The International Catholic Conspiracy:
Catholic Politics in Elizabethan England and the 1580 Arrival of the Jesuits

by

Thomas Flowers

Senior Honors Thesis

History 194
University of California, Santa Barbara

Professor J. Sears McGee

24 March 2006

On December 1, 1581, according to Thomas Alfield, "three glorious Martirs learned, meeke, stoute and constant Priests . . . were under pretence of high treason moste iniuriously to the great lamentation generally of all good men, martired for the Catholike faith."[1] One of these priests was Edmund Campion (b. 1540), a Jesuit missionary who, according to George Ellyot, led "a loose life, wandring & running hither and thither, from shire to shire . . . with such a store of Romish relikes, popish pelfe, trifles & trash" as would make "any Christian hearte . . . for sorrow to bleed."[2] Moreover, the mission of the Jesuits was "to drawe the Queenes Maiesties subiects their heartes and faithes both from God and her highnesss [sic]."[3] Campion was either a martyr or a traitor: one could hardly hope for a more clearly muddled picture.

The historiography of the first Jesuit mission to England has not, in truth, moved so far from the locked horns of Thomas Alfield and George Ellyot. In the summer of 1580, the Jesuits Edmund Campion and Robert Parsons[4] (1546–1610) arrived in England, inaugurating the first of many missions by the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits)[5] to England. Catholic historians, together with their modern, less hagiographic allies, have held to Fr. Alfield's basic premise: the Jesuits came to England for the sake of the Catholic faith, and Campion died a martyr's death. Champions of the English state and its national (and Protestant) church and their more historically minded modern allies have found cause to defend Mr. Ellyot's position, contending that the Jesuits came to England with political confrontation in mind. At best this confrontation

---

[1] Thomas Alfield, *A True Report of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Iesuite and preiste & M. Sherwin & M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581*, sig. A4 r.
[2] George Ellyot, *A very true report of the apprehension and taking of that arche Papist Edmond Campion*, sig. A3 r.
[3] Ibid.
[4] As with so many other early modern English names, the spelling of Parsons's name was not consistent. Consequently, some of secondary sources used in this paper spell it "Parsons" and others "Persons." I have adopted the former usage.
[5] The members of the Society of Jesus are more commonly called "Jesuits" and the two names for the order, following the modern custom of historians and members of the order alike, are used here interchangeably. It is, however, worth noting that no *Jesuit* discussed in this paper either referred to himself as such or cared for the name, and that, indeed, "Jesuit" only appears in the primary material for this paper when used by people hostile to the order.

was intended to be a political one over religious matters; at worst, it was a political conspiracy intent upon seeing Elizabeth off her throne. Many historians, of course, have tread on the middle ground between these two positions, and the current trend in the historiography has, indeed, been to acknowledge both the spiritual and political motivations of the Jesuits. In doing this, a basic principle has tended to govern all subsequent theories, no matter how different their ultimate conclusions: the Jesuits may well have had spiritual motivations, but there was *something* else going on as well, something decidedly more sinister.

This paper challenges that assumption. For while there may have been an International Catholic Conspiracy to overthrow Queen Elizabeth and place a Catholic on the throne, the first Jesuit missionaries had no part in it. Rather, the first Jesuit mission was a pastoral mission, conceived with spiritual motivations, although it had a direct political effect. As such, Campion and Parsons were, indeed, the ringleaders in something of a Catholic "conspiracy," but it was a conspiracy to reconvert the entire realm to Catholicism. This was the intention of the mission from its foundation by the pope and the superior of the Jesuit order, and Campion and Parsons faithfully followed the orders they received. That the mission did not succeed in accomplishing these ambitious goals is, for the purposes of this paper, irrelevant except for what the result of the mission actually was, that is, the entrenchment of the English Catholic position.

The narrowness of my focus in this paper should not be overlooked. This is not a paper on the enormous topic of Catholicism in Elizabethan England, nor on the Jesuit role in Elizabethan Catholicism as a whole. I am concerned only with the first Jesuit mission, which means that all discussion in this paper swirls around events that took place from 1579 to 1581. Further, this analysis will not delve very deeply into the biography of any of the principal actors, nor much into documents written by these men after the years in question. This is a study of an

undertaking launched in relative secrecy that came to have very public repercussions. The motivations of all involved parties are certainly important, but these motivations will not be looked for in psychoanalysis or cultural study. Rather my concern is with the self-representation of the historical actors in a series of critical documents, some private, but most public. For the character, moral or otherwise, of any figure studied here is not important in and of itself, but is significant only insofar as it aids us in understanding both what impact these men intended their actions to have and what impact this intention, and the circumstances, actually produced.

The first section of this paper will establish first what "the Catholic problem" in Elizabethan England consisted of, and, secondly the sort of conspiracy the Jesuits, after they had come and gone, were accused of having undertaken. The second section will examine the foundations of the mission and lay out what the purpose of the mission was as conceived by its initiators. The third section will continue this narrative with an analysis of how the missionaries themselves did or did not carry out this mission. Then the fourth and final section will explore the practical impact of the first Jesuit mission on Catholics in England and English society as a whole.

I. Ambiguous Limits

In reference to recent Jesuit activity in England, Queen Elizabeth's secretary of state, William Cecil, Lord Burghley (1520-1598) noted in 1583 that "in all ages and in all countries . . . all offenders for the most part" have tended "to make defense of their lewd and unlawful facts by untruths" so that they might "continue, uphold, and prosecute their wicked attempts to the full satisfaction of their disordered and malicious appetites."[6] Such was the love that Burghley bore for the Catholic missionary priests who, in his view, thought "themselves fully discharged of

[6] In *The Execution of Justice in England and A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon, 3.

their allegiance and obedience to their lawful prince."[7] There was no doubt in Burghley's mind that the Jesuits were traitors and as such, he had no patience with them or their arguments. Yet William Cardinal Allen (1532-1594), the rector of the Catholic seminary on the continent specifically created to train Catholic priests to work as missionaries in England,[8] had no more tolerance for the English government's construal of Jesuit missionary activity as treasonous than Burghley did for the Jesuit presence in the realm. By Allen's account, the accusations leveled at Jesuits by the crown were "full of wild and waste words artificially couched to abuse the ignorant."[9] Each author, in his own colorful way, left no doubt as to the level of contempt he held for the other.

Such an obvious point, though, raises the significant question of why Burghley and Allen were thus arguing over the matter. Lord Burghley's comments about the treason of the Jesuits comes amidst his *The Execution of Justice in England*, a tract he wrote entirely on the topic of Catholics and Catholic missionaries, defending the position of the crown that any Catholic who was executed was guilty of treason and not executed on account of any matter of religion. William Allen's comment comes from his *A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics*, written to refute the claims made by Burghley in *The Execution of Justice*. In it, Allen went to great lengths to prove that the executed Catholic missionaries died for their religion and, further, that all of the charges brought against these men were without legal merit.

The reality was that no matter how impregnable Allen and Burghley sought to make their own positions, there were distinct and glaring problems with the logic of both, and there is no

---

[7] Ibid., 8.

[8] However, the seminary did not train Jesuits. The seminary at Douai trained the secular clergy of England, that is, those priests who did not live according to the rule of a Catholic religious order like the Jesuits. Allen however, as will later be discussed at greater length, was a supporter of the Jesuit presence in England.

[9] In *The Execution of Justice in England and A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon, 84.

doubt that they knew it. Although the Burghley-Allen debate came after Edmund Campion had already been executed and Robert Parsons had fled England, such a public and comprehensive debate on the issue of the religious and political ramifications of Catholic missionary activity in England serves as a fitting introduction to the maze of ambiguities surrounding the Jesuit mission of 1580. What the Burghley-Allen debate makes so obvious is not merely the ambiguity of the matters at stake regarding Catholic religious and political loyalty, but more specifically the extent to which the English government and Catholic Church could not keep separate the political and the religious; the two were inextricably intertwined. Indeed, the Burghley-Allen debate does not so much make clear the position of English Catholics after the first Jesuit missionaries had come and gone, as it demonstrates the ambiguity implicit in the Catholic mission of the 1570s and 1580s and in the political and religious position of the country in which such an unprecedented mission took place.

The fundamental charge that faced Burghley and Allen was treason. While Burghley spent much of his tract attempting to divorce religion from his accusations of the Catholic missionaries and Allen spent just as much time asserting the primary importance of religion to the actions of the missionaries in England, both men were obsessed with the question of whether or not these Catholics were traitors. For the very same men exemplified by Allen's "happy priest, martyred for that he acknowledged himself to have reconciled certain persons to the Catholic Church" were Burghley's "seditious seedmen and sowers of rebellion."[10] While Burghley did not believe that Allen's "happy priest" was merely dealing in spiritual matters, the fact was that simply being a Catholic priest in England naturally attracted charges of treason. Whether or not the charges had any merit, it is first necessary to understand the position of the Catholic Church in Elizabethan England at which this hints.

---

[10] Ibid., 64, 7.

In 1534, the Reformation Parliament had affirmed that Henry VIII "justly and rightly is and oweth to be the supreme head of the Church of England."[11] Further, after the restoration of Catholicism under the reign of her older sister, in 1559 Elizabeth and her first parliament had reasserted the unity of religious and political power in the person of the monarch, by stating that Elizabeth was "the only supreme governor of this realm . . . as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal."[12] The slight, though significant, difference in the religious titles of the two Tudor monarchs aside, these statutes created a very muddied situation for the remaining Catholics in England. Elizabethan Catholics had, by being English and Catholic, entered into new territory, where their political and religious affiliations were no longer clear cut. For there was a great deal of ambiguity in the minds of Catholics, and even in the pronouncements from Rome and London, about whether or not Catholics could now be faithful in both their religious and political lives. The historian Christopher Haigh has said of the pre-Reformation Church in England that "papal authority was neither loved nor hated; it was not important enough for such strong emotions."[13] Haigh here makes a significant point: to be a Catholic in England when the entire realm was Catholic did not necessarily require any particularly strong devotion to the papacy. Yet for those who remained Catholic after Henry's break with Rome, the question of their allegiance to the pope suddenly was of paramount importance. For what Henry and Elizabeth proclaimed in their respective Acts of Supremacy was not something novel; the notion that the monarchy rested upon, and was invested with, both political and spiritual authority was as true before the break with Rome as it was after it. Thus, for those Englishmen who assented to the religious changes Henry enacted, nothing had changed in their relationship with the crown. It was English Catholics who were the problem.

---

[11] In *The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary*, ed. G. R. Elton, 364.
[12] Ibid., 375.
[13] *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society Under the Tudors*, 8.

Historian Lucy Wooding has asserted boldly that "it was possible to remain loyal to the Catholic faith and to Henry VIII at one and the same time."[14] Such is a reasonable enough assertion to make from the safe distance of centuries and it seems one that might as readily apply to a Catholic's allegiance to Elizabeth as to Henry, but neither the Catholic Church nor the government of England quite saw the matter in that light. In 1571, Pope Pius V (1566-1572) issued the papal bull *Regnans in Excelsis* declaring that Elizabeth had "incurred the sentence of excommunication and [was] cut off from the unity of the body of Christ."[15] This excommunication carried with it a claim that Elizabeth was "deprived of her pretended title to the . . . crown" and also contained a stern command to all Catholics that they "do not dare obey her orders, mandates, and laws."[16] We will examine later the state of this bull by the time of Pius's successor, Gregory XIII, and the arrival of the Jesuit missionaries, but for the time being it is enough to recognize from such a bold challenge to Elizabeth's authority that the Catholic Church, in the person of the pope at least, did not consider someone's self-description as Catholic to be enough: being Catholic meant having a set of obligations that touched on much more than prayers and communion.

The English government similarly politicized the religious position of Catholics in England. It is first of all important to reiterate that the Acts of Supremacy put Catholics in a bewildering position, for if the king or queen of England had "full power and authority . . . [to] correct, restrain and amend . . . errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contempts and enormities,"[17] then how could a Catholic disregard this authority in favor of the pope's claims to these powers and still be loyal to the king? Yet, in 1571, after the pope had issued *Regnans in Excelsis*,

---

[14] *Rethinking Catholicism in Reformation England*, 5, 7.
[15] In *The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary*, ed. G. R. Elton, 427.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 365.

parliament and the crown retorted with *An Act against the bringing in and putting in execution of bulls and other instruments from the see of Rome*, which saw to the "abolishing of the usurped power and jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome" and further stated that "no person or persons shall hold or stand with to set forth, maintain, defend or extol the same usurped power."[18] It thus seems to follow logically that with Rome demanding that Catholics disobey their "pretended queen" and the crown stating that the English people must not obey Rome, that by 1571, at least, no ambiguity could have possibly remained: by the words of the pope and by acts of parliament, Catholics were traitors by virtue of their being Catholic.

The matter was, however, far from that simple; the very existence of the Burghley-Allen debate testifies to it. For Burghley and Allen were not arguing over whether Catholics by their nature were traitors; both men, indeed, actively worked to dismiss this notion. Burghley, in reference to Catholics who had fled England, explained that "these notable traitors and rebels have falsely informed . . . the Bishop of Rome . . . that the cause of their fleeing from their countries was for the religion of Rome and for the maintenance of the said Pope's authority."[19] Strange as it may seem, Burghley here flatly denied that the rebelliousness of English Catholic exiles had anything at all to do with the maintenance of the pope's authority. Considering that it was a crime to "defend or extol the . . . usurped power" of the pope, this position seems to make little sense. And yet it is this contradiction that gets to the very heart of the matter over which Burghley and Allen contended.

It was not enough, from a polemical perspective, for Burghley simply to say that the laws of England had changed forty-nine years before with Henry's Act of Supremacy, much less twenty-four or twelve years previous under the government of Elizabeth; such a position

---

[18] Ibid., 428.
[19] In *The Execution of Justice in England and A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon, 4.

smacked of novelty, and in the early modern world, the concept of novelty was assuredly grouped among the most pernicious of concepts.[20] From a legal or religious perspective, arguments that were novel could be dismissed with little fanfare. It is important, thus, to return to Henry's headship of the Church in England. For the Reformation Parliament never itself claimed to be *making* Henry the head of the Church in England, but rather stated that Henry already *was* the head of the Church. Elizabeth's parliament similarly asserted that their act was about "restoring and uniting to the imperial crown of this realm [its] ancient jurisdictions."[21] It is an important distinction, for it reveals that neither the parliaments nor the monarchs of England considered themselves to have enough authority to change such a fundamental piece of the English constitution. Because nothing *novel* could be good or legitimate, it was essential for both Burghley and Allen to prove the antiquity of their cause. Thus Burghley was quick to point out that the executed missionaries "have justly suffered death, not by force or from any new laws established," but rather "by the ancient temporal laws of the realm, and namely the laws of Parliament made in King Edward the Third's time . . . when the Bishops of Rome and Popes were suffered to have their authority ecclesiastical in this realm."[22]

It is noteworthy that here Burghley expressly denied that the crown persecuted the missionaries according to the very acts of parliament that seemed to fit the situation most particularly. For in 1581, parliament issued a statute that proclaimed that anyone who "put into practice . . . to withdraw any of the Queen Majesty's subjects . . . from the religion now by her Highness' authority established within her Highness' dominions to the Romish religion . . . shall

---

[20] For a delightfully comprehensive explanation of the problems of novelty, particularly as it affected political thought, see Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*. In particular, Skinner makes clear in his introduction that in any political discussion "the terms of the normative vocabulary available to any given agent for the description of his political behavior" dictate that no "new" concept can be truly new because it must rely upon an existing vocabulary to give it expression and validity (xiii).

[21] In *The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary*, ed. G. R. Elton, 372.

[22] In *The Execution of Justice in England and A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon, 8.

be to all intents adjudged to be traitors."[23] Yet Burghley's claim to have condemned the missionaries according to ancient laws anticipated the very criticism that Allen leveled when he stated categorically that the missionaries were "condemned not by any old laws . . . as is deceitfully pretended."[24] As far as Allen was concerned, not only had Elizabeth's parliament "*abolished* the Pope's authority,"[25] but the "statute of King Edward the Third upon which they pretend to have indicted them" fell under the category of the "laws made by godly Popes and princes for punishment of heretics and malefactors" that the English government had now perverted for its own ends.[26]

The indictment or vindication of the executed Catholic missionaries thus depended upon an interpretation of ancient laws. The problem for the English authorities was that they knew that the deck was stacked against their position if they attempted to base their attacks on religious principles. Burghley, for all that he did not hesitate to use the descriptors "notable traitors and rebels" or many other number of invectives for the Jesuits, significantly never called them heretics. Simply put, the ancient *temporal* laws of England were uncompromising in regard to anyone who would willfully draw subjects away from their rightful allegiance to the monarch; such individuals were guilty of treason. Ancient *ecclesiastical* laws, on the other hand, had been created by the Catholic Church; thus the Catholic Church had the ancient authority on the issue of heresy. The Jesuits may indeed have been heretics from the perspective of the Church of England, yet that was somewhat beside the point. For while no one could doubt the authority of the English government to define and prosecute treason, heresy from the Church of England was, quite simply, too novel a concept to have much polemical weight.

---

[23] In *The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary*, ed. G. R. Elton, 432.
[24] In *The Execution of Justice in England and A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon, 61.
[25] Ibid., 67 [Emphasis mine].
[26] Ibid., 83, 77.

By way of example, it is illuminating, in this context, to spend some time examining the ways in which the first and second Acts of Repeal (issued in 1553 and 1554) of Mary Tudor reacted to and commented upon the impressive clamoring for ancient legitimacy in which Henry and Elizabeth's Acts of Supremacy engaged. When Mary set about dismantling the establishment of the Church of England, she did so slowly and carefully, first rolling back the religious legislation of her brother Edward VI, and then, with the second Act of Repeal, moving the religious state of the realm back to its incarnation under Henry VIII before the break with Rome. Her justification, in the First Act of Repeal, was that "the divine service and good administration of the sacraments . . . which we and our forefathers found in this Church of England" had been "in some part taken from us, and in place thereof *new things* imagined and set forth."[27] Novelty was the evil that Mary sought to rid her realm of by returning to the Catholic Church. When Mary's parliament issued the Second Act of Repeal, the point, however, was subtler. The act began by noting that "since the 20th year of King Henry the Eighth of famous memory, father unto your Majesty our most natural sovereign . . . much false and erroneous doctrine has been taught."[28] Although the intention of the act was undeniably to overturn legislation deliberately enacted by Henry, the drafters of the act nevertheless thought it prudent to speak highly of Henry, to highlight the blood relationship between Mary and Henry, and to point out how this, among other things, proved that Mary was England's natural sovereign. Mary was not afraid to claim her legitimacy to the throne through her heretic father, nor, indeed, did she ever attempt to assert that his claim to the throne was illegitimate. This is, perhaps, an obvious point, and an act of parliament hardly gives any indication of what Mary truly thought about these matters, but rather only shows that which she felt was most prudent to proclaim. Yet

---

[27] In *The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary*, ed. G. R. Elton, 409 [Emphasis mine].
[28] Ibid., 368.

even if it was only so much careful politicking, there is a clear sense in Mary's Acts of Repeal that the ancient, temporal laws of England that governed succession were important, even in the face of the sort of pernicious novelty that had led England to break "from the obedience of the See Apostolic and [to decline] from the unity of Christ's Church."[29] Just as Burghley could not simply dismiss the ancient religious laws of the Catholic Church, Mary could not dismiss the ancient temporal laws of England, even from the lofty position of queen. These were the twin pillars necessary to support any sense of legitimacy.

To return to Burghley and Allen, the question that remains is how Allen sought to use ancient law to vindicate the Jesuit martyrs and how Burghley sought to use it to indict them. For it was this dependence on ancient law that made it so necessary for Burghley to prove that the Jesuits were traitors and for Allen to show how the Jesuits did what they did merely for the sake of religion. This was how the debate was framed: if Burghley could prove that the Jesuits were traitors, then he would win the polemic, if Allen could prove the true religious motivations of the Jesuits, he would win. Neither, of course, could win, and yet each truly believed that he held a trump card: Burghley the cause of the civil peace and order of England, and Allen the cause of true, established religion.

What perhaps is most fascinating about the nature of the Burghley-Allen debates is that both men more or less admitted that the other held the very trump card the other claimed to hold, for Allen's entire argument relied on proving that the Jesuits were not traitors, just as Burghley's would be defeated if the Jesuits had purely religious motivations. It is important here to recall that one of the driving purposes of this study of the 1580 arrival of the Jesuits is to understand what the true motivations of the Jesuit missionaries were and that this study argues that even if the Jesuits were traitors, they were traitors because of the way that religion was interwoven with

[29] Ibid., 368.

polities. Where this mess of polities and religion, of ancient laws and polemics, thus leaves us is with one final, and crucial, point to examine in the Burghley-Allen debate. It is essential to understand specifically how Burghley and Allen argued their positions. The details are important, for in them we discover the strengths and weaknesses of each side of the argument, so crucial to discovering what the English government and the Jesuits were really up to, and what the situation in England was after the first Jesuit missionaries had come and gone.

The basis for both arguments has already been laid out above, but it is worthwhile, nonetheless, to examine the fundamentals of the arguments again, with closer attention paid to the words themselves. Burghley's argument, in essence, was that the Jesuits and other Catholic missionaries were traitors, and, more specifically, that the Jesuits were the ringleaders in a vast political conspiracy intent upon overthrowing Queen Elizabeth's government. For it was more than an accidental relationship between Catholicism and treason as might be inferred from the above quoted reference he makes to "these notable traitors and rebels" who "have falsely informed . . . the Bishop of Rome . . . that the cause of their fleeing from their countries was for the religion of Rome and for the maintenance of the said Pope's authority."[30] Whether or not the pope was misinformed about the reasons why these traitors fled England, Burghley was sure that "it liked the Bishops of Rome . . . flatly to animate them to continue their former wicked purpose" of sedition and treason.[31] Indeed, Burghley explained that the entire enterprise was an elaborate plot in which the next logical step was "to erect certain schools which they call seminaries, to nourish and bring up persons disposed naturally to sedition."[32] Burghley's final

---

[30] In *The Execution of Justice in England and A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon, 4.
[31] Ibid., 5.
[32] Ibid., 6.

point in this initial explanation of the plot was to note that the priests trained were named "with titles of seminaries for some of the meaner sort and of Jesuits for the stagers and ranker sort."[33]

What Burghley here elaborated easily earns the title of an "International Catholic Conspiracy." It is not only that the Jesuits in England were traitors, but also that they were trained to be traitors at the behest of the pope who desired that they see to the overthrow of Elizabeth and, indeed, of all good order in England. As much as this may seem the raving of a seriously paranoid man, it must be recognized that Burghley had his basic facts in order. The men who were trained in the seminaries were exiles from England, the seminaries were designed to send men into England, and the pope did support the mission wholeheartedly. And it must not be dismissed as mere fantasy that the pope and the priests of the Catholic Church might have been plotting political intrigues, for indeed, Pope Gregory XIII, at the very least, participated in his share. In a more general sense, however, it was not absurd for Burghley so to confuse religious and political matters: in a world where Church and state had been united for so long, where popes claimed "that [the pope] may depose Emperors," as Gregory VII had asserted in 1075,[34] it was not so easy to separate the two realms.

At the same time, William Allen's defense of the Jesuits should also not be dismissed as fantasy. For Allen, as noted above, had a polemical edge in his claims to the ancient authority of the Church. The crux of Allen's argument, indeed, was that both the motivations and the actions of the Jesuits were purely religious in nature. There is much to be said for the position that the executed priests were "executed for mere matter of religion and upon the transgression of new statutes only, without any relation to the old treasons so made and set down by parliament in

---

[33] Ibid.
[34] *Dictatus Papae*, in Brian Tierney, ed., *The Crisis of Church & State 1050-1300*, 49.

Edward the Third's time."[35] There can be no mistaking that the 1581 act that declared that any person "willingly . . . reconciled" to Rome "shall suffer and forfeit as in cases of high treason," and similarly condemned the men who would work toward such a reconciliation, was intended for the purpose of prosecuting Jesuits and other Catholic missionaries.[36] The executed Jesuits may well have been tried by the treason laws of Edward III, and yet a statute specifically declaring their actions as treason had been newly enacted, which not only suggests that the prosecution of the Jesuits may have had something to do with this new law, but further seems to show that some members of the English government at least considered the Jesuit treason different enough that a new law was required for clarification. It may seem an inconsequential point that Allen was somewhat right when he claimed that the laws under which the Jesuits were executed were new, and yet Burghley's vehement denial of this fact demonstrates that Burghley did not think it so.

Allen also had a knack for making arguments of political motivation seem absurd in the face of the actions of the missionaries as he described them. For as Allen saw it, the crown "suspected [the Jesuits] of [no] other treasons than of hearing confessions, absolving and reconciling sinners to the favor of God and to the unity of the Catholic Church," and he further mocked the crown for claiming that it did not "concerneth religion . . . to demand and press us by torture where, in whose houses, what days and times we say or hear mass."[37] Allen had a point if his facts were in order; even if they were not, his argument had a certain power to it. Yet Burghley gave a fitting rejoinder: "if these seminaries, secret wanderers, and explorators in the dark would employ their travails in the works of light and doctrine," then "all further bodily

---

[35] In *The Execution of Justice in England and A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon, 61.
[36] In *The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary*, ed. G. R. Elton, 432.
[37] In *The Execution of Justice in England and A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon, 64, 70.

punishments should utterly cease."[38] The subtle point made more explicitly in other attacks upon the Jesuits and seminary priests was that these priests made themselves a target for accusations of treason merely by the fact that they operated in the dark, that is, in secret. Thus the question as to what homes the missionaries said mass in can be interpreted as much more than a question touching on religious matters simply because such secret meetings were naturally suspect.

Further, it is not as if Allen completely denied any political involvement. He had no difficulty explaining that "Her Majesty [is] not . . . lawful Queen for two respects: the one for her birth, the other for her excommunication," for Elizabeth did not seek "dispensation for the first nor absolution for the second."[39] This same Elizabeth, according to Burghley was "a sovereign queen, holding her crown immediately of God."[40] Considering these two opposing viewpoints, the stage seems set for a religious debate between Burghley and Allen, and yet, as has already been noted, the Burghley-Allen debate hinged not upon religion but upon the question of treason. Allen made the above pronouncement about Elizabeth's illegitimacy not to support his cause, but to point out that "none of all our priests made any such answer nor otherwise uttered any unlawful speech" such as, Allen noted, a layman executed by the crown did.[41] Allen implied here that while any of the Catholic priests in England could have easily made such an argument and been justified in making it, none of them did so. What they did, according to Allen, was nothing so offensive to royal sensibilities.

No matter how long we picked apart the Bughley-Allen debate, there would come no resolution. The overriding feeling of the entire debate is, indeed, that this was an irreconcilable issue, particularly because both Burghley and Allen make strong arguments. Yet the above

---

[38] Ibid., 40.
[39] Ibid., 88, 89. The reference to her birth recalls the fact that Elizabeth was born to Anne Boleyn, Henry's second wife, which marriage the Catholic Church never recognized as legitimate.
[40] Ibid., 23.
[41] Ibid., 89.

analysis of the debate has not been made with a mind toward proving that Catholics were or were not traitors. What is most significant about the debate is, indeed, not that Burghley thought Catholics were traitors and that Allen did not think them so; that much is obvious. The issue is *why* Burghley thought that Catholic missionaries were traitors, for he did not think they were traitors because being Catholic was treasonous, even though, in effect, it was. He asserted that they were traitors because of his elaborately explained "International Catholic Conspiracy." He reasoned that the Jesuits, indeed, were the "stagers" of a vast rebellious plot. Allen, as we have seen, dismissed this as just so much smokescreen: the Jesuits and other missionaries were tried on trumped up treason charges so that the English government could persecute them for their religion because "the particular state of a number dependeth on this new religion."[42] He had a point: Elizabeth's act of supremacy made clear that the state of her rule depended as much on what, according to Allen, was a "new religion" as on the ancient temporal laws of the realm. The International Catholic Conspiracy may, indeed, have been cover for an assault upon the Catholic religion. But so, too, may have Allen's elaborate religious justifications of the actions of the missionary priests been an attempt to cover over a true Catholic Conspiracy, in which the missionaries took part, that sought to overthrow the English government and impose Catholicism upon the realm. The Burghley-Allen debate does not leave its analysts with any clear notion of what was truly going on behind so much rhetoric.

Questions about the true motivations of ministers of the English crown and whether or not any of them actually believed in the International Catholic Conspiracy will have to be left to another analysis and analyst. For our purposes, however, Burghley's explanation of the plot, with its Jesuit ringleaders, is important, for there was something going on and the Jesuits were deeply involved. Before turning to the hatching of the plot, or, as it may perhaps be more charitably

---

[42] Ibid., 74.

described, the launching of the Jesuit mission, it is fitting to note Cardinal Allen's words about Edmund Campion. Allen explained that Campion was accused of violating a law "in which the first and chief [crime] is to conspire or compass the death of the sovereign, or to levy men of arms against him" and it was upon this "special clause" that he was arraigned.[43] This notion of "levying men of arms" against the queen is one that Burghley, too, made reference to, when he commented that it was only because "all Catholics had not been duly informed that the Queen's Majesty was declared to be . . . an heretic" that previous rebellions against the Queen had not succeeded. Burghley continued by explaining that this "want of information . . . was . . . supplied by the sending into the realm of a great multitude of seminaries and Jesuits."[44]

There is a notion, therefore, in this theory of the International Catholic Conspiracy, that the Jesuits and seminary priests were working to gather forces together for the eventual rebellion. Thus it was only those Catholics who had been "reconciled" by the missionaries that Burghley claimed to be attacking, for only they were abettors in the Catholic plot; it was not a matter of religion from Burghley's perspective, for "there are many subjects known in the realm that differ in some opinions of religion from the Church of England" yet so long as they "also profess[ed] loyalty and obedience to Her Majesty" they bore no guilt.[45] It is in this context that a return to the perspective of Chistopher Haigh is illuminating. Haigh has noted that "when the Jesuits came to England in 1580, many Catholics responded with fear and suspicion" and that many suspected the Jesuit presence would lead to "harsher persecution."[46] Indeed, their suspicion proved correct. Peter Lake and Michael Questier have further noted that the "pastoral aspects of the [Jesuit] mission" eventually paled before the desire of Parsons and Campion "to wield the issue [of

---

[43] Ibid., 78.
[44] Ibid., 17.
[45] Ibid., 9.
[46] "The Continuity of English Catholicism," *Past and Present* #93 (November 1981), 38.

Catholic non-attendance at Church of England services] as a political and polemical weapon against the regime."[47] Even the Jesuit historian Thomas McCoog admits that "Campion and Parsons's understanding of their mission went beyond the instructions they received from Rome" in that these Jesuits sought political confrontation.[48] These are all elusive and bewildering statements if one has not yet had any introduction to these Jesuits and their instructions from Rome, but they also fittingly introduce a study of the commissioning of the Jesuit missionaries. They suggest, across the board, that the Jesuits may indeed have been the ringleaders of a political plot. They suggest that there may have been an International Catholic Conspiracy, even if it was not precisely the plot Burghley thought it was.

II. The Missioning

Edmund Campion and Robert Parsons came to England in June 1580. On July 19 of that year, Campion would write the "brag" for which he gained such notoriety in England, a two and a half page declaration, reportedly written in half an hour, that would inspire storms of rhetoric. Yet before we can turn to the mission of these infamous Jesuits, we must first understand, as far as is possible, how they came to be in England. Campion and Parsons were, of course, both English by birth, but had left as young men for the obvious reason. Further, although by 1570 the seminary at Douai was training missionary priests for England, Parsons and Campion belonged to the Society of Jesus, which, for all its missionary efforts throughout the world, did not initiate an English mission until 1580 when the general of the Jesuits sent Campion and Parsons to England. By late 1581 Campion was dead, and by no later than 1583 Parsons was on the

---

[47] "Puritans, Papists and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context," *Journal of Modern History*, 610.
[48] Thomas McCoog, SJ, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England 1541-1588: 'Our Way of Proceeding?'*, 148.

continent permanently,[49] and the first mission was over. The important question is, what sort of mission were Campion and Parsons supposed to have undertaken?

The answer to this question lies primarily in two texts: the instructions given to the Jesuits by the general of the Jesuit order and the answers given to a list of eighteen Jesuit questions by Pope Gregory XIII. It may seem imprudent to base an understanding of something so disputed, the aims of the Jesuits in England, on two such *official* documents, and yet, put in the proper context, these documents tell us much of what the Catholic Church and the Jesuit order wanted to gain from the mission. Neither document, no matter how official it may seem to the modern analyst, was intended to be public. Yet these documents were the foundation for the mission. In them, when put in the Jesuit context, the basis for the sort of conspiracy in which the first Jesuit missionaries engaged becomes clear. For the instructions that Campion and Parsons received reveal a plot hatched in the Catholic Church that saw the Jesuits as instrumental to the reconversion of England and also shed light upon the mission's political content in the way these documents recognized, and fretted over, the political ramifications of the mission.

Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) and his original handful of companions received formal approval for their new religious order, the Society of Jesus, from Pope Paul III in 1540. In a statement submitted to, and subsequently approved by, the pope, the first Jesuits laid out what would eventually become the basis for the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*. The society was "founded principally for the advancement of souls in Christian life and doctrine" and also "for the propagation of the faith by the ministry of the word, by spiritual exercises, by works of

---

[49] Although Thomas McCoog asserts that Parsons left England directly after Campion's arrest (*'Our Way of Proceeding?'*, 156), the letters of Parsons I examined do no readily confirm this. However, I find it likely that Parsons was on the continent well before 1583, but erring on the side of caution, I will continue to use 1583 when discussing Parsons's departure from England, because I do know he was on the continent by then.

charity and expressly by the instruction in Christianity of children and the uneducated."[50] This sketch of the society also made explicit that "this entire Society and each [member] individually are soldiers of God under faithful obedience to our most holy lord Paul III and his successors" and that this obedience to the pope went far beyond that "which is common to all clerics."[51] This last point is crucial, for it marked the Jesuits as specially bound to the will of each particular pope in all their endeavors. But it should also be noted that Ignatius and his companions specifically stipulated that it was "whatever His Holiness [the pope] commands pertaining to the advancement of souls and propagation of the faith" that the Jesuits "must immediately carry out."[52] That is to say, in their foundational charter, the Jesuits saw fit to make explicit that their mission was a spiritual one, and it was not political orders of the pope that the Jesuits existed to obey.

This was, however, a principle fraught with difficulty, as any student of the medieval and early modern papacy can recognize. Drawing the line between the spiritual and political actions of the popes is not always an easy task. Particularly, it should be recognized that no matter what popes may have *said* about their motivations, when a French pope, for example, made a decision that adversely affected the Hapsburgs, the Hapsburgs tended to be certain that his motivation was, to say the least, not entirely spiritual. For the purposes of the analysis in this section, however, how the actions of Gregory XIII may have been perceived by his political enemies will not be explored. This is not out of any desire to ignore the difficulty of how religion and politics intersected in the papacy, but rather it is because I am not primarily concerned with how the actions of the pope appeared, but with how the pope himself understood the Jesuit mission to England. So, too, it is more important for the moment to recognize that the Jesuits desired no part

---

[50] John C. Olin, ed. *The Autobiography of St. Ignatius Loyola with Related Documents*, 106-107.
[51] Ibid., 107.
[52] Ibid.

in the pope's political entanglements, than to admit the obvious reality that no critic of the Jesuits believed this for a second.

On the topic of misunderstandings, it is also noteworthy that this explicitly spiritual mission was framed in military terms: the Jesuits were "soldiers of God under faithful obedience." It is clear in context that this expression refers only to spiritual warfare and does not touch on war itself or politics, but the language is worth pointing out, for it is the sort of language that the opponents of the Jesuits in England would later use to accuse them of political and military intrigues.

This foundational document, and the few passages quoted above, serve as a fitting introduction to the character of the society. Yet there are a few points that, in the context of this analysis, deserve further attention. One of the primary features has already been mentioned: the Jesuits were defined by obedience. The Jesuits were not, however, bound only by obedience to the pope: there was, in fact, a hierarchy of obedience within the order. Each Jesuit community was to have a superior, each superior reported to a provincial superior, and above those men was the general of the order. Priests and brothers in the society were instructed to "receive [the] command [of superiors] as if it were coming from Christ our Savior, since we are practicing obedience to one in His place."[53] This notion of seeing the "figure of Christ" in superiors would, naturally, be a point in which enemies of the society found much to criticize, and yet it should not be regarded as anything more than an expression of the society's intense devotion to obeying Christ in the context of Christ's Church on earth. It was, indeed, a way for the men of the society to surrender their own will, and since each respective superior was likewise surrendering his will

[53] George E. Ganss, ed., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, 247.

to his own superior up through the pope who was Christ's vicar, in the end, obedience to superiors and to the pope was obedience to Christ.[54]

The other relevant point about the character of the society is, perhaps, a bit more hidden in the above quoted passages. The Jesuits were, from the very start, "men astutely trained," as one author has said of them.[55] Because the Jesuits intended to fulfill their mission "expressly by the instruction in Christianity of children and the uneducated," all Jesuits were thoroughly educated men who could not only educate the uneducated in Christianity but who, as we shall see, could present their views rather well in a debate. Critics of the Jesuits, indeed, were never slow to criticize the Jesuits for the careful, elaborate logic they crafted to suit their purposes.[56]

The Jesuits grew quickly from their original number, but most of their story, unfortunately, will be here ignored.[57] One feature of the Jesuits before 1580 that does merit further note, however, is the fact that the Jesuits were a missionary order, sent both into "pagan" countries, like India, and into Protestant-controlled European countries. In the late 1540s, indeed, the Jesuit Peter Canisius had some considerable success in Southern Germany, bringing Protestant princes back into the Catholic Church.[58] The *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* lays out the principles of a Jesuit mission and the rules for embarking on a new mission. Most missions, naturally, were to be initiated by the general of the society, who, in order to "meet the

---

[54] For a fuller explanation of the Jesuit attitude toward obedience, see the *Constitutions*, 245-249.

[55] That author is Peter McDonough in *Men Astutely Trained: A History of the Jesuits in the American Century*, which, although it obviously deals with Jesuits of a much later period, nevertheless phrases nicely the attitude of the order toward the education of its men.

[56] The relevant passages in the *Constitutions* on the importance of education can be found on pages 210-220.

[57] For a Jesuit account of that story see James Brodrick, SJ, *The Origin of the Jesuits* for the history of the Jesuits from Ignatius through 1556, and James Brodrick, SJ, *Progress of the Jesuits (1556-1579)*, for the rest of the pre-1580 story.

[58] According to James Brodrick, in *The Progress of the Jesuits*, Peter Canisius "reclaimed from the Protestant sea by his personal exertions or his influence with bishops and princes great tracts of Southern Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bohemia and Poland" (150). Although this claim may be a bit exaggerated, it was the view the Jesuits in 1580 had of what their brother had done not so many years ago, and it is not unreasonable to assume that his example inspired the Jesuits who set out for England.

spiritual needs of souls in many regions . . . will have authority to send any of Society's members whomsoever to whatsoever place [the general] think[s] it more expedient to send them."[59] When the general sends a new mission "he will give [the missionaries] complete instructions, ordinarily in writing, about the manner of proceeding, and the means which he desires to be used for the end sought."[60] That is to say, Jesuits, bound by their obedience to the general of the order, were to be left in no doubt as to the will of their superiors. While on mission, indeed, they were to maintain "frequent communication through letters" with their superiors.[61] Yet even when a mission was initiated by the general of the society, Jesuit missionaries were to be "always at the disposition of His Holiness."[62] When on a mission initiated by the pope, it was similarly "expedient that the mission should be entirely explained to the one who is thus sent, as well as the intention of His Holiness and the result in hope of which [the missionaries are] sent" and this instruction, too, "should be given . . . in writing."[63]

The first Jesuit missionaries to England received written instructions from both the pope and the general of the society. Indeed, the procedure for how to initiate a mission seems to have been followed to the letter in regard to the English mission. Two final points, however, remain about the character of Jesuit missions that relate to the topic at hand. The first has already been made, but should be reiterated: Jesuit missions were supposed to exist to "meet the spiritual needs of souls" in the regions to which the Jesuits were sent. There is no provision made for any political involvement, for the Jesuits were supposed to "occupy themselves in undertakings directed toward the benefit of souls" and, also those of "mercy and charity."[64] The final point is

---

[59] George E. Ganss, ed., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, 271.
[60] Ibid., 279.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., 271.
[63] Ibid., 269-270.
[64] Ibid., 275.

that "the Society ought to labor more intensely in those places where the enemy of Christ our Lord has sown cockle."[65] It seems that Protestant England certainly should have fit the bill: by 1580, the "cockle" of Protestantism had been firmly planted for over twenty years. Thus the question surfaces: why did the Jesuits wait until 1580 to send their first mission?

The answer to such a question relies to some degree on conjecture and is, as I shall attempt to explain, somewhat tangential to the purposes of this examination. Yet there are a few points which, of necessity, must be at least touched upon, if for no other reason than the army of historians who have, in recent years, laid much significance upon them. To begin with, there is the important factor of chronology: the Jesuits became an order in 1540. It may not be entirely clear why there was no immediate English Jesuit mission, but a mere thirteen years after the foundation of the order, the threat of English Protestantism already seemed to be a thing of the past. For in 1553, the Catholic Queen Mary was on the throne, working diligently to dismantle the Church whose headship she had inherited. Indeed, in 1553, Ignatius of Loyola wrote to Reginald Cardinal Pole, papal legate to England and eventual Archbishop of Canterbury, to say that he was certain it was "not the bad will of the people but of their leaders and princes which has been the cause of their errors" and to assure Pole that he had given orders that "all the priests should offer mass" for the cause of the Catholic restoration.[66] In 1555, Ignatius again wrote to Pole, this time to tell him that "if your most reverend lordship could find it convenient to send a few good students" to the Jesuit colleges on the continent, Ignatius hoped that "before too long they could be sent back with great profit" to England.[67] There is no reference in either letter to the prospect of a Jesuit mission to England, and although there is some reason to believe that

---

[65] Ibid.
[66] William Young, *Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, V, 304-305, Letters 3627.
[67] Ibid., VIII, 308-111, Letters 5120.

Pole did not want the Jesuits to come,[68] it ought to be noted that there was no visible need for the Jesuits. England was, after all, officially Catholic once more, and it was only a matter of time before heresy would be stamped out entirely. This, indeed, was still the situation when Ignatius died in 1556.

The story, for our purposes, resumes in 1579. No explanation for the obvious gap between the resumption of English Protestantism and the English mission will be here elaborated, but I will suggest a probable one: the Jesuit generals of the intervening years were afraid an English mission would be perceived as political. Thomas McCoog has shown that Everard Mercurian, at least, voiced such fears, which can account for Jesuit reluctance about the English mission from his election in 1573 onward.[69] The significance, thus, of Ignatius's relationship with English Catholicism is that because the religious situation that existed in England at Ignatius's death bore little resemblance to what followed in the 1560s and 1570s, he left no model that his successors could imitate. He did, however, as noted above, leave instructions that implied Jesuits were not to get involved in politics. Considering that the first English mission proved that Mercurian was more than justified in his fears, perhaps a desire on the part of Mercurian, and his predecessors, to act as generals in the spirit of Ignatius, may have been enough of a motivating force to keep the Jesuits away from England.

It appears, however, that in early 1579 Robert Parsons attempted and "failed to convince Mercurian to sponsor a Jesuit mission" to England.[70] In a letter to William Cardinal Allen, Parsons expressed his hope that by "the right informing of F. Generall . . . in our English affayres" Allen might "induce him to joyne" a Jesuit mission with "our other Priests" in England.

---

[68] Thomas M. McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England, 1541-1588: 'Our Way of Proceeding?'*, 107, 129.
[69] Thomas M. McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England, 1541-1588: 'Our Way of Proceeding?'*, 107, 128.
[70] Ibid., 188.

Parsons further noted that "I dare put myselfe for one" of the Jesuits on the desired mission.[71] In this, McCoog sees the beginning of his own version of the Catholic Conspiracy: Allen and Parsons, in this moment, joined together to urge the creation of an English Jesuit mission.[72] It is a reasonable theory, and one certainly supported not only by Parsons's letter, but also by Allen's subsequent involvement in the mission. Yet McCoog passes over as insignificant the fact that Parsons did not fail to add, after stating his desire to "put myselfe" for the English mission, that he would do so "if Holy Obedience employ me therein." Further, Parsons noted that since "I have offered myselfe a good while agoe to the Mission of the Indies and cannot obtayne it" perhaps "God will have me go to this other."[73] Parsons did conclude this thought by emphasizing that he believed a Jesuit mission to England was "so importing," but he here revealed something McCoog, and others, have overlooked. For all that it may seem a rhetorical nicety, the subtle point must not be overlooked: Parsons did seek involvement in an English mission, but he did not initiate such a mission. Bound by the obligation of Jesuit obedience, it was not his plan to hatch and, indeed, the mission depended on the will of Mercurian. Parsons's words make this clear; indeed, even Parsons's seemingly underhanded plan to have Allen be his advocate for the English mission emphasizes that Parsons knew it was not for him to create the mission, nor for him to decide its rules.

All of this, of course, does not answer the question of why the mission was launched when it was launched, even if we accept Thomas McCoog's theory that Parsons and Allen were the initiators. McCoog, though, has an explanation ready, as elaborated in his article "The English Jesuit Mission and the French Match, 1579-1581." As implied by the title, this article

---

[71] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 4.
[72] For the full elaboration of this argument, many of which parts will be touched upon shortly, see Thomas McCoog, "The English Jesuit Mission and the French Match, 1579-1581," *Catholic Historical Review*.
[73] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 4.

frames the mission in a political context, specifically the context of Elizabeth's negotiations with France over the possibility of her marriage to the Duke of Anjou, a brother of the French king. The details of the match and its negotiations are not so important themselves but for one pertinent fact: the Duke of Anjou was a Catholic, and thus any serious consideration of the marriage dealt necessarily with the English Catholic issue. As McCoog sees it, "only through a consideration of political realities in England can we explain why a mission rejected in early 1579 was approved by the end of the same year."[74] These "political realities" were, as McCoog explains, the "delicate diplomatic negotiations [of the Anjou match] with fateful implications for English Catholics," namely the prospect of "some type of religious toleration as a result of the proposed marriage with Anjou."[75] McCoog's theory, therefore, is as follows: Mercurian opposed the English mission on the grounds that it was too politically dangerous for the Jesuits in early 1579, but by late 1579, when Allen came begging, Mercurian was convinced that the time was ripe, for with the likelihood of Elizabeth marrying a Catholic came the likelihood that, even if England were not to become Catholic again, Catholics would at the very least gain some degree of toleration.

This brings us, in McCoog's theory and the narrative of the events, finally to the crucial moment of the Jesuit audience with Pope Gregory XIII (1573-1585). Once Mercurian had approved the mission and selected Parsons and Campion as the principal missionaries,[76] the Jesuits sought the approval of the pope, and, in particular, asked the pope eighteen specific questions regarding the situation they would encounter in Protestant England. Parsons and

---

[74] "The English Jesuit Mission and the French Match, 1579-1581," 206.
[75] Ibid.
[76] There was one other Jesuit sent, Ralph Emerson, although he was not a priest. Additionally, the Jesuits originally set out from Rome with some non-Jesuit companions, although all three Jesuits entered England separately. Due to the limited scope of this paper, the activities of the third Jesuit and the non-Jesuit missionaries will not be discussed. For more on the other missionaries, see Thomas M. McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England, 1541-1588: 'Our Way of Proceeding?'*, 133ff.

Campion, of course, also had instructions from Mercurian himself, but for the purposes of understanding McCoog's argument, and demonstrating its flaws, it is fitting first to address the papal instructions for the mission. Of the eighteen questions the Jesuits asked the pope, the vast majority pertained to Pope Pius V's *Regnans in Excelsis.* This only seems appropriate considering that a strict interpretation of that bull excommunicated any English Catholics whom Parsons and Campion might encounter who "dare[d] obey [Elizabeth's] orders, mandates, and laws."[77] The Jesuits, simply put, wanted to understand what they were getting themselves involved with by entering Elizabeth's England. This point is troubling for many historians because it does not seem to make sense that the Jesuits would ask about how the bull was to be interpreted in 1579 when the non-Jesuit missionaries who had been in England nearly since the bull was first promulgated had never deemed it necessary to do so. Because of this seeming bewilderment, some historians, like Michael Carrafiello, have wanted to see this as an act specifically, and insidiously, designed to "allay the English government's fear that they had come to foment rebellion in England."[78] Thomas McCoog, on the other hand, sees cause to place the meeting with Gregory, once again, in the context of the Anjou match. To this end, McCoog puts particular emphasis upon the fact that Gregory, as will be examined shortly, dispensed many obligations of the bull *for the time being.* This conditional phrase seems to have nagged at McCoog, and led him to ask "what were the present circumstances that mitigated the bull?" McCoog's answer is, definitively, "the marital negotiations and their consequences for English Catholicism."[79]

There are a few notable problems with McCoog's analysis. The first problem is, perhaps, the most shocking, considering that McCoog is himself a Jesuit. It should not be surprising for

---

[77] Ibid.
[78] As quoted in Thomas McCoog, "The English Jesuit Mission and the French Match, 1579-1581," 197.
[79] Thomas McCoog, "The English Jesuit Mission and the French Match, 1579-1581," 197.

anyone who has read the passages of the *Constitutions* on missions, nor for anyone who understands the strong ties of the Society of Jesus to the papacy, that the Jesuits sought an audience with the pope before they set out on their mission. Indeed, it makes perfect sense: the Jesuits, special soldiers of the papacy that they were, wanted to understand the will of the pope in regard to England before they began their English mission. Further, it should be noted that it was not Gregory XIII who had issued *Regnans in Excelsis*, but his predecessor, Pius V, who had died in 1572; the Jesuits were bound to follow the will of the sitting pope, and if he had a particular way of interpreting or amending Pius's bull, the Jesuits certainly needed to be aware of it. It was, thus, a natural move for the Jesuits to seek papal clarification of their mission, and did not need to rest on any political reality whatsoever.

McCoog's other significant misstep pertains to the texts themselves. It is without doubt true that Gregory very carefully stated that the bull "does not oblige Catholics under the present circumstances, but only when the public execution of the bull becomes possible,"[80] and some explanation of why this seemingly sudden change in policy was enacted by the pope in 1579 is needed. Yet the solution to this puzzle can not only be found in the text of Gregory's answers to the questions the Jesuits posed to him on April 14, 1580, but it reveals that the pope had fewer political aspirations for the Jesuit mission in mind than McCoog seeks to attribute to him.

---

[80] The translation is McCoog's in "The English Jesuit Mission and the French Match, 1579-1581," 197, but the document itself is *Facultates concessae Patribus Roberto Personio et Emundo Campiano pro Anglia die 14 Aprilis, 1580,* in Arnold Oskar Meyer, *England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth*, 487. This document needs some explanation: it is *not* Gregory's answers to the Jesuit questions (hereafter called the "Answers") mentioned earlier, but rather a list of the "faculties" he gave to the Jesuit missionaries. There has, indeed, been some controversy over the authenticity not of the Faculties (although this document has not been so clearly authenticated that I can vouch for it with *absolute* certainty) but of the Answers, which is the more heavily used document here. For questions regarding the authenticity of this second document, see Meyer, 136, nt. 1, and McCoog, *Society of Jesus*, 134, nt. 19. My justification for assuming the authenticity of the Answers is as follows: Thomas McCoog, and all other current historians working on this topic, assume its authenticity; the Answers in no way contradicts the more certain document, and, indeed, in many ways reiterates it; and some internal difficulties in the Faculties (such as a stunning lack of explanation for why Gregory was dispensing the bull) are solved by consultation with the second document in a way that is not only logical, but offers what one would expect from a pope attempting as radical a move as Gregory, as we shall see, was.

Gregory, before turning to answer the eighteen specific questions the Jesuits posed to him, saw fit to lay out some general points about the current state of Pius V's bull. In this introductory material Gregory stated that "for the time being . . . Catholics [are] excused from the obligation of the bull."[81] Gregory granted this freedom from the bull to English Catholics according to the principle that "Catholics of the English kingdom are not to be obliged to sin or excommunication on account of the force of the bull promulgated by Pius V."[82] McCoog, of course, interprets this seemingly magnanimous dispensation as just so much politicking: Gregory was willing to give a little bit to Elizabeth's authority because he suspected that she was about to give a little bit to Gregory's authority because of her soon-to-be husband. Yet that is not what Gregory said in this document; indeed, he explicitly laid out completely different reasons for why the bull was no longer in effect.

Gregory allowed his explanation to be governed by a simple principle: "the bull was published for the good of Catholics and of religion."[83] It seems a bewildering point considering that Gregory said this only after having stated that the bull was no longer binding, yet he explained that since "it has been established that great harm comes about to Catholics and religion from the observation of the bull" and because "this has not been the intention of the legislator," the bull should no longer bind English Catholics. Gregory summed up by noting that "what has been instituted for love ought not to be served contrary to love."[84] It is a subtle, and brilliant, argument. From the outset, Gregory made clear that, at least officially, he had no

---

[81] *Ad consolationem et instructionem quorundam Catholicorum angustiis constituorum quastiones aliquot, in M. Petriberg*, "The Excommunication of Elizabeth," 86. Because Mr. Petriberg did not translate this text from Latin, all translations appearing in this paper are my own. I should, however, further note that while I take all credit for the awkward language and failings of this translation, I owe a debt of gratitude to Philip Flowers, who greatly assisted me as I struggled through Gregory's legalistic Latin. Also, please note that this statement is nearly identical in sentiment to the above quoted line from the Faculties.

[82] Ibid., 86.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

qualms with what his predecessor enacted: the bull was without doubt issued for the good of Catholics. Yet, Gregory seems to ask, if a bull that was intended to be for the *good* of Catholics was now *harming* Catholics, how could it still be in effect? In truth, Gregory's point was even subtler than that. Since the "legislator," by which he means Pius V, intended the bull to produce good effects for Catholics, it stood to reason that any interpretation of the bull that produced harmful effects for Catholics could not be a proper interpretation. Gregory here employed the legal principle that the intention of the lawmaker was more important than the letter of the law, especially since the law now operated in a context that the legislator did not envision. Since Pius obviously "instituted [the bull] for love," and the bull now had an effect which was "contrary to love," it could not oblige English Catholics any longer.

Gregory then had to explain what the two contexts for the bull were: the original context that proved that the bull was "instituted for love" and the current context that demonstrated how the bull's effect was now "contrary to love." As Gregory saw it, since "an obligation" such as the obligation of the bull "should be seen as put forward for a [certain] time and place, as far as it applies," therefore since "such an occasion has vanished . . . it follows that the time of that commandment has passed." The bull was intended for that "time and place [when] there was hope for the recuperation of that kingdom by that way and means." Gregory, indeed, did not only assert that the "occasion has vanished" and the "hope had been frustrated" but that the bull, in the present circumstances, sought "to accomplish a thing impossible."[85] As confusing as Gregory's legalistic and unspecific language is he had, nevertheless, effected a dramatic change for English Catholics.

To understand it, the modern reader must first discard the common understanding of excommunication, which sees such an act as absolute and irreversible, not to mention imperious.

---

[85] Ibid.

Gregory here operated under the assumption that excommunication was a means to an end: excommunication was the last, desperate effort of a pope to force heretics to see the error of their ways, to shock them, as it were, into understanding the grave peril into which their obstinacy had led them. Operating under this notion, Gregory suggested that Pius's bull was designed for "the recuperation of that kingdom," of England. This may or may not be an absurd claim: whether it is, is beside the point. Rather, what is significant is that Gregory could easily claim that the bull was promulgated with such an intention. Simply put, Gregory wanted it to be understood that Pius excommunicated Elizabeth and freed her subjects from their allegiance to her with the intention that the shock of losing her subjects' obedience and her place in the body of Christ would jar Elizabeth into seeing the error of her Protestant ways. This was, without doubt, an extremely charitable construction of Pius's bull; and yet it is a *possible* construction. Continuing along this line of thinking, Gregory suggested that since this plan obviously had not worked, and that indeed what the bull had succeeded in accomplishing was both the further persecution of Catholics by means of new anti-Catholic legislation and the increased stubbornness of Elizabeth and her government's hostility toward Rome, and since Pius could not have possibly intended a situation for Catholics "so contrary to love" to exist, that the bull no longer bound Catholics.

Two features of such a convoluted line of reasoning emerge significantly. The first is that Gregory was going to great lengths to show that he was *not* contradicting the will of his predecessor. The second is that Gregory was likewise doing everything in his power to free Catholics from the obligation of the bull. McCoog could be right that Gregory did so with an eye toward a changed political situation for Catholics in England because of the Anjou match. Yet nothing Gregory said indicates this, and Gregory's instructions do not lack a clear reason for why he wishes to free Catholics from following the bull. The problem, of course, is that Gregory's

stated reason is that the bull created too much hardship for Catholics in England, which suspiciously sounds like the pope did something out of loving, spiritual motivations, something of which historians rarely believe popes capable. Yet the fact remains: there is no reason to believe, from the text itself, that Gregory intended anything other than the easing of English Catholic hardship in freeing them from the bull.

This is not, however, to suggest that Gregory's position was so simply magnanimous, nor that Gregory did not have politics in mind. Rather, this understanding helps frame a proper understanding of the Jesuit role in England, as intended by the pope. Perhaps the most important answer to the Jesuit questions Gregory gave in this regard was that "if anyone would teach that the obligation of this bull ceases, he should not be contradicted."[86] This sets the matter in the clear pastoral context of the mission. The Jesuits wanted to know what they were supposed to say to the Catholics whom they encountered: were they to tell them that if they obeyed Elizabeth's civil laws, they were excommunicated? No, Gregory assured them, "Catholics are able to obey Elizabeth with a safe conscience in civil matters."[87] The Jesuits were able to tell the Catholics to whom they ministered *that they were still Catholics*. This was not to contradict, however, that one still "ought to consider [Elizabeth] an illegitimate and excommunicated queen." That part of the bull, since it was a "declaration coming from the Supreme Pontiff" was to remain in effect.[88] For Gregory, treading carefully between respect for his predecessor and his own inclinations toward a more lenient approach, was not attempting to say that Elizabeth was legitimate, but rather that Catholics were not excommunicated by following her civil decrees. Indeed, it was "permitted to call her Queen, etc. because those titles must be understood to be,

---

[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., 87.
[88] Ibid.

and to be said, such as they [really] are."[89] That is to say, so long as a Catholic understood that Elizabeth's claim was illegitimate, a Catholic could refer to her as queen. All of which stipulations go far to explain what Gregory intended for the Jesuits: they were not to worry about the politics of their mission, just so long as a certain minimal level of political protocol was followed.

This was not, however, Gregory's final word on obedience to Elizabeth. Indeed, Gregory made explicit that "Catholics cannot in safe conscience defend [Elizabeth] . . . against those who fight her because of the force of the bull or for zeal of religion." Further, Gregory explained that "if anyone by her death is able to free the kingdom from certain oppression," then it was "without doubt permitted to kill" Elizabeth.[90] These statements, along with similar ones, seem enough to indict not only Gregory of the Catholic Conspiracy, but so too the Jesuits who received such instruction. For if the Jesuits were permitted to teach such things as coming from the pope himself, how could they possibly be free from the taint of political intrigue?

Yet Gregory's position in this regard was more nuanced than is immediately evident in the above extracted phrases. It is noteworthy, for example, that just after Gregory admitted that it was "permitted to kill" Elizabeth if by so doing one could free England from her oppression, he added that "things being established as they are now" it was "much more satisfactory not even to speak about this."[91] Taken by itself, this statement leaves itself open to a host of possible interpretations (including, of course, McCoog's), but Gregory, in his usual subtle, legalistic way, gave further explanation. The key to understanding Gregory's intentions is that, as far as Gregory was concerned, because Elizabeth was "a heretical tyrant" and "govern[ed] with the greatest harm and disturbance to the whole church," she could "legally . . . be deprived of the Kingdom,

---

[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

even if no bull had been published."[92] As damning as this may seem, it is brilliantly illuminating, for it reveals that, despite what seems readily apparent, all of Gregory's talk of justifiable tyrannicide does not stem from Pius's bull. Gregory, indeed, explained that "the Council of Constance, session 15" defined that "it is not permitted for a private person to kill any tyrant" unless the tyrant "be such who seizes the kingdom by force." This, of course, seems to free Elizabeth from danger, for she did not gain her crown by force, but Gregory nevertheless assured that "this point relates to this one [the queen]."[93] It is at this point that Gregory pronounced that "if one is able to free the kingdom from certain oppression" by killing Elizabeth "it is permitted for him to kill her."

The confusion of Gregory's instructions on this issue thus stems from the fact that he had two separate points. The first was that, since Elizabeth was clearly a "heretical tyrant," of course the pronouncements of the Church regarding tyrannicide applied. Yet "things being established as they are now," there did not seem much point in bringing this up. This seems to be because not only had Gregory just finished explaining that Catholics were not bound by the bull to disobey and resist Elizabeth, but also because the deposition of a monarch must be undertaken "prudently and not blindly."[94] Gregory, by the wealth of his conditional phrases each time he brought up tyrannicide, made clear that he did not think it would be prudent for private subjects of Elizabeth to take up arms against her. The key, rather, was that English Catholics could not *defend* Elizabeth if someone with "sure and definite hope of victory" were to attempt to overthrow her "because of the common good of the faith and religion."[95]

---

[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.

Gregory finally left the Jesuit missionaries in not quite as perilous a position as it first appears. For Gregory not only allowed the Jesuits to teach that the bull no longer bound Catholics, but he implicitly instructed the Jesuits not to talk about the possibility of overthrowing Elizabeth with the English Catholics they encountered. Gregory, rather, seems to have been most intent on making sure that if a foreign power (say, Philip II and his Armada) invaded who had "sure and definite hope of victory" that English Catholics would not resist such a power. The point is not that Gregory had no intention of supporting the overthrow of Elizabeth, but rather that he gave the Jesuits no role to play in such a plot. Gregory, thus, envisioned a Jesuit mission that was explicitly pastoral. Pius's strategy had not worked; Gregory seems to have had a new one in mind, and the only part the Jesuits had to play in it was as the reconcilers of the English to the Catholic Church. Yet here, for the first time but by no means the last, we see the way a pastoral mission was initiated with full knowledge of the political ramifications. The Jesuits were to be concerned with souls and not to worry about civil matters, but part of this care of souls meant preparing English Catholics for the possible political eventuality that Elizabeth would be overthrown by Catholic powers. Yet it was fostering the spiritual dedication of Catholics with which the Jesuits were charged.

Having now established the principal concerns of Gregory XIII for the Jesuits, it is fitting to turn to the other document pertaining to the foundation of the mission. Everard Mercurian, as we shall see, gave very practical and intelligible instructions to Campion and Parsons, as would be expected of a Jesuit general. Yet like Gregory's answers to the Jesuit questions, Mercurian's instructions were not without the sort of subtle nuances that could lead to gross misunderstandings of Mercurian's intentions for the mission. In the end, however, Mercurian's instructions laid the blueprint for an eminently pastoral mission, eschewing all political aims, yet

not without acknowledging the explicit political ramifications of Jesuit missionary activity in England.

The oft-quoted "object aimed at by this mission," as Mercurian articulated it, was two-fold: "firstly to preserve . . . and to advance in the faith and in our Catholic religion all who are found to be Catholics in England;" and "secondly, to bring it back to whoever may have strayed from it . . . through ignorance or at the instigation of others."[96] The English Jesuits were to be concerned with the souls of English Catholics. Their target audience was to be both current Catholics and Catholics who "may have strayed." It is important to recognize that, from a Catholic perspective, these two categories comprised just about the entire population of England. Everyone was either Catholic or a former Catholic, and the stipulation that the Jesuits were only to be concerned with Catholics who had left the Church through "ignorance" or "at the instigation of others" was hardly limiting. Considering the steadfastness with which Catholic theologians maintained the undeniable nature of Catholic truth, only arch-heretical theologians, along the lines of Calvin and Luther themselves, could be easily placed outside of Jesuit reach by this instruction, and even for Calvin and Luther types some argument might be made.

Yet Mercurian's instructions hardly left Campion and Parsons with such vague objectives, but rather laid out a specific program for how Mercurian wished them to conduct the mission. It is, indeed, noteworthy that Mercurian's first specific instructions pertained to the "virtue and piety out of the ordinary" with which he felt his men must be armed "in the midst of enemies . . . of outstanding talent, skill and malice."[97] Mercurian was adamant that the missionaries "observe exactly the Society's mode of life so far as conditions allow" and that they proceed with a "combination of distrust in themselves [and] with a firm confidence in God . . .

---

[96] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 319.
[97] Ibid.

[with] frequent and fervent recourse to prayer and examination of conscience."[98] These are not the words of a man zealously committing his men to a bold endeavor; rather, these instructions make palpable Mercurian's fear. Mercurian, who had resisted for so long sending the Jesuits into England because of the political ramifications, clearly had not changed his mind so dramatically that his worries were far from his thoughts as he commissioned Campion and Parsons. And his first concern was not that the missionaries would be accused of political involvement, but rather that the religious and political situation in England would be a grave burden upon the spirits of the Jesuits. He was afraid they would be discouraged and made sure to note that "if it is out of the question for them to live in community, let them at least take care to visit one another as often as possible."[99] This overriding concern for the Jesuit missionaries themselves in what Mercurian perceived would be the most trying of circumstances, indeed, informs all other analysis of his instructions.

Mercurian did, as many historians critical of the subsequent activities of Campion and Parsons have been quick to point out,[100] explicitly order that the missionaries were "not to mix themselves in the affairs of States."[101] It is a crucial point, and one to which this analysis will return to time and again because it is far from obvious whether Campion and Parsons followed this instruction. Yet this was not the main focus of Mercurian's instructions; it was one statement among many others, and should not be given primacy of place simply because it suits the needs of historians. Indeed, the terms that defined Mercurian's construal of the Jesuit aims were entirely religious: Mercurian offered "certain recommendations" about how the missionaries

---

[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., 320.
[100] See Lake and Questier, "Puritans, Papists, and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England," 600; Thomas McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England*, 148; Chistopher Haigh, "From Monopoly to Minority," 56.
[101] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 321.

might best exercise "prudence . . . [which] consists mainly in knowing with whom, when, and in what way and with what subjects they should deal."[102]

Mercurian made reference to four groups of people whom the Jesuits might encounter: familiar reconciled Catholics, strangers who were reconciled Catholics, strangers who were schismatic Catholics, and heretics.[103] By "schismatic Catholics" he meant those Catholics who, without falling into any doctrinal error of the Protestant church, nevertheless had done something to separate themselves from the unity of the Catholic Church, perhaps by attending Church of England services or denying their Catholicism to save their property or position. Familiar Catholics who did not need to be reconciled to the Church, of course, were the most obvious people for the Jesuits "to advance in the faith and in our Catholic religion," which meant, most practically, preaching to them, saying mass, hearing their confessions and the like. In Mercurian's hierarchy of people to whom the Jesuits should minister, these familiar, reconciled Catholics seem to have occupied to topmost rung. As regards "intercourse with strangers" Mercurian instructed that "in the case of Catholics, let it be with the reconciled rather than with schismatics." Regarding heretics, Mercurian was clear that "with heretics [the missionaries] should have no direct dealings."[104] This should, of course, make it clear that the Jesuit mission, as envisioned by Mercurian, involved primarily dealings with reconciled Catholics, *possible*, though not preferable, encounters with schismatics, and absolutely no interaction with heretics. Yet the matter was not left so simply, for Mercurian allowed that "necessity" might force the

[102] Ibid., 319.
[103] Some readers may notice the curious fact that Mercurian made no provision for Catholics who had always remained Catholic, and had never needed reconciliation to the Catholic Church. It seems, however, that anyone whom we would place in this category, Mercurian included among the ranks of the reconciled, perhaps because he considered that the entire realm, as a whole, had broken from Rome, and thus even if the decision to remain Catholic was an immediate one, it was still a reconciliation of sorts.
[104] Ibid., 320.

missionaries "to dispute with heretics."[105] For the time being, it is enough to leave the matter there. Campion and Parsons were to prefer intercourse with reconciled Catholics above all, but not only was it clearly left open that they might deal with schismatic Catholics, but "necessity" could force the Jesuits into a position where it was allowable to "dispute with heretics." Under particular circumstances, thus, the Jesuits were not forbidden from undertaking any spiritual endeavors whatsoever, just so long as they did not "mix themselves in the affairs of States." We will examine how all of this translated into reality in the next section.

Before turning to some analysis of Mercurian's general intentions for the mission, it will serve us well, as we follow Campion and Parsons into England, to note a few of the finer points of Mercurian's instructions. First of all, it is important to note, in light of the already explored importance laid upon obedience and superiors in the Society of Jesus, that Mercurian placed "Fr. Robert . . . in charge of all who are now being sent" and that, thus, Campion was "to obey him as [Campion] would ourselves." Parsons was, indeed, given the "privileges, faculties and favours . . . ordinarily give[n] to Provincials."[106] An additional point worth commenting upon was that Mercurian, once again basing his comments on his concern for the safety of his men, explained that "of necessity" their "dress must . . . be that of laymen" and, further, that for communication between the missionaries and himself "ciphers are useful, and they will be supplied here for use when necessary."[107] A reasonable reader of these instructions will see that it is Mercurian's concern for safety that inspired these provisions, but there was a level of covertness implied by these orders that many later used against the Jesuits. For by these provisions, the Jesuits in England had a way of seeming more like spies than missionaries.

---

[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid., 319, 321.

In the end, from Mercurian's instructions, we can clearly see that if the Jesuit missionaries indeed did follow their orders, then the mission was entirely spiritual in nature. Yet the suggestion that Mercurian envisioned a mission where Campion and Parsons would make "their way anonymously from one safe house to another, hearing confession, settling cases of conscience, and celebrating the Mass"[108] has a way of narrowing Mercurian's vision well beyond what he laid forth in his instructions. One of the central tenets of this paper, indeed, is that the framers of the Jesuit mission as well as the missionaries themselves were involved in a "Catholic Conspiracy" intent upon the reconversion of England. That Pope Gregory XIII had such a program in mind seems clear. Yet Mercurian, too, gives us reason to believe that he had this goal. It is important to keep in mind, as Mercurian gave such orders to Campion and Parsons as that they should be "slow to enter into conversation" with heretics, even when "necessity forces them," that Mercurian was attempting to make sure that his missionaries employed their talents in the most effective ways possible, and that he would *still have missionaries* at the end of the mission. Considering that Campion was executed in 1581 and Parsons was so notorious in England that he did not feel he could return after 1583 without causing Catholics harm, Mercurian's fears, once again, seem to have been justified. It made sense, considering the safety of his men, for Mercurian to desire that they would mostly minister to safe, reconciled families.

This is not to say that Mercurian ever entertained the notion that the Jesuits were only going to England for the benefit of a handful of reconciled Catholics who lacked proper access to the sacraments. Rather, these families were the key to a much broader strategy. The first key to understanding Mercurian's program in this regard was that he desired that "intercourse with

---

[108] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, "Puritans, Papists, and the Public Sphere: the Edmund Campion Affair in Context," 608.

strangers . . . should at first be with the upper classes."[109] Forgetting modern sensibilities for a moment, it is important to recognize that this in no way was an elitist's uncaring attitude toward the "common people." Rather, Mercurian explained, with the upper classes there was "greater fruit to be gathered" and, additionally, they "will be able to protect [the missionaries] against violence."[110] The idea of the "mission to the elites" will be explored in greater detail in the next section, but for the time being it should be understood that Mercurian, in true Jesuit fashion, saw the elites as the key to the converting everyone else. It was through converting elites that "more universal good" was possible,[111] because of the influence the elites wielded. This is clearly what Mercurian had in mind for the Jesuits, for rather than entirely abandoning the notion of the Jesuits conversing with heretics (unless "necessity forced them"), Mercurian rather explained that the missionaries were to "urge the Catholics each and all to strive for the conversion of the members of his family" and to give them "advice and equip them with arguments."[112] It was, indeed, *through* reconciled Catholics that the reconversion of England was to begin, partly because Mercurian feared for the safety of his missionaries, partly because it was what the Jesuits saw as a proper way of proceeding.

All of which brings us, of course, to June, 1580 when Campion and Parsons, traveling separately and incognito, came into England for the first time since their religious estrangement from their homeland. What we have here set up for Campion and Parsons is something of a test. The questions that face them are mostly ones of obedience. On their mission, did Campion and Parsons comply with the wishes of the pope? Did they follow the orders of their general? Indeed, the most pressing question that faces us is whether or not the mission that was envisioned on the

---

[109] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 320.
[110] Ibid.
[111] George E. Ganss, ed., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, 275.
[112] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 320.

continent bore any resemblance to the mission as it was carried out in England. For if Campion and Parsons did follow orders, if they undertook the mission devised by Gregory and Mercurian in the spirit of the Society of Jesus, then their mission was entirely spiritual, and yet also intent upon much more than ministering to a few, lonely Catholics. If Campion and Parsons undertook the mission envisioned by their superiors, it was a spiritual mission intent upon the reconversion of England that thus bore direct political ramifications.

III. The Mission

According to Edmund Campion himself, he came to England, "being sent by [his] Superiours," for "the glorie of God and the benefit of souls."[113] Robert Parsons similarly declared that "in entering the kingdom [he] had by no means followed [his] own inclinations, but had performed an act of obedience" to his superiors in the Society of Jesus, for he bore "the liability of being sent to any part of the whole world to preach the gospel of Christ."[114] Given all that has already been here examined, these statements, no doubt, do not strike the reader as immediately and patently innocent. There is much that they do not say, and much that Lord Burghley, not to mention Thomas McCoog and Michael Questier, could tell us they *do* say that is far from innocuous. These passages are drawn from the statements that Edmund Campion and Robert Parsons hastily composed on July 19, 1580. Campion's statement, by virtue of a reference Campion made to avoiding "anything that might sound of any insolent brag or challenge,"[115] quickly earned the title of "Campion's Brag" in the pages of his critics who thought this claim to be, at best, rather insulting. Although the title is, therefore, polemically charged, no historian of any stripe has ever put forth an alternative, so it will be here also referred to as the Brag. Parsons's statement, although no more or less a brag than Campion's,

---

[113] In J. H. Pollen, *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 349-350.
[114] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 38, 37.
[115] In J. H. Pollen, *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 351.

never enjoyed the publicity of the Brag, as will be discussed below, and thus has, sadly, never acquired a catchy title. For the sake of convenience, it will therefore be referred to as Parsons's Defense, or, more simply, the Defense.[116]

Campion's Brag and Parsons's Defense will be the central objects of analysis for this section of the paper. This section will examine the first, and arguably the most dramatic, moment of the mission: the writing of the Brag and the Defense. For wrapped up within these two brief documents is not only the fundamental issue of what Campion and Parsons made of the mission entrusted to them by Gregory and Mercurian, but the basis for the polemical debate that we will examine in the final section of this paper. It is, further, the Brag and the Defense that have served to condemn Campion and Parsons, time and time again, in the eyes of even those historians willing to concede that the first Jesuit mission was conceived with pastoral intent. The following analysis will seek to demonstrate that, far from deliberately involving themselves in politics, Campion and Parsons, in their statements and the actions of their brief mission, consistently and deliberately followed the orders of the superiors, and in so doing, entered into the political arena only so far as their desire to see England reconverted led them.

To begin, it is important to understand something of the mission's chronology, if for no other reason than to situate the central documents in time. Although it is possible to create a chronology from other sources, for our purposes, Parsons's letters will serve. As already noted, Parsons and Campion reached England sometime in June, and wrote the Defense and the Brag on July 19, at which time they were, it appears, in London. Sometime prior to August 5, Campion and Parsons left London "for the country," a point to which we will return.[117] On November 17,

---

[116] The astute reader may observe that my title is not without its own polemical edge, but in my own defense, I offer that the analysis of this section will demonstrate that a "defense" is precisely what both Parsons and Campion actually intended their statements to be.

[117] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 44.

a mere four months after the Brag was written, Parsons informed his superiors that Campion's Brag had been published and had found its way into the hands of government ministers. Leaping forward over eight months of missionary activity, we find Parsons writing to his superiors on August 30, 1581 that Campion had been arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London on July 22, 1581. During this eight-month period prior to Campion's arrest, Campion, Parsons, and two defenders of the Church of England, William Charke and Meredith Hanmer, engaged in the written debates we will examine in the final section of the paper. However, to conclude the story, Campion was executed December 1, 1581. Parsons remained in England for a time after Campion's death, but was on the continent permanently no later than August 1583.

Such is the history of the first Jesuit mission to England with all of the life and excitement conveniently extracted. But such a dry chronology does have a few points worth noticing, the most significant of which is that Campion's Brag was a public document by November 1580, although Campion was not arrested until July of the following year. This simple fact is, indeed, at the heart of one of the most significant historical controversies surrounding the mission. According to Campion's testimony in the Brag itself, he composed it because he "thought it like enough that . . . I should either sooner or later be intercepted" and arrested by the English government. Therefore "I supposed it needful to put this writing in a readiness" for that time.[118] Campion explained later that "a copie thereof I delivered to a friend, the which (truly without my intention . . .) was made knowne to manie."[119] Through this friend, for reasons that remain obscure, the Brag came to be printed and widely disseminated. Lake and Questier have

[118] In J. H. Pollen, *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 350.
[119] Edmund Campion, *Campion Englished or a Translation of the Ten Reasons*, trans. Laurence Anderton, 32.

also noted that while Parsons's Defense was sealed, Campion's Brag was mysteriously left unsealed after its composition.[120]

Before entering into the speculations of historians, however, it only seems fitting to allow Campion and Parsons their own say. It must first be established that neither Campion nor Parsons ever deviated from a very simple explanation of how the Brag came to be printed. The Brag and the Defense were written with the intention that they would be published if and when the two Jesuits were arrested; in this way, Parsons and Campion could have a voice after their arrests even if they were silenced by the English government. Subsequent to giving the documents to their friend, and without their knowledge or consent, the Brag, but not the Defense, was printed. As Parsons described it in a letter, this person "for some reason or other handed a copy of these documents to another man, and he to second; so that in a few days time the thing reached the hands of a countless number of men, including the Queen's Councillors." Parsons explained that the statements were "written answers prepared in advance" and not intended for publication prior to arrest.[121]

Taking this explanation at face value, at least for the moment, the question that thus arises, particularly considering the flap generated by the Brag's release, is what the Brag and the Defense actually said. For if the Brag was a "seditious pamphlet lately cast abroade," as William Charke would refer to it,[122] to understand the extent to which Campion and Parsons were or were not involving themselves in Burghley's International Catholic Conspiracy, it is necessary to

---

[120] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, "Puritans, Papists, and the Public Sphere: the Edmund Campion Affair in Context," *Journal of Modern History*, 603. Some historians contend that this friend was Thomas Pounde; for an elaboration of Pounde's involvement see McCoog, *Our Way of Proceeding*, 142, 146 and Henry Foley, *Records of the English·Province of the Society of Jesus,* vol. 3, 585ff. The evidence that underpins the theory of Pounde's involvement is not, however, sufficient to convince this historian in any definitive way.

[121] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 57.

[122] William Charke, *An answere to a seditious pamphlet lately cast abroade by a Iesuite conteyning ix. articles heere inserted and set downe at large, with a discouerie of that blasphemous sect.* The reference is, obviously, taken from the title.

understand the basic content of the Brag.[123] For our purposes, because we seek to uncover the true motivations of both Jesuits and are not solely concerned with the public debate, the contents of Parsons's Defense are just as important. Conveniently, however, both statements come to much the same conclusion, with only minor differences in style and subject matter.

The crux of the argument advanced in both the Brag and the Defense was that if Campion or Parsons were arrested, it would be on account of religion. After a brief introduction, Campion divided his Brag into nine articles, the first of which declared himself to be "a priest of [the] Catholic Church . . . vowed now these vii years into the Religion of the Societie of Jhesus."[124] Parsons similarly professed early on that he was "a Catholic, and not only that but a priest as well . . . and further . . . a professed religious and an insignificant member of the Society of Jesus."[125] This much may seem obvious, but it is more important than is readily apparent. For it is into this identification that each man fit the entirety of his self-defense. Addressing his would-be captors, Parsons remarked, toward the end of the Defense, that "since it is on account of my confessing to the Catholic faith that I have been brought by divine permission before your Court here . . . I demand to be allowed to defend this faith."[126] Campion offered a similar challenge to the authorities for "iii sortes of indifferent and quiet audiences" to defend the Catholic faith,[127] but, more generally declared that his purpose, as a Jesuit Catholic priest, was "to preach the Gospel, to minister the Sacraments, to instruct the simple, to reforme sinners, to confute errors,"

---

[123] Also important is how and why the Brag was seditious; this point, however, will be examined in Section IV of this paper.
[124] In J. H. Pollen, *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 350.
[125] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 36. The descriptor "insignificant," it should be noted, in this context is a common early modern way of asserting one's humility.
[126] Ibid., 39.
[127] In J. H. Pollen, *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 351.

which, he summarized "in brief" as "to crie alarme spiritual against foul vice and proud ignorance wherewith many my dear Countrymen are abused."[128]

In the end, this was the essence of both the Brag and the Defense. Campion and Parsons declared themselves to be priests of the Catholic Church and the Jesuit order, considering that it was for such an identity that they would suffer imprisonment and execution, in the face of what their captors would no doubt claim. They saw fit to remind their readers that they were "strictly forbidden . . . to deal in any respect with matter of State or Policy of this realm," and asserted that they would do nothing to violate this command. [129] Yet both Campion and Parsons went further in their statements, challenging their captors to debate. It is a relatively easy task to defend the missionaries up to this point, but as soon as they turn to challenge, the situation becomes muddier. For Mercurian did, without doubt, forbid "direct dealings" with heretics unless "necessity forces them."[130] So why were Campion and Parsons here offering direct challenges to heretics?

Yet the answer is obvious and satisfying, so long as Parsons's and Campion's explanation of how the Brag was published is accepted. For if the Brag and the Defense had been published only after the unjust arrest of the Jesuits on treason charges, then a clear case can be made for "necessity" having forced the missionaries to have "direct dealings" with heretics. Yet it should be obvious that the explanation that both statements were intended merely for release after possible arrest, did not at the time, nor does it now, convince everyone. If for only a moment the notion is entertained that Parsons and Campion may have *sought* involvement in a public, political debate about the place of Catholics in England, the "accident" of the Brag's publication seems imminently convenient. Thomas McCoog perhaps says it best: "the General's instructions

---

[128] Ibid., 350.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 320.

insisted that the Jesuits have no direct dealings with the heretics, but he allowed them to debate if they were forced to do so. . . Immediate capture or the premature release of a declaration provided the required necessity."[131] Knowing full well the end of the story, that Parsons and Campion came to be involved in a "full frontal challenge to the Elizabethan state's construal of the Catholic issue in terms of secular obedience and treason," it seems an easy step to assume that the Brag's publication was no accident. Rather it was the means by which the Jesuits could move beyond "a purely pastoral attempt to provide instruction, council and sacramental grace to English Catholics."[132] It was, after all, the Brag that inspired William Charke and Meredith Hanmer to write against the Jesuits, which in turn provided the opportunity for Campion and Parsons to fight back in writing, recasting the political and religious situation as they saw it. The Brag was what brought the Jesuits into the political arena if anything did; considering that they did not seem to shrink from such a task once it was placed before them, it is reasonable to assume that they harbored from the beginning higher aspirations than Lake and Questier's "purely pastoral" mission.

It must therefore be conceded that it is possible that Campion and Parsons, or just one of them for that matter, may have intended the "accidental" publication of the Brag; there is no evidence to the contrary beyond their own denials. Nor is there any evidence that denies the possibility that Parsons and Campion told the truth. Since we will never know the truth of this particular matter, it will not be further argued. Rather, the assumptions that govern the belief that Campion and Parsons wished the Brag to be released when it was will be examined and evaluated, with the intention of understanding, almost regardless of this one historical detail,

---

[131] Thomas McCoog, SJ, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England 1541-1588: 'Our Way of Proceeding?'*, 148.
[132] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, "Puritans, Papists, and the Public Sphere: the Edmund Campion Affair in Context," 606.

whether Campion and Parsons were attempting to insinuate themselves into the political debate, and whether whatever they intended was in line with their orders from Gregory and Mercurian.

Some of the basic principles by which McCoog, Lake, and Questier make their arguments about the likely motivations of the Jesuits have already been questioned by the analysis of Section II of this paper. Since the matter cannot be settled absolutely, the debate over whether or not the Brag was intended for immediate dissemination ends up being an argument about the nature of the mission as Campion and Parsons perceived it. Lake and Questier have noted that "certainly the more pastoral aspects of the mission emphasized by Mercurian . . . could have been perfectly well—indeed, rather better—pursued without the sort of high-profile, semipublic fuss of the sort provoked by the brag." They go on to explain that these "pastoral aspects" would have been best fulfilled by "the two men [making] their way anonymously from one safe house to another, hearing confession, settling cases of conscience, and celebrating the Mass."[133] There is a fundamental problem with the assumptions upon which such an analysis is made, for "pastoral" does not appear to mean the same thing to Lake and Questier as it did to Gregory and Mercurian. It seems highly unlikely that Gregory or Mercurian would have ever thought to define the appropriate actions of the missionaries so narrowly.

It is worthwhile now to return to Mercurian's instructions regarding the interaction of the missionaries with the various groups he knew they would encounter. Viewing the missionaries' activity in light of Mercurian's instructions gives a clear indication that the Jesuits were, indeed, following those instructions as they interpreted them. The first people to whom Mercurian instructed the Jesuits to minister were the familiar, reconciled Catholics. It seems clear from Parsons's letters, despite the reputation the missionaries have earned for political activity, that this group received considerable attention. Parsons wrote frequently of "the pious men, whom

[133] Ibid., 607.

we come across in large numbers here" who were "most anxious to converse with us and listen to our instructions with great eagerness."[134] While there is no clear indication given here how Parsons came to know that these men were reconciled Catholics, it seems reasonable enough to assume that these pious men were made familiar to him through his contacts in the English Catholic world. Parsons, indeed, constantly found cause to rave about the "devotion and reverence" these men had "for the Supreme Pontiff."[135] His letter of November 17, 1580 is, in particular, filled with stories of tending to the needs of already reconciled English Catholics.[136]

Regarding "intercourse with strangers," Mercurian had instructed that "this should at first be with the upper classes rather than with the common people, both on account of the greater fruit to be gathered and because the former will be able to protect them against violence of all sorts."[137] Parsons, writing on August 5, 1580, informed his superiors that "Fr. Edmund and I have left London for the country . . . partly because . . . nearly all the upper classes [are] residing in the country at this season; partly also because to-day in London the persecution is more severe." Parsons also noted that they followed the upper class to the country because they could with the upper class "employ their labours during this autumn more usefully."[138] It does not seem Parsons can be faulted for any lack of obedience in this regard. Yet the question is why Mercurian and Parsons felt as they did about ministering to the elites rather than the common people. The answer lies in the passages of the Jesuit *Constitutions* that touch on missions. According to the *Constitutions*, "preference ought to be given to those persons and places which,

---

[134] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 45.
[135] Ibid., 46.
[136] Ibid., 58ff.
[137] Ibid., 320.
[138] Ibid., 44.

through their own improvement, become a cause which can spread the good accomplished to many others who are under their influence or take guidance from them."[139]

The issue here is strategy, and it is a particularly thorny issue for the historian of this period because the strategy of the missionaries, indeed of the Catholic Church, did not succeed in England. But the mission to the elites, no matter how abhorrent it might be to modern sensibilities, was the key to everything the Jesuits hoped to accomplish in England. As is shown in the above quoted passages of the *Constitutions*, the Jesuit principle on missions was that more "universal good" could be accomplished by ministering to people who had influence.[140] The principle is simple: because elites and people in authority had so many people under them, the most effective use of a small number of missionaries was to minister to these men who in turn could bring their families and servants, and indeed all people under their influence, along with them in time. It was not, as might be thought, a strategy that was intent on gaining noble conspirators against the crown, but one that recognized the reality, if not also the legitimacy, of the hierarchical organization of European Christendom. Ignatius of Loyola, the author of the *Constitutions*, had, after all, written to Cardinal Pole that he was certain it was "not the bad will of the people but of their leaders and princes which has been the cause of their errors."[141] The Catholic hierarchy could not believe anything but that it was the rulers of England and a small number of wicked men who had led the English people astray; certainly the Catholic resurgence of the populace under Mary had been proof to them of that.

Considering this, it is appropriate to turn to the perspectives of Christopher Haigh and Michael Questier and Peter Lake. Haigh asserts that "from the beginning, leaders of the mission envisioned a reconstruction of English Catholicism along seigniorial . . . lines," but Haigh is

---

[139] George E. Ganss, ed., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, 275.
[140] Ibid.
[141] William Young, *Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, V, 304-305, Letters 3627.

critical of this because he believes that "what may have begun as a pastoral technique, aiming at the poor through their masters and landlords, seems to have become an end in itself."[142] Haigh, analyzing the mission in light of what it became and what was actually accomplished, sees reason to criticize the Jesuits for their focus on the peerage and gentry. While he acknowledges that it *may* have started out as a "pastoral technique," considering what followed it seems obvious to Haigh that the Jesuits, and secular priests, eventually decided that the elites were enough all on their own, no doubt for the selfish reasons of comfort and safety. Ample reference has already been made above to Lake and Questier's view of how Campion and Parsons ought to have occupied themselves to carry out the "pastoral" mission conceived by their superiors. Considering Haigh's critique along with this, Thomas McCoog's not quite veiled insinuation that the accident of the Brag's publication was intentional seems to solve the difficulties nicely. For if Campion and Parsons intended the Brag to be published when it was, then it becomes clear that the Jesuits were seeking to circumvent their orders, and sought direct, political involvement with heretics. To say, in such a scenario, that this proves that the missionaries lacked spiritual motivations is, however, going too far; rather, in this scenario all that can be established certainly is that Campion and Parsons willfully disobeyed their superiors in their zeal to confront English heresy. That this would include political involvement was something from which they apparently did not shrink, but such involvement need not have been their primary concern.

There are, however, at least two questionable assumptions governing such an interpretation. The first pertains most particularly to Haigh's argument: Haigh, for all of his usual care in avoiding whiggery, seems to have slipped into it because of his overriding concern with the history of the frequently ignored commoners. In the end, even many ordinary people who

---

[142] "From Monopoly to Minority: Catholicism in Early Modern England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 136.

were inclined toward Catholicism became Protestants for lack of access to the missionary priests, and so because Haigh's sensibilities are offended by the blatant elitism of the Jesuit approach to missionary work, he forgets that the Jesuit strategy could have worked. That it did not work is the surest piece of evidence in Haigh's argument. But the example of Southern Germany, where the Jesuit Peter Canisius led a successful reconversion effort that targeted not the German people, but the princes, shows that one failure does not invalidate the potential of the Jesuit strategy.[143] Yet the example need not even be drawn from so far afield. Haigh's own research on the religious life of English parish churches from the time of Henry VIII to the Marian restoration shows that although many parishes had stowed away their "altars, images, and crucifixes" during the Edwardian years, it was only when a Catholic was back in power that these signs of their Catholicity reaappeared.[144] That is to say, it took the instigation of the elites to restore the religion of the masses. For as much as a modern reader may dislike it, Tudor England *was* organized along seigniorial lines; the Jesuits recognized this reality.

The second problematic assumption is that a pastoral mission to England would have involved only the secret administration of the sacraments and counsel to needy Catholics. It is the assumption to which Lake and Questier and McCoog keep returning. But the mission to the elites, as the Jesuit *Constitutions* described it, flies in the face of this interpretation. And in view of the concept of the mission to the elites as it was described in the *Constitutions*, the entire argument for the Brag's deliberate publication begins to unravel. If Jesuits ministered to the elites because of the influence the elites wielded, then the mission to the elites was the key to the much wider mission in which the Jesuits engaged themselves, that is, the reconversion of the entire realm. For if the missionaries were seeking to reconvert all of England, then the Brag and

---

[143] See Note 58, above.
[144] *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors*, 207ff.

the Defense reveal nothing more than an appropriate shift in strategy to meet a new reality, namely, the reality of either Campion or Parsons being arrested on charges of treason. If it is assumed that every possible strategy employed by the Jesuits in England was directed toward the same end, and that that same end was the one envisioned by Gregory and Mercurian, then not only does the text of the Brag no longer appear so startling, but the necessity and desirability of its early publication is called immediately into question. As much as the public debate had the potential of doing English Catholicism good, would it not have done Catholicism more good to have successfully reconverted all but the most stalwart Protestant aristocrats without attracting the sort of attention that would lead to the execution of one or both of the two Jesuit priests in England?

The scenario I propose is as follows. Campion and Parsons arrived in England with every intention of following Mercurian's instructions, and duly set about their ministrations to elite Catholics, encouraging these Catholics, in turn, to work on reconverting their families and servants, and so on. Sometime early on, however, it dawned on Campion and Parsons (through what agency I cannot say) that if they were arrested it would be for treason, and in such an eventuality their voices would be entirely silenced, their motivations questioned, and the name of their order all the more defamed. Thus, they wrote the Brag and the Defense with their own defense and the furthering of their mission in mind. For if they were captured and someone subsequently published the Brag and the Defense, then Parsons and Campion would, in a way, be able to continue the work of their mission through the words of their statements, or at the very least, provide an alternative interpretation of their actions and motivations. It was well within the scope of their instructions to do this: it would only be the "necessity" of their capture that would force them into the public arena to debate with heretics. However, through no design of theirs,

the Brag was published some months before Campion was arrested. A change in tactic was immediately required, for with the Brag's publication came a public uproar generated by the English authorities. Surely, unintended as it was, this was just the sort of necessity that Mercurian had allowed for when he granted his exception regarding debate with heretics.

In every possible scenario, Campion and Parsons sought to achieve the same end. If they had not been captured and the Brag had remained unpublished, the missionaries would have worked on strengthening elite Catholics and encouraging them to convert their relatives, with some personal involvement with all but heretics, as their instructions allowed. Thus they would have been working toward the reconversion of the realm through the elites. If one of them had been captured and his defense published, the Jesuits would then have been able to make some small impact on the hearts of the English through the defense itself and any subsequent writing. And, lastly, in the situation that actually occurred, both Jesuits were able to engage in a public debate, with the hope that it would make some progress toward their goal.

Yet such a scenario raises issues that must not be ignored. The first pertains to the likelihood of capture. Campion, after all, stated in the Brag that "I thought it like enough that, in this busie, watchful and suspicious worlde, I should either sooner or later be intercepted and stopped of my course."[145] The fact is, by Campion's own admission, he *expected* to be captured, which in turns means that he expected the publication of the Brag. That it came to be published early is, from a certain perspective, made irrelevant by this simple fact. For if Campion thought it "like enough" that the Brag would be published as part of the natural course of his mission, then it must be assumed that the Brag was part of the Jesuit strategy. The same may be said for the Defense. The question is thus twofold: what good did Campion and Parsons hope to accomplish

[145] In J. H. Pollen, *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 350.

with their statements; and how does this expectation of publication square with the instructions of Gregory and Mercurian?

Taking the second question first, it ought to be reiterated that capture on charges of treason seems, more than anything else, to fit into the category of "necessity" that would force the Jesuits to engage in open debate with heretics. For as much as Mercurian clearly did not want his missionaries captured, it must be recognized that the Jesuits would have no choice but to debate with heretics after being captured; anything less would be a betrayal of their very identity as members of the Society of Jesus. There was not, however, any exception made in Mercurian's instructions regarding "mix[ing] themselves in the affairs of States;"[146] it was strictly forbidden. Yet, in the texts of the Brag and the Defense, the only direct mention of matters political is Parsons's and Campion's denial of political involvement. Since Campion's only statement directly touching on politics declared that he was "strictly forbidden by our Father that sent me, to deal in any respect with matter of State or Policy of this realm,"[147] it seems that it was, rather, his challenge to public debate that gave his statement its seditious repetition. Rather than asking the nearly impossible question of whether or not his challenge to debate did amount to treason, it is more fitting to wonder if Campion was here exceeding the limits of his charge. Given that Campion's offer to debate was to politicians and churchmen alike, there may be some confusion, but Campion did make explicit that at the "quiet audiences" he requested, it was his intention to "undertake to avow the faith of our Catholike Church by proofs innumerable."[148] As a Catholic, Jesuit priest, faced, by no desire of his own, with hostile and cunning heretics, nothing less could be expected. For the moment, then, we will leave Campion's record on political involvement

[146] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 321.
[147] In J. H. Pollen, *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 350.
[148] Ibid., 351.

there and further explore this matter in the final section when we examine the actual debate in which he engaged.

After so much discussion of the Brag, it ought to be admitted that Campion's statement did not earn such a title without some cause; and, as mentioned earlier, Parsons's Defense, although it did not have the stinging brevity of its counterpart, was no more or less a brag. It is, indeed, the bragging and seeming bravado of these statements that has always made the work of the Jesuits' apologists so difficult. Yet it is precisely what appears to be bragging that reveals the true intentions of Campion and Parsons, and clarifies what they thought they could accomplish with such bold declarations. For Campion and Parsons believed that the Catholic theological position was unassailable, and what may appear to be bravado was nothing less than the confident faith of men who did not understand how any thinking, well informed person could be a Protestant of his own free will. Parsons, indeed, explained that "as a young man I had for long been led hither and thither by the misleading utterance of false preachers" but God "never allowed my wavering soul . . . to adhere to [Protestant doctrine] so obstinately as to be infected with this plague." He went on to explain that it only took reading "the sacred writings of the Fathers" to recognize that "everything they contained was . . . repugnant to this new doctrine."[149] Campion, in turn, asserted that he knew "perfectly that no one Protestant, nor all the Protestants living . . . can maintain their doctrine in disputation."[150]

It is tempting to dismiss these declarations as so much insincere posturing. Yet to do so would be to misunderstand the true spiritual feelings of these Jesuit missionaries. Like so many converts and missionaries before and after them, Campion and Parsons simply could not understand why the whole world had not also come to see the truth as they had. It helped their

---

[149] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 36.
[150] In J. H. Pollen, *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 351.

confidence, of course, that bewilderment at the success of Protestantism was, more or less, the position of the Catholic Church as a whole. That this confidence resulted in something that sounded like bragging to English Protestants is without doubt, but when Campion claimed that he was "loath to speak anything that might sound of any insolent brag or challenge" before asserting that he had "evidence so impregnable"[151] no Protestant could refute it, we must not do him the disservice of doubting his sincerity.

This is not to suggest, however, that we should insult Campion's intelligence and assume that he did not realize how the Brag would sound to its Protestant readers. Rather, a twofold understanding of Campion's Brag is in order. On the one hand, Campion was not bragging, but merely stating the truth as clearly and boldly as he perceived it. On the other hand, Campion must have realized how his Brag would sound, and therefore its effrontery must have been a deliberate part of Campion's missionary strategy. For the Brag's bold certainty is crucial to understanding why Campion and Parsons thought their defenses could do some good for the cause of English Catholicism. First, to reiterate, Campion and Parsons simply believed that their position was reasonable and persuasive of itself, so *any* declaration of the Catholic position that could reach people who had been led astray by English heretics might have an impact. But more than just that, the harshness of Parsons's and Campion's perspectives was indicative of the sort of Catholicism they sought to spread in England.

For integral to the Catholic Conspiracy of Campion and Parsons was the attempt to make the Catholics in England more stalwart. It has been noted above that Lord Burghley only opposed those Catholics whom the Jesuits or seminary priests had reconciled. Burghley's reasoning was that it was only these religious dissenters who were also traitors, having been taught treason by the Catholic missionaries. To a certain extent, Burghley's fears were justified.

[151] Ibid.

Campion's Brag and Parsons's Defense, indeed, give a first indication of what the political ramifications of the Jesuit mission would be. For the men who thought of their mission as "one alarme spiritual against the foul vice and proud ignorance wherewith my dear Country men are abused"[152] were not merely attempting to help comfort the souls of a few scattered Catholics. Rather, they were intending to set Catholics apart, as instruments for the intended "restauration of this kingdom."[153]

The final section of this paper will address this issue more fully, and finally attempt to answer the question not of what was intended by the first Jesuit mission, but what was accomplished and what resulted. But before turning to this, it is appropriate to visit once more the question of obedience. It has been my contention that Campion and Parsons followed both their specific orders from Mercurian and consistently and deliberately sought nothing else but the end desired by the pope and their general for the mission. That some doubt will always remain in this matter, particularly as regards the publication of the Brag, is undeniable. Yet perhaps what is more important than any specific order the two Jesuits did or did not follow to the letter, is the spirit in which they undertook their mission. From this perspective, it seems clear that however seditious it was to be a Catholic, Jesuit priest in England, neither Campion nor Parsons attempted to be anything more than that. Theirs was a spiritual mission with grandiose aspirations; how those aspirations translated into reality was another matter entirely.

IV. The War of the Words

Whether or not necessity forced them, Campion and Parsons did debate with heretics. Campion, indeed, found two opportunities for disputation in the brief remaining span of his life. The second of these was in the Tower of London after his arrest and therefore did not afford him

---

[152] Ibid., 350.
[153] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 45.

the equal footing he desired."[154] The first opportunity, likewise, was less than ideal, but at least allowed him his fair say. For this discussion took place in print, and thus was not the face-to-face disputation Campion called for in the Brag. In the aftermath of the Brag's publication, a Church of England cleric and an academic took up the cause of the crown and true religion and wrote responses to Campion's seditious pamphlet. The cleric was Meredith Hanmer (1543-1604), the vicar of Hanmer, Flintshire, and a historian on the side.[155] The academic was William Charke (d. 1617), a "religious controversialist," whose career included stints as a lecturer at Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn.[156] Although Charke had Puritan leanings, and Hanmer eventually had to leave the Church of England and work in the Church of Ireland because of accusations against his character,[157] the two men and their responses to the Brag serve a valuable purpose in the attempt to understand the effect of the first Jesuit mission upon England and English Catholicism.

For wrapped up in this polemical exchange is what the Jesuit mission meant to Elizabethan England. While it would be absurd to suggest that Charke and Hanmer were representative of "the average Englishman" in these tracts, it is important to recognize that, despite the fact that their tracts obviously made it past Elizabeth's censors and were thus allowed to stand as somewhat "official" responses to the Brag, these men were not much like Lord Burghley deftly explaining the legal status of Catholics and Catholic priests in her majesty's realm. As will become obvious once we turn to the texts themselves, these men lacked the tact even of Burghley. In the raw emotion and often predictable arguments of their responses to the Brag, something of the Jesuit impact, and the Jesuit legend, begins to emerge. Campion's

---

[154] Campion's trial presents such a challenge for the historian that it would require more attention than the length of the present paper allows. There are two accounts of the trial, one written by Catholics, another written at the behest of the government, both over two hundred pages long. The difficulty of analysis this poses need hardly be elaborated. However, for the purposes of this paper, the polemical exchange that will be discussed is more than sufficient.

[155] Alan Ford, "Hanmer, Meredith (1543–1604)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

[156] Richard L. Greaves, "Charke, William (*d.* 1617)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

[157] See the relevant articles on Charke and Hanmer in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, above.

Rationem Decem (1581), and Parsons's *A brief censure vppon two bookes written in answere to M Edmonde Campions offer of disputation* (1581), written as answers to Charke and Hanmer, were likewise filled with mostly unoriginal arguments. The debate was just like so many between Catholics and Protestants during the Reformation. Yet it is partly because there was nothing terribly remarkable about this polemical exchange that it can tell us so much. For on the one hand, the sincerity with which the participants invoked typical Protestant and Catholic arguments reveals the true religious conviction of its participants. On the other hand, the way that Charke and Hanmer unwaveringly employed what was becoming standard anti-Catholic and anti-Jesuit rhetoric illuminates what the first Jesuit mission did to change the position of Catholics in England. Thus, the initial polemical exchange between the Jesuits and Charke and Hanmer demonstrates both the true spiritual nature of the mission and the very real effect the Jesuits had on the political position of English Catholics. By the time the first mission was over, a political-religious position that had once been ambiguous was no longer so.

It has been argued above that Campion and Parsons used their identity as Catholic, Jesuit priests as the basis for their self-defense in the Brag and the Defense, and further that it was this identity that dictated their subsequent missionary activity. This argument has not been made, I admit, entirely innocently. For before proceeding any further into this war of words, it must first be established that being *Jesuits* was quite criminal enough for Charke and Hanmer. Charke began his case against the Jesuits by establishing that the Jesuit order "had an obscure conception about fiue & forty yeres past, not long after [the] restoring of the Gospel."[158] Not only that, but their founder, as Hanmer explained, was "a certain souldier by name Ignatius Layola [sic]. . . a

[158] William Charke, *An answere to a seditious pamphlet lately cast abroade by a Iesuite conteyning ix. articles heere inserted and set downe at large, with a discouerie of that blasphemous sect*, sig. B2 r. Hereafter cited as Charke.

Spaniard."[159] The sheer number of insults levied in so few words is impressive. Charke accused the Jesuits of having a novel origin, which was bad enough, but he paired this attack with mention of the fact that the founding of the Jesuits nearly coincided with the *restoration* of the gospel in the Reformation. That is to say, while Luther and Zwingli were engaged in expunging the novelties that had corrupted the gospel in the Catholic Church, Ignatius of Loyola was adding still more novelty to the sagging edifice of the Church. Then there was Ignatius himself, whose claims to spiritual insight and knowledge were made suspect to Hanmer by his origins as a soldier and whose moral character was immediately called into question because he was *Spanish*. Yet there was more, for the Jesuits had named themselves not for "some base and beggarly frier" as the Franciscans and Dominicans had, but had instead "presumed to abuse [the] name proper to Jesus," which was surely blasphemy.[160]

Thus Charke and Hanmer established the pernicious origins of the Society of Jesus in, it should be noted, almost entirely religious terms. Yet perhaps what was most terrifying about the Jesuits was that "they gather learning onely, as the spider gathereth poyson, that they may infect the heart & stomake of their disciples." With this poison, Charke was sure the Jesuits were attempting "to establish againe popish superstitions."[161] In these attacks, there must be seen an element of truth. The Jesuits were "men astutely trained," who had every intention of using all of the learning at their disposal to restore what Charke deemed "popish superstitions" in England. Indeed, Charke's invectives against the Jesuits' use of learning to further their mission reveal the esteem in which Charke, and others in England, held the Jesuits, for they were convinced that, unchecked, the Jesuits would be able to "infect the heart & stomake of their disciples." Charke

---

[159] Meredith Hanmer, *The great bragge and challenge of M. Champion a Jesuite commonlye called Edmunde Campion, latelye arriued in Englande, contayninge nyne articles here seuerallye laide downe, directed by him to the lordes of the Counsail, confuted & aunswered by Meredith Hanmer*, sig. B4 r. Hereafter cited as Hanmer.
[160] Charke, sig. B1 r.
[161] Ibid., sig. B2 v, sig. B3 r.

and Hanmer were thus setting themselves up as the defenders of truth against enemies, to borrow Mercurian's phrase, "of outstanding talent, skill and malice."[163]

Charke and Hanmer, indeed, based their attacks on the Jesuits upon religious principles, and consequently the fundamental issue at stake from their perspective was that the Jesuits preached a false religion. "who made you a preacher?" Hanmer demanded of Campion, "are ye a preacher of the Gospell? I pray ye of what Gospel?"[164] As Hanmer neatly laid it out, the Jesuits and good Englishmen stood in stark contrast to one another. In England, "gods word is here planted, [and] we have a gracious princes[s]. . . our supreme head next immeditly under god."[164] The Jesuits, on the hand, he understood to be "*Romanist*[s] . . . favourer[s] of [the] Pope," and thus he saw fit to wonder "what would yee entreate of without impayring of the state? . . . what Religion would yee establishe without deregotation to the Lawes of [the] Realme?"[165] Charke articulated the matter perhaps even more clearly. According to him, the Pope "holdeth up a banner of rebellion alwaies against [the] kingdom of Jesus Christ: & many times also against [the] kingdom of Princes."[166] It was indeed because the Jesuits clung to their "Romish" religion and maliciously employed all of the tricks at their disposal toward converting people to that religion that Charke and Hanmer took offense at their presence in England. It was this very reality that made Campion's Brag, and the mission as a whole, seditious. The false religion of the Catholic Church was in rebellion against both God and the good government God had established in England.

---

[163] The reader will recall that by this phrase Mercurian referred to the sorts of enemies the Jesuits would find themselves faced with in England.
[164] Hanmer, sig. E1 r.
[164] Ibid., sig. E2 r.
[165] Ibid., sig. F1 v, sig. F2 r.
[166] Charke, sig. B6 v.

It was a matter of religion, but since religion was the basis for the good political order of England, the distinction became muddied. Although removed from the immediate context of the first Jesuit mission, Peter Lake's observation about the role of "anti-popery" in the Long Parliament is illuminating in this context. For Lake notes that "popery worked as a unifying 'other,' an inherently un-English or alien force."[167] From a political perspective, this is what the Jesuits with their Roman connections and Spanish origin brought. The Jesuits had, after all, come to England only to help people who "wil not be partakers of the blessed communion, that mislike her maiestyes proceedings, that secretly conspyre, that practise treason . . . sorcery, and witchcraft."[168] The mixture of political, moral, and religious sins is no accident. The Jesuits, too, were cunning agents of the pope who rebelled, as noted above, not only against Christ, but against earthly kingdoms, as "the enterprise in Ireland is a witnes of part thereof."[169] Indeed, Hanmer perhaps put it best when he explained that the Jesuits were the "last refuge and onely shift to vphold [the] ruinous walles" of the Catholic Church, "least theire kingdome should fall."[170] Thus, the Brag and the Jesuit mission were seditious because religion and politics were inseparable. Charke, indeed, openly proclaimed that anyone who attacked the religion of England "woundeth our common wealth. Religion and policie in Englande are, through Gods singular blessings, preserued together in life, with one spirite."[171] Because this was true, there resulted a certain interchangeableness between the two concepts for Charke and Hanmer.

Although the intertwining of matters religious and political was, as argued in the first section of this paper, partly a natural result of the way Elizabethan England was constituted,

---

[167] Peter Lake, "Anti-popery: the Structure of a Prejudice," in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603*-1642, ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes, 94.
[168] Hanmer, sig. E3 r.
[169] Hanmer, sig. F1 v. Hanmer here refers to a failed military operation from earlier in 1580 that had papal support to invade England through Ireland.
[170] Hanmer, sig. A4 r.
[171] Charke, C3 r.

there was something more at work here. Charke explained at the end of his tract that Campion "pretend[ed] nothing but truth in his false cause & nothing but loue in his seiditious pamphlet."[172] Once more the mixture of the religious and the political is here evident, but it is not just an attack upon religion that Charke made in accusing Campion of pretending "nothing but truth in his false cause." Such a statement, indeed, implies not that Campion was merely wrong, but that he knew that he was wrong. His cause *was* false, and he was attempting to make it *look* true. We will return later to the ramifications of this for the seditious nature of the mission, but for the moment, what is crucial to recognize is that Charke did not believe Campion's sincerity; he did not think that Campion could be sincere in his religious convictions, only in his political allegiance to the pope. Peter Lake, again, sheds some light upon the matter, explaining that "Protestants assumed that once the clear light of the gospel had been revealed to the people . . . it would inevitably cut a swathe through the clouds of ignorance and superstition left behind by popery."[173] The Jesuits, educated men that they were, were not caught up in the "clouds of ignorance," but rather were actively and maliciously producing the very clouds themselves.

It is fitting at this juncture to recall that the Jesuits hardly felt much differently about their own religious position. In the *Rationem Decem*, which was Campion's response to Charke and Hanmer, he explained that "for if I can but make good, that there is a Heaven, that there is a God, that there is a faith, that there is a CHRIST, I do come off[f] victorius."[174] The intrinsic problem of establishing whether the debate was political or religious thus is that when Campion, Parsons, Charke, or Hanmer discussed their own position, their arguments were entirely religious and thus

---

[172] Ibid., E3 v.
[173] Peter Lake, "Anti-popery: the Structure of a Prejudice," 76.
[174] *Campian Englished or a Translation of the Ten Reasons*, trans. Laurence Anderton, 36. Although the *Rationem Decem*, written in Latin, was published in 1581, the English translation used for this paper is from 1632. It is hereafter cited as *Campion Englished.*

political only by implication, yet when any of them took the offensive, each man contended that his opponents were bold-faced liars, pretending to uphold a religious position that was, in point of fact, impossible to sustain. Yet the participants in this debate were not really attempting to convince each other; it can be safely assumed that Charke and Hanmer regarded Campion and Parsons as lost causes, and vice versa. But this was a printed debate, and every writer was attempting to reach a wider audience. Campion and Parsons engaged in their spiritual war against Charke and Hanmer for wavering Catholics and all former Catholics.[175] And it was for all good Englishmen who, from ignorance, might fall victim to Jesuit tricks that Charke and Hanmer set pen to paper. The debaters fought for the souls of the entire realm.

From this perspective, the attacks Charke and Hanmer made against the Jesuits assume a new importance. According to Hanmer, "these Romanistes of a longtime [have] receaued honor, reuerence & good opinion, because of their holy orders" and now because they have been "bewrayed and stripped of this pharisaicall shewe and counterfaite weede" the Catholic Church has "found out a newe order, and society, commonly called of *Iesuits*, as [a] last refuge."[176] The problem as Hanmer saw it had little to do with people such as himself who could easily see through the "pharisaicall shewe" of the Jesuits' learning and piety, but rather his concern was that "such undertakers are like ynough to ouertake some simple ones, not yet cleansed from the dregges of Poperie."[177] As noted above, Charke and Hanmer were deathly afraid that the Jesuits could accomplish at least some small portion of their task. Thus it was their moral duty as Christians to show the Jesuits for what they were, pharisaical in their religion, and traitors

---

[175] It should, however, be noted that since Campion's tract was originally published in Latin, it was not intended for popular consumption, but this is in no way contradictory, when it is remembered that the Jesuit were engaged in a "mission to the elites."
[176] Hanmer, sig. A4 r.
[177] Charke, sig. A4 v.

besides Charke and Hammer were attempting to warn all potential converts of the threat these Jesuits posed to good order and true religion.

Campion devoted little of his *Rationem Decem* to defending the reputation of the Jesuits, but Parsons took up the gauntlet in his *Brief Censure*. Parsons well understood his opponents' aim and the importance of establishing the Jesuits' good reputation. In a August 1580 letter to his superiors, Parsons explained that "the mission entrusted to me is of the greatest importance both for the reputation of the Society and for the restoration of this kingdom."[178] In Parsons's mind, the two causes were inextricably linked. If the Jesuits fell into disrepute, then they would be significantly hindered in their work of restoring Catholicism in England. Parsons thus lost no time in his *Brief Censure* explaining that Charke "undertaketh al manner of lyes without blushing . . . for the bringinge of the Iesuits in discredite with the Reader."[179] Having laid out this principle, Parsons proceeded more subtly, asserting that he would let the slanders against the Jesuits "passe without aunswering, for that it proueth nothing but . . . that they lack Christian and honest modestie."[180] By calling his opponents unvirtuous, Parsons set up his counterargument that the Jesuits exemplified good Christian virtue. Thus, in response to Charke's accusation of Jesuit novelty, Parsons rejoined not only with the predictable argument that "the Protestants faith and beleefe began at that time," but also went on to say that the Jesuits "followinge with humilitie the fayth which they found in Catholike Church, onelye began a strayter kinde of lyfe."[181] Not only was Protestantism a novelty, but its followers lacked the humility of all Catholics, and Jesuit Catholics in particular. It was obviously not for Charke's benefit that

---

[178] Leo Hicks, ed., *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.*, 45.
[179] *A brief censure vppon two bookes written in answere to M. Edmonde Campions offer of disputation*, sig. A3 r. Hereafter cited as *Brief Censure*.
[180] Ibid., sig. A4 r.
[181] Ibid., sig. A6 v.

Parsons made these arguments, but rather he asserted them in the hope that he could salvage the Jesuit reputation in the minds of those who had read Charke's pamphlet.

Campion sought to respond to a different aspect of the attack upon his Brag. While the *Rationem Decem* certainly did stand as a defense of Jesuit motivation, Campion was most concerned with answering the accusation that Parsons and he had come "to carye away in ignoraunce as many as will credite theire lying Oracles."[182] Campion felt confident that he could demonstrate that the truth was quite the opposite. As Campion saw it, since "I ancker myself on those Doctours, whome [the] Spirit did instruct," then although "hangd, drawn & quartered I well may be, overcome I cannot be."[183] Campion's "ten reasons" for why his position was unassailable were themselves standard, but still telling. The first two reasons pertained to Catholicism's grounding in the scriptures; the third showed that only the Catholic Church rightly defined "church;" the fourth laid out the Church's foundation in the ancient Councils of the Church; the fifth and sixth established Catholicism's agreement with the Church Fathers; the seventh showed that history had vindicated the Catholic cause; the eighth attempted to display the paradoxes of the Protestant position; the ninth accused Protestantism of sophism; and the tenth showed that they were "all kinds of witnesses" to Catholic truth. Campion's reasons were no more than an orderly cataloguing of the usual Catholic assaults upon any Protestant position an apologist or polemicist faced. There seems no possible conclusion from this other than that Campion believed that what was keeping the majority of the English people from Catholicism was merely their ignorance of true religion. A simple explanation of what the truth was, in that case, ought to have sufficed.

---

[182] Hanmer, sig. D2 v.
[183] *Campion Englished*, 37.

There is, therefore, little point in laying out the entirety of Campion's argument. The significant points, for our purposes, can be summarized briefly. First, Campion went to great lengths not only to attempt to prove the sure foundations of Catholicism, but also to prove that Protestant claims, for example, to a faith with scriptural purity, were no more than the assertions of "Bible-pretender[s]."[184] Additionally, Campion resolutely proclaimed that he had the "vnvanquishable troupes and forces of the Church of CHRIST" on his side, and that Protestants were merely "small wilde companies of certaine poore and vnarmed freshwater-souldiers."[185] It is worth noting, indeed, that Campion made no distinction between the Church of England and any other type of Protestantism; they were all the same to him, being equal in error. Lastly, and most significantly, Campion based his entire argument on his concept of truth. That is to say, there was next to no mention of politics, little explicit defense of the Jesuits, and no indication given that Campion wanted to engage in anything but a theological debate, albeit a debate which he believed he had already won. For "no other Religion than ours, did euer take anie deepe roote and plantation."[186]

Against the accusation that such swaggering confidence could hardly have been sincere, it is important to recognize not only that such arguments were standard in Catholic polemics during the Reformation,[187] but that Charke and Hanmer invoked truth just as sincerely. Charke, after all, asserted that Christ was on his side just as surely as Campion did, saying that Campion was attempting to maintain "the worldy kingdome of the Pope, against the Spirituall and mightie

---

[184] Ibid., 115.
[185] Ibid., 116.
[186] Ibid., 187.
[187] For an example of a Reformation polemic see John C. Olin, *A Reformation Debate* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966). The debate, in this case, was between John Calvin and Jacopo Cardinal Sadoleto. Although the language is somewhat less bitter and more refined, the basic arguments voiced by Campion were used by Sadoleto as well.

kingdome of Jesus Christ."[188] So, too, Hanmer was just as willing to invoke the historical argument as Campion, wondering if "ye found new scriptures, new councelles, new fathers, new histories, new reasons, new lawes, at the erection of your new order."[189] For Campion and his Jesuit companions had "neglected [their] obedience unto the truth of Gods word."[190] The only significant difference between these invocations of truth and Campion's own seems to be the more pointed, topical nature of Charke's and Hanmer's tracts. Charke and Hanmer were concerned with the Jesuits, with Campion and Parsons themselves, and with the Jesuit mission to England specifically; Campion was more interested in the theological foundations of Protestantism in general against the overall Catholic position.

Many interpretations of this methodological difference are, of course, possible, and it might as easily result from personality as anything else. But it may also have been that Campion sincerely was unconcerned with the personalities in his debate and the particulars of English Protestantism; as far as he was concerned, it was only the return of the English people to the Catholic Church that was of any importance. Parsons, of course, was more than willing to engage in personal attack and the defense of the Jesuits, so this cannot be interpreted as indicative of the overall Jesuit strategy. Indeed, perhaps the divergence of Campion's and Parsons's methods tells us something about their combined strategy, with Campion left to handle the heavy theology and Parsons taking care of the dirtier work. For while in some respects the two approaches would have been hard to combine in one tract, both were essential parts of the effect Campion and Parsons wanted to have upon the English Catholic position. For Campion's argument entrenched Catholics in an uncompromising position about the truth of the Catholic Church, while Parsons

[188] Charke, sig. D7 r.
[189] Hanmer, sig. F4 r.
[190] Ibid., sig. D1 r.

attempted to rally Catholics behind the Jesuit banner. Translated into the reality of the mission as it was actually undertaken, this seems to have been the missionaries' spiritual strategy.

To return to the question of the Jesuit strategy is, of course, to return to one of the fundamental questions not only of this paper but of the history of the first Jesuit mission to England. In the first section of this paper, I asserted that Lord Burghley believed that the Jesuits were the stagers of a vast rebellious plot. I argued throughout the subsequent two sections that treason against the state was in no way part of the Jesuit program for England. But the question that faces us now is not what the Jesuits intended, but what they accomplished. Thus it is necessary to ask whether the actions of the Jesuits did amount to treason, and whether the Jesuit influence helped to foment sedition or rebellion.

In this context, it is fitting to return to the question of how and why Campion's Brag was seditious. It has been argued above that the Brag's explicit political content was negligible, and yet if there was something treasonous about the Brag, it seems that it is best summarized by Campion's stated aim "to crie alarme spiritual against foul vice and proud ignorance wherewith many my dear Countrymen are abused."[191] From the perspective from which this paper has hitherto been examining matters, it seems clear that this statement is entirely spiritual in nature and thus does not implicate the Jesuits in Lord Burghley's International Catholic Conspiracy. Yet it must not be overlooked that Charke and Hanmer, at the very least, recognized neither the sincerity of the Jesuits' spiritual motivations nor any clear separation between an assault upon the religion of England and the government of England. For whatever the Jesuits may have said about their spiritual motivations, William Charke knew that they were really "maynteining . . . the worldly kingdome of Pope, against the Spirituall and mightie kingdome of Jesus Christ."[192]

---

[191] In J. H. Pollen, *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 350.
[192] Charke, sig. D7 r.

Without ever attempting to outline a purely political plot, Charke nevertheless makes a clear case for why the Jesuits were the ringleaders in a Catholic Conspiracy, and one very similar to Burghley's at that. Charke explained that Campion "publisheth a general conspiracie of al the Jesuities in the world . . . to die vpon our pikes . . . or to draw us from religion."[193]

It was not that Campion and Parsons were attempting to *convert* the English from one religion to another, but that they were attempting to draw people away from religion itself. Thus the significance of Campion's "pretending nothing but truth in his false cause & nothing but loue in his seditious pamphlet"[194] to the issue of the Brag's seditious nature becomes clear. Campion and Parsons knew their religion was false and they merely attempted to make it look like religion, in order to draw people away from "our common wealth" where "Religion and policie . . . [are] preserued together."[195] Further, since the truth behind the outward show of Catholicism was the political power of the pope, certainly no one could convert to the false Catholic religion without also forsaking their allegiance to the queen. Simply put, Campion's "profession is not to be credited, the practices of *Rome* are knowen, too too well."[196] In this way, the International Catholic Conspiracy as Burghley described it and the Jesuits' Catholic Conspiracy as it was laid out in the second and third sections of this paper come together. The direct, and known, political ramifications of the Jesuit spiritual plot were all that really mattered in the eyes of their opponents. Campion may not have directly conspired to "compass the death of the sovereign or to levy men of arms against him,"[197] but if what he did drew people away from their rightful

---

[193] Ibid., sig. E3 r.
[194] Ibid., sig. E3 v.
[195] Ibid., sig. C3 r.
[196] Hanmer, sig. F2 r.
[197] William Allen, in *The Execution of Justice in England and A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon, 78.

religious and secular obedience, then in the mind of Burghley and others, there was no need to split hairs.

Yet before passing final judgment, the Jesuits should be allowed their say. No matter what Elizabeth and her ministers believed, political ramifications could not be equated with political goals as far as Campion and Parsons themselves were concerned. And if, as I have argued, the Jesuit missionaries and their superiors *always* recognized the political ramifications of the mission, then they must have known how to reconcile their spiritual mission with its political component. Perhaps the place to begin is with the analysis of Michael Questier. In his book on conversion in Elizabethan and Stuart England, Questier makes the case that "when an individual converted to Rome, he demonstrated the existence of a hidden fund of latent property about which Protestants had every reason to be anxious."[198] That is to say, there was something very frightening about those whom the Jesuits reconciled to Rome in the eyes of people like Charke and Hanmer, precisely because they recognized that it was a *reconciliation*. Something about Catholicism still held power over such people, and that was completely counter to what good English Protestants believed about true religion. This psychological factor, while it should not be exaggerated, should not be ignored when considering why the first Jesuit mission gained the notoriety it did.

This issue of reconciliation is also essential to a point that Questier makes about Parsons. According to Questier, Parsons "distinguished between formal reconciliation to Rome, virtually an administrative process, and 'sound reconciliation,' which generally produce[d] 'a sure and constant Christian afterwards.'"[199] For the key to understanding both the sincere religious motivations of the Jesuit missionaries and the seditious results of the mission is that Campion

---

[198] Michael Questier, *Conversion, Politics, and Religion in England, 1580-1625*, 8.
[199] Ibid., 180.

and Parsons were attempting to make "sure and constant Christians" of all those to whom they ministered in England. At this late point in our analysis, it is at last appropriate to treat one of the central issues facing Catholics in Elizabethan England, that of recusancy. Simply put, recusancy was non-attendance at Church of England services, and was punishable by the laws of the realm. It is precisely the resultant harsher and more strictly enforced anti-recusancy laws that most historians mean when they say that the first Jesuit mission made the English Catholic position harder. While recusancy had been a crime for some time, Elizabeth had not been keen on enforcing recusancy laws until after the first Jesuit mission. There is no real doubt among historians that the Jesuits helped to inspire stricter, and more strictly enforced, anti-recusancy laws.[200]

To say that historians of the Catholic problem have spilt a great deal of ink over recusancy in Elizabethan England would be an understatement; but Michael Questier hits on the major points in regard to Campion and Parsons sufficiently that there is no need to wade too far into such a stormy historical sea. Two of his points, in particular, are of interest. The first is the more definite. Questier explains that "recusancy was a nexus of political and religious ideas."[201] It is a basic, and essential, point: mandatory attendance at Church of England services was exactly the sort of matter that made the difference between the political and religious in Elizabethan England so ambiguous. Not to go to Church was illegal and suggested a lack of allegiance to Elizabeth, but there were clearly religious reasons why a Catholic would not attend his local parish church. Secondly, Lake and Questier assert that Parsons and Campion

---

[200] For the clearest elucidation of the slow progression of recusancy laws, see Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588*, 120-149. In particular see p. 122, for recusancy at the time of the Elizabethan settlement; p. 126, for recusancy in 1577; p. 132, for recusancy in 1581; p. 142, for recusancy in 1586. Incidentally, MacCaffrey's treatment has the advantage that he is examining Elizabethan policy, not "the Catholic problem," and thus presents matters without some of the baggage many of us who are particularly interested in Catholics bring.

[201] Michael Questier, *Conversion, Politics, and Religion in England, 1580-1625*, 102.

"advocate[d] a line on recusancy considerably stricter than anything advocated or acceded by Rome,"[202] and used this to launch "a full frontal, public challenge [on] the Elizabethan state's construal of the Catholic issue in terms of secular obedience and treason."[203]

Before examining much further the issue of recusancy as it related to the Jesuit mission, we should briefly return to Christopher Haigh's comment that "when the Jesuits came to England in 1580, many Catholics responded with fear and suspicion" and many suspected the Jesuit presence would lead to "harsher persecution."[204] It is important to understand this statement in light of something not much touched upon in this analysis: the Jesuits were not the first Catholic missionaries to come to Elizabethan England. Indeed, Allen's seminary priests had been active for nearly a decade before the Jesuits set foot on English soil. These earlier missionaries did not, as a whole, advance the same line on recusancy as the Jesuits, instead tending to focus merely on ministering to the remaining Catholics in England however they could. Thus, there was something decidedly new in the Jesuits' approach to recusancy, and it should not be forgotten that their approach was neither indicative of the position held by all English Catholics nor wholeheartedly embraced by the English Catholic community as a whole. And finally, it is important to understand that prior to the Jesuits' arrival, Rome's stand on recusancy was without doubt as uncertain and ambiguous as Lake and Questier suggest.

But Rome's position on recusancy in 1580 is arguable. In the Answers, Gregory told the Jesuits that in the case of a Catholic lady in waiting for Elizabeth, attending Church of England services was "most dangerous and ought to be avoided by stratagem as much as possible," but was permissible if undertaken with extreme care and with the goal of eventually converting

---

[202] "Puritans, Papists and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context," *Journal of Modern History*, 610.
[203] Ibid., 606.
[204] "The Continuity of English Catholicism," *Past and Present* #93 (November 1981), 38.

"advocate[d] a line on recusancy considerably stricter than anything advocated or acceded by Rome,"[202] and used this to launch "a full frontal, public challenge [on] the Elizabethan state's construal of the Catholic issue in terms of secular obedience and treason."[203]

Before examining much further the issue of recusancy as it related to the Jesuit mission, we should briefly return to Christopher Haigh's comment that "when the Jesuits came to England in 1580, many Catholics responded with fear and suspicion" and many suspected the Jesuit presence would lead to "harsher persecution."[204] It is important to understand this statement in light of something not much touched upon in this analysis: the Jesuits were not the first Catholic missionaries to come to Elizabethan England. Indeed, Allen's seminary priests had been active for nearly a decade before the Jesuits set foot on English soil. These earlier missionaries did not, as a whole, advance the same line on recusancy as the Jesuits, instead tending to focus merely on ministering to the remaining Catholics in England however they could. Thus, there was something decidedly new in the Jesuits' approach to recusancy, and it should not be forgotten that their approach was neither indicative of the position held by all English Catholics nor wholeheartedly embraced by the English Catholic community as a whole. And finally, it is important to understand that prior to the Jesuits' arrival, Rome's stand on recusancy was without doubt as uncertain and ambiguous as Lake and Questier suggest.

But Rome's position on recusancy in 1580 is arguable. In the Answers, Gregory told the Jesuits that in the case of a Catholic lady in waiting for Elizabeth, attending Church of England services was "most dangerous and ought to be avoided by stratagem as much as possible," but was permissible if undertaken with extreme care and with the goal of eventually converting

---

[202] "Puritans, Papists and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context," *Journal of Modern History*, 610.
[203] Ibid., 606.
[204] "The Continuity of English Catholicism," *Past and Present* #93 (November 1981), 38.

Elizabeth.[205] Yet Gregory also cautioned that if such a woman did go to services merely for these ulterior motives, "care should be taken lest Catholics be hurt by her excessive heedlessness and license."[206] Gregory's concern was that, even if the woman was only attending services as part of her plan to convert Elizabeth to Catholicism, she still might harm the Catholic cause by appearing to assent to heresy. This is a completely different point from whether it was morally allowable to attend Church of England services, and it is with this subtler point in mind that Campion and Parsons proceeded.

Parsons and Campion did not merely want to be assured that the elites to whom they ministered were Catholic: they wanted to be sure that they were stalwart Catholics, ready to defend their faith against heresy and zealous in their desire to convert all their dependents to the faith. In his 1580 treatise on why Catholics refused to go to Church of England services, Parsons explained that they could not attend merely for secular obedience because they must avoid "induc[ing] an other man by any meanes to sinne whether it be by lyfe or doctrine."[207] Because "goyne or not goeyning to the Church is made a signe now" by the English government "betwixt religion and religion,"[208] Parsons did not believe that a sincere Catholic could in good conscience attend Church of England services. A Catholic "maye not goe to the Church . . . because it is Schisme and breaking of the unitie of the Catholicke church."[209] Whether or not Catholics equivocated in their hearts, they did violence to the Catholic cause in England by seeming not to care about their religion, or, worse yet, by seeming to have given up the fight for Catholicism entirely. If Parsons made a weapon of recusancy, he did so because he desperately wanted

so he was preaching salvation directly

---

[205] *Ad consolationem et instructionem quorundam Catholicorum angustiis constituorum quastiones aliquot,* in M. Petriberg, "The Excommunication of Elizabeth," 88.
[206] Ibid.
[207] *A brief discours contayning certayne reasons why Catholiques refuse to goe to church.*, sig. B1 v.
[208] Ibid., sig. B7 v.
[209] Ibid., sig. C2 r.

Catholics in England to put their religion above everything else. Thus, he called upon Catholics to rally behind the Jesuit standard, asking them to go beyond the minimum that was required for their salvation, by taking a visible stand and showing all of England where their loyalties lay. Because if being Catholic were not at the center of their being, then Parsons saw little hope of reestablishing the true church in England. Yes, such a position had political ramifications, but Parsons was adamant that but for religion "you [Elizabeth] are borne our Souerayne Princesse and mother, and we your natural subiectes and children."[210]

is this a tenable position?

If we dub such a statement disingenuous considering all else that Parsons did and said, we will hardly be the first. But there seems little point in bothering to do so. Despite the considerable effort Parsons devoted to explaining that Catholics were loyal English subjects, this was never, in truth, central to what he was about in England. Rather, to Parsons, English Catholics certainly were and certainly could be English, but being Catholic had to come first. Campion's bold declarations of Catholic identity were the other side of this argument. For Parsons and Campion were not asking Catholics to rally behind a doubtful truth, but an impregnable one. Parsons told Catholics what to do, but Campion shouldered perhaps the more significant burden: he told them *why* to do it. For Campion was attempting to incite a revolt, but it was an interior revolt against the horrors of the Protestant position. Campion would not settle for Catholics who kept quiet, occasionally attending Church of England services to avoid prosecution. He wanted Catholics in England to reject even the merest taint of Protestantism in their hearts so that they might fall in behind those Catholic theologians "who at this day haue proclaimed open Warre and Hostilitie against Heretics."[211]

---

[210] Ibid., sig. t t 7 r.
[211] *Campion Englished*, 146.

Campion and Parsons did not want Catholics to be in an ambiguous position any longer. Yet that does not mean that the first Jesuit mission was intentionally seditious. Campion and Parsons were not levying troops, nor plotting Elizabeth's assassination. Neither of them, as far as the available evidence can show, ever altered their position that Elizabeth was the rightful monarch of England, and that Catholics did owe her a certain amount of loyalty. But she was not the supreme head—or even the supreme governess—of the Church in England, and her claims to be such had to be resisted. If it was sedition the Jesuits preached, it was the sort of sedition which would come to be called civil disobedience. But even such a descriptor perhaps goes too far. For the basic principle is not that Campion and Parsons believed Catholics could live in peace and harmony under Protestant rule in England. Far from it: Campion and Parsons came to England to make the Catholic position firmer so that Catholics would reclaim the country. Perhaps if enough of her lords and magistrates turned "papist" on her, even Elizabeth might see the light.

How, then, did the first Jesuit mission change the position of Catholics in England? Simply put, the Jesuits helped to create gridlock over the Catholic problem. The first Jesuit mission did not inspire the Spanish Armada, the Throckmorton Plot, or the Gunpowder Plot. Perhaps it was partly the Jesuits, as John Bossy argued, who inspired the transformation of the English Catholic Community into a vibrant, underground church, mostly centered in elite houses that could afford to hide and support renegade Catholic priests.[212] But one polemic can tell us only so much. Yet a polemical exchange is precisely as far as the first Jesuit mission got. Campion and Parsons ministered to and converted as many individuals as they could in the brief span of their mission, but the results of two missionaries' work among a few souls is rather negligible, taken in historical perspective. There were uprisings of Catholics and plots aplenty

[212] See John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850*, 4-32.

waiting, but none came in 1582; if Campion and Parsons were staging a rebellion, it seems they did not find the time to advance it very far.

Indeed, the impact of the first Jesuit mission amounted to one Brag, one execution, some polemics, and more rumor and fear than seems possible from such a small undertaking. The Jesuits would send other missionaries, of course, but their efforts do not concern us here, except so far as they took inspiration from this first mission. For the first Jesuit mission was almost entirely in its legacy, in the writing it left behind. Campion and Parsons did their best to draw up the battle lines of the spiritual fight they thought would win back England. From beginning to end, Campion and Parsons portrayed their mission as spiritual, and eschewed political involvement, except insofar as religious conviction demanded taking a stand. Just as Campion was willing to die for being a Catholic priest, so Parsons thought English Catholics should have been willing to suffer the penalties for refusing to go to church. But such actions did not make Campion or Parsons traitors in their own eyes. Their rebellion, their conspiracy, was against what they deemed a false religion, one that put the souls of the English in peril. Perhaps that was enough to make the first Jesuit mission political, to make Catholic politics, as the Jesuits envisioned them, inherently seditious. But such an argument relies more on implication than evidence. Implications are, of course, important; how important they are in evaluating the nature of the first Jesuit mission to England, I will leave for the reader to decide.

On October 31, 2004, shortly before the American presidential election that pitted the incumbent, George W. Bush, against Senator John Kerry, George Regas, retired rector of All Saints Church in Pasadena, California preached a sermon entitled "If Jesus Debated Sen. Kerry and President Bush." Subsequently, All Saints Church, tax-exempt as most churches in the

United States are, was informed that the sermon "might have constituted an impermissible intervention into a political campaign under the Internal Revenue Code."[213] Put simply, tax-exempt institutions are not allowed to endorse political candidates; the IRS thought it possible that this is what Rev. Regas had done. According to Regas himself, "I took great care to say that I did *not* want to tell people how to vote, but I was challenging them to go into the voting booth [with] all that they knew about Jesus, the peacemaker" in mind.[214] Using this criterion, Regas's sermon, it seems, offered some harsh criticisms of the Bush administration's policies in Iraq. The sermon and surrounding uproar, despite the distance in time, has a connection with the history of the first Jesuit mission to England, particularly regarding a point that Regas made in his defense. Regas reasoned that "the IRS apparently [was] making a subjective determination that I *implicitly* opposed one candidate and endorsed the other" even though he "*explicitly* stated that I was not advising anyone how to vote."[215]

Implicitly, the first Jesuit mission to England was an assault against the religious and political foundations of the Elizabethan state. Yet Campion and Parsons, time and again, *explicitly* denied opposing the Elizabethan state. They came to save souls, to help people on the road to salvation. Much of the historical debate over the first Jesuit mission has depended upon what was implicit about it; this analysis has sought to look at what the Jesuits actually said and did. It would have been completely satisfactory to Campion and Parsons if Queen Elizabeth and her counselors had awoken on the morning of December 1, 1581, and instead of smiling to think that it was the morning of the last day on earth for Edmund Campion, the seditious Jesuit, had instead suddenly realized the truth of the Catholic religion, renouncing all heresy and immediately setting about the reestablishment of the Catholic Church in England. Such a

---

[213] George Regas, "The Won't-Be-Bullied Pulpit," *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 2005, Part B., 13.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid.

scenario is, of course, absurd. But its significance, and the purpose of the entire mission as it was conceived by its founders and its executors, has nothing to do with its probability, with the likelihood of its translation into reality. The point is that, in the end, the Jesuits were most concerned not with how the faith was reestablished, but that the faith was reestablished. For their own part, speaking not of Gregory XIII, Philip II, or Guy Fawkes, the means to this spiritual end were also spiritual. It was what they explicitly and adamantly proclaimed over and over again; perhaps we might believe them.

Bibliography

1. Primary Sources[216]

Ad consolationem et instructionem quorundam Catholicorum angustiis constituorum quastiones aliquot, in M. Petriberg, "The Excommunication of Elizabeth." *The English Historical Review, Vol. 7, No. 25,* (January 1892), 81-88.

Alfield, Thomas. *A True Report of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Iesuite and preiste & M. Sherwin & M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581 Observid and written by a Catholike preist which was present therat whereuuto is annexid certayne verses made by sundrie persons.* London: R. Rowlands, 1582.

Campion, Edmund. *Campian Englished. Or A translation of the Ten reasons in which Edmund Campian (of the Societie of Iesus) priest, insisted in his challenge, to the Vniuersities of Oxford and Cambridge Made by a priest of the Catholike and Roman Church.* Trans. Laurence Anderton. Rouen: s.n., 1632.

Charke, William. *An answere to a seditious pamphlet lately cast abroade by a Iesuite conteyning ix. articles heere inserted and set downe at large, with a discouerie of that blasphemous sect.* London: Christopher Barker, 1581.

Ellyot, George. *A very true report of the apprehension and taking of that arche Papist Edmond Campion the Pope his right hand with three other lewd Iesuite priests, and diuers other laie people, most seditious persons of like sort. Conteining also a controulment of a most vntrue former booke set out by one A.M. alias Anthonie Munday, concerning the same, as is to be proued and iustified by George Ellyot one of the ordinary yeomen of her Maiesties chamber. Author of this booke, and chiefest cause of the finding of the sayd lewde and seditious people, great enimies to God, their louing prince and countrie.* London : Thomas Dawson, 1581.

Elton, G. R., ed. *The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Ganss, George E., S.J., ed. *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus.* St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970.

Hanmer, Meredith. *The great bragge and challenge of M. Champion a Jesuite commonlye called Edmunde Campion, latelye arriued in Englande, contayninge nyne articles here seuerallye laide downe, directed by him to the lordes of the Counsail, confuted & aunswered by Meredith Hanmer.* London: Thomas Marsh, 1581.

---

[216] Unless otherwise noted, primary documents not published within secondary sources are from Early English Books Online: http://eebo.chadwyck.com. These are digitized reproductions of books and pamphlets printed in the early modern period, photographed from copies in rare book collections at the British Library and elsewhere.

Kingdon, Robert M., ed. *The Execution of Justice in England by William Cecil and A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics by William Allen.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965.

Meyer, Arnold Oskar. *England and the Catholic Church Under Elizabeth.* New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967.

Olin, John C., ed. *The Autobiography of St. Ignatius and Related Documents.* New York: Fordham University Press, 1992.

Parsons, Robert. *A brief censure vppon two bookes written in answere to M. Edmonde Camplons offer of disputation.* Doway: Greenstreet House Press, 1581.

-------. *A brief discours contayning certayne reasons why Catholiques refuse to goe to church.* Doway: Greenstreet House Press, 1580.

-------. *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J.* Ed. Leo Hicks, S.J. London: John Whitehead & Son, Ltd., 1942.

Pollen, J. H. *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, 1558-1580.* London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920. 349-352.

Regas, George. "The Won't-Be-Bullied Pulpit." *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 2005, Part B., 13.

Tierney, Brian, ed. *The Crisis of Church and State 1050-1300.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964. 49-50.

Young, William, ed. *Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola.* Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1959.

II. Secondary Sources

Bossy, John. *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850.* London: Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd., 1975. 4-32.

Brodrick, James. *The Origin of the Jesuits.* Chicago: Loyola Press, 1997.

-------. *Progress of the Jesuits (1556-1579).* Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1986.

Carrafiello, Michael L. "English Catholicism and the Jesuit Mission of 1580-1581." *Historical Journal*, 37, 4 (1994), 761-774.

Dickens, A. G. *The English Reformation*, 2nd Edition. Pittsburg: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991.

Foley, Henry. *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus. Historical Facts Illustrative of the labours and sufferings of its members in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, vol. 3. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1966.

Ford, Alan. "Hanmer, Meredith (1543–1604)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Available from http://www.oxforddnb.com/.

Greaves, Richard L. "Charke, William (*d.* 1617)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Available from http://www.oxforddnb.com/.

Haigh, Christopher. "The Continuity of English Catholicism in the English Reformation." *Past and Present* #93 (November 1981).

-------. *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society Under the Tudors*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

-------. "From Monopoly to Minority: Catholicism in Early Modern England." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, vol. 31 (1981).

Lake, Peter and Michael Questier. "Puritans, Papists and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context." *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 72 (2000), 587-627.

Lake, Peter. "Anti-popery: The Structure of a Prejudice." *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603-1642*. Ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes. New York: Longman, Inc., 1989. 72-106.

MacCaffrey, Wallace T. *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981. 120-136.

McCoog, SJ, Thomas. "The English Jesuit Mission and the French Match, 1579-1580." *Catholic Historical Review*, 87.2 (2001), 183-213.

---------. *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England 1541-1588: "Our Way of Proceeding?* New York: EJ Brill, 1996.

McDonough, Peter. *Men Astutely Trained: A History of the Jesuits in the American Century*. New York: The Free Press, 1992.

Questier, Michael. *Conversion, Politics, and Religion in England, 1580-1625*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Skinner, Quentin. *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

Wooding, Lucy E. C. *Rethinking Catholicism in Reformation England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000.