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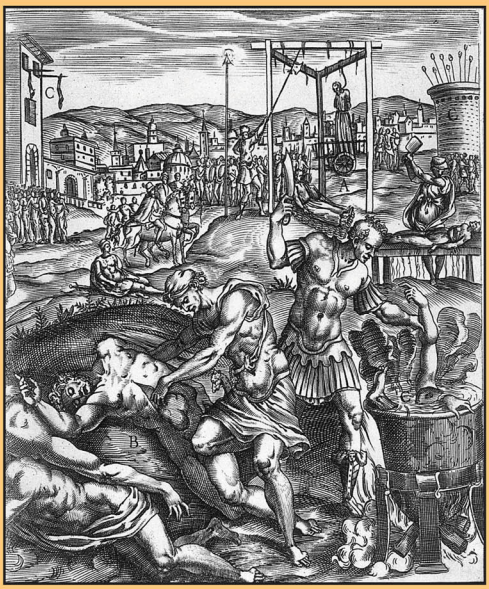

Anne Dillon

The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535–1603

For Charles and Emma

The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535–1603

ANNE DILLON

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Contents

List of figures *xi*

Acknowledgements *xxiii*

Note for the reader *xxv*

Abbreviations *xxvii*

Introduction 1

1 The pseudomartyr debate 18

2 'Spectaculum facti sumus Deo': The scaffold as text 72

3 'Spectaculum facti sumus Deo': The scaffold as image 114

4 Martyrs and murals 170

5 *Theatrum crudelitatum*: The theatre of cruelties 243

6 'A trewe reporte of the li[fe] and marterdome of Mrs. Margarete Clitherowe' 277

7 *The treatise of three conversions* 323

Conclusion 370

Bibliography *375*

Index *469*

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Volume 1. A Calendar, 1518–1546: Beginnings to Legate of Viterbo
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Luc Racaut

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A Critical Edition and Translation of David Hume of Godscroft's Insulae Britannicae
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Robert von Friedeburg

Penitence, Preaching and the Coming of the Reformation
Anne T. Thayer

Huguenot Heartland: Montauban and Southern French Calvinism During the Wars of Religion
Philip Conner

Reforming the Scottish Church: John Winram (c. 1492–1582) and the Example of Fife
Linda J. Dunbar

Baptism and Spiritual Kinship in Early Modern England
Will Coster

The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535–1603
Anne Dillon

Charity and Lay Piety in Reformation London, 1500–1620
Claire S. Schen

Cultures of Communication from Reformation to Enlightenment: Constructing Publics in the Early Modern German Lands
edited by James Van Horn Melton

List of figures

1.1 *The Martyrdom of the Carthusian Fathers*. London Guildhall Library, F1/CHA, Finsbury Charterhouse. By permission of the Guildhall Library, Corporation of London. 54

1.2 *The Martyrdom of the Carthusian Fathers* (detail 1). London Guildhall Library, F1/CHA, Finsbury Charterhouse. By permission of the Guildhall Library, Corporation of London. 58

1.3 *The Martyrdom of the Carthusian Fathers* (detail 2). London Guildhall Library, F1/CHA, Finsbury Charterhouse. By permission of the Guildhall Library, Corporation of London. 58

1.4 *The Martyrdom of the Carthusian Fathers* (detail 3). London Guildhall Library, F1/CHA, Finsbury Charterhouse. By permission of the Guildhall Library, Corporation of London. 59

1.5 *The Martyrdom of the Carthusian Fathers* (detail 4). London Guildhall Library, F1/CHA, Finsbury Charterhouse. By permission of the Guildhall Library, Corporation of London. 59

1.6 *The Martyrdom of the Carthusian Fathers* (detail 5). London Guildhall Library, F1/CHA, Finsbury Charterhouse. By permission of the Guildhall Library, Corporation of London. 60

1.7 *The Martyrdom of the Carthusian Fathers* (detail 6). London Guildhall Library, F1/CHA, Finsbury Charterhouse. By permission of the Guildhall Library, Corporation of London. 60

3.1 Richard Verstegan, *Praesentis Ecclesiae Anglicanae typus* (n.p. [Rheims], 1582) (detail 1). ARCR I, no. 1293, in William Allen, *Historia del glorioso martirio di sedici sacerdoti martirizati in Inghilterra … Tradotta … da uno del collegio Inglese di Roma … S'e aggiunto il martirio di due altri sacerdoti & uno secolare inglesi* (Macerata, 1583) ARCR I, no. 8. Reproduced in *A Briefe Historie of the Glorious Martyrdom of Twelve Reverend Priests: Father Edmund Campion and his Companions*, abridged and ed. J.H. Pollen (London, 1908). By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 127

3.2 Richard Verstegan, *Praesentis Ecclesiae Anglicanae typus* (n.p. [Rheims], 1582) (detail 2). ARCR I, no. 1293, in William Allen, *Historia del glorioso martirio di sedici sacerdoti martirizati in Inghilterra … Tradotta … da uno del collegio Inglese di Roma … S'e aggiunto il martirio di due altri sacerdoti & uno secolare inglesi* (Macerata, 1583) ARCR I, no. 8. Reproduced in *A Briefe Historie of the Glorious Martyrdom of Twelve Reverend Priests: Father Edmund Campion and his Companions*, abridged and ed. J.H. Pollen (London, 1908). By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 128

3.3 Richard Verstegan, *Praesentis Ecclesiae Anglicanae typus* (n.p. [Rheims], 1582) (detail 3). ARCR I, no. 1293, in William Allen, *Historia del glorioso martirio di sedici sacerdoti martirizati in Inghilterra … Tradotta … da uno del collegio Inglese di Roma … S'e aggiunto il martirio di due altri sacerdoti & uno secolare inglesi* (Macerata, 1583) ARCR I, no. 8. Reproduced in *A Briefe Historie of the Glorious Martyrdom of Twelve Reverend Priests: Father Edmund Campion and his Companions*, abridged and ed. J.H. Pollen (London, 1908). By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 129

3.4 Richard Verstegan, *Praesentis Ecclesiae Anglicanae typus* (n.p. [Rheims], 1582) (detail 4). ARCR I, no. 1293, in William Allen, *Historia del glorioso martirio di sedici sacerdoti martirizati in Inghilterra … Tradotta … da uno del collegio Inglese di Roma … S'e aggiunto il martirio di due altri sacerdoti & uno secolare inglesi* (Macerata, 1583) ARCR I, no. 8. Reproduced in *A Briefe Historie of the Glorious Martyrdom of Twelve Reverend Priests: Father Edmund Campion and his Companions*, abridged and ed. J.H. Pollen (London, 1908). By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 130

3.5 Richard Verstegan, *Praesentis Ecclesiae Anglicanae typus* (n.p. [Rheims], 1582) (detail 5). ARCR I, no. 1293, in William Allen, *Historia del glorioso martirio di sedici sacerdoti martirizati in Inghilterra … Tradotta … da uno del collegio Inglese di Roma … S'e aggiunto il martirio di due altri sacerdoti & uno secolare inglesi* (Macerata, 1583) ARCR I, no. 8. Reproduced in *A Briefe Historie of the Glorious Martyrdom of Twelve Reverend Priests: Father Edmund Campion and his Companions*, abridged

and ed. J.H. Pollen (London, 1908). By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 132

3.6 Richard Verstegan, *Praesentis Ecclesiae Anglicanae typus* (n.p. [Rheims], 1582) (detail 6). ARCR I, no. 1293, in William Allen, *Historia del glorioso martirio di sedici sacerdoti martirizati in Inghilterra … Tradotta … da uno del collegio Inglese di Roma … S'e aggiunto il martirio di due altri sacerdoti & uno secolare inglesi* (Macerata, 1583) ARCR I, no. 8. Reproduced in *A Briefe Historie of the Glorious Martyrdom of Twelve Reverend Priests: Father Edmund Campion and his Companions*, abridged and ed. J.H. Pollen (London, 1908). By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 133

3.7 Jerome Nadal, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia quae in sacrosancto Missae sacrificio toto anno leguntur: cum eorundem Evangeliorum concordantia* (Antwerp, 1595), plate 114. By permission of The Annenberg Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania. 140

3.8 Jerome Nadal, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia quae in sacrosancto Missae sacrificio toto anno leguntur: cum eorundem Evangeliorum concordantia* (Antwerp, 1595), plate 141. By permission of The Annenberg Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania. 141

3.9 [Richard Verstegan], Arrest of Catholics. From *Descriptiones quaedam illius inhumanae et multiplicis persecutionis, quam in Anglia propter fidem sustinent Catholicè Christiani* (n.p.d. [1583–84]), 1. ARCR I, no. 1283. Westminster Cathedral, Archives of the Archdiocese, SEC 16/2. By permission of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. 152

3.10 [Richard Verstegan], Tortures inflicted in prison. From *Descriptiones quaedam illius inhumanae et multiplicis persecutionis, quam in Anglia propter fidem sustinent Catholicè Christiani* (n.p.d. [1583–84]), 1. ARCR I, no. 1283. Westminster Cathedral, Archives of the Archdiocese, SEC 16/2. By permission of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. 154

3.11 [Richard Verstegan], Trials and sentences. From *Descriptiones quaedam illius inhumanae et multiplicis persecutionis, quam in Anglia propter fidem sustinent Catholicè Christiani* (n.p.d. [1583–84]), 4. ARCR I, no.

1283. Westminster Cathedral, Archives of the Archdiocese, SEC 16/2. By permission of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. 156

3.12 [Richard Verstegan], Cruelty in torturing Catholics. From *Descriptiones quaedam illius inhumanae et multiplicis persecutionis, quam in Anglia propter fidem sustinent Catholicè Christiani* (n.p.d. [1583–84]), 5. ARCR I, no. 1283. Westminster Cathedral, Archives of the Archdiocese, SEC 16/2. By permission of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. 158

3.13 [Richard Verstegan], Night-time raids on houses. From *Descriptiones quaedam illius inhumanae et multiplicis persecutionis, quam in Anglia propter fidem sustinent Catholicè Christiani* (n.p.d. [1583–84]), 2. ARCR I, no. 1283. Westminster Cathedral, Archives of the Archdiocese, SEC 16/2. By permission of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. 160

3.14 [Richard Verstegan], Cruelty in torturing Catholics (detail). From *Descriptiones quaedam illius inhumanae et multiplicis persecutionis, quam in Anglia propter fidem sustinent Catholicè Christiani* (n.p.d. [1583–84]), 5. ARCR I, no. 1283. Westminster Cathedral, Archives of the Archdiocese, SEC 16/2. By permission of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. 162

4.1 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The first conversion of England'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 3. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 182

4.2 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The second conversion of England'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 4. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 184

4.3 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The third conversion of England'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 10. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 186

4.4 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of St Alban'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 5. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 188

4.5 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of St Amphibalus'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 6. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 190
4.6 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of St Edmund, King of East Anglia'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 19. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 192
4.7 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of the two St Hewalds'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 12. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 194
4.8 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of St Decumanus, St Clarus and St Juthware'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 21. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 196
4.9 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of St Eobanus and St Adelarius'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 16. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 198
4.10 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of St Boniface'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 17. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 200
4.11 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of St Edwin, St Oswald and St Oswyn'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 11. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 202
4.12 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The conversion of Constantine'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 7. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 204
4.13 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'St Helena and the search for the true cross'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 8. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 206

4.14 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'St George slaying the dragon, and his martyrdom'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 14. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 208
4.15 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of St Thomas Becket'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 25. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 210
4.16 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of St Ursula'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 9. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 212
4.17 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of St Winifred'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 22. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 214
4.18 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of St William of Norwich, St Hugh of Lincoln and St Thomas'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 26. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 216
4.19 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of John Fisher, Thomas More and Margaret, Countess of Salisbury'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 27. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 218
4.20 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of the Carthusian monks, and Richard Reynolds and John Hales'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 28. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 220
4.21 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of John Forest and other priests'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 29. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 222
4.22 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The martyrdom of Cuthbert Mayne, Thomas Percy, Earl of Northumberland and others'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 30. ARCR I, no. 944. By

permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 224
4.23 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The racking of Edmund Campion'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 31. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 226
4.24 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'Priests are dragged on hurdles to the scaffold'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 32. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 228
4.25 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The persecution of the English Catholic laity and priests'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 34. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 230
4.26 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The execution of Edmund Campion, Alexander Briant and Ralph Sherwin'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 33. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 232
4.27 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'The execution in England, during the years 1582 and 1583, of members of the Venerable English College, Rome, and the English College at Douai and Rheims'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 35. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 234
4.28 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, 'Pope Gregory XIII, founder of the English College at Rome, commends his alumni to Christ'. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), 36. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 236
4.29 Giovanni Battista de Cavalleriis, Engraving of the altarpiece: the 'Martyr's Picture' painted by Duranti Alberti at the foundation of the seminary in 1579. From *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea* (Rome, n.d. [1584]), frontispiece, 2. ARCR I, no. 944. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 238
4.30 [Richard Verstegan] Arrest of Catholics. From *Descriptiones quaedam illius inhumanae et multiplicis*

persecutionis, quam in Anglia propter fidem sustinent Catholicè Christiani (Rome, 1584), 1. ARCR I, no. 1284. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 240

4.31 [Richard Verstegan] Night-time raids on houses. From *Descriptiones quaedam illius inhumanae et multiplicis persecutionis, quam in Anglia propter fidem sustinent Catholicè Christiani* (Rome, 1584), 2. ARCR I, no. 1284. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 241

4.32 [Richard Verstegan] Tortures inflicted in prison. From *Descriptiones quaedam illius inhumanae et multiplicis persecutionis, quam in Anglia propter fidem sustinent Catholicè Christiani* (Rome, 1584), 3. ARCR I, no. 1284. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 242

5.1 Richard Verstegan, The persecution of Catholics by Calvinist Protestants in England (1). From 'Inquisitionis Anglicanae et facinorum crudelium Machiavellanorum in Anglia et Hibernia a Calvinistis protestantibus sub Elizabetha etiamnum regnante percatorum, descriptiones' in Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* (Antwerp, 1592), 72–3. ARCR I, no. 1299. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 248

5.2 Richard Verstegan, The cruelties of the schismatics in England. From 'Crudelitatum et immanitatum schismaticorum Angliae regnante Henrico eius nominis octavo, peculiaris quedam & per particulas descriptio' in Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* (Antwerp, 1592), 28–9. ARCR I, no. 1299. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 250

5.3 Richard Verstegan, Certain horrible acts of cruelty perpetrated by the Huguenots in France (1). From 'Horribilia quaedam crudelitatis facinora in Galliis adversus Catholicos perfecta, ab his quos vulgus Huguenotos vocat, ab eo tempore quo primum Regi rebellarunt. Anno. 1562', in Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* (Antwerp, 1592), 32–3. ARCR I, no. 1299. By

permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 252

5.4 Richard Verstegan, Certain horrible acts of cruelty perpetrated by the Huguenots in France (2). From 'Horribilia quaedam crudelitatis facinora in Galliis adversus Catholicos perfecta, ab his quos vulgus Huguenotos vocat, ab eo tempore quo primum Regi rebellarunt. Anno. 1562', in Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* (Antwerp, 1592), 48–9. ARCR I, no. 1299. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 256

5.5 Richard Verstegan, Certain horrible acts of cruelty perpetrated by the Huguenots in France (3). From 'Horribilia quaedam crudelitatis facinora in Galliis adversus Catholicos perfecta, ab his quos vulgus Huguenotos vocat, ab eo tempore quo primum Regi rebellarunt. Anno. 1562', in Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* (Antwerp, 1592), 50–51. ARCR I, no. 1299. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 258

5.6 Richard Verstegan, The first fruits of the new religion. From 'Crudelitatum et immanitatum schismaticorum Angliae regnante Henrico eius nominis octavo, peculiaris quedam & per particulas descriptio' in Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* (Antwerp, 1592), 22–3. ARCR I, no. 1299. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 262

5.7 Richard Verstegan, The persecution of Catholics by Calvinist Protestants in England (2). From 'Inquisitionis Anglicanae et facinorum crudelium Machiavellanorum in Anglia et Hibernia a Calvinistis protestantibus sub Elizabetha etiamnum regnante peractorum, descriptiones' in Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* (Antwerp, 1592), 74–5. ARCR I, no. 1299. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 264

5.8 Richard Verstegan, The persecution of Catholics by Calvinist Protestants in England (3). From 'Inquisitionis Anglicanae et facinorum crudelium Machiavellanorum in Anglia et Hibernia a Calvinistis protestantibus sub

Elizabetha etiamnum regnante peractorum, descriptiones' in Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* (Antwerp, 1592), 76–7. ARCR I, no. 1299. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 266

5.9 Richard Verstegan, The persecution of Catholics by Calvinist Protestants in England (4). From 'Inquisitionis Anglicanae et facinorum crudelium Machiavellanorum in Anglia et Hibernia a Calvinistis protestantibus sub Elizabetha etiamnum regnante peractorum, descriptiones' in Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* (Antwerp, 1592), 78–9. ARCR I, no. 1299. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 268

5.10 Richard Verstegan, The persecution of Catholics by Calvinist Protestants in Ireland. From 'Inquisitionis Anglicanae et facinorum crudelium Machiavellanorum in Anglia et Hibernia a Calvinistis protestantibus sub Elizabetha etiamnum regnante peractorum, descriptiones' in Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* (Antwerp, 1592), 80–81. ARCR I, no. 1299. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 270

5.11 Richard Verstegan, The persecution of Catholics by Calvinist Protestants in England (5). From 'Inquisitionis Anglicanae et facinorum crudelium Machiavellanorum in Anglia et Hibernia a Calvinistis protestantibus sub Elizabetha etiamnum regnante peractorum, descriptiones' in Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* (Antwerp, 1592), 82–3. ARCR I, no. 1299. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 271

5.12 Richard Verstegan, The persecution of Catholics by Calvinist Protestants in England (6). From 'Inquisitionis Anglicanae et facinorum crudelium Machiavellanorum in Anglia et Hibernia a Calvinistis protestantibus sub Elizabetha etiamnum regnante peractorum, descriptiones' in Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* (Antwerp, 1592), 84–5. ARCR I, no. 1299. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 272

6.1 The Woman Clothed in the Sun. Woodcut from John Bale, *The image of both churches, after the revelacion of saynt Johan the evangelyst*, 3 parts ([Antwerp] R. Jugge, London [1548?]) STC 1297, ii, tvv. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 301
6.2 The Whore of Babylon. Woodcut from John Bale, *The image of both churches, after the revelacion of saynt Johan the evangelyst*, 3 parts ([Antwerp] R. Jugge, London [1548?]) STC 1297, ii, tvv. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 301
6.3 Anne Askew as the true Church of Christ. Woodcut from Anne Askew, *The lattre examinacyon of Anne Askewe, latelye martyred in Smythfelde, with the elucydacyon of J. Bale* (Marpurg [Wesel], 1547) STC 850. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. 302
6.4 'Madonna and Child with Goldfinch'. The Robert de Lisle Psalter (1320). BL MS Arundel 83, fol. 131b. By permission of the British Library. 309

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Note for the reader

All quotations from contemporary manuscripts and printed works retain original punctuation, capitalization and spelling. Standard abbreviations and contractions have been silently expanded; 'i' has been transposed to 'j', and 'u' to 'v'. If anonymous tracts have personal names, whether pseudonyms, the subject of a tract or an author being attacked, they are entered in the bibliography under those names.

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Abbreviations

ARCR	*The Contemporary Printed Literature of the English Counter-Reformation Between 1558–1640*, compiled by A.F. Allison and D.M. Rogers, 2 vols (Aldershot, 1989–94)
CRS	Publications of the Catholic Record Society
EETS	Early English Text Society
ERL	English Recusant Literature, 1558–1640, edited by D.M. Rogers: series of facsimile reprints, The Scolar Press (London and Ilkley, 1968–79)
Milward, I	Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age: A Survey of Printed Sources* (London, 1978)
Milward, II	Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Jacobean Age: A Survey of Printed Sources* (London, 1978)
STC	*A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640*, first compiled by A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave; 2nd edition, revised W.A. Jackson, F.S. Ferguson and K.F. Pantzer, 3 vols (London, 1976–91)
Wing	*Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and British North America and of English Books Printed in Other Countries 1641–1700*, compiled by Donald Wing, Vol. III (New York, 1951); 2nd edition revised and enlarged by the Index Committee of the Modern Languages Association of America, Vols I–II (New York, 1972–82)

Upon which occasion many good catholike gentlemen desirous to be eye witnesses of that which might hapen in the speach, demeinor, & passage of those three rare paternes of piety, vertue, and innocencie, presented them selves at the place of execution, and my selfe a Catholike preist pressed to that bloodie spectacle, no dout a lively sacrifice unto God, and a sweete savour unto his Angels …

Thomas Alfield, *A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Jesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan preistes … Observid and written by a Catholike preist, which was present therat*.

Introduction

On 15 January 1531, at Livery Dole in Heavitree, outside the Exeter city walls, the evangelical schoolmaster Thomas Benet was burned for heresy. Benet, who had been a thorn in the flesh of the Exeter diocese for some time, had written a series of tracts which served both as a prospectus of his evangelical belief and as a summary of complaint. His list of criticisms had included the assertions: 'the pope is Antichrist; and we ought to worship God only, and no saints'. In a provocative imitation of Martin Luther's action at Wittenburg in 1517, Benet's son nailed these tracts to the door of Exeter Cathedral. He was caught in the act by a citizen going to early Mass and the next day Thomas was brought before the Bishop, the mayor and the canons of the cathedral and examined as to his beliefs. He was tried for heresy, found guilty and, having refused to recant, sentenced to death by burning. So unwilling were the Exeter magistrates to implement the decision that they refused to allow the stake to be erected in Southernhay, which was within the city limits. He was burned, instead, at Livery Dole, outside the city walls. At his burning, which took place in the middle of the natural amphitheatre which the Devon landscape provides here, the Catholic John Barnhouse 'took a furze-bush upon a pike, and having set it on fire, he thrust it unto his face, saying "Ah! horeson heretic! pray to our Lady, and say, Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis, or, by God's wounds, I will make thee do it."' Benet indicated his refusal by turning away his head. Foxe recorded Benet's death as his 'constant end and martyrdom' and celebrated him as a 'mild martyr' who had elected to 'yield himself most patiently (as near as God would give him grace) to die and to shed his blood therein; alleging that his death should be more profitable to the Church of God, and for the edifying of his people than his life should be'.[1]

Within less than thirty years, on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, the religious landscape of the West Country had changed for ever, and on 30 November 1577, in Launceston, Cuthbert Mayne became the first of the Catholic missionary priests to be executed in Elizabeth's reign. Mayne, born at Youlston near Barnstaple in 1544 and baptized into the reformed religion in Sherwell church, took his Bachelor's degree at Oxford. He was ordained a Protestant minister at the age of 18, and appointed chaplain of St John's College, Oxford, in 1570. His mutation

[1] *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe with a Life of the Martyrologist and a Vindication of the Work*, 8 vols, ed. Rev. Stephen Reed Cattley (London, 1837–41), v, 18–26. Hereafter A&M.

from Protestant cleric to open profession of Catholicism to Catholic priest via William Allen's Counter Reformation training ground, the seminary at Douai, was completed by 1575, and in April 1576 he was back in England. He was arrested at the house of John Tregian at Golden near Truro, which had served as the base for his ministry to the local Catholic community and where he had lived posing as Tregian's steward.[2] He was found guilty of having brought into the country the expired papal Bull announcing the Jubilee indulgence of 1575 contrary to the Act against Papal Bulls of that same year.[3] He was hanged, drawn and quartered at Launceston on 29 November 1577 according to the instructions issued by the Privy Council:

> his place of execucion to be at Lanson uppon a markett daye, where after he shalbe deade and quartered, his hed be sett upon a poale and placed in some emynent place within the saide towne of Lanson, and his iiij quarters to be likewise sett uppon iiij poales and placed the one at Bodmyn, the second at Torquey, the third at Barnestable and the iiij at Wadebridge.[4]

His fragmented body was therefore dispersed and posted at strategic points throughout Devon and Cornwall as a stark warning to the Catholics. Tregian, arrested with Mayne, was tried by the Council in London and sentenced to perpetual imprisonment.

The case of Mayne and Tregian, both prominent West Country Catholics, highlights the political and religious infighting which still continued in local communities nearly 20 years after Elizabeth's accession, as Protestant officials took the opportunity to settle personal scores and to take revenge on Catholic neighbours for penalties inflicted during Queen Mary's reign. Seen from a less parochial perspective, the case presented Elizabeth and her Council with the opportunity to convey several clear warnings to the English Catholic community at home and on the continent. The first was to William Allen's seminary at Douai, which, since 1574, had been sending back to England a steady stream of newly ordained English priests to minister to the Catholics. The second was to the recusant Catholic laity who persisted in the old religion; while a further warning was sent to the Universities and in particular Oxford where recusancy was rampant and where concerted recruitment for Allen's seminary was taking place.[5] The Earl of Bedford had warned Sir

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[2] *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, ed. J.R. Dasent et al. (London, 1890–1964), x (1577–78), 7. Hereafter *Acts of the Privy Council*.

[3] 13 Elizabeth I, c.2.

[4] *Acts of the Privy Council*, x, 85.

[5] See Conrad Swan, 'The Introduction of the Elizabethan Settlement into the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, with Particular Reference to the Roman Catholics, 1558–1603' (University of Cambridge, Ph.D, 1955), *passim*.

William Cecil in 1570 that in Oxford 'the Popish wasps and bees were buzzing'.[6]

The Catholic community celebrated Cuthbert Mayne as a martyr just as the Protestant community commemorated Thomas Benet. The word *martyr* is derived from the Greek for *witness*,[7] and both Catholics and Protestants understood martyrdom as the ultimate public act of witness for religious belief. Since one man's martyr must necessarily be another man's heretic, such deaths during the Reformation took place in a highly charged confrontation between opposing confessional positions, as John Barnhouse's response to Thomas Benet demonstrates: its very nature intensifying the conflict that created it. While both the Catholics and the reformers would have agreed that the function of the martyr was, in the words of John Foxe:

> To glorify God by their death, to subscribe and bear witness unto the truth by their blood, and, by the contempt of this present life, to witness that they do seek after a better life; by their constancy and steadfastness, to confirm and establish the faith of the Church, and to subdue and vanquish the enemy,[8]

what they disagreed about – and this was the crux of the Reformation debate – was the truth of the 'faith of the Church' to which the martyr witnessed. There was a further major difference, however: while Thomas Benet had been tried by an ecclesiastical court and burned at the stake by the secular authorities for religious beliefs which had been judged by the Church to be heretical, Cuthbert Mayne had been indicted, tried, found guilty and executed by the state for treason.

Between 1535 and 1603, 239 Catholics in England suffered death for treason. They were executed either by hanging, or by hanging drawing and quartering, or, in one case, by being pressed to death. There were a few exceptions: a small number died as a result of deprivation in prison before or after trial and the Franciscan Friar John Forrest was put to death for heresy.[9] This book considers the ways in which those execu-

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[6] Conrad Swan, 'Introduction of the Elizabethan Settlement', 234.

[7] See G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961).

[8] A&M, v, 611.

[9] Of the 189 executed in the reign of Elizabeth I, 125 were priests. They included 112 priests trained in the new Counter Reformation seminaries founded on the continent by the English Catholic community; ten Jesuits, one Franciscan Observant, one Dominican and one Benedictine. One member of the order of Friars Minor who was waiting to be ordained was also executed. Three of the priests, Thomas Plumtree, Thomas Woodhouse and James Bell, had been ordained during the reign of Queen Mary. Woodhouse had been admitted to the Society of Jesus while in prison awaiting execution. Sixty-three lay people were executed, including three women, Margaret Clitherow, Margaret Ward and Anne Line. These figures are derived from *The Catholic Martyrs of England and Wales:*

tions were transformed through text and image into martyrdom, with particular reference to those which occurred during the reign of Elizabeth I. Martyrdom is a power symbol of persecution, and throughout the period under discussion the Catholic community employed a wide range of texts and manuscripts in which the concept of Catholic martyrdom was used for propaganda in continental Europe, the training of missionary priests and the creation of a separate Catholic identity. Both the Catholics and the Protestants at this time exploited the symbol of the martyr within an ongoing confessional debate; in establishing criteria for what constituted the true martyr and its counterpart the pseudomartyr, they defined and debated their broadest doctrinal differences. An extraordinary range of illustrations was created and used by the Catholics to overturn the Protestant propaganda of the scaffold. These potent images of martyrdom were constructed within broadsheets, engravings and blockbooks and circulated to a wide audience throughout Europe to publicize the English Catholic cause. A detailed discussion of these images forms a major part of this book.

The recent historiography of the Reformation has focused on questions concerning the genesis of the English Catholic recusant community and the work of the missionary priests, both seculars and Jesuits, in maintaining and ministering to it during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and beyond. On the one hand, it has been argued that a discontinuity occurred in Catholicism in the hostile environment of post-Reformation England, as traditional Catholic practice withered and the Catholic community retreated out of sight into the households of the gentry and aristocracy. When the missionary priests, newly trained in the new English seminaries founded on the continent, arrived back in England after 1570 they, like the Jesuits who began to arrive at the beginning of the 1580s, carried with them a new Counter Reformation Catholicism that helped to create a new post-Reformation Catholic community.[10]

A Chronological List of English and Welsh Martyrs Who Gave their Lives for Christ and His Church During the 'Penal Times' (A.D. 1535–1680): the Saints, The Beati, and the Eighty Five Venerable Martyrs Whose Cause of Beatification Was Resumed on 21 September 1978 (London, 1979); Richard Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests as well Secular as Regular and other Catholics of both sexes that have suffered death in England on Religious Accounts from the year of Our Lord 1577 to 1684*, 2 vols ([London], (1741–42), ed. and rev. John H. Pollen (London, 1924), 2 vols in 1, introduction v–xviii and part 1 (1577–1603), 1–269, *passim*; Geoffrey Nuttall, 'The English Martyrs 1535–1680: A Statistical Review', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 22 (1971), 191–197; Philip Hughes, *Rome and the Counter-Reformation in England* (London, 1942), 240–267.

[10] John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community: 1570–1850* (London, 1975), 6, 108, 121; John Bossy, 'The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism', *Past and Present* 21 (1962), 39–59. J.C.H. Aveling and A.G. Dickens broadly support this argument. See

An alternative argument, however, maintains that there was no break in the continuity of Catholicism in England. Rather, those priests who had been ordained during the reign of Queen Mary and still continued their ministry had helped to sustain the old faith during the first two decades of the reign. When the missionary priests arrived, they mediated to the Catholic community a pre-Reformation religion that had changed only as far as it had adapted to life under a Protestant regime.[11]

The issues raised by these arguments are diverse. Recent research into such related topics as church papism and recusancy, the discrepancies between the geographical distribution of the Catholics and that of the missionaries, and the nature of the distinctions between schismatics and heretics made by the missionaries in their approach to conversion has resulted in significant insights into the community and the work of the mission.[12] Some issues remain unresolved, however. Among these is the question of the nature of the Catholicism which the missionaries brought back to England: that is, whether they returned with and disseminated a new, reformed Tridentine religion, or whether surviving pre-Reformation devotional works formed the basis of the religious practices of the Elizabethan recusant community.[13]

What is missing from this discussion is any consideration of whether and, if so, how the Catholic community utilized the symbol of the martyr and the concept of martyrdom in maintaining a recusant stance and in mediating the Catholic faith. The martyr was, after all, their most potent symbol of identification.

While Protestant martyrdom continues to be the subject of extensive scholarly discussion, the field of research into Catholic martyrdom

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J.C.H. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe* (London, 1976), A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London, 1968), 365–367.

[11] Christopher Haigh, 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation', in *The English Reformation Revised,* ed. Christopher Haigh (Cambridge, 1987), 176–215; Christopher Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1975), 255, 267.

[12] Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 1993), *passim*; Michael Questier, ed., *Newsletters from the Archpresbyterate of George Birkenhead*, Camden Society, Fifth Series 12 (Cambridge, 1998), Introduction, 36; Michael Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580–1625* (Cambridge, 1996), 175–176; Peter Lake and Michael Questier, 'Agency, Appropriation and Rhetoric Under the Gallows: Puritans, Romanists and the State in Early Modern England', *Past and Present* 153 (1996), 64–107; Peter Lake and Michael Questier, 'Prisons, Priests and People', in *England's Long Reformation 1500–1800* ed. Nicholas Tyacke (London, 1988), 195–233; Haigh, 'The Continuity of Catholicism', 176–215.

[13] Haigh, 'The Continuity of Catholicism', 176–215, esp. 204–207. See the discussion by Alexandra Walsham, '"Domme Preachers"? Post-Reformation English Catholicism and the Culture of Print', *Past and Present* 168 (2000), 72–123.

has been small by comparison. There had been no detailed analysis of English Catholic martyrdom until 1963, when Helen White's masterly analysis of the Catholic and Protestant martyr texts of the Reformation and of the political and religious influences that shaped them was published. She has shown how the same fundamental cultural and religious sources influenced both Catholic and Protestant constructions of martyrdom, and has demonstrated how, through the use of traditional tropes and within the shifting political and religious landscape of Reformation England, both sides constructed their martyr heroes.

Brad Gregory's recent extensive comparative analysis of Christian martyrdom in the Reformation period has broadened the scope of this approach. In this wide-ranging work he has examined English Catholic martyrdom in conjunction with Protestant and Anabaptist martyrdom across a wide geographical area which includes England, France, the Low Countries, Germany and Switzerland from the late medieval period into the seventeenth century.[14] Neither this work nor Helen White's, however, concentrates exclusively on the English Catholic martyrs.

Catholic martyrdom has always attracted less scholarly interest than its Protestant counterpart has and this is partly due to the accessibility of the Protestant canon. The 'winners' of a battle always have the privilege of writing the official history of events. The power to re-create the past, therefore, lies in the hands of those who have the authority to access the sources and the official right to publish the results. John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* represents such a text in that it was a carefully created narrative of the religious history of England told for the most part through the Protestant martyrs themselves. Its construction ensured that the victory which the Protestant martyrs had won would be celebrated and maintained by uniting through the symbol of the martyr all those disparate confessional stances that made up the Elizabethan Protestant Church in its earliest days. Within ten years of its publication it was chained to the pulpit of every cathedral and collegiate church in England. Taking on the aura of a sacred text, the veracity of whose contents could not be challenged without the accusation of sacrilege, it came to be seen as the English Protestant equivalent of the Acts of the Apostles. Patrick Collinson describes it as being read 'as men read Scripture',[15] and Margaret Aston has described it as being

[14] Helen White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs* (Madison, 1963); Brad Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1999).

[15] Patrick Collinson, 'Truth and Legend: The Veracity of John Foxe's Book of Martyrs', in Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethan Essays* (London, 1994), 151–177, quotation at 151.

in the same category as the Bible; it was a 'Sunday book'.[16] The rhetoric quickly became the given in early Protestant England, and any questioning of the integrity of the work became akin to blasphemy. With the loosening of confessional paradigms, however, it is now beginning to be extricated from its hagiographical construction and has been for some time the subject of much scholarly reassessment. The British Academy project, which is engaged in producing a complete critical edition of Foxe's text, is one example of such a process of revision.[17]

Catholic martyrdom has attracted less attention from the academy, in part because the Catholics were the 'losers'. Before the death of the last English Catholic martyr, Oliver Plunket, in July 1681, indeed even before the death of Queen Elizabeth, the English Catholics had recognized and accepted that the battle had been lost. There was no Catholic equivalent of Foxe. The nearest contemporary Catholic equivalent, the *Concertatio*, aspired to this but it remained in Latin without illustration, remote and inaccessible, as did much of the printed martyr material produced by the Catholics.[18] This was in part because most of it was composed, produced and circulated on the continent. Some martyr texts and manuscripts were kept and cherished within Catholic families and in some private collections but this is where they have tended to remain, although some which were confiscated by the Protestant authorities at this time have found their way into other collections.

Christopher Grene's Collectanae of contemporary accounts of executions, letters of the martyrs and confessors, memoirs, martyrologies and miracle stories which are now preserved at Stonyhurst and Oscott College were, in part, intended to be used in assembling the cause for the canonization of the English martyrs.[19] These collections were subsequently drawn on by Charles Dodd (Hugh Tootell) in his *Church History of England* (1734–42)[20] and by Richard Challoner for his biographical

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[16] Margaret Aston and Elizabeth Ingram, 'The Iconography of the Acts and Monuments', in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot, 1997), 66–142 at 67.

[17] See David Loades, ed., *John Foxe and the English Reformation* (Aldershot, 1997), Introduction, 1–11, for a discussion of the current project.

[18] [John Gibbons and John Fen], ed., *Concertatio ecclesiae Catholicae in Anglia* (Trier, 1583), 2 parts. ARCR I, no. 524; *Concertatio ecclesiae Catholicae in Anglia adversus Calvinopapistas et Puritanos … Nunc denuo centum et eo amplius martyrum, sexcentorumque insignium vivorum rebus gestis … aucta* (Trier, 1588), 3 parts. ARCR I, no. 525.

[19] For an account of Christopher Grene's manuscript collection, see John Morris, *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers, related by themselves*, 3 vols (London, 1877) iii, 3–7. Henry Foley, ed., *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, 7 vols (Roehampton and London, 1875–83), iii, 214–57.

[20] Charles Dodd [Hugh Tootell], *An Apology for the Church History of England from 1500 till 1688*, 3 vols (Brussels [London], 1737–42).

dictionary of the missionary priests, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* (1741).[21] In accumulating, assembling and cataloguing biographical, narrative and political material these writers used the symbol of the martyr to construct a community history for the dispossessed religious minority which the Catholic community had become. However, from the earliest days, such accounts had taken as their starting point not the stark and uncomprising given of the moment of death but the posthumous, hagiographical construction of these deaths as martyrdom. The martyrs became powerful symbols of English Catholic identity – they had, as these accounts were meant to show, willingly endured torture and the ultimate punishment rather than deny that same faith which was practised by the Catholic community. They became triumphant emblems of Catholicism and the ultimate confirmation of its truth. The martyr now became less a function of debate, than a banner, a rallying point of identification for the English Catholics, a symbol of their own adherence to the Catholic faith and their continued persecution through fines, loss of land and property and their exclusion from influential spheres of English community life.

Such an approach persisted. Identification with the martyrs became the touchstone of English Catholic identity and Catholic emancipation in the nineteenth century seems, to some extent, to have intensified this. For example, in 1848 the Catholic magazine, *The Rambler* was founded by a group of lay Catholic converts. The earliest articles on English Catholic history, which appeared in the periodical, however, were written by Old Catholics and, again, directed towards the canonization of the martyrs. When the Catholic converts on the staff were subsequently criticized for distancing themselves from the Old Catholics, they responded by commissioning a series of papers on the martyrs. This was one of the most powerful responses available to them, they believed – one through which they could demonstrate that, although newly converted to Catholicism, they identified wholly with the single most important symbol and tradition of the English Catholic community.[22] Eventually, in 1935, four centuries after their deaths, Thomas More and John Fisher were canonized, while in 1971 a further forty English martyrs were officially named by the Catholic Church as saints. Even in the present day the symbol of the martyr still negotiates and reflects a complexity of faith and values through which English Catholics might identify themselves. And within this identification can be heard a faint echo of one of the most important aspects of the Elizabethan Catholic

[21] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*.

[22] Joseph L. Altholz, 'Materials for Recusant History in "*The Rambler*"', *Recusant History* 6 (1961–62), 80–89.

community; one which had a crucial influence on martyr construction: its geographical location.

Many of the recusant Catholics, and particularly those of the 'middling sort', got on with their lives in England within the constraints and sanctions imposed by Elizabeth's legislation. However, men such as Francis Babington, Richard Smith, Thomas Harding, Nicholas Sander, John Rastell, Thomas Stapleton and many other academics left soon after Elizabeth's accession and settled in Louvain or Rome. Many more who left at a later stage found refuge in the Low Countries, France, Italy and Spain. Consequently, the most influential English Catholics – those who founded the seminaries, trained the priests, directed the mission, raised money for the community, lobbied foreign powers and wrote, printed and distributed the pamphlets, books, broadsheets and blockbooks in which they engaged the Protestants in polemical war – lived and worked on the continent. The effect on the English Catholic community of this geographical 'split' in its population between England and the continent and the inevitable influences on the exiles of the religious and political concerns of their host countries is rarely taken into consideration in discussions on the nature of the Catholic community. The debate thus far has been somewhat insular and Anglocentric. Yet the English Catholic community was forced to look towards the continent for its survival. This book will show that some of the most important influences on the construction of Catholic martyrdom in text and image derived from the fact that those English Catholics who composed and produced this material lived and worked in exile on the continent and were necessarily dependent upon and, ultimately, much influenced by their hosts.

Queen Elizabeth's intentions for the settlement appear to have been premised on the belief that Catholicism would diminish and eventually die with the Marian clergy and the older generation.[23] The Elizabethan Act of Supremacy revoked all Marian religious legislation and ordered the laity to receive communion in both kinds, as opposed to the previous traditional Catholic practice in which the laity had been allowed to receive only the bread.[24] It abolished foreign jurisdiction, both spiritual

[23] Christopher Haigh, 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation' in *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge, 1987), 176–215; 'From Monopoly to Minority: Catholicism in Early Modern Europe', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 31 (1981), 129–47, 'The Church of England, the Catholics and the People' in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, ed. Christopher Haigh (Basingstoke, 1984), 195–220; John Bossy, 'The Character of English Catholicism', *Crisis in Europe: Essays from 'Past and Present'*, ed. Trevor Aston (London, 1975), 223–246, *The English Catholic Community, 1570–1850* (London, 1975).

[24] 1 Elizabeth I, c.1.

and temporal, and united all jurisdiction in the person of the queen. To belong to the commonwealth implied membership of the established Church. The Act of Uniformity legislated for standardization of common prayer and divine service and the administration of the sacraments, and enforced the use of the Edwardian Prayer Book in worship as in 1549.[25] The two acts therefore defined the Church in England politically, legally and theologically and effectively transformed religious belief into a political statement. The Catholics found themselves outmanoeuvred as evidence of at least outward conformity became mandatory. Those who refused were penalized not for conscience but for political non-conformity: as potential traitors. In June 1570, the Lord Keeper Nicholas Bacon was instructed by the queen to make a statement in the Star Chamber that:

> Her Majesty would have all her loving subjects to understand that as long as they shall openly continue in the observation of her laws and shall not wilfully and manifestly break them by their open acts, her Majesties meaning is not to have any of them molested by any inquisition or examination of their consciences in causes of religion …[26]

The Catholics were placed in the immediate predicament of obeying the queen and incurring excommunication, or of obeying conscience and incurring a charge of treason. William Allen expressed the Catholics' dilemma when he wrote:

> these laws against Gods expresse commandments which prescribe obedience and subjection to our Prelates, these decrees that limite Gods constant and permanent truth to the mutabilitie of temporal statutes, to mortal mens willes and fancies: these are the lawes of the Realme (and not the Civil ordinances of our Prince) that we refuse to obey … these are the lawes of the Realme to which we can not conforme our selves in conscience, except we like to perish everlasting.[27]

For the Catholics, absolute belief was only a small part of religious life.[28] The most profound aspects of the faith were those articulated through the rituals of the Eucharist and the sacraments. Some sacraments did not require a priest but the Mass and the sacrament of

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[25] 1 Elizabeth I, c.2.

[26] S.P. Dom. Eliz. 71/16.

[27] William Allen, *An apologie and true declaration of the institution and endevours of the two English colleges, the one in Rome, the other now resident in Rhemes: against certaine sinister informations given up against the same* (Mounts in Henault [Rheims, 1581]), 45. ARCR II, no. 6. STC 369. ERL 67.

[28] Peter Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise: The Political Thought of the Elizabethan Catholics* (Cambridge, 1982), 83.

penance did. Under the settlement, it was not possible for any priest to continue his ministry publicly and if he did so privately then he placed himself and his congregation at risk. The sources show that while in many areas Catholic practice did survive, in other areas determined Protestant ministers and diocesan authorities ensured a gradual conformity.[29] It therefore became apparent early in the reign that new priests would be needed to take the place of the Marian priests or Catholicism in England would cease to exist.

Elizabeth's attack was a bipartite one. In legislating for compulsory attendance at Sunday and feast day services in the parish church and the public reception of the Protestant Eucharist, the government effectively demanded a public denial by the Catholics of their belief. The Catholics argued that such laws were invalid and looked to Rome for guidance. The Spanish ambassador, acting on behalf of the Catholic laity, presented their case as a hypothetical one to a commission presided over by the future Pius V at the Council of Trent.[30] He overstated the situation by saying that the Catholics were obliged by force to attend the services. The commission refused to accept that force was implicit in such a case, and dismissed it. When Pius V came to the papacy he reappointed Thomas Harding and Nicholas Sander as apostolic delegates and gave them a particular brief to inform the English Catholics that attending common prayer was expressly forbidden, even when Mass was heard in secret. Laurence Vaux was delegated to go to England with a pastoral letter which conveyed the essentials of the papal decision: henceforth anyone attending communion service or other service conducted by a Protestant minister or who presented their children for baptism would be regarded as publicly denying the faith.[31]

William Allen spent the years from 1562 to 1565 at his family home in Lancashire, where he experienced at first hand the dilemma in which the English Catholics found themselves.[32] He recognized Elizabeth's strategy and saw that with the gradual death of the Marian priests the Catholic religion would be lost within two generations.

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[29] K.R. Wark, *Elizabethan Recusancy in Cheshire* (Manchester, 1971), 42–44, 81, 132.

[30] See T.M. Veech, *Dr. Nicholas Sander and the English Reformation 1530–1581* (Louvain, 1935), *passim*, for a discussion on this.

[31] Laurence Vaux, *A catechisme or a christian doctrine, necessarie for chyldren and ignorant people* (Louvain, 1568) ARCR II, no. 748. STC 24625.5; see Alexandra Walsham's discussion in *Church Papists*, 22–26.

[32] William Allen, *Letters and Memorials of William Cardinal Allen: 1532–1594*, edited by the Fathers of the Congregation of the London Oratory, with an historical introduction by Thomas Francis Knox. Records of the English Catholics under the Penal Laws, vol. 2 (London, 1882), xxiii, 21.

After his ordination in 1565, he went to Rome in the company of Morgan Phillips and Dr Vendeville. The latter had been intent on financing a mission to the Muslims but he had failed to raise any interest for this project in Rome and on the return journey Allen deflected his attention to a more pressing theatre of operation, that of England. The result was the foundation of the seminary at Douai in 1568, the first to be established under the new rules of Trent, and by 1574 the first of Allen's newly ordained priests had arrived home having been prepared 'to face every danger and endure every suffering for the deliverance of the Church and their brethren'.[33]

Meanwhile, the failure of the Northern Rising of November 1569 led by Thomas Percy, Earl of Northumberland and Charles Neville, Earl of Westmoreland had resulted in the first executions of Catholics for treason in Elizabeth's reign.[34] These were efficiently stage-managed by the Council to deter other potential rebels against the settlement. The Earl of Northumberland was executed at York on 22 August 1572 and the response of the crowd that gathered to watch him die signalled his martyr status. People swarmed over the scaffold and 'gathered up the martyr's blood so diligently with handkerchiefs and linen cloths, that not even a straw stained with it was suffered to remain without carrying it home to be treasured as a sacred relic'.[35]

In February 1570, Pope Pius V, in belated support of the Rising, issued the papal Bull, *Regnans in excelsis*, which excommunicated Queen Elizabeth. It stated that the queen had:

> forfeited every right, dignity and privilege. Moreover the nobles, subjects, and people of the said kingdom and anybody else who has taken an oath to her are freed from that and from every obligation to allegiance, fealty, and obedience, as We now by these letters release them and we deprive the said Elizabeth of her pretended right to the throne and every other right whatsoever and we command all her nobles, subjects, and others mentioned never to venture to obey her admonitions, mandates and laws.[36]

The rebellion had been crushed by the time the Bull reached England and John Felton, who had published it by posting it on the door of the Bishop of London's palace in St Paul's churchyard, was executed there on 8 August 1570. Few of the general population knew of the Bull's existence and both sides found it politically expedient to downplay it.

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[33] Allen, *Letters and Memorials*, xl.

[34] Four hundred and fifty rebels were executed in January 1570.

[35] Quoted in Bede Camm, *Lives of the English Martyrs*, 2 vols (London, 1904–05), ii, 176–181, at 180–181.

[36] G.R. Elton, ed., *The Tudor Constitution* (Cambridge, 1960), 414.

The government responded to *Regnans in excelsis* and the Northern Rising with the Second Treasons Act,[37] the Act against Papal Bulls[38] and the Act against Fugitives over the Sea. This last was aimed specifically at those Catholic men who were leaving England for the seminary at Douai.[39]

Nicholas Sander's *De visibili monarchia* of 1571 was the earliest Catholic text in which those executed for rebellion or for supporting the Bull were described as martyrs.[40] Book 7 was printed in Cologne to avoid the censorship imposed by King Philip II of Spain who wanted to preserve at least outward neutrality towards England. In 1574, Richard Bristow published his *A brief treatise of divers plain and sure ways* and, basing his arguments on St Augustine and in particular *De Civitate Dei*, he challenged John Foxe's claims for his martyrs and responded with his own list of Catholic martyrs 'of this our time'.[41] He began with Thomas More, John Fisher, the Carthusians and 'very many more under King Henry', before moving on to those recently executed, 'the good Earle of Northumberland, D. Storie, Felton, the Nortons, M. Wodhouse, M. Plumtree, & so many hundreds of Northernmen', all true martyrs as opposed to 'those stinking Martyrs of the Heretikes'.[42]

As Cuthbert Mayne was executed in the West Country, Thomas Sherwood and John Nelson, both members of prominent recusant families, were arrested in London.[43] Sherwood, a Douai man not yet ordained, was John Tregian's nephew. He was indicted under the 1571 Second Treasons Act for upholding Pius V's excommunication of Queen Elizabeth. Nelson too was convicted of high treason under the same act for calling the queen a heretic and a schismatic. Both were executed at Tyburn in February 1578.[44] By this date, out of a total of 57 seminary priests in England, Elizabeth had executed two and one layman. The

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[37] 13 Elizabeth I, c.1.

[38] 13 Elizabeth I, c.2.

[39] 13 Elizabeth I, c.3.

[40] Nicholas Sander, *De visibili monarchia Ecclesiae*, 8 books (Louvain, 1571) ARCR I, no. 1013. See STC 21691.

[41] Saint Augustine, *De Civitate Dei: The City of God*, trans. John O'Meara (Harmondsworth, 1972); Richard Bristow, *A briefe treatise of diverse plaine and sure wayes to finde out the truthe in this doubtfull and dangerous time of heresie: conteyning sundrie worthy motives unto the catholike faith, or considerations to move a man to beleeve the catholikes, and not the heretikes* (Antwerp, 1574), 72v. ARCR II, no. 67. STC 3799. ERL 209.

[42] Bristow, *A briefe treatise*, 72v, 73r–v.

[43] Camm, *Lives of the English Martyrs*, i, 223–248.

[44] By this date the government had used all the legislation enacted during the first two decades of the reign. See Joan Leslie Ward, 'The Law of Treason in the Reign of Elizabeth I, 1558–1588' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Cambridge, 1986) and

trials received less attention than would have been expected and the government did not publicize its proceedings as it had in the aftermath of the Northern Rising.

In the following year, Spanish and Italian troops landed on the Irish coast under the papal banner, and in 1580 the principal Catholic powers signed Articles of Confederates committing them to an enterprise against England. The Spanish king, whose troops were in Ireland, placed a bounty on the head of William of Orange, and invasion rumours were rampant throughout England during the summer. Missionary priests continued to arrive and by 1581 there were over a hundred in the country. Elizabeth had thus far avoided the large-scale executions which would have been politically unwise at home and abroad and which would have jeopardized foreign opinion, thereby strengthening the Catholic cause and increasing the chance of military action by Catholic powers against England. The coming of the Jesuits at this crucial point changed all this.

The much-anticipated Jesuit mission of Robert Persons and Edmund Campion arrived in England with 11 seminary priests in 1580. Edmund Campion argued in his Bragge that they came without political intention:

> My charge is, of free cost to preach the Gospel, to minister the Sacraments, to instruct the simple, to reform sinnes … I never had mind, and am strictly forbidden by our Father that sent me, to deal in any respect with matters of State or Policy of this realm.[45]

However, the Protestants replied that it was impossible to detach religion from politics, and William Charke in his reply to Campion stated unequivocally:

> he that smiteth our religion, woundeth our commonwealth: because our blessed estate of policie standeth in defence of Religion, and our most blessed religion laboureth in mayntenance of the common wealth. Religion and policie in England are, through Gods singular blessings, preserved together in life, as with one spirite: he that doeth take awaye the life of the one doeth procure the death of the other.[46]

The majority of English Catholics, who had no wish to be anything other than loyal subjects of their sovereign in civil matters, had ignored

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Donald Alan Orr, 'Sovereignty, State and the Law of Treason in England 1641–1649' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Cambridge, 1997) for a discussion of treason law in the period.

[45] A.C. Southern, *Elizabethan Recusant Prose, 1559–1582* (London and Glasgow, 1950), 154.

[46] William Charke, *An answere to a seditious pamphlet lately cast abroade by a jesuite with a discoverie of that blasphemous sect* (London, 1580), sig. C. STC 5005.

Regnans in excelsis. The need to remove its implications so that 'the Catholics should acknowledge Her Highness as their Queen without danger of excommunication',[47] had been discussed by Edmund Campion and Cardinal Gesualdi in the early 1570s. Persons and Campion now asked for and obtained a ruling on the matter from Pope Gregory XIII. The result was the ambiguous 'rebus sic stantibus' clause which was intended to ease Catholic consciences but which stated that the 1570 sentence did not bind Catholics, 'things being as they are now', until the public execution of the Bull could be carried out.[48] The queen therefore interpreted the arrival of the Jesuits as a prelude to invasion or assassination. Walter Mildmay, describing them as the pope's emissaries, warned Parliament in January 1581 that they were:

> a rabble of vagrant friars newly sprung up and coming through the world to trouble the Church of God; whose principal errand is, by creeping into the houses and familiarities of men of behaviour and reputation, not only to corrupt the realm with false doctrine, but also under that pretence, to stir sedition.[49]

From this point onwards, the slow, carefully judged action against Catholic dissidents accelerated. With the arrival of the Jesuit mission, Elizabeth's government began an increasingly coercive application of legal sanctions coupled with systematic exemplary public executions. It was meticulously selective in its victims, who were earmarked for their representative as well as for their confessional status. They were key figures, those who reflected the most acute Protestant fears. It was not ostensibly the Catholic laity that Elizabeth targeted but the missionary priests and Jesuits who, educated and ordained into the priesthood, returned to England to minister to the English Catholic community. Their formative training in Rome, France, the Low Countries and, later, Spain at the hands of the English Catholic leaders and under the protection of the papacy, together with their vow of obedience to the pope, made them the target of all the worst fears of the queen and the Council. These included invasion, deposition of the sovereign, regicide and the reversal of the religious settlement.

Burghley made a clear distinction between the priests, 'these kind of vermin … suffered to creep by stealth into the realm and to spread their poison within the same',[50] and 'laymen of good possessions and lands,

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[47] Richard Simpson, *Edmund Campion: A Biography* (London, 1896), 75, 141, 410.

[48] A.O., Meyer, *England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth*, trans. J.R. McKee (London, 1967), 487.

[49] See BM Sloane MS. 326, fols 19–29.

[50] William Cecil, Lord Burghley, *The execution of justice in England for maintenaunce of publique and christian peace, without any persecution for questions of religion* (1583)

men of good credit in their countries, manifestly of late time seduced to hold contrary opinions in religion for the pope's authority'.[51] He sought to isolate the Catholic clergy from the Catholic laity, arguing that the latter, although they:

> differ in some opinions of religion from the Church of England and that do also not forbear to profess the same, yet in that they do also profess loyalty and obedience to Her Majesty and offer readily in Her Majesty's defence to impugn and resist any foreign force, though it should come or be procured from the Pope himself, none of these sort are for their contrary opinions in religion prosecuted or charged with any crimes or pains of treason, nor yet willingly searched in their consciences for their contrary opinions that savor not of treason.[52]

The English law of treason was based on Edward III's Statute of Treason under which it was considered treasonable to 'encompass or imagine the death of the King, Queen or eldest male heir'.[53] The government argued that the papacy was attempting to withdraw the queen's subjects from their natural and lawful allegiance by usurping her role as Supreme Governor of the English Church and her sovereignty in general. The crime was defined as aiding in the appropriation of the queen's powers, both temporal and spiritual. This statute and the subsequent act of 1585[54] were seen as clarification of 25 Edward III's provision against adhering to the enemies of the king.[55] The pope was the enemy of the queen and, since seminary priests and Jesuits had sworn allegiance to him, they were necessarily the queen's enemies. It was within this complex of political and religious expediency and legislation through which the government attempted to structure everyday life in England that Catholics were executed for treason and the Catholic community constructed its martyrs.

Chapter 1 of this book examines the pseudomartyr debate and its influence from 1523 up to 1570, setting out the context from within which Elizabethan Catholic martyrdom was defined and providing the backdrop against which the ensuing chapters should be read. Chapter 2 examines the way in which the events of the scaffold were transformed into martyrdom through written accounts, which were subsequently

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in *The Execution of Justice in England by William Cecil and A True, Sincere and Modest Defence of English Catholics by William Allen*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon (Ithaca, NY, 1965), 9.

[51] *The execution of justice*, ed. Kingdon, 12.

[52] *The execution of justice*, ed. Kingdon, 9–10.

[53] 25 Edward III, 5, c.2.

[54] 27 Elizabeth I, c.2.

[55] Orr, 'Sovereignty, State and the Law of Treason in England 1641–1649', 23.

edited by their Catholic creators for the purposes of propaganda abroad and for shaping Catholic identity and encouraging recusancy among the Catholic community in England. Chapters 3 and 4 examine the transformation of these same events into images of martyrdom through a study of the work of Richard Verstegan and the martyr murals of the English College in Rome. The influences on these works of the Counter Reformation Church, the Jesuits, and the political intentions of the Catholic exiles and of their continental hosts are considered here. Chapter 5 investigates how Richard Verstegan used the English martyrs in his *Theatrum crudelitatum* of 1587 in order to rally the support of continental Catholics for invasion of England by Spain and the overthrow of Queen Elizabeth and her government. Chapter 6 is a detailed case study of the manuscript account of the martyrdom of Margaret Clitherow in York in 1586. The final chapter returns to examine the pseudomartyr debate as it stood at the end of the reign through a study of Robert Persons's *The Treatise of Three Conversions*. It discusses the way in which the Catholic martyr was used to define Catholicism against Protestantism, identify the Catholic community and assert Catholic claims to the true Church. At the same time it assesses, within the context of the Appellant controversy, how Robert Persons viewed the Marian policies which had created Foxe's martyrs and how, had the opportunity arisen, he believed the re-establishment of the Catholic Church in England might have been achieved.

CHAPTER ONE

The pseudomartyr debate

On Trinity Sunday 1527, the reformer Thomas Arthur preached a sermon to his followers in which he told them: 'think not that if these tyrants put a man to death … that he is an heretic therefore, but rather a martyr'.[1] He was making a political statement as much as a religious one and he used a rhetoric which they easily understood. The English reformers believed that the true Church, as St Matthew's Gospel had promised, would be identified by the suffering of those who endeavoured to follow the imitation of Christ in the face of persecution.[2] The true Church, they believed, was a suffering community signified and legitimized by martyrdom.

In this same year, Thomas More had been commissioned by his friend the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, to write a series of texts which eventually came to be known collectively as the *Controversies*. They were intended to counteract the reformers' teaching, which was being disseminated orally and through tracts coming into the country from the continent. More produced an accessible vernacular account of what the bishops defined as 'ye ryght fayth of Cryste contynued in his catholyke chyrche so many hundred yerys', in the form of a dialogue with the reformers' teachings.[3] He understood the locus of the threat of the reformers to lie in their claims to the true Church and saw that ' … the very brest of all this batayle/ that is to wyt the questyon whyche is the churche. For that is the poynt that all these heretykes by all the meanes they may labour to make so darke, that by thyr wyllys no man sholde wyt what they meane'.[4] This body of Catholic doctrine therefore constituted the criterion against which the English bishops intended that the reformers' theological claims should be measured and therefore, ultimately, against which their martyr claims would be assessed and dismissed. Consequently, when More replied to statements such as those of Arthur he used an equally familiar term; he called them pseudomartyrs.

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[1] Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1992), 83.

[2] Matthew 10: 17–20, 22–23.

[3] Thomas More, *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, ed. T. Lawlor, G. Marc'hadour and R. Marius, 2 vols, *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, 15 vols (New Haven and London, 1963–), 6, i (New Haven and London, 1981), 433/20–21. All references to *The Complete Works* hereafter abbreviated as CW.

[4] CW, 8, i, 34/30–33.

Martyrdom was understood within the context of St Cyprian's teaching and subsequently that of St Augustine: 'martyres veros non facit poena sed causa'.[5] It was the cause to which a person witnessed through death which determined martyr status, rather than the suffering which was endured. The martyr therefore witnesses to a body of belief, but it is the debate about the truth of that belief which lies at the heart of the argument about the validity of a martyrdom. Any claim to martyrdom is always subjective and can only be made within the essential polarity of its antithesis, the pseudomartyr. Beyond the literal act of martyrdom, therefore, the martyr functions as a rhetorical device, a fecund lexicon through which the writers and image-makers from opposing doctrinal positions define their positions and mark out their differences across the religious divide. It is this argument which constitutes the pseudomartyr debate. This chapter traces and interprets that debate in text and image between the Catholics and the reformers during the time from Thomas More's commission to write the *Controversies* until the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. The pseudomartyr argument, revived by the Reformation and applied to the reformers' claims by More, was developed by subsequent debate during the early stages of the English Reformation and became the argument through which Catholic martyrdom, and indeed Protestant martyrdom, from this point on were defined.

Voices in the debate: Thomas More

During February and March of 1532, in the preface to the *Confutation*, Thomas More denounced as heretical a series of books, mainly by Tyndale, Frith and Roye, which were circulating in London at this time, and which Bayfield was accused of bringing into the country.[6] They included two revived Lollard texts: *A.B.C. ayenst the Clergye*[7] and a new version of William Thorpe's account of his trial in 1407.[8] This latter summarized Lollard belief in the Eucharist, and attitudes to

[5] Saint Cyprian, *De unitate ecclesiae*, trans. and ed. E.H. Blackeney (London, 1928), XIV, 12; Saint Augustine, *Letter*, 89.2, quoted in G.G. Willis, *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy* (London, 1950), 103.

[6] *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe with a Life of the Martyrologist and a Vindication of the Work*, 8 vols ed. Rev. Stephen Reed Cattley (London, 1837–41), hereafter A&M, iv, 684–686.

[7] A&M, iv, 685.

[8] William Thorpe, *The examinacion of master William Thorpe, preste accused of heresye. The examinacion of syr J. Oldcastell*, ed. [W. Tyndale? or G. Constantine?] (Antwerp, 1530) STC 24045. See Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford, 1988), 220–222.

images, pilgrimages, tithes and oaths, within the context of the five charges levelled against Thorpe. However, it read as a martyr text, in the Eusebian tradition of the dialogue between the martyr and his prosecutor, in which Thorpe acknowledged the beliefs for which he suffered and showed his followers how to behave under inquisition. This new, printed version was reinforced by two other additions to the original text: a preface and a short version of the Lollard John Oldcastle's trial, which concentrated on his defence of his belief in the nature of the Eucharist. The reformers therefore incorporated these Lollard martyr accounts, which had been circulating in manuscript, into one vernacular text.[9] The Thorpe text circulated quickly, as Foxe's sources show, although its authorship was unclear: More attributed it to Constantine, but Bale and Foxe were to attribute it to Tyndale.[10] Tyndale's preface made no explicit commendation of Lollard doctrine but he directed the reader to see the Lollard martyrs as part of an eternal chain of martyr witnesses whose condemnation and martyrdom provided further examples of oppression by the Church of Rome.[11] Tyndale's followers therefore proselytized through these texts, while establishing a connection between the cause for which Thorpe and Oldcastle had died in the previous century and their own current persecution and martyrdom.

In this same batch of proscribed books was the fifteenth-century Lollard tract, the *Lanterne of Lizt*,[12] a book of consolation for Wyclif's followers composed between 1409 and 1415.[13] Chapter 11 of the *Lanterne* discussed martyrdom.[14] The reformers were traditional in their use of martyr rhetoric and expressed their beliefs though long-established models. One such was the concept of the two Churches: the true Church and the false Church. This was a commonly understood image, derived from St Augustine's teaching in *De Civitate Dei*,[15]

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[9] Margaret Aston, 'Lollardy and the Reformation: Survival or Revival?', in Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London, 1984), 219–242.

[10] CW, 8, i, 8/25–26; John Bale, *A brefe chronycle concernynge the examinacyon and death of the martyr syr J. Oldecastell* (Antwerp, 1544) STC 1276; L.P. Fairfield, 'John Bale and the Development of Protestant Hagiography in England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 24 (1973), 145–60; A&M, iii, 249.

[11] Graham David Nicholson, 'The Nature and Function of the Historical Argument in the Henrician Reformation' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Cambridge, 1977).

[12] *The Lanterne of Lizt*, edited from MS.Harl. 2324 by Lilian M. Swinburn, EETS o.s.151 (London, 1917 for 1915).

[13] Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, *passim*.

[14] [Grims, J.?] *Here begynnethe the lanterne of lyght* (R. Redman, London, [1535?]) STC 15225.

[15] St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei: The City of God Against the*

and one which had been traditionally assumed by dissident groups in the Church since before the Donatists in the fifth century.[16] John Wyclif, influenced by the writings of Nicholas of Lyra and Joachim of Fiore, had drawn on the concept of the two Churches and employed the term Antichrist to signify cruelty, false doctrine and immorality; that is, anything which set itself against Christ or took his place. He had specifically identified the papacy as such: 'it seemeth that the Pope is Antichrist heere in erth, for he is agens crist bothe in lif and in lore'.[17] In his expectation of persecution, Wyclif had anticipated the creation of true martyrs who would witness to this true, hidden Church. When More wrote his preface to the *Confutation*, therefore, he had in front of him two martyr texts written by dissenters of the previous century who had premised their arguments on Wyclif's teachings. Appropriated and revamped for a new generation of reformers they now contained deliberately established connections between the reformers' martyrs and the Lollard martyrs.

In the new Thorpe text, Oldcastle and Thorpe were presented as martyrs who had died in witness to their belief in the nature of the Eucharist, and, in the preface, both men were associated with 'that good priest and holy martyr, Sir [the reverend] Thomas Hitton burned at Maidstone'.[18] More, therefore, responded directly to Tyndale's preface in this text, when he included Hitton as a case history in his own preface to the *Confutation*. He dismantled the martyr claims made on behalf of Hitton, whom he called 'this newe saynte of Tyndales canonysacyon whose burnynge Tyndale so gayly gloryeth',[19] and examined the corpus of Hitton's belief. And, as Anne Hudson notes, the 'holsome heresyes this holy martyr helde'[20] were very close to those set out in the *Lanterne of Lizt*, and preached among the Lollards of East

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Pagans, 7 vols. The edition used here is *De Civitate Dei: The City of God*, trans. John O'Meara (Harmondsworth, 1972).

[16] W. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from Maccabees to Donatus* (Oxford, 1965), 61; W. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford, 1952); Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley, 1967), 212–225.

[17] Wyclif, 'De Papa' (1379), in *Wyclif, Select English Writings*, ed. Herbert E. Winn (Oxford, 1929), 66–74. See also Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1969); Katherine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530–1645* (Oxford, 1979), *passim*; Michael Wilks, 'Wyclif and the Great Persecution', in *Prophecy and Eschatology*, ed. Michael Wilks, Studies in Church History. Subsidia 10 (Oxford, 1994), 39–63.

[18] He was burned at Maidstone in Kent in late February 1530. Foxe dates it 20 February 1530. A&M, iv, 619.

[19] CW, 8, i, 13/37–14/1.

[20] CW, 8, i, 14/4.

Anglia a century before.[21] More's response was a traditional one; he inverted this image of the martyr and, applying the pseudomartyr topos, he wrote: 'and nowe the spiryte of errour and lyenge, hath taken his wreched soule wyth hym strayte from the shorte fyre to ye fyre everlastyng'.[22] Hitton now became, in More's text, 'the dyvyls stynkyng martyr', a member of the Church of the Antichrist.[23]

In the *Controversies* More set out the standard Catholic teaching of the time on the nature of the Church. He described it as a universal Christian community, with Christ its head and St Peter his successor 'and so foorthe the successors of him ever after'.[24] It was from this spiritual, historical and papal continuity, he argued, that the English Church derived its legitimacy. Throughout the *Confutation*, his repudiation of Tyndale and the other reformers was based upon this definition of the Church as a universal, not a local, nor an invisible, gathering of people. Since the reformers had denied its teachings, he argued, they were no longer within the Church but outside it, in heresy and in the hands of the Antichrist. Within these polemical exchanges, More set out what was, the Church taught, 'the right fayth of Christ'.[25] At the centre of this essential body of belief was the doctrine of the Eucharist and transubstantiation. In his later *A Treatise on the Passion*,[26] More discussed the significance of the Eucharist in relation to society. He wrote:

> The thyng of the sacrament that is bothe sygnified and conteyned, is the verye bodye and the very bloud of our savioure hym selfe, therein actuallye and really present. The thing of this blessed sacrament yt is signified thereby & not conteyned therein, is the unitye or societye of all good holye folke, in the misticall bodye of Christe.[27]

To believe in and to receive the Eucharist, he held, was to acknowledge this concept of the Church as a wider community,[28] a *corpus mysticum*. This became a fundamental point of contention between Catholics and reformers throughout the period under discussion and was a powerful influence in the construction of the Catholic martyr. When More dissected the reformers' use of the martyr topos to validate their teachings,

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[21] CW, 8, i, 16/36–37. Anne Hudson argues that these were close to Lollard beliefs preached in the 1430s. Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 500.

[22] CW, 8, i, 16/35–37.

[23] CW, 8, i, 17/1.

[24] CW, 8, ii, 20–21.

[25] CW, 6, i, 433/20.

[26] CW, 13, 117/20–188/25.

[27] CW, 13, 142/10–15.

[28] For an account of changes in the understanding of the significance of the Eucharist and society see Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford, 1998), 121–166.