Redeeming Death: Mortality, Portraiture, and the Quest for Salvation in Tudor England and Wales

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A thesis submitted to Swansea University in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Swansea University

2024

Summary

This thesis investigates how the visual culture of commemoration in the Elizabethan parish church changed in response to the theological upheavals of the Reformation, namely the refutation of the belief in purgatory and the introduction of a predestinate approach to salvation. The specific focus of this thesis is on a selected body of nine painted works commissioned for display in provincial parish churches across southern England and Wales during the period c.1585-c.1603. These paintings are complex cultural products, and this thesis will present and interrogate the ways that they function as forms of spiritual and social self-fashioning.

These paintings are rare examples of objects that sit at the intersection between late-sixteenth century civic and *memento mori* domestic portraiture, and funeral monuments found within the parish church setting. A composite object type, often functioning as both a commemorative portrait and a church monument, these painted church portrait memorials were created and commissioned during a time of immense political and spiritual upheaval. As such, a primary aim of this thesis is to evidence the late sixteenth century English and Welsh provincial lay experience of mortality and salvation as inherently nuanced and complicated; with the existence of a cross-confessional populace and soteriological beliefs from across the religious spectrum influencing the possible meanings and functions of these memorial paintings, and the way that viewers may have responded to them.

The overarching aim of this thesis is to highlight painted ecclesiological *memoria*, created outside of the court-based, London environment, as an important area of sixteenth century scholarship. Some of these paintings are relatively well known and others have been little published: the *Memorial to William Smart* in Ipswich; the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* once in Faringdon; the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* in Adderbury, the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* in Besford; the *Cornewall Family Memorial* in Burford, the *Memorial to Margery Downes* in Bishop's Frome, and the three *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* once in St Donat's. This thesis will explain and evidence the various factors that influenced their patrons and which account for the different representational strategies employed by the

artists: from medieval ecclesiological art and *memoria,* to the culture of sixteenth century civic and domestic portraiture, and the challenges of a life lived against the backdrop of the Reformation.

Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed: Jessica Rosenthal Mcgrath

Date: 6 November 2024

Statement One

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed: Jessica Rosenthal Mcgrath

Date: 6 November 2024

Statement Two

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for electronic sharing

Signed: Jessica Rosenthal Mcgrath

Date: 6 November 2024

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Dedication

For Reuben and Lucas.

And to Callum, for everything.

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Introduction

We have bene flesh and bloode, we are but bones
and lie for other flesh to take their viewe
our sides were never brasse, our strengthe not stones
we could not choose but bid the world adieu
fare well then sister flesh and think on us
no odds but time, we are, thow must be thus

This quote, taken from an inscription on the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* (c. 1599), a largely unknown oil-on-panel painting in Adderbury parish church, Oxfordshire, successfully and strikingly captures the unavoidable truism of the human condition: 'we have bene flesh and bloode, we are but bones…we are, thow must be thus'. The *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* is one of a small group of surviving Tudor and Jacobean painted portrait memorials on wooden panel which were all (and in many cases, still are) displayed within parish churches across England and Wales. This sub-genre of post-Reformation commemorative portraiture in the church setting was first presented by Sally Badham in a 2009 article for the *Journal of Church Monuments*; in 2015, she considered the object type within the context of the 'kneeling in prayer' visual trope for an article published in the *British Art Journal*.[1] This thesis will present and interrogate the possible meanings, functions, and purposes of nine late-Elizabethan examples selected from within this sub-genre of portraiture - one which Badham notes has 'received virtually no scholarly attention' – and will argue that these works, all commissioned and created during a key political and spiritual phase of the Long Reformation (c. 1585 – c. 1603), sit at the intersection of two late sixteenth century object types.[2] Indeed, this study will suggest that these nine paintings are rare surviving examples of cultural and memorial commissions which sit at the intersection between late-

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[1] Sally Badham, 'A Painted Canvas Funerary Monument of 1615 in the Collections of the Society of Antiquaries of London and its Comparators', *Journal of Church Monuments,* 24 (2009), 89-153; Sally Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer: English Commemorative Art 1330–1670', *The British Art Journal*, 16.1 (2015), 58–72. Following John Spurr, Tessa Watt, Alexandra Walsham, and John Bossy, the term 'post-Reformation' is used here and throughout this thesis, to refer to the period 1560-1640 in England and Wales. See: John Spurr, 'The English "Post-Reformation"?', *Journal of Modern History,* 24 (2002), 101-19; Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 326; Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 5; John Bossy, *Peace in the Post-Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 3.
[2] Badham, 'A Painted Canvas', p. 99.

sixteenth century *memento mori* and civic portraiture and funeral monuments found with the ecclesiological spaces of England and Wales.[3]

This thesis approaches and presents these nine painted church portrait memorials as part of the multifaceted and varied rituals of death, commemoration, memorialization, and self-fashioning that took place within the public setting of the parish church during the later years of the Elizabethan period.[4] The nine select painted works that this thesis focuses upon appear to reflect, through their use of text, iconography, form, and medium, themes that – whilst heavily indebted to the late-medieval *ars moriendi* and *memento mori* tradition - are typical of the post-Reformation period and specifically, as will be argued throughout this thesis, the later years of Elizabeth's reign. For despite being few in number, the presence of painted portrait memorials in the 'the active lived-in space of ecclesiastical buildings' in late-sixteenth century England and Wales, ensured that the dead remained present in the eyes, hearts and - in some cases - the prayers of living parishioners and other visitors to the church.[5] The

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[3] On *memento mori* portraiture in the civic and domestic spheres, see Tarnya Cooper's seminal studies: Tarnya Cooper, 'Memento mori portraiture: Painting, Protestant Culture and the Patronage of middle elites in England and Wales 1540-1630' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 2001); Tarnya Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elites of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales 1540-1620,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012); Tarnya Cooper, "Frail Flesh, as in a Glass": The Portrait as an Immortal Presence in Early Modern England and Wales', in *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, ed. by Mary Rogers (Hampshire and Vermont: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 197-212; Tarnya Cooper 'Predestined Lives? Portraiture and Religious Belief in England and Wales, 1560-1620', in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007), pp. 49-62. On civic portraiture, see the ground-breaking work of Robert Tittler, including: Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Robert Tittler, 'Painters' and Patrons' Circles in Provincial England, c. 1580-1640', in *Painting in Britain 1500-1630: Production, Influences and Patronage*, ed. by Tarnya Cooper, Aviva Burnstock, Edward Town, and Maurice Howard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 338-344; Robert Tittler, 'Regional Portraiture and the Heraldic Connection in Tudor and Early Stuart England' *The British Art Journal*, 9.3 (2009), 3-10; Robert Tittler, *The Face of the City: Civic Portraiture and Civic Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007). On church monuments in England and Wales during the late medieval and early modern period, see: Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008); Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Nigel Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Phillip Lindley, *Tomb Destruction and Scholarship: Medieval Monuments in Early Modern Britain* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007); Rhianydd Biebrach, *Church Monuments in South Wales, c. 1200-1546* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017); Madeline Gray, 'The brass of Richard and Joan Foxwist at Llanbeblig: death, commemoration and the Reformation in Wales', *Transactions of the Caemarfonshire Historical Society,* 72 (2011), 54-68; Madeline Gray, 'Piety and Power: the tomb and legacy of John Marshall, bishop of Llandaff 1478-96', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 162 (2013), 339-49.

[4] On the concept of self-fashioning, see: Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980).

[5] Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, p. 2.

patrons' concerns and anxieties around the process of dying and death itself, the salvation of the soul, and how one would be remembered all occurred against the backdrop of the Reformation in England and Wales. As such, this thesis positions nine different memorial paintings at its centre and asks as its first overarching research question: to what extent and how do the nine works presented and examined in this thesis indicate the existence of a wide-ranging spectrum of religious identity, and varied approaches to mortality and salvation, amongst lay patrons of painted memorial portraits on wooden board for the church setting during the period c.1585-c.1603?

These nine paintings were commissioned during the period c.1585 – c.1603 by seven different patrons ranging from across the geographic, religious, and social spectrums of late-Elizabethan England and Wales. As such, there is a correspondingly large variety of representational strategies deployed across this small group of memorial objects, with difference in scale, form, and content seen across the nine paintings. So too is there a variety in the states of condition and preservation of these paintings: commissioned for display in parish churches spanning nearly the entire south of England and Wales, from East Anglia to the cliffs of Glamorganshire, this thesis argues that the existence of these intrinsically fragile works – objects made of organic materials and housed in damp parish churches with fluctuating relative humidity, vulnerable to rot, worm, and fire - across this wide geographic area indicates the remnants of a largely lost memorial form. Due to such conditions, these wooden memorial paintings in parish churches were likely to be more easily damaged over several centuries than comparable paintings on wooden board housed within domestic settings and thus benefitting from a more stable environment and, in many cases, a surviving family to ensure their upkeep.[6] Once in poor condition and therefore no longer serving their mnemonic or commemorative function (if, for example, the identities of the subject(s) were no longer visible due to abrasion and/or paint flaking), such objects would be more likely to be removed and (particularly if there were no surviving family to act as their champions) to be stored or ultimately destroyed.

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[6] On the risks to survival faced by wooden *memoria* in the parish church setting, see: Sally Badham, 'The Painted Wooden Tomb Effigies at Goudhurst to Sir Alexander Culpepper (d. 1541) and His Second Wife, Dame Constance Culpepper, and Their Comparators', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 176.1 (2023), 296–315 (pp. 305-306).

The nine late-Elizabethan examples that do survive, however, are indicative of the different social, religious, and geographic backgrounds of the men and women who were commissioning painted monuments on board for the ecclesiological space during the post-Reformation period. The patrons considered in this thesis came from different levels of society: from ancient, landed families (members of the nobility and provincial or rural elite such as the Cornewalls in Burford and the Stradlings in St Donat's),[7] the gentry and upper-gentry (the Mores in Addersbury, the Harewells in Besford, the Downes family in Bishop's Frome, and the Untons in Faringdon), and the urban elite (the Smart family in Ipswich, who made their fortune in the wool trade). A similarly wide religious spectrum can be observed, with the patrons of painted wooden portrait *memoria* presented in this thesis including: conspicuously conforming members of Elizabethan society such as Alice Smart in Ipswich, Dorothy Unton in Faringdon, and Edward Stradling in St Donat's; possibly crypto or potentially 'inwardly remaining' Roman Catholics like George Downes in Bishop's Frome and Edmund Harewell in Besford; confirmed Recusants such as Mary More in Adderbury; and patrons like Thomas Cornewall in Burford, for whom the surviving visual evidence indicates conformity.[8] The case studies chapters of this thesis will present this broad religious spectrum and ask what can be gleaned about the religious orientation of the sitter or patron from the visual evidence presented in these nine painted church portrait memorials? Furthermore, what can be deduced about the role of the patron in commissioning these memorials from artists and artisans?

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[7] The term 'nobility' is used here to denote a sixteenth century social type as per Thomas Smith's contemporaneous (written 1562-1565, first published in 1583) description of the sixteenth century 'nobilitas major': those who made up the governing institutions of England and Wales and who, crucially, were in possession of hereditary land and titles. See: Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. by Mary Dewar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 54. Also see: Cox, pp. 9-10. I use the term 'gentry' here as per Cox's definition: a sort of people consisting of 'knights, esquires and gentlemen', who 'owned land upon which their wealth, prestige, and power was based.' See: Cox, p. 10. This social type corresponds to Smith's description of the sixteenth century 'nobilitas minor'. See: Smith, p. 55. For more on the gentry in early modern England and Wales, see: Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales 1500–1700* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 1994).

[8] On the concept of the broad and amorphous Roman Catholic community in England and Wales, and especially on the concept of the Church Papist, or 'inwardly remaining' Roman Catholic, please see: Michael Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage, and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009); Alexandra Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (London: Routledge, 2016).

For these late-Elizabethan patrons, there was no escaping the momentous changes in eschatological and soteriological teaching that occurred, if not during their own lifetimes, then during those of their parents and grandparents. It is no surprise, then, that for those living amid a total reordering of beliefs and practices around mortality and salvation – namely the repudiation of the doctrine relating to purgatory and the power of intercession coupled with the introduction of a predestinate approach to salvation – the thoughts of the living would turn to death and the afterlife. Certainly, the vogue during this period for the inclusion of *memento mori* imagery in domestic portraiture is indicative of a populace gravely concerned, if not utterly preoccupied, with thoughts of their own transience. Indeed, the search for a sense of agency amidst the immutability of death was ever-present during the post-Reformation period. The late-medieval *ars moriendi* tradition had left a mark on the early modern process of dying: 'as the *ars* tradition faded across the sixteenth century, the huge industry for handbooks on the good death continued to blossom throughout Europe'.[9]

In post-Reformation England and Wales the concept of 'the Good Death' was portrayed as a Christian duty and inspired an enormous output amongst the sixteenth century Reformers. Works such as Thomas Becon's *A Sicke mannes Salve* (1560), William Perkins's *Salve for a Sicke Man* (1595), John More's *A Lively Anatomie of Death* (1596), and Christopher Sutton's *Disce Mori* (1601), provided advice as to how a good Christian should manage their own passing in order to die well, alongside how they could conduct themselves during their lifetime in order to be assured of their Election and eventual salvation. An important part of constructing a Good Death was making arrangements for how one would be remembered and commemorated: thus the testamentary evidence indicates that there were frequent requests for the erection of memorials and monuments, most often to be located within the parish church.[10] This physical object – whether a funeral brass, stone tomb sculpture, or painted memorial on wooden panel – afforded the testator some sense of agency in the face of death against a backdrop of a changing soteriology. The commissioning of a memorial for

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[9] Elizabeth Tingle and Jonathan Willis, 'Introduction: Dying, Death, Burial and Commemoration in Reformation Europe', in *Dying, Death, Burial and Commemoration in Reformation Europe*, ed. by Elizabeth Tingle and Jonathan Willis (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 1-24 (p. 9).
[10] Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory,* p. 2.

display in the sacred and public space of the parish church allowed the patron to craft their own remembrance (or that of a loved one), to provide posterity with a narrative of their own choosing, and thus to self-fashion a post-mortem identity in the sight of God and the people. As such, this thesis considers the following two further overarching research questions: firstly, how and to what extent did the visual culture of commemoration within the late-Elizabethan parish church setting change as a result of and in response to Protestant reform, with specific reference to painted memorials on board? Secondly, to what extent was religious reform a driver for creative innovation in the commissioning and creating of memorial forms and imagery for the parish church setting during the period c. 1585-c. 1603, with specific reference to painted memorials on board? The influence of the parish church setting on the meanings, functions, and purposes of these nine objects will also be considered.

These nine painted memorials on board all share a similar aesthetic quality, based both on their materiality and their artistic treatment and handling: these paintings dating to c. 1585-c.1603 are all oil on wooden panel(s), and they all visually correspond to the late-Elizabethan vernacular or naïve style of portraiture: 'flat, non-illusionistic and often reliant upon text or inscription'.[11] As will be explored in the case studies chapters of this thesis, all nine were most likely produced by painters (often heraldic or journeymen) who operated outside of the London-based, foreign-trained circle of portraitists that tends to dominate the art historical canon; as such, they exhibit little of the virtuosic artistic treatment and handling evident in many of the late-Elizabethan and early-Jacobean portraits that hang in the national museums and galleries of England and Wales, and show little evidence of attempted mimetic representation of the subject.[12] Indeed, in selecting these specific nine paintings as its core source material, this thesis maintains an overarching aim to increase awareness of provincial

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[11] Cooper, 'Predestined Lives', p. 55.

[12] Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics,* p. 10. It is certainly possible that a reluctance to develop an interest in illusory or mimetic representation might have been due to a lack of confidence in depicting the similarity between the sign and the referent (as opposed to depicting more familiar emblematic forms of representation). Chapter Six of this thesis, however, will consider to what extent the lack of illusory presence as witnessed in *The Stradling Family Memorial Panels* may have been a deliberate denial of mimesis in order to make the memorial commission more palatable for display in the post-Reformation church setting, and to signal the conformity of the patron. On the possible intentional denial of mimesis or illusory presence in post-1540 visual representation in England and Wales, please see: Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 33, 199; Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, pp. 232-233; Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 277; Maurice Howard, 'Art and the Reformation', in *The History of British Art 600-1600,* ed. by Tim Ayers (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 231-241 (p. 234).

cultural and memorial objects in the late-Elizabethan vernacular idiom as important historical and art-historical sources, worthy of both study and conservation treatment to ensure their preservation.

These nine modest objects comprised of painted wooden board(s), were inexpensive to produce, and far less likely to survive than the elaborately sculpted stone monuments or hardy engraved brasses commissioned by patrons across early modern England and Wales and which are extant in great numbers today. As the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* knowingly informs the viewer in its inscription: 'our sides were never brasse, our strengthe not stones'. Indeed, the use of a material such as wood instead of longer lasting materials such as stone or brass, and thus the inherent impermanence of this organic material housed in a damp unheated space over centuries, possibly without a community of descendants to champion or protect them (unlike, for example, panel paintings in domestic environments),[13] masks the very considerable probability that more examples of this type of painted memorial may have been produced for display within the parish church setting during the period c.1585-c.1603 and later.[14] It is highly likely that such works would have suffered catastrophic paint loss, been removed and ultimately destroyed, and also, despite the considerable research of this author, that further examples are still extant but remain as yet unidentified.

For as Sally Badham and Jane Eade have shown, painted church portrait memorials on wooden panels and canvases were being commissioned, created, and displayed in churches across England and Wales from the mid-sixteenth century into the eighteenth century, thus indicating that this was a relatively established type of early modern commemorative cultural commission.[15] Similarly, the geographic spread of the nine works selected for analysis in this

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[13] Tarnya Cooper, 'The Enchantment of the Familiar Face: Portraits as Domestic Objects in Elizabethan and Jacobean England', in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 157-178 (pp. 158-160).

[14] In many cases, it is these descendants who have ensured the survival of sixteenth and early-seventeenth panel paintings in domestic settings: the majority of these objects have been subject to multiple campaigns of 'refreshing', restoration, and conservation. Cooper, 'The Enchantment of the Familiar Face', pp. 156-158;

[15] Badham, 'A Painted Canvas'; Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer'; Jane Eade, 'Triptych Portraits in England, 1575-1646' (unpublished master's thesis, Royal College of Art and V&A, 2004); Jane Eade, 'The Triptych Portrait in England, 1575-1646', *British Art Journal,* 6.2 (2005), 3-11; Jane Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection: Triptych Monuments in the Post-Reformation English Church', in *Faith, Politics and the Arts: Early Modern Cultural Transfer between Catholics and Protestants*, ed. by Christina Stunck (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019), pp. 177-209.

thesis shows that this object type was being commissioned and created across the entire south of England and Wales during the late-Elizabethan period:[16]

Figure 0.1 Location map of the parish churches which house (or once housed) the nine painted church portrait memorials considered in this thesis.

This geographic breadth is highly indicative of a widespread practice of commissioning and creating and suggests that there were once many more late-Elizabethan painted church portrait memorials in existence than survive today; rather than localized acts of patronage limited to certain parishes or dioceses, patrons from across the width of the country – from South Wales to Ipswich - were commissioning these memorial objects for display in their local ecclesiological spaces during the period c. 1585-c.1603. Indeed, the survival of wooden objects in parish churches is far less assured than stone objects or, undeniably, than wooden objects in domestic settings, which tend to be much more hospitable environments than the often damp and draughty parish churches built during the medieval period in England and Wales. It is telling, for example, that even in the domestic setting, sixteenth century portraits

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[16] Map my own, created using Mapcustomizer: <https://www.mapcustomizer.com/> [Accessed 2 May 2019].
Map key:
1 = St Peter's Church, Besford – the *Memorial to a child of the Harewell Family*
2= St Mary the Vigin Church, Bishop's Frome – the *Memorial to Margery Downes*
3 = St Mary's Church, Burford – the *Cornewall Family Memorial*
4 = St Donat's Church, St Donat's – the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*
5 = St Mary's Church, Adderbury – the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*
6 = All Saints Church, Faringdon – the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*
7 = St-Mary-le-Tower Church, Ipswich – the *Memorial to William Smart*

on panel have very low rates of survival: 'the percentage of surviving pictures for this period may be as low as 30 or 40 percent.'[17] It is logical, therefore to state that the situation, given the environmental conditions, must be much lower for early painted wooden objects in ecclesiological settings.[18]

As will be evidenced in the later case studies chapters of this thesis, the nine memorial paintings selected for study in this thesis have received relatively little public and scholarly exposure or attention, despite five of the nine having found their way into museums.[19] It is likely that the vernacular or naïve aesthetic characteristic of the nine objects, their location within provincial and often remote parish churches, and the probability that they were created by local and often unknown provincial or heraldic artists has led to their relative obscurity. Indeed, a primary aim of this thesis is to highlight late-Elizabethan painted ecclesiological *memoria* on wooden panel, created in the vernacular style by artists outside of the court-based, London environment, as an important and overlooked area of sixteenth century historical and art-historical scholarship, and to contribute to and improve our existing knowledge of this object type. As such, this investigation is steeped within, informed by, and held together by three key themes: firstly, post-Reformation understandings of mortality and salvation; secondly, the visual culture of commemoration and memorialisation within the English and Welsh parish church setting; and finally, the use of memento mori and civic portraiture as a tool for self-fashioning during the Elizabethan period. Chapters One and Two

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[17] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 27.

[18] On patterns of survival of sixteenth century portraits, see: Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* pp. 26-27; Tarnya Cooper, 'Visual Memory, Portraiture and the Protestant Credentials of Tudor and Stuart Families', in *Memory and the English Reformation,* ed. by Alexandra Walsham, Bronwyn Wallace, Ceri Law, and Brian Cummings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 318-333 (pp. 322-324).

[19] The three paintings commemorating different generations of the Stradling family from St Donat's church, Glamorganshire, have been on loan from the Church in Wales to the National Museum of Wales (hereafter NMW), Cardiff, since 2018. Information courtesy of Kitty McKenny, Senior Paintings Conservator, NMW. I am grateful to Kitty and to Adam Webster for their support throughout my doctoral studies, and for allowing me to view the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* and associated curatorial files in the NMW Conservation Studio. The *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* has been in the permanent collections of the National Portrait Gallery, London, since 1884. See: NPG, *Sir Henry Unton: Conservation Research,* <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw06456/Sir-Henry-Unton> [accessed 8 March 2022]. The triptych commemorating a child of the Harewell family from Besford church, Worcestershire, was exhibited at the V&A as part of a temporary exhibition *The Art of Death: The Visual Culture of the English Death Ritual, c. 1500-c.1800* in 1992. See: Nigel Llewellyn, '[An] Impe entombed heere dothe lie: The Besford triptych and child memorials in post-Reformation England', in *Representations of Childhood Death,* ed. by Gillian Avery and Kimberley Reynolds (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp. 52-65.

of this thesis will provide a contextual presentation and analysis of these topics, whilst a survey of the relevant literature is first given here to provide a solid grounding for the analysis (as presented in Chapters Three-Six of this thesis) of the commissioning and creation of nine memorial portraits for display in the late-Elizabethan parish church setting.

    i.   Thematic Literature Review

        a.   Mortality and Salvation during the post-Reformation period

In 2016, Diarmaid Maculloch claimed that that 'the Reformation was not caused by social and economic forces, or by nationalism, but by big ideas about death, salvation, the afterlife.'[20] This is quite a claim, and one that it is only really possible to make now, for 'a generation ago, the social history of death was undiscovered country to historians of early modern England.'[21] The study of death and dying in the early modern period developed during the 1970s, initially amongst French scholars who were part of, or emerged out of, the *Histoire des Mentalités* movement.[22] Historians of the *Annales* school such as Phillipe Ariès, Pierre Chanu, Michel Vovelle, Jacques Chiffoleau, and Jean Delumeau stand out as pioneers of the topic.[23] The work of Ariès has been especially influential in the Anglophone world: his 1977 monograph *L'homme devant le mort*, published in English in 1981 as *The Hour of Our Death*, was amongst the first to utilise a wide range of sources – from administrative records to physical objects such as monuments – to argue that, in the post-Reformation period, the concept and experience of human transience and eventual death progressed from being a collective, if not

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[20] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: a conversation about death*, <https://blog.oup.com/2016/10/reformation-death-protestants/> [accessed 28 August 2018].

[21] Marshall, *Beliefs,* p. 1.

[22] Tingle and Willis, p. 4.

[23] Of particular note are the following works: Phillipe Ariès, *L'homme devant la mort* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1977); Pierre Chanu, *La mort à Paris: XVIe, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Fayard, 1978); Jacques Chiffoleau, *La comptabilité de l'Au-Delà : les hommes, la mort et la religion dans la région d'Avignon à la fin du Moyen Age* (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1980); Michel Vovelle, *La mort et l'Occident de 1300 à nos jours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983); Jean Delumeau, *Le Péché et la peur: la culpabilisation en Occident (XIIIe – XVIII siècle)* (Paris: Fayard, 1983). For more on the *Annales* historians and their contribution to the social and cultural history of death, see: Tingle and Willis, p. 4; Marshall, *Beliefs,* p. 1; Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall, 'Introduction: placing the dead in late medieval and early modern Europe', in *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 1-16 (pp. 1-2). For an excellent general survey of the Francophone historiography of death and commemoration, see: Régis Bertrand, 'L'histoire de la mort: De l'histoire des mentalités à l'histoire religieuse', *Revue de l'Histoire de l'Eglise de Franc,* 86 (2000), 550-9.

social, experience, to an individual one.[24] For Ariès, it was the study of wills that drove his argument of the distinct individualisation of the western mortuary experience following the Reformation.[25] He saw a disparity in the way that people approached and experienced mortality and the process of dying, depending on which side of the Reformation they lived: the medieval collective versus the early modern individual.[26]

Increasingly, however, this view – that there was a profound rupture between the pre- and post-Reformation experience of not just death, but the entirety of the life cycle – is being challenged by postrevisionist scholars. Prior to the revisionist turn in the 1980s, however, the general consensus during the 1960s and 1970s was that the Reformation in England – with the exception of the Marian period, which was deemed to be a largely inconsequential, temporary interlude - followed a clear narrative of swift progress, if not inevitability, and that the teachings of the Reformers were welcomed and readily adopted by a receptive laity who had become disillusioned with the corruption of the late-medieval church.[27] A. G. Dickens, for example, in his 1964 monograph *The English Reformation,* presented the late-medieval church in England as an institution which had veered far from the theological grounding of the gospels, with 'a fantastic emphasis on saints, relics, and pilgrimages, its tendency to allow the personality and teaching of Jesus to recede from the focus of the picture': fertile ground, in other words, for the introduction of the reformist principle of *sola scriptura*.[28] Over the course of his long and celebrated career, Dickens did not digress from this view. Even as late as 1989, when the *English Reformation* was revised, he still presented the Protestantism of the Reformers as the true Christianity, much like the claims of the Reformers themselves: 'in England as elsewhere, the Protestant Reformation sought first and foremost to establish a

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[24] Tingle and Willis, p. 4.

[25] Samuel K. Coohn Jr., 'The place of the dead in Flanders and Tuscany', *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 17 – 44 (p. 34).

[26] Gordon and Marshall, p. 6.

[27] See: Spurr, 'The English "Post-Reformation"?'; Peter Marshall, '(Re)defining the English Reformation', *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), 564-586; Eamon Duffy, 'The English Reformation After Revisionism', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 59, (2006), 720-31.

[28] A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1964), p. 3. For a comprehensive critical appreciation of A.G. Dickens and other traditional, pre-revisionist Reformation historiography please see the following collection of essays: Rodney Ambler and Glenn Burgess, (eds.), 'Reformulating the Reformation', *Historical Research*, Special Issue, 77.195 (2004). For a specific appraisal of Dickens' analysis of the late-medieval church in England, see: Eamon Duffy, 'A. G. Dickens and the late medieval Church', *Historical Research*, Special Issue, 77.195 (2004), 98–110.

gospel-Christianity, to maintain the authority of the New Testament evidence over mere church tradition and human inventions'.[29]

This reading of the medieval church as a corrupt institution which had veered far from its gospel roots fed into Dickens' narrative of a Reformation from below, buoyed by a receptive laity who had already been exposed to the seeds of religious reform by the Lollard movement.[30] Thus, as Christopher Haigh notes, for Dickens, the process of religious reform in England was 'one of conversion rather than coercion, with Protestantism spreading in the localities by the uncoordinated efforts of radical clergy, itinerant clothworkers and Bible reading anticlerical gentry.'[31] Whilst other traditional, pre-revisionist historians of the Reformation in England such as G. R. Elton and Peter Clark maintained somewhat different analyses - Elton in particular argued for a Reformation from above with a specific focus on the role and influence of Cromwell – they agreed that the process of religious reform was essentially a popular or populist one, in as much as it was rapidly accepted by the laity: 'the fact is that by 1553 England was almost certainly nearer to being a Protestant country than to anything else.'[32]

The publication of Haigh's *The English Reformation Revised* in 1987 marked a turning point in the way that historians approached the Reformation.[33] Although, as Duffy notes, 'the contributors to this volume…were in no sense a movement, and they shared no single agenda',[34] there is a clear intellectual thread that links the essays in this seminal collection: the refutation and dismantling of the 'progressivist narrative' that had come to characterize the study of the Reformation in England and Wales.[35] Thus, *The English Reformation Revised*

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[29] A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation,* 2nd edn (London: B. T. Batsford, 1989), p. 13.

[30] Dickens, *English Reformation* (1964 edn), p. 34. For more on the link between Lollardy and the Reformation in England, see: Margaret Aston, 'Lollardy and the Reformation: Survival or Revival', *History,* 49.166 (1964), 149-170. Hudson, Anne, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988); Richard Rex, *The Lollards* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Susan Royal, *Lollardy in the English Reformation: History, Radicalism, and John Foxe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020)

[31] Christopher Haigh, 'The recent historiography of the English Reformation' in *The English Reformation Revised*, ed. by Christopher Haigh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 19-33 (p. 22).

[32] G. R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation: England, 1509-1558* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), p. 371.

[33] Marshall, '(Re)defining the English Reformation', p. 565; Duffy, 'The English Reformation After Revisionism', p. 721.

[34] Duffy, 'The English Reformation After Revisionism', p. 721.

[35] Marshall, '(Re)defining the English Reformation', p. 565.

provided a counterpoint to the traditional historiography, and specifically to the work of Dickens. A new generation of historians championed this newly labelled Revisionist approach to Reformation Studies during the 1980s and 1990s, and their work led to a complete re-thinking of the once commonly accepted narrative of the Reformation in England: they did not subscribe to the idea of an inevitable and linear progress of religious reform that was enthusiastically adopted by a laity who had lost faith in a corrupt late-medieval church. Instead, as a result of the careful study of sixteenth and seventeenth century archival resources from the courtly to, crucially, the local parish level, a new narrative emerged: a long process of religious reform, fraught with disruption and contention at nearly every stage, and experienced in very different ways by the laity in different parts of England and Wales.

Revisionism raised the concept of multiple, overlapping, and often contradictory processes of religious reform in England and Wales. The title of Haigh's 1993 monograph, *English Reformations* (as opposed to the singular, Reformation, and – crucially – without the usual preceding definite article) served to emphasise his analysis of religious changes in sixteenth century England as 'far too complex to be bound together as 'the Reformation', too complex even to be 'a Reformation'. England had discontinuous Reformations and parallel Reformations'.[36] This suggestion - that the pace and progress (or otherwise) of religious change in sixteenth century England was experienced in different ways by different people, in different localities – is visible in the seven parish churches which house, or housed, the painted church memorial portraiture considered in this thesis. Whether within the paintings themselves but also, as discussed in the case studies chapters, in the various fixtures, fittings, and *memoria* visible inside these ecclesiological spaces, the extant material evidence tells a story of 'complex' and 'discontinuous' religious changes: quite the opposite of the once-accepted narrative of a linear, neat process of religious reform, as theorized and presented by Dickens and Elton.

In exploring the full gamut of religious change in England and Wales during the post-Reformation period, Haigh's fellow revisionist historians Eamon Duffy and Jack Scarisbrick –

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[36] Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 14.

both of whom, in contrast to the Protestant Dickens and Elton, are Roman Catholics – arrived at similar conclusions: they both portray a lay populace far from discontent with the late-medieval church and thus, in many cases, unreceptive, resistant, and mortally fearful of the religious changes imposed upon them from above. As Ethan Shagan notes, 'these scholars expanded Haigh's ideas into new narratives of the Reformation in which religious change was an aggressive and destructive process, not a movement of liberation but a violent attack on traditional society by an avaricious government'.[37] The opening lines of Scarisbrick's 1984 monograph, *The Reformation and the English People* are revealing of his interpretation of lay attitudes towards the religious changes of the sixteenth century (whilst employing somewhat more measured language than Shagan's interpretation suggests): 'on the whole, English men and women did not want the Reformation and most of them were slow to accept it when it came.'[38] Duffy, in a career dedicated to the analysis of the lay experience of religious reform - crucially, including those who remained dedicated to Roman Catholicism - during the late-medieval and early modern period, has come to a similar conclusion. From his groundbreaking 1992 monograph, *The Stripping of the Altars,* to his 2020 collection of essays *A People's Tragedy: Studies in Reformation,* Duffy has championed the narrative of a Reformation imposed on the laity from above, whilst also exploring the continuities and reinvigorations that occurred within Roman Catholicism during the English Counter Reformation and the previously overlooked Marian period.[39]

We are now in what is often referred to as a period of 'Postrevisionism.'[40] Peter Marshall explains the label:

> As it has been applied to historians of the English Reformation, it usually implies a readiness to regard the phenomenon as a gradual yet profound cultural transformation rather than as the swift Protestant victory of traditional historiography

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[37] Ethan Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.4.

[38] Jack Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), p. 1.

[39] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c.1580* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1992); Eamon Duffy, *A People's Tragedy: Studies in Reformation* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2020).

[40] Marshall, '(Re)defining the English Reformation', p. 565; Duffy, 'The English Reformation After Revisionism', p. 724.

or as the long-drawn-out and remarkably successful Catholic rearguard actions portrayed by 1980s revisionism.[41]

Thus whilst the once-accepted narrative of a linear, neat process of religious reform based on an enthusiastic rejection of perceived Roman Catholic superstition, continues to be disrupted, so too does the concept of a Reformation imposed on an unwilling populace – as argued, at times, by Duffy, Scarisbrick, and Haigh - from above. Many of the key historians of today have come to view the concept of the Reformation (or, indeed, reformations) in England and Wales as a disorderly, complex, and blurred process: one of 'messy complexity',[42] experienced and endorsed by the laity in different ways and to different degrees. In the same way that Duffy and Scarisbrick's narrative of popular resistance to religious change challenged the theses of lay acceptance as proposed by Dickens and Evans, so too does the work of, for example, Ethan Shagan, challenge and develop Scarisbrick and Duffy's assessments: 'just as important as identifying resistance is differentiating one form from another and analysing their varying goals, methods, and political dynamics.'[43] After all, the act of resistance cannot be taken as an automatic sign of rejection. Resistance to change, whether religious or otherwise, is itself subject to nuance: different people reject varying things, for different reasons, and in varying ways.

Postrevisionism – in its presentation of a 'gradual yet profound cultural transformation' has come to focus on the shades of grey – the nuances, continuities, and adaptations – that characterise the lay experience of religion and spirituality in post-Reformation England and Wales. Scholars such as Alexandra Walsham and Tara Hamling have shown how many of the religious, social, and cultural customs and practices of the Old Faith continued to thrive, develop, and adapt despite – or, in some cases, because of – the new teachings as set out by the various Reformers. Indeed, Hamling's extensive research into the material culture of the post-Reformation domestic space has led her to conclude that 'the Reformation did not bring

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[41] Marshall, '(Re)defining the English Reformation', p. 565.

[42] Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, 'Protestantisms and their beginnings', in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. by Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-13 (p. 8).

[43] Shagan, p. 247. Also see: Ethan Shagan, 'Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellion', *English Historical Review,* 114.455 (1999), 34-63.

about an abrupt and wholesale rejection of the artistic traditions of the medieval past',[44] whilst Walsham maintains that:

> Calvinist theology not merely accommodated but arguably even enhanced aspects of pre-Reformation practice and belief…some traditional cultural paradigms were subtly altered and rehabilitated rather than permanently effaced by the advent of an era of rapid doctrinal and devotional innovation and change. [45]

Key amongst these 'cultural paradigms' are the ways that mortality, salvation, and transience were understood and approached by the laity. As such, I return here to MacCulloch's 2016 assertion that it was 'big ideas about death, salvation, the afterlife' that caused the Reformation. Many of the historians of the postrevisionist era have focused on these themes in their analyses of the societal and cultural impact of the process of religious reform during the early modern period in England and Wales. The concept of a non-linear, disordered, messy, and ultimately incomplete reform of lay belief and actions surrounding death, the afterlife, and – most significantly for the purposes of this study, which considers the memorial commissions of seven patrons from across the religious spectrum of late sixteenth century England and Wales – salvation and commemoration, has, since the 1980s, been explored and furthered in monographs by Peter Marshall, Claire Gittings, Ralph Houlbooke, and David Cressy, as well as in more recent collections of essays edited by Jonathan Willis and Andrew Gordon and Thomas Rist.[46]

These historians have, in the main, characterized post-Reformation beliefs around mortality,

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[44] Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Protestant Britain, c.1560-c.1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 284.

[45] Walsham, *Providence,* p. 168.

[46] Key works include: Marshall, *Beliefs;* David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Claire Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1988); Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England 1480-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); *Sin and Salvation in Reformation England*, ed. by Jonathan Willis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016); *The Arts of Remembrance in Early Modern England: Memorial Cultures of the Post Reformation*, ed. by in Andrew Gordon and Thomas Rist (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2016. Important collections of essays have also been published about religious change and late-medieval and early modern death and commemoration in a pan-European context. See: Marshall and Gordon; Tingle and Willis; *A Companion to Death, Burial, and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, c. 1300-1700,* ed. by Elizabeth Tingle and Philip Booth (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

salvation, and commemoration as undergoing a process of gradual change, with ongoing continuity of memorial practices amongst the laity: they emphasise alteration, adaptation, and transformation rather than the total obliteration of late-medieval beliefs and practices. Houlbrooke, for example, in the tenth chapter of his influential 1998 monograph, examined the process by which the focus and purpose of the English funeral sermon moved from the garnering of intercession on behalf of the deceased to the 'salutary instruction for the living',[47] whilst Tingle and Willis argue that the post-Reformation deathbed was a site where: 'abstract ideas, new doctrines, old habits and almost-forgotten shreds of half-belief crystallised into a messy and imperfect expression of individual identity'.[48] One of these 'old habits' was the belief in ghosts: Marshall's extensive studies on the subject has shown that, at the lay level at least, the belief in ghosts continued to endure during the post-Reformation period.[49] This was despite the rejection of their existence by the Reformers, who viewed a belief in ghosts to be a Roman Catholic superstition, fundamentally intertwined with the state of purgatory and the power of intercession. After all, as Catherine Stevens notes, 'many medieval ghost stories involved ghosts with a purgatorial origin.'[50]

The conclusions presented throughout this thesis, drawn through the study of the visual culture of commemoration in the late-Elizabethan provincial parish church, complement Marshall's assertion that the 'the process of expunging Catholic associations from the commemoration of the dead was slow, messy, and never entirely successful.'[51] This thesis will build on Marshall's assertion in showing how Catholic associations can indeed be seen within late-Elizabethan visual commemorations of the dead in the church setting, with specific reference to painted portrait memorials on wooden panel. It will be suggested that a continued association with the memorial practices of the Old Faith is by no means unexpected

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[47] Houlbrooke, p. 297.

[48] Tingle and Willis, p. 10.

[49] See: Marshall, *Beliefs,* chap. 6; Peter Marshall, 'Deceptive Appearances: Ghosts and Reformers in Elizabethan and Jacobean England', in *Religion and Superstition in Reformation Europe,* ed. by William Naphy and Helen Parish (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 188-208; Peter Marshall, *Mother Leaky and the Bishop: A Ghost Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Peter Marshall, 'Transformations of the Ghost Story in post-Reformation England', in *The Ghost Story from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Helen Conrad-O'Briain and Julie Anne Stevens (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010)

[50] Catherine Stevens, 'You shal reade marvellous straunge things': Ludwig Lavater and the Hauntings of the Reformation', in *Supernatural and Secular Power in Early Modern England*, ed. by Marcus Harmes and Victoria Bladen (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 141-163 (p. 143).

[51] Marshall, *Beliefs,* p. 166.

for the laity of the late-Elizabethan period. For many of these layfolk retained their Roman Catholic beliefs and practices (either openly as recusants, or more covertly as crypto- or inwardly remaining Roman Catholics), whilst even those who had embraced Protestant teachings of predestination and thus rejected purgatory and the power of intercession as superstitions may have remembered and continued to take comfort from some of the customs and practices of the Old Faith. Ritual can offer consolation to those in mourning; even in secular, modern societies it is not uncommon to cling to traditions of faith at times of distress. It seems reasonable to suggest, therefore, that some of the patrons of these nine memorial paintings - all living in the immediate post-Reformation period, and so soon after the back and forth in religious policy from Mary I to Elizabeth I - might turn to the familiar memorial customs and beliefs of Roman Catholicism and of their ancestors in the wake of a bereavement or at the hour of their own death: there is warmth and comfort in the familiar.

Willis, in his examination into sin and salvation during the post-Reformation period comes to a similar conclusion: 'there is a significant danger that the neatness of the story of the shift from 'salvation by works' to 'justification by faith alone' gives an artificial sense of these issues as somehow quickly 'settled' by the reformation.'[52] This sentiment is echoed in the evidence from the nine painted church portrait memorials considered in this thesis; these objects indicate that – during the late-Elizabethan period at least – these issues, so crucial to lay understandings of mortality and salvation, were certainly not 'settled'. As discussed in this thesis, the seven patrons of these nine painted portrait memorials commissioned for display in different ecclesiological spaces across the south of England and Wales approached, understood, and accepted the concept of *sola fide* in different ways and to varying degrees: whilst there are common tropes present in their use of the visual and of text (through the inclusion of inscriptions), there is a considerable amount of variance and nuance in belief as presented in the evidence contained within their painted commissions, and as would have been understood by individual late sixteenth century viewers. As will be discussed in the case studies chapters of this thesis, amongst these seven patrons hailing from across the religious spectrum of late-Elizabethan England and Wales, acceptance of 'justification by faith alone' and thus the rejection of 'salvation by works' and intercessory action was by no means clear

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[52] Willis, *Sin and Salvation,* p. 11.

or universal.

The use of material culture, and specifically visual *memoria*, as the core source material in this thesis aligns with the cultural turn that Reformation Studies has taken in more recent years. Recent scholarship has embraced material, archaeological, and visual culture as valuable source material for the consideration and analysis of approaches to mortality, salvation, and commemoration during the post-Reformation period.[53] Whilst Walsham has been at the forefront of this blurring of traditional academic barriers – her recent articles focusing on delftware as key source material for the study of Protestantism in early modern England would have been unimaginable pieces of scholarship from a Cambridge University Professor of History even a generation ago - she is by no means alone in embracing interdisciplinary study.[54] Scholars such as Tarnya Cooper, Tara Hamling, Catherine Richardson, Jonathan Willis, and Susan Orlik, who investigate the impact of religious change on the visual arts - and who have all, at various points in their work, considered the effect of religious reform on the arts of commemoration in domestic and ecclesiological spaces - have emerged as clear leaders in this field of cultural studies.[55] In addition, and of particular relevance to this thesis, is the recent use of the late-medieval and early modern English parish church itself – the external and internal fabric of the building, the fixtures, and the fittings – as well as parochial (as opposed to monastic, collegiate, or cathedral-based) devotional and

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[53] Ronald Hutton, *Debates in Stuart History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 25. The Centre for Reformation and Early Modern Studies at Birmingham, for example, counts Art Historians, Theologians, Historians, and Literary Scholars amongst its ranks. See: *University of St Andrews Reformation Studies,* <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/reformation/staff.html> [accessed 13 September 2017]. So too does the St. Andrews Reformation Studies Institute. See:
<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/reformation/staff.html> [accessed 13 September 2017].

[54] See: Alexandra Walsham, 'Domesticating the Reformation: Material Culture, Memory, and Confessional Identity in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Studies,* 69 (2016), 566-616; Alexandra Walsham, 'Eating the Forbidden Fruit: Pottery and Protestant Theology in Early Modern England', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 24.1 (2020), 68-83.

[55] See, for example: Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*; Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*; Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (eds.), *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007); Susan Orlik, *Decorating the Parish Church in Post-Reformation England: Material culture, community and identity in Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire, 1560-1640* (Donnington: Shaun Tyas, 2022); Tara Hamling and Jonathan Willis, 'From Rejection to Reconciliation: Protestantism and the Image in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 62.4 (2023) 932-996.

commemorative practice as 'an object of category and study'.[56] This is a concept which has underpinned much of this thesis: the core source material as presented and analysed in the case studies chapters – nine late-Elizabethan painted church portrait memorials on wooden panel - are all housed, or were once most likely housed, within parish churches, as is much of the contextual material evidence.

Thus, this thesis, in presenting and analysing an object type situated for display in the church setting, yet whose social and spiritual function is situated at the intersection between funeral monuments and *memento mori* and civic portraits, will contribute to the increasingly interdisciplinary state of early modern death and memory studies. Furthermore, through its focus on the post-Reformation visual culture of commemoration, this thesis complements the post-2017 state of research. For the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's *95 Theses* galvanized interest around the significance of memory and the effects of religious reform on the way that early modern people chose to commemorate, and the kinds of people, events, and topics that were the source of their remembrances and obfuscations. A key exemplar is the AHRC-funded *Remembering the Reformation* project, which was based at the Universities of York and Cambridge. Fully embracing the cultural turn in its interdisciplinary nature, and unafraid to tackle long-held assumptions about the pace, process, and reception of religious reform throughout Europe, one of the project's aims was to 'to situate discoveries about England within the context of the development of commemorative cultures in the British Isles and Europe more generally.'[57] Similarly, recent work by Christina Faraday and Simone Hanebaum has addressed the use of both the visual and of text within post-Reformation and early

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[56] Julian Luxford, 'The English Parish Church as an Object and Category of Study', in *Towards an Art History of the English Parish Church, 1200-1399*, ed. by Meg Bernstein (Courtauld Books Online, 2021), pp. 11-23. Key publications include: Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*; Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People: Popular Religion and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); *The Parish in English Life 1400-1600*, ed. by Katherine French, Gary Gibbs and Beat Kümin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); *The Parish in Late Medieval England,* ed. by Clive Burgess and Eamon Duffy (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2006). Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Orlik.
[57] *UK Research and Innovation: Remembering the Reformation,*
<https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FM008770%2F1#/tabOverview> [Accessed 3 November 2021].

modern commemorative cultures.[58] Faraday's research in particular, through her examination of the portrayal of the passing of time in Tudor and Stuart portraiture, her focus on the use of *memento mori* iconography within these portraits, and her research into Tudor and Jacobean funeral monuments (albeit of the collegiate, rather than parochial, type), has much in common – most obviously in terms of source material and its focus on patron intention - with this thesis.

b.   The Arts of Remembrance: Church Monuments and Memorials

This author's positioning of nine late-Elizabethan painted memorial portraits on wooden board (which are themselves part of a large object type – the post-Reformation painted church portrait memorial - which has 'has received virtually no scholarly attention'),[59] as sitting at the intersection of funeral monuments on the one hand, and *memento mori* and civic portraiture on the other, requires some historiographical and contextual framing to allow for the comparison of functions and forms of *memoria* that are presented in later chapters of this thesis. What follows below, therefore, is a brief survey of scholarly approaches to church monuments and memorials in England and Wales, with a focus on perceptions of materiality and the gradual movement from approaching *memoria* as an artform to viewing it is as material historical evidence.

The study of English and Welsh church monuments is a long established part of art history. As Nigel Saul notes:

> Interest in monuments of the medieval period was already beginning before the period itself had ended. Perhaps the first to record monuments of note—or monuments to persons of note—was William Worcester (d. 1482), sometime secretary of Sir John Fastolf, who sometimes mentioned tombs in his notes of his travels round the realm.[60]

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[58] See: Simone Hanebaum, 'Textual Monumentality and Memory in Early Modern England, 1560-c.1650' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2019); Christina Faraday, 'Tudor Time Machines: Clocks and Watches in English Portraits c.1530–c.1630', *Renaissance Studies*, 33.2 (2019), 239-266; Christina Faraday, 'The Elizabethan and Jacobean Funeral Monuments in Gonville and Caius College Chapel', *Church Monuments,* 36 (2021), 47-78.
[59] Badham, 'A painted canvas', p. 99.
[60] Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages*, p. 2.

This interest continued into the sixteenth century, most obviously with the publication, in 1563, of *Actes and Monuments* by John Foxe (1516/16 - 1587). The 1563 text and Foxe's three later, each much changed and adapted, editions (published, respectively, in 1570, 1576, and 1583) provide a window into sixteenth century understanding of monuments and commemoration, whilst – as a work of Protestant matryrology – also functioning as a textual monument to those memorialised in its pages.[61] However, whilst the increasing fascination with heraldry and genealogy amongst the antiquarians of the late-sixteenth, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-centuries ensured that the recording and illustration of church monuments continued, a modern art historical study was not produced until Frederick Crossley's *English Church Monuments, A.D. 1150-1550*, in 1921.[62]

Crossley's work focused almost exclusively on English sculpted monuments, with little attention paid to other forms of parish-church-based visual *memoria* such as stained glass, funeral brasses, cross slabs or, indeed, painted memorial portraits on panel.[63] This prioritisation of the sculptural is representative of a certain type of art-historical hierarchy whereby sculptural monuments made of stone were and to a certain extent still are viewed as stylistically and aesthetically superior to cheaper objects such as brasses.[64] Certainly, the separation of the study of sculpture and brass is visible in later art historical monographs: the discussion of English ecclesiological medieval *memoria* in select works by Lawrence Stone,[65] H. A. Tummers,[66] and Phillip Lindley,[67] for example, is entirely focused on sculpted stone tomb

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[61] The first four editions of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* are freely available online courtesy of the Digital Humanities Institute, University of Sheffield. Please see: *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online*, <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe/> [accessed 11 June 2022]. Five further editions of *Acts and Monuments* were printed after Foxe's death: in 1596, 1610, 1632, 1641, 1688 respectively.

[62] Frederick Crossley, *English Church Monuments, A.D. 1150-1550: An Introduction to the Study of Tombs and Effigies of the Mediaeval Period* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1921).

[63] The term *memoria* is used here and throughout this study as per Badham's definition: 'liturgical and social acts connecting the living and the dead.' The core source material of this thesis – the nine painted church portrait memorials that will be discussed in the case studies chapters– are examples of post-Reformation physical *memoria*: the decision to commission a commemorative product for the ecclesiological space is a social act to facilitate a connection between the living and the dead, whether that be through remembrance or intercession. See: Sally Badham, 'Commemoration of the Dead in the Late Medieval Parish: An Overview', *Church Archaeology,* 16 (2012), 45-63 (p. 45).

[64] Saul, pp. 5-7.

[65] Lawrence Stone, *Sculpture in Britain: The Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955).

[66] H. A. Tummers, *Early Secular Effigies in England: The Thirteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1980).

[67] Phillip Lindley, *Gothic to Renaissance: Essays on Sculpture in England* (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1995).

monuments, whilst Colin Gresham, in his 1968 monograph, employs a similarly narrow focus on *memoria* made of stone – specifically sepulchral slabs and effigies - in the churches of medieval north Wales.[68] Even Paul Binski, a leading art-historian of the medieval and early modern ecclesiological visual culture of commemoration, rarely discusses non-sculptural monuments in his monographs, instead publishing a chapter on brasses in a separate collection of essays.[69] There are, of course, some key works on English and Welsh tomb brasses but, tellingly, they too exhibit a reluctance to cross this divide of materiality: monographs by Malcolm Norris, Jerome Bertram, and John Lewis, for example, focus exclusively on brass *memoria*.[70]

This approach of separating out different types of commemorative object according to their materiality is further visible in the approach to stained glass and wall paintings: the visual representation of English and Welsh donors and patrons within these types of memorials tends to have been treated in individual monographs such as Richard Marks' *Stained Glass in England During the Middle Ages* and Roger Rosewell's *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches*, rather than incorporated into more holistic texts about commemorative imagery as a whole.[71] There are several potential reasons for this approach, ranging from the traditional overarching interest of the art-historian in artistic agency, and the materiality and aesthetic quality of an object (at times to the detriment of other important factors such as the social or political significance, or the possible intention of the patron), to the fact that survival rates for some of these types of English medieval physical *memoria* are very low. Much of the memorial imagery contained within glass windows and on the walls of parish churches, for example, were destroyed or whitewashed over during the various periods of iconoclasm in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, and further destruction was wrought

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[68] Colin Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving in North Wales: Sepulchral Slabs and Effigies of the Thireenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1968).

[69] See: Paul Binski, 'The Stylistic Sequence of London Figure Brasses', in *The Earliest English Brasses: Patronage, Style and Workshops, 1270-1350*, ed. by John Coles (London: Monumental Brass Society, 1987).

[70] Malcom Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Memorials* (London: Phillips & Page, 1977; John Lewis, *Welsh Monumental Brasses: A Guide* (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1974); Jerome Bertram (ed.), *Monumental Brasses as Art and History* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1996).

[71] Richard Marks, *Stained Glass in England During the Middle Ages* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993); Roger Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008).

during the sweeping reforms of church interiors throughout the nineteenth century.[72] Many types of medieval mural and glass memorial imagery – where indeed they survive at all - are thus often fragmentary and in a poor state of conservation,[73] perhaps accounting for why memorials depicted on the walls and windows of parish churches tend to have been given more attention by archaeologists than art historians: they have been treated as part of the fixtures and fittings of the parish church as opposed to art objects in their own right in the way that, for example, medieval sepulchral sculpture or, latterly, funeral brasses have been.

This thesis, however, argues that the two – church fixtures and fittings and art objects – are not mutually exclusive, particularly when it comes to the study of commemorative objects and memorials within a wider framework that considers the social, cultural, and religious significance of visual *memoria* alongside any perceived aesthetic value of the object or discussion of the 'technical aspects of the craft.'[74] In other words, a monument or memorial can be appreciated for its artistic or aesthetic value within a wider historical framework whereby its spiritual and commemorative function as both a type of visual *memoria* and a church fixture or fitting is paramount. Historian Nigel Saul has adopted this approach in his study of medieval monuments in English churches. As one reviewer notes:

> The publisher's claim that *English Church Monuments* is a comprehensive survey, 'ground-breaking in its treatment of the subject in a historical context', is fully justified… Saul succeeds in surveying the whole spectrum of funerary and commemorative monuments together…this allows him to pose a wide range of questions of the tombs, and to examine them less as fine art than as sources for 'the

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[72] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* p. 18. Please see Chapter Two of this thesis for in-depth discussion of damage wrought to church monuments and other types of ecclesiological *memoria* during the post-Reformation period. For more on responses to images in England during the post-Reformation and wider early modern period in England and Wales – including elements of destruction, renewal, and adaptation - please see: Richard Williams, 'Reformation', in *Art Under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm,* ed. by Tabitha Barber and Stacy Boldrick (London: Tate Publishing, 2013), pp. 48-74; Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*, pp. 25-65; Hamling and Willis; Orlik. For post-Reformation responses to images on the continent, please see: Carlos Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Lee Palmer Wandel, *Voracious Idols and Violent Hands*: *Iconoclasm in Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg, and Basel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); *Art and Religious Reform in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Bridget Heal and Joseph Leo Koerner (Oxford: Wiley, 2017).

[73] Marks, p. 62; Orlik, pp. 244-247.

[74] Marks, p. 3.

social, cultural, and religious assumptions of the age in which they were produced' (p.9).[75]

This movement from the study of monuments and memorials solely as art objects, towards one whereby they are considered sources of social, cultural, and religious history has also been adopted by major scholars of early modern commemorative culture in England and Wales such as Nigel Llewellyn, Peter Sherlock, Rhianydd Biebrach, and Madeline Gray, and has much in common with Luxford's understanding of the parish church as an 'object of category and study'.[76]

Llewellyn, for example, is explicit in his rejection of connoisseurship, arguing that church monuments and memorials must be viewed as part of specific death rituals, thus prioritising their social and religious function over questions of taste or aesthetic value.[77] Sherlock is equally clear in his approach to church monuments 'as literary, visual and material evidence capable of providing new questions and new answers about early modern England',[78] whilst Biebrach, in her 2017 study of medieval monuments in South Wales - the first monograph since Lewis' 1974 work on monumental brasses to focus specifically on Welsh church monuments, as opposed to other elements of the church interior - assesses the materiality of these objects whilst also using them as a tool to better understand the spiritual and secular concerns, ambitions, and aims of the various patrons.[79] Gray, similarly, presents and analyses church monuments – both parochial and cathedral-based - as objects of social and religious history, interrogating their use of text and images for clues as to the pace and progress of religious change and reform in late-medieval Wales.[80] This thesis will contribute to and build on our understanding of visual parish-church-based *memoria* in south Wales through the case study on the three *Stradling Family Memorial Panels,* commissioned by Edward Stradling in

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[75] D. M. Palliser, review of *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation,* by Nigel Saul, *The English Historical Review,* CXXVI.518 (2011), 131-132 (p. 132)
[76] Luxford, pp. 11-23.
[77] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* p. 31-35.
[78] Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory,* p. 3
[79] Biebrach, *Church Monuments in South Wales.* For more on the state of church monument studies in south Wales, see: Biebrach, pp. 1-13; Matthew Ward, review of *Church Monuments in South Wales, c. 1200-1546,* by Rhianydd Biebrach, *Journal of British Studies,* 57.4 (2018), 840-878.
[80] Gray, 'The brass of Richard and Joan Foxwist at Llanbeblig'; Gray, 'Piety and Power'.

c.1590 for display in St Donat's Church (Glamorganshire), which is presented in Chapter Six of this thesis.

c. Memento Mori and Civic Portraiture in Tudor England and Wales

The modern study of early modern English and Welsh portraiture has been dominated by the influential scholar, curator, and museum director Roy Strong. Prior to Strong's work on artistic production during the 1960s and 1970s, the field of sixteenth century portrait scholarship in the British Isles was somewhat lacklustre, almost certainly in response to the curatorial perception of the aesthetic and artistic quality of English and Welsh portrait production.[81] Cooper, in her 2012 monograph *Citizen Portrait*, succinctly problematises this state of affairs:

> Art historical judgements about the mainstream production of paintings from the Tudor period have often been made on the basis of unfavourable comparison with what has been seen as more sophisticated forms of production in other parts of Europe.[82]

Robert Tittler concurs, noting that:

> The process of forming a canon is one of exclusion as well as inclusion. In this case the excluded work consisted of that which failed to meet the aesthetic standards or connoisseurial judgement of those who have written the standard texts and launched the key gallery exhibits. Paintings of an 'inferior' aesthetic included most of those produced outside the London workshops of the mostly foreign-born or-trained elite painters of the day.[83]

Indeed, there is no doubt that the majority of portraits being produced in provincial England and Wales during the sixteenth century - mostly by journeymen craftsmen or painter-stainers whose names are now lost to history - looked different to those being produced on the

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[81] Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics*, p. 4; Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 21.
[82] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 19.
[83] Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics,* p. 2.

continent by celebrated artists with well documented biographies, who often signed their work and could claim artistic reputation in their own lifetime.

Portraits by the heraldic artists and painter-stainers of England and Wales – the kinds of makers who created the nine painted church portrait memorials considered in this thesis – undoubtedly have a different aesthetic quality to the works of fine or 'polite' art which populate the portrait galleries of England and Wales.[84] Such works of fine or polite art are, in terms of aesthetics, the polar opposite of the nine late-Elizabethan painted church portrait memorials considered in this thesis. Often adhering to the Renaissance theoretical principles of painting outlined in, for example, the tracts of Leon Battista Alberti, many of these portraits show a clear awareness of the ideas of *disegno* and *colorito*, and depict their subjects with full realistic, or *mimetic*, likenesses.[85] In contrast, the nine selected memorial works that this thesis focuses on all correspond to Cooper's definition of the late-sixteenth century vernacular style of portraiture: 'flat, non-illusionistic and often reliant upon text or inscription'.[86]

It is greatly misleading to allow a perceived lack of aesthetic quality, or a lack of information about the artist, to result in the disregarding of an object's historic, social, or even artistic value; and yet this is precisely what has happened over many years of sixteenth century portrait scholarship within the UK. The influential twentieth century art historian Ellis Waterhouse, for example, wrote derisively of portrait production in England that 'the general level of work is of an even mediocrity, executed in the main, it would seem, by small factories of craftsmen rather than by painters with a personal style of their own.'[87] It is significant that

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[84] Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics,* pp. xii – xiii.

[85] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 22. For more examples of sixteenth and early seventeenth century portraits painted by continental artists for English and Welsh patrons, see: Catherine MacLeod, *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits in the National Portrait Gallery Collection at Montacute House* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1999). On the application and use of Renaissance artistic practices and principles in England and Wales, see: Lucy Gent, *Albion's Classicism: The Visual Arts in Britain, 1550-1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995); Lucy Gent, *Picture and Poetry, 1560-1620: Relations between Literature and the Visual Arts in the English Renaissance* (Leamington Spa: Hall, 1981); Maurice Howard and Nigel Llewellyn, 'Painting and Imagery' in *The Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain: Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. by Boris Ford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 222-254.

[86] Cooper, 'Predestined Lives', p. 55.

[87] Ellis Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain 1530-1790* (London: Penguin Books, 1953), p. 33. Quoted in: Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 21.

Waterhouse, over the course of his long career, was at various times Director of the National Galleries of Scotland, Director of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at Birmingham University, and Director of the Paul Mellon Institute.[88] Thus, in considering the inevitable influence that his low opinion of sixteenth century English portraiture would have had on the acquisitions and displays strategies of these institutions – we can begin to see how the canon of early modern portraiture was formed: a process of 'exclusion as well as inclusion',[89] whereby art historians and curators focused on the works that met the appropriate or desired aesthetic and authorial standards as perceived by the Academy. The average viewer and commentator could easily have assumed that all portraits in sixteenth- and early-seventeenth century England and Wales were the work of foreign-born artists, whose works conform to modern aesthetic and connoisseurial ideas of what an art object should be. Furthermore, the major UK galleries and museums, by mainly (and in some cases, solely) displaying portraits of royalty and courtiers by continental artists such as the German Hans Holbein the Younger (c.1497/8 -1543) or Flemish (often Antwerp-born and -trained) painters such as Hans Eworth (d. 1574) and Paul Van Somer (c. 1577/8-1621/2), only served to perpetuate this narrative which is, of course, entirely untrue.

What we have here is a case of modern definitions, tastes, and aesthetic judgements – shaped by the creation of an art market which largely devalued the vernacular aesthetic - being retrospectively applied to sixteenth century visual culture. Without a proper understanding and appreciation of what portraiture might have meant to its original audience - the audience for whom the object was created – it is impossible to appreciate the type of painted commemorative portraiture considered throughout this thesis, or, indeed, an entire tranche of the extant corpus of sixteenth century English and Welsh portraiture. This is even more pertinent when considering that the great majority of extant Tudor portraits created outside of court circles (and therefore outside of London) are by unknown artists; something that has not served them well in a world of art-historical scholarship that has traditionally placed high value on authorship. Strong's work, for example, whilst drawing attention to the skill of English-born portrait painters such as George Gower (c. 1540 – 1596), was still steeped in the

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[88] *Archive Collections: Ellis Waterhouse*, <https://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk/archives-and-library/archive-collections/ellis-waterhouse> [accessed 13 March 2022].

[89] Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics,* p. 2.

academic traditions and conventions of the Academy: despite making full use of the archives in identifying English- and Welsh-born painters, his emphasis was still firmly placed on portrait authorship and aesthetic quality as opposed to patron intention.

Tittler contends that Strong's major contribution to portrait scholarship 'has been further and exhaustively to illuminate for us the portraiture of the monarchy and the court scene,'[90] as it is these kinds of portraits of that tend to have been painted by known artists. Indeed, the 1970 exhibition, *The Elizabethan Image,* curated by Strong and shown at Tate Britain, London, was almost entirely composed of images of the Queen and her courtiers, despite the fact that a large body of vernacular portraiture was produced during the Elizabethan period depicting images of the provincial non-elite. If we are to attempt to understand and appreciate sixteenth century visual culture in its entirety, then the portraits commissioned by these Elizabethans – many of which are still extant – must be considered part of the 'Elizabethan Image', alongside images of the London- and court-based elite. However, Strong's criteria for inclusion in his 1970 exhibition appears to have been guided primarily by aesthetic quality and thus - although he did include depictions of Elizabeth I by unknown artists alongside famous paintings by celebrated portraitists such as Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (*The Ditchley Portrait,* c. 1592)[91] - examples such as *The Darnley Portrait* (c. 1575, unknown artist)[92] exhibit the masterful artistic handling and treatment of the type that is far removed from the portraits painted by unknown native artists for members of the Elizabethan gentry, urban

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[90] Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics,* p. 4.

[91] NPG, accession no: 2561. For more on this portrait, see: Roy Strong, *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1969), pp. 104-5; *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530-1630*, ed. by Karen Hearn (London: Tate Gallery, 1995), pp. 89-90; Caroline Rae, 'Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, John de Critz, Robert Peake and William Larkin: A comparative study', in *Painting in Britain 1500-1630: Production, Influences and Patronage,* ed. by Tarnya Cooper, Aviva Burnstock, Maurice Howard and Edward Town (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 171-9.

[92] NPG, accession no: 2082. For more on this portrait, see: Strong, *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits,* pp. 102-103, 109-12; Roy Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), pp. 85-9; Tarnya Cooper, *Elizabeth I and Her People* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2014), p. 64.

elite, and middling sort.[93] Indeed, Strong contends that the painter of *The Darnley Portrait* was the Italian Federico Zuccari (c. 1540-1609),[94] whereas Cooper argues that 'while the artist is unrecorded, the sophisticated and swiftly rendered paint suggests a talented Continental painter, possibly from the Netherlands.'[95]

Thus, whilst our knowledge and understanding of the traditional portrait canon was much improved by Strong's work, it was not until a later generation of scholars began to examine the portraiture of the provincial non-elites, that an academic and curatorial appreciation for this kind of English and Welsh portraiture – the vernacular as opposed to the 'polite' - as important tools for historical and art-historical study began to develop. When Strong acknowledged in 2005 that 'a strong case remains for a broader survey of regional portraits',[96] Cooper and Tittler had in fact already begun to undertake this research. Cooper, in her 2001 doctoral thesis, examined an enormous number of portraits commissioned by provincial patrons of the gentry, urban elite, and middling sort for display in the domestic and civic spaces of England and Wales,[97] and has maintained and furthered this research interest over

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[93] This thesis follows Cooper in maintaining that whilst the Tudor urban elite cannot itself be described as a 'group, or class, acting with similar intentions or interests', the term serves a valuable purpose in describing 'all individuals who made successful livings selling goods or services in an urban environment'. See: Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, p. 65. This thesis also follows Cooper's definition of the 'middling sort' or 'middle elites' as being comprised of 'more modest households of merchants and professionals', whilst acknowledging Barry's claim that 'there is no simple way to define the middling sort.' See: Jonathan Barry, 'Introduction', in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics, 1550-1800*, ed. by Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 1-27 (p. 2). Certainly, this 'middling sort' of early modern people – and here, as with the urban elite, I consciously do not use the term class or group in order to avoid any comparisons with the modern meanings of the terms, which would be wholly inaccurate in the context of the sixteenth century – was subject to great flux, but it is possible to see two key attributes amongst this 'middling sort': they worked for their living and, whilst they might own property, they were not the inheritors of ancestral land. See: Jonathan Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism? Urban Association and the Middling Sort', in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics, 1550-1800*, ed. by Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 84-112 (pp. 91–92); Lindsey Cox, 'Pleasing 'the common sort exceedingly well': An interdisciplinary repositioning of the British Portrait Miniature c. 1520–1650' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Kent, 2018), pp. 8-15.
[94] Strong, *Gloriana*, pp. 85-9.
[95] Tarnya Cooper, *National Portrait Gallery: A Portrait of Britain* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2014), p. 51.
[96] Roy Strong, 'Forgotten Faces: Regional History and Regional Portraiture', *Historical Research,* 78.199 (2005), 43-57 (p. 43).
[97] Cooper, 'Memento mori'.

the course of her curatorial career.[98] In recent publications, for example, Cooper has focused on female non-elite patronage of Elizabethan portrait artists,[99] whilst Tittler has examined the commissioning and creation of early modern portraits in Oxfordshire,[100] Chester,[101] Gloucester,[102] Yorkshire,[103] and North Wales,[104] and has produced monographs discussing the networks of patronage that existed in urban and rural societies as well as focusing on the artists and craftsmen who undertook commissions for the provincial gentry, middling sort and urban elite.[105] This thesis will contribute to and further our existing knowledge and understanding of the ambitions and intentions of exactly these kinds of patrons and artists. The presentation, examination, and analysis of nine painted church portrait memorials commissioned for display in provincial towns and rural communities during the period c. 1585-c.1603 and executed in the late sixteenth century vernacular style, will further 'highlight the study of painting in England and Wales produced for audiences outside the court environment as a rich and intellectually profitable area of scholarship.'[106]

ii.   Sources and Methodology

This thesis utilises a selected body of works - nine painted memorial portraits on wooden panel that were displayed in parish churches across the south of England and Wales during the period c.1585-c.1603 – as its core source material. These nine paintings are late-

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[98] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*; Cooper, 'Visual Memory'; Tarnya Cooper, 'The Enchantment of the Familiar Face: Portraits as Domestic Objects in Elizabethan and Jacobean England', in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 157-178.

[99] Tarnya Cooper, 'Picturing the Agency of Widows: Female patronage among the gentry and the middling sort of Elizabethan England' in *Routledge Companion to Women, Sex, and Gender in the Early British Colonial World,* ed. by Kimberley Anne Coles and Eve Keller (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 104-119.

[100] Robert Tittler and Adrian Ailes, 'Arms Painting and the Life of Sir Henry Unton', *British Art Journal*, 20.3 (2019), 12-21.

[101] Robert Titter, 'Early Stuart Chester as a Centre for Regional Portraiture', *Urban History*, 41.1 (2014), 3-21.

[102] Robert Tittler, 'The 'Gloucester Benefactors' after Four Centuries', *The Antiquaries Journal*, 95 (2015), 305-24.

[103] Robert Tittler, 'Social Aspiration and the Malleability of Portraiture in Post-Reformation England: the Kaye Panels of Woodsome, Yorkshire, c. 1567', *Northern History*, 52.2 (2015), 182-199.

[104] Robert Tittler and Shaun Evans, 'Randle Holme the Elder and the Development of Portraiture in North Wales, c.1600-1630', *British Art Journal*, 16.2 (2015), 22–27.

[105] Robert Tittler, 'Rural Society and the Painters' Trade in Post-Reformation England', *Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture*, 28 (2017), 1-19; Robert Tittler, 'Painters' and Patrons' Circles in Provincial England'; Robert Tittler, 'Regional Portraiture and the Heraldic Connection'; Tittler, *Face of the City*; Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics.*

[106] Cooper, 'Memento Mori', p. 181-182.

Elizabethan examples of a much wider Tudor and Jacobean object type, the memorial portrait, which was recognised by Roy Strong in 1965 as 'as a phenomenon, and one which remains largely unexplored'.[107] Strong argued that the memorial portrait was a specific type of 'genre which enjoyed considerable vogue in Elizabethan and Jacobean England',[108] and, in presenting his analysis of one such portrait – the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton,* which is considered in Chapter Four of this thesis – he identified three more well known examples of this object type: the *Judde Memorial* (c. 1560),[109] *Sir Thomas Aston at the Deathbed of His Wife* (John Souch, c. 1635),[110] and the *Memorial of Lord Darnley* (Livinus de Vogelaare, 1567).[111]

Crucially, however, whilst all of these paintings are undoubtedly memorial portraits commemorating a deceased subject, the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* differs from the other three in that it most probably hung for a time in the church of All Saints', Faringdon (Oxfordshire). As such, Tittler has described the painting as a 'tomb portrait on a panel'.[112] The *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* is therefore part of a different sub-genre of memorial portraiture, one created for display in the church setting, and thus specifically a painted church memorial portrait. The intended public setting of the parish church, as is argued in Chapters Three-Six of this thesis, holds a crucial influence in the meaning and function of such paintings and would have been a key factor in their commissioning. It is of vital significance in any interpretation of these memorial objects, and thus in any attempt to deduce the possible intentions of their patrons and assess their potential individual approaches to mortality and salvation.

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[107] Roy Strong, 'Sir Henry Unton and his Portrait: An Elizabethan Memorial Picture and its History', *Archaeologia,* 99 (1965), 53-76 (p. 53).
[108] Ibid.
[109] Dulwich Picture Gallery, *The Judde Memorial,* <https://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/explore-the-collection/351-400/the-judde-memorial/> [Accessed 3 September 2020].
[110] Manchester Art Gallery, *Sir Thomas Aston at the Deathbed of his Wife,* <https://manchesterartgallery.org/collections/title/?mag-object-3461> [accessed 4 September 2020].
[111] Royal Collection Trust, *The Memorial of Lord Darnley,* <https://www.rct.uk/collection/401230/the-memorial-of-lord-darnley> [Accessed 4 September 2020].
[112] Robert Tittler, *Painting for a Living in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2022), p. 89. On the likeliness of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unon* having once been displayed in Faringdon church, please see Chater Four of this thesis. Also see: NPG, *The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton (c. 1558 - 1596),* <http://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/making-art-in-tudor-britain/case-studies/the-portrait-of-sirhenry-unton-c.-1558-1596.php> [Accessed 1 August 2019]; Tittler and Ailes, p. 16.

This sub-genre of Tudor and Jacobean commemorative portraiture – the painted wooden church portrait memorial - was first documented by Badham in a 2009 article for the *Journal of Church Monuments* and later in a 2015 article published in the *British Art Journal*.[113] Badham presents a survey of the known extant examples (as well as one which does not survive, the *Pylkington Altarpiece* at Rivington parish church, Yorkshire) of sixteenth and seventeenth century 'flat painted monuments on wood' commissioned for display in churches, whilst noting that 'the type continued into the early eighteenth century'.[114] In these two articles, Badham recognises and briefly explores the nine painted works considered in this thesis; she considers their function as memorials in the church setting, and discusses the iconographic trope of subjects kneeling in prayer within the broader context of late medieval and post-Reformation *memoria*. The type of memorial presented by Badham and, indeed, the nine late-Elizabethan examples selected for consideration in this thesis, 'has received virtually no scholarly attention; hence even finding examples…[presents]…a considerable challenge'.[115] This author is therefore indebted to Badham's work in presenting the first published survey of painted church portrait memorials on wooden panel. Indeed, despite extensive consultation of the major picture libraries for both portraits and the interiors of parish churches - the Heinz Archive (NPG), the Witt Library, and the Conway Library (both Courtauld Institute of Art) – and placing a research call in major journals (*Church Monuments*, *Ancient Monuments,* and *Art and Christianity Enquiry*), I have been unable to find any known further examples (either extant or lost) of this object type.

Jane Eade, during her investigations into the continued (yet rare) existence and function of triptychs during the post-Reformation period, has also recognised the nine memorial portraits considered in this thesis, and has analysed the images and iconography in the two that are extant in complete triptych form: *The Cornewall Family Memorial* in Burford and the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* in Besford.[116] Eade does not, however, include the *Memorial to Margery Downes* in Bishop's Frome amongst her various case studies of post-Reformation triptychs which are still *in situ* in parish churches: the object is not mentioned in

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[113] Badham, 'A painted canvas'; Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer'.
[114] Badham, 'A painted canvas', p. 99.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Eade, 'The Triptych Portrait in England, 1575-1646'; Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection'.

her two published articles on the topic,[117] and the painting is only briefly noted in her 2004 Master's thesis where it is described as 'a memorial' but, crucially, there is no mention of the surviving painted wooden panel perhaps having once been part of a larger triptych memorial.[118] This thesis is the first to make the suggestion, based on archival evidence as well as on the surviving visual and structural evidence as presented by the object itself, that the *Memorial to Margery Downes* was originally in triptych form; what survives today, it is suggested here and in greater detail in Chapter Five, would have once been the central panel of a triptych whose wings are now lost. Chapter Five of this thesis will also – in an extension to Eade's observations regarding the different possible meanings and functions of triptych portrait memorials in the post-Reformation parish church – consider the distinct possibility that the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family,* and the *Memorial to Margery Downes* may have contained an implicit appeal for intercessory prayer from parishioners in the post-Reformation Welsh Marches who were 'inwardly remaining' Roman Catholics or church papists.

Building on Badham's 'survey of flat painted monuments on wood',[119] and her exploration of how these objects functioned in the post-Reformation church setting, this thesis undertakes a detailed exploration of the nine late-Elizabethan examples as identified and presented by Badham, as well as – in an extension to her more general observations – the significance of their specific church settings, the possible intentions of their individual patrons, and who their intended viewers may have been. This author's selection of these nine works from the period c.1585-c.1603 is a deliberate choice: all nine paintings were commissioned during the late-Elizabethan phase of politics and religious reform. John Guy has famously argued that this period, which he refers to as Elizabeth's second reign, was one where 'physical and emotional strains were acute'.[120] Indeed an influential series of essays edited by Guy and published in 1995 presented the latter part of Elizabeth I's reign as 'the nasty nineties';[121] a time of political

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[117] Ibid.
[118] Eade, 'Triptych Portraits in England, 1575-1646', p. 23.
[119] Badham, 'A painted canvas', p. 99.
[120] John Guy, 'The 1590s: the second reign of Elizabeth I?', in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*: *Court and Culture in the Last Decade,* ed. by John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 1-19 (p. 1).
[121] Patrick Collinson, 'Ecclesiastical vitriol: religious satire in the 1590s and the invention of puritanism' in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*: *Court and Culture in the Last Decade,* ed. by John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 150-170 (p. 170); Guy, 'The 1590s: the second reign of Elizabeth I', p. 19.

and social claustrophobia, with the establishment 'increasingly beleaguered' by external and internal threats.[122] For Guy and many of the other contributors to this volume of essays, threats such as the continental wars of religion and the conflict in Ireland, the dangers presented by domestic non-conformity (from across the religious spectrum), the succession crisis, and various crises at court (most notably surrounding the deaths of Leicester in 1588 and Walsingham in 1590, and the rise and fall of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex), resulted in what has been characterised by some historians and literary scholars as a 'fin de siècle malaise', [123] with a certain 'coercive climate' permeating politics and the court, and thus, by extension, the government of the Elizabethan Church.[124]

In more recent years, historians such as Neil Younger, Susan Doran, and Janet Dickinson have questioned this 'second reign thesis';[125] arguing against the presentation of the late Elizabethan-period as one of 'decline and sterility', marred by resentment around high taxes and militia rates,[126] and dismantling the idea that the succession crisis was a threat confined to the post-1585 Elizabethan era: 'the problem mutated and evolved from 1558 till 1603'.[127] Nonetheless, there is no doubt that this this was a period fraught with difficulty for people at all levels of society and at every point along the religious spectrum. For not only were late-Elizabethans living with, and experiencing in their own individual ways, the disruption and fear that came from wars raging across continental Europe (perhaps most notably the war with Spain) and conflict and turmoil in Ireland, but they also had to contend with nationwide harvest failures over the periods 1586-1587 and 1597-1598, and the outbreaks of plague that marred the years 1591-1593.

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[122] Ibid, p. 18.
[123] Annaliese Connolly and Lisa Hopkins, 'Preface: The Long 1590s', *Early Modern Literary Studies,* Special Issue 16 (2007), 1-7 (p. 1) <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/si-16/foreword1.htm> [accessed 13 October 2024]. All of these threats are presented and assessed by Guy in: Guy, 'The 1590s: the second reign of Elizabeth I', pp. 1-19.
[124] Patrick Collinson, 'Bishop Richard Bancroft and the Succession', in *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England,* ed. by Susan Doran and Paulina Kewes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), pp. 92-111 (p. 93).
[125] Neil Younger, 'John Guy, Elizabeth: The Forgotten Years', *Spenser Review*, 47.1.8 (2017) <http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/spenseronline/review/item/47.1.8> [accessed 13 October 2024].
[126] Janet Dickinson and Neil Younger, 'Just How Nasty Were the 1590s?', *History Today*, 64.7 (2014), 10-16.
[127] Susan Doran and Paulina Kewes, 'Introduction: a historiographical perspective', in *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England,* ed. by Susan Doran and Paulina Kewes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), pp. 7-19 (p.7).

Furthermore, alongside the high taxes that accompanied wars on the continent and in Ireland (even if they were not, as Dickinson and Younger have noted, as high as those raised by Henry VIII in the 1540s),[128] as well as the exceptionally high mortality rates that resulted from the triple assault of war, hunger, and plague,[129] the late-Elizabethan laity also had to live with near-constant uncertainty regarding their future religious landscape and therefore their practical and spiritual routes to salvation. The list of threats was a long one: if any one of the Spanish naval assaults had been successful; if Elizabeth I's complex foreign policy and matrimonial prospects involving Catholic princes and powers had yielded different results; or if the various domestic and foreign Catholic (notably, Jesuit) conspiracies that occurred following the excommunication of the Queen had succeeded, then a reversion of England and Wales to Roman Catholicism would have been a very real possibility. Whilst this may have been the sincerest hope of the many Roman Catholics that lived in Elizabethan England and Wales and in exile on the Continent, for Elizabethan Protestants, this was a source of acute anxiety. As Blair Worden explains: 'Elizabethan Protestants feared that their faith, being the religion of the establishment but having too few roots beneath it, would fall with it if an invasion or rebellion succeeded or when the Queen should die'.[130] For those Elizabethans who remembered the back and forth in religious policy from Mary I to Elizabeth, and for those who had been told about this period by their parents and grand-parents, such a change in the religious landscape may have felt like a very real possibility: what has happened once can happen again.

It is possible that this political and spiritual uncertainty may have been a contributing factor in the choice of an impermanent medium – painted board - for some of the patrons of the nine memorial objects presented and analysed in this thesis. As discussed earlier in this chapter, particularly within the likely cold and damp environment of a medieval church, painted board would have been highly susceptible to damage whether from rot, worm, fire or through general neglect over time. Why then, would a patron commission a memorial in

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[128] Dickinson and Younger.

[129] Please see Chapter 1 of this thesis for further discussion of the mortality crises of the later Elizabethan period.

[130] Blair Worden, 'Afterword', in *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England*, ed. by Susan Doran, and Paulina Kewes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), pp. 295-303 (p. 301).

wood for display in their parish church, knowing, as is indicated in the upper inscription on the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More,* that their choice of medium meant that the object was far less likely to survive: 'our sides were never brasse, our strengthe not stones'?'[131] The answer, as suggested above, could be found within an insecurity over what the future religious landscape (and, indeed, the future parish church) might look like. For as is presented and explored in Chapter Two of this thesis, throughout the various phases of religious reform, changes in confessional regime were often accompanied by changes, adaptations, and renewals in the visual culture of commemoration within the ecclesiological setting. It is thus quite possible that a financially prudent late-Elizabethan patron living during this time of religious uncertainty would seek to commission a memorial – destined for display in the church setting - in a cheaper material such as wood as opposed to the more expensive brass or stone. This suggestion is borne out by Orlik's recent research into investment in churches during the post-Reformation period: she concludes that there was more investment during the reign of James I than during the reign of Elizabeth because 'as time passed, it became clear that the Protestant settlement was here to stay and this gave investors confidence for the long term'.[132]

Alongside their materiality - painted wooden panels - and their date of commissioning and creation (and despite huge variances in the scale, form, and content of these paintings), these nine memorials do share certain important features which root them to the late-sixteenth century phase of portrait painting and, more specifically, to the very middle of Tittler's 'malleable moment for English portraiture, c.1540-c.1640'.[133] These features, which account for the selection of these nine specific paintings for this study, include: their creation during the period c. 1585-c.1603; their use of flat, painted wooden panels as opposed to flat canvas or stone, or three-dimensional sculpted wood or stone;[134] their commemorative and

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[131] This quote is taken from the inscription at the top of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* in Adderbury parish church.

[132] Orlik, p. 293

[133] Robert Tittler, 'The malleable moment in English Portraiture, c. 1540-1640', in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe,* ed. by Catharine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 275-292.

[134] During the late-Elizabethan phase of portrait creation, wood was still the preferred medium for the artform in England and Wales; the use of canvas began in the 1590s and had become the norm by c. 1610. See: 'Tittler, 'The malleable moment in English Portraiture', p. 276, p. 278; Badham, 'A painted canvas', p. 91.

monumental purpose and function; their vernacular visual aesthetic, characterised by Cooper as 'flat, non-illusionistic and often reliant upon text or inscription';[135] their use of and reliance upon inscription to convey important messages;[136] their re-use or adaptation of traditional forms and/or images of veneration (such as the triptych form, the kneeling in prayer visual trope, and the iconography of death) for the post-Reformation church setting; [137] and, finally, their survival. This criteria for inclusion accordingly helps to explain why some of the late-Elizabethan examples of painted church portrait memorials as identified by Badham in 2009 and 2015 are excluded from this present study.[138] For example, this author's focus on memorial portraits in the church setting which employ the medium of flat wooden panels accounts for the exclusion of the *Memorial to John Hill* at Ullingswick (c.1590), which is a mural monument made of stone,[139] as well as the monuments to the Walsh family at Shelsley Walsh and Stockton-on-Teme (c.1590-1599, possibly by Melchior Salaboss),[140] which are three-dimensional tomb sculptures made of painted wood.

This thesis' focus on surviving memorial portraits displayed in the ecclesiological setting that were created during the period c.1585-c.1603 – in the middle of a transitional period for early modern portraiture - as well as its overarching aim to increase awareness of painted works in the corresponding late-Elizabethan vernacular idiom as important historical and art-historical sources, explains the exclusion of both the *Pilkington Family Memorial* at Rivington and the *St John Family Triptych* at Lydiard Tregoze from this study. The *Pilkington Family Memorial* dates to 1566 so although it is an Elizabethan commemorative object for the church setting, it predates the parameters of this study by roughly twenty years. In addition, the *Pilkington*

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[135] Cooper, 'Predestined Lives', p. 55.

[136] 'Tittler, 'The malleable moment', pp. 281-286.

[137] 'Tittler, 'The malleable moment', pp. 278-280; 'Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer'.

[138] 'Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer'; Badham, 'A painted canvas'.

[139] An image of the Hill memorial has been published by Badham. Please see: Badham, 'A painted canvas', p. 150. In the image caption, Badham describes this object as a 'painted wooden monument', however when this author paid a field visit to St Luke's church, Ullingswick, in 2019 to examine the Hill memorial, it was clear that it is in fact painted on stone. This note on materiality is corroborated by the Historic England listing for St Luke's, which describes the Hill memorial as 'painted on stone'. See: *Church of St Luke, Ullingswick,* <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1234909?section=official-list-entry> [accessed 10 October 2024].

[140] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* p. 204-3; Sally Badham, *Monument of the Month: Thomas Walsh (d. 1593) and Francis Walsh (d. 1596)* (2017)*,* <https://churchmonumentssociety.org/monument-of-the-month/thomas-walsh-d-1593-and-francis-walsh-d-1596> [accessed 18 December 2020]. For images of the wooden monuments at Shelsley Walsh and Stockton-on-Teme, see: Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* pp. 205-6.

Family Memorial is presumed lost,[141] thus precluding any close looking, formal analysis, or critical evaluation of the artwork as is required by this thesis which takes a material strand of enquiry as its primary avenue of investigation and research. The *St John Triptych* at Lydiard Tregoze similarly does not fit within the date parameters, nor does it correspond to the visual criteria for memorial portraits considered in this thesis: dating to 1615, this magnificent portrait triptych (or to use the most accurate term, polyptych) emerges from within a markedly different visual aesthetic to the nine Elizabethan paintings considered in this study. It sits at a different, later point along the journey 'from the rudely worked, two-dimensional vernacular to an emerging adaptation of the more refined, classically-based, and three-dimensional imagery of the continental Renaissance' that defines the evolution of portraiture (in both the domestic and church setting) over the period c. 1540 – c. 1640.[142]

For, visually, the St John Family triptych is much more in keeping with portraiture of the early Stuart period, from the 1610s onwards, than the nine late-Elizabethan works considered in this thesis: the triptych exhibits expert artistic handling and treatment, visible in both the fine brushwork and mimetic depiction of the subjects. As Eade notes of the Lydiard Tregoze memorial, 'the illusion of physical presence is palpable'.[143] This formal or polite – as opposed to vernacular – execution, has led to speculation that the artist may have been a highly trained and quite possibly Continental portraitist, with William Larkin and Marcus Gheerats the Younger both suggested as potential candidates.[144] The cost of employing such an artist would have undoubtedly been greater than that demanded by a local or journeyman heraldic artist or painter-stainer. It is possible, therefore, that alongside the influence of changing aesthetics and new fashions in portrait production, the accomplished (and costly) artistry of the St John Family triptych is also a reflection of a newfound confidence in the religious landscape of the nation and thus, in the acceptable appearance of the post-Reformation

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[141] The painting was scorched by a fire when on display at Holy Trinity church, Rivington, in 1834 and whilst two copies exist today (one in the church and one in Bishop Auckland Castle), the original cannot be located. See: Badham, 'A painted canvas', p. 111; Alexandra Walsham, *Generations: Age, Ancestry, and Memory in the English Reformations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 80.

[142] Tittler, 'The malleable moment', p. 276.

[143] Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 195. On the changing aesthetic quality of English portraiture – from the vernacular to the 'formal and polite' - as begins to be seen during the early-seventeenth century (and particularly from the 1610s), please see: Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics*, pp. 38-39; pp. 174-175.

[144] Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 193.

parish church, following the defeat of the Spanish threat, the accession of James I, and thus the end of anxieties surrounding the succession and Elizabeth I's foreign and domestic policies. The grandeur of the Lydiard Tregoze memorial could therefore in part be attributed to its early seventeenth century context of commissioning and creation, a period which Worden notes for the 'entrenchment of English Protestantism…related to the rising quality, standing and impact of the ministry, and to the growth of the Church of England's ecclesiological and theological assurance…[as well as]… the new security acquired by the Protestant ascendancy in 1603'.[145] Within the context of such relative security, it is possible that patrons of the parish church (including, as is suggested here, those who invested in the creation of monuments and memorials for the display in the ecclesiological setting) would be more inclined to commission a costly and ambitious cultural object such as the St John triptych than during the uncertainty of the late-Elizabethan period.

In returning to the nine painted memorial works that this thesis uses as its core source material, this author will now consider this study's pursuit of a material strand of enquiry which combines the analysis of nine painted wooden objects with the analysis of the material culture of the seven different parish churches that house or most likely once housed the nine memorials. In following this strand of enquiry, several field visits were first undertaken to the five parish churches where five of the paintings are still *in situ*,[146] as well as to the NPG (where the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* is now displayed) and the NMW, Cardiff, (where the three *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* are now displayed). Field visits were also made to Faringdon parish church (where the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* was probably – as Chapter Four explains - originally displayed), St Donat's parish church (where the three *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* were originally displayed), and St Donat's Castle (where the Stradling family lived). I returned to these key locations, central to the lives of the nine paintings and their patrons, several times over the course of my doctoral studies to study and photograph the painted church portrait memorials, as well as to examine other relevant memorials, monuments, and

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[145] Worden, 'Afterword', p. 301.

[146] These are: the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* at St Peter's Besford, the *Memorial to Margery Downes* at St Mary the Virgin Bishop's Frome, the *Cornewall Family Memorial* at St Mary's Burford, the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* at St Mary's Adderbury, and the *Memorial to William Smart* at St Mary-le-Tower Ipswich. I am grateful to the CDP scheme, the AHRC, the NPG, and Swansea University for providing the funding which allowed me to undertake fieldwork over the course of my doctoral studies.

decorative schemes. I also met with several Vicars, Church Wardens, and other parishioners, who kindly shared their valuable knowledge and insight.

The importance of fieldwork to this thesis – as a study which places patron intention at the heart of its investigations into late sixteenth century attitudes to mortality and salvation, and which uses a selection of objects that have 'received virtually no scholarly attention' as its core source material - cannot be overstated.[147] Unlike many examples of sixteenth century English and Welsh royal and noble portraiture which are displayed in the picture galleries and museums of England and Wales, as well as in various domestic settings which are now in the public domain (such as National Trust and England Heritage properties), seven of the nine late-Elizabethan memorial paintings selected for study in this thesis do not feature on online collections databases or institutional websites and, despite images of some of the paintings being published in select works by Badham,[148] Eade,[149] Tittler,[150] and Goodall,[151] it can be difficult to appreciate or even see many formal elements of an artwork from a small image in a book or an image on a website or blog. Whilst it is much easier to do so when a good quality, high resolution image is available online, as per the images of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* (now at the NMW) and the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* (now at the NPG) and the user can enlarge and zoom into specific details, it is still very difficult – if not impossible – to appreciate the size of an object: it is essential, in the vast majority of cases, to see it in the flesh.

For example, it would be impossible to truly grasp the enormous size and scale of the *Cornewall Family Memorial* without visiting the church of St Mary's Burford to see the

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[147] Badham, 'A painted canvas', p. 99.

[148] Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer', pp. 67-70. Images of *The Memorial to William Smart, The Memorial to Thomas and Mary More, The Memorial to Margery Downes,* and a detail of Anne Cornewall kneeling in prayer from *The Cornewall Family Memorial* are published here.

[149] Eade, 'The Triptych Portrait in England, 1575-1646', p. 6, p. 8. Images of the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* and a black and white image of the *Cornewall Family Memorial* are published here.

[150] Robert Tittler, *Face of the City,* p. 25, p. 147. A detail of the subject kneeling in prayer from *The Memorial to William Smart* is published here, along with a transcription of the inscription. Tittler has also published an image of Panel 3 of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* (prior to the conservation treatment that took place at the NMW)*,* which depicts the patron Edward Stradling and his wife Agnes. See: Tittler, 'The malleable moment', p, 279.

[151] John Goodall, *Parish Church Treasures: The Nation's Greatest Art Collection* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 135. An image of *The Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* is published here.

painting *in situ*, and witnessing how it dominates the chancel: the patron, Thomas Cornewall, clearly wished for his commission – complete with its depictions of apostles and saints, and scenes of the nativity, crucifixion, resurrection, and Last Judgement, as well as the *transi* imagery in the lowermost panel – to be seen by every visitor to the church. Similarly, without visiting the church of St-Mary-le-Tower in Ipswich to view the *Memorial to William Smart,* it would be hard to appreciate the relatively small size of this panel painting and thus to fully grasp the significance of the composition. As is explored in greater detail in Chapter Three of this thesis, the large cartouche framed inscription is at the centre of the *Memorial to William Smart*; it dominates the painting, and therefore highlights the post-Reformation use of text, complemented by imagery, to proclaim both the charitable impulses of the subject and the patron's surety in the Election of the subject.

Fieldwork has enabled this author to consider not just the formal elements of the nine paintings selected for study – the use of colour, line, shape, pattern, composition, and size – but also their materiality and use of iconography, as well as, crucially, the significance and nuances of the church settings that these works are (or were) displayed in. Context creates meaning, and the way that these nine memorial objects interact with other examples of post-Reformation and late medieval *memoria* housed in the same ecclesiological spaces, as well as their positioning within their individual church settings, can be revealing of their possible intended and realised functions during the late-Elizabethan period. At St Peter's Besford, for example, it is still possible to see the alabaster tomb of Richard Harewell (d. 1576, aged 15), which lies along the south chancel wall. Richard was the brother of Edmund Harewell III, patron of the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family*, which was originally displayed opposite this alabaster tomb (on the north wall of the chancel, at the site of the former Easter Sepulchre) before it was relocated to the south aisle in the mid-nineteenth century.[152] It is clear, when standing in Besford church, that Edmund Harewell's placing of the painted memorial to his young child directly opposite the tomb of his brother - who also died in childhood - was a deliberate and powerful choice. The chancel at St Peter's church is small and narrow, and any visitor standing in the space would have been surrounded by two large

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[152] John Humphreys, 'Monumental Effigies in the Churches of Worcestershire', *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society,* 37 (1911), 27-57 (p. 43).

child memorials on either side of them: it would be impossible not to feel the immense grief of the Harewell family at these tragic losses of young life, coupled – in part by virtue of the positioning of the two memorials next to the altar - with the hope and expectation of eternal heavenly reward: 'that living I may love my lorde / That dying I may serve him still'.[153]

Furthermore, fieldwork can lead to discoveries and observations which could only be made upon the examination of material evidence *in situ*. For example, this author only became aware of the continued existence of what appears to be an early seventeenth century stone monumental slab to the memory of William and Alice Smart (the respective subject and, as suggested in Chapter Three of this thesis, patron of the painted *Memorial to William Smart*) during a visit to St-Mary-le-Tower church, Ipswich: there is no pictorial evidence of the object surviving online nor is it referenced in any publication that I have consulted during my doctoral studies. As is discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, the survival of this stone memorial slab *in situ* in the church of St-Mary-le-Tower, alongside the painted memorial on wooden panel, strongly suggests that Smart was buried in the church and that the extant painted *memoria* thus held an implied monumental function in indicating his burial place. In a similar vein of discovery and observation, it is only through visiting St Donat's church and castle in the Vale of Glamorgan that one can see and appreciate how interconnected the two buildings are. As discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis, the ruins of a staircase indicate that there would have once been a private route from the castle directly down into the churchyard; the living inhabitants of St Donat's castle resided just a staircase away from where their deceased forebears were buried. This adds a further layer of geographic intimacy to Edward Stradling's decision to commission the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* for display in the church where his ancestors were buried and where he would, after his own death, 'KEEPE THEM BODELY COMPANY IN THIS SEALFE SAME PLACE'.[154]

Whilst field-based research and close looking at objects within the churches and other sites connected to the patrons of *memoria* considered in this thesis has therefore been central to this study's research methods, wider portrait and other object-based research has also

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[153] This quote is taken from the inscription in the centre of the dexter wing of the triptych *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family.*

[154] This quote is taken from the inscription at the bottom of Panel 3 of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels.*

enabled new suggestions and conclusions to be made. Chapter Four of this thesis, for example, argues that the Oxfordshire-based portraitist known as Sampson Strong may have been the author of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* in Adderbury. A combination of close-looking and the formal analysis of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* alongside the various surviving paintings that can be both confidently and probably attributed to Strong have enabled this new suggestion of authorship to be made, and for the identification of what may be Strong's earliest known portrait to be suggested. As is also presented and assessed in Chapter Four, the analysis of Dorothy Unton's numerous cultural commissions in conjunction with her Protestant leanings (as evidenced in her will) has led to this author's reading of the *Portrait of Sir Henry* as a powerful visual representation of the widow Unton's confidence in her husband's Election. An innovative narrative visual form is used to announce her pious pride in the life of her husband and in her surety of his salvation. Chapter Four similarly assesses the portrait of Henry Unton as young man (c. 1586) in combination with his surviving correspondence to flesh out the character of the subject of the memorial painting: it is suggested that Unton lived a life of social ascendance and took pride in his familial and social connections with some of the leading figures of religious reform.

Thus the primary material strand of enquiry pursued throughout this thesis has been complemented, as far as the survival and existence of documentation allows, by archival and textual research. Surviving sources from national and local archives, as well as from printed primary sources, have been consulted to provide context and meaning to the possible intentions of the seven patrons of these nine paintings. The wills of every patron (where they exist) have been consulted, along with wills left by other members of their families, in addition

to other primary biographical sources such as letters).[155] This has allowed suggestions to be made regarding the religious leanings of this snapshot of the late-Elizabethan laity and their various social connections and circles, and conclusions to be drawn regarding their individual approaches to mortality and salvation during a time of acute political turbulence and theological complexity. For example, this study is the first to analyse the three painted *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* and other extant Stradling family *memoria* at St Donat's church in combination with the cache of letters left by both Edward Stradling, patron of the paintings, and his father Thomas Stradling, as well as the genealogical treatise authored by Edward, and the wills of various Stradling family members.[156] As Chapter Six of this thesis shows, the dual examination of material and textual evidence has shone new light on the possible motivations of this sixteenth century patron of *memoria* for the Welsh parish church setting, in terms of both his numerous cultural commissions and – in direct contrast to the

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[155] A note on the use (or otherwise) of Churchwardens' Accounts in this thesis: despite this author's hopes, there are no surviving Elizabethan Churchwardens' Accounts for the seven parish churches considered in this thesis. According to the *Churchwardens' Account Database,* pre-1850 accounts survive as follows: for the years 1742-1850 at St Peter's church (Besford); the years 1756-1826 at St Mary's church (Burford); the years 1616-1850 at St-Mary-le-Tower church (Ipswich); and the years 1610-1850 at St Mary's church (Adderbury). There are no surviving pre-1850 accounts for St Mary the Virgin church (Bishop's Frome); All Saints' church (Faringdon); St Donat's church (St Donat's). Although disappointing, this is not wholly unsurprising. The survival rates for Churchwarden's Accounts from the post-Reformation and wider early modern period are extremely variable; whilst some churches have extensive extant accounts – perhaps the most famous survivals being at Morebath parish church, thanks in part to Eamon Duffy's work – others have very little, if any, extant. The *Churchwardens' Accounts Database*, complied and administered by Warwick University, went live in 2019, and it is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in using these documents for research purposes. The project has catalogued (and in some cases reproduced) all of the surviving pre-1850 Churchwardens' Accounts from every parish in England and Wales. See: *Churchwardens' Accounts Database*, <http://warwick.ac.uk/cwad> [accessed February 2024]. On the survival and various uses of Churchwardens' Accounts, see: *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens' Accounts, c.1500-c.1800*, ed. by Valerie Hitchman and Andrew Foster (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars' Publishing, 2015).

[156] For Thomas Stradling's letters, see: London, The National Archives, SP 12 17 19, 20, and 21. This author has been unable to locate Edward Stradling's original letters in manuscript form; it is possible that they are no longer extant or that they are lost. The letters are printed in: *Stradling Correspondence: a series of letters written in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, with notices of the family of Stradling of St. Donat's Castle, Co. Glamorgan*, ed. by John Traherne (London: Longman, 1840). The whereabouts of Stradling's original genealogical manuscript is also unknown, if indeed it still survives at all. It was at one point believed that the original manuscript is 'Cardiff Central Library 4.943', however Griffiths has shown that this must in fact be a later copy, dating from sometime between 1573 and 1582. See: Ralph Griffiths, 'The Rise of the Stradlings of St. Donat's', *Morgannwg,* 7 (1963), 15-47 (pp. 15-16). Also see: Susan M. Johns, *Gender, Nation and Conquest in the High Middle Ages: Nest of Deheubarth* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 142. For the 1578 English language edition of Edward's work as compiled by the Welsh antiquary Rice Merrick, see: Edward Stradling, 'Winning of the Lordship of Glamorgan' in Rice Merrick, *Morganiae Archaiographica*, ed. by Brian Li James (Barry Island: South Wales Record Society, 1983), pp. 150-164. The various Stradling family wills consulted by this author are all at the National Archives, Kew. Please see Bibliography One: Unprinted Primary Sources for further details.

fervent Roman Catholicism of his father and siblings - the image he was carefully constructing as a conformist member of late-Elizabethan society.

iii.   Thesis Structure

As previously outlined, this thesis pursues three overarching research questions. Firstly, to what extent do the nine works presented and examined in this thesis indicate the existence of a wide-ranging spectrum of religious identity, and varied approaches to mortality and salvation, amongst lay patrons of painted memorial portraits on wooden board for the church setting during the period c.1585-c.1603? Secondly, how and to what extent did the visual culture of commemoration within the late-Elizabethan parish church setting change as a result of and in response to Protestant reform, with specific reference to these nine painted church portrait memorials on panel? Finally, to what extent was religious reform a driver for creative innovation in the commissioning and creating of memorial forms and imagery for the parish church setting during the later decades of the Elizabethan period? As an historical study rooted in material culture as its key source material, this thesis is structured as a series of object-focused case studies, preceded by two contextual chapters.

In Chapter One, the momentous changes in soteriological teaching and belief wrought by the Reformation in England and Wales are documented and analysed. The focus throughout this chapter is on the abolishment of the purgatorial imperative and the negation of the power of intercession, as well as the establishment of a predestinate understanding of salvation by the Reformers. This chapter is primarily concerned with two key questions. Firstly: to what extent did changes in the doctrine relating to purgatory and the instigation of predestination lead to debate and disagreement amongst the Reformers? Secondly: how far do wills of the laity of the period c.1585-c.1603 indicate an acceptance of Reformation soteriology at the lay level? Whilst Chapter One considers textual material – the writings of the Reformers, and the written wills of the lay populace - Chapter Two moves into the presentation and analysis of late-medieval and post-Reformation material culture, specifically the development of the use of portraiture as part of the visual culture of memorialisation and commemoration within the pre- and post-Reformation ecclesiological space. Chapter Two presents and assesses

examples of the destruction, renewal, and adaption of visual *memoria* that accompanied the process of religious reform in English and Welsh churches, with a focus on figurative, and thus often effigial, representation: how did memorial forms and imagery within the parish church setting change and adapt to the pressures of religious reform? What could remain? What changed? This chapter also considers sixteenth and early seventeenth century portraiture of the sixteenth century *memento mori* and civic type, commissioned for display in the domestic and civic setting, and lays the foundation for how this thesis will contribute to the existing state of research; this author will explain how the nine late-Elizabethan memorial objects selected for presentation and analysis in this thesis sit at the intersection between church monuments and portraits of the *memento mori* and civic type.

Chapter Three is the beginning of the case studies, where nine selected late-Elizabethan painted church portrait memorials are presented and analysed. Through a series of individual examinations into the early lives of these objects – the circumstances, intentions, and beliefs behind their commission, production, and eventual transmission to their various display locations - the evolving and innovative way that seven late-Elizabethan patrons utilised the medium of painted portraiture on wooden panel to commemorate themselves and their loved ones within the sacred space of the parish church will be illuminated. The social and spiritual meanings, functions, and purposes of these objects will be interrogated, and the ways in which their patrons may have determined the visual and textual content of the objects will be considered. This mode of enquiry is informed by Igor Kopytoff's influential body of theory around the social life of things and the cultural biography of objects.[157] Kopytoff contends that similar questions can be asked about objects (or things) as about people and that, in asking these questions, our understanding of society (whether historic or contemporary) can be improved: 'biographies of things can make salient what might otherwise be obscured'.[158] This thesis, in placing objects at the heart of its investigations into late sixteenth century approaches to mortality, salvation, and transience, therefore follows

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[157] Igor Kopytoff, 'The cultural biography of things', in *The Social Lives of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 64-91.
[158] Kopytoff, p. 67.

Kopytoff and more recent scholars of early modern material culture in proceeding 'from the assumption that human and object histories are inextricably intertwined'.[159]

The approach taken in Chapters Three-Six especially – with their focus on questions of patronage, possible artist, and the possible meaning and function of the nine selected memorials considered in this thesis (including who the intended viewers might have been) – is informed by Kopytoff's concept of object biography, with these core chapters concentrating on the analysis of the early lives of the objects in question. In the Conclusion to this thesis, this author will consider the later and possible future life-histories of painted wooden memorial panels in churches: the implications of their display locations (whether still in churches or now in museums), as well as potential risks to their survival, and preventative strategies that may be taken to minimise these risks. Beginning with the *Memorial to William Smart* in Ipswich (Chapter Three), this thesis works its way west across England, with Chapter Four focusing on the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* in Faringdon and the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* in Adderbury (both Oxfordshire). Chapter Five considers the cluster of portrait memorials in the Welsh Marches (the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* in Besford*, the *Memorial to Margery Downes* in Bishop's Frome, and the *Cornewall Family Triptych* in Burford), and finally Chapter Six assesses the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* in St Donat's, Glamorgan, Wales.

Each of these case studies chapters contains close-readings of the painted wooden objects themselves - their iconography and accompanying textual elements – as well as consideration of the local and biographical context in which they were commissioned and created, in order to assess the possible intentions of their patrons. These chapters consider what can be gleaned about the religious orientation of the sitter or patron from the visual evidence presented in these nine painted church portrait memorials and asks: what can be deduced about the role of the patron in commissioning these memorials from artists and artisans? In this way, the evidence from these nine objects will add to and progress the ongoing discussion of the effects of Reformation soteriology on late-Elizabethan lay belief and memorial practice,

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[159] Alexandra Walsham, 'Recycling the Sacred: Material Culture and Cultural Memory after the English Reformation', *Church History,* 86.4 (2017), 1121-1154 (p. 1124). Also see: Hamling and Richardson, *Everyday Objects.*

as well as on the visual and material culture of memorialisation and commemoration in late sixteenth century English and Welsh parish churches. As such, Chapters Three-Six will consider three further key questions: what is significant about the parish church setting for these objects; who were the intended viewers of these memorial objects; and how does the parish church setting influence the meaning and function of these objects?

Chapter One - Reforming Death: Purgatory, Predestination, and Lay responses to a changing Soteriology

    i.   Spaces and places of the afterlife

This thesis contributes to the study of material culture and specifically the visual culture of commemoration within English and Welsh parish churches during the post-Reformation period with a focus on the last twenty years of Elizabeth's reign. However, before discussing the ways in which nine selected painted church portrait memorials can help us to understand the development of attitudes and coping strategies regarding mortality, salvation, and transience amongst the patrons of late sixteenth century visual *memoria* for the ecclesiological space, it is important to delineate the overarching theological context of the period: what were the doctrinal changes that impacted how the visual was used for church-based commemoration and memorialisation during the post-Reformation period? Initially, therefore, this chapter will consider the development of Reformed soteriology in sixteenth century England and Wales, with an initial focus on the disavowal of purgatory and, accordingly, the repudiation of the power of intercession. This chapter will then consider the introduction of a predestinate understanding of salvation, and to what extent this was accepted or challenged by the religious authorities of England and Wales: evidence from the full spectrum of the religious hierarchy will be taken into account here, from the writings of bishops to sermons given by clerics and preachers such as William Perkins and an early-career Samuel Harsnett.

The abandonment of the doctrine of purgatory affected nearly all aspects of late-sixteenth century religious and spiritual life. As Gordon and Marshall note: 'it would be difficult to overstate the importance in terms of formal theology, liturgy, ecclesiastical structures and ritual practice of the abrogation of Purgatory and the repudiation of any form of intercession for the dead.'[1] As will be discussed in this chapter, however, the introduction of these

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[1] Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall, 'Introduction: placing the dead in late medieval and early modern Europe', in *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 1-16 (pp. 9-10).

momentous changes to soteriological teaching and practice was far from a smooth process. By focusing on why and, crucially, how, the belief in purgatory came to be repudiated and replaced by a predestinate understanding of salvation, this chapter will address the complications and nuances involved in the adoption of soteriological reform during the Tudor period: to what extent did changes in the doctrine relating to purgatory and the instigation of predestination lead to debate and disagreement amongst the Reformers?

Any society, of course, is comprised of individuals with their own lived experiences and herein lies the challenge to the historian. Each person, over the course of their lifetime, will experience mortality (both their own and that of their loved ones) and approach the concept of salvation in different ways, and it is clear that there were varying opinions, approaches, and levels of adherence amongst all sections of sixteenth century English and Welsh society and that, furthermore, the personal and individual experience of transience was lived within a soteriological system that was subject to immense change as a result of the Reformation. It is not difficult to imagine how spiritually and emotionally difficult this must have been for the laity: the whole system of beliefs and practices that had helped to navigate entirely natural and enduring human fears and anxieties around morality, salvation, and transience was, during the post-Reformation period, entirely upended. The final part of this chapter will therefore use wills and other testamentary evidence to begin to consider the lay response to these profound and momentous changes in soteriology during the late-Elizabethan phase of religious reform through its pursuit of the following research question: how far do wills from the period c.1585-c.1603 indicate an acceptance of Reformation soteriology at the lay level? This will help to situate the discussion and analysis of nine late-Elizabethan painted church portrait memorials within the wider overarching context of lay belief and commemorative practice in late sixteenth century England and Wales.

a) Purgatory

One of the most momentous changes relating to mortality and salvation effected by the Reformation was the repudiation of the doctrine of purgatory. The late medieval church held the existence of purgatory at the core of its soteriological teachings, and belief in the doctrine

had been an enormous part of the Christian experience for centuries prior to the Reformation. Ideas about a temporary dwelling space for post-mortem souls that were tainted with venial sin, and the intercessory power of the living on behalf of these souls, started to develop in the eleventh century; the noun *purgatorium* was first used in the twelfth century, most likely at some point between 1170 and 1180, and the doctrine was affirmed by Pope Innocent IV at the Second Council of Lyons in 1274.[2] As Marshall explains, the late medieval Christian afterlife could be understood in geographical terms as a 'spiritual map of the hereafter,' comprising of five distinct places: heaven, hell, purgatory, *limbus patrum* (for the unbaptised righteous who had lived before Christ), and *limbus infantium* (for babies who died before baptism).[3] By the eve of the Reformation, the existence of purgatory was well rooted in Christian consciousness, devotional practices, and institutions: the founding of chantries; the saying and singing of masses for the dead; bequests to the parish church, the poor, and the sick; and the commissioning of church monuments and memorials, for example, all occurred in response to the common acceptance that, after death, the vast majority of souls (with the exception of those who died in a state of grace such as the saints and martyrs) would spend time in purgatory to be purged of sin before ascending to heaven.[4]

Unlike heaven or hell, which were permanent abodes, purgatory was a temporary place and, as a result, it became 'the most central part of the spiritual landscape.'[5] The length of a soul's stay in purgatory was influenced by the kind of life the person led whilst living, and, after death, the intercessory actions of the living via the Saints on behalf of the deceased. The

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[2] Jacques Le Goff, *La Naissance du Purgatoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), pp. 435-36; R. W. Southern, 'Between Heaven and Hell', *Times Literary Supplement* (18 June 1982), pp. 651-2.
[3] Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 188.
[4] The corpus of scholarly literature regarding belief in purgatory and the effect of this belief on the relationship between the living and the dead in England and Wales during the late medieval period is unsurprisingly enormous. Key works include: Clive Burgess, '"A fond thing vainly invented": an essay on Purgatory and Pious Motive in later medieval England', in *Parish, Church and People: Local Studies in Lay Religion, 1350-1750*, ed. by S. J. Wright (London: Hutchinson, 1988), pp. 56-84; Christian Steer, '"For quicke and deade memories masses': Merchant Piety in late medieval London', *Medieval Merchants and Money: Essays in Honour of James L. Bolton,* ed. by Martin Allen and Matthew Davies (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2016), pp. 71-90; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-c.1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), chaps. 9-10; Clive Burgess and Beat Kümin, 'Penitential Bequests and Parish Regimes in Late Medieval England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 44 (1993), 610-30; Clive Burgess, 'By Quick and by Dead: Wills and Pious Provision in Late Medieval Bristol', *English Historical Review,* 102.405 (1987), 837-857.
[5] *Death in England: An Illustrated History*, ed. by Claire Gittings and Peter Jupp (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 109.

transitory nature of purgatory therefore enabled a sense of agency over one's own afterlife, or the afterlife of loved ones. As Duffy notes:

> The whole structure of mortuary provision of Masses, alms, pilgrimage, and the adornment of churches and images, which to a greater or lesser degree characterized almost all the wills of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century English men and women, was raised on the belief that such largesse would hasten the soul's passage through purgatory.[6]

In theory, then, one would expect the Reformed position and the gradual acceptance of the non-existence of purgatory to lead to the disappearance of this 'mortuary provision' and 'largesse' amongst the laity. Later in this chapter, testamentary evidence from select English and Welsh dioceses will be discussed and assessed in order to see whether or not this was the case, and to what extent a variance in personal interpretation and piety can be observed.

This chapter, however, is principally concerned with charting why, how, and when the belief in purgatory was eliminated from the teachings of the established church in England and Wales. Whilst Martin Luther's 95 theses of 1517 criticised misconceptions of and papal and clerical abuses related to the doctrine of purgatory, by 1530, he had written his *Recantation of Purgatory,* in which he explicitly rejected the theological validity of the doctrine, arguing that it did not have any scriptural authority: 'there was no purgatory in the Old Testament, nor in the New Testament at the time of the apostles, nor long thereafter.'[7] For Luther, therefore, 'there was no bigger lie on earth than purgatory.'[8] In England and Wales, purgatory was attacked in several influential texts: Simon Fish's *A Supplicacyon for the Beggers* (published in 1528-9), William Tyndale's *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (published in 1528), and John Frith's *A Disputacion of Purgatorye* (published in 1531) all rejected the existence of purgatory primarily because it ran contrary to the doctrine of justification and salvation *sola fide,* as exemplified through the teachings of Paul and Augustine's later

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[6] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 338.

[7] Cited in: Alan Kreider, *English Chantries: The Road to Dissolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 96.

[8] Kreider, p. 96

theology of Grace.[9] For if the soul can only be saved through faith granted by divine grace, then purgatory is an irrelevance: 'the blood of Christ is the only satisfaction, expiation, and cleansing for the sins of the believers.'[10]

Secondly, as there is no mention of purgatory in the Bible, belief in its existence was incompatible with the principle of *sola scriptura* – theological truth being found in holy scripture alone - which would come to define Reformation thinking and practice. As Fish claimed of the doctrine in his *Supplicacyon,* 'there is not one word spoken of hit is al holy scripture.'[11] Furthermore, like Luther, these early English Reformers railed against the systematic usage of the doctrine to bolster the clerical coffers. Fish, Tyndale, and Frith, as well as other like-minded early evangelicals such as Hugh Latimer, John Barlow, and Thomas Cranmer believed that the late medieval church's offer of intercessory action as a coping strategy was, essentially, a deception designed to earn money through the exploitation of lay anxieties about the afterlife.[12] Frith expresses this sentiment in blistering terms whilst ruminating on the concept of purgatorial fire:

> It hath alone melted more gold and silver, for our spiritualty's profit, out of poor men's purses, than all the goldsmiths' fires with in England, neither yet therewith can the raging heat be assuaged, but it melteth castles, hard stones, lands and tenements innumerable. For all your sects of religion, Monks, Friars, Canons, and Nuns, with other priests regular and secular, by this fire, multiplication and alchymy, have obtained their whole riches and pleasures, even the sweat of England. [13]

Tyndale concurs, arguing that the very purpose of the doctrine of purgatory was 'to purge thy purse, and to poll thee'.[14]

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[9] Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England 1480-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 37-8; Marshall, *Beliefs,* pp. 47-53; Cathy Shrank, 'Disputing purgatory in Henrician England: Dialogue and religious reform', in *Representing religious pluralisation in early modern Europe,* ed. by Andreas Hoefele and others (Berlin and London: Lit Verlag, 2007), pp. 45-61 (pp. 46-9).

[10] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* trans. by H. Beveridge (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1989), p. 415.

[11] Simon Fish, 'A Supplicacyon for the Beggers', ed. by Edward Barber (Southgate: American Theological Society, 1871), p. 10.

[12] Marshall, *Beliefs,* pp. 47-53; Houlbrooke, pp. 37-8; Shrank, pp. 47-9.

[13] John Frith, 'Answer Unto Sir Thomas More', in *The Works of the English Reformers: William Tyndale and John Frith*, ed. by Thomas Russell (London: Printed for Ebenezer Palmer, 1831), pp. 146-93 (p. 183).

[14] William Tyndale, *Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures,* ed. by H. Walter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1848), p. 318.

Despite the doubt in and, ultimately, the rejection of the doctrine by the early English Reformers, the concept of purgatory was still officially upheld during the earlier part of the Henrician period, and particularly during the 1520s. Indeed the King himself, in his *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* of 1521, defended the role of papal authority and the selling of indulgences as part of the continued belief in the existence of purgatory.[15] The Bishop of Rochester, John Fisher, similarly publicly defended the doctrine in his 1523 dialogue against Luther, *Assertionis Lutheranae Confutatio,* as well as in the first of his 1526 *Two Fruytfull Sermons*.[16] In these texts, and indeed in other sermons of the 1520s, Fisher argued that the veracity of purgatory was upheld through a variety of different, yet all equally valid, authorities: in contrast to the *sola fide* ethos of Luther and, indeed, the early English Reformers discussed above, Fisher believed that the holy truth of the purgatorial imperative could be observed in the pronouncements of those touched by the Holy Spirit such as, for example, the patricians or early church fathers, and the Pope.[17]

During the 1520s and early 1530s, Thomas More launched lengthy and impassioned defences of the doctrine of purgatory, perhaps most clearly in his famous works of 1529: the *Supplication of Souls* and *The Dialogue Concerning Heresies,* both of which were written in response to, primarily, Simon Fish's attack on purgatory in his *Supplicacyon for the Beggers*.[18] Both of these texts were published whilst More was still Lord Chancellor and a favourite of Henry VIII. Six years later, of course, on 6 July 1535, More would be executed for high treason on the orders of the King. It is likely that the public resignation, charge of treason, and eventual execution of this once immensely powerful and influential Roman Catholic politician and defender of the doctrine of purgatory lent credence to the arguments of the Reformers regarding mortality, salvation, and transience. This is despite the fact that there was still ongoing resistance to the removal of the purgatorial imperative amongst both the laity and traditional-leaning clergy.[19]

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[15] Kreider, p. 97; Peter Marshall, *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 83.
[16] Kreider, pp. 97-8.
[17] Richard Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 93-109.
[18] Shrank, pp. 45-61; Marshall, *Religious Identities,* pp. 83-4.
[19] Marshall, *Religious Identities*, pp. 46-55.

Indeed, it could be argued that the assault against the doctrine was a contributing factor to the Pilgrimage of Grace. For whilst there were many complex motives behind the 1536-7 uprising, spanning the economic, political, legal, and religious, some of the rebels' demands as outlined in both the Louth and Pontefract Manifestos relate directly to the debate over the veracity, or otherwise, of purgatory. The first article of the Pontefract Manifesto, for example, explicitly rejects 'the heresies' of, amongst others, Luther, William Tyndale, and Robert Barnes, all of whom attacked and refuted the theological validity of purgatory.[20] Furthermore, it is possible to link the rebels' opposition to the dissolving of the monasteries directly to their desire to uphold intercessory practices: with the dissolution of the religious houses and the expulsion of their inhabitants, so too would their charge to pray for the souls of myriad dead be dissolved. As Bishop Latimer wrote in a letter to Henry VIII in 1536: the 'founding of monasteries argued purgatory to be; so the putting of them down argueth it not to be'.[21]

By the mid-1530s, the assault against the doctrine of purgatory and associated intercessory practice was in full swing. The ordination of Thomas Cranmer – a fervent critic of the doctrine - as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533 ensured that his word carried great authority throughout the second half of the Henrician period and the entirety of Edward's reign: in theory, it helped to govern and maintain belief in England and Wales. The publication of Cranmer's cycle of homilies in 1547 and subsequent works attacking the concept of and continued belief in purgatory, is revealing of just how repugnant, abusive and, ultimately, blasphemous, the most senior Churchman in the Kingdom found the doctrine to be. In his 1547 *Homily of Good Works,* for example, Cranmer argued that purgatory was one of many:

> Papistical superstitions and abuses...which were so esteemed and abused the great prejudice of God's glory and commandments, that they were made most high and most holy thing, whereby to attain to the eternal life, or remission of sin.[22]

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[20] The full Pontefract Manifesto, or the *Pilgrim petition submitted to the King* is reproduced in: Michael Bush, *The Pilgrim's Complaint: A Study of Popular Thought in the Early Tudor North* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 268-70.

[21] Hugh Latimer, *Sermons and Remains,* ed. by G. E. Corrie (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1845), p. 249.

[22] Thomas Cranmer, *Miscellaneous Writings of Thomas Cranmer,* ed. by J. E. Cox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1846), p. 148.

This emotive language shows the extent to which Cranmer had come to view the doctrine of purgatory as a damaging and deceitful falsehood, an affront to the glory of God and the sacrifice of Christ. For as Calvin stated in 1536, in the eyes of the Reformers, the existence of purgatory 'makes void the cross of Christ',[23] so too did Cranmer, in his 1549 *Answer to the Fifteen Articles of the Rebels,* argue that it was an immense insult to Christ and his sacrifice 'to affirm that all have not full and perfect purgation by his blood, that die in his faith.'[24]

This momentous doctrinal change was espoused and promoted by the established Edwardian church and governing bodies of England and Wales. The Edwardian *Injunctions* of 1547, specifically Injunction 32, demanded that the *Homilies* be taught in parishes throughout England and Wales, thus promoting the view contained therein that purgatory was no more than a papal ruse. Further, both the 1549 and 1552 versions of the *Book of Common Prayer* refuted the existence of purgatory and, since the 1549 Act of Uniformity commanded that all churches adopt the *Book of Common Prayer,* this message would surely have begun to seep deep into lay consciousness. Perhaps the single biggest blow to the belief and confidence in the doctrine of purgatory, however, was the passing of the first Chantry Act under Henry VIII in 1545, soon followed by the Edwardian Chantry Act of 1547. The Henrician Chantry Act, which led to the appointment of chantry commissioners charged mainly with investigating the use of funds, laid the ground for the 1547 Chantry Act; much more extreme in its nature than the 1547 version, the Edwardian Act resulted in the dissolution of the existing chantries throughout England and Wales and prohibited their future creation.[25]

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[23] Calvin, p. 415.

[24] Cranmer, p. 181.

[25] For the classic interpretation of the dissolution of the chantries, please see: Kreider. For a more recent interpretation, please see: Peter Cunich, 'The Dissolution of the Chantries', in *The Reformation in English Towns 1500–1640*, ed. by Patrick Collinson and John Craig (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 159-174. For art-historical and archaeological interpretations of the role of the chantries in medieval England, including their origin and suppression, please see: *The medieval chantry in England*, ed. by Julian Luxford and John McNeill (Leeds: Maney Publishing and the British Archaeological Association, 2012); Simon Roffey, *The Medieval Chantry Chapel: an Archaeology* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007); H. M. Colvin, 'The origin of the chantries', *Journal of Medieval History*, 26 (2000), 163-173. On the regional effects of the suppression of the chantries, please see: Sylvia May Gill, 'Managing Change in the English Reformation: The 1548 Dissolution of the Chantries and Clergy of the Midland County Surveys' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 2010). For the role of chantries in London, specifically at St Paul's Cathedral, please see: Marie-Hélène Rousseau, *Saving the souls of medieval London: Perpetual chantries at St Paul's Cathedral, c. 1200-1800* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011). For more on patrons of the chantries, and specifically the important role of women in their formation and perpetuation, please see: Barbara Harris, *English Aristocratic Women and the Fabric of Piety, 1450-1550* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), pp. 51-70.

The chantries were an institution steeped in the concept of intercession, employing priests solely dedicated to prayer for the souls of the dead in chapels created specifically for this purpose; the term chantry refers to both the endowment of the mass said on behalf of the deceased and the physical space – normally a chapel – where this prayer would be said in front of a dedicated altar. The demolishment of this pillar of purgatorial practice was thus symbolic of the King- and state-endorsed dismantling of the doctrine of purgatory itself. Indeed, this assault against purgatory reached its zenith during the reign of Edward VI when an enormous number of pronouncements and Acts were passed to refute the existence of purgatory and, accordingly, prohibit intercessory practice. Under Protector Somerset, for example, within the first three years of Edward's reign, Parliament passed not only the 1547 Chantries Act, but also, as previously discussed, the first Edwardian Act Of Uniformity which mandated the use of the Book of Common Prayer. Thus, in parish churches throughout England and Wales, services were now conducted from a text from which any mention of intercessory power or other purgatorial practice and belief had been expunged.

It is unsurprising that the instigation of such momentous changes to religious teaching and practice led to fear, discontent and, ultimately, in some parts of England and Wales, rebellion. Just as his father contended with uprisings such as the Pilgrimage of Grace, so too did Edward face significant rebellion. The Prayer Book, or South Western, Rebellion of 1549 saw clergy and laity alike in Cornwall and Devon revolt against Protector Somerset's governance, including the mandated use of the Book of Common Prayer. Indeed, for many in the southwest of England, the removal of any type of formal intercession for the dead from this newly mandated religious text was of grave concern. As Brian Cummings notes, the rebels were explicit in their demand for the immediate reintroduction of intercessory practice: their articles called for the restoration of 'prayers for the souls in purgatory by name, 'as oure forefathers dyd''.[26] As with the Pilgrimage of Grace, however, the South Western Rebellion cannot be classed as an uprising solely against soteriological, or even religious change; as has been argued by Richard Hoyle, Michael Bush, and Ethan Shagan, political, legal, and various

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[26] *The Book of Common Prayer, The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. by Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. xxi.

societal structural factors and grievances were at play amongst the rebel factions of the 1530s and 1540s, alongside fears and anxieties surrounding new religious and soteriological doctrine.[27]

It is of course impossible to assess, on the basis of these multi-causal, multi-faceted rebellions, to what extent and how the laity conformed to the disavowal of purgatory and intercessory practice. Marshall instead suggests looking at smaller scale local uprisings such as the 'Seamer Rising' that took place in Scarborough during the summer of 1549: the demands of the rebels included the restoration of some monastic practices including the re-endowment of chantry lands and, perhaps most revealingly, the reinstatement of the bede-roll and thus, the return of systematic prayer for the dead at local parish level.[28] Haigh, Clive Burgess, and Beat Kümin suggest looking at even more localised moments of resistance, specifically instances throughout the late 1540s and 1550s whereby local clergy and parishioners tried to conceal chantry lands, chapels, and accompanying intercessory practices such as the lighting of obit lamps – symbolic and literal pillars of intercessory practice - from the Edwardian commissioners.[29] Whilst Tarnya Cooper, as an art and cultural historian, turns towards the evidence found in the material culture of the period (specifically portraiture) in assessing the effects of Reformed soteriology on the visual arts: a research strategy which this thesis, as a work of cultural history which follows a material strand of enquiry, will follow.[30]

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[27] On the causes behind rebellions in the north of England during the Henrician period, with a focus on the Pilgrimage of Grace, please see: Richard Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Politics of the 1530s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Michael Bush, 'The Tudor polity and the Pilgrimage of Grace', *Historical Research,* 80 (2007), 47-72. On the South Western Rebellion, the series of debates published in the *English Historical Review* by Ethan Shagan, Michael Bush, and George Bernard are of particular historiographical importance: Ethan Shagan, 'Protector Somerset and the 1549 rebellions: new sources and new perspectives', *English Historical Review*, 114 (1999), 34-63; Michael Bush, 'Protector Somerset and the 1549 rebellions: a post-revision questioned', *English Historical Review*, 115 (2000), 103-12; George Bernard, 'New perspectives or old complexities?', *English Historical Review*, 115 (2000), 113-20; Ethan Shagan, '"Popularity" and the 1549 rebellions revisited', *English Historical Review*, 115 (2000), 121-33.

[28] Marshall, *Beliefs,* p. 102.

[29] Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 172; Burgess and Kümin, pp. 129-30.

[30] Tarnya Cooper, 'Memento mori portraiture: Painting, Protestant Culture and the Patronage of middle elites in England and Wales 1540-1630' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 2001); Tarnya Cooper, "Frail Flesh, as in a Glass": The Portrait as an Immortal Presence in Early Modern England and Wales', in *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, ed. by Mary Rogers (Hampshire and Vermont: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 197-212; Tarnya Cooper 'Predestined Lives? Portraiture and Religious Belief in England and Wales, 1560-1620', in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007), pp. 49-62.

What is clear, however, is that resistance to these momentous changes to soteriological doctrine did occur during the early years of the Reformation in England and Wales: the refutation of purgatory and intercessory practice was not blindly accepted by the entirety of the English and Welsh populace, and nor was the adoption of a predestinate understating of salvation a *fait accompli.* Thus, the accession of Mary Tudor in July 1553 and the attempt to reinstate Roman Catholicism and, accordingly, its soteriological teachings and practices must have been of much comfort to laypeople who had resisted the evangelical-led change of the Edwardian period: providing validation that their continued adherence to the commemorative practices of the Old Faith had indeed helped the souls of their deceased loved ones move through purgatory and find salvation.[31]

Indeed, doctrinal pronouncements in support of purgatory and the necessity of good works for achieving salvation were issued by Bishop Gardiner in 1554,[32] whilst several sermons preached and - crucially in terms of their dissemination and reach – both printed and re-printed during Mary's reign implicitly and explicitly upheld purgatory and decried any notion of a predestinate approach to salvation. William Wizeman notes, for example, how the sermons of the Marian-installed Bishop of Lincoln, Thomas Watson, 'described the communion of saints and purgatory and prayer for the dead in the context of the Eucharist and the Mass', thus ensuring that mortality, salvation, and transience remained at the theological forefront of Mary I's Roman Catholic restoration.[33] In a similar vein, Bishop John Fisher's work of the 1520s, *Assertionis Lutheranae Confutatio*, which, as discussed earlier in this chapter, contained a vigorous defence of the doctrine of purgatory, was re-printed twice during the Marian period (in 1554 and 1556).[34] This was a clear statement of both the Marian

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[31] On the theology of Mary Tudor's church, see: William Wizeman, *The Theology and Spirituality of Mary Tudor's Church* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). On the Queen's personal religion, with a focus on the influence of Humanism on her faith, see: David Loades, 'Introduction: The Personal Religion of Mary I', in *The Church of Mary Tudor*, ed. by Eamon Duffy and David Loades (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 1-32.

[32] Ceri Law, 'The 1557 Visitation of The University of Cambridge', in *Catholic Renewal and Protestant Resistance in Marian England*, ed. by Elizabeth Evenden and Vivienne Westbrook (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 65-92 (p. 69).

[33] William Wizeman, 'The Theology and Spirituality of a Marian Bishop: Sermons of Thomas Watson', in *The Church of Mary Tudor*, ed. by Eamon Duffy and David Loades (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 258-280 (p. 276).

[34] William Wizeman, 'The Marian Counter-Reformation in Print', in *Catholic Renewal and Protestant Resistance in Marian England*, ed. by Elizabeth Evenden and Vivienne Westbrook (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 65-92 (p. 69).

regime's confidence in the veracity of pre-Reformation soteriology – indeed Felicity Heal names Fisher as the leader of the pre-Reformation Catholic theologians in England – as well as a glaring condemnation of Fisher's execution during the Henrician period.[35]

To what extent the Marian restoration of Roman Catholicism, and, accordingly, the restoration of purgatory and intercessory practice was successful has been the subject of much debate amongst historians. Marshall notes, for example, that despite the Marian authorities – in particular Bishops Gardiner and Bonner - promoting the cult of the Saints, the existence of purgatory, and prayer for the dead, there was now 'lukewarmness and parsimony where once there had been unquestioning devotion.'[36] Eamon Duffy comes to a similar conclusion, noting 'the surprising failure' of the Marian regime in re-establishing 'the cult of the dead on anything like its former footing', an outcome he attributes to the break in what had been, until the Reformation, a continuous chain of intercessory action.[37] Marshall argues that this 'surprising failure' can be witnessed in the wills of the Marian period: 'overall testamentary provision for intercession in Mary's reign never returned to pre-Reformation levels'.[38]

This does not mean, however, that the Marian period was inconsequential in terms of the development of the sixteenth century experience of transience. Far from it: the temporary restoration of Roman Catholicism under Mary I was a significant factor in the stalling of the Reformation in England and Wales and thus, in delaying the movement from the largely Lutheran-inspired reform under Henry VIII to the more radical, Swiss-inspired reform that had permeated the new theology and thus, soteriology, of the Edwardian period and which would come to characterise the Reformation under Elizabeth.[39] The execution and exile of leading Edwardian Reformers as well as the creation of a temporary Roman Catholic episcopate under Mary Tudor provided the context within which Elizabethan religious doctrine was formulated:

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[35] Felicity Heal, *Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 347.

[36] Marshall, *Beliefs,* p. 115.

[37] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* p. 495.

[38] Marshall, *Beliefs,* p. 117.

[39] See: Heal, pp. 305-347; Alec Ryrie, 'The Strange Death of Lutheran England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 53.1 (2002), 64-92; Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'The Church of England and International Protestantism, 1530-1570'*,* in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume I: Reformation and Identity, c.1520–1662,* ed. by Anthony Milton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 316-332.

when Elizabeth became Queen in 1558, she inherited a cross-confessional realm, as well as the ever-present threat of a (domestic or foreign-led) Roman Catholic restoration. Indeed, it is worth considering whether, if the outcome of the 1553 Succession Crisis had been different, the cross-confessional populace that existed towards the end of the sixteenth century might have been significantly more homogenous and therefore, whether the varying and diverse approaches towards mortality, salvation, and commemoration exhibited in the painted church portrait memorials presented and analysed in later chapters of this thesis might not have existed.

The accession of Elizabeth I brought a swift re-issuing of doctrinal statements in support of the abrogation of purgatory. The Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563, for example, were explicit in their condemnation of the doctrine, with Article Twenty-Two stating that:

> The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God.[40]

This denunciation was reinforced by further doctrinal pronouncements throughout Elizabeth's reign. The newly instated Bishop of Salisbury, John Jewel, for example, issued several tracts against the doctrine of purgatory throughout the 1560s, describing it, in his 1562 work *An Apology, or Answer, in Defence of the Church of England* as 'no better than a blockish, and an old wives' device'.[41] Similarly, in his Injunctions of 1571, Archbishop Edmund Grindal of York instructed that:

> No month- minds or yearly commemorations of the dead, nor any other superstitious ceremonies, be observed or used, which tend either to the maintenance of prayer for the dead, or of the popish purgatory.[42]

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[40] 'The Thirty-Nine Articles, 1563', in *Religion and Society in Early Modern England: A Sourcebook,* ed. by David Cressy and Lori Anne Ferrell (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 69-80 (p. 75).
[41] *The Apology for the Church of England and a Treatise of the Holy Scripture by Bishop Jewell,* ed. by W. R. Whittingham (New York: New York Protestant Episcopal Press, 1831), p. 63.
[42] 'Archbishop Grindal's Injunctions for the Laity in the Province of York, 1571' in *Religion and Society in Early Modern England: A Sourcebook,* ed. by David Cressy and Lori Anne Ferrell (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 92.

Indeed, whilst an underlying defence of the doctrine continued, implemented in part by English Catholics living in exile, belief in purgatory was under constant, debilitating attack from Reformers during the Elizabethan period.

The French exile John Vernon, for example, who had been imprisoned under Mary Tudor, emphasised the deceitful, avaricious actions of the papacy in promoting belief in purgatory in his aptly named *The Huntyng of Purgatory to Death* (1561).[43] Vernon ended his work with an epitaph for purgatory:

> Now all ye, that this way do travaylle,
> Stay a whyle, and say a morfundis
> For hym, I praye, that there he may in helle
> Broyle with the Pope, whouse broude and sonne he is.[44]

By concluding his work in this striking metaphoric way, Vernon was openly demonstrating his belief that the doctrine of purgatory was now redundant, or, indeed, dead; no longer adhered to by the faithful, and of no consequence to the true believer. Similarly, the theologian and master of Pembroke College, William Fulke, derided any attempt to uphold the validity of what he believed to be a false doctrine, ludicrously akin to 'those vain fables that were wont to be printed in English of *Bevis of Hampton, Guy of Warwick,* and such like.'[45]

By the 1590s, the non-existence of purgatory and the ridiculousness of those who still believed in it would appear to have become so entrenched in the popular psyche that the doctrine became a source of comedy. Indeed, Richard Tarlton's treatise of 1590, *Newes out of Purgatorie, Only such a jest as his jiggle, fit for gentlemen to laugh at an houre*, ridiculed the doctrine and those who adhered in it. Tarlton's attack was largely directed at the Pope and clergy who continued to proclaim the validity of purgatory and the power of intercession. He envisions popes who 'sit triumphantly with their pontificalibus, and their triple crowns,

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[43] Marshall, *Beliefs,* pp. 124-5; Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 36.

[44] Quoted in: Marshall, *Beliefs,* p. 132.

[45] William Fulke, *Two Treatises Written against the Papistes, The one being an answere of the Christian Protestant to the Proud challenge of a Popish Catholicke; The other A confutation of the Popish Churches doctrine touching Purgatory & prayers for the dead* (London: Thomas Vautrollier, 1577), p. 175.

but yet abiding pains of purgatorie as well as the meanest in all the house', a statement no doubt dripping with sarcastic intent.[46] By 1609, when James I scorned the doctrine as 'not worth the talking of', comedy had given way to nonchalance.[47]

b) Predestination

With the disavowal of purgatory, the notion of predestination came to the fore as a crucial part of the post-Reformation route to salvation. However, that whilst the veracity of various notions of predestination - perhaps most significantly, the difference between the Lutheran and Calvinist approaches - dominated sixteenth century theological debate, the doctrine was not conceived by the Reformers. The concept of a predestinate approach to salvation had firm grounding in the scriptural authority of Paul as interpreted and endorsed by the patristic authority of St. Augustine, who preached salvation by faith alone. Augustine's theology of grace is very clearly summarised by MacCulloch: 'there is nothing that a lump of perdition – people like you and me – can do for our own salvation. We need God to do it all.'[48] Thus, the American Theologian B.B. Warfield declared as early as 1905, that 'it is Augustine who gave us the Reformation.'[49]

This pithy statement requires further explanation. For although the sixteenth century Reformers certainly did not invent the concept of predestination from a blank slate, they did refine and, crucially, widely propagate and popularise Augustine's theology of grace. Luther, for example, in his 1525 work, *De Servo Arbitrio*, adopted Augustine's dual concept of humankind's inherent sinfulness and lack of free will, but concluded that it is ultimately God's will that all believers be saved.[50] This, crucially, contrasted with the doctrine of double predestination as formulated by Calvin, finalised in the 1559 version of his *Institutes of the*

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[46] Richard Tarlton, *Jests and News out of Purgatorie*, ed. by J. O. Halliwell (London: Shakespeare Society, 1844), p. 59.

[47] James Rex, *A Premonition to all most Mightie Monarches, Kings, Free Princes, and States of Christendome,* ed. by Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), pp. 125-6.

[48] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *All Things Made New: The Reformation and its Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 4.

[49] Benjamin B. Warfield, 'Augustine and His 'Confessions', *The Princeton Theological Review*, 3 (1905) 81-126 (p. 126).

[50] Martin Luther*, The Bondage of the Will* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1957), p. 168, p. 202, pp. 313-314.

Christian Religion, and which eventually came to be the most widely taught and accepted in England and Wales. Ultimately, however, both Lutheran and Calvinist formulations rendered the spiritual coping strategies of medieval Christendom irrelevant in the face of a predestined route to salvation. Predestination and the rejection of purgatory, therefore, go hand in hand. For if the fate of the soul is preordained by God, and there is no way of influencing its post-mortem journey through good works or intercessory actions, then there is no need for a middle ground between heaven and hell: upon death, the soul of the elect will go straight to heaven and the soul of the reprobate will go straight to hell. In theory, then, any comfort that the living had once been able to draw from their ability to help the souls of the dead in their journey to heaven was extinguished if one accepted the doctrine of predestination as irrefutable, sacred truth. Intercession, and thus the many practices that had developed around this concept, was rendered futile by the adoption of a predestinate approach to salvation.

The adoption of predestination as dogma had begun to take hold quite early on in England. During the Henrician period, John Frith, William Tyndale, and Robert Barnes were key proponents, preaching their belief in various types of predestination decades before the *Thirty Nine Articles* were instated by Archbishop of Canterbury Matthew Parker at the Convocation of 1563, and then confirmed by their entry into the Elizabethan *Book of Common Prayer* in 1571.[51] As early as 1528, for example, the Lutheran Tyndale explored ideas around faith as a symbol of election and a gift given through divine grace in *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*:

> But the right [faith] springeth not of man's fantasy, neither is it in any man's power to obtain it, but it is altogether the pure gift of God poured into us freely, without all manner [of] us, without deserving and merits, yea and without seeking for of us.[52]

Furthermore, Tyndale quite clearly refers to the idea of election in both *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, writing that 'in Christ God chose us and elected us to the world',[53] and

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[51] Carl R. Trueman, *Luther's Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 2.
[52] William Tyndale, 'The Parable of the Wicked Mammon', in *The Works of the English Reformers: William Tyndale and John Frith*, ed. by Thomas Russell, (London: Ebenezer Palmer, 1831), p. 91.
[53] Tyndale, *Mammon*, p. 113.

again in his *Prologue to the Prophet Jonas* (c. 1531), where he talks of 'God's elect, which he hath chosen to give them his Spirit, and to write his law, and the faith of his Son, in their hearts.[54] However, whilst Tyndale preached the divine truth of election, there is no overt mention of predestined damnation or reprobation.

Some scholars have argued that Tyndale therefore maintains a 'somewhat tentative approach to the subject of predestination',[55] due to his reluctance to engage with the idea of reprobation. Carl R. Trueman argues that Tyndale 'introduces election only to underline grace, and rarely discusses the other objective aspects of salvation, such as God's wrath.'[56] Dewey D. Wallace, however, takes the following passage from *Wicked Mammon* as evidence that, even at the very beginning of his career, Tyndale 'implied the doctrine of reprobation':[57]

> Now may not we ask why God chooseth one and not the other; either think that God is unjust to damn us afore we do any actual deed; seeing that God hath power over all his creatures of right to do with them what he list, or to make of every one of them as he listeth. [58]

Wallace is right to draw attention to these lines. For whilst it is true that Tyndale does not explicitly refer to reprobation, these words quite clearly infer the existence of reprobation alongside election, specifically that God 'damn us afore we do any actual deed.' Interestingly, despite the fact that Tyndale was a Lutheran, his reinforcement here of God's omnipotence and omniscience, and his plea for humankind to therefore not question God's purpose in choosing 'one and not the other' or 'to damn us afore we do any actual deed', would be echoed in Calvin's defence of the doctrine of predestination.

Whilst Tyndale might appear somewhat hesitant to fully commit to a belief in the existence of reprobation alongside election, Frith and Barnes are quite clear that the two go hand in

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[54] William Tyndale, 'The Prologue to the Prophet Jonas', in *The Works of the English Reformers: William Tyndale and John Frith*, ed. by Thomas Russell, (London: Ebenezer Palmer, 1831), p. 54.

[55] D. Andrew Penny, *Freewill or Predestination: The Battle over Saving Grace in Mid-Tudor England* (London: Boydell and Brewer, 1991), p. 15.

[56] Trueman, p. 100.

[57] Dewey D. Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology, 1525-1695* (North Carolina: North Carolina University Press, 1982), p. 12.

[58] Ibid.

hand. In 1532 Frith wrote *A Mirrour or Glasse to Know They Selfe*, a treatise that whilst being 'an assertion of predestination and a description of its effects in the elect,'[59] also articulated the author's belief in double predestination of the type that Calvin would later advocate. Frith did not just write about the divinely preordained salvation of certain souls, but also the damnation of others:

> And thys are we sure of, yt whomsoever he chuseth them he saveth of his mercy: and whome he repelleth, them of his secrete and unsearchable judgement he condemneth. But why he chuseth the one and repelleth the other, enquire not (saythe S. Austine) if you wilt not erre.[60]

Frith cites Augustine as the patristic – and thus entirely canonical - authority behind his statement. It is indeed 'impossible to over-estimate Augustine's importance to Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant.' [61] MacCulloch's statement rings true here, but demands some explanation. For during the 1520s and 1530s, in the very early days of the Reformation in England and Wales, there was a clear appetite for the work of the Early Church Fathers, as indeed was the case across much of western Europe.[62] Reformers such as Frith and Robert Barnes studied the words of these doctors of the church and applied them to their own teachings, thus imbibing their work with patristic authority.

Barnes, who spent time at the University in Wittenberg with Luther, would most likely have had access to the full patristic canon. Indeed, Trueman, much like MacCulloch, argues that 'the influence of the patristic writers on Robert Barnes can scarcely be overestimated.'[63] This influence can be clearly seen in the second section of Barnes's 1531 work, *A Supplication Vunto the Most Gracyous Prince Kynge Henry The. VIIJ.*[64] A long section of this work (lines

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[59] Ibid.

[60] Quoted in: Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination,* p. 12.

[61] MacCulloch, *All Things Made New,* pp. 3-4.

[62] On patristics during the Reformation and Renaissance period in western Europe, please see: *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World, ed. by* Simon Ditchfield, Howard Louthan, and Katherine Van Liere (Oxford: Oxford University, 2012).

[63] Trueman, p. 33.

[64] Hereafter referred to as *A Supplication.* Barne's work is extant in four distinct editions. This thesis uses the 1534 edition as found in: Robert Barnes, *A Supplication Vunto the Most Gracyous Prince Kynge Henry The VIIJ,* ed. by Douglas H. Parker (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2008). For more on Barnes, his career, and his contribution to the process of religious reform in England, see: Korey Mass, *The Reformation and Robert Barnes: History, Theology and Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010).

2876-3489) is concerned with the argument for salvation by faith alone, and Barnes consistently turns to scripture and patristic writings to prove his point.[65] In this section, Barnes refers to the New Testament– specifically Peter, Paul and Mark - as well as the work of Origen, Ambrose and Augustine. Lines 3138-3173 are particularly revealing. Here, Barnes expounds on Paul's teaching about justification by faith alone as later articulated by Ambrose and Origen, and concludes that 'this is no newe opinion, seynge that the scripture, and also holy doctors dothe teche it,'[66] a statement of patristic authority that would later be echoed by the Edwardian reformer and archdeacon of Winchester, John Philpot, in support and defence of the Calvinist notion of predestination: 'on the matter of predestination he is in none other opinion than all the doctors of the church be, agreeing to the scriptures.'[67]

Furthermore, despite the modern depiction of Barnes as 'England's first Lutheran',[68] he, like Frith, writes quite clearly in favour of the Calvinist doctrine of double predestination. He does not hesitate to address reprobation alongside election, and fiercely quells any claim that a merciful God would not predestine damnation, arguing, just as Tyndale did in *Wicked Mammon*, that we must not question the divine will:

> Yea but yet sayst thou, that he
> gyueth the one mercy, and gyueth the other none. I answere,
> What is that to the? is not his mercy his owne? Is it not laufull
> for hym to gyue it to whom he wyll? is thy iye euyll, because he
> is good? Take that, that is thyne and go they way. For yf
> it be his wyll to shewe his wrathe, and to make his power
> knowne, ouer the vessels of wrath, ordeyned to dampnacion,
> and to declare the ryches of his glory, vnto the vessels of mercy,
> whiche he hath prepared, and elected vnto glory. What hast
> thou therewith to do? What cause haste thou therof to
> complayne? it is the wyll of God, whiche can not be, but well,

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[65] Barnes, p. 26.

[66] Barnes, p. 223, lines 3171-3.

[67] According to John Foxe, Philpott uttered these words during his trial for heresy under Mary I. He was found guilty and burnt at the stake at Smithfield in 1555. Although the *Book of Martyrs* is a highly subjective work of martyrology, Foxe's depiction of predestination as a longstanding truth, supported by scripture and patristic writing, is the same view that was propagated by the Reformers.

[68] Douglas H. Parker, editor of the 2008 edition of *A Supplication*, notes that 'most individuals who have written about or commented on Barnes consider him to be England's first Lutheran', citing prominent Reformation scholars from the past and present, such as A. G. Dickens, Diarmaid MacCulloch, Carl R. Trueman, and Alec Ryrie who hold this view. See: Barnes, p. 14.

and ryghtwyse, the whiche (as thou sayst) thou beleuest.[69]

This defence of predestination as the route to salvation would continue in earnest during the Edwardian period and later decades, through various iterations of the *Book of Common Prayer,* culminating in the official assertion of an understanding of salvation via predestination.

However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, by the time of Edward's accession in 1547, leading members of the church hierarchy in England and Wales - Thomas Cranmer, John Hooper, Robert Ferrar, John Bradford, Hugh Latimer, Thomas Becon, John Ponet, and John Philpot, as well as influential continental Reformers such as Peter Martyr, and Martin Bucer - had all publicly endorsed predestination as the route to salvation in their written work and sermons, and many would continue to do so even under threat of death during the reign of Mary I.[70] As such, the Edwardian period was a crucial moment for the doctrine, for it was during this time that predestination came to be commonly accepted amongst and taught by the Reformed theological establishment as the true path to salvation. As Wallace notes, it was during Edward's reign that 'the Reformed theology of grace that was to be dominant in the Elizabethan Church of England as well as central to later Puritanism became firmly embedded in English Protestantism.'[71]

This is evidenced in Cranmer's 1549 version of the *Book of Common Prayer*, where 'by far the most visible and controversial transformations took place in the treatment of the Mass and Office for the Dead,' and as Brian Cummings notes, whilst the new service did retain some of the funeral practices of the Old Faith (such as, at the moment of committal, the addressing of the corpse by the Priest, the limited use of psalms, and a kind of Requiem Mass), any explicit mention of intercession for the deceased was struck out, along with any mention of Purgatory.[72] Cranmer's 1552 version of the *Book of Common Prayer,* issued in the penultimate year of Edward's reign, professed an ever more Calvinist understanding of soteriology in its

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[69] Barnes, p. 278.
[70] Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination,* pp. 15-19. Also see: Heal, p. 331.
[71] Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination,* p 15.
[72] Cummings, p. xxviii.

directives for funeral practices: psalms and prayers for the dead, along with the Eucharist, were expunged.[73] In so doing, any and all means of intercession were thus removed from the Mass and Office of the Dead.

c) Debate and Disagreement during the Elizabethan period

The state-imposed return to a predestinate understanding of salvation under Elizabeth was by no means a seamless affair. After all, double predestination, whereby the elect are preordained to salvation and the sinful to damnation, was and remains a difficult and somewhat uncomfortable teaching. It appears to conflict with the portrayal of the all-loving and all-forgiving God of the New Testament, the God of *agape*. As Calvin himself notes of his concept of unconditional or double predestination: 'to many this seems a perplexing subject, because they deem it most incongruous that of the great body of mankind some should be predestined to salvation, and others to destruction.'[74] However, Calvin robustly refuted claims that the reprobation of the sinful meant that God is in any way unjust or merciless. Instead, he argued that, since the whole of humanity is in fact sinful, the fact that God chooses anyone at all for election is a clear sign of his mercy.[75] Much like Tyndale and Frith, Calvin maintained that since 'the will of God is the supreme rule of righteousness, so that everything which he wills must be held to be righteous by the mere fact of his willing it.'[76]

According to this maxim, predestination as willed by an omniscient and omnipotent God is a righteous doctrine and, as such, human beings should not presume to question it.[77] However, human inquisitiveness, particularly when it comes to matters of mortality and salvation, is a force to be reckoned with. Calvin's pronouncements were not enough to smother the debate that would arise regarding predestination. This chapter has already considered how, from the

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[73] Cummings, p. xxxv; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* p. 475; Andrew Wallace, *The Presence of Rome in Medieval and Early Modern Britain: Texts, Artefacts and Beliefs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 207.
[74] Calvin, p. 585. Chapter 23 of Calvin's *Institutes* is concerned with quashing criticisms of the doctrine of predestination, as the chapter subheading makes abundantly clear: 'Refutation of the Calumnies by which this Doctrine is Always Unjustly Assailed.'
[75] Calvin, p. 583.
[76] Calvin, p. 583.
[77] Calvin, p. 583.

1530s and 1540s with Frith and Barnes, the Reformers had felt the need to defend reprobation, thus implying that unconditional predestination was influential enough to merit criticism, even at this relatively early stage in the Reformation process. The debate intensified during Elizabeth's reign, when perceived doctrinal ambiguities within the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559, as well as within the *Thirty-Nine Articles* of 1563 and their reinstatement in 1571, led to debate and disagreement from both the rising Puritan faction (who wanted double predestination to be enshrined in soteriological doctrine) and, from the 1590s, the Cambridge anti-Calvinists who sought the total opposite.

As Nicholas Tyacke notes, the *Thirty-Nine Articles* established a church that officially promoted salvation *sola fide but* did not dwell on the issue of reprobation.[78] Article 17 states that 'predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God',[79] but that:

> For curious and carnal person[s], lacking the spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfal, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchlessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.[80]

Was this an 'attempt to present the Calvinist doctrine of predestination in such a way as to render it practically ambiguous',[81] in the hope of limiting the damage that a dispute between different Reformers might inflict on a country that had already suffered years of religious turmoil? The Elizabethan approach to doctrinal legislation could imply that this was the case. Indeed the Settlement of 1559 has been portrayed as the starting point of a distinctive type of Anglicanism, characterised as a *via media* between Rome and Geneva; between Roman

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[78] Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 178. Also see: Lori Anne Ferrell, 'How-To Books, Protestant Kinetics, and the Art of Theology, *Huntingdon Library Quarterly,* 71.4 (2008), 591-606 (p. 592).

[79] 'The Thirty-Nine Articles, 1563', Cressy and Ferrell, pp. 73-74.

[80] Ibid.

[81] 'The Thirty-Nine Articles, 1563', Cressy and Ferrell, p. 69.

Catholicism and Protestantism, specifically Calvinism.[82] This description however, has increasingly been criticised as anachronistic, and somewhat self-serving: 'a matter of denominational self-definition',[83] which, rather than being rooted in sixteenth century thought or practice, was established by later generations of English Christians, such as members of the nineteenth century Oxford Movement.

Revisionists and Post-Revisionists such as Collinson, Tyacke, Wallace, MacCulloch and Torrance Kirby have shown how the Elizabethan church was – at least in terms of doctrine, and certainly in terms of soteriology – rooted in continental Protestantism.[84] The concept of a deliberate *via media,* or compromise, between Roman Catholicism and Calvinism, established and implemented at an official level, has thus been largely discredited in recent scholarship. What is clear, however, is that ambiguities within the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559 and the *Articles* of 1563-1571 left room for a limited, yet still significant amount of soteriological interpretation. These ambiguities contributed to the development of varying visual approaches and responses to the issues of mortality, salvation, and transience amongst different social groups in different parts of the country, as well as amongst the various types of English and Welsh Christian that continued to exist throughout the post-Reformation period. It is clear that from the granting of the 1559 Settlement, a difference in soteriological belief and teaching had opened up amongst the various types of Reformers; this would continue throughout the Elizabethan period, and into the reign of James I. As previously mentioned, much of this disagreement hinged on the acceptance or refutation of unconditional predestination and can be loosely defined along Puritan and anti-Calvinist, or proto-Arminian, lines.

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[82] For various arguments in favour of the Elizabethan church and Settlement being characterized as a middle way, see: John Henry Newman, *The Via Media of the Anglican Church Illustrated in Letters, Lectures, and Tracts written between 1830-1841* (London: Longmans, Green, 1885), p. 41; John Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments, 1559-1581* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953), pp. 38-84; G. W. Bernard, 'The Church of England, c. 1529-1642', *History,* 75 (1990), 189-206; Hugh Trevor-Roper, *From Counter Reformation to Glorious Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 134, p. 187; Peter White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic: Conflict and Consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 152, p. 158, p. 312.

[83] Dewey D. Wallace, 'Via Media? A Paradigm Shift', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 72.1 (2003), 2-21 (p. 19).

[84] Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559-1626* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. ix; Tyacke, p. viii; Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'The Myth of the English Reformation', *Journal of British Studies,* 30 (1991), 1-19; Wallace, 'Via Media?', pp. 19-21; W. J. Torrance Kirby, *Richard Hooker, Reformer and Platonist* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 18-19.

One example of Puritan teaching which emphasised the existence of predestined reprobation alongside election is found in William Perkins enormously popular *Armilla Aurea* or *A Golden Chain or the description of Theology, containing the order of the causes of salvation and damnation, according to God's word.* This text, first published in 1590, became one of the bestselling Protestant conduct, or how-to, books during the first half of the seventeenth century and was regularly reprinted until at least 1640.[85] *A Golden Chaine* made use of the visual in the form of a diagram to clearly outline a double predestinate understanding of salvation and ensure that even for the illiterate, there is no room for ambiguity or misinterpretation in Perkins' description of the soul's post-mortem journey. This diagram, designed to be inserted into every copy of *A Golden Chaine,* is an innovative teaching device: it summarises the many hundreds of pages of Perkins' prose, in which he painstakingly outlines his interpretation of Calvin's doctrine of double predestination, into a fold-out visual aid which could be used by as a visual mnemonic for the laity to educate themselves and their families or by the Clergy to teach their parishioners.[86]

Perkins' core message is clearly presented and extremely easy to follow: the two possible post-mortem paths as predetermined by God are illustrated, with a double line denoting the route of the Elect to Heaven and a thick dark line showing the path of the Reprobate to Hell. It is worth noting, however, that Perkins' predestinate understanding of salvation does contain a certain element of nuance. Throughout *A Golden Chaine,* he emphasises the importance of introspection and self-examination in order for the faithful to be assured of their place as one of the Elect, and reassures the reader and listener that doubt is an entirely natural part of this process; as the right hand pathway of the diagram makes clear, just because one might have moments of doubt, this by no means indicates a sentence of reprobation.[87] In this way, Perkins' teaching differs from earlier interpretations of Calvinist predestination: far from discouraging any kind of questioning of God's will, Perkins

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[85] Ferrell, p. 592, p. 600.

[86] For more on Perkins' fold-out diagram as a didactic device, see: Ferrell, pp. 600-604; Cooper, 'Memento Mori Portraiture', pp. 141-143.

[87] There are many extant versions of *A Golden Chaine.* This thesis has made use of the 1597 printed version: William Perkins, *Armilla Aurea or A Golden Chain or the description of Theology, containing the order of the causes of salvation and damnation, according to God's word* (Cambridge: John Legate, 1597).

encourages the faithful to investigate their own behaviour in order to seek comfort and reassure themselves of their salvation.[88]

At the same time that Perkins was preaching his version of the truth of reprobation alongside election, the veracity of unconditional, or double, predestination, was being challenged by a group of high-profile preachers identified by Tyacke and Michael Pearce as early or proto-Arminians: Arminians *'avant la lettre'*.[89] Key members of this group included Peter Baro (from 1574 the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge);[90] the prolific preacher and theologian Richard Hooker; Samuel Harsnett (Vicar of various London and Essex parishes during Elizabeth's reign, rising to Archbishop of York in 1629 under Charles I);[91] John Overall (Vicar of various parishes in Cambridge, Essex, and Lincoln during the Queen's reign, later Bishop of Norwich under James I);[92] and Lancelot Andrewes (from 1589, Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, from 1590, Chaplain to the Queen, and from 1601-1605 Dean of Westminster, later Bishop of Winchester under James).[93] All of these Divines challenged the concept of Calvinist double predestination. Specifically, they could not accept a Reformed theology of grace which included the existence of a predetermined state of reprobation.[94]

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[88] Ferrell, p. 600; Alexandra Walsham, 'Migrations of the Holy: Explaining Religious Change in Medieval and Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 44.2 (2014), 241-280 (p. 262).

[89] Nicholas Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism c.1530-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 162; Michael Pearce, 'The career and works of Samuel Harsnett, Archbishop of York, 1561-1631' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford University, 2004), p. 252.

[90] Charles Knighton, *Baro [Baron], Peter (1534-1599), Reformed minister and religious controversialist*. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-1492> [accessed 15 December 2020].

[91] Nicholas Cranfield, *Harsnett, Samuel (bap. 1561, d. 1631), archbishop of York*, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-12466> [accessed 15 December 2020].

[92] Nicholas Cranfield, *Overall, John (bap. 1561, d. 1619), bishop of Norwich*. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-20964> [Accessed 15 December 2020].

[93] P. E. McCullough, *Andrewes, Lancelot (1555-1626), bishop of Winchester*. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-520> [Accessed 15 December 2020].

[94] Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination,* pp. 29-78.

Harsnett, for example, preached a sermon at St Paul's Cross in 1594,[95] in which he explicitly argued that the inclusion of predetermined, or unconditional, reprobation in any salvatory doctrine would be contrary to God's will.[96] Instead, Harsnett argued that God has two kinds of will, the absolute and the conditional, with a clear distinction between the way that the two are applied:

> His absolute Will said, Let there be light, and there was light; Let there be a Firmament, and there was a Firmament…This Will, indeed, cannot be resisted, for it speakes but the word, and the thing is done. But God hath not this Will in the matter of our salvation, for then so should we be saved, as the Heavens were made; but in the matter of our salvation God useth his will with condition[97]

For Harsnett, the belief that God would doom a soul to hell before birth and offer no hope of redemption thus did not correlate with his understanding of Divine grace. If God applied his absolute will to the issue of salvation, then, as a merciful and loving God, all souls would be saved: 'no man is of an absolute necessity the childe of Hell, so as by God's Grace, he may not avoid it.'[98] Harsnett explains that it is not due to God's will that a soul is doomed to damnation, but rather through 'the neglect and contempt of his Grace…and not any privative Decree, Counsel, or determination of God.'[99] In this way, therefore, there are conditions attached to salvation which can be determined during a person's lifetime. Thus, for Harsnett (and in contrast to Calvinist teaching), the doctrine of predestination cannot include unconditional reprobation.

This survey has demonstrated that soteriological teaching and understanding within English and Welsh Protestantism - far from remaining in a state of stasis, enthralled by the pronouncements of, first, Luther, and then the Swiss Reformers – changed and developed

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[95] There has been much debate over the dating of Harsnett's sermon. When it was first published in 1658, the sermon was dated to 1584, however the current consensus is that a date of 1594 is most accurate. See: Pearce, pp. 37-44; Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547- c. 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 302; Frank W. Brownlow, *Shakespeare, Harsnett and the Devils of Denham* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), p. 42.

[96] Pearce, pp. 37-44; Cooper, 'Memento Mori', p. 132.

[97] *Three sermons preached by the Reverend and learned Dr. Richard Stuart ... to which is added, a fourth sermon, preached by the Right Reverend Father in God, Samuel Harsnett*, ed. by Richard Stewart (London: G. Bedel and T. Collins, 1658), p. 154.

[98] Stewart, p. 148.

[99] Stewart, p. 149.

over the course of the sixteenth century. Preachers and clerics such as Perkins and Harsnett introduced 'shades and modulations' into the Reformed understanding of the soul's post-mortem journey, and provided nuance to the severity of the Calvinist formulation of double predestination.[100] As will be discussed below and in later chapters of this thesis, the evidence from the textual and material culture of sixteenth century death – ranging from wills to commemorative commissions such as portraits and tomb sculpture – clearly indicates that these 'shades and modulations' in soteriological belief extended across the post-Reformation confessional barrier. Indeed Roman Catholicism had by no means disappeared from England and Wales – rather, as evidenced particularly by Alexandra Walsham, Michael Questier, and Christopher Haigh - it had developed into a broad scale comprising all kinds of believers from the recusant to the outwardly conformist, yet inwardly remaining Roman Catholic or Church Papist.[101] As such, belief in the existence of purgatory and the power of intercession was still a powerful force in the lives of many late sixteenth century lay people. Certainly, the influence of the medieval visual culture of commemoration - and thus the depiction of belief in the purgatorial imperative and the power of intercession – is evident in extant church *memoria* of the post-Reformation period, including the nine painted church portrait memorials selected for study in this thesis.

ii.   Lay Responses to a changing Soteriology

So far, this chapter has presented and analysed the momentous changes in Christian soteriology as taught and implemented by English and Welsh Reformers from across the confessional scale of sixteenth century Protestantism. By presenting the major themes and

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[100] Alexandra Walsham, Brian Cummings, and Ceri Law, 'Introduction: Memory and the English Reformation', in *Memory and the English Reformation,* ed. by Alexandra Walsham, Bronwyn Wallace, Brian Cummings, and Ceri Law (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 1-47 (p. 19).

[101] The corpus of literature on the continuation and development of Roman Catholicism in sixteenth century England and Wales is vast. Key works include: John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); Christopher Haigh, 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation', *Past & Present*, 93 (1981), 37-69; Lucy Wooding, *Rethinking Catholicism in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Christopher Haigh, 'Review article: Catholicism in early modern England: Bossy and beyond', *Historical Journal,* 45.1 (2002), 481-94; Michael Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage, and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999); Alexandra Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (London: Routledge, 2016).

nuances of Reformed soteriological thought, this chapter has provided the essential theological backbone for the core of this thesis, which is the analysis of the visual culture of commemoration – and specifically church memorial portraiture - in the late-Elizabethan English and Welsh parish church. This chapter has highlighted the considerable theological and doctrinal complexities involved in any discussion of sixteenth century approaches to mortality and salvation. For example, despite the refutation of the power of intercession and the adoption of a predestinate route to salvation being clearly articulated by many Reformers, there was still considerable debate around the admittedly terrifying prospect of unconditional reprobation alongside election. Indeed, whilst the negation of the purgatorial imperative in favour of the concept of predestination might have been widely accepted by many different types of sixteenth century Protestant, the texts analysed in this chapter show that there was still disagreement regarding the exact route to salvation.

With such a breadth of interpretation amongst the Divines, the very leaders of the Reformation and instigators of doctrinal reform in England and Wales, one would surely expect a degree of confusion, or variance in belief, amongst their flock. Working out levels of lay adherence to religious doctrine, however, is an extremely difficult task, and one that cannot be done solely by the analysis of theological writings by various Divines and pronouncements by Bishops and other leading Reformers. Furthermore, there were still many committed Roman Catholics from across the broad and amorphous scale of recusant to Church Papist living, worshiping, and commemorating their deceased loved ones in late-Elizabethan England and Wales. The Reformers by no means succeeded in converting every layman and woman to the New Faith: many parishes were, as Richard Williams notes, 'religiously mixed communities', comprised of various types of Protestant and Roman Catholics.[102] Thus, in order to understand how readily the laity of sixteenth century England and Wales accepted or, indeed, were even aware of, the soteriological changes posited by the Reformers, one must look beyond doctrine and towards more personal and, arguably, more revealing types of lay-produced memorial documents, both textual and material.

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[102] Richard Williams, 'Reformation', in *Art Under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm,* ed. by Tabitha Barber and Stacy Boldrick (London: Tate Publishing, 2013), pp. 48-74 (p. 48).

Chapter Two of this thesis, for example, will consider what funeral monuments and other types of visual *memoria* and sepulchral art in parish churches*,* as well as *memento mori* portraits created for display in domestic settings, can reveal about sixteenth century lay attitudes towards mortality and salvation. Before doing so, however, the final section of this chapter will consider what evidence can be gleaned from a particular type of lay-created document: the last will and testament. Wills, as documents most often drawn up towards the end of a person's life, can reveal much about the beliefs and wishes of the testator in the full and imminent expectation of death. The final part of this chapter will therefore consider to what extent belief in the non-existence of Purgatory and adherence to a predestinate understanding of salvation can be observed in wills of the laity. In so doing, an initial contextual background of lay beliefs and practices surrounding mortality and salvation will be provided, borne out of the analysis of textual source material. The core of this thesis – the presentation and analysis of a small yet significant body of nine selected late-Elizabethan painted church portrait memorials – will thus be rooted in a familiar context of textual evidence.

a) The Last Will and Testament

Scholars of the late medieval and early modern periods have long used wills as key source material in a variety of discipline-spanning topics, from legal and economic history, to the position of women in society and the ever-changing role of the family. In more recent years, wills have also been used to assess the impact of doctrinal changes on the beliefs of the laity, and as a measure of individual and group religious identity and confessional affiliation.[103] As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, there is an increasing academic interest in the social history of death during the Long Reformation and the development of a Reformed soteriology. In the decades since Clive Burges bemoaned an 'unwillingness to devote serious attention to the doctrine of Purgatory,' the academic landscape has changed enormously.[104]

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[103] Ralph Houlbrooke's work is particularly relevant here; his monograph *Death, Religion, and the Family* uses wills as key evidence in examining the impact of the Reformation specifically on the ritual, social, and cultural process of dying.

[104] Burgess, 'By Quick and by Dead', p. 837.

Sixteenth and early seventeenth century wills, as documents created by the testator in the full expectation and immediate contemplation of death, can help to illuminate early modern lay belief regarding salvation, as well as the ritualistic, social, and spiritual aspects of the dying process. They can also, whilst taking into account the methodological difficulties in using this kind of source material, as discussed below, provide an indication of the kind of soteriology that the testator might have subscribed to.

Sixteenth and early seventeenth century wills were normally made up of three distinct sections: the bequest of the soul (or preamble), the bequest of the body, and the bequest of earthly goods. Whilst all three sections of a will can be informative, it is the preamble that has been routinely mined by scholars of the Reformation for clues as to the testator's religious leanings and, more specifically, whether or not they profess a Reformed approach to salvation. Typically, the preamble of late medieval and early modern wills would contain 'the commendation of the soul to God, accompanied by some profession of religious beliefs.'[105] In theory then, this section of the will should reveal the personal beliefs of the testator, particularly when there is a significant deviation from the norm. The reality, however, is much more complicated, and since the 1970s, the reliability of the preamble (and, indeed, of wills in general) as an indicator of the testator's religious affiliation has been subject to great debate.[106] Preambles were often recycled or taken from a specific formula, thus potentially indicating a generic rather than a personal profession of belief, and as scribes were employed to write the vast majority of wills, there is an undeniable possibility that we have been left

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[105] Lorraine Attreed, 'Preparation for Death in Sixteenth Century Northern England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 13.3 (1982), 39-66 (p. 39).

[106] This debate was galvanised by: Margaret Spufford, 'The Scribes of Villagers' Wills in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and their Influence', *Local Population Studies,* 7 (1971), 28-43. For more recent analyses, see: Alec Ryrie, 'Counting Sheep, Counting Shepherds: The Problem of Allegiance in the English Reformation', in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. by Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 85-87; Christine Peters, *Patterns of Piety: Women, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 160-164.

with the voice of the scribe, using a number of generic formulae, rather than that of the (sometimes illiterate) testator.[107]

Thus, like many historians today, my position regarding the reliability and usefulness of wills, and particularly that of the preamble, is somewhere between W.K. Jordan's enthusiastic embrace of these documents and J.D. Alsop's words of extreme caution.[108] For whilst Jordan's assertion that 'wills in this age of profound faith were mirror's of men's souls' is no longer accepted, it would be wrong to discredit the last will and testament as a useless historical document.[109] Indeed as Peters notes, 'even if the image in the mirror is not crystal clear, we can still glimpse a partial reflection.'[110] Certainly, much information can be gleaned from testamentary evidence, particularly when studied in conjunction with evidence from material documents such as paintings and monuments, as well as other lay-created written documents like diaries and letters.

Furthermore, the two key reasons commonly cited for the unreliability of the preamble – the use of formulas and the influence of the scribe - can be tempered by the fact that the will legally had to be read back to the testator in the presence of witnesses, so at the very least one would assume that the testator was happy with its contents. Perhaps most importantly, however, there are other parts of a will that can be examined in an attempt to better understand the testator's soteriological beliefs or, at least, what they profess to believe when contemplating and compiling the directives which will survive them after their death. The instructions given by the testator relating to the dispersal of their money, property, and other goods can be particularly revealing. Did they choose to give money to a combination of familial and local charitable causes or to the upkeep of the parish church, to specific sites such

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[107] Peters, pp. 160-163. For more on the role of the scribe in the drawing up of wills, see: Christopher Marsh, 'In the name of God? Will-making and Faith in Early Modern England', in *The Records of the Nation: The Public Record Office, 1838-1988: The British Record Society 1888-1988*, ed. by G. H. Martin and Peter Spufford (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990), pp. 233-234. On rates of literacy and the beginnings of the development of a literate society, see: David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order; Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[108] See: W. K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England, 1480-1640: A study of the Changing Pattern of English Social Aspiration* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1959); J.D. Alsop, 'Religious Preambles in Early Modern English Wills as Formulae', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 40.1 (1989), 19-27.
[109] Jordan, p. 16.
[110] Peters, p. 160.

as the high altar or a family chapel, and for prayers to be said for their soul? Did they leave specific instructions for their funeral and the way they wanted to be mourned and remembered, or for a particular time of monument or memorial? Or did they perhaps single out known Catholic friends or relatives for special gifts?

b) Methodological Challenges

An enormous amount of English and Welsh wills survive from the late-medieval and post-Reformation period.[111] As James notes:

> Among the largest and most diverse sources of surviving contemporary documentation available to Tudors historians are the collections of wills and inventories probated by a hierarchy of ecclesiastical courts between 1485 and 1603. During the sixteenth century thousands of wills were written and filed for citizens from all levels of society. The Prerogative Court of Canterbury alone has over 52,000 probates docked.[112]

Similarly, Takahashi, in his statistical analysis of wills proved in four courts – the Consistory Courts of Worcester and Ely, the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, and the Archdeaconry Court of Leicester – notes a total of 127,937 extant wills from the period 1500-1629.[113] Thus, partly due to the sheer amount of extant material, scholars must approach the study of wills from within a clear thematic or geographic framework. Somewhat inevitably, therefore, the wills of some parishes and dioceses have received more attention than others. The treatment of the extant Welsh material reveals this imbalance, for whilst studies exist for the wills of late-medieval and post-Reformation Monmouthshire,[114] generally speaking, 'the

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[111] Peter Spufford, 'A Printed Catalogue of the Names of Testators', in *The Records of the Nation: The Public Record Office, 1838-1988: The British Record Society 1888-1988,* ed. by G. H. Martin and Peter Spufford (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990), pp. 167-213 (p. 170).

[112] Susan James, *Women's Voices in Tudor Wills, 1485-1603: Authority, Influence and Material Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p. 1.

[113] Motoyasu Takahashi, 'The Number of Wills Proved in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Graphs, with Tables and Commentary', in *The Records of the Nation: The Public Record Office, 1838-1988: The British Record Society 1888-1988*, ed. by G. H. Martin and Peter Spufford (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990), pp. 187-214 (pp. 193-196).

[114] David Williams, 'Medieval Monmouthshire wills in the National Library of Wales', *Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 19 (2003), 113–28; *Monmouthshire Wills Proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1560-1601*, ed. by Judith Jones (Cardiff: South Wales Record Society, 1997).

testamentary evidence for Wales…is woefully under-used and in some areas, such as gender history, rarely consulted.'[115] This is not, however, due to a paucity of sources, for although survival rates are significantly lower than in some parts of England, there are 650 extant Welsh wills that survive from the period 1382-1550.[116] As will be discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, the lack of scholarly attention paid to Welsh testamentary evidence is replicated in the treatment of Welsh church monuments and memorials. Chapter Six of this thesis aims to redress this balance through the presentation and analysis of certain Glamorganshire wills and the close reading of church monuments and memorials in St Donat's parish church.

Alongside this geographic imbalance, there is a further methodological problem that will resurface many times over the course of this thesis, whether discussing testamentary, material, or literary evidence: survival rates. For whilst the overall survival rate of English and Welsh late-medieval and post-Reformation wills is high, this is not always reflected at the local, parish level. The high survival rate of wills in some parts of England, such as Gloucestershire and London, for example, has resulted in some highly specialised and nuanced publications that examine testamentary evidence from these specific geographic areas and, due to the large amount of extant material, tend to adhere to a very precise date range. Over 8000 sixteenth century Gloucestershire wills survive: a detailed survey and analysis of all the extant testamentary evidence from just this one county would take several years. Instead, Caroline Litzenberger's 1997 monograph is a particularly successful and oft-cited example of local history taken from testamentary evidence which chooses to focus on a sample of Gloucestershire wills. As opposed to analysing every extant will, Litzenberger has selected a sample of 3500 Gloucestershire wills, written between 1541 and 1580.[117] In contrast, there are parts of England and Wales where the survival rates for pre- and post-Reformation wills are dismally low. For example, there are only one hundred extant wills from the Suffolk town of Hadleigh for the entire sixteenth century.[118]

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[115] Deborah Youngs, 'At Hir Owne Discrecion: Women and Will-Making in Late Medieval and Early Tudor Wales', *Welsh History Review*, 29.3 (2019), 408-435 (p. 408).
[116] Youngs, p. 409.
[117] Caroline Litzenberger, *The English Reformation and the Laity: Gloucestershire, 1540-1580* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 169.
[118] John Craig, *Reformation, Politics, and Polemics: The Growth of Protestantism in East Anglian Market Towns, 1500-1610* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p. 169.

Furthermore, the majority of these wills are 'systematically skewed towards the wealthier in Hadleigh',[119] a statement which is applicable to nearly all the surviving testamentary evidence. James' claim, therefore, that 'during the sixteenth century thousands of wills were written and filed for citizens from all levels of society' is slightly misleading.[120] For whilst there are some surviving examples of wills from poorer members of society, these are few and far between.[121] Houlbrooke's statement that wills 'represent – albeit unequally – all ranks save the poorest', is arguably more accurate. Even allowing for the possibility that such documents did at one time exist and now no longer survive, it seems highly unlikely that the average wage labourer or tenant farmer – the vast majority of whom were illiterate - would have been able to afford the services of a scribe to draw up a will, and even less likely that such a document would have found its way to the relevant court to be proved and filed.[122]

However, is not only the asset-less poor who are significantly underrepresented in the surviving testamentary evidence: will making was far less commonplace amongst the female population of Elizabethan and early-Jacobean England and Wales than the male, and as with the male population, women who did draw up wills were normally members of the elite, upper gentry, or middling sort.[123] In addition, as J. S. W. Helt has noted through his study of 1,276 women's wills from sixteenth century Essex, 'married testators were overwhelmingly male, while widowed and single will-writers were predominantly female'.[124] Youngs records a similar situation for Welsh wills of the period 1382-1500, noting that 'as in England, the majority of women making wills were widowed.'[125] Jones highlights this same pattern in the Monmouthshire wills proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury between 1560 and 1600:

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[119] Ibid.

[120] James, p.1.

[121] Houlbrooke, p. 84. One notable and much discussed example is London, The National Archives, PROB 11 56 240; the will of Robert Smith, a servant from Overstone in Northamptonshire. Witnessed by his master, the MP George Carleton in 1573 and proved in 1574, this will is significant due to the non-landowning background of the testator and for its overly Presbyterian sentiment. See: Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 144; John Craig and Caroline Litzenberger, 'Wills as Religious Propaganda: The Testament of William Tracy', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 44.3 (1993), 415-31 (pp. 418-9).

[122] For more on the correlation between literacy rates and the creation of wills, see: Craig, p. 122; Houlbrooke, pp. 102-103; Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order,* pp. 127-9.

[123] James, p. 1; Houlbrooke, p. 87.

[124] J. S. W. Helt, 'Women, Memory and Will-Making in Elizabethan England' in in *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 188-205 (p. 195).

[125] Youngs, p. 424.

'most women who made wills were widows.'[126] Therefore, any analysis that utilises a random sample of testamentary evidence will almost certainly be an inherently gendered study, and, where women's will are included, these are likely to be those of widowed women from the traditional landed and urban elite.[127]

c)   Wills as evidence of lay soteriological belief, c.1585-c.1603

The case studies chapters of this thesis (Chapters Three-Six) will consider the wills (where they exist) of the patrons of the nine selected painted church portrait memorials that form this study's core data set. Where relevant and helpful, wills of members of their family and wider social circles will also be considered. As discussed in the Introduction, these patrons range from hereditary landholders such as Thomas Cornewall of Burford and Edward Stradling of St Donat's, to upwardly mobile gentry like the diplomat Henry Unton, and members of the urban elite, such as the mercer turned MP and philanthropist, William Smart of Ipswich. This breadth of social standing amongst the patrons is matched by the geographic scope of the painted church portrait memorials, indeed the likely places of their creation and the parish churches that they are displayed in (or were once displayed in, in the case of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* and the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels),* span nearly the whole of the south of England and Wales. Seven different parishes within five English dioceses and one Welsh diocese are represented: two paintings from the diocese of Oxford, two from Hereford, one from Worcester, three from Llandaff, and one from Norwich.

With such a wide geographic spread, it therefore seems sensible to briefly consider the broad pattern of late sixteenth century testamentary evidence from across the south of England and

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[126] Jones, p. 22.

[127] The rise of gender history has resulted in several publications specifically dedicated to the study of women's wills, and in recent years there has been an increasing emphasis placed on the wills of non-elite English women. Key examples include: Helt; Claire Cross, 'Northern Women in the Early Modern Period: The Female Testators of Hull and Leeds 1520-1650', *The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 59 (1987), 83-85; Jane Whittle 'Housewives and Servants in Rural England, 1440-1650: Evidence of Women's Work from Probate Documents', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 15 (2005), 51-74; Stephanie Appleton, 'Women and Wills in Early Modern England: The Community of Stratford-Upon-Avon 1537-1649' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 2016). On the wills of Welsh women, see: Youngs.

Wales. This will provide some general context regarding lay piety, and specifically approaches to mortality and salvation during the later decades of Elizabeth's reign. It is, however, neither the intention nor the purpose of this thesis to make conclusions through the study of wills alone: what follows is intended as a brief contextual study in which to better situate the commissioning actions and soteriological beliefs of the patrons of these nine painted church portrait memorials within those of their fellow countrymen and women. Wherever possible, this chapter will consider wills from the diocese that houses the relevant parish church and although it will utilise Litzenberger's three categories of preamble - traditional (reference to the Virgin/the Saints/the Holy Company of Heaven), neutral (reference to election, Almighty God, Christ and the passion, the Trinity), and Protestant (salvation through God/Christ alone or *sola fide*) - [128] this thesis follows John Craig in not being bound to these definitions: the contents of other bequests (to the town or village, to the church, and to individuals for example) alongside the bequest of the body and soul will also be considered.[129]

The nine paintings that form the core of this study were all created between c. 1586 and c. 1603, during Elizabeth's 'Second Reign' as defined by John Guy.[130] This date range is particularly significant in any discussion of approaches to mortality and salvation. Indeed Takahashi, through his statistical analysis of nearly 130,000 wills from the ecclesiastical courts of Canterbury, Ely, Worcester, and Leicester, has shown that this period played host to several mortality crises.[131] In 1586 and 1587 there were nationwide harvest failures, which led to an enormous increase in deaths from famine and related diseases: 'the number of deaths entered in parish registers in 1587 and 1588…[were]…more than 25 per cent above the normal level for the period.'[132] After a brief period of stability, the years 1591-1593 were marked by an outbreak of plague, beginning in Devon and rapidly spreading throughout the south of England, only to be followed by another subsistence crisis in 1597 and 1598 due to catastrophically poor harvests.[133] It is particularly significant that during and immediately

[128] Litzenberger, *The English Reformation*, pp. 172-3.
[129] See: Craig, pp. 80-82.
[130] John Guy, *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[131] Takahashi, pp. 203-4.
[132] Takahashi, p. 203.
[133] Ibid.

after this time of famine 'in the Prerogative Court the number of wills proved passed 1300, around 40 per cent more than in the preceding years.'[134]

In order to have one's will proved at a Prerogative Court rather than the local diocesan court, the testator would have been a person of significant means, normally holding land, property and other financial interests across several different dioceses.[135] Takahashi's findings therefore show that even members of the elite were mortally affected by the twin crises of famine and disease that marked the late 1580s and 1590s: more people were dying more often, across all levels of society. Thus, death, as ubiquitous as of course it is, was exceptionally prevalent during this period. Perhaps, then, the fact that the nine surviving examples of painted church portrait memorials all come from this period is unsurprising. After all, these portraits are lay-created documents commissioned in response to or in expectation of death. During a time scourged with plague and famine, as well as on going wars with Spain and Portugal, death would surely have been ever-present in the collective consciousness of the English and Welsh laity.

During this period, from the 1580s until the end of Elizabeth's reign, D. M. Palliser has noted the last three English examples of what Litzenberger would classify as a traditional soul bequest amongst the extant wills of northern testators: 'an alderman of Newcastle (1582), Lady Wharton of Healaugh near York (1583) and a York alderman's widow (1585)'.[136] This is highly significant, as it indicates that even in the north of England – a part of the country generally considered to have been more traditionally minded in terms of confessionalism - men and women had seemingly abandoned the Roman Catholic soul bequest by the later decades of Elizabeth's reign. Whether or not the absence of a dedication to the Virgin Mary, the Saints, or the Holy Company of Heaven – the traditional figures of intercession – aligns with a definitive change in soteriological belief is, however, less clear. Indeed, this could be the result of a gradual change in scribal convention that manifested within the more formulaic parts of wills during the post-Reformation period as opposed to a clear indication of the

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[134] Ibid.

[135] Jones, p. 3.

[136] D. M. Palliser, 'Popular reactions to the Reformation during the years of uncertainty, 1530-70', in *The English Reformation Revised,* ed. by Christopher Haigh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 94-114 (p. 103).

testator's belief in a predestinate form of salvation or their abandonment of the belief in purgatory.

However, when examined in conjunction with the changing patterns of other types of bequest - of money and property for example - a clearer picture does emerge. For example, Craig's analysis of 387 wills proved in the Commissary Court of Bury St Edmund's over the period 1540-90, has revealed a notable reduction in the number of bequests of property, goods, and money made by testators and, crucially, a striking change in the types of bequests being made.[137] Out of the 98 wills proved during the period 1540-55, 63 testators made a total of 149 bequests, yet over the decades this number systematically reduces until, by the period 1579-90, out of the 86 wills proved, 26 testators made a total of 37 bequests.[138] Even more revealing is the decreasing rate of pious bequests left by the testators: whilst 5 wills of 1540-55 include funds specifically for prayers for the soul, none of the wills of 1579-90 contain this bequest, and whilst 28 wills of 1540-55 include sums for gifts to the high altar and 23 contain money for repairs to various churches, by the period 1579-90, there are no bequests to the high altar and only one for reparations to churches.[139] This data represents a marked decline in bequests for the very tools of intercession - prayers and philanthropic giving to the church and particularly the altar where masses for the dead would routinely be offered - amongst the parishioners of Bury St Edmund's.

John Craig has shown that by 1585, testamentary provision for intercession by the parishioners and clerics of Bury St Edmund's on behalf of the souls of the deceased was no longer a routine occurrence. In some senses, this is unsurprising: following the 1550 proclamations and injunctions issued by Bishops Ridley, Hooper, and Cranmer - with the exception of a brief revival during the Marian period - altars had been systematically destroyed, disbanded, and replaced by simple communion tables throughout England and Wales.[140] Furthermore, an enormous blow to the practice of intercessory prayer had already

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[137] Craig, pp. 82-83.
[138] Craig, p. 82.
[139] Craig, pp. 82-83.
[140] Fincham and Tyacke, pp. 19-21; Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 20-31.

been dealt by the two *Chantries Act*s, and the suppression of the chantries that followed.[141] It therefore correlates that, with this dismantling of the tangible and spiritual fabrics of intercession - of the spaces and institutions within the parish church that had traditionally supported and hosted the prayers for the deceased - the testators of Bury St Edmund's would no longer leave bequests for prayers for their souls, nor to the altar, or for the upkeep of other parts of the church where these prayers would have once been offered.

Craig's analysis of the wills of Bury St Edmund's is particularly relevant to this study: Bury is only 26 miles north-east of Ipswich, where the painted *Memorial to William Smart* is displayed in the church of St Mary-le-Tower, and whilst both of these East Anglian market towns are now part of the diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, during the sixteenth century they were both part of the diocese of Norwich. Furthermore, both Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich were heavily invested in and reliant upon the European wool trade.[142] By the later decades of the sixteenth century and certainly by the turn of the seventeenth, they both shared a similar sort of religious character: for whilst Bury of the 1590s has been characterised as 'a byword for the hotter sort of Protestants',[143] so too is it generally agreed that Ipswich was both an early adapter of Protestantism and, by the later years of Elizabeth's reign, a hotbed of Puritanism.[144] It is possible to hypothesise, therefore, that the bequests within the wills of sixteenth century Ipswich would follow a similar pattern to those of sixteenth century Bury St Edmund's.

Certainly, this decreasing pattern of pious bequest, either for the purposes of intercession or more general giving to the church, as identified by Craig in the Bury wills, is discernible in the wills of men and women across England and Wales over the course of the sixteenth century. Thus Jordan's observation in 1959, of the gradual 'secularization of the charitable impulse' still holds today.[145] Appleton, for example, in her 2016 study of Stratford-upon-Avon wills from 1537 to 1649, notes a marked increase in bequests to the poor amongst both male and

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[141] Please see Chapter Two of this thesis for further discussion about the suppression of the chantries and the effects of the two *Chantries Acts* on the post-Reformation parish church.

[142] Diarmaid MacCulloch and John Blatchly, 'Pastoral Provision in the Parishes of Tudor Ipswich', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 22.3 (1991), 457-474 (p. 457).

[143] Craig, p. 176.

[144] MacCulloch and Blatchly.

[145] Jordan, p. 148.

female testators from the 1580s onwards, alongside a clear decrease in pious bequests to parish churches, such as to the choir or to priests for specific prayers: these bequests only occurred in the wills of Stratford testators during the 1530s and 40s.[146] As with the Bury wills, this reduction in pious bequests to the church suggests that, from the 1580s, Stratford testators had abandoned their belief in the power of intercession. At the same time, the surge in secular charitable bequests in the Stratford wills can be seen in testamentary evidence from across England and Wales. The wills of 181 members of the London Drapers' Company proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury over the century, for example, 'does support the notion that institutional charity increased in the second half of the sixteenth century.'[147]

This 'secularization of the charitable impulse' could indicate that testators were anxious to prove their Election to their family and wider community, and perhaps reassure themselves, in the face of their imminent deaths, that they were predestined for Heaven. As will be discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, the Ipswich *Memorial to William Smart* utilises a similar trope in conspicuously drawing the viewer's attention to the philanthropic actions of the subject, in what this thesis will argue is an attempt to prove the subject's Election to the viewer. In a similar vein, certain iconographical tropes included in the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton,* as will be considered in Chapter Four of this thesis, endeavour to affirm Henry Unton's various successes in life as proof of his salvation as one of God's Elect. Thus, in a reversion of the Roman Catholic attempt to elicit help for the soul's passage through Purgatory and towards Heaven, certain post-Reformation testators are more concerned with testifying to the subject's preordained Election.

Appleton further notes a clear pattern of the increased use of Reformed, or Protestant, soul bequests (as per Litzenberger's classification) within the preambles of Stratford wills proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury from the 1580s onwards, leading her to declare that these testator's 'were evidently conforming to the official religion of the state as the stability of Elizabeth's reign took hold.'[148] This can be further witnessed in Adderbury, where the

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[146] Appleton, pp. 190-191.
[147] Laura Branch, 'Fraternal Commemoration and the London Company of Drapers c. 1440-c. 1600', in *Dying, Death, Burial and Commemoration in Reformation Europe,* ed. by Elizabeth Tingle and Jonathan Willis (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), pp. 115-135 (p. 130).
[148] Appleton, p. 191.

painted *Memorial to William and Mary More* – discussed at length in Chapter Four - is displayed in the parish church of St Mary the Virgin. Indeed, in 1572, one year after the reissuing of Elizabeth's *Thirty-Nine Articles*, the will of a John Cox of Adderbury contained a traditionally worded soul bequest: 'I bequeathe my soule to allmightie god my maker and to his sonne Jhesu Christe my Redemer and to all the Holye companie of heaven.'[149] When read in conjunction with his pious bequest of money and 'two stricke of barlye' towards the maintenance of Adderbury church, it is clear that John Cox's approach to salvation was steeped in the soteriological teachings of Roman Catholicism. This is further evidenced by his charitable gift, which is clearly motivated by his hope of receiving intercessory prayer: he instructs his executors to ensure that the poorest of Adderbury receive 'at the daye of my buryall the valewe of hallfe a quarter of corne, So praye for me.'[150]

One of the witnesses to John Cox's will is a husbandman, or small tenant farmer, Henry Dumbleton.[151] Although it is impossible to say for sure, it is likely that this is the same Henry Dumbleton who died in Adderbury twenty-nine years later. Dumbleton's will is markedly different to John Cox's. It contains an explicitly Protestant soul bequest: 'hopinge onely to be saved by the meritts of Jesus Christ my redemer', and although Dumbleton leaves money for the maintenance of the church bells, there is no mention of prayer for his soul as part of any pious or charitable bequest.[152] Thus by 1601, a husbandman of a small Oxfordshire village was content to dictate, or, at the least, to approve a formulaic preamble containing this statement of *sola fide* when twenty-nine years earlier he had been witness to a will that explicitly called for intercessory prayer and salvation through Christ and the Saints. The changes in soteriological teaching and the extent to which they had taken hold as the approved form of belief (at least within official documents such as wills) are clear to see. For even if Dumbleton still believed in the existence of Purgatory and hoped that he would receive prayers to speed his soul to heaven, his will is a perfect example of public conformity in presenting an understanding of salvation *sola fide.* This would suggest that Cranmer's

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[149] Oxford, Oxfordshire History Centre, 185 275.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Oxford, Oxfordshire History Centre, W 191 139, 17 2 39.

message of 1547, that all have 'full and perfect purgation by his blood, that die in his faith,'[153] had, by the turn of the seventeenth century, reached all levels of Adderbury society.

For as Marshal notes: 'the traditional form is predominant everywhere up until the mid-1540s, and then goes into a far from uniform decline'.[154] The key point here, of course, is that – as with the process of religious reform itself – the testamentary evidence is by no means linear. It is necessary to stress once again here that it is impossible to draw conclusions about the actual soteriological beliefs of individuals from evidence taken from their wills alone. If a testator did not include a bequest for intercessory prayer or a pious donation to their parish church, or perhaps their soul bequest is of the Protestant type (referring to salvation through God/Christ alone or *sola fide*) as opposed to the traditional type (referencing the Virgin, the Saints, or the Holy Company of Heaven), this does not necessarily mean that they believed in election through predestination alone and rejected any notion of the power of intercession.

For example, amongst the Monmouthshire wills proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury between 1560 and 1601, there are no post-1573 wills that contain traditional forms of soul bequest.[155] However, this does not correlate with what we know of the religious leanings of the inhabitants of Monmouthshire (the county bordering Glamorganshire, home to the *Stradling Family Memorial Paintings,* the subject of Chapter Six of this thesis). Jones notes that 'between 1581 and 1625 two per cent of the population aged sixteen and over was convicted of recusancy',[156] thus indicating that certain Monmouthshire families remained devout Roman Catholics throughout the later decades of Elizabeth's reign and the reign of James I. Furthermore, 'some known Catholics, like William Vaughhan of Welsh Bicknor … made simple bequests of the soul.'[157] Similarly, whilst there are no post-1563 London Drapers' Company wills which overtly request prayers for the soul of the testator, the practices of the Company indicate a continued attachment to the memorial rituals and customs of the pre-

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[153] Cranmer, p. 181.
[154] Peter Marshall, *Reformation England, 1480-1642* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p. 85.
[155] Jones, p. 16.
[156] Ibid. See also: F. H. Pugh, *Monmouthshire Recusants in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I* (Cardiff: South Wales and Monmouthshire Record Society, 1957), p. 60.
[157] Jones, p. 16.

Reformation church, notably around charitable acts and impulses, that lasted for several further decades.[158]

This brief analysis of English and Welsh lay responses to changing teachings regarding mortality and salvation over the course of the sixteenth century has demonstrated that – at least within the testamentary evidence – it is possible to witness a gradual movement from the soteriology of Roman Catholicism towards a predestinate understanding of salvation. It is not enough, however, to conclude that the absence of, for example, a plea for intercession, meant that the testator had entirely rejected the soteriology of the Old Faith and whole-heartedly adopted a Reformed approach to transience and the afterlife. It is necessary to consider other elements of the testator's life – through the examination of extant material and textual documents – in order to establish a well-rounded idea of their possible beliefs and attitudes towards mortality, salvation, and transience. As such, later chapter of this thesis will consider nine selected painted church portrait memorials commissioned by seven late-Elizabethan laymen and laywomen in conjunction with other written and material documents such as tomb monuments, letters, paintings, and – where they exist – wills. These nine painted church portrait memorials will be treated as cultural documents and, as such, will be interrogated with the aim of understanding the possible intentions of their patrons. In so doing, this thesis will contribute to our understanding of how the post-Reformation laity used painted church portrait memorials in their quest for salvation, and, in turn, how the soteriological upheavals of the sixteenth century affected their memorial commissions.

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[158] Branch, p. 133.

Chapter Two - Memorialisation and the use of the Visual in sixteenth century England and Wales

The preceding chapter explored the development of Reformation soteriology as propagated by the Tudor monarchs and governing clergy: the Bishops, clergymen, and scholars who made up the religious hierarchy of sixteenth century England and Wales. Amongst those who professed adherence to the New Faith, whilst the abolishment of the doctrine of purgatory and an acceptance of a predestinate understanding of salvation might have been widespread, there was still a variety of doctrinal interpretation and room for debate, particularly surrounding the veracity of belief in double or unconditional predestination. The testamentary evidence examined towards the end of the preceding chapter paints a similarly nuanced picture of how readily, and to what extent, the laity either accepted and absorbed, or even selectively applied, Reformed teachings about the afterlife. For whilst a general trend towards an acceptance of a predestinate understanding of salvation can be observed and, certainly, the evidence from wills does suggest that these changes in soteriological doctrine were indeed felt by some at the local parish level, can it really be asserted that, during the post-Reformation period and particularly in the later decades of the sixteenth century, 'Protestants of all persuasions agreed that the fate of the soul was sealed after death'?[1]

There are some significant methodological problems with this statement: it is too definitive and, for the purposes of this thesis, it does not display the necessary nuance required when moving from an understanding of Reformed soteriology to the impact of these doctrinal teachings on the visual culture of commemoration in the parish churches of sixteenth century

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[1] *Death in England: An Illustrated History*, ed. by Claire Gittings and Peter Jupp (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 153.

England and Wales.[2] The nine selected painted church portrait memorials considered in later chapters of this thesis are complex commissions: as considered in Chapter Four, for example, even those commissioned by recusant patrons such as the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More,* could be read in different ways depending on the beliefs of individual viewers. After all, many late-Elizabethans will have held on to some of the soteriological rituals associated with Roman Catholic practice, and there were still many parishioners who continued to worship according to the belief system of the Old Faith, whether openly recusant or inwardly remaining Roman Catholics. Indeed, the late sixteenth century English and Welsh populace was far from homogenous: whilst Calvinist soteriology might have reached much of the laity, there were many who remained staunchly Roman Catholic in their approach to and understanding of mortality, salvation, and transience. Thus, whilst 'many historians agree that – on the surface at least – by the 1570s a Protestant regime had won support from the governing groups in many parts of England…debate continues on just how much change took place at the local parish level.'[3]

This thesis will contribute to this wider debate, but with a very specific focus on the use of memorial portraiture as part of the visual culture of commemoration that occurred at the local, provincial parish church level. This chapter will move beyond the written theological, doctrinal, and testamentary evidence explored in Chapter One and instead focus on material evidence to assess the changing way that parishioners across the south of England and Wales used the visual to commemorate their loved ones within their local churches. This will provide a clear context within which to situate the later chapters of this thesis, which are composed

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[2] Whilst this thesis focuses on the changing visual culture of commemoration within parish churches in southern England and Wales, it is important to note that similar transformations were occurring throughout the sacred spaces of Christian Europe during the Long Reformation. There was much variation in how different countries and regions responded to Reformed doctrine regarding the display and use of imagery in churches for soteriological purposes, with a delineation between those who were aligned to Lutheran teaching and those who followed the Calvinist or Zwinglian example. This is an enormous subject that has prompted much debate, and there is a correspondingly vast corpus of academic literature. Key recent examples include: Andrew Spicer, *Calvinist Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Martin Wangsgaard Jürgensen, 'Between New Ideals and Conservatism: The Early Lutheran Church Interior in Sixteenth Century Denmark', *Church History,* 86.4 (2017), 1041-1080; Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Bridget Heal, *A Magnificent Faith: Art and Identity in Lutheran Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); *Art and Religious Reform in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Bridget Heal and Joseph Leo Koerner (Oxford: Wiley, 2017).

[3] Tarnya Cooper, 'Memento mori portraiture: Painting, Protestant Culture and the Patronage of middle elites in England and Wales 1540-1630' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 2001), p. 135.

of highly localised case studies focusing on the creation and reception of nine selected surviving painted church portrait memorials created for display in seven different parish churches during the late Elizabethan period. The examination and analysis of these memorial commissions will shine a light on the diverse range of individual belief that existed across the broad spectrum of late-sixteenth century English and Welsh religion.

Indeed objects and images within parish churches would have instructed parishioners on how best to achieve salvation, as well as reminding them of the delights or horrors that awaited them in the afterlife: 'thus an *aide-mémoire* became a prick of conscience'.[4] So too would the highly visible changes and transformations to visual *memoria* that took place during the post-Reformation period in these churches have provided instruction to parishioners regarding the new soteriology as decreed by the Reformers. These changes sometimes resulted in the reduction in production and even the disappearance of entire genres of commemorative imagery in parish churches, as seen in, for example, the near total abandonment of donor portraits contained within painted altarpieces. With the theoretical abolishment of the doctrine of purgatory and, accordingly, the refutation of the power of intercession, images of patrons kneeling in prayerful devotion to various Saints no longer held any soteriological purpose. At the same time, however, and as will be considered in this chapter, recent research by Tara Hamling, Jonathan Willis, and Susan Orlik, has shown that religious reform by no means resulted in the disappearance of religious art and imagery in the ecclesiological setting: new and adapted types of images were indeed being produced and displayed during the post-Reformation period in many different parish churches throughout England.[5]

As Richard Williams notes, 'it is certainly true that images were far more than mere decoration' within the spatial and theological context of the parish church.[6] This statement

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[4] Clive Burgess, ''Longing to be prayed for': Death and Commemoration in an English parish in the later middle ages', in *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 44-66 (p. 46).

[5] Susan Orlik, *Decorating the Parish Church in Post-Reformation England: Material culture, community and identity in Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire, 1560-1640* (Donnington: Shaun Tyas, 2022); Tara Hamling and Jonathan Willis, 'From Rejection to Reconciliation: Protestantism and the Image in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 62.4 (2023) 932-996.

[6] Richard Williams, 'Reformation', in *Art Under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm,* ed. by Tabitha Barber and Stacy Boldrick (London: Tate Publishing, 2013), p. 48.

applies to late sixteenth century objects and images created for commemorative purposes just as it does to the devotional and commemorative imagery within the late-medieval parish church. The key difference, however, is found in the distinctive ways that these memorial objects functioned, for whilst visual *memoria* within the pre-Reformation church was intrinsically linked to Roman Catholic devotional practice and soteriological belief, this was – on the surface, at least - no longer the case by the later years of the sixteenth century: imagery and devotion were no longer so intertwined as to appear one and the same. Instead, as Llewellyn argues, 'the funeral monuments of post-Reformation England filled the space left by the absence of devotional art, just as they helped fill the social vacuum left by the deceased.'[7] This chapter will expand on Llewellyn's thesis by examining the various ways that, over the course of the sixteenth century, visual *memoria* - from church monuments to donor portraiture on the walls, windows, and altarpieces of parish churches - developed and adapted in response to Reformed soteriological teachings. As such, this chapter asks: how did memorial forms and imagery within the parish church setting change and adapt to the pressures of religious reform? What could remain? What changed?

The focus of this chapter is on the kinds of memorial images and objects in churches that incorporate elements of portraiture. Indeed, the remaining chapters of this thesis will focus entirely on painted memorial portraits in parish churches during the post-Reformation period, so in first assessing the use of portraiture for memorial purposes in pre-Reformation parish churches, a clear art-historical context will be provided in which to situate these later portrait-specific case studies. Some clarification is necessary here, however, regarding what is meant by the word portraiture, and how it will be used throughout this thesis. For whether or not an engraved figurative image on a memorial brass, a sculpted effigial tomb monument, or the image of a donor on an altarpiece or on the walls or windows of parish churches can be considered a portrait is a contentious point. Barbara Harris, for example, asserts that 'however prominent the sculpted and engraved effigies were on funerary monuments, most authorities agree that they were not portraits in the modern sense',[8] whilst Paul Binski argues

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[7] Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post- Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 377.

[8] Barbara Harris, *English Aristocratic Women and the Fabric of Piety, 1450-1550* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), p. 316.

that portraits on effigies are uncommon during the medieval period,[9] and Nigel Saul is even clearer: 'it goes without saying that medieval effigies were not portraits'.[10]

Ultimately, however, whether or not these memorials of various sixteenth century men and women can be considered portraits 'in the modern sense',[11] meaning a mimetically accurate representation of the subject normally created from the life, is not amongst the primary concerns of this thesis. This study is concerned with a type of memorial portraiture for the church setting which, as discussed in the Introduction, uses a combination of iconographic tropes and text to commemorate the subject and fashion their post-mortem identity as desired by the patron. Furthermore, as will be explored Chapter Six, it is possible that a lack of mimetic representation in, for example, the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* may have been a deliberate choice taken by the patron – the son of a prominent Roman Catholic who had been imprisoned for the distribution of what was considered to be seditious religious propaganda - to signal his own conformity and ensure that his memorial commission would be considered permissible for display in the post-Reformation parish church setting.

The final part of this chapter will move from this discussion of visual *memoria* in the church setting to an analysis of how portraiture was used by the laity of Elizabethan England and Wales to commemorate and memorialise themselves and their loved outside of the ecclesiological space, with a focus on the potential function of portraits in the domestic space 'as repositories of memory whose resonances were recalculated into a personalized understanding in a reformed context'.[12] By focusing on one superlative example – the c. 1576 portrait of John Isham – this chapter will consider how the commissioning of a type of portraiture by the non-hereditarily landed elites of post-Reformation England and Wales which is laden with iconography celebrating their professional or heraldic achievements, whilst also incorporating *memento mori* and *vanitas* iconography as a display of piety, is evident of both Renaissance 'self-fashioning' and the post-Reformation drive to balance pride

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[9] Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London: British Museum Press, 1996), p. 103.
[10] Nigel Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 143.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Tarnya Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elites of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales 1540-1620,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 202.

(in one's ancestry, profession, and social status) with piety. This chapter also considers the social function of the Elizabethan civic portrait as presented and defined by Robert Tittler. Finally, this chapter will conclude by proposing that the type of cultural product considered in this thesis – painted portrait memorials on wooden panel for display in the church setting, commissioned by patrons from across the broad confessional scale of late-Elizabethan England and Wales - represents an intersection between *memento mori* and civic portraiture in the domestic and civic setting, and funeral monuments commissioned for the ecclesiological setting.

    i.   Church monuments and memorials

       a)   Destruction

Sixteenth century parishioners throughout the south of England and Wales, whether they lived during the pre- or post-Reformation period, would have offered their prayers to God in churches full of monuments and memorials to their ancestors and other deceased people. Indeed, it is clear that the visual culture of commemoration thrived across the whole of the late-medieval and early modern period; the Reformation by no means put an end to the human desire to remember our loved ones after death or to ensure that we ourselves are remembered through imagery. What is evident, however, is that the new soteriology brought in by the Reformers – namely the disavowal of belief in the existence of purgatory as a destination for the post-mortem soul and the introduction of a predestinate understanding of salvation – led to a profound shift in the salvatory function of church monuments, and therefore the role of visual *memoria* within the death ritual as a visible part of the process of mourning.[13] With the refutation of purgatory so too came the abandonment of intercessory prayer for the soul. Thus, as Whiting notes, 'the reformed memorial was designed to promote faith in God rather than in saints, and confidence in the soul's reception into heaven rather than fear of its punishment in purgatory.'[14] Llewellyn concurs, stating of monuments and

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[13] Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.211-28.

[14] Whiting, *Reformation of the English Parish Church,* p. 211.

memorials that 'their traditional functions – in relation to intercession and prayer – were no longer defended since they smacked of unreconstructed Roman Catholic practice.'[15]

It is essential to contextualise changes to visual *memoria* throughout the sixteenth century as part of the wider pattern of the changing visual culture of the post-Reformation church: 'funeral monuments…were now caught up in the debate about images.'[16] As such, the changes to the fixtures and fittings of parish churches (of which, I maintain, monuments and memorials must be included as they are functional objects 'contained within the walls and windows, and between the floor and ceiling' of the building'),[17] were numerous and, some cases, can be attributed to iconoclasm as advocated by Reformers such as John Jewel in his 1571 *Homily Against the Peril of Idolatry and Superfluous Decking of Churches* and Henrich Bullinger in his 1577 *Fifty Godly Sermons.* For as well as the teaching that the presence of graven imagery in churches ran contrary to the Reformed principle of *sola scriptura* and encouraged the sin of idolatry, the abolishment of the belief in purgatory and the establishment of a predestinate salvatory message was a guiding force in the iconoclasm that took place during periods of the sixteenth century. Indeed, imagery which encouraged practices such as intercessory prayer or veneration of the saints in the hope of reducing time in purgatory was no longer acceptable in the post-Reformation period: it was now considered, in the eyes of Reformers such as Jewel, Bullinger, and Perkins to be blasphemous and seditious. Thus, whilst Reformation soteriology 'resulted in a complete reconfiguration of the content and meaning of memorials to the dead',[18] so too did these changes influence the reconfiguring of church architecture and adornment.

For example, the abolishment of the chantry chapels – which in itself could be considered a kind of spatial, architectural iconoclasm – must be directly attributed to the denial of the existence of purgatory and the power of intercessory prayer. The chantries, comprised of the physical spaces of the chantry chapels and the salaried priests who were employed to pray

[15] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* p. 363.
[16] Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), p. 101.
[17] Richard Stemp, *The Secret Language of Churches and Cathedrals: Decoding the Sacred Symbolism of Christianity's Holy Buildings* (London: Duncan Baird, 2010), p. 40.
[18] Madeline Gray, 'Reforming Memory: Commemoration of the Dead in sixteenth century Wales', *Welsh History Review*, 26.2 (2012), 186-214 (p. 187).

for the souls of the chapel's founder and other named peoples, were institutions 'which undoubtedly commemorated the dead',[19] according to Roman Catholic tradition and soteriological teaching. They were denounced in the second *Chantries Act* of 1547 as 'devising and phantasing vain opinions of Purgatory',[20] and the institution in England was accordingly dissolved; the priests dismissed, and the spaces either destroyed or reassigned and reorganised as family or public chapels now stripped of their once fundamental link to the estate of the dead. For example, the *Greyfriars' Chronicle* recounts the total destruction of Robert Tate's chantry chapel of St Mary of Barking in 1547: 'this yere was Barkyng chappylle at the Towre hylle pullyd downe'.[21] There is, however, evidence to suggest that the dissolution of the chantries was less total in Wales than in England, although as Gray argues, rather than being an indicator of 'the passive traditionalism of the general Welsh approach to religious change',[22] the fact remains that there were far fewer chantries in Wales than England to begin with, perhaps as little as eighty, and many of these 'were very slenderly endowed'.[23]

In terms of changes to visual *memoria* during the post-Reformation period, the destruction of tomb monuments – many of which were in chantry chapels - that took place throughout the sixteenth century, is perhaps the most momentous. Phillip Lindley has identified two distinct phases of monumental iconoclasm. The first phase took place during the Henrician Reformation as a direct result of the Dissolution of the Monasteries from 1536 to 1539.[24] This period of destruction was focused on monuments in monastic buildings, and, as a result an enormous number of monuments to the clergy were destroyed. In addition, as it was common practice for members of royal houses and the nobility to be buried in monastic grounds, huge

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[19] Burgess, 'Longing to be prayed for', p. 57.

[20] Phillip Lindley 'Pickpurse' Purgatory, the Dissolution of the Chantries and the Suppression of Intercession for the Dead', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 164.1 (2011), 277-304 (p. 277).

[21] *Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London*, ed. by J. G. Nichols (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1852), pp. 53-78. British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/camden-record-soc/vol53/pp53-78> [accessed 19 August 2020]. The *Greyfriars Chronicle* is an important source of eyewitness information for the changes in London during the process of religious reform, and particularly the effects of the Dissolution of the Monasteries on the London-based Franciscans. The original manuscript, composed of a series of notes and various lists is: London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius F xii. See: Mary C. Erler, *Reading and Writing During the Dissolution: Monks, Friars, and Nuns 1530-1558* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 38-66.

[22] Gray, 'Reforming Memory', p. 192.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Phillip Lindley, "Disrespect for the Dead?' The Destruction of Tomb Monuments in Mid Sixteenth Century England', *Journal of the Church Monuments Society,* 19 (2004), 53–79 (p. 57).

numbers of memorial objects to the elite were also destroyed, removed, or otherwise defaced.[25] Indeed, monumental iconoclasm during this period resulted in widespread destruction: 'mid sixteenth century England witnessed the destruction of Christian tomb monuments on a scale wholly without precedent in western Europe.'[26]

The second phase, beginning under Edward VI and continuing into Elizabeth's reign was in response to both the increasing hostility towards religious imagery and, crucially, as a consequence of the attack levied in the *Chantries Act* of 1547 on the institution of purgatory and, accordingly, the entire Roman Catholic soteriological system.[27] As such, it is this phase of monumental iconoclasm which is of the greatest relevance to this thesis, as it is where we can witness the most direct effects of Reformed teachings regarding salvation, the afterlife, and transience, on the visual culture of commemoration within parish churches. Indeed, 'once the prohibition of purgatory was enacted, the assault on funerary sculpture became more comprehensive, encompassing monuments in parish churches and cathedrals. Many hundreds of tombs and brasses were subjected to attack or defacement by reformers.'[28]

Although it is impossible to know for certain exactly how many medieval monuments have been lost over the centuries, it is generally accepted that those that survive in English parish churches today are only a small proportion of what would have been seen on the eve of the Reformation.[29] This is not to say, however, that monumental iconoclasm was a state-sanctioned affair during the sixteenth century in the same way that attacks on statues of saints or the tearing down of rood screens appears to have been. An enormous amount of damage was wrought during the seventeenth century and the post-Restoration period, and unless documentary evidence survives to evidence exactly when the damage took place, it is

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[25] Lindley, 'Disrespect for the Dead', pp. 57-66; Saul, *English Church Monuments*, p. 367.
[26] Phillip Lindley, *Tomb Destruction and Scholarship: Medieval Monuments in Early Modern Britain* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007), p. 8.
[27] Lindley, 'Disrespect for the Dead', p. 57.
[28] Saul, *English Church Monuments*, p. 367.
[29] Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory,* p. 102; Whiting, *Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p. 223; Lindley, 'Disrespect for the Dead', pp. 53-74; Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 104; Margaret Aston*, England's Iconoclasts: Laws Against Images* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 15, pp. 71–83, pp. 269–70, p. 314, p. 317.

very difficult to confidently ascribe it to the decades immediately following the Reformation.[30] There is in fact clear evidence that the sixteenth century authorities afforded special protection to church monuments and memorials. For example, whilst the 1549 parliamentary act *For the abolishing and putting away of divers books and images* effectively 'sanctioned iconoclasm',[31] it took care to include the following addendum:

> This act, or anything therein contained, shall not extend to any image or picture set or graven upon any tomb in any church, chapel, or church-yard, only for a monument of any king, prince, nobleman, or other dead person, which hath not been commonly reputed and taken for a saint, but that such pictures and images may stand and continue in like manner and form as if this act had never been had nor made.[32]

Thus, church monuments and memorials were, in theory at least, afforded protection from iconoclastic destruction.

The Elizabethan authorities were similarly concerned with the protection of church monuments, enough to issue a proclamation in 1560 which specifically lamented the destruction of:

> Certain ancient monuments, some of metal, some of stone, which were erected up as well in churches as in other public places within this realm only to show a memory to the posterity of the persons there buried, or that had been benefactors to the buildings or donations of the same churches or public places, and not to nourish any public superstition.[33]

Of course the fact that the 1549 addendum had to be issued in the first place, and then, only eleven years later, another proclamation calling for the protection of church monuments had to be delivered is, in itself, evidence that the destruction of monuments was widespread enough to cause concern at the highest levels.[34] Certainly, those inclined to monumental

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[30] Rhianydd Biebrach, *Church Monuments in South Wales, c. 1200-1546* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017), pp. 167-169.

[31] Ruth Nugent, 'Emotion and the Senses in Archaeology', in *The Routledge Handbook of Sensory Archaeology*, ed. by Robin Skeates and Jo Day (New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 109-130 (p. 124).

[32] 'An Act for the abolishing and putting away of divers books and images', in *Statutes relating to the Ecclesiastical and Eleemosynary Institutions of England, Wales, Ireland, India, and the Colonies*, ed. by Archibald Stephens (London: John W. Parker, 1845), pp. 329-330 (p. 330).

[33] Quoted in: Lindley, *Tomb Destruction and Scholarship*, p. 26.

[34] Biebrach, *Church Monuments in South Wales*, p. 167; Lindley 'Disrespect for the Dead', p. 68.

iconoclasm did not have to look far for instruction and inspiration from some of the leading Reformers. In 1549, for example, Protector Somerset 'destroyed Pardon churchyard and cloister, with its Dance of Death Paintings, tombs, and monuments' whilst, in 1552, Bishop Ridley 'commanded the destruction of the tombs in St Paul's Cathedral'.[35] Bishop Hooper, in his 1551-1552 diocesan *Injunctions for Gloucester and Worcester* called for the clergy to take down 'all places, tabernacles, tombs, sepulchres, tables, footstools, rood-lofts, and other monuments, signs, tokens, relics, leavings and rememberances'.[36]

b) Adaptation and Renewal

It would be incorrect however, to couch the narrative of monuments and memorial imagery in churches during the sixteenth century as one solely marked by destruction. Post-revisionism has challenged past perceptions of sixteenth century iconoclasm as a movement rooted in iconophobia and, in redressing the parameters of acceptability of images in the church setting, has queried the extent to which the Reformation did in fact lead to the disappearance of imagery – including memorial imagery - within the parish churches of England and Wales. For whilst images which could be seen to encourage intercessory prayer and uphold the purgatorial imperative were deemed particularly offensive - 'pardon brasses promising indulgences to the reader, chalice brasses showing priests in their sacrificial function, shroud and skeleton monuments and, above all, depictions of saints, of Christ, of the lamb and cross, and of the Trinity' - [37] recent research, including that undertaken by this author, has disproven Lindley's assertion that these 'formats of monument completely disappeared as a consequence of the Edwardian and Elizabethan Reformation'.[38]

It is clear that 'monuments as a genre... survived the upheavals of the Reformation'.[39] As will be demonstrated in later chapters of this thesis, this includes the survival of many late-

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[35] Lindley, 'Disrespect for the Dead', p. 69.
[36] John Hooper, 'Injunctions for Gloucester and Worcester Dioceses, 1551-52', in *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation*, ed. by W. H. Frere and W. M. Kennedy, 3 vols (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1910), III, pp. 284-285 (p. 284).
[37] Saul, *English Church Monuments*, p. 367.
[38] Lindley, 'Disrespect for the Dead', p. 72.
[39] Saul, *English Church Monuments*, p. 367.

medieval monuments throughout England and Wales, albeit sometimes with gaps and niches where religious imagery such as angels, weepers, or lambs would have once featured. A superlative example is at St Mary the Virgin, Lowgate, Hull, where a brass to the memory of the wool merchant John Harrison (d. 1525) survives:

Figure 2.1 The *Harrison Brass,* St Mary the Virgin Church, Lowgate, Hull

Here we see how the figurative depictions of Harrison, his wife, and his children remain, but the central image of the trinity has been defaced.[40] Biebrach has noted a similar pattern of survival in Wales, arguing that whilst monumental iconoclasm did indeed occur in the sixteenth century (virulently at times, and with a strong focus on former monastic sites in proximity to cities and towns), overall, many medieval monuments did survive the immediate post-Reformation period (even if not fully intact).[41] These medieval survivals have allowed scholars of post-Reformation church monuments and memorials, as well as the wider visual

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[40] Whiting, *Reformation of the English Parish Church,* p. 223. See: Whiting, *Reformation of the English Parish Church*, pp. 223-228 for more examples.

[41] Biebrach, *Church Monuments in South Wales,* pp. 166-187.

culture of the parish church, to observe what Llewellyn notes is 'the important thread of continuity that characterises pre- and post- Reformation funeral monuments',[42] whilst also documenting new innovations in the design and execution of imagery – whether monumental or decorative – for the church setting.

Indeed scholars such as Tara Hamling, Jonathan Willis, and Susan Orlik have disputed the once widely accepted argument that 'Reformed Protestants were especially hostile to religious imagery in ecclesiastical spaces'.[43] Orlik's 2022 monograph,[44] as well as a 2023 article by Hamling and Willis in the *Journal of British Studies* have responded to the 'erroneous suggestion that the visually rich interiors of medieval churches were transformed following the Reformation into plain whitewashed boxes'.[45] In illustrating exactly how 'erroneous' this understanding of the use of the visual in the post-Reformation ecclesiological space is, Hamling and Willis' presentation and analysis of the 'religious art' found on a commandment board of c.1602 in the parish church of All Hallows, Whitchurch, Hampshire,[46] and Orlik's discussion of the c.1600 painting of the ceiling of St Peter and St Paul parish church, Muchelney, Somerset with 'twenty-four panels of angels, stars, and clouds',[47] demonstrates that, during the late-Elizabethan period, new images – including figurative religious scenes - were indeed being commissioned and created for display within the parish church setting.

These findings are of particular significance for this thesis, which takes a selection of memorial objects dating to c.1595-c.1603 – all of which make use of imagery (to varying degrees), both religious and secular - as its core source material. For amongst the painted wooden portrait memorials selected for study in this thesis there are, alongside images of the individual

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[42] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* p. 77.
[43] Hamling and Willis, p. 947.
[44] Orlik.
[45] Hamling and Willis, p. 947.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Orlik, p. 178.

subjects being commemorated, images of: skeletons,[48] angels,[49] skulls,[50] hourglasses,[51] shroud monuments,[52] skeleton monuments,[53] the Saints,[54], and even of Christ himself.[55] When studied in the context of Hamling, Willis, and Orlik's recent research, it is clear that these memorial paintings were not being created in a vacuum. Instead, they were part of a wider spiritual and creative drive which perpetuated the making of new (often religious) imagery for both the domestic and church settings during the immediate post-Reformation years.[56] This drive, as this thesis highlights, could be found across the entirety of the broad and diverse spectrum of religious belief and confessional allegiance of late sixteenth century England and Wales.

For it is clear that religious reform did in fact lead to a new type of creativity within monumental representation; with continuity of monumental forms and designs combining with innovative ways of using the visual – both image and ornament – to express new soteriological teachings and, as Sherlock notes, 'new identities that emerged in the wake of the reformation'.[57] Even during the immediate-post Reformation decades - far from the disappearance of memorial imagery in the church setting - new forms and designs of *memoria* were instead being commissioned and created, alongside, for example, the perpetuation of

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[48] As seen in the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* now in the NPG, London, but likely once displayed as a temporary memorial in the church of All Saints, Faringdon. Please see Chapter Four of this thesis for discussion of the possible previous location of the Unton painting.

[49] As depicted in the *Memorial to William Smart* at St-Mary-le-Tower church, Ipswich and the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*.

[50] As seen in the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* at St Mary's Adderbury.

[51] As seen in the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* at St Mary's Adderbury.

[52] As depicted in the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* at St Peter's Besford and the *Cornewall Family Memorial* at St Mary's Burford.

[53] As seen in the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* and the *Memorial to Margery Downes* in St Mary the Virgin Bishop's Frome.

[54] As depicted on the outer triptych doors of the *Cornewall Family Memorial*.

[55] As depicted in the Doom scenes within the tympanums of *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* and the *Cornewall Family Memorial*.

[56] This thesis focuses on the creation and use of imagery in the post-Reformation ecclesiological setting. For the domestic setting, see the ground-breaking works of Tara Hamling, particularly: Tara Hamling *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Protestant Britain, c.1560-c.1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010); Tara Hamling 'Seeing salvation in the domestic hearth in post-Reformation England', in *Sin and Salvation in Reformation England,* ed. by Jonathan Willis (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 223-244; Tara Hamling, "An Arelome To This Hous For Ever': Monumental Fixtures and Furnishings in the English Domestic Interior, c. 1560-c.1660' in *The Arts of Remembrance in Early Modern England: Memorial Cultures of the Post Reformation*, ed. by Andrew Gordon and Thomas Rist (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 59-70; *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

[57] Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory,* p. 98.

certain traditional monumental forms and images. From the 1570s, for example, sculpted wall monuments of stone with figures kneeling at prayer desks, sometimes holding Bibles, become more and more popular.[58] As Badham has argued, this shows an evolution in monumental design: from late-medieval mural memorials depicting the subjects kneeling in veneration to a holy image such as a Saint or the Virgin Mary to, from roughly the 1570s, husbands and wives being represented kneeling in prayer either side of a prayer desk (often holding prayerbooks), with their children fanning (also on their knees in prayer) out behind them.[59] Examples of this new design of kneeling mural monument commissioned during the period that this thesis focuses on, c.1585-c.1603, are particularly numerous in the diocese of Norwich (home to another example of innovative commemorative design, the *Memorial to William Smart*, presented and analysed in Chapter Three of this thesis), and include: the monument to Margaret (d. 1584) and Clement (d. 1596) Hyrne at the church of St Mary, Coslany;[60] the monument to Sir Robert Suckling (d.1589) at the church of St Andrew, Norwich; and the monument to Christopher Layer (d. 1600) in the church of St John the Baptist, Maddermarket.

The use of imagery across the Layer monument is particularly significant; resplendent in polychromatic marble and rich in emblematic and figurative imagery, this memorial to an East Anglian Elizabethan merchant and one time mayor of Norwich further disproves the 'erroneous suggestion that the visually rich interiors of medieval churches were transformed following the Reformation into plain whitewashed boxes':[61]

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[58] Saul, *English Church Monuments,* p. 368; Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* pp. 60-145; Jonathan Finch, 'A Reformation of Meaning: Commemoration and the Parish Church, c.1450-c.1550', in *The Archaeology of Reformation c.1480-1580,* ed. by David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 437-449 (pp. 442-446).

[59] Sally Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer: English Commemorative Art 1330–1670', *The British Art Journal*, 16.1 (2015), 58–72.

[60] An image of this monument is published in: Finch, p. 443.

[61] Hamling and Willis, p. 947. On the Layer monument, see: Churches Conservation Trust, *The Church of St John the Baptist, Maddermarket, Norwich, Norfolk* (2001), <https://www.visitchurches.org.uk/static/uploaded/7d7832a0-96bb-4cbe-8d1ecd05701c36d6.pdf> [accessed 3 November 2024].

Figure 2.2 The *Layer Monument,* St John the Baptist Church, Maddermarket, Norwich © 2022 Norwich360

This remarkable mural monument includes the tripartite layered depiction of a prayer desk, a *memento mori* skull, and a blazing heavenly sun. This powerful visual mnemonic uses imagery to inform the viewer that the pious subjects of the memorial are, in death, receiving their heavenly reward, whilst the four figures flanking the subjects are allegorical representations in the classical architectural style of Peace (holding an olive branch and trampling on weapons), Vanitas (a young boy blowing bubbles), Glory (a woman standing on a crescent moon), and Labour (an elderly man burying a skull with a shovel). This funeral monument of c.1600 does not shy away from the use of the visual in the church setting.

Rather, it embraces imagery as a valuable tool with which to fashion the identity of the subject and present it to the viewer, in this case by portraying Christopher Layer's piety and Election (through the central layered image of prayer desk, skull, and sun), social standing (through his depiction in the red robes of a civic mayor),[62] and erudition (through the inclusion of the four classically-inspired allegorical figures).[63]

As such, the Layer monument has much in common with the nine late-Elizabethan painted memorial portraits examined in this thesis. As will be explored in Chapters Three-Six, these nine painted memorials on wooden panel similarly embrace the use of imagery in the post-Reformation parish church setting and the examples in Ipswich, Burford, Bishop's Frome, St Donat's, and Adderbury all make use of the 'kneeling in prayer' type of monumental design as documented by Badham.[64] Rather than the kneeling subjects being depicted in alabaster or marble, however, the men and women in these nine memorial objects are instead portrayed using paint on wooden panel. This results in a type of *memoria* which, as the final section of this chapter will suggest – in terms of both its materiality and use of text and image - sits at the intersection between two different sixteenth century object types: firstly, the widely commissioned, well surviving, and widely studied stone church monument (as documented and explored by scholars such as Nigel Llewellyn and Peter Sherlock for England and Rhianydd Biebrach for Wales),[65] and, secondly, the somewhat lesser known and certainly

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[62] On red mayoral robes as portrayed in post-Reformation provincial civic portraiture, see: Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 147; p. 150.

[63] On the adoption of certain classical motifs into Tudor and early Stuart portraits as a signifier of learning or sophistication (including classical figures and architectural details as displayed in the Layer monument), see: Susan Foister, 'Sixteenth Century Portraiture and the Idea of the Classical', in *Albion's Classicism: The Visual Arts in Britain, 1550-1660,* ed. by Lucy Gent (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 163-180; Robert Tittler, 'Portraiture and Memory amongst the Middling Elites' in *The Arts of Remembrance in Early Modern England: Memorial Cultures of the Post Reformation*, ed. by Andrew Gordon and Thomas Rist (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 37-58 (pp. 53-54).

[64] Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer'.

[65] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*; Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*; Rhianydd Biebrach, *Church Monuments in South Wales, c. 1200-1546* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017).

poorer surviving *memento mori* or provincial civic portrait as identified and explored by Tarnya Cooper and Robert Tittler.[66]

ii. Donor portraits in the ecclesiological space

a) Altarpieces

As this chapter has shown, whilst the changing function of church monuments and memorial imagery during the post-Reformation period led to many changes in monumental design, the narrative is not one solely of destruction, but also of adaptation, renewal, and continuation. The functional shift from the commissioning of visual *memoria* as a tool for intercession during the pre-Reformation period to, instead, the presentation and affirmation of the patron or subject's predestined, providential place as one of the Elect during the post-Reformation period, did, however, lead to the near disappearance of one entire genre of memorial imagery: that of donor, or votive, portraits depicted on altarpieces. These objects were far more than simple furniture for the altar, instead they held a threefold function: liturgical, devotional, and memorial. For whilst 'altarpieces could symbolise and instruct the laity in the doctrines that underlay the liturgy of the Church',[67] through their association with the altar and thus the miraculous, transformative rite of the Mass, 'the point at which divine and earthly realms converged,'[68] they also encouraged devotion to whichever holy figure was

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[66] Cooper, 'Memento mori portraiture'; Tarnya Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elites of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales 1540-1620,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012); Tarnya Cooper, "Frail Flesh, as in a Glass": The Portrait as an Immortal Presence in Early Modern England and Wales', in *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, ed. by Mary Rogers (Hampshire and Vermont: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 197-212; Tarnya Cooper 'Predestined Lives? Portraiture and Religious Belief in England and Wales, 1560-1620', in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007), pp. 49-62; Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics*; Robert Tittler, 'Painters' and Patrons' Circles in Provincial England, c. 1580-1640', in *Painting in Britain 1500-1630: Production, Influences and Patronage*, ed. by Tarnya Cooper, Aviva Burnstock, Edward Town, and Maurice Howard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 338-344; Robert Tittler, 'Regional Portraiture and the Heraldic Connection in Tudor and Early Stuart England' *The British Art Journal*, 9.3 (2009), 3-10; Robert Tittler, *The Face of the City: Civic Portraiture and Civic Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

[67] Williams, 'Reformation', p. 48.

[68] Lucy Wooding, 'Remembrance in the Eucharist', in *The Arts of Remembrance in Early Modern England: Memorial Cultures of the Post Reformation*, ed. by in Andrew Gordon and Thomas Rist (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 19-37 (p. 19).

depicted on the object,[69] as well as – through the inclusion of donor portraits – encouraging the viewer to remember the patron. Crucially, this remembrance would act, for the late-medieval viewer and, indeed, for continued Roman Catholics during the post-Reformation period, as an encouragement to pray for the patron's soul.

As Badham notes, whilst 'there must once have been many painted altarpieces on panel in England, both with and without donor images…they do not survive in anything approaching the numbers extant on the Continent.'[70] For whilst there are a significant number of pre-1600 painted panels (many of which are indeed altarpieces with donor portraits) that do survive in parish churches and cathedrals in England today, many of these objects 'were in fact only acquired in later centuries, particularly the nineteenth.'[71] This is certainly the case for the 76 pre-1600 German and Netherlandish painted panels in English churches as comprehensively catalogued by Christa Grössinger in 1992.[72] We know of very few of this object type which were *in situ* during the pre- or post-Reformation period in England and Wales, and the vast majority of these were almost certainly created by painters from northern Europe – most often the Netherlands - as opposed to English or Welsh artists.[73] With some notable exceptions such as the Westminster Retable (late 1260s),[74] the Thornam Parva Retable (c. 1335),[75] and the Despenser Retable (1370-1406),[76] as well as other lesser-known examples catalogued by Ollman in his unpublished 2001 doctoral thesis,[77] there are very few surviving

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[69] Beth Williamson, 'Altarpieces, Liturgy, and Devotion', *Speculum*, 79.2 (2004), 341-406 (p. 381).

[70] Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer', p. 60.

[71] Christa Grössinger, *North-European Panel Paintings. A Catalogue of Netherlandish and German Paintings before 1600 in English Churches and Colleges* (Harvey Miller: London, 1992), p. 11. Grössinger includes seventy-six paintings in her catalogue. See: Grössinger, pp. 41-252.

[72] See: Grössinger, pp. 41-252.

[73] Tarnya Cooper, 'Visual Memory, Portraiture and the Protestant Credentials of Tudor and Stuart Families', in *Memory and the English Reformation,* ed. by Alexandra Walsham, Bronwyn Wallace, Ceri Law, and Brian Cummings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 318-333 (p. 319).

[74] For more on this object, see: Paul Binski and Ann Massing, *The Westminster Abbey Retable: History, Technique, Conservation* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, for Hamilton Kerr Institute, University of Cambridge, 2009).

[75] For more on this object, see: Edward Norton, David Park, and Paul Binski, *Dominican Painting in East Anglia: The Thornham Parva Retable and the Musée de Cluny Frontal* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1987); Ann Massing, *The Thornham Parva Retable: Technique, Conservation and Context of an English Medieval Painting* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, for Hamilton Kerr Institute, University of Cambridge, 2003).

[76] For more on the Despenser Retable, see: Sarah Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), pp. 76-94; Julian Luxford, 'A Late Medieval English Design for an Altarpiece', *The Burlington Magazine*, 147.1227 (2005), 399-401(p. 400).

[77] D. T. Ollmann, 'The origin and development of the English reredos 1000-1540' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Cambridge University, 2001), pp. 92-97.

painted altarpieces on panel that can be said, with confidence, to have adorned the altars of English or Welsh churches during the pre-Reformation period, and there are fewer still which feature donor portraits as part of their iconography.[78]

This incredibly poor rate of survival is most likely due to an unfortunate dual combination of changing tastes and fashions and iconoclastic destruction. Firstly, the increasing popularity of alabaster would have almost certainly resulted in the decline in production of altarpieces in wood towards the end of the fourteenth century and, furthermore, it is possible that altarpieces on wood panel could have been destroyed or removed to make way for new versions in alabaster.[79] Then, in a further blow to their survival, the vast majority of wooden altarpieces that were still in use in churches on the eve of the Reformation would have almost certainly fallen victim to iconoclasm during the sixteenth century in response to the directive - contained within the 1552 *Book of Common Prayer* - that stone altars be turned into movable wooden tables and that the various adornments and vestments associated with the medieval altar be destroyed.[80] It is therefore necessary to turn to the few pre-1600 altarpieces on panel with donor portraits that are extant, and which can be confidently placed in parish churches or other public places of worship during the sixteenth century. These objects reveal much about late-medieval visual memorial culture and soteriological belief, as well as the possible aims and intentions of their patrons.

Parishioners in London, for example, would have been able to offer their prayers and witness the mass in front of an altarpiece commissioned by the mercer Robert Tate, who rose to be Lord Mayor of London (1488-89).[81] This painting, of which only four panels are extant, was most likely originally in triptych form:

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[78] Audrey Baker, *English Panel Paintings, 1400-1558: a survey of figure paintings on East Anglian Rood Screens,* ed. by Ann Ballantyne and Pauline Plumber (London: Archetype Publishers, 2011).

[79] On the popularity of alabaster in medieval England, see: Lloyd de Beer, 'Reassessing English Alabaster Carving: Medieval Sculpture and its Contexts' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of East Anglia, 2018).

[80] Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 96-97, p. 178; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c.1580* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 861-865, p. 888, pp. 1064-1065. On the afterlife of medieval liturgical artifacts (including stone altars and objects associated with the medieval altar, often made of precious metals and gems), please see: Alexandra Walsham, 'Recycling the Sacred: Material Culture and Cultural Memory after the English Reformation', *Church History,* 86.4 (2017), 1121-1154.

[81] Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer', p. 61.

Figure 2.3 Unknown Flemish artist, *Four Panels from a Winged Triptych bearing the Arms of Tate/Wood,* c. 1500, oil on panel, All-Hallows-by-the-Tower Church, London

The panels are today on display in All-Hallows-by-the-Tower, but the altarpiece was originally *in situ* in the chapel of St Mary of Barking,[82] a chantry chapel adjacent to the north of the main church, where Tate was buried.[83] This would been a costly object: most likely commissioned c. 1500 sometime before Tate's death in November of that year, the expert artistic handling indicates that it was painted by a highly-trained, probably continental and most likely Bruges-based artist.[84] Grössinger and Badham, for example, suggest that the artist could have been the celebrated Jan Provost of Bruges.[85] Tate has ensured that he is memorialised as the donor of this magnificent altarpiece: he is depicted kneeling in prayer in one of the extant panels –

[82] Richard Marks, *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2004), p. 215; Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer'*,* p. 61.
[83] Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer'*,* p. 61; Redstone, Lilian J., 'The history of All Hallow Church: to c. 1548' in *Survey of London: Volume 12, the Parish of All Hallows Barking, part i: The Church of All Hallows*, ed. by Norman Cox (London: Victoria County History, 1929). British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol12/pt1/pp1-20> [accessed 18 august 2020].
[84] Marks, *Image and Devotion*, p. 215; Grössinger, pp. 131-3; Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, p. 29.
[85] Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer', p. 61; Grössinger, p. 131

most likely one of the triptych wings - and his heraldic arms are represented in a separate panel, again probably a wing of the triptych:

Figure 2.4 Detail of Robert Tate kneeling in prayer in one of the panels (probably a triptych wing) of the
Triptych bearing the Arms of Tate/Wood

Figure 2.5 Detail of the arms of Robert Tate in one of the panels (probably a triptych wing) of the *Triptych bearing the Arms of Tate/Wood*

For Tate was a great benefactor of the chapel and other London places of worship: he left instruction and funds in his will for the creation of a new altar at St. Mary of Barking, as well as money to four London monasteries including, for example, funds for a new altar-cloth at the London Charterhouse and the endowment of several priests to pray for his soul.[86] It is clear that Tate wanted his role as a pious donor to be remembered: the central missing panel of the altarpiece is thought to have contained a depiction of the Adoration of the Magi, thus reinforcing his association, in commissioning and donating this altarpiece to the church, with 'sacred gift-giving'.[87]

Similarly, it is likely that pre-Reformation worshippers at Ashwellthorpe, Norfolk, may have witnessed mass before the images of Christopher and Catherine Knyvet, as portrayed in the wings of the *Ashwellthorpe Triptych*:

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[86] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 12 248.
[87] Marks, *Image and Devotion,* p. 215; Grössinger, pp. 131-3.

Figure 2.6 Master of the Legend of the Magdalen, *The Seven Sorrows of Mary* (*The Ashwellthorpe Triptych*), c.1520s, oil on panels, Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery © Norfolk Museums

Although the exact provenance of the object is unknown, it is likely that, prior to the Reformation the altarpiece would have been displayed in a public or private sacred setting where it could fulfil its liturgical, devotional, and commemorative purpose. Possible settings include the Knevyts' private chapel in their home, or in the parish church of All Saints', Ashwellthorpe, where a replica of the triptych has been on display since 2011.[88] As with the Tate altarpiece, the devotional and liturgical function of the object, in that it would have 'formed the backdrop to the elevation of the host at mass, could reinforce the dedication of a particular altar, and marked the space of the chancel as sacred',[89] is reinforced by the overt use of religious iconography in the central panel, where the Virgin Mary is portrayed using the Roman Catholic trope of *Our Lady of Sorrows,* shown mournfully seated surrounded by scenes from her life. So too is the memorial function of the triptych made clear. As the object

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[88] Stephanie Brooks, 'Ashwellthorpe Triptych Returns Home', *Eastern Daily Press,* 6 February 2011. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/ashwellthorpe-triptych-returns-home-1-794532> [accessed 18 August 2020].

[89] Jane Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection: Triptych Monuments in the Post-Reformation English Church', in *Faith, Politics and the Arts: Early Modern Cultural Transfer between Catholics and Protestants*, ed. by Christina Stunck (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019), pp. 177-209 (p. 177).

was created during the 1520s, it is likely that it was commissioned to commemorate the death of Christopher Knyvet, who died in 1520. The Knyvets are depicted in the traditional position of donors, kneeling in prayer in the wings of the triptych. Their presence within this tableau of piety is further reinforced by the depictions of their respective heraldry and name saints. Thus, as with the Tate altarpiece, worshippers viewing this object would have been reminded of the pious generosity of the donors in commissioning this beautiful and costly devotional object, and, accordingly of their duty to offer grateful prayers for their souls.

After the Reformation, the liturgical function of these altarpieces was no longer acceptable or, at least, state-sanctioned within English and Welsh parish churches. Changes to the liturgy of the Eucharist as a result of the refutation of the doctrine of transubstantiation meant that these objects – replete with their devotional imagery - no longer had a place as part of the ritualistic celebration of the transformative power of the mass. Furthermore, their memorial function – in calling for intercessory prayer and emphasising the good works done by donors in the hope of reducing their time in purgatory – was entirely incompatible with a predestinate understanding of salvation. It is therefore unsurprising that by the later years of Elizabeth's rule in England and Wales - the period during which the nine painted church portrait memorials presented in the case studies chapters of this thesis were created – the commissioning and production of new altarpieces with donor portraits had been abandoned and, furthermore, that the use of the triptych form, a design type which 'was almost exclusively associated with devotional objects and with the altarpiece in particular…had all but disappeared' in both the domestic and sacred setting.[90]

Chapter Five of this thesis will build on observations made by the art historian and curator Jane Eade in her 2004 MA thesis and subsequent articles in 2005 and 2017 about the use of the triptych form in post-Reformation England and, more specifically, the use of this form for the creation of painted wooden memorial portraits in the church setting.[91] In an extension to Eade's analysis of the form, imagery, and location of the *Cornewall Family Memorial* at St

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[90] Jane Eade, 'The Triptych Portrait in England, 1575-1646', *British Art Journal,* 6.2 (2005), 3-11 (p. 3).
[91] Jane Eade, 'Triptych Portraits in England, 1575-1646' (unpublished master's thesis, Royal College of Art and V&A, 2004); Jane Eade, 'The Triptych Portrait in England, 1575-1646', *British Art Journal,* 6.2 (2005), 3-11; Jane Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection'.

Mary's Burford and the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* at St Peter's Besford, this thesis will also consider who the intended viewers of these triptych memorial objects may have been and, as such, their potential function in appealing for intercessory prayer. This thesis, furthermore, will be the first to propose - based on a combination of archival and material enquiry - that the painted wooden *Memorial to Margery Downes* in St Mary the Virgin church, Bishop's Frome, is in fact the surviving central panel of a larger triptych memorial whose outer wings are now lost. The suggestion will be made, given the highly probable continued Roman Catholicism of the patron (George Downes) and the known recusancy of the subject (Margery Downes, wife of the patron), that it is likely that the use of the triptych for the *Memorial to Margery Downes* – a form once so aligned with the mass, the Saints, and the resurrection of the donor - was a calculated choice, made to appeal to the visual memory of those Worcestershire parishioners who remained inwardly Roman Catholic whilst living outwardly conformist lives in an attempt to garner intercessory prayer.

b) Windows and Walls

The depiction of men, women, and children 'kneeling at the feet of individual saints or Christ on the Cross', had been commonplace in late-medieval English and Welsh ecclesiological window glass, from cathedrals to provincial parish churches.[92] As with memorial portraits of donors on wooden altarpieces, however, the inclusion of memorial portraits of donors in the midst of the religious imagery that typically adorned glass windows was not as widely seen in the post-Reformation parish church setting. Yet, whilst much medieval window glass has disappeared from churches, and examples which survive today are rarely fully extant, it is clear that 'there was both destruction and survival of glass in Elizabeth's reign'.[93] Aston has shown how this was almost certainly due to the material and economic constraints involved: glass was an essential part of the church building yet it was also an inherently fragile material and, once damaged, it was expensive to replace or repair.[94] Thus Marks suggests that significant amounts of glass loss during the sixteenth century may actually have been the

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[92] Richard Marks, *Stained Glass in England During the Middle Ages* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993), p. 12; Also see Marks, *Stained Glass*, pp. 231-232.

[93] Orlik, p. 142. On the destruction, survival, adaptation, and creation of new glass in the post-Reformation period, see: Orlik, pp. 142-146; Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*; Aston, *Broken Idols*; Whiting, *Reformation of the English Parish Church*, pp. 145-1488.

[94] Aston, *Broken Idols,* pp. 617-641.

result of 'gradual decay and neglect' as opposed to wilful damage.[95] Whilst Aston argues that it is in fact likely that greater active destruction of glass took place during the seventeenth century both as a result of and in protest to the Laudian agenda of beautification, alongside, during Elizabeth's reign, destruction following the 1559 Injunctions, which was then quelled by the Queen's proclamation in 1560 that glass must be protected (likely for economic reasons).[96] It is highly likely that still more glass was lost during later nineteenth century programmes of church redesign and redecoration, as indeed was the case with much of the internal and external decoration and adornment of parish churches.

Surviving examples of late-medieval window glass indicate the kind of soteriological and memorial imagery which would have once been widespread throughout England and Wales, but which is now a less usual sight. In the north nave of York Minster, for example, an image (c. 1325) of goldsmith Richard Tunnoc is memorialised in glass kneeling before St William of York,[97] whilst at the parish church of Holy Trinity, Long Melford (Suffolk), several members of the Clopton family are depicted kneeling in prayerful devotion within a fourteenth century glass frieze spanning several windows:[98] Similarly, in the south aisle of St Mary the Virgin Church in Waterperry (a small village roughly eight miles east of Oxford), Walter Curson (d. 1527), his wife Isabella, and their numerous sons and daughters, are depicted kneeling in prayer either side of the Virgin and Child above an inscription in English requesting the viewer to pray for their souls:[99]

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[95] Marks, *Stained Glass,* p. 232.
[96] Aston, *Broken Idols,* pp. 617-706. Aston, *England's Iconoclasts,* pp. 314-317. Also see: Orlik, pp. 142-143.
[97] Marks, *Stained Glass,* p. 5.
[98] Stanbury, pp. 196-199.
[99] Marks, *Stained Glass*, p. 13, p. 17; Nigel Saul, *Lordship and Faith: The English Gentry and the Parish Church in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 262.

Figure 2.7 The *Curson Window,* c.1527, stained glass, St Mary the Virgin Church, Waterperry, Oxfordshire

The entire visual scheme at Waterperry does not survive, however. For whilst the donor portraits of the Curson family are extant, only fragments of the religious imagery within the central panel remain intact; potentially having fallen victim to sixteenth century iconoclasm.[100]

For although much medieval glass did indeed escape the full effects of iconoclasm under Edward VI and Elizabeth I, there were still instances of targeted destruction throughout the ecclesiological spaces of England and Wales, from cathedrals to parish churches. At Durham Cathedral, for example, the early fifteenth century cloister windows with their depiction of the life and miracles of St Cuthbert had, by 1593, been destroyed whilst the decorated windows at Tidenham parish church in Gloucestershire were destroyed by the parish vicar in 1548.[101] Similar destruction occurred at St Lawrence's church in Ipswich, and Hadleigh parish

[100] Saul, *Lordship and Faith,* p. 262.
[101] Marks, *Stained Glass,* pp. 229-235

church in Suffolk.[102] Particularly after the Injunctions of 1547, reinforced by Cranmer in 1548, declaring that the faithful (both clergy and parishioners) should:

> Take away, utterly extinct and destroy all shrines, covering of shrines, all tables, candlestick, trindles or rolls of wax, pictures, paintings, and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry, and other superstition: so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glass-windows, or elsewhere within their churches of houses.[103]

It is therefore possible that the lack of religious imagery in the Clopton glass at Long Melford helped it to survive intact, and in such good condition. The frieze solely depicts the donors; there are no saints or 'feigned miracles' as there are, for example, in the partially destroyed Curson glass at Waterperry or the totally destroyed St Cuthbert glass once in Durham Cathedral.

In a similar vein, the presence of religious imagery depicted within English and Welsh church wall paintings is one of the reasons for the huge number of mural schemes that were whitewashed over during the course of the sixteenth century,[104] alongside, as Susan Orlik has demonstrated, whitewashing which occurred 'for reasons of hygiene and maintenance'.[105] For whilst it is generally agreed that numerous wall paintings in parish churches would have contained images of donors,[106] the iconographic focus was very much centred on the sacred. Depictions of the saints and the Virgin Mary, Old Testament scenes (categorised by Rosewell into three distinct groups: The Creation, The Fall, and Cain and Abel),[107] and New Testament scenes (such as the Tree of Jesse, the Holy Infancy, and the Passion) were particularly common.[108] So too were themes relating to transience and the afterlife such as Doom Scenes

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[102] Ibid; Aston, *Broken Idols*, p. 628.

[103] 'Articles for Canterbury Diocese, 1548', in *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation,* ed. by W. H. Frere and W. M. Kennedy (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1910), pp. 114-131 (p. 126). This sentiment was repeated in the Injunctions of 1559.

[104] Orlik, p. 244; Maurice Howard, 'Afterword. Art Re-Formed: Spiritual Revolutions, Spatial Re-Location', in *Art Re-Formed: Re-Assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts,* ed. by Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 267-271; E. Clive Rouse, *Medieval Wall Paintings* (Princes Risborough: Shire Publications Ltd., 1991), p. 9.

[105] Orlik, p. 247.

[106] Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer', p. 40; Roger Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), pp. 99-111.

[107] Rosewell, p. 34.

[108] Rosewell, pp. 37-72.

depicting the Last Judgement, with imagery of hell, of heaven, and instruction about the trials and pains of purgatory;[109] potentially idolatrous imagery of exactly the kind that was barred by the 1547 and 1559 *Injunctions*. Thus, despite the fact that 'from at least the twelfth century, parish churches generally had painted decoration of one sort or another',[110] today we are left with few surviving examples from the medieval period, at least in comparison to the multitude which would have once existed: 'this substantially changed the experience of worshippers'.[111]

What does remain, however, is indicative of the kind of imagery that parishioners in the pre-Reformation period would have been surrounded by during their worship and indicate that there was certainly continuity between pre- and post-Reformation visual commissions for the walls of churches. For example, an extremely rare early survival (c. 1200) of the kind of soteriological imagery that would have once been seen on church walls across England and Wales is at St Peter and St Paul Church, Chaldon (Surrey). [112] This elaborate visual scheme depicts, in graphic detail, the horrors of hell below the delights of heaven; in the middle of the painting is a ladder, almost certainly representing purgatory, from which souls are either saved by angels or taken by devils to eternal damnation. As will be discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis, this Doom scene like imagery is similar to the images within the pediments of three late-Elizabethan painted wooden portrait memorials that hang on the walls of parish churches across the Welsh Marches: the *Memorial to Margery Downes* in Bishop's Frome; the *Cornewall Family Memorial* in Burford; and the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* in Besford.

Indeed, as recent scholarship by Orlik and Hamling and Willis has shown, the covering up or whitewashing of medieval imagery from the walls of churches that took place during Elizabeth's reign 'to comply with the requirement to avoid superstition and idolatry',[113] was accompanied by the creation and application of adapted and new images and forms of

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[109] Rouse, pp. 38-57.

[110] John Schofield, 'Medieval parish churches in the City of London: the archaeological evidence', in *The Parish in English Life, 1400-1600,* ed. by Katherine L. French, Gary G. Gibbs, and Beat A. Kümin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 35-56 (p. 50).

[111] Orlik, p. 244.

[112] On this mural imagery, see: Rosewell, p. 73, p. 81; Binski, *Medieval Death,* pp. 196-197.

[113] Orlik, p. 247.

decoration.[114] Various types of images, ornamentation, texts, and decorative schemes were painted directly onto church walls or displayed on boards or via sculptural wall schemes. This included: Royal Arms; [115] displays of scripture such as the Decalogue (often combining text and image), the Lord's Prayer, and select passages from the Bible; [116] as well as images of religious figures such as the Twelve Patriarchs of Israel,[117] and – at St Mary's, East Knoyle, Wiltshire – depictions of Jacob's Dream, Christ ascending, and the Apostles.[118] As such, it has become clear that the walls of the post-Reformation parish church interior were by no means devoid of imagery, and this thesis - in presenting and assessing a selection of image-laden memorials that were displayed on the walls of late-Elizabethan churches – similarly joins post revisionist scholars in seeking to disprove the 'erroneous suggestion that the visually rich interiors of medieval churches were transformed following the Reformation into plain whitewashed boxes'.[119]

iii.   Portraiture in post-Reformation domestic, civic, and church settings

Whilst donor portraits in memory of particular men and women on altarpieces, stained glass, and mural visual schemes, were no longer such common sights in parish churches of the post-Reformation period, the numerous social and spiritual changes that took place following the break with Rome - during what Robert Tittler has described as the 'malleable moment' in English and Welsh portraiture of c.1540-1640 - provided 'men and women with both the opportunity and the compulsion to refashion their identities' through the commissioning and creating of portraiture for the domestic or civic space. [120] Thus, 'portraiture became an increasingly useful strategy of distinction for new types of patrons' such as the English and Welsh upper-middling-sort and urban elite.[121] As with church monuments and memorials,

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[114] Orlik, pp. 244-292; Hamling and Willis.

[115] Orlik, pp. 247-256; Jonathan Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 317-219.

[116] Orlik, pp. 257-292; Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue*, pp. 305-331; Hamling and Willis.

[117] Orlik, p. 272; Clare Tilbury, The Heraldry of the Twelve Tribes of Israel: An English Reformation Subject for Church Decoration', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 63.2 (2012), 274-305.

[118] Orlik, pp. 275-282.

[119] Hamling and Willis, p. 947.

[120] Robert Tittler, 'The malleable moment in English Portraiture, c. 1540-1640', in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe,* ed. by Catharine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 275-292 (p.289).

[121] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 1.

patrons of a portrait could use image, emblem, and text, to control the personal, familial, professional, and religious identity that they were presenting – and thus the perpetual impression either of themselves or their loved ones - to visitors to their homes and to civic spaces such as livery companies, town halls, and universities. In so doing, portraiture could cement and legitimise the virtues, accomplishments, and reputations of the men and women depicted, as well as the families they came from and the civic bodies or institutions that they were attached to or involved in.

As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, Tarnya Cooper's authoritative work on *memento mori* portraiture has been complemented by Robert Tittler's extensive research into civic and provincial portraiture. It is no exaggeration to say that these two scholars have revolutionized the field of early modern portrait studies with their focus on the depiction of the non-elite of Tudor and early Jacobean England and Wales, their shared interest in vernacular portraiture commissioned and created outside of London court-based circles, and their extensive research into the social and spiritual meanings and functions of portraits. Tittler, through his investigation into portrait commissioning and creating during the 'malleable moment' of c. 1540-c.1640, has, like Cooper, drawn attention to a new visual language within post-Reformation portraiture, one 'fraught with discontinuities, adaptations, and innovations, not only of style and method but also of form and content'.[122] These changes – occurring in the spirit of continuity, creativity, and sometimes a combination of the two - can be observed in many of the portraits commissioned during the post-Reformation period for the domestic and civic space; from an increasing reliance on inscriptions, and heraldic and *memento mori* imagery as opposed to religious images, the gradual move of medium from wood to canvas, and the development of the aesthetic of English and Welsh portraiture from the vernacular idiom to something closer to Continental.[123]

Cooper, in her seminal 2001 doctoral thesis, was the first to present and catalogue the *memento mori* portrait genre, and to provide detailed commentary and analysis about the

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[122] Tittler, 'The malleable moment', p. 289.
[123] Please see the Introduction to this thesis for further discussion of the late-Elizabethan phase of portrait production as it pertains to the nine memorials considered in this study and Tittler's malleable moment for portraiture.

possible aims and intentions of the men and women who commissioned these kinds of paintings. This distinctive type of portraiture, argues Cooper, was used by the Protestant upper-middling-sort and urban elites of England and Wales to present a 'self-fashioned' immortal image of the subject. This was a sophisticated type of patron: fully aware of the power of iconography in allowing them to celebrate their achievements whilst, through the use of *memento mori* and *vanitas* emblems, portraying themselves as pious, conformist members of the New Faith with both a keen awareness of mortality and a confidence in their position as one of God's Elect.[124] These new types of patrons came with a new set of aspirations and concerns, many of which can be read in the portraits that they commissioned, but which, it is suggested here, can be summarised as a twofold picture of patron intention.

Firstly, there is the desire to depict and visually confirm the social ascendance and success of the patron, as well as, in some cases, to enforce a claim to gentility during a period of great flux, where the once clearly-defined social structure and hierarchy was changing.[125] This is manifested through the use of heraldic iconographic devices and inscriptions, as well as symbols of professional occupations. Secondly, there is the visual representation of concerns and anxieties regarding salvation and the afterlife, particularly in the light of a new Reformed soteriology (as expressed through the use of *memento mori* and *vanitas* symbolic imagery). Significantly, during the late-Elizabethan period, these twofold concerns did not include a desire to create an object for its own artistic sake, nor an aspiration to own or create an object for the purposes of aesthetic beauty or luxury. For as Tittler notes:

> These factors of 'demand' still had little to do with the consumption of luxury items or the operation of a fully-fledged consumer mentality, both of which remained

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[124] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* pp. 10-17, pp. 199-203.

[125] This is an enormous topic, and one which has produced a vast corpus of literature which is simply too large to survey here. Some key works for the purposes of further reading include: Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1588-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966); Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales 1500–1700* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 1994); Barry Coward, *Social Change and Continuity, England 1550-1750* (London: Longman, 1997); Keith Wrightson, *English* Society, *1580–1680* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982); *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society, and Politics in England, 1550–1800*, ed. by Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (New York: St. Martin's, 1994).

somewhat anachronistic concepts right into the early decades of the seventeenth century.[126]

In fact, if one accepts Maurice Howard's hypothesis that some late sixteenth century patrons may have actively sought a portrait that was un-lifelike in its representation of the sitter or, indeed, non-mimetic, as a way of repudiating any concerns or anxieties around a potentially idolatrous function,[127] then we are potentially dealing with a set of patron aims and intentions steeped in post-Reformation anxieties around the illusory dangers of lifelike representation.[128]

As such authoritative records of *memento mori* and civic portraiture already exist, I will focus here on the analysis of one particular portrait which provides a superlative example of the new kind of patron, and the new kind of portrait commission, that emerged in the first half of Tittler's 'malleable moment' for portraiture. This is the portrait of John Isham (1525-1596), painted c. 1576 and still *in situ* in its original setting of Lampton Hall:

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[126] Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics*, p. 17.
[127] Maurice Howard, 'Art and the Reformation', in *The History of British Art 600-1600,* ed. by Tim Ayers (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 231-241 (p. 234).
[128] See: Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 33, p. 199.

Figure 2.8 Unknown English artist, *John Isham,* c.1567, oil on panel, Lamport Hall, Northamptonshire.
Reproduced by kind permission of the Lamport Hall Preservation Trust

Isham's biography provides one of the great success stories of Tudor England, and highlights his complicated place within sixteenth century society as both a merchant and a landholding gentleman: born a fourth son to a modest family and apprenticed at seventeen to a mercer,

he made his fortune in the wool trade and, in 1568, he acquired a relatively large plot of land at Lamport, Northamptonshire, where he built his manor house, Lamport Hall.[129]

Isham had for all intents and purposes, successfully and remarkably swiftly made the transition from a London-based merchant to a land-owning country gentleman, as cemented by his nomination to justice of the peace for Northamptonshire in 1576 and his appointment as sheriff in 1581-2.[130] His portrait reflects this rapid ascent: the viewer is reminded of his mercantile roots and the commercial success he garnered, through the deliberate depiction of the two ledger books on the shelf behind the sitter, as well as Isham's apparel of a rich fur and 'elegant robes typical of a successful Mercer.'[131] The inclusion of these symbols, as well as the freeman's gloves that Isham holds in his left hand,[132] would have surely been a conscious decision on the part of the patron in order to portray his pride in his professional success, mercantile roots, and social ascendance. Tellingly, the portrait was created at a significant moment in Isham's life, in the same year that he was elected to the role of renter-warden of the Mercers' Company.[133]

Yet, in terms of iconography, there is much more going on in this portrait than a simple presentation of the sitter's success. For example, the inclusion of the coat of arms to the proper right of Isham's head is a crucial iconographic device by which the patron is publicly exercising his claim to gentility, which he might have felt perfectly entitled to do considering his fortune and his new status as a country landholder. All is not as it seems here, however, for, as Tittler notes, there is no record of Isham being awarded the right to bear a heraldic crest.[134] There are thus a number of possible conclusions, including that Isham's arms were adopted – or, in other words, invented - in the hope of being confirmed as a legitimate

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[129] Ian Archer, *Isham, John (1525-1596), merchant and gentleman.* Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-52151> [accessed 1 November 2019].

[130] Ibid; Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 72; Tittler*, Portraits, Painters, and Publics*, pp. 105-108; Tarnya Cooper, 'The Enchantment of the Familiar Face: Portraits as Domestic Objects in Elizabethan and Jacobean England', in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 157-178 (pp. 173-175).

[131] Tittler*, Portraits, Painters, and Publics*, p. 106.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* pp. 72-72; Tittler*, Portraits, Painters, and Publics*, p. 106; Tittler, 'Portraiture and Memory', p. 43.

[134] Tittler, 'Portraiture and Memory', p. 107.

gentleman and perpetuating his dynastic ambitions. The other possibility is that the coat of arms is in fact a later addition to the portrait. Nonetheless, heraldic representation and, indeed, ancestral lineage, is clearly a key part of Isham's attempts at 'self-fashioning', along with, crucially, the promotion of his professional endeavors and honours. This is evidenced by the request in his will that his grave monument (a brass plate, now lost), should be inscribed with:

> Suche other armes, superscriptions, verses and posies … to testifie to posteritie of what house I discend bothe of my father and my mothers side, that I was a Merchaunt Adventurer of the Cittie of London and free of the Company of Mercers and by that meanes with the blessing of God received my preferrement and was enhabled to purchase the mannor of Langporte and patronage of the churche therof.[135]

For John Isham, therefore, his dual identity as both a mercer and a country gentleman was of the utmost importance; indeed the first enabled the second, as the use of words and phrases in his will such as 'by that meanes', 'was enhabled', and 'received my preferrement' indicate.

Whilst this portrait is thus testament to the desires of sixteenth century patrons of the middling elite or new gentry to exhibit their societal credentials and professional success, so too does it highlight post-Reformation soteriology, particularly regarding the need for piety in life as evidence of the Election of the soul in light of the disavowal of purgatorial teachings. The *memento mori* and *vanitas* imagery within the portrait, namely the clock and the prominent skull in the foreground of the painting upon which Isham rests his hand, is a reminder to the viewer of the need for humility and piety in the face of their inevitable mortality, and – in choosing to include these emblems of transience and faith amongst the trappings of his worldly success – suggests the patron's own pious nature to the viewer as part of his 'self-fashioned' image. Yet, whilst this iconography prompts the viewer to meditate on their own inevitable demise, and ensure that they act accordingly in life to prove themselves as one of God's Elect, Cooper's suggestion that the depiction of Isham's painted body - at the height of his success and in full health - could also be an agent for hope is an arresting argument.[136] During the last years of his life (which Isham spent in ill health at

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[135] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 87, fol. 224.
[136] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, p. 203.

Lampton Hall after a fall from his horse), it is certainly possible that, in viewing his portrait, he found some comfort in remembering the pleasures and successes of his life, as well as hope in the surety of his salvation after death and eventual bodily resurrection in the image of his portrait.[137]

In returning, at the end of this chapter, to Llewellyn's statement that 'the funeral monuments of post-Reformation England filled the space left by the absence of devotional art, just as they helped fill the social vacuum left by the deceased',[138] we arrive back at the post-revisionist argument that there was no abrupt break or rupture in the visual culture of commemoration and memorialisation in the decades immediately following the Reformation. Instead, as this chapter has demonstrated, there was a much more complex process of survival, adaptation, and renewal, alongside what was undoubtedly widespread but, crucially, not complete destruction. For even with the anxiety around visual representation, particularly in places of worship, the repudiation of purgatory, and the refutation of intercession resulting in an overhaul of approaches to morality and salvation, the desire to commemorate and memorialise the deceased through portraiture and other times of imagery in the church setting continued. This desire found expression in both the monuments which continued to be commissioned for display in parish churches, and in the new portrait commissioning activities of the urban elite and provincial gentry of post-Reformation England and Wales. For as much as church monuments and memorials continued to fulfil the need for remembrance amongst parishioners, so too could these new kinds of portraits – by offering visual proof of the subject's salvation as 'exemplars of Christian conduct' – offer comfort and hope to the laity in the domestic and civic space, in the way that the devotional and memorial images of the late medieval church, with their messages of salvation through devotion, prayer, and good works, would have done.[139]

The rest of this thesis is concerned with the examination and analysis of nine memorial portraits on wooden panel that represent a liminal, transitional point in the way that that the laity of post-Reformation England and Wales chose to visually commemorate the dead. It will

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[137] Ibid.

[138] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* p. 377.

[139] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 202; Tittler, *Face of the City*, pp. 137-141.

be suggested that these nine paintings do not represent a decisive break with the way that the dead were visually commemorated in parish churches prior to the Reformation. Rather, this thesis suggests that, as with traditional brass and sculpted stone church monuments, these painted church portrait memorials on wooden panel must be viewed in the context of an ever-changing, transforming visual culture of remembrance which, much like the process of religious reform itself, is characterised by 'continuities and discontinuities, innovation and destruction.'[140] This thinking will guide much of the argument throughout the following case studies chapters, and inform the analyses of these memorial portraits. These paintings were not created in a vacuum. They are products of the turbulent times in which their patrons lived; with the continued existence of a cross-Confessional populace, the memory of the teachings and visual commemorative culture of the Old Faith still very much alive, and, indeed, the innovations within visual *memoria* that occurred as a result of the introduction of a new, Reformed soteriology.

The influence of medieval visual *memoria* is evident in all nine of these painted church portrait memorials. The triptychs at Burford and Besford, as well as the extant Downes panel at Bishop's Frome (once almost certainly the central panel of a triptych), for example, all have clear visual precedent – by virtue of their tripartite form - in the painted wooden altarpieces with depictions of donors which would have once adorned the altars of medieval parish churches. At the same time, the influence of post-Reformation *memento mori* and civic portraiture is evident: there are numerous examples of *vanitas* and *memento mori* emblems used in these nine paintings, whilst the mid sixteenth century vernacular idiom as seen in portraiture during the first half of Robert Tittler's 'malleable moment' (c. 1540 – c.1640) is replicated across all nine of the painted works selected for study in this thesis.[141] The postures and poses of some of the subjects – kneeling at prayer holding Bibles or seated either side of a prayer desk - are similarly reminiscent of the new design of sculpted mural church monument that was particularly prevalent in the later-Elizabethan period, from the 1570s

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[140] Tara Hamling and Richard Williams 'Introduction', in *Art Re-Formed: Re-Assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts,* ed. by Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 1–13 (p. 4).

[141] Tittler, 'The Malleable moment', p. 276; Tittler, *Face of the City,* pp. 8-11; Robert Tittler, *Painting for a Living in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2022), pp. 109-111.

onwards.[142] Indeed, these nine painted memorials on wooden panel (all dating to c.1585 – c.1603) sit at both the very middle of Tittler's 'malleable moment for English portraiture c.1540-c.1640',[143] and at the intersection between portraiture for the domestic and civic space and church monuments: they hold a monumental function in indicating the burial place of the subject whilst also declaring a self-fashioned identity as per the directives of the patron.

Crucially, it is clear that the patrons and subjects of these nine painted church portrait memorials – as well as their likely intended viewers within the parish church setting - all fall on markedly different points along the confessional scale and, as such, a variety of different representational strategies are employed in these cultural and memorial commissions. These objects provide a snapshot of the varied and nuanced beliefs amongst the populace of late-Elizabethan England and Wales: from the recusant Margery Downes in Bishop's Frome and Mary More in Adderbury;[144] to the probable covert or inwardly remaining Roman Catholic Edmund Harewell in Besford; and the conformist Edward Stradling in St Donat's, Henry Unton in Faringdon, and William Smart in Ipswich. This study will show how this data set of late-Elizabethan (post-c.1585) patrons provides further evidence that, at this particular point in the long, nebulous process of religious reform, the English and Welsh populace was still very much a cross-confessional one. The following chapters of this thesis will consider how, as commissioners of painted memorial portraits on wooden panel during the period c.1585-c.1603, these seven different patrons made creative use of imagery, text, and form to grapple with and present their varying individual attitudes towards, mortality, salvation, and transience within the setting of the provincial parish church; concerns born from a life lived against the backdrop of the Reformation.

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[142] Saul, *English Church Monuments,* p. 368; Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* pp. 60-145; Finch, pp. 442-446.

[143] Tittler, 'The malleable moment'.

[144] *Recusants in the Exchequer Pipe Rolls 1581-1592,* ed. by Dom Bowler (Southampton: Catholic Record Society, 1986), p. 52; *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College, 1349-1897,* ed. by John Venn, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), I, p. 108; George Edward Wentworth, 'History of the Wentworths of Wooley, Part 1', *The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal,* XII (1893), 1-35 (p. 6); Patrick Ryan, 'Diocesan Returns of Recusants for England and Wales, 1577', in *Miscellanea 12, Catholic Record Society Record Series 22*, ed. by Patrick Ryan (1921), p. 109.

Chapter Three – Ipswich: The Memorial to William Smart

Figure 3.1 Unknown English artist, the *Memorial to William Smart*, c. 1599, oil on panel, St Mary-le-Tower Church, Ipswich, Suffolk

The *Memorial to William Smart* today hangs on the north wall of the north aisle of St-Mary-le-Tower (hereafter referred to as SMLT), in Ipswich - a town divided into twelve distinct parishes, of which SMLT parish is the most centrally located. Ipswich was (and still is) the largest town in the county of Suffolk, and it holds one of the earliest town charters, awarded by King John in 1200.[1] Tudor Ipswich was an affluent port town with strong links to the northern European wool trade, a long history of prosperity, and relative political autonomy – at least on issues at a local level - thanks in part to the government of its powerful

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[1] Diarmaid MacCulloch and John Blatchly, 'Pastoral Provision in the Parishes of Tudor Ipswich', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 22.3 (1991), 457-474 (p. 457).

Corporation, of which William Smart (c.1530-1599) was a leading member.[2] Smart was a member of the upwardly mobile Ipswich urban elite: he was an extremely successful draper, who spent much of his fortune on philanthropic causes, including bequeathing a farm and swathes of land across Suffolk to the Corporation and leaving money to Christ's Hospital, an Ipswich poorhouse and school.[3] Smart held many important positions within Ipswich society - including coroner, claviger, baliff, and portman – as well as nationally when, in 1588, he was Member of Parliament for the town.[4]

There is no evidence of Smart or his wife, Alice, as anything other than conformists. This is unsurprising, given the Protestant character of late-sixteenth century Ipswich: the town, in a sign of its commitment to religious reform and, 'in a manner reminiscent of the Swiss Reformation', employed a 'common preacher' as early as 1551,[5] and has been variously described as a 'a wealthy town and a cradle of the Reformation,'[6] 'an early Protestant centre,'[7] and a town with 'many Protestants', who were vocal about their faith even under the threat of persecution during the Marian period.[8]

[2] John Blatchly, *The Town Library of Ipswich provided for the use of the Town Preachers in 1599: A History and Catalogue* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1989), pp. 1-3.

[3] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 94 340; N. M. Fuidge, 'Smarte, William (c. 1530-99), of Ipswich, Suff.', in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1558-1603*, ed. by P. W. Hasler, 3 vols (London: H.M.S.O, 1981), III, p. 396.

[4] Blatchly, *The Town Library of Ipswich*, pp. 1-3; Fuidge.

[5] Patrick Collinson, *Godly People: Essays in English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), p. 471.

[6] Collinson, *Godly People,* p. 471.

[7] Claire Cross, 'The State and Development of Protestantism in English Towns, 1520-1603', in *Britain and the Netherlands, Volume VII: Church and State since the Reformation*, ed. by A. C. Duke and C. A. Tamse (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1981), pp. 22-44 (p. 31).

[8] Muriel C. McClendon, 'Reconsidering the Marian Persecution: The Urban Context', in *Protestant Identities: Religion, Society, and Self-Fashioning in Post-Reformation England,* ed. by Muriel C. McClendon, Joseph P. Ward and Michael Macdonald (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 195-210 (p. 205).

i.   Introduction

Since 1914, Ipswich has been part of the diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, but when the *Memorial to William Smart* was created in 1599, Ipswich was within the boundaries of the diocese of Norwich.[9] There are in fact significant comparisons to be made between the Tudor city of Norwich and the Tudor town of Ipswich: as will be discussed during this chapter, these similarly sized East Anglian centres were hubs of mercantile culture, with strong northern European trade links and overarching evangelical religious leanings. Furthermore, the relatively large amount of extant sixteenth century portraits– particularly of the urban elite – originating from both Norwich and Ipswich strongly indicates that the mercantile population of these two centres nursed a keen interest in portraiture. Yet, whilst many art and local historians have demonstrated that the city of Norwich provided fertile ground for the commissioning, production, and ownership of portraiture during the post-Reformation period, and despite Tittler's claim (based on the analysis of probate inventories), that there was 'significant portrait ownership by the end of the seventeenth century' in Ipswich,[10] there has been very little scholarly research to date on the portraiture-related activities of sixteenth century Ipswich townspeople, at least in comparison to their Norwich counterparts.[11] This chapter will redress this balance through a close reading and analysis of the painted *Memorial to William Smart,* a memorial portrait on wooden panel, which, as this thesis suggests, was commissioned by the widow of a leading member of the late sixteenth century Ipswich urban elite for display in the local parish church setting.

Beginning with a contextual presentation of SMLT church, focusing on its fixtures and fittings, this chapter will then consider the especially Protestant character of Ipswich - classed by Christopher Haigh as one of the earliest adopters of the Reformation (along with London,

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[9] MacCulloch and Blatchly, p. 457.

[10] Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 50.

[11] Tittler, *Portraits Painters and Publics,* pp. 163-4; On the commissioning and creating of portraits in early modern Norwich, see: Victor Morgan, 'The Norwich Guildhall Portraits: Images in Context', in *Family and Friends: A Regional Survey of British Portraiture,* ed. by Andrew Moore and Charlotte Crawley (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1992); Virginia Tillyard, 'Painters in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Norwich', *Norfolk Archaeology,* 37.3 (1980), 315-319.

Bristol, Coventry, and Colchester).[12] The effect of this marked Protestantism on the potential aims and intentions of local patrons of portraiture and *memoria* for the ecclesiological space will be considered, alongside key examples of the visual culture of commemoration in Ipswich churches and selected parish churches throughout the bishopric of Norwich. As such, this chapter will demonstrate the strong dedication to Reformed soteriology and the accompanying potential for the innovative commissioning and creating of imagery for the ecclesiological setting as is visible in churches throughout this eastern part of England, and particularly in a town such as Ipswich, where – in an example of the cross-confessional populace that existed under Elizabeth I - Puritanism flourished.

The second part of this chapter will contain a close reading of the *Memorial to William Smart* with a focus on the innovative design and content of this memorial object. In so doing, this chapter will consider how, with specific reference to this Ipswich painted memorial portrait, religious reform could be a driver of creativity for memorial commissions in the church setting. This chapter will also present and assess the place of the *Memorial to William Smart* within the broader context of post-Reformation civic and church portraiture. The possible identity of the artist will be considered, and the possible identity and potential intentions of the patron will also be presented and assessed. As such, this chapter will pursue the following research questions: How could religious reform be a driver of creativity for memorial portraits in the ecclesiological setting? What can be deduced about the identity and role of the patron in commissioning the *Memorial to William Smart* from the artist, with specific reference to the state of widowhood? What can be gleaned about the religious orientation of the sitter or patron from the visual and archival evidence?

a) St-Mary-le-Tower Church (SMLT), Ipswich

There has been a Christian place of worship on the site of SMLT since 1086, as recorded in the Domesday Book, and from 1177 the church was served by the Austin canons of the nearby

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[12] Christopher Haigh, 'The Church of England, the Catholics and the People', in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, ed. by Christopher Haigh (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 195-219 (p. 196).

Holy Trinity Priory, until its dissolution in 1536-7.[13] The current church building is the fourth version, having been completely rebuilt by 1200, then again in the mid-fifteenth century, and for the fourth and final time during the mid-nineteenth century under the direction of Richard Phipson, Diocesan Architect for Norwich.[14] As such, there are no surviving external features from the medieval or Reformation period, although a small amount of medieval and early modern fixtures, fittings, and fabrics have been retained internally: one medieval pre-Reformation silver chalice survives, as well as six fifteenth century misericords, and a finely carved octagonal fifteenth century font in the famous East Anglian style:

[13] *St Mary-le-Tower through eight centuries*, <https://www.stmaryletower.org/history> [accessed 5 March 2022]; 'Houses of Austin Canons: Priory of the Holy Trinity, Ipswich', in *A History of the County of Suffolk: Volume 2*, ed. by William Page (London: Victoria County History, 1975), pp. 103-105. British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/suff/vol2/pp103-105> [accessed 25 July 2023]
[14] *St Mary-le-Tower; Church of St-Mary-le-Tower*, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1235800> [Accessed 13 July 2019].

Figure 3.2 Font, St-Mary-le-Tower Church, Ipswich

This sacred object of the Old Faith, pre-dating the Reformation, shows no signs of deliberate iconoclastic damage (although there is of course some wear and tear visible) despite the strong Puritan presence in Ipswich and, indeed, within the parish and church of SMLT, where the ardently puritan Samuel Ward was town preacher and minister of SMLT for much of the period 1605-35.[15]

Significantly, the font in SMLT displays no overtly religious or figurative imagery, indeed the only carvings are of lions; this perhaps helps to account for its survival in such good condition, with no sign of damage wrought during either the post-Reformation period or during the

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[15] John Blatchly, *Ward, Samuel (1577-1640), preacher.* Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-28704> [accessed 4 September 2019].

iconoclasm of the Civil Wars period. For although Whiting notes that 'unlike altars, the old fonts were never prohibited by government decree', he does concede that 'especially in the south and east…a considerable number were attacked or replaced by metal basins.'[16] Indeed, Whiting cites many examples of fonts which display obvious signs of iconoclastic damage throughout East Anglia, from the destruction or desecration of font bowls in the parish churches of Palgrave (roughly 25 miles north of SMLT) and Witcham (roughly 60 miles north west of SMLT), to the mutilation of sculpted depictions of the Roman Catholic sacraments on the font at Southwold parish church (roughly 35 miles north east along the coast from SMLT), and, at Binham parish church (roughly 60 miles north of SMLT, just past the city of Norwich), the defacement of carvings on the font of 'the saints, sacraments, and Jesus himself'.[17] Thus, it seems safe to hypothesise that the sculptural lions on the SMLT font – as opposed to the carvings of a religious, and thus potentially illusionary nature found defaced on other fonts throughout East Anglia - have protected the object, and kept it safe from iconoclastic damage and destruction.[18]

There are few extant pre-1600 memorials in SMLT. Four monumental brasses from the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries survive alongside the 1599 painted *Memorial to William*

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[16] Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 51. This contrasts with the pattern of font survival as observed by Orlik in parish churches throughout Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire. Orlik notes that basins were not installed; rather pre-Reformation fonts survived in their original locations within churches throughout these three counties. See: Susan Orlik, *Decorating the Parish Church in Post-Reformation England: Material culture, community and identity in Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire, 1560-1640* (Donnington: Shaun Tyas, 2022), p. 187.

[17] Whiting, *Reformation of the English Parish* Church, p. 49. For more on the role, history, and reception of fonts in the parish churches of East Anglia, see: Tom Elich, 'Communal Reconciliation in Pre-Reformation England: Lessons from the Seven Sacrament Fonts of East Anglia', *Studia Liturgica*, 36.2 (2006), 138-165. On fonts in Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire, see: Orlik, *Decorating the Parish Church,* pp. 185-200. On fonts throughout England and Wales, see: J. C. Wall, *Porches and Fonts* (London: Wells Gardner & Co., 1912); Francis Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1908); Ann Nichols, *Seeable Signs: The Iconography of the Seven Sacraments, 1350-1544* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1996); Matthew Byrne, *Church Fonts* (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2020). On fonts and the ceremony of baptism across Europe, with a focus on the use of the visual, see: *The Visual Culture of Baptism in the Middle Ages: Essays on Medieval Fonts, Settings and Beliefs*, ed. by Harriet Sonne de Torrens (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

[18] It is possible that the especially evangelical character of East Anglia accounts for high levels of font damage and destruction: 'the response by the parishioner to a traditional font, and even a plain cover, was determined by their religious position'. Orlik, *Decorating the Parish Church,* p. 199.

Smart. A stone monumental slab to the memory of William and Alice Smart, which is now affixed to the western wall of the nave, also survives:[19]

Figure 3.3 Gravestone of William Smart, St-Mary-le-Tower Church, Ipswich

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[19] I am grateful to Ian Molloy, Clerk of Works at SMLT for showing me this memorial object; it is tucked away in a corner of the nave and, when I first visited the church in October 2017, it was concealed behind stacks of furniture. I would not have found it without Ian's kind assistance.

The inscription on this memorial object indicates that Smart was buried in SMLT alongside his wife Alice who outlived him by roughly a year, and who married Ralph Scrivener (one of the executors of Smart's will) after her first husband's death:

> GVILIELMUS SMART / INTEGERRIMAE PIET / ATIS IVSTITIAQ SENATOR / DEFVNCTVS EST 23 SEP / TMBRIS AD 1599 CVIVS VX / OR ALICIA NVPTA RV / DVLPHO SCRIVENERAR / MIGERO OBIIT 13 OC /TOBRIS AD 1600

> [William Smart, a Senator of unblemished piety and justice, died on 23 September 1599 AD. His wife, Alice, wife of Rudolph Scrivener Armigerus, died on 13th October 1600 AD.][20]

Unfortunately, neither the Parish Office, the Ipswich Diocesan Office, nor the Suffolk Archives have any documentation that attests to the exact burial place of William Smart within the boundaries of SMLT, nor to the original location of the painted church portrait memorial.[21] Given that SMLT was totally rebuilt in the nineteenth century, it is certainly possible that the *Memorial to William Smart* might have hung in a different part of the sixteenth century version of the church, perhaps near Smart's grave, thus functioning as both a funerary monument and a commemorative painting. Indeed, there are other extant memorials whose movements around the church have been clearly evidenced: the town preacher Samuel Ward, for example, was buried 'in the centre nave aisle…under a stone with the inscription *Watch Ward for yet a little while and he that shall come will come'*,[22] yet today this monumental floor slab is found in the choir vestry:[23]

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[20] Translation my own, with assistance gratefully received from Ian Molloy.

[21] Information about the Parish and Diocesan records courtesy of Ian Molloy and Donna Joyce, Administrator of SMLT, received with thanks.

[22] Blatchly, *Ward, Samuel*. The phrase 'Watch Ward' also features in Samuel Ward's portrait, as an emblematic inscription either side of a flaming watchtower, whilst Ward is depicted holding a prayer book and staring (rather disarmingly, almost accusatorily) out at the viewer. See: Unknown English artist, *Samuel Ward,* c. 1620, oil on canvas, Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service: Ipswich Borough Council Collection.

[23] I am grateful to Donna Joyce, who took this photo in July 2019. It is reproduced here with her kind permission.

Figure 3.4 Monumental Floor Slab to Samuel Ward, St-Mary-le-Tower Church, Ipswich

b) Ipswich: 'the cradle of the Reformation'[24]

For most Reformation historians, Tudor Ipswich was 'an early Protestant centre'[25], whose rapid embracing of religious reform has led Collinson to label the town as: 'the cradle of the Reformation.'[26] Certainly, many townspeople of Ipswich actively promoted evangelical, continental Protestant, and, ultimately, Puritan beliefs, most likely influenced by the steady flow of information and exchange of ideas that would have occurred as a result of the trade links between this East Anglian port town and the rest of northern Europe. This relationship was clearly of great importance to the urban elite of Ipswich, for even during the embargo on

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[24] Collinson, *Godly People,* p. 471.
[25] Cross, 'The State and Development of Protestantism in English Towns', p. 31.
[26] Collinson, *Godly People,* p. 471.

trade between England and citizens living within Philip II of Spain's empire during the period 1569 – 1573, there is evidence that Ipswich merchants continued to trade with their Antwerp counterparts.[27] The cultural impact of this trading relationship is evident: northern European books were in circulation in Ipswich as early as the 1530s, as shown by the extant copy of 'a 1534 Antwerp edition of Juvencus...that specifies sale by an Ipswich stationer - 'Vaeneunt Gypsuici in foro piscario, per Reginaldum Oliuerium.'[28] It is therefore likely that Ipswich townspeople – and particularly merchants involved in international trade - were influenced by the religious views of their northern European trade partners, indeed for a brief period during the Edwardian Reformation, specifically 1547-8, when John Oswen and Anthony Scoloker ran printing presses in the town before moving onto Worcester (Oswen) and London (Scoloker), Ipswich was an active centre of Protestant print culture.

With only one exception of the anonymous work, *An Invectyve Against Dronkennes,* printed by Oswen in 1548,[29] every single text coming out of the Ipswich presses were, as Janet Ing Freedman explains:

> Popular works by Protestant reformers, including anonymous tracts and prayers; translations of texts by such authors as Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin; and anti-Papist verse satires by Ipswich writers.[30]

Gregory Duke concurs, noting that 'if the literate citizens of East Anglia were hungry for Protestant works, Scoloker and Oswen served them hearty fare indeed.'[31] With such texts disseminated throughout the town – and, presumably, still in circulation even after the closing of the Ipswich printing presses - it is thus no surprise that the town nurtured and, later,

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[27] Alan R. Pennie, 'The Evolution of Puritan Mentality in an Essex Cloth Town: Dedham and the Stour Valley, 1560-1640' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield, 1990), p. 33. For more on the 1569-73 trade embargo, see: Pauline Croft, 'Trading with the Enemy 1585-1604' *The Historical Journal,* 32.2 (1989), 281-302.

[28] Janet Ing Freedman, 'Anthony Scoloker, the "Just Reckoning" Printer, and the Earliest Ipswich Printing', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 9.5 (1990), 476-496 (p. 476). For more on printing in sixteenth century Ipswich, see: Freedman; S. F. Watson, 'Some Materials for a History of Printing and Publishing in Ipswich', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History*, 24 (1949), 182-227; William K. Sessions, *The First Printers at Ipswich in 1547-8 and Worcester in 1549-53* (York: Ebor Press, 1984); Gregory Duke, 'Parish, People and the English Bible in East Anglia, 1525-1560' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford University, 2004), pp. 162-8.

[29] Duke, p. 162.

[30] Freedman, p. 479.

[31] Duke, p. 162.

protected its puritan inhabitants, arguably the most celebrated being the aforementioned Samuel Ward, 'the famous puritan divine', who was town preacher for thirty years and twice minister of SMLT. [32] Almost from the very moment of his appointment as town preacher, 'the evangelical protestant form of Ward's Christianity' was made very clear:[33] his numerous written treaties and public sermons champion puritan beliefs and make clear his belief that 'those who held office in church and state should be puritans'.[34]

Yet, for the Reformation authorities during the period 1585-1603 - referred to by John Guy and McLaren as Elizabeth's 'second reign',[35] and, indeed, the very period during which the nine memorial paintings considered in this thesis were created - it is no exaggeration to say that Puritanism was considered a grave threat to the established church and social hierarchy of the nation, the religious settlement, and (in some circles) the rule of law and peace.[36] Thus, for the Elizabethan establishment (and so too the later Jacobean establishment), Ward's public commitment to and promotion of Puritanism was unacceptable. There were several attempts to silence him; perhaps the most notable for the purposes of this thesis was his imprisonment in Fleet Prison in response to his creation and subsequent dissemination of *The Double Deliverance:*

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[32] John Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603-1689* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p. 70.

[33] Margo Todd, 'Puritan Self-Fashioning: The Diary of Samuel Ward', *Journal of British Studies,* 31.3 (1992), 236-64 (p. 257).

[34] Blatchly, *Ward, Samuel.*

[35] John Guy, 'The 1590s: the second reign of Elizabeth I?', in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*: *Court and Culture in the Last Decade,* ed. by John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 1-19; McLaren, pp. 8-9.

[36] John Guy, 'The Elizabethan establishment and the ecclesiastical polity', in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*: *Court and Culture in the Last Decade,* ed. by John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 126-149; Patrick Collinson, 'Ecclesiastical vitriol: religious satire in the 1590s and the invention of puritanism', in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*: *Court and Culture in the Last Decade,* ed. by John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 150-170.

Figure 3.5 Samuel Ward, *The Double Deliverance*, 1621, etching on paper, British Museum ©The British Museum

This print, created by Ward in 1621, celebrates both the 1588 Elizabethan victory over the Roman Catholic forces of Phillip II's Spanish Armada (at the proper right of the print) and the thwarting of the 1605 Gunpowder Plot (at the proper left of the print).[37]

It is highly likely that Ward designed *The Double Deliverance* as an act of protest against James I's attempts to enter into an alliance with Spain.[38] For puritans such as Ward, any treaty of

[37] British Museum, *Satirical Print,*
<http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1451076&partId=1&subject=16602&page=311> [accessed 1 October 2019]. On *The Double Deliverance,* please see: Ema Vyroubalová, 'Catholic and Puritan Conspiracies in Samuel Ward's The Double Deliverance (1621)', in *Puritans and Catholics in the Trans-Atlantic World, 1600–1800,* ed. by Crawford Gribben and R. Scott Spurlock (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2015), pp. 47-65; Angus Vine, *Miscellaneous Order: Manuscript Culture and the Early Modern Organization of Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 235.
[38] Vyroubalová, p. 47.

cooperation with a Roman Catholic power – and particularly Spain, a country which in recent, living memory had presented such a grave risk to the Reformation and continued flourishing of Protestantism in England, as well as the life of the Monarch - would have been intolerable. For as Karen Hearn observes, the 1620s, (much like the period during which the nine memorials considered in this thesis were created; the later years of Elizabeth's reign - just before, during, and in the immediate aftermath of the Armada) was notable for an increase in anti-Catholic rhetoric, particularly 'around the time of the proposed marriage between the future king Charles I and a Spanish princess in 1623'.[39] Certainly, survival rates indicate that there was a strong public appetite for Ward's print throughout the 1620s, and thus for the associated message of Protestant deliverance over Roman Catholic forces.

Paper versions of *The Double Deliverance* are extant at the British Museum (as per Figure 3.5 above) and the Yale Centre for British Art,[40] and there is an embroidered textile version made of linen and silk in the collections of the National Museums of Liverpool.[41] Furthermore, and most significantly for the purposes of this study, there is a fully extant oil-on-panel version at the church of St Faith in Gaywood, King's Lynn, within the Diocese of Norwich and roughly sixty miles north of Ipswich, which is quite clearly inspired by Ward's print:[42]

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[39] Karen Hearn, 'Elizabeth I and the Spanish Armada: A Painting and its Afterlife', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 14 (2004), 123-140 (p. 136).
[40] Yale Centre for British Art, *Print made by unknown artist, seventeenth century, The Double Deliverance, 1588–1605, 1621,*
<http://collections.britishart.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3627551> [accessed 1 October 2019].
[41] See: Xanthe Brooke, *The Lady Lever Art Gallery: Catalogue of Embroideries* (Stroud: National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside), pp. 18-20.
[42] The Gaywood paintings were most likely commissioned during the 1620s by Thomas Hares, Rector of St Faith's from 1598 until his death in 1634.

Figure 3.6 Unknown artist after Samuel Ward, *The Double Deliverance,* c. 1625, oil on panels, St. Faith's Church, King's Lynn

The iconographic and functional similarities are immediately apparent when comparing Ward's original print and the Gaywood *Double Deliverance*: both celebrate the defeats of the Armada and the Gunpowder Plot, and they both contain instances of identical imagery and inscriptions.[43] Indeed, the idea that the English and Dutch Protestant victory over the Roman Catholic forces of Spain was providential, or divinely ordained, fits in neatly with the Reformed teaching of predestination: Elizabeth, as God's monarch on Earth, is the Elect leader of an Elect nation.[44] Thus, although Ward's *Double Deliverance* print and the Gaywood *Double*

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[43] On the Armada side of the image, both Ward's print and the Gaywood painting show the English ships arranged ready for battle in a horseshoe formation. Furthermore, they both contain inscriptions stating that God directed the elemental forces in support of Elizabeth's holy cause against Roman Catholic Spain: in the Gaywood painting, on the scroll above Elizabeth's head - O NIMIUM DILECTA DEO, TIBI MILITAT AETHER / ET CONIURATI VENIUNT AD CLASSICA VENTI [Oh most dearly beloved of God, the skies themselves fight for you and the winds come together to answer the trumpet call] - and in the Ipswich print, within the horseshoe formation of the Armdada - 'Ventorum Ludibrium' [the wind's mockery]. Translations my own.

[44] Natalie Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 144; Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 264; Leticia Alvarez-Recio, 'English Protestant Sermons at Moments of Crisis: The Threat of the Spanish Armada', in *War Sermons,* ed. by Gilles Teulie and Laurence Lux-Sterritt (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), pp. 31-52 (pp. 43-48).

Deliverance are, as cultural products of the 1620s, beyond the parameters of this thesis, the message they impart - of a Divinely-won victory by an Elect Protestant nation against the forces of Roman Catholic Spain – was already in circulation in the years immediately following the Armada, during the late-Elizabethan period that this study focuses on.

As with the nine painted memorials considered in this thesis, the parish church setting of the Gaywood *Double Deliverance* adds further nuance to how this painting can be interpreted. For despite being comprised of two unhinged, separate panels, the painting appears visually similar to the diptych design. The two painted panels of the Gaywood *Double Deliverance* were clearly designed to be hung side by side: they are the same size and the same shape, with both panels depicting the relevant monarch (Elizabeth I on the Armada side, and James I on the Gunpowder Plot side) in the small distinctive upper panel, reminiscent of a square pediment. As discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis, and again in Chapter Five, the diptych compositional form was – as with the triptych – once closely associated with the altarpieces of the medieval church and, accordingly the Roman Catholic celebration of the mass and the doctrine of transubstantiation. By 1625, however, the Gaywood *Double Deliverance* shows how the diptych form had been appropriated as a visual tool to proclaim and celebrate two major victories over Roman Catholic forces within the parish church setting; a design form once so closely linked with worship within the Old Faith is now used to proclaim the victory of the New Faith. Furthermore, the very presence of these paintings in the ecclesiological setting further disproves the once assumed narrative that post-Reformation churches were devoid of images; here we see imagery being proudly used to transmit the evangelical message of England as an Elect nation.[45]

Prior to the creation of Samuel Ward's print, however, during the 1580s and 1590s, the idea of a providential victory by God's chosen monarch had already become a common trope in descriptions of the Armada, both in secular and religious writings. In Edmund Spenser's 1590 play the *Faerie Queene,* for example, the female leader Belphoebe - 'She heauenly borne, and of celestiall hew' – functions as an allegorical representation of Elizabeth I, with the elemental

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[45] On the use of images in the post-Reformation parish church setting, see: Tara Hamling and Jonathan Willis, 'From Rejection to Reconciliation: Protestantism and the Image in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 62.4 (2023) 932-996; Orlik.

forces serving her in righteous battle. The Queen herself utilised this imagery in the medals that she had made in England and in the Dutch Republic to commemorate her victory. In the collections of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, for example, is a medal of 1588 by the Dutch maker Gerard van Bylaer:

Figure 3.7 Gerard van Bylaer, *Medal Commemorating the Defeat of the Spanish Armada,* 1588, National Maritime Museum, London

The medal includes the legend, on the obverse: 'FLAVIT [JEHOVAH] . ET . DISSIPATI . SVNT 1588' (Jehovah blew, and they were scattered).[46] The meaning could not be clearer: God used his elemental forces to secure a victory for his chosen monarch.

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[46] Royal Museums Greenwich, *Medal commemorating the defeat of the Spanish Armada,* <http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/37452.html> [accessed 1 October 2019].

Even before the Armada was actually fought, preachers in Hertfordshire,[47] London,[48] and Oxford,[49] were utilising the concept of Elizabeth as God's Elect monarch, and the English as God's Protestant army fighting his holy war against Roman Catholic forces, as explanation and justification for engaging in the upcoming battle: the power of this narrative as a motivational force – even a call to arms - within a nation being actively taught a predestinate understating of salvation cannot be overstated. These nation-wide rallying calls were heard loudly in Ipswich, whose townspeople sent two large warships eighteen miles down the coast to Tilbury Fort to fight for Elizabeth I in 1588. These ships – the 140 ton *William of Ipswich* and the 125 ton *Katharine of Ipswich* - were found, purchased, and provided with fifty crew per ship, all at the expense of the townspeople, as arranged by the Ipswich Corporation who mortgaged Portman's meadow (a large site in central Ipswich, today home to Ipswich Football Club) to raise the necessary funds.[50] In 1588, not only was William Smart a leading member of the Ipswich Corporation, he was also the town's MP. It therefore seems safe to argue that Smart was in support of the war effort and that he probably played a leading role in the sending of the Ipswich warships to fight the Armada. It is, furthermore, tempting to hypothesise that the *William of Ipswich* may have even been named after Smart in recognition of his philanthropic acts, although there is no evidence to corroborate this.

These efforts of William Smart and the Corporation in contributing to the war against Roman Catholic Spain are indicative of the strongly Protestant identity of Ipswich during the 1580s and 1590s, as attested to by extant testamentary evidence from all levels of society. Indeed, there are many examples of what Litzenberger would classify as neutral and Protestant preambles in Ipswich wills during the later years of the sixteenth century and into the

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[47] John Prime, *The Consolations of David, breefly applied to Queene Elizabeth, in a Sermon preached in Oxford the 17. of November 1588* (Oxford: J. Barnes, 1588).

[48] John Stockwood, *A Sermon preached at Paules Crosse on Bartholmew day, being the 24. Of August 1578* (London: Henry Bynneman for George Bishop, 1578); Thomas White, *A Sermon preached at Pawles Crosse on Sunday the ninth of December 1576* (London: Francis Coldock, 1578).

[49] Edmond Harris, *A Sermon preached at Brocket Hall before the Right Worshipfull Sir John Brocket and other Gentlemen there assembled for the Trayning of Souldiers* (London: T. Orwin for I. Daldern and W. Haw, 1588).

[50] *State Papers relating to the Defeat of the Armada, Anno 1558,* ed. by John Knox Laughton (London: Navy Records Society, 1894), p. 160; John Wooderspoon, *Memorials of the Ancient Town of Ipswich* (Ipswich and London: Pawsey and Longman, Brown and Green, and Longmans, 1850), p. 214.

seventeenth.[51] Draper Thomas Blosse, for example, bequeaths his soul to 'Almightie God' in 1581,[52] as does merchant Thomas Fuller in 1584,[53] and gentleman Robert Doon in 1593: 'I bequeathe my soule unto the mercyfull handes of god.'[54] By 1595, there is evidence of markedly more Protestant wording, as per grocer Sebastian Man's soul bequest:

> I bequeathe my soule unto the handes of Almightie god my Creator and Redemer and do hope onlie by and throughe the merrittes of Jesus Christ to be saved and have remission of my synes.[55]

Further evidence is provided by MacCulloch and Blatchly, who note that, in 1606, clerk Robert Wardall professes 'a prolonged testament of his Protestant faith, including an unusual quotation of 1 Thess. 4:17 which looked forward to being one of them that shall be taken up to meet the Lord Jesus in the air: clearly he had taken time and trouble to make this last statement of his gospel hope.'[56] In addition, in 1625, grocer Ralph Man (presumably of the same family as Sebastian) professes his total belief in his election *sola fide*. He places his soul in the hands of:

> Almighty God, creator & maker & to Jesus Christ, lord, saviour & redeemer, by whose blood shed…[I]…confidently believe…[that I]…will be of the elect of heaven.'[57]

Unlike his ancestor Sebastian who wrote his will thirty years earlier, Ralph explicitly refers to election as part of his predestinate understanding of salvation and asserts his absolute assurance that he is one of the saved; a sign of increasingly evangelical soteriological beliefs within this Ipswich family.

Furthermore, the circulation of Samuel Ward's *Double Deliverance* print during the 1620s, as well as the town's refusal to hand Ward over to the Bishop of Norwich for interrogation

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[51] Caroline Litzenberger, *The English Reformation and the Laity: Gloucestershire, 1540-1580* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.172-3.
[52] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 63 61.
[53] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 67 80.
[54] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 82 569.
[55] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 85 190.
[56] MacCulloch and Blatchly, p. 468.
[57] Ipswich, Suffolk Record Office, IC AA1 61 64.

regarding his Puritan beliefs and preaching activities,[58] is indicative of the movement of travel from a fervent early adoption of Protestantism (initially Lutheranism in this part of the country) - as early as 1538, on the orders of Cromwell and Bishop Latimer, the shrine to *Our Lady of Ipswich* was dismantled and the wooden statue of the Virgin brought to London to be burned - towards a strongly Puritan identity, as characterised and exemplified in the person of Ward, the town preacher.[59] However, despite the scholarly consensus that Ipswich was 'an early Protestant centre',[60] the destruction of potentially idolatrous imagery in Ipswich churches as demanded by the Reformers was by no means uniform, nor was it particularly thorough.

The seventeenth century East Anglian iconoclast, William Dowsing, recounts several examples of Roman Catholic imagery and inscriptions still extant in Ipswich churches, which he then went on to destroy; this proves their survival throughout periods of iconoclasm during the sixteenth century. For example, Dowsing notes in his diary that on 29 January 1643, at the church of St Mary Stoke (less than a mile south of SMLT, just across the river Orwell), he found: 'two crosses in wood and one cherubim painted, and one inscription on brass with *ora pro nobis*.'[61] Similarly, at St Peter's church (half a mile south of SMLT), Dowsing found: 'on the porch, the crown of thorns, the sponge and nails, and the Trinity in stone' and at the church of St Mary-at-the-Quay (also half a mile south of SMLT, on Key Street), Dowsing discovered 'six superstitious pictures', as he also found at nearby St Nicholas' church.[62] On 30 January 1643, at St Margaret's church (round the corner from SMLT), Dowsing found a huge amount of imagery from the ecclesiological visual culture of the Old Faith: 'twelve apostles in stone...and between twenty and thirty superstitious pictures' and on the same day at nearby St Matthew's church, he 'brake down thirty-five superstitious pictures.'[63]

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[58] Blatchly, *Ward, Samuel.*

[59] For more on the removal and eventual destruction of the *Our Lady* shrine in Ipswich, see: J. C. Dickinson, *The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 5; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors: Politics and Religion in an English County, 1500-1600* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 160; Gary Waller, *The Virgin Mary in late medieval and early modern English Literature and Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 1-3.

[60] Cross, p. 31.

[61] Wooderspoon, p. 340.

[62] Wooderspoon, p. 341.

[63] Wooderspoon, p. 341.

It is clear, in fact, that throughout the sixteenth century Diocese of Norwich, parishioners did not automatically rush to destroy the imagery of the Old Faith: far from it. At Holy Trinity Church in Long Melford, for example, just twenty miles west of Ipswich, there are extensive examples of parishioners protecting, concealing, and repurposing newly problematic or, indeed, newly blasphemous objects. For example, an intact alabaster panel depicting the Adoration of the Magi that was found under the church floor in the eighteenth century was almost certainly hidden by parishioners during the sixteenth century, potentially under the instruction of the Church Warden, Roger Martyn (d. c. 1580), a traditionalist who had lamented the removal of imagery from Long Melford.[64] Another alabaster altarpiece from the Lady Chapel of Holy Trinity Long Melford was removed, hidden, and preserved by the parishioner William Clopton.[65] Whether or not these parishioners of Long Melford were acting in expectation of another reversal of the Reformation and the re-introduction of Roman Catholic imagery into their church or because they simply could not bear to witness the destruction of objects which, until so recently, had held sacred meanings within the material, visual, and spiritual culture of their parish church, it is clear that this kind of behaviour – the concealment and protection of Roman Catholic imagery, of the kind proscribed by the Reformers – occurred throughout the diocese of Norwich, an area which tends to be characterised as an early adopter of and fervent supporter of evangelicalism.

The late-sixteenth century inhabitants of Ipswich might have difficulty recognising their civic church today, largely due to the extensive remodelling it was subject to during the nineteenth century, but also due to internal changes to the fixtures and fittings of the church, many of which were, crucially, due to the iconoclastic impulses of the Civil Wars period, as opposed to acts of destruction that took place under Elizabeth or the earlier Tudor monarchs. For example, in 1643, when William Dowsing visited St Mary-le-Tower, he:

> Took up six brass inscriptions with *Ora pro nobis,* and *Ora pro animabus,* and *Cuju animae propitietur Deus,* and *Pray for the soul*, in English, and … gave order to take down five iron crosses and one of wood, on the steeple.[66]

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[64] Margaret Aston, 'Public Worship and Iconoclasm', in *The Archaeology of Reformation, 1480-1580*, ed. by Daivd Gaimer (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2017), pp. 9-28 (p. 21).
[65] Whiting, *Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p. 25.
[66] Wooderspoon, p. 341.

This commentary is revealing, for it informs us that, until Dowsing's visit to the church in the mid-seventeenth century, commemorative monuments (in this case, funeral brasses), replete with inscriptions pertaining to the salvific power of intercessory prayer and thus the belief in purgatory, were very much extant within SMLT. This is, on one level, completely unexpected, given that – for much of the first half of the seventeenth century - the minister of SMLT and town preacher for Ipswich was the puritan Samuel Ward, who one would expect to abhor these soteriological sentiments contradicting an expression of faith *sola fide.* It is suggested here, however, that the survival of these objects of the Old Faith in Ipswich are yet another example of the 'messy complexity' of the process of religious reform, particularly in the decades immediately following the break with Rome,[67] and indicate that it is far too simplistic to claim that even a town such as Ipswich - on the surface an example of the Reformation in action, rapidly embracing reform and moving swiftly towards puritanism – followed every directive of the Reformers. After all, even as late as the 1590s, this 'messy complexity' is still discernible in Ipswich, with the town playing host to troupes of actors and performers, and the very real possibility that prohibited mystery plays were still being performed.[68]

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[67] Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, 'Protestantisms and their beginnings', in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. by Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-13 (p. 8).

[68] Patrick Collinson, 'Protestant Culture and the Cultural Revolution', in *Reformation to Revolution, Politics and Religion in Early Modern England*, ed. by Margo Todd (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 33-52 (p. 39). Collinson's hypothesis stands in marked opposition to the earlier work of Aubrey Gwynn who, in 1947, claimed that the Corpus Christi plays in Ipswich had been 'laid aside forever by order as early as 1531.' See: Aubrey Gwynn, 'The End of Medieval Drama in England', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review,* 36.143 (1947), 283-295 (p. 293). This is an example of the problems that can emerge in the study of religious history if polemical confessionalism rears its head. Gwynn, a Jesuit priest writing in 1940s Ireland, was far from objective in his analysis of the effects of the Protestant Reformations on cultural life in England, as indicated by the closing sentence of his article: 'have we, in this isolated revival of an ancient Catholic tradition, a last sadly pathetic witness to the desire, still latent in the hearts of many Englishmen, for the noble and beautiful things that had been lost under Tudor rule?' See: Gwynn, p. 295. Fortunately, polemical analysis along religious lines has no place in the Academy today. Whilst prominent Roman Catholic historians such as Duffy, Bossy, Scribner, and Marshall may have, at times, focused on what has been culturally lost as a result of the Reformation, these postrevisionist scholars have done so with sensitivity and objectivity: their work, in terms of a sense of confessional agenda, is about as far from Gwynn as it is possible to be. This is not to say, however, that personal beliefs of historians have no bearing on their interpretation of the past, but rather that these beliefs must not be used to 'confessionally colour' their analyses, to borrow Ryrie's phrase (quoted by Marshall, as below). Historians with religious beliefs can bring much to their subject: 'rich reserves of empathy and an innate suspicion of crassly functionalist models of religious belief, commitment, and motivation.' See: Peter Marshall, '(Re)defining the English Reformation', *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), 564-586 (pp. 571-574).

ii.   Meanings, Purposes, and Functions

a) Post-Reformation Civic Portraiture

The *Memorial to William Smart* is in many senses a model example of a post-Reformation memorial. There is very little that could be interpreted as contrary to the instructions of the Reformers regarding the acceptability of different kinds of imagery in churches and it is significant that even Dowsing, the ardent iconoclast, does not mention the memorial in his writings. Indeed, the painting is composed of one singular panel of wood, unlike the hinged triptych or diptych altarpieces of the medieval church which had come to symbolise the transformative miracle of the Roman Catholic mass and, once donor portraits became a common inclusion, clearly promoted the salvific power of intercessory prayer. Thus, whilst the triptych form would almost certainly have been synonymous with the visual culture of the Old Faith, a singular wooden panel held no such associations (quite unlike, for example, the three post-Reformation triptych church portrait memorials in Burford, Besford, and Bishop's Frome, which are discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis).

Secondly, there is no overt religious imagery present on the *Memorial to William Smart* such as figurative depictions of Christ, the Virgin Mary or the Saints. There are two angelic or putti-esque figures depicted sitting on either corner of the cartouche at the very top of the painted panel:

Figure 3.8 Detail of angel or putti in the upper proper right corner of the *Memorial to William Smart*

Figure 3.9 Detail of angel or putti in the upper proper left corner of the *Memorial to William Smart*

However, it is unlikely that this kind of angelic iconography would have been considered seditious or dangerously idolatrous by the Reformers. For as Walsham explains, angels were:

> A constituent feature of Protestant mentalities: densely populating the pages of both the Old and New Testaments, they could hardly be discarded as one of the nonscriptural, 'superstitious' accretions Christianity had gathered during the long centuries of papal corruption. Despite their close connection with the tainted cult of saints, their presence in the Bible protected them from becoming casualties of the iconoclastic purge launched by Luther, Calvin and other reformers.[69]

Hamling similarly notes the survival of medieval angelic imagery in churches as evidence of angels as 'an acceptable form of ecclesiastical decoration' in the post-Reformation period.[70] Indeed, whilst the cult of the Virgin Mary and of the saints played a major role in medieval Roman Catholic soteriology by virtue of their intercessory role between humankind and God, angels did not have the same connotations with the soul's journey through purgatory, and most significantly, unlike the belief in purgatory and the intercessory power of the saints, belief in the existence of angelic beings did contradict the Reformist principle of *sola scriptura*.

It might, however, initially appear as if the artist's depiction of the Smarts – who kneel with their hands clasped in prayer but, crucially, do not hold prayer books – is encouraging the viewer to pray for their souls:

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[69] Alexandra Walsham, 'Invisible Helpers: Angelic Intervention in Post-Reformation England', *Past and Present*, 208.1 (2010), 77-130 (p. 77).

[70] Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Protestant Britain, c.1560-c.1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 55.

Figure 3.10 Detail of Alice Smart in the lower proper left corner of the *Memorial to William Smart*

Figure 3.11 Detail of William Smart in the lower proper right corner of the *Memorial to William Smart*

However, the use of the present tense in line four of the central inscription - 'live then sweete Soule in ample rest' - clearly indicates the belief of the patron that William Smart's soul is already in heaven, and that he is thus one of God's Elect according to the Reformed teaching of a predestinate path to salvation. Indeed there is no indication that Smart held any affiliation to the Old Faith during his lifetime, quite the opposite in fact; his name does not appear on any of the Diocesan Returns of recusants for the Diocese of Norwich nor on any surviving Recusant Roll, and the preamble to his will is formulaic and contains what Litzenberger would class as a 'neutral' soul bequest,[71] where he bequeaths his soul solely to 'the merciful handes of Almightie God' with no mention of the saints or any requests for intercession.[72]

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[71] Litzenberger, *The English Reformation*, pp. 172-3.
[72] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 94 340.

Furthermore, Smart's prominent role in Ipswich civic life (including his involvement in raising funds for the Armada-bound ships), as well as his appointment as Member of Parliament for this notably Protestant part of East Anglia, would suggest that he was a conforming member of the Reformed faith.

Therefore, as opposed to the other painted church memorial portraits in this thesis where the commemorated were painted praying without books – the More painting in Adderbury, the Harewell painting in Besford, and the Downes painting in Bishop's Frome – were either confirmed Roman Catholics (as per the recusant Mores) or possible Roman Catholics (as per the potentially inwardly remaining Harewell and Downes families) and, thus, their lack of prayer books could be symbolic of their attachment to the Old Faith,[73] it is suggested here that that the depiction of William and Alice Smart in prayer without holding books is by no means an indication of any alignment with, or belief in, Roman Catholic soteriology. Instead, the composition of the painting, with the placement of William and Alice kneeling either side of the townscape, makes it appear as if the sitters are praying to, or perhaps even for, their town: this is a clear visual depiction of William Smart's attachment to Ipswich, and is indicative of his emotional and financial investment in the town over the course of his lifetime. Smart's role and very visible presence in Ipswich public life was clearly of the utmost importance to his sense of identity and, as such, it is possible to read the *Memorial to William Smart* as a key example of 'self-fashioning' within late sixteenth century English portraiture. For not only are William and Alice kneeling in prayer at either side of the Ipswich townscape, but Smart is depicted in his Corporation gown,[74] and the inscription within the cartouche explicitly list his acts of municipal charity and patronage:

> What can a deede man feede and cloth and holy preecepts give (line 1) …
> Schooles, churches, Orphanarye rooms shal keepe yt still in sight (line 8)
> Men, Weemen, Children, Ould and yug shal were the[e] day and night (line 9)

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[73] Please see Chapters Four and Five of this thesis for the case studies of these painted church portrait memorials to known or likely Roman Catholics.
[74] John Gough Nicholas, *Topographer and Genealogist, Vol II* (London: John Bowyer Nichols and Sons, 1853), p. 298.

In other words, the viewer is reminded that Smart provided food and clothing (feede and cloth) to the townsfolk of Ipswich – men, women, children, old and young – and was a patron of schools, churches, and orphanages.

Further close reading of the inscription indicates that there is more going on here than a simple listing of Smart's good civic deeds. For the viewer is also told that - even if the townspeople of Ipswich forget the debt of gratitude that they owe to Smart due to him being 'out of sight be oute of mind' (line 5) – he can be assured that he will receive Divine thanks in heaven as one of God's Elect: 'If none think nowe on thanks ; if out of sight be oute of minde /Although tis wrong, yet light's thy los that hevenly thank doost finde' (lines 5-6). Moreover, it is possible to discern some not-so-subtle word play in line 9 of the inscription, where it states that 'Men, Weemen, Children, Ould and yug shal were the[e] day and night.' If one accepts Steven Plunkett's suggestion that 'the spelling 'were' is odd precisely so that one can choose one of two meanings',[75] then it is possible to read this line in two different ways. First, if we take 'were' to mean 'ware', as in 'be aware of', then the function of this line is to tell the viewer to 'be aware of' or, indeed, to remember 'day and night' or, in perpetuity, Smart's philanthropy. The second possible meaning, if one reads 'were' as 'wear', is to inform the viewer that it was Smart who clothed the needy of Ipswich and thus 'Men, Weemen, Children, Ould and yug' will have clothes to wear 'the day and night'; in other words, they will always be clothed and warm thanks to Smart's charitable generosity. This line is thus invested with a powerful dual function: it both recounts and memorialises Smart's civic philanthropy.

What we have here, therefore, is a memorial which clearly reveals the subject's desire for his various beneficences to his hometown to be remembered in perpetuity, alongside his prominent role in Ipswich public life. By the time of his death in 1599, Smart had amassed a large fortune (almost certainly as a result of his involvement in the wool trade), and had held a litany of roles in public office: Member of Parliament, Treasures of Christ's hospital, coroner, claviger, bailiff, portman, and a member of the Corporation of Ipswich for nearly forty years.[76] Smart evidently felt a great affection for Ipswich, judging by the numerous bequests and

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[75] Ipswich, Suffolk Record Office, HA445 3 1 1 7 12.
[76] Fuidge.

legacies that he left to the town in his will.[77] On Foundation Street, for example - just around the corner from the appropriately named Smart Street - are the Smart alms-houses, which bear two inscriptions informing the viewer that it was Smart who funded the creation of these buildings:

> William Smart portman
> of Ipswich by his will
> dated January 9 1598
> left several estates for the
> purpose of maintaining
> sundry poor persons and
> funding them in clothes, coals &c
>
> Let gentle Smart sleep on in pious trust
> Behold his charity, respect his dust.

The similarity between these inscriptions and the one on the memorial painting in SMLT is immediately evident. In both cases, the viewer is being asked (or, arguably, instructed) to remember Smart's acts of philanthropy, and to respect and remember him for these civic beneficences.

In a further act of charity, Smart, who was an avid collector of books and manuscripts, gave the majority of his manuscripts collection – including one hundred from the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds - to Pembroke College, Cambridge, a few months before his death,[78] and, in his will, he made special mention of SMLT, by bequeathing:

> My lattern printed books and written bookes in velum and p'chmente…
> towards one librarye safelie to be keepte in the vestrye of the parishe church of St Mary Tower in Ipswich… to be used ther by the com'n preacher…for the tyme being or any other pre'cher mydned to preache in the said p'ishe church.[79]

This bequest, consisting of eight manuscripts - the 'written bookes in velum and p'chmente' - and twenty-five printed books, formed the basis of Ipswich's first public library.[80] Of course,

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[77] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 94 340.
[78] Blatchly, *The Town Library of Ipswich,* pp. 2-4.
[79] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 94 340.
[80] *A Directory of the Parochial Libraries of the Church of England and the Church in Wales,* ed. by Neil Ker (London: Bibliographical Society, 2004), pp. 249-50.

many of these works would have almost certainly been, if not quite Roman Catholic doctrinal tracts, then literature from within the Roman Catholic tradition of written and material culture (such as, for example, the documents from the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds). That Smart left such texts to the Ipswich town preacher 'or any other pre'cher mydned to preache in the said p'ishe church' is an indication of the lingering, unavoidable influence of the medieval church throughout the decades immediately following the Reformation in Ipswich. For whilst there is nothing to suggest that Smart maintained any attachment to the Old Faith and, certainly, the iconography within his portrait memorial in SMLT would support his representation as a conforming member of the Reformed faith, it is possible to see the influence of the late-medieval visual culture of commemoration at play in the *Memorial to William Smart.*

There are clear comparisons to be made with, for example, the central panel of the Withypool Triptych of 1514, which features a donor portrait of the Bristol-born merchant Paul Withypool kneeling with his hands clasped in prayer as per the depiction of Smart in the SMLT memorial painting:[81]

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[81] The wings of the triptych are owned by the National Gallery, London, but they are on loan to the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, where the triptych is displayed in its original composite form.

Figure 3.12 Antonio da Solario, *Virgin and Child with Saint Joseph and Donor, centre panel of the Withypool Triptych*, 1514, oil on panel, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery

This triptych, as an object of 1514, originated from within a very different soteriological tradition to that of the *Memorial to William Smart.* Withypool is portrayed praying to the infant Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and the other saints depicted in the triptych, thus indicating his belief in the power of intercession and, therefore, in the existence of purgatory, as well as his hope that this portrait would elicit prayers for his soul after his death. This is in great contrast to Smart's depiction at prayer next to the townscape of his beloved Ipswich and confident assertions (in the inscription) that he is in already in heaven as one of God's Elect. However, despite these crucial differences in meaning and function, what we see here is the continuation – across either side of the Reformation - of members of the mercantile class being depicted in portrait form for commemorative purposes, within paintings that are either

displayed in a sacred space (as per Smart's memorial in SMLT) or in a sacred form (as per the triptych format of Withypool's commission).

In addition, Withypool's commission is further testament to the increasing visibility of the urban elite as patrons of portraiture in sixteenth century Ipswich. Withypool's wife Anne was born in Ipswich, and, as a wool merchant, Withypool maintained strong professional links to the town which was one of the centres of the Tudor wool trade; in 1546 he bought the large plot of land which had formerly been the site of the Holy Trinity Priory, upon which his son Edmund built Christchurch Mansion.[82] Today, Christchurch Mansion is home to the collections of the Colchester and Ipswich Museums, where several portraits of sixteenth and early-seventeenth century local merchants are on display, including, in a happy coincidence, a portrait of Peter Withypool, an Ipswich lawyer and the son of Edmund and grandson of Paul, patron of the *Withypool Triptych*:

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[82] G. C. Moore Smith, *The family of Withypool: With special reference to their Manor of Christchurch, Ipswich, and some notes on the allied families of Thorne, Harper, Lucar, and Devereux* (Hertfordshire: Walthamstow Antiquarian Society, 1936), p. 44. Edmund Withypool continued the family tradition of artistic patronage, commissioning the Dutch medallist Steven van Herwijck to make two medals bearing his likeness in 1562. See: Edward Hawkins, *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland to the Death of George* II (London: British Museum, 1885), pp. 108-109.

Figure 3.13 Unknown English artist, *Peter Withipoll*, 1570, oil on canvas, Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich

It is highly likely that William and Alice Smart would have known Peter Withypool, as well as fellow merchant and portman of Ipswich Tobias Blosse (c.1565-c.1630), whose portrait is also in the collections of Ipswich council:

Figure 3.14 Unknown English artist, *Tobias Blosse,* oil on canvas, c.1627-1628, Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich

It is suggested here that the *Memorial to William Smart* fits into this tradition of merchant and civic portraiture. Smart was a merchant, and the focus of his memorial portrait is overwhelmingly civic, in remembering his contribution to Ipswich public life, rather than religious, to the extent that Tittler claims that:

> Though this is not in a strict sense a civic portrait – it hangs in the parish church rather than a civic hall and it seems to have been commissioned by the sitters – it

demonstrates a transitional stage between the pious benefactions of the old faith and the secular beneficence which replaced it.[83]

Even within the lengthy inscription describing Smart's various acts of philanthropy, there is no indication that these charitable impulses sprung from anything other than a desire to help his fellow townspeople and, of course, to be remembered for his actions. There is no mention of any hope that these actions would have helped him on his journey to salvation, as one would expect to find on a late-medieval memorial, because, as per the replacement of the purgatorial imperative with a predestinate understanding of salvation, such exclamations were not just theologically obsolete, but, for a conforming Protestant such as Smart appeared to be, they were also blasphemous. Thus, the *Memorial to William Smart* 'celebrates the donors' charitable impulses, as they pertained not to a patron saint or the parish, but to the borough itself.'[84]

b) Artistic innovation: design and form

There has been very little published research about the *Memorial to William Smart* and, as such, there has been virtually no discussion or debate about the painting's authorship.[85] The object itself bears no evidence of an artist's signature and, as is the case with the majority of the memorial portraits in this study, the aesthetic quality of the work is vernacular in its execution. It is clearly not the work of a London court-based, or highly trained, foreign-born artist; more likely, it is an example of late sixteenth century provincial portraiture. It is therefore proposed that a provincial English artist created the painting, quite possibly one living and working locally; indeed the painter must have had an exemplary knowledge of the

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[83] Robert Tittler, *The Face of the City; Civic Portraiture and Civic Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 138.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Tittler and Badham have both commented, briefly, on the painting. See: Tittler, *Face of the City,* p. 138; Sally Badham, 'A Painted Canvas Funerary Monument of 1615 in the Collections of the Society of Antiquaries of London and its Comparators', *Journal of Church Monuments,* 24 (2009), 89-153 (p. 107); Sally Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer: English Commemorative Art 1330–1670', *The British Art Journal*, 16.1 (2015), 58–72 (p. 68).

townscape in order to paint what is the first known panorama of Ipswich.[86] Furthermore, the cartouche that houses the acrostic inscription is typical of late-Elizabethan strapwork; a form of ornament comprised of a combination of ribbon-like scrolls and square blocks found on objects, furniture, and architecture in domestic and sacred settings throughout England from the late-sixteenth century onwards, and particularly in East Anglia, where Blatchly argues it seems to have been especially popular.[87]

It is possible, therefore, that the painter of the *Memorial to William Smart* was inspired by the strapwork detailing they likely would have seen on wooden furniture and panelling in churches and domestic buildings throughout late sixteenth century Norfolk and Suffolk, as well as on numerous stone monuments and architectural facades. Indeed Pevsner notes several examples of late Tudor strapwork across East Anglia including: the c. 1575 strapwork dormers of Shire Hall in Woodbridge;[88] the monument to Sir Henry Bedingfield (d. 1583) in the church of St John the Evangelist, Oxborough, King's Lynn, which features an inscription bordered by a strapwork frame;[89] and the monument in tomb-chest form to Thomas Stutevyle (d. 1571) which depicts three heraldic shields framed by strapwork cartouches in the church of St Mary, Dalham.[90] It is possible that the creators of these strapwork ornamentations in stone, as well as the painter of the *Memorial to William Smart*, would have been influenced by the decorative patterns that featured on many northern European prints and were detailed in the various pattern books that – as Anthony Wells-Cole and Malcolm

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[86] Blatchly, *The Town Library of Ipswich,* p. 1. Also see: Stuart Sillars, *Shakespeare and the Visual Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 24-5. Particularly famous surviving examples of early (meaning sixteenth century) English strapwork can be found at Hardwick New Hall, Derbyshire. The overmantel in the Lower Great Chamber, for example, features gilded strapwork ornamentation alongside the date '1597', whilst the base rails of the Aeglentyne Table (ca. 1568) are inlaid with strapwork. Banham notes that such ornamentation would have been 'modeled on examples found in Northern European pattern books'. See: Joanna Banham, *Encyclopedia of Interior Design* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 177.

[87] Tittler, *Face of the City,* p. 138; Michael Forsyth and Lisa White, *Interior Finishes and Fittings for Historic Building Conservation* (London: Wiley, 2011), p. 51.

[88] Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Suffolk,* (London: Penguin, 2000; 2nd edn revised by Enid Radcliffe, 1974), p. 51.

[89] Nikolaus Pevsner and Bill Wilson, *The Buildings of England: Norfolk; North-west and South* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002; 2nd edn, 1999), p. 583.

[90] Pevsner, *Suffolk,* p, 183.

Jones have shown - were in circulation throughout England during the second half of the sixteenth century.[91]

The prevalence of strapwork, likely inspired by the work of northern-European artists such as Jans Vedreman de Vries, as a form of ornamental decoration throughout sixteenth century provincial England highlights the significant and successful role of print culture (in terms of print creation, publication, and circulation) in disseminating knowledge of design and ornament forms throughout post-Reformation Europe and, crucially, not just to the major cities. [92] Certainly, there is every chance that the wealthy mercers William and Alice Smart, as well as the probably local painter of *The Memorial to William Smart* would have encountered northern European prints and pattern books; as discussed earlier in this chapter, sixteenthcentury Ipswich was a port town and urban centre, with particularly strong continental trade links and a thriving print culture.[93] It is thus highly likely that the strapwork cartouche, as well as emblems such as the blazing sun in the centre of the painting and the angelic figures that sit astride the top two corners of the cartouche may have come from such print sources.

It is suggested here that the use of such ornament and image may have been a conscious decision on the part of the patron and artist in an attempt to portray erudition and publicly declare their knowledge of continental print fashions; to show that – despite their significant distance from London and the court – these Ipswich creators of late sixteenth century visual culture had access to cutting edge northern European sources. Geographic distance did not equate to intellectual distance, far from it: Wells-Cole has shown that the key port towns of

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[91] Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Influence of Continental Prints, 1558 – 1625* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1997); Malcolm Jones, *The Print in Early Modern England: An Historical Oversight* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2010). Several examples of early prints, many featuring strapwork designs by the prolific Flemish printmaker Jans Vedreman de Vries, are still extant today in museum collections. For example: V&A, museum number E.1413-1923; V&A, museum number E. 2033-1899; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, museum number 63.561.

[92] On Vedreman de Vries, the circulation of his designs throughout early modern Europe, and the influence of his work on both patrons and makers in England, see: Anthony Wells-Cole, 'Paper Architecture: Mechanisms for the Migration of Architecture from the Low Countries to England', in *The Low Countries at the Crossroads: Netherlandish Architecture as an Export Product in Early Modern Europe (1480-1680)*, ed. by Konrad Ottenheym and Krista De Jong (Turnhout: Brepolis, 2013), pp. 301-310.

[93] Wells-Cole has demonstrated the prevalence of continental-esque decoration and ornamentation in the port towns of England, and emphasised that wealthy patrons (such as, in this case, the Smarts) would have had access to such media. See: Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 169, p. 299.

England were important points of entry for continental prints and pattern books.[94] Thus, if the selection and use of specific designs and images taken from print sources enabled patrons to express their 'personal aspirations',[95] then the inclusion of strapwork decoration and emblems such as the blazing sun and the two angels could be viewed as a proclamation to the viewer that those behind the commissioning and creation of the *Memorial to William Smart* maintained an intellectual connection to and knowledge of the northern European culture of printed media; that they were plugged into this international network of post-Reformation art and design.

Whilst the inclusion of such ornament and emblems in the *Memorial to William Smart* is thus indicative of patrons and artists taking inspiration from the type of ornament used in prints circulating throughout Europe (and therefore someone connected to continental intellectual and creative networks), so too does the unusual design of the painting – with the panel dominated by the cartouche-framed central inscription and the surrounding imagery (including the portraits of the subjects) playing an important role in supporting and emphasising the message of the text – suggest an awareness of new ways that text and image were being used within the Reformed parish church setting in England. Indeed, it is suggested here that the overall composition and particularly the interplay between text and image across the *Memorial to William Smart* is highly reminiscent of the commandment boards that were created for display in churches following Elizabeth I's order of 22 January 1561. In this order, the Queen decreed that 'that the tables of the commandments may be comlye set up, or hung up' in every church in England, "to be not only read for edification, but also to give some comlye ornament'.[96]

Jonathan Willis, Tara Hamling, and Susan Orlik have shone a light on this 'almost extinct genre of early modern material culture'.[97] There are only around 30 extant commandment boards from the period c.1560-c.1660, which, as Willis explains, indicates an extremely small survival rate of around 0.33 (roughly one third of one per cent), based on the hypothesis that each of

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[94] Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 299.
[95] Wells-Cole, 'Paper Architecture', pp. 306-307.
[96] Hamling and Willis, p. 947.
[97] Jonathan Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 303.

the c. 9000 parish churches in England would have displayed one of these boards by c.1570.[98] Amongst the surviving examples of the object type as presented and analysed by Willis in 2017,[99] Orlik in 2022,[100] and Hamling and Willis in 2023,[101] several include a combination of text and image presented within a similar composition to that found in the *Memorial to William Smart*: a central, framed text (sometimes divided into two tables), surrounded by a range of imagery, from ornament and emblem to figurative depictions of Old Testament characters and histories. It is certainly possible that the patron and artist of the *Memorial to William Smart* may have been inspired by the clever use of text and the arresting combination of text and image as presented on these commandment boards: after all, if Willis is correct in stating that the majority of the parish churches in England had acquired a board by the first decade of Elizabeth's reign, then an Ipswich-based painter active c.1599 would have been able to view a dozen examples of these painted objects within the town's twelve medieval churches.[102]

Could the patron and painter of the *Memorial to William Smart* have modelled their memorial commission and creation – intended for display in the parish church - on these boards? The compositional similarities, as well as the creative use of text displayed across the *Memorial to William Smart* (the central inscription is a rhyming acrostic poem, with the first letter of each line spelling out the name of the subject) suggests that this may have been the case, although it is of course impossible to say for certain. We do know, however, of at least one commandment board from the post-Reformation period (at St Nicholas' Little Horwood, Buckinghamshire) which includes a text in rhyming couplets (in this case, a paraphrasing of Matthew 5), as well as the usual list of the 10 Commandments.[103] Given that only c.30 examples of this object type survive today out of a probable total of c.9000,[104] it seems safe

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[98] Hamling and Willis, p. 947; Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue,* p. 303.

[99] Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue,* pp. 281-344.

[100] Orlik, pp. 256-271.

[101] Hamling and Willis.

[102] Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue,* p. 303.

[103] The rhyming text reads: Both old and young these Lawes befitt / Which God himself in Sinai Writt / These Morall are right just and true / Which all men ought to keep and view. / Who so these keep and by the merit / Of Christ doth trust heaven to enherit / Shall without doubt this life being past / Obtaine the joyes therof at last. Text taken from: Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue,* p. 312-313, where an image of the Little Horwood commandment board is also provided.

[104] See: Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue,* p. 312-314.

to hypothesise that many more commandment boards with similarly creative textual elements would have once existed, and provided inspiration to patrons and creators of memorial objects and images for the post-Reformation ecclesiological setting.

c) Widowhood and 'the agency of the patroness'[105]

Robert Tittler, who, along with Sally Badham, is one of only two art historians to have written about the Smart memorial,[106] states that the painting 'seems to have been commissioned by the sitters'.[107] However, as is so often the case with provincial portraiture of the Elizabethan period, there is no extant documentation to confirm the identity of the patron. Furthermore, unlike some of the other nine painted memorial objects considered in this thesis – such as the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More,* the *Cornewall Family Memorial*, and the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* – there is no inscription announcing the identity of the patron. The acrostic inscription clearly indicates that one of the sitters, William Smart, was already dead by the time of the painting's creation: he is described as 'a deede man' (line 1); his grave is referenced - 'his ground most lowe' (line 3); and his assumed place in heaven as one of God's Elect is made clear – 'live then sweete Soule in ample rest' (line 4).

It is of course possible that Smart commissioned the Ipswich painting prior to his death, as did many of the patrons of post-1540 *memento mori* portraiture (such as Smart's fellow merchant John Isham of Lamport Hall, as discussed in the preceding chapter of this thesis). Furthermore, as will be discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis, Smart's fellow patron of painted *memoria* for the parish church setting, Edward Stradling, commissioned Panel 3 of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* – commemorating himself and his wife – during their lifetime. However, unlike the Smart memorial, Panel 3 of the Stradling paintings makes it clear, through its inscription, both that Edward was the patron and that he was still alive. That there is no mention of Smart as the patron of the Ipswich painted church memorial portrait

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[105] Tarnya Cooper, 'Picturing the Agency of Widows: Female patronage among the gentry and the middling sort of Elizabethan England', in *Routledge Companion to Women, Sex, and Gender in the Early British Colonial World*, ed. by Kimberley Anne Coles and Eve Keller (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 104-119 (p. 104).
[106] Tittler, *Face of the City,* pp. 24, 25, 138; Badham, 'A Painted Canvas', p. 19, p. 31.
[107] Tittler, *Face of the City*, p. 138.

at any point in the twelve-line inscription which occupies the central part of the panel, as well as the fact that Smart makes no mention of the painting in his will despite taking care to list his other 'moveable goods' could indicate that the *Memorial to William Smart* was commissioned by another party.[108]

It is suggested here that the most likely patron was in fact Smart's widow, Alice, who is indeed one of the sitters (in as much as her image appears in the painting), even if she is quite clearly not the subject of the SMLT painting; she is not mentioned at all in the central inscription which eulogises her husband. It is, however, through close reading of Smart's will that the hypothesis that Alice was patron of the Ipswich memorial painting can be made: not only is she granted the vast majority of her husband's numerous properties, lands, and other financial assets including all of his 'moveable goods' (except the books left to SMLT, as discussed earlier in this chapter) but, crucially, Smart names Alice executrix and wills that 'my body, when it shall please Him to end this my transitory life, to be buried at the discretion of my executrix.'[109] This decision, to essentially grant his wife control over the location of his body and the manner in which he would be buried is significant: it shows that Smart trusted Alice with his post-mortem self. Furthermore, given that, as per Smart's will, Alice Smart would have arranged her husband's burial, it is thus highly likely that she would have also arranged his funeral and other types of commemoration, including, as is suggested here, the painted church portrait memorial in SMLT.

If we accept that Alice was indeed the patron of the *Memorial to William Smart,* then we accept her into the ranks of other widows of the late-medieval and early modern period who commissioned church monuments - whether stone, brass, or painted wood - to their deceased husbands.[110] Examples of widow-commissioned ecclesiological *memoria* from the

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[108] PROB 11 94 340.

[109] Ibid.

[110] On women, and particularly widows, as patrons of church monuments to their deceased husbands during the late-medieval and early modern periods, see: Barbara Harris, *English Aristocratic Women and the Fabric of Piety, 1450-1550* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), pp. 25-60; Nigel Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 290-299; Susan James, *Women's Voices in Tudor Wills, 1485-1603: Authority, Influence and Material Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015)*,* pp. 59-66; Susan James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art, 1485–1603* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 10-21; Peter Sherlock, 'Monuments and Memory', in *A History of Early Modern Women's Writing,* ed. by Patricia Phillippy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 292-311.

late-Elizabethan period include: the alabaster and porphyry effigial monument in St George's Chapel, Windsor, to Edward, Earl of Lincoln (d. 1585), commissioned by his widow Elizabeth Fitzgerald, Countess of Lincoln; [111] the alabaster and marble effigial monument to Gregory Fiennes, Lord Dacre (d. 1594), in All Saints Chelsea, commissioned by his widow, Anne Sackville;[112] the two alabaster effigial monuments commissioned by Elizabeth Cooke, first Lady Hoby and then Lady Russell, to both of her husbands, following their respective deaths in 1566 (Thomas Hoby, whose monument is in All Saints Bisham) and 1584 (John Russell, whose monument is in Westminster Abbey);[113] the alabaster effigial tomb monument to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, commissioned by his widow Lettice Knollys after his death in 1588; and the two alabaster effigial monuments commissioned by Barbara Cope in memory of her husbands, Edward Burnell (d. 1589), whose monument is at St Peter's Sibthorpe, and Robert Whalley (d. 1583), whose monument is at St Wilfrid's Screveton.[114] However, whilst this list of elaborately carved alabaster church monuments are all to the memory of husbands from the amongst the elite of late-sixteenth century society, we know that widows of the gentry, upper-middling sort, and urban elite were also patrons of *memoria* for the ecclesiological space.

As Susan James has shown, 'across the century and at almost all levels of society able to afford them, women at court and in the countryside commissioned and paid for an enormous corpus of funerary sculpture, memorial glass, monumental brasses and embroidered banners.'[115] To this list must also be added painted memorials on wooden panel: as discussed in this chapter and later in this thesis, late-Elizabethan widows of the non-elite commissioned memorials to their deceased husbands that combined the spheres of painted portraiture on wood panel and effigial church monument. Indeed, three out of the seven patrons of the painted church portrait memorials presented in this thesis were the non-elite widows of the male subjects commemorated in the respective paintings: firstly, as suggested in this chapter, Alice Smart (a widow of the Ipswich urban elite), and, as will be discussed in the following chapter,

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[111] James, *The Feminine Dynamic,* p. 15.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), p. 12.

[114] Sherlock, 'Monuments and Memory', p. 297.

[115] James, *The Feminine Dynamic,* p. 21; Also see: Barbara Harris, *English Aristocratic Women and the Fabric of Piety, 1450-1550* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

Dorothy Unton (widow of the diplomat Henry Unton, subject of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*) and the Oxfordshire gentry woman Mary More (widow of Thomas More, subject of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*).

Certainly, the state of widowhood, being intrinsically linked to loss, was fertile emotional ground from within which late sixteenth century women could use their cultural commissions to explore themes of transience, mortality, and salvation. For example, whilst the subjects of the painted *Memorial to William Smart,* the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More,* and the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* are, undoubtedly, the commemorated husbands, these memorials – like many of the comparative widow-commissioned effigial monuments in alabaster listed above - all present the viewer with depictions of both the living widow and their late husband. The contrast between the living woman and the dead male being commemorated in the ecclesiological setting in painted portrait form is an arresting visual motif which speaks of, to borrow Tarnya Cooper's phrase, 'loss and regeneration', and prompts the viewer to reflect on their own relationships with those they have lost. [116] Furthermore - and as will be discussed at length in the following chapter of this thesis in relation to the various cultural commissions made by Dorothy Unton following the death of her husband - widowhood appears to have brought a certain sense of cultural agency to the women of the Elizabethan non-elite, particularly regarding the patronage of portraiture.

For whilst men of the gentry, upper-middling-sort, and urban elite were prolific commissioners of portraits for the domestic space during the latter half of the sixteenth century, it was far less common for married women of equivalent social status to take on the role of patron or, indeed, to be depicted in single portrait form.[117] Certainly, Tudor women appeared in and commissioned single portraits, but the majority of these female patrons and sitters seem to have come from the nobility and courtly circles, whilst 'there are only a few surviving sixteenth century examples of single portraits of women from merchant families, and it is perhaps likely that many of these were once paired with portraits of husbands.'[118] It is likely that even the portrait of arguably the most famous wife of a Tudor merchant,

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[116] Cooper, 'Picturing the Agency of Widows', p. 105.
[117] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, pp. 101-110; Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics*, pp. 40-59.
[118] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, p. 105.

Katheryn of Berain (1535-1591, married to Richard Clough), was a 'pendant' – meaning complementary, or paired painting - to one of the two extant portraits of her husband, possibly commissioned as a celebration of their marriage in 1567.[119]

As widows, however, women from merchant families may have been - perhaps for the first time in their lives - in control of their own finances, particularly if (like Alice Smart), they had been left significant amounts of money by their husbands. In addition, if (again, like Alice Smart), a widow had been named executrix of her husband's estate, then she would have been endowed with a certain legal status and financial responsibility. For some women of the urban elite, widowhood thus endowed them with the financial ability and, crucially, the autonomy, to commission their own likenesses: examples include the surviving portraits of Joyce Frankland neé Trappes (1531-1587), widow of two London clothworkers Henry Saxey and William Frankland, which were all commissioned after the death of her second husband,[120] and the portrait of Margaret Craythorne (or Crathorne, d. 1591), dating to c. 1580-91, which was also commissioned after the death of her husband John Craythorne (master of the Cutlers' Company, d. 1568).[121] It is possible that, for the widow-patrons of the memorial portraits on wooden panel as selected for presentation and discussion in this thesis, the decision to include their own likenesses in the memorials they commissioned to their husbands was a similar example of the 'agency of the patroness',[122] enabled through widowhood, in action. If so, then their memorial commissions are testament to their dutiful, wifely piety in remembering their husbands, whilst also ensuring that they too are remembered as patrons of culturally significant and creative *memoria* for the ecclesiological space.

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[119] The portrait of Katheryn of Berain, dated 1568, is quite clearly the work of a highly-trained and exceptionally talented artist: it is attributed to the Netherlandish painter Adriaen van Cronenburgh (c. 1520/5-c.1604) and is in the collections of the National Museum of Wales (NMW), Cardiff (NMW A19), where it is a star object on public display in the *Faces of Wales* gallery. For analysis of the painting, see: NMW, *Katheryn of Berain* <https://museum.wales/articles/1429/Katheryn-of-Berain/> [accessed 6 January 2022]; Cooper, 'Citizen Portrait', pp. 101-105. For more on Katheryn's remarkable life including how she earned the posthumous status of *Mam Cymru (Mother of Wales),* see: John Ballinger, *Katheryn of Berain: A Study in North Wales Family History* (London: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1929); Katherine Swett, 'Widowhood, Custom and Property in Early Modern North Wales', *Welsh History Review,* 18.2 (1996), 189-227 (pp. 198-224).
[120] Cooper, 'Citizen Portrait', p. 105.
[121] Cooper, 'Citizen Portrait', p. 107.
[122] Cooper, 'Picturing the Agency of Widows', p. 104.

iii.   Conclusion

The innovative design of the *Memorial to William Smart* and the imaginative use of text displayed across the painting is indicative of a creativity that flourished during the post-Reformation period that was, as has been suggested in this chapter, at least partly afforded by evolving attitudes to the presence and function of imagery in the church setting during the process of religious reform, as well as the freedoms – both financially and in terms of a newly granted autonomy to pursue selected cultural patronages - granted by widowhood. For the *Memorial to William Smart* displays a continuity of imagery in the depiction, as discussed above, of a portrait of a pious merchant in prayer (a trope visible in both late-medieval and post-Reformation mercantile portraiture), but in its conscious use of text and image to portray the subject's dedication to civic, as opposed to religious, causes, as well as its confident assertion that the subject has met his heavenly reward as one of God's Elect, its subject matter is decidedly post-Reformation. The painting's similarity to post-Reformation commandment boards has also been presented and considered, indeed it is possible that the spatial interplay between inscription and image visible on the *Memorial to William Smart*, with image acting in service of text, as well as the poetical, rhyming nature of the text itself may have been inspired by these post-Reformation objects that would have once been present in every English parish church. Indeed, it is the central, cartouche-framed inscription which relays the central message of the painting in memorialising Smart's philanthropic dedication to Ipswich and reminding the viewer of his Election, with the assertion that his soul is already living in 'ample rest'.[123]

Thus Alice Smart - as a widow of the urban elite commissioning a memorial which sits at the intersection of a civic portrait and a funeral monument indicating the burial place of the subject, one which is heavily reliant on text and realised by an unknown (but almost certainly local) artist working in the late sixteenth century vernacular style – perfectly fits the model of a patron for portraiture at the middle point of the artform's 'malleable moment' as defined

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[123] As is recorded on line four of the painting's central inscription. For a full transcription of the text, please see the Appendix to this thesis.

by Robert Tittler. Her innovative, engaging commission 'speaks clearly to the transition' from the use of image and inscription within portraiture as an appeal for intercession in aid of salvation to, instead, an attestation to William Smart's philanthropic dedication to his community during his lifetime: 'it is the town and thus the secular community toward which Smart directs his devotion'.[124] Indeed, in the same way that the central inscription highlights Smart's acts of civil during his lifetime, so too is imagery used to record, legitimise, and memorialise William Smart's reputation as a leading member of the civic community of Elizabethan Ipswich: the depiction of the first known panorama of the Ipswich townscape reminds the viewer of Smart's dedication to the town, and his portrayal in the red robes of the Corporation underscores his prominent role in the life and governance of Ipswich.[125] Displayed in the prominent public setting of the parish church, this message would have been regularly seen and received by the local community; encouraging them, in remembering Smart's life, to emulate his civic dedication and philanthropy, no longer as an aid to salvation but rather as an attestation of Election and in assertion of the legitimacy of the various civic, local institutions that his memory had been so consciously tied to.

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[124] Tittler, 'The Malleable moment', p. 286.

[125] As noted earlier in this chapter, Smart served the town of Ipswich in many different roles during his lifetime, including coroner, claviger, baliff, portman, member of the Corporation, and MP. See: Blatchly, *The Town Library of Ipswich*, pp. 1-3; Fuidge.

Chapter Four – Oxfordshire: The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton and the Memorial to Thomas and Mary More

Figure 4. 1 Richard Scarlett (possibly), The *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*, c.1596-c.1603, oil on panel, National Portrait Gallery, London. Previously in All Saints' Church, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

This painting commemorates and celebrates the life of Sir Henry Unton (c. 1558-1596). Most likely commissioned by Dorothy Unton, wife of Sir Henry, it is almost certainly the most well-known of the nine painted church portrait memorials selected for presentation and analysis in this thesis: it has been on public display at the NPG since 1884 when it was acquired by the Gallery's first Director, George Scharf.[1] Research undertaken by Robert Tittler and Adrian Ailes in 2019 and Peter Sherlock in 2023 indicates that the artist (possibly the heraldic painter Richard Scarlett) was most likely working on the painting during the very final years of Elizabeth's reign and that it may have been completed during the first two or three years of James I's reign.[2] Thus, whilst the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* in its completed form is a product of the early Jacobean period rather than late Elizabethan period, its aesthetic style is

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[1] NPG, *The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton (c. 1558 - 1596)*, <http://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/making-art-in-tudor-britain/case-studies/the-portrait-of-sirhenry-unton-c.-1558-1596.php> [Accessed 1 August 2019]; Peter Sherlock, 'The Unton Portrait Reconsidered', in *Memory and Mortality in Renaissance England*, ed. by William Engel, Rory Loughnane and Grant Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp. 184-200 (p. 184).

[2] Robert Tittler and Adrian Ailes, 'Arms Painting and the Life of Sir Henry Unton', *British Art Journal*, 20.3 (2019), 12-21; Sherlock, 'The Unton Portrait Reconsidered'.

very much in keeping with the late sixteenth century vernacular idiom: lacking in depth and mimetic representation, it exhibits a 'crudely vernacular working', despite the rich content and creative narrative format of the painting.[3] The decision to include the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* as one of the painted memorials on wooden board selected for study in this thesis is based on the NPG's suggestion – supported by Tittler and this author – that the painting was on display in Faringdon parish church as part of a temporary (probably wooden) memorial structure until the completion of Unton's stone tomb monument in 1606. This suggestion is based on technical and structural analysis of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* undertaken at the NPG as part of the *Making Art in Tudor Britain* research programme and will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.[4]

Henry Unton himself, quite unlike the majority of the subjects of the painted church portrait memorials discussed in this thesis, was very well-known during his lifetime: he lived a public-facing, international life as Elizabeth I's Ambassador to France, and cultivated a chivalric reputation embodying 'early modern ideals of masculine virtue and honour' through his involvement in various military campaigns, and his eventual knighthood awarded on the battlefield by the Earl of Leicester.[5] His post-mortem reputation, as will be discussed at length in this chapter, continued to be carefully fashioned by his widow Dorothy's various cultural commissions in honour of her husband's life and in her surety of his salvation as one of God's Elect.

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[3] Tittler and Ailes, p. 12.
[4] See: NPG, *The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*; NPG, *Sir Henry Unton: Conservation Research,*
<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw06456/Sir-Henry-Unton> [accessed 8 March 2022].
[5] Sherlock, 'The Unton Portrait Reconsidered', p. 184.

Figure 4. 2 Sampson Strong (possibly), The *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*, c.1586, oil on panel, St Mary the Virgin Church, Adderbury, Oxfordshire

This painting was created in memory of Thomas More, a gentleman of Adderbury, Oxfordshire, who, according to the inscription in the lower panel of the painting, died on 2 January 1586. The painting also depicts Mary More, the widow of Thomas, who commissioned, or, as the inscription states, 'caused' the portrait to be made. There is little extant documentation about this couple, and particularly about Thomas. It would appear that he made a particularly good match in marrying Mary, who was the daughter of the prominent

local landowner, and recusant, Sir Anthony Bustard. Mary, having been born into the property-owning gentry class, has left a paper trail at least in terms of her ancestry: for example, she is named several times in her father's will under her married name 'Mary More'.[6] In the record of the 1566 heraldic visitation to Oxfordshire, Thomas is listed in the Bustard of Adderbury pedigree as simply 'Thomas Mort [More] of Stapley', with no information about his parentage.[7] This suggests that Thomas did not come from a particularly wealthy or otherwise noteworthy family.

i.   Introduction

The *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* and the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* commemorate two Oxfordshire late-Elizabethans and were most likely displayed in two Oxfordshire parish churches thirty-three miles apart from each other. These two memorial objects share some important characteristics: as with all of the nine paintings presented in this thesis, they are painted memorial portraits on wooden board that hung (at least for a time) in local parish churches and, as per the *Memorial to William Smart* in Ipswich, both the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* and *The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* were almost certainly commissioned by the widows of the men commemorated in each portrait. As will be discussed in this chapter, however, these two paintings vary enormously from each other in terms of their style and content. The *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* is similar, at least in terms of its composition, to several of the memorials on wooden panel selected for analysis in this thesis: it depicts a couple kneeling at prayer, as well as heraldic and *memento mori* imagery, and has inscriptions ruminating on the transience inherent to the human condition. Conversely, the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* is almost entirely atypical, with its innovative narrative design and

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[6] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 76 3. The wills of Thomas and Mary More, if they ever existed, do not appear to survive.

[7] M.H.A Stapleton writes, in an initialed footnote, that Thomas was a member of the de la More family, from Bicester. See: Patrick Ryan, 'Diocesan Returns of Recusants for England and Wales, 1577', in *Miscellanea 12*, *Catholic Record Society Record Series 22*, ed. by Patrick Ryan (1921), p. 109. However, this claim is unreferenced and there is a further caveat: 'it should be noted that…[Stapleton's]…death prevented the notes being corrected by her.' See: Ryan, p. 10.

use of imagery appearing much more similar in content and style to a narrative or story painting than either a portrait or church monument of the late-Elizabethan period.[8]

There are also crucial differences regarding the confessional leanings and social statuses of the sitters and subjects: as will be presented in this chapter, Mary More, patron of the Adderbury painting, came from a Roman Catholic family and was a confirmed Recusant, whereas Dorothy Unton, patron of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton,* was a conforming Protestant. The Mores were members of the Oxfordshire gentry, whereas Henry Unton was a diplomat and courtier, and a conforming member of the Reformed faith with 'clear protestant leanings.'[9] There are, however, less pronounced differences in the aesthetic quality of the two paintings. Despite the arguably slightly more accomplished artistic treatment and handling displayed across the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More,* as with each of the nine memorial paintings considered in this thesis, both the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* and the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* fit within the late sixteenth century vernacular idiom. Their lack of depth makes them appear two-dimensional and thus 'non-illusionistic',[10] and they rely on text and emblem to convey the intentions of their patrons and to transmit the desired messages of the paintings.

These aesthetic considerations indicate that these two memorial paintings were almost certainly not the work of highly trained, court-based artists. Indeed Robert Tittler and Adrian Ailes suggest that – based on his attendance at Unton's funeral, where he was possibly employed by the bereaved family to work with the herald in establishing and duly designing the display of arms – the author of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* could be the prominent heraldic painter, Richard Scarlett.[11] Building on the work of Tittler and Edward Town, and their

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[8] Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis and Philippa Kelly, *Early Modern English Lives: Autobiography and Self-Representation 1500-1660* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 52.

[9] Mark Greengrass, 'Unton [Upton], Sir Henry (c. 1558-1596), diplomat and soldier.' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-28001> [Accessed 3 September 2019].

[10] Tarnya Cooper 'Predestined Lives? Portraiture and Religious Belief in England and Wales, 1560-1620', in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007), pp. 49-62 (p. 55). Also see: Robert Tittler, *The Face of the City; Civic Portraiture and Civic Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 8-10.

[11] Ailes and Tittler, p. 14.

collective interest in the biographies and practices of early modern portrait painters, this chapter aims to expand our existing knowledge of post-Reformation portrait authorship through its original suggestion of authorship for the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*.[12] As such, this author will propose that the painting may have been the work of the Oxfordshire-based Netherlandish portraitist known variously as Sampson Strong, Sampson Starke, Sampson Starkey, Sampson the Picturer, or 'Sampson the Paynter',[13] whose known works Tittler and Thackaray describe as 'charming but rude vernacular portraits'.[14]

Out of the nine memorial commissions presented in this thesis, the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* is undoubtedly the most well-known: it is 'one of the strangest and best known paintings in the National Portrait Gallery',[15] and, as such, it has generated a relatively large amount of scholarly interest, at least compared to the other eight paintings considered in this study.[16] The painting portrays Unton in all stages of his life and career, from infancy to the deathbed: there are depictions of studying, travelling, ambassadorial work, and military campaigns, as well as the consumption of food and the process of banqueting, the playing of music, and the performance of a masquerade ball. As such, the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* is of interest to scholars of the early modern period from within various academic disciplines. Anthony Rowley, for example, has studied the painting primarily in search of what it can reveal about Elizabethan music-making, whilst Tracey Sowerby has used the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* in

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[12] See in particular: Robert Tittler, *Early Modern British Painters, c. 1500-1640, Unpublished Dataset,* (Unpublished) <https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/980096/> [Accessed 24 September 2019]; Edward Town, 'A biographical dictionary of London painters, 1547-1625', *The Walpole Society,* 74 (2014).

[13] On the career of Sampson Strong, please see: Herbert Blakiston, 'The Oxford Exhibition of Historical Portraits', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 5.14 (1904), 211-219; Tittler, *Face of the City,* p. 38, p. 72, pp. 80-83.

[14] Robert Tittler and Anne Thackary, 'Cultural Relations between London and the Provincial Towns: Portraiture and Publics in Early Modern England', in *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge*, ed. by Bronwen Wilson and Paul Yachin (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 123-138 (p. 128).

[15] Roy Strong, 'Sir Henry Unton and his Portrait: An Elizabethan Memorial Picture and its History', *Archaeologia,* 99 (1965), 53-76 (p. 53).

[16] For example: C. S. Emden,`Sir Henry Unton (1557-96), An Elizabethan Story Picture', *Oriel Papers*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), 1-8; Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait'; Anthony Rowley, 'A Portrait of Sir Henry Unton', in *A Comparison to Medieval and Renaissance Music,* ed. by Tess Knighton and David Fallows (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), pp. 85-92; Michael Benton, 'Visualizing Narrative: Bridging the "Aesthetic Gap"', *The Journal of Aesthetic Education,* 33.2 (1999), 33-49 (pp. 37-45); Ailes and Tittler; Sherlock, 'The Unton Portrait Reconsidered'.

her discussion of the role and significance of gender in early modern diplomacy.[17] The *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* in Adderbury, on the other hand, has been little published: this thesis presents not only the first suggestion of the painting's possible authorship, but also the first full analysis of the potential meanings, functions, and purposes of the painting and thus the possible aims and intentions of its patron, as well as who the intended audience may have been.[18]

This chapter will examine the likely motivations behind the commissioning and production of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* and the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* and assess what their creation can tell us about the visual culture of commemoration in late-sixteenth century Oxfordshire, and particularly the parishes of Adderbury and Faringdon where the two paintings were most likely displayed even if only (in the case of Unton) for a short period of time. This chapter will therefore begin with a brief contextual discussion of the histories of Adderbury and Faringdon parish churches, with a focus on the later decades of Elizabeth's reign, before moving to consider to what extent parishioners obeyed the directives of the Reformation authorities, and to what extent the visual culture of commemoration of the medieval church could still be witnessed in these two parish churches during the post-Reformation period. Following this general contextual introduction, this chapter will then move on to a close reading and analysis of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* and *The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton.*

The possible aims and intentions of the patrons will be presented and considered, including the effect that confessional leaning, social status, and the state of widowhood might have played in the commissioning and creating process of these two memorial paintings on

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[17] Anthony Rowley, 'A Portrait of Sir Henry Unton', in *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music,* ed. by Tess Knighton and David Fallows (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), pp. 85-92; Tracey Sowerby, 'Sir Henry Unton, Elizabeth I, and Chivalric Diplomacy', in *Gender and Diplomacy,* ed. by L. Santaliestra, R. Eisendle, S. Suner (Vienna: Hollitzer Wissenschaftsverlag, 2021), pp. 93 – 114.

[18] Badham has briefly considered the Adderbury memorial, and published an image of the painting, in print and in a blog post for the *Church Monuments Society* website. See: Sally Badham, 'A Painted Canvas Funerary Monument of 1615 in the Collections of the Society of Antiquaries of London and its Comparators', *Journal of Church Monuments,* 24 (2009), 89-153 (pp. 96-97); Sally Badham, *Monument of the Month: Thomas More (d. 1586) and his widow Marie,* <https://churchmonumentssociety.org/monument-of-the-month/thomas-more-d-1586-and-his-widow-marie-at-adderbury-oxfordshire> [accessed 16 March 2021]. John Goodall has also published an image and brief description of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*. See: John Goodall, *Parish Church Treasures: The Nation's Greatest Art Collection* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 135.

wooden panel. The particularly inventive narrative design and innovative use of image in the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* will also be considered, with reference to the creative opportunities afforded by widowhood and the presenting – or self-fashioning - of Protestant identities during the process of religious reform. As mentioned above, this author will also put forward an original argument for the Oxfordshire-based portraitist Sampson Strong as the possible painter of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*. Finally, the significance of the display locations in parish church settings will be addressed, with particular reference to the temporary monumental nature of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* and the continued Roman Catholicism of the More family, as well as the use of *memento mori* imagery - a representational strategy that is largely associated with Protestant identity in post-1540 portraiture - in the Roman Catholic *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More.* In so doing, three key research questions will be pursued: who were the intended viewers of these memorial objects? How does the parish church setting influence the meaning and function of these objects? How could religious reform be a driver of creativity in memorial commissions?

a) Context of Production: the parishes of Adderbury and Faringdon

The diocese of Oxford was created in 1542, during the extensive Henrician diocesan reforms of the 1540s.[19] By the turn of the seventeenth century the diocese was predominantly rural, but it did include 'the University and the city of Oxford, a more metropolitan heart frequently in contact with the capital and intellectual centres abroad.'[20] It is clear that the parishes of Adderbury and Faringdon, roughly twenty miles from Oxford, maintained their strong links with the University, established during the medieval period, throughout the process of religious reform. Indeed, the association between Faringdon and Oxford University seems to have begun during the eleventh century, when the manor of Faringdon, Wadley House, 'appears to have come…into the possession of the Provost and scholars of Oriel College'.[21] The ownership of Wadley House by Oriel College was re-confirmed several times during the

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[19] W. M. Marshall, 'The Dioceses of Hereford and Oxford, 1660-1760', in *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800,* ed. by Jeremy Gregory and Jeffrey S. Chamberlain (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), pp. 197-223 (p. 197).
[20] Ibid.
[21] 'Parishes: Great Faringdon', in *A History of the County of Berkshire: Volume 4*, ed. by William Page and P H Ditchfield (London: Victoria County History, 1924), pp. 489-499. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/berks/vol4/pp489-499> [accessed 18 September 2019].

medieval period, lastly by Edward IV, and it is in fact still owned by Oriel College today, although it has been almost continuously leased out to private occupants, including (and most significantly for this study), to the Unton family during the sixteenth century.[22]

It is therefore unsurprising that the young Henry Unton studied at Oriel College, where he matriculated in October 1573.[23] This association with Oriel and the wider University of Oxford is represented and commemorated in pictorial form in the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*: at the proper left of the painting is a visual vignette labelled 'OXFORD', in which we see a young, beardless Unton reading a book in the middle of an architectural scene which is surely meant to represent (judging by the inscription and depiction of young men in their scholars' robes) the buildings of Oxford University with Oriel College, where Unton sits studying, at the centre. At Oriel, Unton was tutored by Richard Pigot, of the Roman Catholic gentry Pigot family of Aton Rowant (Oxon).[24] This is a fact worth reflecting on: as late as 1573 – fifteen years after Elizabeth's accession – a Roman Catholic was permitted to occupy this public facing role, and to assert influence over the young men in his charge. Thus, during his formative years of young adulthood, Henry Unton – who, as a grandson of Protector Somerset, came from one of the foremost evangelical Protestant families in England - was being educated and mentored by a member of the Old Faith: a further example of the 'messy realities of life in religiously mixed communities' during the Elizabethan period.[25]

The Unton family still have a visible link with Faringdon parish church. Indeed, despite much of the building being destroyed during the Civil War period and subsequently re-built, three pre-Reformation monuments to members of the Unton family are extant in what is still referred to as the Unton Chapel. Except for three medieval funeral brasses, these are the only pre-Reformation monuments that survive are – by happy coincidence - to members of the Unton family. These monuments will be considered in in greater detail later in this chapter.

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait', p. 57

[24] Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait', p. 57; 'Parishes: Aston Rowant' in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 8, Lewknor and Pyrton Hundreds*, ed. by Mary D Lobel (London: Victoria County History, 1964), pp. 16-43. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol8/pp16-43> [accessed 18 September 2019].

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

There are, however, medieval architectural survivals throughout the church, such as the Norman chancel arch and the south door, which is 'covered with ironwork of c. 1200.'[26] Furthermore, a carved triple medieval sedilla (seating for the Priest, Deacons, and sub-Deacons during the Roman Catholic Mass) is *in situ* along the south wall of the chancel:[27]

Figure 4.3 Carved triple Sedilla, All Saints' Church, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Despite being a spatial signifier of the Old Faith, inextricably linked to the Roman Catholic Priesthood and the role of the Priest in facilitating the transformative power of the mass, there is no sign of damage to the Faringdon sedilla. This is relatively unusual, indeed Whiting notes that even though the construction of sedilla ended in 1559, many medieval examples were subject to damage, destruction, and mutilation in the decades following the

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[26] Simon Jenkins, *England's Thousand Best Churches* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), p. 543.
[27] Image taken by Andrew Sargent, formerly Church Warden at All Saints' Faringdon, in June 2023. I am grateful to Mr. Sargent and to Faringdon parish for allowing me to reproduce the image here.

Reformation.[28] Certainly, this would correlate with the call by Thomas Bensham, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield during the first two decades of Elizabeth's reign (1560-1579), to 'dam up all manner of hollow places in the chancel and church.'[29] Bensham's call, however, clearly rang hollow in Faringdon; so too in Adderbury, where there is also a carved triple medieval sedilla in an excellent state of preservation: [30]

Figure 4.4 Canopied triple Sedilla with Piscina to its left, St Mary the Virgin Church, Adderbury, Oxfordshire

© Lional Wall

It is possible that Adderbury St Mary's close association with New College, Oxford, may have helped with the survival of this specific medieval *sedilla:* as will be considered below, New College remained strongly Roman Catholic until the 1580s.

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[28] Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 193.

[29] James Alexander Cameron, 'Sedilla in Medieval England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, 2015), p. 221.

[30] Lional Wall, *Fine Canopied Triple Sedilla, with Piscina to its Left* <http://www.greatenglishchurches.co.uk/html/adderbury.html> [accessed 16 March 2022].

Indeed the relationship between Adderbury St Mary's and New College began in 1381, when the rectory and advowson of Adderbury was granted to the College by its founder, Bishop Wykeham of Winchester; at this point, ownership of the parish church essentially passed to New College, alongside the ability to appoint candidates for the living.[31] The presence of Bishop Wykeham is still felt throughout the church, with his arms and two separate carvings of his head and shoulders displayed in the chancel, as well as a carving of his head and shoulders set into the external wall of the church, above the east window, alongside the arms of New College.[32] There is further clear evidence that the influence of New College was exercised in Adderbury: throughout the fourteenth-, fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries the Warden of the College frequently stayed at The Grange, formerly the medieval rectorial manor house of Adderbury, which had also become the property of the College in 1381.[33]

Moreover, as they held the authority and ability to appoint the living of St Mary's church, the Wardens and Fellows of New College would have, through their choice of candidate, held a considerable degree of influence over the type of Christian theology – and thus, soteriology - being preached to Adderbury parishioners. It is therefore highly significant that New College Oxford was a bastion of the Roman Catholic Counter Reformation during the Marian period and beyond. Indeed when Richard Horne, Bishop of Worcester, was appointed Visitor of the Oxford Colleges in the 1560s, he noted that New College (alongside Trinity and Corpus Christi) housed the most Roman Catholics in the entire University,[34] and, by 1568, '38 Fellows of the

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[31] Jenkins, p 532.

[32] Ibid; *Church of St Mary, Adderbury,* <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1200012> [accessed 18 September 2019]; *St Mary's Church History.*

[33] The Grange still stands and, despite being rebuilt in the seventeenth century, some medieval features – such as the tithe barn – survive. See: 'Parishes: Adderbury' in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 9, Bloxham Hundred*, ed. by Mary D Lobel and Alan Crossley (London: Victoria County History, 1969), pp. 5-44. British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol9/pp5-44> [accessed 3 October 2019]; *St Mary's Church History*; *The Grange,* <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1200006 > [accessed 18 September 2019].

[34] See: Penry Williams, 'From the Reformation to the Era of Reform, 1530–1850', in *New College Oxford 1379–1979*, ed. by John Buxton and Penry Williams (Oxford: The Warden and Fellows of New College, 1979), pp. 44–71 (p. 49); Alexandra Gajda*, '*Corpus Christi, Catholics, and the Elizabethan Reformation', *in Renaissance College: Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in context: 1450-1600,* ed. by John Watts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 263-286 (p. 270); Rashdall Hastings and Robert Rait, *New College* (London: F. E. Robinson, 1901), pp. 116–133; Katie McKeogh, 'The Papists of New College: I', *New College Notes,* 14.4 (2020), <https://www.new.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-01/14NCN4%20%282020%29%20McKeogh%20on%20Papists%20of%20New%20College.pdf> [accessed 17 March 2022].

College (out of seventy) had been removed' due to their continued adherence to the Old Faith.[35] Despite many Roman Catholic students and Fellows going into exile during the Elizabethan period, several continued to study at New College throughout the latter half of the sixteenth century (often, however, without matriculating), and to give gifts and bequests.[36]

The hope of a Roman Catholic restoration within New College (and, indeed, the country) clearly remained vividly present in the minds of some students and alumni. In 1588, for example, alumnus Thomas Martin (1520/21 – 1592/93) donated 27 books and 4 manuscripts to the College Library, including the celebrated late-thirteenth century 'Bohun Apocalypse' from his exile in Louvain.[37] In his bequest, Martin referred to his *alma mater* as a 'Catholicke Colledge',[38] and, as Millbank convincingly argues, the nature of his gift was 'no arbitrary assortment from his library but a deliberate, and politic selection…which relate especially to the study of world history as a divine science', and must thus be considered in the context of the emergent field of Counter Reformation apocalypticism, which was, in 1588 - the year of Martin's bequest - no doubt linked to the (ultimately misplaced) hope and expectation of an imminent Spanish (and thus, Roman Catholic) victory in the Armada wars.[39] It is thus suggested here that continued significant Roman Catholic sympathies within New College and its alumni community in England and in exile on the continent may have played a role in the preservation of medieval figurative imagery and other decorative schemes throughout Adderbury parish church during periods of iconoclasm. Indeed, it was not until the 1580s that a significant Protestant faction began to emerge amongst the Fellows of New College and,

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[35] David Parrot, 'New College and the Reformation', *New College Notes,* 9.3 (2018)*,* <https://www.new.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-12/9NCN3%20%282018%29%20Parrott%20on%20New%20College%20and%20the%20Reformation.pdf> [accessed 17 March 2022].

[36] McKeogh. On the continued participation of Roman Catholics in the post-Reformation life of Oxford Colleges, see: James McConica, 'The Catholic Experience in Tudor Oxford', in *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits*, ed. by Thomas M. McCoog (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1996), pp. 1-68.

[36] Stephen W. May and Alan Bryson, *Verse Libel in Renaissance England and Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 384.

[37] Oxford, New College, MS 65; Arabella Millbank, 'Sixteenth Century Ownership of the Bohun Apocalypse, New College MS 65', *New College Notes,* 4 (2013), <https://www.new.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/4NCN5%20%282013%29%20Bohun%20Apocalypse%2C%20Ms 65.pdf> [accessed 17 March 2022].

[38] McKeogh.

[39] Millbank, 'Bohun Apocalypse'.

judging by the ready acceptance of Thomas Martin's gift, Roman Catholics evidently still –
even at this point - exerted influence within the College and thus, by extension, at Adderbury
St Mary's.[40]

In 1589 - notably, after the quashing of the Spanish threat and thus the diminishment of the
hope and expectation of an immediate Roman Catholic restoration - the Warden of New
College appointed the prominent Oxfordshire puritan preacher John Pryme to the living of St
Mary's Adderbury, a position he held until his death in 1596.[41] It is worth noting the
significance of the year 1589 in the process of religious reform in Oxford: in July, two Roman
Catholic priests and two laymen were executed on Holywell Street, in a clear symbol of the
increasing crackdown on non-conformity within the University, and 'to serve as an example
to the recusant community in and around Oxford.'[42] The appointment of the Puritan John
Pryme to the living of Adderbury St Mary's could therefore not have come at a better time: it
no doubt helped to mend the reputational damage (in terms of past and continued Roman
Catholicism) sustained by New College and Adderbury Parish. It is significant, however, that
Pryme's appointment did not result in the removal of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary
More,* which, as this chapter shows, was commissioned by a noted recusant: the display of
such commemorative imagery, even under the ministry of a Puritan, is a further example both
of how broad the parameters around the acceptable use of imagery in the post-Reformation
church setting were, and of how Roman Catholics were still – despite their continued
adherence to the Old Faith – members of the parish community.

ii.   The *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*

a) Henry Unton: courtier, conformist, and social climber

Henry Unton is by far the most well-known person to feature as a subject in the nine painted
memorials selected for study in this thesis. Unton's life has been relatively well-researched

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[40] McKeogh.

[41] May and Bryson, p. 384.

[42] Gajda, p. 276.

and published in a variety of sources. These include: Empden's article in his *Oriel Papers* of the 1940s and Strong's 1965 piece in *Archaeologia,*[43] through to Ailes and Tittler's 2019 article (which, whilst focusing on the authorship of the painting, does contain a brief biographical section), Sowerby's 2021 article in which she discusses Unton's diplomatic career and chivalric intentions through the lens of gender history, and Sherlock's 2023 chapter in the multidisciplinary volume of essays, *Memory and Mortality in Renaissance England,* in which he analyses the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* in conjunction with the stone monument in Faringdon parish church.[44] The man and his memorial picture have also been the subject of e-articles published by the curators and conservators of the NPG as part of the *Making Art in Tudor Britain* research programme.[45] It does not therefore seem necessary to recount the minutiae of Unton's life here, and, furthermore, this case study is not a work of biography. Instead, the parts of Unton's life that are relevant to the analysis of the painted church portrait memorial, namely his social rank and his confessional status, will be considered here. Indeed, these two factors were amongst the key influences on the painted church portrait memorials being commissioned by parishioners across southern England and Wales during the latter years of the sixteenth century.

By the time that Henry Unton was born in 1557, the Unton family had been 'for some generations men of high consideration in Oxfordshire and Berkshire', but, crucially, they were not an ancient or hereditarily landed family.[46] Indeed it was not until the Tudor period that the Unton family rose to prominence on a national scale. They were not granted the right to bear a coat of arms until the time of Henry VIII,[47] and previous generations of Untons - judging by their professions - were very much of the 'middling sort': an earlier Henry Unton (d. 1470), was 'Chirographer in the Court of Common Pleas, or King's Bench',[48] Thomas Unton (d. 1551) was a merchant,[49] and Hugh Unton (d. 1529) was a London-based draper.[50] However, the

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[43] Emden; Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait'.
[44] Ailes and Tittler; Sowerby; Sherlock, 'The Unton Portrait Reconsidered'.
[45] For example: NPG, *The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton (c. 1558 – 1596).*
[46] *Unton Inventories relating to Wadley and Faringdon, Co. Berks, in the years 1596 and 1620,* ed. by John Gough Nichols (London: Berkshire Archaeological Society, 1841), p. xv.
[47] Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait', pp. 56-57.
[48] Gough Nichols*,* pp. xvii -xviii.
[49] Described in his will as a 'Merchant of the Staple of Calais.' See: Gough Nichols, p. xix.
[50] Gough Nichols, pp. xviii-xix.

fortunes of the Unton family dramatically changed during the post-Reformation period: it is suggested here that their rise in social status and wealth was inextricably linked to the changing socio-political climate that accompanied the process of religious reform in England. When Edward Unton (Henry's father) married Anne Seymour in April 1555, he was aligning himself and his descendants with one of the leading families of the English Reformation.

Anne Seymour was the niece of Queen Jane Seymour and daughter of the famously Protestant Protector Somerset and his second wife, Anne Seymour (née Stanhope), Duchess of Somerset, a prolific patron of Reformation theologians and publishers in the mid-sixteenth century, who used her 'authority to protect both Protestant controversialists such as John Bale and Robert Crowley, and the key publishers John Day and William Seres',[51] and who was in regular correspondence with John Calvin.[52] Henry's mother Anne clearly maintained her own mother's Reformist leanings and connections: in 1549, John Calvin wrote to her from Geneva, praising her for being 'not only adorned with a liberal education…but that you are so conversant in the doctrine of Christ, as to afford an easy access to his ministers, in the number of whom, if I am not mistaken, you acknowledge myself'.[53] Thus, Calvin himself counted Anne Seymour as one of his followers. Through the marriage of Anne and Edward Unton, the Unton family thus boosted not only their Reformist credentials and socio-political status, but also enriched their finances, for Anne brought with her the riches of her own family and that of her first husband (the Count of Warwick, imprisoned under Mary Tudor for his support of Lady Jane Grey's claim to the throne), as well as her connections to the Court: her brother-in-law (through her first marriage) was Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. The results of this marriage are clear: in 1557/8, Edward Unton was knighted by the Queen; after some time spent touring Italy, he was made Sheriff for Berkshire; then MP; then – in a clear mark of royal recognition and favour - he received the Queen at his home during her 1574 summer progress.[54]

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[51] *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature*, ed. by David Loewenstein and Janel Mueller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 119.

[52] Ibid.

[53] *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation, Written During the Reigns of King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, and Queen Mary: Chiefly from the Archives of Zurich*, ed. by Robinson Hastings, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1846), II, p. 703.

[54] Gough Nichols, p. xxix; Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait', p. 57.

After the death of his father in 1583, Henry Unton continued and enhanced these familial links with the Elizabethan court. Over the course of his career he sought employment with various late-sixteenth century grandees and courtiers: Robert Dudley, Sir Christopher Hatton, Sir Francis Walsingham, William Cecil 1st Baron Burghley, and, finally and most significantly, with the Queen herself in his role as Ambassador to France.[55] Indeed it was Unton's Ambassadorial position which allowed him, despite the humble origins of his family, 'to be buried with the heraldic pomp and ceremony due to a baron'.[56] Unton's elaborate funerary arrangements are depicted in the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton,* where the artist makes full use of the visual to present the viewer with a record of this 'pomp and ceremony'. Here we witness Unton's body being brought back to England across the Channel in a ship with black sails and see his long funeral procession where his hearse is draped in a heraldic flag, carried by eight men, preceded by a herald carrying his helmet, and followed by two further heralds holding their banners aloft. Thus, as presented in the painted church portrait memorial, Unton's funeral was quite the spectacle and indeed in the lowermost panel of the painting we see crowds clamouring to view the procession.

This funeral scene is reminiscent of pre-Reformation funerals where the poor and sick would attend, and enter into a specific kind of soteriological social contract: they would receive money (known as a dole), in return for their prayers for the deceased.[57] There is, however, no suggestion that such an exchange took place during Unton's funeral; it is possible that the parishioners of Faringdon simply wanted to witness what would have been an arresting sight and a moment of historic significance within the local community. After all, Henry Unton was a prominent figure, not just in Faringdon, but nationally and – as one of Elizabeth's Ambassadors – internationally. His ambassadorial status not only granted him certain heraldic funereal rights (so far removed from those of his middling ancestors), but it also meant that during the course of his employ Unton possessed what Sowerby has termed 'representative character', meaning that he was:

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[55] Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait'; Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual, c. 1500 – c. 1800* (London: Reaktion Books in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1991) pp. 13-16; John Guy, *Elizabeth: The Forgotten Years* (London: Penguin, 2015), pp. 170-171.

[56] Ailes and Tittler, p. 9.

[57] Claire Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 160.

The symbolic stand in of the Queen. When he spoke as ambassador it was 'as if' Elizabeth did and when he was accorded ceremonial treatment, it was by virtue of his role as the queen's representative.[58]

Indeed, in a letter dated 24 July 1591, Elizabeth commanded Unton (via a letter from her Principal Advisor, William Cecil 1st Baron Burghley in July 1591) to act with 'wisedome, gravitie and temperance… [and to]…have good regarde in all other your behaviours and conversations with all persons, to preserve the estimacion of us and our royal dignitie, as our ambassador, and, in a certain manner, representinge our person'.[59]

Six months later in a letter dated 12 February 1592, Burghley once again emphasises the special responsibility held by Unton due to his possession, in his ambassadorial role, of this 'representative character' of the monarch: he is ordered to take special care to come to no bodily harm or be taken prisoner during his envoy to France because the Queen would 'take yt malum omen to her s[elf] considering yowe do theare represent hir person'.[60] Unton, however, did not heed Burghley's advice: in March 1592 he challenged the young Duke of Guise, Charles de Lorraine (son of Henry Duke of Guise, founder of the Catholic League) to a duel, claiming that he had 'cast unchivalrous aspersions upon the English Queen'.[61] It is tempting to argue, as Sowerby does, that Unton's challenge was based on a deep-seated chivalric impulse, as well as an attempt to boost his own status by claiming social equality (as was necessary to enter into a duel) with Guise.[62] It is suggested here that Unton, in issuing his martial challenge, might have also been trying to present himself as one of Elizabeth's loyal Protestants abroad, consciously fighting against the ever-present Roman Catholic threat. It is possible that his claim to Guise that 'nor would I have you to thinke any inequality of person

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[58] Sowerby, p. 102.
[59] London, The National Archives, SP 78 25, fol. 81r. Also see: *Correspondence of Sir Henry Unton, knt. Ambassador from Queen Elizabeth to Henry IV of France, in the Years MDXCI and MDXCII,* ed. by Joseph Stevenson (London: W. Nichol, 1847), p. 1; Sowerby, p. 102.
[60] London, British Library, Cotton MS Caligula E viii, fol. 148r. Also see: Stevenson, p. 320; Sowerby, p. 102.
[61] Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait', p. 62. Unton in fact issued a minimum of three challenges to the Duke of Guise, so intent was he to defend the Queen's honour and portray himself in the chivalric model. See: London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligua E VII, fol. 232r; London, The National Archives, SP 78 27, fol. 355/r; Gough Nichols, p. lvi; Sowerby, p. 104.
[62] Sowerby, pp. 104-107.

between us, I being issued from as great a race and noble house (every way) as yourselfe',[63] was not, as Sowerby contends, borne of a desire for 'affirmation of Unton's personal status within the aristocracy',[64] but rather as an indication of the socio-political significance of his membership of one of the leading families of the English Reformation. Unton would have had to have been a master of self-delusion to truly believe that he could rival Guise in terms of ancestral nobility: Charles de Lorraine could trace his ancestry back to Charlemagne.

In 1592, Guise had not yet abandoned the Catholic League: his person was still a major threat – in real and symbolic terms - to the security and longevity of a Protestant Europe for which Elizabeth I and Henri IV were fighting. Thus Unton, as Elizabeth's ambassador to the French King, was the mediator between two upholders and defenders of the Protestant cause (at least until the French King's conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1593). It is therefore possible that Unton would want to emphasise his descent (by marriage) from solid Reformist stock; in challenging Guise, he could present himself as a servant of the Protestant Queen standing up to one of the most politically powerful Roman Catholics in Europe: a post-Reformation hero. Certainly, Unton's martial role during the Armada wars would suggest that he took pride in fighting for Elizabeth's Protestant cause: two letters filed under the *Acts of the Privy Council* in June 1588 show how Henry (alongside his elder brother Edward, who predeceased him in 1589) rallied troops and were commanders in Elizabeth's army.[65]

Henry, in the spirit of his father, also married into a family with connections to some of the key players in the Elizabethan Reformation movement; his wife Dorothy was the daughter of Sir Thomas Wroughton, a relative of Lady Walsingham, leading Strong to note that the Walsinghams and Untons were bonded not just by marriage, but 'by a common devotion to the Protestant cause.'[66] Certainly this devotion would have aided Unton's continued cultivation of close relationships with two of the Queen's favourites, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and (prior to his execution for treason), Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, and to thus

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[63] Gough Nichols, p. lvi.
[64] Sowerby, p. 107.
[65] *Acts of the Privy Council of England, Volume 16, 1588*, ed. by John Roche Dasent (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1897). British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/acts-privy-council/vol16> [accessed 12 July 2023].
[66] Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait', p. 58.

further elevate his social status and facilitate his presence in courtly circles. Indeed, a visual indication of Henry Unton's social ascendance – and of the way in which he perceived himself and his position in Elizabethan society – can be found in his elaborate portrait of 1586:

Figure 4.5 Hieronimo Custodis (possibly), *Sir Henry Unton,* 1586, oil on panel, Tate Gallery, London

Described by Ailes and Tittler as a 'sophisticated effort', [67] this portrait of Unton perfectly fits the model of formal, courtly, late sixteenth century English portraiture.

The confident artistic treatment and handling of this portrait would indicate that it is the work of a practiced and highly-trained English portraitist or, perhaps more likely, a Netherlandish émigré. Karen Hearn, Curator of sixteenth- and seventeenth- century British Art at the Tate

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[67] Ailes and Tittler, p. 3.

Galleries from 1999-2012, argues that the 'the handling of Unton's features and costume is reminiscent of the few identified works of the Antwerp artist Hieronimo Custodis, who was active in England from c.1587 and dead by 1593, and about whom little is known.'[68] Thus if we accept that this portrait is by Custodis, or at least an artist in his circle, then this tells us something about how Henry Unton in 1586, at roughly thirty years old, might have perceived his own standing within the increasingly fluid social hierarchy of late-Elizabethan England. For Custodis was a portraitist who, judging by the extant works attributed to him, took the bulk of his commissions from amongst members of the late-Tudor elite and Elizabethan courtiers.[69] His sitters included: Anne Carew, Lady Throckmorton of Coughton Court;[70] Elizabeth Brydges, lady-in-waiting to Elizabeth I;[71] Gyles Brydges, 3rd Baron Chandos of Sudeley Castle;[72] and Edward Talbot, 8th Earl of Shrewsbury and Waterford.[73]

It is probable that Unton's decision to choose a talented émigré as his portraitist was linked to his associations at court, and was borne out of a desire to affiliate himself with these powerful figures of late-Elizabethan England: an act of self-affirmation of his ascendant social status, rather than out of any love of art *per se*. Certainly, there seems to have been little familial interest in painted works of art: in the diary of Unton's father's European tour of the 1560s, there is no indication that he was interested in the artistic products of Renaissance Italy, quite the opposite: Edward Unton and his companions dismissed the 'old picture[s]' on

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[68] Karen Hearn, *Sir Henry Unton* (2001), <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/unknown-artist-britain-sir-henry-unton-t00402> [accessed 15 November 2024].

[69] See: Robert Tittler, *Early Modern British Painters, c. 1500-1640, Unpublished Data Set,* <https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/980096/> [Accessed 24 September 2019].

[70] This portrait is in the collections of the National Trust and can still be viewed in its original setting of Coughton Court, Warwickshire. Accession number: NT 135562. See: National Trust, *Anne Carew, Lady Throckmorton* <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/135562> [Accessed 30 November 2019].

[71] This portrait is in the private collection of the Marquess of Tavistock and the Trustees of the Bedford Estate at Woburn Abbey. It is not on public display at Woburn Abbey, but it is illustrated in: *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530-1630*, ed. by Karen Hearn (London: Tate Gallery, 1995), p. 114.

[72] This portrait is in the private collection of the Marquess of Tavistock and the Trustees of the Bedford Estate at Woburn Abbey. It is not on public display, but a photograph of the object can be viewed in the Heinz Archive at the NPG: London, National Portrait Gallery, Heinz Archive, Chandos.

[73] This portrait is in a private collection. It is illustrated in: Weiss Gallery, *Facing the Past: a catalogue of early portraiture, 1530-1780*, <http://issuu.com/theweissgallery/docs/2011-weiss-gallery-facing-past> [accessed 30 November 2019].

display in Rome, 'which I pass over for tediousnes'.[74] It is significant, however, that there is no attempt in Unton's portrait of 1586 to present the sitter as a figure of piety, in the way that so many portraits of the middling sort and urban elite from the mid-1550s onwards strive to do. It is therefore suggested here that the absence of these visual tropes - *memento mori* and *vanitas* symbolism and inscriptions recounting hope of Election, for example – is further evidence of Unton's clever use of the visual to align himself with the courtly elite: the iconography of piety is disregarded in favour of the visual conventions of elite court portraiture. Much like the 1597 portrait of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex by Marcus Gheerarts the Younger, or the 1575 portrait of Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester by an anonymous Anglo-Netherlandish artist - the 1586 portrait of Henry Unton is one of showy and fashionable wealth (through his elaborate and costly attire) and confidence (through his uncompromising gaze out at the viewer).[75]

b) Unton family monuments and memorials

Despite the lack of an overt Protestant iconography in the 1586 portrait of Unton, considering their familial links to some of the main political leaders of religious reform in England, it is no surprise that the post-Reformation Untons appear to have been dutifully conforming Protestants. Certainly, the preamble of Henry's father Edward's will, dated 1583, is noteworthy for its explicitly Protestant wording: [76]

> I commend my Soule unto my Lord God my creatoure and unto Ihesus Christ my Redemer, to enjoye the heavenly lief which he hathe prepared for his elected children before the beginning of the worlde.

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[74] A. H. S. Yeames, 'The Grand Tour of an Elizabethan', *Papers of the British School at Rome,* vii.3 (1914), 92-113, (p. 110). Yeames has reproduced the diary of Edward Unton from the original manuscript written by his servant, 'Richard Smith, Gentl.' The manuscript is held within the Sloane papers at the British Library: London, British Library, Sloane MS 1813.

[75] The portraits of Essex and Leicester are both in the collections of the NPG. Portrait details: Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, *Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex*, c. 1597, oil on canvas, National Portrait Gallery, London, accession no. NPG 4986; Unknown Anglo-Netherlandish artist, *Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester,* c. 1575, oil on panel, National Portrait Gallery, London, accession no. NPG 447.

[76] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 64 401.

Here, Edward expresses a clearly predestinate understating of salvation: 'the heavenly life which he hathe prepared for his elected children before the beginning of the worlde.' Indeed his will contains absolutely no indication of a belief in the power of intercessory prayer: there are no instructions to pray for his soul and he leaves no gift at all to the parish church.[77] This is in great contrast to the will of an earlier Unton, Thomas, (c. 1464-1533, grandfather of Edward and great-grandfather of Henry) who, in his will of 2 August 1533, left direction and funds for the setting up of a chantry through the employment of a salaried priest instructed to pray for his own soul and those of his ancestors for 10 years following his death.[78] When Thomas' wife Elizabeth (Henry Unton's great-grandmother) died in c. 1536, she left similar bequests to the parish church: money for the maintenance of the high altar and of the church bells, and she also requested that her body be buried alongside her husband in the Trinity Chapel – now the Unton Chapel - in Faringdon parish church.[79]

These testamentary directives help to illuminate the significant differences in soteriological belief as exhibited by members of the Unton family during the pre- and post-Reformation periods: they bear witness to the movement from a Roman Catholic soteriology steeped in the purgatorial imperative, to a Protestant, predestinate understanding of salvation. Frustratingly, Henry Unton himself left no will, most likely due to his early and unexpected death during his ambassadorship,[80] but the preamble of the 1634 will of his widow (and patron of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*), Dorothy, contains an illuminating bequest of body and soul: 'my desire is, that my funeral may be performed without any pompe or solemnity, and with as small charge as may be, in the night.' [81] By 1634, therefore, when Dorothy made her will, this wealthy, leading woman of Faringdon wanted to be buried without any of the symbolic rituals that would have accompanied her pre-Reformation ancestors of a similar social status – no singing, no public mourning, no dole to the poor and sick, indeed no 'pompe

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[77] This is similar to the wishes of other Faringdon residents: in 1587, husbandman William Pain of Little Faringdon solely bequeaths his 'soule unto god my maker an redemer', as does the gentleman Edmund Fowler in 1590: it is clear that by the later years of the sixteenth century, Faringdon residents across all levels of society were professing a predestinate understanding of salvation. See: Oxford, Oxfordshire History Centre, Pec 1 135, Pec 2 74; Oxford, Oxfordshire History Centre, 188.120.

[78] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 25 131.

[79] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 25 528.

[80] Llewellyn, *Art of Death,* p. 13.

[81] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 167 311. Transcription provided in: Gough Nichols*,* pp. 32-6.

or solemnity' of any kind. [82] This is a clear indication of her proud and self-assured belief in her own Election: she did not feel any need to invoke intercessory practices around her post-mortem self - quite the opposite, whilst still alive, she actively directed that such actions did not take place.

Despite these differences in soteriological belief, however, the Roman Catholic Thomas (d. 1533) and Elizabeth Unton were buried in the Unton Chapel in Faringdon parish church alongside their son Alexander Unton (d. 1547), his heir Edward and his wife Anne (the first Untons of the Elizabethan era), and their sons Edward and Henry, as well as Henry's widow Dorothy. Whilst these various generations of Untons all have extant memorials and monuments within the same chapel, these commemorative objects indicate their vast differences in how they might have approached issues of mortality and salvation. The pre-Reformation monument to Thomas and Elizabeth, for example, is a large altar tomb chest standing against the North wall of the Unton Chapel with the figures of the deceased represented in full figurative form with their hands clasped in prayer:[83]

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[82] Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England 1480-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 270. What we see here is evidence of the 'change in attitudes towards funerals' that took place around the turn of the seventeenth century, when there was a movement from elaborate heraldic funerals (as per Henry Unton's) towards more quiet, private affairs as per Dorothy's funeral. This development, Houlbrooke and Aston argue, correlated with an increasing desire to avoid ostentation amidst a rising Puritan faction in early-seventeenth century England. See: Margaret Aston, 'Art and Idolatry: Reformed Funeral Monuments' in *Art Re-Formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 243-261 (pp. 246-247); Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family,* pp. 255-294.

[83] Image taken by Andrew Sargent in July 2022. I am grateful to Andrew and to Faringdon parish for allowing me to reproduce the image here.

Figure 4.6 Tomb monument to Thomas and Elizabeth Unton, All Saints' Church, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

This monument is of the type that, within the visual culture of the medieval church, 'were conceived as Easter sepulchres – altars in a recess.'[84] Further, the inscription on the monument falls into Sherlock's category of 'traditional' or Roman Catholic, wording - 'nolite plangere morte meam quia solum corpus mortis' (do not mourn for my death because only the body dies) - as does the inscription on the funeral brass of Alexander Unton, which recounts his death: 'in the Fyrst ye[a]r of or Sou[er]aigne lorde king Edward the vi on whose soul and alle cristen soul Jhu have mercy ame[n].'[85]

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[84] Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post- Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 220.

[85] Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), p. 104.

The monument to Henry Unton's parents, however, contains no such wording. As one might expect for a memorial object commemorating the daughter of Protector Somerset and her husband, there is no appeal for mercy or intercession by the living on behalf the dead:

Figure 4.7 Wall monument to Thomas and Elizabeth Unton, All Saints' Church, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

This monument is wall-mounted with no depiction of effigial figures and, within the lower panel, contains the following inscription:

> Here lyeth Sir Edward Unton, Knight of the Noble Order of the Bathe, whoe married Anne Countess of Warwick, daughter of Edwarde Seymer Duke of Somersett and Protector of England, by whome he had ffive sonnes, whereof 3 died younge in the

life of their father; Two, namelye Edwarde and Henry onely, survyved and succeeded him, the one after the other in their father's inheritance; and two daughters, Anne married to Sir Valentine Knightley, Knight, and Scissil married to John Wentworth, Esquire.

Significantly, and in marked contrast to the inscriptions on the monuments to the three earlier Untons discussed above, there is no mention of religion at all here. In fact, what we see is evidence of the post-Reformation preoccupation with lineage and genealogy as opposed to, for example, concern for the destination of the soul in the afterlife.[86] This is indicative of a Protestant understanding of soteriology – namely the denial of the existence in purgatory and the adoption of a predestinate belief in salvation - whereby there is no need to elicit prayers for the souls of the deceased. Instead, the focus is on establishing the honourable descent of the subject which, in this case, emphasises the Unton connection to the Seymours. Thus, the Unton Chapel in All Saints' Faringdon, with its mixture of late-medieval and post-Reformation *memoria* is testament to the continued existence of the Roman Catholic visual culture of commemoration within a Reformed place of worship, alongside new monuments that proclaim a Protestant understanding of salvation.

c)   Meanings, purposes, and functions

It is generally accepted that the patron of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* was Dorothy Unton, the widow of Henry. Strong, who wrote the first full study of the painting in the 1965, referred to Dorothy as the painting's 'compiler.'[87] This opinion has stood the test of time, and has been corroborated by some of today's leading art and cultural historians: in the 1990s, Llewellyn noted that Dorothy 'was almost certainly the patron of the *Unton* picture',[88] and, in 2019, Ailes and Tittler wrote that Dorothy 'will have commissioned the painting as she did her husband's monument.'[89] Sherlock, writing in 2023, concurs: 'the portrait first appears in an inventory of the estate of Unton's widow Dorothy, and was almost certainly created at her

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[86] Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, p. 104; Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, pp. 272-306.
[87] Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait', p. 71.
[88] Llewellyn, *Art of Death,* p. 14.
[89] Ailes and Tittler, p.7.

behest.'[90] Strong's initial reasoning for attributing the commissioning of *The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* to Dorothy still resonates. He argued that, as with the scenes or vignettes representing Henry's public life as a diplomat and courtier, the scenes depicting Henry's personal life - as a child being nursed in his parents' house, as a young student at Oriel College, Oxford, as an adult hosting a banquet and a masque, playing the viol with a group of friends, and studying and conversing with other learned men at Wadley House – must have been compiled by someone who knew the inner workings of, and the significant people in, Unton's personal life. Strong notes of these vignettes:

> The more one studies them and, as it were, becomes drawn into the house and its activities, the more intensely personal each item becomes. Only someone very close to Sir Henry Unton could have understood the now obscured nuances which lie behind each little scene, would have known the guests at the banquet, the allusions in the masque scene, and the identity of the musicians, preachers, and servants who make up its little world. In this light the picture has something of the intimacy of the private memoir or diary.[91]

Thus Dorothy, in choosing which scenes and people from her husband's life to include in his portrait memorial proves herself to be a piously dedicated wife, who knew her husband better than anyone else, and is committed to upholding his memory.

Dorothy is not only commemorating her husband, but also ensuring that her place in his impressive life (at least in terms of his stellar career and incredibly successful climbing of the social ladder of late-Elizabethan England) is also remembered. She was most adept at exercising 'the agency of the patroness',[92] that widowhood appears to have granted her: Dorothy Unton went on to patronise further artistic remembrances of her husband which, like the painted memorial portrait, included depictions of herself. For example, Dorothy ensured that she too was represented in the stone tomb monument to Henry Unton in Faringdon church, a prototype of which is depicted in the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton,* with Dorothy in the central position with prayer book in hand, watching over her husband's

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[90] Sherlock, 'The Unton Portrait Reconsidered', p. 185.
[91] Strong, 'Unton and his portrait', p. 71.
[92] Tarnya Cooper, 'Picturing the Agency of Widows: Female patronage among the gentry and the middling sort of Elizabethan England', in *Routledge Companion to Women, Sex, and Gender in the Early British Colonial World*, ed. by Kimberley Anne Coles and Eve Keller (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 104-119 (p. 104).

recumbent, fully armoured effigy.[93] Today, the main survival from this once elaborate monument is - quite fittingly - the stone figure of Dorothy who stands almost entirely undamaged with her hands clasped in prayer:

Figure 4.8 Dorothy Unton, All Saints' Church, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

[93] This monument was realised in stone in 1606, but was then almost completely destroyed during the Civil Wars of the seventeenth century, during which Faringdon church also lost its famous spire. See: Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait', p. 71; Ailes and Titter, p. 11.

Alongside the figure of Dorothy, are two further survivals from the tomb monument: two Corinthian columns and a stone plaque with a Latin inscription detailing the family history, achievements, and accolades of Henry Unton.[94]

This dedicatory plaque is 'typical of many Elizabethan inscriptions, it reveals only Unton's public face',[95] thus contrasting greatly with the intimate scenes of Henry's private life as depicted in the painting commissioned by his widow, which in some senses has much more in common with the Biblical narrative, or story pictures, of the Renaissance than any kind of Elizabethan portrait of typical funeral monument.[96] Indeed, the individual vignettes depicted in the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* display an intimate and affectionate knowledge of the subject's life, whilst at the same time celebrating his various personal and professional achievements: he is, as Sherlock has pointed out, quite literally, heralded by the figure of Fame.[97] This feeling of visual intimacy within the painting is reflected in the evident emotional attachment that Dorothy felt towards the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*. She took care to ensure its continued preservation by making special note of the painting in her will, referring to 'all my story pictures in my Gallery there [at Faringdon House] … unless [except] the picture of Sir Henry Unton which I do give and bequeath to my loving niece the Lady Deering.'[98]

This archival evidence is significant, for not only does it reveal the significant attachment that Dorothy felt towards the memorial painting, but it also informs us that – at the time of Dorothy's death in 1634 – the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* was in Faringdon House (where Dorothy lived from 1615), as opposed to the parish church of All Saints' Faringdon. Whilst this testamentary evidence therefore roots the painting to a specific place at a specific time, it does not mean that the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* was only ever on display in this location.

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[94] Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait', p. 74; Ailes and Tittler, p. 11; Claire Gittings, 'Expressions of Loss in Early-Seventeenth Century England', in *The Changing Face of Death: Historical Accounts of Death and Disposal*, ed. by Peter Jupp and Glennys Howarth (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997), pp. 19-34 (pp. 26-7).

[95] Gittings, 'Expressions of Loss', p. 27.

[96] Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 188; Susan Foister, 'Paintings and Other Works of Art in Sixteenth Century English Inventories', *The Burlington Magazine*, 123. 938 (1981), 273–82, (pp. 274-276).

[97] The figure of Fame blowing her trumpet is depicted to the proper right of Henry Unton's head. See: Sherlock, 'The Unton Portrait Reconsidered', p. 188.

[98] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 167 311. For more on Dorothy's will, and transcriptions of select passages, see: Gough Nichols*,* pp. 32-6; Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait', p. 74; Ailes and Tittler, p. 16.

Indeed, as previously discussed, this author follows the NPG's hypothesis that the painting was for a short time displayed in Faringdon church, most likely as part of a temporary wooden memorial prior to the completion of Unton's stone monument in 1606. This suggestion is based on evidence from an extensive examination of the painting, undertaken during the period 2007-2013 as part of the *Making Art in Tudor Britain* research programme at the NPG. The research methods employed by a team of curators and conservators led by Tarnya Cooper, then Chief Curator at the NPG, included structural analysis, paint sampling, x-radiography, and surface examination.[99]

This programme of examination and research revealed two highly unusual findings relating to the painting's materiality and construction. Firstly, the panels of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* were found to be made not entirely of oak (which was the norm in England during the late-Elizabethan and early Jacobean period), but instead of three separate wooden boards, with the upper two panels made of a different wood (possibly walnut) to the bottom panel.[100] Secondly – in another deviation from the norm of the period - the three panels were found to be affixed together horizontally as opposed to vertically.[101] Then, analysis of paint samples from the three boards showed that the top two panels were prepared with a different primer (or base layer of paint) to the bottom panel. Study of the artistic treatment and handling of each of the three boards also indicated a series of differences between the upper two panels and the bottom panel: there are obvious drying cracks in the paint on the lower board and the artist's manipulation of the paint itself appears simpler, or less refined, and the layers of paint on the outer edges of the top two boards are particularly thin. Finally, x-radiography – as is evident in the image below - revealed two key differences between the upper two boards and the lower board:

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[99] NPG, *The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*; NPG, *Sir Henry Unton: Conservation Research*.
[100] Tittler and Ailes; NPG, *The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*; NPG, *Sir Henry Unton: Conservation Research.*
[101] Ibid.

Figure 4.9 X-ray mosaic of the *Portrait of Sir Henry* Unton. Marked in red are: the panel join to the lowest board; dowels; unfinished painted areas at the edges of the upper two boards © NPG

Here, we see that dowels had at one point been inserted at regular intervals around the outer vertical edges of the upper two boards (as indicated by the red dots in the above image). The pattern of dowels on the bottom board, however, is quite different. Only three dowels are present, and these are found at extremely irregular intervals; as the red dots above show, all were horizontal, but only one was on the actual bottom edge of the painting.[102]

Tittler and Ailes, have argued that, taken in sum, these factors indicate that the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* was most likely completed in two separate stages, with the top two panels painted first and the third panel painted after the completion of the tomb monument in Faringdon parish church, and then later joined to the top two boards.[103] Prior to this, it is possible that the top two panels – the original parts of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* - were affixed into a structure (as indicated particularly by the regular placement of the dowels and the thin layers of paint on both horizontal outer edges of these boards). The NPG and Tittler and Ailes argue that this structure 'would most probably have been' a temporary wooden funeral monument in All Saints' Faringdon: 'such wooden constructs from this era were not uncommon, and are more likely to have been painted on panels joined horizontally', as indeed is the case for the Unton painting.[104] Whilst this proposal cannot be conclusively proven, and

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[102] Ibid.
[103] Tittler and Ailes, p. 16.
[104] Tittler and Ailes, p. 16; NPG, *The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*; NPG, *Sir Henry Unton: Conservation Research*.

indeed it is possible that the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* may have been displayed within a different structure in a different location, this author supports the suggestion. The material evidence as discussed here and presented by the NPG and Tittler and Ailes is compelling. Furthermore, the various other cultural commissions undertaken by Dorothy Unton in memory of her husband indicate a patron keen for her carefully fashioned image of a dutiful wife in mourning to be visible in the public setting, and for her confident assertion of her husband's Election to be publicly proclaimed; where better to do so than in the parish church, in full sight of God, her friends and family, neighbours, and the wider parish community.

Indeed by displaying the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* in the public ecclesiological space, even only temporarily, Dorothy would have brought her grief firmly into the public sphere of the parish church. This is echoed by her decision, in 1604, to commission the composer and lutist John Dowland to write a pavan in memory of Unton, entitled *Sir Henry Umpton's Funeral,* and her commissioning of the elaborate stone tomb monument to her husband, realised in 1606.[105] These public acts of patronage would imply that Dorothy was making a public statement: she wanted people to know that she was still in mourning, several years after the death of her husband, and that she was committed, as a dutiful wife and now widow, to the pious upholding of his memory. These acts of patronage thus bring Dorothy Unton into the ranks of other sixteenth and seventeenth century female patrons of the arts and specifically of portraits and church monuments, from the Tudor Queens Mary and Elizabeth, to – as discussed in the previous chapter - Alice Smart, widow of the urban elite of late sixteenth century Ipswich and patron of the *Memorial to William Smart.*

Of particular relevance to the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* is a small but intriguing body of early modern portraiture whereby widows have commissioned paintings primarily of themselves, yet which also include a visual depiction of their late husbands.[106] For example, the commission of the 1550s, by Mary Neville, Baroness Dacre, who charged Hans Eworth with

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[105] Llewellyn, *Art of Death,* p. 14; Diana Poulton, *John Dowland* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), p. 433; Anthony Rowley 'A Portrait of Sir Henry Unton', in *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music,* ed. by Tess Knighton and David Fallows (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 85-92.

[106] I am grateful to Claire Gittings, who shared her insights into these portraits when presenting her paper *Expressions of Grief in Portraits of Early Modern Widow* at the National Portrait Gallery Staff Research Seminar in May 2019.

painting a half-length portrait of herself seated at a writing desk includes a visual depiction of her late husband Thomas Fiennes: his (small) portrait is hung on the wall behind his wife – very much in the background of the painting - thus making it clear who the true subject of this portrait is.[107] Similarly, most likely during the 1630s, Frances Howard, Duchess of Richmond and Lennox (1578-1639) and Katherine Manners, Duchess of Buckingham (c. 1603-49), separately commissioned Van Dyck to paint their full-length portraits, in which both widows are depicted wearing miniatures of their late husbands.[108] Once again, it is quite clear that it is the women who are the subjects of these two paintings, with their husbands in supporting visual roles.

Thus, if we accept that early modern portraiture was indeed used as a tool of 'self-fashioning', then these female patrons have managed an impressive feat. For in commemorating and honouring their late husbands in their portraits they present themselves as pious, dutiful widows in the eyes of the viewing public, whilst, at the same time, they have put themselves centre stage: these are three portraits of women where their late husbands are in supporting visual roles, rather than the other way around. In their widowhoods, Mary Neville, Frances Howard, and Katherine Manners are thus able to exercise their autonomy and agency as commissioners of cultural products and, in so doing, they have brought themselves firmly into the public sphere of early modern portraiture. They have constructed their own public image and narrative. Part of this narrative, of course, is the pious reminder to the viewer of the importance of commemorating and remembering their dead husbands; no longer for the soteriological purposes of the Old Faith, but perhaps for dynastic reasons, or as an act of consolation for those still living. For in being presented with a visual depiction of both the living widow and the late husband, the viewer is forced to confront the inevitability of death, and to consider their own transience, mortality, and path to salvation.

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[107] Portrait details: Hans Eworth, *Mary Neville, Lady Dacre,* c. 1555-58, oil on panel, National Gallery of Canada, Ottowa.

[108] The original Van Dyck portrait of Frances Howard is now lost however many copies survive, of which the best is probably the version at Longleat House. The portrait of Katherine Manners is on display at Plas Newydd, a National Trust property in Anglesey: Anthony Van Dyck, *Katherine Manners, Duchess of Buckingham,* c. 1628-35, oil on canvas, National Trust, accession no. 1175913. This portrait was exhibited in 2009 at Tate Britain as part of their exhibition *Van Dyck and Britain.*

The *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*, however, despite being commissioned by a widow, differs from those of Mary Neville, Frances Howard, and Katherine Manners in that the subject of the painting is obviously Henry Unton as opposed to his widow, and patron of the memorial portrait, Dorothy. The figure of Henry, seated at his writing desk, dominates the centre of the painting, whereas Dorothy's likeness is significantly smaller and in a less central position. She is shown presiding over her late husband's tomb monument in a clear visual depiction of mourning, loss, and grief but also, it is suggested here, in confident assurance of his salvation. Dorothy's Protestant faith, as demonstrated in her will, makes it highly likely that she would have believed her husband to be one of God's preordained Elect, and indeed one crucial element within the iconography of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* supports this hypothesis: solely a scene of Heaven is portrayed, at the uppermost corner of the proper right of the painting, with no visual representation of Hell.[109] It is not difficult to imagine that, for Dorothy, it was simply an impossibility, according to her predestinate understanding of mortality and salvation, that her husband would not be amongst God's Elect. After all, as David Hoyle notes, as per the Reformed doctrine of assurance – a key tenant in Calvinist theology – 'the elect were urged to know themselves elect'.[110] The doctrine of assurance and the concept of the certainty of salvation for the Elect was widely written about during the sixteenth- and early-seventeenth centuries: as Christopher Haigh explains, texts on the topic by theologians, preachers, and commentators such as William Perkins, Arthur Dent, Samuel Hieron, and Timothy Rogers became 'the best-selling classics of late Elizabethan and Jacobean religion'.[111] It is therefore highly likely that Dorothy Unton, as the well-connected and educated wife of an ambassador from a notably Reformist family, would have come into contact with, and been influenced by, such texts.

In exercising her agency as widow and patron, Dorothy's memorial commission thus makes innovative use of the visual in narrative form to fulfil what Llewellyn describes as a key

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[109] This is in contrast to the imagery used in, for example, the memorial paintings at Besford and Burford, where Heaven and Hell are both depicted and thus, as is suggested in Chapter Five of this thesis, by both salvation and damnation possibly being presented to the viewer as potential options for the destination of the soul, intercessory prayer could be being sought.

[110] David Hoyle, *Reformation and Religious Identity in Cambridge, 1590-1644* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2007), p. 32.

[111] Christopher Haigh, 'The Taming of Reformation: Preachers, Pastors and Parishioners in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England', *History,* 85.280 (2000), 572-588 (p. 578).

function of post-Reformation monuments and memorials in the ecclesiological setting: to 'exemplify and to replace after death the lives of worthy and virtuous individuals'.[112] After all, the painting depicts the carefully curated story of her husband's unimpeachable conformist life and his many professional and intellectual achievements: his fine education and pursuit of erudite and artistic pastimes; his leading role in the local community; his ambassadorial and martial endeavors in service of the Queen; and, finally, his funeral and promised salvation as one of the Elect. Additionally, the depiction of the Reformed death ritual (dying, burial, funeral, and commemoration), as well as the inclusion of a typical *memento mori* emblem in a central position within the painting's composition – the skeleton holding an hourglass to the proper left of Unton's head – further reinforces the Protestant message of piety in the face of the certainty of death and the predestined fate of the soul. Thus, as Sherlock maintains, Unton's 'memory is able to deliver spiritual benefits for a Protestant kingdom'.[113]

This chapter has argued that it was Dorothy who, through her role as patron, presented and perpetuated her husband's memory for the benefit of the parish community first within the public setting of the parish church, and later within Faringdon House, where visitors to her home would have viewed the portrait. This suggested change in location, from the parish church to Dorothy's home, would by no means have meant that the painting and its confident assertion of Unton's virtues and those elements of his life which may indeed 'deliver spiritual benefits for a Protestant kingdom' - his education and talent, his diplomatic career, his Protestant identity, and his eventual assured Election – was removed from the public setting. Far from it: as Tara Hamling has shown, even within the early modern domestic setting there were still public locations, with certain areas of the home (notably, for example, the hall and the great chamber) often functioning as spaces for the reception and entertaining of a wide

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[112] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, as explained on the front flap of the book. Quoted in: Tara Hamling, "An Arelome To This Hous For Ever': Monumental Fixtures and Furnishings in the English Domestic Interior, c. 1560-c.1660' in *The Arts of Remembrance in Early Modern England: Memorial Cultures of the Post Reformation*, ed. by Andrew Gordon and Thomas Rist (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 59-70 (p. 61).

[113] Sherlock, 'The Unton Portrait Reconsidered', p. 187.

range of visitors and thus as sites of interaction and exchange, as well as the perpetuation and encouragement of religious ideals and behaviours.[114]

It is therefore significant that the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* can be located specifically to the gallery at Faringdon House:[115] although galleries within the homes of the elite may have been 'a relatively private area for walking, contemplation, and conversation',[116] galleries within gentry houses 'were more flexible in nature, as they were required to serve a mixture of practical functions and were used by a wider audience of family and friends'.[117] The gallery in Faringdon House – home to the Untons, an Oxfordshire gentry couple - would have therefore been a public space within the domestic setting. By displaying the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* in this location, the painting's monumental function as per Llewellyn's definition - to 'exemplify and to replace after death the lives of worthy and virtuous individuals' - was therefore able to continue.[118] For just as Hamling has shown how certain large-scale fixtures and furnishings within the post-Reformation domestic setting could function in the same way as funeral monuments - 'to establish and celebrate the status, virtues and achievements of specific individuals; to commemorate important rites of passage and to serve as a permanent record and reminder of ancestral and familial heritage' - so to, it is suggested here, would the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* have functioned as such in Faringdon House. [119]

Indeed, the crucial element of public display – an audience of some sort – must be present for the celebration, remembrance, and legitimisation of a subject's life to occur; the memorial object must be viewed for these messages to be received. Therefore, by displaying the painting in the gallery of Dorothy's home – a public space within the domestic setting of a late-Elizabethan gentry house - this element of accessible viewing was retained, although in

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[114] Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Protestant Britain, c.1560-c.1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 122-132, pp. 148-64. Also see: Tara Hamling and Jonathan Willis, 'From Rejection to Reconciliation: Protestantism and the Image in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 62.4 (2023) 932-996 (p. 943, p. 963).

[115] As is evidenced in Dorothy's will. See: London, The National Archives, PROB 11 167 311. Also see: Gough Nichols*, pp. 32-6; Strong, 'Unton and his Portrait', p. 74; Ailes and Tittler, p. 16.

[116] Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household,* p. 175.

[117] Ibid, p. 177.

[118] Llewellyn, *Funeral* Monuments, front flap of the book. Quoted in: Hamling, "An Arelome To This Hous For Ever", p. 61.

[119] Hamling, "An Arelome To This Hous For Ever", p. 61.

a slightly more selective manner than when the object was likely displayed in the church setting. For unlike the parish church, which was open to all, it is likely that only those with links to the Untons - whether family, friends, or household staff - would have viewed the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* in the gallery at Faringdon House. Thus, whilst the temporary display of the painting in Faringdon church, as has been suggested above in this chapter, meant that the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* was, for a short time, 'able to deliver spiritual benefits for a Protestant kingdom' in the widest sense (the parish)[120], the move to a public space within the domestic setting ensured that it would also be in receipt of 'the most sympathetic audience for future acts of remembrance – an individual's own descendants'.[121]

iii.   The *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*

a)   Roman Catholicism and the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*

Unlike Henry and Dorothy Unton, there are no extant documents (either material or written) which would establish Thomas and Mary More as significant artistic patrons. In fact, the lack of any kind of extant documentation specific to Thomas More – neither artistic, nor litigious, nor financial - has resulted in a relatively unusual situation for the early modern historian, whereby much of our information about a husband must be gleaned from what is known about his wife and her family. Thomas, described as a gentleman (GET) in the lower inscription adorning the Adderbury portrait memorial, most probably made a particularly good match in Mary Bustard, who was the daughter of the Adderbury landowner Anthony Bustard. In the record of the 1566 heraldic visitation to Oxfordshire, Thomas is listed in the Bustard of Adderbury pedigree as simply 'Thomas Mort [More] of Stapley', with no information about his parentage, thus further suggesting that Thomas did not come from a particularly wealthy or otherwise noteworthy family.[122] Mary, however, having been born into the property-

[120] Sherlock, 'The Unton Portrait Reconsidered', p. 187.
[121] Hamling, "An Arelome To This Hous For Ever", p.83.
[122] Ryan, p. 109.

owning gentry, has left a (minor) paper trail at least in terms of her ancestry.[123] For example, she is named several times in her father's will under her married name 'Mary More'.[124] Whilst this lack of source material – both textual and material - specific to the patron (and wider family) of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* is frustrating for research purposes, it does potentially reveal something of the social status of the patron and suggests a lack of involvement in public or political life. This is unlike Henry and Dorothy Unton, for example - descendants of leading families of the Reformation period and themselves relatively prolific patrons of the arts – for whom there is a not insignificant surviving cache of archival material and cultural products such as portraits.

It is possible, however, that the lack of extant archival material relating to Thomas and Mary More could be linked to their faith rather than a potential lack of involvement in the public life of Elizabethan Adderbury. For Mary More's family, the Bustards, were known Roman Catholics and Mary and her husband Thomas were no exception: both of their names appear on the 1577 diocesan return of recusants for Oxfordshire, listed on consecutive lines as 'Thomas More of Adderbury pas. [parish] gent. / Mary his wiefe.'[125] The head of the Bustard family, Mary's father Anthony, is also listed: 'Anthony Busterd of Adderbury, Esquire.'[126] It would in fact appear that the Bustard family were fully committed to the Old Faith: several of them appear on the Recusant Roll of 1592, and many remained Roman Catholic until the Restoration.[127] Thomas and Mary's continued Roman Catholicism is in itself not that surprising; recusancy remained strong in parts of rural and civic Oxfordshire throughout the Long Reformation.[128] The continued Roman Catholicism of the Mores and the Bustards is, however, extremely significant for the purposes of this study: their adherence to the Old Faith is a crucial factor in any interpretation of the memorial commissioned by Mary in memory of

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[123] Although there is some extant documentation relating to the Bustard family, what survives is very limited. See: M. H. A Stapleton, *A History of the Post-Reformation Catholic Missions in Oxfordshire, with an account of the families connected with them* (London: Henry Frowde, 1906), p. 65.

[124] London, The National Archived, PROB 11 76 3. Unfortunately, the wills of Thomas and Mary do not appear to be extant; this author has been unable to find them.

[125] Ryan, p. 109.

[126] Ryan, p. 113.

[127] Stapleton, p. 65.

[128] On continued Roman Catholicism in Oxfordshire during the post-Reformation period, see: Gajda; Stapleton; Mary Hodges, 'Aspects of Recusancy in Oxfordshire: the Case of Owen Fletcher of Woodstock (1553 – c. 1635)', *Oxoniensia,* 72 (2007), 1-8; Alan Davidson, 'Roman Catholicism in Oxfordshire from the late Elizabethan period to the Civil War, c.1580 - c.1640' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Bristol, 1970).

her husband, and, by extension, in any assessment of patron intention, possible meaning and function of the object, or who the intended viewers may have been. It is also, as previously mentioned, a possible reason for the lack of surviving source material about the couple; their 'contacts or connections' like other Elizabethan Roman Catholics (whether recusant, crypto, or inwardly remaining), 'may not have been the sort of thing which one wanted to commit to paper'.[129]

Upon first reading of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More,* it appears as a posthumous presentation and commemoration of conforming members of the parish: there is no mention of the Roman Catholicism of the commemorated, no explicit requests for intercessory prayers for their souls, or candles to be lit in their memory. The inscriptions on the stone monuments to other members of the Bustard family, which are in the same transept of Adderbury St Mary's as the painted memorial on wooden panel, also maintain this tactful silence. Similarly, it does not initially appear as if any of the iconography in the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* is particularly Roman Catholic in nature. There is no religious imagery: no Doom Scene; no Virgin Mary; no crucifix; no Biblical scenes of any sort are depicted. In fact, some of the painting's imagery – specifically the hourglass and the skull – appears at the first interpretation to fit neatly into the *memento mori* genre of iconography, which Tarnya Cooper has shown was regularly used as a representational strategy by Protestants during the second half of the sixteenth century: 'portraits depicting many Elizabethan sitters…frequently present religious virtue through remembrance of death and passing time'.[130]

However, once equipped with the knowledge of Thomas and Mary's continued Roman Catholicism, it becomes possible to read this painted memorial quite differently, and to see several iconographic clues that would, to the knowing viewer, indicate a plea for intercessory prayer in line with the soteriological practices of the Old Faith. Firstly, the kneeling figures of Thomas and Mary More are not pictured at a prayer table or desk; instead, they are depicted kneeling either side of, and slightly above, a tomb with a stone skeleton atop. The couple,

[129] Neil Younger, *Religion and Politics in Elizabethan England: The Life of Sir Christopher Hatton* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022), p. 5.
[130] Tarnya Cooper, 'Visual Memory, Portraiture and the Protestant Credentials of Tudor and Stuart Families', in *Memory and the English Reformation,* ed. by Alexandra Walsham, Bronwyn Wallace, Ceri Law, and Brian Cummings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 318-333 (p. 328).

however, are quite clearly at prayer – they kneel upon prayer cushions and their hands are clasped – but, crucially, they do not hold prayer books. As Llewellyn notes, pre-Reformation funeral monuments in English and Welsh churches would often include 'kneeling mourning figures... [who]... were traditional figurations of the prayers said for the deceased', whereas by the mid-1500s, and certainly 'well before 1600', the subjects of tombs would also be depicted kneeling in stone, but, crucially, 'with the introduction of prayer desks with subject effigies in pairs or singly'.[131]

The *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* is therefore notable in that – rather than holding prayer books, or even simply kneeling at an empty prayer desk or table – the subjects kneel with their hands clasped either side of a skeleton-topped tomb. If this skeleton is meant to represent Thomas' post-mortem body, and indeed the text within the lower inscription - 'THIS IS THE REPRESENTATIO OF THOMAS MORE' – would indicate this to be so, then it is as if Thomas and Mary are directing their prayers, quite literally, towards the representation of Thomas' post-mortem self. It is suggested here that this visual tableau thus functions as a request to the viewer to do the same, and that the painting therefore contains an implicit appeal for intercessory prayer, perhaps aimed at those Adderbury parishioners who, whilst maintaining the outwards image of conformity, were inwardly remaining Roman Catholics. Indeed, scholars such as Peter Marshall, Richard Williams, and Alexandra Walsham have shown that the typical congregation of an English parish church during the Elizabethan period was comprised of individuals with varying confessional allegiances, all attempting to co-exist within the requirements and regulations of the Protestant regime.[132] Walsham's work in particular on church papistry and the concept of the outwardly conforming but inwardly remaining Roman Catholic has shone a light on the continued significant presence of Roman Catholics within the post-Reformation parish community.[133]

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[131] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 105.

[132] Alexandra Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (London: Routledge, 2016); Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999); Richard Williams, 'Reformation', in *Art Under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm,* ed. by Tabitha Barber and Stacy Boldrick (London: Tate Publishing, 2013), pp. 48-74 (p. 48); Marshall, *Heretics and Believers,* p. xvi.

[133] Walsham, *Church Papists*.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, it is possible that the Elizabethan community of Adderbury, with its strong spiritual and financial links to the traditionally Roman Catholic institution of New College, Oxford, would have contained a number of men and women who continued to believe in the soteriological teachings of the Old Faith (whether publicly or privately). It is thus perfectly possible that, in the years following the creation (c.1586) of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*, the pews of St Mary's Adderbury contained church papists of varying degrees, from those flying firmly below the radar (but who remained Roman Catholic at heart), to the more determined non-communicant who, in attending church but refusing to participate in communion, tested the limits of conformity.[134] It is precisely these types of viewers who, it is suggested here, might have been the intended audience of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* and who may have answered the painting's appeal for intercessory prayer. Such a late sixteenth century viewer, who still believed in the soteriology of the Old Faith, and thus held an understanding of mortality and salvation rooted in the purgatorial imperative and the necessity of intercession, might very possibly have personally known both the subject of the memorial, Thomas More, and the patron, the recusant Mary More; they may have been part of the same Roman Catholic gentry community, and could have moved in similar social circles.

The monumental element of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* lends further weight to this interpretation regarding the intended Roman Catholic viewership of the painting. Unlike, for example, the portrait of John Case at St John's College Oxford or the *Judde Memorial* at the Dulwich Picture Gallery (both of which also portray recumbent skeletons), the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* holds both a commemorative and a monumental purpose: the viewer is informed, in the lowermost inscription, that the bodies of Mary and Thomas More 'ARE LAIED HEREBY'. Could this inscription contain a further appeal to the intended viewer, standing within the parish church at the site of the subject's burial whilst at the same time being confronted by the image of his decaying body presided over by the living subject and his wife at prayer, to offer up their own prayers for the soul of Thomas More? For the inwardly remaining Roman Catholic in late sixteenth century Adderbury, attending the parish church but in their heart remaining true to the Old Faith, this call for intercessory action

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[134] Walsham, *Catholic Reformation.*

would have been very much in line with their soteriological beliefs and approach to mortality and salvation.[135]

Whilst the depiction of cadavers (skeletal or otherwise) in post-1540 Elizabethan portraiture is extremely rare,[136] the images of the skull and hourglass as seen in the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* are much more commonplace. These two emblems are amongst the visual tropes frequently seen in numerous portraits commissioned by Protestant patrons from the English or Welsh middle elite from the 1540s onwards, as per the sub-genre of *memento mori* portraiture first presented and analysed by Cooper in her 2001 doctoral thesis and later in her 2012 monograph:[137]

Figure 4.10 Detail of an hourglass in the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*

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[135] In the following chapter of this thesis, the similarity between the *transi* monuments of the late medieval church and the skeleton-topped-tomb in the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* will be considered, and the link between such imagery and the soteriology of the Old Faith will be further analysed.

[136] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, p. 109. Tarnya Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elites of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales 1540-1620,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 109.

[137] See, for example: Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* pp. 82-83, p. 98, p. 105, p. 109, p. 115, pp. 139-40.

Figure 4.11 Detail of a skull in the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*

It is important to note, however, that the iconography of *memento mori* was not an invention of the (Protestant) post-Reformation period but rather a reemployment of a visual trope used in the late-medieval period within the context of a Roman Catholic understanding of mortality, salvation, and transience.[138] Therefore, the presence of, for example, a skull and an hourglass (or, indeed, other emblems of *memento mori*) in a post-1540 English or Welsh portrait cannot always be taken as a clear indication of the patron or subject's confessional leaning or soteriological beliefs. As will be discussed below and in the following chapter of this thesis, research by Cooper and now by this author, has shown that these images of *memento mori* do in fact appear in works that range across the religious spectrum of post-Reformation England, for display in domestic, civic, and ecclesiological spaces.

To read the meaning behind *memento mori* emblems within Elizabethan portraiture correctly, it is essential to place paintings like the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* within the

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[138] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 82. Tarnya Cooper 'Predestined Lives? Portraiture and Religious Belief in England and Wales, 1560-1620', in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007), pp. 49-62 (p. 49).

context of the faith, where it is known, of the patron. In the case of this Adderbury painted church portrait memorial, therefore, the recusancy of Mary More and the probable Roman Catholicism of her husband Thomas is highly significant: it allows the viewer to interpret these *memento mori* emblems within Roman Catholic soteriological doctrine and place them within the long tradition of Roman Catholic *ars moriendi*. Thus, rather than reading presence of the skull, hourglass, and recumbent skeleton as being 'concomitant with the idea of salvation through the grace of God alone', as per the numerous *memento mori* portraits of known Protestant Elizabethan sitters identified by Cooper, this thesis argues that these emblems as depicted in *The Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* should instead be interpreted as per the late-medieval (and thus, Roman Catholic) concept of *memento mori*: in remembering that we must all die, we should thus be reminded of the purgatorial imperative governing how to live and the necessity of intercessory prayer and other actions to achieve salvation.

Indeed, despite the iconography of *memento mori* appearing to have been used, post-1540, predominantly by patrons of portraiture from amongst the Protestant urban and middle elite of Elizabethan England and Wales, Cooper notes 'three known exceptions' of portraits of known or highly probable Roman Catholic subjects which include such visual tropes.[139] These are the portraits of: Sir William Ingleby; Sir Robert Throckmorton (in which he rests his hand upon a skull); and the composer John Bull (in which a skull atop an hourglass is depicted to the proper right of the sitter's head).[140] To this list can now also be added the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* as well as, it is suggested here, the late sixteenth century portrait of the Oxford scholar and physician John Case at St John's College, Oxford:

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[139] Tarnya Cooper, 'Memento mori portraiture: Painting, Protestant Culture and the Patronage of middle elites in England and Wales 1540-1630' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 2001), p. 127.
[140] Cooper, 'Memento Mori', appendix I. Portrait details: Unknown British (English) artist, *Sir Robert Throckmorton*, 1570-1599, oil on panel, Coughton Court, Warwickshire, The Throckmorton Collection (National Trust); Unknown British (English) artist, *William Ingleby*, 1550-1578, oil on panel, Ripley Castle, Yorkshire; Unknown British (English) artist, *John Bull,* 1589, oil on panel, Faculty of Music and Bate Collection of Musical Instruments, University of Oxford.

Figure 4.12 Sampson Strong (possibly), *John Case,* c. 1590, oil on panel, St John's College, Oxford

© The President and Fellows of St John's College, Oxford

This painting of Case is replete with the imagery and inscriptions of *memento mori*. It is also, as suggested here, quite possibly a portrait of a Roman Catholic Elizabethan. For despite it being almost impossible to confidently state the personal faith of a long-dead individual - particularly one who lived through the doctrinal upheavals of the sixteenth century – the historian is still able, where enough extant source material exists, to come to a relatively

assured position. In this instance, it appears probable that Case was a crypto-Roman Catholic: during his lifetime he was accused of sheltering Catholics in his home, and it has been alleged that a Roman Catholic priest was present at his deathbed.[141] Furthermore, the (admittedly, Catholic) biographer Anthony Wood claimed that Case lost his fellowship at St John's due to his confessional leanings.[142]

The portrait of Case is in fact of particular relevance to this study: it exhibits startlingly similar iconography and text to that of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*, and both paintings are of probable Roman Catholics. It is immediately apparent that the artist of these two paintings has used the same *memento mori* emblems (the skull and the hourglass), as well as the recumbent skeleton, and that the use of text is the same across both paintings: the inscription at the base of the Case portrait is the exact same text as that contained within the central cartouche of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*, and the text beneath the skull and the hourglass in both paintings is also the same. In addition, the artistic handling and treatment demonstrated across the two paintings is very similar. As with most of the portraits considered in this thesis, they are examples of late sixteenth century vernacular portraiture, meaning that they do not align to the conventions of formal, or courtly, portraiture of the period and that they are (in the main) lacking in depth or other aesthetic subtleties such as shading, thus appearing two-dimensional or 'non-illusionistic'.[143] Furthermore, these kinds of paintings are often heavily reliant on the use of text and emblem to convey the intentions of their patrons and thus, the intended meaning of the portrait itself.

In 1904, Herbert Blakiston (Master of Trinity College, Oxford), posited in the *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* that the portrait of Case could be the work of the northern Netherlandish portraitist known variously as Sampson Strong, Sampson Starke, Sampson Starkey, Sampson the Picturer, or, as Blaksiton referred to him, 'Sampson the Paynter'.[144]

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[141] Edward A. Malone, *Case, John (1540/41?–1600), philosopher and physician*. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-4853> [accessed 28 July 2023].
[142] Ibid.
[143] Cooper, 'Predestined Lives?', p. 55. Also see: Tittler, *Face of the City,* pp. 8-10.
[144] Herbert Blakiston, 'The Oxford Exhibition of Historical Portraits', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 5.14 (1904), 211-219 (p. 12). On the career of Sampson Strong, please see: Tittler, *Face of the City,* p. 38, p. 72, pp. 80-83.

Over a century later, this hypothesis is revisited and updated here: it is suggested that the visual similarities between the known works of Strong and the portrait of John Case are significant enough to credibly argue for the Case portrait to be attributed to Strong and, moreover, that the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* may also be counted amongst the works of Strong. These similarities include the use of shading around the faces of the subjects, with particularly pertinent examples found amongst the portraits Strong was commissioned to paint for Christ's Hospital, Abingdon, such as the 1607 portrait of Sir John Mason: the deep lines of Mason's face and the shading around his cheekbones and chin is evident in the portrait 1597 portrait of Case. Further clues can be seen in the similar artistic treatment and handling of the hands of certain sitters: the hands of Lionel Bostock, for example, in the c.1600 portrait by Strong, again at Christ's Hospital, Abingdon, are comparable to those of John Case: in both portraits, the fingers are overly long and thus out of proportion with the body of the sitter, and the finger nails and knuckles are overly uniform with a lack of illusory or mimetic depiction (we see no or very few fine lines or veins, for example). These similarities are replicated in the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More.*

Further clues can be found within the biographical details of Strong's career: born around 1549 in the Netherlands, Strong settled in Oxford, where he established what would appear to be a relatively successful career as a portraitist for the Oxford colleges, with commissions from New College in 1596, Corpus Christi in 1604, Magdalene in 1605, and All Souls in 1609.[145] The first portrait commission that can, with surety, be attributed to Strong is his 1596 painting of William Wykeham, the founder of New College, Oxford; Strong is listed as 'Sampson the Painter' in New College's accounts for the year 1596, where it is documented that he was paid £6 for the portrait.[146] It is therefore entirely plausible, in terms of the date range and collegiate setting, that Strong could have been commissioned to paint the late sixteenth century portrait of John Case at St John's College. Moreover, given his known link to New College and, accordingly, New College's link with Adderbury and particularly the parish church of St Mary, it is possible that Strong could have been known to Mary More and her family the Bustards who were, as previously discussed, prominent and wealthy members of the parish

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[145] Tittler, *Face of the City,* p, 80
[146] Ibid.

community. Admittedly, the c.1586 date of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* is ten years earlier than the first documented painting by Strong, but this should not be a reason to discount the proposed attribution. In the absence of any archival evidence or the signature of the artist, the dating of sixteenth century vernacular painting is an inexact science and, furthermore, it is quite possible – if not probable – that Strong would have already established a reputation as a competent local portraitist prior to receiving his first commission from an Oxford college.[147]

b) Meanings, purposes, and functions

The openly recusant Mary More clearly felt able and entitled to commission a commemorative portrait for display in Adderbury parish church. It is suggested here that she must have done so in the knowledge that her commission would be safe from damage or removal; there would be little point in choosing to display a painting in a place that would result in its certain destruction. Mary's confidence in the safety of the memorial portrait is particularly significant as, by 1589 - around the time that the *Life of Thomas and Mary More* was created - the living of Adderbury was held by the prominent Puritan preacher John Pryme: exactly the kind of Reformer who we might at one point have assumed would object to the presence of image-laden painted *memoria* commemorating local Roman Catholics in his church. Recent scholarship, however, has shown both that the parameters of acceptability regarding imagery in the parish church setting were much wider than previously thought, and, furthermore, that people from across the broad confessional spectrum of Christianity did live (and attend church) side by side within parish communities during the post-Reformation period.[148] The presence of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* – a Roman Catholic memorial in the puritan-ministered St Mary's Adderbury is further testament to this, and

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[147] Further research is needed here, and indeed more widely into the patronage and authorship of the numerous late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century portraits held by Oxford and Cambridge colleges. See: Anna Clark, 'Exemplary Women: Portraits of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth Century Female Patrons in Oxford and Cambridge Colleges' (forthcoming doctoral thesis, Oxford University and NPG).

[148] See, for example: Hamling and Willis; Walsham, *Church Papists*; William J. Sheils, '"Getting On" and "Getting Along" in Parish and Town: Catholics and their Neighbours in England', in *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands c.1570–1720*, ed. by Benjamin Kaplan, Bob Moore, Henk van Nierop and Judith Pollmann (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009)*, pp. 67–83; Michael Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage, and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

corroborates Haigh's argument that 'the separation of Catholics from the worshipping village community was a very slow process.'[149]

Mary More was a member of the Tudor provincial gentry: a Bustard by birth, therefore part of one of the leading Adderbury families, but most likely relatively unknown outside of Oxfordshire. Certainly, there is no evidence to suggest that the Bustards were political players on a national level and, although her father was titled, the Bustards did not own any kind of hereditary estate or land. They were, however, the leading family in Adderbury for much of the sixteenth century: they were the lessees of the Winchester Manor from 1534 until Anthony Bustard's death in 1568, held one of only two mills in the parish for the entirety of the century, and, at one point, they kept 1,200 sheep on their land.[150] As such, the Bustard presence can still be felt today in St Mary's church, for alongside the memorial to Thomas and Mary More, there was at one point a monumental tomb for Mary More's grandparents and mother, which, according to observations recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, was 'in a tolerable state of preservation' in 1792,[151] and still standing in 1801.[152] All that remains today of this tomb monument is the inscription, which is set into the south wall of the South Transept, within touching distance of the commemorative portrait of Mary and Thomas More. It is thus tempting to speculate that the South Transept acted as a kind of family chapel or chantry for the Bustards, where prayers might have been said for their souls in the decades prior to the Reformation: in a short article by W. Woolston (son of Revd. Dr. T. Woolston, who was resident in Adderbury manor – the former home of the Bustards – during the late eighteenth century),[153] it is suggested that there was once a chantry with six stalls occupying what is today the South Transept, and the site of the Bustard (and More) monuments.[154]

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[149] Haigh, 'Continuity of Catholicism', p. 43.
[150] 'Parishes: Adderbury', in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 9, Bloxham Hundred*, ed. Mary D Lobel and Alan Crossley (London, 1969), pp. 5-44. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol9/pp5-44> [accessed 3 October 2019].
[151] T. Woolston, 'Monumental Remains of the Bustards of Adderbury', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 71 (1792) 111-112 (p. 111).
[152] The monument is depicted in a watercolour by J. C. Buckler, dated 1801: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Top Oxon a 64 1.
[153] 'Parishes: Adderbury'.
[154] W. Woolston, 'Description of Adderbury, by Mr. Woolston', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 87 (1800) 208-211 (p. 210).

Whilst male members of the provincial gentry, middling sort, and urban elite were prolific commissioners of portraits during the latter half of the sixteenth century, it was less common for married women of similar social status to take on the role of patron or to have their likenesses depicted in portrait form.[155] Therefore Mary More's commissioning of the commemorative portrait in Adderbury church - and particularly her decision to include a depiction of herself kneeling in prayer alongside her late husband, as well as numerous inscriptions referring to her own Bustard ancestry as opposed to that of her husband's family – corroborates Cooper's compelling argument that, with widowhood, came 'the agency of the patroness.'[156] The relatively inexpensive medium of paint on wooden panel made it possible for widows of the provincial gentry such as Mary More to commission portraits in memory of their late husbands which, as we have seen in *The Memorial to William Smart* and now with the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* and *The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*, could also include visual depictions of themselves. It is worth remembering here that that survival rates for portraits on wood, particularly when such cultural objects are then displayed in non-climate-controlled conditions (like churches), are dismally low. Therefore, it is highly likely that there were many more portraits commissioned by widows - in memory of both their late husbands and of themselves – for both the domestic and ecclesiological spaces of the late-Elizabethan period, that are no longer extant. Yet it is still possible, if not essential for the advancement of our understanding of the past, to attempt to draw conclusions by working with the material evidence that exists today.

The inscriptions that adorn the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* are particularly illuminating. The lower panel of text, in a separate frame beneath the painting, contains a clear statement of patron intention:

> THIS IS THE REPRESENTATIO OF THOMAS MORE GET: WHO
> DECEASED FE OF IAN: 1586 AND OF MARIE HIS WIFE DAUGH: TO ANTIONIE BVSTARD
> ESQ: WHO CAVSED THIS MONUMENT TO BE MADE IN TESTIMONIE AD CERTAINE
> BELEEFE OF TE RESVRRECTION OF THEIR BODIES
> W^{CH} ARE LAIED HEREBY.

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[155] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, pp. 101-110; Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 40-59.
[156] Cooper, 'Picturing the Agency of Widows', p. 104.

Text is used here to inform the viewer that Mary More commissioned this painted church portrait memorial as an act of visual remembrance and 'IN TESTIMONIE" to the eternal salvation of her husband as well as of her own self. The wording is significant on two levels: firstly, the proclamation of Mary's 'CERTAINE BELEFE OF TE RESURRECTION OF THEIR BODIES' has undertones of a predestinate understanding of salvation and the concept of certain Election within the framework of the Calvinist doctrine of assurance, and secondly, the viewer is informed of 'THEIR BODIES W^CH ARE LAIED HEREBY'. This statement, alongside the spatial distinction of this panel of text in its own frame below the main painting, indicates that this inscription is a later addition to the memorial, added after the death of Mary More. Could this addendum – complete with its message of predestined salvation - have been added to help this Roman Catholic memorial to hide in plain sight within the Reformed parish church setting; to aid the object in masking as a Protestant memorial and thus to protect it from any potential damage that an image-laden commemorative commission by a Recusant patron may inspire?

Tittler has argued that Roman Catholic patrons of portraiture from amongst the middling elite of post-Reformation England 'in many cases…chose to make no reference at all to their continued recusancy, and so their portraits remained indistinguishable in their purpose and content from that of conforming Protestants.'[157] This, as has been suggested above, is not necessarily the case for the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*. The inclusion of Thomas and Mary kneeling with their hands clasped either side of a skeleton-topped tomb (with, presumably, the skeleton meant to represent the subject of the painting, Thomas More) instead of the more widely seen post-Reformation tableau of the subjects kneeling in prayer holding prayer books, could point to an appeal for intercessory prayer from the patron. Thus, although not displaying the same immediately obvious Roman Catholic iconography that can be seen in other surviving late-Elizabethan recusant portraits such as *The Towneley Family at Prayer* (c. 1593-c.1601, Towneley Hall),[158] the memorial portrait commissioned by Mary More

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[157] Robert Tittler, 'Portraiture and Memory amongst the Middling Elites', in *The Arts of Remembrance in Early Modern England: Memorial Cultures of the Post Reformation*, ed. by Andrew Gordon and Thomas Rist (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 37-58 (p. 48).

[158] For images of the Towneley Family painting and on the Roman Catholic context of the object - the subjects and their children, for example, are depicted praying beneath a crucifix - see: Tittler, 'Portraiture and Memory', pp. 51-52; Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics,* pp. 134-136.

did not necessarily remain 'indistinguishable in…purpose and content from that of conforming Protestants'.[159] For the image of the still living Thomas praying seemingly to his decaying corpse could be indicative of a purgatorial understanding of salvation or, as Eade notes of the *transi* motif in general, the concept of 'purgatorial time',[160] recognisable to those still following the soteriology of the Old Faith. Thus, the addition of the lower panel of inscription with its message of certain salvation may indicate an attempt to tone down the potentially purgatorial nature of this imagery, and to render this Roman Catholic memorial more acceptable. This inscription, in addition to the use of *memento mori* imagery of a kind typically used by Protestants from the middle of the sixteenth century as an iconographical signifier of Reformed piety (and which could thus be read as a visual declaration of the Mores' conformity) could have therefore enabled the recusant *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* to mask as a Protestant memorial within the post-Reformation parish church setting.

Indeed, as shown in this chapter, Tarnya Cooper and now also this author have presented evidence of a small number of Roman Catholic Elizabethans who continued to use emblems of *memento mori* in portraiture commissioned for display in the civic, domestic, and ecclesiological spaces of post-Reformation England and Wales. This includes the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* and, as will be presented in the following chapter of this thesis, the *Memorial to Margery Downes* in Bishop's Frome and quite possibly the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* in Besford. It has been suggested that this may have been a deliberate tactic, designed to help these paintings pass as Protestant objects, whilst at the same time ensuring that the intended (most likely inwardly remaining Roman Catholic) viewer received the patron's appeal for intercession. For whilst a church papist or other type of inwardly remaining Roman Catholic viewing the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* might interpret the skull, hourglass, and skeleton in the painting according to the Roman Catholic soteriology of the patron (and thus engaging with what this chapter has argued was the intended function of this memorial object, the call for intercessory prayer), it is equally possible for a visitor to Adderbury church to read these emblems in line with a Protestant understanding of mortality,

[159] Tittler, 'Portraiture and Memory', p. 48.
[160] Jane Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection: Triptych Monuments in the Post-Reformation English Church', in *Faith, Politics and the Arts: Early Modern Cultural Transfer between Catholics and Protestants*, ed. by Christina Stunck (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019), pp. 177-209 (p. 199).

salvation, and transience. It is therefore suggested here that the inclusion of these specific emblems of *memento mori* by a Roman Catholic patron – images which could be interpreted in different ways depending on the beliefs of individual viewers - may have been an attempt to ensure the continued safety of the memorial within the Reformed ecclesiological setting, whilst also ensuring its call for intercession reached its intended (Roman Catholic) viewership.

Clearly, Mary More was successful in this endeavour: her commission was able to remain within the post-Reformation church of Adderbury St Mary's, presided over by a Puritan minister, perhaps largely due to its ability to masquerade as a Protestant image. Indeed, the various inscriptions on this painting exhibit a certain self-awareness in terms of the object's location, function, and material, which would suggest that Mary More was a patron with a very clear understanding of what she was setting out to achieve. The Latin couplet – a quote from the *Satires* by the Roman poet Juvenal - above the tomb is particularly revealing: 'data sunt ipsis quoque fata sepulchris.' This translates literally to 'even tombs themselves must yield to fate' or, as Niall Rudd put it in his translation of the *Satires*: 'even funeral monuments have their allotted life span.'[161] Juvenal, and now Mary More, are thus telling the reader and viewer that, unlike the immortal souls of the people they commemorate, monuments will not last forever. They are physical objects made by people, not God, and are therefore at great risk of damage, whether from willful damage, through neglect, or simply as a result of the passing of time. The inscription on the tomb in the middle of the painting relays a similar message: 'so far is ought from lasting aye / that tombes shal have their dying day.' It therefore appears as if Mary More was particularly aware that, in choosing to commission a memorial made of an impermanent material like wood, rather than the much hardier materials of stone or brass, the object was unlikely to survive intact in perpetuity.

Could this choice of material have been the purposeful action of a financially prudent patron, acting in the knowledge that her commission may not survive, particularly considering her own open non-conformity during a period of acute uncertainty and anxiety regarding the future political and religious landscape of the nation? The inscription at the top of the painting would suggest this to be the case. It contains the line 'our sides were never brasse, our

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[161] Juvenal, *The Satires,* trans. by Niall Rudd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 91.

strengthe not stones': this dual reference to both the fragility and transience of human life also speaks to what Badham has termed 'the ephemeral nature of the monument' itself.[162] Despite this, however, the patron still desired for this memorial painting to be created and hung in the space where she and her husband were buried alongside her Bustard ancestors; the South Transept of St Mary's Adderbury was most likely at one point a chantry for the Bustard family, where prayers for the souls of Mary More's ancestors had been uttered for generations. It is most likely, as has been argued in this chapter, that Mary commissioned the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* in the hope that she and her husband would also be the recipients of such prayers from their fellow Roman Catholics living in late sixteenth century Adderbury yet who, in a show of conformity and an attempt to co-exist with their Protestant neighbours, still attended the parish church. Thus, Peter Marshall's suggestion that, after the Reformation, 'new monuments placed in churches did not ask for prayers, or only very rarely,'[163] must be redressed: for when the monument is made in memory of Roman Catholic subjects, the request for prayer is most certainly present.

   iv.   Conclusion

This chapter, in examining the possible motivations behind the commissioning and production of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*, as well as the potential meaning, functions, and purposes of this narrative memorial painting, has shone a light on the use of memorial portraiture during the post-Reformation period as a tool for proclaiming the Protestant credentials, Elect status, and exemplary conforming life of the subject. The temporary monumental nature of the painting during what this chapter argues was its brief time on display in Faringdon parish church has been presented, and the place of the object amongst Dorothy Unton's numerous cultural commissions in memory of her husband has been analsyed: in exercising her agency as a cultural patron during her widowhood, Dorothy commissioned an innovative memorial painting which uses a creative narrative structure to depict her assurance in her husband's Election, and thus testify to her own Protestant belief in the sanctity and veracity of the predestinate approach to salvation. It is fitting that this testament to conformity and

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[162] Badham, 'A Painted Canvas', p. 97.
[163] Peter Marshall, *Death, Religion and the Supernatural in England, 1500-1700* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2017), p. 27.

Reformed soteriology would, at least for a short while, be displayed in the public setting of the parish church, at the site of Unton's burial.

As with the *Memorial to William Smart,* discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis, the possible presence of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* in Faringdon parish church – even if only for a short amount of time – is testament to just how broad the parameters for the acceptability of images in the post-Reformation ecclesiological setting were. For despite being full of figurative imagery, and despite its temporary location in the church setting, the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* conforms to the acceptable image type as per Hamling and Willis' 2023 criteria: it depicts the story or history of a conforming Protestant in narrative form;[164] it was commissioned by a Protestant; it was (as this thesis argues) placed within a temporary monument and was therefore not in a spatial position of potential adoration within the church; and finally, its commemorative function served a civil (memorial) purpose rather than a religious (worshipful) purpose. By giving the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* a dual public display location - firstly in the parish church, and then in the gallery of Faringdon House – Dorothy ensured that her crafting and legitimising of her husband's postmortem reputation as a man of learning, chivalry, loyalty, and respectable conformity reached the widest possible audience.

The presentation and analysis of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* in this chapter has similarly focused on the potential intentions of the patron, and the likely meanings, functions, and purposes of the painting within the parish church setting. This author has also made the original proposal, based on analysis of the surviving visual evidence and the connection between Adderbury St Mary's and New College, Oxford, that the possible author of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* was the Oxfordshire-based portraitist Sampson Strong. As the first amongst the nine post-Reformation memorial paintings selected for study in this thesis to be commissioned by a Roman Catholic patron, the presence of *memento mori* imagery across the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* has been interpreted as both an appeal for intercessory prayer aimed at the inwardly remaining Roman Catholic parishioner at Adderbury St Mary's, but also as a possible attempt to hide this Roman Catholic memorial

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[164] For a diagrammatic representation of this criteria, see: Hamling and Willis, p. 938.

in plain sight within its location in a Reformed parish church. In this sense, the object could be seen to reflect the post-Reformation provincial Roman Catholic experience as described by William Sheils and later expanded upon by Alexandra Walsham: less one of tolerance, more one of 'getting on' and 'getting along',[165] within the 'unstable mixture of assimilation and segregation, anxiety and cooperation, which defined interactions between Catholics and their neighbours'.[166] For whilst the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* was indeed displayed in an post-Reformation ecclesiological setting presided over by a Puritan minister, its clever use of the visual ensures that its Roman Catholic soteriological message was proclaimed quietly, to be picked up on only by the intended, knowing viewer to St Mary's church.

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[165] Sheils.
[166] Walsham, *Catholic Reformation*, p. 24.

Chapter Five – The Welsh Marches: The Cornewall Family Memorial, the Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family, the Memorial to Margery Downes

Figure 5.1 Melchior Salaboss, the *Cornewall Family Memorial* when open*, 1588, oil on panels, St Mary's Church, Burford, Shropshire

Figure 5.2 Melchior Salaboss, the *Cornewall Family Memorial* when closed*, 1588, oil on panels, St Mary's Church, Burford, Shropshire

This *Cornewall Family Memorial* is a large triptych memorial commissioned by Sir Thomas Cornewall (d. 1615) in memory of his elder brother Edmund (d. 1585) and his parents Richard (d. 1569) and Jenet (d. 1547).[1] The painting is signed and dated: 'Melchior Salaboss fecit an' dm 1588'.

The Cornewall family were an ancient landed family, with links to medieval English royalty: they could trace their ancestry back to Richard, Earl of Cornewall (d. 1272), the (illegitimate)

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[1] As explained in an inscription below the pediment of the portrait: 'well-beloved brother Thomas Cornewayll, now livinge, who hath caused this monume't to be made for the memory of his worshippful pare'ts, and most lou'nge brother in the yere of Our Lord 1587'. See also: Jane Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection: Triptych Monuments in the Post-Reformation English Church', in *Faith, Politics and the Arts: Early Modern Cultural Transfer between Catholics and Protestants*, ed. by Christina Stunck (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019), pp. 177-209 (p. 189).

Figure 5.3 Unknown artist, *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* when open, c.1595-1600, oil on panels,

St Peter's Church, Besford, Worcestershire

Figure 5.4 Unknown artist, *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* when closed, c.1595-1600, oil on panels, St Peter's Church, Besford, Worcestershire

The *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* is a painted church portrait memorial triptych commissioned by Sir Edmund Harewell III (1567-1615) and his wife Susan Colles in memory of one, or possibly all three of their sons, who died during childhood.[6]

The Harewells were a Worcestershire landed gentry family. Edmund studied at Oriel College, Oxford, where he matriculated in July 1585, was made high Sheriff of Worcester in 1596, and was knighted at the coronation of James I in 1603.[7] Despite these successes, Edmund's personal life was marred by tragedy: his brother Richard (d. 1576), his three children, and his wife (d.1604) all predeceased him. Financial and reputational damages followed: his bid to become an MP in 1604 was unsuccessful, and by 1606 his monetary situation was so dire that he had sold off the family home, Besford Court, and associated lands.[8] Following his death in 1615 at the age of forty-eight, Edmund's two surviving sons (from his second marriage, in 1605, to Elizabeth Griffiths) emigrated to Virginia.[9]

Susan, wife of Edmund and mother to the child commemorated in the painting had a nephew who was fined for recusancy in July 1609,[10] and although not a recorded recusant, Thomas Habington notes how Edmund proclaimed his allegiance to Roman Catholicism on his death bed.[11]

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[6] Nigel Llewellyn, '[An] Impe entombed heere dothe lie: The Besford triptych and child memorials in post-Reformation England', in *Representations of Childhood Death,* ed. by Gillian Avery and Kimberley Reynolds (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp. 52-65.

[7] 'Parishes: Besford', in *A History of the County of Worcester: Volume 4*, ed. by William Page and J. W. Willis-Bund (London: Victoria County History, 1924), pp. 19-23. British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/worcs/vol4/pp19-23> [accessed 26 April 2019]; Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses; the members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714; their parentage, birthplace, and year of birth, with a record of their degrees* (Oxford and London: Parker and Company, 1891), p. 238; Llewellyn, '[An] Impe entombed heere', pp. 52-65.

[8] Jan Broadway, *'No Historie so Meete': Gentry culture and the development of local history in Elizabethan and early Stuart England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 97.

[9] Page and Willis-Bund, pp. 19-23.

[10] *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: James I, 1603-1610*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1857), pp. 524-540. *British History Online,* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/jas1/1603-10/pp524-540> [accessed 27 July 2023].

[11] Thomas Habington, *A Survey of Worcestershire,* ed. by John Amphlett (Oxford: James Parker and Co., 1899), p. 29. It is important to bear in mind that Habington was a Roman Catholic polemicist writing largely for an English Roman Catholic audience living, like him, in exile. This does not mean, however, that his writings should be discarded; they are still a valuable resource in understanding the experiences of Roman Catholics in the sixteenth century. For more on Habington's writings, life, and observations regarding recusancy in Worcestershire, see: Jan Broadway, 'To Equall Their Virtues': Thomas Habington, Recusancy and the Gentry of Early Stuart Worcestershire', *Midland History,* 24 (2004), 1-24.

Figure 5.5 Unknown artist, *Memorial to Margery Downes*, c.1598, oil on panel, St Mary the Virgin Church, Bishop's Frome, Herefordshire

The *Memorial to Margery Downes* is a painted church portrait memorial commemorating Margery Downes, daughter of Alice and John Pychard of Paunton Court, Bishop's Frome.

Margery was born in 1548, married George Downes in 1560, and died in 1598, at the age of 50.[12] Margery was four years old when her father died in July 1551 and was named co-heiress of her father's estate alongside her two sisters.[13] Margery was a recusant, as were her daughter and son-in-law.[14] Although there is no specific mention of George Downes (Margery's husband and patron of the painted church portrait memorial) in the Recusant Rolls or in the Diocesan Return of Recusants for Herefordshire, it is probable – judging by the fervent nonconformity of his immediate family - that he too was a Roman Catholic, but perhaps of the inwardly remaining sort.

i.   Introduction

This chapter will present case studies of three painted memorial portraits on wooden panels, all produced in the Welsh Marches within roughly twelve years of each other, and all displayed in provincial parish churches: the *Cornewall Family Memorial* in triptych form (1588, church of St Mary, Burford)*,* the single panel (but, as this chapter will suggest, almost certainly once in triptych form) *Memorial to Margery Downes* (1598, church of St Mary the Virgin, Bishop's Frome)*,* and the triptych *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* (c. 1594-1600, church of St Peter, Besford). Beginning with a biographical introduction to the families and patrons behind these three memorial portraits, with a focus on the likely confessional allegiances of the patrons, this chapter will then move on to discuss the possible authors of the three paintings. There will then be an analysis of the geographic and religious context of commission and production of the three paintings. All three are displayed in parish churches just south of the Shropshire hills, where the counties of Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire meet. Although today this area would be classed as the west Midlands, in the sixteenth century it was part of the Welsh Marches: a region of England that had its own distinctive social and religious identity, and its own approach to and understanding of the

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[12] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 34 419; Sally Badham, 'A Painted Canvas Funerary Monument of 1615 in the Collections of the Society of Antiquaries of London and its Comparators', *Journal of Church Monuments,* 24 (2009), 89-153 (p. 97).

[13] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 34 419.

[14] *Recusants in the Exchequer Pipe Rolls 1581-1592,* ed. by Dom Bowler (Southampton: Catholic Record Society, 1986), p. 52; *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College, 1349-1897,* ed. by John Venn, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), I, p. 108; George Edward Wentworth, 'History of the Wentworths of Wooley, Part 1', *The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal,* XII (1893), 1-35 (p. 6).

visual culture of commemoration in ecclesiological spaces.[15] This westerly part of England was a bastion of Roman Catholicism during the post-Reformation period, and, as this chapter will make clear, the lingering influence of medieval memorial customs and practices can still be observed in its parish churches.[16]

The second half of this chapter is concerned with illuminating – as far as possible - the possible intentions of the patrons through an analysis of the iconography, structure, medium, and display location of these three Marcher church portrait memorials within their respective parish churches, as well as their potential functions, meanings, and intended viewers. This author will demonstrate that the *Cornewall Family Memorial,* the *Memorial to Margery Downes,* and the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* share key structural and iconographical themes which are strikingly like those found on late-medieval monuments and devotional objects within English ecclesiological spaces. The use of the triptych form and the depiction of religious and *transi* imagery across all three of these paintings will be presented and considered within the current historiographical context which has shown that such features, whilst unusual for post-Reformation commissions in the church setting, are by no means a unique phenomenon.[17] At the same time, this chapter will assess the inclusion of these visual elements in light of what is known about the religious leanings of the patrons, and consider how inscriptions may have been used to underscore key messages regarding the use of imagery and potential paths to salvation.

In so doing, this chapter will pursue the following research questions: What can the form of, and the iconography and text used across, these three memorial objects tell us about the religious leanings of their patrons? Who were the possible intended viewers of these three memorial objects? How does the parish church setting influence the meaning and function of

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[15] Llewellyn, '[An] Impe entombed here doth lie', p. 52.

[16] Antoinina Bevan Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions: Polemical Protestant Dialogues in Elizabethan England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 125; John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 77-107; Christopher Haigh, *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 18.

[17] On the acceptability and continued use of imagery in the post-Reformation ecclesiological setting, see: Susan Orlik, *Decorating the Parish Church in Post Reformation England* (Donnington: Shaun Tyas, 2022); Tara Hamling and Jonathan Willis, 'From Rejection to Reconciliation: Protestantism and the Image in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 62.4 (2023) 932-996.

these three Marcher painted memorial portraits? For as with the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More,* presented and analysed in the previous chapter of this thesis, the *Memorial to Margery Downes* is a Roman Catholic memorial in the sense that it commemorates a known Roman Catholic subject from a recusant family.[18] As discussed below, whilst there is no evidence of anything but conformity amongst the Elizabethan Cornewalls, there is evidence of familial and political links to Roman Catholicism amongst the Harewell family. This chapter therefore deals with a set of patrons of painted portrait *memoria* on wooden panel for the post-Reformation ecclesiological space who appear to range from across the religious spectrum of late-Elizabethan England.

ii.   Context of Production

The Welsh borderlands and the Marches – including the western parts of the county of Worcester, home to St Peter's Besford and the *Memorial to a Child of the Harwell family*; the county of Shropshire, home to the *Cornewall Memorial* at St Mary's Burford; and the county of Herefordshire, home to St Mary the Virgin Bishop's Frome and the *Memorial to Margery Downes* – were recognised strongholds of Roman Catholicism where, for the Reformation authorities, recusancy was a serious issue during the later years of Elizabeth's reign.[19] In July 1596, Robert Bilson, Bishop of Worcester, wrote to Robert Cecil to express his concerns:

> I have viewed the state of Worcester diocese, and find it, as may somewhat appear by the particulars here enclosed, for the quantity as dangerous as any place that I know. In that small circuit there are nine score recusants of note, besides retainers, wanderers, and secret lurkers, dispersed in forty several parishes, and six score and ten households, whereof about forty are families of gentlemen that themselves or their wives refrain the church, and many of them not only of good wealth but of great alliance, as the Windsors, Talbots, Throgmortons, Abingtons and others, and in either respect, if they may have their forth, able to prevail much with the simpler sort.[20]

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[18] Bowler, p. 52; Venn, p. 108; Wentworth, p. 6.

[19] Bevan Zlatar, p. 125; Bossy, *The English Catholic Community*, pp. 77-107; Haigh, *The English Reformation Revised,* p. 18.

[20] 'Cecil Papers: July 1596, 11-20', in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House: Volume 6, 1596*, ed. by R. A. Roberts (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1895), pp. 255-272. British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-cecil-papers/vol6 > [accessed 12 July 2023].

Bilson's comment that many of the recusants in his diocese are 'not only of good wealth but of great alliance' is particularly revealing. In the Marches during the later years of the sixteenth century, continued adherence to the Old Faith was evidently no great obstacle to financial prosperity or social standing. Indeed, this is further confirmed by the wealth, type of occupation, and social statuses of the Harewell and the Downes families, both of whom – as this chapter will evidence - maintained strong familial, social, and political links to Roman Catholicism.

The portrait memorial at St Mary the Virgin, Bishop's Frome, commemorates Margery Downes, who was born in 1548 to Alice and John Pychard of Paunton Court, married to George Downes in 1560, and died in 1598 at the age of 50.[21] Margery was four years old when her father died in July 1551 and, relatively unusually for the period, she was named co-heiress of his father's estate alongside her elder sister Dorothy, who was six years old when their father died, and her youngest sister Elizabeth, who was still *in utero* at the time of his death.[22] Margery was a Roman Catholic who, in 1586, was fined for twelve months recusancy.[23] It is clear that her immediate family were also Roman Catholics: Margery's daughter and son-in-law, Frances and Michael Wentworth – mentioned in the inscription at the very top of the church portrait memorial - maintained a private Catholic chapel in their home of Woolley Hall, Wakefield; both were fined several times for recusancy; and, in 1603, Michael seems to have been 'engaged in some Roman Catholic conspiracies', for which he received a charge of High Treason from Elizabeth, from which he was later pardoned by James I.[24]

Although there is no specific mention of George Downes - Margery's husband and patron of the memorial, depicted kneeling with her in prayer in the painting - in the Recusant Rolls or in the Diocesan Return of Recusants for Herefordshire, it is highly likely, judging by the fervent nonconformity of his wife and considering that he would have surely been instrumental in arranging the marriage of his daughter to a known Roman Catholic, that he too adhered to

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[21] Sally Badham, 'Two wooden memorial panels in Herefordshire', *CMS Newsletter*, 21.2 (2005), pp. 13–16.
[22] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 34 419
[23] Bowler, p. 52.
[24] Venn, p. 108; Wentworth, p. 6.

the Old Faith.[25] Although there is very little extant archival information about the Downes family,[26] we do know that Margery inherited a sizeable estate in 1560 after the death of her father, and that George and Margery lived in Paunton Court, Bishop's Frome, 1.4 miles north of St Mary the Virgin church.[27] This large two-storey medieval property with several outbuildings, and evident sixteenth and early seventeenth century additions, would have been a very comfortable home by early modern standards.[28] Thus, despite their numerous links to Roman Catholicism, the Downes family appear to have prospered in late-Elizabethan England, as indeed did many people of similar beliefs, particularly in this westerly part of the country.

The Harewell family lived prosperously (at least for a time) in the small hamlet of Besford, roughly twenty miles east of Bishop's Frome, across the border from the county of Herefordshire into Worcestershire. Sir Edmund Harewell III (1567-1615), patron of the triptych *Memorial to a child of the Harewell Family* displayed in St Peter's church, was the eldest son and heir of the wealthy landowner Edmund Harewell II and Elizabeth Berry, and he married the equally wealthy heiress Susan Colles (of the Roman Catholic Colles family from Leigh, Worcestershire) in 1586. When his father died in 1594, Edmund inherited land and the family property of Besford Court, a fifteenth century manor house built around a large courtyard, with extensive gardens and, to the north-east of the property, a series of Tudor fish ponds.[29] Edmund would have thus grown up surrounded by material comfort in a large and beautiful property, and indeed the trajectory of his life – at least until his late thirties - followed the typical pattern of male members of the Elizabethan upper-gentry: as a young

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[25] The marriage settlement for Michael Wentworth and Frances Downes, dated 1 October 1585, is extant amongst the papers of the Wentworths of Woolley Hall, now part of the Special Collections at Leeds University Library: Leeds, Leeds University Library, MS Deposit 1946 1 Wentworth Woolley Hall, 10.

[26] Many searches of the database of The National Archives (London), as well as email conversations with Rhys Griffiths, Senior Archivist at the Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre over the period January – March 2019, have led to this somewhat disappointing conclusion.

[27] *The Picards or Pycards of Straddewy (now Tretower) castle and Scethrog, Brecknockshire Goldney & Lawrence* (London: Golding and Lawrence, 1878), pp. 153-4.

[28] *Paunton Court, Bishop's Frome* <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1176576> [accessed 24 April 2019]; 'Bishop's Frome', in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Herefordshire, Volume 2, East* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1932), pp. 10-12. British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/heref/vol2/pp10-12> [accessed 24 April 2019].

[29] Page and Willis-Bund, pp. 19-23.

adult he studied at Oriel College, Oxford, where he matriculated in July 1585; he was made high Sheriff of Worcester in 1596; and knighted at the coronation of James I in 1603.[30]

Wealth and status aside, however, Edmund did not have an easy adulthood. By the time he was thirty-eight years old, he had suffered a series of terrible personal losses: his brother Richard died in 1576; his three children (all sons) died during childhood; and his wife died in 1604, around the time that Edmund launched an unsuccessful bid to become an MP. His electoral campaign was marred by controversy and, at points, serious violence,[31] despite – or perhaps because of – the support he received from the Roman Catholic community in Worcestershire, 'where Catholics formed a numerous group among the gentry'.[32] Bishop Bilson's 1576 observance regarding the presence of Roman Catholics throughout the diocese being 'not only of good wealth but of great alliance' evidently still rung true in 1604. Rather than hiding away, continued adherents of Roman Catholicism in Besford clearly felt comfortable enough to publicly endorse Edmund Harewell, a political candidate who, at the very least, would be sympathetic to their cause. For although Edmund was never listed as recusant, Habington claims that professed his allegiance to Roman Catholicism on his death bed: 'but for hys soule I thincke truly hee maye say *Bonum mihi quia humilia sit me*. I sawe hym in greate poverty dye most ryche to God'.[33] This could indicate that Edmund had lived as an inwardly remaining Roman Catholic, or at least harboured an uncertainty about Reformed teaching and practice. Certainly, Edmund knew and presumably conversed with (and was thus potentially influenced by the thoughts and beliefs of) English Roman Catholics throughout his lifetime: his wife and her family, for example were Roman Catholics.[34]

Roughly a decade before Edmund Harewell commissioned the memorial in Besford, across the border in Besford, Shropshire, Thomas Cornewall (d. 1615) was also commissioning a triptych portrait memorial in memory of his parents Richard (d. 1569) and Jenet (d. 1547), as

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[30] Ibid.; Foster, p. 238.

[31] London, Lambeth Palace Library, Talbot Papers MSS 3192-3206, fol. 190; Broadway, *'No Historie so Meete'*, pp. 206-7.

[32] Ian Warren, 'London's Cultural Impact on the English Gentry: The Case of Worcestershire, c. 1580-1680', *Midland History*, 33.2 (2008), 156-17 (p. 176).

[33] Habington, p. 29. Also see: Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 207.

[34] Everett Green.

well as his elder brother Edmund (d. 1585).[35] This information is recorded on the memorial in an inscription below the pediment, visible when the triptych is both open and closed: 'well-beloved brother Thomas Cornewayll, now livinge, who hath caused this monume't to be made for the memory of his worshippful pare'ts, and most lou'nge brother in the yere of Our Lord 1587.'[36] It is worth noting the sequence of dates here: Edmund died in July 1585,[37] the memorial portrait was commissioned by his brother Thomas in 1587, and completed in 1588 as indicated by the artist's signature and discussed below. This would suggest that it took roughly three years for the patron to decide on the contents of the painting and for the artist to execute the work; clearly, therefore, this is a well-thought out and deeply considered commission by a bereaved brother in memory of his parents and sibling.

The Cornewall family were an ancient and wealthy English family, whose familial and financial interests were focused in the Welsh Marches; they could trace their lineage back to Richard, Earl of Cornwall (d. 1272), the illegitimate brother of Henry III, and, by the time that the triptych memorial was commissioned in 1587, they owned vast swathes of land and property throughout Shropshire, Herefordshire, and Devon.[38] The wealth and high local status of the Cornewalls is immediately obvious in the church of St Mary Burford, where, in addition to the enormous painted memorial triptych (3.45m x 3.04m when closed, so large that the figures depicted are life-size), there are seven further monuments to various members of the family, including one to Elizabeth Plantagenet (d. 1426), daughter of John of Gaunt and wife to John Cornewall (d. 1443). In the chancel there is a sculpted mural monument to Thomas, patron of the triptych memorial, and his wife Katherine (d. 1623), who – the inscription recounts - were both buried in the church:

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[35] Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', pp. 188-9. Burford, despite being in the county of Shropshire, is part of the Diocese of Hereford. The diocese is subdivided into two archdeaconries: Hereford, which contains the parish of Bishop's Frome, and Shropshire, which contains the parish of Besford. See: W. M. Marshall, 'The Dioceses of Hereford and Oxford, 1660-1760', in *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800,* ed. by Jeremy Gregory and Jeffrey S. Chamberlain (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), pp. 197-223 (p. 197). Throughout this thesis, the terms 'Shropshire' and 'Herefordshire' are used to refer to the counties, and 'Hereford' to refer to the diocese.
[36] Transcript taken from this author's personal notes and from: Cecil Foljambe and Compton Reade, *The House of Cornewall* (Hereford: Jakeman and Carver, 1908), p. 211; Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 189.
[37] Foljambe and Reade, p. 211.
[38] Harding, para. 1 of 5.

Figure 5.6 Wall monument to Thomas and Katherine Cornewall, St Mary's Church, Burford, Shropshire

Dating to 1630, this monument was likely restored by E. W. Tristram, who undertook conservation work on the Cornewall monuments during the 1930s.[39] Indeed Foljambe and Reade, writing in 1908, note that Katherine Cornewall's dress was black rather than red.[40] This is a pertinent reminder that the memorial objects discussed in this thesis will have all been subject to various changes since their creation, whether intentionally through restoration or conservation work, or simply through the passing of time and neglect.

Edmund Cornewall, the main subject of the church memorial portrait was famous in his lifetime for being 'of giant stature and great strength'.[41] He was said to be over seven feet tall, and in possession of a pollaxe: 'a two-handed infantry weapon designed to hack, cruch,

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[39] Tristram's programme of works is described on a plaque in the chancel.
[40] Foljambe and Reade, p. 216.
[41] McLaughlin, p 78.

and pierce armour plates, as well as flesh and bone'.[42] A fibreglass replica of this object is housed in the north-east corner of St Mary's church, near the painted memorial triptych. Edmund served as High Sheriff of Shropshire (1579-80) and amassed significant properties in the Tenbury Wells area during his lifetime, including 'Dower House in Cross Street'. [43] In 1908, Cecil Foljambe and Compton Reade noted that in Dower House 'there remains an alcove cupboard painted in the style of the memorial triptych in Burford Church.'[44] It is tempting to speculate on the purpose of this painted alcove cupboard. Might the Cornewall family have maintained a private altar in their home, covertly hidden inside this cupboard? Certainly, many Roman Catholics worshipped in secret within the domestic space during the post-Reformation period. The Petre family, for example, maintained a chapel at their home, Ingatestone Hall, Essex: in 'the myddest of a gallery a dore, which dore ledeth into the chapple chamber over the chapple, wher the prist in his mynistracion from beneth may very well be herde'. [45]

Dower House, four miles east of Burford in the hamlet of Newnham Bridge, still stands, but has undergone extensive redecorating over the centuries, as evidenced by an advertisement for the sale of the property in 2022.[46] Today, it is a private home, and this author has unfortunately been unable to access the property to establish whether this painted 'alcove cupboard' is extant. In any case, there is no evidence to suggest that the Cornewall family were anything other than conforming Elizabethans; unlike the Harewell and Downes families, there is no evidence of recusancy nor of relationships with or political allegiances to Roman Catholics amongst the late sixteenth century Cornewalls. As such, this chapter will consider – in light of Walsham and Questier's research into inwardly remaining Roman Catholicism during the Elizabethan period - to what extent the prevalence of religious imagery throughout these three Marcher memorial paintings could be read as a signal of covert, inwardly-remaining Roman Catholicism or church papistry. At the same time, and especially in the light

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[42] Royal Armouries, *Pollaxe*, <https://collections.royalarmouries.org/hundred-years-war/arms-and-armour/type/rac-narrative-1165.html> [accessed 1 February 2022].
[43] Foljambe and Reade, p. 213.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Quoted in: Tessa Murdoch, 'Revitalising Antiquities: Sacred Silver and Its Afterlives', in *Memory and the English Reformation*, pp. 207-222 (p. 218).
[46] *Property Heads*, <https://propertyheads.com/properties/1137154/Newnham-Bridge-Tenbury-Wells-Worcestershire-WR15/> [accessed 2 February 2022].

of recent works by Orlik, Hamling, and Willis on the continued presence of religious imagery in the post-Reformation English parish church, the acceptability of the iconography and the use of text as a moderator across, in particular, the *Cornewall* triptych, will be considered.[47] Indeed, Jane Eade's recent analysis of the images used across this object, and her assertion that the 'visual emphasis of the text and the use of the vernacular could be viewed as putting the whole in a reformist context', is – given the lack of any concrete evidence of a Cornewall familial attachment to the Old Faith – compelling.[48]

a) Possible artists

As with many early modern church monuments and painted portraits, the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* and the *Memorial to Margery Downes* are by unknown artists. The *Cornewall Family Memorial,* however, bears the artist's signature. At the centre-bottom of the central panel (just above the frame) is the inscription 'Melchior Salaboss fecit an' dm 1588':

Figure 5.7 Detail from the *Cornewall Family Memorial*: 'Melchior Salaboss fecit an' dm 1588'

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[47] Orlik; Hamling and Willis.
[48] Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 196.

Very little is known about Salaboss, although Tittler notes that he was active in England during the period 1571-1593.[49] The antiquarian John Guillim (c. 1565 – 1621) refers to him as being active from 1585-93,[50] and he was amongst the congregants of the Dutch Church in London in 1571.[51] Further, Eade notes the existence of a portrait of Elizabeth, Lady Dawnay, dated 1571 and signed by Salaboss in the possession of the Dawnay family at Wykeham Abbey, Yorkshire.[52] No other extant works can be definitively attributed to him, although Llewellyn and Badham have hypothesised that the painted sculpted wooden monuments to the Walsh family found in the parish churches of Shelsley Walsh and Stockton-on-Teme and dating to the 1590s may be by Salaboss.[53]

It is possible that Salaboss was one of many Protestants from the Antwerp and Bruges areas who sought refuge from persecution following the re-introduction of Roman Catholic rule throughout the Spanish Netherlands.[54] Indeed during the sixteenth- and early-seventeenth century, many Protestant Netherlandish portraitists settled in England and Scotland and some achieved extremely high profiles working for the Court and various elites: Hans Eworth (born in Antwerp, active c. 1540 – 1573), for example, was painter to Mary I and later Elizabeth I, and Marcus Gheerarts the Younger (born in Bruges, c. 1561 – 1636), became painter to Elizabeth I and later Anne of Denmark.[55] Perhaps Salaboss was inspired to undertake a similar journey in search of freedom from religious persecution, as well as artistic opportunity and recognition. Certainly, the presence of his signature in such a prominent position on the

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[49] Robert Tittler, *Early Modern British Painters, c. 1500-1640, Unpublished Dataset,* (Unpublished) <https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/980096/> [Accessed 24 September 2019].

[50] Jim Murrell, 'John Guillim's Book: A Heradlic Painter's *Vade Mecum*', *The Volume of the Walpole Society,* 57 (1993/1994) 1-52, (p. 7).

[51] London, London Metropolitan Archives, CLC 180 MS07403. I am grateful to Edward Town of the Yale Centre for British Art who first told me about this archival reference.

[52] Jane Eade, 'Triptych Portraits in England, 1575-1646' (unpublished master's thesis, Royal College of Art and V&A, 2004), p. 29.

[53] Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 204-3; Sally Badham, *Monument of the Month: Thomas Walsh (d. 1593) and Francis Walsh (d. 1596)* (2017)*, <https://churchmonumentssociety.org/monument-of-the-month/thomas-walsh-d-1593-and-francis-walsh-d-1596> [accessed 18 December 2020]. For images of the wooden monuments at Shelsley Walsh and Stockton-on-Teme, see: Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* pp. 205-6.

[54] Eade, 'Triptych Portraits in England, 1575-1646' (master's thesis), p. 29.

[55] See: Karen Hearn, 'Netherlandish Painters Active in Britain in the 16th & 17th Centuries' in CODART, *The World of Dutch and Flemish Art*, 15th Anniversary Online Publication, The Hague, 2013: <http://ezine.codart.nl/17/issue/46/artikel/netherlandish-painters-active-in-britain-in-the-16th-and-17th-centuries/?id=191> [accessed 20 December 2020].

painting could indicate a foreign-born painter (even if, by 1571, he appears to have settled in England); it is extremely rare to find the artist's signature on an English regional painting at this point in the early modern period.[56]

Although not comparable to that of, for example, Hans Eworth or Marcus Gheerarts the younger – the kinds of London or court-based painters whose work, as discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, has formed the basis of national collections of sixteenth and early seventeenth century portraiture – Salaboss' relatively confident artistic treatment and handling does somewhat distinguish him from amongst the other local or journeymen (often heraldic) painters responsible for the eight other painted memorial works presented and analysed in this thesis. The *Memorial to Margery Downes* at Bishop's Frome, for example, whilst displaying a strong grasp of *textura* script - thus indicating that the artist had some formal training beyond that of a typical heraldic artist – does not exhibit the same level of artistic handling in the execution of the portraits (particularly the facial features and the hands) as the Cornewall memorial at Burford. Similarly, although Willis and Llewellyn have hypothesised that the Harewell portrait memorial at Besford may be Salaboss' work,[57] the handling of the drapes of the curtains (in the central panels of both the Harewell and Cornewall triptychs) and the shroud of the corpses (in the lower or *predella* panels of both triptychs) are quite different. The body of the Harewell child, for example, is featureless and monochromatic, whereas the Burford adult is a highly articulated, almost mimetic representation of a dead body, with sunken facial features and clearly visible bones and muscles.

Finally, technical analysis undertaken by conservator Pauline Plummer in the 1980s has indicated that the triptychs at Besford and Burford are not by the same hand.[58] It is worth

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[56] Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 3.

[57] John Willis, 'The Harewell Triptych in Besford Parish Church', Transactions of the Worcester Archaeological Society, 1 (1923), 79-87 (p. 83); Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual, c. 1500 – c. 1800* (London: Reaktion Books in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1991), p. 30.

[58] Jane Eade, 'The Triptych Portrait in England, 1575-1646', British Art Journal, 6.2 (2005), 3-11 (p. 3); Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 191. I am grateful to Pauline Plummer for sharing her memories of working on the Besford triptych with me. Plummer's archive of notes and drawings is held at the Hamilton Kerr Institute, Cambridge. It is uncatalogued but can normally be viewed by request. Regretfully, I have been unable to access the archive due to covid-19 restrictions.

noting, however, the enormous developments in conservation science that have taken place since the 1980s. For example, infrared reflectography, a technique which was not described in print until 1966, [59] was, in 1985, still considered to be 'one of the newer methods used by conservators and art historians to study the works of art entrusted to their care.' [60] It is possible, therefore, that inspection of the Cornewall, Harewell, and Downes portrait memorials using up to date scientific techniques and equipment would yield further, more conclusive results about the authorship of the three paintings.

b) Commemoration and the use of the visual in Marcher ecclesiological spaces

The parishes of Burford, Bishop's Frome, and Besford are all clustered south of the Shropshire hills, where the counties of Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire meet:[61]

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[59] See: J. R. J. van Asperen de Boer, 'Infrared Reflectograms of Panel Paintings' *Studies in Conservation*, xi (1966), 45-46.

[60] William Real, 'Exploring New Applications for Infrared Reflectography', *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, 72.8 (1985), 390-412, (p. 392).

[61] Key: 1 = St Peter's, Besford; 2 = St Mary the Virgin, Bishop's Frome; 3 = St Mary's, Burford. Map my own, created using *Mapcustomizer*, <https://www.mapcustomizer.com/> [accessed 28 March 2022].
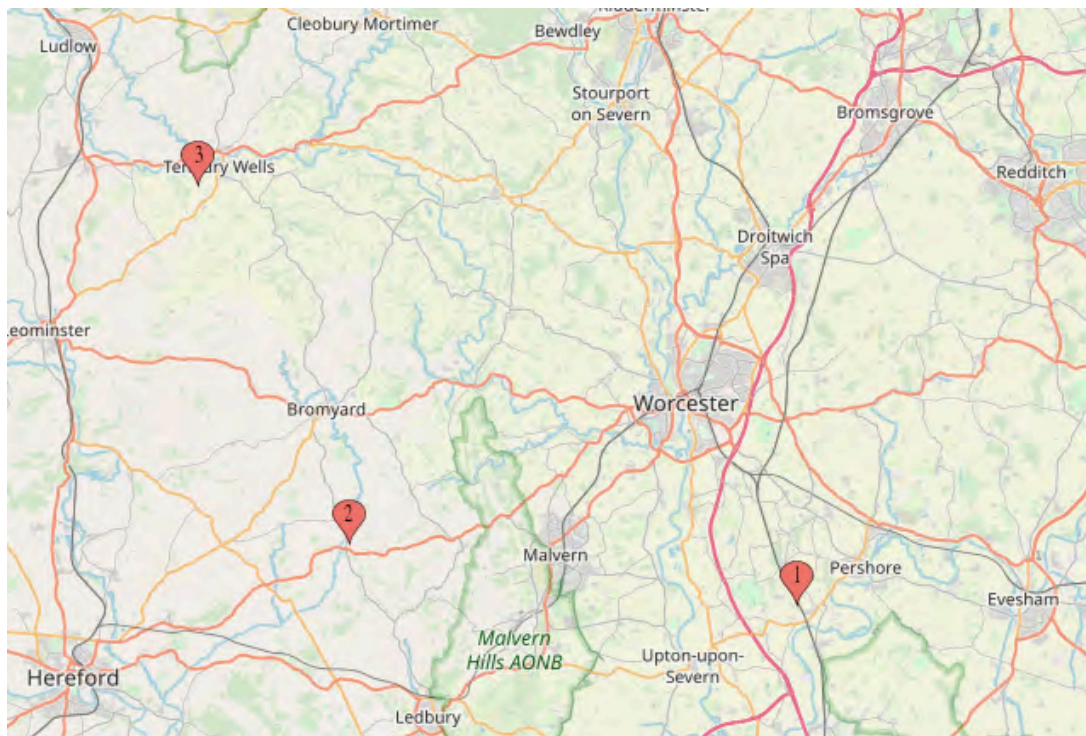
Figure 5.8 Location map of the three parish churches which house the three painted church portrait memorials considered in this thesis chapter.

This part of England has historically been referred to as the Welsh Marches. The Diocese of Hereford - which contains the parish of Burford, home to the Cornewall family triptych, as well as the parish of Bishop's Frome, home to the *Memorial to Margery Downes*, directly borders Wales. It is one of the oldest dioceses in England, 'an ancient marcher see', founded in 676, and predominantly rural at the turn of the seventeenth century, as it still is today, with the exception of a few market towns and centres such as the cathedral city of Hereford, and the towns of Ross and Ludlow.[62] Besford parish - home to the painted *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* – is within the Diocese of Worcester, reputedly founded c. 679 by St Theodore of Canterbury; after the dissolution of the Priory, Worcester Cathedral chapter was re-established by Henry VIII on 24 January 1542.[63] As the above map illustrates, the distances

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[62] Marshall, 'The National Church in Local Perspective', p. 197.
[63] *Church of England, Diocese of Worcester* <https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/about-us/#:~:text=The%20Diocese%20of%20Worcester%20is,the%20tribe%20of%20the%20Hwicce> [accessed 28 July 2023].

between each of these Marcher parishes are relatively small: all three churches are within twenty-thirty miles of each other.[64]

The churches of St Peter's Besford, St Mary the Virgin Bishop's Frome, and St Mary's Burford, are all pre-Reformation, medieval, places of worship. At Besford, surviving parts of the chancel date to the early thirteenth century, and the church's fourteenth century timber frame is one of the last remaining in the UK.[65] At Burford, parts of the chancel arch date to the twelfth century and the (restored) roof to the fourteenth century.[66] At Bishop's Frome, the chancel arch has been dated to the twelfth century, as has the south doorway of the church, whilst the tower arch is fourteenth century.[67] Unfortunately there are few original medieval fixtures and fittings extant inside St Mary the Virgin (Bishop's Frome) church due to major rebuilding and refurbishment works that took place during the nineteenth century: the chancel was rebuilt in 1847 and the nave and aisle were rebuilt in 1861.[68] There are, however, several pre-Reformation fixture and fittings, including monuments and memorials, still visible at Besford and Burford, all of which survived the numerous periods of Iconoclasm during the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth.

At Burford, for example, there is an extant holy water-stoup, set into the wall of the nave next to the south door of the church.[69] This is a rare survival: the hallowing of water and thus the objects associated with such practices came under attacks from several Reformers. Nicholas Ridley, for example, declared the hallowing of water to be irreligious 'conjuring', something that 'the Apostles never knew',[70] whilst John Parkhurst, in his 1561 *Injunctions* for Norwich

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[64] Map my own, created using Mapcustomizer: <https://www.mapcustomizer.com> [accessed 02/05/2019].

[65] Simon Jenkins, *England's Thousand Best Churches* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), p. 741; Page and Willis-Bund, pp. 19-23.

[66] *Church of St Mary,* <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1383422> [accessed 3 March 2022].

[67] *Church of St Mary the Virgin,* <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1349597> [accessed 3 March 2022].

[68] Ibid.; Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Herefordshire* (London: Penguin Books, 1963), pp. 74-75. For more on the rebuilding of St Mary the Virgin Bishop's Frome, see: *Bishop's Frome: St Mary the Virgin, Church Heritage Record 618042,* <https://facultyonline.churchofengland.org/church-heritage-record-bishops-frome-st-mary-the-virgin-618042> [accessed 3 March 2022].

[69] *Church of St Mary the Virgin.*

[70] *The Works of Nicholas Ridley, D.D., Sometime Lord Bishop of London, Martyr 1555,* ed. by Henry Christmas (Cambridge: The University Press, 1841), p. 55.

instructed water stoups throughout the diocese to be 'quite and clean taken away'.[71] Thus, the water-stoup, which had once been in every medieval parish church, became an object representative of Roman Catholic superstition, one amongst many 'externals of the old religion',[72] which were removed en masse during the Edwardian and Elizabethan Reformations.[73] Although many of these stoups were destroyed, they were sometimes repurposed and reused for everyday activities, thus emphasising their newly irreligious status and highlighting their spiritual demotion; no longer sacred objects, they were used by some parishioners and priests for domestic purposes, ranging from milk vessels and sinks, to water-troughs for animals including - perhaps as a purposeful further degradation of this once holy object – for swine.[74] The Burford water-stoup, however, is fully extant, still *in situ* next to the south door of the nave, and in remarkably good condition: it shows no sign of damage, nor any evidence of attempted destruction or removal.

Throughout Burford church, there are numerous medieval tombs and monuments to the Cornewall family not only extant, but also showing no sign of deliberate damage. Of particular note is a rare example of a medieval heart monument, with the inscription stating that: 'here lyeth the Heart of Edmond Cornewayle…who travelling to forraine countries died at Collene the xv year of Hen. VI., and willsed his servants to bury his body there and to enclose his heart in lead and carry it to Burford to be buried':

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[71] John Parkhurst, 'Injunctions and Interrogations for Norwich, 1561', in *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation*, ed. by Walter Frere and William Kennedy, 3 vols (London: Longmans, Green, 1910), III, pp. 97-107 (p. 100).

[72] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c.1580* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 585.

[73] See: Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 106-111.

[74] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* pp. 585-586; Alexandra Walsham, 'Recycling the Sacred: Material Culture and Cultural Memory after the English Reformation', *Church History,* 86.4 (2017), 1121-1154 (p. 1137).

Figure 5.9 Mural heart monument to Edmond Cornewall, St Mary's Church, Burford, Shropshire

Heart burial as a funerary practice, whereby the deceased person's heart would be interred separately from the body, was a relatively common custom amongst medieval European elites and royalty (especially English and French) when a death occurred far from the home parish or other intended burial place.[75] This practice was particularly prevalent amongst English elites who died whilst on Crusade or pilgrimage - as per Edmond Cornwall, who died in Cologne on his return from the Holy Land – as removal of the heart and other internal organs helped to better preserve the corpse during the long journey home for burial or, if the body were to be buried abroad, then at least the heart could be sent home to the family for interment.[76] In addition to these practicalities, Sally Badham offers the intriguing suggestion that the separate burial of the body and entrails might have been a deliberate choice during the medieval period, enabling multiple monuments to be erected and multiple sites of memorialisation to be established, thus increasing the likeliness of prayers being offered by priests and congregants: with increased visual prompting, comes increased intercession.[77]

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[75] Estella Weiss-Krejci, 'Heart Burial in Medieval and Early Post-Medieval Central Europe', in *Body Parts and Bodies Whole: Changing Relations and Meanings,* ed. by Katharina Rebay-Salisbury, Marie Louise Stig Sørensen, and Jessica Hughes (Oxford: Oxbow, 2010), pp. 119-134 (p. 120).

[76] Ibid; Sally Badham, 'Divided in Death: Medieval Heart and Entrails Monuments', *Church Monuments,* 34 (2019), 16-77 (pp. 22-24).

[77] Badham, 'Divided in Death', p. 24.

This may explain, for example, the popularity of heart burial amongst English monarchs during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries: Richard I, John, Henry III and their families all practised heart burial.[78] Queen Eleanor of Castille's interment went a step further, with a tripartite burial following her death in 1290 near Lincoln; her body was buried in Westminster Cathedral, her heart at the house of the London Dominicans, and her other internal organs at Lincoln Cathedral.[79] The practice largely came to an end following the papal bull of 1299 against the post-mortem division of the corpse and, although there is some evidence that heart burial continued amongst French and Scottish Kings and perhaps amongst some English elites, it did not become widespread again in England.[80] Indeed, during the post-Reformation period, there was a general distaste surrounding the involvement of surgeons during the post-mortem process and therefore, by extension, the separation of the internal organs from the body. Gittings notes the example of Mary, countess of Northumberland, who wrote in her will of 1572: 'I have not loved to be very bold afore women, much more would I be loath to come into the hands of any living man be he physician or surgeon.'[81] This distaste was shared by Elizabeth I: the early-seventeenth century diarist John Manningham wrote that 'it is certaine the Queene was not embowelled'.[82]

For Mary, countess of Northumberland and for Elizabeth I – aristocratic and royal women of the post-Reformation period - the purgatorial imperative which drove the desire for intercessory prayer was no longer a factor in their mortuary decisions. When it came to their burial sites, there was simply no need to ensure numerous places of interment and thus numerous places of memorialisation; according to a predestinate understanding of salvation, there was no need for intercession on behalf of the soul. This is not to say, however, that the separation of internal organs from the body did not take place at all during the post-

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[78] Anna Duch, 'The Royal Funerary and Burial Ceremonies of Medieval English Kings, 1216-1509' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2016), p. 161.

[79] Badham, 'Divided in Death', p. 24. For more on tripartite burials amongst the medieval elite and royalty of central Europe, see: Weiss-Krejci, pp. 125-130.

[80] Duch, p. 162.

[81] Claire Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 156-157.

[82] John Manningham, *The Diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple, And of Bradbourne, Kent, Barrister at-Law, 1602-1603*, ed. by John Bruce (Westminster: J.B. Nichols and Son, 1868), p. 159. For more on separate burials of the heart and body amongst English monarchs, see: Jennifer Woodward, *The Theatre of Death: The Ritual Management of Royal Funerals in Renaissance England, 1570-1625* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997), p. 172-174; Duch, pp. 160-163.

Reformation period. Indeed Henry Unton's entrails were removed and his body embalmed to enable his corpse to make the long journey back from the site of his death in France to Oxfordshire for burial in Faringdon parish church: *The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* depicts Unton's widow Dorothy presiding over his coffin and, crucially, holding a separate viscera chest.[83] Based on this pictorial evidence, Unton did have two separate burial sites, but it is likely that his choice was driven by the practicalities of bodily transport as opposed to the purgatorial imperative. As discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis, there is nothing to suggest that Unton was a nonconformist or that he rejected Reformed teachings about the predestined route to salvation. Quite the opposite: this author has argued that his memorial picture is a visual celebration of his widow's surety in his Election.

This is in great contrast to earlier, pre-Reformation Tudor royals who briefly revived the practice of heart burial in England. Indeed Henry VII and his wife Elizabeth had their hearts buried separately from their bodies,[84] and the tradition is – although no contemporary documentation can evidence the claim - that Prince Arthur's heart was buried beneath the chancel floor at the parish church of Ludlow (only seven miles north-east of Burford), whilst his body was buried at Worcester Cathedral where his tomb monument still stands today.[85] Anna Duch argues convincingly that Henry Tudor and his immediate family, as founders of a new royal dynasty, may have been inspired to reinstate the tradition of royal heart burial to provide some sense of ritualistic continuity between his line and that of earlier English monarchs, and, indeed, to appear similar to other European royals (the French and Habsburgs, for example), who had continued to practice heart burial: 'if Henry Tudor was to be royal, then he had to imitate other royals.'[86] However I would also argue that for the pre-Reformation Tudor royals, steeped within the Roman Catholic tradition and thus living with the ever-present need to secure salvation and hasten the journey through purgatory via intercessory prayer, the decision to reintroduce heart burials would have been unavoidably influenced by their purgatorial understanding of salvation. It is telling that the heart of the

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[83] As presented in Chapter Four of this thesis. Also see: Gittings, p. 156; Woodward, *The Theatre of Death*, pp. 6-7.

[84] Duch, p. 163.

[85] Ralph Houlbrooke, 'Prince Arthur's Funeral', in *Arthur Tudor, Prince of Wales: Life, Death, and Commemoration*, ed. by Steven Gunn and Linda Monckton (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), pp. 64-76 (pp. 64-65).

[86] Duch, p. 163.

ardently Roman Catholic Mary I was buried separately from her body, whilst those of Edward VI and Elizabeth I were not.[87]

It is highly likely that Edmond Cornewall's instruction, as noted in the inscription of the heart monument, to have his body buried in Cologne and his heart interred in his parish church at Burford after his death in 1436 was similarly motivated by a desire to garner as much intercessory prayer as possible, alongside practical considerations regarding bodily transportation. Edmond's soul would have surely received the most prayers from people who had known him during his lifetime: from his family, and the priests and parishioners of Burford where the Cornewall family were the local landholders. Burial solely in Cologne, where he did not have any familial links, would not been considered to have served Edmond's soul well. The next generations of Cornewalls and other parishioners of Burford, however, clearly respected the shrine and thus the perpetuation of Edmond's memory: they maintained the heart memorial throughout the Reformation period, when, as Chapter Two of this thesis has shown, the destruction of medieval shrines and monuments was commonplace. Edmond's heart remained *in situ* until 1819,[88] and the wall monument and inscription was neither destroyed nor whitewashed over, far from it: in 1630, the inscription was restored by his descendant Sir Thomas Cornewall.[89] Thus, despite being a monument to a Roman Catholic in a Reformed parish church, the heart shrine has not only survived intact, but has been well-tended to and protected even during the immediate post-Reformation period.

Also in Burford parish church, and in a comparable state of excellent preservation, is a rare and fully extant wooden effigial monument to a later Edmond Cornewall (d. 1508):

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[87] Woodward, *The Theatre of Death*, 173.
[88] Foljambe and Reade, p. 194.
[89] Ibid. The inscription was restored again by E. W. Tristram in 1938, when he undertook a programme of works on the various Cornewall monuments at Burford church, as recorded by a plaque in the chancel.

Figure 5.10 Wooden effigial monument to Edmond Cornewall, St Mary's Church, Burford, Shropshire

The existence of this memorial is particularly remarkable considering the low survival rate of wooden effigies in general: even the original wooden effigy of Elizabeth I did not survive past 1760.[90] Further, the position of this monument is significant: it is in pride of place in the church, in the central aisle of the chancel and directly in front of the altar. It would therefore be in the direct sight line of parishioners gathered for the ritual of the mass, and thus more likely to elicit prayers for the soul of the deceased Cornewall represented in effigial form. The survival of this conspicuous and elaborate monument to a Roman Catholic is likely due to the subject of the effigy having lived prior to the Reformation, therefore no accusation of conscious irreligiosity could be levied against him. Much like the pre-Reformation generations of Stradlings commemorated in the St Donat's memorial paintings (discussed in the final chapter of this thesis), the Cornewall commemorated by this wooden monument in Burford could have been considered – even in the eyes of the most ardent Reformer – innocently ignorant of the true faith and falsely led to believe in the power of intercession, but by no means heretical.

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[90] Woodward, *The Theatre of Death,* p. 108.

A further most revealing survival from within these Marcher parish churches is the beautifully carved and ornately decorated fifteenth century wooden rood-loft at Besford, which houses the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family.* The entire rood-loft (although not its screen) is extant, *in situ*, and in good condition, despite Bishop Hooper of Worcester and Gloucester's call - in his 1551 *Injunctions* for the diocese that:

> You exhort your parishioners and such as be under your cure and charge for the ministry of the church, to take down and remove out of their churches and chapels, all places, tabernacles, tombs, sepulchres, tables, footstools, rood-lofts, and other monuments, signs, tokens, relics, leavings, and remembrances, where such superstition, idols, images, or other provocation of idolatry have been used.[91]

This early instruction to destroy rood-lofts was heeded to some extent throughout the Diocese of Worcester: Hutton notes that the rood-loft at South Littleton - only thirteen miles away from Besford - was demolished in 1552-3, and the rood-screen and loft at St Michael in Bedwardine (in the city of Worcester, but no longer standing) was also destroyed in 1553.[92] Indeed the Churchwardens' Accounts for the year state that a Richard Mitte was paid for two days' work during which he was specifically charged with the 'taykng downe of the Roodlofte'.[93] However this obedience to Bishop Hooper's orders was by no means universal. As presented below, there is much extant material evidence to indicate that, in the Welsh Marches at least, 'all parishioners and such as be under your cure and charge for the ministry of the church' did not, in fact, follow their Bishop's directives 'to take down and remove' their rood-screens and lofts or, for that matter, the many other internal furnishings in their churches that were proscribed by the 1551 *Injunctions.*

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[91] John Hooper, 'Injunctions for Gloucester and Worcester Dioceses, 1551-52', in *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation*, ed. by W. H. Frere and W. M. Kennedy, 3 vols (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1910), III, pp. 284-5.

[92] Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'Worcester: a Cathedral City in the Reformation', in *The Reformation in English Towns, 1500-1640*, ed. by Patrick Collinson and John Craig (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998), pp. 94-113 (p. 106).

[93] *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Michael's in Bedwardine, Worcester, from 1539 to 1603*, ed. by John Amphlett and Alfred Porter (Oxford: Printed for the Worcester Historical Society by J. Parker, 1896), p. 32.

At the church of St John the Baptist in Strensham, for example – only four miles from Besford - twenty-four late-fifteenth century wooden panels, each one depicting different apostles and other saints as well as the enthroned Christ holding an orb, are extant:[94]

Figure 5.11 Wooden panels depicting apostles, saints, and the enthroned Christ holding an orb, St John the Baptist Church, Strensham, Worcestershire

These panels, now partly overpainted and decorating the western gallery of the church, were almost certainly created to adorn the medieval rood-loft, most likely with the panel of Christ in the centre, flanked on either side by the other holy figures.[95] Similarly, at St Leonard's church in Ribbesford – twenty-three miles north of Besford - several panels of late-fourteenth century fine oak tracery, almost certainly part of the rood-screen, were preserved and reused to decorate the pulpit rather than being removed from the church or destroyed.[96] There are similar survivals in the neighbouring Diocese of Hereford. At St Margaret's church in the

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[94] Image taken from the *Churches Conservation Trust* website. See: *Strensham*, <https://www.visitchurches.org.uk/visit/church-listing/st-john-strensham.html> [accessed 28 March 2022]; Richard Marks, 'Framing the Rood in Medieval England and Wales', in *The Art and Science of the Church Screen in Medieval Europe: Making, Meaning, Preserving,* ed. by Spike Bucklow, Richard Marks, and Lucy Wrapson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017), pp. 7-30 (pp. 21-22).

[95] Marks, pp. 21-22.

[96] These wooden panels are still extant and *in situ* and include metaphorical images such as a fox preaching to a congregation of geese and a bagpipe playing pig. See: *Church of St Leonard, Ribbesford,* <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1115135> [Accessed 26 April 2019].

hamlet of St Margaret, for example, the carved oak rood loft and pillars stand undamaged.[97] This enormous structure dominates the small rural church, and provides a clear spatial delineation between the nave and the chancel, thus serving to heighten the mystery of the mass for the medieval parishioner.

It is therefore clear that the inhabitants of some Worcester and Hereford parishes chose to save, preserve, and conceal certain medieval furnishings and fixtures in their churches, despite the fact that this meant acting against the directives of their Bishop.[98] Yet the concealment and protection of potentially contentious visual imagery and objects in parish churches should not automatically be taken as a sign of continued attachment to the Roman Catholic faith; it is possible that parishioners felt an emotional, historic, or personal connection, rather than a theological or spiritual attachment, to controversial objects such as rood-lofts and screens, which typically displayed images of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and other saints and apostles. After all, such furnishings formed part of the visual history of the parish, and it is thus conceivable that even if parishioners no longer believed in the religious associations and representations between the object and the Roman Catholic doctrine within which they were created, they simply didn't want to see these historic objects destroyed (alongside the memory of their previous function).

It has, furthermore, in recent years become increasingly clear that the boundaries of acceptability around images in the church setting during the post-Reformation period were much broader than revisionist historiography – with its focus on Patrick Collinson's pervasive iconoclasm to iconophobia narrative of the 1980s, in which he argued that the post-1580 English populace came to broadly reject and fear the image – had come to suggest.[99] The 2023 diagrammatic model created by Hamling and Willis and accompanying discussion, for

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[97] Jenkins, pp. 276-77.

[98] Whiting notes, for example, that 'sometimes the deposed objects were placed in storage or…entrusted to parishioners for safekeeping.' See: Whiting, *Reformation of the English Parish Church,* p. 158.

[99] Collinson first presented this argument in his 1986 Stenton Lecture at the University of Reading: 'From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: The Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation'. A revised form of the lecture formed Chapter Four of Collinson's influential 1988 monograph: Patrick Collinson, *Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1988).The original lecture is printed in: Patrick Collinson, 'From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: the Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation', in Peter Marshall (ed.), *The Impact of the English Reformation, 1500-1640* (London: Arnold, 1997), pp. 278-307.

example, has shown that - whilst there were certainly many different factors at play in establishing the kinds of image that were considered suitable in the post-Reformation ecclesiological setting – images, as long as they adhered to certain criteria and key contextual factors, continued to appear and play a valuable role within parish churches across England.[100] Orlik's extensive research into the visual culture of the parish church in post-Reformation Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire complements this assessment: she has documented many examples of medieval imagery that survived the Reformation, and of new images that were made for display in the ecclesiological setting during the period 1560-1640.[101]

This is not to say, however, that directives for the destruction of images in churches on the orders of Reformation authorities such as Bishop Hooper were ignored, but rather that the situation was more complex and subject to greater nuance. The church of St Laurence in Ludlow (within the Diocese of Hereford and only seven miles from St Mary's, Burford, which houses the *Cornewall Family Memorial*), for example, provides a compelling example of evolving attitudes towards the use of the visual in a Marcher parish church during the Elizabethan period. For St Laurence Ludlow - described by John Leland in 1540 as 'very Fayre and large and richly adorned and taken for the Fayrest in all these parts',[102] became (at least during the early years of religious reform under Henry VIII and Edward VI) less and less 'richly adorned' and, quite possibly, in the eyes of certain parishioners, somewhat less 'fayre' as a result of the implementation of Reformed directives. The Ludlow Churchwardens' Accounts for 1547 record that images of Jesus and St George that had once adorned the chapels of St Laurence were sold off and, by 1551, all of the altars in the church – and thus, one can assume, their corresponding (most likely image-laden) altarpieces – had been destroyed and replaced with simple tables.[103] Eight years later, on 26 September 1559 – over a year since Elizabeth's accession and two months after her Religious Settlement, although some years before the passing of the Thirty-Nine Articles in 1563 - a payment was made for 'takynge downe the

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[100] Hamling and Willis.

[101] Orlik.

[102] John Leland, *The Itinerary of John Leland the Antiquary*, ed. by Thomas Hearne (Oxford: printed at the Theatre, 1711), p. 74.

[103] Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 203; John Goodall, *Parish Church Treasures: The Nation's Greatest Art Collection* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 132.

rowde' in Ludlow church.[104] This pattern of the removal of images - of Jesus and St George, as well as other presumably image-laden objects such as altarpieces and the rood-screen - certainly correspond to Hooper's directives in his 1551 *Injunctions.*

It is clear, however, that the parishioners of St Laurence were not averse to – or fearful of - the presence of imagery in their church. This is evidenced by the Commandment Board commissioned for the church in 1561, which is still extant and *in situ* in Ludlow St Laurence. The Churchwardens' Accounts for March of that year note payment for 'the table of commaundementes' and then, in April, there is a further payment 'to Thomas Season, for setting the tale of the commaundementes in a frame'.[105] Jonathan Willis notes of the object: 'the combination of abbreviated text and rich figurative decoration has a transitional feel to it: to borrow the words of Tessa Watt, the ethos is 'distinctively "post-Reformation" if not thoroughly "Protestant".'[106] Willis' argument here is compelling. The blend of the heavily abbreviated text of the Decalogue – of central importance for Lutherans and Calvinists alike, and at the core of a Reformed Christianity based on the principle of *sola scriptura* - depicted on a painted scroll, and framed by images of ornate Tudor roses, crowned IHS monograms, and red flowers is particularly arresting.

These images are immediately recognisable as the kind of ornamentation that can be found within the extant material culture of the medieval English parish church: it is, for example, highly reminiscent of the tracery decoration that survives on the medieval rood-loft at St Peter's, Besford (where the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* is displayed), roughly twenty miles away from Ludlow. Thus, we see medieval imagery reused and reimagined here within the context of a Reformed object. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, commandment boards were commissioned throughout England in response to Elizabeth I's decree that:

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[104] *Churchwardens Accounts of the Town of Ludlow, in Shropshire, from 1540 to the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth,* ed. by Thomas Wright (Westminster: J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1869), p. 93.
[105] Wright, p. 103. Also see: Jonathan Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 319.
[106] Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue*, p. 320.

> The tables of the commandments may be comlye set, or hung up in the east end of the chauncell, to be not only read for edification, but also to give some comlye ornament and demonstration, that the same is a place of religion and prayer.[107]

The instruction for 'comlye ornament' is crucial here, for it reveals the Queen's desire to set 'the correct ambience of a place of religion and prayer – an early concession to the beauty of holiness.'[108] The rich visual imagery present on the Ludlow St Laurence commandment board ensures that it provides 'comlye ornament' to the church, whilst at the same time publicly promoting the Decalogue as the guiding principles of the Reformed church. As such, text and image are combined in service of the display and edification of Reformed teachings within the ecclesiological setting.

In 1581, however, a new monumental commission was erected at Ludlow St Laurence whose use of the visual went far beyond the realm of 'comlye ornament'. The colourful, large, and elaborate monument to Sir Robert Townshend and his wife is extant today and in exceptional condition. The visual style of the monument, illustrated below, is decidedly medieval, described by Jenkins as a 'classical chest with fluted Ionic columns…set within a Gothic canopy.'

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[107] Quoted in: Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue*, p. 297. For more on commandment boards as an object type in the Elizabethan parish church (including their origins and survival rates), please see: the discussion in Chapter Three of this thesis; Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1546 – c. 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 40; Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household',* p. 54; Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue*, pp. 297-331; Hamling and Willis, pp. 947-953; Orlik, pp. 256-271.

[108] Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue*, p. 298.

Figure 5.12 Monument to Sir Robert Townshend, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, Shropshire

Occupying a place of central ecclesiological importance in the chancel near the communion table or altar, this monument is rich in the iconography of the Old Faith: in what is surely an attempt to elicit intercessory prayer from the viewer to speed his soul through purgatory, Sir Robert's twelve children are represented as weeping mourners in the various panels of imagery that adorn the tomb chest and - significantly and unexpectedly for a monument of 1581 in a Reformed parish church – three of Townshend's daughters are dressed in the habits of nuns:

Figure 5.13 Detail from the Monument to Sir Robert Townshend: three daughters dressed as nuns

It is thus unsurprising to learn that Townshend was, in fact, a Roman Catholic.[109] This has led Jenkins to assert that, despite his faith, he was 'grand enough to merit burial in the sanctuary of the civil church.'[110]

Certainly, as Chief Justice of the Marches of Wales,[111] Sir Robert was a particularly 'grand' man, with familial connections to the elite and royalty: his son – commissioner of the monument to his father in Ludlow St Laurence - hosted Elizabeth I on her progress in 1578.[112]

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[109] Jenkins, p. 577; Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Shropshire* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1958), p. 359.
[110] Jenkins, p. 577.
[111] Michael A. Farraday, *Ludlow, 1085-1660: A Social, Economic and Political History* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1991), p. 73.
[112] Zillah Dovey, *An Elizabethan Progress* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1996), p. 61.

Clearly therefore, the Townshend family's continued adherence to Roman Catholicism presented no major barrier to their social and political ascendance in the Marches, nor to the erection of a large monument in an important position within Ludlow church, with the six Townshend daughters depicted in the habits of nuns. This imagery of female monasticism reminds the viewer of Townshend familial commitment to the Old Faith and makes clear the Roman Catholic religious leanings of the subject and patron. As such, this author suggests that the Townshend monument tests the parameters of acceptability as per Hamling and Willis' recent model for the display of images in the post-Reformation parish church.[113]

For whilst the function of the monument as a tool for remembrance and the promotion of late-Tudor family bonds may be interpreted as civil in as much as it held a 'social or community function', the known Roman Catholicism of the subject and wider family, as is made clear through the daughters depicted as nuns, leads this memorial object onto uncertain ground. For if 'a known papist could not be permitted an image that would otherwise be judged acceptable, even beneficial, for good Protestant viewers',[114] then surely an image of female monasticism, on a memorial object to a known Roman Catholic, would be entirely unacceptable. Yet the Roman Catholic Townshend monument, replete with its contentious imagery, was created and displayed in a parish church during the decidedly post-Reformation year of 1581. The very commissioning and erection of the Townshend monument in St Laurence Ludlow at this point in the process of religious reform – alongside the two Roman Catholic memorials on wooden panel presented in this thesis (the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* in Adderbury parish church and the *Memorial to Margery de la Downes* in Bishop's Frome) – is thus further testament to Christopher Haigh's observation that 'the separation of Catholics from the village community was a very slow process'.[115] For as this thesis elucidates, during the late-Elizabethan period, Roman Catholic patrons were still commissioning image-laden memorial objects for display in their local, public, ecclesiological spaces.

    iii.   Meanings, Purposes, and Functions: Structure and Location

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[113] Hamling and Willis.

[114] Hamling and Willis, p. 946.

[115] Christopher Haigh, 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation', *Past & Present*, 93 (1981), 37-69 (p. 43).

a) Structure: the triptych form

The Harewell painted memorial at Besford and the Cornewall memorial at Burford are still structurally intact (despite the surface of the Harewell memorial being in an extremely poor state of conservation, with much paint loss and abrasion) and displayed in their original triptych forms: both objects are composed of a central panel with two hinged side panels (also referred to as wings or doors) which can be opened and closed. The Besford and Burford memorial paintings are particularly large objects, respectively measuring 2.13 x 2.21 metres (when open) and 3.45 x 3.04 metres (when closed).[116] As discussed in Chapter Two, this thesis is the first to posit that the painted wooden *Memorial to Margery Downes* in St Mary the Virgin Church, Bishop's Frome, was also originally in triptych form and that what survives today – a single painted wooden panel of modest size (86.4 cm x 66 cm) – is the extant central panel of the triptych whole. This proposal is based on textual and material evidence: firstly, the extant written account from 1878 of the *Memorial to Margery Downes* in St Mary the Virgin church, which describes the object as 'a painting in oil, with cupboard doors to close over it', [117] and, secondly, the evidence of structural alterations that are visible to the front (or *recto*) of the painting.[118]

It is clear from the top edge of the *Memorial to Margery Downes* that the structure of the object has been significantly altered at some point:

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[116] Measurements taken in July 2019 with the kind assistance of Callum Wilson and Ray Morris.

[117] *The Picards or Pycards of Straddewy,* pp. 153-4.

[118] It is important to note here that this assessment of the visual evidence is based on what can be seen in the church; as it has been impossible to remove the *Memorial to Margery Downes* from the wall it has not been possible to examine the back (or *verso*) of the painting.

Figure 5.14 Detail from the *Memorial to Margery Downes*: upper part of the painting showing alterations

This image demonstrates how each side (lengthways) of the memorial has been altered or trimmed back. Firstly, the outer edges of both ornately framed cartouches are no longer visible. Secondly, the '0' from Margery's age of 50 is missing at the proper left edge of the painting: we read 'An° AEtatis Suae. 5'. The proper right edge of the memorial painting exhibits the same evidence of alteration, with part of the first letter, the 'A', missing from the statement of George Downes' age. This indicates that – as with the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* now at the NPG – structural alterations have taken place; most likely, I would argue, the removal (either intentional or accidental) of the 'cupboard doors' (meaning the triptych wings) from the central panel at some point after 1878, but before 1960 when the *Memorial to Margery Downes* was found 'in pieces behind an altar' within the Munderfield Chapel at St Mary the Virgin church, reminding us of the fragility of this subgenre of monumental painting.[119]

For the Elizabethan parishioner living through the ongoing process of religious reform, it is likely that the triptych form (as well as the two-panelled diptych and many-panelled polyptych) would have been associated with the pre-Reformation altar, the altarpieces of the

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[119] 'Letter regarding Bishop's Frome', *Country Life*, 150 (1970), p. xx.

medieval church with their salvific function, and the miracle of transubstantiation.[120] This association was a pan-European phenomenon which still exists in Roman Catholic churches across the continent; indeed Jacobs' statement about the function and visual purpose of the triptych in the medieval Netherlands, that 'it was devoted to religious subject matter and thereby suitable for use as an altarpiece to be seen and used in the context of liturgy', can be applied to triptych altarpieces throughout Roman Catholic Europe.[121] For if 'altars had always been inherently linked both with the celebration of the Eucharist and with the bodies or relics of the saints',[122] then, equally, the enormous number of extant wooden European altarpieces in triptych form indicates a similar inherent link between the Roman Catholic altar and the triptych object structure.[123] The triptych, as a form commonly used for altarpieces and thus as a spatial indicator of where the Eucharist is celebrated, is therefore a design with strong visual links to the transformative power of the mass as a route to salvation for humankind.

Belief in this miraculous Eucharistic occurrence - so central to Roman Catholic liturgy that it was reaffirmed at the Council of Trent in 1551 - was addressed by the Reformed Elizabethan church in the *Thirty-Nine Articles* of 1563. Article twenty-eight stated that:

> Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.[124]

With this declaration, belief in transubstantiation was thus decried by the Elizabethan church as something fundamentally superstitious: an insult to both 'the nature of the Sacrament' and the principle of *sola scriptura*. The triptych, with its close association to the altar, the mass, and therefore to the now unholy doctrine of transubstantiation thus began to disappear from

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[120] Eade, 'The Triptych Portrait in England, 1575-1646', p. 3.

[121] Lynn Jacobs, 'The Triptychs of Hieronymus Bosch', *The Sixteenth Century Journal,* 31.4 (2000), 1009-1041 (p. 1009).

[122] Beth Williamson, 'Altarpieces, Liturgy, and Devotion', *Speculum*, 79.2 (2004), 341-406 (p. 354).

[123] Numerous triptych altarpieces can be found in churches throughout continental Europe, still serving their spatial, liturgical, and soteriological function. In addition, many fine examples are now in the collections of British museums; visitors to institutions such as the Royal Collection, the National Gallery, and the V&A, will see many of these objects on public display.

[124] 'The Thirty-Nine Articles, 1563', in *Religion and Society in Early Modern England: A Sourcebook,* ed. by David Cressy and Lori Anne Ferrell (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 69-80 (p. 70).

churches in England and Wales during the Elizabethan Reformation. As discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, the distinctive three-panelled, hinged frame had become even further associated with the Roman Catholic church once donor portraits began to be included in the wings of the object during the fifteenth century, for whilst these portraits functioned as a visual proof of piety, they were also as a clear call for intercessory prayer as a means of hastening the donor's soul through purgatory. Finally, the form was inexorably associated with the cult of Saints; medieval altarpieces commonly depict an image of a Saint - whose bones may be interred as a relic within or beneath the altar itself - on the central panel, to whom the donor(s) in the wing(s) would be praying, thus representing the soteriological power of intercessory prayer.[125]

It is therefore unsurprising that 'the use of the triptych as a frame for any kind of painting is extremely rare in England in the century after the Reformation.'[126] Indeed there are only eight extant or partially-extant wooden portrait triptychs from this period: the three discussed in this thesis chapter, in the parish churches of Burford, Besford, and Bishop's Frome, and the famous St John painted monument at St Mary's church, Lydiard Tregoze (1615, but with later painted additions), as well the Harte family triptych (1575, Lullingstone Castle), the 'Great Picture' of Lady Anne Clifford (1646, Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal), the Holme family triptych (1628, V&A), a Flemish triptych with portraits of unidentified sitters in the wings (c. 1589, National Trust, Cotehele House, Cornwall), and the wings of a triptych displaying portraits of Sir Robert and Lady Elizabeth Throckmorton (c. 1540-50, Doddington Hall, Lincoln). The *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* at Besford, the *Memorial to the Cornewall Family* at Burford, and the *Memorial to Margery Downes* at Bishop's Frome are thus extremely unusual examples of fully or partially extant portrait memorials in triptych form created after the Reformation for display in the ecclesiological space. As such, this author follows Eade in reading post-Reformation portrait triptychs as distinctly liminal objects: situated somewhere between the altarpieces of late-medieval England and the later appropriation of the triptych as a visual format by which to declare Reformed doctrine and celebrate the New Faith.[127]

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[125] Williamson, p. 359.
[126] Jane Eade, 'Triptych Portraits in England, 1575-1646' (master's thesis), p. 1.
[127] Eade, 'The Triptych Portrait in England, 1575-1646', p. 10.

Indeed, it is possible, in tracing the evolving use of the triptych design (and its derivatives such as the polyptych and diptych), to witness the potential for creative innovation afforded by the Reformation. For by the late-sixteenth century, this design form - once synonymous with the hinged wooden altarpieces of the late medieval church and thus the Roman Catholic celebration of the mass - was being used to proclaim the message of conformist religious reform and laud the authority of the monarch, as evidenced by two late-Elizabethan objects in the parish church of Preston St Mary (Suffolk). Here, there are two late sixteenth century triptychs: a commandment board and a royal coat of arms painted internally with the arms of Elizabeth I and, on its outer wings, a long inscription warning or, as Richard Williams astutely notes, 'sermonising', against idolatry.[128] The focus and function of these triptychs are on the central tenets of the Reformation in England: the transmittal of the word of God as found in Scripture, and the authority of the Monarch.[129]

By the second quarter of the seventeenth century, the triptych, and its related design forms were being used both to proclaim central tenets of Reformed belief and to celebrate Protestant victories in the ecclesiological setting. As discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, for example, the *Double Deliverance* painting of c. 1625 at Gaywood church, King's Lynn – although comprised of two unhinged panels - is immediately visually reminiscent of the diptych form: they are comprised of two large painted wooden boards of almost exactly the same size and shape, which are clearly meant to be displayed side by side (as per the original print source by Samuel Ward, discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis). The *Double Deliverance* evidences an innovative recycling of the diptych form – once so closely aligned with the medieval altar and Roman Catholic celebration of the mass - to instead proclaim and celebrate Protestant deliverances and victories over the Armada and Gunpowder Plot.

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[128] Richard Williams, 'Reformation', in *Art Under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm,* ed. by Tabitha Barber and Stacy Boldrick (London: Tate Publishing, 2013), pp. 48-74 (pp. 50-51).

[129] For more on the Preston St Mary's commandment board and royal coat of arms, see: Ibid; Tara Hamling and Richard Williams 'Introduction', in *Art Re-Formed: Re-Assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts,* ed. by Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 1–13 (p. 8); Margaret Aston*, England's Iconoclasts: Laws Against Images* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 364-365; Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue*, p. 297. The two Preston St Mary's triptychs are illustrated in: *Elizabeth: The Exhibition at the National Maritime Museum*, ed. by Susan Doran (London: Chatto & Windus, 2003), cat. 270, cat. 52.

b) Associations of Location: the Altar and the Easter Sepulchre

Based on their structural composition as objects in triptych form, these three church portrait memorial paintings demonstrate the influence of medieval devotional and memorial art on their post-Reformation Marcher patrons. Edmund Harewell, Thomas Cornewall, and George Downes all commissioned a type of object which, in terms of its physical structure, could have come straight out of a late-medieval workshop: at Besford and Burford, the memorials both have hinged wings, painted on both sides, and thus clearly designed with every intention to be opened and closed, as per the design of pre-Reformation triptych altarpieces. It seems reasonable to hypothesise, having established above the likeliness – based on textual and structural evidence – that the *Memorial to Margery Downes* was originally in triptych form, that the now missing wings have been similarly hinged and painted on both sides. Taking this into account, and considering also the small size of the Downes object, comparisons can be made to the small number of partially-extant small portrait triptychs and diptychs which almost certainly held a devotional function as portable altarpieces during the pre- and post-Reformation periods.

For example, Cooper highlights how the small size of the late fifteenth century *Donne Triptych* – made for and depicting the Welshman John Donne (d. 1503), his wife Elizabeth (d. 1506/7) and their daughter - allows 'for devotion on the move',[130] whilst the late fourteenth century *Wilton Diptych* – owned by and depicting Richard II - is described by Lisa Monnas as belonging to a 'class of portable devotional paintings.'[131] Perhaps the most significant comparator, however, to the *Memorial to Margery Downes* are the partially-extant wings of a triptych at Doddington Hall which depict in one panel the notable Roman Catholic courtier Sir Robert

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[130] Tarnya Cooper, 'Visual Memory, Portraiture and the Protestant Credentials of Tudor and Stuart Families', in *Memory and the English Reformation,* ed. by Alexandra Walsham, Bronwyn Wallace, Ceri Law, and Brian Cummings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 318-333 (p. 320). For more on the *Donne Triptych*, please see: National Gallery, *The Donne Triptych*, <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/hans-memling-the-donne-triptych> [accessed 23 February 2019]. This painting is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six of this thesis.

[131] Lisa Monnas, 'The Furnishing of Royal Closets and the use of Small Devotional Images in the Reign of Richard II: the Setting of the Wilton Diptych Reconsidered', in *Fourteenth Century England III*, ed. by Mark Ormrod (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004), pp. 185-207 (p. 185). For more on the *Wilton Diptych,* please see: National Gallery, *The Wilton Diptych, English or French?,* <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/english-or-french-the-wilton-diptych> [accessed 3 March 2022]; Dillian Gordon and Caroline Barron (eds.), *The Wilton Diptych* (London: National Gallery, 2015).

Throckmorton (c.1513-1581) and, in the other panel, his wife Elizabeth Throckmorton (c.1519-1554) and their children.[132] Although the central panel of the composite object is now missing, judging by the relatively small size of the wings (69cm x 33cm) and the Roman Catholicism of the Throckmortons, it is highly likely that this portrait triptych functioned as a portable altarpiece within the domestic space. So too is it probable that the triptych at Cotehele House - with the proper right wing depicting an unidentified man, the proper left wing depicting an unidentified woman, and the central panel depicting the Adoration of the Magi – functioned as a portable altarpiece:[133]

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[132] Badham, 'A Painted Canvas', p. 111; Paul Mellon Centre, *Sir Robert Throckmorton and his Wife Elizabeth neé Hussey*, <https://www.artandthecountryhouse.com/catalogues/catalogues-index/sir-robert-throckmorton-and-his-wife-elizabeth-ne-hussey-1112> [accessed 3 March 2022].

[133] National Trust, *Epiphany (Triptych)*, <https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/348078> [accessed 3 March 2022]. The Cotehele triptych is currently displayed in the private chapel at Cotehele house and was *in situ* there in 1894. See: National Trust, *Epiphany (Triptych)*; A. H. Malan, 'Cotehele: A Feudal Manor House of the West', *Pall Mall Magazine*, May-August 1894, pp. 189-190. On the use of private chapels in Roman Catholic homes during the early modern period, see: Richard Williams, 'Forbidden Sacred Spaces in Reformation England', in *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 95-114.

Figure 5.15 Unknown English or Flemish artist, *Epiphany (Triptych),* c. 1589 with possible later additions, oil on panels, Cotehele, Cornwall, The Edgcumbe Collection (National Trust) © The National Trust

Figure 5.16 Detail from *Epiphany (Triptych)*: donor portrait of a male

Figure 5.17 Detail from *Epiphany (Triptych)*: donor portrait of a woman

These portraits of what are almost certainly the donors date to c. 1589, making at least the wings of the Cotehele triptych roughly contemporary to the painted Downes memorial at St Mary the Virgin Bishop's Frome (1598). The Cotehele triptych is similarly small in size, with the central panel measuring 69.5cm x 47cm; thus leading Hearn to note its portability in stating that it probably 'came to this country with…the Flemish merchant Sir Thomas Coteel'.[134]

It is however unlikely that the *Memorial to Margery Downes*, despite almost certainly having originally been in triptych form, would have held a devotional function. The absence of a cultic image in the central panel of the triptych – indeed the likely central (and only known surviving) panel depicts George and Margery Downes as opposed to a Saint or the Virgin Mary – suggests that the painting, whilst quite possibly containing an appeal for intercessory prayer from the viewer, held a largely commemorative as opposed to a worshipful (and thus potentially idolatrous) function. This author therefore suggests that the *Memorial to Margery Downes* was not an object of worship as per the triptych altarpieces of the late-medieval church, but rather an object of remembrance with a monumental function in indicating the burial place of Margery Downes. Yet could there have been something within the visual memory of certain late-Elizabethan parishioners of Bishop's Frome that may have led them to link this small painted wooden triptych memorial object to the small painted wooden triptych altarpieces of the Old Faith and, thus, the Roman Catholic ceremony of the Eucharist?

As this chapter has discussed above, the subject of the painting – Margery Downes – was recusant, as was her daughter and son-in-law. It is thus probable that George Downes, patron of the *Memorial to Margery Downes* was too a Roman Catholic, but perhaps of the covert, or inwardly remaining sort. Could the confessional leanings of the Downes family, combined with the structural similarities between the painting and the triptych altarpieces of the late-medieval church have led to hostility towards the object itself? The material evidence would suggest that this may have been the case: there is significant damage across the faces of Margery and George Downes, with two deep cuts to the wooden panel in a cross formation

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[134] *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530-1630,* ed. by Karen Hearn (London: Tate Gallery, 1995), p. 29.

across Margery's left eye, and with most of George's face targeted, again with the focus on his eyes:

Figure 5.18 Detail from the *Memorial to Margery Downes*: iconoclastic damage to the face of Margery

Figure 5.19 Detail from the *Memorial to Margery Downes*: iconoclastic damage to the face of George

It is clear that this damage, almost certainly made through incision, is far more than abrasion through natural ageing.

It is suggested here that this damage follows what Brian Cummings has shown was a pattern of eyes being gouged, scratched, and sliced out of images of both religious and civil men and women (such as saints and patrons) depicted in medieval paintings, statues, and within manuscripts and printed books.[135] Could this targeted, deliberate damage to the eyes of George and Margery Downes therefore be indicative of hostility to the presence of this memorial in triptych form – a design once linked so heavily to the altars of the Old Faith - to a Roman Catholic family within the setting of a Reformed parish church?

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[135] On the deliberate targeting of eyes in medieval figurative images during the post-Reformation period, see: Brian Cummings, 'The Wounded Missal: Iconoclasm, Ritual and Memory in Reformation Yorkshire' in *Memory and the English Reformation,* ed. by Alexandra Walsham, Bronwyn Wallace, Ceri Law, and Brian Cummings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 353-379 (p. 355, p. 362).

The *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* at Besford and the *Cornewall Family Memorial* at Burford, however, show no such signs of targeted damage, despite both originally being displayed within touching distance of the altar on the site of what would have been, in the medieval church, the Easter Sepulchre. Normally a temporary structure made of wood, the Easter Sepulchre was placed along the north wall of the chancel during the lead up to Easter Sunday, typically from the afternoon of Good Friday.[136] Every Easter Sunday, medieval clergy and parishioners acted out a highly symbolic and ritualistic drama in this specific part of the church: the Host would be buried in the Easter Sepulchre which would then be closed, before being opened and the Host removed, thus allowing parishioners to undertake a symbolic 'visiting' of the empty tomb of the risen Christ.[137] The Easter sepulchre was therefore a devotional object inextricably linked to the Resurrection but also to the customs of the late-medieval church: exactly the kind of ritualistic, or performative practice that, for the Reformers, was indicative of a type of Christianity far removed from faith *sola scriptura.*

For the medieval parishioner, the chancel – with its spatial association with the Easter sepulchre and the High Altar – was a covetable place to be buried: its inherent link with the concept of resurrection, and therefore salvation, led to the construction of tomb monuments for the parish elite in this location within churches across England and Wales.[138] This was especially true of the north wall of the chancel, the site of the Easter Sepulchre. Indeed

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[136] Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 187; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* pp. 115-134; Timothy Connor, 'A last Easter sepulchre: Thomas Wever and St Mary's Church, Tarant Hinton, Dorset', *The Antiquaries Journal,* 102 (2022), 342-369.

[137] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* pp. 115-134; Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection'*,* pp. 187-8. On the liturgy and changing ceremony associated with the Easter Sepulchre in England, see: Pamela Sheingorn, *The Easter Sepulchre in England* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 1987); Christopher Herbert, 'English Easter Sepulchres: The History of an Idea' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leicester, 2007). For more localised studies, please see: Connor, pp. 342-369; Veronica Sekules, 'The tomb of Christ at Lincoln and the development of the Sacrament Shrine: Easter Sepulchres Reconsidered', in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Lincoln Cathedral,* ed. by Thomas Heslop and Veronica Sekules (London: *British Archaeological Association,* 1986), pp. 118-131. For more on the transforming appearance of and rituals associated with the Eastern Sepulchre throughout Western Europe, from the early medieval period to the present day, see: Justin E. A. Kroesen, *The Sepulchrum Domini Through the Ages: its Form and Function* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001).

[138] On the chancel as a coveted burial location in both the pre- and post-Reformation culture of commemoration, and as a signifier of high social status within parish communities: see: Connor, pp. 342-269; Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England, 1066-1550* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 87-89; Nigel Saul, *Lordship and Faith: The English Gentry and the Parish Church in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 171-183; Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 187.

Timothy Connor, in his 2022 study of a Dorset Easter sepulchre dating to the first quarter of the sixteenth century in the church of Tarrant Hinton, notes that the evidence from several wills of the pre-Reformation period indicate the testator's wish to be buried, and to have a monument erected, at the site of the Easter sepulchre.[139] Eade further notes how the north wall of the chancel was 'traditionally reserved for the monument of the church's chief lay patron, a custom that continued beyond the Reformation, but by the sixteenth century it had also come to be associated with the Easter sepulchre…the monument associated with the Easter rites of the Roman Catholic Church'.[140]

Eade draws attention here to the fact that the erection of a monument along the north wall of the chancel was normally associated with leading members of the parish and that, crucially, this practice continued during the post-Reformation period. This is evidenced by the situating of the *Cornewall Family Memorial* and the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* in this location within their respective parish churches: as discussed above, the Cornewall and Harewell families were leading members of their respective communities in the Welsh Marches. For whilst numerous historians agree that 'even in the post-Reformation period, burial in the chancel was particularly sought after',[141] and that 'burial within the chancel rails was usually seen as the most prestigious',[142] could the choice taken by Edmund Cornewall and Edmund Harewell - to erect a painted wooden memorial in triptych form specifically on the former site of the Easter Sepulchre - go beyond the social function of proclaiming their family's elevated place in the social hierarchy of the parish community through burial (and associated monumental commemoration) in the chancel?

It is suggested here that this choice of location could signal an enduring attachment to – or at least a continued association with – the rituals of the pre-Reformation church. For it is highly likely that patrons of visual *memoria* in the late-Elizabethan period such as Edmund Harewell and Edmund Cornewall had, within either their own recollections or those of their

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[139] Connor, pp. 342-269.
[140] Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 187.
[141] J. F. Merritt, *The Social World of Early Modern Westminster: Abbey, Court and Community, 1525-1640* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 213.
[142] Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 288.

parents during the Marian period, memories of the Easter Sepulchre and the corresponding ritualistic enactment of salvation through the Resurrection taking place at the north wall of the chancel of their parish churches. This is strikingly similar to the way that the triptych form had come to be associated with resurrection and salvation through its association with the site of the altar and the ritual of the mass. Thus, as Eade so astutely suggests: 'the creation of memorials in triptych form, and the space of the Easter sepulchre, is evidence of the desire to appropriate an ancient and powerful signifier of religious strength in the face of loss.'[143]

Building on this proposal, this authors suggest that, for almost certainly Roman Catholic late-Elizabethan patrons of *memoria* such George Downes, patron of the triptych *Memorial to Margery Downes,* and the possibly inwardly remaining Edmund Harewell, patron of *Memorial to a Child of the Harwell Family*, the decision to commission painted wooden memorials in triptych form as well as for display in the space where the Easter Sepulchre had once been, suggests more at play than a proclamation of 'religious strength in the face of loss'.[144] For if, as Hamling and Willis suggest, 'the religious credentials of the patron/owner of an image could be a first or final consideration in calculating purpose or intent',[145] then the Roman Catholicism of the Downes family and the likely Roman Catholicism of the Harewell family must be taken into account. It is possible that, for such patrons, the use of the triptych form and the erection of a monument along the north chancel wall do not represent an appropriation, but rather a continuation of devotional and memorial practices in line with their Roman Catholic faith; as such they could be proclaiming to their intended, knowing viewers – fellow adherents of the Old Faith, whether church

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[143] Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 207.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Hamling and Willis, p. 946.

papists or inwardly remaining Roman Catholics – their steadfast confessional allegiance even with the Reformed ecclesiological setting.[146]

iv.   Meanings, Purposes, and Functions: Iconography and Inscriptions

In the second half of this chapter so far, I have considered the highly likely Roman Catholicism of the patron of the *Memorial to Margery Downes* and the possible Roman Catholicism of the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* and have analysed the structure and locations of these memorial commissions within this context of potential patron confessional allegiance. It is clear that for all three of the Marcher wooden painted memorials considered in this chapter, the parish church setting - and specifically with reference to their triptych form and, for the Harewell and Cornewall memorials, their location along the north wall of the chancel – is significant in terms of the meaning and function of these objects. Indeed, the appropriation of medieval (and thus, Roman Catholic) design forms and locations for these memorials signifies, as a minimum, the continued influence of the devotional and memorial customs of the Old Faith on these post-Reformation patrons. Could such features also suggest a potential continued dedication to the Old Faith? Further testament to the continued influence of medieval *memoria* is found in the iconographic tropes used on these three Marcher wooden portrait memorials. The rest of this chapter will therefore be dedicated to the analysis of this imagery, beginning with a discussion of the depiction of corpses in each painting: what can the inclusion of this visual trope tell us about the potential intentions of the three patrons, the possible meanings and functions of the three memorials, and who their intended viewers may have been?

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[146] This is echoed in the placement of Robert Townshend's tomb on the north wall of the chancel in what would have once been the location of the Easter Sepulchre, in Ludlow parish church. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the way that the visual is used to depict Townshend's three daughters is indicative of the family's continued Roman Catholicism, but it is also particularly evocative of the Easter Sepulchre: the depiction of the six daughters in two groups of three, and their mournful presence (with bowed heads and hands on hearts) could be interpreted as a knowing nod to the iconographical trope of the three Marys, commonly seen on late-medieval Easter sepulchres. As Binski notes: 'a carved Easter Sepulchre with any claim to comprehensiveness would bear images of the risen Christ, the Three Maries and the sleeping soldiers.' See: Paul Binski, 'An Early Miniature Copy of the Choir Vault of Wells Cathedral at Irnham, Lincolnshire', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 169 (2016), 59-70 (p. 61).

This section will also consider the myriad of religious images that, although not present on the Bishop's Frome memorial, are visible on the Burford and Besford memorials: the judgement or doom scenes that are included in the topmost panel of the *Cornewall Family Memorial* at Burford and the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* at Besford; the depiction of the apostles and the evangelists on the exterior of the wings of the *Cornewall Family Memorial;* and the scenes from the life of Christ illustrated in the panel below the pediment of the *Cornewall Family Memorial*. What can this iconography tell us about the religious leanings of these two Marcher patrons - Edmund Harewell and Thomas Cornewall - and the parameters of acceptability regarding the use of images in the post-Reformation ecclesiological setting? Finally, this chapter will assess the significance of the various inscriptions that adorn each of the wooden memorial paintings and consider how the three individual patrons used a combination of word and image both to convey their beliefs and hopes around mortality and salvation and to ensure – as far as possible – that their memorial commissions were admissible within the post-Reformation parish church setting.

a) The reclining corpse

The three painted church portrait memorials discussed in this chapter share an immediately obvious visual trope: they all depict a corpse in varying states of decay towards, or within, the lowermost panel of the painting. This trope is also present in the memorial at Adderbury to Thomas More, discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis. On the Harewell memorial at Besford, the corpse – depicted in the early stages of death, prior to decomposition - is shrouded and set within the *predella* panel:

Figure 5.20 Detail of the corpse from the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family*

At Burford, the corpse on the Cornewall memorial is similarly depicted in the *predella* panel. It too is shrouded, and, although clearly dead, the body is not especially decaying:

Figure 5.21 Detail of the corpse from the *Cornewall Family Memorial*

The corpses on the portrait memorials to Margery Downes at Bishop's Frome and Thomas More at Adderbury, however, are quite different from those at Burford and Besford. At Bishop's Frome, the corpse is a skeletal figure lying recumbent or *au gisant* atop a tomb-like structure:

as I am suche shalt thou be, by course of kind assured.

Quod fuit, est, et erit, in solo articulo perit, quid
prodest tunc esse, fuisse, fore. cum sunt nisi florida sine
flore, et cum omne perit, quod fuit est et erit.

Figure 5.22 Detail of the skeleton from the *Memorial to Margery Downes*

At Adderbury, the corpse is similarly skeletal and is also represented *au gisant* atop a tomb:

Figure 5.23 Detail of the skeleton from the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*

There are no *predella* panels here: the Adderbury memorial is composed of a single painted panel, as is the Downes memorial at Bishop's Frome (although, as discussed above, the object was almost certainly originally in triptych form).

There is a strong visual similarity between the representation of decaying, skeletal, or shrouded corpses in these paintings and those depicted on the cadaver tombs or *transi* monuments of late-medieval England and Wales.[147] Indeed cadaverous imagery can be found on two dimensional memorials (such as brasses, incised slabs, and, as this thesis argues, on painted church portrait memorials) as well as three dimensional carved tomb monuments made of stone and, less commonly, wood, in ecclesiological spaces throughout Northern Europe.[148] Badham and Cotton note the existence of 175 medieval memorials (both lost and extant) depicting cadavers within English churches, although they do not indicate whether this includes the four painted church portrait memorials detailed in this thesis and illustrated above.[149] Indeed the study of *transi* iconography has grown more popular in recent years and, as the pace of research increases, the number of known examples are steadily rising. Thus, whilst Welch, in 2016, identified 41 fully extant three dimensional *transi* monuments – meaning carved, sculptural objects – in England and Wales,[150] by 2017 Badham and Cotton had identified 42 extant and 5 lost carved cadaver monuments.[151] It is generally agreed that none are known to have existed in Scotland.[152]

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[147] For more on English and Welsh *transi* monuments (also referred to as cadaver tombs), please see: Binski, *Medieval Death,* pp. 139-52; Kathleen Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); Pamela King, 'Contexts of the Cadaver Tomb in Fifteenth Century England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 1987); Pamela King, 'The cadaver tomb in England: novel manifestation of an old idea', *Church Monuments,* 5 (1990), 26–38; Nigel Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 311-34; Sally Badham and Simon Cotton 'A lost 'double-decker' cadaver monument from Terrington St Clement (Norfolk) in context', Church Monuments, 32 (2017), 28-48; Christina Welch, 'Late Medieval Carved Cadaver Memorials in England and Wales', in *Death in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: The Material and Spiritual Conditions of the Culture of Death*, ed. by Albrecht Classen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), pp. 374-10. For European *transi* monuments and memorials, please see: Jakov Đorđević, 'Made in the skull's likeness: of transi tombs, identity and memento mori', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 17 (2017), 1-19; Scott Gratson, 'A Stratification of Death in the Northern Renaissance: a reconsideration of the cadaver tombs of England and Germany' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Temple University, 2019).

[148] Badham and Cotton, p. 28; Welch, p. 374; Peter Marshal, *Beliefs and the Dead,* p. 22.

[149] Badham and Cotton, p. 28; Saul, *English Church Monuments*, p. 314.

[150] Welch, p. 374.

[151] Badham and Cotton, p. 30.

[152] Badham and Cotton, p. 30; Welch, p. 374.

It is these three dimensional *transi* that are of particular relevance to this study, specifically what was categorised by Erwin Panofsky in 1964 as the 'double decker' type.[153] This particular kind of tomb monument depicts the deceased using two separate effigies: one figure of them alive or *au vif* and normally in an idealised state, whilst the other is an effigy *au mort*, represented in varying states of decay.[154] Both effigies are normally depicted reclining or *au gisant,* with the cadaverous carved effigy resting below the effigy *au vif*, hence the term double decker. Like the painted church portrait memorials discussed in this thesis, the double decker *transi* is a rare type of church monument, indeed there are currently known to be only 17 extant and 3 lost examples in England.[155] A superlative example is the monument to John Fitzalan in the Fitzalan Chapel at Arundel Castle: created c. 1435-45, this alabaster and limestone double decker cadaver monument is in an excellent state of preservation, with an effigy of Fitzalan *au vif* and resplendent in full armour on the top brier, whilst his skeletal effigy rests quite clearly *au mort* in the tomb chest below.

For Eade, the influence of the late-medieval *transi* monument on the Harewell painting at Besford and the Cornewall painting at Burford is self-evident and obvious: 'the motif of the shrouded corpse is borrowed from medieval *transi* or cadaver tombs'.[156] Similarly, I would argue that Pevsner, in choosing to employ the word cadaver as opposed to corpse in his description of the Burford memorial implicitly acknowledges the influence of the *transi* type of monument : a '2.21 metre tall cadaver of Edmund Cornewall is depicted in the lower section.'[157] Badham too notes that the depiction of Edmund Cornewall and of the child of the Harewell family at Besford are reminiscent of monuments with double effigies, one living and one dead, as per the *transi* type: a 'novel manifestation of the commemorated depicted *au vif* and *au mort*'.[158] Badham's acknowledgement here of the novel nature of the cadaverous imagery displayed in these post-Reformation Marcher painted church portrait memorials is

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[153] Erwin Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture: Its Changing Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini,* ed. by H. W. Janson (London: Thames and Hudson, 1964), p.65, p. 78.
[154] Jessica Barker, *Stone Fidelity: Marriage and Emotion in Medieval Tomb Sculpture* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2020), p. 63.
[155] Badham and Cotton, p. 30.
[156] Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 199.
[157] Pevsner, *Shropshire*, p. 91.
[158] Badham, 'A Painted Canvas', p. 105.

significant, indeed there is no doubt that, by the late-sixteenth century, the *transi* type of commemorative object was a rapidly dying breed. As Sherlock notes, whilst: 'the depiction of corpses remained a constant, if relatively uncommon feature of monumental sculpture in England throughout the first half of the sixteenth century … only a handful of cadaver tombs were commissioned during the reign of Elizabeth.'[159]

Within the genre of Elizabethan portraiture, whether for display in the domestic, institutional, or ecclesiological space, cadaver iconography is also extremely unusual. As a visual trope it pushes the limits of the kinds of *memento mori* imagery that one might expect to find on post-1540 English and Welsh portraits: whilst skulls and hourglasses might occur regularly, an entire decaying body – particularly one depicted *au gisant* towards the bottom of the painting - is far from the norm.[160] Other than the painted church portrait memorials discussed in this thesis, the only other extant English comparators are the portrait of John Case in St John's College, Oxford (see Chapter Four of this thesis, fig 4.11), and the portrait of William (c. 1513-91) and Joan (b. 1532) Judde at the Dulwich Picture Gallery:[161]

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[159] Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), p. 49.
[160] Tarnya Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elites of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales 1540-1620,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 109.
[161] I am grateful to Phoebe Evans at the Dulwich Picture Gallery for her assistance in sourcing this high-resolution image, and for permitting me to reproduce it here.

Figure 5.24 Unknown British artist, *The Judde Memorial*, c.1560, oil on panel, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London

The composition of this painting is strikingly similar to the church portrait memorials at Burford and Besford: a shrouded cadaver, emaciated but not yet skeletal, lies recumbent atop what appears to be a tomb chest at the base of the painting. Portraits of the living subjects are depicted above. Do we have here, therefore, another 'novel representation', to use Badham's phrase, of a painted effigy *au vif* presiding over a painted effigy *au mort*?

There are, this author suggests, two possible different ways of understanding the function of this portrait. The first is that it commemorates of the marriage of the two sitters.[162] Certainly, the central inscription alludes to a union, sanctioned by God, between the man and woman

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[162] Dulwich Picture Gallery, *The Judde Memorial,* <https://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/explore-the-collection/351-400/the-judde-memorial/> [Accessed 3 September 2020]; Matthew Craske, *The Silent Rhetoric of the Body: A history of Monumental Sculpture and Commemorative Art in England, 1720-1770* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 58; Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 109.

depicted: 'the worde of God / hathe knit us twayne / and death shall us / devide agaiyne'. The second – to which I subscribe - is that whilst the portrait has a commemorative function, it is primarily asking the viewer to remember the sitters after their deaths, as opposed to memorialising the Juddes' marriage.[163] This is made clear by the inscription on the inner frame, which is contemporary to the painting: 'when we are deade and in owr graves, and all owre bones be rottun, by this shall we remembered be, when we shulde be forgotten.'[164] Furthermore, the use of typical *memento mori* imagery (the skull and the half-burnt candle) combined with the extensive use of text across the painting presents a narrative of pious contemplation in the face of human transience: 'we behowlde our ende', as inscribed in the centre of the portrait above the skull. The sitters, it would appear, are hopeful of their eventual salvation: 'lyve to dye and dye to lyve eternally', as inscribed at the base of the painting and, as Cooper argues, the position of the corpse 'upon ears of corn creates an emblem of regeneration and hope for eternal life, symbolic of Christian resurrection.'[165] It is suggested here, therefore, that rather than celebrating their marriage, this double portrait of the Juddes' is instead a memorial of their godly lives and a reassuring testament – to both themselves and those who would view the painting after their deaths – of their salvation.

So far, the visual similarities between the *Judde Memorial* and the painted church portrait memorials at Burford and Besford are plentiful. These three paintings use a combination of text, image, and emblem to memorialise the sitters and, crucially - alongside the memorials at Adderbury and Bishop's Frome, as well as the *Portrait of John Case* at St John's College Oxford - they are the only extant post-1550 English painted portraits on panel to depict a body *au mort* at the base of the painting. The essential difference, however, is that whilst the *Judde Memorial* is indeed commemorative in its nature, it does not hold a monumental function: there is no reference to a burial place and thus it almost certainly would have hung in a domestic rather than ecclesiological space.[166] As such, the corpse *au gisant* at the base of the Judde double portrait can be situated within the post-Reformation *memento mori* type of iconography; its presence in the visual tableau reminds the viewer of the inevitability of death

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[163] Llewellyn, *Art of Death*, p. 11; John Ingamells, *Dulwich Picture Gallery: British* (London: Unicorn Press, 2008), p. 72.
[164] Ingamells, p. 72.
[165] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* pp. 109. Also see: Ingalmells, p. 72.
[166] Badham, 'A Painted Canvas', p. 105; Llewellyn, *Art of Death,* pp. 10-12.

and the corresponding need to live a virtuous life as a signifier of Election and, therefore, eventual salvation. In contrast, the three Marcher memorials discussed in this chapter, as well as the Adderbury memorial discussed in Chapter Four, hold an explicitly monumental function. Each painting uses text to inform the viewer that the subject is buried in the parish church alongside the portrait memorial: 'Here lieth Margery' at the top of the Bishops' Frome memorial; 'Here lyeth Richarde Cornwayll esquire, and Jenet his wife' and 'Here lyeth Edmonde Cornwayll' at Burford; 'an Impe entombed heere dothe lie' upon the Harewell memorial at Besford; and, at Adderbury, the viewer is told that the bodies of Mary and Thomas More 'ARE LAIED HEREBY'.

Why then, did Edmund Harewell, Thomas Cornewall, and George Downes, as well as Mary More in Adderbury, choose to include a cadaver towards the bottom, or within the *predella,* of their painted monumental commissions? It is certainly possible that they could have been inspired by the late-medieval *transi* imagery that they might have seen in nearby churches and cathedrals. Indeed, as discussed earlier in this chapter and in Chapter Two of this thesis, there are many extant pre-Reformation monuments which survived the various periods of iconoclasm, as well as monuments which are now lost but that we know survived the Reformation period; this includes two- and three-dimensional cadaver monuments. Furthermore, although today the strongest concentration of *transi* iconography is found 'in the home counties and East Anglia',[167] there are and were some significant examples within the ecclesiological spaces of the Welsh Marches and south Wales, as well as throughout Oxfordshire. Badham and Cotton note, for example, the existence of a 'lost example..[which]… was at Worcester Cathedral, presumably of a prior, perhaps Thomas Ledbury (d. 1443)'.[168] There is every chance that the Marcher patrons would have seen this cadaver monument: it was still standing in c. 1640 when Thomas Habington described it as 'the anatomy of a deade man wasted to boanes, hys roabe a shrowde and under hys heade a mitar'.[169] In Oxfordshire, Mary More might well have seen – or been told of - the *transi*

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[167] Badham and Cotton, p. 28; Saul, *English Church Monuments,* p. 314.
[168] Badham and Cotton, p. 28.
[169] Quoted in: Badham and Cotton, p. 28.

monument to her fellow female patron Alice de la Pole, duchess of Suffolk (d. 1457), at the church of St Mary, Ewelme.[170]

It is proposed here that the similarity between these three Marcher painted church portrait memorials, as well as the Adderbury memorial to Thomas and Mary More, and the late-medieval cadaver monument goes far beyond their shared iconographical representation of corpses in varying states of decay. The composition of the four painted wooden memorial portraits discussed here – with the depiction of the commemorated alive in the upper part of the paintings and their cadaver either in a separate *predella* panel as at Burford and Besford, or, if there is no *predella*, then towards the base of the painting as at Bishop's Frome and Adderbury – indicates that the patrons were influenced not just by the iconography of *transi* monuments, but also by the specific structural composition or architecture of the double decker *transi* type. The spatial delineation between the effigies of the subject *au vif* and *au mort* that characterises the double decker cadaver monument is replicated in these painted wooden church memorials. Is it possible that that in these four paintings we see, through the combination of iconography and composition (the depiction of a subject towards the top of the visual tableau *au vif* and, at the base, *au mort*), a deliberate decision by the patrons to convey a specifically purgatorial understanding of salvation within their monumental commissions, as per the patrons of late-medieval *transi* tombs?

It is highly significant that amongst the nine painted wooden memorials selected for analysis in this thesis, three out of the four memorial objects that replicated the specific effigial structure of the double decker carved *transi* were commissioned by patrons who were either recusant themselves or members of notable recusant families (the Mores in Adderbury and the Downes in Bishop's Frome), or maintained strong links to Roman Catholicism (the Harewells in Besford). For these patrons, the contrast between the representation of the subject being commemorated as a living being and, below, as a cadaver may have been representative of what Eade terms 'purgatorial time': the sheer horror of seeing such a

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[170] For high-quality, full colour illustrations of the Alice de la Pole *transi* tomb monument, please see: Đorđević, p. 7; Gratson, pp. 201-2; Roger Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), pp. 198-201. For an illuminating case study of this monument through the lens of gender history, please see: Gratson, pp. 52-86.

graphically depicted corpse *au gisant* beneath a vivacious being would, for those whose understanding of salvation was steeped within the Roman Catholic tradition, naturally lead to thoughts of purgatorial torments.[171] These painted cadavers, therefore, whilst still functioning as a *memento mori* device, differ from the Judde and John Case painted cadavers by virtue of their monumental function: they implore the viewer, in remembering the inevitability of death, to also remember the potential terrors that may await the deceased. For if, as Llewellyn notes, 'monuments mark the site of the grave and engage the sight of the spectator',[172] then it is possible – given the confirmed and likely Roman Catholic faith of these specific patrons - that these painted monuments, in engaging 'the sight of the spectator', also call on them to pray for the soul of the departed, who, we are informed by each painting, is buried where the viewer is stood, and is represented in effigial form before our eyes: resplendent *au vif* and vividly, unavoidably, *au mort*.

b) Religious imagery

The employment of cadaver iconography in the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family, The Cornewall Family Memorial, The Memorial to Margery Downes,* as well as in the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* in Addebury, raises the issue of the permissibility of certain visual tropes within the setting of the post-Reformation parish church. As discussed in Chapters One and Two of this thesis, attitudes towards religious imagery - particularly figurative religious imagery – and thus the continued existence and production of visual *memoria* that included such images were shaped by the process of religious reform and, accordingly, changes to soteriological teachings. Concerns around images, beginning during the Edwardian period, were expressed by Bishop Ridley: we 'cannot not with safe consciences give our assents that Images of Christ etc should be placed and erected in in churches.'[173] Indeed, for English Reformers schooled in Calvinist teaching, the problem posed by the presence of religious imagery was twofold: firstly, that the quest to replicate what had been divinely created through man-made imagery was blasphemously presumptuous, even if a futile endeavour –

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[171] Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 199.

[172] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 225.

[173] *The Works of Nicholas Ridley, D.D., Sometime Lord Bishop of London, Martyr 1555,* ed. by Henry Christmas (Cambridge: The University Press, 1841), p. 83.

the ability of man as creator cannot compare to God - and, most significantly, that the presence of religious imagery in ecclesiological spaces could lead to a perception of illusory presence by the laity which, in turn, could lead to idolatry. [174]

Indeed, post-revisionist scholarship has shown that, whilst there was indeed a wide range of opinions regarding the acceptable display and use or function of images in the post-Reformation parish church setting, 'what Protestants feared profoundly and consistently was not the image but the sin of idolatry'.[175] As Hamling and Willis have demonstrated, and as this thesis further attests to, images, even religious ones, continued to be created for display in the post-Reformation parish church setting. There were, as Hamling and Willis have shown, several crucial factors that accounted for their level of acceptability in the ecclesiological setting: their subject matter; their intended purpose as well as the way that they were then used by the viewer; their medium; their display location; and the faith of the patron.[176] If any of these criteria were not met, then there may be a risk of idolatry or other kind of misuse (either as intended by the patron or as assumed by the viewer), and thus the presence of the particular image in the church setting entered potentially contentious ground.

Of course, a painted depiction of a body *au mort* is not – in and of itself - a religious image. Rather, within the three Marcher painted church portrait memorials considered in this chapter, as well as the Adderbury *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*, it has been suggested that this visual trope functions as a combination of a *memento mori* image and a monumental effigy. As previously discussed, however, whilst it does not overtly purport – through the use of the visual, or through any inscription present on the portrait memorials – to represent a religious or saintly figure, the presence of these painted cadaverous effigies below the living subjects could, in the eyes of Roman Catholic patrons and viewers, or simply those parishioners who may have continued to hold Roman Catholic soteriological sympathies, be a reminder of purgatorial torments and thus potentially function as an implicit call for intercessory prayer. The rarity of cadaverous imagery on both domestic and civic portraiture and monumental commissions during the Elizabethan period has already been considered

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[174] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 28.
[175] Hamling and Willis, p. 937.
[176] Hamling and Willis, pp. 940-946.

above. It is suggested here that this rarity was because of the potential that such images could be perceived to encourage intercession as was perhaps the intention of the Marcher and Adderbury monumental paintings.

In addition, although a cadaver is not a religious image, there may have existed within the visual memory of the post-Reformation parishioner, a link between a painted or sculpted cadaver and the numerous representations of Christ – both three- and two-dimensional - which would have once adorned the parish churches of England and Wales. Such imagery 'enraged English iconoclasts': it was seen as a real and substantive threat to a church established on the principle of faith *sola scriptura* and, as such, was the target of much destruction during the post-Reformation period.[177] The *Dead Christ*, c. 1500-20, in the Mercers' Hall chapel, London, is one such example:[178]

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[177] Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* p. 29.
[178] On the Mercers' *Dead Christ*, please see: Aston, *Broken Idols,* pp. 247-9; Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* pp. 28-9; Williams, 'Reformation', pp. 68-9; Kim Woods, 'The Mercers' Christ re-examined' in, *Late Gothic England: Art and Display*, ed. by Richard Marks (Donnington: Shaun Tyas; London: The Victoria and Albert Museum, 2006), pp. 57-69.

Figure 5.25 The *Dead Christ*, c. 1500-20, Mercers' Hall Chapel, London. Courtesy of the Mercers' Company.

Photographer: Louis Sinclair

Found hidden five feet underneath the floor of the chapel in 1954, the *Dead Christ* is a stunning example of English stone carving, 'a work created on the cusp of an English Renaissance that was never to be',[179] yet with signs of deliberate iconoclastic damage. The arms and legs have been attacked, with the hands and feet of the sculpture entirely smashed off, as is visible in the image above.[180] Further, two deep cuts – judging by their precision, undoubtedly a deliberate act - have been made to the chest of the *Dead Christ*:

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[179] Andrew Graham-Dixon, *A History of British Art* (London: BBC Books, 1996), p. 23.
[180] Williams, 'Reformation', p. 68; Cooper, *Citizen Portrait,* pp. 28-9.

Figure 5.26 Detail of damage to the *Dead Christ*. Courtesy of the Mercers' Company.

Photographer: Louis Sinclair

Aston argues that this destruction probably took place 'early in Edward VI's reign, when Bishop Ridley was making sure of the thorough purging of London's churches'.[181] Indeed the Mercers' records for 1547-8 describe how they were engaged with the 'takyng dowen of the image[s] in the church'.[182]

We do not know why or when the Mercers' *Dead Christ* was concealed underneath the chapel floor. Aston asserts that the statue was buried to ensure its survival and protect it from further damage,[183] whilst Williams argues instead that the burial of the object is an example of 'Protestants treating church images in a ritualistic and even anthropomorphic fashion of punishment and burial of the body.'[184] Either way, it is clear that the damage inflicted on the

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[181] Aston, *Broken Idols,* p. 249.
[182] Quoted in: Williams, 'Reformation', p. 68. Also see: Woods, p. 58.
[183] Aston, *Broken Idols,* pp. 247-9.
[184] William, 'Reformation', p. 69.

Mercers' *Dead Christ* is one of many examples that corroborate Saul's statement that 'shroud and skeleton monuments and, above all, depictions of saints, of Christ, of the lamb and cross, and of the Trinity' were amongst the most offensive to certain Reformers and thus the most susceptible to iconoclastic destruction.[185] This was reiterated during Elizabeth's reign, with the publication of the 1563 *Second Book of Homilies.* Throughout, there is a focus on the use of the visual in the ecclesiological space with an emphasis, most keenly felt in Part Three of the *Homilies*, on the importance of maintaining scriptural authority above all else. For the homilist, the principle of faith *sola scriptura* in clearly a governing force in the development of the post-Reformation visual culture of commemoration: the futility of, and dangers involved in, creating and displaying religious images or 'similitudes' in churches is explained with reference to several Old Testament passages, amongst them Deuteronomy 4:15-18 – 'cursed be the man that maketh a graven or molten image, abomination before the Lord' – and Exodus 20:4-5 - 'Thou shalt not make any likeness of anything in heaven above, in earth beneath, or in the water under the earth.[186] The homilist concludes that:

> Seeing that religion ought to be grounded upon truth, images, which cannot be without lies, ought not to be made of put to any use or religion, or to be placed in churches and temples, places peculiarly appointed to true religion and service of God. And thus much, that no true image of God, our Saviour Christ, or his Saints can be made.[187]

Yet, despite this very clear injunction, the three Marcher memorials discussed in this chapter all contain – to varying degrees – versions of these exact visual tropes.

For example, in addition to the dead Christ-esque cadaver present on all three paintings, there are remnants of a Last Judgement or Doom scene, now sadly badly abraded, towards the top of the central panel of the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* in Besford:

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[185] Saul, *English Church Monuments*, p. 367. For further examples of figurative religious images in churches attacked by iconoclasts during the Edwardian and Elizabethan periods, with accompanying high quality colour photography enabling the reader to fully grasp the extent of the damage inflicted on the various objects, please see: Williams, 'Reformation', pp. 30-73.
[186] *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches in the Time of Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory*, ed. by John Griffiths (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1864), pp. 228-9.
[187] Griffiths, p. 228.

Figure 5.27 Detail of the Doom scene from the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family*

It is still possible to make out, at the proper left of the object, a figure writhing in pain, presumably subject to the torments of Hell, as well as the faint outline of a figure enthroned, presumably Christ. This correlates with how Habington described the scene as he saw it when visiting Besford at some point prior to his death in 1647: 'the leafes beeinge opened theare appearethe Highest of all Our Saviour on the Raynbowe sittinge in Judgment, and underneathe the Resurrection of the deade.'[188] A similar Doom scene, in a much better state of preservation, is present in the *Cornewall Family Memorial* at Burford:

Figure 5.28 Detail of the Doom scene from the *Cornewall Family Memorial*

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[188] Habington, p. 51.

Taking Habington's testimony into account, it is possible to assert that both painted monuments share the same iconography of the Doom or Last Judgement: we see Christ enthroned atop a rainbow and, below, a vision of the 'General Resurrection', with humanity experiencing the delights of heaven or the pains of hell.[189] In the Burford Doom, there is also a scene depicting the Passion. What we have in both of these memorial triptychs, therefore, is not only a figurative depiction of Christ, as was expressly forbidden by the *Second Book of Homilies,* but also a fully formed religious scene of the kind which was found, usually above the chancel arch, within nearly every English parish church during the medieval period.[190]

There is a veritable plethora of figurative religious imagery depicted on the *Cornewall Family Memorial*. The apostles and the evangelists are depicted on the exterior of the triptych wings:

[189] Clive Rouse, *Medieval Wall Paintings* (Princes Risborough: Shire Publications Ltd., 1991), p. 57.
[190] Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 197; Rouse, p. 57. On Doom or Last Judgement scenes in the English and Welsh medieval parish church setting, see: Rouse, pp. 57-60; Rosewell, pp. 72-81. Many medieval Doom scenes are still at least partially extant, although a great many more have disappeared. For a list (albeit, by the author's own admission, non-exhaustive) of surviving Doom scenes in the ecclesiological spaces of England and Wales, see: Rosewell, p. 345-6.

Figure 5.29 Detail from the *Cornewall Family Memorial*: apostles and evangelists on the exterior of the triptych wings

Each figure is named in a cartouche below the image, prefixed by the abbreviation for Saint: thus, the *Cornewall Family Memorial* depicts and names certain Saints in icon-like individual frames. Also present on the *Cornewall Family Memorial* are scenes from the life of Christ, with the Nativity, Crucifixion, and Resurrection all presented individually framed just below the pediment of the triptych:

Figure 5.30 Detail from the *Cornewall Family Memorial*: The Nativity

Figure 5.31 Detail from the *Cornewall Family Memorial*: The Crucifixion

Figure 5.32 Detail from the *Cornewall Family Memorial*: The Resurrection

What we have here, therefore, are examples of exactly the kind of imagery that had, in theory at least, been banned from display in churches, unashamedly depicted on a late sixteenth century memorial – an extremely large, prominently positioned memorial – within the post-Reformation public ecclesiological setting. For these images, icon-like in their individual frames, portray the Saints and Christ in full figurative form. Could the use of the visual here be inexorably linked to the belief in illusory presence, the power of intercession, and thus the existence of purgatory? After all, as Whiting notes of pre-Reformation approaches to mortality and salvation: 'from God was sought mercy; from the saint intercession.'[191]

Taken in sum, these are indeed unusual images to see depicted on memorials created for display in English parish churches during the later years of the sixteenth century. For whilst 'a pre-Reformation memorial might show not only the deceased but also God or a saint',[192] as well as other religious scenes, this was less commonly the case in late-Elizabethan memorials. The depiction of the commemorated *au mort* beneath their image *au vif* alone is unexpected, considering the implicit link with medieval imagery of the dead Christ and the echoing of the

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[191] Whiting, *Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p. 215
[192] Ibid.

transi monumental form that is so intertwined with a purgatorial view of salvation, but the excess of figurative religious imagery in the paintings at Besford and Burford is particularly notable. The Elizabethan *Second Book of Homilies* made it clear that 'traditional images had no role in places of worship',[193] yet in Burford, for example, the *Cornewall Family Memorial* displays an iconography that Llewellyn argues was 'unaffected by the supposed prohibitions of the Reformation.'[194] The same could be said of the Doom or Last Judgement scene in the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family.*

It is possible that, in choosing to display such imagery in the public space of the parish church, the patrons of these memorials were openly displaying a continued commitment to, or at least continued engagement with, the visual culture of the Old Faith. For if, as Sherlock argues 'images were sometimes used to express traditionalist beliefs' when depicted on post-Reformation church monuments,[195] then this could certainly be true of the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family,* which, as discussed earlier in this chapter, was the commission of a potentially inwardly remaining Roman Catholic patron, said by Habington to have formally proclaimed his dedication to the Old Faith on his deathbed. The same, however, cannot so persuasively be said of Thomas Cornewall, patron of the *Cornewall Family Memorial.* This author has found no evidence of nonconformity amongst the Elizabethan Cornewall family of Burford. Eade concurs, noting that they were 'certainly outwardly conforming members of the political elite.'[196] In asserting, therefore, that the religious images adorning the *Cornewall Family Memorial* were most likely commissioned by a conformist patron, recent research by Orlik, Hamling, and Willis can help to contextualize and explain the presence of such iconography – of the Doom, the apostles, the Nativity, Crucifixion, and Resurrection - upon this painted memorial in the post-Reformation parish church setting.

For these scholars, in further disrupting the once assumed narrative of Protestant iconophobia, have uncovered other examples of exactly this kind of religious imagery in post-Reformation commissions within the church setting. As Hamling and Willis have shown, and

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[193] Aston, 'Art and Idolatry', p. 244.
[194] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 204.
[195] Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory,* p, 114.
[196] Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 206.

as discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, at All Hallows, Whitchurch (Hampshire), there is a commandment board of 1602 which depicts painted religious narrative scenes, and a comparable later board of 1664 is at All Saint Hedgerley (Buckinghamshire).[197] At St Mary's East Knoyle (Wiltshire), there is a plasterwork scheme of 1639 which depicts Jacob ascending to heaven on his ladder.[198] That such images were commissioned for display in the Reformed ecclesiological setting and, certainly in the case of the commandment boards, for display on a Reformed object type, evidence the way that images were used in the post-Reformation parish church as an aide to Protestant piety whilst at the same time firmly rejecting the concept of illusory presence. After all, the religious images on these commandment boards promote and act in service to the Decalogue, a text which holds the condemnation of idolatry as one of its central tenets. Could the same argument be applied to the *Cornewall Family Memorial*? For with no evidence of anything but conformity amongst the Elizabethan Cornewalls, including Thomas Cornewall, patron of the painting, it is possible to read the composition – including the religious scenes depicted on the memorial - not as a sign of Roman Catholicism, but rather as evidence of creative use of imagery and, crucially, text in service of Reformation teachings.

As Eade notes, the panels containing religious imagery are small - particularly the minute scenes from the life of Christ – and are thus: 'starkly contrasted with the enormous, almost life-size portraits of the Cornewalls'.[199] As such, the image of the Cornewall family – functioning in remembrance and legitimisation of these conforming, leading members of the parish community – takes centre stage within the composition of the painting. Thus, the sheer scale of the civil (as opposed to religious) imagery within the painting, and its positioning in the middle of the central panel, ensures that the eye of the viewer is first drawn to this family group as opposed to the much smaller religious panels, set at the very top of the object. Whilst asserting the centrality of the civil (family) imagery to the memorial function of the object, it is also possible that the placing of the religious imagery at the summit of this enormously tall object – it is 3.45 metres in height – was a deliberate act, designed to portray Christ as the

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[197] Hamling and Willis, pp. 947-953.
[198] Orlik, pp. 275-282.
[199] Eade, 'The Triptych Portrait in England', p. 10.

ultimate authority in this visual tableau and thus limit any potential difficulties surrounding the depiction of the Saints - those figures of intercession - on the triptych doors.

Indeed, following Tara Hamling's compelling argument around the deliberate placement of religious imagery in elevated locations within public spaces in the domestic setting (such as the long gallery), it is similarly suggested here that, in creating such an uncomfortable viewing experience in the public setting of the parish church - for it would be difficult to look at the religious imagery high up on the Cornewall monument for long without getting a sore neck - the viewer becomes the gazed-at as opposed to the gazer.[200] Instead, it is the subject of the image on high (which, in the Burford triptych, is Christ, whether in his majesty within the Doom scene, or in the three tiny images of the nativity, crucifixion, and resurrection) that becomes the gazer, as opposed to the viewer. Hamling, following Jonathan Schroeder and Michel Foucault's concept of 'gaze theory', assets that the very act of looking (or gazing) involves an exchange of power, with the gazer (as opposed to the gazed-at) holding the authority.[201] Following this argument through, therefore, in placing the figure of Christ so high up within the composition of the Cornewall triptych that he becomes the gazer, it is his authority that is emphasised over the subjects of the painting (the Cornewall family), the Saints depicted on the triptych doors, and any visitor to the church. Furthermore, as will be considered below, the use of text – of verses from the Apostles Creed and particularly the directive to 'Regard not these pictures but follow the Lord / As did the apostles in Lyf and in Word' - above the images of the Saints would appear to underscore this point in guiding the viewer away from any intercessory practices or idolatry that their depiction may inspire, and towards the true and only authority of God in the form of Christ.

c) Text as moderator

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[200] For Hamling's analysis of the meaning and function of imagery placed up high on the plasterwork ceiling of the long gallery of Lanhydrock House in Cornwall (c. 1635) and the ceiling within a merchant's house in Dartmouth, North Devon, (c. 1635-40), as well as her application of 'gaze theory' in interpreting the placement of these images, please see: Tara Hamling, 'To see or not to see? The presence of Religious Imagery in the Protestant Household', *Art History,* 30.2 (2007), 170-197.
[201] Hamling, 'To see or not to see?', pp. 183-186.

Some post-1550 patrons who commissioned monuments and memorials containing religious imagery used a subtler kind of iconography than that used by Thomas Cornewall, Edmund Harewell, and George Downes. In Wiltshire, at the parish church of Broad Hinton, for example, the sculpted tomb monument to Sir William Wroughton (d. 1559) depicts images of the crucifix and five wounds of Christ. Unlike the Cornewall and Harewell memorials, however, who unashamedly display religious imagery on the central panels of the respective triptychs, the Wroughton monument conceals any potential visual signifiers of the Old Faith under the canopy of the tomb brier. It is possible that these three Marcher patrons felt more confident than William Wroughton in publicly displaying religious imagery on their commissions due to the location of their respective parish churches. Indeed the amount of extant and undamaged *memoria* to Roman Catholics in the ecclesiological spaces of the Welsh Marches – and, as discussed earlier in this chapter, particularly in Burford and Besford - would indicate a degree of tolerance being exercised, or perhaps simply a feeling of safety in this rural, westerly part of the country, far from the capital and the court, where recusants were 'of good wealth but of great alliance',[202] and where idiosyncrasies in monumental design were the norm: 'in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and Shropshire we encounter distinctive regional types of monuments and active, if isolated , local workshops.'[203]

For whilst confessional allegiances to Roman Catholicism – and thus the soteriological beliefs of the Old Faith – continued to be proclaimed upon ecclesiological *memoria* during the later years of the sixteenth century, in the main, this tended to be via inscriptions, where certain words and phrases (such as the *cujus* suffix) acted as confessional signifiers.[204] In this way, a non-conformist patron could bypass the use of the visual altogether, and thus any controversies over the suggestion of illusory presence given the particular context of their faith. This is not to say, however, that Roman Catholic patrons of text-based *memoria* hid their beliefs. Sherlock notes that, 'although uncommon, epitaphs included petitions to pray

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[202] 'Cecil Papers: July 1596, 11-20', in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House: Volume 6, 1596*, ed. by R. A. Roberts (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1895), pp. 255-272. British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-cecil-papers/vol6 > [accessed 12 July 2023]
[203] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* p. 69.
[204] Peter Sherlock, 'Monuments and the Reformation', in *Memory and the English Reformation,* ed. by Alexandra Walsham, Bronwyn Wallace, Ceri Law, and Brian Cummings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 168-184 (p. 172); Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory,* pp. 115-117; Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead,* p. 176; Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* p. 254.

for the dead well into the seventeenth century.'[205] Llewellyn concurs: 'in certain areas of England, Romish tomb inscriptions survived well into the Elizabethan period.'[206]

With these Marcher memorials, however, we have the opposite situation. It is the visual, as has been suggested here, that could be seen to encourage intercession through the presence of plentiful religious iconography and, more specifically, imagery directly related to the afterlife and the pains of purgatory: the *transi* imagery across all three paintings (also present on the Adderbury memorial to Thomas More); the saints painted across the triptych wings at Buford; and the Doom Scenes at Burford and Besford. The use of text, however, is, in some senses, much more complicated. For just as the monument to William Wroughon in Broad Hinton uses text to moderate the visual and proclaim conformity – via the inclusion of an inscription naming 'Elisabeth by the grace of God Quene of England' - so too do these Marcher portrait memorials.[207] As such, we can see how the use of text within the visual culture of commemoration of the late-Elizabethan parish church – and specifically in relation to text on wooden painted portrait memorials - changed as a result of, and in response to, Protestant reform.

There is an enormous amount of text across the memorials at Burford, Bishop's Frome, and Besford. Some of the inscriptions are focused on lineage and heraldry, and thus the elucidation of the various coats of arms depicted, but the majority of the text is concerned with human transience: how the patron hopes the commemorated subject will be remembered, and what they hope or believe will happen to their soul after death. It is here that we see the inherent 'messiness', to use Peter Marshall's phrase, of approaches to mortality and salvation in action during the post-Reformation period.[208] It is possible to read in the various inscriptions a rejection of grief coupled with a confidence in the heavenly resurrection of the person commemorated. The *Memorial to Margery Downes* at Bishop's

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[205] Sherlock, 'Monuments and the Reformation', p. 172. Also see: See: Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 254; Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead,* p. 177. For examples of such epitaphs across England, please see: Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead,* pp. 265-308.
[206] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* p. 254.
[207] Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, p. 114.
[208] Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead,* p. 166; Peter Marshall, *Heretics and Believers: A History of the English Reformation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017), p. xvi.

Frome, for example, informs the reader of the patron George Downes' 'pious renunciation of grief at his wife's death':[209]

> Though Nature's wrack in thee makes Nature weepe
> In mee deere wife whose want workes myne anoy
> Yet seeing grace in Christ made Naturee sleepe
> I ioivng weepe through hope to meete in joy

The focus is not on the patron's loss, but rather his hope that they will both meet again 'in joy', presumably at the point of Resurrection. This sentiment is echoed in the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family*, where we are told that the child's 'hope of future virtuous lyfe / was plaine forshewed by lyfe an death', whilst, in an inscription below the figure of Time, and in the first-person voice of the child, the viewer is told of his hope to serve (and thus, reside with) God after his death: 'That living I may love my lorde / That dying I may serve him still.'[210] At Buford, a similar hope in resurrection, and joy in expectation of the delights of heaven awaiting the deceased is expressed: 'With joye thys world we leave / And hope the the to lyve / Through Christ our Lord.'

Sherlock and Marshall have shown how, by the end of the sixteenth century, much of the ecclesiological *memoria* being newly commissioned displayed a clear belief in the place of the dead in heaven: 'confidence in a positive outcome in the afterlife was dominant'.[211] As Marshall has suggested, assurance that the soul of the deceased would find heavenly reward helped to make the Calvinist doctrine of double predestination more palatable, and speaks to 'a deep-seated social impulse to think well of the dead.'[212] It is suggested here that these three Marcher portrait memorials use text to communicate this narrative in a way which leaves room for interpretation depending on the beliefs of the viewing public. Unlike, for example, the myriad of post-1550 epitaphs which unambiguously state that the soul of the departed has gone to heaven,[213] the *Cornewall Family Memorial,* the *Memorial to Margery*

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[209] Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory,* p. 94.
[210] See: Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 197. Transcript taken from my personal notes and: Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 197; Willis, 'The Harewell Triptych', pp. 79-87.
[211] Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, p. 111. See also: Marsall, *Beliefs and the Dead,* p. 182-201.
[212] Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead,* p. 197.
[213] See: Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead,* pp. 200-1; Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory,* pp. 71-95.

Downes, and the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* instead articulate a 'hope' in salvation. Thus, these three painted church portrait memorials render themselves ambiguous in their soteriological pronouncements: for the Roman Catholic viewer, this expression of hope could be taken as a prompt to pray for the soul of the commemorated – to bring this hope to fruition – whereas, for the Protestant viewer, it could be taken as an expression of expectation of post-mortem salvation and, therefore, Election.

It is proposed here that this textual ambiguity might have been a deliberate choice by the patrons of these three painted wooden memorials: it was a way of protecting their monumental commissions from controversy and potential destruction. This is most clearly seen on the *Cornewall Family Memorial,* through the addition of an inscription beseeching the viewer to 'Regard not these pictures but follow the Lord / As did the apostles in Lyf and in Word', painted just above the images of the saints. Of course, the fact that these icon-esque images of saints are there at all means that the viewer can decide – based on their own confessional leaning and soteriological beliefs - whether or not to follow this textual command. Thus, once again, we have an example of deliberate ambiguity. The viewer can choose whether to pay heed to the image, or to the word: further evidence of the 'messiness' (to use Peter Marshall's phrase again) of both the presentation and reception of views about paths to salvation during this late-Elizabethan period of religious reform.

Similarly, the inclusion of text from the Apostles' Creed – a statement of faith which 'ought throughlye to be receaued and beleued' as stated in the *Thirty-Nine Articles* of 1563 and the 1571 reissue - underneath the individual images of the Nativity, Passion, and Resurrection could be seen to temper the presence of religious, figurative imagery in the *Cornewall Family Memorial.*[214] Each image of Christ is accompanied by key parts of the Creed, painted in bright red and thus instantly catching the eye of the viewer: 'I believe the Cryst / was born of the Virgin Mary', beneath the Nativity scene at the proper right of the object; 'I beleve that Cryst was / crucyfied dead and buryed', beneath the central Crucifixion scene; and 'I beleve that

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[214] *The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England,* ed. by Edward Welchman, trans. by a Clergyman of the University of Oxford (London: Bible and Crown for John Rivington; Oxford: Oxford Theatre for James Fletcher and James Rivington, 1758), p. 22. On the endorsement of the Apostles' Creed by Reformers across Europe, see: Aza Goudriaan, 'Reformed Theology and the Church Fathers' in *The Oxford Handbook of Reformed Theology,* ed. by Michael Allen and Scott Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 10-23 (pp. 10-12).

Cryst did ryse the third day fro death to Lyfe', beneath the depiction of the Resurrection at the proper left of the object. For Eade, the inclusion of the Apostles Creed and the instruction – placed in a prominent position across the top of the doors or wings of the Cornewall memorial – to 'Regard not these pictures but follow the Lord / As did the apostles in Lyf and in Word', signals the patron's attempt to ensure the conformity of his commission: 'the visual emphasis of the text and the use of the vernacular could be viewed as putting the whole in a reformist context.'[215]

Certainly, an instruction to place one's faith in God as opposed to images, the presence of a scriptural authority, and the inclusion of carefully crafted and soteriologically ambiguous inscriptions about the fate of the soul lends a degree of conformity to these memorial commissions and must have gone some way to alleviate any concerns around idolatry (whether real or potential). Llewellyn concurs: 'such public statements confirm that images are to be used as examples but not to be worshipped'.[216] Furthermore, when situated in the context of recent research regarding the function and thus the acceptability of religious imagery within the post-Reformation ecclesiological setting, it becomes possible to read the various examples of such imagery across the *Cornewall Family Memorial* as a signal, not of a lack of conformity, but rather as examples of a 'carefully negotiated stance on what constituted acceptable and unacceptable images.'[217] If we go by Hamling and Willis' criteria of acceptability, then a crucial factor here is in the purpose of the memorial: if its primary purpose is as an object of remembrance, then the presence of religious imagery could be considered acceptable due to the civic function of the object, even in the church setting.[218] Thus it could be argued that the images, whilst clearly influenced by medieval iconography, are not presented with the intention of worship, but rather to underscore the message of pious commemoration by a grieving and dutiful son and brother whilst – crucially – any risk of a possible encouragement to idolatry is mediated by the text demanding that the viewer 'Regard not these pictures but follow the Lord / As did the apostles in Lyf and in Word'. Even the depiction of the apostles on the triptych wings is given a conformist explanation by the

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[215] Eade, Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 196.
[216] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 255.
[217] Hamling and Willis, p. 962.
[218] Hamling and Willis, pp. 94-941.

second half of this legend: their presence is a didactic rather than worshipful device, by which the viewer is being taught to follow the examples of the apostles in staying true to the word of God.

As previously discussed, this interpretation of the acceptability of the religious imagery across the *Cornewall Family Memorial* within the context of the post-Reformation ecclesiological setting is further, crucially, bolstered by the fact that there is no evidence that the Cornewall family were anything other than conforming, leading members of late-Elizabethan Burford parish life.[219] The same, however, cannot be said of Edmund Harwell, patron of the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family*. For there are several elements within Edmund's biography which suggest that he was a Roman Catholic, quite possibly of the inwardly remaining sort. Firstly, his wife's family were well known Roman Catholics from Leigh, Worcestershire, and whilst this alone is not enough to signify Edmund's own confessional allegiance – indeed Walsham has shown that mixed marriages during the Elizabethan period were far from uncommon – when combined with the support that Edmund received from the large Roman Catholic gentry community in Worcestershire when he ran for MP in 1604 (to the extent that sectarian violence broke out during the campaign),[220] as well as Habington's observation of Edmund's deathbed declaration of allegiance to the Old Faith,[221] a picture can be credibly built of an outwardly conformist, yet inwardly remaining Roman Catholic member of the parish.[222]

In the case of the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family*, the likely confessional allegiance of the patron therefore influences the potential intended meaning and function of the memorial, as has been assessed earlier in this chapter. Indeed, it is significant that – unlike the Cornewall memorial – there are no 'public statements…[to]…to confirm that images are to be used as examples but not to be worshipped',[223] nor scriptural quotations, to proclaim the conformity of the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family.* This author's assessment

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[219] Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 206.
[220] Warren, p. 176.
[221] Habington, p. 29. Also see: Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 207.
[222] On mixed (Roman Catholic-Protestant) marriages in England during the post-Reformation period, see: Alexandra Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 94-96.
[223] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 255.

throughout this chapter of the likely function of the Harewell memorial as a visual remembrance containing an implicit appeal to viewers for intercessory prayer is mirrored in that of the *Memorial to Margery Downes*, a commemorative object which celebrates and remembers the life of a recusant. As such, like the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* in Adderbury, the *Memorial to Margery Downes* is a Roman Catholic memorial object commissioned for display in the post-Reformation parish church setting.

The use of text, it is suggested here, further highlights the call for intercession contained within the *Memorial to Margery Downes.* For although the expression of hope in salvation using the verancular – 'I ioivng weepe through hope to meete in joy' – is, as discussed above, a soteriologically ambiguous statement, the Latin couplets within George and Margery Downes' speech bubbles could be indicative of a purgatorial as opposed to a predestinate understanding of salvation. Badham, in her presentation of the Downes memorial, argues that the Latin verses are of a 'moralising nature',[224] and whilst this may be true, it is possible to read a concept of heavenly reward and resurrection governed by Christ's mercy for the postmortem soul of the subject as opposed to a preordained Election, with George proclaiming 'Qui pro nobis dedignaris cruciari / Fac nos Christe cum tuis glorificari' [You, who for us did not refuse to be crucified, make us, Christ, glorified with you] and Margery similarly declaring 'Qui tuos Redemisti Vere / Nostri Jesu nunc Miserere [You, who have your own truly redeemed, have mercy on us now Jesus].[225] The plea for Jesus to 'have mercy on us now', could indicate that the subjects believed the fate of their souls to still be in flux, and thus their places in the afterlife to still be undecided, which – if this were the case - would suggest the opposite of a predetermined understanding of salvation, as indeed would be expected from the Roman Catholic subjects.[226]

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[224] Sally Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer: English Commemorative Art 1330–1670', *The British Art Journal*, 16.1 (2015), 58–72 (p. 67).

[225] Translations my own.

[226] It could also be possible to interpret the choice of language (Latin as opposed to English) as a signifier of the Roman Catholicism of the Downes family, and accordingly - in the context of these soteriological inscriptions - as an indicator of their belief in the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory. For more on the use of Latin inscriptions on post-Reformation church monuments as potential indicators of Roman Catholicism, see: Nigel Llewellyn, 'The Happy Preserver of his Brother's Posterity': From Monumental Text to Sculptural Figure in Early Modern Sussex', in *Art, Literature and Religion in Early Modern Sussex: Culture and Conflict,* ed. by Andrew Hadfield and Matthew Dimmock (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 221-254.

v.   Conclusion

This chapter, in its presentation and assessment of three late-Elizabethan painted church portrait memorials from across the Welsh Marches has pursued the following three research questions: What can these three memorial objects tell us about the religious leanings of their patrons? Who were the possible intended viewers of these three memorial objects? How does the parish church setting influence the meaning and function of these three Marcher painted memorial portraits? This author's exploration of the medium, form, location, and iconography of the *Cornewall Family Memorial,* the *Memorial to Margery Downes,* and the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family*, has shown that whilst all three objects do indeed share similarities in their tripartite structure, their depiction of religious and *transi* imagery, and (for the Cornewall and Harewell memorials) their location along the north wall of the chancel, the context of the patron and/or subject's faith is of crucial significance in any interpretation of the possible intended meanings, functions, and audience of these memorial commissions. In reading these paintings within the context of the likely confessional allegiances of their patrons, this thesis has extended observations made by Sally Badham who is, to date, the only other author to have presented and explored all of the nine paintings considered in this thesis.[227] For although Badham assesses the form and iconography of these three Marcher memorials, she does not consider the crucial impact that the religious beliefs of the individual patrons may have had on their commissioning, creation, and reception. This chapter has sought to redress this balance.

In a similar vein, this chapter has built on observations made by Jane Eade, who has made extensive studies of the text and iconography displayed across the *Cornewall Family Memorial* and the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell* Family, but who describes the Harewell family as 'conforming Anglicans',[228] and who does not include the *Memorial to Margery Downes* in her articles on post-Reformation triptych portraits. Indeed, this author is the first to suggest both that the Harewells were most likely inwardly remaining Roman Catholics, and that the Downes memorial object was once in triptych form and must therefore be counted amongst the few surviving examples of post-Reformation portrait triptychs. In addition, the fact that

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[227] Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer'; Badham, 'A Painted Canvas'.
[228] Eade, 'The Triptych Portrait in England, 1575-1646', p. 10.

Margery Downes was recusant, as was her immediate family, means that this painting must be considered a post-Reformation Roman Catholic memorial in the sense that it commemorates, celebrates, and legitimises the life of a Roman Catholic in the setting of a Reformed parish church. Thus, even if the primary functions of the *Memorial to Margery Downes* and the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell* family may appear to be civic ones of remembrance,[229] the certain (for the Downes object) and likely (for the Harwell object) Roman Catholic context of their creation is highly suggestive of an appeal for intercessory prayer communicated, as this chapter has shown, through their specific use of text and image to their fellow Roman Catholic parishioners.

Their display in the post-Reformation ecclesiological setting speaks to the fact that – at this late-Elizabethan point in the long process of religious reform – parishes were still very much 'religiously mixed communities',[230] comprised of congregants from across the religious spectrum, from dedicated Calvinists to church papists. It is likely that this would have been especially the case in this westerly part of England, where Bishop Bilson noted, in 1596, that Roman Catholics were 'not only of good wealth but of great alliance'.[231] Yet, at the same time, this chapter has also shown that religious imagery was also used by patrons such as Thomas Cornewall - who does not appear to have been anything but conformist – in the post-Reformation parish church setting. For the clever positioning of depictions of the Doom scene, the Nativity, the Passion, and the Resurrection high above both the viewer and the images of the Saints, as well as the use of text as a moderator – 'Regard not these pictures but follow the Lord / As did the apostles in Lyf and in Word' – could be seen to place the *Cornewall Family Memorial* 'in a Reformist context', [232] in which the viewer is instructed to follow the true authority of Christ over all else. Thus – as has been shown by this chapter's considerations of three Marcher memorial commissions - at this point in the long process of religious reform, during the closing years of Elizabeth's reign, religious imagery was clearly still being used by patrons of *memoria* from across the religious spectrum for display in the parish church setting.

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[229] For more on the concept of the civic and religious functions of images in the post-Reformation parish church setting, see: Hamling and Willis.

[230] Marshall, *Heretics and Believers,* p. xvi.

[231] 'Cecil Papers: July 1596, 11-20', p. 297.

[232] Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 196.

Chapter Six – St Donat's: The Stradling Family Memorial Panels

Figure 6.1 Unknown English or Welsh artist, Panel 1 of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels,* 1590, oil on panel, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. Previously in St Donat's Church, St Donat's, Glamorganshire

Figure 6.2 Unknown English or Welsh artist, Panel 2 of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels,* 1590, oil on panel, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. Previously in St Donat's Church, St Donat's, Glamorganshire

Figure 6.3 Unknown English or Welsh artist, Panel 3 of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels,* 1590, oil on panel, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. Previously in St Donat's Church, St Donat's, Glamorganshire

The *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* are comprised of three painted church portrait memorials. The paintings were commissioned by Sir Edward Stradling (c. 1529-1609) and realised in 1590, as attested to in the inscription of Panel 3. The three panels commemorate different generations of the Stradling family of St Donat's.

The Stradling family, despite Edward's claim of Norman descent, probably originated in Strättligen, near Thun, in Switzerland, and are documented as living in Wales from 1284.[1] By the late sixteenth century, the Stradlings had amassed swathes of land throughout south Wales and Somerset, including the St Donat's estate with its imposing castle set on the cliffs above the Glamorganshire coastline.[2] Edward lived at St Donat's, where he cultivated a reputation as a scholar and patron of the arts and learning in south Wales; his will lists a notable collection of books and manuscripts, as well as a large collection of arms and armour and ancient coins.[3] In addition to his scholarly pursuits, Edward was an active participant in Glamorgan politics and society: he was knighted in October 1573, made sheriff in 1573-4, 1582-3, and 1595-6, and by 1590 he was deputy lieutenant of Glamorgan.[4]

As will be discussed in this chapter, the sixteenth century Stradling family were notable Welsh Roman Catholics: Edward's siblings living in religious exile in on the continent; his sister was a nun; and his father had been imprisoned for the distribution and promotion of Roman Catholic miraculous literature. There is no record of non-conformity attached to Edward, although it is worth noting that his wife's family were documented recusants.

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[1] Ralph Griffiths, 'The Rise of the Stradlings of St. Donat's', *Morgannwg*, 7 (1963), 15-47; Ralph Griffiths, *Stradling, Sir Edward (c. 1529-1609), antiquary*. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26624> [accessed 14 June 2023].
[2] Ibid.
[3] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 114 393.
[4] Griffiths, 'Rise'; Griffiths, *Stradling, Sir Edward*.

i.   Introduction

Amongst the numerous published works on the Stradling family and the castle of St Donat's during the Elizabethan period, the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* are barely discussed, if they are even mentioned at all.[5] The only significant studies of the three painted church portrait memorials to date are Hannah Woodward's 2012 Master's thesis - which remains unpublished despite the clear significance of her findings for historians, art historians, conservators, curators, and indeed anyone interested in the material culture and socio-religious history of early modern south Wales – and Conservator Charles Reed's 2014 article in the bi-annual journal of the British Association of Paintings Conservators-Restorers.[6] These studies by Woodward and Reed, however, are in the field of conservation science and, as such, they are not historical or art historical investigations into the socio-political and religious significance of the paintings. Indeed Woodward's' primary aim – which she fulfils admirably and thoroughly - is to present and assess 'the methods and materials of regional painting in sixteenth century Britain, focusing upon the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*'.[7]

The *Stradling Family Memorial Panels,* as with nearly all of the nine painted works selected for discussion in this thesis, fall into that over-occupied, and often overlooked, hinterland between art history and history; with their vernacular or naïve aesthetic quality resulting in their neglect by art historians and their very materiality – the fact that they are paintings rather than written documents – perhaps contributing to their neglect by historians. This chapter will redress this balance, and provide, for the first time, an assessment of the

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[5] The key works on the Stradling family and St Donat's Castle during the Elizabethan period are: Griffiths, 'Rise'; Glanmor Williams, 'The Stradling Family', in *The Story of St Donat's Castle and Atlantic College,* ed. by Roy Denning (Cowbridge: D. Brown & Sons in conjunction with Stewart Williams Publishers, Barry, 1983), pp. 17-54; Graham Thomas, 'The Stradling Library at St Donat's Castle', *The National Library of Wales Journal,* 24.4 (1985/86), 402-419; Elisabeth Whittle, 'The Tudor gardens of St. Donat's Castle, Glamorgan, south Wales', *Garden History*, 27.1 (1999), 109-126; Anna Maria Orofino, '"Coelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt": David Stradling (1537 – ca. 1595) and his Circle of Welsh Catholic Exiles in Continental Europe', *Recusant History,* 32 (2014), 139-58. Nineteenth century antiquarian sources are also useful here, specifically the histories of the Stradling family found interspersed amongst the primary sources printed in Traherne and Clark. See: *Stradling Correspondence: a series of letters written in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, with notices of the family of Stradling of St. Donat's Castle, Co. Glamorgan*, ed. by John Traherne (London: Longman, 1840); George Thomas Clark, *Thirteen views of the Castle of St. Donat's, Glamorganshire* (Shrewsbury: Adnitt & Naunton, 1871).

[6] Hannah Woodward 'A Study of Sixteenth Century Regional British Painting Practice; Technique and Materials of the Stradling Family Memorial Panels, c.1590' (unpublished master's thesis, Northumbria University, 2012); Charles Reed, 'Conservation of the Stradling Family Memorial Panels', *Picture Restorer*, 45 (2014), 10-15.

[7] Woodward, 'Sixteenth Century Regional British Painting Practice', p. 6.

medium, location, and iconography of the three paintings within their wider social, geographic, and religious context, as well as within their specific context of creation through the patronage of Edward Stradling during the late Elizabethan period. Indeed, this thesis contains the first analysis of the possible meanings, purpose, and functions of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*, as well as the potential aims and intentions of their patron. It is, in addition, the first time that archival material – specifically testamentary evidence and the cache of letters written by and to Edward Stradling – will be presented and analysed alongside the material evidence of the paintings, other Stradling *memoria* in St Donat's parish church, and the architectural evidence found within St Donat's Castle. In so doing, this chapter will seek to understand the religious orientation of the sitter and how this may have affected his commissioning of the painted wooden memorials, as well as the significance of the parish church setting to the meaning and function of the objects.

As such, a key aim of this chapter is to highlight the importance of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* – three paintings executed in the late sixteenth century vernacular idiom, most likely painted by a local, heraldic artist, and commissioned for display in a small church on the Glamorgashire coast – to our understanding of late sixteenth century artistic and ecclesiological patronage and creation in south Wales, and, more specifically, of the effects of Protestant reform on the visual culture of commemoration in the provincial parish church setting. Beginning with a presentation and analysis of the context in which the paintings were commissioned and created - focusing on the diocese of Llandaff and the parish of St Donat's - this chapter will then consider the effects of Reformed soteriology and Elizabethan politics on the patronage of memorial art for the Welsh ecclesiological space, with specific reference to the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels.* Questions of meaning, function, and purpose will be explored, with a particular focus on the role of *memoria* in fashioning and presenting the conformist identity of the patron in response to the Roman Catholicism of his family. As such, the following three research questions will be pursued throughout this chapter: What can be gleaned about the religious orientation of the patron from the visual evidence? How did Edward Stradling use *memoria* as a signal of conformity? How did religious reform, and the uncertainty of the immediate post-Reformation political and religious landscape, impact the creation of these three painted wooden objects of remembrance?

ii.   Context of Production

a)   The diocese of Llandaff

The parish of St Donat's, within the Deanery of the Vale of Glamorgan (part of the Archdeaconry of Margam), lies to the west of the small market town of Llantwit Major. [8] The parish has been part of Llandaff diocese since the twelfth century, which was still, in the sixteenth century, a largely rural diocese with small towns found throughout: Llantwit Major, Newport, Usk, Chepstow, Abergavenny, Cardiff, Cowbridge, Kenfig, and Neath all fall within the diocesan map.[9] Even within the context of the Reformation in Wales, the pace and character of which is generally considered by historians to have been 'sluggish and piecemeal',[10] with the continuation of a 'non-militant Catholicism',[11] whereby 'traditional practices and beliefs continued to coexist with the established church',[12] and thus 'Reformed beliefs were patchy and slow to develop',[13] Protestantism appears to have been particularly slow to take seed in Llandaff. In an account sent to the Privy Council in 1577, the Bishop of Llandaff, William Bleddyn, reported the highest number of recusants (13 in total) out of all the dioceses of Wales, as well as the presence of at least four known Catholic priests, and a general 'slackness' amongst sheriffs and justices of the peace in monitoring the presence of traditional beliefs and practices amongst the clergy and laity.[14] Bishop Bleddyn's report was in fact an underrepresentation of recusancy in the diocese: the late Sir Glanmor Williams – the leading historian of early modern Wales – has shown that there were actually close to 400

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[8] *Vale of Glamorgan*, <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/structure/deanery/132/> [accessed 22 June 2023].

[9] Rhianydd Biebrach, 'Monuments and commemoration in the Diocese of Llandaff, c.1200-c.1540' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Swansea University, 2010), p. 13.

[10] Katharine Olson, 'Slow and Cold in the True Service of God': Popular Beliefs and Practices, Conformity and Reformation in Wales, c. 1530-c.1600', in *Christianities in the Early Modern Celtic World,* ed. by Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin and Robert Armstrong (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 92-107 (p. 99).

[11] Glanmor Williams, *Wales and the Reformation* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), p. 279.

[12] Madeline Gray, 'Reforming Memory: Commemoration of the Dead in sixteenth century Wales', *Welsh History Review*, 26.2 (2012), 186-214 (p. 190).

[13] Rhianydd Biebrach, *Church Monuments in South Wales, c. 1200-1546* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017), p. 175.

[14] Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, p. 264.

recusants in Llandaff (381 in total), equating to 'the highest proportion of recusants to Anglican communicants of any diocese in England and Wales'.[15]

The term, 'slackness', used by Williams to characterise attitudes to religious reform throughout Llandaff is particularly illuminating: a sense of 'slackness' could be attributed to both the appropriation of the New Faith and the retention of the Old in the diocese and, indeed, throughout south Wales. This was certainly the case during the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations, when no great rebellions took place akin to the Pilgrimage of Grace, or the 1549 uprising in northern England, whilst, at the same time, there is little evidence of the evangelical message regarding the presence of imagery in churches, for example, being widely accepted at the popular, or even clerical, level.[16] For as Rhianydd Biebrach has demonstrated, there were relatively low levels of image damage or destruction across south Wales and the diocese of Llandaff during not just during the early years of the Reformation, but the entirety of the sixteenth century; local attitudes towards imagery – including figurative monuments and memorials - as well as towards places associated with the saints such as shrines and holy wells, were generally protective rather than destructive.[17]

In many of the cases where the destruction of images did take place, this was often the work of government authorities as opposed to local parishioners or clergy, and – considering that Llandaff was a particularly poor diocese – it is possible that certain iconoclasts were in fact driven by potential financial gain as opposed to any kind evangelical opposition to imagery in the ecclesiological space.[18] In the Lady Chapel of Llandaff Cathedral, for example, the treasures of the shrine of St Telio - comprised of images, adorned with precious metals and gems, of the founding saints of the diocese (Telio, Dyfrig, and Oudoceus) and the twelve apostles – were removed by the Cathedral Canons in 1538, ostensibly for their protection.[19] However, the fact that the Canons were also accused of removing paving stones throughout

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[15] Olson, p. 99. See: Williams, *Wales and the Reformation,* p. 375.

[16] Williams, *Wales and the* Reformation, pp. 32-38, p. 264; Biebrach, 'Monuments and commemoration in the Diocese of Llandaff', p. 44; Biebrach, *Church Monuments in South Wales*, pp. 175-176; Gray, 'Reforming Memory', pp. 190-192; Olson, p. 94.

[17] Biebrach, 'Monuments and commemoration in the Diocese of Llandaff', pp. 35-48; Biebrach, *Church Monuments in South Wales,* pp. 171-178.

[18] Biebrach, 'Monuments and commemoration in the Diocese of Llandaff', p. 13.

[19] Williams, *Wales and the Reformation,* pp. 127-128; Biebrach, *Church Monuments in South Wales,* p. 176.

the Cathedral as well as the brass from three late-medieval monuments, would suggest that these particular churchmen were motivated more by earthly reward than fear that this sacred imagery and, in particular, the illusory presence attached to the images of the saints, may suffer damage from iconoclasts.[20]

In the most general of terms, the Marian period saw a continuation of this 'slackness' both towards the upholding of the New Faith, and the embracing of the Counter Reformation in south Wales: compared to England, there were relatively few Protestants who went into exile and particularly few instances of martyrdom, whilst at the same time there was no great rush amongst the Welsh gentry and elites to relinquish the gains made through the Dissolution of the Monasteries, nor was there much increase in the provision for post-mortem prayer within Welsh wills of the Marian period.[21] Even into the Elizabethan period, this apathy continued. A combination of linguistic barriers, poverty, and a profound continued attachment to rituals and objects associated with the landscape (and often with the saints), as well as important popular literary and commemorative traditions such as the bardic *marwnad,* meant that the progress of religious reform, at least in south Wales, continued to be slow and, as has been argued by numerous historians, less visible than in England.[22]

Overall, however, historians tend to view the Reformation in Wales as a success of sorts, for despite it taking several decades into the seventeenth century for Calvinism to become widespread at the lay level,[23] outward religious conformity and loyalty to the Elizabethan Settlement was, by the end of the sixteenth century, relatively widespread amongst the upper-gentry and elites of Wales, indeed it was often members of the gentry who were charged with ensuring conformity in their individual localities, even if they undertook this charge with a relatively limited degree of enthusiasm.[24] The survival of a significant amount

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[20] Biebrach, *Church Monuments in South Wales,* p. 176.
[21] Olson, p. 97; Gray, 'Reforming Memory', p. 142.
[22] Olson, pp. 92-107; Gray, 'Reforming Memory', pp. 186-214; Felicity Heal, *Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 107-109; Alexandra Walsham, 'Holywell: Contesting Sacred Space in Early Modern Wales', in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe,* ed. by Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 211-36.
[23] Olson, p. 107; Densil Morgan, 'Calvinism in Wales, c. 1590-1909', *Welsh Journal of Religious History,* 4 (2009), 22-36, (pp. 22-27); Densil Morgan, *Theologia Cambrensis, Protestant Religion and Theology in Wales, Volume I: 1588-1760. From Reformation to Revival* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019), pp. 11-83.
[24] Olson, pp. 98-101.

of medieval religious imagery in Llandaff Cathedral, for example, implies that the call to rid churches of potentially illusory imagery went largely unheeded in this particular part of South Wales: images of the Virgin and Child, Christ in Majesty, the Passion, souls being lifted to heaven, and several monuments with depictions of monastic mourners all remain intact.[25]

Of course, the appearance of conformity did not always translate to an acceptance of the New Faith. We know that several prominent families in Elizabethan Wales remained devoted Roman Catholics, with varying degrees of openness.[26] As was the case in England, and has been addressed throughout this thesis, the confessional scale during the post-Reformation period was wide in Wales: from fervent Protestantism to crypto- or inwardly remaining Roman Catholicism, to outright recusancy. We have already seen how rates of recusancy in the diocese of Llandaff were particularly high during the Elizabethan period, so it is thus unsurprising that certain members of the Stradling family of St Donat's Castle openly retained their Roman Catholic faith during the late sixteenth century. As will be discussed later in this chapter, Thomas Stradling (father of Edward Stradling, patron of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*), was imprisoned under Elizabeth I for the distribution of heretical material and the promotion of Roman Catholic miracles, whilst David and Damascene Stradling (siblings of Edward) lived in faith-based exile in Spain (where Damascene was a nun), and the family of Edward's wife were also Roman Catholics. Edward himself, however, showed no outward signs of allegiance – confessional or political – to the Old Faith, quite the opposite: as will be suggested in this chapter, he strove to present the image of conformity through his various cultural commissions (including the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*), the company that he kept, and his diligent upholding of the Elizabethan Religious Settlement.

b) St Donat's

The small coastal parish of St Donat's is dominated by St Donat's Castle, which today houses Atlantic College, an international school which is part of the United World Colleges group.[27] The castle stands high on the cliffs of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, with panoramic views

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[25] Biebrach, 'Monuments and commemoration in the Diocese of Llandaff', pp. 46-47.
[26] Olson, pp. 99-100.
[27] See: *UWC Atlantic College,* <https://www.atlanticcollege.org> [accessed 23 June 2023].

across the sea and over the village, and the terraced gardens slope downwards to a small beach. This imposing and beautiful site has been continuously occupied since the twelfth century and was home to the Stradling family from the thirteenth century until 1783, when Sir Thomas Stradling was killed in a duel in France and the St Donat's estate passed to his friend Sir John Tyrwhitt.[28] The small parish church of St Donat's sits in a recess of land behind and beneath the castle and, as well as the main public gate into the churchyard, it would have once been accessible directly from the castle; a door from the churchyard leads to a set of stairs (now overgrown and unusable) which lead up to the castle:

Figure 6.4 View of St Donat's parish church and churchyard in the foreground with St Donat's Castle in the background

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[28] *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan: The Later Castles from 1217 to the Present, Vol. 3, Pt. 1b: Medieval Secular Monuments* (Aberystwyth: Royal Commission on Ancient & Historical Monuments in Wales, 2000), pp. 307-312.

Figure 6.5 View of the doorway leading from St Donat's churchyard to the stairs up to St Donat's Castle

Figure 6.6 View of the stairs leading up to St Donat's castle from the churchyard of St Donat's

Architecturally and spatially, therefore, there is a close link between the castle and the church. This link was enhanced, and given a further memorial and familial element, through

the creation of the Stradling Chapel by Thomas Stradling,[29] and the re-interment by Edward Stradling of previous generations of the family in this space, as described in the inscriptions across the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*. As mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, it is only through visiting the St Donat's site that the close spatial and architectural link between these domestic and sacred settings - the castle and the church - can be fully appreciated: when you stand in the churchyard it is impossible to ignore the towering presence of the castle. In choosing to re-inter previous generations of Stradlings in the church of St Donat, and in commissioning the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* for display where his ancestors were buried and where he would, after his own death, 'KEEPE THEM BODELY COMPANY IN THIS SEALFE SAME PLACE',[30] Edward therefore ensured that the living inhabitants of the castle would continue to be intimately linked to their forebears.

The Stradling panels are three individual paintings representing three generations of the Stradling family. Sir Edward Stradling (1529-1609) was the patron of these painted church portrait memorials, all three of which – as we are told in the inscription in Panel 3 - were created in 1590. Therefore, whilst the first two paintings in the series portray deceased sitters – in chronological order, Panel 1 is of Thomas (d. 1480) and Jenet (d. 1533) Stradling and Panel 2 is of Edward (d. 1535) and Elizabeth (d. 1513) Stradling – Panel 3, which represents Edward and his wife Agnes (1547-1624), was painted during their lifetime, as the inscription in Panel 3 clearly states. Although the three panels are distinct, rather than physically joined, they were almost certainly displayed together in the Stradling Chapel of St Donat's church from the time of their completion in 1590, as indicated by the inscription in Panel 3:

> SIR / EDWARD NOWE IN HIS LIFETIME HATH SET FORTH THIS MONUMENTS OF THES HIS / AUNCESTORS DECEASSED AND BY GODS GRACE MEANETH BOTH HE AND HIS WIFE AFTER THEIR / DECEASSE TO KEEPE THEM BODELYCOMPANY IN THIS SEALFE SAME PLACE ANNO DOMINI. 1590

This inscription makes clear Edward's intention, that the memorial paintings – described as 'MONUMENTS' should accompany the bodies of himself, his wife, and his Stradling forbears:

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[29] PROB 11 114 393.

[30] This quote is taken from the inscription at the bottom of Panel 3 of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels.*

'THIS SEALFE SAME PLACE' can therefore be read, in this context, as meaning the Stradling chapel at St Donat's church.

The *Stradling Family Memorial Paintings* and the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* are the only painted church portrait memorials analysed in this thesis that are no longer housed in their original display settings. Whilst the Stradling panels are now on display in the National Museum of Wales (NMW), Cardiff, it is highly likely that the paintings remained in the chapel attached to St Donat's church from their installation in 1590 until they were stolen from the church sometime between 29 December and 31 December 1991. In 1992, they were transferred to the NMW.[31] Eye witness accounts confirm that they were *in situ* in the early-nineteenth century: a 'W.H.T' describes seeing 'three curious old paintings on panel' in the chapel during a visit to St Donat's in May 1821, and indeed his description of the images and iconography matches the *Stradling Family Memorial Paintings*.[32] Similarly, the American journalist and folklorist Wirt Sikes, in his recollections of a trip to 'the Wild Welsh Coast' in 1833, describes seeing what can only have been the memorial paintings: 'in a little chapel attached to the church are tablets of wood…which tell the tales of the past in resonant inscriptions, and bear pictures of knights in armor and ladyes fayre.'[33]

Extant material evidence in St Donat's church further corroborates the presence of the paintings in the Stradling chapel, which today functions as the church's vestry. For example, the three metal hooks which once almost certainly held the *Stradling Memorial Panels* remain affixed to the west wall of the chapel:[34]

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[31] For more on the theft of the paintings see: London, National Portrait Gallery, Heinz Archive, Stradling; *St Donat's Church, St Donat's*, <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/227714/details/st-donats-church-st-donats> [accessed 10 September 2020].

[32] 'Letter from W.H.T to Mr. Urban (21 May 1821)', *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle* (London: John Nichols and Son, 1821), pp. 489-491.

[33] Wirt Sikes, 'The Wild Welsh Coast', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine,* LXVI (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1833), 325-353 (pp. 331-332).

[34] The three hooks are visible in the middle of the wall, above the radiator and below the wall bracket which might have once displayed a Stradling funerary helmet. It is tempting to speculate that this helmet could have belonged to Edward (patron of the memorial portraits), and perhaps even been the one depicted on the table between Edward and Agnes in Panel 3. Frustratingly, however - and as is so often the case when studying sixteenth century material culture - the helmet is now lost, and thus no firm conclusion can be drawn.

Figure 6.7 View of the west wall of the Stradling Chapel, St Donat's Church, with three hooks and one wall bracket visible

These three hooks are spaced evenly apart and occupy a wall which is free of any other type of memorial or monument. Unlike the other three walls of the chapel – the north wall is taken over by a door out to the churchyard and a large wall monument, the smaller east wall is occupied by a large window, and the south wall has a door to the nave and two further wall monuments – this west wall of the chapel is entirely empty: there is a blank space where the painted church memorial paintings would have once almost certainly been displayed.

During their treatment at the NMW, metal fixtures were removed from the top middle of the *verso* of each Stradling painted panel. These fixtures, it is suggested here, would have once been used to hang the paintings from the hooks in the Stradling chapel at St Donat's Church:

Figure 6.8 Two metal fixtures previously attached to the *versos* of two of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*

When assessed in conjunction, the presence of the hooks in the church and the metal fixtures which were once attached to all three of the Stradling painted church memorial portraits, would indicate that the panels had been displayed in this position in the St Donat's vestry for a significant amount of time prior to their theft in the 1990s. Indeed, both the hooks and the metal fixtures show signs of significant age, weathering, and visible decay.[35]

The Stradling panels are the only examples amongst the painted church portrait memorials considered in this thesis where it is possible to categorically state that the main subjects of commemoration – in this case, the patron Edward and his wife Agnes - were alive at the time that the relevant painting was created: the viewer is explicitly told, through the use of text, that Edward 'NOWE IN HIS LIEFETIME HATH SET FORTH THIS MONUMENTS'. Panel 3, therefore, at the time of its creation, was more like a *memento mori* portrait than a church monument; despite the inscription describing it as a 'MONUMENT', at the time of its installation in the chapel, Panel 3 did not hold a monumental function. After all, with the subjects still living, it would be impossible to indicate the place of their burial. Unlike, for

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[35] I am grateful to Adam Webster and Kitty McKenny for their comments, and for showing me the metal fixtures in the Conservation Studio at the NMW. I am also grateful to Adam, Kitty, and the parish of St Donat's for permitting me to reproduce images of the *Stradling Family Memorial Paintings* taken by the NMW in 2018 following their conservation treatment at the museum.

example, the three Marcher memorials considered in Chapter Five of this thesis and the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* in Adderbury, all of which held both a commemorative and a monumental function, Panel 3 of the *Stradling Memorial Panels* is unique in that it pre-empts its future function as both an object of remembrance and a church monument.

It is therefore suggested here that the large blank space below the inscription in Panel 3 was most likely left with the intention of being completed after Edward and Agnes' death and subsequent burial in the Stradling chapel. After the erection of the stone monument to Edward on the north wall of the chancel, however, it is possible that it was no longer considered necessary to complete the inscription in Panel 3; the inscription in the new stone monument may have fulfilled this role:

Figure 6.9 Wall monument to Edward Stradling, Stradling Chapel, St Donat's Church
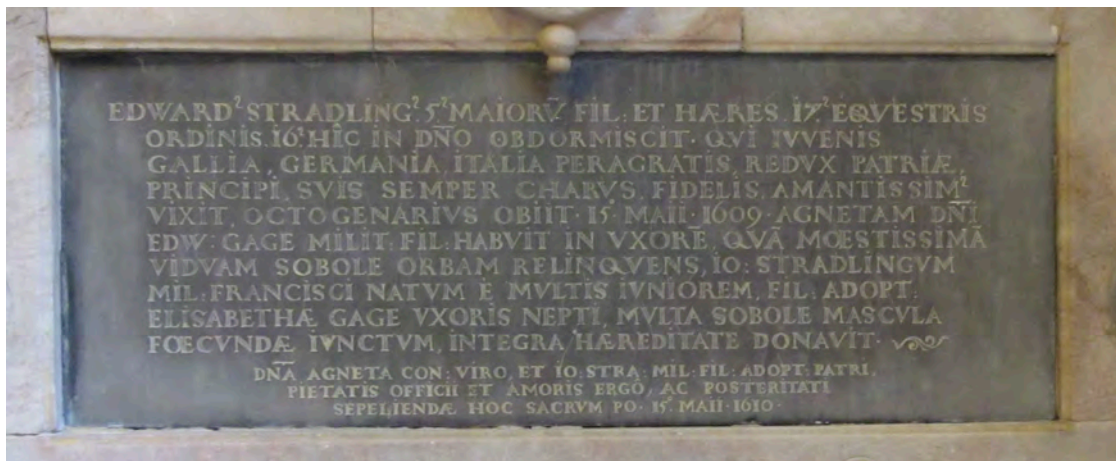
Figure 6.10 Detail of the lower inscription on the wall monument to Edward Stradling, Stradling Chapel, St Donat's Church

This monument was erected in 1610, following Edward's death in 1609. Indeed, in his will, Edward states his wish to be buried in the chapel 'built by my father adjoining to the parish church of St Donat betwixt my great-Grandfather and grand-Mother on the north side and my father on the south side' and leaves money to his cousin and heir, John Stradling, for the creation of a 'tomb monument' in this same space.[36] After Edward's death and burial in the chapel, Panel 3 of the *Stradling Memorial Panels* would thus come to realise a monumental function alongside the stone wall monument: it can therefore now be classed – alongside the other paintings selected for study in this thesis - as a composite object type, functioning as both a commemorative portrait and a funerary monument, sitting at the intersection between *memento mori* portraiture and tomb monuments.

iii.   Meanings, Purposes, and Functions: 'VERTUES HOLE PRAISE CONSISTETH IN DOING'

Edward Stradling commissioned the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* at a time in his life when the transient nature of human existence might have weighed particularly heavily on his mind. The inscription in Panel 3, underneath the depiction of Edward and Agnes, confirms the 1590 date of the paintings, and that Edward was still living when they were created: 'EDWARD

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[36] PROB 11 114 393

NOWE IN HIS LIFETIME HATH SET FORTH THIS MONUMENTS…ANNO DOMINI 1590'. Although it is of course impossible to say for sure, it is suggested here that, at the time of commissioning the paintings, Edward was most probably living if not quite in expectation of his imminent death, then most probably with an ever-increasing awareness of his own transience. Born in 1529, by 1590 Edward would have been sixty years old, as is recorded on Panel 3: 'AENO. ATATIS SUE /. 60'. By early modern standards, this was a relatively advanced age. Edward's father Thomas, for example, died at seventy-three, and Edward's grandfather (also called Edward, and depicted in Panel 2 of the paintings) died at roughly sixty years of age. It is certainly possible that Edward had already begun to suffer from ill health, or at the least would have been experiencing the natural effects of ageing: by 1609, aged seventy-nine, and 19 years after the creation of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels,* he was deceased. Thus, Edward's decision to commission this pre-emptive monument and visual memorialisation of himself took seed during the twilight period of his life, when he would have most likely had an increased awareness of his own mortality, and the transient nature of human life in general.

a) Creating

The desire to be remembered after death has been considered as a motivation behind Elizabethan artistic patronage in the ecclesiological space throughout this thesis, and indeed, it is likely that this was a major factor in Edward's decision to commission the memorial panels during the later period of his life. However, the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* portray several different generations of Stradlings and are full of information – transmitted through both text and image - about the lives, achievements, and social statuses of various family members; these paintings were thus not intended solely to memorialise but also to celebrate the people depicted both as individuals and on a collective, familial level. The inscription boxes below the subjects in all three Stradling panels exhibit a genealogical theme: details of the births, marriages, achievements, deaths, and burials of the subjects are recounted. For example, in Panel 2, the visual is used to remind the viewer that the Stradling family helped achieve victory over the French during the Siege of Tournai:

Figure 6.11 Detail from Panel 2 of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* showing Edward Stradling IV in armour

Here, Edward Stradling IV, who, following the capture of the city, was knighted by Henry VIII in Tournai Cathedral on 25 September 1513, is depicted kneeling in armour, as if he has just come off the battlefield.[37] In choosing to present the subject in military dress, the patron is thus remining the viewer of the heroism and patriotism of his family.

Similarly, the central inscription in Panel 1 (between the figures of Thomas and Jenet Stradling), recounts the bravery of Harry Stradling (c. 1423-77):

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[37] Griffiths, 'Rise', p. 30; Clark, p. 12.
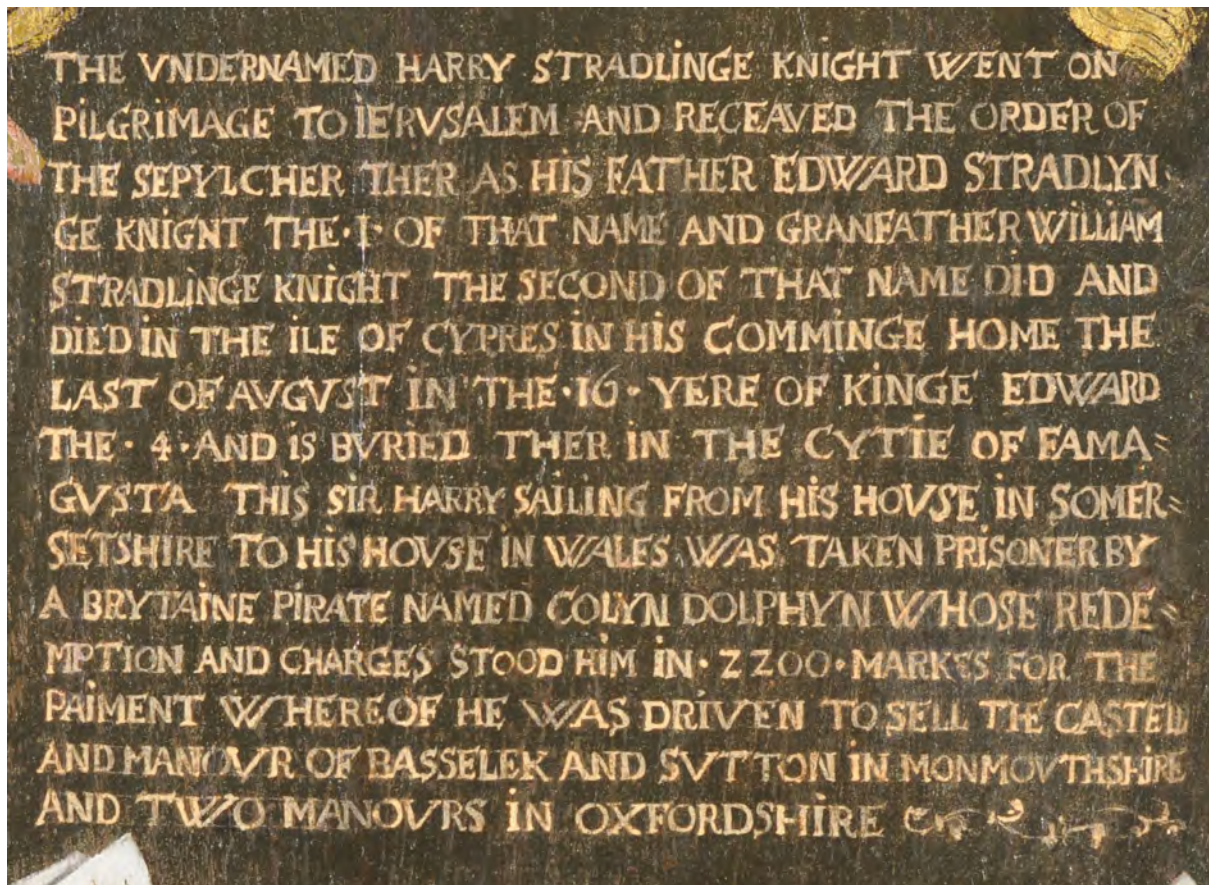
Figure 6.12 Detail of the central inscription from Panel 1 of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*

This inscription tells us that Harry Stradling was awarded the Order of the Sepulchre during his pilgrimage to Jerusalem (thus proclaiming his piety to the viewer), and that he survived a period of imprisonment when he was captured by a Breton pirate called Colyn Dolphyn. As patron of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels,* it is highly likely that Edward would have specifically instructed the artist to include this tale in his commission, and indeed it is also included in Edward's literary genealogical work, *The Winning of the Lordship of Glamorgan out of the Welshman's Hands*.[38]

These two cultural commissions by Edward Stradling are the first known recorded accounts of the tale of Harry Stradling and Colyn Dolphyn; it is possible that the patron may have been

[38] Edward Stradling, 'Winning of the Lordship of Glamorgan' in Rice Merrick, *Morganiae Archaiographica*, ed. by Brian Li James (Barry Island: South Wales Record Society, 1983), pp. 150-164.

somewhat liberal with the truth in order to perpetuate a sense of Stradling heroism and mythology. Certainly, the tale has endured to become a mainstay of local folklore, and the Stradling name has long been, and indeed still is, spoken in connection with Colyn Dolphyn. The nineteenth century Glamorgan poet Taliesin Williams, for example, wrote a lyric poem, *The Doom of Colyn Dolphyn* in which he recounts Harry Stradling's capture and subsequent (undocumented) execution of Dolphyn;[39] it is referred to by antiquarians such as George Clark and modern historians like Ralph Griffiths;[40] and the tale is still told today by local historians and school children alike. Glamorgan local historian Graham Loveluck-Edwards, for example, includes it in his 2022 *History from the Vale of Glamorgan* YouTube series, whilst in 2009 the children of Wick and Marcross Primary School made a YouTube video about Harry Stradling and Colyn Dolphyn, rather charmingly interspersed with images of St Donat's Castle and details from the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*.[41]

The watchtower on the St Donat's Castle estate has also become tangled up in the story of Harry Stradling and Colyn Dolphyn. The antiquarian George Clark, in 1871, wrote that Harry Stradling is said to have built the structure, 'certainly to little purpose' considering his capture,[42] and the 2007 *Survey of County Treasures* for the Vale of Glamorgan, which provides an inventory of 1200 monuments in the Vale, similarly claims that the watchtower at St Donat's Castle is 'probably C15 in origin…erected as a lookout by Sir Harry Stradling'.[43] No evidence is provided for this claim, and it is worth noting that the *Survey of County Treasures* was compiled by volunteers for the local authority's planning department.[44] It thus does not purport to be a work of architectural history but rather an inventory of monuments and their locations. What the survey reveals, however, in asserting that the watchtower was built in the fifteenth century by Harry Stradling as a lookout, is the extent to which the tale has seeped into local consciousness: the effects of Edward's sixteenth century cultural commission can

[39] Taliesin Williams, *The Doom of Colyn Dolphyn* (London; Merthyr Tydfil: Longman & Co, 1837).
[40] Griffiths, 'Rise', p. 28; Clark, pp. 6-7.
[41] *The murder of Colyn Dolphin at Tresilian Bay*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIPJFrm6VYg> [accessed 14 June 2023]; *Colyn Dolphyn*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8aVQeJbONw> [accessed 14 June 2023].
[42] Clark, p. 7.
[43] *The Vale of Glamorgan County Treasures: St Donat's*, (Vale of Glamorgan Council, 2007), p. 25. <https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/files/Living/Planning/Policy/County_Treasures/St_Donats.pdf> [accessed 24 November 2020].
[44] Ibid, p. i.

still be felt today. A study commissioned by the *Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales* in 2000, however, indicates that the earliest parts of the watchtower structure in fact date to the later years of the sixteenth century, as opposed to the fifteenth.[45] It is therefore suggested here that the watchtower was most likely built by Edward – in a signal of his dedication and loyalty to Elizabeth's Protestant rule - as part of his expansion and fortification of the St Donat's estate, in response to the recurrent threat of Spanish invasion (and thus what would have been an inevitable return to Roman Catholicism).

Edward's celebration of his family's armigerous status is also evident in the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels,* most obviously through the careful representation of heraldic shields in each panel, but also through the depiction of the symbolic objects displayed on the table between the subjects in each: Panel 1 depicts a feathered cap adorned with medals, and Panels 2 and 3 show plumed helmets atop the tables. These iconographic symbols of nobility and military achievement are given prime position within the composition of each panel; they occupy the central space in between each Stradling couple, therefore ensuring that the viewer is immediately confronted with, and reminded of, the status of the family. Furthermore, the Stradling family motto, *Duw a Digon,* is carefully reproduced below each male's heraldic shield. This Old Welsh phrase - which translates to as 'God is enough' or 'With God, enough' - can also be seen on the outer southern wall of the Elizabethan Long Gallery at St Donat's Castle, where there is a terracotta roundel depicting the motto alongside the Stradling stag.[46] This heraldic architectural ornamentation is a fascinating survival; we know that Edward Stradling V instructed the remodelling of the Long Gallery, so it is highly likely that he was also responsible for the creation and installation of this display of both nobility (through the iconography of the Stag) and piety (through the motto *Duw a Digon*) on the outer – and therefore most visible - wall of his home.[47]

Edward's keen antiquarian interest in Stradling genealogy is further evidenced by his pseudo-scholarly treatise, *The Winning of the Lordship of Glamorgan out of the Welshman's Hands*,

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[45] For a diagrammatic cross-section of the St Donat's watchtower, including dates of construction, see: *Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan*, p. 339.

[46] Alan Hall, *St Donat's Castle: A guide and brief history* (Clydach Vale: Zenith Media, 2013), p. 10.

[47] Griffiths, *Stradling, Sir Edward*.

probably written at some point between 1561 and 1566 and then published in 1584 as part of David Powel's *The Historie of Cambria now called Wales*.[48] This work became relatively well known amongst Elizabethans even at Court level; Edward seems to have compiled the Stradling pedigree at the behest of William Cecil, a fellow antiquarian as well as Secretary of State, and at least one copy was kept at Court by Blanche Parry, a distant Stradling cousin employed as 'chief gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber to Queen Elizabeth, and keeper of the Queen's jewels'.[49] The translation of the work into Welsh suggests that it was also read and circulated closer to home.[50] In the *Winning of the Lordship of Glamorgan out of the Welshman's Hands,* Edward goes to great lengths to establish the antiquity of the Stradling family, at some points reporting folklore as if it were fact: he claims that the Stradlings were descended directly from the Normans, when in fact 'the first Stradling to settle in England, John "de Estratlinges" arrived in the train of Otto de Granson, soldier, diplomat and royal administrator in North Wales and the Channel Islands, and Edward I's staunch friend'.[51] This means that the Stradling family did not appear in Glamorgan until some two hundred years after the Norman Conquest of 1066.

However, the historicity of - and whether Edward truly believed in – this tale of Stradling ancestry is, for the purposes of this study, immaterial. What matters is that Edward chose to include it in his commission, thus further illuminating his unceasing desire to promote and celebrate his family's reputation and right to a hereditary lordship. Moreover, his ardent claim that the Stradlings arrived in Glamorganshire and specifically to St. Donat's with the Normans, could be seen to reveal his attachment to the land and castle, and possibly partly accounts for his decision to embark on what would have been a lengthy and costly programme of refurbishment of both the castle and gardens.[52] After all, with such a historic and illustrious pedigree (even if not entirely true) now, as result of the publication and relatively wide dissemination of *The Winning of the Lordship of Glamorgan out of the Welshman's Hands,* firmly in the public sphere of Elizabethan knowledge, Edward might have deemed it prudent to ensure that his estate was suitably impressive: a great lord needs a great castle.

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[48] Stradling, 'Winning of the Lordship of Glamorgan'.
[49] Traherne, p. 235; Griffiths, 'Rise'*,* pp. 15-16.
[50] Griffiths, 'Rise'*,* p. 16.
[51] Griffiths, 'Rise', p. 17.
[52] Griffiths, 'Rise', pp. 42-44.

Alongside remodelling the Long Gallery, which 'is believed to have originally consisted of smaller retiring rooms',[53] Edward was responsible for numerous further improvements and additions to the St Donat's castle and estate, including the addition of spectacular terraced gardens, a vineyard, and two deer parks,[54] as well the installation of an extensive library, which 'became the focus of lyrical acclaim by Archbishop Ussher and other scholars'.[55] For like his friend and eventual executor of his will, John, Lord Lumley, Edward was a great collector of books and manuscripts,[56] and his library at St Donat's castle included many immensely historically valuable texts, including the now lost Register of Neath Abbey.[57] Thus, although Edward did not ignore the practical and essential aspects of lordship and landholding, such as repairing bridges and building sea walls,[58] the changes that he made to St Donat's castle and grounds ultimately ensured that he would be the lord of an eminently fashionable Elizabethan estate. It is likely that Edward's newly remodelled long gallery may have been used to display tapestries as well as portraits and other paintings, as per the great houses of Elizabethan England such as Hardwick Hall and Haddon Hall, and his library quickly

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[53] Hall, p. 10.

[54] As described by Edward's cousin and adopted heir, the poet John Stradling in: John Stradling, *Ad D. Edw. Stradling Equ.: Horti Sui Donataei Descriptio [Ioannis Stradlingi epigrammatum libri quatuor]* (London: George Bishop & John Norton, 1607). For the original Latin version in print, see: Ceri Davies, *Latin Writers of the Renaissance* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1981), pp. 43-44. For an English version of the poem, see: Whittle, p. 1.

[55] Williams, *Wales and the Reformation,* pp. 100-101. See also: Thomas, 'The Stradling Library', p. 402.

[56] Lumley's name is clearly visible on the final page of Edward Stradling's will, see: PROB 11 114 393. The Lumley inventories recorded the vast personal collection of furniture, books, and paintings (including many portraits) of John, Lord Lumley, in 1590. They are an invaluable source of information on Elizabethan literary and artistic tastes and collecting patterns in sixteenth century England. It is regrettable that similar documentation does not survive for Edward Stradling's collection. For more on the Lumley inventories see: *Art Collecting and Lineage in the Elizabethan Age: The Lumley Inventory and Pedigree*, ed. by Mark Evans (London: The Roxburghe Club, 2010). The original manuscript, in ink and watercolour on vellum and bound in red velvet, has been on loan to the V&A from the Duke of Scarborough since 2003: London, Victoria and Albert Museum, LOAN:SCARBROUGH.3-2003. The manuscript was included in the recent V&A exhibition, *Renaissance Watercolours* (5 January – 23 March 2021).

[57] It is likely that the Register was acquired by Edward's father Thomas Stradling (d. 1571), after Neath Abbey was dissolved in 1539. See: Thomas, 'The Stradling Library', p. 404.

[58] John Stradling, 'Epigram 62. To Sir Edward Stradling, Knight, on the seawall at Aberthaw, constructed at his own expense for the containment of the Severn, a Herculean labor completed within five months, 1606', in Dana F. Sutton (trans., ed.), *John Stradling's Epigrammatum Libri Quatuor (1607): A Hypertext Critical Edition*, <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/stradling/> [accessed 2 March 2019].

became well-known and well-used as a lending library amongst his friends and acquaintances, 'who lent chronicles and other books in return'.[59]

These additions and improvements to the St Donat's estate – particularly the installation of continental-style terraced gardens and a vineyard - suggests firstly that Edward was inspired by the Italianate architecture and landscape that he would have seen during his extensive travels throughout continental Europe, culminating in a year-long residency in Rome during the period 1548-9,[60] and secondly that he expected to receive enough guests at his home, and thus consume enough wine, to merit planting and maintaining a vineyard in this particularly wet and windy corner of the south Glamorganshire coastline. Certainly, there is evidence that the renovation works were much admired by visitors to the castle; poet Thomas Leyson was so inspired by the resulting beauty of the St Donat's estate that he wrote a poem extolling the castle and gardens. Although Leyson's Latin poem no longer survives, a contemporaneous Welsh translation by poet John David Rhys is extant and contains specific reference to the improvement and building work commissioned by Edward.[61]

It is thus apparent that Edward Stradling V strove to cultivate an atmosphere of culture, creativity, and scholarship at St Donat's, and around his own person. He was the patron of at least three leading Welsh scholars and poets: Thomas Leyson (1549-c. 1608), John David Rhys (1534-c. 1609), and his cousin and adopted heir John Stradling (1563-1637). These partnerships between patron and poet resulted in the creation of several scholarly and artistic works. In 1592, for example, Edward funded the creation and publication of 1250 copies of the first Welsh grammar in Latin, written by John David Rhys and entitled *Institutiones Linguae Cambricae*.[62] This endeavour was clearly of immense importance to Edward, as he made special mention of the work in his will:

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[59] Griffiths, *Stradling, Sir Edward*. On the purpose and function of the gallery during the post-Reformation period, with a focus on the display of images in this space, see: Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Protestant Britain, c.1560-c.1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 174-198

[60] Ibid.

[61] Cardiff, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 118, 11-19. The manuscript is slightly damaged, but it is in Rhys' own hand and runs to over a hundred lines. See: Ceri Davies, 'Est locus a castro decliui rupe recedens: a sense of place in some Latin works from Glamorgan,' in *Neo-Latin Poetry in the British Isles*, ed. by L.B.T. Houghton and Gesine Manuwald (London: Bristol Classics Press, 2012), pp. 208-30 (p. 213).

[62] PROB 11 114 393; Griffiths, *Stradling, Sir Edward*.

> Item, whereas they were printed at my expense twelve hundred and fifty British grammars, I do give fifty of them ready bound to my friend Mr. Doctor Davys, the author of them, and my will is, that the rest of them shall be given and bestowed from time to time by my cousin, Sir John Stradling, upon such gentlemen and give others as he shall think fit for the advancement of the British tongue.[63]

Here, Edward states his motivation for the dissemination of the grammars as 'the advancement of the British tongue', thus indicating his dedication to the promotion of knowledge and learning even after his own death, and his desire to be remembered as the patron on whose orders and 'at my expense' this important scholarly work was created.

Clearly, therefore, his role as a patron was a crucial part of Edward's identity and, in a letter to Edward dated 12 July 1592, Rhys refers to him as 'my Maecenas,'[64] most likely a reference to Gaius Maecenas (70 BCE – 8 CE), the famed Roman diplomat and patron to Horace and Virgil, whose gardens in Rome were famed for their beauty. One can imagine how delighted Edward – who fashioned himself as a patron of the arts and learning, and invested so much money and time into the remodelling of his home - would have been by this comparison. Indeed, Edward's surviving letters reveal that he strove to maintain a wide circle of illustrious, and intellectual, contacts: there are correspondences with fellow antiquaries Rice Merrick, William Camden and lexicographer Thomas Wiliems, as well as great statesmen such as Francis Walsingham, glamorous adventurers like Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh, leading churchmen such as Gervase Babington, famous poets and literary figures such as Thomas Sackville and the Welsh writer and herald Lewis Dwnn, as well as fellow patron of the arts and famed collector John, Lord Lumley.[65] Furthermore, Edward arranged for his ward Barbara Gamage to marry into the Sidney family, thus ensuring a perpetual connection between the Stradlings and the Sidneys of Penshurst Place, one of the great families of Elizabethan England, notable for their love and patronage of the arts and poetry in particular.[66] Edward clearly valued his connections with the cultural elite of Elizabethan England and Wales, and endeavored to maintain good relations: letters from Francis Walsingham, dated 11 January

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[63] PROB 11 114 393.
[64] Traherne, p. 314.
[65] Traherne.
[66] Griffiths, 'Rise', pp. 39-40.

1585, and Arthur Bassett, dated 6 February 1583, recognise and thank Edward for lending members of the Sidney family the use of his horse and of his harpist on several occasions.[67]

b) Forgetting

Edward's inclusion in, or even just contact with, these kinds of intellectual and artistic social circles would have bolstered his reputation as a scholar and patron of the arts and learning in South Wales. In many ways, he appears to have been the very model of a Renaissance gentleman: a patron of the arts with a wide social circle of erudite friends and acquaintances. Certainly, this is how historians have portrayed him: Williams describes Edward as a 'courtier, man of affairs, and soldier; scholar, man of letters and artist; as virtuous as he was brave; as supple and strong in mind as in body; as sensitive to things of the spirit as he was accomplished in public affairs and skilful in economic management'.[68] Although this is something of an exaggeration, for Edward never actually attained a position at court and there is no record of him fighting in any military campaign, it is nonetheless revealing of his enduring reputation and historical assessment. Thomas' portrayal of Edward is similarly glowing, if slightly more measured: 'one of that new breed of Renaissance gentlemen with a keen interest in antiquarian pursuits, a thirst for knowledge of all kinds, and an awareness of the new ideas circulating in Europe concerning philosophy and the arts'.[69] With an illustrious circle of intellectually minded friends and acquaintances, and having travelled throughout Europe and Italy in particular, one would therefore expect Edward's only known commission within the sphere of the visual arts, and specifically memorial portraiture, to perhaps be a self-aggrandising or self-promoting object, with clearly visible continental influences as per the formal, courtly portraiture of late-sixteenth century England and Wales.

Yet, whilst certain heraldic and familial achievements are certainly, as discussed earlier in this chapter, celebrated and commemorated through the iconography and inscriptions on the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*, Edward's own personal, numerous accomplishments are

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[67] Traherne, p. 31, pp. 239-240.
[68] Glanmor Williams, 'The Stradlings of St Donat's', in *The Vale of History,* ed. by Stewart Williams (Cowbridge: D. Brown and Sons, 1960), pp. 90-94 (p. 90).
[69] See: Thomas, 'The Stradling Library' p. 402.

not referenced at all. Aside from the information about his marriage and age, the paintings tell the viewer only two specific things about Edward Stradling V: firstly, that he is the patron of the paintings, and, secondly, that he transferred the bones of his ancestors from the chancel of St Donat's church to the chapel and that after his death he too wishes to be buried in 'IN THIS SEALFE SAME PLACE'. Edward thus presents himself as a man of pious family duty, as opposed to what the surviving evidence suggests he really was: a fashionable intellectual with an illustrious social circle; an enthusiastic and generous patron of the arts and learning; and the lord and architect of a Renaissance castle complete with famous lending library and its own vineyard. Edward has, in these memorial commissions, humbled himself. The key question, of course, is why?

It is suggested here that Edward, in commissioning the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* might have been striving for a tactful neutrality in terms of his personal representation and, furthermore, that, as patron of the painted church memorial portraits, he made use of iconographic occlusion, or obfuscation, to present himself to the viewer as a model of dutiful piety and, crucially, conformity: a perfect example of the use of the visual for the purposes of 'self-fashioning'. For whilst the paintings depict Edward and his wife Agnes, his grandparents and great-grandparents, there is no panel dedicated to the memory of his parents. It is proposed here, for the first time, that this exclusion of one specific generation from the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* would have been a deliberate choice, indicative of Edward's desire to distance himself from the memory of his father Thomas Stradling, whose open commitment to the Roman Catholic faith caused an enormous amount of trouble for the Stradling family during the Elizabethan period, and particularly for his son.

During the Marian period, most likely at least in part due to their continued and uninterrupted devotion to the Old Faith, the Stradlings had prospered: Thomas was made muster-master of the troops in 1553; justice of the peace in 1554; specially tasked with investigating and punishing the dissemination of heretical material (particularly books) in 1557; and awarded vast swathes of land by the Queen in south Wales and Bedfordshire in 1558.[70] After the accession of Elizabeth I in November 1558, the Stradling family held fast to the Old Faith and

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[70] Griffiths, 'Rise'*,* p. 34; Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, p. 232.

displayed an open lack of religious conformity: not only did Thomas refuse to subscribe to the Act of Uniformity in 1569,[71] but, even worse, some years earlier he had been imprisoned for – and one cannot overlook the element of irony here – the distribution of heretical, seditious material.[72] Thus, Thomas Stradling, who had been tasked with rooting out heretical (Protestant) texts during Mary's reign, was now guilty of circulating heretical (Roman Catholic) material under the new Elizabethan regime.

Thomas' crime was linked to the 'miracle of St Donat's': on 20 March 1559, a storm caused part of an ash tree on the St Donat's estate to keel over and break in two, purportedly revealing the shape of the holy cross in the split trunk of the tree.[73] Thomas arranged for patterns of the cross to be made and disseminated amongst his friends and relatives (including his son David and daughter Damascene, both of whom were Roman Catholics living in exile) and, as news of the miracle spread, local people – particularly 'serten maydens of the Towne of Cowbryge' - began to make a journey of pilgrimage to St Donat's to 'gase upon' the cross.[74] The story – including the pattern of the cross commissioned by Thomas Stradling - was picked up by the Catholic polemicist Nicholas Harpsifeld, who included it in a widely-circulated text of 1566:

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[71] Griffiths, 'Rise', p. 36.

[72] Griffiths, 'Rise', p. 35-37; Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, pp. 232-233; Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity and Memory in early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 218-220.

[73] David Williams, 'The Miracle at St Donat's', *Welsh Review,* 6 (1947), 33-8.

[74] Walsham, *Reformation of the Landscape,* p. 218. Also see: Griffiths, 'Rise', pp. 35-36; Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, pp. 232-233.

Figure 6.13 The pattern of the cross made by Thomas Stradling, from: Nicholas Harpsfield, *Dialogi sex contra summi pontificatus, monasticæ vitæ, sanctorum, sacrarum imaginum oppugnatores, et pseudomartyres* (Antwerp: 1573 edition)

Harpsfield clearly stated his purpose: he intended that his 'countrymen, divinely admonished by such miracles would cease, after the example of St Paul, to persecute Christ in his cross, his image, and his members.'[75] For Thomas Stradling, Nicholas Harpsfield, and most probably his fellow Roman Catholic readers, a miracle such as this would have been a clear sign of God's displeasure at Elizabeth's Protestant nation, and particularly at the renewed proscriptions

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[75] Nicholas Harpsfield, *Dialogi sex contra summi pontificatus, monasticæ vitæ, sanctorum, sacrarum imaginum oppugnatores, et pseudomartyres* (Antwerp: 1573), pp. 360-1. Also see: Walsham, *Reformation of the Landscape*, p. 218; Griffiths, 'Rise', pp. 35-36; Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, pp. 232-233.

against certain types of imagery – 'his cross, his image' – in churches that followed the issuing of the 1559 Injunctions.

Following Harpsfield's publication of the 'miracle of St Donat's' and of Thomas Stradling's pattern of the miraculous cross, the story continued to spread far from south Wales, indicating that it had been appropriated as an international signifier of the true Roman Catholic faith. Indeed, Stradling's account of the miracle was published again by the Cornish recusant and hagiographer Nicholas Roscarrock, who described it in his *Lives of the Saints: Cornwall and Devon*, and it was included in an anonymous publication in Paris in 1566 as well as in a 'Roman Catholic work written in Welsh, presumably by Robert Gwyn. Cardiff Cenrtral Library, Hafod MS. 6, f. 106-7', at some point between 1588 and 1598.[76] Before even Harpsfield's publication, however, the authorities had begun to investigate the case. In 1561, Thomas Stradling has been arrested by William Cecil and imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he wrote to the Queen and Cecil, the Secretary of State, to protest his innocence, claiming that his actions were 'not done upon any seditious purpose or ill intent, but only of ignorance'.[77]

Of course, we will never know whether or not Thomas Stradling was being truthful in these letters, but it is worth remembering that he had spent the previous five years living under Mary I, a staunch promoter of the Counter Reformation and avid persecutor of Protestantism. Thomas may not have been genuinely 'ignorant' of the upset his actions would have caused under the new Elizabethan regime, but a certain degree of confusion as to what was acceptable behaviour – only a year into her reign - would be understandable and perhaps even expected. The whole episode of 'the miracle at St Donat's' helps to further illuminate the tumultuous religious and political upheavals of the sixteenth century and shows how drastically a person's social and political identity could change throughout the long process of religious reform. After all, Thomas Stradling, who had been responsible for investigating heresies against the Roman Catholic faith and the distribution of seditious material under Mary, now became guilty of such activity himself under Elizabeth. Thomas was eventually

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[76] Walsham, *Reformation of the Landscape,* p. 218; Griffiths, 'Rise', p. 35.
[77] London, The National Archives, SP 12 17 19, 20, and 21; Williams, 'The Miracle at St Donat's', p. 37.

released from captivity in October 1563 at a bail price of 1000 marks; an extremely high sum, which must have had some impact on the family finances, not to mention the stain on his reputation and the curtailment of his political career and that of his son. Indeed, Edward would never attain a position at court, and he was barred from sitting on the commission of the peace until after his father's death in 1571.[78]

The continued Roman Catholicism of Edward's siblings David and Damascene would not have helped matters, for, like their father Thomas, they made no attempt at the appearance of conformity: David lived in Spain where he was at the centre of an English Catholic community in exile, and Damascene (also living in exile in Spain) was not only a nun but a companion to the countess of Feria, whose husband was an advisor and confidante of Philip II and prominent supporter of the 1571 Ridolfi Plot to assassinate Elizabeth I and install Mary I of Scotland in her place.[79] Furthermore, Edward's wife Agnes was born into the conspicuously Roman Catholic Sussex Gage family, who continued to publicly proclaim their non-conformity well into the 1590s: in the parish church of Firle, West Sussex, there is a 'series of inscriptions executed c.1585-95 for the monuments of the Catholic Gage family…each unrepentantly proclaiming *quorum animabus propicietur Deus'*.[80] These large monuments are physical, unavoidable declarations of Roman Catholicism; they take up much of the church, and include three sizeable altar tomb chests and the below monumental brass of 1590:

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[78] Griffiths, *Stradling, Sir Edward*.
[79] Griffiths, 'Rise', p. 35; Orofino, pp.142-147.
[80] Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 176.

Figure 6.14 Brass to Thomas and Elizabeth Gage, St Peter's Church, Firle, Sussex © Julian P Guffogg

The final line of the inscription on this monumental brass - QUORUM ANIMABUS PROPICIETUR DEUS - in English meaning 'on whose soul may God have mercy' and thus, by implication calling for intercessory prayer to hasten the soul's progress through purgatory, was commonly found on pre-Reformation memorial brasses throughout England and Wales but, by the post-Reformation period, it was extremely rare.[81] That this brass of 1590 makes use of the phrase is indicative of a publicly pronounced, continued belief in the soteriology of the Old Faith.

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[81] Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead,* p. 175.

It is worth remembering here that the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* were also created in 1590, in the immediate aftermath of the Armada and not long after the various crises surrounding Mary Stuart's claim to Elizabeth's throne. Edward would have thus commissioned the paintings during a period of significant political turbulence, when the threat from Roman Catholicism –and specifically Spain – would have been a vivid, recent memory in the mind of the English and Welsh populace and ruling bodies. As such, it is perhaps unsurprising that Edward took the opportunity, in commissioning these memorial paintings, to distance himself from the open Roman Catholicism and non-conformity of his family and that of his in-laws, and to signal his own conformity and loyalty to Elizabeth's rule and Settlement. In so doing, he would have helped to ensure the continued prosperity of the Stradlings and the St Donat's estate during the tumultuous years of the late-sixteenth century. Indeed, there was significant financial benefit in avoiding any accusation of recusancy: from 1581, Roman Catholic non-conformity could be punished with significant fines and the confiscation of property and lands.[82] It is perhaps to be expected that Edward, who had only recently completed extensive renovations at St Donat's, would endeavour to avoid any risk of these punitive measures.

It is of course impossible to say with any certainty that Edward Stradling was not, when it came to matters of his own religious leanings, a Roman Catholic. He may have maintained all the outward signs of conformity – as indeed did so many of his countrymen – whilst, in his heart, remaining committed to the teachings (including the soteriology) of the Old Faith: 'religious conformity and service to the Crown should not…be taken as directly representative of…personal beliefs or hardened confessional positions'.[83] Whatever Edward's personal faith might have been, however, there is no doubt that he successfully maintained the image of conformity. He actively sought out and befriended influential Protestants both at home in South Wales and abroad: arranging the marriage of his ward Barbara Gamage to Robert Sidney, brother of Sir Phillip Sidney, 'Elizabethan England's model poet-courtier and

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[82] Orofino, p. 150.
[83] Olson, p. 100.

Protestant soldier',[84] and cultivating friendships with two successive bishops of Llandaff - William Bleddyn who held the Bishopric of from 1575 until his death in 1590, and his successor Gervase Babington, who was in post until 1594, when he moved to the see of Exeter and later Worcester.

Edward's relationship with Bishop Babington seems to have been particularly significant; the two corresponded regularly throughout the 1580s and 1590s, and the surviving letters from Babington to Edward reveal a certain level of respect and intimacy between the two men.[85] Babington refers to Edward as 'a pyller of this country' and comments on his 'worshipful goodness' and, in 1583, he dedicated his work *A Very Fruitfull Exposition of the Commaundements by Way of Questions and Answeres* to Edward Stradling alongside 'all other Gentlemen in Glamorgan shire that feare God.'[86] Bishop Babington thus portrays Edward as a respectable man of the Reformed faith, central to the god-fearing gentry and elite of South Wales. Certainly, Edward's careful cultivation of relationships with notable Protestants of the day would have helped to quash any potential underlying doubts about his own religious beliefs or his loyalty to the Elizabethan Settlement: he was clearly at pains to distance himself from any memory of the Roman Catholicism of his father and establish his own reputation as a loyal conformist. When the master of the English College at Rome, for example, wrote to him in 1578 urging him to declare his loyalty to the Roman Catholic faith, Edward immediately reported the letter to the Council of the Marches in Wales.[87] Edward similarly exhibited his dedication to Elizabeth's religious settlement when, in 1582 at the behest of William Bleddyn and 'in her Majesty's service to so good effecte',[88] he rooted out a suspected Anabaptist preacher active in Glamorganshire, 'a person vehemently suspected to be a very disobedient subjecte to her Highness, a greate adversary to her proceedings'.[89]

[84] Elizabeth Goldring, '"In the cause of his God and true religion": Sir Philip Sidney, the *Sequitur Celebritas,* and the Cult of the Protestant Martyt', in *Art Re-Formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 227-242 (p. 227).
[85] For the letters between Babington and Stradling, see: Traherne, pp. 277-289.
[86] Gervase Babington, *A Very Fruitfull Exposition of the Commaundements by Way of Questions and Answeres* (London: Thomas Orwin, for Thomas Charde, 1590), p. 1.
[87] 'Simancas: May 1578', in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2, 1568-1579*, ed. by Martin A S Hume (London, 1894), p. 579. See also: Griffiths, 'Rise', p. 37; Orofino, p. 150.
[88] Traherne, p. 87.
[89] Traherne, pp. 87-88.

c) *Memoria* as a signal of conformity

It is surely then, no surprise that Edward – who had suffered greatly as a result of his father's continued Roman Catholicism - would choose to exclude his father from the portrait memorials that he commissioned, in an endeavour to distance himself from the Old Faith. Yet, Edward's grandparents and great-grandparents, who, having lived prior to the Reformation, would have been Roman Catholics, are celebrated and commemorated in Panels 1 and 2 of the *Stradling Family Memorial panels*. These earlier Stradlings maintained strong connections to the great institutions of the Roman Catholic faith: the inscriptions in Panel 1, for example, tell us that Thomas (d. 1480) 'DYED AT CARDYIFE IN THE MONASTERY OF THE PREACHINGE FRYERS' and that Harry Stradling, his father Edward, and grandfather William had all undergone pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where they had all been made knights of the Sepulchre. During his journey to Jerusalem, Harry Stradling – whose travels and rumoured escape from the pirate Colyn Dolpyn are celebrated in the central inscription of Panel 1 - stopped in Rome where, as a dedicated and pious Roman Catholic, he sought out indulgences from the Pope for both himself and his wife, despite there being 'great labour and cost to get it…I never had so great travail for anything.'[90] Further, Edward Stradling IV (d. 1535, subject of Panel 2) left the seal matrix of Neath Abbey to his second son Harry Stradling in his will; a clear sign of his emotional and spiritual attachment to this important part of monastic, and therefore Roman Catholic, history.[91]

However, these generations of Stradlings lived before the Reformation and thus, crucially, were innocently ignorant of the New Faith. They did not make an active choice to deny the teachings of the Reformers and continue to believe in the existence of purgatory. Harry Stradling might have gone to 'great travail' to seek out indulgences from the Pope, thus limiting the time that their souls would spend in purgatory, but, crucially, he did so in the fifteenth century, decades before the sixteenth century Reformers would teach that such actions were both futile and blasphemous. Clearly, the same cannot be said for Thomas, Edward's father, who even in his will of 1571 - in what could be perceived as a final act of

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[90] Letter from Harry Stradling to his wife, original text and transcript printed in: Clark, pp. 10-11.
[91] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 25 477; Thomas, 'The Stradling Library at St Donat's Castle', p. 404.

faith-inspired solidarity - singled out his exiled Roman Catholic son David, for a special post-mortem gift of his 'large gold chain' and all of his apparel.[92] With the reputational stain of his father's Catholicism hanging over him, it has thus been suggested here that Edward used the memorial paintings as a tool to cement his own standing as a loyal conformist.

Indeed, the inscription in Panel 3 of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* (portraying Edward and Agnes) - 'VERTUES HOLE PRAISE CONSISTETH IN DOING. 1590' - occupies a central position within the composition of the painting, thus making a powerful public statement of the patron's purpose. As Woodward notes, this inscription declares 'the commission of the panels to be an act of piety,'[93] thus ensuring that Edward could clearly communicate his message of personal piety to the viewer, as well as highlighting his dutiful and virtuous attempt to ensure the perpetual commemoration of his ancestors in a way which underlines his dedication to the Reformed faith and the Elizabethan Settlement. For whilst the panel paintings discreetly avoid any mention of his father's Catholicism, Edward and Agnes are presented as models of Reformed piety, who kneel in prayer clutching prayer books. As has been discussed in previous chapters of this thesis, the depiction of prayer books is a crucial part of the conformist iconography of Elizabethan English and Welsh *memoria*; it implies the subject's dedication to faith *sola scriptura* and ensures that the depicted supplicants could not be accused of promoting intercessory prayer. For as Llewellyn notes, pre-Reformation funeral monuments in English and Welsh churches would often include 'kneeling mourning figures.. [who]… were traditional figurations of the prayers said for the deceased', whereas by the mid-1500s, and certainly 'well before 1600', the subjects of tombs would be depicted kneeling with the addition of a prayer book. [94]

The depiction of textiles in the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* holds a similar iconographic significance: Edward and Agnes are dressed primarily in black, the colour of piety and mourning, and the inclusion of draped curtains framing each Stradling couple is 'suggestive of a veil between the earth-bound viewer and the realm which the figures of the deceased

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[92] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 53 218.

[93] Woodward, 'Sixteenth Century Regional British Painting Practice', p. 12.

[94] Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 105.

now inhabit.'[95] The use of drapery as an iconographic device to signify the spatial and spiritual difference between the living and the dead, and thus – for the Reformed patron or viewer - to emphasise the futility of intercessory prayer, was a common feature in early modern commemorative paintings. Curtains are used in several of the portraits in this present study - the Harewell memorial in Besford, the Cornewall memorial in Burford, the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* now at the NPG, as well as the Stradling panels – and appear frequently in early modern paintings containing death bed scenes. For example, in *Sir Thomas Aston at the Deathbed of his Wife,*[96] black curtains surround the bed where Magdalene Aston's corpse lies. This creates a clear separation between the deceased subject and the living figures of her husband Thomas and their son. This distinction between the spaces inhabited by the living and the dead is further emphasised by a second depiction of Magdalene, who is this time very much alive and richly dressed, seated just outside of the curtain-framed deathbed 'towards the bottom of the picture in the social space of the living.'[97]

Furthermore, and perhaps most significantly, all three of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* are naïve or vernacular in their quality, terms defined by Tittler as denoting 'those forms of expression that are not based on formal, even quasi-academic, principles or training, and that tend to be rooted instead in local or provincial traditions of craftsmanship.'[98] For whilst it may be true that 'there is evidence of increasing confidence in the faces of the depicted',[99] there is no attempt at a mimetic likeness of the subjects which, whilst being impossible for the deceased Stradlings depicted, would have been entirely achievable for the still-living Edward and Agnes. Edward, for example, simply does not look his true age of 60. The panels are clearly not the work of the highly trained, often foreign-born, artists who were active at court and in aristocratic circles during the 1580s and 1590s. It is suggested here that this was a further deliberate choice by the patron; after all, Edward, with his wide-ranging

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[95] Eade, 'The Triptych Portrait in England, 1575-1646'. p. 9.

[96] Painted by John Souch, oil on panel, c. 1635-6, Manchester Art Gallery.

[97] Llewellyn, *Art of Death,* p. 47. Other examples include: David des Granges, *The Saltonstall Family*, (c.1636-7, oil on canvas, Tate Britain, London); Van Dyck's *Venetia Digby on her Deathbed* (1633, oil on canvas, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London); and the anonymously painted *John Transcendent the elder on his Deathbed* (c. 1638, oil on canvas, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford).

[98] Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 9.

[99] Woodward, 'Sixteenth Century Regional British Painting Practice', p. 9.

social circle, as well as his love for and knowledge of Renaissance arts, learning, and architecture was a member of what Tittler defines as 'the intellectual, social, and political elites, with their more sophisticated and cosmopolitan outlook'.[100] Edward would certainly, therefore, have had both the social contacts and financial means necessary to find and employ a reputable, skilled portrait painter.

Judging by the vernacular quality of the paintings, however, it is most likely that Edward entrusted a local, probably heraldic artist with this memorial commission. Local tradition maintains that that the painter was an early member of the Cardiff-based Byrd family,[101] and this suggestion is included in Wright's authoritative index of British and Irish paintings in public collections,[102] and perpetuated by Woodward.[103] Badham somewhat less confidently states that the panels were 'possibly from a painter named Byrd'.[104] However, the paintings themselves bear no artist's signature or emblem, and there is no record of a painter working under this name (or variants of the name) in any published sources, nor is there any evidence of a late sixteenth or seventeenth century will left by a painter or painter-stainer named Byrd amongst the testamentary collections of the National Archives or the Glamorganshire Record Office. Tittler has come to a similar dead end, noting that 'local tradition identifies the painter's last name as 'Byrd', though nothing else about him has come to light'.[105] With no conclusive evidence linking Byrd to the paintings, and no record of a painter by this name ever having existed, it is therefore impossible to assert that the identity of the author of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels.*

What is clear, however, from the confident handling of the armorial shields in each of the three panels, is that the artist was comfortable painting heraldic devices. This is in great

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[100] Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics*, p. 10.

[101] As suggested by: Adam Webster, Chief Conservator at the National Museum of Wales; the late Alan Hall, former Head of Biology at UWC Atlantic College, St Donat's Castle tour guide, and local Glamorganshire historian; and Alan Davies, Church Warden of St Donat's.

[102] *British and Irish Paintings in Public Collections: An Index of British and Irish Oil Paintings by Artists Born Before 1870 in Public and Institutional Collections in the United Kingdom and Ireland*, ed. by Christopher Wright (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 224.

[103] Woodward, 'Sixteenth Century Regional British Painting Practice', p. 8.

[104] Badham, 'A Painted Canvas', p. 99.

[105] Robert Tittler, 'The malleable moment in English Portraiture, c. 1540-1640', in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe,* ed. by Catharine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 275-292 (p. 290).

contrast to the treatment of the faces of each figure, for example, where there is little in the way of shading to represent skin tone as well as the depiction of the eyes which lack any type of lifelike representation. It is tempting to argue that Edward must have chosen such a painter because he simply could not find a suitably talented artist in Glamorganshire. As Tittler explains:

> The further from London one lived…(and despite the fact that some London-based painters travelled to take on commissions elsewhere), the more difficult it would often have been to rely on London-based painters, and thus the more likely the resort to local hands for portraits.[106]

However, despite the obvious inherent geographic difficulties involved in employing a London-based artist for a commission in South Wales, the Stradling family had - prior to the creation of the memorial panels - done so successfully. This is evidenced by the terracotta sculptural roundels of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius and a female figure, perhaps Cleopatra, found on the western range of the inner court of St Donat's castle.[107]

These roundels are almost certainly the work of the Florentine sculptor Giovanni da Maiano, 'the author of the dramatic series of roundels depicting busts of classical figures that decorate three gatehouses at Hampton Court Palace'.[108] It is likely that the St Donat's Maiano roundels were commissioned or acquired by Sir Thomas Arundell of Lanherne for Eizabeth and Edward Stradling IV (the subjects of Panel 2 of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*); Arundell was the father of Elizabeth Stradling.[109] Maiano, who spent his career in England in the employ of Cardinal Wolsey (hence the connection with Arundell of Lanherne, brother of Sir Thomas Arundell of Wardour Castle, who was at one point employed by Wolsey) and later Henry VIII, was a London-based, foreign artist, [110] yet his work appears at St Donat's: it is thus clear the

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[106] Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics,* p. 70.
[107] Hall, p. 8.
[108] Hall, p. 8; Kent Rawlinson, 'Giovanni da Maiano: On the English Career of a Florentine Sculptor (c. 1520-42)', *The Sculpture Journal,* 26.1 (2017), 37-52 (p. 37).
[109] Anthony Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses of England and Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 698.
[110] Charlotte Bolland, 'Italian Material Culture at the Tudor Court' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen Mary University of London, 2011), p. 256.

Stradling family, even before the time of Edward Stradling V, had the social connections necessary to commission works from top artists. Proximity to London and to the Court, therefore, whilst certainly making it easier to find a trained artist, was not a necessity: patrons and artists forged connections outside of the London court setting.

As early as 1478, for example, the Welshmen John Donne of Kidwely (c. 1428 – 1503) commissioned the Flemish artist Hans Memling to create the Donne Triptych, now in the collections of the National Gallery, London:[111]

Figure 6.15 Hans Memling, *The Virgin and Child with Saints and Donors (The Donne Triptych),* c. 1478, oil on panel, The National Gallery, London

It is likely that John Donne commissioned this painting whilst in Calais as commander of Edward IV's troops.[112] The resulting triptych - which includes donor portraits of Donne and his wife and daughter kneeling in supplication at the feet of the Virgin Mary and infant Jesus - is a testament to the benefits of travel to the sphere of the visual arts in the Renaissance and early modern period: had Donne not travelled to Calais, this remarkable painting would

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[111] National Gallery, *The Donne Triptych.*
[112] Tarnya Cooper, 'Visual Memory, Portraiture and the Protestant Credentials of Tudor and Stuart Families', in *Memory and the English Reformation,* ed. by Alexandra Walsham, Bronwyn Wallace, Ceri Law, and Brian Cummings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 318-333 (pp. 319-321).

never have been commissioned. It is thus clear that members of the Welsh elite and upper-gentry had the opportunity to meet and forge connections with highly trained artists during their travels in continental Europe; after all the concept of young male elites and members of the upper-gentry taking an extended journey around Europe as a rite of cultural and intellectual passage took seed during the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries.[113]

It is possible, therefore, that Edward Stradling might have met many different types of artists during his time spent abroad undergoing this ritual of travel synonymous with the high-ranking youth of the early modern period. Indeed, Edward spent a chunk of his early adulthood in continental Europe, culminating in a year-long residency in Rome during the period 1548-9, where he became friendly with the well-connected sixteenth century Grand Tourist, Sir Thomas Hoby.[114] Even if Edward had not been afforded the opportunity to forge connections with artists during his travels, however, there is still every possibility that he could have employed a trained artist to paint the Stradling family memorial panels. There is clear evidence that artists, and specifically portraitists, did travel throughout early modern England and Wales to undertake their commissions. For example, as discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis, the *Cornewall Family Memorial* in Burford is signed 'Melchior Salaboss, 1588.' Salaboss, a Netherlandish artist known to have been working in London from 1585 to 1593, and potentially from as early as 1571,[115] must have thus travelled to Herefordshire during this period to fulfil his commission. It is therefore highly likely that Edward Stradling, as well-travelled as he was and with his range of illustrious social contacts, could have, like his contemporary Thomas Cornewall, employed an artist of significant calibre and training to come to St Donat's in pursuit of promised employment.

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[113] There is an enormous body of scholarly literature discussing the origins and evolution of what would become the concept of the Grand Tour, including: Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations since the Renaissance* (London: Frank Cass, 1998); Rosemary Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy, c. 1690-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Edward Chaney and Timothy Wilks, *The Jacobean Grand Tour: Early Stuart Travellers in Europe* (London and New York: I. B. Tauras, 2013).

[114] Hoby's long journey throughout much of continental Europe inspired many of his countrymen to undertake similar trips. See: Thomas Hoby, *The Travels and Life of Sir Thomas Hoby, Kt. of Bisham Abbey: Written by Himself, 1547–1564*, ed. by E. Powell (London: Camden Society, 1902).

[115] London, Metropolitan Archives, CLC 180 MS 07 403; Murrell, p. 7.

Instead, Edward chose to employ what was most probably a local, heraldic artist. This is not to say that such an artist would be totally untrained, after all 'the use of colour and depiction of costume are beautifully elaborate, if the facial features leave something to be desired in realism.'[116] Certainly, it is possible that the heraldic author of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* might have maintained close links with painter-stainers or, indeed, been one himself.[117] He undoubtedly had access to pigments of the highest quality, as evidenced by the use of azurite in the helmets in Panels 2 and 3, and the gold and silver leaf used to decorate the heraldic shields, as well as the jewellery worn by the female figures in all three of the panels.[118] As Woodward notes: 'the range of pigments in the palette of these works is surprisingly varied when considering the likelihood that they were executed by a heraldic-trained craftsman'.[119] With access to these expensive materials, and evidence of artistic prowess in, for example, the depiction of the blackwork decoration on Agnes' sleeve in Panel 3, it thus becomes increasingly likely that Edward Stradling chose a talented heraldic artist – one who was confident in handling high-quality pigments and could paint armorial shields of great beauty - yet whose lack of formal training in portraiture would ensure that the figures depicted, and specifically their faces, would not be too lifelike in their representation and would thus not risk any accusations of an attempt to portray illusory presence.[120]

There is, however, significant material evidence that the portraits were ill-received. As with the *Memorial to Margery Downes,* discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis, there is clear evidence of damage to the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*. In Panel 3 there are several

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[116] Woodward, 'Sixteenth Century Regional British Painting Practice', p. 15.

[117] For more on the close connection between provincial portraiture and heraldry in the early modern period, see: Robert Tittler, 'Regional Portraiture and the Heraldic Connection in Tudor and Early Stuart England' *The British Art Journal*, 9.3 (2009), 3-10.

[118] Woodward, 'Sixteenth Century Regional British Painting Practice', pp. 23-24. Woodward's Master's thesis documents and analyses the findings of Conservators at the National Museum of Wales, who worked intensely on the Stradling family panels during the period 2014-2015. Woodward, as a Conservator, focuses on the methods and materials of the artist. Her work is essential reading for anyone interested in the Stradling memorial paintings and the wider practices of artists in early modern England and Wales.

[119] Woodward, 'Sixteenth Century Regional British Painting Practice', p. 23.

[120] On the possible deliberate denial of mimesis as an act of compliance with Elizabethan proscriptions regarding the display and function of images, please see: Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead,* p. 277; Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, pp. 232-233; Tarnya Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elites of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales 1540-1620,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 33, p. 199; Maurice Howard, 'Art and the Reformation', in *The History of British Art 600-1600,* ed. by Tim Ayers (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 231-241 (p. 234).

deep slashes across Edward's hand and in Panel 1 it appears as if the subject's eye has been deliberately gouged out:

Figure 6.16 Detail from Panel 3 of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* showing damage to the subject's hand

Figure 6.17 Detail from Panel 1 of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* showing damage to the subject's eye

It is possible, therefore, that despite Edward Stradling's attempt to distance himself from the Roman Catholicism of his family through his memorial commission, in the end he was simply unable to do so. It is posited here that – as with the damage inflicted to the eyes of George Downes in the *Memorial to Margery Downes* – that this could be another example of targeted, deliberate damage to the image of the eye of a member of a notable Roman Catholic family displayed in the post-Reformation church setting. As considered in Chapter Three of this thesis, this would correlate with what Brian Cummings has shown was a pattern of damage to the eyes of religious and civil men and women (such as saints and patrons) depicted in medieval paintings, statues, and within manuscripts and printed books during the post-Reformation period.[121] Indeed, with the reputational stain of his family's public, visible non-conformity – and particularly that of his father - hanging over him, there is every chance

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[121] On the deliberate targeting of eyes in medieval figurative images during the post-Reformation period, see: Brian Cummings, 'The Wounded Missal: Iconoclasm, Ritual and Memory in Reformation Yorkshire' in *Memory and the English Reformation,* ed. by Alexandra Walsham, Bronwyn Wallace, Ceri Law, and Brian Cummings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 353-379 (p. 355, p. 362).

that Edward's carefully composed images of conformist piety and commemoration could have been viewed by some as Roman Catholic *memoria.* Thus, the Roman Catholicism of the Stradling family, as well as the visual similarity of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* to the triptych altarpieces of medieval Christendom (by virtue of there being three wooden painted panels clearly meant to be displayed sequentially as a whole), might have further implied – to the 'hotter sort' of Protestant, particularly those who, as Tittler notes, 'persisted in their negative attitude towards portraiture' throughout the post-Reformation period – that these memorial paintings were on the wrong side of the confessional line.[122]

iv.   Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Edward Stradling's public actions throughout his lifetime - his cultivating of notable Protestant contacts such as Bishop Gervase Babington,[123] his immediate reporting of a letter sent to him by the master of the English College at Rome,[124] and his rooting out of a suspected Anabaptist preacher active in Glamorganshire -[125] would all point to the portrayal of an outwardly conformist commitment to Elizabeth's religious settlement. It is, of course, still possible that Edward, patron of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*, retained a personal confessional attachment to the Old Faith: as discussed in this chapter, his wife's family maintained their Roman Catholic practices into the post-Reformation period and his father, brother, and sister were all openly dedicated to the Old Faith. Continued open Roman Catholicism amongst some members of a family, however, did not necessarily mean that these religious leanings were shared by all. Indeed, Walsham has shown that, during the Elizabethan period, mixed marriages were relatively common,[126] and, moreover, William. J. Sheils has argued that familial ties – often facilitated through marriage – were a crucial element in the continued (semi) integration of Roman Catholics within their local

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[122] Robert Tittler, 'Portraiture and Memory amongst the Middling Elites' in *The Arts of Remembrance in Early Modern England: Memorial Cultures of the Post Reformation*, ed. by Andrew Gordon and Thomas Rist (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 37-58 (p. 52).

[123] As evidenced in the surviving letters between Stradling and Babington. See: Traherne, pp. 277-289. Also see Babington's glowing dedication to Edward in a printed work of 1590: Babington, *A Very Fruitfull Exposition,* p. 1.

[124] 'Simancas: May 1578', p. 579. See also: Griffiths, 'Rise', p. 37; Orofino, p. 150.

[125] Traherne, pp. 87-88.

[126] Alexandra Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 94-96.

communities, and certainly a reason for their continued investment in their local parish (Reformed) church.[127]

It is, however, the material evidence provided by *The Stradling Family Memorial Panels* themselves, and most tellingly, the absence of the representation of Edward's Roman Catholic parents that is, as this chapter has argued, the most credible indicator of the patron's religious leanings: he is at pains to distance himself from the actions of his father, to the extent that he omits him from the visual tableau of familial commemoration, whilst including himself, his wife, and other earlier members of the Stradling family. In the notable absence of a memorial image of his parents – and thus the denial of their place in this family line up - are we seeing a visual representation of the possible traumatic effects of Edward's lived experience as the child of a prominent Roman Catholic during the post-Reformation period who – although validated under Mary I - was imprisoned and ostracized from society due to suspected proselytizing activities under Elizabeth I? Under these circumstances, the uncertainties and anxieties of a life lived during the back and forth in religious policy between Mary and Elizabeth, and the government monitoring of confessional identity as a mark of political allegiance during the reign of Elizabeth I may have weighed very heavily on Edward Stradling.

This chapter has argued that Edward Stradling used his memorial commission to distance himself from the religion of his family, and that imagery – or, in this case, the purposeful and creative lack of a specific image - has been used to erase the memory of the patron's own parents in order to enhance his conformist credentials, in addition to the deliberate employment of a heraldic artist (in order to ensure a lack of illusory presence in the depiction of the subjects). The effects of religious reform and the instigation of Elizabethan conformity on Edward's memorial commission are thus clear: he is at pains to self-fashion his conformity in the face of his family's Roman Catholicism, and to ensure that the images displayed in the public setting of the parish church would quell any potential accusations of his own allegiance to the Old Faith. Displayed in the Stradling chapel, surrounded by the tombs of his ancestors, this author maintains that the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* speak to Edward's desire for

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[127] William. J. Sheils, 'Catholics and their neighbours in a rural community: Egton chapelry 1589-1780', *Northern History,* 34 (1998), 109-133.

acceptance from his community, and perhaps even forgiveness for the errors of his father, as well as recognition and legitimisation of the family's past heroic endeavors (even if they were somewhat exaggerated). Painted wooden portrait *memoria* is thus used to complement and proclaim the patron's carefully fashioned identity as a dutiful and leading member of late-Elizabethan society in south Wales, and to proclaim his pious dedication to the remembrance of his family (or at least, the politically acceptable members of his family) in full sight of the parish community.

Conclusion

This thesis has placed nine surviving examples of late-Elizabethan painted wooden church portrait memorials at the heart of its investigation into the post-Reformation lay experience of mortality, salvation, and transience. As Chapters One and Two have considered, the shift from a life driven by the purgatorial imperative to a predestinate understanding of salvation did, in many cases, lead to a reordering in the relationship between the living and the dead. It is clear, however, that these momentous soteriological changes were by no means universally accepted; debate and disagreement as to how the soul would achieve salvation, and thus how the dead should be presented and remembered within the church setting, persisted throughout the Long Reformation. This thesis, through its pursuit of a material strand of enquiry complemented by archival and printed evidence, has explored to what extent this changing soteriology was accepted and processed by a small, selected group of English and Welsh patrons of *memoria* from across the religious spectrum of late-Elizabethan Wales. In so doing, this study has joined post revisionist scholars such as Peter Marshall, Alexandra Walsham, Tara Hamling, Jonathan Willis, and Susan Orlik in highlighting the presence of 'shades and modulations' within late-Elizabethan soteriological belief at the lay level and, accordingly, as it can be seen within the visual culture of commemoration of the post-Reformation parish church setting.[1]

The nine memorial objects presented and assessed in this thesis have been selected from within a small surviving sub-genre of Tudor and Jacobean commemorative portraiture commissioned for display within the ecclesiological setting, as first documented by Sally Badham in 2009, and further explored by her in 2015 within the context of the 'kneeling in prayer' visual trope.[2] This type of early modern artform 'has received virtually no scholarly attention'.[3] Building on Badham's 'survey of flat painted monuments on wood',[4] as well as

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[1] Alexandra Walsham, Brian Cummings, and Ceri Law, 'Introduction: Memory and the English Reformation', in *Memory and the English Reformation,* ed. by Alexandra Walsham, Bronwyn Wallace, Brian Cummings, and Ceri Law (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 1-47 (p. 19).
[2] Sally Badham, 'A Painted Canvas Funerary Monument of 1615 in the Collections of the Society of Antiquaries of London and its Comparators', *Journal of Church Monuments,* 24 (2009), 89-153; Sally Badham, 'Kneeling in Prayer: English Commemorative Art 1330–1670', *The British Art Journal,* 16.1 (2015), 58–72.
[3] Badham, 'A painted Canvas', p. 99.
[4] Ibid.

Jane Eade's investigations into post-Reformation painted wooden triptychs, this thesis has explored the medium, location, form, scale and content of these nine late-Elizabethan objects in an attempt to better understand their possible meanings, purposes, and functions. It has been shown that these nine examples of painted wooden provincial *memoria,* commissioned and created during a key point in the history of the Long Reformation, utilised a wide variety of representational strategies to self-fashion and present the social and religious identities of their patrons and subjects, who hailed from across the religious, social, and geographic spectrums of late-Elizabethan England and Wales. It has, for example, been argued that two of the nine objects considered (at Adderbury and Bishop's Frome) were commissioned by Roman Catholic families, as was, quite possibly, the *Memorial to a Child of the Harwell Family* in Besford. As such, and particularly when placed in the context of places of worship within individual parishes steeped with their own visual, political, and religious histories, this self-fashioning was often accompanied by distinct soteriological functions such as an appeal for intercessory prayer from the (Roman Catholic) viewer, or an attestation and legitimisation as to the piety and Election of the (Protestant) subject(s) and, thus, by extension, the patron.

This research has also led to possible new attributions for the unknown author of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More,* which, as suggested in Chapter Four, may have been the Oxfordshire-based artist known as Sampson Strong. As such, this study has contributed to our knowledge of early modern portrait authorship – a field driven by the work of Robert Tittler and Edward Town - and has added a further possible detail to what we already know of Strong's biography: he can now persuasively be situated within Oxfordshire in the mid-1580s, with one of his earliest commissions possibly being for the parish church setting.[5] Indeed, this thesis has argued that the nine paintings presented sit at the material intersection between late-Elizabethan portraiture for the domestic and civic setting and funeral monuments for the ecclesiological space. They hold a monumental function in indicating the burial spot of the subject whilst also allowing the patron to self-fashion their social and

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[5] Robert Tittler, *Early Modern British Painters, c. 1500-1640, Unpublished Dataset,* (Unpublished) <https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/980096/> [Accessed 24 September 2019]; Edward Town, 'A biographical dictionary of London painters, 1547-1625', *The Walpole Society,* 74 (2014).

religious identity through the language of portraiture during the mid-point of its 'malleable moment', defined by Robert Tittler as the period c.1540-c.1640.[6]

These painted works have a number of visual attributes that root them to this post-Reformation and specifically late-Elizabethan context, including: the adoption of the late-sixteenth century vernacular idiom; the use of emblem and inscription; the use or adaptation of earlier religious images and forms such as the kneeling in prayer trope, *memento mori* and transi imagery, and the triptych form; and the use of painted wooden boards as a medium. Indeed, parishioners in this late Elizabethan period – regardless of their position on the broad religious spectrum of late sixteenth century England and Wales - were living in the very recent aftermath of the back and forth in religious policy from Mary I to Elizabeth I and thus subject to anxieties brought on by government monitoring of confessional identities, various Catholic conspiracies (both domestic and foreign), the excommunication of the Queen, and the political and social results of her complex foreign policy and matrimonial prospects. Coupled with the succession crisis, high taxes, and persistent episodes of plague and harvest failures, the future political, social, and religious landscape (and, accordingly, the future appearance of the church) may have seemed very uncertain indeed to these late sixteenth century patrons of *memoria*. Whilst we cannot of course know with certainty the intentions of these patrons, could the choice of an impermanent – and much more affordable - medium such as wood rather than the hardier brass or stone, as well as the decision to employ local, often heraldic artists, reflect these uncertainties and indicate a type of financially prudent patron with a keen awareness of the potential transience of their cultural commission? As the inscription at the top of the *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* in Adderbury parish church reminds the viewer: our sides were never brasse, our strengthe not stones'.

Whilst this shared medium of painted wooden panel unites these nine objects, there is nonetheless an enormous variety in scale, form, and content, and, accordingly, in their possible meanings and functions. This thesis has shown how these differences in composition, structure, and representational strategies can be linked to the fact that these nine paintings

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[6] Robert Tittler, 'The malleable moment in English Portraiture, c. 1540-1640', in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe,* ed. by Catharine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 275-292.

were commissioned by patrons from across the religious spectrum of late-Elizabethan England and Wales. It has, furthermore, been suggested that the faith of the patron had a significant bearing on, for example, whether the individual object may be appealing for intercessory payer and, as such, who the intended viewer may have been. Thus, the potential meaning and function of the memorial commissions of recusant patrons such as Mary More in Adderbury, and likely inwardly remaining or crypto-Roman Catholic patrons such as George Downes in Bishop's Frome and Edmund Harewell in Besford can be read in different ways to the commissions of conformist patrons such as Edward Stradling in St Donat's, Alice Smart in Ipswich, and Dorothy Unton in Farringdon.

Indeed, this thesis – in an extension to Tarnya Cooper's groundbreaking work on *memento mori* domestic portraiture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England and Wales - has considered the way that this representational strategy was used in portraiture from across the religious spectrum of late-Elizabethan England and Wales, for display in the parish church setting. For Cooper, whilst indeed acknowledging that the visual language of *memento mori* was used by patrons in Roman Catholic Europe,[7] argues that post-1540 *memento mori* portraiture in England and Wales makes use of 'images as mediators of the expression of social and religious concerns pertinent to the Protestant discourse of salvation'.[8] As such, Cooper's seminal work has largely considered portraits that depict Protestant subjects and sitters, exclusively situated within domestic and civic settings.[9] This thesis, however, in considering a selected body of memorial portraits in the church setting, commissioned by and depicting subjects from conforming Protestant, to the 'inwardly remaining' Roman Catholic, to the confirmed recusant – many of which include *memento mori* imagery and text - has critically shown that this mode of visual representation was used within portraiture from across the religious

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[7] Tarnya Cooper, 'Memento mori portraiture: Painting, Protestant Culture and the Patronage of middle elites in England and Wales 1540-1630' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 2001), p. 176.

[8] Ibid.

[9] With 'three known exceptions' of portraits of known or highly probable Roman Catholic subjects: Sir William Ingleby; Sir Robert Throckmorton; and the composer John Bull. Cooper, 'Memento Mori Portraiture', p. 127; Cooper, 'Memento Mori Portraiture', appendix I. Portrait details: Unknown British (English) artist, *Sir Robert Throckmorton*, 1570-1599, oil on panel, Coughton Court, Warwickshire, The Throckmorton Collection (National Trust); Unknown British (English) artist, *William Ingleby*, 1550-1578, oil on panel, Ripley Castle, Yorkshire; Unknown British (English) artist, *John Bull,* 1589, oil on panel, Faculty of Music and Bate Collection of Musical Instruments, University of Oxford.

spectrum of late-Elizabethan England and Wales for both the domestic and ecclesiological settings.

This author's focus on the visual culture of commemoration within the post-Reformation parish church has contributed to, and is steeped within, the current postrevisionist historiographical context which maintains that the parameters of acceptability for religious images in the ecclesiological setting were broad and subject to great nuance. As such, this thesis has followed in the footsteps of Tara Hamling, Richard Williams, and Susan Orlik in disproving Patrick Collinson's influential narrative of iconoclasm to iconophobia. A selection of late sixteenth century *memoria* which makes full use of the visual and, in many cases, proudly displays religious imagery of the kind previously thought to be unwelcome in the post-Reformation church setting has been presented and explored. Furthermore, whilst 'the religious credentials of the patron/owner of an image could be a first or final consideration in calculating purpose or intent',[10] as, for example, is the case with the numerous religious scenes depicted across the *Cornewall Family Memorial* in Burford (whose patron Thomas Cornwall appears to have been a dutiful Conformist), this thesis has shown that in some cases, late-Elizabethan Roman Catholic patrons did in fact commission memorial objects replete with imagery – both religious and secular - for the church setting. When it came to *memoria* in portrait form, therefore, it is now clear that late-Elizabethan patrons from across the religious spectrum used imagery for commemorative, social, and religious purposes even within the ecclesiological setting. It has, furthermore, been posited that a possible deliberate ambiguity or lack of fixed meaning of iconography, the strength of residual provincial Roman Catholicism in the form of church papistry, and the civic role of remembrance that a memorial performs could help to account for the acceptance of such commissions in Reformed places of worship.

This thesis has placed a specific type of late-Elizabethan cultural object at the heart of its argument that the post-Reformation lay experience of soteriology, and the way that the laity approached and understood mortality, salvation, and transience was an inherently messy

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[10] Tara Hamling and Jonathan Willis, 'From Rejection to Reconciliation: Protestantism and the Image in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 62.4 (2023) 932-996 (p. 946).

one.[11] Indeed, the use of the visual for commemorative purposes by some of the seven different patrons of the nine painted church portrait memorials considered in this study evidences a possible belief in and public pronouncement of the existence of purgatory, and, accordingly, in the power of intercession. For example, the use of *transi* imagery of the double cadaver type – previously used in the stone tomb monuments of the late-medieval church - is visible in the painted church memorial paintings at Adderbury, Bishops's Frome, Burford, and Besford. This clearly demonstrates a continuity in the iconography of commemoration, across both sides of the Reformation divide: late-medieval death iconography and the visual tropes of Roman Catholic *memoria* continued to be commissioned for and used in the sacred and, crucially, the public setting of the post-Reformation parish church. For the late-Elizabethan layperson in these Oxfordshire and Marcher parishes, this kind of imagery – so linked to the concept of intercession and, thus, a concept of transience governed above all by the purgatorial imperative – was visible in plain sight.

There is, indeed, nothing to suggest that the patrons of these painted church portrait memorials were at pains to conceal their possible continued adherence to, or at least public pronouncement of sympathy with, the soteriology of the Old Faith. Far from it. In Adderbury and Bishop's Frome, the painted wooden memorials commissioned by the recusant Mary More and the likely inwardly remaining Roman Catholic George Downes use visual imagery to publicly celebrate, commemorate, and legitimise the lives and burials of their spouses who had been laid to rest within their respective provincial parish churches: inscriptions inform the viewer that 'here lieth' Margery Downes (who, as this thesis has shown, was a noted recusant), and that the body of Thomas More is 'laid hereby.' Thus, the very presence and continued survival of these paintings highlights the persistence of residual popular, provincial Roman Catholicism and corroborates Christopher Haigh's statement that 'the separation of Catholics from the village community was a very slow process'.[12] This thesis has shown that, in Adderbury and Bishop's Frome, Roman Catholics were - as late as 1598 – still being buried and having monuments erected to their memory within the parish church setting. This study

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[11] Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, 'Protestantisms and their beginnings', in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. by Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-13 (p. 8).

[12] Christopher Haigh, 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation', *Past & Present*, 93 (1981), 37-69 (p. 43).

has, furthermore, suggested that - even within the post-Reformation ecclesiological setting - the intended viewers of such memorials may have been members of the increasingly amorphous Roman Catholic community in England and Wales. For as has been highlighted by Alexandra Walsham and Michael Questier, during the post-Reformation period there were many outwardly conforming yet inwardly remaining church papists who, despite regularly attending the parish church, held fast to their belief in the Old Faith.[13]

At the same time, this thesis has shown that the conformist patrons of these nine late-sixteenth century painted church portrait memorials used their visual commissions to distance themselves from the soteriological practices of the late-medieval church and to ensure their own reputation as conforming members of late-Elizabethan society. The *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*, for example, depict and commemorate three generations of the Stradlings of St Donat's, but, crucially, there is no panel dedicated to the memory of the patron's parents, who were conspicuous Roman Catholics: in 1561 Thomas Stradling was tried on charges of conspiracy for the international circulation of heretical material. It has been suggested in Chapter Six of this thesis that Edward Stradling, patron of the St Donat's paintings, chose to omit his father from his memorial commission to distance himself from his actions and attempt to erase the resulting stain on the familial reputation. Certainly, the iconography employed in the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* is typically conformist: there are no images of the Saints, other potentially intercessory figures, or 'religious personages',[14] and – in a tableau of Reformist piety based on the principle of faith *sola scriptura* - the various subjects are shown in dedicated worship holding their prayer books either side of a prayer table. This thesis has further suggested, in an expansion on and update to theories posited by Peter Marshall, Nigel Llewellyn, and Tarnya Cooper on the deliberate denial of mimesis in post-Reformation provincial portraiture and *memoria*, that the erudite and well-connected Edward Stradling may have purposefully chosen a heraldic artist for his memorial commission, despite having the financial means and social contacts to employ a court-based, highly trained

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[13] Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009); Alexandra Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (London: Routledge, 2016); Michael Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage, and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
[14] Hamling and Willis, p. 954.

portraitist.[15] By choosing the kind of painter who lacked the training to produce a mimetic likeness, Edward avoided any potential accusations regarding figurative imagery and illusory presence in the ecclesiological setting, and thus furthered his self-fashioned image of conformity.

This thesis has thus shown that Reformed soteriological thought and doctrine – specifically, a predestinate approach to salvation – had, by the closing decades of Elizabeth's reign, been adopted by some patrons of late sixteenth century painted portrait memorials and that this new approach to mortality and transience was publicly proclaimed in their commissions for the parish church setting. As discussed in Chapter Four, the will of Dorothy Unton, for example, patron of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton,* reveals her Reformed leanings in relation to the post-mortem treatment of her body: 'my desire is, that my funeral may be performed without any pompe or solemnity, and with as small charge as may be, in the night',[16] and her will makes no request for any kind of action that might elicit intercessory prayer. This is similarly the case in the painted wooden portrait memorial that she commissioned in memory of her husband and that, as Chapter Four of this thesis has argued, was possibly displayed in Faringdon church as part of a temporary memorial: there are no inscriptions asking the viewer to remember or pray for Henry Unton, and there is little of the typical iconography of loss or mourning. Instead, the viewer is presented with a narrative painting which celebrates Unton's life and achievements; he is quite literally, heralded by the figure of Fame.

Furthermore - and in clear contrast to, for example, the *Cornewall Family Memorial Painting* at Burford and the *Memorial to Margery Downes* in Bishop's Frome where Heaven and Hell are presented in Doom scenes - the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* depicts solely a scene of Heaven, at the uppermost corner of the proper right of the painting. This thesis has proposed

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[15] Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 277; Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 232-233; Tarnya Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elites of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales 1540-1620,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 33, 199.
[16] London, The National Archives, PROB 11 167 311; Margaret Aston, 'Art and Idolatry: Reformed Funeral Monuments' in *Art Re-Formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 243-261 (pp. 246-247); Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England 1480-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 255-294.

that such iconography is indicative of a predestinate approach to mortality and salvation, publicly announced in the parish church setting. In representing only Heaven, the patron is proclaiming that Unton, as one of God's elect, has no need to fear Hell: 'Fame flies down with a laurel wreath ready to crown Unton and to blow her trumpet to announce his arrival into the heavenly country.'[17] Indeed the creative narrative design of the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* highlights the role of religious reform as a driver for innovation in the commissioning and creating of memorial forms and imagery for the parish church setting: the visual is used to tell the story of a famous conformist life and proclaim Dorothy Unton's absolute assurance of her husband's Election. The extensive use of figurative imagery within the narrative scenes from Unton's life – found within a memorial painting commissioned by a patron of unimpeachable Reformist credentials to hang in a late-Elizabethan parish church – complements Hamling and Willis' statement that 'while the relationship between Protestantism and the image in early modern England could be fraught, it was far from inherently hostile'.[18]

This thesis has maintained the likeliness that the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* would have hung in Farringdon parish church as part of a temporary commemorative structure before being transferred to Dorothy Unton's home. What we see here, therefore, is a late-Elizabethan memorial object which can function in both the ecclesiological and the domestic setting: rather than scenes from the life of Christ or the lives of the saints that would have once adorned, for example, the painted wooden altarpieces commissioned to perpetuate the memory of medieval donors and patrons, the *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton* uses the visual to present, or fashion, the life story of the subject himself. The *Memorial to William Smart* in Ipswich similarly recounts and celebrates the life of the subject, with an emphasis on Smart's pious philanthropic dedication to Ipswich, whilst his Election is asserted on the fifth and sixth lines of the inscription: 'If none think nowe on thanks; if out of sight be outde of minde/ Although tis wrong, yet light's thy los that heavenly thank doost finde.'

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[17] Peter Sherlock, 'The Unton Portrait Reconsidered', in *Memory and Mortality in Renaissance England*, ed. by William Engel, Rory Loughnane and Grant Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp. 184-200 (p. 188).

[18] Hamling and Willis, p. 996.

As with the Unton painting, the *Memorial to William Smart* also speaks to the potential for religious reform to be a driver of creative innovation. As discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, the visual focus of the painting is a poem in acrostic form, with the first letter of each line spelling out Smart's name: it is an imaginative and creative use of text, full of rhymes and word play. Dominating the painting, and framed by an ornate cartouche, this inscription is of central importance to the *Memorial to William Smart* and is reminiscent of the Commandment Boards that would have once been commonplace in post-Reformation England and Wales: text dominates, whilst image is used both to complement and further illuminate the contents of the inscription, and to provide 'comlye ornament' within the parish church setting.[19] Furthermore, the imagery used in this painting indicates a patron with a keen awareness of artistic currents, and an artist who had access to the northern European pattern books and print sources that would have circulated in a port town such as Ipswich during the later-Elizabethan period.[20] The influence of Continental print sources and ornamental design is evident across the *Memorial to William Smart*, notably through the strapwork surrounding the cartouche, the blazing sun at the top of the panel, and the two putti who sit atop the upper corners of the cartouche.

It is clear, however, that the visual evidence presented within this thesis corroborates and further proves Alexandra Walsham's statement that, when it came to attitudes towards mortality and salvation in England and Wales, 'the Reformation wrought far more subtle modifications in traditional mentalities than an earlier generation of historians assumed'.[21] Two of the nine painted wooden memorials discussed and analysed in this study (at Adderbury and Bishop's Frome) were commissioned by Roman Catholic families and, as such, they evidence a likely continued belief in and public proclamation of Roman Catholic soteriology as well as the perpetuation of certain late-medieval iconographic tropes in an appeal for intercessory prayer from their fellow (inwardly remaining) parishioners who maintained the same attitudes towards morality and salvation. At the same time, five

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[19] Elizabeth I, *Orders taken the x. day of October in the thirde yere of the raigne of our Soueraigne Ladye, Elizabeth Quene of Englande, Fraunce and Irelande, defender of the faith* (1561). Quoted in: Jonathan Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 297.

[20] Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Influence of Continental Prints, 1558 – 1625* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1997), p. 169, p. 299.

[21] Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity and Memory in early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 337.

paintings which declare the conformist credentials of their respective patrons and subjects, and which emphasise a commitment to a predestinate understanding of salvation, also reveal the continued influence of the visual culture of the Old Faith. The *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton,* the *Memorial to William Smart,* and the three *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* all contain elements of medieval death iconography (now refashioned within the *memento mori* genre), include depictions of figurative imagery, and display a visual indebtedness to the late-medieval practice of donor portraiture within the interior of the parish church. As such, it has been argued throughout this thesis that the late-sixteenth century painted church portrait memorial is a decidedly post-Reformation cultural product: an object type situated somewhere between a church monument and a *memento mori* or civic portrait, commissioned by patrons from across the full breadth of the confessional scale, from recusant, to church papist, to conformist.

By using visual source material to contribute to the existing debate about Reformation soteriology - how widespread its acceptance was amongst the laity of late sixteenth century England and Wales, and how this can be witnessed within the visual culture of commemoration in parish churches - this thesis has contributed to the 'cultural turn' that the discipline of Reformation Studies has taken during its period of post-revisionism. It is, however, essential to acknowledge the inherent difficulties and limitations involved in any study of early modern material culture and, specifically, of an object type that is almost exclusively housed in parish churches as opposed to the secure and environmentally controlled environment of a museum or gallery. It is telling that the nine late-Elizabethan painted church portrait memorials which form the core data set of this thesis are in varying states of preservation. This strongly suggests that the paintings presented in this study are the last remaining survivals of what would have once been a much larger type of visual *memoria* within the ecclesiological spaces of late-Elizabethan England and Wales. As Badham has evidenced, painted memorials on wooden panel continued to be produced for display in churches into the eighteenth century; this suggests that the artform was much more widespread during the Elizabethan period than the poor survival rate of the object type may suggest.[22]

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[22] Sally Badham, 'A Painted Canvas', p. 99.

Indeed, when the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* arrived at the National Museum of Wales (NMW) in January 1992, the paintings were in an extremely poor state of conservation. Despite spending roughly a year of their lives as stolen property underneath a bed in Cardiff,[23] it is clear that the damage to the paintings occurred during the centuries that they had been on display in the Vestry of the medieval church of St Donat: NMW Conservators discovered that the surfaces of the paintings were suffering from significant historic abrasion and paint loss,[24] and that there were signs of dry rot and historic woodworm damage across all three objects.[25] Indeed, the environmental conditions within many English and Welsh churches (specifically the medieval buildings which are still used as places of worship today, rather than churches built from Victorian times onwards) are often the exact opposite of the carefully controlled climates of galleries, museums, and conservation studios. This is not, however, intended as a criticism. For churches are first and foremost places of worship, and as such ministers and parishioners cannot be expected to adhere to the rigorous standards of museum professionals, nor do they have easy on-site access to state-of-the-art conservation studios or, indeed, the funds to employ conservators. Furthermore, it would be extraordinarily difficult and costly for medieval church buildings to adhere to the same environmental conditions as modern, purpose-built galleries or museums, or to maintain the same standards of twenty-four-hour security against theft.

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[23] London, National Portrait Gallery, Heinz Archive, Stradling; 'St Donat's Church, St Donat's', *Coflein,* <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/227714/details/st-donats-church-st-donats> [accessed 10 September 2020]. It is worth noting here the significant threat that theft plays to the survival of church monuments and memorials, particularly those that are of a portable size or made of expensive materials. On the numerous challenges to the survival of church monuments and memorials, as well as the many examples of positive intervention by parishioners and heritage bodies, see: Sally Badham, 'Viewpoint: Problems affecting church monuments: a personal perspective', *Ecclesiology Today,* 47 and 48 (2013), 75-105.

[24] Hannah Woodward, 'A Study of Sixteenth Century Regional British Painting Practice; Technique and Materials of the Stradling Family Memorial Panels, c.1590' (unpublished master's thesis, Northumbria University, 2012), p. 22.

[25] Woodward, p. 66-70; Charles Reed, 'Conservation of the Stradling Family Memorial Panels', *Picture Restorer*, 45 (2014), 10-15 (p. 11). Woodward and Reed's criticisms of early practices reveal the huge strides that have been made in in how we approach the preservation and conservation of historic material culture. Indeed, the application of cradles to the back of each Stradling panel (most likely at some point during the nineteenth century) had resulted in: 'large splits between the planks, and in each case a complete separation between planks, as well as multiple minor splits and distortions causing delamination of paint layers'. See: Woodward, p. 81. Furthermore, 'the paint surfaces were unsympathetically overpainted and obscured with several layers of very thick discoloured varnish'. See: Reed, p. 11. Assisted by funding from the Pilgrim Trust, these issues have now been expertly dealt with and the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* are now on public display in the museum, thus indicating that the owners of the paintings – the Church in Wales – as well as the parishioners of St Donat's are in agreement that the secure and environmentally-controlled conditions of the paintings gallery at the NMW is (at least in terms of survival) a more suitable display location than their parish church. See: Reed, p. 10, p. 15.

Despite this caveat, however, the condition of the St Donat's panels prior to their arrival at the NMW was lamentable and, sadly this is not a unique case: several of the painted church memorial portraits still *in situ* in parish churches are in similarly poor states of conservation. This would indicate that many other examples of this object type have been lost over time due to environmental conditions. The triptych *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* in Besford, for example, is particularly badly damaged: large parts of the inscriptions are completely illegible; the imagery is almost entirely abraded in parts; and the paint is continuing to flake.[26] The *Memorial to Margery Downes* in Bishop's Frome also displays high levels of abrasion, surface paint loss, and flaking, and the panel itself is acutely warped and suffers from several large vertical splits.[27] Were these paintings in the care of museums or galleries rather than still displayed in their respective parish churches, it is probable that they would be in better states of conservation, and thus their continued survival would be much more likely. The *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*, for example, has been in the collections of the NPG since 1884 and, during this time, it has been regularly conserved and is displayed in an environmentally controlled gallery: all factors which will help to ensure its continued survival. Furthermore, the successful treatment of the *Stradling Family Memorial Paintings* at the NMW is testament to what can be achieved when late-Elizabethan painted church portrait memorials are given the attention of fully accredited and highly-skilled paintings

[26] The triptych was 'restored' by the wall paintings expert E. W. Tristram in 1923, and the renowned conservator Pauline Plummer undertook conservation work on the painting in 1974. See: John Willis, 'The Harewell Triptych in Besford Parish Church', Transactions of the Worcester Archaeological Society, 1 (1923), 79-87 (p. 86); Eade, 'Portraiture and Resurrection', p. 191; Eade, 'The Triptych Portrait in England, 1575-1646', p. 3. However, the object was 'barely strong enough to be loaned for the exhibition, *The Art of Death: The Visual Culture of the English Death Ritual, c. 1500-c.1800* at the Victoria & Albert Museum in the early months of 1992'. See: Nigel Llewellyn, '[An] Impe entombed heere dothe lie: The Besford triptych and child memorials in post-Reformation England', in *Representations of Childhood Death,* ed. by Gillian Avery and Kimberley Reynolds (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp. 52-65. (p. 62). There is no evidence (neither documentation available through the parish, nor from my inspections of the triptych in May 2018, August 2019, and February 2020) of remedial conservation work having taken place on the painting in the years since it was temporarily displayed at the V&A.

[27] As with the Besford triptych memorial, there is no know record of recent accredited conservation work being commissioned. This was confirmed by email conversations with Steven Baggs, Vicar of St Mary the Virgin, Bishop's Frome, over the period October 2017 - January 2019 and with Rhys Griffith, Senior Archivist, Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre in January 2019. The closest to some kind of documentation regarding conservation of the painting is a letter published in a 1970 edition of Country Life, noting that 'a few years ago…the late Mrs. Hopton of Canon Frome Court paid for this… [memorial]…to be repaired and cleaned', as well as put behind glass, presumably to protect the object from further, potentially irreversible, damage. See: 'Letter regarding Bishop's Frome', *Country Life*, 150 (1970), p. xx.

conservators. This is in contrast to the many objects which are likely to have perished and the fate of some painted church portrait memorials that are still in parish churches, out of the care of museums, and instead cared for by parishioners and clergy who, despite their undoubtedly noble intentions, may not be well-versed in the care, conservation, and display of sixteenth century wooden panel paintings.

The *Memorial to Thomas and Mary Mor*e in Adderbury, for example, is positioned perilously close to a working radiator:

Figure 7.1 The *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More* positioned above a radiator in Adderbury Church

This positioning leaves the painting highly vulnerable to potentially devastating heat damage (although it is worth noting the overall excellent general condition of this painted church portrait memorial, with little visible paint loss or damage to the wooden panel). An even more problematic example is the positioning of the *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* in Besford. The painting is affixed to the south wall of the Nave, in between the main door into the church and a large wooden ceiling beam:

Figure 7.2 The *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family* positioned in between the church door and a wooden ceiling beam in Besford Church

This positioning leaves the painting vulnerable to damage on two fronts: from the church door potentially swinging into the proper right wing of the triptych when fully open, and from the proper left wing banging into the large ceiling beam when being opened. It is possible that this less-than-ideal display location may account for some of the severe damage sustained to the *Memorial to a Child of the Harwell Family*, as discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis.

This is not, however, a call for the removal of these memorial paintings from parish churches. For despite the undeniable benefits of such vulnerable objects being housed in museum environments, there are also distinct advantages to these church portrait memorials remaining in their intended, original locations. It is a rare and thrilling experience to view any sixteenth century portrait on display in its original setting, and for both the general viewer and particularly for today's parishioners, the continued presences of these painted memorial portraits in churches forges a visible, visceral link with the sixteenth century men and women who worshipped in the very same space and commissioned these commemorative objects. Furthermore, just as 'the context in which paintings were seen gave rise to particular meanings' for the families that commissioned them,[28] so too is this the case for the modern viewer: the relationship between the display space and the object can help to illuminate the original intentions of the patron and messages of the painting. This is particularly relevant when it comes to memorial objects in sacred settings. This thesis has shown that many of the patrons of painted church memorial portraits had specific reasons for wanting their commissioned objects to be displayed in their local parish churches, not least the fact that they would have felt a distinct emotional and historic bond to the ecclesiological spaces which contained the tombs and monuments of their ancestors and would eventually be their own resting place. Certainly, 'burial alongside earlier generations of the same family was a commonplace request in Elizabethan wills',[29] and these provincial parish churches had often been the familial place of worship and burial – as well as the site of key life events such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals – for many generations.

The painted church memorial portraits commissioned by Alice Smart in Ipswich, Edward Stradling in St Donat's, Mary More in Adderbury, Dorothy Unton in Faringdon, Edmund Harewell in Besford, Thomas Cornewall in Burford, and George Downes in Bishop's Frome were all displayed in parish churches with still-visible links to these respective families: as discussed throughout the case studies chapters of this thesis, these memorials joined many other ancestral monuments and tombs, sometimes in family chapels or else found in other

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[28] Tarnya Cooper, 'Visual Memory, Portraiture and the Protestant Credentials of Tudor and Stuart Families', in *Memory and the English Reformation,* ed. by Alexandra Walsham, Bronwyn Wallace, Ceri Law, and Brian Cummings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 318-333 (p. 322).
[29] Paul Cockerham, 'Lineage, Liturgy and Locus: the changing role of English funeral monuments', *Ecclesiology Today*, 43 (2010), 7-29 (p. 19).

locations throughout the church. The triptych *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family*, for example, was commissioned and created in the years immediately following the death of the patron's three children,[30] and it was originally displayed adjacent to the tomb monument to the patron's brother who also died in childhood. The sense of grief and loss created by these two monuments to such young lives, as well as the hope of holy reward in heaven, must have been viscerally felt by any visitor to St Peter's Besford. Thus, the painted church portrait memorial, as this thesis has argued, could hold the same commemorative and monumental function as a monument in stone or brass and played a similarly important role in the religious and social process of memorialisation and commemoration in late-Elizabethan England and Wales. [31]

A primary intention of this thesis has been to further highlight the significance of church monuments and memorials 'as literary, visual and material evidence capable of providing new questions and new answers about early modern England',[32] whilst, above all, aiming to further our knowledge and understanding of late-Elizabethan vernacular commemorative

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[30] Llewellyn, '[An] Impe entombed heere dothe lie', p. 56.

[31] Of course, the decision about whether to keep objects *in situ* in churches is as an extremely complicated one, and such discussion is largely beyond the scope of this thesis. There are, however, many organisations which can provide financial support as well as expert guidance to enable conservation work to take place on objects owned by the Church, ranging from the Church in Wales or Church in England itself through schemes such as ChurchCare, to institutions such as the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) and the National Churches Trust (NCT), as well as more general organisations like the Idlewild and Pilgrim Trusts. See: *The Church of England,* <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare> [accessed 3 October 2020]; *Churches Conservation Trust,* <https://www.visitchurches.org.uk/> [accessed 19 September 2020]; *National Churches Trust,* <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/> [Accessed 3 October 2020]; *Idlewild Trust*, <https://www.idlewildtrust.org.uk/> [accessed 19 September 2020]; *Pilgrim Trust*, <https://www.thepilgrimtrust.org.uk/> [accessed 19 September 2020]. Once funding has been raised, an object could then be treated on site or in a museum before being returned to the parish where it can continue to be displayed post-treatment, ideally in climate buffered frames or cases. Some of the material evidence considered in this thesis has benefitted from this kind of action: the treatment of the *Stradling Family Memorial Panels* at the NMW was partly funded by the Pilgrim Trust, although the paintings are now on display in the NMW as opposed to the church of St Donat, and funding from ChurchCare as well as money raised by the *Friends of St Faith's,* enabled conservator Rupert Featherstone of the Hamilton Kerr Institute (HKI), Cambridge University, to treat the *Double Deliverance* in 2018. The parish was then advised on how best to display the paintings, thus enabling them to remain in their original setting whilst ensuring that any necessary action has been taken to safeguard their continued survival. For example, the radiator below the *Double Deliverance* has been permanently disabled and the heating pipes fully insulated, thus protecting the object from potentially catastrophic heat damage. Copies of both the pre- and post-treatment reports can be requested through Gaywood parish office or directly through the HKI; I am grateful to David Greening, Lay Deanery Synod Representative for Lynn, for putting me in touch with Rupert Featherstone, who kindly agreed to share his reports with me.

[32] Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), p. 3.

artforms commissioned and created for audiences outside of the court-based, London environment. Further research is needed in this area, not least to bring wider scholarly and public attention to the myriad early modern cultural and memorial objects outside of London galleries and museums, but also to establish a trans-European narrative in terms of how we approach the presentation and analysis of painted church portrait memorials on wooden panel. Indeed, it is worth reflecting upon the existence of late-sixteenth century painted memorial portraits commissioned for provincial churches across continental Europe, and what this specific type of material and visual evidence can tell us about how patrons approached mortality, salvation, and transience during a time of immense soteriological upheaval. To this end, a comparative, trans-European study of late sixteenth century painted church portrait memorials would be a particularly fruitful avenue for future research. It is ultimately hoped that this thesis, in presenting and assessing nine examples of a small surviving subgenre of post-Reformation memorial art, will inspire future research and lead to the preservation of these fascinating objects as well as, perhaps, the discovery of more survivals of painted portrait memorials in the church setting.

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Appendix: Inscriptions

The *Memorial to William Smart*

Within the central cartouche:

What can a deede man feede and cloth and holy preecepts give

It can not be ___ tel not me I know he still dooth live

Live then sweete Soule in ample rest example to the rest

Like thine his ground most lowe be laid that high will build his nest

If none think nowe on thanks; if out of sight be oute of minde

Although tis wrong, yet light's thy los that hevenly thank doost finde

May never yet faire Ipswich trye be foully so unkinde

Schooles, churches, Orphanarye rooms shal keepe yt still in sight

Men, Weemen, Children, Ould and yug shal were the day and night

Alas then not for ye we cri but for our sevles alas

Ruing the want of such a wight as al thine adge did pas

This I le poore Man one did moorne; thus gras bewailed gras.

The *Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*

The painting's sole inscription in prose is now illegible, but it was transcribed in the eighteenth
century and has been published on the *Making Art in Tudor Britain* page of the NPG website.
[1] It is reproduced below.

Either side of the coat of arms in the lower proper left section of the paper (above the scene
of Unton as a baby in his mother's arms), now illegible:

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[1] NPG, *The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton (c. 1558 - 1596)*,
<http://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/making-art-in-tudor-britain/case-studies/the-portrait-of-
sirhenry-unton-c.-1558-1596.php> [accessed 1 August 2019].

This worthie and famous Gent. Sir Henry Unton was son unto Sir Ed. Unton, Knight. His grandfather was Sir Alexander Unton, and his greategrandfather was Sir Thomas Farrington; and also his mother the moste verteous Lady Ann Seimor, Countes Warwick, eldest daughter to the Lord Ed. Seimor, Duke of Somerset, ouncle to Kinge Ed. and soe protector of his persone and ye relm. Her ouncles were Thomas and Henry Seimor, which Thomas was Lord Admiral of England, and married unto Katherine Parr, last wife of Kinge Henry The Eigth. Her mother was Duches of Somerset; her aunte was the Lady Jane Seimore, Queen of England.

The *Memorial to Thomas and Mary More*

Above Mary, below the skull: 'THAT LARST I WAS IS GONE AND PAST'

Above the skull: QUASI MORITURUS VIVE [as we die we live]

Above Thomas, below the hourglass: 'THE FLEETING STREAM NOT HALFE SO FAST'

Above the hourglass: MORE FLUENTIS AQUAE [like flowing water]

Either side of the angels above the top cartouche: VIVE PIUS MORIERE PIUS [live piously, die piously] / OMNI SCRIBITUR HORA TIBI [every hour is against you]

Above the tomb: 'DATA SUNT IPSIS QUOQUE FATA SEPULCHRIS' [even tombs themselves must yield to fate]

On the tomb: 'SO FAR IS OUGHT FROM LASTING AYE / THAT TOMBES SHAL HAVE THEIR DYING DAYE'

Top panel:

WE HAVE BENE FLESH AND BLOODE, WE ARE BUT BONES

AND LIE FOR OTHER FLESH TO TAKE THER VIEWE

OUR SIDES WERE NEVER BRASSE, OUR STRENGTHE NOT STONES

WE COULD NOT CHOOSE BUT BID THE WORLD ADIEU

FARE WELL THEN SISTER FLESH AND THINKE ON US

NO ODDS BUT TIME, WE ARE, THOW MUST BE THUS'

Bottom panel:

THIS IS THE REPRESENTATIO OF THOMAS MORE GET: WHO

DECEASED FE OF IAN: 1586 AND OF MARIE HIS WIFE DAUGH: TO ANTIONIE BVSTARD

ESQ: WHO CAVSED THIS MONUMENT TO BE MADE IN TESTIMONIE AD CERTAINE

BELEEFE OF TE RESVRRECTION OF THEIR BODIES

W^{CH} ARE LAIED HEREBY.

The *Memorial to Margery Downes*

At the top of the painting:

Here lieth Margery, one of the D and CoH: of John Pitchar Esq: the late wife of George de la Downes Esq; yt had only issue / Francis M: to Mychall Wentworth, Esq ; who departed this life ye XIIth day of Jan'ary Anno D'ni 1598. Anno R. R. D'na nostra Elizabeth. 41

Within the painted cartouche above George:

Though Nature's wrack in thee makes Nature weepe

In mee deere wife whose want workes myne anoy

Yet seeing grace in Christ made Naturee sleepe

I ioivng weepe through hope to meete in joy

Such force hath Vertu on Tyme, Death, and Hell

It makes them live, that lives but to dy well

Within George's speech bubble:

Qui pro nobis dedignaris cruciari

Fac nos Christe cum tuis glorificari

[You, who for us did not refuse to be crucified, make us, Christ, glorified with you][2]

Next to George's head: Anº AEtatis Sui 60

Within the painted cartouche above Margery:

Time drew along (long time) her date of life

whose Life then ended when her life begun

For Death unspowsd hir to espowse this wife

by mortall Stoke to Gods Immortal Sonne

O blessed Stroke that from Mans Rocky hart

makes streams of Life to flow through Deaths desert

Within Margery's speech bubble:

Qui tuos Redemisti Vere

Nostri Jesu nunc Miserere

[You, who have your own truly redeemed, have mercy on us now Jesus][3]

Next to Margery's head: Anº AEtatis Suae 50

At the feet of George and Margery:

---

[2] Translation my own
[3] Translation my own

As thou art, suche have I bene. Whilst life and lust indured

as I am suche shalt thou be by course of kind assuered

Underneath the skeleton:

Quod fuit, est, et erit, in solo articulo perit, quid

prodest tunc esse, fuisse, fore cum sunt nisiflorida fine

flore, et cum omne perit, quod fuit est et erit

[What was, and is, and will be, perishes in only a moment, what does it profit then to be, to have been, to be going to be, when they are no more than flowering things without a flower, when everything perishes which was, is and will be].[4]

The *Memorial to a Child of the Harewell Family*

Transcriptions are printed in: Llewellyn, '[An] Impe entombed heere dothe lie', pp. 54-55.

On the central panel of the triptych, only visible when the wings are open:

The' soundes the woeful watche

when death with dreadful stroke

Retornes all flesh to mouldie earthe

But Christ shall soon revoke

And call the good to life againe

But plunge the bade in e'dless paine

On the middle panel of the dexter triptych wing, when open:

Poore childe to whome should I complaine

[4] Translation printed in: Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), p. 94.

in this my grief and mazed plight

Tyme bends his scythe to cut my threede

Death waves his dreadful darte i'sight

and doth doe threat without delaie

to take my vitall breath awaie

To flee for aide to parents deere

will not availe in this distresse

noe sugred words or guiftes or bribes

can force of tyme and death supresse.

Then to the Lorde I fly alone

to man tis vaine to make my mone

With pacient minde and thankful hart

graunte I may yeilde unto this will

That living I may love my lorde

That dying I may serve him still

When Tyme and Death have plaid their part

Yet then this sight shall ease my Hart

On the middle panel of the other triptych wing, when open:

Of Harewelles blodde eer conquest made

Knoune to descende of gentle race

And sithence linckt in jugall leage

With Colles whose Birthe and vertues grace

An Impe entombed heere dothe lie

In tender years berefte of breath

Whose hope of future virtuous lyfe

was plaine forshewde by lyfe and death.

A Childe he seemde of graver years

and Childish toies did quyte dispise

he sought by yealdinge parents due

and serving god to clime the skies

But prickte with percing plagues of death

for mercie still to god he cryde

Soo lyved he with the love of men

Soe deere in sight of God he died

Blushe elder Sex from Christ to strai

when such an impe forshewes the waie

The *Cornewall Family Memorial*

Transcriptions are printed in: Eade, 'Triptych Portrait in England, 1576-1646', appendix B.

On the tomb from which a figure arises:

I beleve that chryst shall come

to Judge the quick and the dead

Here lyeth Richarde Cornwayll esquire, and Jenet his wife: which Rich: was sone and heyr to Sr. / Thomas Cornwayll of Burforde Knight: whych Jenet was Doghter and heyr unto Hery Woga esq & Katherin his Wife one of y heires of David Mathew of Rhaidre by hys Wfe whych was heyr to Vrett of / Tortworth whych Hery was son & heyr to Sr. John Wogan of Wiston Kn. Rich: died a.o.d.ni 1568 Aet. 75. Jenet a.od.ni 1547 Aet.40

Here lyeth Edmonde Cornwayll son & heyre to Richard Cornwaylle & Jenet hys wife who beinge never / marryed, died wth out issue in ye. Yere of his age 50 in ye. Yere of our Lord 1585 leaing his lands & goods / uto his welbeloved brother Thomas Cornewayle now living who hath caused this Monument to be / made for ye. Memory of his Worshipfull Parets & / most lovige Brother in the yere of our lord 1587

Beneath the small square panels of the nativity, passion, and resurrection of Christ:

I beleve the Cryst / was born of the Virgin Mary

I beleve that Cryst was / crucyfied dead and buryed

I beleve that Cyst did ryse / the third say fro death to Lyfe

Above the apostles on the exterior of the triptych doors:

Regard not theise pictures: But follow the Lord / As did the apostles: In Lyff and in Word

Syth death so certayne ys & shuer
And so uncertayne is the houer
Regard the concell whych I give
Lyve well to dye, dye well to lyve

For as you are so once was I
And as I am so shall you be
Altho' that ye be fayre & younge
Wyse, welthy, hardy, stout & strong

Your debt you sall to nature pay
Theyrefore think on the latter day
And praye to God hthat He may send
You grace to mayke a godle end

O Lord, our sowles receive
And ek our sins forgyve
With joye thys world we leave
And hope with the to lyve

Through Christ our Lord

Amen

Sir Thomas Cornewayll of Burford Knight

sone unto Sir Edmund of Cornewayll

Knight lyeth buryed at Artoon near

London who died about ano dom '1537

iat 70 whose Father Sir Edmund was

buyred in the black fryers at London

in the chapel of Sir John Corenwayll

Lord Stanhope

Here lyeth Dame Ann Cornewayll Wife

unto Sir Thomas Cornewayll and

Daughter unto Sir Richard Corbet

of Morton knight by Dame Elizabeth

his Wife Daughter unto the Lord

Ferrys of Chartley after married

Unto Sir Tho. Leighton knight w'Dame

Ann died ano dom 1548 + 78

The *Stradling Family Memorial Panels*

I.   Panel I

Below the Stradling coat of arms: DUW A DIGON [God is enough]

Next to the head of Thomas: HE DIED BEFORE HE WAS . 26 . YEARS OF AGE

Next to the head of Jenet: ANNO AETA SVE . 24 .

In between Thomas and Jenet:

THE UNDERNAMED HARRY STRADLINGE KNIGHT WENT ON

PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM AND RECEAVED THE ORDER OF

THE SEPYLCHER (HER) AS HIS FATHER EDWARD STRADLYN

GE KNIGHT THE OF THAT NAME AND GRANDFATHER WILLIAM

STRADLINGE KNIGHT THE SECOND OF THAT NAME DID AND

DIED IN THE ILE OF CYPRES IN HIS COMMINGE HOME THE

LAST OF AUGUST IN THE 10 YERE OF KINGE EDWARD

THE 4 AND IS BURIED THER IN THE CYTIE OF FAMA-

GUSTA. THIS SIR HARRY SAILING FROM HIS HOUSE IN SOMER-

SETSHIRE TO HIS HOUSE IN WALES WAS TAKEN PRISONER BY

A BRYTAINE PIRATE NAMED COLYN DOLPHYN WHOSE REDE

MPTION AND CHARGES STOOD HIM IN 2200 MARKES FOR THE

PAYMENT WHEREOF HE WAS DRIVEN TO SELL THE CASTEL

AND MANOUR OF BASSELEK AND SUTTON IN MONMOUTHSHIRE

AND TWO MANOURS IN OXFORDSHIRE.

In the text box below Thomas and Jenet:

HERE LYETH THOMAS STRADLINGE ESQUIRE SONNE TO HARRY STRADLINGE KNIGHT

AND / ELISABETH HIS WIFE (THE DAUGHTER OF WILLIAM THOMAS OF RAGLAN IN THE

COUNTIE OF / MONMOUTH KNIGHT) WHO DYED AT CARDYIFE IN THE MONASTERY OF

PREACHINGE FRYERS / THE 8 DAY OF SEPTEMBER IN THE YERE OF OUR LORD 1480

WHOS BONES (AFTER THE DISSOLUTION OF THE SAYD / MONASTERIE) THOMAS

STRADLINGE KNIGHT HIS NEPHEW CAUSED TO BE TAKEN UP AND CARIED TO SAINT /

DONATTS AND BURIED IN THE CHAUNCELL OF THE CHURCH THER BY HIS SONNE THE

4 DAY OF JUNE IN / THE YERE OF OUR LORD 1537 AND AFTERWARDS EDWARD

STRADLINGE KNIGHT HIS NEPHEWE SONNE / THE 5 OF THAT NAME TRANSLATED THE

SAID BONES OUT OF THE CHAUNCELL IN TO THE CHAPPELL THER IN / THE YERE OF

OUR LORD 1573 AFTER WHOS DEATH HIS WIFE MARIED WITH SIR REES AP THOMAS /

KNIGHT OF THE GARTER AND DYED AT PICTON IN THE COUNTY OF PEMBROKE THE 5

DAY OF FEBR= / UARY IN THE YERE OF OUR LORD 1533 AND WAS BURYED AT

CAMARTHEN IN THE CHURCH OF THE / MONASTERY OF PREACHING FRIERS WITH THE SAID SIR REES AP THOMAS HER HUSBAND.

II.   Panel 2

Below the Stradling coat of arms: DUW A DIGON [God is enough]

In the text box below Edward and Elizabeth:

HERE LYETH EDWARD STRADLINGE KNIGHT THE . 4. OF THAT NAME SONNE TO THOMAS / STRADLINGE ESQVIER AND IENET HIS WYFE (THE DAVGHTER OF THOMAS MATHEW OF RADER / IN THE COUNTY OF GLAMORGAN ESQVIER) WHO DIED IN THE CASTELL OF SAINT DONATTS THE / . 8. DAY OF MAY IN THE YERE OF OVR LORD . 1535 . AND WAS BVRIED IN THE CHAVNCEL OF THE / CVURCH THER WHOSE BONES WERE AFTER TRANSLATED BY HIS NEPHEWE EDWARD STRADLINGE / KNIGHT OF THE . 5. OF THAT NAME INTO THE CHAPPELL THER IN THE YERE OF OVR LORD . 1573 . ALLSO / HERE LYETH ELIZABETH HIS WIFE DAVGHTER TO THOMAS ARVUNDELL OF LANHEYRON IN THE COUNTY / OF CORNEWALL KNIGHT WHO DYED IN CHILDBEAD AT MERTHERMAWRE THE . 20. DAY OF FEBRUARY IN / THE YERE OF OUR LORD . 1513 . AND WAS BURIED THER WHOS BONES THOMAS STRADLINGE KNIGHT / HER SONNE CAUSED TO BE TAKEN UP AND CARYED TO SAINT DONATTS AND BURIED IN THE CHAUNCELL / OF THE CHURCH THER WITH HER HUSBAND TH . 8 . DAY OF MAYE IN THE YERE OF OUR LORD.1536. / AND WERE AFTERWARDS BY EDWARD STRADLINGE KNIGHT THE . 5 . OF THAT NAME HER NEPHEWE / TRANSLATED OUT OF THE CHANCELL INTO THE CHAPPEL THER IN THE YERE OF OUR LORD.1573.

III.   Panel 3

Below the Stradling coat of arms: DUW A DIGON [God is enough]
Next to Edward: AN AETATIS SUE / . 60 . INCIPIENTE .
Next to Agnes: AENO.AETATIS. / . SUE . 40 .

Between Edward and Agnes: VERTUES HOLE PRAISE . / CONSISTETH IN DOING . / 1590

In the inscription panel below Edward and Agnes:

THES PICTURES DO REPRESENT SIR EDWARD STRADLINGE KNIGHT THE . 5. OF THAT / NAME SONNE TO SIR THOMAS STRADLINGE KNIGHT AND KATERIN HIS WIFE DAUGHTER / TO SIR THOMAS GAMEGE OF COETY KNIGHT) AND THE LADY AGNES STRADLINGE HIS WIFE / DAUGHTER TO SIR EDWARD GAGE OF SUSSEX KNIGHT AND ELISABETH HIS WIFE DAUGHTER / TO JOHN PARKER OF WILLINGET^{O}N IN THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX ESQUIRE WHICH SAID SIR / EDWARD NOWE IN HIS LIFETIME HATH SET FORTH THIS MONUMENTS OF THES HIS / AUNCESTORS DECEASSED AND BY GODS GRACE MEANETH BOTH HE AND HIS WIFE AFTER THEIR / DECEASSE TO KEEPE THEM BODELYCOMPANY IN THIS SEALFE SAME PLACE ANNO DOMINI . 1590