

# *Consecrated Things and Places: Visitation and Sacralisation in the Jacobean Church*

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*Jacobean visitation articles reveal increasing anxiety about preserving sacred space and material things from profane use. New churches and churchyards were consecrated by novel rites as sacred space was increasingly prioritised and emphasised in visitation. More and more prelates labelled the church building 'the house of God'. By 1612, the archbishop of Canterbury's metropolitical visitation articles identified ecclesiastical space and furniture, notably the communion table, as 'consecrated' to God. English prelates widely adopted this sacralising rhetoric. These innovations originate not in the prescriptions of avant-garde prelates awaiting the advent of Laud but more commonly in those of Reformed conformist bishops.*

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In his memoirs for 1636, Sir Simonds D'Ewes deplored in Bishop Matthew Wren's visitation of Norwich the 'many new and strange articles never before used' that 'ensaddled' the truly pious. In what Kenneth Fincham labels the 'most notorious' Caroline visitation articles the 'most zealous of Laud's lieutenants' investigated in feverish detail the state of ecclesiastical life throughout his diocese.<sup>1</sup> Anxious inquiries about proper care of sacred space and its appurtenances larded the document. Wren inquired whether church buildings in the diocese were 'decently and comely kept' and 'employed to godly and their right holy uses'. Was anything in them 'noisome, or unseemely for the house of God'? A novel article

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<sup>1</sup> Simonds D'Ewes, *The autobiography and correspondence of Sir Simonds D'Ewes, Bart.*, ed. James O. Halliwell, London 1845, ii. 141; *Visitation articles and injunctions of the early Stuart Church*, ed. Kenneth Fincham, Woodbridge–Rochester, NY 1994–8, ii, p. xxv; Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars restored: the changing face of English religious worship, 1547–c. 1700*, Oxford 2007, 326.

demanded whether dogs or hawks were brought into churches to ‘the polluting of that holy place of the Christian Congregation’. Another inquired whether ‘the whole consecrate ground’ of churchyards was ‘kept free from swine, and all other nastiness’. Treatment of the communion table was monitored – was it ‘used unreverently, by leaning or sitting on it, throwing hats or any thing else upon it ... writing on it’ or ‘any other prophane or common use’? Wren’s articles exemplify the intensity in the 1630s of the Laudian campaign for the ‘beauty of holiness’, a movement embracing, in Anthony Milton’s summary, the ‘conviction that the church building was God’s house and should be treated as such, reflected in the more elaborate decoration of church interiors and furniture, and an enhanced importance placed upon the inherent “edifying” value of the public worship and ceremonies conducted within’. For Wren the church was indeed ‘the house of God’, the place itself and material objects in it were rendered sacred by consecration, and the communion table, that ‘vital battleground’ of the 1630s, demanded especial protection.<sup>2</sup>

Some scholars have sought to represent William Laud’s programme as merely a more zealous continuation of earlier ecclesiastical policies for order and conformity. Laudians undoubtedly self-presented this way; Calvin Lane has shown how eagerly they sought historical precedent for their policies.<sup>3</sup> Others argue for a stark qualitative difference between earlier ecclesiastical policies and those of the Laudians, with the Laudians constituting ‘a strange and disastrous aberration that disrupted a settled “Puritan Church”’. Novelty is often especially remarked in Laudian attitudes towards sacred material things. Peter Lake notes a ‘whole chorus of writers from the 1630s’ that conceived the physical structure of the church as ‘the house of God’, the divine presence suffusing ‘the whole structure and all the physical impedimenta used in his worship with an aura of holiness’ so that ‘humanity should conduct itself within the church with the necessary reverence and respect’.<sup>4</sup> D’Ewes’s disgust with Wren in 1636 manifests how Laudian policies could strike some

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Wren, *Articles to be inquired of within the dioces of Norwich*, London 1636 (RSTC 10298), sig. A3r–v; Anthony Milton, ‘Unsettled reformations, 1603–1662’, in Anthony Milton (ed.), *The Oxford history of Anglicanism, I: Reformation and identity, c. 1520–1662*, Oxford 2017, 63–83 at p. 70; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars restored*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> ‘It was not so much the novelty of policy but its vigour that distinguishes the 1630s’: Peter White, ‘The *via media* in the early Stuart Church’, in Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The early Stuart Church, 1603–1642*, Stanford, CA 1993, 211–30 at p. 229. See also George Bernard, ‘The Church of England, c. 1529–c. 1642’, *History* lxxv (1990), 183–206 at pp. 201–4, and Calvin Lane, *The Laudians and the Elizabethan Church: history, conformity and religious identity in post-Reformation England*, London 2013. Lane emphasises (p. 80) Wren’s ‘litigious, even neurotic need to buttress his work by reference to older directives’.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Milton, ‘Introduction: reformation, identity, and “Anglicanism”’, c. 1520–1662’, in his *Oxford history*, i. 1–27 at p. 5; Peter Lake, ‘The Laudian style:

contemporaries as wholly novel and indefensible. Lately, it has been proposed that certain Laudian trends may not have been so much absolutely illegitimate as ‘contested’ readings of the English Reformation. Anthony Milton, for instance, declares that ‘Laudianism – for all its innovatory nature – was a partial reading of an ambiguous Elizabethan legacy’.<sup>5</sup> This essay uses prescriptive evidence, especially visitation articles and consecration rites, to track the appearance and identify the origin of certain key elements of the ‘beauty of holiness’ mentality in pre-Caroline church life and practice.

The extent of the Reformation’s reversal of medieval Christianity’s enthusiastic embrace of sacred materiality continues to interest historians.<sup>6</sup> In England at the Elizabethan Settlement, many of the materials of traditional worship were demystified and recycled for non-sacred uses, that is, profaned. Assuming with Alexandra Walsham that the transition from medieval to modern occurred in ‘cycles of sacralization and desacralization, disenchantment and re-enchantment’, this essay contends that the Jacobean period especially represented a space of emergent sacralisation in England. Early Reformers’ rejection of any localisation of holiness in matter had made the Elizabethans, as J. Wickham Legg declares, ‘almost afraid to admit’ that the church building was ‘in any way more sacred than any other building’. In the long run, however, English churchmen found it difficult to maintain let alone inculcate any stable understanding of an un-sacralised worship space. It might be assumed that this Jacobean movement of resacralisation was initiated by *avant-garde* conformist clergy such as Lancelot Andrewes, Richard Neile, Richard Montagu and William Laud. This article aims to show, however, not simply that the Laudian adoption of sacred materiality was to some degree a continuation of innovations appearing earlier, but also that some, in fact, of these earlier

order, uniformity and the pursuit of the beauty of holiness in the 1630s’, in Fincham, *Early Stuart Church*, 161–85 at pp. 164–5.

<sup>5</sup> Milton, ‘Introduction’, i. 9. See also Anthony Milton, *England’s second Reformation: the battle for the Church of England, 1625–1662*, Cambridge 2021, 108.

<sup>6</sup> See Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton (eds), *Defining the holy: sacred space in medieval and early modern Europe*, Aldershot 2005; Andrew Spicer and William Coster (eds), *Sacred space in early modern Europe*, Cambridge 2005; Alexandra Walsham, ‘The Reformation and “the disenchantment of the world” reassessed’, *HJ* li/2 (2008), 497–528, and *The Reformation of the landscape: religion, identity, and memory in early modern Britain and Ireland*, Oxford 2011; Shannon Gayk and Robyn Malo, ‘The sacred object’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* xlv/3 (2014), 457–67; Margaret Aston, *Broken idols of the English reformation*, Cambridge 2016; Euan Cameron, ‘Reformation and modernity: enduring questions: words, matter, and the reformation: revisiting the ‘modernity’ question’, *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* cviii (2017), 12–20 and *Church History: Material Culture in the Reformation* lxxxvi/4 (2017).

sacralising initiatives are traceable to prelates otherwise untainted by suspicion of *avant-garde* conformism.<sup>7</sup>

These sacralising developments align with the attitudes and priorities of a party of English prelates representing a kind of *via media* in early Stuart churchmanship. In recent decades, scholarship has broken out of an overly dichotomous view of the post-Reformation English Church that attended predominantly to the two hostile and more noisy factions farthest from each other on the churchmanship spectrum – Puritan and Arminian or *avant-garde* conformist – and pushed our vision beyond what Peter Lake and Isaac Stephens call the ‘mutually-reinforcing, bipolar’ frame.<sup>8</sup> Without downplaying the importance of these factions, scholars have brought to the fore a quieter middle ground, English clergy who shared Reformed theology, especially soteriology, and a fierce anti-Roman animus with Puritans while accepting episcopacy, the Book of Common Prayer and a more expansive ceremonialism like English Arminians. This distinct and identifiable group variously termed Calvinist episcopalian, Calvinist conformist or Reformed conformist at length received extended and thorough treatment in Stephen Hampton’s *Grace and conformity* in 2021.<sup>9</sup>

Hampton identifies concerns ‘for reverence, order, and decorum’ as well as ‘for the identification and beautification of sacred space’ as strands in the texture of Reformed conformist piety. In fact, he makes the consecration in 1624 of the new chapel at Exeter College, Oxford, the entry point into his analysis of Reformed conformity. It is striking that, of the ten representative divines Hampton highlights for his study, seven ultimately became bishops and at least six of these prelates performed church or churchyard consecrations at some point in their

<sup>7</sup> Alexandra Walsham, ‘Recycling the sacred: material culture and cultural memory after the English Reformation’, *Church History* lxxvi/4, 1121–54, and ‘Reformation and “disenchantment”’, 527; J. Wickham Legg (ed.), *English orders for consecrating churches in the seventeenth century*, London 1911, p. xvii. For *avant-garde* conformism and ‘disenchantment’, and, its early manifestations see Peter McCullough, “Avant-garde conformity” in the 1590s”, in Milton, *Oxford history*, i. 380–94.

<sup>8</sup> Nicholas Tyacke, ‘Puritanism, Arminianism and counter-revolution’, in Conrad Russell (ed.), *The origins of the English Civil War*, London 1973, 128; Fincham, ‘Introduction’, in his *Early Stuart Church*, 9; Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: the Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant thought, 1600–1640*, Cambridge 1995, 539–40; Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and people in Elizabethan and early Stuart England*, Cambridge 1998, 105; Peter Lake and Isaac Stephens, *Scandal and religious identity in early Stuart England: a Northamptonshire maid’s tragedy*, Woodbridge–Rochester, NY 2015, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Hampton, *Grace and conformity: the Reformed conformist tradition and the early Stuart Church of England*, Oxford 2021. Hampton makes a compelling case (p. 13) for preferring the term Reformed conformist. See also Greg Salazar, *Calvinist conformity in post-Reformation England: the theology and career of Daniel Featley*, Oxford 2022, 5.

incumbencies.<sup>10</sup> The novel development in the English Church of these rites of consecration manifests in a dramatic way a creeping sacralisation in the post-Reformation Church with roots extending back into the reign of Elizabeth. The intensification of sacralising imperatives in visitation, however, preceded and laid a groundwork for these new consecration rituals.

Visitation articles include much evidence for a heightening sacralisation in the early Stuart Church. As royal officials, bishops and their deputies modified the wording of various articles, they expounded church law as they interpreted it. In practice, then, these ‘liminal texts’, as Milton argues, could ‘promote wildly different interpretations of the Church’s formularies and what they required’ and ‘insist upon practices which had no legal justification in the liturgy or Canons of the post-Reformation Church’. Still, they reveal aspirations and ideals, not of the whole English Church, certainly, but of specific prelates. Moreover, because articles were frequently modified, they can provide a window on change in these ideals over time.<sup>11</sup> An ordinary’s selection of an existing set of visitation articles might of course indicate nothing more than episcopal inertia. At other times, however, choices or modifications of articles suggest a deep investment in the visitation process. While granting that authorship of specific sets of articles is a ‘vexed issue’, Fincham concludes that episcopal involvement in composition should not be considered exceptional and that ‘even minor modifications can be very revealing’. It is difficult to imagine that significant alterations could have been implemented without episcopal awareness and commitment.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Hampton, *Grace and conformity*, 1–8. For John Prideaux see John Maddicott, *Between scholarship and church politics: the lives of John Prideaux, 1578–1650*, Oxford 2022, 343; for Joseph Hall see *English orders*, 322–3; for Thomas Morton see *English orders*, 319, 83, 130, 139, and Andrew Spicer, ‘“God will have a house”: defining sacred space and rites of consecration in early seventeenth-century England’, in Spicer and Hamilton, *Defining the holy*, 230 n. 94; for John Davenant see W. H. Long (ed.), *The Oglander memoirs: extracts from the MSS of Sir J. Oglander, Kt.*, London 1888, 9–12; for George Carleton see *English orders*, 320; for John Williams see Spicer, ‘Defining sacred space’, 229 n. 93, and *English orders*, 321. As for the seventh bishop, George Downame, my suspicion that he consecrated St Columb’s Cathedral, Derry, in the year before he died, has yet to be verified.

<sup>11</sup> Milton, *Second reformation*, 17–18; Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as pastor: the episcopate of James I*, Oxford 1990, 131. For explicit contemporary deployment of visitation articles to support specific doctrinal or practical positions see John Williams, *The holy table: name and thing*, n.p. 1637 (RSTC 25726), 43, 77, 83–4. Effectiveness of visitation is an entirely different matter; no argument is offered here that episcopal ideals were shared broadly among the lower clergy or populace. For contemporary comments on visitation’s effectiveness see Fincham, *Prelate*, 122, and *Stuart royal proclamations*, ed. James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, Oxford 1973–83, ii. 249.

<sup>12</sup> *Early Stuart visitation*, i, pp. xviii, xxi, xix. As early Stuart visitation documents tended to be ‘more uniform in content’ than those of Elizabeth’s reign, modifications

*Some precedents*

An older historiography depicted English church buildings as suffering nothing but neglect from the Reformation until the coming of the Stuarts. Elizabeth's notorious depredations on ecclesiastical property for herself and her courtiers helped to reinforce this view.<sup>13</sup> More recently, Diarmaid MacCulloch and J. F. Merritt have noted that English church building or refurbishment programmes, so noteworthy in James's reign, were already developing late in Elizabeth's.<sup>14</sup> Whether the Elizabethans deserve a reputation for extraordinary neglect of church fabric, it is certain that there were contemporary perceptions in certain quarters of a pervasive inadequacy in the maintenance of ecclesiastical buildings. These quarters included the highest in Church and State. From the start of Elizabeth's reign, Crown and ecclesiastical authorities undertook to ensure that church buildings and churchyards were well-maintained, preserved from defilement and that proper deportment was maintained within them. Royal displeasure about the profanation of churches and churchyards was repeatedly expressed in various ways in the first few years of Elizabeth's reign. At Matthew Parker's instigation, for instance, a royal letter in January 1561 lamented

such Negligence and lack of convenient Reverence, used towards the comely Keeping and Order of the said Churches, and especially of the upper part, called the *Chancel*... and ... the unclean and negligent Order and spare Keeping of the House of Prayer; by permitting of open Decays and Ruins of Coverings, Walls and Windows, and by appointing of unmeet and unseemly Tables, with foul Cloths for the Communion of the Sacrament; and generally, leaving the Place of Prayer desolate of al Cleanliness, and of meet Ornaments for such a Place, whereby it might be known as a Place provided for Divine Service.<sup>15</sup>

in early Stuart articles would seem more likely to have been deliberate and therefore to reveal more clearly their composers' aspirations (i, p. xvii).

<sup>13</sup> Roland G. Usher, for example, summarised church care in Elizabeth's reign as a 'half century of neglect and pillage': *The reconstruction of the English Church*, New York 1910, ii. 41; Andrew Foster, 'Bishops, Church, and state, c. 1530–1646', in Milton, *Oxford history*, i. 90–2.

<sup>14</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'The myth of the English reformation', *Journal of British Studies* xxx (1991), 1–19 at p. 13; J. F. Merritt, 'Puritans, Laudians, and the phenomenon of church-building in Jacobean London', *HJ* xli/4 (1998), 934–60 at p. 942.

<sup>15</sup> John Strype, *The life and acts of Matthew Parker*, London 1711, bk II, 82, app. 27–8. It should be noted that, even in 1561, the special character of the chancel and the communion table are highlighted. For other early measures see the proclamation against iconoclasm, 19 Sept. 1560: *Tudor royal proclamations*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, New Haven 1964–9, ii. 146–8; royal letter, 24 June 1561: Edward Cardwell, *Documentary annals of the reformed Church of England*, Oxford 1844, i. 304–5; the royal orders of Oct. 1561: *Visitation articles and injunctions of the period of the reformation*, ed. Walter Howard Frere (Alcuin Club Collections 14–16, 1910), iii. 109;

'Place of Prayer' is not precisely 'house of God' but, in other respects, if this originated later, it could be mistaken for Laudian shrillness.

Yet some Elizabethan Protestants did of course identify the church building as the 'house of God'. Attempting to set the regime's religious tone early in the reign were the first three homilies in the *Second book of homilies* (1563), all devoted to inculcating proper Protestant attitudes towards church structures. This collection opens with the homily on 'the ryght use of the Church or Temple of God, and of the reuerence due unto the same'. Allowing that God's special temples were not material structures but the bodies and minds of true Christians, the homilist still explicitly declares that the church was not only 'called' but was 'in dede ... the house of God and Temple of the Lorde' and was designated so 'in almoste infinite places in the Scripture'. Parishioners, therefore, were to adopt reverential behaviour from the very moment they entered the building: 'What quietnes in gesture and behaiour, what silence in talk and wordes, is required in the house of God.'<sup>16</sup> Even the immensely long second homily against idolatry and 'superfluous deckyng of Churches' repeatedly identifies the building as 'the House of God', and demands reverential behaviour within it.<sup>17</sup> The balancing act between fear of idolatry and fear of profanation continues in the third homily on the 'repaying and keypyng cleane, and comely adournyng of Churches'. It was 'sinne and shame to see so many Churches so ruinous, and so foully decayed, almost in euery corner'. Irreverence in the place, it was suggested, threatened to bring down God's wrath upon his flock.<sup>18</sup> If English sacred space was not in fact generally filthy and unreverenced, queen and homilists were certainly concerned to head off that contingency.

These are not duelling homilies, as Fincham and Tyacke note, but 'taken together ... seek to strike a balance between the necessary destruction of idolatrous images and preservation of the "true ornaments" of the church'.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the placing of these homilies at the very beginning

and the royal proclamation, 30 Oct. 1561 (repeated twice in the 1570s and again in 1587), imposing for brawls in church or churchyard fines that were 'always to be converted to the repairing of the church' where the offence occurred: *Tudor royal proclamations*, ii. 177–8, 367, 435, 534.

<sup>16</sup> *The seconde tome of homelyes of such matters as were promised and intituled in the former part of the homelyes*, London 1563 (RSTC 13664), sigs 1v–2v, 8v. In fact, the word 'reverence' or some form of it appears twenty-four times in the twenty-two pages of the first homily. For the official status of the second *Book of homilies* see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars restored*, 42.

<sup>17</sup> *Seconde tome*, sigs 12r, 13r, 68r, 73v–74r.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* sigs 84r, 86v, 88r. Complaints of contemporary church conditions could come from opponents of the hierarchy as well. Puritan pamphleteers could deplore that chancels lay 'ruinous in sundry places, quite contrary to her maiesties pleasure': *A lamentable complaint of the commonalty*, [London] 1585 (RSTC 7739), sig. D3v.

<sup>19</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars restored*, 43.

of the new volume is telling. The conclusion of the Edwardian and first Elizabethan *Book of homilies* had in fact announced the specific topics to be addressed in the anticipated sequel. The *Second book* announces in its title that it at last fulfilled that pledge. Yet, instead of the ‘promised and intitled’ homilies on the ascension of the saviour and on various vices, the second volume gave pride of place to three unadvertised sermons on correct attitudes towards the ‘house of God’.<sup>20</sup> Seeds of later sacralising possibilities were sown by the early Elizabethan homilists.

Parker’s dissatisfaction with English church care was echoed by his archiepiscopal successors. In 1602, Whitgift claimed to be expressing the queen’s personal displeasure when he circulated diocesan reports on the state of their churches and complained of the many ‘greatly decayed, some fallen down or like to do so, and many others undecently kept – giving occasion to enemies of our profession to think that we are but profanely minded’. Thereafter, according to Roland Usher, the ‘great question’ of the next incumbent was: ‘Is your church decayed and whose duty is it to put it into repair?’ Yet, notwithstanding these efforts, Bancroft’s successor George Abbot could still protest in 1614 the ‘greate deformytie’ that appeared ‘in divers churches and chappell’ in England ‘they being verie negligently kepte. And not in such decent manner as they oughte to be’.<sup>21</sup> His primatial predecessors certainly bequeathed to Laud a rhetoric of dissatisfaction with English church maintenance.

In the early seventeenth century, with the intensification of church construction campaigns and a perceived need to inaugurate each new worship space in some way, English bishops devised consecration rituals. Over and over again in these rites, the space, whether church, chapel or churchyard, was declared ‘severed from profane use’ and dedicated strictly to the worship of God, at times leveling anathemata at any who would dare defile the space in future.<sup>22</sup> Surviving sermons preached on these occasions reveal clergy at pains to differentiate their practice from the

<sup>20</sup> *Certain sermons, or homilies, appoynted by the kynges maiestie, to be declared and redde, by all persones, vicars, or curates, every Sunday in their churches*, [London] 1547 (RSTC 13638.5), sig. U3v; *Certayne sermons appoynted by the quenes maiestie, to be declared and read, by all persones, vicars, and curates, every Sondaye and holy daye in their churches*, [London] 1559 (RSTC 13648.5), sig. Aa3v.

<sup>21</sup> *Calendar of state papers domestic: Elizabeth 1601–3*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green, London 1870, 205–6; Usher, *Reconstruction*, ii. 44; Lambeth Palace Library, London, CM.113.

<sup>22</sup> MacCulloch, ‘Myth’, 13; *English orders*, passim; Spicer, ‘Defining sacred space’. For consecratory imprecation see *English orders*, 24, 42, 79–80, 199–203; John Samuel Fletcher (ed), *The correspondence of Nathan Walworth and Peter Seddon of Outwood, and other documents chiefly relating to the building of Ringley Chapel* (Chetham Society cix, 1880), 32; Thomas Oughton, *Ordo iudiciorum; sive, methodus procedendi in negotiis et litibus in foro ecclesiastico-civili Britannico et Hibernico*, London 1738, ii. 266–8.



Roman.<sup>23</sup> While a very early ritual (William Barlow's consecration of Fulmer church and churchyard in 1610) included a blessing of the baptismal font, consecration of church furnishings and communion vessels would not become common even after Andrewes's consecration of Peartree church in 1620 until Laud's influence became more widespread.<sup>24</sup> The formula 'severed from profane use' might suggest that the efficacy of consecration was predominantly negative: the space or material was no longer secular, but was not necessarily infused with some new quality – the sacred. Yet the consecration rites as a rule go further; they repeatedly and enthusiastically embrace a rhetoric of sacred materiality. The space is God's 'presence and place of Residence', 'Sacred', 'Sanctified', 'a Religious Place', 'this Hallowed Place', 'an Holy Temple' and the 'court of Audience wherin thou doest sitt to heare our prayers, and it is our Heaven vppon Earth'.<sup>25</sup> John Prideaux, preaching at the consecration of Exeter College chapel by John Howson in 1624, explained that the reverence required in these separated spaces was 'not for the inherent sanctity of the place (which our Adversaries presse too far) but through the obiective Holinesse, adherent to it, by Christs promises, sacred meetings, united deuotion, ioynt participating of the word and sacrament, liuely incitements through others examples'.<sup>26</sup> This objective holiness could be strictly and locally delineated; Prideaux's Survey insists that the effects of consecration did not extend (apparently by sheer will of the celebrant) to the ground just west of the new chapel; it remained profane 'in case benefactours might be led by God to build lodgings there'.<sup>27</sup> It would not do to

<sup>23</sup> Fincham and Tyacke examine four consecration sermons preached between 1617 and 1624: *Altars restored*, 122–5. Anne-Francoise Morel's treatment of the genre is more wide-ranging in chronology: 'Church consecration in England, 1549–1715: an unestablished ceremony', in Maarten Delbeke and Minou Schraven (eds), *Foundation, dedication and consecration rituals in early modern cultures*, Leiden 2012, 297–313.

<sup>24</sup> *English orders*, 14, 47–80. Andrewes's form included blessings of baptistry, pulpit, lectern, communion table (called 'sacram ... mensam' in the rubric and, later, 'SS: Mensam'), place of wedding vows and the whole pavement under which corpses might be interred (p. 59).

<sup>25</sup> The above is a random sample from the rites employed by several bishops, 1607–15: *English orders*, 2–4, 10, 22–3, 31, 35. Later, Richard Baxter displayed impatience with the notion that places and things dedicated exclusively to the divine were not made holy. 'To say, as some do, that (They are indeed consecrated and separated, but not Holy) is to be ridiculously wise by self-contradiction, and the masterly use of the word *Holy* contrary to custome and themselves': *A Christian directory: or, A summ of practical theologie and cases of conscience*, London 1673, 915, question 170.

<sup>26</sup> John Prideaux, *A sermon preached on the fifth of October 1624: at the consecration of St Iames Chappel in Exeter College*, Oxford 1625, sig. C3r. Laud, when accused at his trial of pronouncing 'the place holy' when he consecrated St Katherine Cree in 1631, defended himself by referencing this part of Prideaux's sermon: *The works of the most reverend father in God, William Laud, D. D.*, Oxford 1854, iv. 248.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Maddicott, *Between scholarship and church politics*, 141 n. 75.

have even Oxford academics resident in the sacred space created by Howson's ritual. Preachers seeking to explain what consecration effected reinforced what visitation articles dealing with sacred space had been increasingly inculcating since late in Elizabeth's reign.

### *Prioritising sacred space in visitation*

In visitation early Elizabethan bishops almost invariably inquired into the proper maintenance of churches and churchyards. Parker's metropolitan articles in 1560 demanded 'whether youre Churches be well adorned, and conueniently kept without waste, destruction or abuse of any thing: whether your Churcheyardes be wel fensed and clenly kept: ... Whether your Chauncels and Parsonages be well and sufficiently repaired'.<sup>28</sup> A decade later, canon 5.2 of 1571 enjoined churchwardens to see 'that the churches be diligently and well repaired', while 5.3 insisted that 'the churches be kept clean and holy, that they be not loathesome to any, either by dust, sand or any filthiness'.<sup>29</sup> This type of rhetoric was typical of Elizabethan visitation articles.

A hint of heightened concern for sacred space, however, appeared later in Elizabeth's reign – in some visitation articles the condition of the church building and its fabric was given priority. Earlier articles commonly commenced like Parker's or Edmund Grindal's influential articles for Canterbury Province (1576) with queries about ministerial adherence to the Book of Common Prayer.<sup>30</sup> In 1581, however, for visitation of Chester diocese, Bishop William Chaderton postponed liturgical inquiries until article 8. Instead, his visitation opened with the care of churches and churchyards: 'First, whether your Church, Chappel, or Chauncel be well and sufficiently repayred, and clenly kept, and the mansion house of your Parson or Uicar, with the buildings thereunto belonging, likewise well and sufficiently repaired, and your Churchyard well fenced, and

<sup>28</sup> Matthew Parker, *Articles for to be inquired of, in the metropolitan visitation of the most reuerende father in God Mattheu*, n. p. 1560 (RSTC 10151), sig. A3v. For precedents in royal visitations see *Reformation visitation*, ii. 11, 122; iii. 13.

<sup>29</sup> '5.2 Aeditui curabunt ut ecclesiae ... diligenter et probe reficiantur. 5.3 Aeditui curabunt ut aedes sacrae, mundaе et sancte conseruentur, ne cuiquam vel pulvere, vel ramentis, vel sordibus moveant nauseam': *The Anglican canons, 1529–1647*, ed. Gerald Bray, Woodbridge–Rochester, NY 1998, 190–3. Unratified by the queen, the canons of 1571 were nevertheless approved by the entire college of English bishops: Gerald Bray, 'Canon law and the Church of England', in Milton, *Oxford history*, i. 168–85 at p. 174; *Anglican canons*, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Edmund Grindal, *Articles to be enquired of, within the prouince of Canterburie*, London 1576 (RSTC 10155), sig. A2r. Church and churchyard care appear in article 5, with further brief allusion in article 39 (sigs A2v, B3r). For the influence of Grindal's articles see Usher, *Reconstruction*, ii. 28.

clenly kept.' Were churches or churchyards 'abused or prophaned by any unlawfull, or unseemely acte, game, or exercise, as by Lordes of misrule, Summer lordes, or ladies, Pipers, Rushebearers, Moricedancers, Pedlers, Bearewardes, and such like'?<sup>31</sup> Chaderton's pioneering visitation articles direct that the material structures of worship be inspected before any other concern. They must be decent and clean, and the spaces themselves are capable of profanation.<sup>32</sup> Fincham describes Chaderton as a Calvinist with a 'reputation as a learned and liberal bishop who preached more often than many colleagues'. Although MacCulloch labels him 'anti-puritan', his hostility to nonconformism was not always clear to his superiors.<sup>33</sup> Although Chaderton did not regularly involve himself in visitation, he clearly owned these articles as he removed to Lincoln in 1595. Later extant sets in 1598, 1601 and 1604 display numerous modifications, but proper maintenance of sacred space remained always foremost in Chaderton's visitations.<sup>34</sup> His last surviving set, in 1607, however, splits the crucial first article, greatly expanding in the new second article the list of profane activities prohibited in churches and churchyards. Then, a new third article pulled the minister's house out of article 1 and insisted that it and any almshouses be properly maintained and employed to their 'godly, and ... right vse'. This modification might indicate the composer's realisation that clerical residences did not technically belong in the same category as the sacred space of churches and churchyards; still they could be inappropriately used, as numerous visitation articles made clear.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> William Chaderton, *Articles to be enquired of within the diocese of Chester*, London n.d. (RSTC 10174.5), sig. A2r. In contrast, Grindal's article concerning performers who 'come unreuerently' into churches and churchyards is sixty-first and does not explicitly identify such behaviour as abuse or profanation of the space as Chaderton's article does: *Articles*, sig. C2r.

<sup>32</sup> It is possible that Chaderton was relying on earlier precedent; no articles from William Downham, his predecessor in Chester, would appear to have survived: W. P. M. Kennedy, *Elizabethan episcopal administration: an essay in sociology and politics*, London 1924, i, p. xi.

<sup>33</sup> Fincham, *Prelate*, 258, 290; Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'The latitude of the Church of England', in Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (eds), *Religious politics in post-Reformation England: essays in honour of Nicholas Tyacke*, Woodbridge–Rochester, NY 2006, 41–59 at p. 56; Fincham, *Prelate*, 219, 230; Peter Lake, 'Moving the goal posts? Modified subscription and the construction of conformity in the early Stuart Church', in Peter Lake and Michael Questier (eds), *Conformity and orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560–1660*, Woodbridge–Rochester, NY 2000, 179–205 at pp. 184–9.

<sup>34</sup> Christopher Haigh, 'Chaderton, William (d. 1608)', *ODNB*, at <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5011>>; William Chaderton, *Articles to be enquired of, within the diocese of Lincolne*, Cambridge 1598 (RSTC 10235), 1; *Articles to be enquired of, within the diocese of Lincolne*, Cambridge 1601 (RSTC 10235.5), sig. A3r; and *Articles to be enquired of, within the diocese of Lincolne*, Cambridge 1604 (RSTC 10236), 1.

<sup>35</sup> William Chaderton, *Articles to be enquired of, within the diocese of Lincolne*, Cambridge 1607 (RSTC 10236.5), sig. A3r. William Wickham, for example, inquired in 1585

Chaderton's prioritising of church care in visitation initiated a trend. The practice was adopted in the articles of Thomas Bickley in Chichester in 1586, William Cotton in Exeter in 1599, and then with increasing frequency and across ecclesiastical factions in the next century.<sup>36</sup> Identifiably ceremonialist prelates such as Andrewes, Richard Neile and Richard Montagu placed sacred space first in their visitations.<sup>37</sup> Others, wholly innocent of Arminian sympathies, followed Chaderton's example as well. Articles for Exeter Cathedral under Dean Matthew Sutcliffe adopt the pattern in 1609.<sup>38</sup> The fiercely anti-Catholic Calvinist George Hakewill adopted Andrewes's articles and put church care first in his surviving sets of visitation articles for the archdeaconry of Surrey from 1619 into the 1630s. Joseph Hall's visitation articles for Exeter diocese in 1631 and 1638 commence with the state of church fabric in article 1, and revisit the issue in articles 4 and 60 (62 in 1638). Laud's nemesis John Williams prioritised church care in visitations through the 1620s and 1630s.<sup>39</sup> In visitation, inspection of sacred space before all else became broadly common in the early Stuart Church. The precedent, however, was Elizabethan.

whether clergy of Lincoln diocese kept within their dwellings 'any alehouse, tipping-house or tavern; or ... any suspicious women': Kennedy, *Administration*, iii. 191.

<sup>36</sup> Kennedy, *Administration*, iii. 209, 326; *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 70–91, 130, 136, 178, 185–6; ii. 1, 245.

<sup>37</sup> In 1606 and 1609 Lancelot Andrewes's *Articles to be enquired of within the diocese of Chichester*, London 1606 (RSTC 10181), sig. A2r, do not lead with church care (see *Early Stuart visitation*, i. p. xviii for identification of the articles of 1609), but by 1610 for Ely he has adopted the practice initiated by the prelate who had ordained him thirty years earlier: *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 84, 178; P. E. McCullough, 'Andrewes, Lancelot (1555–1626)', *ODNB*, at <<https://doi.org/10.1093/refodnb/520>>. For Neile and Montagu see *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 85–8; ii. 191.

<sup>38</sup> *Articles to be enquired of ... within the peculiar jurisdiction of the dean and chapter of the cathedral church*, London 1609 (RSTC 10207.5), sig. A2r. Sutcliffe's attitude toward Arminians appears in his will: 'I hate as apostates from the faith and traitors to God's true church' those 'amonge us that palliate Popish heresies and under the name of Arminius seek to bringe in Poperie, and endeavour with all theire little skill to reconcile darkness to light, Antichrist to Christ, heresie to the true Catholike faith': quoted in Nicholas Tyacke, *The anti-Calvinists: the rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590–1640*, Oxford 1987, 215.

<sup>39</sup> P. E. McCullough, 'Hakewill, George (*bap.* 1578, *d.* 1649)', *ODNB*, at <<https://doi.org/10.1093/refodnb/11885>>; *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 185; Joseph Hall, *Articles to be enquired of within the diocese of Exeter*, London 1631 (RSTC 10206.5), sigs A2r, B2v, and *Articles to be enquired of within the diocese of Exeter*, London 1638 (RSTC 10207), sigs A2r, B3; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars restored*, 273; John Williams, *Articles to be enquired of within the diocese of Lincoln*, London 1622 (RSTC 10240), sig. A2r; *Articles to be enquired of within the diocese of Lincoln*, London 1625 (RSTC 10241), sig. A2r; and *Articles to be enquired of within the diocese of Lincoln ... 1630 & 1631*, [Cambridge] n.d. (RSTC 10243), sig. A4r.

Yet, the specific order of articles may not amount to all that much.<sup>40</sup> After all, Laud himself would not always prioritise church and churchyard care in his visitations. In 1622, for St David's, and in the 1630s, for metropolitan visitations, Laud patterned his articles after Abbot's set of 1612 – the first section of which treated of church buildings, ornaments and ecclesiastical property.<sup>41</sup> In Laud's 1628 and 1631 visitations of London, however, inquiries about the clergy come first. And the 'notorious' articles of Wren actually opened with interrogations about doctrine, public prayer and sacraments before proceeding to issues of sacred space.<sup>42</sup> John King displaced church care from the priority it had held in his earlier visitations of the archdeaconry of Nottingham (1599, 1605) to article 25 in 1610, when he adopted a set of articles based on Richard Vaughan's 1605 articles for London (the 'most widely imitated set in the early Stuart Church'). Yet this displacement did not clearly signify a lesser care about sacred space. In fact, by the time of King's first visitation as bishop of London two years later, article 25 was not considered sufficiently sturdy, and was expanded into three articles (2.5–7), demanding inspection of churches, chancels, church-buildings and churchyards for good repair and decent and comely keeping. This format was retained for King's London visitations in 1615 and 1618.<sup>43</sup> Jacobean prelates' concern for sacred space may be indicated not only in the ordering of visitation articles but also in the expansion and elaboration of such articles.

### *House of God and heaven on earth*

John King has not customarily been associated with the *avant-garde* party.<sup>44</sup> Yet King revealed in 1620 to what a pitch of rhetorical fervour an English

<sup>40</sup> For a contemporary view that priority in visitation did indicate significance, however, see Williams, *Holy table*, 84.

<sup>41</sup> *Early Stuart visitation*, i, 110, 112.

<sup>42</sup> William Laud, *Articles to be enquired of within the dioces of London*, London 1628 (RSTC 10263), sig. B4r, and *Articles to be enquired of within the dioces of London*, London 1631 (RSTC 10264), sig. A2r; Wren, *Articles*, sig. A2r–v.

<sup>43</sup> Kennedy, *Administration*, iii, 317; John King, *Articles ministred in the visitation*, Oxford 1605 (RSTC 10305), sig. A2r, and *Articles to be enquired of within the archdeaconry of Nottingham*, Oxford 1610 (RSTC 10305.5), (4)–(5); cf. Richard Vaughan, *Articles to be enquired of within the dioces of London*, London 1605 (RSTC 10256), sig. B1r; *Early Stuart visitation*, i, p. xvii, 39; John King, *Articles, to be enquired of within the dioces of London*, London 1615 (RSTC 10259), sig. B1v, and *Articles, to be enquired of within the dioces of London*, London 1618 (RSTC 10260), sig. B2r.

<sup>44</sup> King was one of James I's 'preaching pastors' according to Patrick Collinson (*Richard Bancroft and Elizabethan anti-Puritanism*, Cambridge 2013, 210), representative of the evangelical prelates and patron of godly preachers for Fincham (*Prelate*, 253, 255), and 'Calvinist bishop' to Milton and McCullough (*Catholic and Reformed*, 53; 'King, John [d. 1621]', ODNB, at <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/15568>>).

Calvinist bishop could be driven by concerns about sacred space. On 26 March, inspired by James I's attendance at a ceremony at St Paul's designed to rouse support for restoring the cathedral, still damaged from the lightning strike in 1561, King preached a moving sermon in which he hinted that a new holy day should be entered in the English calendar to commemorate the occasion. He proclaimed that 'the dilapidation of any of Gods Oratories and Sacraries, his *Heauens vpon earth*, goeth to his heart like swords; nor, can hee behold with dry eyes, the destruction, or despiight done to his sacred Inheritance'. King rebuked as atheists those who would account the 'houses of God, common and prophane, like other houses', and make 'lay-stals and dung-hils, where their site was'.<sup>45</sup>

King was comfortable using such terminology for sacred space; the church building is described as 'heaven on earth' in the church consecration ritual that he had already employed multiple times by 1620. Abbot, too, had used similar rhetoric in his consecration of Dulwich College chapel in 1616. In fact, these two conformist Calvinist prelates account between them for at least fifteen consecrations of church, chapel or churchyard between 1610 and 1621, while commissioning at least six more consecrations by other bishops.<sup>46</sup>

Identification of the church building as 'house of God' was no novelty in 1620. Besides the old Elizabethan *Homilies*, of course, canon 85 – 'Churches to be kept in sufficient reparation' – of the canons of 1604, had expanded the corollary canon of 1571 by insisting that the church be maintained 'as best becometh the House of God, and is prescribed in an homily to that effect' (like Laudians later, the composers of the new canons could carefully insist on Elizabethan precedent for their elaborations).<sup>47</sup> Canon 86, then, required ordinaries to survey churches at their triennial visitations and report defects to High Commission, with the names of those responsible.<sup>48</sup> Canon 88, explicitly titled 'Churches not to be profaned', doubled the list of profane activities discouraged by 1571's canon 5.5 as well as making explicit that chapels and

<sup>45</sup> John King, *A sermon at Paules Crosse on behalfe of Paules Church*, London 1620 (RSTC 14982), 57 [numbered 49], 27.

<sup>46</sup> *English orders*, 31, 318–19, and at p. 35 for Abbot; M. Kelly, 'The invasion of things sacred: Church, property, and sacrilege in early modern England', unpubl. PhD diss. Notre Dame, IN 2013, 228.

<sup>47</sup> '[P]rout domo Dei imprimis conventit, et in homilia quadam huius argumenti praecipitur': *Anglican canons*, 378–81. The official text of the new canons was the Latin adopted by Convocation in the summer of 1604, 'even though the English version was the original and was in fact the text usually cited in legal cases' (p. lix). Canon 85, moreover, had expanded its predecessor, canon 5.2 from 1571, by adding a requirement that churchyards be 'sufficiently repaired, fenced, and maintained with walls, rails or pales' (pp. 190–3, 378–81).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 380–1.

churchyards were to be, like church-buildings, preserved from defiling.<sup>49</sup> The canons of 1604 essentially appropriated the stricter Elizabethan visitation articles dealing with sacred space and imposed them on the whole English Church.

### *Archbishop Abbot's innovations*

The new canons on church fabric and sacred space in turn influenced new visitation articles. The phrase 'house of God' began to appear in visitation. First, this was largely implicit, referencing canon 85 without quoting it, as in Vaughan's article 2.5 in 1605 for London. King followed suit in his visitation of London in 1612.<sup>50</sup> In the same year, canon 85 would also be cited in visitation by a higher-ranking prelate. For his first metropolitanical visitation of the twenty dioceses of the Canterbury province from 1612 to 1616, the 'strongly Calvinistic' Archbishop Abbot modified and greatly expanded the visitation articles left to him by his predecessor Bancroft in 1610.<sup>51</sup> Abbot's set transported Bancroft's articles 48–51 to the very first section of his set, now labelled 'the church, the ornaments thereof, and the churches possessions'. Abbot's article 1.3, then, relies upon and significantly expands Bancroft's article 51 (expansions italicised):

Whether are your church and chappels, with the chancels thereof, and your parsonage or vicarage house, *your parish almes-house and church-house*, in good reparations: *and are they employed to godly, and their right holy uses? Is your church, chancell, and chappell* decently and comely kept, as well within as without, and the seats well maintained, *according to the 85 cannon, in that behalfe provided?* Whether your church-yard be well fenced, and kept without abuse: and if not, in whose default the same is, and what the defect or fault is? *And whether any person hath incroached upon the ground of the church-yard, or whether any person or persons, have used any thing or place consecrated to holy use, profhanely or wickedly?*<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> 'Ecclesiarum religio profanis usibus non polluenda': *ibid.* 382–3, cf. 194–5. New canons 18 and 111 dealt with reverence within churches during divine service: pp. 286–7, 410–11. Since these purported to defend religious activities from disruption they are less clearly indicative of anxieties about sacred space *per se*.

<sup>50</sup> Vaughan, *Articles*, sig. B2r; *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 40. Even earlier, in 1603, Bishop Francis Godwin's injunctions for Llandaff had explicitly labelled the cathedral God's house: *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 2. Godwin's *Catalogue of the bishops of England*, London 1601 (RSTC 11937), reveals throughout a strain of outrage at violations of sacred space in English history and in his own time.

<sup>51</sup> *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 100n. For Abbot's churchmanship see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The reformation: a history*, New York 2003, 473, 497.

<sup>52</sup> *Early Stuart visitation*, 100–1; cf. Richard Bancroft, *Articles to be inquired of, in the first metropolitanall visitation*, London 1605 (RSTC 10158), 16.

Years earlier, in his Cambridge divinity lecture, Lancelot Andrewes had discussed ceremonies, church fabric and church funds, and declared it evident ‘that *things may be consecrated to Holy use, even under the Gospel*. What the ‘intellectual progenitor of Laudianism’ dared to argue in Latin in an academic setting about 1590 was in 1612 openly introduced into English visitation articles by James’s primate, notwithstanding his deep distrust of Laud, evident since at least 1603.<sup>53</sup>

The novel phrase was no mere fluke of some episcopal bureaucrat’s pen. Not long before this visitation, Abbot had been heavily involved in the production of new letters patent for the Court of High Commission. The new document had expanded the court’s powers in various ways, including new faculties to investigate all ‘profanation of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper and of all *other things and places consecrated or dedicated to divine service*’.<sup>54</sup> Moreover by 1612 Abbot had already presided at some of the earliest post-Reformation consecrations of new sacred space in England. As bishop of London, he had consecrated in 1610 the rebuilt church of St Olave Silver Street and a churchyard for St Bride’s. The ritual used at St Olave’s declared that, even before Judaism, God’s servants throughout all human history had

separated and hallowed certaine places from all prophane and common vses ... Soe Adam had his Oratory in Paradise and Jacobbe his prayeing place in the feildes. Moses his holy Grounde in the Wildernes, and the Israelites there Tabernacle for thy worship in the land of promise vntill it pleased thee at the last to put into the hart of King Salomon to build a Temple.

Other Old Testament precedents and synagogues in the time of Christ, the rite proceeded, had persuaded Christians to consecrate buildings to be the ‘Court of Audience’ where God sat to hear Christian prayers, and constituting ‘our heaven vpon earth’.<sup>55</sup> Space, in this formula, was not simply

<sup>53</sup> McCullough, ‘Avant-garde conformity’, i. 390; Lancelot Andrewes, *Concio ad clerum pro gradu doctoris, &c.*, in *Reverendi in Christo patris, Lanceloti, episcopi, Wintoniensis, opuscula quaedam posthuma*, London 1629 (RSTC 602), 17, translated in his *Sacrilege a snare: a sermon preached, ad clerum, in the University of Cambridg*, London 1646 (Wing A.3151), 19; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars restored*, 99; H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud, 1573–1645*, London 1940, 37.

<sup>54</sup> Roland G. Usher, *The rise and fall of the High Commission*, Oxford 1968, 219, 340 (emphasis added).

<sup>55</sup> London Metropolitan Archives 9531/13, pt II, fos 393v–5v; *English orders*, 31, 35. In this ritual, the justification by historical precedent for separating space from profane use predates by nearly a quarter of a century similar rationalisations noted in the arguments of Laudian divines in the 1630s: Peter Lake, ‘The Laudians and the argument from authority’, in Bonnelyn Young Kunze and Dwight D. Brautigan (eds), *Court, country and culture: essays on early modern British history in honor of Perez Zagorin*, Rochester, NY 1992, 149–75 at pp. 166–7.



declared separate from profane use, in a negative way, it was positively declared to be ‘hallowed’.

As Andrew Spicer has noted, the earliest explicit reference to place as ‘consecrated’ in post-Reformation visitation articles appears in William Chaderton’s last articles for Lincoln in 1607. There article 2.37 inquired whether any minister had preached or ministered sacraments ‘in anie chappell not consecrated, or in anie house having no chappell allowed by law’. Again the new canons provided inspiration. Canon 71, in forbidding ministers to preach or administer the eucharist in private houses, had made explicit exception for residences in which existed ‘capella consecrata, ac legibus huius regni ecclesiasticis approbata’.<sup>56</sup> In 1571, canon 4.6 had allowed ministers with proper episcopal licence to preside at worship in private homes, ‘either in chapel or other place of prayer’ without adverting to any consecration of the space. By the early seventeenth century, however, formal consecration was becoming increasingly important to English bishops and, as Spicer notes, useful as well. Bishops used the requirement of consecration for worship space to ‘limit and control the establishment of new places of non-parochial worship’, at times even declining requests to consecrate new private chapels if patrons’ intentions were suspect. Chaderton’s novel visitation article in 1607 would be imitated later by numerous ordinaries, especially by Laudians.<sup>57</sup>

Abbot’s importation of the idea of the sacredness of consecrated things and places into visitation articles allowed him to introduce in 1612 in the same set a further novelty whose later enthusiastic adoption by Laudian prelates has tended to occlude its origin. In the very first of Abbot’s articles appeared an unprecedented (in visitation) inquiry about reverence due the communion table – was it ‘so used out of time of divine service, as is not agreeable to the holy use of it; as by sitting on it, throwing hats on it, writing on it, or is it abused to other prophaner uses’.<sup>58</sup> Since the thing was consecrated to the divine, even outside service time it was to be preserved from profane use. From the time the communion table had replaced the old altar in English churches, authorities had insisted on the ‘decency’ of the replacement. Elizabeth’s Injunctions of 1559 even ordered a ‘holy table ... decently made’. The requirement of holiness

<sup>56</sup> Spicer, ‘Defining sacred space’, 218–19; Chaderton, *Articles* (1607), sig. B2r. It seems likely that the composer of Chaderton’s article had worked from the official Latin text of the canon, for the English translation had preferred the term ‘dedicated’ – ‘chapels dedicated and allowed by the ecclesiastical laws of this realm’ – perhaps a less elevated translation than ‘consecrated’: *Anglican canons*, 362–3.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Vel in capella vel in oratorio, aut publicas preces dicat in cuiusque privatibus aedibus, nisi episcopus illi autographo suo et manus suae subscriptione eius rei potestatem fecerit’: *Anglican canons*, 186; Spicer, ‘Defining sacred space’, 217–19; *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 80, 82, 85–6, 88–9.

<sup>58</sup> *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 100.

would not remain common in visitation articles, but over and over again Elizabethan ordinaries would insist on ‘decent’, ‘fit’, ‘fair’, ‘honest’ or ‘comely’ tables for communion. Canon 5.3 of 1571 required a ‘joined handsome table’; canon 82 in 1604 insisted on ‘convenient and decent tables... kept and repaired in sufficient and seemly manner’.<sup>59</sup> Unsurprisingly, Andrewes found the condition of some contemporary communion tables deplorable; as far back as the mid-1580s he had famously lamented that ‘the table of the Lord’ could look ‘more like an oyster board... than a table fit for God’s sanctuary’.<sup>60</sup> Again, however, it was Abbot not Andrewes who inserted this new formal objection to the profane abuse of communion tables in visitation.

Abbot’s innovations were adopted widely (although after 1616 his own practice could vary). Visitation articles began regularly to refer to things and places as consecrated; objection to the profaning of communion tables became common. Fincham highlights the influence of John Overall’s visitation articles for Norwich in 1619. Their structure was largely derived from his predecessor John Jegon, but Abbot’s influence is discernible as well, in the more expansive inquiries about abuse of the communion table in or out of divine service and whether any ‘place consecrated to holy use’ had been treated in a profane manner.<sup>61</sup> *Avant-garde* conformists could find no more useful precedent to embrace: Francis White, Samuel Harsnett, Richard Corbet, John Howson, Richard Montagu and others.<sup>62</sup> Laud used Abbot’s articles (with his own additions) as basis for his visitation of St David’s in 1622 and for visitations as archbishop in the 1630s.<sup>63</sup> But the articles of ordinaries unsympathetic to

<sup>59</sup> *Reformation visitation*, iii. 27, 102, 225, 326, 371; Kennedy, *Administration*, ii. 79; iii. 210, 227, 318, 345; *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 10, 18, 31, 39–40, 48, 70, 84. In 1571: ‘Curabunt mensam ex asseribus composite iunctam’: *Anglican canons*, 192–3; ‘Mensis congruis et decentibus ... mensae convenienter et decore conserventur’: 376–7.

<sup>60</sup> Lancelot Andrewes, *The pattern of catechetical doctrine at large*, London 1650 (Wing A.3147), 298–9. For dating and discussion of this passage see Nicholas Tyacke, ‘Lancelot Andrewes and the myth of Anglicanism’, in Lake and Questier, *Conformity and orthodoxy*, 5–33 at pp. 15–16.

<sup>61</sup> *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 100n; Fincham, *Prelate*, 202; *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 157n; cf. John Jegon, *Articles to be inquired of in the dioceses of Norwich*, Cambridge 1611 (RSTC 10289.9), 4–5, and *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 159–60. Going beyond Abbot, Overall’s article 3.3 did not simply reference canon 85 but explicitly labelled the church building ‘the house of God’.

<sup>62</sup> *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 169–73; ii. 26, 31–2, 192–3.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* i. 110, 112–14. In 1622 Laud does, as Fincham notes (i. 110), crucially modify both Abbot’s wording and canon 82 (which Abbot had dutifully replicated) about the placement of the table during the communion service in order to suggest that it must be kept within the chancel. By his 1630 visitation of London, however, Laud adopts Abbot’s precise phraseology about the communion table being placed at communion time ‘within the Chancell or Church’ while, in the same article, expanding Abbot’s strictures upon objectionable uses of the table ‘out of divine service’ with the ominous words ‘or in it’. Oddly, this set excises in the article dealing with

Laudianism display Abbot's sacralising rhetoric as well. Williams's visitations of Lincoln, for instance, reveal an increasing concern about profanation of churchyards in 1630 until in 1635 he adopted both Abbot's innovations (only to abandon them prudently in 1641).<sup>64</sup> Thomas Morton, one of Hampton's exemplary Reformed conformists, used Abbot's articles as basis for his visitation of Coventry and Lichfield in 1620 and Durham in 1637.<sup>65</sup> That 'staunch defender of Calvinist orthodoxy', John Davenant, in relying on Overall's set as basis for his visitations of Salisbury in 1622, 1628 and 1635 removed, as Fincham notes, 'the more contentious articles or phrases'. Yet, traces of Abbot's heightened sacral rhetoric remain. Davenant's article 2.1 still inquires if the table was used in or out of service 'as is not agreeable to the holy use of it', though he excises the list of possible abuses, while his article 2.4 inquires whether anyone had used 'a place consecrated to holy use prophanelly or wickedly'.<sup>66</sup> Things were holy; places were consecrated; they could be wickedly profaned; more and more bishops said so. The rising tide of sacralisation in the English hierarchy lifted even the boats of the less enthusiastic.

This essay has highlighted sacralising initiatives in the English hierarchy that predate the influence of Laud and originate with prelates unconnected to an *avant-garde* movement in the English hierarchy. The novelties of Laud and the Laudians have become a byword; but innovation did not always arise from the *avant-garde*. Whatever else was radical in the Laudian programme, much of the more elevated sacralising rhetoric in visitation articles was not initiated by them. Fincham and Tyacke recognise that prescriptions such as Abbot's about the communion table became controversial only later in the context of altar-wise translation initiatives.<sup>67</sup>

encroachments upon the churchyard the very phrase about 'any thing or place consecrated to holy use' that one might have expected Laud to have seized upon most greedily: William Laud, *Articles to be enquired of within the dioceses of London* [London 1631] (*RSTC* 10264), sig. B1r-v. This is probably also true of Laud's first visitation of London in 1628; the Marsh's Library original reproduced by Early English Books Online is missing the relevant page: *Articles to be enquired of within the dioceses of London*, London 1628 (*RSTC* 10263), page preceding sig. B1r. My thanks to Amy Boylan, assistant librarian at Marsh's Library, for verifying this.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Williams, *Articles* (1625), sig. A2r; *Articles ... 1630 & 1631*, sig. Br; and *Articles*, Cambridge 1635 (*RSTC* 10244), sigs A3r, A4r; *Early Stuart visitation*, ii. 103.

<sup>65</sup> *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 114-15.

<sup>66</sup> Vivienne Larminie, 'Davenant, John (*bap.* 1572, *d.* 1641)', *ODNB*, at <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/7196>>; *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 173-5, quotation at p. 173 n. 8; John Davenant, *Articles to be enquired of in the diocese of Salisbury*, London 1622 (*RSTC* 10330), London 1622, sig. A4r-v. His articles remained generally stable then in his visitations of 1628 and 1635: *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 174-6.

<sup>67</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars restored*, esp. pp. 45-7, 109. Postponed outrage did not apply only to tables; the trigram on a pulpit cloth at St Bartholomew Exchange, for

Such measures were uncontroversial in 1612 because by that time a significant portion of the English hierarchy was growing accustomed to viewing communion tables, church space, church fabric and the ground of churchyards as sacred material things and significant numbers had themselves performed rituals pronouncing such things and spaces holy.

The English Crown and ecclesiastical hierarchy had looked to the state of the kingdom's churches and churchyards since the Elizabethan Settlement. Elizabethan bishops set clear standards of care for churches, their furnishings and churchyards; constant inquiry was made in visitation regarding the repair, cleanliness and maintenance of ecclesiastical structures, communion tables and churchyards. Later, and in the next reign, however, a discernible heightening of sacralising rhetoric emerged, alongside new church construction and intensified efforts to improve the material condition of numerous other churches, communion tables and churchyards. Concern over church fabric in the 1630s was undoubtedly an essential 'element of the Laudian reformation', yet intense objections to ill-kept churches and churchyards were perennial earlier and often evident in the prescriptions of Reformed conformist bishops.<sup>68</sup>

The church building was God's house, in the homilies and in canon 85. Proper reverence was essential in it and in churchyards, even when services were not being held, because the space itself had been severed from profane use, 'hallowed'. Laudians looking for evidence of general 'Puritan' neglect of churches or searching for precedent for calling the church the 'house of God' and treating it as the place of God's 'most intense and most manifest' presence need only have turned to the official homilies promulgated by the first generation of Elizabethan bishops. But this kind of rhetoric had not been echoed in the visitation articles of the earlier prelates. Nor, even though they repeatedly inculcated maintenance and cleanliness of, and due reverence in, church space and decency of communion tables, did they generally refer to such spaces and things as 'consecrated'.

Changes in visitation articles late in Elizabeth's reign reveal English ordinaries attending with intensified urgency to the integrity of churches and churchyards. Chaderton gave care of church and churchyard priority in his 1581 visitation. The canons of 1604 declared the church building the house of God. In the second decade of the seventeenth century, church and churchyard consecration became common. By 1612, Canterbury himself sought to punish those who profaned 'any thing or any place

instance, seems to have caused no stir in 1616 but became obnoxious by 1643: Hugo Blake, Geoff Egan, John Hurst and Elizabeth New, 'From popular devotion to resistance and renewal: the cult of the holy name of Jesus and the Reformation', in David Gaimster and Robert Gilchrist (eds), *The archaeology of Reformation, 1480–1580*, Leeds 2003, 175–203 at pp. 190–1.

<sup>68</sup> *Early Stuart visitation*, ii, p. xxiii.

consecrated to holy use' and specifically identified the communion table as a holy thing, condemning its profane use even outside of divine service. Bishops across the spectrum of churchmanship followed these examples.

Besides the explosion of consecration services from the 1610s and heightened sacral rhetoric in visitation, numerous concurrent developments in pre-Caroline England indicate an elevated conception of sacred materiality: the English church refurbishment and beautification programme under James I and the 'sustained revival' of Rogationtide processions and festival communions noted by J. F. Merritt; 'the revived ritualism' in the 'protected space' of Protestant elite homes and college chapels remarked by Felicity Heal; the demand in canon 87 and in visitation, for parishes to provide glebe terriers for the protection of church property, as well as widely noted anxieties about the sin of sacrilege issuing from the pulpit and press.<sup>69</sup> From the evolving wording of visitation articles it is evident that English ecclesiastical authorities were ever more insistent upon appropriate care and respect for the material structures of their worship spaces. Laudians later may have appropriated the contemporary discourse of sacrality as if horror over violation of sacred things was their own private preserve. But zeal for the beautification and protection of the houses of God was not confined to an upstart party of *avant-garde* prelates; these developments were furthered by the innovations of Reformed conformists such as Chaderton, King and Abbot. Reformed conformists not only accepted the Book of Common Prayer, they embraced with enthusiasm what Anne-Francoise Morel justifiably calls an 'unestablished ceremony'.<sup>70</sup> From day one of his episcopal career, Laud found in the already established rhetoric of 'consecrated' places and things, of the church as 'house of God', and of the communion table as a 'holy thing', tools ready to hand for his own more feverish doctrinal and liturgical campaign to accomplish the resacralisation of the national Church. There were novelties in the early Stuart Church, to be sure, but they did not always arise from the Arminians.

<sup>69</sup> Merritt, 'Puritans, Laudians', 935–60, and 'Religion and the English parish', in Milton, *Oxford history*, i. 122–47 at p. 141; Felicity Heal, 'Art and iconoclasm', in Milton, *Oxford history*, i. 186–209 at pp. 94–8. 'The provision of ecclesiastical terriers has usually been viewed as a Laudian concern; in fact, the policy was Jacobean, and its chief architect was Archbishop Abbot': Fincham, *Prelate*, 188; *Early Stuart visitation*, i. 101; Kelly, 'Invasion', *passim*.

<sup>70</sup> Morel, 'Church consecration', 297.