to the Prayer Book when ministering the communion, and not wearing a surplice.³¹ Undoubtedly the presence of two open Puritans would have considerably influenced the religious temper of Hull, and by the end of the century this influence was beginning to spread beyond the town, for Briskin, a doctor of theology, went on to serve as rector of Beeford from 1594.³² This pressure from both lay and clerical authorities within Hull, coupled with regular Protestant preaching and teaching, undoubtedly contributed to the growing strength of Protestantism there, and marks out Hull as being very different to other parts of the region, though it shared similarities with other Yorkshire towns such as Beverley and Halifax. The alliance is further emphasised in the case against William Steade, the parish clerk of Holy Trinity church in Hull. Simon Pinder, the curate of Holy Trinity, accused Steade of absenting himself from sermons and homilies, continuing to ring the church bells, and being held in high regard by the papists, and was notably supported in his case by the mayor and aldermen of the town. Indeed the articles in the case suggest that the clerk's living would be better suited to the maintenance of a preacher.³³

Although the depositions of Robert Rede, vicar of Swine, in April 1554 for having married during the reign of Edward might be used to indicate that reformed beliefs had spread elsewhere in Holderness, his claim that his wife '...haith not bene with hym sens Lammas last past...' and their subsequent willingness to live apart is perhaps more indicative of a marriage made for companionship, convenience or economic reasons than as an expression of reformed theological beliefs.³⁴ Whilst

²⁹ Forster, 'Hull in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,' p. 95; Cross, *Urban Magistrates*, p. 15.

³⁰ Cross, *Urban Magistrates*, pp. 15-16.

³¹ Marchant, *The Puritans and the Church Courts*, p. 234; Forster, *ibid*, pp. 95-6; Briskin appeared before the High Commission in 1578 and 1581.

³² Lawrence, 'Fasti Parochialis – Holderness,' p. 18.

³³ HC.CP 1570/30; Chanc.AB.9, fols 209-10.

³⁴ Chanc.AB.6, fols 32r, 33v.

Holderness saw a greater number of priests deprived for marriage during the reign of Mary than either York or Cleveland, they agreed without exception to live apart from their wives, or were divorced, and almost all were from parishes in or near to Hull. Even William Utley, the curate of St. Mary's who had condoned the removal of the sacrament from his church consented to part from his wife and did penance for his marriage, suggesting that even where clergymen demonstrated sympathy with the new religion, their livelihoods were more important than their marriages.³⁵ The resignations of the vicars of Easington in 1556 and Keyingham in 1554 might indicate the incompatibility of their personal beliefs with those of the Marian regime, but this cannot be confirmed.³⁶ There is little to indicate anything more than compliance amongst the Holderness clergy before Elizabeth's reign, and beyond Beeford and Hull only two other Holderness parishes were served by Puritan ministers before 1600.³⁷

In contrast to these early suggestions that the new religion was making headway in Hull, the evidence for the rest of Holderness during the early years of Elizabeth's reign reveals what appears on the surface to be the most obstinate resistance to the Elizabethan settlement in Yorkshire. The 1567 visitation returns for Holderness portray a remarkable image of large-scale retention of traditional church furnishings and 'objects of idolatry and superstition.' The churchwardens or minister of almost every parish were presented during this visitation for either failing to remove elements of Catholicism from their churches or to re-equip them for Protestant worship. At Skeffling the commissioners discovered that an altar had been saved, as had a cross from the rood, a holy water stoup and an image.³⁸ Halsham too retained an altar, and holy water stoups survived in several churches, including Kilnsea, which also had two tabernacles, and Burton Pidsea, which retained vestments, several banners and banner staffs, a sepulchre and a paschal.³⁹ The parishes of Leven, Preston, Roos, Tunstall and Wawne all retained various images and paintings, and other items of 'superstitious idolatry' remained in many other parishes.⁴⁰ At Welwick the situation was more extreme, for the parish appears to have retained virtually everything

³⁵ Chanc.AB.7, fols 84v-85r, 87r-v.

³⁶ Garritty, 'The Parish Clergy', appendix.

³⁷ Marchant, *Puritans and the Church Courts*, pp. 319-24; the other parishes served by Puritans were Easington and Withernwick.

³⁸ V1567-8/CB1, f. 187v.

³⁹ V1567-8/CB1, fols 187r, 191r, 192r.

⁴⁰ V1567-8/CB1, fols 191v, 192v, 193v, 209r-v; Many of the Holderness cases mentioned here, and others, can also be found in the records of the Northern High Commission. HC.AB 3, fols 168v-174r, 175v, 184v.

necessary to say the Catholic Mass.⁴¹ The visitation returns record that the altar was still standing, and that the church retained an image of John, two holy water vats, pictures, paintings, a cope with images, crucifixes, candlesticks, clappers, and a golden tabernacle. In many of these cases the ministers and churchwardens claimed that the objects in their possession had been defaced, though often this had only happened since the reports of the visitation commissioners, and in some parishes, such as Wawne, they protested their ignorance as to the existence of these possessions until the commissioners unearthed them.⁴² It is not always clear whether surviving vestments, altars, and images were destroyed or defaced in the aftermath of their discovery by officials. It seems likely that in the majority of cases they were, as there are very few parishes that are repeatedly reported for the possession of Catholic goods.

The parishes of Holderness were not alone in their failure to comply with orders to remove such items from their churches, but for no other deanery in Yorkshire is there such comprehensive evidence of almost wholesale retention of objects of traditional religion. It is clear from the extant visitation returns that the local authorities of Holderness shared a desire to root out Catholicism and enforce religious conformity at parish levels by the late 1560s. Furthermore they appear to have been largely successful, for the parishes of Holderness appear only rarely in the records of the High Commission, and even then almost all cases involved Melchior Smith. In addition, despite the general lack of Protestant manpower in early Elizabethan England, and the fact that during the 1560s there were few places outside Yorkshire with higher numbers of JPs unsympathetic to the new religion, by 1564 the East Riding Commission was firmly controlled by men who favoured the Elizabethan settlement.⁴³ This combination of secular and ecclesiastical authorities both seeking to remove traces of Catholicism in the region reflected the alliance of magistrates and ministers in Hull, and marked the region as very different from deaneries such as Cleveland where the authorities tended to share the conservative sympathies of the people. In many ways, this local cooperation and the collaboration of the regional authorities with the injunctions of the central government in the early Elizabethan period meant that there were few options beyond conformity open to the people of Holderness.

⁴¹ V1567-8/CB1, f. 190v.

⁴² V1567-8/CB1, fol. 190v.

⁴³ Susan Taylor, 'The Crown and the North of England, 1559-70,' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Manchester, 1982), pp. 17 & 19.

This did not mean that the people, or the clergy, shared the authorities' desire for conformity. John Bolton, the rector of Hilston, was deprived of his living early in Elizabeth's reign and became a papist fugitive in Holderness before his capture. Together with one Michael Bolton, almost certainly a relative, John was committed to Hull gaol, where both ultimately died as Catholics.⁴⁴ In 1567 Michael was reported alongside George Bolton at Hedon to be a misliker of religion and for failing to attend church, whilst William Bolton of the same parish was accused of praying on a Latin primer, failing to communicate, and receiving George and Michael, here named as 'two papists' into his house. William claimed they were his brothers and thus argued that he was doing nothing wrong, and also claimed he no longer had his primer.⁴⁵ The Bolton family had something of a reputation as adherents of traditional religion, and George Bolton was in trouble in 1586 for neither attending church nor communicating, but significantly none were ever listed in the archiepiscopal visitations as recusants. Indeed, Hedon returned no recusants during Elizabeth's reign, possibly an indication that the Boltons were protected by their neighbours despite the general conformity of the parish. Interestingly, a previous incumbent there, John Swinscoe, was deprived in 1567 and though no cause is given religious dissidence may have been the reason.⁴⁶

Michael Bolton served as a parish priest until his imprisonment in 1579, and had subscribed to the 39 Articles before his institution to Burton Pidsea in the early 1570s. As Burton does not appear in any of the visitation returns for the 1570s, Bolton's open Catholicism cannot have been publicly exercised within his parish, at least not effectively. Similarly in Tunstall the priest William Ulvason was reported to have deserted his cure by 1568 and was certainly a Catholic prisoner in Hull in 1575.⁴⁷ The resignations of the vicars of Winestead and Hornsea in 1567 may also have concerned religion, and Robert Turner, who had been instituted to Winestead in 1557, must have subscribed to the Marian Catholic church. The records unfortunately give no details, but it has been suggested that Turner had also served at Hedon during the

⁴⁴ Hugh Aveling, *Post Reformation Catholicism in East Yorkshire 1558-1790*, (East Yorkshire Local History Series, 11, 1960), p. 11.

⁴⁵ V1567-8/CB1, f. 193r; V1567-8/CB2, f. 20r.

⁴⁶ V1586, f. 149v; Aveling, *Post Reformation Catholicism in East Yorkshire*, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Aveling, *Post Reformation Catholicism in East Yorkshire*, Michael Bolton was also involved in a case brought by Sir John Constable to the Star Chamber around 1572. He was charged with freeing Scottish and Flemish merchants and mariners captured from a Flemish ship driven aground at Tunstall and imprisoned at Hedon. There is nothing in this case to suggest that religion was involved, and the cargo of the ship was given as corn, but it is not inconceivable that the ship may have been carrying Catholic priests or books, which Bolton sought to liberate. STAC 5/C3/21.

Edwardian period, which may indicate that he had no strict religious allegiance.⁴⁸ Whether confessionally motivated or not, Holderness witnessed frequent changes of clerical personnel during the mid-Tudor period which would have weakened continuities with the past, and thus the chances of the widespread survival of traditional beliefs and practices. It is possible that conservative priests who resigned or were deprived remained in the area and continued to influence those they had previously served. However there is no evidence that they imitated their Cleveland counterparts, who successfully maintained numerous Catholic communities until the arrival of the seminary priests from 1580.

One of the most interesting cases of opposition to the Elizabethan regime is that of Thomas Fugall, the immediate predecessor of Melchior Smith as vicar of Hessle and Hull. Fugall, a zealous Catholic who had been appointed by the Marian regime in 1557 was accused in 1561 of refusing to say services in English and counselling others to do the same, not warning his parishioners not to use beads according to the injunctions, using a knife to cut up a copy of the English Bible in the house of William Weddall in Hull, troubling Hull residents during the reign of Mary for adhering to the Word of God, and refusing to bury one Richard Allen of Hull for the same reason despite warnings from the mayor. Christopher Ledgard, who made these accusations, also accused Fugall of having an illicit relationship with his wife, and of fathering another woman's child.⁴⁹ Fugall denied the accusations, but they were treated sufficiently seriously by the courts that he was placed under a bond of £100 to appear before the archbishop. Regardless of the fact that Fugall's Catholicism was illegal by 1561, it seems clear that his beliefs were somewhat out of place in Marian Hull, further indicating that opposition to traditional religion and adherence to Protestantism were growing in the town even during Mary's reign. It might also be argued that Marian Hull was home to a Protestant conventicle, as the evidence indicates that the Bible Fugall was accused of cutting was being read from aloud at the time, but this cannot be confirmed. It is possible that for the plaintiff the religious element of this case was merely a tool to ensure that Ledgard received justice for what he perceived to be the most important part of the case; Fugall's supposed illicit associations with Ledgard's wife. Of the numerous witness in this case, most deposed

⁴⁸ Aveling, *Post Reformation Catholicism in East Yorkshire*, pp. 13, 16; Lawrence, 'Fasti Parochialis – Holderness,' p. 139.

⁴⁹ CP.G.1041.

on the issue of adultery alone, suggesting that, for his parishioners, Fugall's sexual misdemeanours were considered more severe than his religious ones. Nevertheless, this case is evidence that people were very aware of the nature of contemporary religious disputes, and were willing to use these for personal gain. It is probable that Fugall, whom one of the witnesses reported to have been Scottish, did retain conservative beliefs, but it is also very likely that Ledgard used this to ensure his own victory over his vicar in the adultery issue. A small number of witnesses did report their awareness of the trouble Fugall had reputedly caused for the married parson (and former monk of Easby) William Harland, and Rowland Wilkinson and his wife during Mary's reign, but only two, William Jenkinson, a merchant, and John Hardcastle, alleged that they had witnessed Fugall refuse to say services in English and his parishioners continue to use prayer beads. This may reflect a lack of concern with these issues amongst parishioners, but may also indicate that the accusations of religious non-conformity against Fugall were exaggerated.

The case against Fugall also suggests that parishioners were able to conform to the requirements of the regime without enthusiastic leadership from their priest, and similar evidence can be found for other parts of Holderness. In the 1575 examination of the clergy Hugh Gray, the vicar of Welwick, was considered a simple man with poor Latin, but was nevertheless conforming.⁵⁰ Indeed, though few of the Holderness clergy were considered zealous, all were evidently performing their duties well by 1575, and most had some knowledge of Latin.⁵¹ Welwick produced only a handful of non-conformists in the decades after 1570 despite the early showing of conservatism, and throughout the rest of Holderness the largely satisfactory, if not particularly zealous, clergy ensured that by 1600 fewer than ten recusants were presented. Clearly, distance from York made little difference to the effectiveness or zeal of the Holderness authorities, for despite being amongst the geographically farthest from York the deanery officials were perhaps the most effective of all in Yorkshire at seeking out any remnants of traditional religious belief and practice. This contrasted directly with the city of York which, although home to the Council of the North and the Ecclesiastical Commission, managed to retain a significant Catholic community. Similarly Cleveland, which is roughly the same distance from York as Holderness, saw the establishment of

⁵⁰ V1575/misc; Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, p. 118.

⁵¹ V1575/misc; Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, pp. 116-8.

one of the largest and most important Catholic recusant communities in Elizabethan England. This perhaps reflects the dominance of the town of Hull over its surrounding area, and the influence of officials based at Hull within Holderness parishes. It would have been difficult for parishioners to hide evidence of non-conformity from local men committed to imposing reform, and clearly in Holderness the success of the visitations relied upon this local commitment.

Extant documentation from the 1570s suggests that the purge of the 1560s had essentially removed Catholicism from Holderness. The visitations of the 1570s record only one significant exception to the general conformity; the 1575 accusation of Richard Halome, the parish clerk of Swine, to be a 'defender an mainteyner of the Romishe religion and [for saying] it will never from his harte.'⁵² Perhaps significantly, Halome was also accused of failing to do his duty as clerk, failing to attend services and disobeying the vicar, suggesting that once again a possibly spurious accusation of religious non-conformity was used as a means of securing the removal of a clerk who was not fulfilling his duties. Holderness parishes were also noticeably absent from the 1577 return of recusants for the York diocese, though the list records two recusants from Hull. Robert Tennyne and his wife Janet must have practised their faith in some isolation, though they may have been in contact with the numerous Catholic prisoners held in Hull gaol.⁵³ The latter half of Elizabeth's reign continued to demonstrate conformity in Holderness. This supports the suggestion that the comparatively large-scale survival of Catholic objects there in the 1560s was a result of an attachment to familiar rituals, or simply a policy of wait and see rather than any conscious opposition to Elizabethan Protestantism. It was not certain in the 1560s that Elizabeth's religious settlement would last, or even that she would remain on the throne, and with this in mind it is unsurprising that so much evidence of traditional religion was found in Holderness. Arguably more surprising is that the officials of Holderness worked so hard to uncover it.

Equally significant to the conformity of Holderness, however, was the deanery's failure to attract missionary priests. Unlike in Cleveland the long and largely isolated coastline of Holderness was not targeted by the priests who began to arrive

⁵² V1575/CB1, f.71v.

⁵³ *CRSP*, 22, p. 32.

from continental Europe from the 1580s. Marchant has suggested that this may have been due to the success of Edmund Bunny, whom Grindal appointed as chancellor of the deanery of Holderness, in his work to convert the people to the Established Church.⁵⁴ Bunny was born in Wakefield and educated at Oxford before being made a fellow of Merton College in 1565 as a result of his preaching abilities, and he returned to Yorkshire as chaplain to Edmund Grindal when the latter was promoted to the Archbishopric of York. Subsequently, Bunny preached at numerous places in Yorkshire and took seriously the pastoral duties which came with his ensuing appointments. The publication in 1584 of his *A Book of Christian Exercise, Appertaining to Resolution*, shared many of the characteristics of, and was in many ways a Protestant version of, Robert Parsons' *Book of Resolution*, published to inform English Catholics of continental developments and combat the practice of church papistry. The two texts became popular works of devotion amongst Catholics and Protestants, and its combination of controversial and pastoral writing ensured that Bunny's book became a formative influence on the godly.⁵⁵ Bunny's preaching alone would not have kept out the seminary priests however. Rather the relative proximity of the Holderness coastline to trade routes to and from the mouth of the Humber would have increased the danger of detection for the seminary priests. Perhaps most importantly however, the number of Catholic gentry families in Holderness was small.

This lack of Catholic gentry ensured that there were few safe houses from which priests could receive shelter and sustenance after their voyage, and the problem was compounded by the conformity of the heirs of several Catholic gentlemen. Sir Henry Constable for example, son and heir of the Catholic Sir John Constable of Halsham, was sufficiently Protestant that he served as a JP, seignior of Holderness, High Sheriff of Yorkshire and MP for Hedon during the 1580s. Even his marriage into the notoriously Catholic Dormer family caused no trouble until Sir Henry was removed from the commission of the peace in 1591 as a result of his wife's Catholicism. Nevertheless, Lady Constable's own faith appears to have had little impact on Holderness, for she seems to have concentrated her energies with some success on establishing Sir Henry's house at Kirkby Knowle in the North Riding as a

⁵⁴ Marchant, *Puritans and the Church Courts*, p. 17.

⁵⁵ William Joseph Sheils, 'Bunny, Edmund (1540–1618)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3943>, accessed 21 Sept 2007].

Mass centre.⁵⁶ Furthermore, Thomas Gargrave's 1572 list of the principal and lesser gentry of the three Ridings of Yorkshire lists only four men whose places of residence are given as Holderness. Of these only Christopher Hillyard of Winestead and George Dakins of Brandesburton, are counted as Protestant. Robert Wryght of Plowland in the parish of Welwick, was 'doutfull or newtor' and of Thomas Boynton of Barmston, nothing is recorded.⁵⁷ None of these parishes except Welwick appear to have had much trouble with non-conformity. Brandesburton returned three non-communicants in 1582 but made no other appearances in the visitations return, whilst Barmston and Winestead do not feature in the visitations at all.⁵⁸ Even at Welwick non-conformity was uncommon after the initial retention of church goods; the recusancy of Francesca Thorpe and non-communication of Margaret and William Damme were exceptional.⁵⁹ Families such as the Constables, known Catholics who held lands in Holderness, are listed as resident in other parts of Yorkshire, suggesting that their influence was concentrated on other areas. Gargrave's list is known to be both incomplete and not entirely accurate. However it is probably worth noting that of the twenty-six East Riding gentry he lists, ten are considered to have been Protestant, and eight as doubtful or neutral. Gargrave's informants led him to believe that only six East Yorkshire gentlemen were still Catholic in 1572, and of these, two were members of the Constable family, one was a Babthorpe - another family of renowned East Riding Catholics - and one was a Vavasour - a steadfastly Catholic family, whose primary connections were with the city of York.

There are isolated cases of religious non-conformity in the later sixteenth century which suggest some survival of traditional sympathies in Holderness, but nothing that might be considered a serious threat to the establishment. In addition to scattered presentments for recusancy, non-communication and non-attendance at church, a clandestine marriage took place at the house of Robert Ellerker in Skeckling in 1582, and in the same year Christopher Thomson of Garton was suspected to be

⁵⁶ Aveling, *Post Reformation Catholicism in East Yorkshire*, pp. 25-6; V1600/CB.1A, fols 72v-73v suggests a small but thriving recusant community was present in the parish of Kirkby Knowle.

⁵⁷ James J. Cartwright, *Chapters in the History of Yorkshire: Being a Collection of Original Letters, Papers and Public Documents, Illustrating the State of that County in the Reigns of Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I* (Wakefield, 1872), pp. 66-7, 70, 72.

⁵⁸ V1582, fols 203r-v.

⁵⁹ V1582, f. 210v; V1586, f. 151r.

hiding 'many reliqs of popery' in his house.⁶⁰ At the next archiepiscopal visitation, in 1586, Henry Bolton of Hornsea, probably a member of the Bolton family discussed above, was accused of harbouring papists, but there is no evidence of regional Catholic networks such as those which existed in Cleveland. Recusancy was never more than a minor problem for the Holderness authorities.⁶¹ The 1580s also saw an increasing number of presentments for an insufficient number of sermons preached each year in Holderness parishes, though the presence of Puritan preachers such as Melchior Smith and Griffith Briskin ensured that this was not the case in Hull. This increase might simply be the result of increased investigation by the visitation commissioners, but it may also reflect an increasing enthusiasm for the Established Church amongst the parishioners expressed through a desire to hear sermons. Although I will argue below that for Cleveland the apparent absence of opposition to the state religion is indicative of a largely conservative ruling class not reporting their subordinates, in Holderness it seems certain that the lack of opposition was genuine and that compliance was virtually universal.

The evidence from wills can shed further light upon this picture of conformity in Holderness, and also confirm that it was not universal. Claire Cross's study of Hull wills has revealed that though preambles remained conservative throughout the reign of Henry VIII, after the accession of Edward VI only a small number refer to the Virgin, and only one, which was drawn up within months of the King's accession, requested prayers for the testator's soul. Some ambiguity remained however; in 1549 the Hull alderman James Johnson bequeathed his soul to 'Almighty God, and to the Holy Trinity, to Our Lady, St Mary, and to all the celestial company of heaven,' whilst at the same time he trusted 'that through the merits of Jesus Christ [his] death and passion to be partaker with him and one of the number of the elect and chosen fellowship.'⁶² This combination of statements of both traditional and reformed beliefs suggests a fusion of traditional and reformed beliefs and emphasises the blurred boundaries between the old and the new. The 1540s were very much a transitional period with no defined confessional divisions. Johnson's preamble clearly emphasises the fluidity and ambiguity of religious categories and personal beliefs whilst

⁶⁰ V1582, fols 210v, 211r, 257r; the marriage between Robert Dalton and Elizabeth Constable at Skeckling was performed by John Moore, the parson of Sproatley.

⁶¹ V1586, f.154r; the visitation of 1600 saw only 8 recusants presented in Holderness, compared to 259 in Cleveland the same year, V1600/CB.1A, *passim*.

⁶² Prob. Reg. 13, f. 572.

demonstrating that despite Hull's reputation for early progression towards religious reform, this was far from universal.

Across Holderness Edwardian will preambles remained largely traditional, and bequests for masses, diriges and prayers for the soul were not uncommon, though neutral wills became increasingly numerous. There is evidence that religious outlooks were changing and moving on from medieval Catholicism, but Protestant beliefs had not yet taken root. John Foster of Brandesburton's 1547 bequest of his soul to 'almightie god that it may please hyme that it may rest at the day of judgement with Abraham Isaake and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,' and Jennet Lightefoite of Hedon's bequest of her soul 'unto almightie god our hevenly fader whiche is mercifull unto all them that doth call upon hyme with a penitent harte' in 1551 demonstrate that they no longer fully subscribed to traditional religion, but whilst both demonstrate some evangelical influences, it is not possible to label them as Protestant.⁶³ By the reign of Mary will preambles in Hull had become largely neutral, though there were a small number who mention the Virgin. In contrast William Crokehay's will of August 1558 included a decidedly Protestant preamble, and the request for a funeral sermon, something generally associated with zealous Puritans of the later sixteenth century.⁶⁴ Only a couple of Marian Hull wills contained Catholic bequests, and there is nothing to suggest any resurgence of Catholicism in the town.⁶⁵ Marian wills elsewhere in Holderness generally demonstrated continued conservatism, but gave little evidence of any zealous Catholic feelings. Preambles were almost wholly conservative, though there were a small number of neutral and Protestant examples, and traditional bequests were scarce.⁶⁶ Though John Bullie of North Frodingham requested half a trental of masses, William Wright of Skeffling requested a whole trental to be said for himself and his friends' souls, and William Ranold of Patrington bequeathed money to buy an altar cloth for his parish church, these are isolated examples.⁶⁷

⁶³ Prob. Reg. 13, fols 401r, 751v.

⁶⁴ Prob. Reg. 15 part 3, f. 302; Cross, *Urban Magistrates*, pp. 12-13, 14.

⁶⁵ For examples of Catholic bequests in Hull wills see Prob. Reg. 16, fols 44v-45r (Angle); Prob. Reg. 15 part 1, f. 136 (Dalton); Cross, *Urban Magistrates*, pp. 13-14.

⁶⁶ See for example the Protestant preamble of the will of Robert Lowcaster of Swine; Prob. Reg. 15 part 1, f. 240v; and the neutral preambles of John Watson of Witherwick (f. 10r-v) and William Bilton of Keyingham (f. 10v).

⁶⁷ Prob. Reg. 15 part 1, fols 268v (Bullie), 269r-v (Wright), 294r-v (Ranold).

The first year of the Elizabethan settlement saw a wide range of different preamble types used across Holderness which often appear to reflect the confusion many parishioners must have felt about religion. Although just under half of the ninety-three wills for Hull and Holderness in the years 1559 and 1560 present a preamble in what would generally be recognised as a traditional format, it is increasingly evident that some of these were hedging their bets with bequests of their soul to God as their maker and only redeemer and to all the celestial company of heaven.⁶⁸ Others, and particularly those from the parish of Brandesburton, were even more ambiguous. Along with other parishioners there, Merialle Wylkes bequeathed her

soul to the clemencye and great mercifulness of oure Lorde Jesus Christ my maker and redeemer throughe whose most blessed passion I beleve faithfully to be saved and to his most blessed mother our ladye sante Marie and to all the celestially compagne of heaven.⁶⁹

Clearly in Brandesburton there was a growing attachment to reformed religion, yet still uncertainty about what the true religion really was, and such preambles demonstrate both this uncertainty and the fusion of old and new beliefs.

In other Holderness parishes however, will preambles were much more explicitly Protestant by 1559. Thomas Preston of Owthorne, and William Wytwange of Withernsea, both bequeathed their souls to 'the infinite mercy and goodnes of oure savyors savyore Jesus Christe throughe whose glorious passion and death I beleved only to be savede.'⁷⁰ Testators in Aldbrough, Tunstall and Riston were also leaving Protestant preambles, but in some instances it is possible to see both Catholic and Protestant preambles in use in the same parish, which suggests that this period was witnessing a definite transition of religious allegiance. Traditional will preambles, like other evidence of traditional religious beliefs in Holderness, quickly diminished in number after 1560. Even the wills of known Catholics such as James Bolton of Hornsea and William Bolton of Swine gave little indication of their beliefs.⁷¹ Nevertheless, though the wills of the early 1560s gave little indication of a lasting attachment to Catholicism in Holderness, nor do they suggest that Protestantism had fully taken root in the region. The majority are neutral, and can thus indicate little more

⁶⁸ See for example the will of Robert Cooke of Burton Pidsea, Prob. Reg. 16, fols 18r-v.

⁶⁹ Prob. Reg. 16, fols 81v-82r (Wylkes) see also 99r-v (Yonge), 99v-100r (Pickering).

⁷⁰ Prob. Reg. 16, fols 17r-v.

⁷¹ Prob. Reg. 17, fols 205r, 302r-v.

than adherence to the law and the slow move away from traditional beliefs and practices. By the end of Elizabeth's reign wills from Holderness give no hint that Catholicism remained in the deanery, reflecting the evidence obtained from other sources, but nor were explicitly Protestant preambles common.⁷² Clearly, whilst conformity in Holderness was widespread, it took some time for parishioners to accept the full ramifications of the theological and liturgical Reformations in England.

The Deanery of Cleveland

Cleveland provides an astonishing contrast to Holderness in terms of the nature of religious practice and levels of conformity, though at first glance the evidence appears to be somewhat contradictory. Once again there is little reference to the region during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary. However the deanery was certainly involved in the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace, and the parish of Seamer was home to the rising of 1549; indications that conservative feelings remained strong. The executions following the Pilgrimage also provide evidence that support for Catholicism in Cleveland was not simply based on ignorance and superstition amongst the lower ranks of society, but was present amongst the gentry and nobility. Amongst others, Sir Robert Constable, Sir John Bulmer and his wife, and Sir Nicholas Tempest belonged to families who later continued to resist the implementation of Protestantism.

The loss of any visitation returns for Yorkshire prior to the 1560s undoubtedly ensures that much of the religious history of Cleveland will remain hidden, but the later history of the region suggests that conservatism remained so strongly entrenched that earlier visitations would merely have added details rather than changed the overall story. It is no doubt significant that Dickens made no mention of any cases of non-conformity during the period 1509 to 1558. Given his propensity for claiming even the most tenuous cases as evidence of early reformed religion in Yorkshire, Dickens' silence for Cleveland is a strong indication of the extent to which traditional religion and its rituals and ceremonies were embedded in these moorland societies. Dickens' only mention of the region was the complicated 1530s conflicts between Francis Bigod

⁷² For more Protestant preambles see for example the wills of Steven Hogg of Marfleet (Prob. Reg. 26, fols 144r-145r); Marmaduke Thompson of Hollym (Prob. Ref. 27, f. 132r); Agnes Thompson of Skeckling (Prob. Reg. 28, fols 256v-257r) and Elizabeth Byleth of Skeffling (Prob. Reg. 28, fols 820r-v).

and John Hexham, abbot of Whitby, over the abbey's tenants.⁷³ The details have little relevance here, but it is perhaps significant that Bigod, a known reformer, was also at loggerheads with the Conyers and Eure families, both of whom long retained conservative sympathies and supported the abbey against Bigod. Indeed the Conyers later played a significant role in the survival of traditional religion in the Whitby area, and Gregory Conyers was instrumental in bringing about Bigod's downfall.

Whitby abbey was undoubtedly an influential presence in what was then a small fishing town. The presence of other large monastic houses at Guisborough and Mount Grace, as well as smaller houses of monks, nuns and friars at Grosmont, Handale, Basedale, Rosedale, Northallerton and Yarm ensured a ready supply of conservative priests into Cleveland parishes for many years after the Dissolution. The remoteness and poverty of many of these parishes ensured they long remained unattractive to educated ministers, and a general shortage of Protestant manpower after the Reformation meant the authorities had little choice but to allow surviving ex-monks to continue in their new roles as parish clergy. Few of the monks of Whitby seem to have survived long after the dissolution, though Peter Thompson, who moved to Middlesbrough after the suppression of his house, was still drawing his pension in 1573, and John Watson served at Fylingdales until at least 1561, and subsequently at Levisham until at least 1578.⁷⁴ Whitby itself continued to be served by monastic clergy. Anthony Watson of Kirkham and Robert Laverok of Malton both served there and though they appear to have conformed, it is unlikely that they were particularly zealous in their implementation of reform after 1559.⁷⁵ Robert Pursglove, a former prior of Guisborough and commissioner for the King during the dissolution of the larger monasteries, certainly influenced religious practice in the area around Lythe, north of Whitby. Pursglove's successful ecclesiastical career spanned the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward and Mary, but despite having actively worked with Archbishop Holgate to bring the Reformation to Yorkshire, he refused to subscribe to the Elizabethan settlement.⁷⁶ Pursglove was confined to within twelve miles of his home at Ugthorpe manor, in the parish of Lythe, from 1561 to 1564 as a result of his conservatism and the threat he was perceived to pose to the Established church. Though this effectively

⁷³ Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 83-6; *LP*, IX, 216; *LP*, X, 49; *LP*, XII (i), 870.

⁷⁴ Cross and Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns*, pp. 57-8.

⁷⁵ V1575 MISC; Cross and Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns*, pp. 306-7, 398; Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, pp. 124-5.

⁷⁶ D O'Sullivan, *Robert Pursglove of Guisborough and His Hospital* (Great Ayton, 1990), pp. 24-6.

prevented him from visiting Guisborough, where his conservative influences would have been strongest, Pursglove's beliefs must have had some impact on the parishioners of Lythe. During the course of the Elizabethan visitations the parish returned almost a hundred recusants and non-communicants.⁷⁷

Pursglove was not the only Guisborough monastic who retained an influence in Cleveland after the dissolution of the monasteries. Others took livings elsewhere in Yorkshire. William Wysdale served at Skeffling and Welwick in Holderness during the 1550s and early 1560s, which may account for the slow speed with which these parishes initially complied with the Elizabethan settlement. It is possible that another Guisborough monk, Thomas Walker, was serving at North Frodingham in Holderness as late as 1586.⁷⁸ Within Cleveland John Harrison acquired the living of East Harlsey after the dissolution, and was still drawing his pension in 1573, though it is unclear if he remained in East Harlsey as several men of this name held livings in Yorkshire. Also in Cleveland, Oliver Grayson served as rector of Easington from 1540 until 1578.⁷⁹ John Clarkson, another former monk of Guisborough, also appears to have had a significant impact on the region after the dissolution. He described himself as curate of Guisborough in his will of 1556, and his bequests included a request that his successor pray for his soul annually for twenty years, as well as small gifts to some of his former brethren. He possessed a number of books which may previously have belonged to the priory, some of which he bequeathed to George Tocketts, and to Robert and Roland Rokeby who he appears to have been tutoring.⁸⁰ George Tocketts and his family were later in trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities for recusancy, and several Rokebys in Richmondshire were also named as recusants in the later sixteenth century, suggesting that Clarkson's influence may have been far-reaching. Elsewhere Robert Holland, a former canon of Grosmont, appears to have been living in Loftus in the early 1560s, and may have served as curate there until at least 1573.⁸¹ Similarly his fellow Grosmont canon William Knagges seems to have held the living of Cloughton in Scalby parish, just south of the Cleveland boundary, until early 1569.

⁷⁷ Hugh Aveling, *Northern Catholics: The Catholic Recusants of the North Riding of Yorkshire* (London, 1966), p. 38; Emma Watson, "'A Stiff-necked, wilful and obstinate people,": The Catholic Laity in the North York Moors, c.1559-1603,' *YAJ*, 77 (2005), appendix 2.

⁷⁸ Cross and Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns*, p. 282, 284, and see above for more on Skeffling and Welwick.

⁷⁹ *ibid*, pp. 275-7.

⁸⁰ *ibid*, pp. 273-4; Prob. Reg. 15, part 1, fols 242v-243r.

⁸¹ Cross and Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns*, p. 238.

Edmund Skelton, another Grosmont monk who will be discussed more fully below, went on to serve as curate at Egton, which became home to the largest recusant community in Elizabethan Yorkshire.⁸²

Equally resistant to reform was Roger Thompson, a novice at Mount Grace at the time of the dissolution. He became vicar of Ampleforth in the deanery of Ryedale, but was sequestered for refusing the oath of supremacy in 1559 and was included in a 1561 list of recusants still at large. His influence in Elizabethan Yorkshire was relatively short-lived however, for he fled to the Continent and joined the priory of Sheen Anglorum, becoming prior in 1581/2.⁸³ Robert Marshall, another monk of Mount Grace also went to Sheen, leaving his living at Carlton in Cleveland to do so, and monks and friars from houses outside Cleveland's boundaries served in many parishes after the Dissolution.⁸⁴ In 1567, for example, the vicar of Hutton Rudby, one Robert Symon who had previously been a monk at Warter, was charged with not providing sermons for three years. Three years later Edward Baker, the curate of Great Ayton and a former monk at Marton, was summoned before the High Commission for sympathising with the rebellion, though as he still held the living in 1577, his offence cannot have been deemed too serious.⁸⁵ Most former monks appear to have conformed and drawn no attention to themselves however. John Taylor, a former Dominican friar, served at Hutton Rudby until around 1558, and Rievaulx monks James Fairweather and Oliver Watson served at Marton in Cleveland and Ormesby respectively, without demonstrating any open resistance to the Elizabethan regime.⁸⁶

The presence of men such as these, and those who remained in Cleveland without holding a benefice, undoubtedly aided the continued conservatism of the parishioners, and also provided a direct contrast to the number of reformed ministers in Holderness. However the Marian clergy also played an important role in the survival of Catholicism within Cleveland. Only two Marian priests were deprived for marriage in 1554, and one of these, John Hoode of Stokesley, was also deprived of two livings in the Norfolk diocese, which suggests that he was in any case unlikely to have been resident in Cleveland. However, it is worth noting that Stokesley experienced very

⁸² *ibid*, pp. 238-9.

⁸³ *ibid*, p. 233.

⁸⁴ *ibid*, p. 231.

⁸⁵ *ibid*, pp. 310, 348; V1567-8 CB1, f. 116r.

⁸⁶ *ibid*, pp. 176 (Fairweather), 183-4 (Watson), 429 (Taylor).

little Elizabethan non-conformity. Also deprived was William Latymer, rector of Kirby in Cleveland, but he was subsequently restored in 1559. Kirby presented no non-conformists, and appeared only rarely in the visitations, though the parish was missing the first book of homilies, a good communion book and Erasmus's *Paraphrases* in 1586.⁸⁷ Interestingly, in the same visitation the churchwardens were accused of failing to levy the forfeiture for absence, but they do not appear to have had any regular absentees. It has been argued that Cleveland, along with the rest of Yorkshire, showed indifference rather than enthusiastic revival at Mary's reinstatement of Catholicism. However this does not seem to agree with the extant evidence and it might rather be argued that there was little need for demonstration when many parishes had probably experienced very little change during Edward's reign as a result of the intrinsic conservatism of their clergy.⁸⁸

Given the content of the later records it is perhaps surprising that the deanery of Cleveland does not feature prominently in the early Elizabethan visitation returns. There is no evidence from the returns of the 1560s or 1570s that the parish churches of Cleveland deanery remained full of Mass equipment. Not all were yet fully equipped for Protestant services, nor were all receiving the requisite number of sermons each year, but there is no record of any altars still standing in churches, or paintings adorning the walls. A report was made at Osmotherley during the 1559 royal visitation 'that their ymagies by convayed awaye, but by whom they knowe not' and Catholic church fittings were still hidden in the parish in 1575.⁸⁹ Janet Corney of Danby was presented in 1567 for keeping 'certeyne vestments and other supersticious Idolatry' in her house, but her deceased husband had been curate of Danby, which may explain the presence of these items.⁹⁰ From this evidence alone it would seem that on the surface at least Cleveland was already conforming by 1567.

However, the records of the High Commission give a hint that perhaps conformity was not ubiquitous. In 1562 images were discovered at Kirk Leavington and Birkby,⁹¹ and in early 1568 the churchwardens of Easington were instructed by the

⁸⁷ V1586, f. 105r.

⁸⁸ J.H Rushton, *They Kept the Faith: The History of Some Yorkshire Christian Congregations* (Pickering, 1967), pp. 14-15.

⁸⁹ C.J Kitching (ed.), *The Royal Visitation of 1559, Act Book for the Northern Province*, Surtees Society, 187, Gateshead, 1975), p.69; Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, pp. 20-21.

⁹⁰ V1567-8/CB1, fols 125v, 145v, 199v.

⁹¹ HC.AB 1, fols 24r, 27r.

court to make full provision of worship books for the Protestant service, and to ensure that the children and youths of the parish attended catechism classes.⁹² This issue had also arisen in the visitation of 1567, when the vicar of Easington was also accused of omitting his quarterly sermons and continuing to say the communion for the dead, suggesting that there was considerable reluctance to accept the Elizabethan settlement in the parish.⁹³ In the summer of 1569, just a few months before the outbreak of rebellion, the chapelry of East Rounton in the parish of Hutton Rudby was found to lack all the books required for Protestant worship, the parishioners were not receiving the holy communion the requisite three times per annum, and the chapel had been served for a time by a Scottish priest.⁹⁴ The faith of this priest is not specified, and nor is his name given, making tracing him impossible, but neither the implication that he might have been a Catholic fleeing the Scottish Reformation nor the possibility that he might have had links with Mary Stuart during her imprisonment can be ruled out. Shortly after this, the curate of Middleton upon Leven made clear his dislike of reformed ways by actively working to dissuade a fellow (unnamed) clergyman from the 'godless state of matrimonye.'⁹⁵ In October 1569 the churchwardens of Guisborough were admonished for not carrying out their duties properly; there was a dispute over the schoolmaster there and the curate, Edmund Dickson, was imprisoned for keeping images.⁹⁶ Nevertheless these few cases are wholly insufficient as evidence of widespread conservatism in Cleveland, and instead suggest that the deanery saw only a handful of religious dissidents during the 1560s.

An alternative suggestion might be made however. Whilst Holderness had conforming local and regional authorities, and little lasting attachment to traditional religion, Cleveland officials were almost uniformly conservative in the 1560s. In 1569, for example, a Cholmley and a Radcliffe were appointed as JPs for the Whitby Strand area. As members of important Catholic families, both played a substantial role in later recusancy. Their appointment as JPs must have made a significant contribution to the survival of traditional religion in the Whitby area before the arrival of the missionary priests. In this they would have been aided by the absence of any comparable Protestant power in the region before the arrival of the Puritan Thomas Posthumous

⁹² HC.AB 3, f.168v.

⁹³ V1567-8/CB1, fols 186v-187r.

⁹⁴ HC.AB 4, fols 83r, 85v.

⁹⁵ HC.AB 4, f. 151r.

⁹⁶ HC.AB 4, fols 188v, 189v, 199v, 206r.

Hoby at Hackness in 1597. To return to Thomas Gargrave's list, of the thirty-three North Riding gentry he named, thirteen were recorded as definitely Catholic, twelve as Protestant and seven as doubtful, neutral, or unknown. Of these, five Catholics and one Protestant were recorded as having their seats in Cleveland, however it is known that Roger Radcliffe, listed by Gargrave as Protestant, was in fact Catholic and was as influential in maintaining Catholicism in his Mulgrave estates as the Cholmleys were in Whitby.⁹⁷ The accuracy of Gargrave's list has already been questioned, but it nevertheless serves as a useful tool for illustrating the great difference in the religious allegiances of the gentry of the deaneries of Cleveland and Holderness.

Thomas Hoby was a vigorous champion of the interests of the Cecil family, and was uncomfortably close to the Catholic mission centre based at Grosmont priory, which had hitherto been isolated from any Protestant influences as well as being hidden from the authorities. Even after Hoby's arrival the Council of the North requested further assistance in dealing with the problem of recusancy in Cleveland, emphasising that it was considered to be a serious and pressing issue. A letter from the Archbishop of York and the Council of the North to Cecil, written soon after a raid on Grosmont priory in July 1599, requested that Lord Sheffield, the non-resident Lord of Mulgrave since the death of Francis Radcliffe in 1591, be appointed a member of the council as 'it might encourage him to spend part of the summer at Mulgrave castle, in the midst of these ungodly recusants, where he would assist the service, and suppress seditious speeches and actions.'⁹⁸ Their wish was granted for in 1603 Sheffield was appointed president of the council by James I. It has been suggested that he was not a success in the position, and Elizabeth had certainly refused his earlier application for the presidency on account of his having married a Catholic.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, recusancy numbers in Cleveland continued to increase throughout the final years of Elizabeth and into the reign of James, although this may have been a result of a higher rate of detection after the advent of educated gentry Protestants to the area.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, by 1600 presentments for the neglect of sermons or lack of homilies and prayer

⁹⁷ Cartwright, *Chapters in the History of Yorkshire*, pp. 67-8, 70-71.

⁹⁸ G.W. Boddy, 'Catholic Missioners at Grosmont Priory, part II', *Northern Catholic History*, 20 (1984), p. 3; *CSPD, 1598-1601*, Doc. 233 no.72.

⁹⁹ F.W Brooks, *The Council of the North* (Historical Association, 1953), p. 18; Hugh P. Kendall, *History of the Old Castle of Mulgrave in Yorkshire*, (Hull, 1948), p. 92.

¹⁰⁰ E. Peacock (ed.), *A List of the Roman Catholics in the County of York in 1604* (London, 1872), pp. 88-117.

books virtually vanish from the records across Yorkshire. The authorities obviously had some measure of success in ensuring churches were properly equipped to provide Divine Service by the end of the century, but significantly less success in ensuring that the people attended those services and believed what they were told.

I would argue that Cleveland was one of a number of regions in Yorkshire where conservatism was so widespread in the 1560s that it was simply not reported to the authorities. There are obvious difficulties with using silences in the sources to construct an argument, but I believe that for Yorkshire in general, and particularly for Cleveland, there is sufficient supporting evidence from later decades to uphold the suggestion that conservatism was much more widespread in the 1560s than the records suggest. Whilst Holderness stands out in the 1567 visitation with much more evidence of the survival of traditional practice than elsewhere, Cleveland scarcely features in the same visitation, yet went on to become one of the most significant recusant strongholds in the country. Cleveland's distance from the authorities at York cannot be used to explain why so few presentments were made for conservatism, as it has already been suggested by the evidence from Holderness and York that this made little difference. However, the evidence from Cleveland, like that from Holderness, emphasises the importance of local authorities in implementing religious change. The predominantly reformed outlook of the JPs of Holderness caused the vigorous and diligent seeking out of the continuation of traditional rituals and preservation of Catholic furnishings. The conservatism of their Cleveland counterparts surely supports the argument that there must have been a considerable amount of selective blindness towards conservative practices. Certainly men whose own preference was Catholicism were unlikely to have presented their neighbours for enjoying the same, at least whilst the government was placing no particular pressure upon them to do so.

In the 1570s, whilst the evidence for Holderness implies widespread conformity, that for Cleveland continues to suggest that conservatism remained, yet was not widely reported. Occasional traces of traditional religion were discovered by visitation commissioners throughout the 1570s; monuments were uncovered in Whorlton and Appleton for example.¹⁰¹ In 1575 accusations of popery were made against Sir William Allen, curate, and James Thomson, a parishioner, of Guisborough.

¹⁰¹ Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, p. 21.

Richard Hildreth, a churchwarden at Kirby Sigston was presented in the same year for selling ‘an iron bounde chest, one cope, ij bells and certein woodd belonging to the churche.’¹⁰² Christopher Dixon of Guisborough was presented in 1575 for praying upon a Latin primer, and at Birkby in 1578 the commissioners discovered the church walls were not whitewashed where ‘monuments of superstition’ had formerly stood. Nor was the rood loft defaced, and across the deanery a growing number of people were presented for non-attendance at church and non-communication.¹⁰³ The cases are still comparatively few in number, but they provide sufficient evidence that even twenty years after the accession of Elizabeth traditional religion remained entrenched in parts of Cleveland society. Since many Cleveland officials in the 1570s remained religiously conservative, it may be argued that the conservatism we can uncover represents only the tip of the iceberg.

The number of non-conformists in Cleveland increased throughout the remainder of Elizabeth’s reign. Although it is uncertain whether this growth was a result of more people rejecting reformed religion or the greater effectiveness of the commissioners, it cannot be denied that the numbers were sufficiently high to cause concern amongst government representatives in the north. It is likely that this concern only took root during and after the 1569 Northern rebellion. Though often regarded as a rebellion of Durham and Northumberland, some of the largest contingents of rebels in fact came from the Allertonshire district of Cleveland, and the deanery features heavily in the post rebellion High Commission records.¹⁰⁴ Though no masses are known to have been celebrated in Cleveland churches during the rebellion, the destruction of Protestant books was widespread. In the early 1570s representatives of almost half the parishes in Cleveland were summoned before the High Commission charged with the provision of books destroyed during the rebellion, and the repeated entries for many suggests a widespread unwillingness to comply.¹⁰⁵ The rebels did not receive the support of all the Catholic gentry of Cleveland however. The Cholmleys of Whitby, who are known to have supported and housed seminary priests from the 1580s, did not follow the northern Earls into rebellion, and the common people largely followed their example. Similarly there were few rebels from the lands held by the

¹⁰² V1575/CB1, fols 54v, 60v, 62r.

¹⁰³ V1575/CB1, f. 54v; V1578-9/CB1, f. 118r.

¹⁰⁴ It is undoubtedly significant that the peculiar of Allertonshire was under the jurisdiction of the Bishops of Durham.

¹⁰⁵ HC.AB 5, *passim*.

Conyers and Radcliffes in eastern Cleveland, and it is interesting to note that none of the North Riding gentry later named as Catholic in Gargrave's list of the wealthiest and ablest gentry were involved in the 1569 rising.¹⁰⁶

The Cholmleys were, despite their undoubted adherence to the Catholic faith throughout the sixteenth century, notable for their refusal to rebel against the monarchy. Richard Cholmley, who served every Tudor monarch except Henry VII, was careful not to allow his own religious feelings to drive him into rebellion. He appeared far less troubled by the religious changes imposed by the state than were some of his heirs. Henry VIII knighted Richard, named him JP for the North Riding, and later appointed him Sheriff of Yorkshire. Edward granted him lands in return for his assistance with the closure of the chantries and guilds in the North Riding, and he was elected Sheriff of Yorkshire for a second time during Mary's reign, as well as serving as MP for Yorkshire during her final Parliament. However Richard's star declined following Elizabeth's accession.¹⁰⁷ Following his refusal to adopt Protestantism he was imprisoned in York castle for countering the accusation that he was plotting to advance the claims of the Countess of Lennox and her son to the English succession with a charge of embezzlement against the Council of the North. Although it is probable that Richard's Catholicism was the main reason behind the charges against him, he was arguably the least obstinate member of his family. The possible exception was Francis, the eldest son of his first marriage, the preamble of whose 1586 will expressed full conformity to the regime yet nevertheless also hinted at personal Catholicism.¹⁰⁸ The marriage of Henry, Richard's eldest son from his second marriage, to Margaret Babthorpe, a daughter of one of Yorkshire's most notorious Catholic families, is confirmation, if any were needed, of the family's Catholicism. Margaret's brother William was one of the very few East Riding gentlemen Gargrave named as Catholic, and her mother became a nun in widowhood.¹⁰⁹ Margaret, and Richard's second wife Katherine, daughter of Henry Clifford, first Earl of Cumberland, were instrumental in establishing Whitby as a safe haven for Catholics, and for harbouring and protecting incoming missionary priests from the colleges in Europe. Richard's religion was certainly the reason for his deprivation of the

¹⁰⁶ Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, pp. 81, 84; Cartwright, *Chapters in the History of Yorkshire*, pp. 67-8

¹⁰⁷ Jack Binns, 'Sir Hugh Cholmley of Whitby 1600-1657: His Life and Works,' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 1990), pp. 37-9.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*, p. 41; Prob. Reg. 23, fols 212v-213r.

¹⁰⁹ Binns, 'Sir Hugh Cholmley,' p. 42; Cartwright, *Chapters in the History of Yorkshire*, p. 66.

governorship of Scarborough in 1568, but his moderacy and loyalty to the crown ensured he was treated leniently.¹¹⁰

Henry Cholmley's adherence to the Catholic faith, together with the mismanagement of his finances ensured he was almost bankrupt by the time of his conversion to Protestantism in 1599, and his wife and sister had been imprisoned for recusancy at least once.¹¹¹ The Cholmleys dominated the Whitby area, and as their absence from the Northern Rebellion had ensured the quietness of the people, so their open Catholicism led the way in religious practice. I will argue below that even the presence of a Protestant minister in Whitby made little difference to the recusancy numbers. The strength of the Cholmley's influence was almost certainly the result of the lack of Protestant gentry to mount a challenge. The arrival of Thomas Hoby certainly had a huge impact on the religious make-up of the region, and Binns has claimed that his pursuit of recusants rapidly made him one of the most hated men in the locality.¹¹² Certainly Hoby was involved in almost constant litigation with his Catholic neighbours virtually from the day he arrived in the area, and his vendetta against the Cholmleys, and also the Eures, became lifelong. For Hoby they were natural targets. He was an ardent Puritan, whilst they were known Catholics and harbourers of missionary priests, whose protection was allowing the people of Whitby Strand to continue resisting the implementation of the Elizabethan religious settlement.¹¹³ They in turn regarded Hoby as a government spy.¹¹⁴ Hoby's vendetta against the Cholmleys was played out, largely in the court of Star Chamber, later than period covered by this thesis, but it is worth noting that the religious divisions between the two families ran sufficiently deep that even after the Cholmley's conversion to Protestantism Hoby continued to attack their rights to hold lands and offices.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Binns, 'Sir Hugh Cholmley,' p. 43.

¹¹¹ *ibid*, p. 49.

¹¹² *ibid*, p. 56.

¹¹³ Despite their reputation for Catholicism no member of the Eure family was ever presented during the Archbishop's visitations for recusancy, non-communication or failure to attend church.

¹¹⁴ Binns, 'Sir Hugh Cholmley,' pp. 56-7; Boddy, 'Catholic Missioners, II,' p. 4.

¹¹⁵ Jack Binns (ed.), *The Memoirs and Memorials of Sir Hugh Cholmley of Whitby, 1600-1657*, (YASRS, 153, Woodbridge, 2000), p. 5; for further details on the charivari see Andrew Cambers, 'The Partial Customs of These Frozen Parts': Religious Riot and Reconciliation in the North of England,' *SCH*, 40 (2004), pp.169-179; Felicity Heal, 'Reputation and Honour in Court and Country: Lady Elizabeth Russell and Sir Thomas Hoby,' *TRHS*, series 6, 6 (1996), pp.161-78; Joanna Moody, *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady: The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599-1605* (Stroud, 2001); Similar personal disputes appear in the records of Star Chamber between a number of key Yorkshire gentry families, particularly after 1580. However like the Hoby-Cholmley cases, there is nothing in these to confirm that religion was the primary reason for the conflict, and the cases I have looked at always involve land disputes, and often also assault. A dispute over the rectory of Scalby, near

Whilst implicit throughout, it was not until after the introduction of the recusancy laws in 1581 that the true extent of conservatism in Cleveland began to be revealed. The dramatic increase in the records of Catholic non-conformity in Cleveland which accompanied these laws indicates that the region cannot have had anything other than a strong background of conservatism, despite the contrary picture suggested by some of the earlier evidence. That a Cleveland man was caught using a rosary in 1581 suggests a long-standing traditionalism. Likewise, the opposition to clerical marriage expressed by Anne Grecian of Seamer, near Stokesley, reflects a traditional sensibility. She called her curate's children 'prestes calves' and claimed it was 'never good worlde since mynisters must have wyves.'¹¹⁶ By 1583 a regular commission was touring the North Riding in order to find hidden Catholic objects, and when they found a gold crucifix in the house of Richard Cholmley, it was defaced and returned to him in pieces.¹¹⁷ Cleveland saw over eight hundred presentments for recusancy and almost two hundred cases of non-communication over the period 1582 to 1600 as well as numerous cases of clandestine marriage, baptism and even a secret night time burial.¹¹⁸ Obviously some of these were repeat presentments, but the total of 259 recusancy presentments for 1600 alone, compared with the mere eight for Holderness, fourteen for Pontefract deanery, and 44 for Ainsty, gives an idea of the importance of the Cleveland recusants. Even Ryedale, Cleveland's southern neighbour had only 75 recusancy presentments. Across Yorkshire only the archdeaconry of Richmondshire came close to rivalling the number of recusancy presentments in Cleveland with a total of 308 individuals plus two households with an unspecified number of members in 1595, compared with 225 for Cleveland deanery in the same year.¹¹⁹ The number of missionary priests in the North Riding in the last decades of Elizabeth's reign doubtless played a part in the size of the recusant community there. Anstruther and Challoner have identified over one hundred Catholic priests active in Yorkshire from the late 1570s, and many of these are known to have worked in the

Scarborough for example, involved an attack on members of the Conyers family, but as one of the defendants was a member of the Meynell family it is perhaps unlikely in this case that religion was involved. STAC 5/C9/8.

¹¹⁶ Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, 23; V1586, f. 105v.

¹¹⁷ Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, 23; The Cholmley's also suffered damage to their property during the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace, though in this case the damage was done by rebels dissatisfied by the Cholmley's failure to support their cause. *LP*, XII, i, 393.

¹¹⁸ Watson, 'A Stiff-necked, wilful and obstinate people,' pp. 194-6, appendix 2.

¹¹⁹ V1595-6/CB3; V1600/CB.1A; See also Watson, 'A Stiff-necked, wilful and obstinate people,' appendix 2.

North Riding.¹²⁰ Several seem to have been returning home after receiving an education and training abroad. The well established network of safe houses across the North York Moors, coupled with a significant number of existing Catholics and its remoteness from York and the ecclesiastical authorities, made Cleveland an attractive landing point for Catholic priests on the English mission. It has also been argued convincingly that the seminarists were the first post-Reformation evangelists to reach Cleveland, and there is certainly evidence that missionary priests were being hosted and protected by ordinary lay men and women as well as the gentry.¹²¹

Given this very high level of persistent attachment to traditional religion, it is perhaps surprising that there are occasional records which indicate sympathy with reform. In the 1567 visitation Francis Green, rector of Birkby, was accused of refusing to wear a cope or surplice at the administration of the communion. It is likely that his evident inclination towards Protestantism and regard of the surplice as a remnant of popery was a major reason why Birkby returned only two recusants and six non-communicants in the Elizabethan visitations.¹²² This is further emphasised by the High Commission records of the case against Green, which state that he was ‘a man that doyth earnestely favor God’s holly word and his trew and sincere relegio and detesteth all papistry.’¹²³ Similarly in Marske the 1575 arrival of Christopher Roger as the new minister is likely to have been the reason for the lack of later recusancy in the parish. Roger was married in a ceremony performed by his brother William, rector of Kildale, another Cleveland parish without recusancy presentments in the visitation returns. He remained in the living until 1623, providing a long and unbroken stretch of Protestant preaching and teaching at a time when recusancy was making great advances elsewhere in the region.¹²⁴ Likewise in Osmotherley, which also had no Elizabethan recusancy presentments, the vicar, Alexander Abe, was a married university graduate who was zealous to the extent that he regularly presented his parishioners for keeping superstitious objects in their parish, and for offences such as absence from church.¹²⁵ However, Abe himself was presented in the visitations of 1575 and 1578 as the church

¹²⁰ G. Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests Vol.1, Elizabethan 1558-1603* (Durham, 1969); D. A Bellenger, *English and Welsh Priests 1558-1800* (Bath, 1984); R. Challoner *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* 2nd edition, revised and edited by JH Pollen (London, 1969).

¹²¹ W.J. Sheils, ‘Catholics and their Neighbours in a Rural Community: Egton Chapelry 1590-1780,’ *Northern History*, 34 (1998), p. 119; Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, p. 45.

¹²² V1567-8 f.114r; HC.AB 4, fols 9v-10r, 12v, 13r; Watson, *ibid*, Appendix 2, 201.

¹²³ HC.AB.4 fols 12v-13r.

¹²⁴ E Hope, *Hope’s History of Marske-by-the-Sea*, 2nd Edition, (Redcar, 1975), p. 25.

¹²⁵ Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, p. 123.

lacked a book of Homilies and a large Bible, and also because he was caught brawling in the churchyard with one of his parishioners. Perhaps more tellingly he was also reported as suspended from his living.¹²⁶

Nevertheless, conformist and Protestant ministers were not always successful in eliminating traditional religion from their parishes. St Mary's parish church at Whitby, which had been served by ex-monastic clergy since the Dissolution, received its first Protestant minister, Robert Toes, in 1570. However the town continued to have a large recusant community, suggesting that the faith of the gentry was as significant as that of the incumbent in shaping the religious attitudes of ordinary parishioners. Toes was succeeded at Whitby by his son Daniel in 1598, but even this long period of unbroken Protestant ministry could not prevent the existence of a thriving Catholic community in the town which continued to grow even after the conformity of the Cholmleys at the end of the century.¹²⁷ An attempt to install a town preacher in Whitby also failed. The lease of the rectory of Whitby was granted to the Earl of Huntingdon for twenty-one years in 1593 on the condition that he would provide an incumbent at all times to preach and evangelise. The idea was that one able man would provide a better service than several ill-educated and poorly paid curates. However, Huntingdon's death only two years later ensured that the experiment was short-lived, and although the clause remained in subsequent leases of the rectory, there is no evidence of its impact before the close of the sixteenth century.¹²⁸ The returns of the examination of the clergy of 1575 state also that the curate of Egton, Robert Wilmot, was young, zealous and of good character, but Egton had one of the largest recusant populations in England. At Hutton Rudby and Seamer the vicars were both members of the Catholic Conyers family. George Conyers at Hutton Rudby was reported to have good Latin, be moderately well read in Scripture, zealous and of good character, and John Conyers at Seamer was said to be young, of good character, zealous and teaching the catechism.¹²⁹ However given the family's recusancy it is unlikely that either were the zealous Protestants they were reported to be, particularly as their livings were located in the heart of a district in which the Conyers owned considerable estates. It is

¹²⁶ V1575/CB1, f. 61; V1578-9/CB1, f. 117.

¹²⁷ F.R. Robinson, *Whitby: Its Abbey and the Principal Parts of the Neighbourhood* (Whitby, 1860) p. 135; V1600 CB.1B f.236v-237r.

¹²⁸ W.J Sheils, 'Profit, Patronage or Pastoral Care: The Rectory Estates of the Archbishopric of York 1540-1640,' in *Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800*, ed. R. O'Day and F. Heal (Leicester, 1981) pp. 100-1.

¹²⁹ Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents*, p. 124.

no doubt significant that the advowsons of both parishes were in the hands of the Conyers Lords, who would probably have chosen incumbents whose religious sympathies reflected their own.¹³⁰

As was seen above, the wills from Holderness deanery appear to reflect an unerring journey towards acceptance of the new religion, becoming neutral, and occasionally Protestant, from a relatively early date. A sample of wills from Cleveland, largely taken from those parishes with the most and least recusancy presentations later in Elizabeth's reign, again provides a contrast. Bequests of the soul continued to include 'all the celestial company of heaven' well into the 1580s and occasionally beyond, though the Virgin Mary slowly disappeared.¹³¹ Equally, during the reign of Edward, when most parts of Yorkshire saw a definite increase in the number of neutral will preambles, some Cleveland testators continued to openly display Catholic beliefs. In 1548 William, Lord Eure, bequeathed his soul to Mary and all the saints as well as to God and Christ, and Cecily Boynton, a widow of Roxby in the parish of Hinderwell, bequeathed her soul to God, Mary and all the Saints in 1550.¹³² Nevertheless, these wills still reflect the impact of the Reformation, for unlike their predecessors neither Eure nor Boynton made any elaborate provision for their afterlife and the ritual of late medieval Catholicism is very much muted. Looking only at will preambles for mid-Tudor Cleveland there is little sign that England had experienced a Reformation, yet the Reformation clearly had a significant impact, for Marian wills do not see a great upsurge in religious bequests and requests for prayers for the soul. Many people continued to cling to traditional rites and ceremonies, but much had been destroyed so completely that it could not be restored in the time of Mary's reign. The effects of the Reformation upon church furniture is also hinted at, for in 1555 Thomas Postgate of Wragby bequeathed a sum of money towards the repair of the church's chalices, and in the same year John Wrythe of Ellerby in the parish of Lythe bequeathed an altar cloth to Hinderwell church.¹³³

¹³⁰ William Page (ed.) *The Victoria History of the County of York: North Riding Volume II* (London, 1923), pp. 290, 293.

¹³¹ A few examples are Prob. Reg. 22, fols 217r (Booth, 1582), 582v (Ager, 1584), 632r-v (Hodgeshorne, 1584); Prob. Reg. 23, fols 110v-111r (Chapman, 1585), 308v (Wilson, 1586), 659r-v (Richardson, 1587), 885v (Carlell, 1588), Prob. Reg. 25, f. 1203r-v (Thompson, 1592).

¹³² Prob. Reg. 12a, fols 2v-3r (Eure); Prob. Reg. 13, f. 706v (Boynton).

¹³³ Prob. Reg. 14, fols 205r, 209r-v; The Postgate family long remained obstinate Catholics and were heavily involved in Catholic missionary work in the North York Moors region.

Mary's reign also witnessed an isolated example of a Protestant will preamble in Cleveland when the gentlewoman Constance Gower of Stainton beseeched God her saviour and redeemer to use his infinite mercy to pardon her soul.¹³⁴ Such sentiments were rare however, and it is evident that traditional religion prevailed even after it was once again contrary to the laws of the realm. The 1562 will of John Brown of Sneaton, near Whitby, left money to three poor widows, with the unspecified implication that they were to be paid to pray for his soul, and similar bequests can be found in the 1567 will of William Russell of Hawsker and even the 1596 will of Agnes Whitby of Lythe.¹³⁵ Traditionally seen as particularly efficacious for the soul, the prayers of widows were often requested by testators with sufficient means at their disposal, but their illegality by 1562 might indicate that prior arrangements would have been made by the recipients of the bequests for such prayers. Nevertheless, probate was granted for the 1566 will of William Norham of Loftus which bequeathed money to the parish poor to pray for him and for all Christian souls, and for the 1569 will of John Hart of Brotton which left money to named poor to pray for him.¹³⁶ These wills clearly suggest personal adherence to traditional religion, which can be assumed but not ratified from the traditional forms of preamble used by many of their contemporaries. An even more explicit indication of traditional beliefs can be seen in the 1565 will of Edmund Skelton, curate of Egton.¹³⁷ Skelton, a former canon of Grosmont priory, bequeathed 'a boke called postella cassiodrius catholicon and a byble in lattyn to remaine in the church for ever,' and also several unspecified books to Robert Holland, a fellow former canon. Whilst I have been unable to firmly identify the *postella cassiodorius catholicon*, it is likely to have been an edition of the religious writings of Cassiodorus, the sixth century Roman writer and politician who became a monk in retirement. Cassiodorus wrote with the aim of educating monks, and it is possible that Skelton obtained this text from the library of his former monastery; certainly this was not the reading material of the average man. It is likely that Skelton made some contribution to building the foundations of what later became the largest recusant community within Cleveland, and it is certainly possible given the general conservatism of Egton parish that Skelton's Latin books remained in the church for some time. The visitations have no record of their discovery, but this is no guarantee that they were not hidden from the commissioners.

¹³⁴ Prob. Reg. 14, fols 183r-v.

¹³⁵ Prob. Reg. 17, fols 162r-163v; 630r; Prob. Reg. 26, f. 321v; Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, p. 80.

¹³⁶ Prob. Reg. 17, f. 553r.

¹³⁷ Prob. Reg. 17, f. 474v; Cross and Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns*, p. 239.

Despite the problems with using will preambles to identify religious beliefs, it is undoubtedly significant that in Cleveland traditional preamble wordings occurred almost exclusively in parishes which other sources reveal to have had a high concentration of recusants. Traditional style preambles were still appearing in Whitby, and nearby Lythe and Fylingdales, at the end of the sixteenth century. All three parishes were stopping points on the well-established Mass circuit in the area, and in Whitby at least these wills are evidence that not all parishioners were using their parish priest as their scribe, for by this stage the town was under the ministry of the Protestant Daniel Toes.¹³⁸ There are a few explicitly Protestant wills for Elizabethan Cleveland, almost all of which appear very late in the reign and originate in parishes which returned few if any recusants. A rare exception is the 1564 will of the yeoman Gyles Hewgalle of the parish of Whorleton.¹³⁹ The lengthy preamble to this will suggests that Gyles was both a firm Protestant, and that he had considerable personal input into the preamble rather than relying upon formulae used by scribes. Hewgalle's will thus provides a rare example of a more personal statement of belief. Other Protestant preambles in Cleveland appeared much later in Elizabeth's reign. Margaret Bawdwayne of Marton, and John Holland of Roxby both indicate a true Protestant belief in their wills, and the presence of only one recusant in each parish suggests that conformity, at least, predominated, and that some of the parishioners had truly converted to the Established religion.¹⁴⁰

It is also significant that Hinderwell parish, which incorporated Roxby, was from 1561 to 1601 served by Francis Scarth, one of only a few Tudor priests serving the parish who was not presented to the living by the Catholic Salvin family.¹⁴¹ The previous rector, Richard Salvin, had been deprived for his refusal to subscribe to the religious settlement, and died in hiding from the High Commission in 1571.¹⁴² Clearly his Elizabethan appointed successor had enjoyed some considerable success in eliminating the strong attachments to traditional religion displayed by Cecily Boynton in 1550. Even the presence of St. Hilda's well in the parish churchyard at

¹³⁸ Prob. Reg. 28, fols 590v-591r (Robson).

¹³⁹ Prob. Reg. 17, f. 360v.

¹⁴⁰ Prob. Reg. 27, fols 460v-461r (Bawdwayne) and f. 709r (Holland).

¹⁴¹ Michael Harrison, *Parish of Hinderwell*, (Whitby, 1973), p. 23.

¹⁴² Aveling, *Northern Catholics*, p. 24.

Hinderwell,¹⁴³ a former pilgrimage site for Catholics which some continued to visit after the Reformation, seems to have lost any significance it once had to reformed teaching and preaching. It appears that in Cleveland, as in Holderness, the evidence from wills supports that obtained from official records, and provides a useful means of tracking religious change through the parishes. As the majority of testators in York, Holderness and Cleveland left wills with neutral preambles and predominantly secular bequests, so the majority of the populations of these regions quietly conformed to the religious changes imposed upon them. Only those who did not conform came to the attention of the authorities, and thus to historians. Whilst their importance cannot be underestimated, neither can that of the conformists who gradually allowed the religion of the Elizabethan settlement to become established in their parishes and localities.

Conclusion:

The deaneries of Cleveland and Holderness were clearly very different regions during the Reformation period, and experienced the religious and political upheavals of the time in different ways. The evidence suggests that on the whole both remained largely conservative until the reign of Elizabeth, with the town of Hull the only notable exception. This in itself is unsurprising. What might be considered more surprising is the variety of ways in which people experienced the Reformation in these deaneries, and the ways in which they accepted, rejected and interacted with the religious changes imposed upon them and incorporated aspects of those changes into their local cultures and traditions. Taken at face value the evidence appears to suggest that in Elizabethan Holderness initial conservatism largely gave way to conformity, and perhaps even Protestantism, whilst in Cleveland initial conformity was replaced by Catholic recusancy. The face-value experiences of these regions would indicate that the arguments of Hugh Aveling and John Bossy that the seminarist priests essentially 'saved' Catholicism in Elizabethan northern England were correct. However, if my argument that what appears to be initial conformity in Cleveland was simply a failure by Catholic local authorities to report the conservative activities of their Catholic neighbours is valid, then the survival side of the survival/revival argument is strengthened. Initially, it may have been a lack of clarity over religious issues which allowed Catholic practices to continue unchecked in some areas, as well as a lack of

¹⁴³ John Graves, *The History of Cleveland* (Stockton-on-Tees, 1972), p. 318.

any organised programme of repression by the government, whilst the increased persecution in the aftermath of both the Northern rebellion and the arrival of the missionary priests from the 1580s ensured that more commitment and effort was required to be a Catholic. Nevertheless, these case studies demonstrate the impossibility of applying large-scale arguments at a regional level, particularly in a county as varied as Yorkshire. Cleveland and Holderness were used as case studies because they represent opposite extremes, but even in York, where the presence of both secular and ecclesiastical government authorities might have been expected to cause widespread conformity, a thriving Catholic community can be found. There is sufficient, and sufficiently varied, evidence for Reformation Yorkshire to allow the historian to construct a number of different stories of the receipt of religious change. Close inspection of a number of regions within the county clearly indicates that there can be no single interpretation of how the people of Yorkshire reacted to and worked with or against the series of Reformations imposed by the Tudors. Further close study into other deaneries is undoubtedly needed before a real conclusion can be reached about the extent of conservatism, conformity and apathy in Yorkshire. Nevertheless I would argue that, whilst early conservatism in Yorkshire did not always lead to later recusancy, recusancy always stemmed from conservatism.

Conclusion

It is evident that the religious changes of the Tudor period had an enormous impact upon the regional religious culture of Yorkshire. The shift from Catholic to Protestant saw the repeated removal and replacement, followed by the final removal, of much that had for centuries been an integral part of the cultural and religious lives of the population of Yorkshire. The dissolutions of the monasteries and chantries, the abolition of purgatory, the removal of objects and images of devotion from parish churches and the loss of the ritual and ceremony of traditional religion entailed a huge alteration in popular perceptions of the church and religion, and resulted in the emergence of extensive, if often subtle and underground, popular resistance. This thesis, which aimed to revisit material previously studied by Dickens, has demonstrated that the effects of religious change were very different to the conclusions posited in his work. There is much less evidence to suggest that Protestantism had taken a firm hold by 1553 than Dickens argued, and I have shown that responses to the Marian restoration of Catholicism within Yorkshire were much more positive than Dickens suggested, and undoubtedly contributed to the tenacity of conservative belief and practice during the reign of Elizabeth. It therefore seems evident that, in line with the work of revisionist historians such as Duffy, the beginning of widespread acceptance of Protestantism within Yorkshire needs to be dated to the mid-1580s, rather than the 1550s. Whilst interest in Protestant ideas began to emerge relatively early, and put down deep roots, in towns such as Hull and Halifax the impact of reformed religion remained scattered and patchy in Yorkshire until well into the reign of Elizabeth, thus it is more accurate to re-date the cusp of change in Yorkshire to some three decades after the date suggested by Dickens.

I have demonstrated in this thesis the extent of continuity of religious belief and practice throughout the religious changes imposed by Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and, at least initially, Elizabeth I. Conservatism was particularly tenacious, and despite the best efforts of the authorities, reform was implemented slowly. As late as the 1590s crosses made of napkins were still being laid on the bodies of the dead in Richmondshire, and Robert Middleton, the vicar of Nidd, was charged in 1586 with

continuing to say the Latin Mass and crossing the sacramental bread.¹ In Mirfield in the Ainsty deanery vestments were discovered by visitation commissioners in the late 1590s, and there are scattered references from the Ainsty and Pontefract deaneries during the 1580s and 1590s which suggest that whilst conformity predominated and Protestantism was making inroads, conservatism still remained. Both deaneries saw presentments for recusancy, non-communication and non-attendance at church during the later years of Elizabeth's reign, as well as occasional clandestine marriages or illicit baptisms outside the parish, and 'relics of popery' were still suspected to be hidden in places.² It is from the late 1580s and early 1590s particularly that evidence of the work of Catholic missionary priests can be seen in the number of presentments for illicit baptisms, marriages, and even burials.³ As Aveling has pointed out it was easy to excuse the private baptism of a child as many families carried out baptism ceremonies at home if the newborn child was seriously ill, but marriage was a more serious issue with both legal and spiritual connotations.⁴ Nonetheless, many Catholics, particularly in Cleveland, did still find a way to marry in their own faith. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, many initially used Henrician and Marian priests whose ordination before the Elizabethan settlement made their legal position indisputable, and many more were prepared to travel to find a Catholic priest.⁵ In most cases those involved in illicit marriages were also presented for recusancy, but there are a few incidents where the reason for the secrecy behind the marriage is not so clear, and it is evident that Catholic networks covered a much wider area than merely the established recusant communities.⁶

¹ Hugh Aveling, *The Catholic Recusants of the West Riding of Yorkshire 1558-1790* (Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society; Literary and Historical Section, 10:4, Leeds, 1963), pp. 195, 201

² See V1600/CB.1A fols 26v, 43r for extra-parochial baptisms in Ainsty; HC.CP ND/10 for the discovery of vestments at Mirfield in the late 1590s; HC.CP 1596/4 for the night time marriage of William Turner of Pontefract (though it seems accusations against him were largely unfounded); V1582, f. 235r for Francis Jackson of Warmfield's refusal to baptise his son in his parish church; and V1586, f. 175v for recusants in Calverley; HC.CP 1596/6 gives details of a recusancy case in Swinefleet, and provides names not mentioned in the visitation returns

³ HC.CP ND/10

⁴ Hugh Aveling *Northern Catholics: The Catholic Recusants of the North Riding of Yorkshire 1558-1790* (London, 1966), pp. 148-150; for a marriage to be recognised in law it had to be performed by an Anglican minister in front of witnesses. A Catholic marriage was seen as little better than living in concubinage, and had the potential to create serious inheritance problems, particularly if the heir was a minor.

⁵ Emma Watson, "'A Stiff-necked, wilful and obstinate people,'" : The Catholic Laity in the North York Moors, c.1559-1603,' *YAJ*, 77 (2005)

⁶ See V1600, fols 60r, 73v, 85v, 180r, 182r, 193r for examples of illicit marriages which were not explicitly recorded as Catholic.

Presentments for unlawful baptisms are more common than those for illicit marriages, and again are especially evident in Cleveland. Many of the parishioners involved were presented repeatedly for their failure to baptise successive children, and also for their own recusancy. This suggests that action taken to confront the problem remained minimal in some areas, however there is also evidence that men and women not known to be active members of Catholic networks as well as prominent Catholic families were actively avoiding the legitimate baptism of their children. In the Harthill and Pontefract deaneries, Richard Danby of South Cave and George Anne of Kellington were presented for failing to baptise their children in the parish churches. Both families were notorious for their recusancy however, and were wealthy enough to stand any fines imposed upon them, perhaps suggesting that the procurement of Catholic rites was more important to them than any penalties inflicted by the government.⁷ Lesser gentry such as Thomas and Elizabeth Gelstrop of Kirkby Overblow also failed to baptise their children however, perhaps a legacy of the earlier resistance to the Elizabethan settlement expressed by the parish priest Richard Poole, as did men and women from lower down the social scale.⁸ Burials, in contrast, were much less common. Most Catholics continued to be buried in their parish church, partly because that was where their ancestors had been buried, and partly because of the difficulties of securing the services of a priest, but perhaps more importantly because the ground in the churchyards had been consecrated under the old faith. Others conducted private burials, some of which occurred at night; torchlight burials are said to have been common amongst the Cholmley family of Whitby for instance.⁹ Francis Harper, the curate of Fulford near York was presented for baptising, marrying and burying people not of his parish, perhaps suggesting that he was willing to provide non-prayer book forms of these rites, though there is no indication of such diversification in the presentment.¹⁰

Nevertheless, despite this evidence of lasting conservatism in Yorkshire in the 1580s and 1590s, it becomes possible from the mid-1580s to identify clear confessional divides. From this time church papists gradually began to drift away from conservatism into either conformity or recusancy, and the county's experiences appear

⁷ V1600/CB.1A, fols, 96v, 201r

⁸ See for example V1600/CB.1A, fols, 13Av, 43r, 54r

⁹ P.S. Jeffrey, *Whitby Lore and Legend* (Whitby, 1952), p. 60

¹⁰ V1586, f. 3r

to reflect Duffy's argument that committed Protestantism and new, Counter-Reformation, Catholicism were only just beginning in England in the 1580s.¹¹ The conservatism which I have demonstrated to be so prominent was beginning to change in the 1580s as the twin effects of evangelical Puritan preachers, and Counter-Reformation Catholic missionary priests were felt. These two groups of men exerted pressure in many parts of Yorkshire on those who clung to the surviving remnants of traditional religion promoted by an ever-decreasing number of priests ordained during the Catholic regime of Mary and as conservatism gradually died out Protestantism and reformed Catholicism gradually began to take its place as the words of preachers and missionaries took effect. The arrival of the seminary priests, and the transition from conservatism to recusancy, has largely been responsible for the survival / revival debates I have touched upon in previous chapters. However it seems clear that the arguments of Bossy and Haigh both have some relevance for Yorkshire as it is evident that elements of traditional religion persisted in parts of the county, and were added to, rather than replaced by, the reformed Catholicism brought by the missionary priests. In addition to these general changes in Yorkshire, it is also possible to identify regional differences in the sharpening of confessional divides from the mid-1580s. Though the city of York remained very much a contested territory, clearer divisions can be seen in the county's three Ridings.

In York, conflict remained between a citizenship still largely sympathetic to traditional religion and reluctant to embrace reform, and an increasingly, though not entirely, Protestant civic leadership. The presence of senior government and ecclesiastical authorities placed additional pressures on the city to conform, though as has been seen their presence appears to have had a limited effect upon the citizens. The case of Margaret Clitherow provides an effective example of the difficulties York was facing in the mid-1580s as missionary priests brought reformed Catholicism to compete with emerging Protestantism. Clitherow was connected to those involved in national debates about the nature of conformity, and thus of Catholicism itself, but was also linked to senior civic officials who considered her activities an embarrassment. Clitherow's execution proved to be a pivotal moment in the history of religious change in York, and it is only after 1586 that more concerted efforts to enforce religious change began to be implemented. The city had begun to appoint civic preachers from

¹¹ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (Yale, 1992)

the early 1580s, but the first few preachers held the post for only a short time, suggesting that their impact upon the city was limited and their presence resisted by the citizens. Levels of conformity appear to have increased in York from the 1580s and 1590s, though undoubtedly a thriving Catholic community continued to exist, and York's support of the royalist cause during the Civil War of the 1640s is perhaps a reflection of this lasting sympathy for traditional religion.

The years between the arrival of the missionary priests from the early 1580s and the Civil War of the 1640s provide the next chapter in the story of religious change, regional culture and resistance in Yorkshire. It is possible to see from the mid-1580s the emergence of confessional patterns which gradually developed into concrete regional confessional identities within the county. These went on to shape loyalties and reactions during the Civil War, yet also reflect the early process of reformed religion in Yorkshire. In Hull and the cloth towns of the West Riding, where Protestant ideas began to take root relatively early, there is clear evidence of increasingly Puritan sentiments and civic control by the end of Elizabeth's reign, and it was perhaps inevitable that these regions became strong supporters of the Parliamentary cause during the 1640s. A direct contrast is provided by the more rural North Riding, and indeed parts of the East Riding, where thriving Catholic communities demonstrated support for the Crown and caused Protestants to fear for the future of their religion. Andy Hopper has pointed out that not all confessional loyalties were so clear-cut, and anti-Catholicism did not always lead to parliamentary allegiances, but he has also provided extensive evidence to suggest that the locations of anti-Catholic panics at Halifax, Bradford, Pudsey, Bingley, Sheffield and Hull following the Irish rebellion in 1641 to 1642 all correspond to subsequent regions of strong parliamentary activism.¹²

Halifax and Hull have already been identified as early centres of Protestant advance within Yorkshire, and Bradford and Sheffield were emerging as industrial centres. Around Hull, parliamentary success owed much to rumours that East Riding Catholics were arming themselves in response to the Irish Rebellion, but there can have been little comfort in the knowledge that Yorkshire and Lancashire had more resident Catholics than the rest of England combined, again a reflection of the situation

¹² Andrew Hopper, "The Popish Army of the North": Anti-Catholicism and Parliamentary Allegiance in Civil War Yorkshire, 1642-6,' *Recusant History*, 25:1 (2000), pp. 12-28, esp. pp. 23-4

in the 1580 and 1590s.¹³ Roman Catholicism was especially feared in Yorkshire in the 1640s, which can only be a result of the lasting strength of the old religion within the county, and it is undoubtedly significant that Archbishop Richard Neile had in the 1630s enforced innovations which many felt leaned towards Catholicism and threatened the survival of Protestantism within Yorkshire.¹⁴ Equally significantly, Neile's investigations of dissent revealed that two-thirds of the churches visited later coincided perfectly with parishes known to have yielded substantial parliamentary support, again those in the vicinity of Hull and the West Riding cloth towns.¹⁵ In Cleveland and Richmondshire by contrast, a strong Catholic tradition aided by the significant impact of the missionary priests of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was followed by support for the royalist army.

Undoubtedly these emerging political and religious loyalties were the result of the twin pressures of Puritan evangelism and Catholic missionary work which began to affect confessional beliefs from the mid-1580s. This gives further credence to the argument that it was the 1580s, rather than the 1550s, which provided the turning point for the process of religious change in Yorkshire. Resistance to the Established Church was never quashed, but the Elizabethan settlement gradually grew more acceptable, and the large number of church-papists and conformists began from the 1580s to polarise into Protestant or Catholic confessional camps. Conservatism became a thing of the past as religious divides crystallised in the decades after 1580, and it is undoubtedly significant that towns and regions which demonstrated the earliest reformed sympathies and the most extensive resistance to reform continued to demonstrate similar persuasions a century after the beginning of the English Reformation. The story of the influence of these Catholic missionaries and Puritan evangelists upon these communities remains to be told, but clearly the divisions of the Civil War owe much to the earlier religious policies imposed upon the county and the nature of popular reactions to them.

¹³ *ibid*, p. 15

¹⁴ *ibid*, p. 12

¹⁵ *ibid*, pp. 12-13

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