

Anna of Denmark and Henrietta Maria: Catholic Queens in a Protestant Land

From the vantage point of hindsight, we tend to view human history as a coherent linear narrative. Even we who are scholars of the early modern period must remind ourselves that those living in the age of Reformation did not have our perspective on the matters that were unfolding around them. Indeed, while twenty-first century scholars can argue over whether to speak of “the Reformation” or “Reformations” and over how many years the process of Reformation actually spanned, writers of the early modern period tended to view the Reformation not as an event that had been accomplished but as an event in progress. As Carol Wiener reminds us, in the early modern period, “neither Protestant nor Catholic accepted the possibility of co-existence. Both sides expected that one or the other must achieve a total victory.”¹ As such, threats to Protestantism appeared very real; at any moment, the tide might turn and what had been gained could be completely lost.

Fears of international plots haunted the early modern imagination. Fed by the Northern Rebellion (1569), attempts on Elizabeth’s life, and the Gunpowder Plot, these fears of foreign plots to undermine the Protestant ruler and violently return England to Rome took on a life of their own. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, much of this fear centered on the Jesuits. In a letter to Alfonso Agazzari, Jesuit missionary Robert Parsons speaks to early modern anxieties about potential Jesuit plots: “There is tremendous talk here of Jesuits, and more fables perhaps are told about them than were told of old about monsters.”² In this chapter, I will focus not merely on the historical “facts”

of the Reformation, but also on the “fables” that inform people’s beliefs about the ultimate fate of Reformation, the persistence of Catholicism, and the threat of international plots and Catholic queens. As Arthur Marotti reminds us, “Historical reality is the lived experience of individuals who see and interpret the world primarily through beliefs, fantasies, and ideologies, not through any supposedly objective analysis of evidence or cause-and-effect relationships.”³ The specter of Catholicism as a threat to England mattered as much as the truth of Jesuit incursion. Similarly, the Stuart queens’ performances of Catholicism and their subjects’ responses to these performances matters as much for our study as does the exact nature of the queens’ beliefs. This chapter explores what the queens’ confessional identities meant politically and artistically, and how their identities fit into a larger framework of representations of women, power and queenship. After briefly discussing the early modern religious landscape and Anna and Henrietta Maria’s confessional identities, the chapter will conclude with a consideration of Catholic models of female autonomy, early modern stereotypes of Catholicism as a religion, and the ways in which fears of Catholicism and the Catholic woman influence attitudes toward the early Stuart queens.

The impact of the early Stuart queens consort continues to be an underexamined part of the overall narrative of early modern religion and politics. Yet, as we shall see, attending to the ways that Queens Anna and Henrietta Maria perform themselves and the responses of those consuming these performances—either directly or vicariously—helps us gain a fuller picture of the complex cultural narrative that informs the period leading up to the English civil war. Early modern history reveals the impact of the monarch on the people’s freedom to worship. Henry VIII’s decision to split from the Roman Catholic Church had ushered in the Reformation, and Mary I’s ascendancy to the throne had briefly reintroduced Catholicism. As such, all of the subjects of the crown knew that the monarch’s confessional views had a significant impact on their own ability to worship. Late in Elizabeth’s reign, tensions mounted as her subjects debated who should ascend the throne at Elizabeth’s death. In James I’s and particularly in Charles I’s reign, the issue of succession had been settled, but it was replaced with an equally thorny question: what might happen if the king were led away from the true faith? The question proved more than academic because, despite the fact of a Protestant England, the first four Stuart kings all had Catholic queens: Anna of Denmark, Henrietta Maria, Catherine of Braganza and Mary of

Modena. Although early twentieth-century scholars might have found it easy to dismiss queens Anna of Denmark and Henrietta Maria as frivolous and superficial, those living in the early modern period would hardly have shared this view. Queens not only shared the kings' most intimate moments, but they also had the potential to influence the confessional beliefs of the royal heir. Although the English feared popish plots and hostile takeovers, the greatest threat for widespread religious change lay much closer to home in occurrences such as the Protestant monarch's conversion to Catholicism or in his or her adoption of policies of toleration that would allow the old religion to once again take root.

Because the monarch's strong adherence to Protestantism had such an impact on the religious practices of his or her subjects, many early modern Protestants would have agreed with Anne Crawford's assertion that the king's choice of a wife was his most important responsibility.⁴ As I discussed in the introduction, with the king's choice came distinct dangers, for queens were often foreign born peace-weavers brought in to heal the tensions between warring factions or nations. This plan effectively brought 'the enemy' into the very heart of the court.⁵ With the Biblical model of Solomon in mind, many early modern reformers bemoaned the presence of foreign, Catholic women in the royal bed, and the Catholic Stuart queens were all "objects of anti-Catholic rhetoric and paranoia."⁶ Although Anna and Henrietta Maria practiced their faiths in different ways and played different roles in their husband's courts, each woman threatened patriarchal hegemony through her performance of queenship, sponsorship of dramatic entertainments, and most significantly through her practice of Catholicism.

Concerns about Catholic consorts were not without merit. After all, in addition to influencing their husbands, the queens consort also had a significant impact on their children, producing a fear that Catholicism could reemerge in the next generation. Despite the legitimacy of this concern, the paranoia that English writers expressed about Catholic consorts drew its power as much from popular perceptions and fears of Catholicism as it did from verifiable fact. Indeed, many writers associated Catholicism with superstition and the occult. Further, these anti-Catholic representations often linked Catholics and Catholicism to 'disorderly women'.⁷ Connections between Catholicism and magic and between usurping women and witchcraft placed Anna and Henrietta Maria in particularly precarious positions politically and iconographically. Jacobean and Caroline court performances frequently focused on threats to the

state, presented as allegorical characters such as disorder, dissension, rumor and strife. Although the conflict between the forces of order and disorder could be embodied in any number of ways, artists and dramatists repeatedly presented these forces as two opposing female types—the sacred, godly woman and the disruptive witch. Even under the rule of a king, one of the most reliable means of presenting the contrast between order and chaos, good rule and tyranny was through the female body. We find representations of the opposing forces of good and evil embodied in female form throughout the artistic works of the Jacobean and Caroline periods—whether in court masques or in Shakespearean dramas. These images often operate as justifications of the monarchy—suggesting that only the reigning monarch (and consort) can tame the forces of disorder and anarchy embodied by the sexual, disruptive female.

In their court masques and official performances, Anna and Henrietta Maria could present themselves as embodiments of godly order and right rule, their chaste virtue and productive fertility standing against the forces that threaten to overturn order, forces often represented by the diabolical witch. However, no matter how well formed the masque, neither queen could control how her image actually played to a crowd that was growing increasingly frustrated with the Jacobean royal prerogative and that viewed the queen as potentially disruptive. James I and Anna were able to navigate the waters of increasing discontent; unfortunately, their son Charles and his queen would not be able to hold back the tide of civil strife, and Henrietta Maria's militant Catholicism would go down in history as one of the reasons for the bloody civil war and the fall (albeit temporary) of the Stuart monarchy.

THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE OF EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

To understand why the public spectacle of Catholicism, accompanied by a string of high-profile conversions, struck fear in the hearts of many Protestants at Charles I's court, we need only consider the changes that the English had endured in the preceding decades. In 1534, approximately seventy years before James I ascended the English throne, the English Parliament had passed the Act of Supremacy, which declared that the king was "the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England." With that act, Parliament broke the ties between England and Rome that had lasted for almost a 1000 years.⁸ With the Reformation

came the closing of the monasteries, the destruction of many shrines and much sacred art, the “dethroning of Mary,” the dismantling of the cult of the saints, the rethinking of what constituted sainthood, and an increased emphasis on marriage. Royal injunctions of 1536 and 1538 prohibited pilgrimages, relic veneration, and offerings to images.⁹ In the Jacobean and Caroline period, the battle for the hearts and souls of the English people continued to rage, but the dividing lines were not as clear cut as traditional narratives of the Reformation have suggested.

The variety, fluidity and even confusion of early modern belief stem, in part, from the messiness of the Reformation. Significant changes in the theological beliefs and the iconographic landscape of England were bound to unsettle any sense of fixed religious identity. While we, in the twenty-first century, have a tendency to examine the Reformation in terms of oppositional categories such as Catholic, Puritan, Anglican and Anabaptist, we might do better to consider the early modern English as a people struggling with profound theological questions and forging religious identities in volatile times. Early modern writers such as John Donne, whose own religious identity had shifted from his early life as the son of a recusant family through a conversion to Anglicanism and eventually to a role as a celebrated Anglican preacher, offer a glimpse of the type of questions English Christians would have been asking. In ‘Holy Sonnet 18’, “Show me, dear Christ, thy spouse...”, Donne, employing the Biblical imagery of the Church as Christ’s bride, begs that the Lord will show him the true spouse: “What, is it she, which on the other shore / Goes richly painted? Or which robb’d and tore, / Laments and mourns in Germany and here?”¹⁰ The lines seem to follow the standard Protestant technique of aligning the Catholic Church with a “richly painted” whore. However, Donne does not remain within this stock comparison as the following lines ask the question pondered by many English Christians: “Sleeps she a thousand, then peeps up one year? / Is she self-truth and errs? Now new, now’outwore?” (ibid., 4–5). If the Protestant Church were the true church, then where had she been for so much of church history? Reformers took pains to answer this question, reconstructing salvation history in a way that highlighted the faith of a remnant of true believers against the corruption of the Roman church. However, rewriting the narrative could not completely erase the sense of mutability that the Reformation had introduced, a fact that early modern scholars have examined in some detail in recent years.

The historiography of the Reformation has undergone a seismic shift in the past two or three decades.¹¹ The ‘story’ of the reformation in England had for many centuries followed a similar pattern. The country, oppressed by corrupt and under-educated clergy, longed for reform. Full of nascent nationalism, they desired to be free of the tyranny of a foreign pope. Spiritually dead, they desired revival, renewal, and a focus on the scriptures. Historians had long argued that Henry VIII’s state-imposed Reformation had wide support among a people weary of church corruption and superstition. The Reformation could thus be explained by a range of historical clichés: “the decay of medieval religion,” the “growth of an articulate laity,” and “the rise of Lollardy.”¹² In this “master narrative” of English religious history, even “heavy-handed disciplinary measures taken by those at the top of the political and ecclesiastical hierarchies” become justifiable steps taken in the name of progress.¹³ In this narrative of triumphant Protestantism, Catholic devotion during the reign of Mary I could be ignored or dismissed as anomalous, and the Catholic consorts of the early Stuart kings played little role. Anna’s private practice of Catholicism could be ignored, and Henrietta Maria’s more militant Catholicism could be presented as a temporary threat to Protestantism that justified the execution of her husband and a war to save the nation from royalists and their high church (Anglican and/or Catholic) leanings.¹⁴

The work of revisionist historians of the 1980s and 1990s such as Eamon Duffy, Christopher Haigh and Jack Scarisbrick has radically altered long-standing views about the English Reformation, sweeping away the former certainty that the Reformation represented a logical step in the evolution of the faith and that Protestantism quickly and completely replaced Catholicism.¹⁵ Revisionist historians mustering church wardens’ accounts and other contemporary sources showed that the Reformation was hardly as uncomplicated as the traditional narrative suggests. Elizabethan laws against Catholics were enforced selectively, and recusants continued to persist in the traditional faith. Further, even among the converted, some Protestants continued to hold on to beliefs that were officially heretical. Christopher Haigh argues that, during the reign of Elizabeth, away from the “cathedral cities and the main towns, official Protestantism made little real progress.”¹⁶ Indeed, many of the clergy “made the Prayer Book services as much like masses as circum-spection allowed” (*ibid.*, 180).

The revisionist historians of the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century posed many important questions, and, in doing so, they have opened up many additional questions, moving scholarship in a direction that Peter Marshall terms ‘postrevisionism.’ As Marshall helpfully presents it, postrevisionism views the Reformation as a “gradual yet profound cultural transformation” as opposed to the rapid Protestant victory of traditional narrative or the “successful rearguard action portrayed by 1980s revisionism.”¹⁷ Postrevisionism in Marshall’s view is not a refutation of revisionism, but “an acceptance of the need to work outward from some of its basic scholarship drawing attention to its nuances and paradoxes, its long-term continuities and discontinuities, and its intended and unintended consequences” (*ibid.*, 568–569). It is just this complexity that we must engage in order to understand the cultural moment in which Anna of Denmark and Henrietta Maria practiced their faith.

On the surface, it would seem that placing Anna of Denmark and Henrietta Maria in conversation in terms of confessional identity would serve little purpose. After all, Anna practiced her Catholicism so quietly that some contemporary scholars disagree as to whether she actually converted, and Henrietta Maria practiced her faith with so much zeal that many scholars count it among the causes of the English civil war. In fact, however, the differences in the ways that the queens practiced Catholicism prove significant not only to our understanding of how they performed their queenship but also to our understanding of the complexity and fluidity of confessional identity.

It proves difficult to speak of Catholicism and Protestantism as hard and fast categories not only because people were torn between Catholicism and Protestantism, but because both of these belief systems were themselves in a state of flux. Protestants felt pulled between the doctrines of the emerging Anglican Church and those of the “hotter” Protestants (to use Patrick Collinson’s term). Differences in beliefs concerning the meaning of the Eucharist, the means of salvation, human free will, and other less central questions of vestments and liturgical practices created tension among Protestants. These differences were not insignificant. Catholicism, too, felt the effects of Reformation.

The Council of Trent inaugurated a new era of Counter Reformation Catholicism. In order to understand the mindset of an early modern English Catholic, one must make some distinction between medieval Catholicism, which remained in the cultural memory of the English,

Protestant and Catholic alike, and Counter Reformation Catholicism, which for the Protestant represented the threat of foreign, Jesuit take-over and for the Catholic recusant could represent a range of different options from hope to threat. Some scholars use the terms ‘survivalism’ and ‘seminarism’ to distinguish between medieval Catholicism and a new form of English Catholicism stemming from missionary efforts.¹⁸ This distinction proves important, but it is not as absolute as some scholars would suggest it to be.

English Catholicism did not die with the Act of Supremacy to be reborn through the efforts of Jesuit priests. Catholicism never actually left the national consciousness to be reformed and reintroduced. As Haigh argues, “there was much more continuity in England than those who have distinguished between ‘medieval Catholicism’ and ‘Counter Reformation Catholicism’ have allowed” and “emerging recusancy owed much to what had gone before” (*ibid.*, 178). Further, the Counter Reformation did not create a new Catholicism. As Keith Luria makes clear, the Council of Trent did not so much change beliefs as it made an effort to oversee existing beliefs and exercise some control over them. Catholics sought divine aid and guidance in many places from churches to pilgrimage shrines. They believed in the power of sacred wells, relics and images, and they drew close to God and each other through religious festivals and processions. While Catholic reformers “did not feel equally comfortable with all of these manifestations of sacrality,” the Council of Trent did not prohibit any of them. Instead, as Luria points out, “the church sought to exercise greater supervision over them and rid them of customs it now deemed profane or superstitious. Meanwhile, the faithful remade their own religious practices by inventing new manifestations of sacrality and by appropriating the church’s reforms.”¹⁹ However, despite the fluidity of early modern religious identity, in the imaginations of many English subjects, traditional Catholicism and Counter Reformation Catholicism were very different things. For many, Medieval Catholic memory of a “Merry Old England” sat in sharp contrast to Counter-Reformation Catholicism, a foreign threat embodied for the English in the form of the Jesuit missionary priests. That Henrietta Maria brought a foreign, Counter-Reformation Catholicism to the court helps to explain the anxiety that she produced in some of her English subjects. As Frances Dolan, Helen Parish, and Arthur Marotti make clear, what people believed about the threat of Counter-Reformation

Catholicism proved to be as important as any real danger that Catholic continental powers, Jesuits or Catholic queens might have actually posed.

When discussing confessional identity, particularly for Anna and Henrietta Maria who had to perform their allegiance to the pope in ways that did not undermine Stuart absolutism, we might speak in terms of broad categories of belief and performance. Part of the reason for scholarly uncertainty about Anna's faith involves the fluidity of beliefs and the gulf between lived beliefs and official theology that exists in every historical epoch. Indeed, determining people's confessional identity proved somewhat problematic in the early modern period. Because recusancy led to fines and even punishment, many Catholics chose to conceal their faith. Thus, we do not know how many people considered themselves Catholic while attending Protestant services, and we do not know exactly what these 'Church Papists' might have believed. Further, without the control of Rome, the Catholic in England could be more fluid in his or her beliefs and practices. As Christopher Haigh cautions, to understand the role of Catholicism in the early modern period, one must avoid "a restrictive definition of Catholicism which stresses union with Rome and conscious rejection of a heretical Church of England."²⁰ At the parish level, "the issues were blurred, and it is more helpful to recognize that for the peasantry the old religion was a complex of social practices, many of which remained available" (*ibid.*). Catholicism was, therefore, "not a neat, simple and unproblematic religious category and English Catholics employed "a variety of creative approaches to religious conformity."²¹ As we shall see in subsequent chapters, this "creativity" can be seen in the beliefs and performances of both Anna and Henrietta Maria. Both women used their public performances of queenship and their court entertainments to convey their queenly identities as well as their confessional identities. In both cases, these iterations of Catholicism prove uniquely shaped by continental Counter Reformation piety and the needs of Catholic queens performing their roles in a Protestant land.

Much scholarly attention has been paid to early modern fears that Henrietta Maria would push the king to conversion or influence his policies. Indeed, concern with the Catholic queen and her retinue of priests haunted the Protestant imagination during the reign of Charles I. Far fewer scholars have considered how Anna's Catholicism might have registered on those who knew of or had heard rumors of her conversion. Yet, we know that, by 1596, rumors of her possible conversion had reached England, for Elizabeth I sent Robert Bowes to question the

Scottish queen about reports of her conversion. This scholarly neglect might stem, in part, from scholarly disagreement about the details of Anna's conversion and about her confessional identity.

Running through much of the historical discussion of Anna's faith is the question of the seriousness of her conversion, summed up by David Harris Willson's assertion that Anna very likely "adopted Catholicism in the half-trifling way in which idle persons sometimes occupy themselves with a new faith. Her conversion did not make her serious or devout, nor did it strengthen her character."²² While Willson's assessment of Anna's confessional identity proves fairly extreme in its dismissiveness, less extreme versions of this assertion can be found throughout scholarship on Anna's Catholicism. Many historians have implied that Anna lacked seriousness in life and as such her religious conversion cannot have been serious. Further, some scholars have questioned her sincerity because she continued to attend Protestant services. Because her conversion works against the narrative of a triumphant Protestantism, dismissing it as the folly of a frivolous woman has often proven more appealing than opening up the question of why some people might have felt more aligned with the Catholic faith than with the Protestant one.

Because political realities forced Anna's confessional identity to remain a private matter, even contemporary scholars who are more sympathetic to the queen have difficulty assessing the depth of her connection to the old faith. Many argue along lines that are similar to Piero Contarini's 1618 ambassadorial report to the doge: "Some consider her a Catholic because she would never go to the English church, but really her religion is not known."²³ Even those who comfortably assert that Anna converted to and faithfully practiced Catholicism disagree as to when this conversion took place. Although many historians, including Alphons Bellesheim, Albert Loomie, W. Plenkens, John Stevenson, and A.W. Ward, suggest that Anna converted around 1600 and H. Chadwick identifies 1599 as the probable date, Maureen M. Meikle and Helen M. Payne suggest that the date of conversion was actually much earlier, in 1592–1593.²⁴

I find Meikle and Payne's argument that Anna converted in the early 1590s convincing. In discussing the queen's faith, I am willing to dispense with rigid definitions of what being Catholic means in favor of a fluid reading of religious identity. I do not know that it is possible to completely reconstruct someone's lived beliefs 400 hundred years after their death; however, I also see no reason to dispute Anna's own

assertions concerning her identity. It is worth noting that early modern observers who questioned the sincerity of Anna's Catholicism often had their own religious agendas that they wished the queen to promote. As such, Anna's performance of the faith, as opposed to her actual beliefs, appears to have been of the most interest to those in the court who were observing her life. The Vatican and international Catholic powers wished to see Anna make a bigger show of her faith, to attempt to bring relief to the English Catholics, and to lead her husband and children to the true faith. Anna, however, proved more shrewdly political than most observers realized, and she fully understood the need to support the Stuart dynasty. As Anna's conversion still remains a source of debate, I will briefly sketch out what we know about her conversion and the reasons for Anna's keeping her faith quiet.

ANNA OF DENMARK: MAPPING THE QUEEN'S CONFESSIONAL BELIEFS

Anna came to Scotland a Lutheran bride. Her marriage treaty allowed her to practice her Lutheran faith in Scotland but offered no provisions for the queen to convert to Catholicism. Indeed, James had selected Anna in part because he desired to marry a Protestant princess. At some point in the early 1590s, however, Anna converted to Catholicism. One reason for her conversion might have been the feeling of isolation that the young queen no doubt felt in her new land. Her introduction to Scotland's Calvinist brand of Protestantism proved unappealing to the young princess.²⁵ As we shall discuss in this chapter, from the outset, Anna found herself in conflict with the Kirk. At Anna's coronation, James desired that his bride should be anointed with holy oil as was traditional for divine right monarchs and their consorts. The Scottish ministers, however, viewed the anointing of oil as a superstitious holdover from Catholicism, and objected to its use. James VI proved intractable on this point. Understanding the importance of the performance of divine right and sanctity, he threatened to have one of the bishops crown the queen if the ministers refused. James got his way, but this conflict would certainly not be the last clash between the royal couple and the Kirk.

To make matters worse, Anna's chaplain, Johan Sering, converted to Calvinism.²⁶ Anna, far from her family and Lutheran community,

uninspired by the Kirk, and without the support of her chaplain, apparently turned to her friends for spiritual support, and one of her closest friends was the countess of Huntley, Henrietta nee Stuart. Henrietta, the daughter of James's early favorite Esmé Stuart, was a devout Catholic, and most sources agree that Anna's conversion came about at least in part as a result of Henrietta's influence.²⁷ While we can attribute Anna's conversion to the closeness of her friendship with Huntly and the distance that she felt from the Kirk and its ministers, these reasons do not—nor can they—explain her conversion. Certainly, if we are to give Anna even a modicum of respect, we must acknowledge that Anna, like most converts, found something within the Catholic Church that appealed to her on a personal, spiritual level.

Evidence for her conversion comes from several sources including Father Robert Abercromby, who wrote that, in 1600, he had met with Anna in a secret chamber for three days and instructed her in Catholicism.²⁸ On the third day, Anna heard mass and received the Eucharist. During the next two years of Abercrombie's time in Scotland, Anna would receive the Eucharist an additional nine times (*ibid.*). Anna's commitment to the faith is confirmed through letters that Anna sent to Pope Clement in 1601. The letters, delivered by Dr. Edmund Drummond, profess Anna's Catholic faith and ask for "papal protection for herself and her children and approval of her husband's claims to the throne of England."²⁹ Anna specifically explains her plan to keep her conversion quiet: "If we, prompted by danger to our present state, are attending rites of the heretics, let it not be attribute to our desire, but to the hostile times which we are compelled to endure. We beg, and in any case you will plead, that his Holiness will grant absolution and a blessing" (*ibid.*).

Anna's excuse for keeping her faith private parallels Abercrombie's explanation for her silence. According to Abercrombie, James confronted his wife about meeting with a priest, telling her that "if you cannot live without this sort of thing, do your best to keep things as quiet as possible, for if you don't our crown is in danger."³⁰ James's concern undoubtedly centered on the Scottish throne, but he just as easily could have been considering his claim to the English throne.

Although Anna might have desired to keep her faith private in order to help her husband secure the English throne, at his accession to that throne, Anna did take steps to make her faith somewhat more public. In June 1603, Anna publicly refused to take communion at James and

Anna's English coronation. Scaramelli gives an account of the coronation, saying that the archbishop of Canterbury tried to persuade her more than once; however, "Her majesty, after very quietly saying 'no' once or twice, declined to make any further answer."³¹ Perhaps, once James had secured the throne, Anna felt safer in pursuing her faith, for, after her arrival in England, she "repeatedly made overtures to Rome and insinuated to Catholic ambassadors that she was of their religion."³²

To get a sense of the sincerity of Anna's confessional identity, we might follow Leeds Barroll's suggestion and look to the reports sent by departing Venetian ambassadors. It is from the 18 May 1603 report of Venetian ambassador Scaramelli that we find a useful summary of Anna's religious conversion: "The Queen, whose father was a Martinist [Lutheran] and who has always been a Lutheran herself, became a Catholic, owing to three Scottish Jesuits, one of whom came from Rome, the others from Spain. Although in public she went to the heretical [Anglican] church with her husband, yet in private she observed the Catholic rite. With the King's consent the mass was sometimes secretly celebrated for her."³³ Scaramelli's report suggests that Anna's religious identity remained consistent as she and James assumed the English throne. Five years later, in September 1608, Anna had "sufficient confidence to attend mass and the sacraments at the Spanish embassy in the Barbican."³⁴ These actions prove significant for they reveal that Anna still made some semi-public shows of Catholicism even after the Gunpowder Plot.

If we can believe sources such as Abercromby, Scaramelli and Anna herself, then we might ask why Anna's faith did not cause more of a ripple during her time period, and why scholars so often either debate the nature of her faith or completely ignore it. There are several possible reasons for this relative silence. As Meikle and Payne suggest, early reports of Anna's conversion may have been lacking because Scottish observers may have confused Anna's practice of Catholicism with Lutheranism, a fact that speaks to the divisions within Protestantism.^{35,36} In addition, Scottish subjects may not have been aware of the queen's confession because Anna seemed to have few scruples about attending Protestant services as long as she did not partake in mass. While in Scotland, she attended Protestant sermons except those preached at Holyroodhouse Chapel by Patrick Galloway, James's personal minister whose sermons dripped with a "vehement anti-Catholic rhetoric" (*ibid.*). In England,

she attended Protestant services, including the preaching of John Donne, but did not take communion.

Part of the reason for scholarly skepticism about Anna's faith might stem from the reports of early modern Catholics such as Cardinal Guido de Bentivoglio, who recounted in 1613 that, while Anna had given "clear signs of her inclination" to be Catholic, her preoccupation with court fetes suggested a "facile and changeable character," so the belief that she was Catholic "could not be founded on anything but uncertain conjectures."³⁷ Contemporary scholars should be careful, however, to consider the motivations of the Vatican and Catholic ambassadors when assessing their comments about Anna's faith. The pope and Europe's Catholic powers wanted to draw England back into the fold. Having a Catholic queen would have seemed like the perfect way to influence the younger generation if not the king. Their hopes may have been misplaced, however, for as we shall see in our discussion of Henrietta Maria, even an openly Catholic queen committed to supporting the cause of Catholicism could do very little to effect the changes that the pope would have desired. As McCullough argues, "eager to secure a reliable Catholic influence on her husband, these men found Anne's frequent attendance at Protestant preaching and prayers and her unwillingness to become the anchor of a Catholic interest at court dubious confirmation of her Catholicism."³⁸

Finally, some of the questions about Anna's Catholicism undoubtedly stem from contradictory reports concerning Anna's confession at her death. Julian Sanchez de Ulloa reported that "although she gave in her lifetime some signs that she wished to die a Catholic, she seemed changeable and unreliable and, according to what they tell me, not expecting to die so quickly, she was very careless over what was most significant for her salvation."³⁹ According to Loomie, Jean Baptiste van Male, who was more familiar with the queen's household, contradicts this report, suggesting that the queen's behavior may not have resulted from a casual attitude toward death. Van Male affirms that the archbishop of Canterbury and others were present at her death, but "the envoy was told that a few days previously Anne had received a priest who dealt very secretly 'about affairs of her conscience'" (ibid.).

Much scholarship echoes the concerns of the Catholic ambassadors, which are not particularly fair. Although the pope and international Catholics might have wished that Anna had more vigorously performed her faith, Anna would have had good reason to keep her conversion

quiet and to continue to attend Protestant services. While in Scotland, she needed to appease the Kirk, as well as to support James in his bid for English throne. Once James became king, he and Anna faced the responsibility of building a new dynasty and fashioning a union between Scotland and England. Anna, a shrewdly political woman, her political acumen already forged in the fires of Scottish politics, understood that new dynasties require careful construction. James had not been the only claimant of the English throne. Besides his sex and his acceptable line of descent, one of James's strongest appeals to the English was his Protestantism. As such, Anna publicly flaunting her Catholicism would have been politically damaging. Further, James's own mother had been executed by the former English queen in large part because of the Catholic plots to place her on the English throne. Evoking memory of the former Scottish queen would not have been a wise political move.

Even after coming to England, Anna had to be careful about revealing her confessional identity. Early in James's reign, pressure from Parliament led the king to enforce laws against Catholicism that led to the execution of Catholics. If the task of practicing Catholicism proved challenging before the Gunpowder Plot, it became significantly more difficult after the plot, which would cast a shadow of doubt over Catholics that would haunt Protestant discourse for centuries to come. The attempt to kill the king and parliament had branded the Catholics as a particularly dangerous group, and the queen perhaps saw no choice but to keep her faith fairly quiet. In doing so, she joined a number of English Catholics "for whom routine compliance with the Church of England and committed Catholicism were not mutually exclusive."⁴⁰ Anna's Catholicism—like that of many of her English Catholic subjects—was fraught with difficulty and a need for secrecy and it would not necessarily have been as clearly demarcated and theologically consistent as we might expect.

HENRIETTA MARIA'S CONFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Henrietta Maria's circumstances proved quite different. Entering England as a French Catholic princess, Henrietta Maria came with a Catholic identity already firmly established in the marriage treaty, which allowed for the practice of her faith, including the keeping of priests and the saying of the Mass. Further, Henrietta Maria came to her new home with a missionary zeal reinforced by her godfather Pope Urban

VIII's commission for her to be the Esther to her oppressed Catholic people. One should not be surprised if her performance of Catholicism differs from that of the mother-in-law. These differences help to explain why Anna's faith is rarely mentioned in scholarly discussions of James I, whereas Henrietta Maria's faith is central to historical discussions of his son Charles I.

We should note, however, that Henrietta Maria's faith and the performance of it did not remain a replica of continental Catholicism. Indeed, as she spent more time in her new home, surrounded by Protestants, she began to perform her faith in ways that represented a distinct mixture of Catholicism and her own personal tastes and beliefs. In her role as queen, she did all that she could to advance a culture of Catholicism at court, and, in many ways, she proved quite successful. Indeed, in 1636, her court established a permanent nuncio from the Vatican, a move that—to some degree—legitimized Catholicism. As Catholic influence on government increased, the pressure on Charles also increased. The activities of Gregorio Panzani, an Oratorian priest and temporary ambassador from the Vatican; the Franciscan Christopher Davenport; and Scottish priest George Con added to fears that Charles and Archbishop William Laud intended to take the Church of England back to Rome.

In addition to establishing ties with the Vatican, Henrietta Maria engaged in active proselytization. Henrietta's efforts to win her new people to her faith no doubt began as soon as she stepped onto the English shore. After the Anglo-French peace treaty in 1629, Louis XIII aided his sister in this mission through the gift of a dozen Capuchin priests to her court. The Capuchin order, known for their proselytizing activity on the borders of Protestantism, played a significant role in French Catholic reform.⁴¹ In addition to welcoming the Capuchins, Henrietta Maria also opened a new chapel, constructed by Inigo Jones, at her chief residence, Somerset House. Father Cyprien de Gamaches describes the September 1632 dedication ceremony as an opulent event appropriate to its real and symbolic significance. In a land still littered with, in Shakespeare's words, the "bare ruined choirs" of Catholicism, the fact that the queen was building a new chapel held great significance. On December 10, 1636, the same year in which England established permanent relations with the Vatican, the chapel opened and celebrated its first mass. Henrietta Maria's response to the opening of the chapel reveals her understanding of what this victory could mean to the cause of Catholicism in England. According to De Gamaches, "tears of joy seemed to trickle from the eyes

of the Queen, considering, in this pious and striking ceremony, the grace which God bestowed on her to erect a church where would thenceforth be celebrated all the divine services which heresy had banished from England.”⁴² For a short time, the dream of English Catholics seemed to have been realized, and their hopes for further growth, acceptance and conversion rested in the person of their French Catholic queen.

WOMEN, QUEENSHIP AND RELIGION

In the seventeenth century, anti-Catholic sentiment informed and, in some ways, helped create Protestant national identity. Carol Wiener argues that, during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, hatred of Catholics, which was once primarily “the private obsession of religious extremists,” became “part of the national ideology.”⁴³ To be “a good Englishman” was to be Protestant, and many late sixteenth and seventeenth-century English subjects would have agreed with Thomas Dekker’s assertion that Catholicism proved incompatible with loyalty to the crown: “Not one good Subiect breathes amongst them All.” Anti-Catholic sentiment linked English Catholics to international conspiracies; however, the fear of Catholicism encompassed not only the threat of foreign influence or invasion but also extended into the realm of the supernatural. Indeed, the battle between Catholicism and Protestantism could be read as a spiritual battle with the Catholics firmly on the side of evil.⁴⁴ As we shall see in the section that follows, the insistent gendering of this spiritual battle had real consequences for England’s Catholic queens.⁴⁵

Although the evils of Catholicism could be presented in many different ways, anti-Catholic writers frequently presented them in terms of witchcraft and sorcery. This type of formulation proved particularly effective in rewriting the historical narrative, for with “medieval miracles recast as demonic fraud, the Catholic church could be represented as an institution headed by papal conjurers and necromancers, preaching doctrines that were shaped by magic and venerating as its heroes saints whose reputation rested on their ability to work false and diabolic wonders.”^{46,47} The fact of their Catholicism linked the queens to the entire complex of anxieties that anti-Catholic narratives evoke.

Perhaps no one more fully embodied Protestant fear of Catholicism and unruly women than Queen Mary Stuart. In Mary, Protestants found the perfect foil for their own English queen. Mary Stuart could be cast as the very embodiment of the dangerous, sexually promiscuous Catholic

Whore of Babylon standing in opposition to her cousin Elizabeth, the godly, virginal Protestant representation of the true church. While anti-Catholic sentiments can be traced to the earliest days of the Protestant reformation, Anne McLaren argues that this dichotomy between the two queens had real consequences for English national identity. Anti-Catholicism became central to English national and political life in the late sixteenth century in response to the fact that Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart had “comparable blood claims” to the English throne.^{48,49} Protestants feared the possibility of a Catholic takeover focused on Mary Stuart, and, as McLaren argues, anti-Catholic rhetoric increased because it had “a literal target, in the form of Mary Queen of Scots, for a powerful fusion of misogyny and anti-Catholic sentiment” (ibid., 741). We would not want to overstate this case; after all, anti-Catholic sentiments seem almost inseparable from early Protestant rhetoric. Nonetheless, we must acknowledge that the existence of two queens in England did make for significant concern from 1561 until the execution of Mary Stuart in 1587, and this concern allowed for a barrage of creative work setting the queens in contrast, a fact that only heightened the gendered nature of representations of spiritual battle.

Edmund Spenser and other Protestant writers made much of the conflict between these queens. In works such as *The Faerie Queene*, Elizabeth could be the virtuous female knight, Britomart; the virginal huntress, Belphebe; or the powerful and good queen of the faerie, while her Catholic cousin played the role of Duessa, enchantress and witch. The fact that Mary Stuart’s son James ascended to the English throne in 1603 stopped the tide of negative imagery connected to Mary; however, the image of Mary as an idolatrous whore remained in cultural memory and threatened to taint the wives of the Stuart kings, particularly Henrietta Maria, who practiced her Catholicism openly and whose lineage linked her to a foreign threat, bringing the worlds of spiritual battle and literal invasion together in the person of the queen.

Because of their confessional beliefs, Anna and Henrietta Maria always risked evoking these darker images of female rule as they attempted to construct images of royal autonomy. Even the traditional imagery of the sacred feminine proved problematic.⁵⁰ In Protestant England, the traditional images of appropriate female agency—the Virgin Mary, female saints and martyrs—no longer held the position of legitimacy and honor that they once had. First, celibacy proved problematic. As Protestant historian John Bale makes clear in his reimagined history of English

Christianity, the degenerate nature of the church can be seen in the practice of clerical celibacy.⁵¹ The fact that vowed celibacy serves as a sign of the fallen nature of the church has strong implications for the idea of the feminine sacred and for the queens who embraced Catholicism. Second, reformers had directed particularly forceful attacks on the feminine sacred—the female saints, Marian shrines and women depicted in religious art. Thus, Anna and Henrietta Maria’s use of Marian imagery proved problematic.

Although virginity has held a place of honor since the earliest days of Christianity, vowed virginity has always offered a challenge to patriarchy because it opened up the possibility for moving outside of patriarchal gender constructs.⁵² In some accounts, virginity endowed a woman with a genderless existence, offering freedom from some of the restrictions and many of the stereotypical representations placed on those gendered female. In the early days of Christianity, the “metaphor most frequently used for women who undertook to live an uncompromising Christian faith was that they had ‘become male.’”⁵³ Women “referred to themselves in this way,” and male authors also “repeatedly referred to women whose courage and commitment they admired as ‘more like men than nature would seem to allow’” (*ibid.*). Elizabeth I buttressed her performance as female Prince with the fact of her virginal intactness, which separated her from the sexual economy and the subordination that it implied. Anna and Henrietta Maria could not so neatly escape their connection to the female body, but they could embody the sacred virgin through performance and, in so doing, open up an alternative site of power.

In the medieval period, vowed virginity, in addition to allowing women to live a genderless existence, also allowed them some degree of spiritual authority. Many literary texts bestow more than mere honor on the virgin estate; they present virginity as capable of endowing a woman with supernatural abilities—powers beyond the reach of those around her who do not possess her purity. Despite Protestant aversion to the sacred feminine, Elizabeth I heavily employed the language and imagery of sacred virginity in order to obscure her sexual difference, bolster her claim to divine monarchy, and to deflect criticism. Elizabeth could navigate the complicated issue of female virginal power because she was a champion of the Protestant faith, and her power supported the True Church and its place in Providential history. Elizabeth’s image as sacred virgin resulted in part from the careful constructions of her government

and her encomiasts. However, it also owed much to the convergence of early modern beliefs about the supernatural nature of monarchy and numerous fortunate coincidences that allowed Elizabeth to escape attempts on her life. Because early modern beliefs about monarchy were strikingly similar to medieval beliefs about saints, the supernatural power attributed to Elizabeth as queen dovetailed with the powers ascribed to her as divine right monarch. According to Stuart Clark, it was “a commonplace that anointing not merely indicated royalty and enabled kings to share in the divinity, but conferred a protective sacrosanctity on their persons.”⁵⁴ This “disarming aura of holiness which [in some interpretations] rendered rulers immune from attack” also proves a defining characteristic of the medieval virgin saint (*ibid.*). In a fascinating twist that allowed reality to support belief, Elizabeth’s narrow escape from numerous plots on her life fueled the notion that she was somehow charmed, protected as an agent of God, inviolable as regnant, virgin and sacred figure. As Alexandra Walsham puts it, Elizabeth “gained her renown as a godly ruler simply by surviving a series of ‘popish’ attempts to assassinate and depose her. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that she largely had the Roman Catholics to thank for her elevation to the status of Protestant icon.”⁵⁵ Elizabeth’s ability to survive despite the dangers she faced during the reign of Mary, two serious bouts with smallpox in 1562 and 1572, and several popish plots against her life lent credibility to her supporters’ presentation of her as a sacred virgin. The attacks that Elizabeth escaped were directed by Catholic powers and sympathizers. Thus, her connection to the sacred feminine fit into the Protestant myth of Divine Providence.⁵⁶

Anna of Denmark and Henrietta Maria, as wives and mothers, could not harness the representational power of the sacred feminine in quite the same way that the unmarried Elizabeth could. Marriage played a key role in Protestant discourse, and, for the queen consort, the promotion of marriage and family proved the heart of her responsibility. Nonetheless, Anna and Henrietta Maria could tap into the powerful imagery of the sacred feminine through the image of the Virgin Mary. Because the Blessed Virgin combines within her both virginity and fertility, she had been a key figure in allowing English consorts to spiritualize their roles as wives and mothers. Mary’s role as mediator for humanity and her sacred fertility could be used as a model for celebrating the queen’s role as mediator for her people and as the bearer of royal heirs. However, although the evocation of the Virgin Mary had been

a commonplace in medieval representations of queenship, for Catholic queens in Protestant England, this imagery proved particularly fraught with potential dangers. In early modern England and Scotland, representations of the Virgin Mary could be attacked for usurping the position rightly owed only to Christ. As Frances Dolan points out, attacks on Mariology and attacks on Catholic queens often intertwined. To many Protestants, the Catholic elevation of the Virgin Mary higher than her 'natural role' as handmaiden of God paralleled the Stuart queens' attempts at exerting autonomy—both were examples of "inversion and usurpation."⁵⁷ Early in the Reformation, this concern with delimiting Mary's role produced a misogynist reimagining of the sacred virgin, exemplified in the words of a preacher in Kent, who in 1536 described the Virgin Mary as little more than "a saffron bag."^{58,59}

Despite Puritan concerns with Marian iconography, the image of the sacred virgin could be a powerful tool in the hands of the queens. While many scholars discuss Anna of Denmark in terms of her subversive masque performances and Henrietta Maria in terms of her focus on marriage and fecundity, fewer scholars consider the ways in which both queens wield the image of the sacred virgin to assert their own claims to authority. The following chapters will examine the ways in which Anna of Denmark and Henrietta Maria constructed their identities and performed themselves as godly bringers of order and stability standing in contrast to forces of evil and corruption. As we shall see, the lines that separate the queens' representations of autonomy and power from images of disruptive and diabolical women continually threaten to collapse, turning images meant to support the Stuart dynasty into images that threaten its stability. Their dangerous roles as consorts, potential enemies in the royal bed, when combined with their performance of female power and the Catholic faith had the potential to turn queens Anna and Henrietta Maria into powerful images of female disorder. These types of images have real consequences, a fact that will become abundantly clear as we examine the rhetoric that paved the way for the execution of Charles I and the temporary overthrow of the English monarchy. Indeed, this view of Anna and Henrietta Maria as emblems of disorder has persisted into contemporary scholarship where Anna has been largely ignored or trivialized and Henrietta Maria has been alternately trivialized and demonized.

NOTES

1. The totality of this belief is evident in the fact that the English “not only failed to rejoice, but even found new cause for anxiety in their own successes,” a phenomenon that would seem “to indicate that despite official optimism, so long as the enemy remained unvanquished, doubts persisted in England about the final outcome of the struggle.” Carol Z. Wiener, “The Beleaguered Isle. A Study of Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Anti-Catholicism,” *Past and Present* 51 (1971), 53.
2. Quoted in Arthur Marotti, *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 9.
3. Marotti, *Religious Ideology*, 4.
4. Anne Crawford, *Letters of the Queens of England 1100–1547* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997), 3.
5. For more on queenship and the connection between marriage and sovereignty see Louise Olga Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament: Arts of Rule in Late Medieval Scotland* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), Chaps. 5–6.
6. Arthur Marotti, *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts* (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1999), 3.
7. Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Cornell University Press, 1999), 4.
8. For an informative and succinct history of the Reformation in England and on the continent, see Patrick Collinson, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003); Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe’s House Divided, 1490–1700* (London: Allen Lane, 2003); Hans J. Hillerbrand, *The Division of Christendom: Christianity in the Sixteenth Century* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Know Press, 2007); and Kenneth G. Appold, *The Reformation* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).
9. In 1547, under the reign of Edward VI, a number of traditional practices were prohibited: display of roods and other images, prayers and masses on behalf of the dead, Easter vigils, use of holy bread, holy water, palms and ashes.
10. Donne, “Holy Sonnet 18,” lines 2–4.
11. As Carlos M. N. Eire makes clear, even the word Reformation (singular and capitalized) makes a distinct statement about historical opinion of the event (and about Protestant triumphalism). The name suggests progress, a move from something corrupt and deficient to something changed for the good. The use of the singular noun pushes the historical perspective that only the Protestants had spearheaded an event significant enough to

- be an actual Reformation. Carlos Eire, *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450–1650*. (New Haven: Yale UP, 2016), ix.
12. Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society Under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 56.
 13. Ken Jackson and Arthur F. Marotti, “The Turn to Religion in Early Modern English Studies,” *Criticism* 46, no. 1 (2004): 170.
 14. This reading of history was so ingrained that, when Henry Sacheverell preached a sermon in 1709 calling for passive obedience to monarchy, the Whig parliament was horrified that he cast the Gunpowder Conspirators in the same light as the men who executed Charles I.
 15. For an overview of this conversation, see Margaret Bowker, *The Henrician Reformation: The Diocese of Lincoln under John Longland 1521–1547* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); John Joseph Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985); Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Antichrist’s Lewd Hat* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Haigh, *English Reformations*.
 16. Haigh, *English Reformations*, 178.
 17. Peter Marshall, “(Re) defining the English Reformation,” *The Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 3 (2009): 565.
 18. Haigh, *English Reformations*, 56.
 19. Keith Luria, “Popular Catholicism and the Catholic Reformation,” in *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honour of John W. O’Malley*, ed. Kathleen M. Comerford and Hilmar M. Pabel (S.J. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 117.
 20. Haigh, *English Reformations*, 179.
 21. Francis Young, *English Catholics and the Supernatural, 1553–1829* (London: Routledge, 2016), 6.
 22. David Harris Willson, *King James VI and I* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956), 95.
 23. Leeds Barroll, *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England: A Cultural Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 172; *State Papers Venice* (SPV) 15:420.
 24. Maureen M. Meikle and Helen M. Payne, “From Lutheranism to Catholicism: The Faith of Anna of Denmark (1574–1619),” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 64, no. 1 (2013): 46–49.
 25. Father Abercrombie reveals that Anna was “most decidedly opposed to Calvinism.” Joseph Stevenson, “Gleanings among Old Records: Anne of Denmark, Queen of Great Britain,” *The Month* 35 (1879): 256–265.

26. Anna's annoyance with Sering's actions can be seen in her refusal to acknowledge him as her minister even though in 1603 he would come to England in that capacity (*ibid.*, 67).
27. Father Abercrombie attributed her interest in Catholicism to her memory of Catholic princess whom Anna had known in her youth. According to Abercrombie, Anna had been in Germany when she was very young, and, at that time, she was educated in the home of a Catholic princess. The impression of being in the household and seeing the Catholic priest celebrate mass had stayed with her, and, in Abercrombie's opinion, contributed to her desire to investigate the Roman church.
28. Stevenson, "Gleanings among Old Records", 259.
29. Albert J. Loomie, "King James I's Catholic Consort," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* (1971): 305.
30. Stevenson, "Gleanings among Old Records", 259.
31. Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*, 169; SPV, 10:81.
32. Peter McCullough, *Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 169.
33. Barroll. *Anna of Denmark*, 169.
34. Loomie, "King James I's Catholic Consort," 307.
35. Meikle and Payne, "From Lutheranism to Catholicism," 49.
36. In Denmark, Lutheran services administered communion at every Sunday service rather than the four times a year that Calvinists gave communion. Further, "as a prelude and prerequisite to Lutheran communion, Danes had to confess and receive absolution" whereas "confession and absolution had been abandoned in Scotland at the time of the reformation in 1560" (Meikle, 49).
37. Loomie, "King James I's Catholic Consort," 303.
38. McCullough, *Sermons at Court*, 169.
39. Loomie, "King James I's Catholic Consort," 313.
40. McCullough, *Sermons at Court*, 170.
41. Caroline Hibbard, "Henrietta Maria," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Database.
42. Thomas Birch, *The Court and Times of Charles I: Including Memoirs of the Mission in England of the Capuchin Friars in the Service of Queen Henrietta Maria... by Father Cyprien de Gamaches* vol. II (London: Henry Colburn, 1848), 313.
43. Wiener, "The Beleaguered Isle," 27.
44. Rewriting the narrative of history through the lens of Protestant Providentialism allowed the Reformers to address two major problems: they needed to defend their church against accusations of novelty, explaining where the true church had been prior to 1517, and

they had to answer the argument of Catholics such as Sir Thomas More that Protestants could not claim the miracles that the Catholic Church could. Helen Parish argues that the Reformers addressed these questions by unfolding “a narrative of conflict between truth and falsehood throughout history, a narrative from which the Roman church, popes, and clergy emerged as the embodiment of evil.” Reformers such as John Bales, a former Carmelite friar turned Protestant historian, used scripture to show that Roman church had fallen into error and to recast English history as a narrative of “the rise and influence of Antichrist within the Roman Church.” Thus, the Protestant narrative could present the True Church as a remnant that remained faithful despite the fact that the Catholic Church had strayed into error. Further, the miracles, which had seemed proof of the Church’s legitimacy, could be cast as fraudulent and even occultist. Helen Parish, *Monks, Miracles, and Magic: Reformation Representations of the Medieval Church* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 23.

45. While both churches could be presented as women—the Protestant church as true bride of Christ and the Catholic as a whore—the Protestant church also took on the image of solid, strong masculinity in opposition to the weak, effeminate Catholic Church with her celibate clergy.
46. Parish, *Monks, Miracles, and Magic*, 8.
47. While anti-Catholic rhetoric likened the practices of the Roman church to witchcraft, that fact does not necessarily mean that people conflated witchcraft and Catholicism in a simplistic way. According to Francis Young, no real evidence suggests that accusations of witchcraft were made against people specifically because of their Catholic beliefs. Protestants may not have seen Catholics as witches, but they saw in the Catholic heresy some of the same elements that they saw in diabolical magic. Francis Young, *English Catholics and the Supernatural, 1553–1829*. (London: Routledge, 2016), 15.
48. Anne McLaren, “Gender, Religion, and Early Modern Nationalism: Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, and the Genesis of English Anti-Catholicism,” *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (June 2002): 740.
49. McLaren argues that it was not originally Mary’s Catholicism but her gender that caused the problem with her succession to the English throne in the event of Elizabeth’s death: “The conflation of Mary’s identities, as ‘woman’ and as Catholic, enabled the ‘Protestant ascendancy’ to attain her blood claims to political authority” (ibid., 740). More importantly, by focusing on Catholicism, they were able to challenge Mary’s right to rule without challenging Elizabeth’s (ibid., 741). This strategy perfectly parallels the rhetoric that surrounded the royal sisters, Mary Tudor and

- Elizabeth, with the polemistis who had attacked Mary based on gender being careful to switch that critique to Catholicism once Elizabeth came to the throne.
50. Karen Winstead, citing various catalogues of medieval artworks and of saints' legends as evidence, argues that "the overwhelming majority of medieval Christian heroines were virgins." *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 1. In the middle to late medieval period, "virgin martyrs, more than any other type of saint, appear to have captured the imagination of the faithful" (ibid., 3). Female virgin saints, martyrs, nuns and mystics have captured the literary imagination from the earliest days of Christianity.
 51. Parish, *Monks, Miracles, and Magic*, 27.
 52. The heavy weight of cultural metaphor falls upon the virginal body. As Katherine Coyne Kelly points out, "Virginity, the virgin, and the virginal have a great metaphorical and mythical power, and complex of cultural beliefs." Virginity, according to Kelly, is "often figured as wholeness, intactness, perfection, and the virgin as a conduit to the divine and/or an earthly prize to be won or bestowed." The virgin's body could operate variously as a symbol of the Church or as a physical temple in the flesh. *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2000), ix.
 53. Miles, Margaret, *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 55.
 54. Stuart Clark, *Thinking With Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 625.
 55. Alexandra Walsham, "A Very Deborah?" The Myth of Elizabeth I as a Providential Monarch," in *The Myth of Elizabeth*, ed. Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 151.
 56. For more on Protestant beliefs about God's supernatural intervention in the world, see Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford University Press, 1999). In a tract from 1589, Elizabethan lawyer Richard Crompton, writing in response to the Catholic conspiracies leading up to Mary Stuart's execution, argues that Elizabeth had been preserved from death by a "special providence accorded to all sacred beings." Clark, *Thinking With Demons*, 625.
 57. Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century* (Cornell: Cornell UP, 1999), 120.
 58. Mary E. Fissell, "The Politics of Reproduction in the English Reformation," *Representations* 87 (2004): 54.
 59. Fissell suggests that the image of the Virgin as "a bag of saffron or pepper when the spice was taken out" must have been particularly common,

“for it was one of the specific heresies forbidden by the church in 1536” (ibid., 55). While saffron was extremely expensive, the bag that contained it was comparatively worthless (ibid.).

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